

THE CABOT CHRONICLE

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Tribute to Bonnie Stevens Dannenburg

by Ruth Goodrich, President
Cabot Historical Society

Bonnie was born February 13, 1947, to Warren Willard Stevens and Margaret Elizabeth Joyal Parent in Hampton, VA, where her father, who was in the US Army Air Corps, was stationed. Bonnie's father, Warren, was killed by lightning at age 20 on August 25, 1947, while home on leave, haying on what later became Melvin Churchill's farm. He is buried in Durant Cemetery. Bonnie was only six months old at the time. Bonnie and her mother lived at Warren's parents' dairy farm near Molly's Pond, where the Lesperances now live. Bonnie's mother was born on April 4, 1927, in Colchester, VT. She later remarried. She died September 16, 1998, in Torrington, CT, and is also buried in Durant cemetery.

Bonnie stayed on the farm and was raised by her grandparents, Florence & Harry Stevens. Bonnie attended Cabot schools. When she went to high school in

Cabot Village, she was a cheerleader and often stayed with her maternal grandfather, Joseph T. Joyal, in the house at 79 Elm Street. This house has been owned by Bonnie's maternal family for more than a century. During school vacations, Bonnie stayed with her mother in Millbrook, NY. After graduating from Cabot High School in 1965, Bonnie went to Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie, NY, earning an Associate's degree with a concentration in institutional child care.

There in NY, she met Peter Dannenburg and they married in 1967. They have two daughters, Allison and Stephanie, grandchildren and great grandchil-



dren, many nieces, nephews & cousins.

Bonnie served the community of Cabot for decades. She was a dedicated volunteer, president of the Cabot Historical Society for more than 20 years, maintaining two museums with collections from Cabot's past. She was instrumental in organizing, cataloging and ar-

ranging the wonderful displays in the Main Street museum and the West Hill Schoolhouse. She had a vast range of knowledge about each item that was amazing. She cared deeply about the Historical Society, its members and the collections.

She led the annual Cabot Apple Pie Festival. A lifelong Democrat, Bonnie

served as chair of a revitalized Cabot Democratic Committee, delegate to Washington County Democratic Committee and delegate to the state convention. She was a Cabot Justice of the Peace for several years. She researched and published a detailed family genealogy back to 1676 in France. Bonnie and her husband were team leaders for Episcopal Marriage Encounter seminars throughout the US and Canada.

Bonnie raised funds for the Cabot Alumni Association by hosting fancy teas. She was also a lifeguard, calligraphy instructor and a 4H leader. Her varied activities also included gardening, cat shows, fine felting, crocheting and knitting.

Bonnie died suddenly in her home on Elm Street in Cabot on August 3, 2023, at the age of 76, with her husband of 56 years by her side. She was very active in helping the community and her family until the day she passed away.

Cabot Children's Center Update

by R. D. Eno

It's early morning, but Carlie Beliveau has been on the job since 6:30 at the Cabot Children's Center, located in the basement of the United Church. Carlie, 21, began working with pre-toddlers while she was still a high school student in Danville, and later became a Life-Skill Para-educator at her old alma mater.

"But I really wanted to be with the babies," she says. "I missed them."

So, soon after the Children's Center opened its doors last fall, Carlie jumped at the chance to join the staff, especially since she had begun her career in early childhood education with Heather Smires, owner of ABC/LOL, the licensed child-care provider that operates the Cabot Center. ABC/LOL has facilities in St. Johnsbury and Peacham that have earned the highest, 5-STAR, rating from the Child Development Division of the Vermont Department of Children and Families.



Carlie Beliveau

"I always knew I had a passion for the happiness of young children," Heather has written. "I opened a child-care center in Danville the year after I graduated from high school, and what started with six children quickly grew into a center for 39 children." (see 'Children's Center', page 2)

Cabot Ambulance Seeking Town Meeting Vote

Cabot Ambulance is continuing to serve the community with the dedication of highly skilled volunteer VEFR's, EMT's and AEMT's. There have been many questions asked about the future of the ambulance in recent select board meetings. Many of those questions were based on misinterpretations, falsehoods and rumor. ALL have been clarified and put to rest. The ambulance has asked for the same appropriation as last year, \$40,000 to help defray expenses for this service. The select board has talked about not giving the Ambulance an appropriation \$\$ in the general fund for "Emergency Services" and then put the ambulance service out to bid in the new fiscal year. We certainly hope they do not do that, but if they do, citizens need to know what they are voting for. This could be confusing to voters, as they may not be clear on the repercussions. As of the printing of last month's *Chronicle*, the selectboard stated they had not made any decisions yet. If that is done, then it could be a possibility that Cabot

Ambulance would be out of service as of July 1, 2024, if that course of action took place and our bid was not accepted. Concerned citizens who have been following the topic approached us with the encouragement to let the Townspeople of Cabot decide this critical issue instead. As a result, on January 16 we turned in a petition to have an item on the ballot for the voters to consider that reads as follows:

"Do the citizens of the town of Cabot wish to see continued service by the Cabot Emergency Ambulance Service as the primary transport ambulance service for the Town of Cabot?"

As an all volunteer service, we do the very best we can, covering a very high percentage of all calls within the town. We have had many new members apply in recent months. We are prepared to continue to work together with the fire (see 'Cabot Ambulance', page 2)

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING ON AUSTRALIAN BALLOT ARTICLES

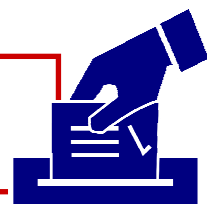
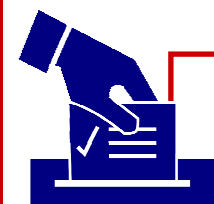
Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 7:00 p.m., At the Willey Building

TOWN ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 10:00 a.m.,
At the Willey Building

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTING

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.,
At the Willey Building



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Children's Center

(see 'Children's Center', page 2)

After the birth of her second child, Heather had to sell the Danville center, but she returned to the field a decade later, founding the ABC/LOL Child Care Center & Preschool in St. Johnsbury, and later ABC Little Sprouts, Camp LOL and the Peacham Children's Academy and Peacham Afterschool Learning.

"We are now serving over 200 children with 68 staffers," says Heather. "My husband and co-owner Jon is as involved with our Centers as I am. He is our full-time contractor and maintenance expert. ABC/LOL is our family serving the families of the children we care for."

In association with the CCA, first as a consultant and then as a provider, Heather wrote the grant applications that brought funding from Let's Grow Kids and the Vermont Early Childhood Foundation (VECF). Dean Deasy, Cabot's Fire Chief and proprietor of 3-D Electric, Chuck Talbert of Woodchuck Painting Co., Seth O'Brien of Seth's

Computer Services, and contractor Ben Ackermann all worked diligently (and quickly!) through the summer of 2023 to bring the Church basement up to child-care code – thanks to the congregation's special providence, the building suffered no flood damage in July! – and the Center accepted its first child in November.

At present, the Center is staffed by Carlie, Kaitlin Kimball, an experienced child care professional, and United Church treasurer Sue Bussolotti, who runs the business office, oversees the kitchen and serves as unofficial grandmother. More staff and a permanent director are expected soon, and until those hires, the Center is only accepting infants.

Finding skilled and reliable staff is always a challenge, but the most recent VECF grant award allows ABC/LOL to offer new employee training as well as access to college-level classes in Early Childhood Education at Northern Vermont University. There is already a waiting list, however, for "wobblers" and toddlers, and enrollment forms can be found on ABC/LOL's website, <https://www.abcandlol.com>.

Cabot Ambulance

(continued from page 1)

department and potential new FAST Squad to serve our fellow citizens. It is essential to have ambulance transport service within the boundary of our town and not have to wait longer for out of town services. We want the people of the town of Cabot to decide this matter, not just a select few.

The ambulance is currently housed in East Cabot until upcoming events determine our future. We are actively looking for land within the town to build our own station, seeking grant funding and fundraising. We appreciate the support of our neighbors and hope that some of you will consider joining us in this endeavor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Miner, President, CEAS

HEADS UP! IT'S COMING IN APRIL

by Chip Taylor

It's not too early to begin making plans for a once in a lifetime event for many of us: A total eclipse of the Sun on April 8. Cabot will be right on the edge of totality, so you will be able to just go outside and see it, weather permitting (and keep in mind that our area, on the edge of the North East Kingdom, is the cloudiest part of the U.S.). If you want to see the total part of the eclipse for more than a few seconds, you should consider heading 30 to 50 miles northwest to the center line of totality, where it will last for several minutes.

Now is the time to get eclipse viewing glasses for everyone (you absolutely do not want to look at the Sun without them except for the few minutes of totality) and plan where you will go to view the event if there are cloudy skies. And if you travel, think carefully about your route. Major roads will be filled with traffic both before and after the event: After the last total solar eclipse I saw, it took me almost four hours afterward to go twelve miles from a two lane highway to an Interstate to head home.

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2024 Legislative Priorities Senator Anne Watson, Washington District



This has been a hard year for many in the Washington District, and I'm eager to get started working on solutions. My top two

priorities for the session are flood recovery/resiliency and housing. We need more workforce in almost every sector. One of the key bottlenecks in getting more workforce is a lack of housing. I would love to pursue a "Housing First" as an approach to homelessness, but we need houses to move people into. Simultaneously, the structure of Act 250 may actually be perpetuating the sprawl it was intended to prevent as developers try to avoid the Act 250 triggers. I believe it's time to modernize Act 250 to both allow for more dense housing and to better protect wildlife corridors. We should make it easier for municipalities with robust zoning to either administer their own Act 250 process or exempt them from it.

Our flood recovery and resiliency response must address both financial relief

for municipalities, businesses, and individuals, as well as updating our policy landscape to better prepare for a hotter, wetter climate. I anticipate that we'll start the year off in Natural Resources and Energy with a look at how we can better manage and fund our river corridors for flood prevention, and support water management infrastructure. We are living with the effects of Climate Change, and the time for adaptation is now.

I'm also proud to be one of the lead sponsors of the Climate Superfund Act, which would require that oil companies pay for the damages that they have caused in our communities through carbon pollution. Right now, Vermonters are footing the bill for damage from extreme weather events that are driven by fossil fuels. In the meanwhile, those companies (like Exxon and Chevron) that have sold us those fossil fuels have not done anything to help pay for those damages. The Climate Superfund Act would require that these companies pay for their share of the damages that Vermonters have experienced from climate change. Just like other superfunds, it is the polluting company's obligation to pay for the damage they have caused. You make a mess. You clean it up.

Anne of Green Gables Cast Announced

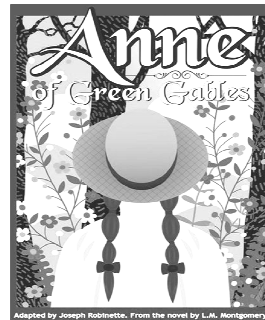
by Karen Mueller-Harder

Cabot Community Theater proudly announces the cast for Anne of Green Gables, based on the beloved book by L.M. Montgomery. CCT has a policy of including everyone who wants to be in our shows, and we had a total of 50 people audition, so it's quite a cast! We have divided up some parts so that more young people can have an opportunity to perform a lead role. Performances will be May 2-5, so be sure to plan on seeing the show!

Anne Shirley: Sycada Barnes, Susannah Harman, Althaea Irwin, Cora McIntyre, Coraline Brooking Metcalf, Louise Swift
Marilla Cuthbert: Becky Browning
Matthew Cuthbert: Thomas Dunbar, Jonah Meacham, Darren Usinowicz
Rachel Lynde: Luna Dunbar
Diana Barry: Lila Christiansen-Pollica, Stella Cusack, Molly Despathy, Ella Lacelle
Gilbert Blythe: Mack Hofmann, Nic Ingram
Josie Pye: Iris Jacobs
Ruby Gillis: Josie Pare
Jane Andrews: Addelyn Temple
Bessie Wright: Rue Jacobs
Tillie Boulter: Amara Hansen
Gertie Pye: Gwen Pare

Carrie Sloane: Poppy Gletsos
Prissy Andrews: Ada Allen
Sara Gillis: Savannah Light
Moody MacPherson: Henry Torres
Charlie Sloane: Lucas Vitale

Jimmy Glover: Dylan Meacham
Mary Jo: Ana Abare
Minnie May Barry: Kate McIntyre
Mrs. Barry: Erin Barry
Aunt Josephine Barry: Ellie Melen
Miss Stacy: Hope Metcalf
Mrs. Allan: Sage King
Reverend Allan: Harper Smith
Mr. Phillips: Spencer Vitale
Stationmaster: Charlie Lander
Mr. Sadler: Hollis Allen
Jerry Buote: Marco Welters
Mrs. Blewett: Elizabeth Vitale
Miss Rogerson: Polly Allen
President of Queen's Academy: Peg Elmer Hough
Sunday school kids: Lily Dunbar, Elfi Goldenrose, Ariella Helfand, Simone Kulsick, Ruthie Podolin, Moirah Usinowicz, Orion Vitale



**THE CABOT
CHRONICLE**

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Cabot Chronicle Mission Statement: The Cabot Chronicle is a home-delivered newspaper devoted to telling the story of the Cabot community.





COMMUNITY COMMENTARY

The views, opinions and information expressed in the Community Commentary, are solely those of the writer and not necessarily those of this newspaper or its affiliates.

A Place of Horses and Healing



Editor's Note: This letter was received after the deadline for the December Cabot Chronicle, but we agreed to print it in a future edition.

Dear Editor:

Kathryne Silberman remembers the first time she visited

Rhythm of the Rein, a therapeutic riding and driving program in Marshfield, nearly ten years ago.

Silberman, who has been battling a connective tissue disease for more than 40 years, arrived in a wheelchair. She was looking for therapy for her son, who has cerebral palsy, and she found a place that also provided relief from the pain and stress of struggling with her illness.

"Things started changing when I got on a horse," said Kathryne, who is 71. At first, she rode with people walking on each side of her for security, and eventually she gained the confidence to ride independently. The horse, a mare named Grace, was quiet and reliable, she said. "My pain went away."

Created by physical therapist Dianne Lashoones, Rhythm of the Rein has been offering therapeutic riding services and other activities for people with special needs for more than 20 years. The program is accredited and staffed by a physical therapist and Libby Hale, a PTA, who are also both Credentialed Therapeutic Riding instructors who work individually with adults and children to help them gain confidence, enjoy physical activity, and connect with horses. Beth Belote is the barn manager and our Certified Adaptive Carriage Driving Instructor.

Horses are herd animals with a built-in perception for others' emotions and the environment around them. Equine therapy is used around the world as a way to aid people who struggle with



physical conditions as well as emotional regulation and impulse control. Working with horses has been proven to increase connectedness and confidence; at Rhythm of the Rein, an important part of the program is grooming and preparing the horses for riding, giving participants a sense of responsibility.

After ten years at the farm, Silberman said she has seen equine work change peoples' lives, including that of her son, Charles.

"There is something about horses that calms children," she said. "Autistic children will be very vocal and active, and when they get on the horse, they quiet down right away. You see the happiness expressed in their faces, and the joy as they get more comfortable over a period of time."

Rhythm of the Rein's Therapeutic Riding and Driving Program relies heavily on donations and volunteers to make its programs available to all who need them. Please consider supporting this critical community asset on Giving Tuesday.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=720477783447927&set=a.546628670832840>

Submitted by Dianne Lashoones, past founder and Board member
Rhythmoftherein1@gmail.com
388 US Route 2, Marshfield, Vt. 05658
802 595 3567

Why Have a Business Directory?

by Sandy Pond,
Sandy Pond Studios

To support you, we need to know who you are and what you offer to the community. Having easy access to your phone, email, or website can introduce you to those visiting Cabot, attending family gatherings, public events or enjoying a special evening out. Knowing there is lodging, a place to repair the car or buy that last-minute gift makes the Cabot experience that much more memorable. [and we Buy Local! Thrive local!]

The Cabot Business Forum discussed the potential for Welcome to Cabot signs on the North, East and West sides of town and perhaps creating a logo for branding. Any ideas? The web address could be there for all to see, and may bring in visitors from Route 2, etc., to visit our amazing farms offering raw milk to organic beef to flowers and fruits. Then explore the walking trails or bike the back roads.

Education was an item we thought about to support our businesses. As Cabot's young folks enter the entrepreneurial world, having an event inviting those with years of experience to share what they have learned, good and bad, could be a great way to mix up the generations, learn some real-

time history and build community. We can always invite outside speakers and share grant info, perhaps the chamber, advertising gurus, etc., for a community business gathering.

Would you attend? Would you share? A meet and greet business exchange and discussion on the above matters may be a great place to start.

A thank you to CCA, hiring Seth O'Brien to get the directory done! So, please fill out the directory online questionnaire and we encourage you to attend our next meeting, February 12, at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall/Wiley Building meeting room.

Cabot Business Forum/Directory
Questionnaire



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hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com

Two February Community Dances!

by Karen Mueller-Harder

February 9 & 18

The Cabot Community Contra Dance will host TWO dances during the month of February, both held in the wonderful third floor space in the Wiley Building (Cabot Town Hall, 3084 Main Street).

Our regular second Friday dance on February 9 will feature the calling of Cabot's own Karen Mueller-Harder, who specializes in beginner-friendly dances! The dance is 7:30-10 pm, with a short intro session for new folks at 7:15. Live music is provided by a great group of local musicians--feel free to just come and listen if you like!

And our November Family Dance was such a success that we will be hold-

ing another one on Sunday, February 18, from 1-3 pm! This is for families who find evening dances too late for them, and anyone else who would enjoy some daytime frolicking with people of all ages! While all our events are family-friendly, this one will feature active dances especially well-suited to the youngest members of the community. Karen will also be the leader for this event, and we'll have the same great live music we enjoy for the Friday dances!

Everyone is welcome, and all dances are taught, and easily learned, even if you've never danced before! Admission is on a sliding scale, \$5-10, but nobody is turned away for lack of funds. Masks are welcomed but not required.

Hope to see you at the dance!

OBITUARIES & MEMORIALS

Casey Lynn Clifford



Casey Lynn (Suback) Clifford, 45, of Walden, passed away at Copley Hospital in Morrisville on Saturday, December 16, 2023, after a long battle with cancer. She was born in Mayfield Heights, Ohio on Nov. 17, 1978, the daughter of Gary and Sharon (Podany) Suback. At that time, she joined her older sister Megan.

Casey is survived by her husband Peter Clifford and their children Rylee and Hunter of Walden, her parents Gary and Sherrie Suback of Beaufort, S.C., her sister Megan Silver (James) and (children) Yasmine, Elisha, Dylan, Jacob and Tobias of Cleveland, Tenn. and a "sisterhood" of very loving and

devoted friends. She is also survived by her in-laws, Francis (Bud) and Judy Clifford of Walden.

A Celebration of Life will take place on Mothers' Day, May 12, 2024. Any donations can be made to Peter Clifford, PO Box 54, West Danville, VT 05873 or via <https://www.gofundme.com/f/caseys-heartbreaking-cancer-story>. The complete obituary may be viewed at dgufunerals.com.

Casey's family deeply appreciates your words of support and sympathy, hospital and home visits, prepared meals and snacks, the gifts of Christmas during our time of deepest sorrow, your continued thoughts and prayers and the overwhelming love of our community. The staff at Copley Hospital during Casey's Hospice stay were caring and superb! THANK YOU!

Andrew was an avid traveler who enjoyed exploring places nearby, as much as he did traversing long distances behind the wheel with Steph, his navigator, by his side. Over the years, Andrew and Steph traveled to every state in the nation, much of the time by car. In recent years, Steph took the wheel and they continued to explore the shores of Delaware. Andrew relished a good treasure hunt at an antiques market or just having a coffee sitting in the ocean air. He delighted in relaxing with a drink and listening to music, especially a live concert or show.

Andrew is survived by Stephanie Bolton Liston of Lewes, DE, Ian Liston and Margaret Chou of Wilmington, DE, Seth and Kelly Liston of Greenville, RI and Rebecca and Christopher DiJulia of Wayland, MA. Andrew was the loving grandfather to Charlotte, Lindsay, Carter, Sophia, Garrett, Kaitlyn and Lily. Stephanie Bolton, daughter of Betty Bolton, was raised in Cabot. Additional information is available at <https://www.telegram.com/obituaries/pneo0686906>.

ter for West Danville. Retiring from the Post Office in 2015, Garey had nearly five decades of service to his country, in one form or another.

Garey was a long-time member of the West Danville United Methodist Church. He was also a long-time member of the Danville Knights of Pythias, as well as the Joe's Pond Association, and the West Danville Community Club.

Survivors include brothers Richard (Terri) and Dennis (Betty) Larrabee; Garey's two children Curtis Larrabee and his wife, Cristin Ashmankas of St. Johnsbury, Vt., and Jenny (Larrabee) Rafuse and her husband James of West Danville, Vt.; grandchildren Caleigh, Connor and Cordelia Larrabee, Alyssa, and Ava Rafuse, in addition to many nieces, nephews, cousins, grand-nieces, and grand-nephews.

Garey was predeceased by his wife of 50 years, Jane. He was also predeceased by his parents Earl Larrabee and Ethel (Hall) Larrabee; brothers, Robert, Earl, Lawrence, and James; sisters: Shirley (Larrabee) Brochu, and Patricia Larrabee; and grandson Celestus Larrabee.

In life Garey lived believing the way to happiness was through service to those in, and passing through, his community. He believed friendship was an essential ingredient in life, and strove to make benevolence, kindness, generosity, and tolerance a reality in his daily life. Above all Garey placed home and family at the top of his priority list.

Private Graveside Services will be held later at the convenience of his family.

Shirley McClay



Shirley McClay has gone to join the Angels and to be with her husband, Jim, the love of her life. She was born in 1931 in Cabot, VT, to Harry and Addie Searles. She was one of 18 children. She had a special connection with her brother Jake and his wife Nettie.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in his memory may be made to the West Danville Methodist Church, P.O. Box 55, West Danville, Vermont 05873-0114, Damon Lodge, Knights of Pythias, P.O. Box 114, Danville, VT 05828-0114 or to the West Danville Community Club, P.O. Box 6, West Danville, VT. 05873.

Arrangements are in the care of Dian R. Holcomb of Northern Vermont Funeral Service, 60 Elm Street, Hardwick. Online condolences are welcomed at: northernvermontfuneralservice.com.

Jim and Shirley moved to Vergennes, where they were very involved in the community. They operated the Brown-McClay Funeral home for many years; Shirley became a licensed funeral director to help Jim with the business, getting her driver's license when she was 50. Shirley went skydiving for her 70th birthday.

Private burial will take place in Prospect Cemetery. Additional information is available and online condolence may be offered at www.sandersonfuneralservice.com.

The Most Important Garden Tool

by Susan Socks of Garden Goddess Consulting and Gardening

Last February, I wrote about "showing love" to your garden tools: keeping them clean, sharp, oiled, painted and always stored under cover.

This February, I want to talk about the care of *your most important tool: YOU!*

Gardening is fun and rewarding. It's also physically demanding. In the enthusiasm fueled by warmer weather and longer days of spring, or the rush to bring in the fall harvest, it's very easy to get carried away. A little thought and a bit of care can prevent most gardening injuries and keep you in the garden for decades.

Sun

One of the most common gardening injuries is sun exposure. Obviously, sunburns are painful and unpleasant, and should be avoided. But chronic sun exposure that leaves you tan is also damaging. "Protective tan" is a myth. If you're getting enough sun to tan, you're getting enough sun to damage your skin. Premature wrinkling, spotting, and skin cancer doesn't happen in a day, or a season...it's the cumulative effect of years of sun. Long sleeves and pants, wide-brimmed hats, gloves, and sunscreen will keep your skin healthier longer. When possible, use sunscreens with natural ingredients. And remember to re-apply sunscreen if you'll be out for more than a couple hours.

Heat

Heat injuries (heat exhaustion and heat stroke) are caused by working in high temperatures, and often involve dehydration as well. When possible, work in the morning or evening. If you have to work midday, take breaks often. Be aware that as you age, your tolerance for heat may be less than it used to be. At any time of day when working, drink plenty of water. Keep a bottle nearby (or even two). Water is best; avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol, as these actually dehydrate, rather than hydrate.

Insects

The same long sleeves, long pants, and hats that protect from sun can also keep off most insects. During very buggy times (such as blackfly season), use insect repel-

lents to keep them at bay. Choose products with natural ingredients such as lemongrass and citronella, and when possible, apply the repellent to your clothes rather than directly on your skin. If you will be working in areas of tall grass or brush, you are likely to encounter ticks. Wear long pants tucked into socks, and after work, check yourself carefully for ticks, from head to toe.

Please note, insects are an absolutely vital part of the ecosystem, so don't spray insecticides on your gardens or lawn. Protect your own personal space only!

Feet and hands

Some folks love gardening with bare feet. That's fine for light work, in a safe area. However, the wider world has thistles, ground-nesting wasps, sticks and rocks, and in the case of old farms & homesteads, broken glass and rusty metal. Consider your space, and whether you should save your barefoot time for when you're reading in the hammock.

Gardening barehanded can be fun, and some tasks are best suited to fingertips. But if you'll be doing a lot of heavy work, a good pair of gloves will save you from blisters, and dirt wedged uncomfortably under nails.

Overuse injuries

There are multitudes of ways to overuse your body while gardening, and I could dedicate several articles to the topic. But for now, here are a few key points.

Design gardens for easy access. Narrow garden beds, pathways, containers, and waist-high raised beds will minimize awkward bending and reaching.

Use the right tool for the job and invest in quality tools. As needed, use a kneeling pad or low seat on wheels.

Alternate tasks. When possible, don't do the same task for hours on end. Switching tasks allows your body to work in different positions.

Check in with yourself frequently. Stand up, shake out arms and legs, stretch your back. Assess if you need water, food, a different tool, or a break.

(see 'Garden Tool', page 13)

Andrew Barry Liston



Andrew Barry Liston, age 74, of Lewes, Delaware, formerly of Shrewsbury and Boylston, Massachusetts, died at home on January 4, 2024, after a courageous battle with arterial lateral sclerosis (ALS), with his loving wife, Stephanie, by his side.

Andrew was born on October 31, 1949, in Niskayuna, New York, and was raised in the Worcester area in a large household surrounded by five cherished siblings, Lisa, Linda, Nancy, Ron and Peter. A graduate of Wachusett Regional High School, Andrew went on to earn degrees in Mathematics at the University of Vermont and in Civil Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Andrew met his devoted wife, Stephanie, at the University of Vermont, and they married in 1971. 'Andy' and 'Steph' raised three children, Ian, Seth and Rebecca, in Shrewsbury, where they lived until 2018.

Garey Ronald Larabee



Garey Ronald Larabee, 78, of West Danville, Vt., passed away peacefully at the Northeastern Vermont Hospital in St. Johnsbury surrounded by family on Friday, Jan. 19, 2024.

He was born on Oct. 26, 1945, in Hardwick; the youngest of nine children born to Earl and Ethel (Hall) Larabee.

After graduating from Hardwick Academy in 1963, he attended Champlain College, and Lyndon State College. Garey served in the United States Navy, attached to the 1st Marine Division, 1965-1973. He married Jane Hastings of West Danville in 1970. In 1976, Garey and Jane took over general management of Hastings Store from Jane's parents Ralph and Mabel, thus ushering in the store's third generation of ownership. Garey worked, for many years, as a clerk in the West Danville Post Office, with his father-in-law, Ralph Hastings as Postmaster. In 1993, he became the Postmas-

Through The Cabot Chronicle, the CCA promotes their mission to enhance the quality of community life for those residing, doing business, and visiting Cabot, VT. One aspect of that mission is to empower Cabot residents to participate in the governance and management of our town.

The Chronicle is dedicating a staff writer to cover selectboard and other meetings, for the purpose of keeping community members informed about issues discussed at meetings they might not be able to attend. Most meetings are available via Zoom for those who would like to listen in person. Instructions for joining meetings virtually through Zoom are posted regularly on Front Porch Forum, or you can call the Town Clerk's office for details at 563-2279. Digital Recordings of selectboard meetings are available on the Town website, CabotVT.US by clicking on "Selectboard Meetings."

Wastewater Plant

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

The board has been discussing the state of the wastewater system and plant at the past several Selectboard meetings of the new year. It was first addressed at the January 2 meeting where Mike Hogan asked Fred Ducharme to describe some of the issues he found when he visited the plant.

Fred described the condition of the electrical panel and noted that it needed to be replaced. He said the air is eating up the copper bus bars, and the breakers are actually weeping water. He said he has a good idea of how to prevent the condensation. Fred noted there is so much heat in the facility that the doors are left open.

Fred then changed the topic to the amount of water that is flowing into the system. The plant has not been able to keep up with the flow of effluent into the system, and the extra is being trucked away, adding an additional cost to the town. Fred said they opened up some of the manholes and saw a constant flow of water coming from the area where the temporary firehouse is located. He added that there are only two houses above the location and they shouldn't be creating that much water in the pipe.

Ruth Goodrich, member of the public, asked if sump pumps could be complicating the issue. Fred responded it was 10 am on New Years day when they looked, and the water was clear. He also said the two houses do not have a problem with water in their basements. He added that he believes something may have shifted in the ground to cause the problem.

Roger, the representative from H2O Innovations, the company that services the wastewater plant, said they will have a camera in town to look at the line on the following Thursday. Roger also said when they last put a camera in the line, there was one gasket hanging loose near the recreation field. Roger also confirmed the pumping rate is very consistent throughout the night. Fred agreed that indicated a lot of water is entering the system.

The board next discussed the wastewater plant at the budget and regular Selectboard meetings on January 16. At the budget meeting, Fred said when the hole was dug to connect into the water line for the temporary firehouse, the contractor dug down through the sewer pipe to get to the water line. The water line is six feet below the surface, and the sewer pipe is only three feet. Fred has no idea how they didn't notice ripping out a four inch pipe, and said they have been paying all that money to haul away the extra effluent due to the mistake.

The board continued the discussion at the regular board meeting, where Fred discussed the state of the wastewater plant. He said things have not been maintained, or just shut off. He added that he doesn't feel it is any fault of the

current H2O Innovations staff, and they are in the process of learning the system.

Fred then told the board it would cost \$23,000 to replace the electrical panels. And then turned to Roger to describe other things about the plant. Roger said he did get half of the ventilation system running and that should solve the condensation problem. However, he added that the heating costs will go up.

Mike asked what the normal practice was to deal with all the moisture and Roger said he had seen timers used, but also a humidistat. Fred chimed in that the humidistat would be the ideal solution.

Roger went on to say that they did fix the problem with the sewer line by the temporary firehouse. He added that they confirmed the flow of water had dried up by looking in the manhole. Roger reminded the board that they still have to fix the gasket issue in the pipe near the intersection of South Walden Road and Route 215.

Roger went on to describe other issues at the plant, and said the computer had crashed and they could not get it to work. He also mentioned that when the plant was first built there was an issue with condensation in the electrical panels. He said it had been fixed by running the ventilation, and that was done for 20 years. Roger recommended having an HVAC contractor analyze the situation and determine the best solution.

Michelle Leclerc asked if there was any way to make someone else pay for the damage done to the sewer line up at the temporary firehouse. She said the costs have exceeded \$40,000 handling the extra water in the system and there isn't money in the budget for the expense. Fred agreed that a lot of the cost was due to the extra water getting into the system because of the break. The board agreed to have Fred talk to Dean about the issue.

Roger then talked about the operational capacity of the system. He referred to the engineering study the board had recently received, and pointed out the design flow was 50,000 gallons a day, with a peak of 90,000 gallons a day. Roger said the plant has never operated anywhere near that capacity. He said the highest that it has ever operated was 29,000 gallons a day.

R.D. Eno wanted Roger to clarify the operational capacity of the plant, and expressed interest in knowing the real excess capacity of the plant. Roger speculated that if they could get 35,000 gallons a day, it would be the best the plant has ever operated.

Mike concluded the conversation by recommending the board read the engineering study report, and they could have Roger come back for more questions. Mike also told the board they would eventually have to talk about a capital plan since the plant has been in operation for 26 years.

Ambulance Service

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

At the January 2 meeting of the Selectboard, Jenn Miner was there on behalf of Cabot Ambulance. She presented the selectboard with a letter signed by their CPA stating that Cabot Ambulance's books were up to date.

Jenn then wanted to clarify how the FAST squad worked in conjunction with an emergency transport service (i.e. ambulance). Jenn said that both are toned out for a call at the same time. She added that whoever is contracted for emergency transport by the town, that service will work with the FAST squad and Selectboard on what circumstances would require transport.

Also on the night of the 2nd, there was a Selectboard meeting specifically to review the draft budget with the public. At that meeting, the topic of Cabot Ambulance also surfaced. Someone from the public asked whether Cabot Ambulance was private or a non-profit. Ruth Goodrich answered that it is not municipal, it is a private non-profit. Ruth noted that there had been some lapses in filing after the change to a new treasurer and information not being forwarded.

Then it was asked how many calls Cabot Ambulance had last year, and Jenn noted they hadn't closed the books for the year yet, so they don't have a specific number, but the estimate is around 120 calls. Then it was asked to what percentage of calls did Cabot Ambulance respond. Ruth could only answer for December, and said they covered 100% of their calls. Jenn pointed out there are various reasons why an ambulance service might not respond to a call, which include multiple calls at the same time, or too many staff coming down with COVID.

Then the conversation turned to the proposed FAST quad in the fire department, and whether that was redundant. Skip Bothfeld explained that the FAST squad gets there first and takes care of the patient, and packages the patient for when the transport agency arrives. Jenn

added that there is some redundancy, but that it is a good thing.

The board pondered the question of putting out a request for proposal (RFP) to start a bid process for the emergency transport service at the next budget meeting on the 16th. Karen Larsen said she thought putting this out to RFP is a sensible thing to do. She added that Cabot Ambulance has already indicated they are in support of the FAST squad model. She concluded that this implies the town needs a transport agency.

The board decided to move the \$40,000 appropriation for Cabot Ambulance from the ... appropriations line item and put it into a new line item titled "Emergency Transport Service".

Mike noted Cabot Ambulance was funded by the town for the remainder of the fiscal year, until June 30. R.D. expressed that he didn't see how they wouldn't have a contract in place by June 30. Mike added that he wanted Cabot Ambulance to have every opportunity to apply for the service contract. He emphasized that it is important the town has a contract for everything.

Fred stated that he felt the board should ask the voters. Mike mentioned that he saw a petition in the library related to asking the voters about using Cabot Ambulance, but wasn't sure of the language in the proposed article. Fred reiterated that there was no reason the Selectboard should make the decision. R.D. noted that if there is indeed an article, it may control how the town contracts a transport agency.

Then later that evening, at the regular board meeting, Jenn presented the board with a signed petition to ask the voters to designate Cabot Ambulance as the primary transport agency for the town.

Jenn also followed up on some questions from the previous meetings. She said that she checked with Vermont EMC Licensing and they are completely in compliance. She also told the board that Cabot Ambulance had responded to 80% of the calls in 2023.



New Road Crew Member - Tom Dailey



Tom hails from Woodbury. He graduated high school in 2015 and signed on with Bourne's Energy, working there for nine years. His father was road foreman for Woodbury.

Road crew members report he fits in perfectly—eager to learn, good with equipment and a great work ethic and personality! We surprised him passing through the town offices and grabbed a photo, and Rollin Tebbetts captured a picture of a town plow in action—don't know who was behind the wheel!

Ackermanns Invited to State House



The Ackermann Family with strong ties to Cabot were the guests of Governor Phil Scott during his State-of-the-State address in Montpelier.

Governor Scott recognized Vermonters who helped their neighbors recover from the July flood. The Ackermann's, who are dairy farmers in nearby Hardwick, were seated in the balcony as he congratulated their efforts. "Eight- and ten-year-old Andee and Allie Ackermann started their own business, a lemonade stand, giving every single penny of the \$700 they made to help the Hardwick House of Pizza."

After the speech, the Governor served Andee and Allie's lemonade to guests in his State House office. The family was joined by Cabot resident and Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts, who gave the family a tour of the State House and provided the photos for The Cabot Chronicle.

Let's Talk About ART



Diane Huling at the piano in her home, with some of her paintings on the surrounding walls.

by Janet Van Fleet

Classical Pianist Diane Huling

Classical pianist Diane Huling has been called “Vermont’s only topnotch romantic pianist,” by critic Jim Lowe, who describes her playing as “sublime”, “natural” and “irresistible”. She has a classical education in piano performance from the Eastman School of Music and has a stellar reputation as a world-class musician.

She has lived in Cabot for 23 years. Within months of moving to her house on Ducharme Road, her husband died and, partly as a kind of home-made therapy, she began to paint the walls and surfaces of her house with images of people and landscapes. Over the years she has also painted on more traditional surfaces like canvas and board, and she still plans to paint large murals on walls that are in the process of construction.

Sixteen years ago she married fine woodworker and boatbuilder Curt Holden, and together they undertook modifications to their house that involved removing some of the walls with her murals. That’s OK with Diane, as they are working to create a raised performance space behind a large arch framed by two smooth-shaft doric columns constructed from scratch by Holden. In their vision, the stage will contain a nine-foot grand piano and be open on two sides to a small theater box and seating in two adjacent spaces in the house, where she anticipates that they could accommodate an audience of up to 40 people.

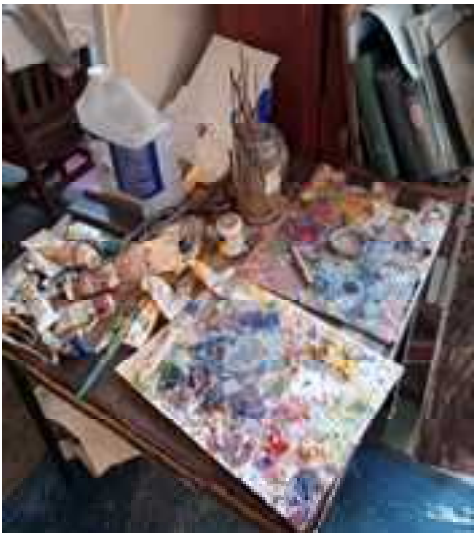
“We’re hoping to have a space to produce concerts here at the house and provide space for recitals for other musicians in a nice, intimate space,” says Huling. She pointed out that both in grand homes in Europe and kitchen junkets in Vermont, music has often – even primarily – been presented in homes, and this would be a great way for people here in Cabot and surrounding towns to experience classical music.

The couple has been working on this project for about six years, and are hoping to finish by this summer, though financing is always the constraining variable. Recently, their insurance com-

pany threatened to cancel their policy unless they put siding on the outside of the space they’re renovating – and there went the money saved up for a hardwood floor for the performance area.

Nevertheless, they are continuing to commit to the project, and Diane is also planning a spring concert at the Barre Opera House that will be accompanied by a new group of paintings that she is working on, each of which responds to a particular piece of music on the program. “What I’d really like to do,” she says, “is photograph the paintings and have them projected onto a scrim behind me on the stage while I’m playing.”

This is another inspiring example of Huling’s creative thinking across genres, but it comes at a cost in time and funds. One of the realities of being an artist (musician, painter, writer, etc.) is that it takes years of training and experience, long periods of work in the studio or with an instrument, and many hours of planning for presentation to create the exhibit or concert or book that the public sees. But it’s not like a job with a salary and a predictable income. While all artists have to make peace with this fact in order to continue to do their work, it is good for the rest of us to think about the work behind the work that we see. In future columns, I hope to continue to keep an eye on the business part of making art.



Huling's paints and palette.

CABOT EDUCATION

WHATS BEST FOR OUR KIDS?



CABOT SCHOOL

RESPECT. RESPONSIBILITY. KINDNESS. ENGAGEMENT.

A Model for Inspiration and Learning

by Rebecca Tatistcheff,
Cabot School Principal

Vermont has some of the most progressive education legislation in the country. Laurie Gagnon of the Aurora Institute recently wrote, "What's especially important about Vermont's approach is that it sets a vision for shifting the education system as a whole to a student-centered, proficiency-based approach." ([Aurora Institute](#)) It has set and followed trends in best practice by supporting project-based learning, personalized learning plans, and proficiency-based assessment. Our state legislation encourages flexibility and adaptability -- all well-established and important strategies for sustaining rural education. In 2018, Cabot School redesigned their high school programming to align to the State's vision for public education and meet the goals of our landmark legislation and State Board of Education Rule Series 2000 (the Education Quality Standards). The high school team designed a project-based program that allowed students to apply their learning through experiences beyond the bounds of the classroom.

Over the course of the next six years, the team worked to create coherence across the PreK-12 community; identifying and assessing transferable skills, encouraging curriculum that saw students become resources and change-makers in the community, and developing a coherent learning map that gives every student the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in creative ways while still developing the skills necessary to be successful learners beyond high school. Students demonstrate proficiency and content knowledge through the creation of short films, podcasts, long form journalism pieces, creative writing, and plays. They are resources and change-makers in their small but vibrant and economically diverse community.

Over the past three years, 100% of our graduating seniors have applied to and been accepted to at least one two- or four-year institution. And all graduates have completed a self-designed internship based on their unique interests. A student interested in emergency services became a certified CPR trainer and then trained twelve Cabot staff members. A student interested in skiing became an adaptive ski instructor, supporting individuals with disabilities to experience the joy of skiing as he does. In a conversation with school visitors, he emphasized the transformational nature of this experience. By the end of the year, he was advocating for Vermont Adaptive and plan-

ning to continue his work with them into college. Such opportunities for deeper learning improve long-term outcomes for students including, importantly, a commitment to civic engagement ([AIR.org](#)).

—I am proud of the incredible work we have done as a PreK-12 community over the past several years. We have built a robust afterschool program that enriches students' learning and provides a work-based learning and leadership experience for our middle and high school students. We have coordinated and aligned our curriculum and thematic projects so our educators and students can focus on deeper learning and worry less about reinventing the wheel every year. We have shifted our literacy practices to better align with the science of reading while also ensuring students are engaged in work that is deep and meaningful. Every Cabot senior is engaged in Senior X internships that are driven by their passions: engineering, big engine repair and maintenance; social work, computer science, technical art and design to name a few. And when we engage students' passions, they persist in their learning, even when it gets hard. Our high school program is highlighted as a model for project-based learning, flexible pathways, and proficiency-based assessment. Visitors comment on the depth of student learning and the invaluable skills in collaboration, communication, creativity, problem solving, and life-long learning -- all values the Vermont State Legislature and the State Board of Education have defined in law and rule.

For all the ways Cabot exemplifies the intent of the legislation to create opportunities for Vermont youth beyond the schoolhouse walls, we should be looking to Cabot School as a model for inspiration and learning. In 2021, Cabot was nominated by two institutions, including the Vermont Agency of Education, for inclusion in a catalog of innovative schools through [The Canopy Project](#). Students' graduation portfolios (illustrated through their Mastery Transcripts) are indicative of the rigorous quality of the work that they create. Cabot should be upheld as a model of what schools in Vermont strive to instill in their portrait of a graduate. We should be working to scale up these practices and learn from Cabot's story of school transformation.

Unfortunately, this winter, the Cabot school board and community are confronting whether they can sustain the PreK-12 model financially. The confluence of the looming funding cliff when local ESSER Funds, meant to be temporary bolsters to school communities in the wake of the pandemic, and ESSER-

funded state initiatives like the Community Schools Act (Act 67 of 2021) end in September, alongside increasing inflation and legislatively mandated infrastructure repairs mean that the Act 127 funding formulas meant to create educational equity, may, in fact, not see the desired results.

Annually, according to the supervisory union, between 50 to 60 percent of Cabot school's student population qualify for Free and Reduced lunch (FRL). Twenty to twenty-four (20-24) percent of the students we serve have documented disabilities, ranging from moderate learning disabilities to those that require one-on-one and out of district support. Both numbers exceed the State average in these student reporting categories. One might assume, then, that the per pupil expenditure is higher at Cabot than at other schools in the region with lower percentages of students living in poverty or in need of support services. It is not. Cabot's per pupil expenditure in the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year was the lowest of the schools in the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union. *Cabot is using its funds wisely and implementing the innovations called for by lawmakers.* While Cabot may not be an affluent community, it has

always been rich in its commitment to community; it deserves a school that can deliver rigorous and innovative learning experiences to all of its students.

Cabot is not the only school district facing such dire financial challenges. Added to the tension between innovation and adequate funding is an aging infrastructure that continues to drain financial resources into emergency maintenance rather than forward thinking goals. Like other communities, Cabot needs help to navigate these challenging times. I would call on you as local residents to reach out to your local legislators. Ask them to incentivize innovative models of education with adequate funding and infrastructure. Urge them to see innovation, funding, and infrastructure as intimately connected to the health of communities. Call on lawmakers across the state to learn from Cabot's story, and the stories of other community schools, and to incentivize the innovation lawmakers clearly support without asking individual communities to make hard and destabilizing decisions at the expense of their young people.

Editor's note: This article appeared in VT Digger, and a shortened version in the Barre-Montpelier Times-Argus.

Town Meeting School Vote

by Niels Larsen

All Vermont schools face challenges. One is that significant tax and funding related issues are outside of their control. In Cabot, a recent property value reassessment will improve Cabot's Common Level of Assessment. By how much will not be known until it is certified. The State funding formula impacts the budget, but has yet to be announced. The big increase of health insurance just negotiated by the State affects all Vermont schools. All these factors affect Cabot's school budget as well as what Cabot will pay destination choice towns should "choice" be chosen at Town Meeting. These uncertainties will not be resolved by Town Meeting Day. Therefore, if school choice were adopted, no one will know what level of taxes they will face, only, as will be explained below, that choice will cost more.

In the meantime, voters need as much clarity as possible for what will be on the ballot and the rationale for voting for it.

Among arguments made for closing the high school in favor of choice, at least three made me join the conversation.

1. It will save money. (The proponents of choice admitted at a School Board meeting that this argument was used to gather signatures for the petition.) It is not true! Choice will increase taxes as explained at a recent School Board meeting and supported by the fact that Walden currently pays an average tuition of \$ 22,500 compared to \$20,786. Other

districts face the same inflationary and health care cost increases. Should current home school families enroll children in other high schools, the Cabot school budget should be expected to increase by more than \$22,500 for each previously home-schooled child. Therefore, it will be a while before Cabot will know what Choice will cost - until this year's school budgets are approved. Note also that taxes would decline by spreading the fixed cost over more students if those students were enrolled in Cabot. An additional factor is that with choice Cabot voters no longer have any say on spending or the operation of the schools their children will attend.

2. The high school "denies a quality education", is just one of several assertions made about the quality of education. The statement is particularly offensive to me as I am sure it is to teachers, students and school administration and others as I will explain below.

3. There is a mental health crisis at Cabot High School. One must assume compared to the choice options and, by implication, that it is caused by the school. It is an outrageous assertion to make without any evidence.

About quality, I followed my grandson and his cohort of friends, some since Pre-Kindergarten. He graduated last year ahead of schedule, in part because early college and on-line advanced placement courses are available to supplement what the school can offer. He was one of seven (*see 'School Vote', page 9*)

Four Photos Selected as Standouts in Community Contest



by Sonia Scherr, Cabot School Community Coordinator

Cabot School is excited to announce the winners of this year's Meaning of Cabot Photo Contest. Clockwise from left in the collage: "July Sunrise, Cabot, Vermont" by Cabot resident Bruce MacDonald (first place); "Taking the Girls for a Walk" by Cabot School staff member Brandy Goodrich (third place); "Cabot Sunset" by ninth-grader Dexter Mongeon (third place); and "A Bright Day in Cabot" by Cabot resident Rory Thibault (second place).

The Meaning of Cabot Photo Contest is an opportunity for people who live, work or attend school in Cabot to reflect through their original photos on their community and what it means to them. The contest saw more participation this year than ever before, with 39 photo submissions and more than 100 community members viewing the 12 finalists and voting on winners.

Cabot School Budget

By Cabot School Board

The Cabot School Board has voted on a budget to present to the voters on Town Meeting Day. We had four options:

- The least expensive option was to close grades 7-12 and designate another school (potentially Twinfield) for our 7th - 12th graders to attend. This would be the least expensive because we could negotiate a lower tuition rate with that school. **The tax rate would be \$1.93, which is up \$.16 from this current year.**
- The second least-expensive option was keeping the 7th and 8th grades in Cabot and designating a school for our high school students. The tax rate would be \$2.06, which is up \$.28 from this current year.
- The third option was to continue to operate as a PK-12 school. The tax rate would be \$2.14, which is up \$.37 from this current year. This is the option the School Board voted for, and it will be on the ballot.

The winners and finalists, along with written comments from the photographers about their work, will be featured in an exhibit at Cabot School Performing Arts Center this winter. The public is invited to the opening on February 21 from 6-7 p.m. This free event will include live music with Cabot student musicians, refreshments, and a silent auction of signed prints from the contest, with proceeds going toward Cabot's after-school program.

The community-wide Meaning of Cabot contest, now in its third year, is sponsored by Cabot School. Sonia Scherr, the school's community coordinator, worked with community member and photographer Neil Bainton to select this year's finalists. The community then chose the winners — without knowing the photographers' identities — during voting that began at the December 16 Holiday Market in Cabot Village and continued online through December 31.

- The fourth option was to operate a PK-8th grade and pay tuition to the high school selected by each family (School Choice). This is the most expensive option, with a minimum tax rate of \$2.20, which is up \$.43 from this current year. It is a minimum tax rate because it does not take into consideration any additional students who are currently being home schooled, and it also does not take any Special Education costs into account. This option was submitted only because a petition was submitted in favor of it. It will be on the school ballot, although the School Board is unanimously opposed to it.

We realize that none of these options are great, so it was not an easy decision. We are thankful to have heard from quite a few community members, and most of the feedback we received was to keep our high school open. The town has voted on whether to close the high school three times in the past ten years and has always voted against it. We hope to make our case to you, the voters, as to why we believe keeping a PK-12 school is the best choice. To do this, we plan to

have a Board member hold 'office hours' at The Den a few mornings a week starting the week of January 29 and continuing until Town Meeting Day, to send out an informative flier to all households, to have a Board member present at the town recycling center every Saturday starting January 27 through March 2, to post information on Front Porch Forum, and even to go door-to-door in the weeks before Town Meeting Day. We will also hold our Annual Meeting on March 4 to answer any last-minute questions.

We know that this budget increase is hard, but we also know that 74% of households in Cabot receive help from the state paying the school tax. 21% of households pay only a flat 2% of their income, 53% pay the Income Sensitive rate of 2.72% of their income, another 8% pay a combination of the Income Sensitive rate and the Homestead Tax Rate, and 18% of taxpayers, those with household income over \$137,000, will pay the full rate of \$2.14.

So why is the budget up so much? Most of the increase is due to factors outside of our control: the substantial extra cost required to buy heating oil since the wood chip plant broke down last year, a 16.4% increase in health insurance costs, and inflation raising the prices of everything from food to supplies. There is only one new budget item within our control, and that is for

Understanding why "School Choice" is not Cost Effective for Cabot

by Rory Thibault

Vermont's education finance system is not easy for taxpayers to understand or navigate. Although my time on the school board has come to an end, I want to help explain some of the potentially confusing issues related to the cost of operating as a K-12 district versus operating as a school choice district. This article addresses (1) the current year per pupil spending versus other districts, (2) how special education factors into a choice budget, (3) the cost differences between a PK-12 structure and "choice", (4) understanding other school's tuition rates, (5) understanding the "common level of appraisal."

First, Cabot's FY 24 (current year) per pupil spending was \$20,786. This was lower than any of our neighboring communities: Hazen - \$21,145, Danville - \$21,241, Twinfield - \$22,555. Choice districts were even more expensive, i.e. Peacham - \$22,797, and Walden (Cal Coop) - \$22,841. These districts are facing the same cost increases as Cabot — with varying abilities to mitigate costs. For example, Cabot, like all other public schools, is subject to a 16% increase in healthcare premiums for employees. Likewise, the increases in salary for educators in Cabot is consistent with other districts. Suffice to say, costs are increasing for everyone — and there is also inflation on other costs of goods and services needed to run a school. The announced tuition rates for FY24 (the current year) are not reflective of tuition rates for the year ahead — which will be increasing. Cabot may be "catching up" in spending to these other districts, but the proposed budget also contains some desperately needed funds for campus maintenance that can no longer be delayed.

\$50,000 to start to pay off a loan of \$500,000 (warned separately on the ballot), which is to reconfigure the school so that the elementary grades are in the main building and the high school is in the satellite buildings. We recognize that with all the other costs being up, this might not seem like the best time to request this additional funding. However, the administration strongly believes that 'flipping the campus' is a very important step in being able to improve the school climate, and the Board supports this plan.

We want you to know that no matter what the town votes for on Town Meeting Day, we are planning to hold community conversations around the future of education in Cabot. We understand that these tax increases are not sustainable, but we are asking the town to pass the budget for next year to give us additional time to figure out a sustainable plan for the future. If it is determined that we cannot afford to continue to operate a high school, at least the community — including the students — will have time to plan thoughtfully and prepare for that change.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any School Board member: Ellen Cairns, Erica Fucello, Frank Kampf, Jason Monaco, and Chris Tormey. All email addresses are first name.last name@ccsuvt.net.

Second, comparing Cabot's proposed FY25 budget, less special education costs, to current year tuition rates to other schools, as explained at a recent School Board meeting, is comparing apples to oranges. We cannot just "remove" special education expenses from the equation — these costs and obligations follow students. "Sending" districts are responsible for those costs when students tuition to a "receiving" school. In practice, when including special education payments on top of tuition payments, the rate per pupil is well above the published tuition rate. For example, if 20 students are tuitioned at \$20,000 to another district, but there are \$100,000 in additional special education costs for these students, the average tuition ends up being \$25,000. The point is, the tuition rate does not reflect what a "sending" district actually pays on average per student.

Third, it is important to note that the school board's warned FY25 budget provides for operation of a PK-12 school in Cabot, including a high school. If voters approve the "Choice" article that is on the ballot, the structure of Cabot School will change as of fall 2025 and high school will no longer be offered in Cabot. The warned budget, even if it passes, will need to be recalculated, re-warned, and returned to the community for a new vote. The Supervisory Union presented at previous school board meetings what a draft Choice budget might be. To tuition Cabot's students elsewhere would require approximately \$300,000 more in education spending — this is before considering the 10-12 home school students that Elizabeth Halada Vitale referenced during a school board meeting who may use school choice — meaning another \$250,000 or more in (see 'School Choice', page 10)

We Are in a Pickle

by Elizabeth Vitale

We, the voters of Cabot, have found ourselves in quite a pickle. For almost a decade we have voted down the school budget. This has forced our school administration to cut everything from building maintenance to books in the library. Some may argue that these cuts were necessary to keep tax dollars low, and that our school now operates on a very lean, efficient model. Others may say that these cuts have created an unsustainable system that is slowly imploding.

This is not entirely the fault of our tax payers. The State of Vermont has spent years penalizing our small rural town for trying to continue to operate a small school. From tax penalties resulting from Act 68 (2003), to trying to force mergers between small town schools (Act 153 of 2010, Act 156 of 2012, and Act 46 of 2015 all played a role in merging and consolidating school districts), to now, under Act 127, our school will once again be penalized for failing to stay under an arbitrary 10% increase threshold in per pupil spending.

Unfortunately, many of the budget cuts that have been made in the past several years were just expenses that we kicked down the road. Our school buildings need new roofs, our school heating system was broken for several months last school year, requiring costly repairs that put the school budget FY24 into a deficit, and, at the October 23, 2023 School Board meeting, the School Board and Superintendent discussed the need to completely replace our gymnasium.

There are many other “extras” which have been cut which have placed our school at a significant disadvantage. Ellen Cairns, Cabot School Board Chair, stated at the School Board meeting on January 10, 2024, “For instance, our library budget used to be \$10,000 per year, and that budget got cut to \$2,000 before the budget even got asked, and that budget didn’t pass. So then we say, oh that roof that needs to be fixed? Well, we’ve got a budget that needs to get fixed, so the roof doesn’t get fixed. We’ve got to get a budget fixed, so we’ve got to cut supplies.”

These decisions have real-world ramifications. This is evidenced in state test scores which can be found on the Vermont Agency of Education website. For instance, in 2022 assessment testing, Cabot School Grade 5 tested at 63.64% BELOW proficiency in English Language Arts, and 90.91% BELOW proficiency in Math. And, in 2022, our graduation rate was only 78% compared to a state rate of 83%.

While some community members have shared their personal stories of success at the Cabot School, there are others who are just as dissatisfied. Our teacher exodus at the end of the school year last year (when school choice wasn’t even on the ballot!) is just one more symptom of our overall struggle.

The School Board’s proposed FY25 School Budget of \$4,490,319 is a huge increase over FY24 - almost \$890,000! This equates to a per pupil spending of \$25,513 (\$4,490,319/176 pupils FY24). The worst part is this increase doesn’t improve the school. It just maintains the very lean program we have already been

running. Based on the FY24 Education Property Tax Rates from the Department of Taxes, Cabot pays a higher Homestead Tax Rate than 82% of other Vermont towns. And that was using last year’s numbers. The proposed FY25 School Budget will raise our Homestead Tax Rate to \$2.14, that’s a 21% increase over last year.

Why aren’t other schools experiencing a 24% budget increase this year? According to our Superintendent and Administration, other schools had not previously cut their budgets as much as we have. And so, in this time when inflation, staff shortages, and a housing crisis are impacting us all, our school, without any discretionary spending at their disposal to cut, is feeling the effects acutely.

The writing has been on the wall for years. Through the actions of our state and the voters in our town, we have significantly hindered our school. As Rebecca Tatistcheff, Cabot School Principal, recently said at the January 10, 2024 School Board Meeting to the School Board, “You’ve cut so much out of the budget over time that year-over-year increases aren’t adding things back in. We’re not saying we’re going to build back in a shop program. That’s not part of the conversation.”

When looking at the options before us on town meeting day, we can vote to keep our PreK-12 school, and continue to face the same challenges we have been struggling with. Our own administration warned our School Board at the School Board meeting on January 10, 2024 to not fall into the trap of thinking our school budget increase (and tax increase) is limited to just this year. Rebecca Tatistcheff stated, “I really want to discourage the board from thinking of this as a one year aberration and think of a sustainability plan over time.”

But we don’t have to give up on the ideal of a small town school, where our children can befriend their neighbors, be cared for by our community members, and feel the connection of our roots in this town. Just as Cabot emerged stronger from the flood waters last summer, we can create a better, brighter future for our children. To do this we must embrace change. We can vote to tuition students in Grades 9-12 to other schools where their individual needs can best be met, while maintaining and refocusing our efforts on our PreK-8 school.

Will tuitioning our high school students result in a lower school budget and tax increase? There is a bit of uncertainty. Once our students and their families look at the school options that will be available to them, and select the school that best meets their needs, we will have a better idea of how much the budget will be. Based on the ‘FY24 Announced Tuition Report’ from the Vermont Agency of Education, the average tuition of Union 7th-12th grade schools is \$18,266. Even if all of our highschool aged children chose the most expensive school on the list (Bellows Falls USHD in Thetford at \$22,430), we would STILL be under the proposed per pupil spending in Cabot of \$25,513.

Our Supervisory Union did their own analysis of tuitioning out our 9th-12th graders and used a per pupil tuition rate of \$22,500 to estimate a budget of \$4,572,195. This option, according to the

numbers presented at the School Board meeting on January 10, 2024, would result in a Homestead Tax Rate of \$2.20 (as compared to the currently proposed FY25 School Budget of \$4.5 million and a Homestead Tax Rate of \$2.14). Could tuitioning students mean paying a slightly (\$.06) higher tax rate than keeping our school in its current configuration? Maybe. But, we have to consider the quality of the education for the dollars spent. The option to tuition our high school students is the best way to stretch our education dollars the furthest.

Will there be challenges with changing the configuration of our school? Yes. Can we work together as a community to come up with creative solutions? Absolutely! We have proven time and again that we are a town that comes together in times of hardship to build a better future.

What about transportation? Our town could pay for busing, organize carpools, and utilize public transportation. What will become of the unused school buildings? They could be rented as income for the school, turned into senior housing, or used as community space (which always seems to be in short supply!). I even heard someone suggest that being the ‘higher

School Vote

(continued from page 7)

graduates who earned a combined \$379,000 in scholarships. In that class, as in the current year graduating class, “choice” lottery slots were left unused. This is not the picture of an inferior education with unhappy parents and kids.

Since fifth grade my grandson’s class benefited from the combination of conventional subject-focused and project-based learning. This model evolved as experience was gained. Subject material from multiple disciplines were integrated with student independent research for each of the projects. The teams organized what they learned and presented it verbally and in writing in coherent English. They “learned to learn,” and explain publicly to family and interested others what they had learned. In the process, they acquired the social skills they will need in whatever career they choose to pursue. Cabot’s classes are small, allowing teachers and students to really know each other.

Cabot students have access to the Central Vermont Career Center which enrolls students from participating towns whose career interests are in the trades, technical and other skills. The school also actively reaches out to local employers to help find internship type arrangements to help those students transition seamlessly into occupations in high demand in Vermont. Jobs that offer a living wage while providing critical services needed in our community and by the many Vermont companies that are in desperate need of such staff.

The “choice” proponents appear to speak mainly for families aspiring to acceptance at the most competitive universities and colleges. They have stated that other schools will offer a better chance of acceptance at competitive universities or colleges. In fact, Cabot graduates have also been successful at Ivy League Universities, strong Private and State universities, and excellent Community Colleges.

What ideas do proponents have for families who do not want their kids burdened by student loans, when good ca-

ground”, perhaps it becomes our new town center! Won’t our local businesses suffer without the revenues generated by the high school students? It’s doubtful. When looking at the home value trends over the past several years, one can easily see that house prices in the neighboring towns of Peacham and Walden (where school choice is offered for high school) continues to go up, while Cabot can be seen “flatlining”. <https://www.zillow.com/home-values/58/vt/>. Tuitioning our students will, in fact, make Cabot more desirable, encouraging more families to choose to move to Cabot, and continuing to build a robust local economy.

When faced with change, we always wish for more time, or to go back and try a different path. But this is where we are. The time is now. We must take back control of education spending and make the best of the cards we are now holding. Vote ‘Yes’ to close the high school (grades 9-12) at the Cabot School and tuition students in those grades to eligible schools of their choice, while retaining the elementary and middle school grades (pre-K thru 8th). Children are our future, let’s put them first.

reers are available that can minimize or avoid that while enabling them to find jobs paying living wages and settle where their roots are in Vermont? To pave the way, this year the school found opportunities for six seniors to gain work experience, possibly leading to future employment. Choice also shifts the burden of transporting children to other schools and after school programs or sport to the parents.

Consider also that losing the high school will have ripple effects on other parts of the community. At the school the older kids are “buddies” to elementary school kids to the benefit of all involved. Older students contribute at the library, youth sports, as volunteer firefighters or ambulance crew. This year’s science class has assisted The Friends of the Winooski River in a study on behalf of the Cabot Select Board to document opportunities to mitigate future flood damage in Cabot and beyond. Such community service would suffer were that age group to attend schools in other towns.

Finally, without a strong school, what would make young families want to move to Cabot? The vitality that an influx of young families contributes will soon be missed. Fewer families mean fewer taxpayers to fund Cabot’s essential infrastructure, administrative services, roads, water and sewer, fire protection and ambulance services. Multiple studies have shown that when communities lose all or just part of their schools, a decline in property values relative to homes elsewhere follows. Everyone’s taxes will rise or services will suffer while home values will decline relative to towns with schools.

The 2025 budget process may therefore be a better time to settle this issue. Deferring the decision would also help defuse the current tension that tears at the fabric of our community. People of good will should be able to find a process that ensures that the decision can be made with more solid information and provide voters with an apples-to-apples comparison of well-informed choices in 2025.

School Choice

(continued from page 8)

spending if all of these students were tuitioned (using the FY 24 average tuition for Walden - \$22,500). The total cost for school choice could be near or in excess of another \$500,000 in spending. Notably, this is the increase even after the Supervisory Union estimate accounted for cutting approximately 8-9 staff members and assumed reduced facility costs.

Fourth, it is important to understand why "receiving" schools offer a tuition rate below their per pupil spending rate. As an example, if Cabot were to be a choice town and ten high school students request tuition, we would send a cash payment to other schools for them. Again, using \$20,000 as an example – we incur \$200,000 more in education spending. Other districts will happily take \$20,000 per student (and will bill us for any special education services) because it doesn't actually cost \$20,000 to educate that student. The incremental cost of adding a student is closer to \$0 than it is to \$20,000. In contrast, when we operate a high school every new student who enrolls in the district only incrementally increases the costs to the district – up and until the number of additional students requires adding teachers or services. In plain terms, if these same ten students enrolled and attended Cabot High School and we did not have to hire any more teachers, our spending per pupil would decrease, as would the tax rate. Think of it this way – we pay a teacher the same whether

there are 10 or 15 students in a classroom.

Simply put, this is why the choice model doesn't work for larger districts. Each additional student results in a higher fixed cost for the district. We gain no efficiency since the cost of each new student is fixed, rather than incremental.

Finally, some in town have considered comparisons between tax rates – this is also "apples to oranges" because of the impact of the common level of appraisal (CLA). This is a state metric designed to even out the difference between assessed values and actual home values. Cabot's CLA is low (meaning a higher tax rate) and triggered a statistical reappraisal this past year – when implemented it will reduce the rate – but it doesn't directly change the tax bill. In the current year, Cabot's tax rate is elevated because the State determined that actual home values were more than assessed values – so to make up for that we are charged a higher rate on lower home values. Reappraisal will bring assessed values back up to actual values, which will mean a lower rate on higher home values. The State does this to get a "fair" amount of tax value from each homestead, given the variable valuations across towns.

To conclude, the choice model will not reduce education spending or the burden on taxpayers. Cabot voters should make the "choice" to follow the estimates provided by the professionals at the Supervisory Union who prepare our budget and the budget of choice districts like Walden.

Update on the Cabot Youth Council

by Laura McCaffrey,
VYP Community Coordinator
for Cabot, Vermont Afterschool

Keep your eyes peeled!

During the week of February 5 or February 14, Cabot Youth Council will hold a vote for Cabot youth on a number of proposals for the \$40,000 grant that Vermont Afterschool has provided to Cabot youth. Students at Cabot School will vote during Cabot School community meetings.

Homeschooled and privately schooled youth, please keep your eye on Front Porch Forum and the Cabot Connects FB page for online posters with a voting link. We'll also hang posters with the voting link in town. Anyone who prefers

to contact me directly can do so at laura@vermontafterschool.org.

The voting ballots will have brief descriptions of each project so you'll learn a bit about them; they currently include a bike trails project, rec field improvements, materials for more teen library programming, and materials for CSPAC so it can become a teen-led teen space. We'll vote our priorities, rather than voting for one winner, because most of the options won't require the full \$40,000.

This has been a long process, and so many young folks have worked hard to survey other young people, map the town, work with community partners, and create proposals. Stay tuned to find out about the results.

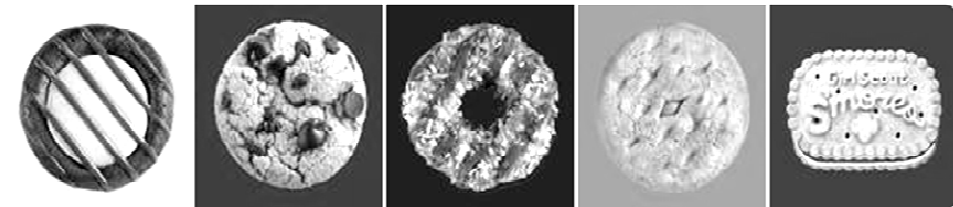


It's Girl Scout Cookie Season

Girl Scouts are now taking cookie orders, with cookie booths for in-person sales to begin in February and continue through March 17. Talk to a Girl Scout you know or find a Girl Scout through our Cookie Finder at www.girlscouts.org/en/cookies.html. You can also text "Cookies" to 59618. This link can be

used to find a local booth, purchase cookies and/or to donate cookies for local community causes.

During this highly anticipated time of the year, girls flex their entrepreneurial muscles and acquire important life skills like money management, team building, public speaking and decision making. All proceeds from cookie sales stay with local councils and troops to power Girl Scouts' amazing experiences year-round.



WORK LOCALLY! CABOT CHILDREN'S CENTER We are Hiring a Director/Lead Teacher.

This full time (Monday-Friday), year round position offers a competitive salary and ongoing professional development.

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- A strong understanding of child development.
- Dedication to exploring nature and the natural environment with children
- Ability to plan fun and engaging activities
- Strong knowledge in developing and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children
- Excellent time management skills and ability to handle multiple tasks
- Ability to work well with others (staff, children, and parents) and to foster a team environment.

Must clear full background check.

Benefits include:

- Paid vacation and sick time
- IRA plan with 3% match
- Paid Professional Development opportunities
- Employee Child Care discount
- Gym Membership
- Paid planning time

Educational counseling and support to further your education and many other benefits.

For more information or to apply,
email CabotChildrensCenter@gmail.com
or call 802.473.2772.



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Lyndonville Recycling Center 224 Church St., Lyndonville, VT

Wednesday, 8 am-4 pm & Saturday, 8 am-3 pm
Add. Hours on Mon. & Fri., 8 am-4 pm, (closed as needed).



Soil Saver Backyard Composters
on sale now for only \$50.00 at
the Lyndonville Recycling Center!
District residents only, limited supply available.
Call 802-626-3532 for more details.



by Gary Gulka

2023 was a busy year for the Conservation Committee, with public outreach and education and flood resiliency activities. Starting off with outreach and education, the following public events were held, many in collaboration with the Cabot Library.

January 15 – A presentation on Vermont Forests in a Changing Climate by Ali Kosiba, UVM Extension Forester.

February 19 – Winter wildlife tracking at McQueeney Trails.

March 23 – Bear Aware presentation by Vermont Fish & Wildlife biologist, Josh Blouin.

April 23 – Emerald ash borer presentation by Roland Payne, Jr., our Tree Warden and Conservation Committee member.

May 7 – spring ephemeral and wildflower walk at Talbert Trails with Bob Popp, local botanist from Marshfield.

May 28 - Bird Walk near the shores of Joe's Pond and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail led by Tom Berriman of NEK Audubon.

The Conservation Committee participated in and coordinated the Conservation Plant Sale with the Marshfield and Plainfield Conservation Commissions. Over 80 plant orders were processed, and we received proceeds of almost \$500 to put towards conservation efforts. Although we will not be participating in this effort this year, we plan to help Cabot residents with conservation and riparian plantings. We received a \$500 flood recovery grant that we will put towards purchasing plants and will work with Friends of the Winooski on river and streamside plantings.

The Select Board has allocated \$20,000 of ARPA funding for continuation of our natural communities inven-

tory work in town that was started during COVID. We will use the funding to contract with a naturalist to continue site visits and characterization of significant natural communities in town. We will sponsor community walks and outreach events. This work will contribute to town plan revisions on Cabot's natural resources, including identification and prioritization of important forest blocks for wildlife habitat and migration, required in town plans. We hope that this work will culminate not only in interesting but important information to help the town and residents in stewardship of our natural resources. We appreciate the past cooperation of landowners in allowing access by our naturalist to their properties and look forward to working with additional landowners.

And lastly, the great flood of July 10 and 11. We felt strongly that the Conservation Committee could play an important role in contributing to flood resiliency in Cabot. We volunteered to lead and coordinate a Cabot Flood Resiliency Task Force to mitigate the environmental impacts of future storm events so we do not experience the devastating flood impacts of 2011 and 2023. The Task Force, consisting of community members and Friends of the Winooski, began meeting in September. We have walked and documented conditions in over six miles of the two tributaries that damaged the village, have met with engineering consultants and state officials, and will be applying for grant funding to conduct studies to help us find viable alternatives to slowing and diverting flows in future major storm events. We hope to keep the community informed and involved in our work to make Cabot more flood resilient and improve the health of our watershed. We will need your help and support!

From Grant Awards to Washouts, Cabot Trails Has Memorable Year in 2023

The Cabot Trails Committee is made up of seven community members who logged more than 1,100 volunteer hours on trails-related work in 2023. The tasks of the Trails committee include trail building and maintenance, meetings, and grant/administrative work. Using the State of Vermont valuation for volunteers, this equates to \$30,954 donated to creating and maintaining trails and fostering economic development for the town of Cabot. To date, Cabot Trails has created almost twelve miles of trails in partnership with twenty landowners to provide access to beautiful landscapes here in Cabot for residents and visitors to enjoy.

The Trails Committee started 2023 with high hopes and tremendous energy. In April, the town received \$62,500 recreational trails grant from the VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation. This grant award gave the Cabot Trails a significant boost by providing funding for equipment, safety training for volunteers, trail building materials, contracted labor and materials to build trails and trailhead parking and construct a kiosk in the village that will include a master trail map and trail user information. And this grant will expand the Cabot Trails network by funding the construction of a new trail at Burt's Orchard, expand the Town Forest trails, and rehab the trail from the Willey Building to the Old Center of Town.

As all aspects of town life were interrupted by the 2023 flooding events, so were Cabot Trails. Several Cabot Trails were closed because of dangerous conditions caused by erosion, culvert damage, and wetness. The Trails Committee recently applied for a flood recovery grant



through VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation to repair damage so that all trails can be open as soon as possible.

And the Trails committee has also worked to connect Cabot to other towns through neighboring trails. There is a mile or so of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail that passes through Cabot. We have been working with towns from St. Johnsbury to Hardwick through an Agency of Transportation grant to conduct a Regional Amenities Scoping Study to identify parking, signage, informational kiosks, and other amenities to improve trail user experience.

Cabot Trails will need lots of volunteer help in 2024 to repair damage and build new trails, so if you are interested in helping with trail maintenance, special projects, and trail workdays please consider becoming a Cabot Trails Steward. If you are interested in volunteering as a trail steward, please contact Lori Augustyniak (lori.cabottrails@gmail.com) or speak to any committee member.

Trail Committee members: Monique Gerbex, Dana Glazier, Gary Gulka, Kris Schmitt, Michael Socks, Chuck Talbert, and Paul Wade

Bottoms Up for the New Year



Rollin Tebbetts photo

Can you Name This Vegetable?

Neighbors in Action received several bags of this vegetable. Can you name it? Better yet: do you have an easy and yummy recipe for using it? Email Inbox@CabotVermont.org with your answer or recipe, and we'll print it in the January issue.



Editor's note: We had no room for the answer in the January edition!! So here it is, now:

ANSWER: Watermelon Radish

CABOT VERMONT ANNUAL EVENTS 2024

**Tuesday, March 5, 2024
TOWN MEETING
& PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**

**Sunday, March 31, 2024
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
EASTER DAWN SERVICE**

**Saturday, May 4, 2024
GREEN UP DAY**

**Saturday, June 29, 2024
TOWNWIDE YARD SALE**

**Thursday, July 4, 2024
INDEPENDENCE DAY
CELEBRATION**

**July 26 & 27, 2024
CABOT ARTS
& MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**Sunday, July 28, 2024
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
175th ANNIVERSARY**

**Tuesday, August 13, 2024
PRIMARY ELECTION**

**Sunday, September 8, 2024
RIDE THE RIDGES**

**Friday, September 13, 2024
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
HARVEST SUPPER**

**Saturday, September 28, 2024
CABOT FALL FOLIAGE,
CHEESE & CULTURE FESTIVAL
& TURKEY DINNER**

**Saturday, September 28, 2024
CABOT BULK DISPOSAL DAY**

**Tuesday, November 5, 2024
GENERAL ELECTION**

**Monday, November 11, 2024
CABOT VETERANS DAY LUNCH**

**December 8, 2024
CABOT COMMUNITY MEMORIAL TREE**
**December 13, 14 & 16, 2024
TOY & WARM CLOTHING SHARE**

**Saturday, December 14, 2024
CABOT HOLIDAY FESTIVAL
& OUTDOOR MARKET**

**Wednesday, December 25, 2024
CABOT COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS DINNER**

**January 3 & 4, 2025
5th ANNUAL CABOT VILLAGE
12th NIGHT CELEBRATION**

* Date and Time Tentative

Jaquith Library Upcoming Events

All events are free and held at the library (unless noted otherwise)
Old Schoolhouse Common 122 School St.
RM 2, Marshfield, VT 802-426-3581
www.jaquithpubliclibrary.org jaquith-publiclibrary@gmail.com

Monthly Book Group for Adults Fourth Mondays of the month at 7 p.m.

Join us for the Jaquith book group. For copies of the book, please stop by the library. New members are always welcome, and it's only one hour a month!

February 26 – The Good Lord Bird by James McBride

Chapters in History Book Group Second Saturday of the month at 2 p.m.

A free program series of reading and discussion co-sponsored by the Marshfield Historical Society and the Jaquith Public Library. The public is welcome and encouraged to participate in this free series. Books are available for loan from the library.

Story Time and Playgroup: For kids Birth to Age 5

Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

Get ready for some fun with Sasha during story and activity time. These science, art, and nature-based programs will encourage creativity and exploration.

Winter Gardening Workshops At The Jaquith Library

Looking at Flowers: Plant Behavior,
Flowers & Seed-Saving
Sunday, January 28, at 1:00 pm
Jaquith Public Library

Understanding plant reproduction is essential for seed-savers, so let's look at (pictures of) flowers—and take a short break from winter! Join Anne Miller in a detailed look at the anatomy of vegetable flowers and some of their wild relatives, and at the wide variety of reproductive strategies used by different plant families. We'll also look at some of the ways plants cultivate other organisms, including humans, for access to nutrients, for protection, and for reproduction and dispersal.

Adventures in the Root Cellar
Sunday, February 18, at 12:30 pm
Jaquith Public Library

The first vegetables from your garden are delectable and exciting, but if you're eating stored vegetables from your garden, a CSA or a store through the winter, you might be getting a bit jaded by now. Melissa Seifert and others will bring interesting recipes and dishes using storage vegetables. Bring your favorite recipes and dishes, too, and we will have a great meal, and go home to face our root cellars with renewed enthusiasm.

Cut It Out: Pruning Fruit Trees

Saturday, March 16, at 1 pm
East Hill Tree Farm in Plainfield
Rain Date Saturday, March 23, at 1 pm
Join Nicko Rubin of East Hill Tree Farm for a hands-on workshop, and learn when, why, and how to prune fruit trees, which tools to use, and how to anticipate the future form of the tree. We will focus on apple trees, but will also include pear, plum and cherry trees. Prune for health! Prune for fruit quality! Prune for beauty!

Honeybees and Human Cultures
Wednesday, April 17, at 7 pm
Jaquith Public Library

Explore the worlds of honeybees and their associations with humans with local honeybee enthusiast Jean-Jacques Maury.

Cooperation Vermont's Food Program

Cooperation Vermont's Food Program, in partnership with the Marshfield Village Store, is looking to kickstart a thriving Farmers Market in the magical village of Marshfield and we want to hear from you! Please help create a prosperous Farmer's Market by filling out this survey. In addition, the Marshfield Village Store is looking for ways to increase local produce used in the deli and sold in the store so information gathered will be used for those purposes as well! For more information contact: CVTFoodProgram@gmail.com

Marshfield Farmers Market Survey:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSckcWLASqM69jGG7T-K91KOTpmhIVAP8mEl6kEupuy3K75xvQ/viewform>

Just Food Hub Fundraiser for the Jaquith Library

The Jaquith Library is raising money by collaborating with Just Food Hub, a profit-free, volunteer-run coop in Marshfield that helps raise funds for organizations and groups. When you go to jaquithlibrary.justfoodhub.us to order, the Jaquith gets 30% of all purchases. Just Food Hub sells ethically sourced, authentically fair-traded food from around the world. Mostly sourced from Equal Exchange, Just Food Hub food is organic, grown by small farmers and worker coops in the Global South and across the US.

How to Borrow Audio Books and E-books

Libby and Green Mountain Overdrive (also known as Listen-up Vermont) are both downloadable audio and e-book programs brought to you by member libraries of the Green Mountain Library Consortium. You can borrow up to three e-books or audios for up to two weeks. Selections include material for all ages and interests. If you have a Jaquith Public Library card, you have access to thousands of ebooks and audiobooks. Whether you decide to use Libby or Green Mountain OverDrive you need to:
1- Enter Jaquith Library
2- Enter the numbers 5658, followed by your 4-digit patron number
3- NEW: enter a password. The password is the first four letters of your last name (all caps).

Best wishes,
Susan Green

The Jaquith Library is open on Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 3 to 6 p.m. (Wednesdays until 7 p.m.), Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Jaquith Public Library
122 School St. RM 2
Marshfield, VT 05658
802-426-3581

Annual Report of the Cabot Community Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 245, Cabot, VT 05647 ~ info@cabotvermont.org



The Cabot Community Association (CCA) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization and is led by a Board of Directors and a few very part-time paid staff members (approximate annual payroll \$24,000 for three individuals). The CCA works with residents to respond to community need and create programming to enhance the quality of life in Cabot, as well as promote economic development.

The town's investment in CCA of \$10,000 last year helped to leverage additional contributions of nearly \$216,000 in participant fees, charitable contributions, and grants that directly support the projects that Cabot residents run and participate in.

In calendar year 2023 the CCA:
--Launched the **Cabot Children's Center** on the ground floor of the United Church of Cabot to address the urgent need for childcare in Cabot. The center opened in November 2023 and is operated by Heather Smires of ABC LOL Childcare. The CCA secured more than \$109,000 for project coordination, equipment and renovations to the Church.

--Served as fiscal agent and managed **flood relief donations**, from Go Fund Me and other contributors, totaling more than \$57,000, distributed grants to 77 residents and businesses, and assisted with volunteer coordination. All funds raised were awarded to flood relief.

--Coordinated **Cabot 4th of July** festivities. We continued to focus our efforts on promoting local business with increased food offerings in the village, vendor displays and organizations hosting activities to raise funds and provide activities for our holiday guests.

--Hosted the **Cabot Fall Foliage** event to provide opportunities to promote local businesses (Burt's Orchard, Goodrich's Maple Farm, The Den, Cabot Village Store) and enjoy Cabot's fall foliage (Cabot Trails, Shutterbug car tour).

--Promoted and administered **Community Grants** to Cabot not for profits and grass roots organizations. The CCA awarded a total of \$10,000 to sixteen projects run by Cabot Not for Profits and grass roots organizations. Grant recipients from July 2022– June 2023 include: Cabot Arts, The Cabot Chronicle,

Friends of Cabot Library, Fall Foliage Festival, Cabot Historical Society, Cabot Mentoring, Cabot July 4 celebration, Neighbors in Action, and Cabot Community Theater.

--Provided **bookkeeping, administrative assistance, technical help, and grant research** to six local grass roots organizations/projects who, because of their affiliation with the CCA, can solicit tax-deductible donations. These groups are Cabot Christmas Dinner, Friends of Cabot Mentoring, Ride the Ridges, Friends of Cabot Library, Friends of Cabot Trails, and Cabot Community Theater.

--Published *The Cabot Chronicle*. *The Cabot Chronicle* began publishing in 2008, and is a reliable communication vehicle for Cabot residents, government, businesses and organizations.

In 2023 *The Cabot Chronicle*:

- Delivered 12 issues to every household in Cabot and beyond;
- Offered free and discounted advertising space to local not-for-profits and community groups;
- Provided extensive space to the town and school for coverage of town business and outreach;
- Dedicated a writer to regularly report on Selectboard meetings and town business.
- Encouraged citizens to participate in local elections by providing information they need;
- Collaborated with Historical Society to honor Cabot Veterans and capture their stories; and
- Promoted understanding and appreciation for what makes Cabot a great community.

We welcome new volunteers and ideas. If you are interested in being involved in any of the projects mentioned above, please contact us.

Paul Wade, President
Frank Kampf, Vice President
Lori Augustyniak, Executive Director
Jeanne Johnson, Secretary
Roz Daniels
R.D. Eno
Susan Robinson

Driving in Winter Weather

by National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

What to Do in an Emergency

If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather, stay focused on yourself and your passengers, your car, and your surroundings.

- Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself.
- Put bright markers on the antenna or windows to be easily seen.

Be mindful of carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of any snow and run your car only sporadically — just long enough to stay warm. Don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space.

Changes You May Notice Tires

As the outside temperature drops, so does tire inflation pressure. Make sure each tire is filled to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended inflation pressure, which is in your owner's manual and on a label located on the driver's side door frame. Do not inflate your tires to the pressure listed on the tire itself. That number is the maximum pressure the tire can hold, not the recommended pressure for the your vehicle.

Some other tips:

- Inspect your tires at least once a month and before long road trips.
- Check the tires when they're cold,
- Check each tire's age. Some vehicle manufacturers recommend replacing tires every six years regardless of use.
- An inspection is not just about checking tire pressure and age. Remember to check: for any damage or conditions that may need attention; the tread and sidewalls for any cuts, punctures, bulges, scrapes, cracks, or bumps. The tread should be at least 2/32 of an inch or greater on all tires; and your spare tire.

Consider installing snow tires, but before buying new tires, visit NHTSA's [Tires](#) page to review tire safety ratings.

Car Seats

In colder weather, parents typically dress their children in winter coats. But it's important to know that heavy coats can interfere with the proper harness fit on a child in a car seat. When your child will be secured in a car seat, pick thin, warm layers, and place blankets or coats around your child after the harness is snug and secure for extra warmth.

Also, make sure car seats and booster seats are properly installed and that any children riding with you are in the right seat for their ages and sizes. See NHTSA's [child passenger safety recommendations](#) to find the right seat for your child's age and size. You can visit NHTSA's [Child Car Seat Inspection Station Locator](#) to find a free car seat inspection site near you, or to get information on virtual inspections.

Batteries

When the temperature drops, so does battery power. In cold weather, gasoline and diesel engines take more battery power to start, and electric and hybrid-electric vehicles' driving range can be reduced. Have a mechanic check your battery, charging system, belts, and for any other needed repairs or replacements.

Safety Technologies

Familiarize yourself with the safety technologies on your vehicle and how they perform in wintry conditions. Know whether your vehicle has an antilock brake system and learn how to use it properly. For more information on driver assistance technologies, visit [NHTSA.gov/DriverAssistTech](#).

Floor Mats

Due to slushy winter conditions, you might consider switching out your usual floor mats for thicker material or rubbery ones. Improperly installed floor mats in your vehicle could interfere with the operation of the accelerator or brake pedal, increasing the risk of a crash.

Preparing Your Vehicle Lights

Check your headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers and interior lights. Be sure to also check your trailer brake lights and turn signals, if necessary.

Windshield Wipers

You can quickly go through a lot of windshield wiper fluid in a single snowstorm. Make sure your vehicle's reservoir is full of high-quality "winter" fluid with de-icer before winter weather hits.

Cooling System

Make sure you have enough coolant in your vehicle, and that it meets the manufacturer's specifications in your manual.

You may also want to visit your mechanic for a tune-up and ask them to check for leaks, badly worn hoses, or other needed parts, repairs, and replacements.

Before You Go Stock Your Vehicle

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving-related tasks, and supplies you might need in an emergency, including:

- a snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper;
- abrasive material (sand or kitty litter), in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow;
- jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices (flares and emergency markers);
- blankets for protection from the cold;
- and a cell phone and charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine.

Gas Up or Plug It In

Keep your gas tank close to full whenever possible.

Similarly, in the case for [electric and hybrid-electric vehicles](#), it is important keep your battery charged and to also minimize the drain on the battery. In general, batteries with liquid electrolyte have reduced energy storage and delivery capabilities at lower temperatures. The battery drain due to heating can be minimized by keeping your electric vehicle as warm as possible during freezing temperatures.

Plan Your Route

Check your local weather and traffic reports before heading out. If your roads are not in good shape, consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. If you do have to go out, make sure you are prepared in case you become delayed while traveling. If making a long road trip when winter weather is forecasted, consider leaving early or changing your departure to avoid being on the roads during the worst of the storm.

AVAILABLE NOW ~ ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT AT CABOT COMMUNITY SENIOR HOUSING

Call Downstreet Housing Trust at 802-476-4493

Unit #8 with porch, small on-site storage,
and one allocated parking space.

All utilities included except cable and telephone. Cabot Commons Senior
Housing offers affordable, income-based senior independent living.

Garden Tool

(continued from page 4)
Tripping and falling

Keep your working spaces tidy. During the workday, set unused tools in a visible area, preferably off the ground. At the end of the day, put away tools, pots, bags of soil, and other garden things. Keep your high-traffic pathways open and easy to

walk on, either by mowing, or laying pavers or gravel.

Happy Valentine's Day, and happy gardening!

This garden article is brought to you by Susan Socks, aka the Garden Goddess. Stay tuned for upcoming articles on lawn care, pruning, garden tools, edible landscapes, homesteading, and more. For gardening help, visit [www.SocksFamilyFarm.weebly.com](#) or call 802.498.7785.



CABOT PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

LIBRARY HOURS: Monday noon - 6 pm, Tuesday 10 am - 6 pm, Wednesday 2 - 6 pm, Thursday noon - 6 pm, and Saturday 9 am - noon. Curbside library service is still available during regular library hours.

Youth Programming - Be sure to visit our website: cabotlibrary.com and check FPF for updates, registration information and added programming.

Dungeons and Dragons (ages 9 - 13) - **Ongoing - Tuesdays, 3:30 - 5:00 pm** - Join Losada Stoddard as DM for our newest D&D campaign. Learn how to build a Dungeons and Dragons character, and then set out on your Adventures. No experience necessary! Come for the mysteries and magic, tails and talons, puzzles, and prophecies! Snacks provided. New members are welcome anytime!

Story and Activity Time (ages birth - 5) - **Wednesdays 10:30 - 11:30 am** - **3rd Floor of the Willey Building** Join youth librarian Amanda Otto for stories, songs, snacks, crafts, and open play. All are welcome!

STE(A)M Program (ages 11+) - **2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month - January 10th - February 28th - 2:30 - 4:00 pm** - Explore topics in science, technology, engineering, art/design and math through a hands-on approach. Participants will be given a different challenge card and materials kit each session. Past challenges have included balloon powered cars, egg drop and building challenges, Rube Goldberg contraptions and more! Snacks provided. All are welcome! Pre-registration is appreciated - email amandaotto.cabotlibrary@gmail.com.

Teen Game Night (ages 12 - 18) - **Thursday, February 22 - 6:00-7:30 PM** Come play classic and new board and card games. Bring your friends or come solo and make some new ones. Snacks provided.

Adult/Family Programming
Darning & Patch-Mending Gathering - Sunday, February 11 - 1-3 pm - Whether you're a visible-mending newbie or have been repairing your clothes for years, come join us at the Cabot Public Library for an afternoon of mending and connecting with your neighbors. Just bring your clothes in need of fixing, and we'll supply instructions and materials. Tea and snacks will be provided!
Zentangle on Zoom - Sunday, February 11 - 2-4pm is a drawing method that uses simple, repetitive strokes to make beautiful designs. Some people practice Zentangle as a form of mindfulness while others enjoy it as a creative outlet. Join us as we move beyond the basics using heart strings and patterns to create some lovely pieces you can give as Valentines. If you have colored pencils please have them on-hand, but they are not required. Contact the library for the basic supply kit and Zoom link.

Yoga for Everybody! Sundays 10:30-11:45 am

Seize the potency of a fresh year by making a commitment to your vitality with a weekly practice of yoga! Classes are a playful invitation to meet yourself while gaining strength, flexibility, balance, alignment, and attunement to the rhythm of your breath. All are welcome, beginners especially encouraged. Mats and props provided. Donation-based (\$10 suggested). Sundays at the Willey building, ongoing 10:30-11:45am.

Thanks: Many thanks to Christina Sacalis and Amanda Otto for the Darning and Patch Mending workshop. Thanks also to the Library Trustees and Student Representative for their dedication and good work: Grace Hoffman, Niall McCallum, Angela Ogle, Kurt Steinert and Erin Ruddell and our student representative, Ila Steinert.

See you at the library!
Kathleen Hoyne - Library Director
Amanda Otto - Youth Librarian



ADVICE FROM THE TREE WARDEN

by Roland Payne, Jr.
Cabot Tree Warden

It has been an unusually warm winter with heavy wet snow and rainy days. Winter weather has been hard on our trees with heavy wet snow and high winds. Trees throughout the forest have lost branches or have branches broken and left dangling by nothing more than a couple strands of wood fiber. In some cases, branches are broken off and hung up, waiting to dislodge and fall to the ground. During recreation activities on trails in forested areas, please be mindful of the potential overhead dangers these conditions present. Sound advice would be to scan overhead trees for branches broken off and hung up and avoid them. These are known as widow makers to loggers and have the potential to kill when falling to the ground.

Another concern is large trees around residences, driveways, and yards. It would be a suitable time to inspect the large trees for damage or signs of stress such as splitting. The heavy snow and

high winds will likely continue through the winter given our current storm cycles. The repeated stresses from storms can weaken or split trees, especially trees with structural defects. Structural defects would include splitting, rotten wood, or newly formed cracks. It would be wise to inspect trees periodically throughout the winter for signs of problems caused by repeated high wind events.

As we move toward spring, it will become more important to inspect and remove any trees showing signs of damage which could make trees quite dangerous as they bud out and develop leaves in May. The leaves add a tremendous amount of weight to trees and act like a sail in high wind events. This additional weight and pressure on a tree during spring storms might be enough to take down a tree that is damaged but still standing. Please be careful as you recreate this winter and avoid dangerous situations, as you encounter recently broken trees in the forest. Be safe and enjoy your time outdoors this winter.



Twin Valley Senior Center

P.O. Box 152
East Montpelier,
VT 05651
802-223-3322
irector@twinvalleyseniors.org

TWIN VALLEY SENIOR UPDATE

by TVSC Executive Director

TWIN VALLEY SENIOR CENTER CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT

Where: Twin Valley Senior Center - 4583 Rt. 2, East Montpelier

When: Saturday, February 24, 2024

Registration: 9 am - 10 am

Play Begins: 10 am

Type of Tournament: Singles

Tournament Details:

•**Qualifying Round:** Consists of 6 games for each player, with 6 different opponents. Top 6 players continue to

compete for Tournament Prize Money. (Assuming 40 Players) 1st Place - \$250 2nd Place - \$200 3rd Place - \$150 4th Place - \$100 5th Place - \$70 6th Place - \$30

•**Consolation Round:** Losers of Qualifying Round have the option, for \$10, to continue in a Consolation Tournament. Consolation Round Prize Money and Payout, to be determined by number of players.

COFFEE, MORNING REFRESHMENTS AND LUNCH PROVIDED

For More Information: Tom McGibney 802-379-7706 or 802-223-3081, LTMCGIBNEY@YAHOO.COM.



CABOT

February Calendar

FREE Food Share Distribution

Wednesdays: February 14th & 28th

from 12:00 - 2:00 pm

(No Community Supper in February - See you in March!)

Other FREE Events at Neighbors in Action:

Red Cross Blood Drive: Thursday, February 2nd

from 12:00 - 4:30 pm

Senior Adventures: Tuesdays, February 6th & 20th*

from 10:00 - 1:00

*Music Trivia with Craig will be our Special Guest on February 20th!

3339 Main Street

Downtown Cabot Village

NeighborsinActionVT.org

CABOT ARTS SHOW AND TELL

*Cabot Visual Arts' Show and Tell folks will gather
in the Willey Building on*

February 11, 2024, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

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Cabot Senior Housing



Cabot Senior Housing
on Glinka Road offers:

- Eight apartments: seven affordable, one market rate.
- Full kitchen, living room, bath, dining area, one or two bedrooms, deck or porch.

- Solarium, large common area with deck, laundry, bathroom, kitchen, function area.
 - Mail delivery and trash and recycling pickup.
 - Free parking, garden plot and storage unit.
 - Support services in Central VT help residents maintain independent living.
- Cabot Commons is managed by the Downstreet Housing & Community Development. Applications are available at www.downstreet.org or call 802-476-4493.

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Cajun Band



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