

February 2024

# HALIFAX NEWS

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## AROUND TOWN

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### RULES ABOUT BURIALS OF HUMAN REMAINS

Are you aware of any bodies buried on private property? Please let our Town Clerk, Patty Dow, know!

While it is perfectly fine and legal to bury a deceased family member on the family property, Vermont requires that the burial place be registered with the Town Clerk. Names, dates, and location are needed. Vermont Statute Annotated (VSA) Title 18: Health, Chapter 121: Cemeteries covers the requirements the State of Vermont has for burying bodies and interring cremated remains (“cremains”).

“The permanent disposition of human remains shall be by: (A) interment in the earth; (B) deposit in a chamber, vault, or tomb ...; (C) deposit in a crypt of a mausoleum; (D) cremation; or (E) natural organic reduction.” In addition, “the distance from the bottom of the outside coffin or body shall be at least three and one-half feet below the natural surface of the ground.” And there are several specifications about being far enough away from water supplies.

When you bury someone in Vermont, you must put a marker on the grave within three years stating name and dates of birth and death (if known).

All cremation documents must also be filed with the town clerk.

VSA 18 § 5302 defines “Cemetery” as “any plot of ground used or intended to be used for the burial or disposition permanently of the remains of the human dead in a grave, a mausoleum, a columbarium, a vault, or other receptacle.”

In Halifax, where we have located 21 cemeteries, cemeteries are managed by the Cemetery Commission, currently Linda Swanson, Gary Rand, and me, Laurel Copeland. We were elected to this position. At the time I agreed to run, I had no idea how much work this could be! But it has been fascinating, and I’ve learned a lot.



Many of our gravestones are old. Early stones were made of slate, which flakes and splits apart, or marble, which bends and breaks under the weight of snow and ice, or field stones. Replacing or repairing broken stones is required by Vermont statute. The Cemetery Commission or the Select Board must take care of cemeteries and gravestones.

The Town can accept gifts of money, stock, and bequests made to the Cemetery Commission.

We Commissioners pay for maintenance: mowing and weed-whacking cemeteries all summer, removing trees that threaten gravestones (as shown in the photo of Whitneyville Cemetery before trees were removed), improving land donated to our town cemeteries – clearing trees and brush, leveling the ground, installing drainage, and seeding the earth, surveying and mapping such land (another VSA requirement), and finding lost graves with ground-penetrating radar.

Green burials—where “unembalmed human remains ... rest in either no burial container or in a nontoxic, nonhazardous, plant-derived burial container or shroud”—are legal in Vermont and were the norm when many cemeteries were established. Halifax does not currently have a “natural burial ground” which is a cemetery containing *only* green burials and maintained using ecological land management practices. But there may be one in our future.





Friendly health care workers stand at the ready before the COVID Vaccination Clinic on January 6 in the Halifax Community Hall. Missed the opportunity? See call-out box for details on getting vaccinated for influenza, COVID, or respiratory syncytial virus at home.

Vermont has an in-home vaccination program. You can get your flu shot, COVID vax, and/or RSV shot at home. Entire households -including caregivers and friends- can be vaccinated at once for:

- COVID (ages 6 months+)
- Flu (ages 6 months+)
- RSV (ages 60+)

**Call to schedule an appointment:  
(802) 830-4137**

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**GENTLE YOGA CLASS 10 A.M. TUESDAYS IN HALIFAX (JAN 16-MAR 19)**

Seth Geeslin is offering a 10-week session of yoga and gentle stretching classes at 760 Old Stage Rd (in heated barn) in West Halifax on January 16 at 10:00 a.m. Class will run through March 19th. All are welcome; no sign-up required. Please dress comfortably and bring a yoga mat if you have one (we have a couple to loan). Any questions - or to confirm class is happening if weather is questionable - please call Seth at 802-490-4294. When: Weekly on Tuesdays, 10 to 11 AM, from Jan 16 through Mar 19, 2024  
Where: 760 Old Stage Rd, West Halifax, VT – Mary Horne

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**SENIOR MEAL IN HALIFAX** – Friday February 16 Senior Meal in Halifax will be served at 12 noon in the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax. Menu: Shepherd’s pie, fruit, carrot salad, and dessert. All seniors are welcome. Free-will donation of \$3.00 is asked for age 60 years and up, \$4.00 for under age 60. Hope to see you there. A call to Joan is appreciated 802-368-7733. – Joan Courser

**JOAN’S SIGHTINGS.** The snow has brought more birds. Four Cardinals three males and a female. A few Chickadees, a few Starlings, Sparrows, Purple Finch, a couple of Blackbirds, lots of Blue Jays, and many, many Juncos, a Nuthatch, a couple of Crows. – Joan Courser

**ELSEWHERE AROUND TOWN.** Up on Hanson Road the grey foxes come around from time to time, we see red squirrels and field voles, deer, ravens, crows, a broad-winged hawk, barred owl, blue jays, chickadees, golden-crowned kinglets, and juncos. Mostly we see a lot of snow—on the trees, in the air, over the ground. The driveway is an ice palace for a small and energetic ogre.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

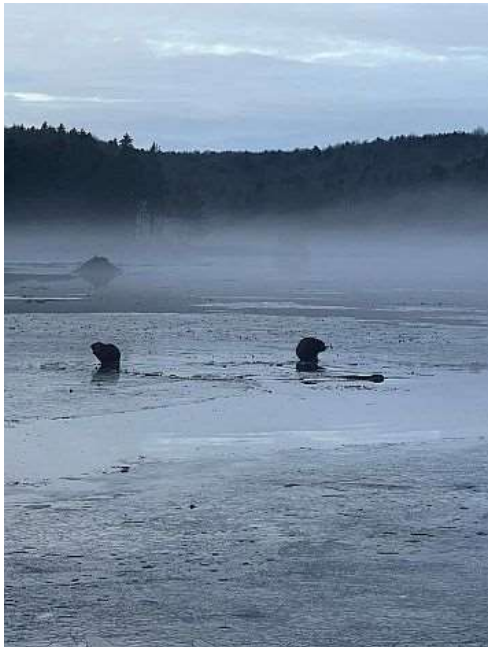
On January 2, four men responded to a medical call for a man with difficulty breathing. Also on January 2, seven men responded to a car off the road; there were no injuries. On January 9, five men responded to a residence with a man not breathing well. The ambulance was called. On January 10, six men responded to call with a man with severe back pain. On January 25, three men responded to a call of severe back pain; the person was transported by ambulance to the hospital. On January 9 four men responded to a residence where a man was not feeling well. The person was turned over to ambulance personnel.

**Burn Permits are Required – call before you burn.  
Call: Dennis (802) 368-7809 or Malcolm (802) 368-2484**





**GATES POND BEAVERS** – Late in December the torrential rainfall caused several beaver dams in the area to breach. At Gates Pond, the far bank gave way causing the pond level to drop precipitously. After several days, the beavers had made no move to repair the breach. But the low water level meant their lodges were not safe havens anymore. The water level had to come up. A team of workers led by Patti Smith of Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC.org) tackled the muddy problem. After two days of hard work, the pond was restored, and the beavers could enter their lodges from underwater again.







Lynda Copeland of Hanson Road took a ride on a horse the other day. She is visiting her daughter Heidi Schmitt in West Virginia. Clockwise from upper left: grand-daughter Katrina Schmitt, Lynda, Sam McCullough, daughter Heidi, grand-daughter Alyssa Schmitt, Laura Horst, and the horse, Millie (The Saint). Lynda is 97 1/2 years old. Photo by Seth Cooley.

The snow made a pretty scene on Hanson Road



**THE GREEN RIVER** was looking exceptionally green one day as I drove down to Brattleboro. Like the river, the route to Brattleboro goes downhill, from 1700 feet elevation at my house to 300 feet at the Connecticut River. West Brattleboro sits at about 500 feet elevation.

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**Send check made out to “Newsletter” to**  
**Joan Courser**  
**P O Box 27**  
**West Halifax VT 05358.**

**NEWSLETTER STORIES** – Got a Halifax story?  
Send to Laurel [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com) or Joan [JWCinVt@gmail.com](mailto:JWCinVt@gmail.com)  
(PO Box 27, 05358).



**Fences and Stone Walls Above West Halifax**

# Halifax News

FEBRUARY 2024

## CALENDAR

<b>Feb. 1, 2024</b> (Thursday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 3, 2024</b> (Saturday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 8, 2024</b> (Thursday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 10, 2024</b> (Saturday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 15, 2024</b> (Thursday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 17, 2024</b> (Saturday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 22, 2024</b> (Thursday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 24, 2024</b> (Saturday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Feb. 29, 2024</b> (Thursday):	Leap Year Day! Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Mar. 2, 2024</b> (Saturday):	Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

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Archives: <https://czresearch.com/newsletter>