

Town of Mount Vernon Community Newsletter



www.mtvernonme.org

December 2022 Edition

TOWN OFFICE STAFF

Town Office

Phone: 207-293-2379
Fax: 207-293-3507
clerk@mtvernonme.org
Mon 8am-6pm
Tue, Wed, & Thu 7am-3pm
Fri, Sat & Sun - Closed

Town Clerk & Tax Collector

Heather Wheeler @ 207-293-2379
clerk@mtvernonme.org

Deputy Clerk

Rachel Meader @ 207-293-2379
deputyclerk@mtvernonme.org

Treasurer

Kerry Casey @ 207-293-1103
treasurer@mtvernonme.org
Mon, Wed 10-12

Select Board

selectboard@mtvernonme.org

Anna Libby @ 207-951-2385
anna@mtvernonme.org

Robert Grenier @ 207-293-2783
bob@mtvernonme.org

Carl Rogers @ 207-200-8058
carl@mtvernonme.org

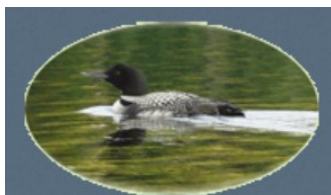
Select Board Admin. Assistant

Open position

Select Board Meetings are held every other Monday at the Town Hall Office @ 1997 North Road

Warrant @ 6:30 pm
Regular Town Business @ 7:00pm

Planning Board Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Dr Shaw Memorial Library @ 344 Pond Road



TOWN DEPARTMENT STAFF

Animal Control Officer

Eric Johnson 207-931-7684
dogs, cats and other domesticated animals only.

Cemetery Sexton

Bob Grenier @ 207-293-2783
bob@mtvernonme.org

Code Enforcement Officer and Plumbing Inspector

Bill Butler Work: @ 207-293-2636
Cell: 207-446-6541
CEO@mtvernonme.org
Tuesdays 8am-4pm

Fire Chief

Jason Beckler @ 207-293-2114
(non-emergencies)

General Assistance

Anna Libby @ 207-951-2385
anna@mtvernonme.org

Health Officer

Rachel Criswell, MD

Rescue Director

Pat Rawson @ 207-293-2597
(non-emergencies)

Road Commissioner

Lee Dunn @ 207-242-5828

Tax Assessor

Roger Peppard @ 207-293-1105
3rd Thursday of each month
Call Town Office for Appointment
assessor@mtvernonme.org

Transfer Station

Megan Goucher @ 207-213-3523
Sat & Sun 8:30 am - Noon

Dr. Shaw Memorial Library

207-293-2565
Website: drshawlibrary.org
Email: librarian@drshawlibrary.org

Mon 3pm-6pm,
Wed 9am-12pm & 3pm-7pm
Sat 10am-3pm

*Masks appreciated.
Curbside always available.
Call or email us in advance.*

Mt. Vernon Post Office Hours Retail Window

Mon-Fri 7am-10am, 11am-2pm
Sat 9am-11am

Newsletter

**All articles to be submitted by
25th of each month to:**

newsletter@mtvernonme.org

Paid Business Advertisements

- ◇ Business Card Size \$15/month
- ◇ 1/4 page \$25/month
- ◇ 1/2 page \$45/month
- ◇ Full page \$90/month

Select Board Meetings are now live streamed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3UCAtx3K5rqMCNAcBCqnLQ/live>

Help wanted

The select board is looking for a new Administrative assistant. Email: selectboard@mtvernonme.org

See page 3 for more details.

From the Select Board

The Town of Mount Vernon had a great turnout in this year's election. We had over 1020 votes. That shatters our last record. This shows the Town's enthusiasm to get out and vote.

The winter sand has been put up. There is a pile of sand to the right of the sand shed that town residents may fill up a bucket or two for personal use.

The Transfer Station Attendants will be checking passes over the next month. Please have yours on the dash so they can easily see them. We are just trying to prevent nonresidents from dumping in our Transfer Station. If you could separate your tin and aluminum cans and place them in the bin at the recycling crusher or throw them in the metal bin this will save the Town money. The metal bin is the only bin that we make money on at this time. LP gas tanks cannot be accepted at the Transfer Station. We are looking into where these tanks can be dropped off. This also includes the smaller blue torch and green camp tanks. The chains across the metal bin and the bulk materials bin will be replaced with gates for added safety. They should be going in soon.

The yard around the Fire Station and the Rescue Station have been paved. These areas were getting uneven and rough and becoming dangerous. The water spigot at the Station now has a sign that the water should not be used for drinking. The reason for this is that we do not test the water. Use at your own risk.

A safety Consultant has been hired to set up a safety program for each of our departments. These manuals will contain all the material needed for each department to do training and prepare records. All of this is required by the Maine Labor Laws.

If you haven't used the Town's Website, give it a look. You can find the Town's tax maps, Selectboard minutes, information about each department and many other information you may find informative. If you can not find something that you think should be on the site let us know.

The Selectboard and everyone at the Town Office would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday season.

Bob and the Selectboard

Help wanted—Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

Some of the duties of the Administrative Assistant include:

- ◆ Attends Board of Selectmen meetings, helps prepare agendas, provides supporting documents and information pertinent to agenda items, and writes meeting minutes.
- ◆ Organizes and maintains filing of both electronic and physical documents.
- ◆ Works in a collaborative manner with Board of Selectmen, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, department heads, and the public; supports processes for effective information flow and sharing.
- ◆ Acts as liaison between selectmen and all Town departments, boards, committees, commissions, as well as citizens. Advises and communicates with the Board of Selectmen thereof.
- ◆ Organizes and prepares for Town Meeting and special town meetings including preparing warrants, producing the town report, and ensuring set up of meeting space and that copies of materials are available.
- ◆ Produces the monthly town newsletter.
- ◆ May also need to attend and take minutes for other committees, such as Planning Board and Board of Appeals.

Essentials skills and experience should include:

- ◆ Significant experience with the Microsoft Office suite of products.
- ◆ Communicating effectively orally and in writing, including research capability and reporting ability.
- ◆ Listening to, and accepting, criticism; must possess conflict resolution skills and public relation skills. Practices discretion and sound judgement.

Email selectboard@mtvernonme.org if interested.

December Dates to Remember:

- 12-03-22—**Santa** and his **Elves** at the CC for the **Christmas tree lighting 4-6 PM**
- 12-05-22—**Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM**
- 12-06-22 — **Digital Inclusion and Digital Equity working group (Zoom) Meeting at 03:00 PM (tentative)**
- 12-06-22—**Board of Appeals Meeting (no cases to be heard) Town Hall at 6:30PM**
- 12-07-22—**Community Center Board meeting at 6:00 PM**
- 12-21-22 - **Broadband Committee (Zoom) Meeting at 06:30 – 08:00PM (tentative)**
- 12-21-22—**Planning Board Meeting in the Dr Shaw Memorial Library at 7:00PM**
- 12-19-22—**Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM**



If you have a meeting you want to post, please Email newsletter@mtvernonme.org

Broadband Committee Update - DECEMBER, 2022

What is next for Broadband in Mount Vernon?

The Broadband Committee would like to extend its appreciation to each of the 1009 voters who voted on the broadband question on November 8th . The town discussions were informative but even so, the initiative was defeated in a very close vote 502 yes and 507 no.

The committee is halted its efforts to submit the infrastructure grant proposal. Instead, it plans to continue monitoring other town initiatives and opportunities to improve our town's infrastructure proposal, particularly with respect to the overall cost of the project and its impact on property taxpayers.

At the same time the committee is going to focus on the Digital Inclusion Plan which, when implemented, can result in better broadband support for us all, regardless of the network infrastructure developments. Here are a few points to consider:

- Senior Citizens (over 65) should consider their eligibility for the new state of Maine Property Tax Stabilization Plan. Signing up can prevent future increases in property taxes. And these savings will not be an expense to other property taxpayers in Mt Vernon.
- Many of our citizens have yet to take advantage of the American Connectivity Plan (ACP). This is a federal subscription subsidy for families whose incomes are less than 200% of the poverty line. They can receive up to a \$30 per month reduction in broadband subscription fees.
- Greater access to telehealth services in town is emerging. We hope that town members will ask us about what these are, what privacy protections are being rolled out and how the town can reduce barriers to access.
- Spectrum or Consolidated homeowners also can consider saving money by turning in the cable box ("cut the cord") and instead relying on internet "streaming" for entertainment packages.
- For the town's DSL users monthly subscription fees in town range from \$50-\$60 to \$80 or more. We can inform you about these options.
- We are developing a new partnership with the Library and DEC to provide free individualized broadband assistance and skill building classes. Some of these will be available to you at home through the internet and others will be provided at the Mt Vernon Library. We're developing a new partnership with Neighbors Driving Neighbors to provide transportation to these classes.

If you wish more information or have questions, send an email with your contact information to The Mount Vernon Broadband Committee mtvbrdbnd@gmail.com. If you wish, provide your phone number and one of us will answer your questions.

Best wishes for the holidays.

Mount Vernon Selectboard Meeting Minutes – October 24th, 2022

Attending: Bob Grenier (Selectboard Chair) Anna Libby and Carl Rogers (Selectboard)

Kerry Casey (Staff)

William Rosenberg (Chair, Broadband Committee, in attendance)

Susan Herman (Governance Committee, Chair) Kathy Jacobs (Governance Committee, member)

Jason Beckler (Fire Chief)

Kathie Smith (Guest) Alice Counts (Guest), Barry Skilling (Guest)

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Bob Grenier

A motion was made to accept the meeting minutes from the October 10th meeting. Approved 3-0

Governance Committee – Sue, Katie, Barb – Add Kathy Jacobs and Aaron Berls

Sue sent report in 2020 to Bob – made recommendations but not sure if any action was taken.
Suggested hiring a “Town Office Coordinator” with an increase in hours and pay

This would be a skilled person who could address communications across silos

A step toward a town manager

Considered options of possible town manager role

Bob pointed out that we are now managing a \$3 million dollar budget, a good number of employees, more regulations, FEMA, wants ability to pursue grants that are available, other towns around us have town managers

What duties could be taken away from the Selectboard?

What would be the impact on the Selectboard?

Town administrator – one level down from Town Manager

Focus on communications between silos, people management

A lot has changed with grants

Plenty of resistance noted in the past

Interview other town managers including Eric in Readfield

Develop timeline to investigate

May need town meetings and a town charter

Salary issue/questions

Would be advantageous to have someone oversee the town clerk and treasurer

Anna to email potential candidates to Sue

Barry expressed concern about the quality of a town manager

Bob made a motion to accept Kathy Jacobs and Aaron Berls to the Governance committee –

Approved 3-0

Sue Herman to follow-up with Greg Cauldwell about changing campground to a commercial enterprise.

Broadband – Bill Rosenberg presented

Pole survey is complete

Maine Connectivity Authority application window is now open

Question about Kennebec County ARPA funding opportunity notification – SB not aware. \$22 million available – non broadband.

Broadband committee will apply for additional funding options, primarily for Digital Equity

Need copies of our insurance policy

Need 2 years of audited financial statements

Select Board minutes 10/24/22—continued

Working on agreement with Matrix

Bill indicated broadband committee will submit a request for the SB to sign bond anticipation note, no cost, will not be used unless the town warrant is approved and a grant received. Wants to include it in the application for the MCA grant.

Request to extend use of Remington French until the end of the year while staying within the original allocated budget.

Anna made a motion to the Selectboard extend the time for Remington to work with the broadband committee and be paid until the end of the calendar year 2022 and remain within the original budget. Approved – 3-0.

Transfer Station

Bob working to get new gates for the dumpsters to minimize hazard of people falling into the dumpsters. Bob recommends we use Lynn Poole to install the gates since he did the prior work to install the chains.

Tires fees to increase from \$2.00 to \$3.00 due to increase in costs from our vendor.

Bob made a motion that we increase the tire fee (passenger car size) to \$3.00 per tire.

Approved 3-0.

Bob noted MMA may have money to assist with putting the new gates in.

Appointments:

Aging in Place Committee – Motion by Anna to appoint Joseph Lopez and Leslie Grenier to the Aging in Place Committee. Approved – 2-0 Bob abstained due to Leslie’s appointment.

Safety procedures for all departments:

Will begin work on Department of Labor fire department requirements on October 29.

Selectboard and Jason to work with Lynn on requirements/review.

Library and town office work to be done November 16.

Closing Winter Roads

Motion made to close the following roads:

Mooar Hill Rd from the transfer station to N. Taylor Rd

Cottle Hill Rd from Karabin to 267 Cottle Hill Rd

Motion approved 3-0

Lee can now close these roads at any point

North Rd Drainage project – Bob mailed signed agreement back to the Maine State engineer

Blake Hill Rd – Bob to call about status of Blake Hill Rd.

Drinking water at the Fire Station – Jason noted that we cannot guarantee the quality of the water coming from the outside drinking faucet at the Fire Station. We will put up a sign indicating the water is not for drinking. Check with Tom Carey, town attorney.

Watershed into Long Pond – Charley indicated funds were available to address drainage to Long Pond

October 29 – **Drug take back @ Belgrade transfer station** from 10:00 to 2:00. Mount Vernon residents are welcome to drop of prescription drugs.

Select Board minutes 10/24/22—continued (2)

Question was asked about the **need for signature collection for non-profits** – if non-profit is requesting the same amount, no need for signature

Discussion about **purchasing an OWL for planning board meetings** – Discussion about cost, use of library money

Anna noted a **misspelled name in the 9/26 meeting minutes**. Anna to provide name to Carl to remedy. Anna made a motion to amend the spelling error from 9/26. Approved – 3-0.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:58

Mount Vernon Selectboard Meeting Minutes – November 7, 2022

Attending:

Bob Grenier (SB Chair), Anna Libby and Carl Rogers (Selectboard)

Kerry Casey (Staff)

William Rosenberg (Chair, Broadband Committee)

June Cauldwell (Chair, Community Center)

Greg Cauldwell (Chair, Planning Committee)

William Ellis and Brandon Ellis (Representing Maine School of Masonry)

Guests: Ona Fast, Aaron Berls, Barry Skilling and Alice Counts

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 by Bob Grenier

A motion was made to accept the meeting minutes with amendments for 10/24. Motion seconded by Anna. Approved 3-0.

Community Center – June Cauldwell

Plan is to repair the foundation and eventually put in a full floor

The Ellis brothers were in attendance. They were selected to do the repair work representing the Maine School of Masonry

DEP was invited to review proposed fixes – felt they could bend the rules a bit but also may need to come before the planning board – If greater than 10 yards of soil is to be moved, the planning board needs to approve the work.

File a “permit by rule” request

CC board decided to proceed with the more expensive proposal but felt the contractors better understood what needed to be done and were most aligned with the local goals.

June is asking the town pay for the DOT permit - \$266.00

CC will have 2 years from the permit approval date to complete the work.

The project will cost \$15,000.00. Funds will come from the CC coffer.

Foundation wall under the handicap ramp will be pointed

Minor excavating will be needed under the ramp. A rubber barrier will be put in place to ensure water drains away from the building.

On the front side, granite slabs have shifted from a prior repair. A trench will be dug to expose the foundation. Minor jacking will be performed to get forns in for concrete to flow through the wall. The company will then replumb and realign the granite with the sill plate under the building. Trench is expected to be 3’ to 4’ deep.

Additional ditching to divert water

Contractor needs to be DEP certified and ensure no silt goes into the lake

Select Board minutes 11/7/22—continued

Discussion about DEP certification is a 1-day course. Only 1 person from the company needs to be certified.

Permit by rule – wait 14 days

May need to wait until spring – up to 50% of the inside work can be done without a permit.

Need copy of company's liability insurance policy

Plan is to do just the foundation first.

Timeline for the handicap ramp being out of use is approximately 2.5 days.

The whole project is expected to take 2 weeks once work begins. It will probably be December or January before the work starts.

Meeting with CEO Bill Butler is planned for tomorrow.

Bob G made a motion to spend \$266.00 for the permit by rule – Approved 3-0

The Ellis brothers will send the contract and insurance policy tomorrow for signature.

Broadband – Bill Rosenberg, Chair, Broadband Committee

Grant application is being worked on and will be ready for Wednesday night submission, assuming the vote is positive.

Pole survey is complete – Matrix found differences in the miles of coverage compared to the Casco Bay report. The number of poles however is in line with prior analysis.

Plan is to ask for a larger grant which should lower the funds needed via the property tax Working on the Bond Anticipation Note (taxable) from Androscoggin Bank.

Contract with Matrix will be worked on over the next few weeks. A memorandum of understanding is available for the grant submission.

The grant application review is expected to take 2 months.

There are a number of points that need to be ironed out as a result of the pole survey.

A request was made to get details regarding Amanda Meader's time spent on the project.

Transfer Station

Bob bought the gates

Talked with Lynn Poole to install the gates

Bob noted we got a letter from Waste Management. Rates going up. Rates will be \$34.00 per ton and \$39.00 per ton.

Bob to get with Meghan to talk about ways to minimize fees. May be advisable to put foam in

North Road Drainage

Bob requested an extra deep basin

Scott Horne indicated he could get the catch basin and pipe in this year, perhaps in a couple of weeks.

Safety Procedures

Fire department review went well

Lynn is meeting with Pat and Jason tonight to review Rescue details

Lynn will meet next Wednesday to review the Town Office and Library

Still need to schedule a meeting with Meghan and then with Lee

Appointments – Paul Crockett to Governance Committee

Bob made a motion to appoint Paul Crockett to the Governance Committee – Approved 3-0

Select Board minutes 11/7/22—continued (2)

Spring Hill Cemetery tree removal

Bob sent 3 requests for pricing to remove a tree at the Spring Hill Cemetery that is hazardous. He received 2 quotes so far.

Recommendation was made to check with Soucy Johiah who is ½ the price of others. Phone number is 653-0564. He has insurance

Castle Island Bridge to be removed November 14th and re-open by Memorial Day. Possible reopening with 1 lane prior to Memorial Day.

Pay Policy – Kerry wrote a pay policy to provide documentation to FEMA for reimbursement. Anna made a motion to accept the Town of Mount Vernon pay policy how we operate to FEMA. Approved 3-0

Recommendation the town recognize Dana Dunn for his contributions to the community given his health.

Waste Management review – tipping, hauling, pulling fees.

Governance committee – meeting on Thursday evening.

Bob moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:51. Approved 3-0

Bob to send out policies for SB to review prior to the next SB meeting.

Heating Assistance

With K1 (kerosene) at about \$7 a gallon and #2 fuel oil at \$4.50-\$5.00 a gallon, folks are concerned about either their own ability to keep the heat on this winter or about the wellbeing of others.

For the January newsletter we hope to have an article that helps inform people how they can:

1. Get access to heating assistance funding from a variety of sources.
2. Or, help others in need by either making donations or attending a fundraising event.

More on this topic next month.

Did you know:

You can look up tax bills and balances due here: <http://reonline.harriscomputer.com/research.aspx?ClientID=1024>

And the online Tax maps are here: https://mtvernonme.org/Documents/Tax%20Maps/MountVernon_5-8-22.pdf

One of the features of the tax maps are that the property owners are listed in the upper-right of each map. You just have to zoom in to see that info. The maps are updated annually.

MOUNT VERNON YouTube CHANNEL



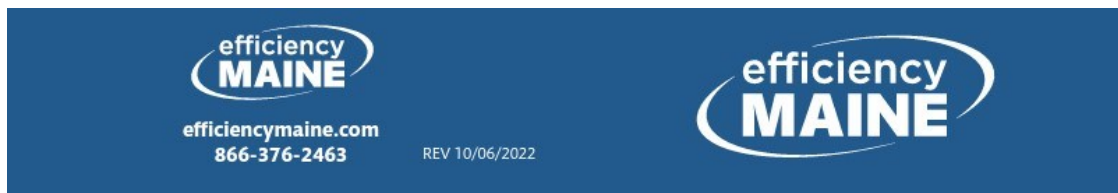
You can watch the Select Board meeting LIVE now on YouTube at the link below. When we have enough subscribers, we can name our own link. Please help Mount Vernon to achieve our own dedicated YouTube Link. All we need is 100 subscribers.

Follow this link and then hit the subscribe button. The current URL is <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3UCAtx3K5rgMCNAcBCqnLQ/live>

Once we have 100 subscribers, the channel would be something like <https://www.youtube.com/townofmountvernon> instead!

Did you know that Efficiency Maine has insulation rebates up to \$9,000 available now? [Click here to learn more about](#) this program which includes “Any-Income” rebates up to \$5,000 and Income-Eligible rebates up to \$9,000.

There’s also an \$850 incentive to upgrade from an old electric hot water heater to a heat pump water heater. [Click here for more details.](#)



From the Clerk’s Office:
Both dogs and snowmobiles may be registered now for 2023.

Dr. Shaw Memorial Library

December 2022

Phone: 293-2565 Email: librarian@drshawlibrary.org

“A library...is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft, and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.” Caitlin Moran

Wintry weather: During the winter months, if the weather is bad, please call us during our usual hours to see if we are open or if we will be closing early, before you go out on the roads to visit us. We try to keep patrons, staff, and volunteers safe on snowy or icy days! Our number is 293-2565.

Story Hour, and Take&Makes: The next planned story hour with Bobbi Jo is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14 at 10AM. Bobbi Jo chooses great stories to read to the kids, and she and Alice collaborate on putting together some art or craft activity for everyone to do together. We hope you can join us! Meanwhile, Alice will put together another **winter holiday Take&Make**, and will have them ready by the middle of the month. Please stop by and grab one for your child, they are quite popular among our young patrons!

Knitting/Crocheting group: The knit & crochet group is hoping to reassemble at the library, to craft together and teach others who might be interested in joining but who don't quite have the skills yet. Please call or email the library if you are interested, and we'll let Amy know, so she can start planning on good times for the group to meet.

Giving Tree: The Rescue folks delivered a small Giving Tree, as usual, to us. We have it on the round table near our circulation desk. Please come in and take a tag. They will take monetary donations, which can be delivered to Flying Pond Variety, or can be sent directly to the address written on the tags. Your generosity and support of this community tradition is greatly appreciated!

Lifelong learning: Bendable Maine is part of a nation-wide project supported by the Drucker Institute, to provide opportunities for learning at all stages of life, through digital learning centers. You can read more about this elsewhere in this issue of the town newsletter. As an introduction, local libraries are working together to provide a Zoom meeting about all of the resources available through Bendable Maine on Wednesday, January 18, from 6-7pm. As we get closer to the date, we will post the zoom link on our website and our Facebook page. This project shows a lot of promise, and libraries and other organizations are becoming involved in order to support our communities of learners!

Tax Help: Our marvelous Tax Gurus, David and Christine, will be back to provide tax help for community members who need assistance, as a service of AARP. They will have appointments on Saturdays: February 25, March 11, & March 25. Please call the library after January 3rd to schedule an appointment. You can see further information in this issue of the newsletter.

Digital Connectivity: The wonderful Broadband Committee folks have reached out to us to see if we might be able to collaborate with them regarding helping anyone who would like to sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program, which can help reduce monthly costs for internet access for people who meet the income criteria. If you want to learn a bit about the ACP, you can visit their site at: <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov>

If you want to know more, you can view an AARP article about it here: <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/personal-technology/info-2021/fcc-subsidy-helps-broadband-internet-access.html>

Dr. Shaw Memorial Library—Continued...

Applying can be a bit difficult for individuals, so the Broadband folks are learning how they might be able to help. We will let you know what assistance we can all offer later this winter, after we've finalized any plans.

Also, if you are in need of a device, the nonprofit group that used to be called the PC's for Maine Project is now re-formed into Give IT Get IT.org. They will accept and recycle your old computer, or you can get a low cost computer & support from them. You can call them at 207-338-4233, or visit their website at www.giveitgetit.org

One more item about digital access, you can learn all kinds of skills about being online and using various programs by visiting the National Digital Equity Center. They have a variety of videos about increasing your digital skills, and are a wonderful resource: <https://digitalequitycenter.org/classes/> Many folks around Maine are exploring these. If you are interested, and don't have access to a computer at home, let us know, and we can set you up at one of our public access computers, to get you started.

I just finished Elizabeth Strout's novel, Oh William! What are you reading or listening to as you prepare for winter and the holidays? Be well, everyone. The light will begin to slowly return after winter Solstice!

BS from the TS



Wednesday December 28th – We will be open 12-4 for your convenience.

Note: We cannot accept propane tanks unless the nozzle has been removed. Sorry for any inconvenience. Two places you can also dispose of propane tanks are:

Fabian in Oakland
Tim's RV in Chelsea



Happy Holidays from your transfer station crew.



WINTER REVELS RETURNS TO THE VIENNA UNION HALL WITH RANDY JUDKINS

After a 3-year break the Vienna Union Hall will host "Winter Revels" on December 17th. This year's Revels will be headlined by the return of Randy Judkins aka "Judd the Jester". Randy has been performing to Maine audiences for many years. He is Chief Entertainment Officer of the Maine Hysterical Society whose mission is "to Preserve, promote and provoke laughter."

Randy has appeared in a handful of television commercials and independent films in Maine. Randy has instructed at the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey's Clown College in Florida and has served as a character consultant for Tri-Star Pictures. The Juilliard School of Drama in New York City hired Randy to teach a series of master classes in character and physical comedy.

Randy will be joined by a group of Pineland Fiddlers including Owen Kennedy, Accordionist Gary Chapin and a troupe of local youngsters, opening the show.

You won't want to miss this one. Tickets are \$10 for Adults and \$5 under 12 and are available at <https://www.viennaunionhall.org/arts-and-events>.

From Maranacook Adult Ed:

Registered Maine Guide Information Night

Want to be a Registered Maine Guide? Don't know the process? Trying to decide how to train to take your tests? Want to know the rules about guiding? Take this one hour interactive free class. Get your answers and create your future!

Instructor: Alice Bean Andrenyak

Date: Tuesday, January 3, 2023

Location: Live Online

Cost: FREE

To register, go to: <https://maranacook.coursestorm.com/course/registered-maine-guide-information-meeting?search=guide>

FREE INCOME TAX SERVICES

The AARP Tax-Aide program provides free Federal and State tax return services. Tax-Aide volunteers are trained, tested and certified by the IRS to prepare returns for low- and moderate-income taxpayers, with particular focus on those over 50, but all are welcome!

Low-income taxpayers should note that the only way they can receive the Maine Property Tax Fairness Credit and the Sales Tax Fairness Credit is to file a Maine Income Tax return. Even if you pay no income tax you may be eligible for these credits. These may be worth several hundred dollars, depending on your circumstances.

At this point, Covid-19 masking is optional. Tax counselors will mask, if requested by the taxpayer.

The free tax services are provided by appointment only by calling January 3rd or later and are available at the following sites:

The Dr. Shaw Memorial Library in Mount Vernon (call 293-2565 when the library is open on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays). Tax dates are Saturdays, February 25, March 11 and March 25, with April 8 as an additional day if needed. This site is intended primarily for Mount Vernon and Vienna residents, but is open to all.

The Cohen Community Center in Hallowell (call 626-7777 Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm). Tax dates are Tuesdays and Thursdays, January 31 through April 13.

December News from the Food Bank

Thanksgiving is now behind us and the food bank is planning for Christmas boxes. These will be given out on December 17, starting at 9 a.m. If you haven't signed up for a box yet, please do so no later than the 12th. You can call us at 293-2141 and leave a message. If you're unable to pick up your box, contact Neighbors Driving Neighbors at 860-0677 several days in advance to arrange for a driver.

If you normally get your full pantry items on the third Saturday of the month, please come on the 12th as the third Saturday is the holiday box day.

This year we plan to return to pre-COVID logistics. In the pews upstairs we will be placing holiday gift things such as toys, books, clothing and miscellaneous items for your perusal. Volunteers will direct you as to where to park if you plan to partake in this "shopping".

During the first two weeks of December, we will be asking families with children under 18 for specific information that we will pass on to the Giving Tree committee. Please mention this if we forget to ask.

We will be closed on December 24, Christmas Eve. However, we will be open on December 31 for fruits, veggies and baked goods so feel free to stop in.

BENDABLE MAINE-A RESOURCE FOR ALL MAINERS

What is Bendable?

Bendable is a robust learning marketplace. It allows Maine residents of all ages and backgrounds to easily discover content that is just right for them on a wide variety of subjects and then acquire new knowledge and skills through online courses as well as local, in-person learning opportunities. The learning system's aim is to make the residents of Maine more resilient in the face of a hanging economy. It is truly lifelong and universal but is focused, above all, on reaching those in the Maine community who have been most underserved.

Who is Bendable for?

Much of the content on Bendable is geared for working adults, but it is truly a “lifelong” learning system. Anyone from elementary school through retirement age should be able to find interesting things to learn.

Who is behind Bendable?

Bendable is an offering of the Drucker Institute, a nonprofit social enterprise based at Claremont Graduate University. The Institute created Bendable with funding from Google's and Walmart's corporate foundations. The system was designed by IDEO. The Institute launched Bendable in June 2020 in South Bend, Indiana, in partnership with the St. Joseph County Public Library.

How was Bendable Maine developed?

The Drucker Institute partnered with the Maine State Library in 2021 to bring Bendable to Mainers. Bendable Maine launched in August 2022.

How was content chosen on Bendable?

The team that developed Bendable—led by the Drucker Institute, a social enterprise based at Claremont Graduate University in California—worked with the Maine State Library, its network of local libraries across the state and other key stakeholders to curate a learning catalog tailored for the desires and needs of Mainers. They balanced topics, skill level, age and modality so that you are always one click away from the learning you need. They included high-quality national providers and trusted local providers so that community-based, in-person choices are highlighted alongside online offerings. Some popular topics include: cooking, personal finance, personal well-being, sales and service, languages, crafting and making, job readiness.

Does Bendable cost money?

Because Bendable is being offered through the Maine State Public Library, the vast majority of learning resources featured on the system are free to Maine residents. When there is a cost, it's clearly indicated.

How do I take advantage of Bendable?

You can go to: <https://maine.bendable.com> and from there create your own free account. It is as easy as that! More information is provided on the Maine State Library website.

What is Bendable's Privacy Policy?

Bendable is compliant with the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) and the European Union's GDPR.