The Viking, February 2018

Town of Veazie
For the past three years, Town Manager Mark Leonard and School Superintendent Matt Cyr have been trying to foster a sense of collaboration and shared purpose between the town and the school in Veazie.

They’ve been working with a group that includes Town Council Chair Chris Bagley, School Committee Chair Kristin Bagley, and other members of the community to enhance the Veazie “brand” within the Greater Bangor area.

To put it another way, they’ve been looking for ways to highlight the positive qualities of the town and to encourage both residents and prospective residents to recognize those qualities.

“We wanted to do a better job of communicating, so I started talking with marketing firms,” said Matt. “We quickly realized this is more than just a school issue. The school and the town are in this together. It’s only going to work if we demonstrate that it’s a collaborative effort. We take great pride in our community—and that includes both the town and the school.”

Do you have your VZ plate yet? 500 ordered, 300 still available

How many towns in Maine have names that can be expressed by two letters of the alphabet? Only one—and those letters are “VZ”.

For years, People in Veazie waited patiently for the Department of Motor Vehicles to work its way through the alphabet. Plates with four numerals followed by “VZ” became available in 2017, and the town ordered as many as it could, which turned out to be 500.

Deputy Clerk Julie Strout said about 300 of the VZ plates were still available as of Feb. 1, 2018. There’s no extra cost for a new VZ plate beyond the normal registration fee of $25.

‘After School’ a time to thrive at Veazie Community School

Come visit V.C.S. any afternoon as the buses have loaded and pulled away. You might be surprised to find lots of different activities happening! Students in Veazie are offered many opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills by choosing to join a club or sport.

Chess Club takes place on Mondays and is open to any first through eighth grader. Students learn new techniques and get a chance to make new friendships as they practice their game each week. Students have also played some ‘good ol’ fashioned’ board games during this time, such as BattleShip, Monopoly, Connect Four and Sorry!

S.T.E.M. Club is new to Veazie this year. Teachers are already using STEM activities in their classrooms. This club lets those interested get even more opportunities to use it. S.T.E.M. stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. It allows kids to collaborate on various challenges that promote critical thinking skills. It lets the students become innovators in solving real life issues that will hopefully spark a passion in them for their future. S.T.E.M. club runs Tuesdays for Grades Kindergarten through Two and on Thursdays for Grades Three through Five. We had twenty-seven students participate in the first nine weeks session. Our next session starts after February vacation.

‘This is only going to work if we demonstrate that it’s a collaborative effort. We take great pride in our community—and that includes both the town and the school.’
2 Homeland Security grants requested by Town Manager Mark Leonard provide videocameras and DVR system, ‘Go Bags’ for VCS

One of the things that Mark Leonard does routinely in his combined role as Town Manager, Police Chief, and Fire Chief for the Town of Veazie, is to scan the list of grants that are announced periodically by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Twice in the past two years, he’s recognized grants that would benefit the School Department rather than the town and applied for the grants anyway.

Three years ago, he secured a $12,000 Homeland Security grant that funded 16 videocameras and a DVR system for the school, as well as an automated access control system.

Most recently, by leveraging a $5,300 grant for several emergency needs, including firefighting foam for the fire department, all-hazards simulation training for fire, police, and EMS personnel, a mobile major medical kit for Veazie Community School and “Go Bags” for every classroom.

In the event of an evacuation or relocation of the student body, the major medical kit will provide the supplies needed to triage small-scale injuries, so that first responders can focus on the most significant injuries. Similarly, the “Go Bags” have first-aid supplies that teachers can use in an emergency.

Mark Cyr, VCS Principal and Superintendent of Schools for Veazie, said Mark didn’t have to apply for grants for the school.

“The town had its own funding needs, but Mark recognized that some grant programs would be very beneficial to the school,” Matt said. “He reached out, made the choice to include the school, and wrote the grants. Both the school and the town are better off as a result.”

The 16 videocameras that were purchased with the 2016 grant are mounted strategically inside and outside the school. The system includes a small video screen in the principal’s office and a large video screen in the main office. The screens can show all 16 camera views at once, or they can focus in on one or two camera views.

The display is also available to the police and fire departments.

Matt says that having the town manager write grants for the school system, or ask if the school would like to co-author a grant, may be unusual for most municipalities, but it’s par for the course in Veazie.

“It’s one of many ways that we try to work together,” he says.

Town, school collaboration

(Continued from page 1)

agents, head hunters, and hospital recruiting offices,” says Matt. “Hospitals have teams of people whose job is finding places for new doctors to live in the Bangor area. We want those doctors to choose Veazie.”

Sutherland Weston is also helping the town develop a logo, which should be ready this spring.

Mark noted that as the group worked through the process, they learned what they’re trying to do is unique in the area.

“The school and the town are working together to promote and advertise our town,” he said. “We want to have a ready-to-go packet for prospective home buyers and school searchers. This is not something that other communities are doing. We’re cutting-edge—we’re a couple steps ahead of other communities.”

Matt and Mark said Sutherland Weston talked to a number of towns in the area inquiring about creating community information packets, but there weren’t any available.

“They were told to check with the Chamber of Commerce or look at the town website,” Matt said. “But most town websites are heavy on municipal information, and school websites are essentially school related. No one had a pamphlet or brochure stating why their town was a good place to live or raise a family.”

Mark said the citizens group is trying to get the community set up from a marketing standpoint for the next 5 to 10 years.

“We’re trying to do this in such a way that the school and the town are working together and not at cross purposes,” he said. “We recognize that the school system is one of the key factors that people consider when they decide where to relocate.”

As Mark and Matt became more focused on telling people why Veazie is a good place to live, the idea of a joint school-community newspaper came into focus.

The result was The Viking, which is published jointly by the town and the school. Like the planned marketing effort, it represents a unique degree of town-school collaboration.

The editor of The Viking, Dave Wollstadt of Old Town, has been producing newsletters for 20 different school districts in Maine during the past 15 years, but The Viking is the first where the school and the town are co-publishers.

The idea behind The Viking is that both the town and the school need to do a better job of communicating what they have to offer, both to Veazie residents and to others,” says Matt.

Both Mark and Matt say the community has a lot to be proud of.

“Look at Veazie,” says Mark. “We’re centrally located. We’re not just a strip of road between Bangor and Orono—we’re a vibrant, active community with a very low crime rate, and we have a reasonable tax rate that’s lower than the communities on either side (Bangor and Orono). We also have full-service municipal police and fire departments and an excellent PreK-6 school where students can choose which high school they want to attend.”

Matt adds VCS is what he would call a “destination school.”

“We have that small-school feel, but we have diverse offerings and programs,” he says. “The level of support that we receive from the community enables us to do things that other schools don’t always get to do, such as our FLEX program on Fridays.”

He also points out that Veazie’s central location makes high school choice easier for both parents and students to navigate.

“Veazie currently has students attending eight high schools,” he says.

The town runs a bus to Orono, John Bapst provides bus service for Veazie students, and Bangor High School picks up students at several locations in town. Parents can also drive students to Brewer and Old Town, which aren’t that far away.”

Matt says that in most cases, when parents come to enroll a child, they’ve already done their homework and made their decision that VCS is the school they want, based on whatever information was available to them.

“We need to make sure that the information that we’re making available is in a format that answers all of the questions that someone may have,” he says. “We want to promote what we do well and what we’re proud of. Mark and I have worked on this from the start—this needs to be a collaborative effort.”

The Viking is published by the Town of Veazie and Veazie Community School for the citizens of Veazie.

Mark Leonard, Town Manager

Matthew Cyr, Superintendent and Principal

David C. Wollstadt, Editor (www.SchoolNewsletters.net)

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Town Meeting, State Primary Election set for June 12

Nomination papers available March 2

The Town of Veazie will be holding the annual Town Meeting and State Primary Election on Tuesday, June 12, 2018.

Nomination papers for municipal vacancies will be available at the Veazie Town Office on Friday, March 2 and can be picked up during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Vacancies include:
- One position on the Town Council, which will be a three-year term.
- Three School Committee members for two- and three-year terms.
- One Sewer District Trustee for a three-year term.

To be qualified for an office, the State requires that the candidate be a citizen of the United States, a Maine State resident, and at least 18 years old.

In addition to the State requirements, the Town of Veazie requires the following: elected officials and/or candidates for the Town Council and School Committee must be registered voters and shall reside in the Town of Veazie during their term of office.

Nomination papers must contain signatures of no less than 25 registered Veazie voters and no more than 35 in 2017. The filing deadline for nomination papers is by the close of business on Friday, April 13.

If you have any questions please contact Julie Strout, Deputy Clerk, at the Town Office at 947-2781.

— Matt Cyr, Superintendent and Principal

Veazie residents, children enjoy 2017 ‘Halloween Hullabaloo’

VZ license plates

(Continued from page 1)

The Town of Veazie has been issuing plates with two different letters since 1991, starting with 1AB to 9999AY in April 1993, when narrower dies were introduced for manufacturing the plates. From April 1993 to June 1999, the DMV issued plates 1AZ to 9999GW. Then, when the state discontinued the “lobster” plate (with the skinny red lobster between the numbers and the letters) in favor of the current chickadee plate, the DMV started with plate number 1GA. The plates reached the V series in 2016 or 2017, when Veazie placed its order. As of November 29, 2017, the DMV was issuing plates ending in the letters WK.

Superintendent’s message

Veazie has grit

Veazie has grit. During the past two and a half years, I have consistently observed that regardless of the objective and despite the odds, the path Veazie chooses to walk is ambitious, warm and true. I’d like to share a short story as an example of why I feel this way.

Student drop-offs, bus runs and staff arriving to work was pretty normal the morning of Monday, October 30, 2017. However, there was nothing normal about the return home. An incredible wind-storm wreaked havoc on much of the region, resulting in mass power outages and significant structural damage to homes and businesses. Many roads were impassable due to downed trees entangled in power lines and other debris. The Town of Veazie would remain without power for the next three days.

Our newly-appointed Student Council had scheduled a Halloween Hullabaloo event for Tuesday the 31st. Students were very nervous about whether or not we should host the event and questioned if it was “the right thing to do.” Our PTO was also planning on piloting a “Trunk or Treat” event in the parking lot as an alternative for younger children, and the Veazie Fire Department was planning on hosting a Haunted Fire House. While Veazie was spared some of the major devastation to its infrastructure and roadways, we did not have power anywhere in the town. Some homes had back-up power, but many did not and homes were getting chilly, perishable food in refrigerators started to spoil, and all was quiet and dark.

After thoughtful discussion with all parties involved—the VCS Student Council, VCS PTO and Veazie Police and Fire Departments all insisted that the event must go on. The time was modified in order for it to take place during daylight hours (remember, no street lights or power in homes), all events were moved into our cafeteria (the generator does not light the gym), and many, MANY parents showed up with AMAZING Trunk or Treat displays. Veazie Fire and Police were also present with treats and prizes as well as handouts directing children to the Haunted Fire Station after the Hullabaloo. The best part of all was the number kids in attendance—many, if not most, of our students were in attendance.

Many VCS staff members did not have power back at home and chose to return to Veazie with their own families to support and participate in our Hullabaloo. News that our event was “a go” was shared, and families from neighboring communities came over to enjoy the festivities. For a brief time, kids and parents alike forget how complicated our lives had become in the aftermath of the windstorm. Our community persevered and pulled together during an historic time of crisis and actually hosted a public event—and it was spectacular.

The Town of Veazie deserves great accolades for the perseverance it demonstrated that Tuesday evening. There are simply too many individuals to thank to include specific names, but I do want to commend the entire staff of Veazie Community School for placing Veazie students first….the VCS PTO for putting together our first ever community Trunk or Treat, and the entire Veazie Police and Fire Departments for their active participation and support. Mother Nature destroyed many things during that windstorm, but it could not break our compassion and sense of community. It is with great pride that I tell others I am Superintendent and Principal of the Veazie Community School. Veazie has grit.

— Matt Cyr, Superintendent and Principal

Veazie Community School
Veazie Fire Department hosted a joint workshop with AARP Maine and the State Fire Marshal’s Office to provide training and heighten awareness of three public safety issues that place our senior population at risk.

State Fire Marshal Joe Thomas pointed out during the workshop that Maine has a growing elderly population and the ability to “age in place” must be done safely.

The key areas that affect our seniors are:

- Fire safety.
- Scam and fraud prevention.
- Fall prevention.

The goal of the workshop was to collaborate with other groups that have regular contact with the elderly and be able to recognize safety concerns and help educate our older population.

Often times, the first contact a first responder has with a senior citizen is when an emergency occurs. By working with other groups that have regular contact with the elderly, we can get these key safety messages in the home.

This workshop was one of many to be held in the area and around the state.

For more information on these and other elderly safety topics visit states.aarp.org/region/maine/
Officer Meaghan Jones, VPD

Another D.A.R.E. class has come to a close, and I’m proud to say all 5th graders successfully completed the class.

Many topics are covered in this 10-week program and I’m confident the students will use the tools they were given to guide them in the right direction, when faced with challenging and adverse events. Students are encouraged to use the DDMM (Dare Decision Making Model) when faced with tough decisions.

As these young people approach their adolescent years, they will have different techniques they can use to effectively say no to drugs and alcohol. Students have also been educated about bullying and ways to prevent it, report it and stop it. We really focused on Cyber bullying. In today’s day and age, social media drives so much, and unfortunately, social media is a place where someone can create much discontent by simply using a keyboard. We discussed the risks and consequences of using social media to lash out, spread rumors and bully others. Students had the most questions in regards to bullying.

Students created a help network. In short, a help network is a group of trusted adults they can go to if they need help. We discussed how it’s OK to go to these people if you need help dealing with a situation you feel you can’t handle on your own. People in their help network are individuals the students can also report unsafe situations to.

I would like to recognize Olivia Bragdon for her hard work on her D.A.R.E. essay, resulting in her winning the contest. Olivia’s essay captured what was taught and was fact-based. Olivia worked diligently through the entire program and really shined as a student. Olivia was disciplined, knowledgeable and a great participant. Great job Olivia!

It is my hope that all students will move forward in their lives, with the confidence and wisdom to be strong, successful, drug-free individuals. I enjoyed the time I spent with the students and I’m very proud to have graduated every single one of them.

Great job, 2017 D.A.R.E. graduates!

Veazie Fire, Police Departments talk about public safety work at VCS FLEX program

For eight weeks last fall, members of the Veazie Fire and Police Department participated with the Veazie Community School’s FLEX program to provide an overview of what Veazie Public Safety does within the community and give students the opportunity to experience what it takes to be a police officer or firefighter.

Over the course of the eight weeks, Sgt Gene Fizell of the Veazie Police Department shared topics with a group 6, 7 and 8th graders, including:

- A demonstration of the equipment officers carry.
- A presentation on home safety.
- A K-9 demonstration.
- How officers conduct searches of vehicles, building and suspects.
- Asst. Chief Pete Metcalf of the Fire Department also provided information on different topics, including:
  - Opportunities for the students to experience a smoke house and practice escaping a “smoke-filled” environment.
  - A presentation on fire behavior and fire extinguishers.
  - A practice session for hands-only CPR.
  - A mini firefighter challenge obstacle course.

Both Fizell and Metcalf agree that this program ties in well with each department’s year-long safety education involvement with the school. The hope is this experience will spark an interest in the kids and they may consider public safety as a career when they get older.

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Veazie 7th graders ponder: ‘If I Led My Community . . .’

Each year, Mrs. Cobb’s 7th graders compose and submit an essay to the State of Maine titled “If I Led My Community”. This past spring, we were notified that Olivia Messer (now a VCS 8th grader) was the winner of the 7th grade category, and had her essay shared and displayed at the State House, and now in our school lobby.

In addition to Olivia’s winning essay from last year, we are also sharing current 7th graders Madison Brown and Rebekah Jaksa’s submissions for the coming contest. Veazie Community School students have won this State competition two times in the past four years (Sophia Bilodeau won the essay contest 3 years ago).

Olivia Messer: 2017 winning essay for Maine

By Olivia Messer
If I led my community, I would probably start with spending more money on having more events in our community. I would have different events that would help our community connect more than it has already. The events I would put in place would be picking up recy- cling day, community game night and book club. I feel like the people in our community should connect with each other more and could be a community where everyone feels welcome.

Holding events at the school will also make our small school more notice- able. We can host a movie night at Veazie Community School, with everyone being welcome. This will bring more attention to our school.

I would hold a fundraiser to fix the potholes on Veazie street roads. Veazie citizens often walk/ride on Veazie roads, so they deserve to have nice roads to walk/ride on. Then, our road would be more safe for our citizens. From the fundrais- er, I would also make it a fundrais- er to fix Veazie sidewalks that have worn down from rain and erosion. Safer sidewalks lead to safer roads which leads to a safer community.

A problem the kids and adults have discovered is that (at the intersection) our crosswalk lights do not work properly. This can cause much danger to kids and adults who are crossing the roads. I would fix this problem immediately because I don’t want Veazie citizens to feel unsafe in their own community.

When the crosswalk lights are fixed, all Veazie citizens have to do is push a button and wait until there is the silhouette of a person walking appear on the screen as it should be. Without it being fixed, Veazie citizens will have to wait until the traffic has cleared, which can take a long time.

I want Veazie to be a safe place where people will always feel wel- come and comfortable. With all of our Veazie citizens together, we can fix these things and accomplish the big things. Veazie is a place that is proud of its citizens.

Veazie is an amazing community, and with all of the things I would want to do, General Samuel Veazie would be very proud of his community.

Rebekah Jaksa: ‘Connect kids to the elderly, plant flowers, open school library to the town’

By Rebekah Jaksa
If I led my community, there are a few things I would want to do, starting with making our small community more like a community. When you look up the definition of community it says, a group of people living in the same place or hav- ing a partic- ular char- acteristic in common. Or a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. Sometimes the definition of community does not match how it actually is, so I would like to make our community more like a commu- nity.

The first thing I would do to accomplish this goal is to make a program that would connect kids to the elderly. The program would be between students at the Veazie Community School and the Veazie Senior Center and may later expand to people who live outside the senior center. The stu- dents would match with the senior citizens to do activities that would benefit both child and senior. This program would help the elderly feel less isolated from their community. It would also benefit the kids, be- cause it would give them an oppor- tunity to develop relationships with the elderly.

First, I would want to plant flow- ers around our town and make a town garden. The town garden would be located in town owned land. The garden would be operated by the volunteers which would form a club. All the produce would go to the school, senior citizens home, and to the homeless shelter. This, I think, would bring the community together because, different volun- teers would meet each other and form relationships.

To further enhance the sense of community, I would want to cre- ate more trails in the town owned woods and make all the existing trails handicap accessible, so that people with physical challenges would feel more accepted and be able to see and experience the woods and make all the existing trails handicap accessible, so that people with physical challenges would feel more accepted and be able to see and experience the Maine outdoors like everyone else does. By sharing the love of the out- doors, it may create new relation- ships, friendships.

In the winter kids and adults are usually trapped inside without anything to do. So I would like to make winter outdoor activities like, ice skating, sledding, cross country skiing, snow building contest, sled dog races, snowshoeing, and more. Also if it is too cold to play outside I would want to have a place to go where kids can play games inside. This would make kids meet new friends and give them a chance to blow off energy.

One final thing I would want to do is make the school library open to the community. This would give people a chance to get books locally. It would also encourage the com- munity to read, and people could later form book clubs. It would also expand the variety of books in the school library.

If I led my community, those are some of the things I would want to do to make Veazie more connected and better than it already is.

Rebekah Jaksa: ‘To have a happy community, you have to have happy people’

By Madison Brown
To have a happy community, you have to have happy people. That’s why if I led my community, I would focus on making and keeping the citizens happy.

In Veazie, where I live, there is a senior living center. There are many seniors that live here, but there isn’t a lot for them to do. Even setting up a program where they go on walks once a week would help them. Many elderly people may want to do gardening. I would build a garden on the senior living property. The seniors would tend to it and they could grow vegetables which can even be a part of their meals. Gardening is something that all ages can enjoy. I would get the Veazie Garden Club to team up with the senior living center and create a program for the elderly in our community. Most of the people in the Veazie Garden Club are elderly. This would make everything healthy and happy.

There’s a small raised bed located behind our school. The students grow and pick the veg- etables. This is a good pro- gram because it gets students involved in things. It also makes them understand that healthy eating is important. Even though there are many good things about this program, it could be bet- ter. I think the parents should get involved. Parents could help build more raised beds. They could also help teach the kids how to do things with vegetables. This could make the whole family understand the meaning of healthy living, which in the end could make our entire com- munity healthier.

Down along the banks of the Penobscot River in Veazie, there is a small park. It is a place for people to walk their dog, go fishing, get a kayak or a canoe in the water, or just play. We have had school events there, including an art day where the students of Veazie School painted rocks and made an art piece that we now hang in our school. We had a lot of fun! I think that we should have more of those events. Maybe we could even have lunch down there.

There should also be more town events held there with guest speak- ers and activities. This would bring people to the park and let them know about it. Many people don’t even know that we have a river park. It has been shown that going outside can improve short term memory and reduce stress. This could make the citizens of Veazie happier and get people to be more involved in the beautiful, small town of Veazie.
VCS celebrates Veteran’s Day with special school assembly, songs, essays, Blood Drive

On Thursday, November 9, the Veazie Community School celebrated Veteran’s Day with a special school assembly. In addition to art work and other displays, the PreK, K, and grades 1 and 2 sang songs, 3rd grader Surya Vel played the piano, intermediate students read poems, 6th graders Ben, Hannah, Avery and Christian shared essays they had written following interviews with Veterans at the Cole’s Land Transportation Museum.

VCS parent and Veteran Thomas Stone was our keynote speaker and spoke about his time at the Naval Academy followed by his service on two nuclear powered submarines. Students were VERY impressed to find out his longest time spent under water was 79 days!

We also honored Veazie Police Sgt. Fizell for his years of service and presented him with a United States Flag. At the end of the assembly, every VCS student shook the hand of our guest veterans and public safety officers. Our guests then ate lunch with the students.

After the Assembly, the American Red Cross setup a Blood Drive in our school gym...a simple but powerful way to give thanks to our Veterans. It was a truly wonderful day. Thank you to all Veterans and public safety officers/officials for all that you do!!
After School a time to thrive at VCS

(Continued from page 1)

ming the EV3s. These are student-built robots that are computer-programmed to do a variety of tasks. The club also works on inventing ways to help solve environmental issues. They then present their idea in front of judges. The Robotics Team competes against area teams. This was their second year competing and they made it to states!

Our Viking athletes in grades 5-8 compete in soccer, cross country, basketball, softball, baseball and track and field. In between sport seasons you can see many of our third through eighth graders in the gym taking part in intramurals.

As you can see there is always something happening at V.C.S. so come on in!

‘Breakout EDU’ kits challenge students to use critical thinking skills to solve curriculum clues

Breakout EDU kits are boxes that come with a variety of locks and items that are used to play games that can be connected to any curriculum and content area. All of the games require students to use critical and creative thinking skills along with collaboration and communication in order to solve the clues to unlock the locks for each box.

VCS Students from many different grade levels have had the opportunity to Break-out!! Most recently 5th grade broke out in connection with their American Revolution unit and our last middle school Breakout was the most challenging yet! Students had to utilize content knowledge in math and science while clearly communicating accurate data to stop the Snow Catcher!!
FLEX Friday is a special time at VCS

Friday mornings at the Veazie Community School are pretty exciting—and it is not because the weekend has arrived. It is because of something called FLEX Friday. FLEX Friday is a special time each Friday morning when teachers and volunteer community members lead multi-age student groups in mini-classes covering a theme they are passionate about. Students take control of their own learning by choosing what to join each session. Student groups are created using a combination of student interest, student choice and syllabus requirements. Each FLEX session lasts for 8 weeks.

Past FLEX offerings for VCS students have included the following: Kindness Club, STEM Club, Fitness Clubs, Knitting, Origami, Gardening, Seacoast United Soccer, Shotokan Karate Do, Public Safety Club, Stop Motion Lego Movies, Fairy Houses, Cooking, LEGO Robotics, Board Games, Photography, Dancing, Learning to Draw, Chinese, 3-D Printing, Nature, Scratch Coding and even Putting on a Play. In addition to parent volunteers, area business owners have joined in the learning and collaboration. To date, volunteer business owners and organizations teaching classes at VCS have included the Eastern Maine School of Self Defense, the Mary Drew School of Dance, Seacoast United Soccer Club, Veazie Police and Fire Departments and the Old Town/Orono YMCA. Allowing students to take ownership of their FLEX classes makes their learning more meaningful and enriches the overall school experience. It also shows students that the school and community truly care about their interests. Through our FLEX Friday program, our school and community have become champions of student learning, individuality and opportunity. We have leveled the playing field for exposing students to a diverse curriculum. FLEX opens their eyes to life outside of school and encourages creativity, academics, cultural diversity and athleticism.

FLEX Friday offers the children of Veazie a wide open array of learning opportunities you typically do not see in a public school. It is a wonderful way for community members to get involved, share a passion and help a child's education grow even more. If you have a special hobby, skill or experience you would be willing to share during one of our eight week FLEX blocks, please call the school. We'd love to hear from you!
The Intermediate students celebrated an excellent theater production at the Vezzie Community School on February 1, 2018. This year the kids performed Disney’s Alice in Wonderland Jr.

Parents and friends joined Alice as she left her sister Mathilda, played by Ava Taylor and headed as the rabbit hole in a fast paced scene. Tweedle Dee and Dum, the Mad Hatter and of course, the Queen of Hearts and her Cardsmen. There are many steps involved in putting on such a production and it begins with the difficult task of casting. It is a priority for us to make this as student-directed as possible. We started off by reading through the play as a group and students then decide what parts they would like to play. It was really fun because I’m such good friends with the other two playing Alice outside of the play,” Arianna Baron explained, “In our free time we got together to make sure we had the right shoes, clothing and make-up. It’s been a lot of fun.”

Tall Alice was played by Halle Buxton and Olivia Bragdon played the third Alice. Both girls went above just learning their own roles and timing. Having some previous experience with this play, Halle read lines with several other cast members including the White Rabbit and the Cheshire cats.

This play would not have been such a success without many students stepping up and taking on some difficult roles. The Cheshire Cat: Kylee Barker, Emmaline Hyde, Hannah Lee, Isabelle Ireland, and ShawAnthony-Jones had the big responsibility of keeping the flow of the story going. Alice got some sound advice from the wise and confident caterpillar played by Sarah Hartford. Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum (Kason Bagley and Parker Trahan) inspired quite a few laughs from the audience. The effort they spent working on the timing and delivery of their parts really paid off.

I don’t know about you, but I think I would pass on a game of chess: Kylee Barker, Emmaline Hyde, Hannah Lee, Isabelle Ireland, and ShawAnthony-Jones had the big responsibility of keeping the flow of the story going. Alice got some sound advice from the wise and confident caterpillar played by Sarah Hartford. Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum (Kason Bagley and Parker Trahan) inspired quite a few laughs from the audience. The effort they spent working on the timing and delivery of their parts really paid off.

The audience loved how the Mad Hatter, performed surgery on yes...a watch. How many times have you ever seen a talking doorknob before? Wyatt Chandler nailed this part. Let’s not forget the always late White Rabbit played by Blythe McColl. The lines of the March Hare, played by Hunter Suez were well spoken. The audience was very entertained by the lively Rock Lobsters performed by Aurora, Aidon, Nick, Seth, Josiah, Piper, and Richard.

Scenery and sound were also led by our students. This year Liam MacDonald set his creative mind in motion with scenery and set creations. Mason Buxton was in the sound room and responsible for the many smooth transitions from speaking to singing. A task that would be difficult for most, but for Mason this technology is right up his alley.

We are very thankful to our Parent Teacher Organization who supports this annual endeavor and we look forward to another theatrical adventure next year.

Rick Hathaway
Vezzie Community School, 8th Grade Class of 2000

Tell us a little bit about what you are doing now (where you live, what you do for work, etc.)

I live in Bangor, Maine with my wife Deanna and 3 children (Warren, Ainsley, Vivian). After Vezzie, I went to John Bapst High School then on to Maine Maritime Academy with a degree in Marine Engineering Technology. I shipped as an Engineer on the T &T Spirit in Trinidad and Tobago before taking a job with The Hope Group in Bangor Maine. Currently I am the Marine Product Manager for The Hope Group.

What did you do right after you left Vezzie Community School?

Went to John Bapst High School, then Maine Maritime Academy.

What do you remember most vividly about your time at VCS?

The fact that it was a small school where it didn’t matter what grade you were in but everyone knew each other. The teachers and students.

What are some lessons you learned at VCS that served you well in life?

Don’t be late, and tolerant, and inclusive. Several of my teachers at John R. Graham exemplified kindness and patience, Mr. Elkington and Ms. Gott. To work hard, be persistent. I played baseball, basketball, and soccer at John R. Graham. Mr. Gonyar was my baseball and basketball coach and kids wrote me their own names and it was well planned and executed.

The audience loved how the Mad Hatter played by Blythe McColl. The lines of the March Hare, played by Hunter Suez were well spoken. The audience was very entertained by the lively Rock Lobsters performed by Aurora, Aidon, Nick, Seth, Josiah, Piper, and Richard.

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What did you do right after you left Vezzie Community School?

Attended John Bapst Memorial High School then went on to the University of Maine for bachelor’s (BA, Psychology) and doctoral (PhD, Neuroscience) degrees. Following PhD went on to do post-doctoral training in cancer and immunology at Rutgers University, bioinformatics and modeling at the Laboratory, and cellular and molecular neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

What do you remember most vividly about your time at VCS?

Remember our football and basketball games at recess, intramural sports after school; art class and painting my first watercolor with Mrs. Clukey; science fairs and building a weather station to measure air pressure, wind speed,
By Susan Logan

6th Grade started off the year focusing on the theme of kindness. They read the book *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio. The main character in this story was born with Treacher Collins Syndrome. The students researched for information to expand their background knowledge of the syndrome.

A student from John Bapst with the syndrome visited the class to talk about her life experiences. She shared many situations of living with the syndrome. She also shared details of her surgeries. The students asked her many questions.

The class was able to attend the movie *Wonder*. Thank you to P.T.O. for sponsoring the trip. Mrs. Shannon made t-shirts with the class with the logo CHOOSE KIND. The students wore them to the movie.

One of the activities after seeing the movie was to compare it with the book. The students were discussing the differences as they left the movie. This discussion continued when we met for our next class.

“When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose KIND.”

—Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

6th graders focus on kindness theme, adopt logo ‘CHOOSE KIND’

Civil Rights Team—Back row (l. to r.): Janet Chen, Ben Francis, Cody Dupuis, Mikayla Nguyen, Emily Adams, and Madison Brown. Front row: Rebekah Jaksa, Fallon Eggert, Olivia Messer, Lily Chandler, and Avery Messer.

VCS Civil Rights Team

- **Who Are We?**
  We are the VCS Civil Rights Team.

- **What Do We Do?**
  We protect the rights of individuals and help people feel welcome in our school. We educate our school about what bias is and how we can all make sure we are respecting EVERYONE’s rights.

- **What is a Civil Rights Team?**
  Civil Rights Teams help everyone feel welcome no matter what their National Origin and Ancestry, Gender (Including Gender Identity and Expression), Race and Skin Color, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Disabilities.

- **Our Mission**
  Our mission is to make sure that everyone feels included and welcome at VCS. We want to make the community aware of the VCS Civil Rights Team and hopefully inspire interest in fellow students and community members.

Civil Rights Team—Back row (l. to r.): Janet Chen, Ben Francis, Cody Dupuis, Mikayla Nguyen, Emily Adams, and Madison Brown. Front row: Rebekah Jaksa, Fallon Eggert, Olivia Messer, Lily Chandler, and Avery Messer.

PLANTING GARLIC—A group of 1st and 2nd graders led by parent Melissa Stone (top right in photo at right) planted garlic last fall in one of the new raised beds at VCS. The garlic will be harvested in mid-to late-summer and used in the VCS kitchen. Lower left photo: 1st grader Amelia Hartford works hard at peeling individual garlic cloves for planting.

Sixth Graders wearing their Choose Kind T-Shirts.
One of the first, and most crucial, parts of our training was to understand and identify students who are under-resourced. It is so very important as educators to know each child individually. We start by considering the resources of each child. One of the first resources we consider is emotional. Does a student have a strong enough self-esteem that he can accept responsibility for his/her choices? Second, is the child physically healthy? Thirdly, does the child have the skillset he or she needs for learning, and fourthly, does the child believe he or she can learn and do what is asked of them. Finally, we take into consideration resources available to the child outside of school.

The next task set before the team was to answer the question “What do we do now?” Once we identified resources available to the student, their individual strengths and needs we systematically developed an evidence-based practice (EBP) approach to build on individual strengths proven successful in reducing the impact of specific need areas. EBP is proven through rigorous scientific research to produce the desired outcome.

On November 22nd, the VCS MALT led the teacher in-service day for all VCS staff with professional development on “what is evidence-based practice?” and “what are research-based strategies?” Each staff member was provided with a copy of the book Research-Based Strategies by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D. and were given time to practice in how to use this resource with VCS students.

As a result of this training, the VCS MALT has been asked by a classroom teacher for assistance in addressing specific needs of individual students in the classroom. The feedback has been positive as the teacher reports back to the team that the MALT’s assistance has been highly beneficial to individual students and the classroom as a whole. In a short period of time the school as a whole is already benefiting from the work the MALT team and teachers are doing together here in Veazie!

The MALT training was provided in partnership with the Maine DOE Office of Special Services and the Maine Autism Institute for Education and Research (MAIER) and will provide additional on-site coaching support for a year. The coaching is designed to support the MALT action plan, goals and provide requested training.

Upon request from any classroom teacher the Veazie MALT team members will provide support, resources and consultation to the general education.

If you are interested in learning more about our team please feel free to contact us visit our community library where we have some excellent resources on this and various other topics. Members of the Veazie Community School Maine Autism Leadership Team include Tara Frazier, Elizabeth Glunt, Melissa Hileman, Jessica Murphy and Debrajean Scheibel.

Orono-Veazie Water District provides update on 2017 activities

The Orono-Veazie Water District is pleased to provide this update regarding its 2017 activities.

Enhanced water quality: Testing has revealed that formation of chlorination byproducts in our treated water has been greatly reduced in the last four years. While our drinking water has exceeded EPA water safety guidelines for 9 consecutive quarters, the district seeks to further optimize water quality by maintaining a rigorous year-round flushing strategy, aggressively managing water storage and use among the district’s three standpipes, and closely monitoring treatment conditions at the plant.

Finances: Haverlock, Esty & Curran has completed district’s 2016 Financial Report, confirming that the district is in good financial health with acceptable debt and available funds adequate to support emergency capital expenditures. We are currently planning construction projects for 2018 in conjunction with the towns of Orono and Veazie to create efficiencies and maximize the impact of public resources. Access the 2016 financial report on the OVWD website: https://ovwd.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/8/1/10814272/2016_financial_audit_orono_veazie_water_district.pdf

Priorities: The trustees have identified locating a supplementary water source as a priority following review of a 2015 comprehensive plan developed by Wright/Pierce Engineers based on performance history of the four wells that currently provide the bulk of our water. While there is no imminent concern regarding water supply, the trustees are unanimous in their agreement that responsible stewardship of the district requires exploration to identify an additional water source.

The water district Board of Trustees generally meets on the second Tuesday each month, and we welcome your attendance and your participation at our meetings. Please check our website (https://ovwd.weebly.com) for meeting schedules, to view agendas and to read minutes or listen to audio recordings from previous board meetings.
VCS participates in ‘Hour of Code’ during Computer Science Education Week

By Martha Shannon, Library Media Specialist

The beginning of December brought us Computer Science Education Week. Though here at Veazie, we celebrate computer science all year through various activities inside the classroom and out. Our entire school joined in on the largest learning event in history - Hour of Code, a nationwide initiative to introduce millions of students to computer science and programming.

Monday, December 4th, we hosted Hour of Code Night where several students were able to share with the community their families what they have been learning in Library Media and continue to design and create collaboratively. Three of our middle school students, Fallon Eggett, Cody Dupuis, and Luke Bilodeau, also stayed after the event to share with the community board about how they have used programming on the VCS Robotics team. All Veazie students, PreK through grade eight, have received several lessons during Library Media class about programming using Scratch Jr. (K-2) and Scratch (3-8). They’ve completed lessons on code.org and on a website called Tynker. They’ve even created their own version of Google’s logo. Many of our students have taken what they’ve learned in class and created independent coding projects. We’re making a statement that Veazie Community School is ready to teach foundational 21st century skills, introduce our students to computer science and programming, inspire them to learn more, and leave them feeling empowered.

VCS Library: Books fly off shelves during January; another 200 new books received; middle school students take over Makerspace

By Martha Shannon, Library Media Specialist

Books were just flying off the shelves in the VCS Library during January! Thanks to a grant we received to purchase new resources for the library and Makerspace, we recently received another order of almost 200 books, bringing our total count of new books to 568 since September. Most of these books were requests from students and staff. From old classics turned into graphic novels, LEGO Adventures in the Real World, and many nonfiction books geared towards our primary students, we hit a record in January with over 500 books signed out in one month.

Some of the ways we promote reading in the library are to feature book trailers using QR codes, provide book talks during Library Media class, change displays often, and allow students time to share and discuss what they’re reading. Our third, fourth and fifth graders also help to keep the library shelves neat with our Adopt a Shelf program. Students are taught responsibility through managing the care, organization and display of books. A handful of students have also learned how to shelve, which has been very helpful. They’ve also become a great resource to peers who have difficulty locating a book by call number. Another way we celebrate reading is with a Reader of the Week from the primary, intermediate and middle school wing. These students complete an interview about their reading habits and their picture is on display in the library windows to share with others.

Our middle school students have taken over the Makerspace! Many students enjoy using this space before and after school to do computer programming, robotics, complete puzzles, learn creative lettering and drawing, and create stop motion videos. However, our most popular maker activity this month was the LEGO Challenge. For each book students signed out, they added one LEGO piece to a collaborative build. The scene grew each day, and it was fun to see what we created together as a community of readers.

Be sure to follow our blog at vcslibrarymedia.blogspot.com for more library updates.

Veezie Community School Library

10:30am

March 15 “Construction Zone”
March 29 “Reading is a Hoot”
April 12 “Out of This World”
May 3 “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt”
May 17 “Dig Into Reading”

Veezie Community School Library

Ages 2-5 welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Free to attend. Each program will last about 15-60 minutes. Please email Mrs. Shannon maston@veazies.org with any questions.
Greetings, fellow community members, from the VCS PTO! We would like to start off by saying THANK YOU to everyone who has helped contribute to what has been, thus far, a very successful school year!

PTO sponsored events such as the VCS Craft Fair and the Online Auction, in addition to programs such as CLYNK and Box Tops, fund special programs and field trips as well as extracurricular activities for our students. It is because of this support that our students don’t have to do any individual door-to-door sales in the community.

The PTO also helps coordinate events that bring the community together and PTO members can often be found volunteering their time to help with a multitude of VCS activities such as helping teachers with projects or office work, and running the concessions stand at school events.

In order to maintain this level of support for VCS, there is a need for more help. While we understand that not everyone can make monthly PTO meetings, there are a number of ways that everyone can contribute to the success of our school – EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS!

If you are interested in helping out, even if you can’t attend PTO meetings, and even if you don’t have a lot of spare time, we would LOVE to hear from you! Just contact us at pto@veaziecs.org so that you can be kept up to date on PTO events and ways that you can help. Thank you for your support!

VCS Athletics Update

By Brian Gonyar

Both VCS soccer teams had an excellent fall seasons culminating in a playoff double header at the All Saints fields. The girls lost a close game and the boys lost in double PKs. Congratulations to both teams on a fine season.

The cross-country team hosted a meet this fall on a newly designed trail that included a stretch along Veazie’s newly acquired park along the river. We received MANY compliments on our course and hope to continue to host cross-country meets in the future.

Our basketball teams are currently coming to the end of their seasons. Another fun experience for all. Good luck heading into the playoffs.

36 students in grades 5-8 participated in fall sports, and 30 students are currently participating in basketball— that’s well over half of our eligible students! Athletics is a great opportunity for students to learn about teamwork and commitment. We are proud of our student athletes and thankful for the support we receive from the community.

The Veazie Community School MATHCOUNTS Team recently competed in the regional meet held at Reeds Brook Middle School in Hampden. Team members included Fallon Eggett, Olivia Messer, Janet Chen, Madison Brown, Martin Skacel, and Avery Messer.

VCS PTO needs your help!

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Pre-K/Kindergarten Registration - 2018-19 School Year

Veazie Community School is now accepting Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten applications for the 2018-2019 school year. Both Pre-K and Kindergarten are full-day programs—that’s right, a full-day Pre-K program! Stop by the office at anytime to pick up an application. Pre-K slots do fill up quickly, so please do not delay. A roster slot will only be secured when a properly completed application is returned.

Our full day Pre-K and Kindergarten programs expose students to a diverse curriculum. In addition to amazing classroom instruction with strong focuses on literacy and STEM, students attend weekly PE, Art, Health, Guidance, Library Media, Spanish and Music classes.

Please call ahead or email the Principal, Matt Cyr (mcyr@veaziecs.org) if you’d like to arrange for a school tour. We currently have openings for tuition students.

Thank you,
Veazie Community School
1040 School Street, Veazie, ME 04401
207-947-6573

FYI — Any person with a disability who requires auxiliary aids or services in order to fully participate in an activity at the Veazie Community School is requested to contact the office of the principal at 947-6573 (TDD Relay 1-95593323) at least 72 hours in advance of that activity.

Congratulations to Emily Adams for winning our school’s Geography Bee during the January competition. Emily worked her way through the school preliminary round and won a very close match in the school finals, edging out Fallon Eggett. GeoBee finalists from left to right: Martin Skacel, Fallon Eggett, Riley Auxier, Emily Adams, Madison Brown, Luke Bilodeau and Liam Wheeldon.

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VCS Student Council focus: giving back and having fun!

The 2017-2018 VCS Student Council is focused on giving back and having fun! Most recently we collaborated with Veazie Congregational Church to organize a collection drive for the Bangor Humane Society, VCS students collected over 700 items to donate!!! We had a great time bringing our donations to BHS and visiting all the animals they have for adoption!

We held elections for officers, and the middle school students elected Fallon Eggett for President and Martin Skacel for Vice President. Bekah Jaksa is our treasurer and Lily Chandler is our secretary.

VCS Student Council will be taking over for the Box Top Collections starting February 1st!! Bring in those Box Tops and be on the lookout for some exciting news regarding Box Top Collections!!!

Veazie Community School is now in it’s second year of competing in the Lego Mindstorms (First-Inspires) robotics competition, and very quickly gaining respect around the State as a high-performing programming school. This past year, our team of 11 students committed to 16 weeks of preparation before, during and after school as they built robots, scripted code programs and did research focused on this year’s theme of Hydrodynamics.

The VCS Viking Robotics Team competed in a regional qualifying meet held in Searsport and was awarded the Strategy and Innovation Award. The team also finished in a two-way tie for first place in the programming category—which included a head-to-head competition.

Our team’s incredible success at the regional qualifier earned them the right to compete at the State Robotics Competition held in Augusta. 60 of the best middle school robotics teams from across the State of Maine met one Saturday in December for a very intense and fast-paced competition. At the end of the day, the VCS Viking Robotics Team earned the 5th highest point total in the programming portion of the event! Our small school (with BIG HEART) made us all proud that Saturday and put Viking Robotics on the map in a competition that included 60 teams from small schools, large schools, charter schools and home schools.

The season is now over, but our programmers still arrive to school early every day to spend time in the Makerspace—home to our robotics team. VCS teaches coding (programming) as early as Pre-K. All VCS students are exposed to robotics and coding as part of our regular curriculum which places great emphasis on STEM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

VCS Robotics Team to compete at state meet in 2nd year

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Our young Veazie artists have been hard at work turning cold gray clay into delicate ceramic creations. We invite you to join us for an afternoon of warm food and beautiful bowls crafted by our very own art students.

The “Soup for the Soul” fundraiser will be held on Saturday, March 24, at 12 noon at the Veazie Community School. Tickets are $10 each or $25 for 3 and include a drink, a bowl of soup, bread, crackers, and a ceramic bowl of your choice. Proceeds will go towards a local charity of the students’ choice.

**MENU**

- Iced Tea • Lemonade
- Chicken Noodle Soup
- Chilli • Corn Chowder
- Bread
- Crackers, Shredded Cheese, Sour Cream, Butter, and other toppings

Students will be sent home with signup lists for their families and VCS staff to purchase tickets. Please contact the VCS Art Teacher, Ms. Curtis, at acurtis@veaziecs.org to purchase tickets or for more information about volunteering, donations, our process, and cause.

We hope to see you there!