



# The Heron

Winter 2026 | Issue 2

## VTP News, Events, and Announcements

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## VTP Communications Committee Announcement

*by Michele Bergeron, Co-Chair, Communications Committee*

The VTP has established a dedicated Communications Committee, formed by separating the communications team from the Clubhouse Committee. The committee is dedicated to supporting the communication needs of the VTP.

The membership remains unchanged. Michele Bergeron and Steve Umbro serve as Co-Chairs, with Nancy Killam as Secretary. Committee members include John Edmondson (Editor-in-Chief), Ruth Kogel (Editor of Happenings), Louise Greene (Designer & Layout Artist, Roving Reporter), Jody Phillips (Community Outreach), Nancy Killam (Committee News), Steve Umbro (Contributing Writer), and Michele Bergeron (Seacoast Activities & Events).

## Photo Calendar Contest

The Communications Committee invites you to enter the VTP Photo Calendar Competition. Starting January, submit any photo for a chance to appear in our 2027 VTP Calendar, which will be available for purchase (at cost) at the end of 2026. Submitted photos will be displayed at the 2026 Annual Meeting for all residents to vote on their favorites.

### Requirements:

- Photos must be taken on VTP grounds.
- Photos must be in JPEG format.
- We need images representing all seasons.
- Please do not include people.
- Submission grants VTP rights to use your photo in the calendar.
- Unlimited photo submissions.
- No restrictions on when photos were taken.
- Start date is now. Last day to submit photos is September 15, 2026. (This will give us time to print and create a display for voting at the Annual Meeting.)
- Submit photos to [VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com](mailto:VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com).
- Be sure to include your name and unit number in your email.

### We Asked, You Answered

by Michele Bergeron

Here's a summary of the VTP Website and Newsletter Survey results based on feedback from 62 community members:

#### Website Usage & Accessibility

- **Frequency of Visits:** Most members visit the VTP community website occasionally, with only 2 visiting daily and 7 never visiting. Reasons for not visiting include lack of time, no perceived need, or relying on a spouse for updates. Some "never" users plan to be more active after learning about the site at the Annual Meeting.
- **Ease of Use:** 95% find it easy to access the information they need on the website.

#### Learning & Engagement

- **Website Navigation Presentation:** 41 respondents were not interested in a Clubhouse presentation on navigating the website, while 17 were. Comments ranged from "It's easy to navigate" to "It would help immensely."

#### Newsletter Feedback

- **The Heron Newsletter:** 51 read the new quarterly newsletter, 11 did not. Most comments were positive. A few did not recall receiving it, found the content repetitive, or not relevant to them. *{Note: The Newsletter was emailed to the same address where you received the survey.}*

#### Content Interests

- **Most Desired Content:** Top interests include community and VTP events (54), home maintenance/seasonal tips (49), HOA board updates (42), community project updates (47), and the VTP Marketplace (35). Other interests: new neighbor introductions, volunteer opportunities, safety updates, restaurant and real estate updates, and resident spotlights.
- **Additional Suggestions:** New topics were suggested such as a link to the CP website, event photos/reviews, health insurance info, and a voluntary resident directory. One respondent expressed a preference for not being pressured to socialize.

#### Communication Preferences

- **Preferred Platforms:** Email is the most preferred platform for updates (59), followed by the website (20) and bulletin boards/signage (9).
- **Content Formats:** Short news blurbs (55), event calendars (45), and photos (30) are favored, with some interest in full-length articles and FAQs/tipsheets.

#### Email Updates

- **Happenings Updates:** 52 like receiving the emailed "Happenings" updates in addition to the quarterly newsletter; 10 are fine with just the quarterly newsletter.

#### Willingness to Contribute

- **Contributors:** Few are interested in contributing content—3 for writing, 4 for submitting photos/event info, and 1 for editing/proofreading. Most (48) are not interested.

#### Overall Satisfaction

- **Satisfaction Levels:** 31 are very satisfied, 22 satisfied, 7 neutral, and none are dissatisfied with current communications. Comments highlight appreciation for the newsletter and emails as ways to stay informed, with some only using the website for specific information.

#### Suggestions for Improvement

- **Feedback:** Suggestions include presenting the newsletter as an online flipbook, creating a voluntary resident directory, adding more graphics/photos, and providing an updated calendar without a password. Several respondents were complimentary or had no suggestions.

### Brentwood Fun Fact

by John Edmondson

If you're like me, you'll be watching an old show on TV Land and suddenly think, "Wow, I haven't seen that actor in a long time." And more likely than not, you can't place a name on that face that is so recognizable.

One of Brentwood's own, Lee Bergere, was one of those faces. Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1918, he had a long and distinguished career on the stage and in television. In 1936, at 18, he was Danny Kaye's understudy in the Broadway production of *Lady in the Dark*. He appeared with Richard Kiley when *Man of La Mancha* premiered in Los Angeles in 1967.

He had an astonishingly long list of television appearances, everything from *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *Star Trek* (as Abe Lincoln), *The Munsters*, *Hogan's Heroes* and *All in the Family to Dynasty*, in which his character, majordomo Joseph Anders, was significant enough to get "killed off" at the beginning of that prime-time soap opera's fourth season.

How many character actors who toiled for decades in obscurity would love that kind of notoriety? The answer is, lots of them.

Bergere died in Fremont, NH, on January 31, 2007, at the age of 86, after living the previous decade in Brentwood. Check out his photo on Wikipedia. I'm sure you'll say, "Oh, yeah, I recognize that guy."

Source for Fun Facts is a book called "Brentwood Through the Years 1742-2017."

### Calling All VTP Residents for Ideas

Do you have an idea for a fun party or activity? Any unit owner may sponsor and host a community event at our clubhouse.

Just fill out the Clubhouse Reservation Request (located on the VTPnh.net website). The Board will review the request, and the event will be posted on the calendar.

Let's continue to bring the community together, use our beautiful clubhouse and enjoy life at VTP!

### Surprising Connections

by Laura Braverman

I believe in six degrees of separation, but did not expect to find as many as I had here, since I had never before lived in New Hampshire or, more broadly, New England. Since moving here, I've discovered:

- three others (Sandra, Sue H. and Ali) who worked at the Cape Cod Sea Camps, where I had been a camper for three summers;
- sisters (Sandy and Karen) who lived in the same Philadelphia suburb that I did and went to the high school across the street from mine;
- one (Rita) who was in the same high school class in the south Bronx as my karate instructor, although they didn't know each other; and
- husband and wife (David and Beth) who employ one of my California friends in a remote job.

I don't know what other connections I may have in this community, but look forward to finding out.

### Your Board of Directors

Erik Amundsen, President	603-702-0510
<a href="mailto:erik100@comcast.net">erik100@comcast.net</a>	
Gene Stilwell, Treasurer	603-303-1651
<a href="mailto:gene.stilwell@comcast.net">gene.stilwell@comcast.net</a>	
Laura Braverman, Secretary	917-545-1013
<a href="mailto:laurabvtp@gmail.com">laurabvtp@gmail.com</a>	
Warren Trested, Director	603-819-1530
<a href="mailto:wtrested.vtp@outlook.com">wtrested.vtp@outlook.com</a>	
A. Karen Anasson-Dooley, Director	203-464-3148
<a href="mailto:karen_vtp@yahoo.com">karen_vtp@yahoo.com</a>	

### View From Jackie Zeaman's Deck



### Giving Back, One Paw at a Time

by Laura Braverman

For the past two-plus years, I have volunteered at the NH Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NHSPCA) in Stratham. I love animals, but am on-the-go too frequently to be tied down to a pet. At the NHSPCA, I mostly walk dogs and have been recently approved to be a short-term dog foster home.

In addition, I have helped the SPCA with events, office work and marketing projects. The time commitment for most activities is flexible. On average, I give 2 hours per week.

The NHSPCA shelters a wide variety of animals and also has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, including for those who do not want to be involved with animal care or any physical labor. Thank you to so many of my neighbors who have donated old sheets, towels, blankets carriers, beds and dog/cat food. I usually go there once a week and am happy to accept donations on the NHSPCA's behalf.

For more information on volunteering: <https://nhspca.org/volunteering/>. The NHSPCA also welcomes cash donations and items from its wish lists <https://nhspca.org/wish-list/>. Please share more stories of unexpected connections since arriving at VTP and volunteering experiences for inclusion in future newsletters.

### Board View

by Erik Amundsen

As the year comes to a close, we would like to take a moment to reflect and express our gratitude for all that has unfolded within our community.

As the VTP has progressed from its infancy—through the build-out phase and into a period of maturation—we have collectively transitioned to a place of calmer, steadier waters.

This journey is a familiar one for many HOAs, as communities learn to define themselves, discover shared priorities, and determine the direction they wish to take together.

This positive evolution is especially evident in our Board meetings, which have moved from being occasionally tumultuous to becoming respectful, constructive conversations focused on the business of the HOA.

Early in the year, decisions were made to bring committees back into the fold. This has proven to be a tremendous success, creating opportunities for more community involvement and support in the day-to-day operations of VTP.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Clubhouse, Maintenance, Insurance, and Communications Committees for their ongoing dedication to making VTP such a wonderful place to live.

We are deeply grateful to be part of a neighborhood where neighbors help neighbors, and members truly care for and look out for one another.

Whether it's assisting with a simple task like replacing smoke-detector batteries or volunteering time to wrap presents for residents at the local nursing home, these acts of kindness define who we are as a community.

### Information to Note

- The Board of Directors have scheduled a **Quarterly Meeting of the VTP Homeowners Association for Wednesday, January 21 at 6:30 PM to be held in our Clubhouse.** CP Management will notify you by email about the meeting and Zoom link.
- For up-to-date information and to learn more about what **VTP volunteer committees** are doing, be sure to visit the VTP website for committee minutes.
- **CPManagement** main office in Exeter and after-hours answering service is 603-778-6300. **Website:** <https://www.cpmmanagement.com/>
- The **Clubhouse is for ALL residents' use**, along with the pool, fitness room, and pickleball courts (at your own risk). **Clubhouse entry code is 5513.**
- The **Wi-Fi password** in the Clubhouse is **Clubhouse\$.**
- Visit the **VTP website** for current information, schedules and activities at [www.VTPNH.net](http://www.VTPNH.net) using the **password VTPclub55.**
- The VTP community also offers its own social media communication channels on **Facebook ("VTP Friends")** and on the **messaging app Slack.** If interested, contact: Sandra Long, 203-984-6947, for Facebook and Pam Winter, 978-270-9246, for Slack.

### Seasonal Activities & Events

by Michele Bergeron

**O'Neil Cinemas at Brickyard Square** offers Super Bargain Tuesdays and Senior (62+) Wednesdays when movie tickets are \$7 all day.

<https://epping.oneilcinemas.com/home>

**Exeter Bowling** (Candlepin) Lanes on Columbus Ave in Exeter offers Senior Bowling on Wednesday mornings at 10. \$12 for 3 games and free shoe rental. <https://www.shooterssportspub.com/lanes>

**Ogunquit's Playhouse** will reveal their 2026 season after January 13<sup>th</sup>. You can follow them on Facebook or <https://www.ogunquitplayhouse.org/>.

### Recurring VTP Activities

**MAHJONG** – Mondays 1:00 – 3:00 PM If you would like to join a group, learn how to play, or just want more information, contact Paula Furlong at 781-254-5366.

**HAND & FOOT CARD GAME**– Tuesdays 1:00 to 3:00 PM and Wednesdays 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Games are typically played in groups of 4 and are organized via a text chain. If you would like to join in or learn how to play, contact Val Simard at 760-683-4460.

**BOOK CLUB** – 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 to 8 PM. January's book—*James* by Percival Everett—will be discussed at 3:30 PM on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Contact Ruth Kogel at 516-972-6996 for information.

**FRIENDS FRIDAYS!** Friday afternoons 4:00 to 6:00 PM at the Clubhouse. For more information, reach out to Denice Anderson at 603-759-5622.

**BINGO** will return on Thursday, January 29. Bring a snack to share. We are working towards having cash bingo. Look for more information in future Happenings email blasts.

**GAME NIGHT** will resume in February, the first Tuesday of every month. Bring a game; learn a game; come and play! Bring a snack to share

We are working on bringing back **COUNTRY LINE DANCING** on February 21, if there is enough interest in the community. If you haven't already done so, send an email to [VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com](mailto:VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com) with your name, unit #, and how many dancers will be joining your group.

### Maintenance Team Hard at Work



There's no business logo on this truck, and these men aren't wearing company uniforms. They are Kevin Dooley and Warren Trested from our Maintenance Committee. They were heading out to trim the River birch trees between homes in Phase IV. They've also been hard at work replacing charcoal filters on the septic vents in Phases I, II, and III. We truly appreciate the time, effort, and dedication these men—and the entire Maintenance Committee—give on behalf of all of us here at the VTP.

### Maintenance Meeting Summary

- The Maintenance Committee had a very productive meeting on November 18. Many issues were discussed, including septic propane tank screening, new house number signage, plum tree disease and tree replacement plans, pickleball court painting plan, septic field grass and pond preservation plans.
- The MC has created a new document, the **Contractor and Handyman List** which you can find behind the maintenance folder/tab on the VTP website. A complete set of minutes is posted on the VTP website. An updated **Homeowner's Maintenance Guide** can also be found there.
- **Seasonal Maintenance Tip:** With the lower temperatures this winter, change the battery in your heat sensor in the garage, or you may start to hear chirping noises!

### VTP Marketplace Opens

- The VTP Marketplace will start once we receive your submission(s). They will be included in our monthly Happenings and quarterly newsletter.
- Send details about something you need, want to sell, wish to find a good home for, etc. to Michele Bergeron at [mjbergeron603@gmail.com](mailto:mjbergeron603@gmail.com).
- Include your contact information, and we will post it. Just let us know when it should be removed. We request that whatever you post is for the VTP community only.

### Request for Contributors

Responses to the recent newsletter survey indicated 3 people interested in writing articles or a regular column, 4 people are interested in submitting photos / event information, and 1 for editing / proofreading. Please email Michele Bergeron at [mjbergeron603@gmail.com](mailto:mjbergeron603@gmail.com) so that we can get you started on our team!

### Email Communication Preferences

- Residents may opt out of email updates from [VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com](mailto:VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com), which include newsletters, event notices, surveys, website updates, and amenity information. **Participation is voluntary.**
- To unsubscribe, email [VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com](mailto:VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com) and request removal from the distribution list. **This will not affect delivery of essential HOA communications from CP Management.**
- If you'd like your spouse added, email their name and unit number to [VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com](mailto:VTPNHClubhouse@gmail.com). Changes here do not impact emails from CP Management.

### Brentwood Rec Department News

- Nick Lawrence begins his tenure as the new Director of the Brentwood Recreation Department on January 5. He comes to Brentwood from another Rec Department and is excited to be serving our town. Jason will continue in his role of Assistant Recreation Director.
- The next Bingo session will be on Tuesday, January 20 from 1:00 to 3:30 PM at the Rec Center. The next Young-at-Heart Luncheon is slated for February 11

with a Valentine's theme. Entertainment is to be determined.

- In general, luncheons and Bingo are sponsored on alternate months, so look forward to Bingo in March and another luncheon in April. A spring trip is also in the planning stages.
- The basketball courts will soon be transformed into a skating rink for the winter months. Watch for an announcement that the area is safe to use.

### Food Pantry Still Needs Our Help

Our generosity in donating to the local Food Pantry makes an enormous difference in the lives of many who are struggling to put food on the table for their families.

Some clothing items have also been donated. A Mitten and Scarf Tree is located in the foyer of Fellowship Hall at Pilgrim Church. Two pairs of mittens, which I hung on the tree, were claimed right away.

Warm mittens, hats, and scarves are always welcome. Many organizations have not yet finalized their late winter calendars. Be sure to check E-Mail Blasts for updates.

### Parenting Adult Children?

*by Stephen Umbro*

Many of us in this housing association not only have adult children, but, in some cases, middle aged children. Raising and guiding them through their childhood and adolescent years was certainly a challenge. We didn't always have all the answers and wisdom, but our roles seemed to be better defined.

Most teenagers don't want to be lectured or given advice by their parents. I was a high school guidance counselor for many years, and it wasn't uncommon for one of my sons to tell me to stop acting like a guidance counselor when giving him advice. But it's still our job to guide and protect without being smothering.

It was an emotional time for my late wife Debbie and I when we had to say goodbye to our three children as they went off to college. But little did we know that each of them would move back home for extended periods of time after graduation. They had good reasons for doing so and we enjoyed having them, but I wish someone had told us years before, "Don't worry, you're not losing your children yet." *Continued...*

### Parenting Adult Children? *Continued...*

Once our children finished school, began their careers, transitioned into adulthood and even marriage, naturally the dynamic of our relationship with them had changed quite a bit.

Even though our personal relationships with them were strong, we realized we couldn't and shouldn't be telling them what to do any longer. We took several steps back and began listening more and talking less. The instances of unsolicited advice were fewer to avoid resentment. To this day, more often than not, they don't necessarily seek advice, but do still want to hear my thoughts and opinions. I also assume there may be plenty going on in their lives that I don't hear.

When I'm too direct or too willing to offer my advice and opinions, my children may listen, but will hope the conversation ends quickly. Or, they may simply say, "I know what I'm doing." But we are parents and our need to offer what we view as productive advice never really ends, nor does it completely have to if done in moderation.

I have to remind myself it's a conversation, not a lecture. When I do listen more and talk less I can better understand their point of view, and perhaps offer more instinctive opinions.

Most of the time, Debbie and I were in synch about parenting. It was easier when she was alive because we could talk together about our children and their decisions and decide if having a conversation with one or more was needed, or if it was more appropriate not to get involved.

Our children don't need us nearly as much now, but in other ways they occasionally do and most of us always feel a degree of responsibility for them no matter what their age. When those times occur, I now feel more urgency to pull up every ounce of common sense, experience, and objectivity I have to try to say and do the right things.

Sometimes I'm right and sometimes I'm not, but there's no omnipotent instruction guide or plan that has all the answers. We just try to do our best. The approaches I spoke of in this essay worked for us, and

I hope our children too, but there is no one size that fits all. I just consider myself very fortunate that things worked out well and, in large part, due to Debbie, who taught me how to be a parent. I guess many men can also say the same thing about their wives.

### Holiday Season at Our Clubhouse

The Clubhouse Committee transformed our community center into a festive setting with holiday decorations. Your creativity and teamwork made it warm and welcoming for everyone to enjoy. We appreciate your time, talent, and dedication in making it a beautiful place for the holiday season!

