

middle TOWN NEWS letter

May 2020

Taking Care of Each Other

In early March, some Middletown Springs volunteers came together in an effort to address food insecurity of town residents with job losses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, to find a way to ensure that neighbors had enough food and to try to support local businesses.

Solutions started with the support of state and non-profit agencies. The Middletown Springs Elementary School began providing free meals to families with children under 18, but this left out those without children, and seniors who were increasingly at risk picking up groceries outside of town.

Many stepped up to help fill these needs. Vicki Arsenault was quick to offer support for accessing staples that were hard to find on supermarket shelves. She orders what she can from her distributor and picks up items from the supermarket for those who are at risk. She provides a distribution point for pre-ordered fish, and for breads baked by Naga Bakehouse, and will deliver food if needed.

Corey Best and Sissy Hicks have been providing sustenance to Middletown Springs for years through their restaurant and catering businesses, and they are making meals available to those who need them. People can register online; Corey and Sissy take turns providing 20 meals on Tuesday and Saturday. Patty Kenyon developed and manages an efficient Google order form that makes it possible to record people's choices to pass along to the chefs.

Reservations for meals can be made at <https://forms.gle/LV1nAt9kqsKz5gdu9>

Julie Sperling and Doug Freilich of Naga Bakehouse run community bakes and provide bread and locally ground flour for free to those who need support.

While the Poultney Foodshelf continues to serve Middletown Springs residents, Beth Miller of the Rutland County Parent and Child Center has expanded that support to those who need boxes of staples (and produce and meat when it is available) from the Vermont Foodbank.

Dave Carr and Stan Achey of the Community Church supplement both the Food Shelf and the Meals program with donations of food, labor and financial

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United States 2020 Census

- You count! Everyone counts!
- It's about fair representation and redistricting.
- It's about \$675 billion.
- Your privacy is protected.
- It takes 10 minutes of your time.

Making sure every person in Vermont is counted during this 2020 Census matters a lot. Vermont receives around \$2.5 billion dollars in Census-guided federal funds, which works out to about \$3,963 per person, IF WE PARTICIPATE! A Complete Count is vital to securing dollars for our state, our county, and our town. So far, Middletown Springs has a 50% response rate. We can do better than that. It takes 10 minutes, no hard questions, completely confidential.

The past decades' censuses were conducted by people hired by the Federal government to go door to door. This year it's up to you to hop online my2020census.gov, do it by phone (844-330-2020) or return the questionnaire you got in the mail.

It is interesting to follow the census response rate across Vermont and in this town. <https://2020.mapvt.com/> Updated daily.

COVID-19 Updates

For the most current information and guidance on COVID-19 in Vermont, visit the website of the Vermont Department of Health, at <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19>, and the Middletown Springs website at <http://middletownsprings.vt.gov/emergency-safety/disasteremergency-planning/>

Also In this Issue:

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Property Tax Due

Property Tax payments for the 4th and FINAL Quarter of Fiscal Year 19/20 are due **on or before Monday, June 15, 2020.**

PLEASE READ: Due to COVID-19, taxes will be accepted via Mail OR by depositing them into the new Drop Box/Slot on the OUTSIDE of the Town Office.

For your safety and for the safety of the people working in the town office, please do not come into the town office to drop off your taxes. Thank you for your cooperation.

Mail payments to PO Box 1022, Middletown Springs, VT 05757 with a June 15, 2020 or prior postmark. If you require a receipt, please include a self addressed, stamped envelope with your remittance.

Plan NOW to submit your taxes on time – crazy weather and unexpected circumstances can foil your intention of submitting taxes on time. Tax payments received or postmarked AFTER June 15, 2020 are considered LATE and DELINQUENT.

Currently, there are NO exceptions for late taxes. An 8% penalty will be imposed if taxes are received or postmarked after June 15 and will be forwarded to the Delinquent Tax Collector, Debra House, for collection. Additionally, 1% interest fee will be charged for the first 3 months of delinquency, and 1.5% interest per month will be charged thereafter.

If you have any questions regarding tax payments, please contact Jenny Talke Munyak, Town Treasurer.

Contact Info for the Treasurer:

- mtstreasurer@vermontel.net (most expeditious and preferred)
- (802) 235-3256 (if you don't have access to a device, please leave a voice message at the office)
- Thank you for not calling her home number.

Listers Need Your Address

Is your mailing address correct on your property tax bill? Have you moved, or made updates to your mailing address?

If a change needs to be made to your mailing address, please contact the Middletown Springs LISTERS directly (NOT the Town Treasurer.)

The Listers are solely responsible for the Grand List file, from which the property tax bills are derived. They have the capability and responsibility to make address changes for you.

Send your change requests to: mtslisters@vermontel.net, or to: M.S. Listers, c/o PO Box 1232, Middletown Springs, VT 05757.

Big Dumpster Day

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Big Dumpster Day previously scheduled for early May has been **POSTPONED until June 6, 2020.** As a reminder, this is the opportunity for Middletown Springs residents to discard their unwanted/unused big items that do not qualify as normal household trash for the nominal fee of \$5.00 per vehicle load (or \$10.00 for vehicle plus trailer). This event will be conducted at the West Street property across from Parker Water Wells, Saturday, June 6, 6 am-12 noon.

Acceptable materials may include items such as furniture, mattresses, small amounts of demolition/construction debris (NO contractors, please), larger children's toys, and the like. Please note that Hazardous Materials, paints, and oil are **NOT ACCEPTABLE.** Clean cardboard and normal plastic containers should be taken to the recycling compactor at Fort Dumpster during regular operating hours. Middletown participates in the SWAC Household Hazardous Waste event which has been rescheduled to early October.

Any items that operated with refrigerant/compressors need to be taken to the Fort Dumpster site and are subject to a \$20.00 fee per item. This includes appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, dehumidifiers, and the like. The Town has to hire a certified contractor to remove the freon refrigerant from these items.

Metals will be collected in a separate container for no charge. Please try and have these items sorted and separated from other large, bulky items to be discarded.

Please contact any Select Board member or Glen Moyer, Transfer Station manager, with any questions. Thank you for your cooperation!

No Burn Permits

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to rise and the weather keeps giving us dry spells, James Reed, the town fire warden, made the decision to stop issuing burn permits in town until further notice. He made this decision to protect everyone and promised to post an update when the situation changes and burn permits will once again be issued.



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support.

David Wright and Pat Hemenway make the Historical Society available for distribution and storage of food shelf supplies.

Ashley Fioretti and the Friends of the Library designated the Food Project as a “special project”. FOL treasurer Nita Clay reports many remarkably generous donations.

Donations can be made out to Friends of the MS Library. “Food project” should be written on the memo line. Checks can be brought to the Historical Society when food is picked up, or mailed to: Food Project, c/o Friends of the MS Library, PO Box 1206, Middletown Springs, VT 05757.

Herb Childress and Nora Rubinstein coordinate the Food Project and staff the distribution point.

And many Middletowners have stepped up to offer blueberries, fresh eggs and produce when it becomes available.

As of now, the Middletown Springs Food Project has been up and running for several weeks. Volunteers at the Historical Society give out the ordered meals or the food pantry boxes of staples, donated eggs and produce, and Sissy and Corey have prepared over 70 meals. Free will donations for the \$10 cost of the meal, or whatever people can afford, are welcome. There are 26 people who volunteer to help with food or staffing or logistics, and the Food Project relies on the support of eight local and regional organizations.

The Food Project hopes that summer see a gathering on the Green for a celebration of the town-wide commitment to taking care of each other. Until then, the Food Project welcomes those who could use its support. Let someone else do the cooking by ordering dinner and sharing a virtual meal with neighbors.

Thank you to all who are involved.

Green Up Day

Green Up Day has been postponed to May 30. With so many closings and the Governor’s “stay home, stay safe” order, Green Up Vermont is unable to distribute Green Up Day supplies until the first week in May. Town coordinators will be communicating how people can pick up bags safely with social distance, along with plans for trash collection on May 30.

With COVID-19 and the precarious health situations in our world today, please use logical precau-

tions and stay informed on what the Vermont Dept. of Health is recommending. Visit <http://www.greenupvermont.org> for information on safety, ways to communicate, and other fun information. Thank you to all who get out and Green Up to keep our state looking beautiful as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Green Up Day.

An easy way to support Green Up Vermont is on line 23 of your Vermont Tax Form.

Unemployment Claims

Need help with your unemployment claim? Are you self-employed or an independent contractor who is having issues accessing benefits through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program (PUA)? State Representative Robin Chesnut-Tangerman can help. In response to the backlog at the Vermont Department of Labor, the House has launched a tool so that Legislators can now collect constituents’ UI/PUA issues and flag those concerns for a speedier resolution by the Department of Labor.

Please email Robin directly at rchesnut-tangerman@leg.state.VT.us or call him at 802-282-5535 to provide him with the information listed below:

First Name

Last Name

Phone number

Last 4 of SSN

Email address

Have you received a UI/PUA or stimulus check yet?

When did you apply for UI?

What issue are you experiencing:

If regular unemployment insurance (UI):

- Haven't received a benefit yet
- Didn't receive the \$1200 check
- Need PIN reset
- SSN error
- Eligibility
- Believe you were wrongly denied

If Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA):

- Can't access system to finish the application
- Made an error, need to update application
- Haven't received a benefit yet
- SSN error
- Believe you were wrongly denied
- Other (explain briefly)

**Join Front Porch Forum
to know what is happening**
It's free. It's local. And it's friendly.

Check it out at

<http://FrontPorchForum.com/>

Memorial Day Parade

It is with great regret that the Middletown Springs Memorial Day Parade Ad Hoc Committee is canceling our parade this year. With the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the large numbers of people who usually attend, it does not seem safe or prudent to have that many people standing shoulder to shoulder, even outside on a beautiful May day. We still want to honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, and are in the planning stages for a simple and worthy ceremony that will also keep people safe. Watch for more information to come. Please pass this message on to anyone you know who may have come to our parade in the past. Thank you for your patience and continued support.

Library Resources & Services

While the Library building is still closed there are many resources available with a Middletown Springs Public Library library card. **Don't have a card?** Email for a speedier response from the library and we can sign you up for one. **Don't know your library card number?** We will look it up for you.

If you have questions, comments, or need help, please contact us. We will be regularly checking email and the phone messages.

On the Library's website (<https://middlespringslibrary.org/>) there are links to our online card catalog as well as a number of FREE electronic resources including:

[Learning Express Library](#) provides a comprehensive selection of academic and career-related solutions such as prep for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) exam, nursing and medical testing prep, job interview and resume writing, computer skills, SAT, LSAT, and GRE test prep.

Through [Universal Class](#) access online classes, ranging in topics from writing skills, software programs (including Adobe and Microsoft programs), to science, html, and graphic design. Though classes are not for college credit, they are led by a live instructor with whom you can communicate by e-mail. Courses allow you to proceed at your own pace, working on assignments any time, day or night.

From newspaper articles to DIY car repair, the [Vermont Online Library](#) (VOL) may have the information you need, sorted by topic & age range. There is homework help for school students and research assistance for adults. You can even use it to read current articles from the NY Times, Washington Post, the Economist, and more.

Or, through [Listen Up Vermont](#) check out an

audiobook or e-book to your phone, tablet, or other device. Just like print books, there's a checkout period, and only one person can have a book at a time. To access, install the Libby app, or go to <http://gmlc.overdrive.com>. Additional directions are [available](#).

Library Curbside Service

Although the building is still closed, the Library is committed to providing patrons & the community with expanded access to online resources and safe access to books, DVDs and other physical materials through limited, contactless, curbside pickup service, **began Wednesday, April 29.**

Hours for curbside pickup: Wednesday 1-5 pm and Friday, 11 am-3 pm (or by appointment).

Place Your Requests:

1. Use their website to search for items currently available and place a hold on the items you want. Go to <https://middlespringslibrary.org/> for access to our online catalog.

- - OR - -

2. Call the library during pick-up hours to talk to a librarian. (235-2435, Wed 1-5 pm & Fri 11 am-3 pm)

- - OR - -

3. Email the library, or leave a phone message. (middlespringslibrary@gmail.com or 235-2435)

If you aren't sure what you want, that's ok. They can help with that.

Secure a Pickup Time:

1. You will be notified via email or phone when your order is ready for pick up.

2. Call the library before you come so they know to put your order out.

2a. If you are not able to come to the library during scheduled pickup times, they will work with you to find an alternative.

Pick Up Your Items:

1. With mask, washed hands and gloves on, they will pull your items, check them out to you, put them in a bag, and place the bag on a table outside of the building. The items that they circulate have been safe and unexposed inside the Library.

2. Look for the bag labelled with the last four digits of your library card and your initials.

2a. Please do not enter the building. (They are sad about this, too.)

3. Grab your bag and enjoy!

Return of Borrowed Items:

1. Returns may be left in the outside book drop.

1a. If the book drop is full, please come back another time rather than leaving your returns on the porch.

1b. During the curbside pickup times, bagged returns may be left on the table on the porch (labeled

“returns” & dated).

1c. ALL returns are quarantined before being returned and made available again for circulation.

2. Due dates will be stamped inside the books, BUT no book will be considered late until two weeks after the Library reopens.

3. Also, please DO NOT drop off book sale donations until further notice.

Note: These guidelines will be reviewed and amended based on guidance from the Vermont Dept of Health, ACCD, and the Dept of Libraries and at the discretion of the Library trustees. At this time, the Library building remains closed to the public and all programs are suspended.

Stay Connected

To keep up-to-date on library news, watch Front Porch Forum **AND** sign up for the Library’s periodic E-News at <https://mailchi.mp/2cab7316f313/librarynewssignup>.

Whether during the global pandemic or on a regular weekday, the Middletown Springs Public Library works hard to serve the community and fulfill their mission: to be a community doorway to reading, resources and lifelong learning and to be a center for people, ideas and culture. They have launched a periodic email newsletter. They share links to library resources, information about local happenings, inspiration for readers, and hope for the future. They need your permission to add your email to the list of library news subscribers which you can provide by calling, emailing or following the link above.

New! Virtual Story Time

To launch their new series of online story times, the Library recorded a special one celebrating the 50th annual Earth Day! Join Melissa for songs and stories about the earth. It is uploaded to the Library’s [YouTube channel](#).

They plan to record and upload additional story times once a week, at least until they are able to hold them again in person in the library. If you want, you can subscribe to their YouTube channel and get alerts directly every time they upload a new one. Or, watch FPF and the Library eNews for notices.

While these story times are designed for children 2-6 years old, Kimberly finds them a delightful balm to balance the news of current events. Try it!



April was Poetry Month

Library Poetry Challenge

With Stay Home, Be Safe for all,
Essentials have taken the call.

Write poetry -- both bad and good
And capture the moment, if you would.

Now it's your turn!

We set the bar low, and the topic is wide.
What's it been like to be trapped in - or outside?

A Quarantine Poem by Herb Childress

Another day around the house
With this family I suddenly know too well.
Did you always hum that tune all day?
Your co-workers must hate it.
I do.

Vermont has the third lowest rate of infection
of any state in America.

An arithmetic and science lesson
for daughters and sons who want nothing more
than to get back to the school that,
a month ago,
had been soooooo borrrring.

The good news is that we all know how far six
feet is now.

A generation with sudden improvement in
spatial perception skills.

I mostly recognize people with their masks on.
But not always.

And I'm suddenly harder of hearing
Since I can't see your lips move.

I see the signs
for free meals
and free food boxes
and free firewood.
That's the kind of freedom
I value the most.
When we take responsibility
for one another
and do the right thing
even when it's inconvenient.
We have been liberated
from our selfishness.

How long will this last?
What does the word “normal” mean now?
Do I hate the Patriots as much
now that Brady's gone?
A thousand questions
with no answers.

Calendar of Events

In response to Governor Scott's order to minimize gatherings, the Middletown Springs Selectboard has encouraged all Town boards and committees to meet only for urgent decisions. This may mean that some regularly scheduled meetings are cancelled or postponed, while others are held at their normal time and place but encouraging electronic participation rather than in-person attendance. Please check with the following people to see whether a meeting will be held at its usual time and place, and their preferred method for remote participation.

Regular Meeting Schedule & Chair or Contact Person

Conservation Commission	2 nd Thurs	Elizabeth Cooper
Fire Dept. Training	Every Tues	Joe Castle
First Response	3 rd Sun	Carl Haynes
Friends For Education (FFE)	2 nd Wed	Ashley Fioretti
Friends of the Library (FOL)	2 nd Tues	Ashley Fioretti
Library Trustees	4 th Wed	Kristal Hier
Planning Commission	1 st Mon	Peter Blekis
Selectboard	2 nd & 4 th Thur	Terry Redfield
Wells Springs School Board		Clarence Haynes

Library's Knitting Circle, Book Group, and Toddler Time are suspended. Contact Library for details and alternatives.

When public meetings do occur, meeting organizers must set up the meeting space such that the recommended six feet of distance is maintained between participants.

The Vermont Secretary of State has [updated, temporary guidelines](https://sos.vermont.gov/secretary-s-desk/commentary/updated-covid-19-impacts-and-considerations-for-open-meeting-law/) for boards & committees to comply with Vermont Open Meeting Laws. <https://sos.vermont.gov/secretary-s-desk/commentary/updated-covid-19-impacts-and-considerations-for-open-meeting-law/>



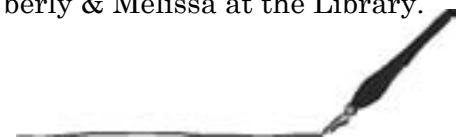
TOWN NEWSLETTER

Lots of information in a snippet & list format, plus a Calendar of Events. No ads, articles, or minutes.

This supplements and enhances the Town website & Front Porch Forum and will serve the needs of those who don't regularly use computers.

Digital copies are available as a PDF. The PDF is posted to FPF or the Town website or is sent free via e-mail to those who sign up. It is also available in hard copy, delivered by USPS, to those who subscribe for \$6 a year postage. Copies are posted at the Town Office, Grant's Village Store, and the Library.

Questions: Call 235-2435, or e-mail middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com to reach Kimberly & Melissa at the Library.



Submit News & Events to:

Middletown Springs Public Library
PO Box 1206
Middletown Springs, VT 05757
middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com

Deadline: 25th of the month for inclusion in upcoming issue.

Daily COVID-19 Updates

Local and state information on the town website. Please check it daily.

<http://middletownsprings.vt.gov/emergency-safety/disasteremergency-planning/>

