



Whitefield News

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January is “Get Organized Month” – Baloney!

By Harriet Vaughan

Maybe this works in the southern hemisphere but here in Maine January is far too cold and stormy to make reliable progress in getting organized. We tend to have closed-off rooms we choose not to heat so no one wants to start on an organizing project in them. Porches and mudrooms fill up with boxes and bags of stuff to be recycled awaiting the right conditions of: not too windy; not too slippery under foot in the driveway or at the recycling center; then, not too muddy during a thaw. Maybe April or May can be “Get Organized Month”.

Meanwhile, there are a few projects that are worth undertaking in January, such as going through family photos. Perhaps you’ve inherited photos from your parents or grandparents and you have no idea who the people are or where the photos were taken; and yet, you still have them. Why?! Can you let yourself toss ones that are duplicates or indistinct? Can you get IDs on them from other family members? Does the next generation care about them? Can you scan



them onto your computer or upload them to online storage? As for the photos that you have taken and saved, write on the back of them with a pencil the names of the people and any other pertinent information.

Have you saved lots of info in file folders? Is the information still valid? Do you still have instruction manuals for small appliances or electronics that you no longer have? Look for items that have no downside to getting rid of them. Ask yourself, ‘what is the worst thing that could

happen if I didn’t keep this?’ If you can live with the answer, set yourself free from the burden of hanging on to useless information.

Harriet Vaughan lives in Coopers Mills. She is a former professional organizer and has a Facebook page called “The Aging Coach”.



Volunteer of the Month, Dennis Merrill

By Sue McKeen

We at the Whitefield News like to recognize folks around town for their generosity and service to our community. Beginning this month, we will have a series featuring a special volunteer who has shown such dedication and service.

To that end, I recently sat down with Dennis Merrill. Although Dennis was reluctant to talk about himself, blow his own horn, or be recognized in any way, I convinced him I’d buy him something good to eat at Sheepscoot General. That worked. I have to admit that in fact Dennis, always the gentleman, actually bought me coffee and refused to let me pay.

Dennis was born and brought up in Westbrook where he graduated from high school and subsequently went on to the University of Maine, majoring in biology. It was also at UMO that he met his wife, Nancy. They married in 1973 and while looking for a rural setting to raise their family, settled in Whitefield in 1988. They have two children and three grandchildren. Dennis worked as an environmental specialist for the DEP and retired in 2009. He immediately got busy with his “new career”. Volunteering.

His first foray into that world was helping to establish and organize the Recycling Committee. He served as chair of the Tax Assessment Advisory Committee; helping the town during a very difficult transition period. He also served on the Planning Board. Not one to sit idle, Dennis went on to serve two terms on the Select Board and as chair his second term. During this time, he gave



hundreds of hours on projects for the town; consequently, saving the town the expense of hiring contractors. He commented on his terms as a selectman, “As a selectman, the work comes with the job, which is more than just showing up at a meeting. If you take on a responsibility, you should do what is needed.” While on the Board, Dennis helped organize the Road’s Committee, where he still serves. He is an active member at the Union Hall, Whitefield Library, and was part of the genesis of our Whitefield Newsletter. His volunteer activities are too numerous to list, but if there’s a project to be done, a person who needs help, or an event that needs support, you will see Dennis Merrill front and center.

I asked Dennis what motivates him to give so much of his time and energy. He commented, “I like to solve problems. I have had the good fortune to work with a lot of good people. Things don’t happen because of one person alone; it takes working together to make something. When I asked Den-

nis what he sees for the future. He commented, “What would the town look like if everyone in town volunteered for just one day? Would we have a better community?” He smiled, got up and paid for my coffee.

Out and About in Whitefield

By Christine LaPado-Breglia, christine.lapado@gmail.com

I recently talked by email with Clarissa Howard, the learning commons guide at Whitefield Elementary School, about the school's relatively new Makerspace within its learning commons. I sent her a list of questions and she kindly gave me answers. What follows is our Q&A:

Christine LaPado-Breglia: What is a Makerspace and how long has Whitefield Elementary School had one?

Clarissa Howard: A Makerspace is a space dedicated to allowing students an opportunity for hands-on creativity (tinkering). It is a space that encourages students to design, experiment, build, and invent things from their imagination. This space is used in conjunction with the library and both are called the "learning commons." This is our first year of transitioning from the standard library into a learning commons that includes a Makerspace. Like other schools moving toward this trend, our district felt our students would benefit from the adoption of a learning commons, which began this year. A Makerspace is not solely a science lab, a woodshop, a computer lab, or an art room, but a combination of all as a student wishes to use it.

CLB: Who gets to use the Makerspace and how often?

CH: All grade levels have two learning commons classes, with one specifically being used for Makerspace. If students are working on something for another class, they are able to use the Makerspace as well.

CLB: What do kids at Whitefield Elementary typically get to do in the school's Makerspace?

CH: Currently, middle school students are using 3-D printers; others have been challenged to create something that fits in their backpack, such as pillows, dog beds, cardboard designs, necklaces. Some classes are challenge days, like building a tall structure using only newspaper and tape, then other days, students can use nonconsumable items like Legos, straw building kits, circuit boards, sewing, etc. Students are only limited by their imagination.

CLB: What benefits do you see for kids working in the Makerspace? What are their favorite things to do?

CH: The biggest benefit I have seen is students helping others as they are creating things (holding parts or suggesting different ideas) and the excitement they have in coming into the Makerspace.

Each student is different. Some like to use the material and sew, some love cardboard construction, some want to design Lego buildings, others use craft materials to design imaginative things, and some like to work on coding or 3-D printing. I will say one class went crazy over a donation someone made from their junk drawer—they were so excited about these treasures—keys, dice, bottle caps, spools, etc.—that we will be doing a Junk Drawer Challenge in January!

CLB: Why do you think Makerspaces are catching on as a trend in schools across the United States?

CH: Personally, I feel that technology has taken some of the physical aspects of play away from children. By creating a space that is dedicated to hands-on, creative problem-solving in a safe environment, students are able

to interact with others and motivate each other as well in the sharing of ideas. Our goal is to make it a positive experience for students.

CLB: What needs does the Whitefield Elementary Makerspace have? How could community members help, for example, by donating supplies? What kinds of supplies are needed?

CH: Our Makerspace needs are for the consumable items students use, like masking tape, duct tape, glue, glitter, material, etc. that need to be purchased. All donations are welcome, especially junk drawer items—students go crazy checking things out!

We can always use paper and toilet paper rolls, leftover ribbon or yarn, lids, bottle caps—anything that you can look at and ask, "What would a child create with this?" Believe me, they will come up with ideas.

CLB: Name five things on the Makerspace wish list.

CH: Glue sticks (small), buttons (lots), thread, pom poms, googly eyes.

CLB: Anything else you'd like to add?

CH: I feel so privileged to be a part of this new change at our school and working with teachers to provide students with opportunities to explore new ways to show their creativity and learning.

Whitefield Elementary School is located at 164 Grand Army Road, Whitefield, and can be reached at 549-5251. Howard asks that any donations to the Makerspace be dropped at the school office "and if the double doors are open after school, right in the learning commons."



Canyon Peaslee working on continents

Photo by Christine LaPado-Breglia

Town Office News....

Monday	8am to 4pm
Tuesday	8am to 4pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	7am to 12pm and 3pm to 7pm
Friday	8am to 2pm

Reminder dog licensing are due no later than January 31st. After that date a late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed as well as licensing fee. We also notify Animal Control if dogs are not licensed after January 31st. Should you no longer have a dog(s) please notify the office at 549-5175 to let us know. We will need to get you off our list.

Nomination papers are due no later than January 20, 2020.

If you have outstanding taxes for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, foreclosure notices will be mailed on or about January 13th. Make sure to pay your outstanding taxes before that date to avoid more cost. If you are unable to pay your taxes, please contact the office at 549-5175 to set up a meeting with the Select Board to work out a payment plan.



SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHITEFIELD?!

In honor of our State's Bicentennial in 2020, the Whitefield Historical Society will begin the new year with monthly 'teasers' in this Newsletter; highlighting interesting and sometimes obscure people, places and things that are unique to our town. Watch for our monthly queries, and look for answers in the following month's issue...or visit our Facebook page to find the answers immediately! We hope you will enjoy learning more about your town over the last 200 years. Please join us in keeping history

New Road Signs Report

By Frank Ober

I am pleased to report that the volunteers have installed 13 Welcome to Whitefield signs to all the major entry roads to the town. Selectman Keith Sanborn drove the last screw into the last sign at approximately 3 PM this afternoon, just in time before winter settles in.

The project took five sessions and we encountered mud, (sweat and tears), roots, water, rocks, hard clay, cold and wet weather, hilly terrain, and the rest was easy digging.

The crew included some of the following at each session: Keith Sanborn, Erik Ekholm, Dennis Merrill, Ed Mooney, Chris Robbins, Mike McMorro and Frank Ober.

This was a community project with the cost of the materials donated and the design by a local citizen. From concept to completion took nine months, from March to December.

I am proud to have been part of this project which recognizes a new era in the town with the addition of our new neighbors, the Amish, and the fact that others use the roads besides motor vehicles.



Select Board Corner

November 15-December 15, 2019

Below are issues of likely interest to the residents of Whitefield from the Select Board meetings of the previous month. For a complete description of the issues before the Board each meeting, please click this link: <https://townofwhitefield.com/agendas-minutes/> to go to the Town website and read the Select Board minutes.

The primary work of the Board over the last month, beyond financial oversight of the Town, has been to develop the annual budget for 2020-2021. Meeting weekly, the Board has gathered budget figures from the Fire Department, Town Office, and various active committees to compile and vote on a draft budget ready for review by the Town Budget Committee in January.

The Select Board met with David Spicer to review the performance of the snow plowing after the first major snowstorm in December, during which the Board received more complaints than average. Spicer reported all kinds of bad luck during the storm, including broken-down trucks, new staff less familiar with plowing priorities, loss of staff, and other events. Spicer promised to improve performance during future storms.

The Select Board voted to approve adding 18 solar panels to the roof on the King Mills Fire Station. The solar array on the central Fire Station is working well, but the power use by Town buildings has increased, so the new array would help to reduce energy costs. The proposal will be brought to Town Meeting as a warrant for a vote. The idea is that the Town would purchase the panels outright (cost estimated to be \$16,000), and the power generated would be combined with the current array to provide power for Town buildings. The King Mills Fire Department graciously agreed to the use of their roof and the Town will be responsible for any expenses associated with the project.

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JANUARY 2020 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR.

1st



- 2nd **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 3rd **WHITEFIELD FOOD PANTRY**, St. Denis Hall, 10-3 pm
ART OPENING WITH LAUREN OLSON 5-7 pm Sheepscot General
- 4th **YOUTH CROSS-COUNTRY SKI CLINIC** Jan. 4- Feb. 8, 9:30-11 am, at Hidden Valley Nature Center
- 6th **COOPERS MILLS FIRE DEPT.** All are welcome. No obligation. 7 pm
KINGS MILLS FIRE DEPT., 7 pm
- 7th **SELECT BOARD**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 8th **WHITEFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**, Town House, 1 pm
FULL MOON SNOWSHOE HIKE at Hidden Valley Nature Center 5-7 pm
- 9th **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
RSU SCHOOL BOARD MEETING Chelsea School, 6:30 pm
- 12th **WHITEFIELD ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (WAA)**, Whitefield School, 6 pm
- 13th **WHITEFIELD MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPT.**, Fire Station, 7 pm
- 14th **WOMEN OF WHITEFIELD**, We are a group of ladies who get together on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 10 at the Sheepscot General. There is no agenda just coffee, etc. and good conversation. We would love to have more ladies join us.
PTA MEETING- please join us for our meeting @ 5:30 always the 2nd Tuesday in the school conference room.
- 15th **NEW PARENT PLAY GROUP**, Sheepscot General, The playgroup is primarily aimed at 0-2 years old Playgroup will meet in the gallery space at 9 am.
PLANNING BOARD, Town Office 6:00 pm
- 16th **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 17th **OPEN MIC FEATURING MARK S HORN** Sheepscot General 7-9 pm
- 18th **WHITEFIELD FOOD PANTRY**, St. Denis Hall, 10-12 pm
DRUMMING CIRCLE, Sheepscot General, 6:30 pm. Open to the public, all welcome
- 21st **SELECT BOARD**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 23rd **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 25th **COMMUNITY SINGING CIRCLE**, Sheepscot General, 6 pm. Open to all, acoustic instruments welcome.
- 28th **WOMEN OF WHITEFIELD**, We are a group of ladies who get together on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 10 at the Sheepscot General. There is no agenda just coffee, etc and good conversation. We would love to have more ladies join us.
- 30th **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 31st **MUSIC WITH THE GAWLER FAMILY** 6-8pm, Sheepscot General



Do you have an event?

Contact: whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com

STUFF FOR SALE- We encourage anyone to send us their classified ad. This is a free service.

FOR SALE: 2'x 4.5' Brand new jet sled for snowmobile. Great for ice fishing. \$25. Call Bill at 446-8891.



Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 15th of the month. whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com
Whitefield Newsletter Committee: Cheryle Joslyn, Kit Pfeiffer, Sue McKeen, Tony Marple, Christine Lapado-Breglia & Debbie Rogers.

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