VERMONT'S VOICE

SPRING 2024

TOWN OF VERMONT, WISCONSIN

AGRICULTURE • ENVIRONMENT • RECREATION

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Jack of All Trades

Living in Vermont: Part 2

Annual Town Meeting

Do's and Don'ts of Spring

Part Three of the Soil Series

Election Results

Township News

SPRING IN THE TOWNSHIP
Growing again

Spring in Wisconsin; 7 inches of snow, and then a week later sunny and 60º. Being resilient and adaptable is a character trait of Vermont residents that is formed by the land and the climate. In this issue we highlight our very creative and dedicated town constable Jack Schulenberg. Kelle Anderson shares her journey of adapting to her new life here in the township. Nick Balster explains what CPORT is in the third installment of his series on the soil beneath our feet.

If you have a story idea or a photo to share, please email coxco@chorus.net.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Vermont's Voice*.

— Gary Cox, *Vermont's Voice* at coxco@chorus.net

JACK OF ALL TRADES
41 years on the job

READ MORE

TWO VIEWS
Living in the township

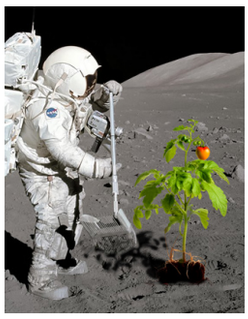
READ MORE

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
April 16th at town hall

READ MORE

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SPRING
Springtime chores

READ MORE



CPORT
Part three of the series on soil

READ MORE

OUR PEOPLE

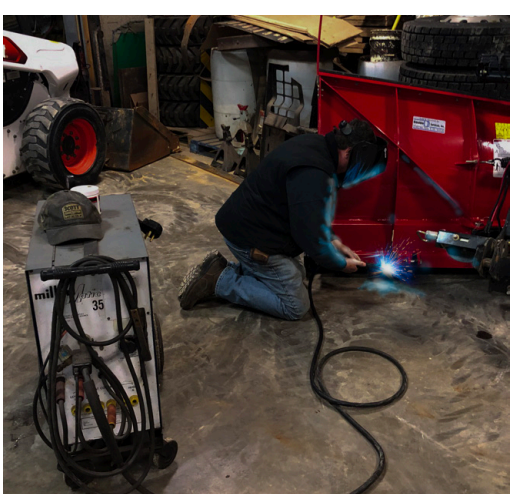
JACK OF ALL TRADES

When I first heard about this position of Town Constable I had wondered if there was a uniform that went along with this antiquated name. Considering the reality of what the job entails it might be better titled "Jack of All Trades" which is how town chair Karen Carlock likes to jokingly refer to our current town constable Jack Schulenberg.

Jack says, "You name it, I can do it."

Jack has been in this capacity in various forms for the past 41 years. His dedication to the job is best illustrated in this story:
In February of 2017 Jack broke his fibula and tore the ankle tendons in such a horrific way that his foot was facing the wrong way. But it was a winter storm and roads needed to be plowed and salted in order for school buses to pick up students. He limped back to the truck and went to work loading salt with the tractor and plowing with the truck. When he was done he drove to the hospital and has had 5 surgeries on the ankle which still bothers him. He says in his 16 years of full-time constable, he has missed only 5 storms because of that injury.

Jack began working with the township in high school while cutting trees with Phil Skalet who was the town constable at the time. After that, he worked with Dave Haugen on a as-needed basis for 19 years. He has been full time for the past 16 years. One of Jack's many talents is welding. Jack began his love of welding and fabricating in high school. He was recruited as welder for the Alaskan pipeline project but decided that job was not for him. He worked various jobs in construction and for a dairy supply company. He picked up skills along the way that he uses every day in his township job. Currently, Jack also raises beef cows and runs a road/parking lot striping business.



Jack modification the plow blade using one of his many talents.

Another Jack special fabrication: the offset hopper.

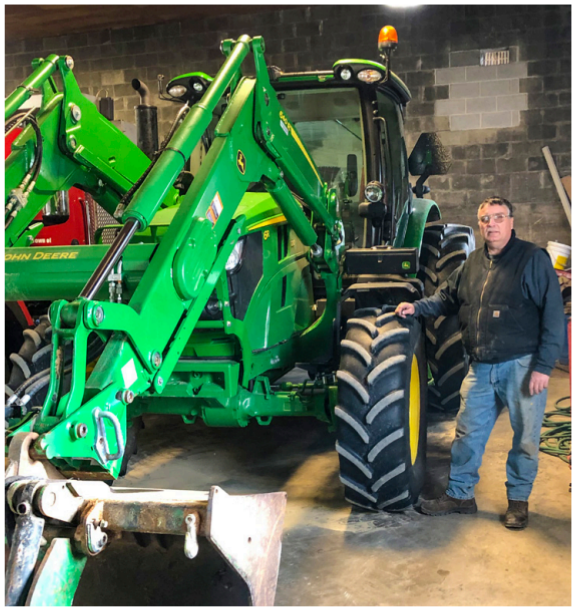
On any day Jack can find himself plowing, mowing, cutting trees, patching roads, sweeping gravel, maintaining equipment, or helping out someone broken down on a town road. He says he loves the variety in the job, but he really enjoys fabricating a unique solution for a more cost-effective and efficient approach to an aspect of township maintenance. His 41 years on the job gives him insight into not only how to fix what's broken, but how to keep it from breaking again. Jack has made many custom attachments for the tractor and modifications to the plow trucks from blade modifications to offset salt hoppers. Each fabrication makes more efficient use of town resources. This keeps the cost of maintaining our roads down. His custom adaptation of

A simple solution to how much salt is needed.

the salt hopper allows the plow driver to spread the salt and gravel down the middle of the crown of the road rather than the single side of the road the way factory hoppers do. This cuts our salt use in half. Speaking of salt, Jack has a simple solution to getting the correct amount of salt ordered in any given year. He has spray-painted markers on the walls of the salt shed that with one look you can see what has been used and how much will need to be ordered to fill the shed to capacity for the coming winter season.

The township's main plow truck is the International HV, and we also have a secondary F550 that Tim Pierce uses to plow a set route of 11 miles. Jack drives the International on a 27-mile route. That truck cost around $230,000 and Jack is very protective of it. He is the only one with the proper licensing to drive it. Some storms put 120 miles on each truck. As with all equipment, things break. This past January during the subzero weather and snow storms a

The International truck



The John Deere tractor

The F550

radiator hose broke out on the road on the International and Jack and Tim were out in 35º below windchill switching out the hose. Jack also recalls early on in his constable career, working with Phil Skalet during the winter cutting trees along the road. They were burning the brush and pushing the limbs and wood off the road into the burning brush pile with the plow blade. The heat of the fire softened the ground and the front end of the plow truck dropped into the mud and got stuck with the fire between the plow and truck. Jack jumped in his own truck and pulled out the town truck before the hydralic hoses melted and the fluid ignited.

Jack has perfected a technique to patch roads using old skid steer tires.

A custom fabricated plow adapter for the tractor. It can now serve as a back-up snow plow.

Other town equipment includes the John Deere tractor with the batwing mower and end loader and the skid steer along with a host of chainsaws, brush cutters, welders, torches, and really anything that Jack needs to maintain our roads and town property.

Jack is on call 24/7 and has cut short a birthday party or two to come back to town and clear trees from the road.

POP QUIZ

By town ordinance, how long after a snowstorm is the town patrolman required to have the road cleared?

- **3 hours**
- **3 days**

•3 weeks

A custom fabrication using a discarded trailer ramp.

Guess what this is for. Hint: Jack calls it "the bear trap".

On the occasion when Jack does get a break, he likes to get out and do some serious big game hunting.

He has hunted in Manitoba, New Mexico, Colorado, Newfoundland, Wyoming, Montana, and here in Wisconsin with both his daughters. They have harvested bear, deer and turkeys close to home. Jack's most memorable hunt was for moose in Maitoba.

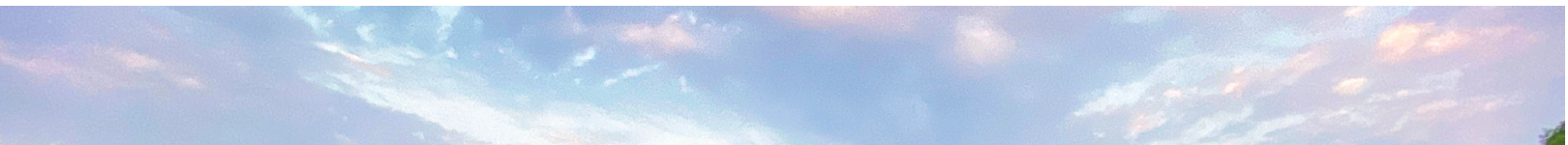
As Jack travels the town roads he is always keeping an eye out for trees that might require trimming or removal, signage in need of repair, the condition of a stretch of road, clogged culverts, all the things we often take for granted. So each time you travel a stretch of town road that is clear of snow, is meticulously mowed, or stop in our beautiful town hall be sure to give our "Jack of all Trades" a word of thanks for his dedication to the Town of Vermont.

Full-time Township Constables through the years

1855	19??	19??	1967-1989	1989-2008	2008
Originally local farmers got together and maintained the roads. There was a shared interest in keeping the roads passable for the many cheese factories to get their product to market.	?? Severson	Romie Grub	Phil Skalet	Dave Haugen	Jack Schulenberg
	Early records of personnel or a bit hard to find, but we know there were some early town residents taking on a more formalized paid position.				

LIVING IN VERMONT: PART 2

A series of different perspectives on living in Vermont



MOVING TO TOWN OF VERMONT

by Kelle Anderson

I expected to flip a switch and quickly adjust to this new landscape amongst those who valued the land and living in harmony with it. Truth is, it's been a journey.

"The land found us" – this is the way I explain our move in 2018 to Pleasant Valley. I knew little of this jewel nestled in the Town of Vermont in the renown Driftless area. It took my husband, Richard, inviting me several times to hike with him at Pleasant Valley Conservancy before I relented and discovered a whole new way of experiencing nature and the outdoors. Fast forward about 2 years into our almost daily walk, talk and pray hikes and a For Sale sign appeared as we were walking to our car. That sign started our journey to making the Town of Vermont our new home, and land restoration our new endeavor.

While I was filled with excitement about moving to "the country" in this season of my life, I was leaving all I knew. I was raised one block from Camp Randall Stadium and subsequently raised our sons and in the small-town community of Cross Plains and taught at Park School. For my husband, having been raised on a farm in Minnesota and a true nature man at heart, moving to the country was like coming home. For me it was all unfamiliar. Because I was so drawn to the needed retreat feel of quiet, unhurried living, I think I expected to flip a switch and quickly adjust to this new landscape amongst those who valued the land and living in harmony with it. Truth is, it's been a journey.

Being an extrovert and strongly community oriented, I quickly learned the definition of "neighbor" was miles different (literally!!) than the one I had lived with my whole life. To me, neighbor meant I could see their house, wave as they drove up the street, and walk over for a quick glass of wine or tea and conversation on their porch or a neighborhood gathering. Now neighbor means someone miles away with no house in sight, and that random middle of the road conversation is my week's highlight. I'm learning it takes intentionality to build community when you're new, life is full and neighbors are hidden by trees and miles. I learned quickly though that I love the sounds of birds waking up in the valley, the natural beauty of prairie, fenn and forest all around in every direction. Breath-takingly transcendent. The drives have grown on me and become worth it because they remind me how fortunate I am to live in this pristine environment replete with the voice of God. My friends will often say "the drive here was so beautiful!".

Town of Vermont and Pleasant Valley is our home – my path was bit bumpier than my husband and adult sons who jumped right in. It has been an adjustment for me, but adjustments are good soil for growth, says this counselor. I can now truly say, I look forward to hikes with Richard and Bella our chocolate lab, our bountiful garden to work, enjoy and share, ongoing restoration work, a blooming prairie, porch time with family and friends, our annual Music on the Prairie and meeting more Town of Vermont "neighbors". Our hope and prayer is to leave a legacy of land and soul restoration for future generations in this oh so beautiful part of the world.

OUR GOVERNMENT

ANNUAL TOWN OF VERMONT MEETING

April 16th Town Hall 7:00 pm

Residents of the Town of Vermont have the opportunity to participate directly in the major decisions that affect management of the Town and how money is spent.

The Annual Town meeting is held the third Tuesday in April and is a forum for residents to share their opinions and ask questions directly of Town officials. It also serves as an opportunity for the Town Board to share Town achievements from the preceding year as well as its plans for the future.

If you are a resident, you are encouraged to participate in the Annual Town meeting. If you are not a resident of the Town, you are welcome to attend Town Meeting as an observer.

This year our Town Treasurer, Heather Richter will explain the mil rate calculation and how it effects your tax bill.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

DO'S AND DON'TS OF SPRING

Spring is here and with it an opportunity to get outside and do some timely maintenance to get rid of infestations and to keep our desirable plants healthy.

DO

Garlic mustard

In medium to large sized infestations, a combination of hand pulling, cutting or localized herbicide treatment is appropriate for managing garlic mustard. First, an aggressive effort at hand pulling all newly established or "satellite" infestations is recommended to limit garlic mustard's spread. Next, consider managing well-establish "core" populations with a combination of pulling, cutting and or herbicides.

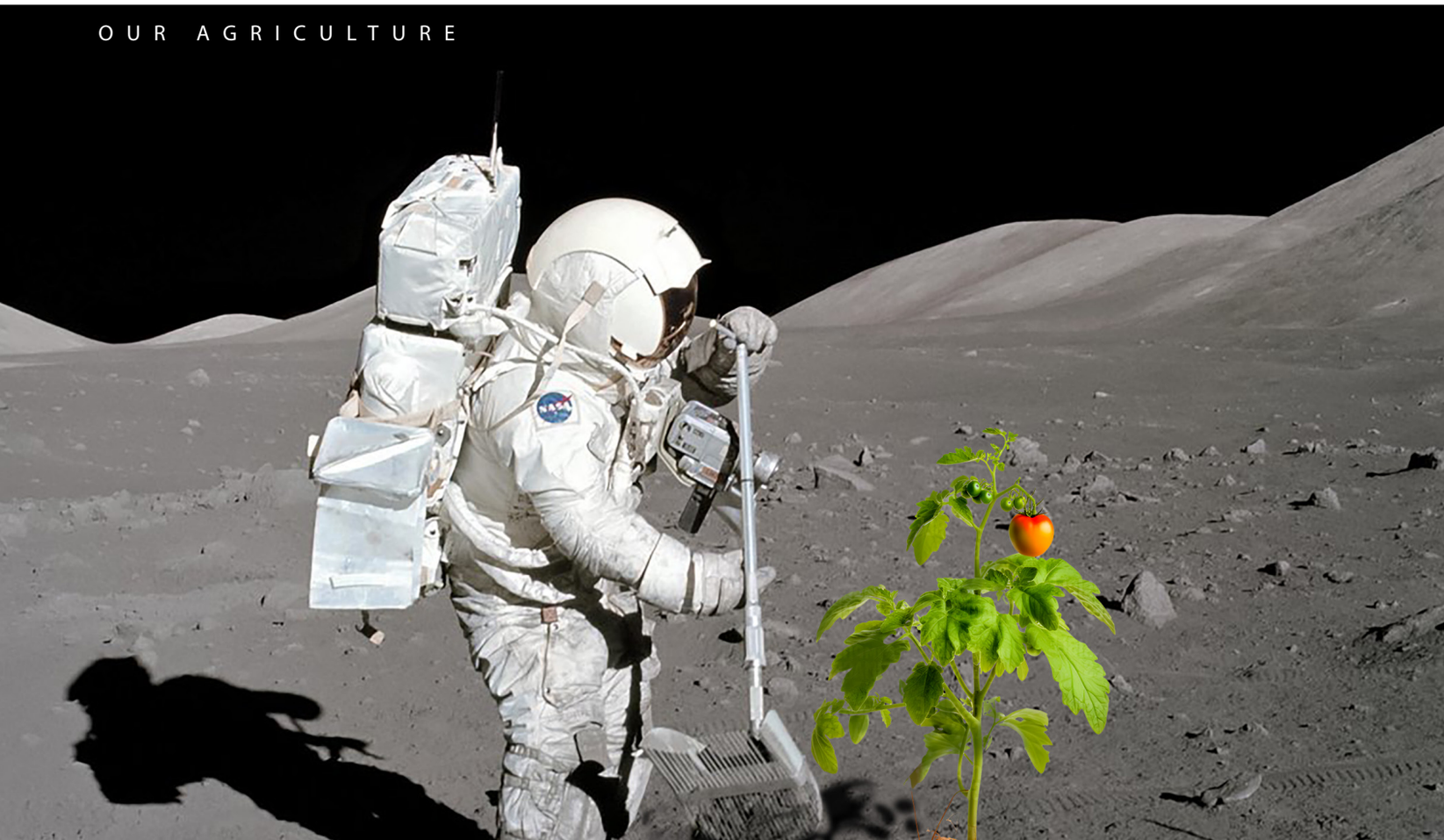
If the plants are flowering, it is important to remove all cut stems since seed development will continue even if the stem is severed from the root. Because mechanical cutting does not remove the root crown, it may be necessary to cut multiple times in a season to prevent seeds from developing on secondary stems that sprout from the rootstock.

DON'T

Oak Wilt

Oak wilt can be very expensive to control, but prevention is effective and cheap. Avoid injuring oaks by activities such as cutting firebreaks, road construction, and road maintenance on oaks from April 1–July 15.

If the spring is unusually warm, the risk of aboveground oak wilt infection can occur before April, but this is rare. If the daily high temperature is 60 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer for about one straight week, there may be a risk of oak wilt.



CPORT, "One acronym to rule them all!"

Thank you for *digging into* the next installment of our series on that thin, living skin of the Earth called Soil.

By Nick Balster

Town of Vermont Plan Commission member and Town Board and UW-Madison Professor

Take any scientific discipline or subject ending in "ology," and you will find a plethora of acronyms. Even outside academic-speak, acronyms are everywhere. These linguistic shortcuts can be helpful but, at the same time, exclude those who don't know their meaning. So why do I bring up acronyms in an article about Soil? Because, just like the ancient inscription inside the infamous ring in J.R.R. Tolkien's book, *Lord of the Rings* read, "*One ring to rule them all…*", I believe there is one acronym to rule them all, which goes by the name of **CPORT**.

Allow me to explain.

I would argue everything we do in life is connected to Soil. This truth comes from the fact that Soil effectively integrates the atmosphere, hydrosphere (water), lithosphere (rock), and biosphere into a media of infinite complexity to ponder for a lifetime and study for millennia. Within this complexity, soil provides many reliable environmental services, so much so that we often forget how much we depend on it. So one might ask, as I certainly did, "How can I gain a deeper (pun intended) understanding of something so complex and hidden below my feet?"

C CLIMATE

P PARENT MATERIAL

O ORGANISMS

R RELIEF

T TIME

Enter **CPORT**, the one acronym to rule them all.

To begin understanding soil, all we need to do is memorize the acronym CPORT (*think of seaports where ships go to exchange cargo*). For it is in CPORT that we find the five factors from which all Soils originate: "C" for climate, "P" for parent material, "O" for organisms, "R" for relief (think topography), and "T" for time – the essential ingredients to birth every Soil type from atop the tallest mountain to the deepest canyon to the black earth of Vermont Township. Where you find Soil, you find CPORT. In fact, missing just one letter, and you won't, and don't, have Soil. CPORT integrates the atmosphere, biology, geology, and hydrology over time into the organized milieu that sustains our world. One acronym to rule them all!

So, I encourage you to remember CPORT and what it represents, as it will help you understand why a particular Soil looks and behaves the way it does. Look at the soil and think CPORT – What is the climate like? What is its parent material? What organisms are present? What is the dominant relief? And how has time played a role? – answering these questions will help you understand your Soil. Visa versa, examine a soil, and you can interpret the CPORT that shaped it, as soil preserves this legacy. Pretty powerful if you ask me!

In the last installment, I asked whether there is Soil on the Moon or Mars. Well, the unfortunate answer, for now, is no. You see, without CPORT, soil does not develop. True, these celestial bodies have parent material, definitely relief, and time has certainly passed, and you might even stretch to say the moon has a climate (given the discovery of lunar ice), but what's missing? Yes, the O is arguably the most important factor in CPORT – the organisms! Life! Without O, the other four ingredients for soil sit in an incapacitated state, called regolith, waiting for that breath of life to turn it into Soil, that thin, ecstatic skin of Earth. CPORT, one acronym to [indeed] rule them all!

Now that we have a framework, in the next installments, we will unpack each letter of this linguistic tool to highlight some fascinating properties of Soil that may surprise you; they sure did me. Enjoy the spring and the great annual awakening of Soil!

One interesting postscript –

Legend has it that tardigrades, seemingly extraterrestrial microorganisms that can withstand years of dehydration and extreme temperatures and even survive the vacuum of space, have made it to the moon. They arrived not of their own power but unintentionally brought up to the Moon's surface by lunar landers. Whether this urban legend is true or not, if a day comes when the conditions are met to bring these creatures out of cryptobiosis, the O in CPORT will be met, and the Moon may one day have Soil! Something to ponder.

OUR HISTORY

A HISTORY OF HARD WORK

From the 1977 book *History of the Town of Vermont*

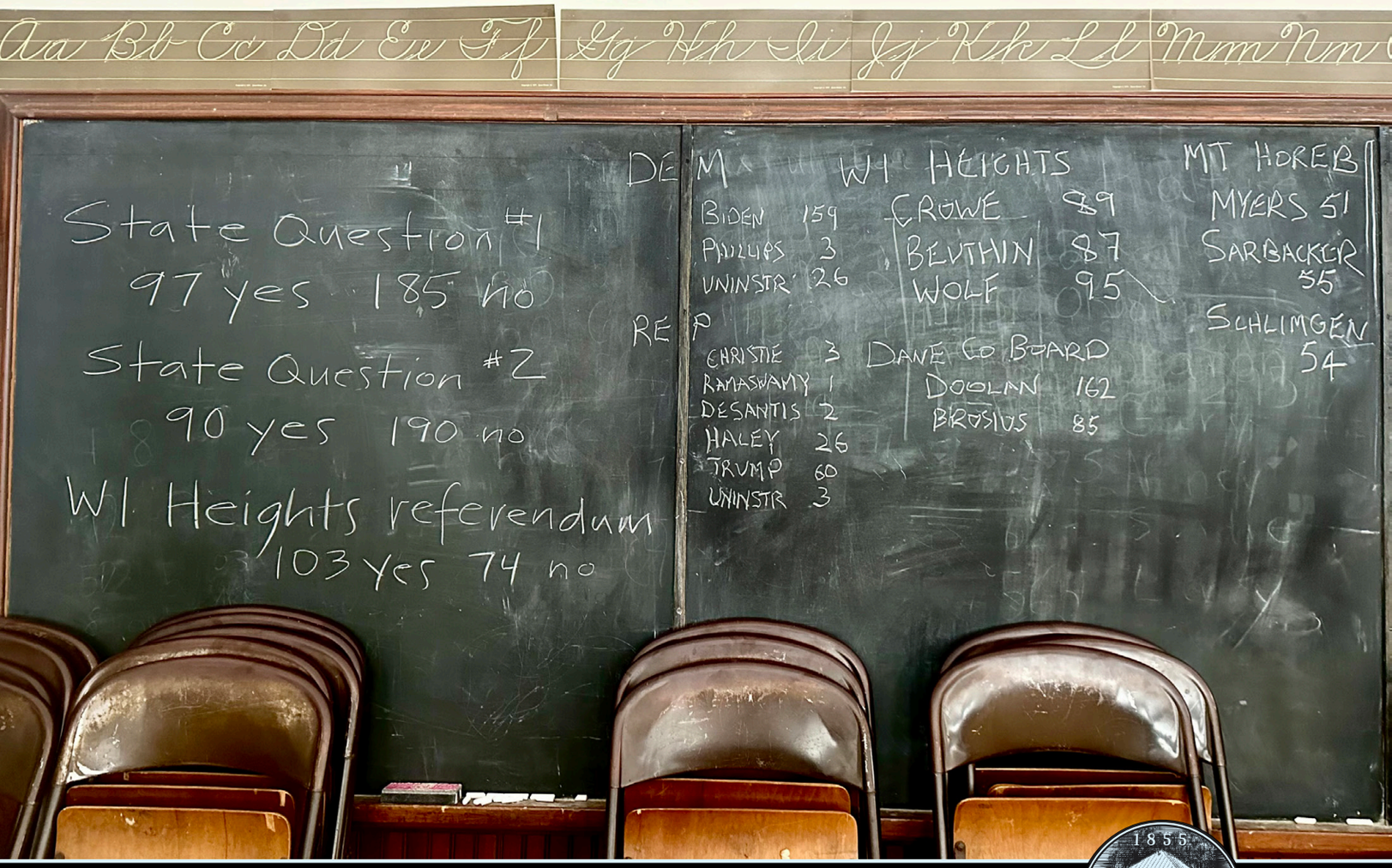
Herman Fesenfeldt at Black Earth told about selling Hans Gilbertson a hay mower. Hans complained that it wasn't operating properly and wanted Fesenfeldt to come and see what was wrong. He suggested Hans would need to hook the team onto the mower. Hans said he wouldn't need to do that, and pulled it himself!

OUR ELECTIONS

"OLD SCHOOL" ELECTION RESULTS

From the April 2nd Spring Primary Election

291 Vermont residents cast their votes on April 2nd despite 7 inches of very wet and slippery snow. The steep section of JJ proved to be a challenge for voters coming and going, but there were no accidents, just a number of large trucks sliding sideways down the road in front of the town hall. Below is an image of the results Vermont township style.



OUR GOVERNMENT

VERMONT TOWNSHIP

A BUSY ELECTION YEAR

- **Tuesday, August 13th Primary for congressional seats**
- **Tuesday, November 5th General election**

OPEN BOOK UPCOMING

Open book is upcoming April 23, 2023 from 4 PM–6 PM at the town hall and is the opportunity for anyone to come with questions for the assessor about the assessed value of their property. If you are unsatisfied with the assessors decisions, then they will help you schedule a Board of Review meeting. The Board of Review will be May 14, 2023 from 6 PM – 8 PM also at the town hall.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

In a recent *Vermont's Voice* article, there was discussion about the various public safety agencies that serve Town of Vermont residents and inter-municipal collaboration to consider ways to maintain and enhance service while aiming to reduce cost increases. The inter-municipal group has continued to meet and are supportive of exploring cooperative strategies. The next meeting of the group is April 29th.

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HOME