

THE CABOT CHRONICLE

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2025 Homestead Declaration Deadline April 15

The 2025 tax season officially opened when the IRS and the Vermont Department of Taxes began accepting personal income tax returns for tax year 2024 on January 27. The 2025 filing deadline for personal income tax returns, timely Homestead Declarations and Property Tax Credit claims is April 15, 2025.

Vermont resident homeowners are required to file a homestead declaration each year, even if they don't need to file personal income tax. When they file their homestead declaration, they may qualify for a property tax credit. The Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Credit claim are typically submitted at the same time, either when filing Vermont Personal Income Taxes or separately using myVTax. If a property owner files for an extension, they can file their homestead separately before the April 15 deadline to avoid being considered 'late'.

2025 Brings Increase for Dogs and Wolf-Hybrid License Fees

In the 2024 session, the Vermont Legislature increased the fee to be collected for the State of Vermont Rabies Control Program from \$1 to \$3 effective January 1, 2025. See [Act 167 \(2024\)](#).

This will raise the total that clerks must collect to \$11 for neutered or spayed dogs and \$15 for unneutered ones registered by April 1, of which \$7 must be remitted to the state. The law also expanded the use to which the money collected may be spent to include the administration of the State's animal welfare laws.

Rabies Vaccination Requirements

1. All dogs and wolf-hybrids over 3 months old must be vaccinated.
2. All vaccinations, including the initial vaccination, must use a U.S. Department of Agriculture-approved three-year rabies vaccine product.
3. All vaccinations must be conducted by a licensed veterinarian.
4. Every animal must receive a booster 9-12 months after initial vaccination.
5. Vaccinations must be given every 36 months.

Candidates for Election Cabot School Board and Cabot Selectboard

(See candidate introductions on pages 8, 9 and 10)



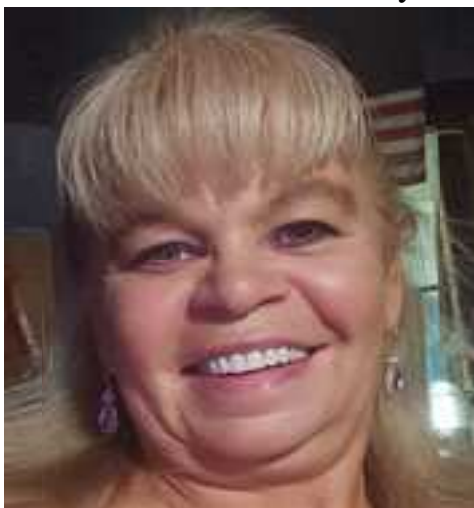
Chris Tormey - School Board - 3 year



Melissa Pratt - School Board - 2 year



R.D. Eno - Selectboard - 3 year



Jennifer Miner - Selectboard - 3 year



Karen Larsen - Selectboard - 2 year



Peggy Johnson Miller - Selectboard - 2 year

Rainbow Sweets Sold to Land Trust

by Michelle Eddleman McCormick
Director, Cooperation Vermont

On January 31, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. at 1689 US Rt. 2, Marshfield VT, the location of the former Rainbow Sweets Bakery, nonprofit organization Cooperation Vermont closed the sale of the building and brought it into the Cooperation Vermont Community Land Trust to be permanently stewarded by the community.

Rainbow Sweets Cafe and Bakery opened in April 1976, serving Marshfield as a community hub: local eatery, gathering space, and a bright spot to catch up with neighbors and visitors. Rainbow Sweets closed for the winter in 2019, and was unable to open in May, as was usual.

During the pandemic, Bill Tecosky and his wife, Trish Halloran, announced they were permanently closing after 44 years. At the time, they noted they hadn't yet decided what to do with the building that housed Rainbow Sweets. But, hearing of the work done by Cooperation Vermont to bring the Marshfield Village Store building into the organization's land trust, ensuring the building is used for community benefit in perpetuity, and the work converting the general store and deli business to a worker-owned cooperative, Bill Tecosky reached out to propose an idea for Cooperation Vermont's next project, the purchase of the Rainbow Sweets building.

"We want to thank all of our many customers and friends who visited us for over 44 years. Thank you, Michelle and the trustees, for making this happen. This will ensure that our old building on US Route 2 will continue to be a community hub protected by the Cooperation Vermont Community Land Trust forever. We are excited and very happy to know that the building will be used for affordable housing and for the benefit of the community."

So, from a shared pride in the Marshfield community and a love of good food, ownership of the Rainbow Sweets building transferred in January 2025 to Cooperation Vermont. The second-story housing space will be retained as affordable worker housing and the downstairs (see 'Rainbow Sweets', page 16)

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, March 3, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.

Cabot School Performing Arts Center

Australian Ballot Voting 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Town Hall

TOWN OF CABOT ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, March 4, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.

Wiley Building Town Hall

Australian Ballot Voting 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Town Hall

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School & Selectboard News: Pages 5-7
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LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Update

The past month has been a whirlwind at the Statehouse. On the Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry Committee, we have heard testimony from several state agencies and many related associations, councils, and private farms and businesses. The goal has been to listen to the needs of the stakeholders across our state who are vested in the ag, food, and forestry sectors.

Today in our committee we took a straw poll and unanimously decided to continue to support universal school meals.

I myself have been working on six bills. One has been sent to the Committee on Environment. The others are still in the works.

Greg Burt, Representative,
Cabot, Danville & Peacham
Owner, Burt's Apple Orchard LLC



COMMUNITY COMMENTARY

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

Selectboard Meeting Civility

Letter to the Editor:

I have been a "regular" at the select board meetings for several months and have been around for lots of discussions from fireworks permits to bridge work. The meetings are sometimes lively and sometimes very quiet. Regardless, the board has mostly maintained civility and order – but not at the meeting on January 28.

I do understand the complexities of running public meetings. The idea of community involvement is important, but a line needs to be and is expected to be drawn between being involved and being a danger. I did not feel safe at that meeting, and actually thought the fire chief might pull out a weapon. He was obviously out of control.

You may think my viewpoint is extreme, but I have been in a position of fear and what I felt when the chief stood up, turned around and vehemently attacked the back row, where the ambulance squad was sitting, it was downright scary. I made eye contact with a board member and motioned for him to be stopped, but the best I got was a request for him to face front. He continued his tirade and finished with a refusal to sign anything, and put the FAST squad "on hold." In my opinion, it was cruel and childish, and some board members were arrogant, condescending and even showed signs of bullying.

Cabot is a shining example in so many respects. This unhealthy and unnecessary rift between the two very im-

portant organizations is setting neighbor against neighbor and, in my opinion, we don't need this extra stress. Members of both organizations have said that when an emergency occurs, all work together towards a positive outcome. Why is this any different?

- Since the ambulance is a private organization and the fire department is a municipal agency, and
- The community clearly wants the presence of the ambulance, and
- The fire department needs the ambulance commitment in order to create its FAST squad,

Then it is the fire department that needs to work with the ambulance to make concessions, no?

Meanwhile, despite insinuations to the contrary by the fire chief and members of the fire department as well as some board members, the community has never been underserved by the ambulance.

The fact is that this rift between our two important organizations has tarnished our amazing community and confused our neighbors and, frankly, we don't need the extra stress. Let's try to keep our minds on the big picture.

Thanks for reading.

Sincerely, Maria Angela Acchione

Cabot Community Investment Fund

Why abandon a plan that works?

In October, Cabot Selectboard member R.D. Eno presented our Cabot Community Investment Fund Committee with a plan ("CIP") that would eliminate the current CCIF plan and CCIF Committee, and instead place all of CCIF's funds under the control of the Selectboard to use for "Capital Projects" in Cabot, to be identified by the Selectboard.

On Town Meeting Day Cabot voters will be asked to approve the elimination of the current CCIF Plan and its replacement by the "CIP" plan. After a good deal of review and discussion this fall, our CCIF Committee agreed unanimously not to support this change.

As a committee of five community volunteers, our overall reaction was, "Why this push to abandon the current CCIF plan if it's working?"

Working under the goals of the current CCIF plan (that was approved by voters in 2019) the CCIF has been able to support Cabot in a variety of ways:

1. Promoting commercial development with loans/grants to small businesses
2. Promoting education with grants to Cabot School and to community members continuing their education beyond high school
3. Improving community infrastructure, facilities and services with grants and loans to Cabot Fire Department, Cabot Ambulance, Neighbors in Action, the Cabot Library, Cabot Commons senior apartments, as well as to Town facilities like the Willey Building, the Town Garage, and the Wastewater treatment plant

Beavers Should Bid on Flood Control Projects

To the Editor:

A January 29 piece in VT Digger was headlined "Final Reading: House Environment heard about the benefits of beavers." It stated that "we could be rewarded with reduced flooding due to beavers' ability to build dams, which create wetlands and slow down water."

The next day Digger published, "Cabot task force ready for flood-protection upgrades," which The Hardwick Gazette had published January 14.

Our concern is that adopting the Selectboard's CIP Proposal would greatly narrow the range of ways that this fund can support our Town in the future: namely, Capital Projects identified by the Selectboard.

Part of the Selectboard's rationale for the CIP Proposal is that the CCIF Fund has been underutilized and at times "questionably managed". As far as use goes, the current CCIF Plan allows for Cabot voters to approve large withdrawals from the FUND for projects that they agree are needed (Cabot School's gym roof and the Town Garage being two recent examples), and the total assets of the fund declined by 1.5 million dollars between 2013 and 2022. Bottom line: It's been used.

The CIP Proposal would dissolve the current CCIF Committee and replace it with a new group (whose members need not be Cabot residents) whose sole responsibility would be fiscal management of the Fund. Over the past several years our Committee has worked hard to better understand the Fund's Assets, and (working with our partners at Union Bank) during the past two years we've been able to increase the value of the Fund's two trust accounts by 30%.

We believe that the current CCIF plan is working and see no reason to abandon it. With careful management and continued growth, we believe that the Fund can continue to support a broad range of services, businesses and facilities in Cabot.

Sincerely,
The Cabot Community Investment Fund Committee:

Greg Burt, Melvin Churchill, Jack Daniels, Jason Monaco, and Chris Torrey

Beavers should be allowed to bid on flood control projects. Beavers are an untapped labor force. They are industrious, eager and work for shrubs. This cheap labor may dry up the need for new public bonds. Beaver deceiver pipes and regular maintenance can evaporate any obsession with creating big splashy ponds.

A possible drawback is that these rodents are official symbols of Canada. Beavers without U.S. work permits may be excluded from competing for government contracts until Canada becomes the 51st state. Nevertheless, beavers should be allowed to float projects. They've been effective, if toothy, engineers for eons.

Peter B. Dannenberg, Cabot
Editor's note: This letter first appeared in VT Digger, February 5 and Hardwick Gazette, February 12.

CABOT ARTS SHOW AND TELL

Cabot Visual Arts' Show and Tell folks will gather

in the Willey Building on

March 30, 2025, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

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.



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OBITUARY

Brien A. Ducharme, Jr.



Brien August Ducharme, Jr., age 90, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at Heaton Woods Assisted Living in Montpelier, Vermont.

He was born on September 30, 1934, in Marshfield, to Brien and Cecile Ducharme. Brien was the oldest of four siblings, Maurice Ducharme, Bertha Trumble and Lorraine Harvey.

Brien married the late Jeanne Claire on August 17, 1955, and Andre, Dennis, Maria, David, Gerard, Myle, Miya and Anh were a product of their love. He devoted his life to being an amazing provider. Brien spent his working years as a logger, enjoying being in the woods sharing his love of nature and garden with his family and friends. Brien enjoyed dancing and traveling throughout the States and Europe with his wife

Jeanne, and their many friends. Later in life he grew to enjoy playing cards and spent many hours with family and friends beating them at the game of Rummy.

Brien leaves behind loving and cherished memories of his eight children, nineteen grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. A host of nieces, nephews, cousins and many dear friends will miss him greatly, but will stop and remember the snow machine rides, picking blackberries, milking the cow, Sunday Mass at North American Martyrs Church, fishing quietly on the bank of a gently slow-moving stream, round dancing for hours on end, his quick and free sense of humor, Sunday drives and the memories go on.

The funeral and celebration of life will be held 10:00 am on May 17, 2025, at Christ Covenant Church, 167 Creamery Street, Marshfield, VT. The burial will follow at Durant Cemetery in Lower Cabot.



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elsie Rose Dunster

Born December 27, 2024, 10:52. a.m.
To Cabot Constable Nell McQueeney & Melvin Dunster
5 lbs., 15 oz., 18"



Grayson Shane Gochey

Born January 30, 6:21 p.m.
To Shane and Brooklyn Gochey
8 lbs., 8 oz., 21" long
Happy and healthy



Numbers R Us

Tax Services

Let me handle the numbers
so you can focus on what matters most.

Monthly Budgeting, Bill Management & Checkbook Balancing
Personal Income Tax Returns • Full-Service Accounting

Valerie Sargent

802-745-9026 • St. Johnsbury, VT
valsarg_NumbersRUs@outlook.com

CABOT VERMONT ANNUAL EVENTS 2025

**Monday, March 3, 2025
ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING**

**Tuesday, March 4, 2025
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**Sunday, April 20, 2025
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
EASTER DAWN SERVICE**

**Saturday, May 3, 2025
GREEN UP DAY**

**Saturday, June 28, 2025
TOWNWIDE YARD SALE**

**Friday, July 4, 2025
INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**

**Saturday, September 13, 2025
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
HARVEST SUPPER**

**Sunday, September 14, 2025
RIDE THE RIDGES**

**Saturday, September 27, 2025
CABOT FALL FOLIAGE, CHEESE &
CULTURE FESTIVAL & TURKEY DINNER**

**Saturday, September 27, 2025
CABOT BULK DISPOSAL DAY**

**Sunday, December 7, 2025
CABOT COMMUNITY MEMORIAL TREE**

**Friday, Saturday & Monday
December 12, 13 & 15, 2025
TOY AND WARM CLOTHING SHARE**

**Saturday, December 13, 2025
CABOT HOLIDAY FESTIVAL
& OUTDOOR MARKET**

**Thursday, December 25, 2025
CABOT COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS DINNER**

Courtesy of The Cabot Chronicle

WEDDING, ENGAGEMENT & BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE FREE IN THE

THE CABOT
CHRONICLE

Wedding, engagement and birth announcements and photos should be received within two months of the event by digital submission no later than the 15th of the month emailed to Inbox@CabotVermont.org.

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."



SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Public Concerns

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

At the January 28 Selectboard meeting, Theresa Lay-Sleeper spoke about public officials behaviors. She said that twice she has attended public meetings where a member of the Selectboard has alleged mis-management of public funds against a group of committed and skilled volunteers, the CCIF committee. She said that she was appalled that the comments were made with no evidence of mismanagement.

Theresa went on to say that at another meeting she heard another Selectboard member asking the question "what do you want, the Ambulance or the Fire Department". She said that type of question is divisive while there is a conflict going on in town relative to the Cabot Ambulance and the Fire Department. She expressed that no one should be asked to make a choice between the two.

She concluded her statements by referring to a public meeting held the previous week. Theresa expressed that she felt that one of the public officials violated HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) by talking about a patient treated during an emergency. She said that everyone has a right to privacy if they receive emergency services.

At the next Selectboard meeting on February 4, Maria Acchione-Goodrich

also spoke to the board about the January 28 meeting. Maria told the board that she was really upset at the last meeting, and she has not been able to let it go.

She went on to say "with all due respect, the Selectboard, and especially the chair, has the responsibility to maintain order during the meeting, and that clearly did not happen at the last meeting, in my opinion." She added that she understands the complexity of running a public meeting, and that community involvement is very important. But she expressed that a line needs to be drawn between being involved and being safe.

Maria explained that her viewpoint may seem extreme, but she has been in a position of fear in the past. She expressed that when the Fire Chief stood up and turned around and vehemently attacked the back row, specifically Ruth Goodrich, she felt fear. She went on to say that the conduct at the meeting might be the norm, and people may be used to it, but stated that she is not used to it.

She said she made eye contact and motions to the board, but said he was allowed to continue. Maria said she feels like the behavior was allowed to continue and should have been stopped. Mike Hogan thanked her for her comments.

Fire Department Rating

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

Dean Deasy was present at the February 4 Selectboard meeting to provide good news to the Selectboard. The subject was not on the agenda, so Dean spoke during "Other Business".

Dean announced the Fire Department had recently been re-evaluated for the Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating. He explained that the rating is updated every five years, and the rating is used to set fire insurance rates for all properties in the town.

He talked about the 25 different categories that are analyzed, and stated there are many sub-categories that cover everything from radios, dispatch, water flow, and the Fire Department. He explained they look at how many times the department responds with at least four people, as well as the available water supplies.

Dean mentioned that there are a few negatives which are beyond their control. He noted the aging tanker, which is considered small, was one of the negatives. But he said there is a plan in place to address it. Dean also noted that the temporary fire house is not National Fire Protection Associations (NFPA) compliant.

Then he noted that the new ISO rating was 4.4, significantly down from 7.7 (1 is the best rating). Dean said Cabot moved up to the 29th percentile, and as a result homeowners should see a reduction of 18%-20% in their insurance rates. He added that businesses could possibly see a bigger decrease of 22%-24%. Dean noted that the new ISO rating takes effect when your policy renews, and added that the new ISO rating goes into effect in May.

Dean went on to say that they will be coming back in the spring time to do flow tests on the hydrants. He is hoping that the results may reduce the ISO rating further, possibly down into the 3's.

**"If you don't vote,
you forfeit your right
to complain."**

Andre' Marie Du Pont



Disagreements Around Emergency Services

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

Before the board moved onto public comment at the January 28 board meeting, Mike Hogan reminded everyone that the discussion at that night's meeting should remain civil and constructive. Later in the meeting, the subject of the outstanding contract requirements for Cabot Ambulance was discussed.

Mike started the contract discussion by saying there are a few outstanding issues, and turned the floor over to Karen Larsen. Karen said that the town of Cabot engaged Cabot Ambulance in a contract that became effective on July 2 of last year, and will end on July 1 of this year. She stated that embedded in the contract are a number of deliverables that are part of how the board understands operations and metrics. Karen added that the deliverables protect the town and Cabot Ambulance from liabilities.

She recalled that Jenn Miner was the president of Cabot Ambulance at the time and was to be the signator on the contract. But she explained that several days after the town signed the contract, they had to redo the contract because Cabot Ambulance requested that Ruth Goodrich be the signator on the contract.

Karen then announced that Cabot Ambulance had eleven material violations of the contract. She stated that Cabot Ambulance is not in compliance at the moment, and hoped that the town would not have to sanction. She said some are proforma and some are more serious. She proceeded to read from the contract and listed the need for an organization chart that contained the reporting structure, along with certifications and the expiration dates of team members.

Ruth Goodrich interjected that they had handed that to the town at the budget meeting and accused Karen of telling a lie. Mike asked everyone to be civil. Mike asked Ruth about the document, and Ruth explained that the documents were handed to Karen at the meeting, and Ruth said she had extra copies with her that night.

Karen said that the town clerk does not have the documents, and Ruth reiterated that she handed the documents in at the meeting, and Karen had even asked questions regarding the certification dates. Karen expressed that it is "wonderful" that Ruth had copies of the documents with her.

Karen then went on to list the other missing deliverables. She said that they just received fourth quarter statistics, and had previously received third quarter statistics, but had not received year to date statistics. Though she said that could be amalgamated from the quarterly statistics. Karen then listed more deliverables in detail, reading from the contract. She concluded the long list of deliverables noting that an operational agreement with the FAST squad was also a deliverable in the contract.

Ruth then said all of those documents were handed in at the budget meeting, if

they were applicable. She stated that they have the insurance they have always had, and increased it some per the towns request. She reiterated that the documents were handed in at the budget meeting. R.D. Eno then said he had not seen the documents and got agreement from other board members that they had not seen the documents.

Karen went back to the FAST squad topic, and that the establishment of the FAST squad was approved at last year's Town Meeting. She said that an enormous amount of work has gone on since last year towards the establishment of a FAST squad. Karen said that they held a summit with all the interested parties, as well as East Montpelier head of service. She said that the group worked to develop an operational letter of agreement which would structure how the FAST squad and Cabot Ambulance work together. Karen said that everyone at the meeting had agreed to the letter of agreement at the meeting.

Karen said that two weeks later there was no response from Cabot Ambulance. She said the Fire Department reached out to Cabot Ambulance and there was no response. Karen added that the meeting happened on December 16 and as of that night, the letter had not been signed. She added that it prevents the town from starting FAST squad operations, and it is being blocked by Cabot Ambulance. Karen also said that it results in a diminished level of care. She added that is the 11th material violation of the contract, and the most important.

Mike went through the package that Ruth submitted, listing off the documents included. Karen went through the list she created from the contract to check off the deliverables. She noted that the training schedule was missing and Ruth reiterated that she handed that over at the budget meeting. Ruth added that not once did the town notify Cabot Ambulance about missing deliverables. Karen said that it is in the contract and it's up to the professionals that sign the contract to be responsible for the deliverables and not rely on the town to make requests.

Jean Goodrich then spoke that she was at the budget meeting, along with three other Cabot Ambulance members. She asked if the board recalled part of the discussion regarding the EMTs on the roster. The board agreed they remembered the discussion, and she reiterated that was when the documents were handed to the town.

Jean followed up by asking if there was a more efficient way to deliver the documents to the town. She said that there are a lot of documents the board handles, and it is easy for some to get misplaced. Mike suggested that the documents be submitted to the Town Treasurer and not the Selectboard.

Karen continued going through the list, and there was continued discussion about what has been provided and received. Slowly, they checked the deliverables (see 'Emergency Services', page 6)



SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Emergency Services

(continued from page 5)

ables, and Karen said that the operational agreement was the one deliverable missing.

Glenn Goodrich said that Cabot Ambulance submitted two different versions of the operational agreement that were flatly denied by the Fire Department because they didn't put the Fire Department in charge of a scene. He added that it gave the Fire Department the authority to discharge any ambulance personnel from a scene. Glenn stated that they could not sign an agreement with that kind of provision. He said that no emergency transport agency, whether it is Cabot or East Montpelier, is going to take instruction from a Fire Department.

He asked why that provision has to be in the operational agreement. Karen said that scene command was discussed extensively at the meeting. She said the language was drafted with the Ambulance leadership at the meeting. Karen said the acting secretary of the Fire Department was part of the conversation and asked Rory to speak to it.

Rory Thibault said that the things in the agreement do have precedent, and to say otherwise is not true. He noted a few agencies that have the wording in their contract. Rory went on to say that everyone would agree that there is a complete lack of trust between the two organizations. He said the elephant in the room is that they have trouble working together.

He went on to say that over the last four-to-five years, 36% of the time mutual aid responded instead of Cabot Ambulance. Rory said the need is clear for a FAST squad, and noted that there are five EMTs on the Fire Department. He said in an ideal situation, the FAST squad arrives first, by personal vehicle. Rory added that what was clear in the operational agreement was that as soon as the ambulance arrives, patient care is handed off.

Rory added that some of the language in the agreement is there to make sure there are clear lines. He added that leaving it ambiguous does not do anyone favors and invites conflict. He said that the membership is in support of the Chief's position.

Karen then spoke to the agreement regarding the removal of anyone from the scene. After reading the relevant portion of the agreement, she stated the understanding was that regardless of which ambulance service responds, the focus is on the patient and the scene. She restated that the issue of dismissal pertains to patient care. She asked if that was the sticking point, and Glenn responded that was the major sticking point.

The discussion then turned to who was the incident commander. A member of Cabot Ambulance spoke about the hypothetical situation of the incident commander dismissing someone because of the ongoing conflict between Cabot Ambulance and the Fire Department. Karen pointed out that dismissal is not for any reason, it is for substantial safety violations. Rory pointed out that there are statutes that any disciplinary actions can be appealed to the Selectboard.

R.D. wanted clarification on the inci-

dent command, and said that whoever gets there first exercises incident command. The consensus was the language supported that understanding. Karen added that all patient care is under the control of the ambulance service.

Ruth responded that everyone is always professional on scene, and there is no quarreling happening when everyone is present on scene. She said that there is no reason to write all the incident commands into the contract because they all go through training regarding who is responsible for incident command for the different types of scene. Ruth continued to talk about trusting people on scene and that they should not be worrying about being reported by members of the Fire Department.

Rory addressed some of what Ruth said and stated that is the reason why there needs to be a robust agreement. He added that there are members of the Fire Department that are fearful about going to a scene with certain members of Cabot Ambulance. Karen also said that what Ruth listed regarding incident command matches what is in the operational agreement. Karen continued to emphasize that Cabot Ambulance is holding up the establishment of a FAST squad.

The debate continued on the issue of incident command, and the difference between incident command and patient care. Mike tried to summarize the discussion. He said that the purpose of the discussion that night was to clear up the missing deliverables, and that he didn't intend to have the discussion delve into the operational agreement because he knew it would cause a lengthy discussion. He stated that they need to work it out, it's not up to the Selectboard to work it out between the two organizations.

Dan Peterson spoke from the Zoom call and said that the contract is too long and not necessary. He added that incident command is well understood by everyone, and part of their required training. Another member of the public spoke about how it all seems like a big pissing match. She explained how things work in health care from her experience and agreed with Dan. She said everyone is professional and it is not necessary to have all the language regarding incident command.

Fred Ducharme asked what other towns have for an agreement. He said that everyone lives in this community, and he agreed with Dan that we don't need all the wording. He said the community is being divided over a few sentences.

Kerri Moll, a member of the Fire Department, described how lies are being spread on social media. Kerri said people need to calm down. She went on to talk about how everyone is a volunteer and that people who work in emergency services suffer from PTSD at a much higher rate than the average person. Kerri voiced concern and said the Selectboard should not be putting additional pressure on Glenn or Chief Deasy.

Susan Socks, a member of the Fire Department, said that she is hearing a level of animosity between Cabot Ambulance and the Fire Department, but everyone does respect the separate responsibilities of the two organizations. She suggested that it's a good idea to have incident command described on paper even

though everyone understands it from their training. She expressed that it seems like a very silly sticking point.

Karen asked, in general, how do we move forward? The meeting broke down into quarreling among members of the Selectboard and members of the two organizations in attendance. R.D. then said that an operational agreement must be signed by February 4, he added that if Cabot Ambulance doesn't sign the operational agreement, then they are in breach of the contract.

Rory spoke for the Fire Department and posed to the Selectboard that they come back to the Fire Department with what is objectionable and inappropriate. It said it was not fair to put it back onto them. Karen suggested that Cabot Ambulance respond to that request to identify the elements of the operational agreement that are objectionable to Cabot Ambulance. She proposed that the Selectboard should receive the objections by Friday.

Fred asked if the Selectboard should solve the differences, and if what they propose would be accepted. Rory responded that they wanted clear lines established. He went on to talk about allegations made by people and he expressed that the board is saying they don't value the legitimate concerns of the members. Fred expressed that his question wasn't answered and stated that it isn't fair to put it onto the community. Fred said that the Selectboard is supposed to solve the hard issues.

Ruth referred to the agreements from other ambulance services and said they

are short and sweet and are simple. She said that they were not happy with what the Fire Department proposed. Ruth went on to say that they proposed an agreement back in October and the Chief wouldn't sign it. She exclaimed that it is not Cabot Ambulance that is holding up the agreement.

Mike then asked Dean to speak. He said that they are trying to add a service, not take away Cabot Ambulance. Dean said that he frequently sees East Montpelier ambulance service arrive at the scene, and there are things that need to be addressed. He explained this is why they want a FAST squad.

Dean emphasized that incident command has to be in the agreement. He said that someone has to be in charge at the scene. He stated that they need a very detailed agreement because there is a lack of trust between the organizations that has existed for a long time. Dean then verbally attacked Ruth by mocking her professionalism, and talked about negative posts on social media.

R.D. pointed out that the Selectboard cannot tell Cabot Ambulance to do anything because they are a private organization. He said they can direct the Fire Department because it is a municipal agency. He laid out the timeline to have an agreement ready for the next Selectboard meeting and asked everyone to keep off social media.

At the next Selectboard meeting, held on February 4, the operational agreement for the FAST squad was not discussed.

SCHOOLBOARD UPDATES



School Choice Lottery Slots

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

The Vermont Legislature passed a law in May 2012 (Act 129, Sec. 34, § 822d 2A) that allows high school students to apply for school choice through a lottery system. The school board sets the number of slots for students entering and exiting a school district through this system. If there are more students than the number of slots designated by the school board, then a lottery system is used to award the slots. At the January 27 School Board meeting, the board addressed the number of slots that will be offered for the next school year..

Matt Forrest told the board that a decision regarding lottery slots was required by February 1 if the board wanted to make any changes. He reminded the board that currently there are ten slots for students to attend another school, and ten slots for students to come to Cabot High School. Matt noted that the other school would need to accept the student before they could participate in the program.

He then addressed when a student needed to sign up for the lottery, and talked about how the program doesn't penalize the sending school. But he thought that Cabot needed to get credit for the student as part of the student count, which occurs between the 11th and 30th day of the school year. He concluded that they wanted the student to be enrolled during that period.

Matt then spoke to how a homeschool student could participate in the lottery.

He said that to be considered a homeschool student, the student needed to be doing three of the five core courses at home. Matt concluded that to be considered enrolled at Cabot High School, the student would need to do at least three of the five core courses at school.

He pointed out that personal learning plans are being used in the high school, and the classes and schedule can be structured to support such a student. Matt concluded his explanation to the board by saying he thought for students to be eligible for the lottery slots, a student should be enrolled at the beginning of the year. He added that the enrollment needed to be not as a homeschool student, based upon the definition he just explained.

Ellen Cairns said that she liked the definition that a student would have to be enrolled half time. She also asked if a policy was needed to define all of it. Matt suggested the administration create a procedure and add it to the family handbook.

Matt reminded the board that once a slot is awarded to a student, the student keeps the slot until they graduate, or move out of town. Jennifer Blake said that five of the ten slots would be open next school year. Chris Tormey asked how much interest there was last year, and how many students were not awarded a slot. Erica Fucello said she thought there were two slots open last year and five students applied.

(see 'School Choice Lottery', page 7)

SCHOOLBOARD UPDATES

School Choice Lottery (continued from page 6)

Chris then asked about a homeschool student coming to school to apply for the school choice lottery, and how that would work. Matt said that applications must be submitted from January till March 3. He added that April 1 is when families are notified.

Chris asked if we would require a homeschool student continue to be enrolled, and speculated a homeschool student that was attending school to apply for the lottery would just disenroll on April 2. Matt said that they would lose their slot if they disenroll. Chris said that the student would commit in September to be enrolled in Cabot school and have to stay enrolled through the entire school year.

Ellen asked about a student that moved into Cabot in November and wanted to apply to the school choice lottery. Matt said that was a good question, and said the procedure could make an exception for new residents with regard to needing to be enrolled during the first month of school. He said they have a list of homeschoolers because they need to be registered with the state.

Chris asked what are the five core courses? Matt responded with math, science, reading and writing, history/civic/government, and the last one was literature.

Alicia Heber said that in two years there could be no lottery slots available. She then spoke about her kids, and noted that one would probably be interested in the hybrid option (taking some classes at home) if they couldn't get a slot. She then spoke about the social aspects of small class sizes.

Ellen then posed to the board the question of increasing the number of slots, or keeping them the same. Erica said she

felt strongly that they should increase the number of slots. She added that some students have come to Cabot through the lottery system. Erica also said she knows homeschool families that are interested but felt like there wasn't a good enough chance to get one of the slots.

Chris talked about homeschool students that wanted to get a slot and would enroll in the school. He went on to say those students would get to experience the Cabot High School program, and if they didn't get a slot they might continue to be enrolled in the school. Chris said he would be in favor of adding two slots. Jason Monaco said he would be in favor of adding five slots.

Matt said that with 38 full time students, 15 students would be a significant percentage. He said that looking at the statute that number might be too high, and suggested 12 might be better. Ellen said that they may already be skating over the line. She said that it is a little unclear in the statute and on the Agency of Education website.

The board continued to debate the benefits and pitfalls of adding more slots to the lottery. The subject of home school families that are interested in possibly enrolling in the school was also discussed.

Erica moved to add two slots, increasing the number of lottery slots to 12. Chris seconded the motion. Alicia said she was conflicted, and expressed worry about the younger classes. She said she felt there will be more interest in the lottery. She said that she would support an increase of five. Jason expressed the desire to add more slots. Matt told the board that Danville has five and Twinfield has ten.

There were three votes for the motion: Chris, Erica and Ellen; and there were two votes against the motion: Jason and Alicia. The motion passed and the number of slots were increased to 12.

The Importance of Informed Selectboard Decision-Making in Emergency Services

A Statement from the Chief of Cabot Fire Department

The Select Board of our community plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of our emergency services. As the Chief of the Cabot Fire Department, I am exceptionally pleased that the Cabot Select Board bases its decisions on the guidelines and standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) which is also adopted by the State of Vermont, specifically NFPA 1851, 1407, and 1500. These standards (as well as many others) are critical to the operations and safety of our department, and it is reassuring to know that our current Select Board comprises individuals who are not only knowledgeable of these in detail but also deeply committed to maintaining these high standards.

The Importance of Volunteer Health

Public safety volunteers, notably firefighters, play a vital role in maintaining the safety and security of communities. In the line of duty, we are often exposed

to hazardous substances, including carcinogens, which significantly increase our risk of developing serious health conditions such as cancer. Prolonged exposure to these harmful substances can have devastating consequences, not only for the individuals affected but also for their families and the community they serve.

Carcinogen Exposure in Public Safety Careers

Carcinogens are substances that can lead to cancer after prolonged or intense exposure. In the context of public safety, these can include chemicals released during fires, hazardous materials encountered during rescue operations, and even certain substances used in the maintenance of equipment. Firefighters, (paid or volunteer) for example, are frequently exposed to smoke, asbestos, benzene, and other toxic chemicals. These exposures can occur through inhalation, skin contact, and ingestion, making it imperative to minimize and manage these risks effectively.

A little bit of information:

NFPA 1851, titled "Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting," provides comprehensive guidelines on how to select, care for, and maintain the protective gear that our firefighters rely on. This standard ensures that our personnel's gear remains in top condition, providing the necessary protection in hazardous situations. By adhering to NFPA 1851, the Select Board demonstrates a commitment to the safety and well-being of our firefighters, ensuring they have the best possible protection while performing their duties.

Another crucial standard is NFPA 1407, which outlines "Standard for Training Fire Service Rapid Intervention Crews." This standard is critical for preparing our firefighters for emergency situations where rapid intervention is required to rescue a community member or fellow firefighters in distress. The emphasis on thorough and consistent training ensures that our crew members are well-prepared and capable of responding effectively in high-stress scenarios. The Select Board's adherence to NFPA 1407 underscores their dedication to the continued education and preparedness of our fire department staff.

NFPA 1500, "Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program," is perhaps one of the most comprehensive standards, covering a wide range of topics from occupational health and safety to wellness programs for firefighters. This standard is fundamental in promoting a culture of safety within the department, addressing not only the physical hazards associated with firefighting but also the mental and emotional well-being of our personnel after a "tough call" involving a fatality. The Select Board's commitment to NFPA 1500 illustrates their holistic approach to the welfare of our firefighters, ensuring that all aspects of their health and safety are given due consideration.

In the February issue of the *Cabot Chronicle* an article submitted by Sandy Pond, it became very apparent that there is a lack of understanding regarding the significance of these NFPA standards, what they even represent, and their critical importance to Cabot's emergency services, and how the Cabot Select Board navigates using these. Such standards are not merely bureaucratic requirements; they are the backbone of our operational effectiveness and the safety protocols that protect our community and our firefighters.

All members of the Cabot Fire Department are gratified that the Select Board consists of **educated and informed individuals who understand the importance of these standards when they make decisions.** Why would you want to take three Select Board members who have extensive knowledge in this area and ask them to "recuse themselves" is beyond me. Their knowledge and commitment ensure that decisions are made with the utmost consideration for safety, efficiency, and effectiveness. This informed decision-making process is crucial, as it impacts the lives of our firefighters and the community they serve.

We are fortunate that the current Select Board prioritizes knowledge, experience, and education over the mere occupancy of a position. They ensure that the Cabot Fire Department can operate at the highest level of efficiency and safety, providing the best possible service to the Cabot community (YOU). This informed leadership is instrumental in fostering a sense of trust and reliability within the community, as residents can be confident that their safety is in capable and knowledgeable hands.

As for The Role of the Public Safety Building Project, the public safety building project is designed to create NFPA requirements in a facility that addresses the critical need for reducing carcinogen exposure among volunteers. This facility will incorporate advanced technologies and best practices to ensure a safer working environment. Funding for this project will be with USDA award of just over \$5,000,000 to contribute to this necessity, and also FEMA and other funding sources. Some key features of the project include:

- **Enhanced Ventilation Systems:** Modern ventilation systems will minimize the accumulation of toxic fumes and chemicals in the air, providing a cleaner atmosphere for volunteers to work in.
- **Decontamination Areas:** Dedicated decontamination zones will be established to ensure that volunteers can safely remove contaminated gear and clothing, clean, and replace. Reducing the risk of prolonged exposure.
- **Fully compliant NFPA, OSHA and the State of Vermont facility.**
- **Hazardous Material Storage:** Proper storage facilities for hazardous materials will be implemented to prevent accidental exposure and contamination.
- **Training and Education:** Comprehensive training programs will educate volunteers about the risks of carcinogens and the best practices for minimizing exposure to themselves, their families, and the community.
- **Installation of a "TIER 1" emergency command post**
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Investment in high-quality PPE will provide volunteers with the necessary protection against harmful substances.

In conclusion, the Select Board's adherence to NFPA standards is a testament to their commitment to the Cabot Fire Department and the community at large. Their informed decisions, based on critical guidelines, ensure that our firefighters are well-equipped, well-trained, and well-cared for. As Chief of the Cabot Fire Department, I am proud to work alongside such a dedicated and knowledgeable group of individuals who prioritize the safety and well-being of both our personnel and the community we serve. When you cut corners on safety, you do make it personal. Investing in the health and safety of those who risk their lives for the community is not just a moral obligation but a practical necessity.

Be Safe!
Chief Deasy

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION CABOT SCHOOL BOARD

There are two school board vacancies and two candidates running for those seats. The Cabot Chronicle asked them to introduce themselves and tell us a little about why they are running. For more information about the candidates and their thoughts, and community member questions, the recording of the February 19 Candidate Forum at Town Hall, sponsored by the Cabot Chronicle, Cabot Community Association and Town of Cabot, is available on the following websites:

Cabot Chronicle: CabotChronicle.org
Cabot Community Association: CabotVermont.org
Town of Cabot: CabotVT.US

Chris Tormey - School Board Candidate - Three-Year Term

Introduction

I'm Chris Tormey, and I'm a candidate for reelection to a three-year term on the Cabot School Board. I am a semi-retired teacher. After teaching biology and earth science for 33 years at Lamoyille Union High School in Hyde Park, VT, in 2019 I have continued to do substitute teaching since then. My wife Mary Ann and I have lived in Cabot since 1989, and our three sons are graduates of Cabot School.

Skills/Interests

I am interested in helping Cabot School continue to provide a strong education for our kids at a cost that our town can support. My experience with the school both as a parent, teacher and board member has allowed me to develop skills in listening, problem-solving and communicating that I believe are valuable for working on our school board.

Motivation to Serve on School Board

I believe that my skills and experience will be useful in supporting the improvements ongoing at the school and in communicating about them to the community.

Role of School in our Community

Providing a strong education for our kids at a cost that our town can support.

Melissa Pratt - School Board Candidate - Two-Year Term

Please introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about yourself.

My name is Melissa Pratt. My family made Cabot our home in 2023. I have three kids - two attending Cabot school, a 5th grader and a senior. My oldest graduated from high school in Massachusetts and is currently a sophomore at UVM. I formerly worked as a project manager in the mutual fund industry, but most recently have been a stay at home mom. I am passionate about community involvement and have enjoyed being part of committees in my former community for schools, the farmer's market and the library. I currently serve on the Cabot School Sustainability Committee, which was created in 2024 to address concerns of the Cabot community brought up during school choice debates.

What skills and interests do you bring to the school board?

As a parent and advocate for the education and well-being of our students, I believe that being on the school board will provide the opportunity to make a positive impact on our community. I have the unique perspective of having lived and raised children in a community with 6,000 students and now one with around 160. I have seen both traditional education and project based learning in action.

Thoughts on Governor's Proposal

The details for Governor Scott's plan are gradually being presented, but from what I've read so far I have these concerns:

The plan would change how schools are governed and funded, but would not address several major cost drivers for schools: special education, health insurance, mental health services, etc.

The Vermont Agency of Education would be charged with assessing small schools like Cabot for both educational quality and financial viability, and based on that assessment the school could potentially be merged or closed.

School Board's Role in Communication/Transparency

The Board should continue to be able to explain how the school operates in general to parents and community members, while directing them to the appropriate school staff for specific concerns/complaints. It should also foster ways for both parents and community members to better understand the school, including articles, forums, open houses, etc.

I am committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment and driven to support teachers, students, and families in ensuring that our school is one where every child can thrive. I believe in supporting all different types of learners in the ways that best help them reach their full potential.

My background in project management and community involvement along with my dedication to quality education and fiscal responsibility, makes me a strong candidate to help guide our district into this next chapter. I am eager to contribute my perspective and work collaboratively to make decisions that benefit all students and strengthen our community.

What makes you want to serve on the School Board?

This is a pivotal time for Vermont education. I want to serve on the school board because I care deeply about not only my children's education but that of all young people of Cabot. I have seen what an asset a small community school can be in addressing the unique learning needs of its students. I've also seen some of the challenges. What we do now will impact the chances of our school surviving in the future.

What do you see as the role of the school in our community?

Cabot School is the heart of this town. It's a pretty special place where kids are not just a number. It's a place where students and faculty build strong relationships with each other and the community. It's a place where families can gather for a harvest meal. A place where school and community members can join together for a pizza party open house. It is where our youth gain the foundation for fundamental skills needed for life beyond school.

What do you think of the Governor's emerging proposal for bringing down the cost of education?

We are in an affordability crisis and change is needed in the way that schools are funded in Vermont. The education tax burden for residents is high, but I see issues with the way the governor's proposal reads right now. There is still a lot of information that is unclear and this plan will continue to evolve, but It's hard

to imagine that five districts for the entire state would be a good solution. This system would also result in loss of local control of the schools. I will continue to monitor the proposal as more details become clear.

How do you think the School Board should ensure communication and transparency between the school and the community?

Communication and transparency are key in fostering a good relationship between the school and the community. I have seen great improvement with communication this school year. The school has been creating and sharing weekly newsletters. The school board has shared these newsletters on Front Porch Forum and on the Cabot Connects bulletin board. The Sustainability Committee has hosted forums to gather feedback and share information. Many of the people I've spoken with around town feel much more informed so it's imperative to continue these efforts.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION CABOT SELECTBOARD

There are two selectboard vacancies and four candidates running for those seats. The Cabot Chronicle asked them to introduce themselves and tell us a little about why they are running. Their responses are in order of length of term and alphabetically.

For more information about the candidates and their thoughts, and community member questions, the recording of the February 19 Candidate Forum at Town Hall, sponsored by the Cabot Chronicle, Cabot Community Association and Town of Cabot, is available on the following websites:

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Town of Cabot: CabotVT.US

R.D. Eno - Selectboard Candidate - Three-Year Term

Introduction

I'm R.D. Eno, I've lived in Cabot since 1976, and I'm running for a second three-year term as Selectperson. Third, actually. I served previously as Selectboard chair from 1995-98, and I have also served (at various times) as chair of the UDAG (now CCIF) Committee, chair of the Willey Building Committee, as president of the Historical Society and as the Town's representative to two solid waste management districts and CVFiber, which is now part of NEKCV. (Incidentally, NEKCV is hanging fiber-optic cable in Cabot right now. Hooray!)

I was responsible for the 1990 Town Meeting petition that resulted in the UDAG Committee and the UDAG Program; I founded both the Cabot Community Association and Cabot Arts; I was instrumental in opening the Cabot Child Care Center; I set up our recycling depot, and, as Selectboard member, I initiated the Flood Resiliency Task Force. There you have my resumé. Oh, I'm also a journalist, writer and non-profit organizer (and amateur musician), but serving on the Selectboard has become a (very nearly) full-time job.

What Are Your Views on Economic Development?

I first ran in 1995 because I saw a job that needed to be done – designing and bonding for a municipal wastewater system – and I believed I could do it. I did it, and then I stepped down. Some people will never forgive me for persuading the voters at Town Meeting to approve that bond, but without that system, which

brought an end to sewage discharges into the Winooski, many village premises would have been condemned, and our local economy would not have thrived.

Even so, it didn't thrive enough, and after the Creamery shut down its Visitor Center and closed its short-lived factory outlet in the village – I saw another job that needed to be done – locally planned economic development to fill (and maybe overflow) the hole that the Creamery had left. Cabot Arts (thank you, Dana!), the Den (thank you Bobby, Neil and Johanna!) and the Child Care Center (thank you Lori, Heather and the CCA!) were great beginnings, but I had scarcely begun to look for other ways to bring commerce into Cabot when the Flood of 2023 turned potential development into recovery.

Since then, in addition to the usual Selectboard duties, I've served on the Flood Resiliency Task Force, working under Gary Gulka's leadership to develop long-term flood mitigation projects in and around our village center. The *Chronicle* has reported ably on the progress made by the Task Force, and village residents and business should know that we are doing our utmost to protect their properties and livelihoods. But writing grants, assembling documentation, supervising the work of professional consultants and ensuring that the public has knowledge and a voice in the Task Force's recommendations – along with all the ordinary budgeting, reporting and maintenance responsibilities – has made Selectboard service far more arduous and time-
(see 'R.D. Eno', page 9)

R.D. Eno

(continued from page 8)

-consuming than it was when I first sat on the board.

Goals as a Selectboard Member

Nevertheless, recovery and economic revitalization remain the jobs to be done, and I am asking voters to give me another three years to move them closer to accomplishment.

As for transparency and citizen participation in local affairs, the *Chronicle* is delivered to every address in Cabot and provides an exhaustively detailed account of every Selectboard meeting. If you want to know what's going on, read Frank Kampf's *Chronicle* reports, or check out the minutes on the Town website. Other than contract negotiations, real estate transactions or matters actually or potentially in litigation, all Selectboard business is conducted in open session, and it would be unfair and untrue to suggest that the Board has been less than transparent.

Jennifer Miner - Selectboard Candidate - Three-Year Term

Introduction

My name is Jennifer Miner, and I have been a Cabot resident for 24 years. My children were 2, 4 and 10 when we moved into the town of Cabot. My daughter did not attend Cabot schools but is now a resident in the community along with my two adult boys. I currently have four granddaughters in the Cabot school system and believe that everyone in the community should be aware and involved in the decision-making process for this community as it impacts our children and grandchildren's future as well. I am a healthcare administrator by profession and have served the community in numerous capacities since 2006. I have strong communication skills and believe that engaging with and listening to our citizens is our best opportunity to have a community that is invested in success. I never saw myself entering a race for a public office like this; in fact, I have stated that I never wanted to be in politics. I have made the decision to run for a Selectboard seat in the Town of Cabot after hearing and witnessing people's concerns and frustration about not being heard, respected or having a voice at the local level. I have written grants for the Cabot Ambulance service in the past, and believe that I could offer additional knowledge and support in finding opportunities as we continue to rebuild Cabot from the 2023 and 2024 floods.

Goals as a Selectboard Member

My primary goal as a Cabot Selectboard member is to increase community engagement in the local decisions that impact us all.

How Will You Encourage Participation in Town Decisions?

Several years ago when I first began doing appropriation requests for Cabot

How Will You Encourage Participation in Town Decision?

In my view, the best way to encourage citizen participation would be to bring back Town Meeting and votes on all money items from the floor. That would return meaningful power to the people. At present, only a handful of voters turns up at the Selectboard, and even the *Chronicle's* informational gatherings draw smaller attendance than traditional Town Meetings used to.

A few shout-outs to the Highway crew and foreman Sid Griggs, whose frequent on-line posts keep us well-informed about the condition of our roads; to the Fire Department and Chief Dean Deasey, a committed and capable leader of the most committed and capable volunteer squad in the area; and to my Selectboard colleagues, Mike, Fred, Karen and Skip. Whether voters re-elect me or not, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve on this team.

Emergency Ambulance I went on record stating I felt that people should attend the budget meetings and be informed of what goes into the creation of our annual budgets, and I do know some concerned citizens that have done just that. As elected representatives we should be reaching out regularly to citizens to get their input, feedback, and thoughts on the items being brought to the board and discussed. We should be promoting an open and collaborative atmosphere, and encourage people to participate in board meetings. Elected officials are elected to represent the people, not an agenda, and should never make any community members feel that they are not heard and respected. We will never all agree on everything but providing a safe and respectful avenue for people to bring concerns forward is our responsibility as leaders whether elected or appointed. My goals as a Selectboard member is to provide a fiscally responsible budget that our citizens can afford, to increase community involvement in community decisions, and improve people's perception of the Selectboards representation.

What Are Your Views on Economic Development?

I think future development and support of business in our communities is a necessity to continue growth and opportunities, and this should be supported no matter who you are. Small businesses help drive the success of our community. As elected officials we should foster an atmosphere of building back better, and bettering the community for all.

If you feel that it is time to see a change, I would ask for your vote on Tuesday March 4 for the three-year term on the Cabot Selectboard.

nity, its diversity of opportunity, its great natural beauty, and its fine school. Frank and Becky Pinette sold me their family home on the South Walden Road and I have lived there ever since. My son, Neil Alexander, was born in 2006

and we added an addition to our home when my parents -Doris and Niels Larsen- joined my household. Neil attended Cabot school from pre-K right through grade eleven, graduating early and earning a full scholarship to college at seventeen. All these years later, and with more than twenty years of community involvement and lived experience in Cabot, I remain deeply grateful that we found our way here, that we built a life and a home in this town, and that I was able to raise a family and take care of my Elders in this place. A new phase of my personal life is also opening; Will Ameden and I were married in June of 2024 in a joyful celebration, and we are in the process of consolidating our households at the Under Orion Farm on the Ducharme Road. Cabot is our home and our community, and this is where we will stay.

My professional background is in financial services, economic development and education. I am currently employed with National Life in Montpelier as a Senior Executive Assistant and project manager. The group I work most closely with is 'Retirement Services', a \$660MM sales and service organization that supports retirement plans for (mostly) municipalities, teachers, and fire and police organizations. I hold a Masters in Public Affairs from Princeton University and two undergraduate degrees from the University of Maine – a BS in Education and a BA in History. Prior to joining National Life I spent ten years in the classroom, teaching Economics, History, and Social Sciences at the high school level, the last six of which were with Montpelier High School and St. Johnsbury Academy. My professional background also includes community development and resiliency work, both in the domestic and international spheres. I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria and Macedonia where I was involved in education and humanitarian relief coordination and served with the UNDP in Azerbaijan on landmine and unexploded ordinance removal projects. In the domestic context, I worked in community revitalization and development in Trenton, New Jersey, before we came to Vermont and from 2014-2018 worked with the global resiliency organization founded by Governor Madeleine Kunin, the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC). ISC's work was with under-resourced communities; first listening to all local stakeholders and then helping them plan toward and implement projects to become more resilient to the forces of climate change.

What skills and interests do you bring to the Selectboard?

The skills that I bring to Cabot's Selectboard are the tools and capacities that I have built over the course of my professional career and through both personal and Selectboard engagement in Cabot. I have deep experience in coordinating complex and long-term projects, working with a diversity of stakeholders and interests to advance sometime difficult initiatives, and long experience in working as part of an administrative and stewardship 'team' to build toward goals as articulated by the community. For the last two years I have been an integral part of the "Cabot Team" which includes among others: the Selectboard; our emergency services; local, State and Federal organizations; non-profit and private entities;

volunteers and service organizations, all of which have worked to respond to the catastrophic flooding of 2023 and 2024. I have worked with many of you clearing debris, mucking out basements, working traffic control, and holding the administrative conversations that help to support the work of recovery and build the systems of future resilience. I understand finance and the management of multi-million dollar initiatives, in part because that is the world that I work in every single day at National Life, and in part because these last two years have (frankly) taught me more than I ever wanted to know about FEMA financing, grant funding, and how to put a Town back together after the worst things have happened – all of this combined with the sobering knowledge that we have likely not seen the last of extreme weather information-based decision making and adherence to established statute. I am steady and thoughtful, process and progress oriented as well as empathic and caring. The criticism and the complements are true, however, I am not an emotional leader. I am direct and clear and know that a diversity of perspective is important and that we need to work together for the common good. I am comfortable holding difficult conversations and building processes which are 'new' to Cabot. I do not always agree with the views of every Selectboard Member on every issue and that -to my way of thinking- is a *good* thing; that is why we have a Board – to examine multiple perspectives from a diversity of constituencies, to have vibrant conversations, and then to make the best possible decisions that we can. It is my opinion that whether you have been in Cabot four months or forty years, *everyone* deserves voice, access to accurate information, the ability to participate and contribute, and the respect and gratitude of their neighbors. I am passionate about Cabot, both as it is and for what it might become in the future, and care deeply about the challenges and opportunities that are before us. I am a public servant, an administrator, and a civil servant – this means that I listen to the community, gather information, make every effort to join my fellow Selectboard Members in good decision making....and then we move forward to get things done.

The questions of my 'interests' as relates to Selectboard activities is – as I have learned in dramatic fashion- a necessarily flexible thing. I am here to serve the community. When I was first elected to the Selectboard in March of 2023, I genuinely thought I would be working on economic development: affordable housing, looking at zoning statute, continuing to encourage business enterprise, and looking seriously at regional opportunities for tourism and marketing. Bike paths and food corridors anyone? And then July of 2023 and July of 2024 happened; and everything changed. That change was encapsulated in a conversation I shared with a gravel hauler headed for the Jug Brook Road in the days following (the first) flood. I rode shotgun in his truck as he delivered his third load of the day because I wanted to see the work in progress and because I had to connect with Sid on a traffic control question. "You just got elected to the Selectboard?" he asked. 'Yes'. "What great %#@*ing timing!". We laughed...but what he said (see 'Karen Larsen', page 10)

Karen Larsen - Selectboard Candidate - Two-Year Term

Introduction

Hello Neighbors. My name is Karen Larsen and I am running for re-election to Cabot Selectboard; the two-year seat. My family and I moved to Cabot in 2004; we chose Cabot for its sense of commu-

Karen Larsen
(continued from page 9)
was true; everything that I had thought I wanted to work on had literally been washed away by the new priorities of the flood. So be it. This is a small thing, shifting governance priorities in the face of catastrophe, but it speaks to how I view Selectboard service – I am elected to serve the community, to listen to the needs of my neighbors and to respond with whatever service is needed at that time, whether that means standing with a stopsign at an intersection so that the Road Crew can do their work; assessing FEMA funding agreements as they pertain to rebuilding the Mack Mountain bridge or the construction of a new public safety building; or working with a coalition of stakeholders to build an Emergency Action Plan for the West Hill Pond Dam.... among many other issues.

What makes you want to serve on the Selectboard?
I would, however, like to think that we are coming toward the ‘other side’ of the stressful, expensive and all-consuming work that has attended recovery and rebuilding. To be clear, there is major work yet to be done, including the completion of a new public safety building; the remaining rebuilding, reinforcement and repairs to damaged bridges, embankments, and roadsides; attention to debris management and floodplain access; and a redesign of the culverts and bridges in the Village (particularly) to defend against future flooding. I am fully committed to seeing those projects through and this is a major reason that I

**Peggy Johnson Miller -
Selectboard Candidate - Two-Year Term**

Introduction
I am Peggy Johnson Miller, MS, and I will be running for the two-year seat on the Cabot Selectboard. I moved to Cabot in 1993. My son attended Cabot School, graduating in 2001. My husband and I worked with the Cabot Community Association, organizing and running a teen center in the gym every other Saturday night for ten years. I worked on the grant applications to get funding for multiple projects with the youth of Cabot. I served on the school board for a two-year term after my son graduated. I bring over 25 years of experience writing grants and reports, negotiating contracts and creating budgets, and serving on committees at the local and state levels. My education includes a BA from OSU in communications and public relations and an MS in criminal justice and public administration from VCU. I was also a licensed social worker and a licensed mediator when I lived in Ohio.

am running for re-election to the Selectboard. But I also think that the time is approaching where we can once again begin to redirect energy and time toward developing those elements that will help to build and sustain Cabot as a vibrant and affordable place to live, work and raise a family.
The Selectboard just approved the 2025 Town Plan, a flexible ‘blueprint’ for what we hope our Town can become while recognizing the challenges and constraints we face; how do we understand the future of affordable housing, economic development, energy access, land use, stewardship of natural resources, and community resources? The Plan is available on the Town of Cabot website and I encourage everyone to read it and become involved with these conversations. Although all are important, the areas where I would most like to contribute are: developing affordable and energy efficient housing so that Cabot builds upon its reputation as a great place to live, work, and raise a family; supporting the development of locally-based small businesses including leveraging our rich agriculture heritage for production and tourism in the farm and food sectors; continuing to support the development of our Village Center as an economic hub and draw for visitors; and continuing to build on the work of our Trails Committee and those interested in linking Cabot into additional opportunities for tourism and recreation.
I look forward to continuing to work with the Cabot Selectboard on behalf of my Cabot neighbors and hope you will consider voting to return me to the two-year seat.

My work history includes 36 years working for child serving agencies in Ohio, Virginia and Vermont. I was a social worker, visitation mediator, group home director, probation officer and state and federal grant and contract manager. I retired in 2016.
How Will You Encourage Participation in Town Decisions?
I have great respect for the community of Cabot, the Cabot School and the emergency services that serve our town. I would hope to be able to foster a level of cooperation with other programs in Cabot by listening to the needs of community members, making sure plans for changes and purchases are made transparent to the community in advance of decision making whenever possible and working to resolve issues presented to the board by the community. I would hope my grant application writing skills and negotiations experience could be put to use to benefit the Cabot community.

**Governor Scott’s
Education Transformation Proposal**

**by Chris Tormey,
Cabot School Board**

In January, Governor Phil Scott and officials in the VT Agency of Education introduced a plan intended to improve the quality of preK-12 public education in Vermont while also reducing its cost. If the plan as proposed (<https://governor.vermont.gov>) wins the support of the VT Legislature and eventually becomes law, it will radically change how schools in Vermont are governed and funded. For students in many communities across the state, it will also likely impact where they go to school and the number of other students sharing their classrooms.
Currently there are over 100 individual school districts in the state, and each is governed by an elected school board which oversees the operation of the schools in that district. Every year these boards draft a budget to fund the operation of the school(s) which is voted up or down by the voters in that school district. The funds to operate each school are drawn from a statewide Education Fund. In addition to property tax payments from all towns, revenue from other sources (VT Lottery, rooms/meals taxes, etc.) are pooled into the Education Fund. Since the VT Supreme Court’s “Brigham Decision” of 1997 and the enactment of Act 60, the Education Fund has allowed towns across the state with very different levels of valued property to provide similar levels of per-pupil spending for their schools.
Under Governor Scott’s plan, there would be only five (5) school districts statewide: the 162 students currently in the Cabot School District would be combined with over 10,000 other students into the “Northeast Region School District”. A five-member elected board would have the ultimate say on how and where the students in that district would be educated, with input from “school advisory committees” in the individual communities of the district. The board would create “attendance zones” that would dictate where each student would be assigned for elementary, middle and high school.
Besides changing how schools would be governed, the Scott plan would also drastically change how they are funded. Rather than the voters of each of the current 100+ school districts determining how much to spend per pupil at their school(s) in a given year, the plan would automatically provide a uniform “Foundation Grant” of \$13,200/year to the “Northeast Region School District”

for each of the 10,000+ students within it. (Additional grants would also be included for students with specific needs/ challenges: English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, etc.)
In developing this transformational plan, the Vermont Agency of Education hired a consulting firm (APA Associates) from Denver, Colorado, to research ideal class and school sizes to improve education and promote cost savings. Based on APA’s research, the plan models future student:teacher ratios of 15:1 for K-3rd grade and 25:1 for Grades 4-12.
The current annual cost for educating Vermont’s 80,000 preK-12 students stands at 2.3 billion dollars, and the Scott plan estimates that shifting to a five-district, “Foundation Plan” model would reduce that cost by 183 million dollars. Since many schools in Vermont (including Cabot) currently have student:teacher ratios well below the 15:1 for K-Grade 3 and the 25:1 for grades 4-12 assumed in the plan, it’s likely that a good deal of the plan’s estimated savings would come from reductions in current staff: both classroom teachers as well as administrators. At this point in time, however, state officials introducing the plan’s elements to legislators have yet to provide many specifics about exactly how the projected 183 million dollars in savings would be realized.
During a presentation to the House Ways and Means Committee on February 3 by Vermont Education Secretary Zoie Saunders, Ms. Saunders was asked by Representative Emily Kornheiser, “I just can’t fathom where the actual cost savings is coming from. Quite frankly, what is being cut?” Secretary Saunders responded, “There will need to be shifts in operations and staffing to be able to deliver on the proposal. We know that there are certain schools where this would be very challenging to achieve without considerable adjustments and changes.” (“Details emerge on school spending plan, but big questions remain.” by Allison Novak in Seven Days, February 3, 2025).

At its January meeting the Cabot School Board voted to join the Rural School Community Alliance (vtruraledu.org), a coalition of over 25 school boards across Vermont who’ve united to emphasize to lawmakers in Montpelier “the indispensable role rural schools play in the lives of Vermont’s children, families and communities” as they learn more about and consider the potential benefits and downsides of the Governor’s plan.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

YOUR VOTE IS CRITICAL!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Please vote on or before Tuesday, March 4. It is very important that every voice is heard.

VOTE ON TOWN MEETING DAY

Australian Ballot Voting:
at Town Hall
Tuesday, March 4, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

VOTE NOW AT TOWN HALL OR AT HOME

Early and Absentee Ballot Voting
Monday-Thursday 9-5 p.m.
Ballots must be received by Town Clerk no later than 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 4, to be counted

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Cast Announced



by Karen Mueller-Harder

Cabot Community Theater proudly announces the cast for our production of *The Little Mermaid*. CCT has a policy of including everyone who wants to be in our shows, so we have an amazing cast of 47 community members, as well as a wonderful tech staff! We have divided up the larger parts so that more people can have an opportunity to perform a lead role.

Ariel: Sycada Barnes, Nora McCann, Ellie Melen
Eric: Mary Rogerson, Louise Swift
Ursula: Jessica Della Pepa-Clayton, Luna Dunbar
Sebastian: Jesse Clayton, Thomas Dunbar
King Triton: Seth Vandenburg
Scuttle: Clare Waterman
Flounder: Mavis Hall
Grimsby: Erin Barry
Chef Louis: Thomas Dunbar
Aquata: Susannah Harman
Andrina: Lila Christiansen-Pollica
Arista: Althaea Irwin

Atina: Brooke Bergeron
Adella: Jojo Taylor
Allana: Simone Kulsick
Flotsam: Amara Hansen
Jetsam: Judzia Bubrowski
Pilot: Liam Waugh
Windward: Kate McIntyre
Leeward: Fern Hammond

Sea creatures, Sailors, Seagulls, Maids, Chefs, and Princesses: Luciana Abare-Rossi, Belle Bergeron, Keegan Bergeron, Alexander Clayton, Ariabella Clayton, Lily Dunbar, Elfi Goldenrose, Enid Hammond, Fern Hammond, Alice Hannan, Areilla Helfand, Hanalee Hill, Rue Jacobs, Iris Jacobs, Simone Kulsick, Savannah Light, Cora McIntyre, Penelope Otto, Gwentyth Pare, Ruthie Podolin, Nora Rader, Zelda Scrivenner, Addelyn Temple, Jaelynn Tyler, and Moirah Usinowicz

Rehearsals and costume and setwork are underway, and it's going to be a production you won't want to miss! Performances will be May 8-11 in CSPAC; look for ticket info in the April Chronicle!

Cabot Trails Year in Review

by Gary Gulka

This past year, two new trails have been added to the Cabot Trails Network. In May, the Old Center Trail which starts behind the Willey Building was completed. It goes to the Old Town Center and cemetery and is one mile in length. The trail can also be accessed from Old Center Road off Danville Hill Rd. A small parking area was improved for trail users and visitors to the Old Town Center. We worked with Cabot School to create a poetry walk on this trail, with original poems posted on plaques along the length of the trail.

The 1.3-mile Burt's Orchard Trail loop was completed this summer and features scenic vistas and benches for rest stops. The trail can be accessed near the Orchard retail store.

Improvements have been made to the Town Forest Trail, including parking and loop trails.

Trail damage from the July 2023 flood is being addressed, including Langone Road erosion and bridge construction to replace a failed culvert on Talbert Farm Trails and Langone Trail. We have been fortunate to receive two Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) grants totaling \$137,500 to support our 15-mile trail network, including flood damage repair, building our capacity with tool and equipment purchases, construction of informational kiosks and benches, and marketing our trails network to resi-

dents and visitors. In the past year, Trails Committee members logged over 400 volunteer hours.

This year we will be completing the work under both grants. We will be placing a large Cabot Trails Network master trail map and informational kiosk on the Willey Building property. We will have all our trails posted to the Trail Finder website that features hundreds of Vermont and New Hampshire trails. Trail User Surveys will be accessible at each trailhead through a QR code that cell phone users can access. In addition to maintaining the trail network, we hope to make some modest expansions this year.

We thank Cabot landowners who have allowed public access through their lands to make this local recreational resource possible.

Our trail maps are accessible at trailhead kiosks and on the Cabot town website and Cabot Community Association (CCA) website.



Two Community Dances in March

The Cabot Community Contra Dance will host TWO dances in March, both held in the wonderful third floor space in the Willey Building (Cabot Town Hall, 3084 Main Street).

Our regular second Friday dance on March 14 will feature the friendly calling of Karen Mueller-Harder, our local dance organizer. Live music is provided by a great group of local musicians—you can just come and listen if you like! All ages and abilities are welcome, and we all dance with each other. We use genderless terminology and all dances are taught, and easy to learn. The dance is 7-9:30 pm; if you've never been to a contra, you are encouraged to arrive right at 7:00, as we will start with the simplest dances, and then we'll build upon what you learn throughout the evening.

And we will be holding another Family Dance from 10 to noon on Saturday,

March 8! 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. Our teacher will be Erin Smith, who loves leading family dances, and we'll have the same great live music we enjoy for the second Friday dances!

Admission is on a sliding scale, \$5-10 suggested, but nobody is turned away for lack of funds! Water is provided, or bring your own water bottle. Masks are welcomed but not required, and we ask that you bring some clean, dry shoes to change into for dancing to keep snow and mud off the dance floor.

Hope to see you at a dance!



Letter to Fellow Community Voters:

I recommend a "no" vote on Article 11, "Shall the voters adopt the new CCIF (Cabot Community Investment Fund) Plan as printed in this Town Report, which calls for the consolidation of the UDAG and Scholarship Funds in a single CCIF Fund, and appropriate the consolidated CCIF Fund for the purpose of the plan?"

My thought: What is the purpose of asking community members to take on a task if we're not going to respect their work enough to listen to their recommendation? The CCIF Committee does not support this proposed change.

Both the current 2019 CCIF plan and proposed 2025 change may be found on the Town website: CabotVT.US/Boards & Meetings/Cabot Community Investment Fund.

Sincerely, *Fred Ducharme*

HAZEL M. GREAVES INCOME TAX & BOOKKEEPING SERVICE



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✦ Exquisite hand puppetry
✦ Dadaist ventriloquism
✦ Stand-up comedy

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Now Appearing at the
THE PLAINFIELD OPERA HOUSE
MARCH 9, 4 PM

BAFFO BOX SHOW
A COMPACT CARDBOARD COMEDY

Take it from these satisfied customers...

"Absolutely delightful!"
"A breath of fresh air!"
"A jolt of Comedy!"
"I recommend to any and all!"

The creation of this production was supported by a grant from: The Jim Henson Foundation

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CABOT ARTS PRESENTS - A CONCERT AND WORKSHOPS WITH

★ **THE HORSENECKS** ★

On tour from the Pacific Northwest, Gabrielle McCrae and Barry Southern play hard-hitting and heartfelt old-time and classic Bluegrass music.



With tight harmony singing, thoughtful song writing, foot-stomping dance tunes, and inspired lyrics The HorseNecks set a new standard in today's traditional music scene.

SUNDAY, MARCH 23RD AT 5PM

AT THE WILLEY BUILDING AUDITORIUM 3084 MAIN ST. CABOT, VT

WORKSHOPS 2:30 - 3:45 PM

OLD-TIME FIDDLE WITH GABRIELLE MACRAE / OLD-TIME BANJO WITH BARRY SOUTHERN

WORKSHOPS ARE \$30 BY RESERVATION / INFO & SIGN UP AT: WWW.CABOTARTS.ORG

ADMISSION \$17 ADV. / \$20 BOOR / TICKETS: WWW.CABOTARTS.ORG

INFO: (802) 793-3016 / DIRECTOR@CABOTARTS.ORG

Upcoming Events at the Jaquith Library

All events are free and held at the Jaquith Library unless noted otherwise.

For more info: 802-426-3581 or email: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com

Or visit our website:

www.jaquithpubliclibrary.org

Becoming One with the World: A Guide to Neohumanist Education with Author Kathleen Kesson, Friday, March 7 at 7 pm

Is our current educational model providing young people with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to survive and thrive in an uncertain future? What is our deepest, most heartfelt hope for a compassionate human race, and how can education help manifest this hope? How can we reimagine education to be more just, sustainable, and joyful? Join Kathleen Kesson, Professor Emeritus (LIU-Brooklyn), former Director of Education at Goddard College, and founding Director of the John Dewey Project on Progressive Education at the UVM for a conversation about the future of education.

Celebrate PI Day with Sweet and Savory Pies. Friday, March 14 from 3:14 pm to 6 pm

Come to the Jaquith Library and celebrate PI Day by eating sweet and savory pies of all types. The pies will be for sale as individual slices or whole pies. Support the Jaquith on March 14th by buying pizza pie at the Marshfield Village Store. 10% of pizza proceeds will benefit the Jaquith Library. Or go to Positive Pie in Plainfield and buy pizza and say the word "Jaquith" and 25% of your purchase will go to the library.

Permaculture Tree Guilds

Saturday, March 15 from 2-3pm

Learn how to design a fruit tree guild suitable for your growing space. This permaculture concept approaches the garden as an ecosystem in which the various plants have interdependency through nutrients, soil building, and protection. Maximize your harvest while addressing pest and disease issues and leave this free class with a plan for your own Tree Guild. Please register by emailing marshfieldrh@gmail.com or calling (802) 426-3581

Orchard Care with East Hill Tree Farm. March 22 from 2pm-3pm

Please Note Workshop Address: 3499 East Hill Road, Plainfield, VT 05667

Learn the basics of maintaining your trees and orchard with Nicko Rubin of East Hill Tree Farm. This free class covers pruning, amendments, and other critical entry-level topics. This event is co-sponsored by the Jaquith Public Library and Marshfield Resilience Hub. Please register by emailing marshfieldrh@gmail.com or calling (802) 426-3581

All Hands Together Community Crafting Group on Tuesdays 4:30 to 6 pm, and the fourth Saturday of every month 11:30 am to 1 pm

Bring whatever craft you are working on or start a new project. All ages are welcome if they are old enough to be sitting and working on a craft. Knitting and spinning maven, Donna Hisson from Marshfield, is the host of the group.

Baby & Caregivers Meet-up with Good Beginnings. Every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 am

Join us for our weekly gatherings where

caregivers can relax and connect while their babies play and explore in a calm, supportive setting. Geared toward babies ages 0-18 months and their caregivers. Siblings can come along as well.

Winter Story Time and Playgroup

Wednesdays from 10:30 to 12:30 a.m.

For children birth to age six and their grown-ups. We follow the Twinfield Union School calendar and do not hold the program the days Twinfield is closed.

Monthly Book Group for Adults on Fourth Mondays at 7 pm

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!

March 24 A Midwife's Tale Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

Chapters in History Book Group

Second Saturdays of the Month Starting in February at 2:00 pm

The public is encouraged to participate in this free reading and discussion series of presidential biographies. Books are available for loan from the library.

March 8 A Man of Iron: The Turbulent Life and Improbable Presidency of Grover Cleveland by Troy Senik

Call for Actors!

Have you always dreamed of treading the boards AND supporting your local library? We are looking for Marshfield-area actors to perform in a staged play reading of the play *Murder by the Book* by Laura Teasdale, sponsored by author Lousie Penny. Want to know more? Contact Bethany Bohall, Chair, Friends of the Jaquith and the play reading's director, at bethanyannbohalla@gmail.com. Beginners and experienced theater folk are welcome!

Just Food Hub Fundraiser for the Jaquith Library. Give Someone you Love a Gift Basket!

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, the food is organic, grown by small farmers and worker coops in the Global South and across the US. As part of the alternative trade system, Equal Exchange and Just Food Hub are focused on fighting racism, climate change, and supporting organic food, workers co-ops, and small farmers. **WE ALSO SELL JUST FOOD HUB ITEMS AT THE LIBRARY.**

Wood Moisture Meter is available to borrow at the Jaquith Library The Vermont DEC's Air Quality & Climate Division (AQCD) and the Department of Libraries have co-sponsored the statewide wood moisture meter loan program. Hand-held wood moisture meters are available at 63 public libraries for patrons to borrow for free to check the moisture content of their firewood. Wood burning is an economical way to heat homes. However, proper burning practices are necessary to prevent poor air quality and protect public health. **We also have an Indoor Air Quality Meter for Loan.**



Cabot Community Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 245, Cabot, VT 05647
info@cabotvermont.org

Annual Report, Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

The CCA is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization led by a Board of Directors and a few very part-time paid staff members (approximately annual payroll \$40,000 for 7 individuals.). The CCA supports the following programs –Cabot Visual Arts, Greater Cabot Area Working Landscape Network, Economic Development Workgroup, Cabot Child Care Initiative and *The Cabot Chronicle*. The CCA board strives to provide a valuable resource to the Cabot community and consistently acts to expand its service to the town and Cabot residents. Activities this past year that demonstrate the CCA mission include:

--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 allocated to flood relief.

--Launched a new **CCA website** <https://CabotVermont.org> and **Cabot Business Directory** <https://cabotvermont.org/businessdirectory>. These projects will better represent the vitality and diversity of Cabot, provide information on how residents can get involved in the community, support local businesses and integrate with other Cabot online presences.

--Sustained the **Cabot Children's Center** with public, private and in-kind support. The Children's Center has become an integral part of the CCA's economic development plan and is working to respond to the increasing need for child-care services in Cabot. The Children's Center is serving 15 children and has a waiting list of families seeking care.

--Coordinated the **Cabot 4th of July** festivities. This year we were challenged again with wet weather and limited parking in the village. Collaboration with Cabot Fire Department, town leaders and staff, and community volunteers resulted in the creation of a plan for traffic control and parking for large events hosted in the village. Efforts for 2025 will include promoting local businesses and engaging organizations to benefit from the increased holiday traffic.

--Hosted the **Cabot Fall Foliage** event, in coordination with the Cabot Cheese & Culture Festival, to provide opportunities to promote local businesses and enjoy Cabot's fall foliage. A new feature was creating an online map to assist visitors with experiencing Cabot, <https://www.cabotchronicle.org/stories/fallfoliage2024>.

--Published *The Cabot Chronicle* which has been in publication since 2008.

The Chronicle is a reliable communication vehicle for Cabot residents, boosts civic participation through increased volunteerism and enhanced knowledge of town government and promotes understanding and appreciation for what makes Cabot a great community.

Accomplishments for 2024 include:

- Dedication of a writer to regularly report on Selectboard and School Board meetings;
- Collaboration with the Historical Society to honor Cabot Veterans and capture their stories; and
- Organizing and hosting candidate and Town Meeting forums.

--Provided **bookkeeping, administrative assistance 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.

--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. The CCA awarded a total of \$10,000 to sixteen projects run by Cabot Not for Profits and grass roots organizations including: Winter Toy & Clothing Drive, Veterans Event, 12th Night, Summer Reading Program, Cabot Art & Music Festival, Cabot Arts, *The Cabot Chronicle*, Fall Foliage Festival, Cabot Historical Society, Cabot Mentoring, Cabot July 4 celebration, and Cabot Community Theater.

--Assisted other organizations and businesses with event promotion and grant writing.

--The Economic Development Work Group was not formally active this year but will be re-envisioned as a business association to help promote our local economy. The CCA maintains relationships with Cabot Creamery administrators and state agencies to assist in these efforts.

--And perhaps most important to note, the town's investment of \$10,000 last year helped the CCA to secure nearly **\$190,000 additional funding** in 2024 in participant fees, charitable contributions, and grants, that directly support the projects that Cabot residents run and participate in.

We appreciate the support the Town of Cabot has given to *The Cabot Chronicle* and CCA. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Town and embarking on our 18th year of publication.

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
Jeanne Johnson, Secretary
R.D. Eno
Susan Robinson
Bobby Searles
Johanna Thibault
Lori Augustyniak, Executive Director



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.

Thank you for your support on Town Meeting Day! – Tuesday, March 4

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+) - **Ongoing - Wednesdays, 10:30 - 11:30 am - Willey Building 3rd Floor** - Join youth librarian Amanda Otto for stories, songs, snacks, crafts and open play! All are welcome!

Chess and Checkers Club (ages 6+) - **Wednesdays, March 12 & 26, 2:30 - 4:00 pm** - Drop in to play chess and checkers with other kids and special guest players. Don't know how to play? No worries, we will teach you! Younger kids interested in learning to play are welcome with adult supervision. Popcorn provided.

Build a Bluebird House Workshop - Saturday, March 15 - 12:30 - 2:30 pm - The Eastern Bluebird is one of Vermont's most beloved birds. Nest boxes can help bring these birds to your yard. This is a hands-on workshop for ages 6 and up, materials and tools provided. A short history of Eastern Bluebirds, as well as tips for placement will be provided. Special thanks to the Conservation Committee, Cabot Trails Committee and Larrabee's Building Supply for their collaboration and donation. Registration required - please email amandaotto.cabotlibrary@gmail.

Cabot Book Group – there are two options to meet - **Wednesday – March 12 at 6 pm or Thursday – March 13 at 2 pm**. Feel free to choose whichever time suits you. The March book selection is *Birding to Change the World: A Memoir* by Trish O'Kane. Please note: author, Trish O'Kane will at-

tend the Thursday book group discussion via Zoom. Please see below for a book summary. Copies of this book will be available in the library for you to borrow. All are welcome! – Email cabotlibrary@yahoo.com for more info and to be added to the book group email list.

Trish O'Kane is an accidental ornithologist. In nearly two decades of writing about justice as an investigative journalist, she'd never paid attention to nature. But then Hurricane Katrina destroyed her New Orleans home, sending her into an emotional tailspin. Enter a scrappy cast of feathered characters—first a cardinal, urban parrots, and sparrows, then a catbird, owls, a bittern, and a woodcock—that cheered her up and showed her a new path. Inspired, O'Kane moved to Madison, Wisconsin, to pursue an environmental studies PhD. There she became a full-on bird obsessive—logging hours in a stunningly biodiverse urban park, filling field notebooks with bird doings and dramas, and teaching ornithology to college students and middle-school kids. When Warner Park—her daily birdwatching haven—was threatened with development, O'Kane and her neighbors mustered a mighty murmuration of nature lovers, young and old, to save the birds' homes. Through their efforts, she learned that once you get outside and look around, you're likely to fall in love with a furred or feathered creature—and find a flock of your own.

Many thanks to Ama Peyman for organizing the performers for our Black History Month event and for the wonderful home cooked food. Thanks to Ama Peyman and Mary Rogerson for their lovely performance of Nikki Giovanni's poetry. Thank you to Kevin Graffagnino for a fascinating look at Ira Allen and Vermont history.

Thanks so much to Gary Gulka, Dawn Andrews and the Cabot Conservation Committee for co-sponsoring the program with Vermont author Ethan Tapper. Special thanks to everyone who participated in our Community Live Storytelling event. Additional thanks to Losada Stoddard, Neil McCallum and Dana Glazier for their program contributions!

Kathleen Hoyne – Library Director
Amanda Otto – Youth Librarian

Cabot Community Association Financial Report for fiscal year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Income	CCA Administration	The Cabot Chronicle
Advertising, Subscriptions		\$ 9,828
Charitable Contributions	\$ 121,490	\$ 1,613
Town Appropriation	\$ 10,000	\$ 15,000
Flood Relief	\$ 57,013	
Total Income	\$ 188,503	\$ 26,441
Expenses		
Administration	\$ 11,406	\$ 387
Cabot Childcare Initiative	\$ 90,031	
Community Grant Awards	\$ 6,750	
July 4	\$ 2,957	
Fall Foliage	\$ 791	
Printing & Postage		\$ 9,709
Payroll & Payroll expenses	\$ 17,665	\$ 20,410
Flood relief grant awards	\$ 48,085	
Total Expenses	\$ 177,685	\$ 30,506
Net Income	\$ 10,818*	\$ (4,065)

\$8,828 is in reserve for future flood related needs.



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

Gelli Print Workshop
Saturday, March 22
from 10 am to 2:30 pm
All supplies included.
Workshop is by \$25 donation
per participant
To register call 802-223-3322
or email director@twinvalleyseniors.org.



It was a lot of work, but well worth the effort to prove Vermont's commitment to a clean environment to the WORLD! [Congratulations](#) Everybody!

Together WE are GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS Title holders for "The Most Pledges Received for Trash Clean Up in 24 Hours." People not only pledged to clean up trash, they acted on it which makes a world of difference. Thank you!



FREE Food Share
Wednesdays MARCH 12th & 26th
□ □ □ ! " # \$ □ □ □ % □ □ " □ □ □ & □

Thursdays MARCH 6TH, 13TH, 20TH, AND 27TH
DOORS OPENING AT 5PM, COME JOIN IN ON THE FUN

Senior Adventures
Tuesdays MARCH 4th & 18th 10AM

3339 Main Street
Downtown Cabot Village
Call: 802-563-3322

NeighborsinActionVT.org
www.facebook.com/
neighborsinactionvt



Following our engineering report in November on alternatives to mitigate flooding in Cabot Village, the Select Board directed SLR Consulting to develop concept design plans and cost estimates for the preferred alternatives. The preferred alternatives are a bridge structure to replace the double culverts under Main Street in the center of the village and a slightly elevated bridge at the north tributary by the recreation field. There would also be some stream widening on the south tributary in the center of the village both upstream and downstream. In January, the concept design work and cost estimates for the projects were completed. We are currently working on a FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant application to fund the \$3.4 million project. If we are fortunate to receive a grant, the completion of this project is likely to be two-to-three years from the present time.

We applied for and received a grant from Vermont Emergency Management for the buyout of the Cabot Garage business in the center of the village, which would accommodate the construction of the bridge and stream widening. Under this grant, the funding would compensate the Cabot Garage owner for the appraised value of the business and pay

for the closeout and removal of the building. The Cabot Garage has the option to accept or reject the buyout at any time over the next year. The property has been appraised, and the town is now conducting the necessary environmental site investigations necessary for the closeout.

We are currently seeking alternative village locations to site the Cabot Garage business and to work up cost estimates for the relocation. It remains to be seen how this relocation will be funded and financed, but it will likely be a combination of funding sources. We are actively seeking out village properties where the relocation would be feasible, and we are also open to suggestions from community members. We intend to hire an engineering firm to assist with evaluating site alternatives, site plan design, and cost estimates.

The woody debris logjam upstream on the south tributary was removed in November as a precautionary measure to avoid future blockage of the culverts, but this area is still unstable and will require further mitigation under future grants.

There are several moving parts to this flood mitigation project that we hope will come together this year, not to mention other flood mitigation and resiliency efforts we hope to tackle in town.



A Sign of Spring



The Red-winged blackbirds return to Cabot in March. Rollin Tebbetts photo

Girl Scout Cookie Booths Are Open Now Through March 16



How to Purchase Girl Scout Cookies This Year

- If you know a registered Girl Scout, reach out to learn how they're selling cookies. If you don't know a Girl Scout, see www.girlscoutsgwm.org/ cookie and use the Girl Scout Cookie Finder to find a booth and purchase cookies.
- You can also text COOKIES to 59618 to stay informed about how to purchase Girl Scout Cookies and other exciting Girl Scout news.

You can also support Girl Scouts along with our hometown heroes and military by buying cookies and donating them through our Gift of Caring program at cookie booths and online at <https://bit.ly/4aBfX7U>.

Rainbow Sweets

(continued from page 1)

bakery space transformed into a commercial kitchen available to the community to support local food producers in preparing their goods for a commercial market.

To further anchor the space as a community hub, Cooperation Vermont is working with a Marshfield resident with a business plan to provide healthy, low cost prepared meals. The goals of the business are to address food insecurity in the area and to create more indoor spaces where folks can gather. More information will be released about the cafe business in the future.

Additionally, there is another space on the ground floor that is zoned as both commercial and residential. Cooperation Vermont will be announcing a community visioning process for how best this space could be used to meet local needs. One idea already put forth is that it could be shared space for people in the healing arts (therapists, counselors, massage therapists, herbalists, and more) and could house a local apothecary.

Michelle Eddleman McCormick, Director for Cooperation Vermont and General Manager for Marshfield Village Store says, "It is critical for spaces key to



the overall community's ability to thrive be pulled off the speculative market and put to use serving local needs. It is equally important that those spaces are cooperatively managed by members of the community."

The idea of cooperative governance goes back a long way in Marshfield. The town of 1,800 is a blend of longtime residents, many whose families scratched out homesteads on the rocky hills and supported one another as they fed Marshfield -and beyond- for over 150 years, and newcomers who started arriving in the '60s. Now, in the face of climate and political concerns, residents new and old are coming together to ensure a resilient, nourishing and capable town - for those just passing through, others making it their new home, and those with streets named after their families.

Cooperation Vermont was formed in 2022, with the mission to build economic and environmental democracy. The vision is to shift away from extractive systems of economic development and collectively create self-sufficient, resilient communities with thriving, ecological sustainable economies.

Ongoing development is planned for the Rainbow Sweets building, with initial focus being a commercial kitchen space. Fundraising will begin this year for renovations on the cafe and kitchen spaces.

NEW & USED EQUIPMENT

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LARGE SUPPLY OF CRUCHON, VMSMA & MAPLE LEAF CONTAINERS

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SEE A LISTING OF EQUIPMENT FOR SALE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGES:

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