



Courtesy photo

Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant donated this bucket truck to the U.S. Virgin Island power restoration efforts in the wake of hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Light company makes a big gift

Ashburnham authority helps out after massive hurricanes

ASHBURNHAM — Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant General Manager Kevin M. Sullivan announced this week that it has donated one of its bucket trucks to the U.S. Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority to assist in the hurricane relief and power restoration efforts on the devastated islands.

In September, and only two weeks apart, hurricanes Irma and Maria decimated the islands in the Caribbean basin. Weeks later, the New England Public Power electric utilities were asked to consider being part of a "mutual aid" effort to rebuild the electrical distribution system for the residents of the Virgin Islands.

"When we began hearing about the extensive damage the two Category 5 hurricanes inflicted on the U.S. Virgin Islands, it made us think about our epic New England ice storm back in 2008," said Sullivan. He added, "The linemen and I talked about the humanitarian aspect of this request and how our customers benefited by mutual aid for the town of Ashburnham back then. I decided if the linemen would commit to spending several weeks away from their families, the AMLP would support the request to help."

Once the paperwork was in place, 40 trucks drove to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., arriving Oct. 11. One of the trucks was the AMLP's bucket truck carrying two of the

linemen. All trucks were then transported by barge to the assigned island of St. Thomas, where crews had flown in days earlier to prepare. Upon the return of AMLP's first two crew members on Nov. 5, two other linemen were sent the following day. As of this time, they are still on the island assisting with the recovery and repair efforts.

"Receiving reports of the extent of the devastation, we all realized that there might be another way the AMLP could share its resources. The three-member Ashburnham Municipal Light Board voted unanimously to donate the AMLP's 17-ton bucket truck already on-site," said Sullivan. "The truck is a well-maintained 2006 International with a 50-foot aerial lift. After driving to Florida, the vehicle has been in service 12-14 hours each day since it arrived on the island, which is a testament to its service history. Late last week, I received notification WAPA accepted the donation," he said.

AMLP's Light Board management and personnel believe in paying it forward — not just within the local Ashburnham community but in other areas near and far where the need is greatest. The USVI Water & Power Authority plans to use the AMLP-donated bucket truck in and around St. Thomas at its discretion, including on Water Island, for the foreseeable future.

A CIRCLE OF GIVING

Veterans helping veterans

By Andrew Mansfield
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GARDNER — The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 907 donated to Mount Wachusett Community College's scholarship for veteran students on Wednesday, fulfilling what has become an annual tradition.

"We've been doing it over 10 years," VVA Chapter 907 President James Benton III said.

Benton said the donation was for \$2,000. Joining him was VVA Chapter 907 Vice President Charles Hodgkinson and Marianne Temes, who is a member of the friends of the VVA Chapter 907 group.

They presented the donation to Mount Wachusett Community College President James Vander Hooven and Director of Veteran Services Robert Mayer.

"You guys are amazing," Mayer said.

Vander Hooven said the college pays "very close attention" to the needs of veteran students and looks to assist them in achieving their educational goals and entering the workforce.

"This type of community donation for scholarships enables more students to be able to reach that goal and makes a very visible difference for our students," Vander Hooven said. "Local support from the veterans is huge."

Mayer explained that the veteran's scholarship is awarded annually near the end of the spring semester. Grade point average and financial need are among the factors that determine who is selected. The college is home to



News staff photo by ANDREW MANSFIELD

From left, Mount Wachusett Director of Veteran Services Robert Mayer stands next to VVA Chapter 907 President James Benton III who hands the check to Mount Wachusett President James Vander Hooven.

close to 200 veteran students.

Generally, one student is chosen to receive the scholarship, but there are cases when it could be given to two deserving students. If a veteran student is planning to move on to another college or university to earn a bachelor's degree, greater consideration is given to them due to the cost of education.

The scholarship is funded through private donations. Mayer also spoke of private donations that are used to buy textbooks, laptops and other technological equipment that veteran students may need for school.

Through the Veteran Student Success Center that Mayer oversees, those items can be loaned out as needed on a semester-by-semester basis.

"We look for little ways that we can just help," Mayer said.

This scholarship donation by the VVA Chapter 907 follows other donations the group has made in recent weeks to the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center and to the National Education for Assistance Dog Services.

NEADS runs a service dog program for veterans with a physical disability or other condition such as post-traumatic stress disorder, and the dogs are provided at no cost to them.

In addition to charitable causes that are focused on veterans, Benton said the VVA Chapter 907 will also donate to some programs that benefit children, such as youth sports leagues.

In total, he said the group donates between \$10,000 and \$12,000 annually to local causes. Helping the group raise funds are their two large annual events, a meat raffle held in March and a motorcycle ride held in May around Memorial Day.

The people and groups who contribute to running those events do so at no charge to VVA Chapter 907, Benton explained.

VVA Chapter 907 is not a large group, but over the years the dedication of its members has produced consistent contributions to local veterans and the overall community.

"We're only 20 guys and girls," Benton said. "We give away more than we take in."

Home News

Home News Policy

Our home news section is intended to promote free events or events that directly affect a volunteer-driven organization that benefits the community. Paid events that are deemed fundraisers or benefits do not qualify. Non-charitable events that charge the public for profit are not allowed, as we consider that paid advertising. The deadline for submission is 10 days prior to the event by mail, fax, or email. If you would like non-charitable events to appear in the home news more than once it will be \$17.56 for 30 words.

E-mail:

homenews@thegardnernews.com

Gardner

ELECT DEAN TRAN FOR STATE SENATE

A Reception for: Dean Tran for State Senate will be hosted by Gardner Mayor, Mark Hawke and Worcester County Sheriff, Lew Evangelidis with other surprise guest (more than likely). The event will take place on Saturday, November 25 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Gardner Elks #1426, 31 Park St. RSVP to Gwen@deantran.com. Contributions accepted at the door. (Suggested \$25, \$35, \$50, \$75, \$100).

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS HOSTS MEDICARE SEMINAR

Blue Cross will hold a Medicare seminar at no cost for Medicare beneficiaries on November 29 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Colonial Hotel, 625 Betty Spring Rd. Please join Blue Cross for a Medicare seminar to learn more about your 2018 options including: health, dental and prescription drug insurance plans. There is no cost for the seminar. A sales person will be present with information and applications. To reserve your place at an in-person seminar, call 1800-262-BLUE (2583). Or TTY/TDD users please call 711. Additionally, you can register at <http://medicare.bluecross.com/learn-more/attend-seminar>.

GVNA HOSPICE PROGRAM OFFERING SPECIAL BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

GVNA's Hospice program will be hosting a "Grief Through the Holidays" program Holidays" program on Monday, November 27 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at our Gardner office on 34 Pearly Lane. The holiday season is a festive and joyous time, but for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one it can be difficult and painful. "The holidays often bring a surge of

emotions, both happy and sad, as we are reminded our loved ones are no longer with us," said John Neilon, Spiritual Care & Bereavement Coordinator. "Please consider joining us for this encouraging program," said Neilon. "Hear from our Bereavement Team and those who have gone through this process personally," he said. "Together we will help each other through the holidays and discover new reasons to enjoy them again," he added. To register for the November 13th meeting or for more information about our ongoing Bereavement Support Groups, please call 98-632-1230, Ext. 325. Gardner meetings will be held at the GVNA HealthCare, Inc., 34 Pearly Lane on the 2nd Monday of the month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. or the 4th Monday of the month from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

YARD WASTE PICK UP

The Gardner Board of Health will be informing residents that there will be yard waste pick up next week Tuesday, November 28 through Friday, December 1 on their regular trash pickup day. Please place all yard waste bags, open barrels or boxes with leaves, grass and all other easily raked materials at curbside with your trash barrel. Branches less than 2" diameter, not to exceed 3' long may be bundled and left by your yard waste for pickup. There is no limit to the amount of yard waste bags, barrels or boxes for each household.

SANTA COMING TO THE GARDNER MUSEUM

Santa visits the Gardner Museum on November 25 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Take your own photo with Santa. For more information call 978-632-3277 or email us at www.gardner-museuminc.com.

READ TO DOLCE THE GOLDENDOODLE

Read to Dolce the Goldendoodle at the Levi Heywood Memorial Library. Kids ages 5 and up can sign up for a 15 minute session between 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday. Dolce will listen to your child read and help develop their reading confidence. Call 978-632-5298 to register or visit leviheywoodmemlib.org for more information.

GVNA HEALTHCARE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

For those who have suffered the loss of a loved one it can be difficult and painful. "GVNA HealthCare is here to help those struggling with this emotionally challenging time of year," according to Chauntelle Carty, RN, BSN, Hospice Director.

GVNA offers Bereavement Support groups to the community several times a month and is open to anyone who has experienced a loss," said Carty.

GVNA HealthCare, Inc. will be holding a support group at 34 Pearly Lane on the second Monday of the month from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. or the fourth Monday of the month from 2 to 3:30 p.m. For more information about the Bereavement Support Group, please call GVNA's Hospice Program at 978-632-1230, Ext. 384.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

A weekly women's Bible study meets on Mondays at 2:30 p.m. at a member's home (alternating between Hubbardston or Gardner). They are using "The Bait of Satan" by John Bevere.

THE ANCHOR GROUP FOR YOUNG ADULTS

This group for younger adults (21-40) on Saturday nights from 7 to 9 p.m. for Bible study and fellowship at the home of Sam and Mandi Williams in Gardner. Contact Mr. Brendon MacKay 617-548-5359 or Mr. Sam Williams 978-424-8189 for more information. For more information about Bethany's ongoing programs and community outreach programs, contact the church office during the week 978-632-5097 or visit the website, www.bethanygardner.org. Directions to the church and ministry leaders' contact information may be found in the "Contact Us" section of the website.

Ashburnham

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

The Stevens Memorial Library, 20 Memorial Drive will hold these on a weekly basis. The Literacy playgroup will be held on Mondays from 1 to 2 p.m. Storytime for children 6 and under will be held on Thursdays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. and Tech and tablet office hours will be held on Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

OPEN MIKE FEATURING STEVE RAPSON AT THE STEVENS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Hear some great local musicians perform at the Stevens Memorial Library, 20 Memorial Drive on Wednesday evening, November 29. Doors open at 6:30 for seating and refreshments provided by the Friends of the Library. Open mike begins at 7 p.m., followed by our featured performer, guitarist and singer-songwriter Steve Rapson, at 8 p.m. Seating is limited so please arrive early. Admission is free! To sign up for an open mike slot, call the library at

978-827-4115 beginning November 15.

Leominster

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE CONTROLLING THE WAY YOU EAT?

Are you having trouble controlling the way you eat? Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) is a free Twelve Step recovery program for anyone suffering from food obsession, overeating, under-eating or bulimia. Local meeting is held at 6:30 p.m. on Sundays in conference room 1 (next to the cafeteria) at the Health Alliance Hospital - Leominster, 60 Hospital Rd. For more information: (local contacts) call Peter at 978-518-7774 or Ellen at 978-265-2555. For more information or a list of additional meetings throughout the U.S. and the world, call 781-932-6300 or visit: www.foodaddicts.org. FA World Service Office 400 West Cummings Park, Suite 1700 Woburn, MA 01801 fa@foodaddicts.org <http://www.foodaddicts.org>

Orange

HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS OPEN FOR TOURS

The Society remains open for tours through its property, which includes the main 18 room house and the attached three story barn, where, among other things, is stored the 1904 Groust steam powered automobile made here in Orange in one of the first two automobile factories in America. The Weymouth-French House became the Orange Historical Society in 1942, and the Society offers tours Sundays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4 p.m. and by appointment. The Orange Historical Society houses its collection of Orange area household furnishings, farm implements, business posters, children's toys and games, and its Groust Steam automobile and early fire equipment in the Society building, which was the residence of Samuel French in the late 1800's.

SANTA IS COMING TO THE ORANGE TOWN HALL

Orange Community Band will be welcoming Santa to the Orange Town Hall on Friday, November 24, with a concert of Christmas music beginning in the Ruth B. Smith Auditorium at 5 p.m. The Orange Business Association, Mahar Key Club, and friends have activities planned for inside the Auditorium, and Cub Scouts will be offering hot chocolate in the lobby. Children will be able to make decorations for a tree to be set up in the Hall, and there will be a Holiday dis-

play with working train to enjoy. Santa is due to arrive around 5:30 p.m. and children will be able to visit him while listening to holiday music played by the Band. Orange Christmas decorations will be limited until after Thanksgiving due to "Fall festival" filming in the park by the movie production company, but the inside of the Town Hall will be as festive as ever, and some outside lighting is in place for after-hours. Band members are reminded to bring their own chairs, stands, and stand lights for the concert, as stage lighting in the Town Hall is still in the planning and hoping stages! Donations to the Town Hall Restoration Committee are always welcome.

Templeton

INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT PRESERVING TEMPLETON'S HISTORY

People interested in learning more about preserving Templeton's history should join the Narragansett Historical Society. Meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. We will be discussing our next event, the Jack Frost Festival set for December 3 on the Common, from 3 to 5 p.m. Our next big event to watch for will be after the holidays, our annual Cabin Fever event. For more information, follow us on Facebook or drop us an email. The building is still open on Tuesday nights from 6 to 8 p.m., until the snow starts in earnest. Stop by to visit the building, see interesting displays of local people and times gone by or, conduct your own research project. We love to help with Family Trees! To learn more or to create your membership, contact the Society at narragansetthistoricalsociety@yahoo.com.

TO THE CUSTOMERS OF THE TEMPLETON MUNICIPAL LIGHT AND WATER PLANT

Bring in a non-perishable food item for the Templeton food pantry and receive a free LED light bulb. While supplies last.

Winchendon

SHOE COLLECTION DRIVE

The Winchendon Public Schools Extended Day Program is conducting a shoe collection drive starting on September 1. The program will earn funds as well as redistribute shoes to impoverished nations. Collection boxes will be in the elementary schools and local business to collect the new and gently used shoes.