

DEERFIELD CURRENTS

The Engage: DeerfieldSM Newsletter

ENGAGE: DEERFIELD

CHANNELING COMMUNITY INTERESTS INTO ACTION



Spotted! Deerfield residents Kathy Sylvester (left) and Nathalie McCormick stay current reading "Currents."

Women's History Month

In 1987, Congress designated the month of March as Women's History Month. For March 2026, the National Women's History Alliance (NWH) announced the theme: "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future." From the NWH: "This theme honors the women who have and are reimagining and rebuilding systems to ensure long-term sustainability – environmental, economic, educational and societal.

The U.S. Postal Service has paid tribute to women on many stamps. Ask for them at your local post offices.



Staff Book Picks

Octavia Butler. Octavia Butler upended every stereotype, both in her work and her presence. "Star Trek" sucked me into science fiction at a young age – not space battles but the alien-ness of alien worlds. **Ursula K. Le Guin** opened my eyes to alternate cultures in "The Left Hand of Darkness." Then Octavia Butler blew the doors off with "Bloodchild," flipping sci-fi tropes inside out. A six-foot Black woman reshaping the genre! Her fearless imagination inspires me still.

- Lili Dwight, Engage

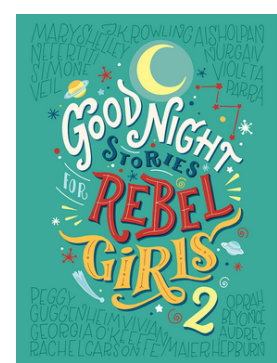
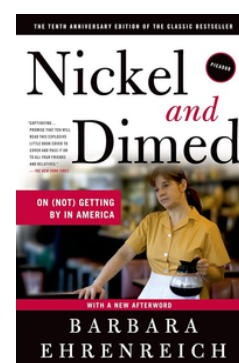
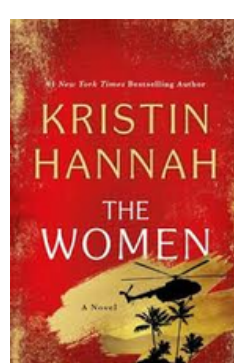
"Inconspicuous Consumption: The Environmental Impact You Don't Know You Have," by Tatiana Schlossberg. Climate change connects to everything: hamburgers, athleisure, Netflix, the internet (the idle power vampire). Schlossberg takes our habits, purchases and pollution apart piece by piece via science, politics and homespun humor. She talks right to us. Here's what we can do, she says: Ask questions, make demands, vote for candidates who honor our values. (Tatiana Schlossberg, an environmental journalist and a daughter of Caroline Kennedy, died in 2025 at age 35.) - Pat Ryan, Engage

"The Women," by Kristin Hannah, is a historical fiction novel about the experience of a young woman serving as an army nurse during the Vietnam War. - Judy Kundl, Engage

"Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America." Barbara Ehrenreich describes her three-month period of living in the U.S. on minimum wage in 2001. Her description of the life of the working poor is still relevant today. -Judy Kundl, Engage

"The Correspondent," by Virginia Evans." Well-written tale of a woman's letters throughout her life. - Analee Wulfkuhle

"Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls 2" by Francesca Cavallo and Elena Favilli. The stories have details about women from history and fun quotes. Boudicca: "I am not fighting for my kingdom and wealth now. I am fighting as an ordinary person for my lost freedom, my bruised body, and my outraged daughters." - Romy, 1st Grader





Meet Your Open Space Committee Chair: Julie Caswell

Questions by
Currents Staff

Q. Please give us a brief description of your job:

I am the chair of Deerfield’s Open Space Committee. We work on permanently protecting parcels of land and making Deerfield more walkable, hikeable and bikeable. I am also vice-chair of the **Community Preservation Committee**. We accept and review proposals of projects involving open space, recreation, historical preservation and affordable community housing, and, if approved, recommend the projects for funding at Town Meeting.

Q. How do you start each day?

Making coffee, reading newspapers online and watching the sun rise.

Q. What are your favorite parts of your job?

I love working on seeking permanent protection for open space in Deerfield with committee members, other volunteers, the Selectboard, town administrators and staff, the Mass. Department of Conservation & Recreation and Franklin Land Trust. I also love working on grants to expand walking and hiking opportunities in Deerfield through developing hiking trails and walking loops.

Q. What’s on your Town “To-Do” list?

The first is further protecting open space. Our Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee want to build on efforts since 2023 that have put over 350 more acres in Deerfield under permanent protection by working to establish a Deerfield Conservation Fund. This fund would allow the Conservation Commission to take timely steps to this goal; for example, to acquire parcels that come on the market and to support open-space protection activities such as surveying land and acquiring trail easements. The Community Preservation Committee has voted to recommend to Town Meeting this year that Community Preservation Act funds be allocated to a Deerfield Conservation Fund.

The second is improving outdoor recreation opportunities. The Open Space Committee has applied for MassTrails funding for a renovated segment of the Pocumtuck Ridge Trail and to design a new, accessible walking loop along the Connecticut River.

We are working on walking and hiking trail maps, public access to our beautiful rivers and playground opportunities. We are committed to learning about the Indigenous history and connection to this land, past and present, from local Indigenous leaders and partners. We look forward to sharing this connection and history in future Open Space Committee programs.

Q. What do you do for fun/laughs?

I hike on the Pocumtuck Ridge, meet up with family and friends (often hiking!), read (thank you, Tilton Library), travel and binge TV series (often not prestige offerings).

Q. What’s the best way to contact you?

My email address is caswellrtr@gmail.com. We are looking for a fifth member to join the Open Space Committee. Please contact me if you are interested in learning about the committee!



Adelaide Ehle and Leo Vickery as Mr. & Mrs. Banks

“Mary Poppins” at FRSU: Steps in Time and a Spoonful of Women’s Suffrage

On March 13–15, the Frontier student actors and musicians shook the school auditorium rafters with their supercalifragilisticexpialidocious talent. A salute to Mrs. Banks with her suffragette sash amid syncopated applause to the ensemble and production team: Director **Gian DiDonna**, Music Director **Janet Ryan**, Orchestra Conductor **Max Sherrill**; **Val Voorheis** (costumes), **Olivia Leone** (choreography), **Mike Zeoli** and **Dan Murphy** (sets); **Sofia Hebert** (Mary Poppins), **McCavery Burgess** (Bert), **Adelaide Ehle** (Winifred Banks), **Leo Vickery** (George Banks).

Indigenous Stories of the People and History of Our River Valley

The Deerfield Open Space Committee is sponsoring a talk by David Brule, president of the Nolumbeka Project (nolumbekaproject.org), Nehantic Tribal chairman and coordinator of the collaborative battlefield study of the massacre at Great Falls. He will discuss the people, history and natural beauty of the Connecticut River Valley.

The Local Cultural Council supplied funding. May 2 in the Town Hall, South Deerfield, 11 a.m. –12:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 12+.



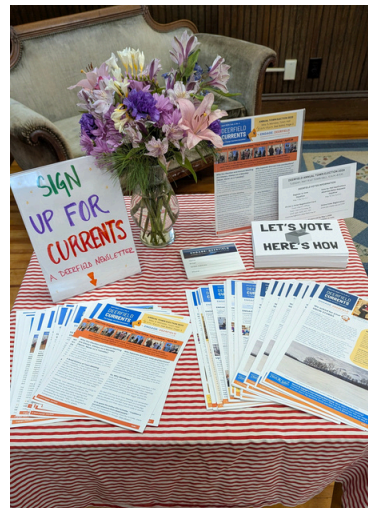
Town Meeting Boot Camp

On March 15, using the official Town Meeting guidelines for a mock meeting and a fictitious "Warrant," the Engage team went rollicking through the "budget" for the "Snail Cultivation Department" and debated the pros and cons of an imaginary dog park. Our audience (very real) lined up to comment. The format was designed for people who had never been to a town meeting as well as seasoned pros. It was a crash course in how to use your voice and your vote to be a part of Deerfield's future. We met new folks who are interested in town government and how Deerfield works as a community.

Audience review: The mock Town Meeting was lively, interesting, "sometimes confusing," "just like the real one," though shorter and with a cookie break.

Watch it here: [youtube MockTown Meeting](#)

➤ **Save the Date for "Meet the Issues" April 26, 3 p.m.**



Spies, Ciphers and Secret Codes

Visit the Discovery Center in **Historic Deerfield** for this hands-on event. During the American Revolution, spies used methods like invisible ink and secret codes to carry important information. Learn about these techniques and write your own secret message during school vacation week. April 18–20, 22–26, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., 110 Old Main St. (No advance registration needed.) Note: **Historic Deerfield events are free for Deerfield residents.**



Town Hall News

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Monday, May 11 at Frontier Regional School auditorium; doors open at 5:30 p.m. **Free childcare** is provided.

HOUSING NEEDS IN REVIEW

On March 19, as part of the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, graduate students from the Conway School of Landscape Design presented a review of housing types to address community needs and discussed bylaws and regulations that influence development. The recorded session is available [here](#).

Around Town



Registration Open for Spring Sports

Recreation Director **Gaby Richard-Harrington** encourages everyone to spring forward for:

- Field Hockey at DA field house – March
- Baseball Spring Training and skills assessments for Majors and Minors
- Baseball Rookies and Tball
- Softball Spring Training and skills assessments for grades 3-6 at TBD – Coaches needed!
- Summer Concerts – Suggest a band.



CISA's 2026 Local Hero Sign-up Is a Click Away

The public awareness campaign for **Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown®** began in 1999 and has become the country's longest running "buy local" program for farm products. Farms and non-farm businesses alike are eligible if they operate in western Massachusetts.

> [Click here to enroll.](#)

> [Click here to renew.](#)

Celebrate NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

April 19-25, 2026



YOYO CLUB

Saturdays, 4/4, 5/2, & 6/6
1:30pm - 2:30pm

All Ages and Skill Sets Welcome

Free tax resources, click here.

TAX HELP RESOURCES

Free information and services for federal and state tax filing support

North Main Sugar Shack Still Selling Sweet Syrup in South Deerfield

From **Patty and Dan Telega**: "We are a six-generation sugaring family. We have all 3 classifications of maple syrup in glass and jugs, along with maple candy, sugar and cream. And we offer fresh eggs, bread and vegetables daily. Stop by and say hi. We always have the door open." 127 North Main St., South Deerfield; phone (413) 325-4336.



Menopause: Longest Subscription That You Never Signed Up For

Since September 2024, the Franklin County Y in Greenfield has brought together women in their 40s through their 70s (and beyond) to build strength, knowledge and confidence in a unique 12-week class. Each session combines a brief, practical look at how menopause affects the body— especially the role of estradiol — with a targeted workout using weights and interval training to increase strength, bones and brains. The results are powerful: Participants leave not only stronger, but also with a clearer understanding of what's happening in their bodies and how to respond. [New session begins April 7, from 6:30-8 p.m. All are welcome.](#)

Engage: DeerfieldSM is a fiscally sponsored project of the Peace Development Fund. Make a tax-deductible donation by mail or online at: [Engage:Deerfield Donate](#). By mail: The Peace Development Fund, PO Box 1280, Amherst, MA 01004-1280. Memo line: "Engage: Deerfield"