**Montpelier Notes**,  An occasional email for Pownal and Woodford residents. If you would prefer not to receive these notes please reply to [botzow@sover.net](mailto:botzow@sover.net) and I'll remove you from the list. If you would like to be added please let me know. I do not give your email address to others. --Bill Botzow

February 20, 2011

Hello All,

Last week’s thaw seemed to break the back of winter but this weekend tells a different story with its return to below freezing temperature and a hard wind. It was cold Saturday at the Transfer Station, but still good to catch up with those I saw. Yes, it was another full week in Montpelier. The drive home Friday night under a full moon is a good time to think through the week’s events and start preparing for next week. Next week will be especially long as the Commerce Committee has set a goal of passing the administration’s jobs bill after giving it a thorough review. Overall there are a lot of good initiatives in the bill that work together to get people back to work and grow businesses. Still we need to make sure the pieces work, are good policy and affordable now and long range.

This week we welcomed new legislative pages including Amanda Dean from Pownal. It is a real pleasure to see her in the State House working hard with a great smile. We can be very proud of Amanda. She earned this position through hard work and demonstrating her promise as someone who can both keep up her schoolwork and take on the responsibilities of a page.

This last week Wednesday was League of Cities and Towns Day in Montpelier. As they have every year, Selectboard members travelled to Montpelier for informational sessions and meetings with their representatives and others. It was good to welcome Nelson Brownell, Hap Percey and Clint Hutchins and help them meet with the legislature and the Governor. I enjoy it very much when constituents come to the State House. Its tradition of open and accessible contact with elected officials makes it a pleasure to help all who make the long drive connect with their government. Please let me know if you would like to visit and when you might be coming north.

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**Community Notes:**

Early Voting for Town Elections Registered voters can vote ballot before the March 1 Town Meeting Day elections by going to the Town Offices in Pownal and Woodford during regular office hours. Also Karen Burrington will have special hours for early voting at the Pownal Town Office next Sunday from 10 am to 3 PM.

Governor Shumlin Area visit

Tomorrow Monday February 21, Governor Shumlin will be in the Bennington area and will be coming to Pownal for a meeting at Oak Hill Children’s Center focused on Early Childhood Education at 9:45 AM. All are welcome. He will also be at Carmody’s 421 Main Street Bennington from 12 to 1PM and if you’re up earlier at Whitman’s Feed Store in North Bennington from 8:30-9:00 am.

PRESIDENT'S DAY FREE CHICK'N BISCUITS SUPPER FEB. 21

Monday, February 21, 2011 - 5pm-7pm, President's Day Free Chick'n Biscuits Supper, Pownal United Methodist Church located at Rt. 346 & Church Street. Warm food and fellowship, optional donations to Pownal Food Pantry.

MAUMS WINTER CARNIVAL FEB. 26

MAUMS PTSA is sponsoring a WINTER CARNIVAL with FOOD, FUN & GAMES at the MT Anthony Middle School on SAT. FEB 26, 2011 from 10-3. (watch for carnival flyers to be sent home from school with 2 free tickets to use @ this event!)

E-Vermont Community Broadband Project - “Social Media Marketing”

***When*:   Monday, Feb. 28, 2011 at 6 PM \***

***Where*:   Pownal Elementary School Library**

An interactive training session on how to establish a social media presence for your business and how to best use social media to accomplish your business goals. Participants will be introduced to various social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Yelp, Digg, Etc.) and provided instruction on how to use these online tools. Businesses will also be shown ways to track your success online. More in-depth social media training will be conducted on a one-on-one basis. This training requires participants to be stationed at computers with broadband access.

\*Presentation is about an hour long and will end   before Town Meeting.

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Here’s what passed the House this week:

**H. 88** **An act relating to uniform child custody jurisdiction and enforcement**

This bill revises the law on child custody jurisdiction. Sorting out law between various states can be very complicated.We took this step because of changes in federal law and because case law is currently inconsistent among various jurisdictions. The bill provides standards for states to exercise their jurisdiction over a child custody determination with a standard for continuing jurisdiction, and clarifies how changes are made going forward. For instance, the bill provides for a remedial process to enforce interstate child custody and visitation, which brings a uniform procedure to interstate enforcement. The bill passed on a voice vote.

**J.R.S. 16** **Joint resolution requesting that penalties under the No Child Left Behind Act be suspended until the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is reauthorized in a revised form**

No Child Left Behind has caused great adjustment, some good some difficult, for schools. The House Education brought the resolution to the full House for a vote. It passed on a voice vote.

*Whereas*, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is incorporated into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and

*Whereas*, in accordance with the provisions of NCLB, public schools must focus on math and reading, and

*Whereas*, in a 2007 study, the Center for Education Policy found that 44 percent of United States school districts have reduced the amount of time spent on science, social studies, and the arts, and

*Whereas*, focusing only on math and reading will not adequately prepare Vermont students for the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, and

*Whereas*, the test score gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress have been lower since the enactment of NCLB, and

*Whereas*, NCLB measures are narrow and imprecise, and they ignore other factors in student academic performance, and

*Whereas*, many Vermont schools are forced to choose between losing highly qualified and effective principals and teachers or reject substantial funding, due to punitive sanctions for their failure to make adequate yearly

progress under NCLB, and

*Whereas*, it is the responsibility of the United States Congress periodically to evaluate the effectiveness of this legislation and reauthorize ESEA, and

*Whereas*, Congress has not thoroughly evaluated the impact of ESEA-NCLB on schools and the educational process since NCLB was first enacted in 2001,

*now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives***: That the General Assembly urges Congress to suspend immediately the punitive sanctions under the No Child Left Behind Act until the act is reauthorized in a revised form, *and be it further*

***Resolved***: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Congressional Delegation

**H. 45** **An act relating to the Winhall school district’s budget**

The Education Committee also worked on this bill, changing all the original language to make sure tuition deficits won’t be included in calculating excess spending. It would apply to next year’s school budgets.

The name of the act would change to “An act relating to excluding tuition deficits from the definition of excess spending” to reflect its application state wide.

**H. 52** **An act relating to the definition of poultry products**

This bill makes sure quail, pheasant and partridge will be categorized correctly for slaughtering regulations. This is a small niche agriculture sector in Vermont and the change helps producers. It passed on a voice vote.

**H. 114** **An act relating to electrical installations**

The House passed this bill last year but there wasn’t time for the Senate to take it up. This year’s bill is the same as last year and sets policy for wiring houses with exemptions for those wiring their own house. There was a procedural roll call vote on the bill to send it back to committee which failed 31 to 101. I voted with the majority. Later the bill passed on a voice vote.

**H. 153** **An act relating to human trafficking**

This bill sets a comprehensive system of criminal penalties and prevention programs for human trafficking. It also includes a program of services for human trafficking victims.

Because of the seriousness of the issue there was a roll call vote. I voted yes and it passed 131 to 5.

**H. 236** **An act relating to limitation of prosecutions for sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult**

This bill changes from three years to six years the statute of limitations period for a prosecution for sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult. It passed on a voice vote.

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**State House Elections – Sergeant at Arms, Adjutant General, UVM Trustees**

Every two years the General Assembly holds an election for the Sergeant at Arms. The Sergeant at Arms runs the State House, supervising all its non legislative functions for the public. The job includes security, scheduling, staffing and maintaining order. This year Francis Brooks was reelected to the post. Francis was a long serving State Representative from Montpelier before becoming Sergeant at Arms. Before that he was a high school physics teacher. He does a very good job and he was reelected with no opposition.

The General Assembly also elects every two years the Vermont National Guard Adjutant General. General Michael Dubie ran for reelection and because there was another name on the ballot a vote was held. General Dubie was reelected 151 to 2. He has led the Vermont National Guard through its largest overseas deployments admirably and has distinguished himself here in Vermont and amongst his peers. We can be very proud of his work.

My term of six years as a University Trustee ends this year. However I decided to run for another term because we need some long range continuity on the board and I would like to continue my work in making sure the University has an excellent and up to date internal audit and compliance system. Also the University needs representation on the board from all parts of Vermont and a voice for encouraging its role in higher education and economic development throughout the state. I was elected along with Representatives Joan Lenes from Shelburne and Kesha Ram from Burlington.

I hope everybody has a very good week.

Stay in touch,

Bill

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