

London, Sarah

From: Lofy, Bill
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 12:39 PM
To: London, Sarah
Cc: Carrier, Janis
Subject: Re: Public Records Act request

confirmed

On Apr 17, 2012, at 12:37 PM, "London, Sarah" <Sarah.London@state.vt.us> wrote:

Please confirm that the State pays for Gov's iphone. Thanks.

From: Andy Bromage [<mailto:andy@sevendaysvt.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 12:34 PM
To: London, Sarah
Subject: Re: Public Records Act request

Hi Sarah,
Thanks for the reply.
For clarification, can you tell me: Is the phone that this video was shot on a government issued phone? Or is it the governor's private phone/account that he pays for himself?
Best,
Andy

On Apr 17, 2012, at 12:11 PM, London, Sarah wrote:

Andy,
We have received your Public Records Act request. The video you have requested was not "produced or acquired in the course of agency business" and is therefore not a public record under Vermont law. 1 VSA 317(b). Additionally, we have security concerns with releasing a video depicting the Governor's private residence. If you would like more information about the Governor's bear encounter, however, please feel free to follow up with Sue Allen. Please note that, as provided by 1 VSA 318, you have the right to appeal this determination to the Governor's Chief of Staff, Bill Lofy. Thanks very much,

Sarah

Sarah London
Counsel to the Governor
802-828-3333
Sarah.London@state.vt.us

From: Allen, Susan
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2012 9:56 AM
To: London, Sarah
Cc: andy@sevendaysvt.com
Subject: FW: Public Records Act request

Sarah, please note the public records request below. Sue

From: Andy Bromage [<mailto:andy@sevendaysvt.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2012 9:51 AM
To: Allen, Susan; Spaulding, Jeb
Subject: Public Records Act request

Hi Sue (and Jeb),
Please accept this as public records request for the bear video shot by Gov. Peter Shumlin on his smart phone. I'm unclear whether the phone -- and thus, video - - would be considered state property subject to open records law. If you reject it, please specify the exemption for withholding.
Best,
Andy

SEVEN DAYS
Andy Bromage
Political Columnist
P.O. Box 1164
Burlington, VT 05401

Phone: (802) 865-1020 x39
Email: andy@sevendaysvt.com
Web: www.7dvt.com
Twitter: [@andybromage](https://twitter.com/andybromage)

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London, Sarah

From: Carrier, Janis
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 12:53 PM
To: Lofy, Bill
Cc: London, Sarah
Subject: Re: Public Records Act request

Sorry about that just saw the other string of emails

From: Lofy, Bill
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 12:51 PM
To: Carrier, Janis
Cc: London, Sarah
Subject: Re: Public Records Act request

He used his state phone

On Apr 17, 2012, at 12:50 PM, "Carrier, Janis" <Janis.Carrier@state.vt.us> wrote:

We would need to ask Governor which phone he used?

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London, Sarah

From: Allen, Susan
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 3:35 PM
To: Allen, Susan
Subject: AFTERNOON MEDIA CLIPS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 17:

VALLEY NEWS EDITORIAL:

Vt. Drug Registry

Warrants Should Be Required

When Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin stopped by to talk last week, he began by relating an entertaining story about how he had single-handedly confronted four bears that were raiding the bird feeders in back of his rented home in Montpelier the previous evening. He obviously lived to tell the tale, although not without a narrow escape. This story, accompanied by a smart-phone video, neatly illustrates qualities that we have come to associate with the governor during his first term, namely boldness, optimism and a certain tendency to underestimate difficulties.

Thus, we were not necessarily reassured by Shumlin's position on one of the more substantive issues he subsequently discussed with the editorial board, his proposal to provide State Police investigators with access to records contained in Vermont's central prescription drug registry without obtaining a warrant.

Shumlin declared that letting four specially trained investigators get such information through the state health commissioner would help combat an epidemic of prescription drug abuse in the state without resulting in "fishing expeditions" by the authorities. And he pointed out that law enforcement personnel are already authorized, under a 1968 statute, to enter any pharmacy and look at an individual's prescription drug records without a warrant.

We appreciate the governor's desire to confront this problem, which is unquestionably severe. But at the same time, we fear that his proposed solution contains substantial privacy risks that he perhaps underestimates.

Health records are normally afforded special legal protections because they contain sensitive personal information about an individual, so the notion of allowing police access to those records without having to first appear before a judge and seek a warrant is especially troubling. The fact that the Legislature in 1968 went down the wrong road is not an argument to build upon that mistake.

Nor is the fact that prescription drug abuse is arguably the number one law enforcement problem facing Vermont a good argument to bypass a key constitutional protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. Historically, it has been precisely in the midst of crises of various sorts that these protections have come under the most pressure and precisely when they are most needed to prevent abuses by government. And it is also in the midst of crisis that law enforcement is most tempted to conduct fishing expeditions, especially when all the information is neatly compiled in one place.

Curiously the one argument that might have a chance of succeeding in this context is the one no one seems to be making: that police need immediate access to the records of people who are obtaining prescriptions from multiple doctors or pharmacies because these cases often present an emergency and the time involved in seeking a warrant could compromise an investigation or endanger an individual. If, in fact, no one is making that argument, it is perhaps because there's no evidence to support it.

Additionally, it seems to us that the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System was set up as a health care database and ought not be diverted to law enforcement purposes lightly. It also seems admirably suited in its current form to combat the prescription drug abuse problem by allowing the health department to work closely with pharmacists and physicians when it sees a prescription pattern that suggests a patient may be addicted or is diverting drugs for illegal distribution.

The fact is that the Fourth Amendment is in deep trouble these days because its protections against unreasonable searches and seizures have slowly been eroded by the courts and the government in the name of security. We hope Vermont will not chip away at them further.

BURLINGTON FREE PRESS:

Longtime Addison County sheriff dead at 59

BY MIKE DONOGHUE

Longtime Addison County Sheriff James B. Coons has died at his Middlebury home. He died late Monday night after a recent battle with cancer.

Coons, 59, had been sheriff in Addison County for 31 years and was currently the vice president of the Vermont Sheriff's Association.

He is a former Middlebury Police officer raising to the rank of detective lieutenant before successfully running for sheriff.

Survivors include his wife, Julie, and their two sons.

His father, Morton Coons, also served as the Addison County Sheriff.

As provided by law, Addison County High Bailiff Donald M. Keeler Jr. has assumed the duties of sheriff. Keeler has been a deputy sheriff at Addison County Sheriff's Department for 40 years.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete this morning.

V TBUZZ BLOG:

Why does an ad link Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Puerto Rico?

Posted on [April 17, 2012](#) by [Nancy Remsen](#)

A full-page advertisement in this newspaper advised readers to contact Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., to reconsider the status of Puerto Rico. It could mean savings of \$24 billion.

The Committee for a Decolonized and Self-Sufficient Puerto Rico was listed as having paid for the advertisement.

Who is that? Google didn't yield any clues.

Sanders' office had no idea.

The advertisement was purchased by Media Net in San Juan for Fundacion Voz Del Centro, which, according to various Internet links, is a cultural, nongovernmental organization in Puerto Rico.

The Fundacion is headed by Ángel Collado-Schwarz, who just published a book entitled "Decolonization Models for America's Last Colony."

The ad noted that Sanders is on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which is responsible for U.S. territories. Puerto is a U.S. territory.

Michael Briggs, Sanders' spokesman, asked staff of the committee if there had been other advertisements in the hometown papers of other senators.

"The committee hasn't heard of any other ads. They don't know who the group is," Briggs reported. "There is nothing currently pending before the committee on the subject."

As for the \$24 billion the ad suggested might be saved if Puerto Rico's status changed, the committee staff told Briggs "They have no idea how the figure was calculated."

"There is a referendum in Puerto Rico in November on its status," Briggs noted. "Whatever the voters decide, Bernie said he looks forward to working with the people of Puerto Rico."

Vermont Legislature plays 'What's behind bill No. 1?'

Posted on [April 17, 2012](#) by [Terri Hallenbeck](#)

Last week, one Senate committee sought to attach physician-assisted death legislation to a tanning bill.

Another committee is trying to attach a ban on plastic shopping bags and expansion of the bottle deposit law to a recycling bill.

Still another hopes to add decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana to a prescription drug bill.

This week, some senators will try to attach a bill allowing child-care providers to unionize to another labor bill.

In both the House and Senate, legislators are looking for ways to put an amendment regarding Green Mountain Power Corp.'s proposed acquisition of Central Vermont Public Service Corp. onto any bill they can find.

One thing all of these add-ons have in common is they are major pieces of legislation looking for an unorthodox route to reality. Vermonters who want to follow them, however, would be hard-pressed to do so because in some cases the legislation doesn't exist until it's about to be voted on. If it's hard for you to follow, it's not much easier for the legislators who will be doing the voting.

With the 2012 legislative session down to a matter of weeks, it seems there is more than the usual amount of last-minute maneuvering going on.

"It seems to be the most in by four years," said Sen. Tim Ashe, D/P-Chittenden.

"I think we have more than the usual dysfunction," said Sen. Richard Sears, D-Bennington, who fought the physician-assisted death bill on the Senate floor last week and this week expects to fight the addition of the child-care provider union bill even though he's one of the original sponsors of the measure.

"It does seem like there are quite a few things up in the air," said Rep. Don Turner of Milton, the House Republican leader. He's left looking like a hockey goalie who has no idea where the next shot might come from.

House Speaker Shap Smith, D-Morris-town, argued that this session is no different than others when it comes to last-minute changes.

"At the end of a biennium, it not unusual to see amendments to bills that leave you scratching your head," Smith said. "It's what conference committees are for."

Sen. Virginia Lyons, D-Chittenden, said she doesn't think there's more than the usual shenanigans going on, but that this year's version involves more high-profile issues. The reason, she speculated, was pent-up frustration from supporters of bills that legislative leaders have kept buttoned down.

"If people have passion about the bills, they have to be heard," Lyons said.

Lyons is chairwoman of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee, which went against her wishes last week in adding the bag ban and bottle deposit expansion to the recycling bill. Though she was on the short end of those votes, Lyons said she has no problem with allowing the measures to be debated on the Senate floor, where she hopes to persuade a majority to vote against them, noting that the committee did not hear testimony on the issues.

Ashe said he also thinks there is pent-up frustration among some senators whose bills have been kept at bay. He also said that the push to end the legislative session early hasn't helped, noting that the Senate Finance Committee faces a host of complicated bills in the next couple weeks. "There is too little time to take up the complicated issues," he said.

Sen. Vince Illuzzi, R-Essex/Orleans, is a master at finding ways to fit passed-over legislation into bills in the final hours of a session. In some cases such moves are OK, he argued, and in some cases they're not.

He said he'll fight the child-care union bill because he doesn't think it's been properly studied. The measure would allow child-care providers to unionize and negotiate child-care subsidies with the state. That's a different relationship than exists between other unions and employers, he said.

Illuzzi has an add-on of his own, though. He hopes to hook an amendment legalizing the growing of industrial hemp to a cigarette manufacturing bill. That one is different, he said, because the Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee he chairs took testimony on it and supports it.

Defensible or not, last-minute additions make it harder for anyone — legislator, state official or the public — to track what's going on.

If you run a business that's wondering what's up with the question of whether cloud computing should be taxed, you might be wondering why — despite a lot of talk about it — no bill has come out of either the House or the Senate.

Where it will pop out and what it will say is a mystery, but Speaker Smith said Monday on the issue, "My goal is by the end of the session to clarify whether pre-written software should be taxed if its delivered via the cloud and to ensure that those businesses who were unsure before this session would get a refund."

As for the nagging \$21 million Green Mountain Power question, the House Commerce Committee is scheduled to hear testimony all week on whether that money should go directly back to Central Vermont Public Service Corp. customers or to energy efficiency programs for them.

A group of legislators wants the House to vote on an amendment that would require the Public Service Board to rule that the money go to customers. If that vote ever happens, at least now one can argue that it wasn't without testimony.

Don't count on it happening, though. House Commerce will hear separately from each of the legislators pushing the \$21 million return. There is no indication on the committee's schedule that time is of the essence even as the clock ticks toward adjournment.

Speaker Smith, who is opposed to intervening in Public Service Board cases, put it this way, "If you're going to try to undermine the Public Service Board process you ought to take a fair amount of testimony."

As for H.718 _ the bill that's being held hostage to prevent the House from voting on the \$21 million — it might never see the light of day. Commerce Committee Chairman Bill Botzow, D-Pownal, whose committee wrote the bill, said it has useful measures in it, including making more of the Public Service Board filings electronic and therefore more accessible to the public.

London, Sarah

From: Allen, Susan
Sent: Saturday, April 14, 2012 6:03 AM
To: Allen, Susan
Subject: MEDIA CLIPS FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 14:

WCAX:

Bare Vermont Governor chased by bears

MONTPELIER, Vt. -

The call goes out each spring from the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife: Take down your bird feeders so you don't attract backyard bears. And almost every year, people forget. Even the governor, who had a close encounter Wednesday night with four bears.

"So I thought, I got to get them out of here, get those bird feeders in or they are going to come back every single night. It was dumb of me not to bring the bird feeders in that night, but I got in late," said Gov. Peter Shumlin, D-Vermont.

The governor shot footage on his iPhone of the bears from inside the home he rents in Montpelier. He would not release the video to us, but he did show me.

"You can see right there see the bear starting to move right there?" he said.

Turns out this was a mother bear and at least two cubs on the porch. The governor yelled out the window to scare them away and he went out to get the feeders.

"The biggest bear is a long distance away-- starts tearing for the porch as I am grabbing the other two feeders. So I grab them and tear for the porch door and literally it was 7 feet from the door when I slammed it shut. I thought, that bear is coming right through," he said.

Reporter Judy Simpson: There are a couple of things wrong with this story.

Gov. Peter Shumlin: There's a lot of things wrong with this story.

Simpson: First of all, you were supposed to bring your feeders in last month, governor.

Gray Speems is an outdoor guide. He says approaching wild bears is very dangerous.

"It's really bad. Don't do it," he said.

Especially unprepared in the middle of the night.

Shumlin: "Let's just put it this way, real Vermont boys don't wear pajamas. So the bear was better dressed than me.

Simpson: There is a visual for you.

Shumlin: (laughs)

The governor says he has learned his lesson.

Simpson: So, bears and bare feet and barely nothin'...

Shumlin: Bears, bare feet, barely nothing-- it is a bear of a story. Lesson of the story: don't feed birds this time of year.

All kidding aside, Col. David LaCour who is the chief game warden for the state says never approach wild bears, especially a sow who feels she has to attack to protect her cubs. I asked the governor why he went out for the feeders. He told me he wanted to get those bird feeders in or the bears are going to come back every single night.

Vt native killed in Alaska Coast Guard shooting

KODIAK ISLAND, Alaska - A Vermont native was one of two people shot and killed at a Coast Guard station in Alaska.

The shooting happened early Thursday morning at a Coast Guard communication station on Kodiak Island.

One of the victims was Petty Officer James Hopkins, a graduate of Vergennes Union High School. He was an electronics technician at Kodiak for the last three years.

Hopkins and civilian employee Richard Belisle were found dead at their station, which monitors radio traffic from ships and planes.

An FBI spokesman says they're still looking for the shooter and investigating the motive.

The FBI does not believe it was an act of terrorism.

Trash floods damaged Vt mobile home park

BERLIN, Vt. - If you want to know a thing or two about the River Run Manor Mobile Home Park in Berlin, you need to meet Jennie Thompson.

"I pay attention, I can sit on my lawn and just watch what's going on, without being nosy," Thompson said with a laugh.

She's lived here for 12 years and knows every tenant.

"Seven, eight, nine, yeah, about 10 of us," she said.

When the flood destroyed many of her neighbors' homes last May, she knocked on doors, making sure everyone got out. Many of them never came back.

"I miss that, look out the backyard and realize they're not there anymore," Thompson said.

While she knows each neighbor, most by name, Thompson admits she knows nothing about the future of her neighborhood, which doesn't look much better than the way Mother Nature left it almost one year ago. It's become a local dumping ground. Trash is strewn about the neighborhood, most of which doesn't belong to the people who live there. Thompson says this is especially frustrating as she watches a statewide effort, led by the Lt. governor to remove mobile homes that were damaged by Irene.

"We'd like to help where we can, but we only have so much in terms of resources. The town just does not budget resources to help with private property," Berlin Town Manager Jeff Schulz said.

Schulz says both the state and town's hands are tied.

"The ownership of that park is very much in limbo," Schulz said.

Back in 2003 the landowner ended up in bankruptcy court, forcing his company to partner with what's called a "receiver"; essentially working with another company to make sure rent is collected until debt is repaid because the bank no longer trusts the current property owner. But after the flood, as tenants disappeared, money got too tight. They're expecting the park will soon be up for public option. But Thompson says she just wants to be informed.

"Let us know. We hear it's going up for auction. Come down, tell us. We're not bad people, we just feel like we're forgotten," Thompson said.

If the mobile home park is sold at public auction it's uncertain if it will remain a mobile home park at all. So Thompson and her neighbors' futures are completely reliant on whoever buys the property their homes are on.

The program in place to help flooded mobile home owners that's been pushed by Vermont's lieutenant governor would not help these folks. They've looked into it, but essentially there are so many legal issues at hand that it would be too time-consuming and expensive to go that route.

Irene retired from tropical storm name list

MIAMI (AP) - Irene is being retired from the list of storm names because the 2011 hurricane killed 49 people and caused more than \$15 billion in damage.

A report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says the name will be replaced by Irma. Irene was retired Friday from the official list of Atlantic Basin tropical storm names by the World Meteorological Organization's hurricane committee.

The report says storm names are reused every six years unless retired for causing considerable casualties or damage. Irene is the 76th name to be retired from the Atlantic list since 1954.

Five people were killed in the Dominican Republic after Hurricane Irene stormed through the Caribbean last August. Three died in Haiti. And 41 died in the U.S. when Irene barreled up the Eastern Seaboard.

Vermonters ready to reel in trout

WATERBURY, Vt. - Saturday is the opening of trout season in Vermont.

There has been some concern that wild trout populations were damaged by flooding from Tropical Storm Irene.

The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife says its research shows that fish are quick to recover from the effects of severe flooding. Populations may be down a bit from preflood numbers at first, but should rebound in the future.

Fishing guide Chuck Kashner of Poultney says some old fishing spots look new due to flooding, but he is seeing insect hatches and that is what trout eat so the signs look good, for a successful trout season this year.

[Click here for more from the Vt. Fish & Wildlife Department.](#)

VPR:

Speaker Allows Utility Merger Issue To Be Heard

John Dillon

.(Host) An effort to force the state's largest utility to refund money to customers when it's sold is gaining some headway in the Statehouse.

As VPR's John Dillon reports, backers of the legislation are pleased that House Speaker Shap Smith has allowed hearings on the issue.

(Dillon) The debate is over how customers will get reimbursed for paying higher rates a decade ago when Central Vermont Public Service Corporation was in financial trouble.

The Public Service Board has said customers should share in the profits if the company was ever sold. GazMetro of Montreal now wants to buy CVPS and merge it with Green Mountain Power. The utilities want to invest the refund money in weatherization and energy efficiency programs.

Dorset Republican Patti Komline has sponsored legislation that would require a direct \$21 million rebate to ratepayers. She says that's a fairer way to reimburse customers. And Komline objects to the utility's plan to recoup the weatherization investment through higher rates.

(Komline) "Doing the weatherization piece is not sharing the profit equally. And then putting it into rate base and making people have to pay more money is absolutely appalling."

(Dillon) Komline says she's confident she has enough votes to get the bill passed if it reaches the House floor. But she says the legislation still has a long way to go.

(Komline) "I hope that they move the bill out on to the floor and we can have a vote on that. My concern is, though, it's a House bill. It's going to go over to the Senate and because of the late date it will get caught up in the Rules Committee. And I think that's the plan - is it will die in the Senate but it will look like there's movement on this side."

(Dillon) House Speaker Shap Smith says the bill deserves to get a hearing.

(Smith) "This is such a large issue that it's not something that should be done on the floor of the House. It should be done in committee. There should be extensive testimony taken on whether it's a good idea to move the amendment forward or not."

(Dillon) But Smith says he does not think the Legislature should get involved in the merger case, which is now before the Public Service Board.

(Smith) "I would be concerned if we were passing laws that were changing the rules of the game in the middle of a trial, and I think that's akin to what's being done here."

(Dillon) The House Commerce Committee will hold hearings on the issue early next week.

London, Sarah

From: Allen, Susan
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 4:28 PM
To: Allen, Susan
Subject: AFTERNOON MEDIA CLIPS FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 13:

BRATTLEBORO REFORMER:

Many potential candidates eye Brattleboro rep seat

HOWARD WEISS-TISMAN

Brattleboro Reformer

BRATTLEBORO -- With no incumbent running for the Vermont House seat in Brattleboro's District 3 for the first time in 10 years, officials from the state's Progressive, Democratic and Republican parties all say they will be taking a closer look at the district for this November's election.

Rep. Sarah Edwards, P/D-Brattleboro, who was first elected to the Statehouse in 2002, announced this week that she will not be seeking a sixth term.

In the past few years, the Democrats have worked closely with Edwards and have chosen not to run a Democratic challenger for her seat. Windham County Democratic Chairman William Johnson said the county committee will likely talk about the seat during an upcoming meeting.

"There has been some talk, but we have nothing to announce yet," Johnson said. "It is too early for speculation."

Johnson said the Democrats supported Edwards while she was representing the district, and now would at least weigh their options in anticipation of the open seat.

"We have deliberately not run anyone," said Johnson. "Sarah has come to our meetings and has kept us informed as to what was going on."

Anyone who wants to run in the primary has to turn in a petition with 50 signatures to the town clerk before the end of the business day on June 14.

The primaries are scheduled for Aug. 28., and the general election is Vermont GOP Chairman Jack Lindley also said it was too early to commit a candidate to the race, though he said an open seat will encourage the party to give the Brattleboro district seat a closer look.

"It does look inviting to us," Lindley said. "Anytime a seat opens up it is a great opportunity to look at it and study the demographics and figure how the district has voted in the past. If we have a candidate we will work hard and try to get him or her elected and sent to Montpelier."

Edwards beat the Democratic incumbent, Don Webster, in a close race in 2002, and the Progressives have held a tight grip on the district ever since.

Morgan Daybell, director of the Vermont Progressive Party, said she hopes her party will be able to hold on to the seat.

"We do have two people considering a run, and another that I may approach," Daybell said Tuesday. "We will have a candidate in that district."

BENNINGTON BANNER:

Sears' districting amendment sent to Senate

KEITH WHITCOMB JR.

Staff Writer

BENNINGTON -- The idea to leave House district lines in Bennington County alone during reapportionment has made its way through committee on the Senate side, but how the notion will fare ultimately is unknown.

Sen. Dick Sears, D-Bennington, vice chairman of the Senate Reapportionment Committee, said his amendment to not tamper with the district lines in Bennington County, as the House bill proposes, passed on a 6 to 1 vote Thursday. He said the bill will go to the Senate floor sometime next week, possibly Tuesday or Wednesday, and is likely to be rejected by the House, which has already passed its own version.

Sears said the bill will likely find its way to a conference committee made of three House members and three Senate members, who will discuss only the parts of the bill that conflict.

It seems clear the bill will not become law by April 15, the deadline for a reapportionment plan to align district populations with the U.S. Census results. Secretary of State Jim Condos set the date so his office could be ready for the 2012 elections.

Condos, a former senator, said his office has a substantial amount of work to do in preparation, statutory deadlines to meet, and cannot act until the Legislature finalizes the district lines.

The April 15 deadline was set in order to give the election division time to complete the necessary work before May 14, which is when candidates can begin filing to be on the ballot. Aug. 28 is the date for primary elections.

Condos said recent federal voting law reforms, such as the Help America Vote Act, have given his offices five databases to maintain, as opposed to the one it used to deal with. Each has to be updated in sequence and involves work with five different software developers.

Condos said it appears the Legislature will leave the elections division, which consists of five people, three weeks to complete its work, on top of fielding the hundreds of calls and e-mails the division receives daily during election time from town clerks.

"I don't know if we can get this thing done in that amount of time," he said, although they will certainly try. Condos said they have no other choice.

According to Condos, it is possible the Vermont Supreme Court may decide his office cannot meet the deadlines required by law and could order elections be held using the old district lines. That would mean another election in 2013 using new lines, then another election in 2014 to get back on the two-year cycle. He said such an event occurred in the 1960s.

Some of the delays and discussions have been caused by disagreements Republicans and Progressives have with Democrats over district lines in Burlington. Locally, Shaftsbury, according to the 2010 census, is short the 165 people it needs to remain a single-member district. The House approved a plan that would give people in Arlington to Shaftsbury and take more from Rupert to keep Arlington whole, a plan opposed by Rep. Cynthia Browning, D-Arlington, and Rep. John Malcolm, D-Pawlett.

Another plan had been to give some of Bennington to Shaftsbury, which was disliked by Bennington's House reps and Sears himself.

Sears said his amendment is an attempt to keep those in his district happy, something that may not be possible. Rep. Alice Miller, D-Shaftsbury praised Sears for the amendment, as did Browning. Both said any plan simply disrupts too many people.

House Assistant Majority Leader Willem Jewett, D-Addison 2, said the problem the House Reapportionment Committee had with leaving Bennington untouched is it would leave too great a deviation in the number of people compared to representatives.

Jewett said the state and federal constitutions are the guiding factor in how many people are needed for one House representative. The ideal number is 4,171 people per one representative. Anything above or below that contributes to a deviation.

The Burlington Free Press reports that Vermont GOP Chairman Jack Lindley has said he will file a lawsuit if the deviation ends up being greater than 18 percent. Currently both Senate and House versions exceed that number. Sears said that if a lawsuit is going to happen anyway, there's no reason to alter Bennington's districts.

Every 10 years the Legislature must look at census data and alter House district lines to ensure that all Vermonters have equal representation in the House of Representatives. Up until the 1960s, each town had one representative, meaning a small town of a few hundred people had as much say as towns with several thousand. Smaller towns were lumped into districts, and some towns were divided in an effort to make the populations within each district similar to one another and easier to represent.

Sears said reapportionment times are often heated. In 2002, it was driven by disagreements between Republicans and Democrats. What is unusual this time is the dispute between Senate and House, which typically do not alter each other's reapportionment bills much.

VALLEY NEWS:

Governor Confronts Bears Snacking at His Bird Feeders

By John P. Gregg
Valley News Staff Writer

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin rarely backs away from a fight, but he had to beat a hasty retreat Wednesday night when he found himself outnumbered by four black bears that were feasting on bird feeders in the backyard of his Montpelier home.

"I had a tough night," Shumlin said in jest to *Valley News* editors and reporters at the start of an editorial board meeting yesterday.

The 56-year-old Vermont native said he had returned to his house in the state capital around 10:30 p.m. and went to bed. The rental home, located in a suburban neighborhood about a 10-minute walk to the Statehouse, backs onto a field and woods. "I hear something banging on the porch, and I've just fallen asleep, and I look out at this tree ... and there are four bears on my bird feeders," said Shumlin, who said they included a sow and two cubs.

"I yell at them through the window, they run away, and come right back," Shumlin said.

Barefoot and straight out of bed, the first-term Democrat said he was intent on rescuing his bird feeders.

"First, I scare them away, and they keep coming back," Shumlin said of the bears.

"So I go out and grab two of the feeders, run back into the house, then they come back, they knock the suet out, then knock the big feeder down, and they are going at it," said Shumlin, who also showed a short video he made of the encounter on his smart phone.

Shumlin said he went outside again, and found a bear more aggressive than he expected.

"The (bear) charges me on the porch -- I'm tearing through the door. You almost lost the governor," Shumlin joked. "Security was not there. I was within three feet of getting 'arrrh.' "

Shumlin, who grew up in a rural part of Windham County, said he had put up the bird feeders to remind him of home.

"I'm not a city boy, so my only connection to nature now is to feed the birds like mad. It makes me feel like I'm back in Putney," he said.

But his hobby also runs counter to recommendations from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, which last month urged homeowners to take down their bird feeders to prevent bears emerging from their winter dens from seeking out the high-energy seeds.

The department estimates that almost 6,000 black bears are now found in Vermont.

Fish and Wildlife spokesman John Hall, a 45-year department veteran, said suet and black oil sunflower seeds are "particularly attractive to bears" who can "can pick up the scent of either of those foods from quite a long distance.

"A lot of us feed birds as long as we can because we enjoy seeing them, and thinking that we are helping them," Hall said. "At this time of year, birds can readily find food, and they don't need our help."

Bears, on the other hand, Hall noted, can become habituated to bird seed, pet food or trash that is left outside.

"We don't want to tempt bears to seek food near people. That can be their downfall," Hall said.

And those bears could visit again, even if Shumlin has stored the feeders inside.

"Unfortunately, sows, mothers, will teach their cubs that same behavior," Hall said. "They are a very smart animal. Once they learn a particular spot, they are going to register that for the future."

TO SEE THE FRONT PAGE OF THE VALLEY NEWS, VISIT WWW.VNEWS.COM. THERE IS A PHOTO OF THE GOVERNOR AND A STORY ON "VOWS NO FISHING EXPEDITION" "SHUMLIN DEFENDS DRUG SEARCHES WITHOUT WARRANT." THIS STORY HAS NOT MOVED ONLINE; I HAVE ASKED JOHN GREGG TO SEND A COPY A.S.A.P. AND WILL CIRCULATE.

WASHINGTON POST:

Disaster prep helps Vermont bank weather tropical storm with little inconvenience to customers

By Associated Press, Updated: Friday, April 13, 3:59 PMAP

NEW YORK — Tornadoes and storms that have swept through the South and Midwest this year have been a reminder to small business owners everywhere that disasters can wipe out a company within a matter of seconds. And rebuilding can be a long, expensive process.

Business owners can limit the amount of financial and emotional damage they suffer by putting together a disaster preparedness plan. Northfield Savings Bank, a 13-branch bank in Vermont, was ready when Tropical Storm Irene swept over the state last Aug. 28. Tropical storms usually don't take a heavy toll on inland states like Vermont, although the region has occasionally been soaked by the remnants of hurricanes. But this time, Northfield's 2,500-square-foot branch in the central Vermont town of Waterbury was "totally consumed," said CEO Tom Pelletier. THE PLAN

"We knew on the Thursday and Friday preceding the storm that the probability of our experiencing heavy rain was very real," Pelletier said. "As it tracked the East Coast, we were following it very closely."

Because Vermont is a mountainous state, towns and villages tend to be located in valleys and near rivers. That makes towns like Waterbury vulnerable to flooding from an intense storm. By Friday night, with the storm wreaking havoc in the South, the bank began putting its plan into effect at six branches including Waterbury. Meanwhile, the entire town was preparing to evacuate.

A big part of the bank's plan was being sure that employees would be safe — and for everyone to have contact numbers for one another. That is one of the most important parts of disaster planning. "We knew where everyone would be," Pelletier said.

Then employees at the six branches spent several hours getting as much furniture and equipment as possible off the floors in the offices and basements. The bank's other seven branches weren't in a flood zone, so similar precautions weren't taken at those offices.

On Sunday, the storm hit, and “the volume of rain was significantly more than initially forecast,” Pelletier said.

THE DAMAGE

Irene dumped as much as 11 inches of rain on parts of Vermont, causing floods that devastated homes, businesses and farms. Waterbury was one of the hardest hit parts as the Winooski River overflowed its banks, and Pelletier said there was four feet of water in the branch on top of a completely flooded basement.

“Once the flooding was inevitable, even with all the planning in the world, there was nothing we could do” to prevent the damage, Pelletier said.

The branch was a mess. Its furnishings — which had been brand-new after a recent \$250,000 renovation — were ruined. The receding floodwaters left behind mud and debris. The only items that could be salvaged were several computer keyboards and monitors that were placed high enough to escape the floodwaters.

The good news was that the bank’s information about customers and their accounts was held in computers at a central remote location, so none of the data was lost. The nearest Northfield branch was just 15 minutes away, in Montpelier, so customers could do their banking there.

But the flood did hit the bank’s safe deposit vault. About 30 customers who had safe deposit boxes lost their property, including documents like wills and deeds.

THE AFTERMATH AND RECOVERY

The bank knew it couldn’t wait for the branch office to be rebuilt for it to reopen. And it didn’t have to. For many years, it has paid an annual retainer for what’s called a “bank in a box” — a 72-foot trailer that serves as a full-service mobile banking unit. It arrived from Pennsylvania just a few days after the storm. It took several days to hook up, but the mobile branch was operating the following week.

Pelletier said that “going into 2011, in our budgetary process, we wondered, ‘do we need to continue paying for the bank in a box?’ It turned out to be the best investment we ever made.”

The bank had also arranged before the storm for contractors to immediately arrive and assess the damage and begin repairs. But the building needed more than repairs — by the end of the week, contractors had gutted the branch. By early March it was rebuilt, and its grand reopening was Friday, April 6.

Because the bank had flood insurance — which must be purchased separately from a standard business insurance policy — the cost of rebuilding was mostly covered by that policy. The bank did not say how much it cost to rebuild.

The bank also helped its safe deposit customers replace their lost documents. Their losses would have been covered under their homeowners’ insurance policies.

VTDIGGER:

Vermont Senate committee passes ban on fracking

BY ANNE GALLOWAY

Earlier this morning the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee voted unanimously for a bill that would ban hydraulic fracturing for natural gas in Vermont.

Hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking,” is a dangerous drilling process that pumps huge quantities of water, toxic chemicals, and sand at very high pressure into shale formations to release natural gas from otherwise irretrievable depths. Fracking for natural gas has been linked to public health threats as well as serious ground, air, and water pollution. Activities related to fracking have also led to an increased rate of earthquakes.

The bill (H.464) was amended by the Senate Committee after passing the House of Representatives as a three year moratorium. The updated bill prohibits the use of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas in Vermont, and requests regular reports from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Further, the bill prohibits collection, storage, or treatment of fracking wastewater in the state.

“With this legislation Vermont would become the first state in the nation to ban fracking,” said Leah Marsters, VPIRG Clean Energy Associate. “Banning fracking is the right move for Vermont because it’s dirty, dangerous, and absolutely unnecessary in this state.”

“Senator Lyons and her committee members deserve credit for standing up to the oil and gas lobby,” said Paul Burns, Executive Director of VPIRG. “Protecting public health and Vermont’s water is not a partisan issue, as this unanimous vote demonstrates.”

The bill still needs to be passed by the full Senate and then reconciled with the House version before it becomes law.

“We’re confident that House members will join their Senate colleagues in supporting a ban on this dangerous practice,” said Burns.

BUSINESS INSIDER (CHECK OUT THE HEADLINE ...)

Vermont Governor Narrowly Avoids Being Mauled To Death By Bears

Jaywon Choe

It's been a day of near-death political news.

First, we heard about Newark mayor Corey Brewer's heroics, risking his life to save a woman from a burning building.

Now there's this from Vermont.

According to the Associated Press, Vermont governor Peter Shumlin was nearly mauled by some bears that were raiding his backyard birdfeeder.

Shumlin said he woke up to find four bears — two of them cubs — in his yard. He then made the foolish attempt to chase away the invaders, and that's when one of them made a run for him. The governor narrowly escaped, eventually making his way back into his home.

He told the Valley News editorial board that the state "almost lost the governor," and that he was within "three feet of getting 'arrrh.'"

Maybe Shumlin should have taken the advice of his state's fish and wildlife department, which clearly urges residents to "avoid contact" with bears on their property.

ASSOCIATED PRESS:

Vt. governor chased by 4 bears in backyard

Updated: 4/13/2012 3:43 PM

By WILSON RING,

MONTPELIER, Vt. -- A late-night encounter with four bears trying to snack from backyard birdfeeders gave Vermont's governor a lesson in what not to do in bear country.

One of the bears chased Peter Shumlin and nearly caught the governor while he was trying to shoo the animals away, he said Friday.

"I had a close encounter with a bear, four bears to be exact," Shumlin said.

Shumlin said he had just gone to bed inside his rented home on the edge of Montpelier late Wednesday when the bears woke him up. He looked out the window and saw the bears in a tree about five feet from the house trying to get food from his four birdfeeders.

"I open up the window and yell at them to get away from the birdfeeders. They kind of trot off," Shumlin said Friday. "I go around to the kitchen to turn the lights on and look from the other side and they're back in the birdfeeders. So I figure I've got to get the birdfeeders out of there or they're going to make this a habit."

He said he then ran out and first grabbed two of the feeders. As he grabbed the other two and made his escape, "one of the bigger bears was interested in me."

"It was probably six feet from me before I slammed the door and it ran the other way," Shumlin said.

Shumlin said he didn't stop to get dressed, though he didn't reveal exactly how little he was wearing.

"I sleep like many Vermont boys, without too much clothing at night. I'm not a big pajama person," he said. "The bottom line is: The bears were dressed better than I and they could have done some real damage."

Shumlin, 56, a first term Democratic governor from Putney, said he had part of the encounter on video, which he refused to release. He first described the wild encounter in an interview with the editorial board of the Valley News newspaper of Lebanon, N.H. He told the newspaper he was within "three feet of getting 'arrrh.'"

"The lesson is as a Vermonter who grew up in this state and should know better, if you're going to feed birds at this time of year, bring your birdfeeders in at night," he said.

But Col. David LeCours, Vermont's chief game warden, said bringing feeders in at night won't make a difference because the bears will return to eat the birdfeed on the ground. The Department of Fish and Wildlife urges homeowners to remove birdfeeders in the spring.

While homeowners like to watch the birds, they don't need to be fed once the snow melts, LeCours said.

In certain circumstances, such as if someone is deliberately trying to attract bears, people can be fined for keeping feeders out, but that wouldn't apply in the governor's case.

"If someone does it inadvertently, there's no violation of law," LeCours said.

LeCours said it was likely Shumlin was dealing with a sow with three cubs. He said he'd never heard of a bear chasing after a person with food, but mother bears will protect their young.

"She most likely felt her cubs were being threatened," LeCours said.

London, Sarah

From: Allen, Susan
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 3:56 PM
To: Allen, Susan
Subject: AFTERNOON MEDIA CLIPS FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 13:

BEAR STORIES:

BURLINGTON FREE PRESS:

Gov. Shumlin escapes 4 bears in backyard

MONTPELIER — Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin said he barely escaped the wrath of four bears outside his Montpelier home Wednesday evening.

Shumlin said he had just gone to bed around 11 p.m. Wednesday when he heard a ruckus outside. Four bears, including two cubs, were after the food in the four bird feeders on a porch, just ten feet away from his bedroom window.

He said he opened the window and yelled at the bears, or as Shumlin put it, "used my strongest Vermonter" to scare the bears away.

Shumlin said he went outside to retrieve the bird feeders, so that the bears wouldn't return for the food in the feeders. But as Shumlin started to carry two of the feeders inside, the bears started coming back. Shumlin said he again used his strongest Vermonter to scare the animals off. They ran to the edge of the yard.

He went back outside to get the other two feeders. He said the bears appeared unhappy to have their food source taken away. The was especially true of the largest, poppa bear, Shumlin said. "He just booked it for the porch," Shumlin said.

The governor took the two feeders and made a beeline for his door, with the poppa bear in hot pursuit. "When I opened the door, he was on the porch and five feet from the door. I screamed through that door. I didn't know if the bear was coming through."

On the bright side, Shumlin is an avid runner, so he said he was able to move pretty quickly away from the bears. On the negative side, the governor said he wasn't exactly dressed for an outdoor tangle with wildlife. "Real Vermont boys don't wear pajamas," he said.

Shumlin said he is aware of Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife suggestions made on March 27 to bring bird feeders inside to discourage bears, but he figured ursines wouldn't be a problem in a suburban neighborhood within walking distance of downtown Montpelier.

"There is a lesson in all this. Don't forget to bring in your birdfeeders," he said.

Shumlin still puts the feeders out in the morning for the birds, but vowed to always take them indoors in the evening.

NPR:

Vermont Governor Has Bear Encounter

BY MARK MEMMOTT

Bears are in the news again.

Tuesday, there was the guy in Los Angeles who was texting-while-walking and almost bumped into a 400-pound black bear. The close encounter with an ursine was caught on video.

Now there's this:

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin (D) returned to his rental home Wednesday night in Montpelier to see four bears "feasting" on the bird feeders in the backyard, the *Valley News* reports. And he decided, Shumlin told the newspaper, to try to shoo them away so that he could save the feeders from destruction. The story continues:

" 'First, I scare them away, and they keep coming back,' Shumlin said. ... 'So I go out and grab two of the feeders, run back into the house, then they come back, they knock the suet out, then knock the big feeder down, and they are going at it.' Shumlin said he went outside again, and found a bear more aggressive than he expected.

" 'The (bear) charges me on the porch — I'm tearing through the door. You almost lost the governor,' Shumlin joked. 'Security was not there. I was within three feet of getting *arrrh*.' "

The *Burlington Free Press* writes that:

"On the bright side, Shumlin is an avid runner, so he said he was able to move pretty quickly away from the bears. On the negative side, the governor said he wasn't exactly dressed for an outdoor tangle with wildlife. 'Real Vermont boys don't wear pajamas,' he said."

A little TMI, for us, governor.

He says he's now going to heed the advice of experts who say Vermonters need to bring their bird feeders in once the weather gets warm to avoid attracting bears.

POLITICO:

Vermont governor Peter Shumlin chased by 4 bears in backyard

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) - Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin says he was chased and nearly caught by four bears that were raiding his birdfeeders.

Shumlin says he was in bed in his rented Montpelier home late Wednesday night when he heard what turned out to be four bears in the backyard.

He says he looked out and saw the bears, including two cubs. He tried to chase the bears away, but they kept coming back.

Shumlin says he ran out barefoot in an attempt to rescue his birdfeeders. He says one of the bears charged him on the porch.

Shumlin tells the Valley News editorial board that Vermont "almost lost the governor." He says he was within "three feet of getting 'arrh.'"

MSNBC:

Vermont governor outruns 4 bears in yard -- barefoot

By Sevil Omer, msnbc.com

Barefoot and bold, Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin outran four hungry bears vying for the birdfeeders hanging from his backyard porch -- and won.

Shumlin was in bed in his rented Montpelier, Vt., home Wednesday night when he heard a ruckus in his backyard, said Susan Allen, the governor's spokeswoman.

When the 56-year-old Democratic leader looked, he spotted two adult bears and two cubs trying to eat out of his bird feeders. He attempted to chase the bears away, but the animals kept coming back, Allen said.

"The bears were hungry and had just come out of hibernation," Allen said, adding: "[S]eeing them in this residential neighborhood was highly unusual."

When the bears kept clawing at the feeders, Shumlin ran out barefoot to grab the dispensers in an attempt to stop the bears from eating, but one bear charged at him on the porch.

The governor was able to run back into the kitchen, with feeders in hand, and escape the hungry bandits.

Shumlin told the Lebanon Valley News editorial board that Vermont "almost lost the governor," adding that he was within "three feet of getting 'arrh'," the Associated Press reported.

Allen said Shumlin learned a valuable lesson: "Do not put out feeders in the spring."

AP STORY RAN IN NUMEROUS NATIONAL PAPERS

WCAX:

Gov. Shumlin chased by 4 bears in backyard

MONTPELIER, Vt. -

Gov. Peter Shumlin had a dangerous encounter this week with some backyard bears.

Shumlin said he had just gone to bed at his rented house in Montpelier Wednesday night when he heard what turned out to be four bears-- including a mother and two cubs-- who were going after his birdfeeders in the backyard.

The governor says he ran out barefoot to chase them away, but ended up being chased himself.

"The biggest bear is a long distance away-- starts tearing for the porch as I am grabbing the other two feeders. So I grab them and tear for the porch door and literally it was 7 feet from the door when I slammed it shut. I thought, that bear is coming right through," said Shumlin, D-Vermont.

The governor admits going outside with bears near was not a smart thing to do.

HUFFINGTON POST

Bears Chase Peter Shumlin, Vermont Governor, In Backyard

MONTPELIER, Vt. — A late-night encounter with four bears trying to snack from backyard birdfeeders gave Vermont's governor a lesson in what not to do in bear country.

One of the bears chased Peter Shumlin and nearly caught the governor while he was trying to shoo the animals away, he said Friday.

"I had a close encounter with a bear, four bears to be exact," Shumlin said.

Shumlin said he had just gone to bed inside his rented home on the edge of Montpelier late Wednesday when the bears woke him up. He looked out the window and saw the bears in a tree about five feet from the house trying to get food from his four birdfeeders.

"I open up the window and yell at them to get away from the birdfeeders. They kind of trot off," Shumlin said Friday. "I go around to the kitchen to turn the lights on and look from the other side and they're back in the birdfeeders. So I figure I've got to get the birdfeeders out of there or they're going to make this a habit."

He said he then ran out and first grabbed two of the feeders. As he grabbed the other two and made his escape, "one of the bigger bears was interested in me."

"It was probably six feet from me before I slammed the door and it ran the other way," Shumlin said.

Shumlin said he didn't stop to get dressed, though he didn't reveal exactly how little he was wearing.

"I sleep like many Vermont boys, without too much clothing at night. I'm not a big pajama person," he said. "The bottom line is: The bears were dressed better than I and they could have done some real damage."

Shumlin, 56, a first term Democratic governor from Putney, said he had part of the encounter on video, which he refused to release. He first described the wild encounter in an interview with the editorial board of the Valley News newspaper of Lebanon, N.H. He told the newspaper he was within "three feet of getting `arrh."

"The lesson is as a Vermonter who grew up in this state and should know better, if you're going to feed birds at this time of year, bring your birdfeeders in at night," he said.

But Col. David LeCours, Vermont's chief game warden, said bringing feeders in at night won't make a difference because the bears will return to eat the birdfeed on the ground. The Department of Fish and Wildlife urges homeowners to remove birdfeeders in the spring.

While homeowners like to watch the birds, they don't need to be fed once the snow melts, LeCours said.

In certain circumstances, such as if someone is deliberately trying to attract bears, people can be fined for keeping feeders out, but that wouldn't apply in the governor's case.

"If someone does it inadvertently, there's no violation of law," LeCours said.

LeCours said it was likely Shumlin was dealing with a sow with three cubs. He said he'd never heard of a bear chasing after a person with food, but mother bears will protect their young.

"She most likely felt her cubs were being threatened," LeCours said.

NBC NEWS (CHICAGO STATION)

Barefoot Vt. Governor Chased by 4 Hungry Bears

Gov. Peter Shumlin says he came within "three feet of getting 'arhhhh'"

By Sam Schulz

Vermont should count its lucky stars.

Had Gov. Peter Shumlin not just barely managed to outrun four hungry bears in his own backyard, the state might be out of a governor right now.

Shumlin said he got out of bed Wednesday night to investigate noises coming from his Montpelier backyard and found four hungry bears raiding his birdfeeders, according to The Associated Press, citing a report by the Lebanon Valley News.

He tried to chase the two adult bears and two cubs away, but undeterred, they kept coming back for the bird food — and one of them charged him on his porch.

Shumlin told the Lebanon Valley News that he came within "three feet of getting 'arhhh,'" which doesn't sound good. Vermont "almost lost the governor," he said.

Shumlin might have done well to heed the old advice about bears: Don't mess with a mama bear with her cubs!

GAWKER:

Barefoot Vermont Governor Chased By Bears After Daring Birdfeeder Rescue (UPDATE: He Was Also Naked)

Who would you rather have as a leader: A man who runs into a burning building to rescue a woman, or a man who will put his life in danger to save the seeds in his birdfeeder from a pack of roving bears?

While Newark mayor Corey Booker was playing firefighter *or whatever*, Vermont governor Peter Shumlin was busy getting "chased and nearly caught by four bears" in his own backyard. I'll let the AP take it from here:

Shumlin says he was in bed in his rented Montpelier home late Wednesday night when he heard what turned out to be four bears in the backyard.

He says he looked out and saw the bears, including two cubs. He tried to chase the bears away, but they kept coming back.

Shumlin says he ran out barefoot in an attempt to rescue his birdfeeders. He says one of the bears charged him on the porch.

"I yell at them through the window, they run away, and come right back," Shumlin told the *Valley News* yesterday. "First, I scare them away, and they keep coming back. So I go out and grab two of the feeders, run back into the house, then they come back, they knock the suet out, then knock the big feeder down, and they are going at it."

Shumlin joke that the green mountain state "almost lost the governor" that night: "I was within three feet of getting 'arrh.'" (Scary bear noise, we think.)

There is said to be video evidence of the face-off.

UPDATE: Adrian, my coworker and fellow Vermonter, dug up another crucial detail to Shumlin's harrowing night, via the *Burlington Free Press*: "On the bright side, Shumlin is an avid runner, so he said he was able to move pretty quickly away from the bears. On the negative side, the governor said he wasn't exactly dressed for an outdoor tangle with wildlife. 'Real Vermont boys don't wear pajamas,' he said."

GOVERNOR'S JOURNAL:

Nothing To See Here

It is being widely reported in Vermont that Governor Peter Shumlin(D) had a run in with four bears this week and one almost got the better of him.

It sounds more like a scene out of a comedy than the final moments of *Legends of the Fall*, but Shumlin tells one local newspaper that the issue of succession was in play for at least a moment.

Shumlin was chasing a family of four bears out of his yard – in his barefeet – because they were rummaging through his bird feeders. One turned and chased him.

London, Sarah

From: Spaulding, Susan
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 10:34 AM
To: Allen, Susan; Wengroff, Ariel; Richards, Alyson; Bartlett, Susan; Appleby, Leigh; Wesley, Carolyn; Roessle, Drusilla; London, Sarah; Scrodin, Chris; Trombley, Shana; Spaulding, Jeb
Subject: RE: here's the bear story that ran

He did a GREAT job telling the story on Mark Johnson. Maybe a little too much information on his sleeping attire ☺

Susan M. Spaulding
Director, Appointments to Boards and Commissions
The Pavilion - Fifth Floor
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-0101
(802)-828-3333 fax 828-3339

From: Allen, Susan
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 10:08 AM
To: Wengroff, Ariel; Richards, Alyson; Bartlett, Susan; Spaulding, Susan; Appleby, Leigh; Wesley, Carolyn; Roessle, Drusilla; London, Sarah; Scrodin, Chris; Trombley, Shana; Spaulding, Jeb
Subject: Fwd: here's the bear story that ran

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Gregg <jgregg@vnews.com>
Date: April 13, 2012 9:21:46 AM EDT
To: "Allen, Susan" <Susan.Allen@state.vt.us>
Subject: here's the bear story that ran

For some reason it didn't get put online. We're glad Gov. Shumlin agreed to go on the record with this. The WPost line I referred to was Bob Woodward's famous line about parties at Katharine Graham's house.

"Everything at a Katharine Graham party is off the record -- unless it's really good."

chrs, John

Governor Confronts Bears Snacking at His Bird Feeders

BY JOHN P. GREGG

Valley News Staff Writer

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin rarely backs away from a fight, but he had to beat a hasty retreat Wednesday night when he found himself outnumbered by four black bears that were feasting on bird feeders in the backyard of his Montpelier home.

"I had a tough night," Shumlin said in jest to Valley News editors and reporters at the start of an editorial board meeting yesterday.

The 56-year-old Vermont native said he had returned to his house in the state capital around 10:30 p.m. and went to bed. The rental home, located in a suburban neighborhood about a 10-minute walk to the Statehouse, backs onto a field and woods. "I hear something banging on the porch, and I've just fallen asleep, and I look out at this tree ... and there are four bears on my bird feeders," said Shumlin, who said they included a sow and two cubs.

"I yell at them through the window, they run away, and come right back," Shumlin said.

Barefoot and straight out of bed, the first-term Democrat said he was intent on rescuing his bird feeders.

"First, I scare them away, and they keep coming back," Shumlin said of the bears.

"So I go out and grab two of the feeders, run back into the house, then they come back, they knock the suet out, then knock the big feeder down, and they are going at it," said Shumlin, who also showed a short video he made of the encounter on his smart phone.

Shumlin said he went outside again, and found a bear more aggressive than he expected.

"The (bear) charges me on the porch — I'm tearing through the door. You almost lost the governor," Shumlin joked. "Security was not there. I was within three feet of getting 'arrh.'"

Shumlin, who grew up in a rural part of Windham County, said he had put up the bird feeders to remind him of home.

"I'm not a city boy, so my only connection to nature now is to feed the birds like mad. It makes me feel like I'm back in Putney," he said.

But his hobby also runs counter to recommendations from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, which last month urged homeowners to take down their bird feeders to prevent bears emerging from their winter dens from seeking out the high-energy seeds.

The department estimates that almost 6,000 black bears are now found in Vermont.

Fish and Wildlife spokesman John Hall, a 45-year department veteran, said suet and black oil sunflower seeds are "particularly attractive to bears" who can "pick up the scent of either of those foods from quite a long distance.

"A lot of us feed birds as long as we can because we enjoy seeing them, and thinking that we are helping them," Hall said. "At this time of year, birds can readily find food, and they don't need our help."

Bears, on the other hand, Hall noted, can become habituated to bird seed, pet food or trash that is left outside.

"We don't want to tempt bears to seek food near people. That can be their downfall," Hall said. And those bears could visit again, even if Shumlin has stored the feeders inside.

"Unfortunately, sows, mothers, will teach their cubs that same behavior," Hall said. "They are a very smart animal. Once they learn a particular spot, they are going to register that for the future."

John P. Gregg can be reached at jgregg@vnews.com or 603-727-3213.

----- Original Message -----

From: "Susan Allen" <Susan.Allen@state.vt.us>

To: "John Gregg" <jgregg@vnews.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012 2:20:30 PM

Subject: Re: bear factcheck

Rental

Suburban neighborhood field and woods in back of house. Bears just take risks when they wake up hungry and move into areas they don't usually brave.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 12, 2012, at 2:04 PM, "John Gregg" <jgregg@vnews.com> wrote:

Hi, Sue,

I'm doing a bear story sidebar, of course. I think just saying the house is a 10-minute walk to the Statehouse will suffice for our purposes, withough getting into the name of the road, but can you tell me:

- a) is it a rental, or did he buy?
- b) is it near a park or some other rural feature I might identify that could explain the bears?

thks and chrs, John

--

John Gregg
Political Editor
Valley News
W. Lebanon, NH
(603) 727-3213
jgregg@vnews.com

