



THE LYME SCHOOL Newsletter

SERVING THE LYME COMMUNITY
FOR OVER 100 YEARS



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SCHOOL YEAR

Thursday, February 25, 2010

"ONE OF THE BEST TOWN MEETINGS"

By Christopher Graff, Chief of the Montpelier Bureau of the Associated Press.

It is, quite simply, the most eloquent ode to town meeting ever told. It was written 50 years ago by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. It is a story of the choice that faced her town of Arlington at a town meeting: Whether to build a new school. Here is the story as she told it in her 1953 book "Vermont Tradition."

This was a fight over action to be taken now - going into debt for an ideal, an ideal which is almost the only primal urge for which humanity need never blush - sacrifice by the old, to give children a better chance.

Those voters who believed the town could never raise the extra money required for building and upkeep, they were sincere in their mournful admission that, what with wretched train service, hardly any automobiles, the nearest existing public high school might almost as well be fifty miles off as the actual 12 miles of unplowed winter snow drifts and spring mudholes. But with even more sincerity, they listed our community's urgent material needs one after another. The hill roads should be resurfaced, or they would wash out to stony trails. Care for the sick and poor was more costly every year. But above all the bridges.

In a mountain town with flash floods roaring over the banks of its water courses after hard rains, bridges have an imperious priority. Our bridges needed reinforcement, not only from recurring high water, but against the great tonnage of modern traffic. It would be dangerous not to rebuild them. It would take all the resources of a poor mountain town to keep our bridges in repair. To add to that expense the enormous cost of a new school - insane.

The tangible needs of the body and the impalpable needs of the mind and spirit stood up to see which was the stronger. The material needs outshouted the ideal. They sounded real and actual. The little flickering flame of responsibility for the future of the town's children died down to a faint glimmer in the hearts of the men and women whose votes would in a few moments make the decision. Those who had longed and worked for the school sat silent, disconcerted by the predicted crashing of the bridges, loud in their ears. What could be said against that?

Then up sprang Patrick Thompson - yes, you are right in guessing from his name that he was Irish, was Catholic, was only one generation away from those who drank stinking water from the ship's barrel, long strings of green slime hanging down to the floor, as they struggled on toward the New World and Vermont. He had worked his way up to a partnership in one of our two grocery stores. What education he had - it was sound - he had received in our public schools. We usually saw him in a white apron, standing behind the counter, selling sugar and tea. We have never forgotten and we will never let our children forget how he looked that day, his powerful shoulders squared, his hands clenched. We still remember his exact words, intense as the flame of a blowtorch: "We are being told that our town cannot afford to keep its bridges safe and also provide for its children a preparation for life that will give them a fair chance alongside other American children.

"That's what we are being told. Not one of here really believes it. We just can't think of what to say back. But suppose it were true - Then I say, if we have to choose, 'Let the bridges fall down!' What kind of town would we rather have 50 years from now - a place where nitwit folks go beck and forth over good bridges? Or a town with brainy, well-educated people capable of holding their own in the modern way of life? You know which of those two is really wanted by every one of us here. I say, 'Let the bridges fall down!'"

He took his seat in silence, the American citizen, the Celt, whose grandparents had lived in enforced ignorance. It was a turning point in the life of our town. We knew it was. So we spoke not a word. We sat silently, thinking. And feeling. What we felt, with awe, as though we saw it with our physical eyes, was in all our human hearts, the brave burning up to new brightness of the ideal.

Presently, the Moderator said in the traditional phrase, "Any further discussion?" The silence was broken. They "forward your ballots." In a silent line the grave-faced voters moved slowly toward the ballot box, each hand holding a white paper.

The school was built. Years later it burned, and was replaced, almost without opposition, by an even better one. The first battle had been conclusive. As we old-timers look at look at the building, our hearts bursting with thanksgiving, we can see clearly as if actually carved on the lintel, the words "LET THE BRIDGES FALL DOWN."

Patrick Thompson has long been in his grave. But he walks at the head of every graduating class in our high school...a school for poor as well as rich, open to every race, to every creed, to everybody

Democracy's Purest Form: Local Town Meetings

ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE IN THE GYMNASIUM

Tuesday, March 2nd at 7pm

LITTLE TOWN MEETING

An "informational" meeting designed to allow candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves & tell all about what their interests are and what they hope to accomplish in whatever board they're running for; a time to review the warrant informally and ask relevant questions so as to make an informed vote etc...

Thursday, March 4th at 7pm

SCHOOL BUDGET MEETING

When the Town votes to pass or not pass the school budget.

Tuesday, March 9th (7am-7pm)

BIG TOWN MEETING

When the town votes to pass or not pass the town budget and warrants articles (with the exception of the school budget which is voted on at the School Budget Meeting, above) and elects candidates for open positions..



For several years this story appeared in the newsletter around the time of town meeting. Recently, I was asked to print this story in the newsletter again. After some digging we located it . What I found appealing in this story was not the conclusion the vote arrived at, it was that it demonstrated the importance of involvement, speaking ones mind and the presence of selfless decision making and the impact one person can have in the truest example of democracy - local town meeting. See you March 2, 4 & 9.



THE PLAINS SCHOOL 1906

THE LYME SCHOOL Newsletter



LAURA BARNES SCHOOL 1958

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8th Grade Prepares for High School

Math, science and french placement tests, school visits, and now... a decision. This time of year Lyme's 8th grade students make their decision about what high school to attend. This year's eighth graders will be attending **Thetford Academy**, **Hanover High School**, and **St. Johnsbury Academy**. In the past 8th graders have also chosen **Hartford** and **Rivendell** Schools.

For a growing number of students from the Lyme School and Crossroads Academy, St. Johnsbury has become the school of choice (For those watching the town budget --it also has the lowest day tuition of the three). We are fortunate in that our town has made the commitment to maintain its practice of "School Choice". (However, in order for "School Choice"

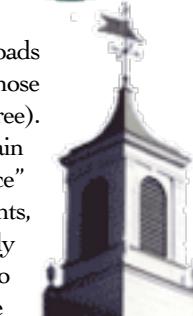
to continue as the practice for Lyme's High School students, parents will need to actively advocate for it annually during the town budget process.) We are also fortunate to have so many strong schools in the area to choose from. Congratulations, to the 8th grade and good luck... Continue to make us proud... You will do great!

Childcare Available for School Budget Meeting

Child care will be available from the 8th grade (as well as their adult chaperones) on the evening of March 4th from 6:45 until the end of the meeting.

For more information Contact Kate Cook at 795 - 3141

Read Across America March 1st - 5th



LYME DRAMA PRESENTS: TIED TO THE TRACKS



Book by Tim Kelly

Music by Arne Christiansen

Lyrics by Ole Kittleson.

The performance dates are March 18, 19 and 20.
Tee Shirts are now available
\$10 Youth - M, L Adult - S, M, L



DO YOU HAVE YOUR POEM FOR YOUR POCKET YET?

Poem In Your Pocket Week to celebrate Dr. Suess's Read Across America starts March 1 - 5. Poetry books are available through the school and public library. And if anyone needs another Poem In Your Pocket form they are available in the office.

NEXT PTO MEETING: Wednesday, March 17th at 2pm

**Lunch
Week of
3/1 to 3/5**

Monday	BURGER DAY! Hamburgers, Cheeseburgers or Veggie Burgers Steak Fries Garden Salad Corn Cantaloupe, Watermelon
Tuesday	Stuffed Pasta Shells or Plain Pasta Dinner Rolls Garden Salad Broccoli Sliced Oranges, Grapes Rainbow Sherbet
Wednesday	Grilled Cheese Sandwich (white or whole wheat) Chicken Noodle Soup Garden Salad Cucumbers, Carrots, Celery Applesauce, Watermelon
Thursday	Beef Nachos w/ Cheese, Lettuce, Salsa Garden Salad Baked Beans Peaches, Apples Jello w/ Whipped Cream
School Budget Vote 7pm	Chicken or Tuna Salad Wrap Cottage Cheese Garden Salad Veggie Platter Peaches, Apples
Friday	Al a carte Fruit and Milk are available everyday

Contact me at: JValence@LymeSchool.org
Phone: 795-2125 or just stop by.
You may print color copies of the Newsletters at: www.LymeSchool.org



CONVERSE FREE LIBRARY

K-Kids Time - Stories and Craft
Thursday, March 4th and every Thursday beginning at 12:45

Gmail and Google Apps,
a Valley Net program

Tuesday, March 2 at 1:30 and repeated
Wednesday, March 3 at 7PM



Hot Lunch Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. "In accordance with Federal law and US Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."