

middle TOWN NEWS letter

August 2020

Primary Election: Tuesday, August 11

at the Historical Society, 7 am-7 pm

The Board of Civil Authority has implemented the following recommendations and guidelines in regard to the upcoming August primary.

Recommendations:

Everyone is strongly encouraged to vote in the primary using the absentee ballot process. Every voter on the voter checklist should have received a postcard in the mail from the Vermont Secretary of State's office that included a postage-paid absentee ballot request form. **If you did not receive this postcard**, you can contact the Town Clerk and request an absentee ballot.

At this point it is too late to guarantee on-time delivery by USPS. Voters can use the black drop-box outside the town office to securely drop off ballots when the Town Clerk is not in the office.

If voting in person, we strongly recommend that parents **do not bring** children to the polling place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guidelines and Safety Measure Requirements:

Voting will take place at the Historical Society Dining Room. **Masks will be required to enter** the Historical Society Building. All workers and voters inside the building will wear a face covering at all times.

Accommodations will be made at the polling location to address mobility-challenged voters and those who will not or cannot wear a face covering. Staff will meet such voters outside the polling place; their votes will be processed when poll workers are available to do so.

Due to space considerations and limitations, **there will be a limit of two (2) voters allowed in the polling place at one time.**

Writing instruments will be sanitized after each use. Voters are welcome to bring their own writing instrument. Ballots will be handed out along with a sanitizing wipe so that voters can wipe down their voting space prior to voting. Additional sanitation of spaces will happen at regular intervals throughout the day.

Our goal is to allow everyone to engage in their civic duty to vote while taking the necessary

precautions to minimize the risks of contracting COVID-19. If you have questions or suggestions to enhance the safety of community members, reach out to any member of the BCA. The BCA is made up of the five town Justices of the Peace (Nora Rubinstein, Elizabeth Cooper, Leslie Silver, Patricia Hemenway, and Marth Heitkamp), the Town Clerk (Laura Castle), and the members of the Selectboard (Terry Redfield, Patty Kenyon, Carl Haynes, Heather Grier, and Neil Russell).

To request an absentee ballot: call, email, or visit the town clerk, 235-2220, middletown@vermontel.net.

United States 2020 Census

A complete count is vital to securing dollars for our state, our county, and our town. So far, Middletown Springs has just over a 58% response rate. We can do better than that. It takes 10 minutes, no hard questions, completely confidential.

The deadline for the self-reporting portion of the census has been moved up to **September 30, 2020**. The coronavirus pandemic makes self-reporting the safer, smarter way to make sure you count. Fill out the census survey at my2020census.gov/; make a call to 844-330-2020; or return the questionnaire you got in the mail.

It is interesting to follow the census response rate across Vermont, by county and by town, at 2020.mapvt.com/. It also shows that Vermont has one of the lowest response rates which means when federal dollars are being allocated Vermont will not receive our fair share, for the next 10 years!

State Parks & State Historic Sites

Borrow the library's pass for a day of adventure and get free entry for up to eight people in one car at any of the Vermont State Parks or Historic Sites.

<https://www.vtstateparks.com/>
<http://historicsites.vermont.gov/>

A Note from the Town Treasurer

Property tax bills for the new fiscal year 2020/21 have been mailed. If you do not receive your bill by mid-August, please contact the Town Treasurer at mtstreasurer@vermontel.net to verify your name and mailing address.

SAVE YOUR TAX BILL FOR FUTURE REFERENCE!!

If you have Homestead Declaration/Rebate questions contact the Vermont Department of Taxes directly at <https://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners> or 802-828-2865.

The first quarter installment of your property tax is **due and payable** on or before Tuesday, September 15, 2020.

Follow the link!

Understanding Your Property Tax Bill

Vermont Department of Taxes

<https://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/property-tax-bill>

School News from the Principal

August has arrived, and our staff is planning for the start of another school year with the reality that COVID-19 is still a health concern. I want to recognize staff and families for coming together to provide online learning, and the students for being engaged in **a new learning experience**. I attribute our success to a number of factors. Our school was fortunate to have already had one-to-one computers for our kindergarten through sixth grade students. MSES's students were quite familiar with a number of on-line learning platforms which made the challenge of transitioning to all online learning in a matter of days less difficult. Our teachers rose to the challenge by creating engaging learning opportunities and adapting as needed. I liken the situation to building a plane at the same time you are flying it. Last but not least, **kudos to our parents** who had to become familiar with the platforms and academics for different grades all while dealing with outcomes of the shutdown of the economy this spring.

We have taken what we learned from the spring and will be applying it to a hybrid model which combines both in-person and online learning to start the school year. The big "take-away" from this E-learning experience is that the "Habits of Work" we focus on with the students, student-directed learning, and

student engagement are important parts of all successful learning.

For the foreseeable future, staff and most students will be required to wear **face masks** while in school. Parents are encouraged to send children to school with cloth face masks, if they have them. We are also looking for community members who would be interested in sewing student-sized cloth masks. Our plan is to have two masks per student and to wash them at school daily. If you can help with this, please call the school at 802-855-5155.

Rick Beal

Pre-K Playground Fundraiser

MSES is raising money for a **separate Pre-K playground**. With Vermont's new early childhood guidelines, it will be hard for Pre-K students to share the playground with the rest of the school. We will create an age-appropriate, fun, and exciting playground featuring a sand/water table, a small picnic table and umbrella, a small balance climbing center, basketball hoops at different levels, and a playhouse.

This project is still in need of funding. Our Pre-K teacher, Kristina Severance, has submitted a "Donors Choose" project online with the hope of having it funded for the coming school year. You can get to **Mrs. Severance's Pre-K Playground project** by going to www.donorschoose.org, clicking on "See Classroom Projects," entering 05757 in the "Near city, state, zip" box, and clicking "Search." Please give if you are able. Donations of any size would be most appreciated!

Racial and Social Justice Resources

The Vermont Department of Libraries website has an extensive and [expanding list of racial and social justice resources](#). It is made available as a starting point for information on racial and social justice. There are links to Vermont projects and organizations, historic resources as well as booklists for kids and adults, and continuing education, self-guided curricula and learning portals

The Library has a number of titles for adults and children as well, including multiple copies of John Lewis's graphic novel memoir **March: Book One**. You are welcome to come in and pick up a copy to borrow or keep.

Library News

The Library is currently open for **walk-in service on Tuesdays (2 pm - 7 pm)**, masks required and one household at a time. We have **no-contact service on Wednesdays (1 pm – 5 pm), Fridays (11 am – 3 pm), or by appointment.** Call 235-2435 or [email](mailto:library@middlespringslibrary.org) your requests. We will contact you when your order is ready for pickup. Details are available on the Library's website (<https://middlespringslibrary.org/>). Don't know what you want? Tell us what you like and we will pick out a few things for you to sample. Our track record has been pretty good so far.



Time to return the Library Books.

All items that have been in circulation since the Library closed in March are now due. There are **no fees, fines, or penalties.** If returning after hours, there is a book return box next to the door. When items are returned, they are quarantined for no fewer than four days before being checked back in and shelved.

Bored??

Board Games: Check out a board game from the Library. There are games for kids and adults. We love to see them circulate!

Puzzle Swap: There is a small but growing collection of jigsaw puzzles donated by community members. Borrow one and just return it when you are done. Have puzzles you've completed and are ready to pass along (with all their pieces)? Consider adding them to the Library's puzzle swap.

Community Calendars

It's time to send in your updates for the Community Calendar. Between the calendar pages for June & July there is a re-order form. Send it in by September 1 and help the Library Trustees complete their tasks of the calendar updating and reprinting for 2021. All proceeds benefit the Town Library.

Didn't get a 2020 calendar? [Order one](#) today and see what you have been missing.

For more information or to advertise, contact the Library at 235-2435 or middlespringslibrary@gmail.com.

New at the Library

Adult Fiction

The Widow by Fiona Barton
The Pelton Papers by Mari Coates
500 Miles from You by Jenny Colgan
The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes
by Suzanne Collins
Fair Warning by Michael Connelly
Girl, Woman, Other by Bernardine Evaristo
28 Summers by Elin Hilderbrand
Then She Was Gone by Lisa Jewell
Riviera Gold by Laurie R King
Deacon King Kong by James McBride
Utopia Avenue by David Mitchell
Quotients by Tracy O'Neill
Dept. of Speculation by Jenny Offill
Weather by Jenny Offill
To Wake the Giant by Jeff Shaara
All Adults Here by Emma Straub
Her Last Flight by Beatriz Williams

Adult Non-Fiction

Infinite hope: a Black artist's journey from World War II to peace by Ashley Bryan
The Yellow House by Sarah M. Broom
How to Be a Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi
Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You
by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide
When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange

Picture Books

The Youngest Marcher by Cynthia Levinson
Many Moons by James Thurber

Movies

1917
A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood
The Biggest Little Farm
The Current War
A Dog's Purpose
The Eagle Huntress
Freedom Writers
Little Women
Up from Slavery
The Zookeeper's Wife

Summer Story Times online

Although weekly Story Times with Teacher Heather have ended, you can still view them on the [Library's YouTube channel](#).

Pleasant View Cemetery Association

The trustees of the Pleasant View Cemetery Association held our annual meeting on June 10, 2020, much later than normal thanks to COVID-19 pandemic. Terry Redfield returns as Chair, while Art Castle continues as Superintendent and Kathy Colvin as Secretary-Treasurer. The Trustees wish to offer special recognition and a tremendous amount of gratitude to Kathy, who has served in this capacity for some 40-plus years (45!?) and is trying to find a successor to take over this task. I can't even begin to fathom the dedication and service that Kathy has provided over those years. We are forever in her debt.

We also wish to recognize Donald Marcy and thank him for his many years of service to the Cemetery Association. Donnie was always eager to participate in the annual spring cleanup effort, cut brush along the hedgerows, and help in whatever capacity was needed. Whether the task, Donnie was there. We know that he enjoyed making the rounds through the cemetery almost every night, checking out the status of things and seeing what needed to be done. While health issues may prevent Donnie from being an active member now, the Trustees have made Donald Marcy "Pleasant View Cemetery Trustee Emeritus". He will remain a member for life and we will appreciate his service and opinion in whatever form that entails. Thanks again, Donnie!

A mystery benefactor installed a new birdhouse early this spring in the area where excavated materials are stored, near the west border about halfway down. Thank you for this – we really appreciate it! We have also invested better than \$2,000 in repairs to several damaged stones in the cemetery. Bowker & Sons of West Rutland have installed new bases, made repairs, and/or cleaned several stones that were damaged and/or tipped over.

We encourage anyone interested in purchasing a family plot to contact Art Castle (235-2351) or Terry Redfield (235-2084). Effective June 1, 2017, our rates are as follows:

Single Lot	\$ 1000
Two-Grave Lot	\$ 1500
Four-Grave Lot	\$ 2500
Burials - \$800	Cremations - \$400

(Up to four (4) cremains may be installed in place of a single burial lot.)

Sundays and Legal Holidays – add \$100.00

Terry Redfield

Welcome Wagon

The Anderson family has moved from St. George, Utah to 57 South Street, formerly the residence of Jim Webber and Audrey Cameron. Please welcome Aaron and Haley Anderson and Olivia (21), Diego (20), Graycie (18), Emily (17), Jak (pronounced Jack - 14), Miyah (13), Ethan (12) and Elena (8).

Aaron is self-employed and has run his own business for over 25 years. He is a master woodworker, general contractor, builder and designer, specializing in fine furnishings, custom building designs/restoration and greenhouses for sustainable living. He has been a firefighter and community response team member as well as an instructor for various classes pertaining to sustainable living/self-reliance.

Haley is a registered nurse who has been working in the cardiac setting of an area hospital with a background in surgical trauma. She began her career as a medical assistant in a rural Nevada. Haley loves playing volleyball, coaching youth basketball, reading, and all family activities such as camping and sailing.

In Haley's words, "Aaron and I can't wait to meet everyone. We both love to be involved and look forward to getting to know folks in Middletown Springs. Our 8 kids are truly amazing with sweet, kind spirits and a desire to work hard and grow. We are excited for this cross country move and collectively look forward to enjoying this new adventure, the beauty of Vermont and our new home in Middletown Springs."

Audrey and I are moving to 930 Howe Valley Road, Cecilia, KY 42724. We hope that you will welcome the Andersons as you welcomed us 10 years ago. When down our way in Kentucky please feel free to come visit.

Jim Webber

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.health-vermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19>, and the Middletown Springs website at <http://middletownsprings.vt.gov/emergency-safety/disaster-emergency-planning/>.

Calendar of Events

In response to Governor Phil 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 with 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 the 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 Thurs	Terry Redfield
Town Facilities Planning	1 st & 3 rd Thurs	Terry Redfield
Wells Springs School Board	1 st Wed	Clarence Haynes

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

The Vermont Secretary of State has updated, temporary guidelines for boards & committees to comply with **Vermont Open Meeting Laws**. You can find more information at <https://sos.vermont.gov/secretary-desk/commentary/updated-covid-19-impacts-and-considerations-for-open-meeting-law/>.

About the 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 (FPF) 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 email 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.

Have questions? Call 235-2435, or email: middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com to reach Kimberly and Melissa at the Library.

Submit News & Events to:

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

Deadline: 25th of the month

Front Porch Forum

Join Front Porch Forum to know what is happening between issues of the middleTOWN NEWSletter. It's free. It's local, and it's friendly. Check it out at <https://frontporchforum.com/>.