

March 2024

## HALIFAX NEWS

### PUMP LOGS – AN ORAL HISTORY

– *Orien Dunn of Granby, Vermont, as recorded in Ron Strickland's book, Vermonters: Oral Histories from Down Country to the Northeast Kingdom (© 1986 Chronicle Books)*



“We put ’em in the ground for the water to run through to the house from a spring. We take a log 8 foot long and at least 8 inches at the butt end and bore a hole right through. Fir balsam. Cedar makes good logs but it’s damn hard to find.

“When I was 17, 18 years old I was boring logs with my dad and he got cramped up in some way and I took over. And I went about 12, 14 miles to the next job and got over there by gee whiz, and I went and cut the trees in the wood. I took my horse and hauled them all out of the woods into a bunch. Then I cut the big end off all of ’em so they were perfectly flat. If we have a log cut to the dimensions that we want, and if it’s laid up on horses as we call ’em and dogged down so that log can’t move, then we bore right through there 8 feet. Then we got a riggin’ that I stick in that hole, and I turn it around three or four times, and that makes a tunnel in each end. Over on the other end, you make it down so it’ll fit that tunnel. That’s the way you put your logs together.

“Dad would go out into the neighborhood and help

lay water pipe with lead pipe. He’d put them right in the ground and keep adding on until they got to the house. But he didn’t like them. If you’ve ever noticed, lead pipe has got a scale on it inside and out. In my part of the country, we were trying to get all fir logs in for water and get rid of that damn slime inside.

“My dad was a blacksmith for horses and for any ironwork that needed to be repaired. It didn’t make no odds whether it was for horseshoes or what it was. Latches and hinges up to the size for a barn door. I don’t know that he ever made an auger by hand. I know that he used to go to Glover, Vermont. There was a man up there that made ’em. That was his business. He didn’t make anything else. Dad would go up there and buy the bits and bring ’em home and weld ’em onto iron of his own to make his auger to bore with. The auger is an inch-and-a-quarter bit. It goes around like that once. Then it straightens out about two feet. Then there’s solid iron welded into that that goes back to the handle that you turn.

“My father was born and brought up right there in the town of Granby. My mother was born there, too, and went to the same one-room school. They got married when they got out of school. I took my dad for my model as far as anything went that I could do. As long as I was doing any work, I tried to get as close to the same as he was as I could. He was about all I did have to stick up to. He was a good teacher. When I got big enough to trail him around the blacksmith shop, I never got a lickin and I never got swore at there. I got my lickins outdoors when I got into mischief. But in the shop I didn’t get into mischief. There were too many tools in there. Chisels and planes and stuff like that where a young kid could get damned hurt. The first thing we got told was, ‘Be careful!’ That was all the training we ever got, just watching him work.

“Wood will probably last the longest of anything with water running in it. I’ve taken up pump logs to put in new ones and by gee whiz they’d be wore right through on the bottom where the water had run through till it had

wore the wood out. I wouldn't be surprised if they'd last forty years if they were put down in the ground solid. In fact, I've got one up at the shop that's around a hundred years old. I guess they're about the only pipe that you could manufacture on your own. I won't say that I was at the beginning of it, because I wasn't. It was a long ways back behind me that they were boring logs. But as long as any body wants to have that work done, I will be available practically any time that they want a demonstration.”

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The “Pump Logs” story was suggested by Wayne Courser. It is part of a Vermont oral history book by Ron Strickland which Wayne and Joan shared with me. This story is quoted with permission from the author, and it was a bit of a journey to get to this point. I wrote to the publisher for permission on November 28. They said to write to their permissions department, so I did. This generated a response letter that said they would take 4-8 weeks to decide on my request. On January 9, 2024, the Chronicle Books permissions assistant replied that she was sorry but “this title has gone out of print, reverting its rights back to the author.” I searched for Ron Strickland and found his website, <https://ronstrickland.com/> where I found a contact page and completed it. I waited 3 weeks but heard nothing. Revisiting Ron's website, I noted that his bio said he was married to a researcher in the Veterans Health Administration in the Boston area -- and I recognized her name! So I looked up my colleague and contacted her at her work email address, apologetically. She responded kindly and quickly and gave me Ron's current email address. He immediately gave me the permission I sought. And he called me on the phone a couple weeks later to reiterate his pleasure to grant permission for this reprinting. What a fun mini-odyssey 😊

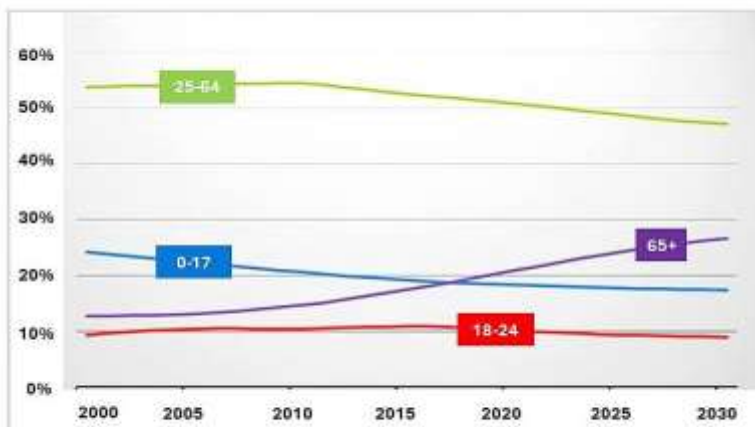
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**LISTENING SESSION ON AGING – March 9, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm in the Halifax Café.**

Join us on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, for a Listening Session presented by Windham Aging, an organization dedicated to ensuring older Vermonters stay safe, fulfilled, and well cared-for (<https://www.windhamaging.com/>).

Windham Aging envisions all Vermonters being able to age in place consistent with Act 156, Older Vermonters Act (2020). The proportion of Vermonters who are over 65 years of age has been increasing – look at the purple line on the graph “Share of Vermont Population by Age Group” from our state Tax Structure Commission (left).

**Share of Vermont Population by Age Group**



Source: U.S. Census decennial census and estimates and Vermont Censensus Administration and Legislative Joint Fiscal Office projections.



Windham Aging has produced a report on the state of aging in Windham County (online at <https://www.windhamaging.com/report>). Hard copies will be available at the March 9<sup>th</sup> get-together. The Listening Session is your chance to discuss your hopes and worries about aging – yours, your family's, your neighbors'. What do we have and what do we need to keep everyone well as we age?

**PI DAY AT THE CAFÉ IS MARCH 14.** Pi is an irrational number approximately equal to 3.14. Multiply a circle's diameter times pi and you get its circumference. We celebrate Pi Day on 3.14 – March 14<sup>th</sup>. Come to the Café 10-1 for round food—cookies, meatballs, pizza, and of course pie.

**GENTLE YOGA CLASS 10 A.M. TUESDAYS IN HALIFAX (JAN 16-MAR 19).** Seth Geeslin's 10-week yoga and gentle stretching classes are winding up this month. Come at 10:00 AM on Tuesdays to 760 Old Stage Rd (heated barn) in Halifax. Last class is 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 in questionable weather - please call Seth at 802-490-4294. – Mary Horne

**SENIOR MEAL IN HALIFAX** – Friday March 15 is the next Senior Meal in Halifax serving at 12 noon in the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax. Menu: **New England boiled dinner** (corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, turnips with onions on the side, cornbread, rolls, and dessert. All seniors are welcome. Free-will donation of \$4.00 is asked for age 60 years and up, \$5.00 for under age 60, for this particular meal. Hope to see you there. A call to Joan is appreciated 802-368-7733. – *Joan Courser*

**AVIAN FLU IN VERMONT.** Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) or bird flu has killed a bobcat and two red-tailed hawks in Cornwall, Vermont, 2 1/2 hours north of us and about 10 miles southwest of Middlebury. The cross-species deaths were reported by news outlets on February 16, 2024. Vermont Fish & Wildlife asks that you **report unusual bird deaths (or sick birds)**, where “unusual bird death/sickness” is defined as any hawks or owls outside of roadways, any loons or eagles, 5 or more crows/jays/ravens/songbirds, 2 or more terns, any waterfowl, or 3 or more turkeys. Contact Fish & Wildlife at [fwinformation@vermont.gov](mailto:fwinformation@vermont.gov) or 802-828-1000. Protect your flocks from direct contact with wild birds. More details are online at <https://vermontdailychronicle.com/avian-flu-crosses-species-kills-vermont-bobcat/> and <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/wildlife-diseases/avian-influenza-wildlife-health-bulletin>.

**JOAN’S SIGHTINGS.** Happy to be seeing four Red-Winged Blackbirds each day, a sign of spring! I also have a few Chickadees, four pairs of Cardinals, several Bluejays, Mourning Doves, lots of Juncos with a pair checking out a birdhouse. I had a very large Hawk one morning checking out my chickens, was glad to see it leave WITHOUT one of them! Still seeing a Nuthatch but not the red-breasted one. I hope it returns when warmer weather arrives. I am very much looking forward to the spring/summer birds. Still have my Woodpeckers lots of loud hammering is heard, a Hairy and a Downy. Some Starlings, a couple of Titmice, Sparrows, and Purple Finch (and they have turned their beautiful RED color now). – *Joan Courser*

**ELSEWHERE AROUND TOWN.** February is a busy month. We saw a fisher bounding through the back of the property one day (pic). Shortly after that I spotted tracks that a friend identified as Snowshoe Hare. One morning a racoon came by (pic). Foxes are out and about. The bobcat keeps walking up the VAST trail in the wee hours of the morning screaming his incomprehensible message. I spotted a black squirrel on Collins Road (pic). Birds are singing in the morning. Chicka-dee-dee-dee! Pretty soon we will be hiking out to our vernal pools to hang acoustic monitors to record the calls of wood frogs on some rainy, cold morning coming our way this spring.



Do you like traipsing around the woods and wading into shallow pools? I can take you with me! [Email [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com) or cell 210-488-1701] Check out the Vermont Vernal Pool Monitoring Project (<https://vtcostudies.org/projects/forests/vernal-pool-conservation/vermont-vernal-pool-monitoring-project/>). Pic: wood frog on leaf mold last summer in Halifax.

#### **FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

- On February 2 four men responded to Griffin Lane; a person was transported to the hospital.
- On February 4 three trucks and nine men responded to a chimney fire.
- On February 17 six men responded to a medical call; the ambulance transported.
- On February 18 two men responded to a medical call; the ambulance transported to Brattleboro.
- On February 18 three men responded to a medical call; the ambulance transported.
- On February 18 four men responded to a medical call; the ambulance transported to Brattleboro hospital.



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

Fairy-white trees covered in frozen frost, a February visual treat outdoors...



...indoors every plant in the place is blooming! Even the aloe (they bloom!?) and the amaryllis that had no leaves a month ago.

Clockwise from left:  
Walking iris, kalinchoe (orange), amaryllis (day 16, day 17), aloe, oxalis, African violet, gerbera daisy.



Check address label for your expiration date.  
Send \$7.00 for postage for your mailed paper copy.  
**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).





Brilliant winter sunset – photo by Andrea Underwood Jones

### **DVFiber Construction Progress**

Fiber optic internet in Halifax is becoming a reality. DVFiber is currently projecting to cover much of Halifax in 2024. The construction crew in the photo was hanging cable near Halifax Center in late February. There has been little snow to halt their progress. Anyone who wants to get truly high-speed internet from a community-owned provider should get on the [DVFiber.net](http://DVFiber.net) website, click "Check Availability" and provide contact information, which is kept private. DVFiber can then contact the interested households when service becomes available in their section of town.

– *David Jones*





# Halifax News

MARCH 2024

## CALENDAR

- Feb. 29, 2024** (Thursday): **Leap Year Day!** Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Cookies shaped like things that leap?
- Mar. 2, 2024** (Saturday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Mar. 7, 2024** (Thursday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Mar. 9, 2024** (Saturday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- (3/9 Saturday):** **Windham Aging** at the Café 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Mar. 14, 2024** (Thursday): **Pi Day!** Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Round food!
- Mar. 16, 2024** (Saturday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Mar. 21, 2024** (Thursday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Mar. 23, 2024** (Saturday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Mar. 28, 2024** (Thursday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Mar. 30, 2024** (Saturday): Halifax Café open 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- ...
- May 25, 2024** (Saturday): **4th Annual Edie Fenton Memorial Plant Swap** 9:00 am to 1:00 pm



Photo by Andrea Underwood Jones

Editor: [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com). Email me for free color e-version.

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