TOWN OF VERSHIRE

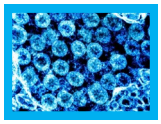
Spring Update

Vershire Town Newsletter

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 3

MAY 2020

TOWN OFFICER'S NOTES AND NEWS



From the Vershire Health Officer

COVID-19 UPDATE

In order to keep our focus on the best response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it enters a new phase in Vermont, here's some information that might help us to decide what to do next.

THE GOOD NEWS: Vermont is now benefiting from its aggressive approach to social distancing as cases remain low , and Orange county has recorded few cases and no deaths. As a result, the Governor is beginning to relax stay-at-home orders.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US? The flip side to the low number of cases is the likelihood that most of us are still susceptible to the virus. So far, we've reduced our susceptibility by conscientiously protecting ourselves and our neighbors through hand washing, staying at home, and wearing a face-covering when we're outside the house. Sure, someone who has been infected and recovered is likely to be less susceptible to the virus. But we don't know who that is since many infected people don't show any signs or symptoms of the disease, and we haven't done enough tests in our community to prove exposure one way or the other.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT COVID-19? The only thing we know for certain is that the virus is still here, in our environment waiting for the chance to infect a sus-

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Green Up Day May 30, 2020.

Join the Vermont Green Up Tradition to keep our roadsides clean and free of litter! Vermont was the first state in our nation to designate a special day for cleaning up the entire state. This tradition was started in 1970 by Governor Davis and 2020 marks its 50th year!

Green Up bags are provided to collect roadside trash and will be available at the Town Office. **You may bring your filled Green Up bags to the Vershire Town Center at 27 Vershire Center Road on May 30th.** A truck will be waiting there.

Please do your roadside green up no later than Sunday, May 31st as the truck will make one last pass over the roads on Monday before heading to Lebanon. This year, the City of Lebanon landfill will not waive any tipping fees and the cost of greening up will fall to each town.

Contact Eleanor Zue at 685-3182 (eleanorz@sover.net) or Kelly Bushey at 685-0055 kellmitch30@gmail.com) and let them know where you can help. Thank you for making a positive difference in our community! As always, for safety dress appropriately: Wear coats, gloves and old clothes and wear a bright color.

At the Durgin Hill Transfer Station: Regular Recycling, Household Trash, and Scrap Metal drop-off is from 7:00a.m to 1:00p.m. Remember—Bagged Green Up trash goes to the truck at the Vershire Town Center Building!

GREEN UP DAY WILL HAPPEN ON: MAY 30, 2020

Town of Vershire
https://www.vershirevt.org

IMPORTANT DATES:

May 1
May Day (or Beltane)
May 10
Mother's Day
May 12
Selectboard Mtg.
May 13
Planning Comm. Mtg.
May 25
Memorial Day
May 26
Selectboard Mtg.
May 30
Green Up Day
May 31
RABIES CLINIC!

There is a calendar on the Vershire website. Check it out at https://www.vershirevt.org

FOOD FRIDAY!

Vershire Town Center Building, 27 Vershire Center Road
10:00—12:00

REMEMBER—THERE WILL BE NO HOUSEHOLD TIRE, ELECTRONICS OR BULB COLLECTION THIS YEAR ON GREEN UP-DAY!
(but we are looking into having a tire collection later on)

VERSHIRE NOTES AND NEWS, CON'T

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ceptible person. And the only way we are certain to sustainably reduce our population susceptibility is with a safe vaccine. A safe vaccine is still more than a year and a half in the making, if we're lucky.

WHAT ABOUT TREATMENT? We also know that there is no proven or approved treatment for this virus. No drugs or other non-medical treatments have yet been shown to be effective, and some are even unsafe. Be skeptical if anyone suggests otherwise. If you're really curious, look it up on a reliable website (I suggest the Vermont department of Health https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19)

WHAT DO WE DO NOW AND FOR THE MONTH OF MAY: Without more information about our own susceptibility, and without a vaccine, the strongest recommendation is to remain aggressive about social distancing: plan to stay at home for everything but essential trips out for the Month of May, wash hands frequently, and wear a face-covering whenever leaving the house. Now is not the time to relax our guard. What we've been doing has worked, let's stay the course.

Dr. Steve Atwood, MD, Vershire Town Health Officer

Notes from the Selectboard, May 2020

Selectboard notes from a brother on another planet.

"Holy cow!" That's what Harry Caray, calling plays for the Chicago Cubs, used to say when one of his Cubbies hit a homer.

As a matter of fact, we've always liked cows here in Vermont, or at least used to when there were more here and we knew what they looked like. But that exclamation has some novel resonance as we confront a situation that seemed to come out of nowhere just as baseball season was supposed to start. That situation is Covid-19. (Dammit! I miss baseball!) OK, I'm better now.

When we last connected in the previous newsletter, life was simpler. Winter had knocked us around, as it often will, but we're tough and acclimated. Around town meeting day, many hopefuls were anticipating spring. In fact, I have heard, and often repeated, the saying that if Vermont didn't have such crummy weather, more people would come here to live. Remember stuff like: "Eleven months of winter and one month of rough sledding."? I always thought there was a hidden strategy to this chatter, as in "Let's keep 'em out.", or at least discourage some multitude from migrating here. Or, how about the exaggerations of mud season? "Yucky," we told anyone who asked, "you wouldn't like to live here full time."

Well, that "strategy" has worked since I came here in 1975. The state population isn't much more than that time, yet Vershire is a notable exception: about 300 +/- in '75, and 730 +/- today. (We must have been doing something right…) But the demographics don't lie, and, in spite of Vershire's gain, our dear state hasn't grown that much.

What a blessing that fact is now! As we confront the invisible enemy, Corona (the beer is not the enemy, rather a friend to be enjoyed responsibly…), Vermont is in a good position. With a spread-out population, social distancing is easier. With an ever-present desire to be a good neighbor, most people are doing the right thing: 6' apart, wearing masks (now a small industry in our town), and gloves (don't we usually wear them anyway?).

So for now, we slog on. We may be able to approximate "a normal Vershire life" in the not-too-distant future. But at the moment, we hold tight. Go to your woodshed! Clean up the detritus and make room for next year's fuel. Whatever happens with the virus, you gotta be ready for what you know is coming at this point: another winter. Remembering: "It in't over 'til the fat lady sings." Bless you all.

From the Listers

The State of VT and the Department of Property Valuation and Review (PVR) has extended the timeline for filing the required annual homestead form until July 15th. PVR has also extended the timeframe for the Listers to lodge the annual Grand List, your property assessed values as of

NOTES AND NEWS FROM THE VERSHIRE TOWN OFFICERS

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April 1st, 2020, until August 15th.

The Listers are still working towards lodging the Grand List and holding information meetings and grievance hearings in June as noted on the new town website, https://vershirevt.org. Should it be necessary to delay the time frame, we will announce the revised dates on both the list-serve and on the website.

We strongly encourage all property owners and residents to file their required state tax forms, especially the Homestead forms as soon as possible. This will hopefully expedite the income sensitivity based tax adjustment/state payment letters being sent out and that adjustment can be posted on the tax bills for 2020-2021.

If you need assistance with your Homestead Values for your 2019 tax filing, we are in the town office on Thursdays from 1-4:30 accepting calls and emails only (no in person visits) and will return your call or email Thursdays. Phone number: 802-685-2224 email: listers@vershirevt.org

From the Town Clerk
Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, and Office Closure. So far, Vermont (and Vershire) has done admirably well in adhering to the Stay Home, Stay Safe, orders from Governor Phil Scott. Over the next month or so, we will find out how safely we can begin to reopen our economy and town. Of course, this pandemic isn't over yet and no one should expect things to suddenly spring back to what they were before COVID-19. The Vershire Town office is still closed to all non-essential foot traffic. There are no events (public or private) being scheduled in the Vershire Town Center Building for the foreseeable future and Vershire Day and Vershire summer Camp have both been canceled. However, Green-Up Day is still scheduled for May 30. All Green Up Trash goes will be collected at the Vershire Town Center Building that day.
For official guidance on how to stay safe in the next months, please depend on the CDC's website (https://www.cdc.gov/), the VT Department of Health (https://www.healthvermont.gov/), as well as the VT Emergency Management (https://vem.vermont.gov/) for the most current information.
Remember that the virus can live for up to four hours on copper surfaces, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel! So cleaning those surfaces in your house (including your cell phone or computer) on a regular basis is a good idea, but washing your hands with hand cleanser after touching any surface outside of your house, or whenever you think of it, is an even better one!

Reference Links:

https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus

Again, although the office will be closed it is staffed during normal business hours and available by both phone and email, please be patient with turnaround times and if you don't get through the first time, wait and try again. The number is (802) 685-2227 and the email address for clerk is clerk-treasurer@vershirevt.org

We are finding ways to work with you and for you and hope, like you do, for an end to this virus. However, we must all keep up the downward pressure on the curve of transmission and to limit the possibility of exposure to this virus, thus providing our healthcare system and professionals the time they need to care for everyone who needs it.

Dog registrations are still required! These can be handled through the U.S. Postal Service and we can get rabies vaccinations via email or fax from your veterinary. For dogs needing updated rabies vaccinations, the deadline for licensing your dogs without a late penalty is extended to May 31, 2020. If you have questions about rabies clinics and rabies vaccinations, please call. I can also send out, via email, copies of tax bills and/or property data. Which brings us to:

Federal and State Income Tax Filing – The federal government and the State of Vermont has extended the deadline for FILING AND PAYING taxes due from April 15, 2020 to July 15, 2020.

Reference Links: https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus

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and https://tax.vermont.gov/coronavirus

Trash and Recycling Saturdays

Trash and recycling Saturdays are still happening. Recycling and Trash Saturdays will continue with some slight procedural changes. No more than three (3) vehicles will be allowed through the gate at a time and only one vehicle will be allowed to unload at a time. Facemasks or face coverings should be worn when folks are outside of their vehicles unloading! Please plan to carry your own trash and recycling from your car to the bins and truck, if possible. If you need trash bags, a face mask, or if you have other questions, talk to Mike or Sande or call the Town Office—685-2227.

Town of Vershire Website:

The website is live and filling up with information as it grows. Stay tuned and add the site to your browser tabs! https://www.vershirevt.org

From the Road Crew—If you see something that needs our attention, like a tree down in the road, please call 685-7789 and let us know. If we are out, please leave a message. We do not travel every road every day and need your help to be our eyes and ears and to alert us to down trees.

Please be mindful that we will be out grading, ditching, working on culverts and clearing brush away from the sides of the roads in the months to come. Always think about safety first—both yours and ours. Keep your eyes peeled and your speed down when you are traveling the roads of Vershire!

FROM VERSHARE AND HELPING HANDS

Hello everyone, from all of us at Helping Hands!

As we continue to shelter in place, we hope that you are still healthy and finding ways to cope with this unusual situation. It is a challenging time for all of us and we want you, the Vershire community, to know that there are many ways that we may be able to help you. We understand that lost or furloughed jobs can create a financial challenge for many households. We have no idea how long COVID19 is going to cause serious disruptions in our lives, and we realize that more help may be needed in future weeks or months.

For sustenance, we are offering a Food Shelf every Friday from 10-12 at the Vershire Center offering food and some non-food items. Please let us know if you would like food but can't make it to the pick-up. We will make arrangements to deliver to your doorstep. We want to thank those of you who have volunteered to deliver groceries from the Vershire Center Food Shelf to people with compromised immune systems and those of you who have made donations of food and money in anticipation of the food needs of our community.

If you are in need of financial help, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us. We will do our best to help you. All requests are confidential and without judgment.

And, if you would like to help us to continue assisting people in our community, we would welcome your donation. We have a donation box at the Gunn's home, on the corner of Eagle Hollow Rd and Route 113, just inside the garage. You can also contribute financially by sending a check to: Helping Hands, 1152 North Rd Vershire, VT 05079. All donations are tax deductible. Thanks to all of you who have already made donations to the GoFundMe - over $4,000 has been raised. We look forward to the time when we can all be together again.

Suzanne (Zanni) Lacey (802) 291-3905

zannilacey@gmail.com

Tonya Gunn

(802) 685-0063

naturalearthfarmvermont@gmail.com

UPPER VALLEY STRONG

Upper Valley Strong (UV Strong) is made up of a group of approximately 50 non-profit agencies, churches, schools, towns and local branches of State Government who work together to respond to the extraordinary needs of our region. It originated in 2011 as the Long-Term Recovery Committee in response to the devastation of Tropical Storm Irene. Its purpose then is its purpose now -- to get direct services to people in need and to share resources and expertise to make sure national and regional resources and disaster relief funding are used in the most effective manner possible.

Today, UV Strong has reemerged as a major contributor to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as this new natural and economic disaster affects our community. It has organized nine (9) committees to cover the needs and coordinate the responses for our families in the following major areas:

- Preventing Illness
- Food access
- Housing
- Child Care
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- Maintaining Older Adult Health
- Financial Relief & Unemployment

US Strong is a community-to-community organization, driven by volunteers from our community and others in the Upper Valley. Vershire is a part of UV Strong. To find out more about it and how it can help you and your family, check out the website at uvstrong.org, or call Gene Craft at the Town Office.

Unemployed and Worried about Running Low on Food?

You worked all your life and always put food on the table.

COVID-19 changed all that.

Recently unemployed because the virus shut down the business you worked for.

No unemployment insurance check has come through yet even though you applied.

Your fridge is getting empty and the cupboard's looking lean.

Other people go to the local food shelf. You've never been. Not even sure where it's located.

Time to change that. Everyone needs to eat well and stay well. Especially now. You will be treated with respect.

Do it for your family.

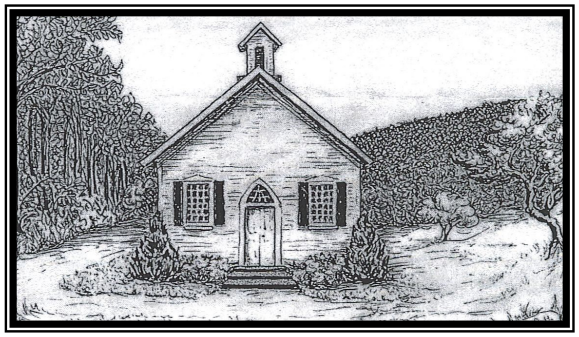
Do it for your community.

Stay strong by eating well.

Go here: https://uvstrong.org/resources/food-access/#food-resources

FOOD FRIDAY!

Vershire Town Center Building, 27 Vershire Center Road
10:00—12:00



Green Up Collections and other News from G.U.V.S.W.M.D

Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District will NOT be collecting tires and electronics on Green Up Day, May 30, 2020.

Please be reminded that as of July 1 all Vermonters will be required to keep food scraps out of their trash, with the exception of meat and bones (although there is the possibility of a grace period to implement this—more on that as we go forward). We're trying to save space in Vermont's one remaining landfill. The average American discards between 30% and 40% of his/her food in the trash. The Town of Vershire is planning to have a container available for food scrap drop off at the Durgin Hill site for those who can't or don't want to compost at home.

GUV has backyard composters and kitchen food scrap pails for sale. Please contact the GUV office if you have any questions about composting, recycling, trash, or hazardous waste.

802-674-4474 or

hgillett@swcrpc.org.

Hartford Transfer Station - Access to the interior of all buildings will be closed to the public until further notice. We will continue to manage coupon sales at the scale house. All customers will be asked to sort and deposit their own recyclables and trash at the outdoor containers. We advise all of our customers to have a back-up plan for waste disposal in the extreme event that we have to close the facility. Please refer to the Town's social media and public outreach outlets for continued updates.

We appreciate your patience. Here is the link—https://www.hartford-vt.org/2203/Recycling-Solid-Waste/

Greater UV Solid Waste Management District - Staff members will be working from home. Please call 674-4474 or email

hgillett@swcrpc.org with questions or concerns. Visit www.guvswd.org or our Facebook page for updates.

VTrans Phase 2 Restart Plan for Construction Activities on Municipal Projects

Effective April 27, 2020

Pursuant to Memo dated 4/24/2020 from ACCD Secretary Kurrle "Update 2 - New *Work Safe* Additions to the Stay Home, Stay Safe Order " bullet 1.1 Outdoor Businesses & Construction Operations, the Agency of Transportation has developed this plan to safely resume certain activities with operations with a that shall rigorously meet the following **MANDATORY HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:**

• No symptomatic or COVID-19 positive workers are allowed on site and any worker(s) who have contact with a worker or any other person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 14 days.

• No employees are allowed to remain at, work or job site if sick or symptomatic (with fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath).

• At this stage workers from out-of-state must quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. Lodging is not available for non-essential out-of-state workers.

• To the extent feasible, prior to the commencement of each work shift, pre-screening or survey shall be required to verify each employee has no symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath), including temperature checks.

• Signs must be posted at all entrances clearly indicating that no one may enter if they have symptoms of respiratory illness.

• Maximum of 5 (five) total workers per location/job. The 5-person crews must maintain a minimum of 6-feet apart from another crew member.

• No more than 2 people shall occupy one vehicle when conducting work. When in a vehicle with one other person both occupants must wear masks.

• All employees must observe strict social distancing of 6 feet while on the job and should refrain from touching their faces.

• All employees must wear non-medical cloth face coverings (bandanna, scarf, or non-medical mask, etc.) over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others. In the case of retail cashiers, a translucent shield or "sneeze guard" is acceptable in lieu of a mask. All employees shall refrain from touching their faces.

• Employees must have easy and frequent access to soap and water or hand sanitizer during duration of

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Still More Information

Vershire Resources

If you are at higher risk or have symptoms: The following folks have agreed to be available by phone during daytime and early evening hours. They can link people up with volunteers who are available to pick up essential groceries, medications, and possibly assist with outside pet care.

If you can help your neighbors with the above tasks, please contact someone on the list below with your availability (days, time of day).

List of names:

- Mike and Tonya Gunn 685-0063
- Laura Craft 685-4640
- Gene Craft, Town Clerk 685-2227
- Eileen Murphy 685-3203
- Aaron Hoopes 685-4448
- Liz Thames 685-1001
- Rita French 333-9296
- Dale Ricker 685-4745

Other Numbers for quick reference:

- Questions about COVID-19: Dial 2-1-1
- If you are returning from most of Europe, China, Iran or South Korea: Call Health Department Epidemiology at 802-863-7240.

Helping Hands, through VerShare, (a local Non-Profit Organization), is organized and collecting donations for a local relief fund to help Vershire Residents who are hardest hit by the fallout from the novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 disease. For more information, see the Helping Hands column information inside. Contact Tonya Gunn (685-0063), or Zanni Lacey ((802) 291-3905)

You can also contribute financially by sending a check to: Helping Hands, 1152 North Rd Vershire, VT 05079. All donations are tax deductible.

Check up on your neighbors and anyone you know that might need assistance, or reassurance. Self distancing and self-isolation can be so…isolating!

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work, and handwashing or hand sanitization should be required before entering, and leaving, job sites.

• No congregation of employees is allowed. All common areas, such as break rooms and cafeterias (excluding restrooms) are closed.

• Equipment, including bathrooms, field offices, frequently touched surfaces and doors, tools and equipment, and vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected at the beginning, middle and end of each shift and prior to transfer from one person to another.

• When working inside, open doors and windows to promote air flow to the greatest extent possible and limit the number of people occupying a single indoor space.

• All business operations must have a designated health and safety officer on-site who monitors and has the authority to stop or modify activities to ensure compliance with these mandatory health and safety requirements.

• All business, non-profit and government operations must use remote work whenever possible.

• All employees, including those already working (except healthcare workers, first responders, and others already trained in infection control, personal protection/universal precautions), must complete, and employers must document, a training on mandatory health and safety requirements as provided by VOSHA, or another training program that meets or exceeds the VOSHA-provided standard by May 4, 2020.

Town of Vershire
6894 Route 113
Vershire, VT 05079

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Postal Patron
Vershire, VT 05079

Email: admin@vershirevt.org
Phone: (802) 685-2227
Fax: (802) 685-1113

THE TOWN WILL SPONSOR A RABIES CLINIC, MAY 31, 2020 (YES THAT IS A SUNDAY) AT THE VERSHIRE TOWN CENTER. PEOPLE WILL WAIT WITH THEIR PETS OUTSIDE AND ANIMALS WILL BE BROUGHT IN ONE AT TIME. ALL CATS MUST BE IN CARRIERS AND DOGS MUST BE LEASHED.

Trying Times - Poem by Audrey Heller

It's not easy living in such trying times, it becomes increasingly harder in every way.

All of us have begun to feel the pressure, as we go from day, to day.

It's been a constant struggle, just trying to make ends meet.

However, we're all quite determined and will never admit defeat.

We'll need to tighten our belts for now, hoping in time, we'll no longer feel the slack.

When that day happens, we'll more then welcome it back!

It just proves that if we have to, we can get along, even if it means we are put to the test.

As far as I'm concerned, this country we live in, is still by far the best!

Now, all we need is patience, some fortitude too.

Then you can be certain, no matter what,

somehow, we'll see this through!