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Hathaway Holiday Lights coming to VCS December 1-26

On Saturday, Nov. 7, Rick and Deanna Hathaway and their children, Warren, 9, Ainsley, 7, and Vivian, 4, started work on bringing the “Hathaway Holiday Light Show” to the Veazie Community School for the 2020 holiday season.

Rick is installing more than 50,000 lights at the school, which will be synchronized with music that people can listen to on their car radios at FM 98.1.

Last year, Rick’s light show at his home in the Judson Heights neighborhood in Bangor was ranked No. 1 in the area by Q106.5.

This year, Rick is building a new house on Buck Hill Drive in Veazie, and he asked Town Manager Mark Leonard and Superintendent of Schools Matt Cyr if he could move his lights to Veazie. They said yes, adding that the plan to light up the school is supported by both the Town Council and the School Board.

Rick says he’ll be working weekends and evenings during November to install the lights, which will be on display from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. December 1 to 11 and from 4 to 9:30 p.m. December 12 to 26.

Retired Educators Support VCS Music Program

Last year VCS music teacher Mr. Arell received quite a bit of attention when his efforts to secure instrument donations for students went viral on social media. The instrument collection is still going strong, and allows for students to take up a new instrument without the burden of that purchase falling on their families.

This fall retired VCS teacher Mike Smart contacted us to let us know that the Penobscot County Retired Educators Association, a member of MEA Retired, wanted to make a donation to our music program. Mike Smart stopped in to hand a $200 check to Mike Arell.

Thank you Mr. Arell is finding creative ways to keep our music program going despite the challenges of the pandemic. Students are receiving individual music lessons via Zoom, and we now have a Google classroom page dedicated to “Quarantine Karaoke,” where students can upload videos of their musical talents and leave positive comments to each other.

Sgt. Jon Carson joins Veazie PD after 30 years with Sheriff’s Office

Sgt. Jon Carson, who retired from the Penobscot County Sheriff’s Office after 30 years of service, is the new sergeant in the Veazie Police Department, second in command to Chief Mark Leonard.

Sgt. Carson joined the department on September 8. He is replacing Sgt. Gene Fizell, who left the department earlier this year.

Jon’s career in the Sheriff’s Office started with seven years in Corrections, including four years as a sergeant. He transferred to the Patrol Division in 1997 and became a patrol sergeant in 2001. In 2002, he transferred to Orrington, where he remained part of the Sheriff’s Office but was employed by the town.

He spent the next 17 years as a sergeant in Orrington.

“Wore the Sheriff’s Dept uniforms, trained with the Sheriff’s Dept court officer, but we were employees of the town,” he said.

In 2010, Jon went to the Town of Carmel, where he spent 16 months as a Sheriff’s Deputy but a town employee. During his last three months in the Sheriff’s Office, he worked in Eddington.

Jon said he applied for the sergeant’s position in Veazie after talking with Chad Young, one of Veazie’s full-time police officers who served as a corporal under Jon in Orrington.

“Chad told me that Veazie had (Please turn to page 3)
Town Manager’s message:

Update on town projects; new electronic sign; new town employees; Community Policing Award

Happy Fall! nearly Winter!

We have already had our first snowstorm of the season, although brief because since the storm we have seen a few 60-degree days. The Town is well prepared for the wintry weather to come. Our salt pile has been stocked and we have hired a new winter road maintenance crew. Black Bear Lawn Care was selected to take over for Lou Silver’s Construction. Thank you to Lou Silvers for 8 years of performing the tasks of keeping our roads, parking lots and sidewalks clean and safe. I look forward to working with Black Bear as we transition. Although we have a new contractor, much like years past, if you have a comment or concern regarding snow plowing, I urge you to contact the Town Office. As a reminder, if your mailbox is damaged or destroyed by the plow, the Town has a Mailbox Replacement Policy in effect. The contractor will make every effort to temporarily fix the mailbox so you will continue to receive your mail. The permanent repair and replacement will be taken care of once the weather allows.

As we enter into the winter months, I think it’s important to highlight the projects we completed over the summer. We completed phase III of the complete rebuild of Sunset Drive which is located off the Chase Rd. Thank you to our partners at the Orono Veazie Water District and the Veazie Sewer District. Without their partnership the project would not be as successful as it is. With this area nearing completion we now begin the process of determining what streets(s) we will be working on next year. I am in the process of receiving pricing to mill and repave Thompson Road. Once pricing is received it will be presented to the Council for discussion. This project will also have to be done in partnership with the Water District and Sewer District and may have to be a multi-year project. I will discuss the decision in a future article. Another big project I am extremely happy to report is the installation of a new electronic sign. This was installed at the end of Main Street across from the Church. Town Office staff received training on it last week and it is now fully operational. The sign was mostly purchased through a Keep Maine Healthy Grant which I applied for earlier this year. This is a welcome addition and will provide another means of communication for the residents and visitors.

Finally, for projects, Bangor Gas is nearing completion of Phase 2 of installing natural gas throughout Town. I believe with the completion of this phase nearly all of the Town now has access to natural gas, which I know many residents have taken advantage of. The Town Office and Community Center were converted last year and we have seen great savings in our heating cost. If you are interested in converting to natural gas, I would recommend you contact Bangor Gas soon to discuss your options.

Since the last Viking the Town has seen a few employees leave us or are in the process of leaving us. I’m happy to report their replacements have been hired. On the front page you will see Andy Fish has been hired to replace one of our long-time employees Julie Reed who will be retiring at the end of the year. Julie’s knowledge of the interworking’s of the Town will certainly be missed but we wish her well as she enters into a well-deserved retirement. In addition, Gene Fiedl has left the Police Department so he too can start the next chapter of his life. Hired in his place is Jon Carson who also has been showcased on the front page of this edition of the Viking. Both Andy and Jon bring a wealth of knowledge and professionalism to their respective jobs.

Finally, Beckie Woods left us after accepting a full-time job with the City of Auburn. Beckie’s energy and willingness to take on any project will certainly be missed but we wish her well too.

I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize the rest of the outstanding employees the Town has. As we have all been dealing with the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Town employees have done an outstanding job. Specifically, I’d like to mention:

• Julie Strout in the Town Office, who has put on two (2) elections without incident, with one being the largest voter turnout the Town has ever seen.
• The other Office Staff, who never lost a day of work and worked very diligently to help the citizens while the Town Office was closed for a period of time.
• The Public Safety Staff, who have responded to your requests for help without hesitation.

We are very fortunate to have such a great group of dedicated employees. Thank you to each and every one of them for everything they do to make this a great community. I am fortunate to have such an outstanding and dedicated group working with me.

Finally, I’m proud to announce the Veazie Police Department was selected to receive the New England Chiefs of Police Community Policing Award. They competed with agencies from all over New England and ultimately were chosen to receive the award. I will do a future article when the award is received but congratulation to the members of the Police Department for receiving this well-deserved award.

So much has occurred since the last addition and I could go on but I won’t so, in closing I would again like to remind everyone to follow the Town on Facebook and Twitter or sign up for our list serve which sends out periodical messages so you can stay up to date on important topics occurring in Town. The sign up for the list serve is located on the Town’s website or by calling the Town Office to provide us with the required information to sign you up.

(Continued in next column)
By Ben Birch Jr.,

Tax Assessor, Town of Veazie

In this article, I wish to provide some comments on how local government works in the Town of Veazie. Town Meeting was the new form of government established in the early New England settlements, including the territory that became Maine. As Maine communities have grown, their residents have adopted alternative forms of local government, including the town meeting. In Veazie, we have the local form of government consisting of Town Meeting – Selectmen – Manager.

This form of government differs from Town Meeting – Selectmen–Manager in that some legislative functions are exercised by the town meeting and some by the council. In communities with this variation, most legislative functions regarding the budget are reserved for the town meeting; for this reason, it is sometimes referred to as the Financial Town Meeting–Clerk–Manager system. The council exercises legislative functions regarding ordinances. In this form, the council serves the executive function as well as exercising certain legislative responsibilities. In 2016, 18 Maine communities were operating under this form of government.

All governments rely on a number of different taxes for their revenues, but in Maine, the property tax and the motor vehicle excise tax generate by far the most significant revenues for local government. These two tax systems supply 60 percent of the revenue needed to operate local government in Maine. Various state aid programs including the state’s financial contribution toward K-12 education, make up most of the balance. Property taxes make up more than 80 percent of the revenue municipalities collect themselves.

The legislative body of the community—the town meeting or the council—determine annually what amount of money will be needed to operate the local government. It is

(Continued from page 1)

a great police department and that Mark Leonard was a great chief to work for,” he said.

Jon grew up in Old Town and earned his associate’s degree from the University of Maine in 1989. He lives in Orrington with his wife Susan. He has a stepson, Alex, 21, who lives in Orland, and a son, Nate, 29, who lives in Wilton.

Jon recently became interested in metal detecting, which he finds relaxing.

“I like history, so if I find something old, like an old coin, that’s interesting,” he says. “Mostly, I’ve found old bottle caps and a lot of metal pull tabs.”

Jon also loves reading.

“I read every day,” he says “I read a lot of science fiction and alternative history.”

Andy Fish

(Continued from page 1)

towns work—and to network to find ways to streamline operations.”

He also served as interim town manager in Orrington for about seven months.

“It was a great opportunity,” he says. “I learned a ton, but I don’t have any aspirations to be a town manager again.”

Andy is married and lives in Milford with his wife. They have two grown daughters and two grandsons who live in the local area.

In his leisure time, Andy likes to be outdoors. In particular, he enjoys hiking and hiking. other forms of local government in place of town meetings. In towns where communities have replaced the town meeting with town or city councils. Many communities have turned to professional administrators, town or city managers, who carry out municipal policy under direction of the elected officials. Of the 491 municipalities in Maine today over 425 still conduct business at the annual town meeting, in a form that has survived well over 300 years. Unique to New England, town meeting is still seen by Mainers as a highly appropriate way to govern themselves. Auburn was the first municipality to employ a professionally trained manager, adopting that form of government in 1917. Portland followed in 1923, Belfast in 1929, and Bangor and Brewer in 1931. The motivation to adopt the manager form is often financial. With professional administration, communities found that local services could be provided more efficiently and less expensively. In financial terms, the manager functions as a chief financial officer, coordinating the purchases and activities of various municipal departments and scrutinizing them through the budget process. In Veazie, we have the local form of government consisting of Town Meeting – Council – Manager.

This form of government differs from Town Meeting – Selectmen–Manager in that some legislative functions are exercised by the town meeting and some by the council. In communities with this variation, most legislative functions regarding the budget are reserved for the town meeting; for this reason, it is sometimes referred to as the Financial Town Meeting–Clerk–Manager system. The council exercises legislative functions regarding ordinances. In this form, the council serves the executive function as well as exercising certain legislative responsibilities. In 2016, 18 Maine communities were operating under this form of government.

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(Continued from page 1)

Soldiers, and Town Meeting has been held in Riverview Park. The group ordered coffee, donuts and sandwiches, which were enjoyed outside. The park was lovely and the weather was perfect.

(Continued from preceding page)

The Virginia Council of Governments (VCOG) is a federation of 137 local government organizations in 13 states, including the District of Columbia.
Maine Municipal Association helps us understand Local Government in Veazie

(Continued from page 3) then the assessors’ duty to set the tax rate, or the “mill” rate (Latin for “one thousandth”) needed to raise the amounts the legislative body has determined. At a mill rate of one, a property owner would have to pay one dollar in taxes for every thousand dollars of property valuation.

The property taxed to provide local revenues includes “real property,” which is land and buildings, and “personal property,” such as business machinery and equipment. Before property can be taxed, it must be assessed to determine fair market value. Municipal assessments may be based on 100 percent of the property’s value or based on a fraction of full value as long as all property in the municipality is being assessed equally at this percentage of market value. According to state law, local assessments are supposed to be maintained at no less than 70 percent of full value.

Maine Revenue Services (MRS) is the state agency that monitors each municipality’s assessment practices and compares municipal assessed value with actual sales prices. Through this sales analysis process, MRS is able to determine each municipality’s taxable value if it were assessing all property at 100% of market value. The municipality’s “equalized” State Valuation is used to determine the distribution of state aid to each municipality and the amount of county taxes a community pays. State valuation also serves as a guideline for local assessors to see where the municipal valuation is relative to market value.

In most Maine communities, education is by far the largest municipal expense, followed by public works and police and fire protection. In Veazie, the town manager provides the administration that makes possible the delivery of municipal government services. Functional services provided by local government are those directly affecting individuals, and go beyond administration and record keeping. Clearing snow from the streets is an important functional service in most municipalities. While each municipal individuality decides what services to provide, most such services can be categorized under public safety, public works, social services, and recreation.

Property taxes are the primary source of revenue for Maine’s cities and towns and are used to provide local government services. Other than excise taxes on motor vehicles and boats, municipalities are barred by Maine law from using any other form of taxation to raise revenues to fund local services.

Local government is the level of government “closest to the people.” It is the level of government which citizens have the greatest access to and the most control over. It is as close as we come to self-government. However, with this right to self-govern comes the responsibility to be informed and to make thoughtful decisions that are in the best interest of all the citizens in your community. Being active in municipal affairs is the responsibility to exercise this right of self-government.

These comments came from the Maine Municipal Association’s publication, “Local Government In Maine” and “Guide to Property Tax.

Pastor Seymour, Veazie Congregational Church: ‘VICTO’

Let me start with an understatement: This is a year that we will all remember. And, even though we might like to do so, how could we ever forget the impact it is having in our daily lives?

It is a time which has changed things in such a way that we never would have imagined just a year ago: a time which holds much significance for us to be sure. I wonder, though, how we’ll remember it. As time moves on it is going to be that the impact of this pandemic has already had upon our society—and the entire world—will take on a new, profound, context. Like the many events of generations now gone by, we will learn from this pandemic, and our future descendants. To be sure, the challenges we face will have long-lasting effects, as will our response. We may not yet realize the fullness of this impact for some time. As a result, though, we will learn from it. And, also, there will be growth. Humankind has always been able to overcome adversity. For example, our remembrance of the following events will help us to gain a new perspective on the present. Not long after his arrival in October 1620, those who were seeking a new freedom struggled through tumultuous Atlantic storms during their voyage to reach these shores. Their efforts eventually resulted in the birth of our great nation! Secondly, 200 years ago (Mar 24, 1818) Maine became a statehood. Thirdly, 175 years ago (Mar 29, 1845) the VZ church dedicated its meeting house. Fourthly, 75 years ago (Sept 1945) WWII II officially ended. Finally, each year on the 11th of November we remember what the people, on the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month of 1918. To remember all of those who struggled with immense adversity during that wartime, Veteran’s Day was officially established (1954). These dates and events remind us that we have quite an inheritance, so much to be thankful.

Centuries ago, our forefathers and mothers gave to us a tremendous, wonderful, heritage. Those who sailed the ocean blue upon the Mayflower, prepared the way for the eventual establishment of two monumental, historic factors: 1) Development of Congregationalism, which is, to this day, is still existent primarily in New England; and, 2) on November 11th - in the waters off Cape Cod – they signed an agreement, documenting their covenant vows with one another, stating their intent of just how they would live together in a common-unity. This historical document—their pledge to one another—is known as the Mayflower Compact. It laid the groundwork for the formulation of the United States Constitution.

It is an amazing thing for all of us to remember, what people, on their trans-Atlantic voyage, were able to accomplish in spite of their many hardships. While these are indeed difficult and tiring times for us today, disturbing and uncertain in many ways they are, nevertheless, the days of our lives. The days of our life’s pilgrimage. So how shall we then live? Let me start with an understatement: This is a year that we will all remember. And, even though we might like to do so, how could we ever forget the impact it is having in our daily lives?

For us to be sure.

May we be diligent in our pursuit of the well-being of all persons in our common-unity.

May the Peace and Grace of God be upon us all.

— Rev. Patrick Seymour, Pastor, Veazie Congregational Church

Veazie Congregational Church News

After six months of sharing our Sunday morning service on YouTube, the Veazie Church has once again opened its doors to worshippers. We are following the CDC guidelines for safe worship services, which include masks, distancing, and lots of sanitizing. There is always room for more: if you’d like to join us on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. — masks are required and we have them available.

We held two Take Out Only Church Suppers this fall. One menu was beans and all the fixings and the second was roast pork dinner. They were quite successful, and we will continue to hold such events until we can host our church suppers in the dining room once again. Watch for our signboard in front of the church.

We were very disappointed to cancel our 175th Anniversary celebration in March, and we are exploring a future celebration when we can once again be together safely. This November is another important event for us, as it is the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims and the beginning of the Congregational Church. Our celebration will be small but no less significant.

We are unsure of what our Christmas events might look like. We are planning to have a wreath sale, and we may be able to have a reformed Holiday Fair. The Christmas
Superintendent’s message:

VCS Reopening Plan, Corona Relief Funds, Financial Impact of Covid-19, Looking Forward

The start of the 2020-2021 school year has been nothing short of the most incredible educational experience we will ever witness. Seven months have passed since the switch was flipped and our plans transitioned to what we now refer to as the “new normal.” The list of thanks and gratitude is far too long to go into detail, but I do want to be very clear in stating that we could not be where we are today without the dedication and support of the amazing staff at VCS; the wonderful families we collaborate with, and the entire community of Veazie.

Preparation for the start of our school year began last spring with the collection of survey data from parents and students. During the month of July, a team of 26 staff and community volunteers who we refer to as the VCS Reopening Advisory Committee (SRC) worked more than a dozen times to develop our back-to-school plan while following Maine DOE and Maine CDC framework.

During the month of August, a smaller group of VCS staff called the Hyflex team met regularly, using the SRCA reopening plan to further develop specific protocols related to safety and general school operations. Each school in Maine was charged with developing their own reopening plans. Here in Veazie, student and staff safety has been a priority for every level of decision making. As a result, our reopening plan enables students in grades PK-2 to attend school in-person 5-days/week; and grades 3-6 attend in-person 3-days/week while attending remotely 3-days/week. Twenty percent of our students/families chose to attend remote-only, 5-days/week.

Our safety plan continues to focus on 6-feet of spacing for all students and staff as feasible with masks being worn at all times except during snack, lunch, and scheduled mask breaks. In order to put our safety plan into action, we had to place students into every corner of the school.

• We presently conduct regular ed classes in the music room, stage, cafeteria, library, and makerspace room.
• Our gym has been converted into a cafeteria/proctor room only able to safely seat two classes at one time.
• Our reading recovery room was converted into a remote instruction classroom.
• Our art room was converted into a special education room.
• Our special ed. director’s office was converted into a special ed. classroom.
• Our conference room was converted into an ELL classroom.
• Our three smaller teacher workrooms and the FG office were converted into remote instruction rooms.
• Our teacher lunch room was converted into a teacher work room.

All of this took an incredible amount of flexibility and coordination!

Corona Relief Funds

The federal government distributed Corona Relief Funds (CRF) to all states last spring. Schools were notified in mid-August that they would be receiving a portion of these funds to be used exclusively for the development and implementation of reopening plans.

Districts were given a very short two-week window to draft and submit budgets. Expenditure of these funds has been challenging as they come with all the typical federal planning requirements, including multiple bids for projects and purchases. In addition, all projects and/or purchases must be received and/or completed prior to December 30, 2020. These restrictions have limited many schools from effectively spending CRF funds.

In early October, schools in Maine were notified of a second round of CRF funds with another two-week grant submission timeline. These funds followed the same federal procurement process and December 30, 2020 timeline. As you can imagine, many schools fear that these restrictions will make it very difficult for schools to feasibly utilize the funds on projects that will be accepted by both state and federal auditors. HVAC contractors and computer/technology vendors in particular have become so overwhelmed that they have turned away project proposals and bid offers as they simply do not have the inventory or ability to complete projects and deliver purchases before the end of December 30, 2020.

Despite the challenges I have described, I am happy to note several VCS purchases that were approved, including a respectable supply of PPE, a large tent for outdoor classrooms, a permanent pavilion for outdoor classrooms, and special equipment necessary to move and store outdoor classroom supplies.

We have also received incredible support from our PTO with the purchase of classroom materials that lend themselves to individualized instruction.

THANK YOU, VCS PTO!

Financial Impact of COVID-19

We are all well aware of the financial impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on state and local economies. While the current state administration has been able to creatively budget to avoid a curtailment of the school subsidy during the current school year, we have been directly forewarned that the next couple of years will be very challenging.

The School Committee is aware of what struggles that lie ahead, and work has already begun on a responsible budget plan beginning with ultra-conservative expenditures of funds during our current fiscal year in order to generate carry forward to support future budget years.

The Maine Department of Education remains on track to release FY22 (2021-2022 school year) state subsidy allocations by the beginning of February. These figures, along with our ongoing budget planning, will guide the next fiscal year.

I look forward to working with the Veazie Town Council and Town Budget Committee on this process.

Looking Forward

VCS actively collects feedback from our families through surveys and general communications. This feedback is invaluable as we strive to make learning experiences for our students the absolute best. We understand that some families in grades 3-8 want their children to be present 5-days/week.

As mentioned earlier, the safety of our students and staff remains to be the driving force behind all decisions related to Veazie Community School. We all wish this would simply go away, but that does not seem likely at any point in the near future.

Looking forward, we will continue to be reflective while also taking safe and calculated risks. The support we have received does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

— Respectfully,

Matthew B. Cyr

Tiffani Lindsey new VCS Office Manager, Admin. Asst. to Supt.

Tiffani Lindsey, who attended John R. Graham School and then the new Veazie Community School, has joined the VCS staff as School Office Manager and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of School Matt Cyr.

Tiffani came to VCS after four years with the Bangor School Department, where she was director of Bangor’s 21st Century Program, a grant-funded before-school, after-school, and summer program at three Bangor schools.

Before that, she spent four years as the general manager at Great Skates Entertainment Center in Bangor, and worked in residential life positions at several schools, including a small community college in Michigan. She also worked in Residence Life at the University of Maine, where she earned her Masters degree in Higher Education Leadership.

She attended Champlain College in Burlington, VT, where she studied elementary and early childhood education.

A native of Veazie, Tiffani graduated from Bangor High School. She currently lives in Veazie. Her hobbies include hiking and cooking.
Rick started the holiday light show in remembrance of Warren’s twin brother, Alexander, who died after being born prematurely.

“My wife gave birth at 26 weeks due to twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, and Alex passed away after four days,” Rick said. “Warren spent 51 days in the NICU, and we grew close to the doctors, nurses, and technicians who helped him survive and recover.”

Warren is healthy today.

Rick said the holiday light show started as a way to give back to the community and the NICU.

“It’s grown from there,” he said.

Rick said he and his family decided to move to Veazie because of their long ties to the community.

“I grew up in Veazie and went to school in Veazie,” he said. “My mother taught at the Graham School and VCS, and my wife did her student teaching there as well.”

Rick added that his children have always attended VCS on a superintendent’s agreement, and he didn’t know how long that could continue.

Hathaway Holiday Lights

(Continued from page 1)
“We were concerned that our kids might have to leave VCS,” he said. “It was time to make a decision on whether to move or not, and we decided it was the right time.”

Warren is in the 3rd grade at VCS, and Ainsley is in the 2nd grade. Their younger sister, Vivian, 4, is in day care.

Rick said he’s loved doing Christmas lights since he was a youngster.

“My father and I used to deck the house on Silver Ridge in Veazie,” he said. “Back in the day, the town had lighting contests, and we won a few times, but we never had automation.”

When he was in high school, he found a program for automating Christmas lights, but he never had the money to invest in it until he got a real job. Rick’s first job was shipping out, with six months on and six months off, and Christmas lighting gave him something to do during his time off.

Rick currently works as a sales representative for Maine Trailer.

“I don’t ship out any more,” he said. “When I got married and had children, I decided shipping out was not the life I wanted.”

Town Manager Mark Leonard and Superintendent of Schools Matt Cyr say they’re delighted to have VCS as the new home for the Hathaway Holiday Light Show.

“Rick told us he didn’t think his new house on Buck Hill Drive would be a good fit for holiday lighting, partly because of its location and partly because of the traffic flow,” Mark said.

Mark noted that Veazie used to have a holiday lighting contest throughout the community, and he’d like to see it come back.

“It may not occur this year, but we’d like to encourage holiday lighting so that we showcase the entire community, and not just have people drive through to look at the school,” he said.

In addition to Rick and his family, volunteers on Nov. 7 were Rod and Carolyn Hathaway (Rick’s parents); Graydon and Kayan Clark (Deanna’s parents); Ryan and Leah Welch and their children, Addie and Nichols (friends); Greg Rollins and his son Luke (friends and Veazie residents); Paul Messer (Veazie resident and Town Council member); and Paul Dupuis (Veazie resident and School Board member).

Our largest fundraiser of the year is coming up soon...

NOVEMBER 24th - DECEMBER 1st

2020 FALL ONLINE AUCTION

This year the PTO will be putting together themed baskets!!!

If you'd like to donate, feel free to send in any items related to the following themes...

* GAMES  * ART  * SPORTS
* MOVIES  * PETS  * BOOKS

Please send in all donations by: November 12th
Thank you for your continued support!

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make a check payable to: Veazie Community School PTO

If you have any questions, please feel free to email: pto@veaziecs.org

VEAZIE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
1040 SCHOOL STREET
VEAZIE, ME 04481
VCS garden remains popular, despite COVID-19 restrictions

Despite the restrictions resulting from COVID-19, the VCS garden remains a popular and rewarding activity for many students and community members who were going for walks this summer and stopped to leave a kind note about how wonderful it was to see the garden available for the students to see things growing.

The garden has eight raised beds. This fall, the students harvested tomatoes, carrots, summer squash, cucumbers, string beans, and herbs—garlic, mint, and chives.

“We try to plant fall crops, so the students can harvest them and use them in the cafeteria,” says Nicole Richard, Special Education Tech who oversees the Garden Club. “Our goal is to use all the veggies that we can in the cafeteria.”

This year pumpkins were planted and grew all around the greenhouse. The PreK and Kindergarten students picked them and brought them in to decorate their classrooms.

Mrs. Kimball’s first graders dug up the potatoes this fall, and the 2nd grade followed up by digging and looking for stragglers—potatoes that the first graders left behind.

Mrs. Brooks and Mrs. Thibeault served home fries with breakfast sandwiches as one of our hot lunches, and they were delicious!

The VCS Garden Club met virtually during the summer. Mrs. Richard was able to Zoom from the greenhouse, where she taught a lesson and gave live updates of the garden’s growth. She also provided growing experiment kits to each garden club student. Each week the students shared a live tour of their gardens as well.

Max and Maya Subernat, grade 2 students, said their favorite Garden Club activity was an experiment they did putting bean seeds in a Ziploc bag with a wet paper towel.

“They hung the Ziploc bag in a sunny window, and within a week, they could see how the sprout and roots emerged from the seeds,” Mr. Richard said.

Garden Club students also made flower blossom models out of play-doh, straws, toothpicks and mini-marshmallows, to learn about the parts of a flower and the importance of pollination.

One impact that COVID-19 has had on the Garden is that the students haven’t been able to use a composting mixer that was donated to our school by the students from the Society and Environment Class at EMCC. The EMCC students worked with Mrs. Frazier and the Garden Flex group last fall to learn about this natural fertilizer made of post-consumer waste and establish a composting system.

“We are hoping to use kitchen scraps in the composting machine, but with the virus, we haven’t had a chance to do this yet. As opposed to years when we had peeldings and scraps, food service is delivering all the lunches and most of the produce is pre-packaged (for example, cut-up broccoli and carrots),” Mrs. Richard said. “As a result, we’re not peeling anything. Hopefully, when the virus is done, we’ll be able to make better use of the composting machine.”

Mrs. Chandler’s Kindergarten students have been growing and harvesting sunflowers for several years.

“It’s hands on learning about the life cycle of a plant,” Mrs. Richard says. “The students plant the sunflower seeds when they’re in kindergarten and cut the flowers down as first graders. Then they give the seeds to the kindergarten students, who dry them out and plant them back in the garden in the spring.”

Mrs. Richard says gardening activity drops off during the winter. “The school has two hydroponic systems, that Mrs. Frazier and I are still learning how to operate successfully. We have gotten sprouts to grow but want to be able to grow vegetables all year long.”
Mainely Pest offers full range of pest management services

When you find bed bugs in your sheets or rodents in your cupboards or attic, who should you call?
Mainely Pest, which moved to 1521 State Street (across from JC Auto Body) in November 2019, has the tools, services, and experience to make your home pest-free— and keep it that way.
Mainely Pest is owned by Kyle Stoops, a military veteran who moved to Winterport seven years ago after putting his children through Orono schools.
Kyle operates the business, along with his wife and two sons and another employee who are fully-licensed and certified in pest management. Kyle has a third son who is also licensed and certified, but he is attending college and working at another job.
Kyle says MainelyPest is a full-service pest control company that provides residential, commercial, and property management services throughout Maine.
MainelyPest operates primarily in Penobscot and Hancock counties, but also services customers as far north as Madawaska, as far east as Calais and Eastport, and as far south as Portland.
The company also works as a partner with Copesan, a nationwide alliance of regional pest management providers headquartered in Wisconsin, serving Copesan’s commercial clients in Maine.
A typical home visit from MainelyPest starts with a free inspection, which often involves MainelyPest’s owner and founder, Kyle Stoops, personally evaluating your property for signs of pest activity.
If any uninvited guests are discovered, the next move is to remove those pests from your home quickly and efficiently.
Finally, when your home has been deemed pest-free by our experts, MainelyPest will put safe-guarders in place to keep unwanted pests like bed bugs, cockroaches, rodents, wildlife, and many more from returning.
Sometimes pests are a nuisance, and at other times they are destructive to your home. Whether it’s carpenter ants burrowing through your wood, rodents wreaking havoc in your basement or attic, or an infestation of fruit flies, Mainely Pest has the plan for you.
“We don’t just copy and paste solutions to problems,” Kyle says. “We design the perfect solution for each individual situation, making sure our customers receive the exact services for which they have paid. At the end of the day you are most important to us, nothing else. We would not do what we do if we didn’t care.”
If a customer has bats, mice, squirrels, or rats in their attic, Kyle says MainelyPest will go in, take out all the insulation, remove and sterilize anything that’s been soiled, disinfect the area, and then blow in new insulation.
“We always use cellulose insulation, which is treated with borate, a natural pest inhibitor,” he says.
The Mainely Pest technician will also put mesh or caulking or foam in areas in the basement or attic where rodents or other pests enter.
“It’s part of our pest control service,” he says. “We’ll also trap rodents and service feed boxes to keep them from coming in.”
MainelyPest also provides commercial pest control services for Maine businesses, including day care facilities, restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, food processing facilities, and warehouses.
Kyle says he maintains personal involvement with MainelyPest’s commercial accounts, and he emphasizes that clients pay for only what they agree to—no more, no less.
He also says that MainelyPest offers 24-hour emergency service, year-round pest prevention services, and a guarantee: “If pests return after we leave, we’ll re-treat for free.”

When Kyle started in pest control, he lived in Orono and worked for a large corporate pest control company.
“T was appalled at how they treated customers, who would be charged the full rate even if they didn’t get the full service,” he said.
“I didn’t want to do that. My customers were my friends and neighbors. My kids went to school with their kids.”
Kyle said he expressed his objections in a heated conversation with the local management, which escalated into a confrontation with a senior manager from out-of-state.
“He told me that if I didn’t like the way things were being run, I could quit, start my own company, and run it the way I wanted,” he said.
“I took his advice and started my business, selling pest control services door-to-door.”

Kyle says he started MainelyPest because he had a friend who was in need, unable and ill-equipped to deal with pests that were threatening his well-being.
“This is where we found our calling to help Maine residents deal with the nuisance, damaging, and potentially dangerous pests invading their homes and businesses,” he says.
“It has never been about the money; our community is what matters most to us. We understand on a personal level the threat insects, rodents, and wildlife can pose to the health and happiness of you and your family and are dedicated to solving those pest problems quickly, effectively, and at a price that doesn’t break the bank. It’s why we do what we do. It is what makes us MainelyPest!”

Soaring
By Lana Friess, Grade 8
(The following is Lana’s response to the fall writing prompt, “Reliving an Event.”)

Whoosh! The ground disappears from underneath me and now I’m flying. The feeling of being weightless and being pushed back into my seat thrive within me as I climb higher and higher into the sky. I can hear the wind rushing over the seagull-like wings of the beautiful airplane I’m in, making them flex to the point where they could snap. That delicate balance; perfectly engineered to generate the optimal amount of lift, while still making an exhilarating ride for the passengers. Amazing.

Clonk! The tow hook is released and the glider that I’m flying in is now Soaring. I look down at the Earth and all of the tiny houses, cars, and people that make up the civilization we know. I can see small bumps on the horizon that are actually the towering mountains of the Swiss Alps. I love it. I love the feeling of being free, the feeling of being unstoppable. My life is this one moment right now where all that I am is one with the Earth and the sky. If only I could go higher…

The sky was never the limit for me. I always knew that there were no limits. If you set your mind to it, then you can do it, no matter what stands in your way. Now I’m feeling that more than ever, as I soar through the sky. No motor, no engine, just the power and the nature of the Earth that carries me. I realize how small we really are. The whole world that we know, is just a delicate little pearl floating in the never-ending ocean of the universe. All we humans have is this one Earth. We have to take care of it, and most people don’t realize that Earth is our ship, and we are just the passengers that need it to survive.

I come back to the moment I’m in and look up at the sky. I feel like I have never felt before. I wish I could live in this moment forever. I stare at the puffy clouds that are passing above me. They kind of remind me of each of the seven and a half billion people that live on this planet. Each is beautiful and different in their own way.

I wish that all people in this Earth could relive that moment. I wish that all people would think like I was thinking then. I wish that all people would realize that we are all the same. That, we are all the same on the inside even though we look different on the outside. I wish that the racial divides, the climate change, and all of the problems that we face in this world are solved by simply looking past our differences and are solved with the thought in the back of our mind that we all are passengers on this one ship that we call planet Earth, and what we want our destination to be.
VCS Poetry - Grades 7 and 8

Oh Summer, Where Did You Go?
By Holly Humphrey
2nd Grade Teacher, VCS

Oh summer, where did you go? The ground’s becoming frosty And the wind’s getting sharper While the air’s getting colder But houses are getting warmer Oh summer where did you go? The smell of apple cider lingers from the fridge And the sound of pumpkin seeds sizzle from the oven Oh summer, where did you go? The variety of color on every leaf, none like the rest The trees become a blur of colors Red Orange Yellow As I walk through the colored forest The sound of crunching leaves and twigs following my every step All the colors fill my eyes As I look up to the oh so bright sky —Kylee Barker, grade 7

Autumn
By Holly Humphrey
2nd Grade Teacher, VCS

The warm nights by the campfire start to fade as days become cold The frost bitten mornings and sunny afternoons Early nights creep up and turn what were bright mild evenings into a gloomy, frigid dusk Driving by mountains splattered with reds and yellows Jumping in leaf piles to hear that satisfying crunch only to rake back them together again Pumpkin spice fills the menu while handmade maple syrup fills my cabinets I carve jack o’lanterns in preparation for Halloween as it comes upon us and stock up on candy The horses grow soft, cloud-like coats around them as they prepare for the winter season —Isabelle Ireland, grade 7

The Peaceful Start of Fall
By Holly Humphrey
2nd Grade Teacher, VCS

As summer exits Fall enters And everything changes The tourists depart and the ferries stall Fishermen are few Although the locals have to keep up with the bills The silence that comes with September Is peaceful, rather than eerie You can hear the waves Crashing against the rocks But it still feels like things in the town have come to a halt Not that that’s a fault The eye in the middle of a storm As school will soon start There will be even fewer people around during the day When the special baking begins, I know the house will smell heavily filled with scents of fall Of pumpkin And all sorts of amazing smells. Out the window Visible among the trees are the first red leaves —Olivia Buswell, grade 8

Over the fields
By Holly Humphrey
2nd Grade Teacher, VCS

Right above the sorrow of madness and insanity Lies the restful and smiling desert of endless fall With the leaves swirling around the constant stirring of the forest and screaming Comes the hollow husk of the trees and leaves The animals are hidden, afraid of running, as Hallow’s Eve approaches slowly. —Liam MacDonald, grade 7

Spokes
By Holly Humphrey
2nd Grade Teacher, VCS

Wet are the leaves Lying on the trail Over the roots And under tire The only sounds Throughout the wood Is the shifting gears *click* The crunchy leaves *crunch* The wheel over rock *thump* And the wind in the trees *whistle* Nevermind the noise The rider thinks As he glides through the trail as if nothing is real. —Duncan Carlisle, grade 8

VCS Second Graders Explore the River
By Holly Humphrey
2nd Grade Teacher, VCS

Our classrooms look a bit different this school year, but our learning has been just as exciting. Second grade has taken advantage of all the wonderful outside spaces that have been created for us to learn and explore. On one of the first days of fall we decided to take our classroom to the river. It was a perfect day for walking, observing, and learning. Second graders sat and observed and then sketched all this view had to offer. We were very lucky to see a bald eagle spreading its huge wings! We also read the history of the Veazie Dam and found some pretty cool rocks with amazing designs. We didn’t get to skip rocks, but we are sure we found some perfect ones. Some of our second graders are sure there might have been buried treasure, but digging was a pretty hard job. It was a perfect day to enjoy the outside and it sure made learning exciting!
When presented with the challenge of physical distancing and wearing masks, all while trying to learn, Veazie Vikings found ways to make it work!

In order to create smaller group sizes, our school had to transform every possible space into a classroom.

The result? Unique, clever, and spacious learning areas for all of our students in the cafeteria, stage, music room, and elsewhere. We also created flexible outdoor spaces like the large tent that was divided into classrooms.

Veazie Vikings Make it Work - Part 1

Having your own spot to read or do school work is one thing, but what about mask breaks? Vikings have great solutions for that too. All around our property we have created outdoor learning spaces that are fun and flexible. When students have personal space outdoors, they can take their masks off for a bit. Our teachers have been using outdoor spaces a lot this fall, rain or shine!

Veazie Vikings Make it Work - Part 2

The library is now half of the second grade classroom (the other half is next door in the Maker Space).

The gym has been converted into a cafeteria/snack room able to seat two classes at a time.

The music room and stage now serve as part of the first grade classroom.

The cafeteria is now the other half of first grade.