Love story

'Hundred Days' to tell an uplifting and challenging tale with music. See Arts + Leisure.

Taking two

Panther men's lax reaches .500 with a pair of recent strong performances. See Page 1B.

Home edition

Find out where you can use power tools and get renovation ideas in our 16-page pull-out.

ADDISON COUNTY
INDEPENDENT

Vol. 78 No. 13 | Middlebury, Vermont ◆ Thursday, March 28, 2024 ◆ 60 Pages | $1.50

Hot job

MARK RAISHART FEEDS another piece of hardwood into the evaporator at the Foxglove Farm sugarhouse in Leicester on Sunday during Vermont Open Sugarhouse Weekend. He and his wife, Catie, boil up about 150-200 gallons of maple syrup each year. See more photos on Page 11A.

Independent photo/Steve James

ANWSD budget defeated again

Second setback by only 18 votes

By ANDY KIRKALDY

VERGENNES — For the second time in a 21-day span, residents of the five Addison Northwest School District communities on Tuesday rejected a spending plan to fund education in the district's three schools for the coming 2024-2025 academic year.

This time the vote was closer in lighter turnout: Voters said no, 745-727, or 50.6%-49.4%, to a proposed $27.5 million spending plan.

That budget would have maintained all educational offerings except the Vergennes Union High School alternative education program, the Walden Project. That particular reduction had dismayed some in the community.

In all, the ANWSD board had

(See ANWSD, Page 13A)

County prosecutor loses her law license

High court OKs temporary move

By MIKE DONOGHUE
Vermont News First

MONTPELIER — The Vermont Supreme Court suspended the law license of Addison County State's Attorney Eva P. Vekos for her failure to properly respond to questions about her fitness following her arrest on a charge of driving while impaired. The high court issued the interim order on Wednesday.

St. Johnsbury Attorney David Sleigh, who represents Vekos, said Wednesday that he and his client are still willing to cooperate on the inquiry.

Sleigh said Wednesday morning that after getting the Supreme Court ruling, he emailed disciplinary prosecutor Jon Alexander to ask what information — besides privileged medical

(See Vekos, Page 13A)

New report confirms major student unrest in the ACSD

Data show biggest problems at elementary grade levels

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The COVID-era surge in student unrest has, to date, largely been measured through police reports and sometimes-harrowing accounts from school officials about such conduct as children making threats, throwing furniture and refusing to comply with requests.

But thanks to new software called "Educlimber" and reporting requirements for staff, the Addison Central School District has, for the past seven months, been able to chart both minor and major K-12 student behavior incidents on its campuses in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge.

And the numbers aren't pretty.

"This is a really small, though distressing, picture," school board member James "Chip" Malcolm said.

According to information unveiled on Monday by ACSD Director of Equity & Student Services Nicole Carter, there were 1,172 documented minor or major behavior incidents within the school system between this past August and this month. And officials acknowledged that number could be low, given the likelihood some educators

(See Unrest, Page 8A)

Mary Hogan teachers appeal for assistance

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Mary Hogan Elementary School teachers have asked the Addison Central School District board for more resources — and to preserve a key, student-discipline position that's slated to be cut this summer — in response to a growing number of student behavior issues. They said

(See Response, Page 8A)

Each year, physical education teacher Sierra Thornton leads the Salisbury Community School's "American Heart Challenge," offered through the

(See By the way, Page 13A)

HOPE, farm team up to distribute produce

By MARIN HOWELL

MIDDLEBURY — Two local organizations are teaming up to tackle food security in Addison County and provide more residents with fresh, locally grown produce.

The effort is a collaboration between Middlebury nonprofit Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects (HOPE) and Little Village Enterprises, a social venture founded by former Vermont Coffee Company owner Paul Ralston.

Among Little Village Enterprises' initiatives is "Little Village Acres" farm, located on the former Dow Farm property on Case Street. Over the past year Little Village Acres has worked with HOPE staff and volunteers to grow and process crops at the Middlebury farm, 100% of which are then donated to community

(See Little Village, Page 16A)

LINCOLN COMMUNITY SCHOOL students make tortillas during the school's annual cultural study celebration this past Thursday. The fiesta highlighted what students learned this winter during their study of Querétaro, Mexico, and celebrated various aspects of Mexican culture.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

Celebrating Mexican culture

Lincoln students' studies explore life in Querétaro

By MARIN HOWELL

LINCOLN — Temperatures hovered just below freezing outside the Lincoln Community School this past Thursday, March 21, but those gathered inside the building were kept plenty warm with the sights, smells and sounds of sunny Querétaro, Mexico.

Students at the elementary school spent the past several weeks studying the Mexican state as part of the learning community's annual cultural studies program. On Thursday, LCS students shared what they'd learned with the crowd of around 100 fellow students, staff and community members convened in the school gym.

While the intensive study offers students an opportunity to learn about people and places in different parts of the world each winter, LCS music teacher Carina Ellis said this year's program also gave students a chance to get to know some of their

(See Lincoln, Page 12A)

Independent lauded as top weekly paper in New England

ADDISON COUNTY — The *Addison County Independent* and its sister publication *Vermont Ski + Ride Magazine* took home 17 first-place awards — and another 17 second- and third-place nods — for excellence in journalism at the annual Better Newspaper Competition held over the weekend at Waltham, Mass.

The competition, held each year at the annual convention of the New England Newspaper and Press Association, honors the top newspapers and news websites from all six New England states in 85 editorial categories and 35 advertising categories. Professional judges are hired to shift through the more than 2,000 contest entries.

While the *Addison Independent* is

(See NENPA winners, Page 10A)

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Middlebury man pleads not guilty to 'random' knife attack on College St.

Police believe substance abuse and mental health factors in unprovoked assault

By MARIN HOWELL

MIDDLEBURY — A Middlebury man is being held without bail after pleading innocent to charges he attempted to kill a Middlebury College student in a knife attack on College Street this past Wednesday, March 20.

Police report that Jerry L. Hoffman, 31, of Middlebury, randomly attacked the male student and a female friend walking by Hoffman's College Street residence at around a quarter to 8 p.m. that evening. Hoffman reportedly stabbed the man repeatedly, apparently for no clear reason.

> *"Recently we found out he's been using meth and that has caused all sorts of hallucinations."*
>
> *— Hoffman's mother*

Police believe a combination of substance use and mental health issues were factors in the attack.

"As far as we know there really is no motive," Middlebury Police Detective Chris Mason told the *Independent*. "There's no connection between the victim and the assailant. The assailant didn't say anything prior to the assault or during the assault. It doesn't appear to have been a robbery attempt.

"We do think there probably is a substance use and a mental health component to the attack," Mason added.

WEDNESDAY STABBING

According to court documents, the victim and his companion, a guest of the student visiting for spring break, were walking back to the college from Shaw's Supermarket on that Wednesday evening. The pair was nearing campus grounds on College Street when Hoffman approached them from behind and began stabbing the student in the back.

"We know that the victim was stabbed four times, was pushed to the ground and was kicked repeatedly while he was on the ground," Mason said.

Court documents state the student yelled for help, at which point a man came out of the most proximate residence and asked what was going on. The man was identified as Hoffman's father in the affidavit. The attack reportedly took place in front of Hoffman's parents' home on College Street, where he had been living since September 2023, according to court records.

Hoffman allegedly continued attacking the student after his father came out of the home, at which point the student approached the residence, saw a snow shovel and picked it up. The student held the shovel in front of himself defensively, after which Hoffman entered the house, according to court records.

"Immediately after that, as the assailant was going into his house, the victim and his friend fled across the green in front of the house," Mason said, referring to the park to the west of Twilight Hall.

The pair managed to get to a Franklin Street home, where they called 911 at 7:54 p.m. The woman, who made the 911 call, was uninjured, but the injured man was rushed by Middlebury Regional EMS to Porter Hospital, then transferred to UVM Medical Center. He was released from the hospital the following morning in stable condition. Information on the extent of his wounds was not made available.

Back on College Street, Hoffman's father also called 911 immediately after the incident, according to court records.

At 7:51 p.m., Middlebury police arrived on the scene and found Hoffman, armed with two knives, outside his home. Police say Hoffman refused their commands to drop the weapons, and instead fled; police ran after him on foot.

According to police, Hoffman ran toward the rear of the house and through the backyard. Police chased him down Mill Street, where he ran into Otter Creek, still armed with the knives.

Perhaps shocked by the cold water, Hoffman stopped in the creek and eventually complied with commands to drop the knives.

Police took Hoffman into custody and MREMS took him to Porter Hospital to be evaluated for exposure to the cold water. Police then took him to MPD headquarters, where they booked him.

Seven Middlebury police officers responded to the incident and were assisted by officials from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, Vermont State Police, Vergennes police and the Middlebury Fire Department.

Police charged Hoffman with attempted murder and jailed him at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility without bail.

In Addison Superior Court/Criminal Division in Middlebury the next day, March 21, Hoffman pled not guilty to charges of attempted first degree murder, aggravated assault with a weapon, and resisting arrest.

PRIOR INCIDENTS

This is not the first time Hoffman has been arrested following a violent incident. Burlington police in June 2019 arrested Hoffman and cited him for assault, disorderly conduct and unlawful mischief after he allegedly punched three people in downtown Burlington.

In October 2019, Hoffman was again arrested after punching strangers in downtown Burlington, according to Burlington Police.

Hoffman has also had prior run-ins with the Middlebury Police Department.

"Middlebury police is very familiar with Hoffman," Mason said. "Most of the officers that have been here for any length of time have had incidents, if not cases, involving Hoffman."

The most recent incident in Middlebury took place in 2020, when Mason and another officer responded to Hoffman's parents' home.

"His behavior had become somewhat erratic, and the parents were concerned," Mason recalled. "They felt there was probably some drug use. They also felt that there was some deteriorating mental health."

Mason said Hoffman had smashed a sliding glass door leading from the house into a porch.

"Myself and another officer showed up, and Jerry was standing in the kitchen holding a large knife, a chef's knife," Det. Mason said.

> *"As far as we know there really is no motive … We do think there probably is a substance use and a mental health component to the attack."*
>
> *— Middlebury Police Detective Chris Mason*

Hoffman eventually complied with Mason's request to put the knife down, and police took him to the hospital for treatment of wounds presumably resulting from breaking through the glass door.

Hoffman's father notes in court documents that his son "has had issues with drug use in the past," pointing to suspected meth use in particular.

Hoffman's father referenced the 2020 incident in a written statement included in the affidavit, stating that "When he takes meth, he gets very paranoid. There was an incident back in October of 2020 when he was taking meth. There was property damage, and he was confronted by police wielding a kitchen knife. He was hospitalized after that."

Hoffman's father, in his written statement, cites a handful of other incidents occurring since 2020, in which he suspected his son was using meth and was exhibiting paranoia.

In another written statement included in the affidavit, Hoffman's mother also references prior incidents involving her son and states, "I believe he gets violent because of drugs and mental illness."

She writes in the statement that "Recently we found out he's been using meth and that has caused all sorts of hallucinations."

Hoffman's parents in their written statements to police both note efforts to confront their son about his drug use.

"My husband and I have been trying to get some help for Jerry," Hoffman's mother writes, noting that on the day of the knife attack she told Hoffman she didn't feel safe with him and needed him to leave the house. "I was begging him to let us help him."

Hoffman's mother also states that on the morning of the March 20 attack, she called the emergency line at the Counseling Service of Addison County to try to get help for her son.

"I was able to get Jerry to call the hotline and they made arrangements to begin an intake next week," she wrote.

Defense attorney James Gratton is representing Hoffman and has requested a mental health evaluation for his client, who is being held without bail at the state prison in Rutland.

Hoffman's case is scheduled for a weight-of-the-evidence hearing on Thursday, March 28, at 1 p.m. in Middlebury.

If found guilty on all three charges, Hoffman could face life in prison and thousands of dollars in fines.

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Cornwall Outdoor Recreation Area gets substantial boost

84 contributors combined for $21K

By JOHN FLOWERS

CORNWALL — Thanks to a dedicated group of citizen volunteers, the generosity of neighbors and a couple of successful grant applications, plans for a new Cornwall Outdoor Recreation Area (CORA) are moving ahead at warp speed, with a potential groundbreaking as soon as late June.

"It's incredibly humbling and satisfying," CORA Committee leader Gail Isenberg said of progress thus far on what will be Cornwall's first municipal recreation area. It will host pollinator gardens, an ADA-compliant walking path, pickleball and tennis courts, and other amenities on a town-owned, two-acre parcel just south of the community's elementary school.

"Cornwall is very motivated to get this done."

So, what began less than a year ago as a "lark" originally aimed at creating one or more local pickleball courts, is now a firm plan that's poised to jump off the drawing board, providing a spot for a variety of passive and active recreation options for Cornwall-area residents of all ages.

"It's gone from nothing, to this, because of the community," a grateful Isenberg said.

Progress has been steady and incremental.

Just last week, CORA Committee members Isenberg, Woody Jackson, Marge Drexler, Stan Grzyb, Meg Harris, Sue Johnson and Liz Marino celebrated the successful harvest of $21,000 in local contributions in just 12 days. That money — donated in small increments by 84 individuals and families with Cornwall connections — unlocks an additional $40,000 grant through the Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development.

And that's not all.

The Middlebury Tennis Club recently lobbed in a $7,000 gift, to go along with another $70,000 from Cornwall's cut of American Rescue Plan Act money. So all told, that's $138,000 banked thus far for a CORA project estimated at $350,000, of which $125,000-$150,000 will need to be raised locally.

More funding news is imminent, according to Harris. She said Cornwall could receive as much as $248,000 in assistance through the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grant Program. VOREC is a competitive program and the details of Cornwall's specific allotment are still being worked out.

Projects under VOREC qualify for reimbursement for related goods and services. Grzyb explained the CORA Committee will pay the upfront costs for project elements like excavating, defining the parking lot and building the picnic pavilion, then submit invoices to VOREC for payback. The cost of the pickleball/tennis courts won't be reimbursable through VOREC.

"VOREC told us not to expect the final go-ahead for construction until the end of May or early June," Grzyb said through an email. "No reimbursable work can be started until the final agreement is signed."

Once fully completed, CORA will include the aforementioned walking trail, gardens and playing courts, as well as exercise stations, a picnic area and shelter, benches, pollinator gardens, a horseshoe pitch and a bocce ball surface.

Organizers see great potential for the nearby Cornwall school children to use, and learn from, the new recreation area. The pollinator gardens, for example, will offer opportunities for horticultural and entomology studies.

Committee members will soon meet with Cornwall's Development Review Board to explain the project and earn the requisite OKs to break ground. Area contractors are waiting in the wings to begin work on CORA once it's been vetted, Isenberg said.

With a large chunk of funding in hand, Isenberg and her colleagues are eager to see shovels in the ground. Their enthusiasm is on display on the CORA website, coravt.org.

"Now the work really starts," a message from the group reads. "We'll keep you posted as plans develop for site surveying, excavation, and building. Stay tuned… "

Sweet shades

MARY HOGAN STUDENTS Zara Trump, left, Matilda Boyce and Julian Stein try out eclipse glasses while learning about the astronomical event last week. The protective spectacles will help students safely view the total solar eclipse on April 8.

Independent photo/Steve James

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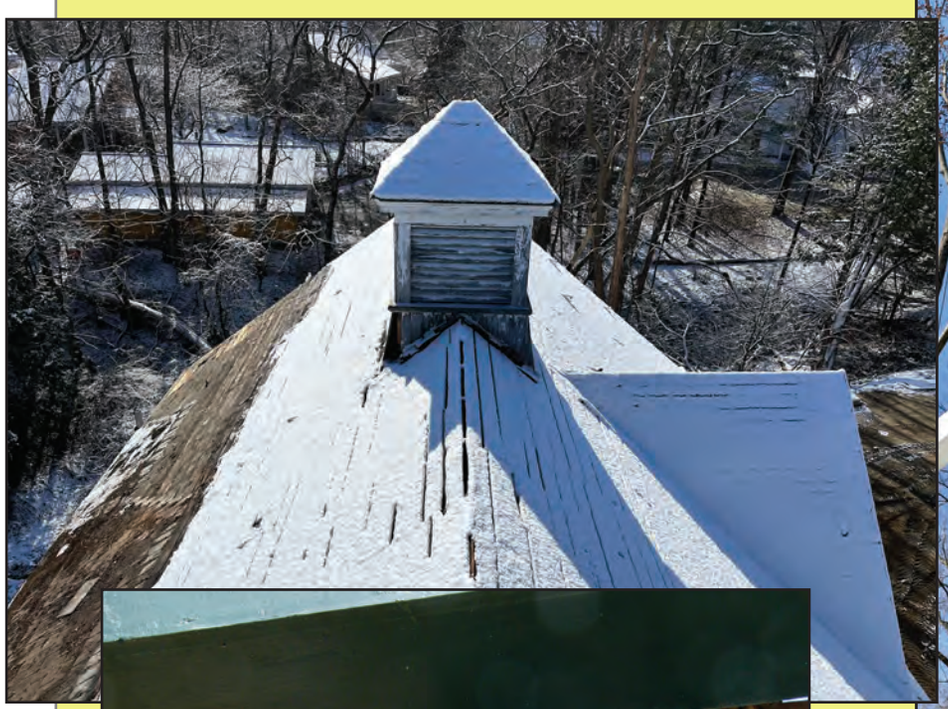
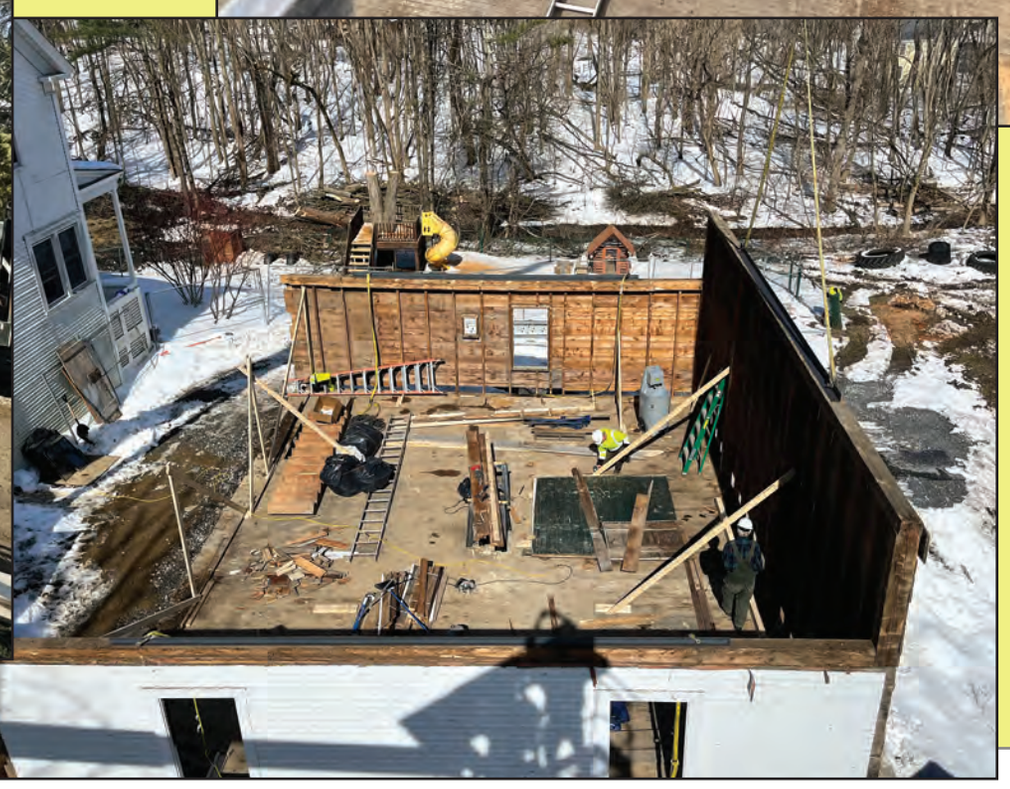


Barn storming

CONTRACTOR LOU NOP and his helpers spent several days this past week dismantling a 130-year-old carriage barn on the Otter Creek Child Center property at 150 Weybridge St. in Middlebury. The barn will be reassembled at Sunrise Orchards in Cornwall, where it will serve as an event/retail venue. Sunrise's Barney Hodges, left, took part in the removal process.

Photos by Steve James, Christine Hodges and Emily May



ADDISON COUNTY

School News

Eliza and **Emma Doucet** of Bristol have been named to the fall 2023 dean's list for their outstanding academic achievement at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, Mass. To be eligible for this honor, a student must carry 14 or more credits and achieve a grade point average of 3.5.

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ADDISON INDEPENDENT

Editorials

County Dems have role in requesting Vekos to resign

Two things are clear in the recent Vermont Supreme Court ruling that suspended the law license of Addison County State's Attorney Eva Vekos: first, that Vekos failed to properly respond to a lawful request for information about her fitness to fulfill her duties; and second that she has betrayed the trust of Addison County voters.

The first issue is purely legal: After Vekos drove to a homicide scene in Bridport on the night of Jan. 25 while allegedly under the influence of alcohol, she was arrested at the scene by Vermont State Police and taken to state police barracks in New Haven. There she refused to provide a court-approved breath test, nor would she submit to having her fingerprints or mugshot taken. Vekos pleaded not guilty to the charges in Vermont Superior Court in Middlebury on Feb. 12.

Following that incident, disciplinary prosecutor Jon Alexander has been pursuing the case on behalf of the Vermont Professional Responsibility Board. Alexander had asked Vekos and her attorney to address how the DUI charge bears on her fitness to practice law. Not receiving a suitable answer (see story on Page 1A), the Supreme Court suspended her law license. While she can no longer prosecute cases requiring a license, she can direct those cases to be handled by her deputies, therefore greatly reducing her workload, while adding more to her deputies.

The DUI charge, however, isn't the critical issue in terms of Vekos remaining on the job. One mistake shouldn't be the sole reason to seek dismissal. But this isn't the first example of her poor judgment. Rather, it's the continued lack of good judgment that has created the perception of a person in power who shouldn't be there.

Most of us can agree that deciding to drive to the scene of a homicide while allegedly under the influence, if that turns out to be true, is not good judgment. But neither were her published comments several weeks later in which she said she felt threatened by local law enforcement officers and found it difficult to work with them. The comment demonstrated an inability to work with others who are essential to her job.

Moreover, in a story reporter John Flowers wrote several weeks ago, he detailed several complaints of Vekos failing to affectively prosecute serious offenders, while others have criticized her inability to effectively manage the states attorney's office. On each critical point, her response has not been reassuring. That's a serious problem.

The role of the state's attorney is to work with County Sheriffs and others to "seek justice in the prosecution of criminal offenses, child abuse and neglect cases, juvenile delinquencies, mental health proceedings and some other civil matters," according to the state website.

The ACLU further explains that "State's Attorneys have enormous power over the lives of Vermonters entangled in the criminal justice system. They choose who gets charged and who is free to go, who gets diverted to treatment for substance use, and who goes to jail. They choose whether to seek the maximum or minimum sentence. They choose whether or not to prosecute police officers and government officials for misconduct. The State's Attorney is also an elected official, which means they are ultimately accountable to the voters." That also means, just like a Sherriff who has violated the public's trust, it's difficult to seek dismissal.

Vekos was elected in November 2022. She has served just over one year of a four-year term. In that position she earns $132,225.60 per year.

It is clear she is not the candidate voters thought she was when the county Democratic Party promoted her for the office. If Vekos does not resign on her own, county Democrats should actively advocate for that outcome — the party's reputation of being able to promote competent candidates is at stake if they do not.

Angelo Lynn

Kudos, and thanks Addy All-Stars

I'd be remiss if I didn't shout from the rooftops that the *Addison Independent* was named best-of-the-best among New England's largest weekly newspapers, won 16 other first place awards, and 17 second and third place awards (see story, Page 1A.) Nor is it the first time we've won General Excellence (though it's been a few years). More importantly, we're almost always in that top tier of three to five top-notch papers. Such consistency defines the most important goal: sustainable quality journalism.

We're humbled by the honors earned, and we're all proud to work with a team that consistently strives to do the best journalism we can.

And it is important work.

Stories in today's *Independent,* for example, tell readers what the ANWSD school board is contemplating following its second budget defeat. County residents learn why the state Supreme Court suspended the law license of Addison County State's Attorney Eva Vekos, and why she should resign. Reporter John Flowers writes two revealing stories about the student behavioral problems teachers are facing, particularly at area elementary schools. (Please read both as they help explain why school budgets are so high.) There are sports stories, obituaries, calendar of events, community news, columnists, op-eds, letters, public notices and advertisements that tell us about the county's businesses.

It is, in short, a package of weekly community information that helps make our lives complete. Then consider what it would be like not to have the *Independent* playing the role we do.

It's no secret legacy news outlets like the *Addison Independent* face declining revenues. News deserts are common. In the past decade the nation has lost one third of its newspapers and two-thirds of working journalists. Part of the reason is that it's expensive. At the *Independent* we spend more than $25,000 per week to deliver you the news.

The Independent has been an outlier not because we are immune to the disrupted economics (though we have maintained strong readership, which helps maintain ad revenues), but also because we've been willing to pay for good journalism. While other papers have cut newsrooms to the bone, we haven't. But to continue that excellence, we'll need the community's additional support.

We started the ADDY ALL-STARS two weeks ago as a way for individuals to play that larger role, and we're excited to announce we raised our first $10,000 from almost 75 supporters. That's a strong start toward a first-year goal we hope will reach much closer to 500 supporters — less than one-tenth of our regular readers. If you want to keep the *Independent* strong, join us and be part of the team.

For our part, we'll continue to work hard to produce award-winning journalism because it's who we are, but, being honest, we're more likely to be able to keep doing that with everyone's support.

Angelo Lynn

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Taking aim at science

FIELDING HENDRICKSON, A fourth-grader at Mary Hogan Elementary School in Middlebury, squints during a lesson eclipses last week as she tries to imagine what it will look like when the moon passes between the Earth and Sun on April 8.

Independent photo/Steve James

Our neighbors are not our enemies

The hardest and most necessary work of our life is loving other beings.

What can happen if we expand our understanding of who deserves this love? Would we hold as much responsibility for the well-being of the children we will never meet as we do the preschoolers we see on our way to work? Could we care for people outside our segregated American neighborhoods? Could we care for non-human beings? After all, how do we want to love each other? Philosophically, practically … How do we want to love each other?

Ways of Seeing

By Elio Farley

Will we materially support people different from ourselves, not as saviors, but through a politic of solidarity and neighborliness? Will we offer childcare so a parent can take an extra shift? Will we demand a living minimum wage out of our legislators? Will we boycott Hannaford dairy until they sign on to Leche Con Dignidad, Milk With Dignity, because our neighbors deserve decent labor conditions? Will we learn the languages of our neighbors? Refuse the sentiment that English is the language of this land when we know it's the colonizer's tongue?

If you've answered yes to any, I hope we can act in accordance. Ideals are great, but we need action too. Now I'm going to ask us some questions I'm nervous asking even myself. And we're going to be uncomfortable together because that's where growth happens.

How can we love the people we've been placed against, honor the pain that tension causes, and refuse to simplify our humanity into yet another case of them and us? Will we jumpstart the car of the neighbor with the obnoxious lawn signs? If we don't care for their politics, do we at least care that they can get to work on time? Will we take the time to actually talk to them, and be curious enough to learn why they hold those beliefs? Will we actually listen to what they say and not just listen to respond or argue? If we don't want to talk to them about politics, will we ask them about their loved ones or at least the weather? Will we deliver them soup when we learn they've lost someone they love? Can we earn their trust enough to care for them? To allow that relationship to be reciprocal? To invite them over for coffee? To dare to call them a friend?

I've asked us these questions because I am still figuring out the answers. Chances are, I'll have white hair and still not know all the answers. I do not believe that caring for someone I'm supposed to disagree with weakens my personal politics. Oftentimes, we can agree on some things. We can even coalition together.

Deep love enacted through compassion is, at least in my experience, the best way to resist violence. Believe me, I know what it's like to love someone whose politics disagree with my very existence, who was

(See Ways of Seeing, Page 5A)

SVUUSD budget merits support

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2,472 individuals who exercised their right to vote on March 5th. As you know, the Slate Valley Unified Union School District's budget was defeated by 464 votes, one of the largest margins in recent history. Members of the school board have tried to gather information as to why this budget proposal, with an increase of less than one percent in spending per weighted pupil, and an equalized tax rate decrease of less than one percent, was unacceptable to 59% of our voters.

I will begin by providing some factual information about our FY25 proposed budget:

• Our per pupil spending is $11,320.94 which is an increase of 0.20% from last year. This is the second lowest in the region.

• Our average student teacher ratio is 16:1, which is consistent with other regional schools. The maximum class size in accordance with the Vermont State Educational Quality Standards is 20 students for grades K-3 and 25 for grades 4-12. Increasing class size is a challenge facing all rural schools. For example, in one of our schools, three grades have less than ten students. This obviously brings our average down. Also, we have a few K-2 grades with a total of 23-28 students in each. These numbers are too great for one class, so two classes are created, bringing class size down to 11-14 students, and now below the allowed maximum.

• Last year, only 19% of the expenditure budget, roughly $5.3 million, was paid for by local district taxpayers. The remainder was paid by state and federal funds along with non-resident taxpayers.

Community Forum

This week's writer is Pati Beaumont, Chair of the Slate Valley Unified Union School Board.

• The reason we do not mail a copy of our 36-page budget to all taxpayers is because it costs about $20,000 to do this mass mailing. If you would like detailed information, please visit our website at https://www.slatevalleyunified.org/o/svusd/page/budget, or call Slate Valley's executive assistant, Lisa Bowen (802-265-2556), to have a copy mailed to you.

Some people think that by voting down the budget, we are sending an effective message to Montpelier. This idea is flawed for many reasons:

• First, 1/3 of the budgets presented on March 5th were voted down, but there were districts that did not vote in March. So 29 of 93 budgets that were warned failed. 22 were rescheduled. It is likely that many budgets will pass after a second vote, thus not raising significant concerns with our legislature. A 'no' vote from SVUUSD taxpayers will not result in changes for this year, but it will send a negative message to our district students and staff.

• If you are concerned about student test scores and the quality of their education, continuing to vote down our budget will force us to reduce resources which are necessary to increase test scores.

• A 'no' vote on the budget will have no substantial impact on your property taxes. Your taxes are rising due to a flawed educational funding formula. It is a very complicated formula, but one of the key components is the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) on your property. Due to a number of factors, the CLA for all the SVUUSD towns is much less than it should be. (To meet my goal

(See Beaumont, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

More lawmakers asked to attend

Our next, and last, Legislative Breakfast will be held in Weybridge on Monday, 8 April. Let's have some of our representatives there! So far, it has only been Sen. Chris Bray attending. He believes he is a representative of the county and it is his duty to attend. What about the others? Do you only attend when you want to be elected? For shame.

Lois Farnham
Middlebury

Is 'Trumputin' the best option?

Is Trumputin the best candidate the Republicans can come up with? Tells you a lot about that party and its sorry followers (er, grovelers). This guy is unfit to be President, and always has been. His first term was a disaster, and everyone with half a brain knows it. Put this wannabe dictator in the slammer. Short of that, he should be put down like a rabid dog. Ok, enough of being nice and polite.

President Biden has presided over four peaceful and productive years, without the chaos we had to live with from 2017-2020. A large infrastructure bill was passed that has infused a lot of funding for critical projects, plus a bill to support most Americans through the pandemic, and don't forget the Inflation Reduction Act. He has strongly supported Ukraine in its fight against the maniac Putin, bolstered NATO, and he actually cares about our environment and strives to do something about it. It's great having someone in the oval office that actually cares about the country, the world, people and the environment.

Joe's still the guy! He may be a senior, but he's smart and empathetic, not stupid and pathetic, like Trumputin.

Bruce Acciavatti
Salisbury

ANWSD should preserve Walden

Addison Northwest Supervisory Union was extremely short-sighted in taking an axe to the VUHS Walden Program in their too-quick budget revision after the first one was rejected.

The traditional indoor classroom model does not work for some students. For those kids, the Walden Program is critical. For twenty years the Walden Program offered a highly successful, alternative, outdoor-based education that helped those students become successful adults.

"This program was absolutely essential for my development as a student, an artist, and human being in general, as has been the case for so many of the teens who have passed through the woods of the Willowell Foundation," said a graduate writer, filmmaker and artist Julia Walsh, in a March 18, 2015, Opinion published in this paper, at another time when Walden was threatened. "It is a beacon of hope not only for many students ... as they move through high school, but ... for current and future educators, environmentalists, social activists, farmers, and artists..." (Julia Walsh, "Opinion: Alum Praises VUHS Walden Program," *Addison Independent*, 18 March 2015).

Research has shown that education in the outdoors and the wild positively affects health, social interaction, well-being, creativity, and prevention of depression. (See Dr. Sarah-Anne Muñoz, "Children in the Outdoors: A Literature Review," https://ltl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/children-in-the-outdoors.pdf). "Green schoolyards" lead to higher outcomes in language arts, math, and science. (See Children & Nature Network, "Green Schoolyards Can Improve Academic Outcomes;" www.childrenandnature.org). With two-thirds of U.S. 8th graders performing below standards in science and math, this is not a time

(See Watson letter, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

Scott history of vetoes threatens animal legislation

There are two bills currently in the Vermont legislature, Bill H.626 — An Act Related to Animal Welfare — and S.258 — An Act Relating to the Management of Fish and Wildlife. S.258 has passed the senate, and H.626 has been stalled in the House Appropriations Committee. The governor is opposed to these two pieces of legislation.

Gov. Scott so far has vetoed 47 pieces of legislation passed by the Legislature. These bills took an enormous amount of time and resources for people to pass. How much taxpayer money has Scott wasted and how many people, who have worked tirelessly on these bills, has he thumbed his nose at?

The governor has been in power for seven years. He hasn't had competition when it comes to reelection, at least when it comes to the financial clout of his opponents. Scott thinks he's untouchable. But it's time he step aside.

Phil Scott is a lot like former New Jersey governor Chris Christie, who vetoed bills that prohibited the use of gestation crates on pregnant pigs (also known as the "pig crate ban") in 2013 and 2014. These bills overwhelmingly passed the New Jersey legislature. God forbid a female pig should have the right to stand up, lie down, turn around, or extend her limbs while she lives in filthy conditions with no light provided or kindness given to her. The pork producers had Christie's loyalty, and there were "only" 9,000-ish pigs in New Jersey who would have been affected. Such an infinitesimally small welfare improvement, but Christie wanted his bacon with as much suffering as possible.

Gov. Scott is no different. Apparently, Scott believes that hounds do not need justice and baby goats do not need food. He believes that female bears should be shot for recreation and cubs don't need mothers (Fish and Wildlife denied a petition to ban the intentional killing of sows).

Animal abuse is rampant in Vermont. People have tried to fix a ridiculously inept and broken system that operates more like backwoods Arkansas than any progressive state when it comes to animal protection laws and wildlife reform. Goats were starved for months on end and, ultimately, died of starvation in Charlotte in 2023, which prompted H.626. Animals are routinely abused, but if the "owner" voluntarily relinquishes that animal, s/he faces no charges.

Wild and farmed animals are at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to empathy and consideration given to them. The Fish and Wildlife Department's definition of "humane" is taking five minutes for a beaver or muskrat to die from intentional drowning. It's time to reform the archaic non-educated wildlife board and bring wildlife policy into the 21st century. It's time for the department to follow science for real, instead of pretending to

(See Stevenson letter, Page 7A)

Watson letter

(Continued from Page 4A)

to ignore such studies. And with social media leading to depression and other negative outcomes in teens, it's not the time to quit on nature-based learning.

What are the students, for whom the regular classroom doesn't work and who may be at risk in various ways, supposed to do, now that this program is gone? How will they receive their rightful high school education?

Not only has ANWSD chopped this program; it did so with only 2.5 weeks between the budget's Town Meeting Day rejection and March 26th's re-vote on the new, cut-back budget. The newspaper article came out in the Thursday, March 21 *Independent*, giving only three days for the community to find out about it and no time for any reaction or questions before the next vote. It's as though they were trying to slip it by without anyone noticing. By holding another vote so fast, were they trying to prevent feedback or questioning of the budget cuts?

Yes, money is tight. But why did the district not take the time to thoroughly evaluate ALL programs and possibilities for budget revision, including requesting community input? Why not make a heroic effort to "sell" the budget to the community, by presenting detailed information about this and ALL programs, before taking another vote?

All teens deserve an education that works for them. Not just those who can get by in the traditional classroom.

Ann Watson
New Haven

Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A)

taught that I am a threat to their values. I live that pain. I witness it in our own community. And I refuse to let pain be my guiding force in this world.

I understand the instinct to disregard someone. Sometimes we just don't have the emotional energy to see someone in all their complexity. Sometimes that's fine. But it can't be all the time.

I wonder if the important work we are being called to do, especially in as politically divided times as ours, is to refuse the learned behavior of enemy-making. Enemies are a great excuse for continued violence. It is easier to murder your enemy than murder your neighbor.

Our neighbors near and far must not become our enemies. Yet we're fed doctrines and policies that turn our neighbors into our enemies. We must refuse enemy-making, on a personal and collective level.

And yes, of course I'm talking about Gaza. And of course I'm talking about inhumane immigration policies, and climate crisis "sacrifice zones," and murderous healthcare funding, and about Nex Benedict. And I'm talking about any political thing we could ever talk about. And I'm talking about any life thing we could ever talk about. Because life is political. How we live is political. Who gets to live is political.

This ingrained practice of enemy-making is the very root of the dehumanization that admits, justifies, and perpetuates cycles of brutal mass murder. When we make someone our enemy, we dehumanize them beyond redemption. The systems of violence that we try to survive in are also practices that we enact onto each other. Each of our actions either fuels or resists larger structural violence and the ideologies that empower it. How do we not continue violence when these interlocking systems are created and maintained through violence?

We must continue a compassionate resistance to violence. Love requires a radical refusal of coloniality's lie of enemy-making. Love is the only way we can faithfully continue in these deeply unethical and violent times.

Elio Farley (he/they) is a community organizer, with experience in queer youth nonprofit work, sex education, and labor/civil rights advocacy. A senior at Middlebury College studying Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (GSFS) and Education, they use their education in intersectional feminist principles and pedagogy to build community networks that can care for each of us and counter systemic oppression. Elio leads with transformative joy, revolutionary love, and deep respect. They do this work because our kids deserve better.

Beaumont

(Continued from Page 4A)

of trying to explain things as simply as possible, I will not go into details about this statement. Please refer to the budget presentation given during our informational meeting on 3/04/24.) All your educational tax dollars become part of the pool of money at the state level that is then distributed to all schools in the state.

• Budgets start to be developed about a year before they are presented to the voters. Therefore, the budget contains many contractual obligations (teachers' contracts, fuel costs, insurances, etc.), as well as some forecasting (needs for new students moving into the district, building maintenance, etc.). Obviously, we need to pay our financial obligations, as would any organization, or household. When a budget vote fails, it is necessary to continue revising the budget for a revote.

• What happens if we continue to vote down our budget? By law, the school board must persist in developing a budget approved by the taxpayers. If the budget is not passed by July 1, 2024, we will be allowed to borrow money to meet our financial obligations. The law allows us to borrow up to "87% of our last passed budget" (for which we also must pay interest) which would result in a 21% shortfall from the currently proposed budget for FY25.

• School spending mirrors local spending. It is exactly what households and businesses in our community are experiencing, an increase in food costs, fuel, rent and utilities. We do not have solutions to the rising costs throughout our state. They are out of our control. So we will continue to revise our budget and bring it to the voters until a budget is passed. Also, each time we go through the voting process, it costs us thousands of dollars that is not allocated in our budget.

Act 127 allowed us to increase our budget by $3,000,000 without affecting the tax rate. These funds were to be reinvested to help our students achieve the desired outcome, to "level the playing field." This money was not intended to reduce the tax rate. At this point, any further reductions to our budget will mean that this money is returned to Montpelier, where it will be allocated to other schools in the state. We will lose this money, and it will not significantly reduce our taxes.

On March 18, the school board voted to reduce our budget from $31,021,635, to $30,871,635, eliminating three Instructional Assistant positions (due to students moving out of the district during the 2024-2025 school year) and a late bus run. We will bring this revised budget to you for a vote on Thursday, April 11.

It is evident that the Vermont educational funding system requires reform. The cost of educating students in our state ranks second only to New York, necessitating a stronger voice in Montpelier. We urge you to contact our legislators and convey that our taxes are too high, despite attempts at relief through current legislation. These individuals have the power to enact changes, unlike your local school board. (Rutland District: Representative William Canfield wcanfield@leg.state.vt.us, Senator Brian Collamore bcollamore@leg.state.vt.us, Representative Jarrod Sammis jsammis@leg.state.vt.us, Senator David Weeks, dweeks@leg.state.vt.us, Senator Terry Williams tkwilliams@leg.state.vt.us, Addison District: Representative Joseph Andriano jandriano@leg.state.vt.us, Senator Christopher Bray cbray@leg.state.vt.us, Senator Ruth Hardy rhardy@leg.state.vt.us).

Your school board members are committed to ensuring that each and every student in the SVUUSD has the best education possible, while being fiscally frugal. We love our community and want to support each and every one of you! We truly hope that if you are uncomfortable supporting this budget you will reach out to any of your school board members with your constructive thoughts about managing this increase.

State policies make it tough to boost housing stock

The legislative breakfast held at Shoreham Congregational Church with only one Addison County Legislator, Senator Chris Bray present. Shame on the rest! There was much discussion on the housing crisis, Mr. Bray said that part of the problem was the old people occupying large houses instead of small senior living accommodations.

It becomes apparent to me that one of the methods to make this happen is to raise property taxes above homeowner's ability to pay. Would the Vermont National Guard round up the seniors? I fear that we will be heading toward the Japanese concentration camps during WWII. Maybe Hitler's gas chambers.

Maybe there should be a prohibition on and state enforced eviction of all the residents converted to offices or retail endeavors. Case in point: Lawyer row, dental offices, real estate etc., on Court Street, Middlebury. Instead of another shopping mall there could be a concentration in multi-level structures for one-stop shopping. Bet the lawyers would object.

Hey, Senator Bray, you could set an example!

Another factor as I have been made painfully aware is the extensive *renters rights* requiring landlords to support *squatters* heat, light, water. No rent from October 1, 2023, through April 2024. My house will *never* be rented again. It was an affordable rent. Please be informed that not all landlords are the scum of the earth.

Edward Payne
Bridport

99th Birthday Card Shower for Pauline (Lengyel) Novak

Please help us celebrate Pauline's very special milestone in a different way by showering her with birthday cards to open on her birthday, April 24th. She will very much enjoy hearing from her family and friends.

Please send cards and birthday wishes before April 24th to her daughter, Cheryl Novak, 738 Boardman Street, Middlebury, Vermont 05753.

Thank you so much! The Novak Family

From our kitchen to your oven!

Now available, our hand tossed pizza produced in small batches, par-baked, flash frozen and vacuum packed in house by our A-Team.

Only available at Nino's Pizza.

This 14" NY thin crust is the perfect size for the grill or the oven

Ready in 10 minutes or less.

Keep a few in the freezer for poker night, the babysitter, book club, or family dinner.

Featuring our most popular pies, including our famous Harvest Beet Pies!

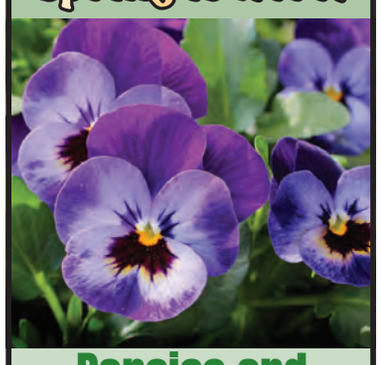
Find them in our pizza freezer!

There's always time for Nino's Pizza.

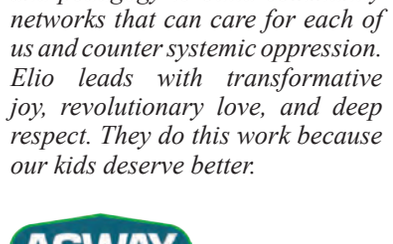
21 Macintyre Ln., Middlebury, VT / (802) 388-7755 / ninosmiddlebury.com
Hours: Monday - Saturday 11:00 - 8:00
Closed Sundays

AGWAY

Spring is Here!



Pansies and flowering, potted bulbs are here!



Closed Easter

MIDDLEBURY AGWAY
338 Exchange Street
Open 7 days
802-388-4937
Mon. - Fri. 8-6, Sat. 8-5, Sun. 9-4
www.MiddleburyAgway.com

Elderly Services, Inc.
2024 Community Education Series

Session 1:
"How to Age with Purpose and Meaning"
Elder Counseling Options and Resources in our Community.
Presented by Joanne Corbett
Geriatric Social Worker, Elderly Services
Tuesday, April 9, 3:30-5:00 PM
at The Residence at Otter Creek

Session 2:
"Better Safe than Sorry"
Computer, Telephone and Mail Fraud targeting the elderly
Presented by Tom Hanley, retired chief of Middlebury Police Department
Tuesday, April 23, 4:30-6:00 PM
at National Bank of Middlebury

Session 3:
"Keys Bags Names Words"
Inspiring documentary film addressing dementia, how to reduce the risk of developing it, and how to meaningfully connect with loved ones living with it.
Presented by Eileen Lawson
Geriatric Social Worker, Elderly Services
Tuesday, April 30, 4:30-6:00 PM
at Ilsley Library Community Room

Session 4:
"How to Age with Purpose and Meaning"
Elder Counseling Options and Resources in our Community.
Presented by Joanne Corbett
Geriatric Social Worker, Elderly Services
Tuesday, May 14, 3:30-5:00 PM
at EastView at Middlebury

Session 5:
"You are Not Alone"
Caring for an aging loved one with memory loss: signs, symptoms and strategies
Presented by Eileen Lawson
Geriatric Social Worker, Elderly Services
Thursday, May 23, 4:30-6:00 PM
at Middlebury Congregational Church

Register now
802.388.3983

All Sessions are free and open to the public
To RSVP or learn more, call Eileen Lawson at Elderly Services: 802-388-3983
www.elderlyservices.org

ADDISON COUNTY

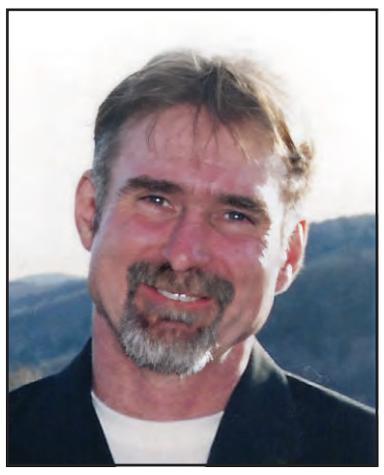
Obituaries

Allen John Anderson, 65, of Pittsford

PITTSFORD — Allen John Anderson, age 65, passed away March 12, 2024, at his home in Pittsford.

Allen was born in Brockton, Mass., on April 16, 1958. He was the son of John and Sheila (Raw) Anderson. Allen grew up in Middletown Springs, Vt., where he spent his early education, and graduated from Poultney High School, class of 1976.

He has been a self-employed automotive mechanic most of his life. He was a former employee of Blue Seal in Brandon, where he was a mechanic, as well as in maintenance. Allen was a talented carpenter, having built his own houses in Florence, and Hubbardton, as well as restored several in Rutland County. He enjoyed hiking, fishing and was an avid reader. He had a love of



ALLEN JOHN ANDERSON

restoring classic vehicles.

He is survived by his mother, Sheila Rivers; his five daughters, Ina Anderson of Forest Dale, Ashley Beatty (Jim) of Whitehall, N.Y., Jessica Anderson (Broc) of Florence, Niki Garrido (Alex) of Newcomb, N.Y., and Danielle Pennine (Sam) of Coventry, R.I.; two sisters, Lisa Cook of Fair Haven and Claire Yentz of Pittsford. Seven grandchildren and several nieces, nephews and cousins also survive him.

He is predeceased by his father, John (Jack) Anderson; his aunt Shirley Newhall; and his dogs, Rose, Bear, Trixie, Max, and Mya.

A private graveside committal service and burial will take place, at a later date, at Evergreen Cemetery in Pittsford.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made, in his memory to; Rutland County Humane Society, 765 Stevens Road, Pittsford, VT 05763.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon ◊

Paul Martin Patterson, 74, of Orwell

ORWELL — Paul Martin Patterson, age 74, passed away, March 12, 2024, at Rutland Regional Medical Center.

Paul was born in Orwell on Feb. 12, 1950. He was the son of George and Rita (Jabot) Patterson. He grew up in Orwell, where he received his early education and graduated from Shoreham Academy, class of 1968. Following graduation he joined the United States Army. He was honorably discharged in 1972 in Homestead, Fla., where he remained for several years, working for Withers Storage Company. He then returned to Rutland for several years and then back home to Orwell. He began working at Midas in Rutland. He later joined the staff at Sto Industries in Rutland. There he traveled to multiple corporate locations to provide accurate sampling and product demonstrations for Sto Industries until retiring.

He enjoyed hunting, gardening,

PAUL MARTIN PATTERSON

and good conversation. He had an ability to fix just about anything. He enjoyed maple sugaring and was a master sugar maker for years, boiling and filtering syrup with life-long friends Rob and Chrissy Barnes, and many years later with his son James. He very much enjoyed being in and around the sugarhouse.

Surviving is his son, James Paul Patterson of Poultney; two sisters, Shirley Hendricks and Ruth McGuire, both of Orwell; two brothers, Thomas Patterson of Pickens, S.C., and Kenneth Patterson of Mt. Airey, N.C.; and his three grandchildren, Ryan, Alyssa and Dillon. Several nieces, nephews and cousins also survive him. He was predeceased by his parents and brother David Patterson.

A graveside committal service and burial with military honors will take place at a later date in Mountain View Cemetery in Orwell.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made to the Orwell First Response Squad, Orwell, VT 05760.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon. ◊

Obituary Guidelines

The Independent will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing. For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the Independent offers a free notice of passing up to 100 words, subject to editing by our news department.

Photos (optional) with either paid obituaries or free notices cost $10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to obits@addisonindependent.com.

Submissions must be received by 11 a.m. on Wednesday for publication in the Thursday paper. Email obits@addisonindependent.com or call 802-388-4944 for more information.

Nancy Brigan, 88, of Vergennes

VERGENNES — Nancy (Clark) Brigan passed away on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at the age of 88. A funeral will be held Monday, April 1, at 11 a.m., at Brown McClay Funeral home in Vergennes A full obituary will appear in the April 4 edition of the *Addison Independent*.

Anne Marie Baldwin memorial service

MIDDLEBURY — Family and friends are respectfully requested to attend visiting hours for Anne Marie Baldwin on Friday, April 5, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Sanderson Funeral Home in Middlebury.

Ronald Richard Mullins, 95, of Orwell

ORWELL — Ronald Richard Mullins of Orwell, Vt., aged 95, died with his family around him in Rutland, Vt., on March 21, 2024.

Born on April 30, 1928, in Danbury, Conn., he was the son of the late Ethel (Weippert) and Bernard Mullins. He graduated from the Riverdale Country School, received a degree in economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree from the graduate school of Business at Columbia University. In 1946 and '47 he served in the U.S. Army and was also a reserve officer in the U.S. Air Force.

Ron purchased the historic Brown Farm in 1968, which had been in the same family since 1786. Believing that the generations who had sought their livelihood on the farm deserved the respect of a preservation, he took great pleasure in the restoration of the barns and the grand old house. And it was there on the front porch, he married his second wife, Maryann Gray-Mullins on May 19, 1984. The two of them also kept an apartment in New York City.

Mr. Mullins had an extended and wide-ranging business career. First, after college, he joined Texaco. From there he went into advertising at Norman, Craig and Kummel, where he worked as a personal assistant to the legendary Norman B. Norman,

RONALD RICHARD MULLINS

before moving into accounts. He then joined Arthur Anderson in its management consulting division. He next founded Cegmark International, Inc., which operated in financial and marketing consulting exclusively for European clients, a company he ran for 35 years. He was engaged with many leading companies in France, England, Italy and Germany and was subject to frequent international travel. Mr. Mullins also served on the boards of directors for a number of companies, including Clark Shoes.

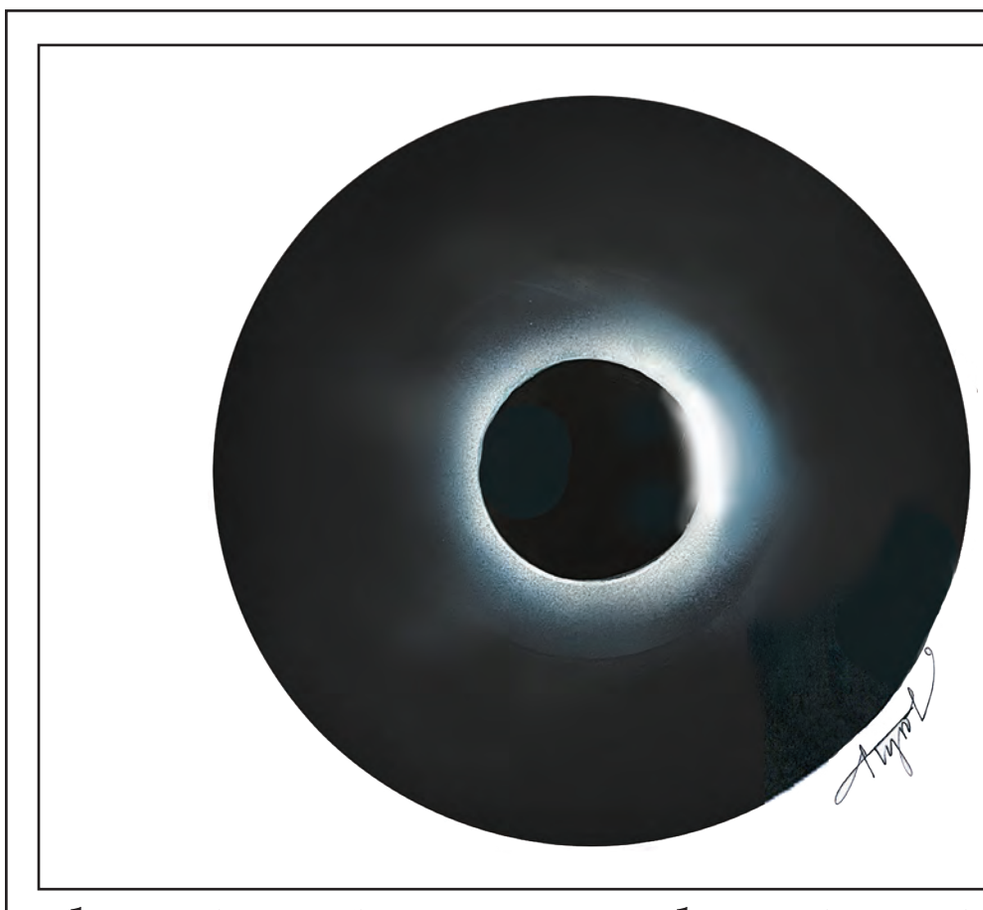
Ron was devoted to his wife, Maryann. He was also devoted to his four children from his first marriage to Janet Hayward, all four of whom live in Vermont: Scott and his wife Cheryl of Orwell; Mark and his wife Maricel, also of Orwell; Hilary, also of Orwell; and Kristen and her partner Judy Rosovsky of Richmond. In addition, he leaves six beloved grandchildren: Jade, Jesse, Bryan, Lisa, Charmaine, and Charlie.

Ron had a fervent interest in economic systems, his scope extending to both finance and politics. He considered himself a life-long student of American history, in particular of the colonial and revolutionary periods. From his independent studies, he confirmed his opinion of the greatness of George Washington, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton.

He also had a life-long interest in art and visited all of the main museums in Europe and the United States. In his later years, he developed a great fondness for opera. His apartment in New York being close to Lincoln Center, he was easily able to see the major productions there, and in his view, no finer evening could be had than finding oneself seated in the 10th row of the Met's Orchestra section, listening to a great opera, an appreciation for opera being something he said comes with age.

A celebration of his life will be held at a later date on his farm.

Donations in Ron's name can be made to the Foley Cancer Center at the Rutland Regional Medical Center.◊



The solar eclipse: a worthy celestial drama

By MICHAEL J. CADUTO

The Outside Story

In the cosmic dance of heavenly bodies, no phenomenon possesses the drama of a solar eclipse, when the moon passes directly between the sun and earth. In the path of totality, where the moon completely obscures our home star, the world falls into an ominous darkness that has evoked everything from wonder to dread. This year, our region will experience a total solar eclipse on April 8.

For any specific geographic location, "total solar eclipses are extremely rare events," said Amanda Leith, education coordinator at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center in Concord, N.H. "The next time we will see a total eclipse in New Hampshire won't be until May 1, 2079."

The most recent solar eclipse in which New England was in the path of totality was in 1970, and totality then was visible only in Nantucket and the southeastern tip of Cape Cod. Before then, Maine was within an eclipse path of totality in July of 1963, and parts of New Hampshire and Massachusetts were in October 1959. Vermont has not experienced totality since August 31, 1932, and according to NASA's website, there will not be another major total eclipse in the United States until August 12, 2045, when the path of totality will start in northern California, arc across the southern states, and end in Florida.

On April 8, 2024, the eclipse maximum (when the largest portion of the sun's disc is hidden behind the moon) will pass over northern New England during a span of about eight minutes. It will begin in northern Vermont at 3:25 p.m. in South Hero, then at 3:26 in Burlington, 3:27 in Montpelier, and 3:28 in St. Johnsbury. It will start at 3:29 in Lancaster, N.H., and 3:32 in Caribou, Maine. Eclipse viewers along the path of totality will see the moon block out all but the sun's corona (outer atmosphere), which will appear as a faint glow around the edge of the moon's disk.

"The duration of totality may last seconds to several minutes, depending on location," said Catherine Miller, observatory specialist in the Department of Physics at Middlebury College. "As you go farther away from the path of totality, the fraction of the sun that is blocked by the moon gets smaller." When viewed from southern Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, the eclipse will block roughly 95 percent of the sun.

Many organizations are planning events to celebrate the eclipse. The Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium in St. Johnsbury, Vermont (fairbanksmuseum.org) will feature educational programs and a live video from NASA, plus a play-by-play description of the eclipse with Planetarium Director Mark Breen and Vermont Public's Jane Lindholm. From April 6-8 the Appalachian Mountain Club (outdoors.org) will offer a full schedule of astronomical programming.

From making pinhole cameras to assembling a 9-foot Total Eclipse Puzzle, the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center (starhop.com) is planning fun and informative eclipse-related activities and a Solar Eclipse Viewing Party from 12-5 p.m. April 8. The Center will also screen the film Totality at noon each Wednesday through Sunday through April 7. The Center's Countdown to the Eclipse web page includes eclipse information, activities and safety tips.

Safety is paramount, and eclipse viewers should NEVER look directly at the sun when viewing the eclipse, which could burn the retinas in their eyes and can cause blindness. Both NASA and the American Astronomical Society offer detailed safety information on their websites.

"Sunglasses, 3D-glasses, and regular telescopes and binoculars will not protect your eyes from damage," cautioned Leith. "The safe ways to look at the sun are with dedicated safe solar eclipse viewers … and by looking at the eclipse indirectly, such as with a pinhole projector."

Miller recalls viewing the partial eclipse of 2017 while working at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. "I remember looking at the ground beneath some trees where the sunlight was filtering through the leaves. Instead of seeing normal leaf shadows, I saw crescent shapes. The openings in the tree canopy were acting as pinholes, each creating an image of the eclipsed sun on the ground."

Celebrating the solar eclipse is a way to share a mesmerizing experience with millions of people. It is a rare opportunity to behold a cosmic event that has enthralled humankind for millennia, inspiring story, song, and mythology from time out of mind.

Michael J. Caduto is a writer, ecologist, and storyteller who lives in Reading, Vt. He is author of "Through a Naturalist's Eyes: Exploring the Nature of New England." The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands *magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: www.nhcf.org.*

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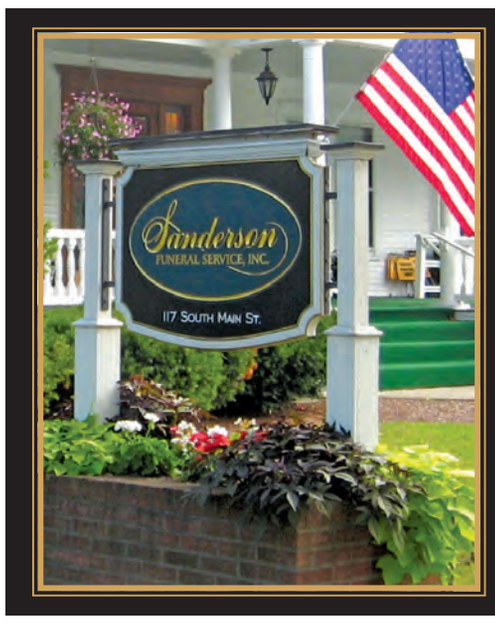

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Two in five Vermonters experience food insecurity; plan aims to feed them

By MARIN HOWELL

MIDDLEBURY — For many Vermonters, reliable access to the food they need is not a guarantee. In fact, the nonprofit Hunger Free Vermont reports two in five Vermonters are now experiencing food insecurity.

The Vermont Farm to Plate Network, along with nonprofits, hunger councils and residents throughout the state, are working to change that.

They've developed a plan that guides the state toward ensuring by 2035 that no Vermonters have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. The plan, released by Vermont Farm to Plate in January, is called the "Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035," and it outlines several strategies to help the state reach that goal.

"We believe the government can make policy choices to create food security for everyone in Vermont, and that we can do this by 2035," Food Security Roadmap Project Manager Becka Warren told the two-dozen community members who gathered at a March 19 Addison County Hunger Council meeting in Middlebury to learn more about the new plan and how to support its implementation. "(We believe) that these strategies, which are complex, cover a lot of different areas that will help us on the road, and that we are already on the road to food security."

MAKING THE ROADMAP

Development of the roadmap was led by the Vermont Farm to Plate Network's Food Security Priority Strategy Team. Creating the plan was a collaborative effort that took more than two years and included contributions from more than 600 Vermonters.

A statewide community engagement process kicked off in 2022, and outreach efforts included surveys and focus groups, as well as interviews with professionals focused on food security and individuals struggling to access food.

The team received contributions from farmers, healthcare workers state officials and others with expertise in food security.

"We had all of this information that had come from around the state, people were participating in every county," Warren said of the process.

Participants' feedback ranged from concerns and priorities to strategies and solutions for improving the state's food system and food security response.

Warren said to compile the roadmap, each contribution was filtered through questions like "What solution is being suggested?" and "Does this solution create full food security for all people at all times?"

PATH TO FOOD SECURITY

The completed roadmap is centered around a shared goal of having all Vermonters food-secure in 2035. The plan uses the United Nations definition of food security as "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

To achieve this goal, the roadmap targets systems and policy changes rather than individual-level interventions.

"It builds on government programs, community innovation, and the shared experiences of Vermonters in recent years, with policy recommendations and actions we can take in Vermont to create permanent, equitable food security for all," the plan reads.

The roadmap also highlights "priority populations in Vermont," noting that current research shows Vermonters living in rural areas, with a disability, below the poverty line and who are Black, Indigenous of People of Color and/or LGBTQ+ are more likely to be food insecure.

The plan is organized under three goals:

- Goal G: Government ensures food security for all in Vermont.
- Goal A: Vermont farms have the resources to be resilient.
- Goal C: Communities have the tools to support food security.

Each goal includes specific objectives, with proposed strategies for meeting those objectives, things to keep in mind, and quotes from contributors.

Multiple objectives listed in the roadmap highlight ways to address transportation-related barriers that threaten food access, such as by making effective investments in transportation in rural and urban Vermont (Objective G7).

Identified strategies for achieving that objective include providing financial support for transportation, such as gas cards or vouchers, and increasing investment in public transportation options, as well as rideshare and other transit services.

"There is an incredible amount of driving that has to be done in order to get food," one Vermonter states in the roadmap. "My family has to think really carefully about how much we drive and when, given gas prices. It's not necessarily a bad thing to have to be thoughtful about it, but some folks who may be an hour away from a grocery store or market or may not have a reliable vehicle or money for gas, may be doing without."

Community members at the March 19 gathering explored some of the other objectives outlined in the roadmap. The event was part of a series of in-person events hosted by Vermont Hunger Councils, diving into the roadmap with representatives from Hunger Free Vermont and Vermont Farm to Plate Network.

Attendees last week discussed threats to food access like climate change, which has led to flooding and other extreme weather events that damage infrastructure and increase transportation-related barriers.

Objective G4 in the roadmap aims to address that threat by creating a food security emergency response system in Vermont, noting emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic and 2023 floods have highlighted the need to update the state's existing emergency plans in order to meet food security challenges.

"These strategies and this objective are very specific in terms of thinking about 'what are the systems we need to have in place,' the systems of communication, systems of collaboration on the state-wide level that include local emergency management plans," Warren explained.

IMPLEMENTATION

Those gathered on Tuesday also discussed how to help put the new plan into action.

The roadmap highlights the importance of collaboration in reaching its goals, as well as having the plan's priority populations lead and inform this work.

The plan lists several collaborative structures and the roles they play in achieving a food-secure Vermont, such as the Vermont Legislature and Office of Food Security, community-based councils, and a statewide food security coalition within the Farm to Plate network.

The coalition will support the roadmap's implementation, in collaboration with the Office of Food & Nutrition Security and related legislative committees. Warren noted last week that a provisional coalition has been formed, with some legislative priorities related to the roadmap already in action.

"Our task for this year with this coalition is to create enough of a coalition structure that would say, 'this is what the coalition is, who would like to join,' to create a three- or four-year plan," she said. "This isn't that long until 2035 for creating food security, so 'what are we going to do for the next three years that feels very tangible and is well sequenced in terms of what the priorities are.'"

Hunger Free Vermont Outreach Manager Lechelle-Antonia Gray also spoke about the role of hunger councils in supporting the roadmap's implementation. The Hunger Councils of Vermont network is made up of groups throughout the state, each chaired by local leaders and supported by Hunger Free Vermont staff.

"I know some councils may continue this discussion in their next meeting," Gray said last week. "We really want to keep hearing the rumblings of how you all are feeling about this roadmap and how that intersects with your work."

Those interested in learning more about the roadmap can find the plan at tinyurl.com/bdda5h38.

MAUSD still seeking central office

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Mount Abraham Unified School District officials are once again exploring options for the future of the district's central office after voters on Town Meeting Day overwhelming opposed the proposed purchase of the building that houses MAUSD's current office. The vote against went 1,615-820.

MAUSD officials spent several months prior to the vote considering alternative locations for the central office, a study motivated because the district's landlord is looking to sell the BristolWorks complex on Bristol's Munsill Avenue that houses the MAUSD office.

Purchasing the property for $1.23 million had emerged as the least costly option of those considered by district officials. Other explorations included looking for a new space to rent and refitting space in one of the district's school buildings.

With the proposed purchase rejected by voters, district officials went back to the drawing board at Tuesday's MAUSD board meeting, discussing the timeline for a central office decision and other options.

"It may be worth some conversation about 'what do we think the understanding was when folks went to the polls,'" Superintendent Patrick Reen told the board. "Was belief that saying 'no' to that meant we saved dollars, when the reality is saying 'no' to that might mean we spend more dollars?"

Reen noted the district has a couple of options, including taking the purchase off the table and exploring alternative locations, or putting it back out for another vote.

"Either that's still on the table and we ask for the vote again, which is risky, or we accept that it is what it is and that's what the voters said, and we move on to plan B," he said.

Board member Brad Johnson said on Tuesday it might be worth keeping another vote on the table, noting the potential impact of having the original question on the same ballot on which voters also defeated the district's proposed spending plan for fiscal year 2025.

If approved by voters, money for the office purchase would have come from the capital construction funds already built into the district's operating budget.

"I think there are probably a lot of taxpayers out there who said 'OK, I can take this increased school budget, but I don't want to spend another ($1.23 million) for buying an office," Johnson said. "That connection between saving money and how it affects the budget, it's a hard thing to explain, and I think it did not come across. If we can figure out a way to articulate why it makes some sense to do this, having a second vote I don't think we should take off the table."

Other board members opposed the notion of holding another vote on the building purchase, including New Haven representative Kathi Apgar.

"What I heard loud and clear serving as a poll person, was that the cross-over between the two budgets had nothing to do (with the opposition)," Apgar said. "That folks really believed we were not in the business of being landlords number one, and number two, if we had enough money to spend on another building then we had enough to fund all the services that the students need without taxing the taxpayers. That was a very clear message."

During the weeks leading up to Town Meeting Day, several district voters took to Front Porch Forum to voice their opposition to the proposed building purchase. Some recommended spending the $1.23 million to support educators and students, while others suggested using current space available in the district's elementary and middle/high school buildings instead.

Multiple board members on Tuesday identified educating the community on the role of the central office and what's needed in a district office space as a potential next step.

"If we can better define the role of our admin, what they're contributing specifically to the district in terms of our needs as a district, that might set up the conditions to make an argument for what kind of space we need," board member Mike Dash said.

"I don't know how you convince people to spend money on the space if they don't actually know what that space is housing," he added.

District officials on Tuesday also discussed identifying when a new central office location would be needed.

Reen told the board the district's lease for the BristolWorks location ends this coming October, with the option to extend for another year.

"This timeline is really predicated on a construction project," he noted. "If that's something we're considering, or if that's what we default to, we have to have time to make sure we do that."

Stevenson letter

(Continued from Page 7A)

or preaching about it when it's convenient for them.

Gov. Scott is directly responsible for how VT Fish and Wildlife manages wildlife. He chooses the board — hand-picked by him according to his personal whims and friends list. He chooses board members who don't submit applications. Those who submit applications and have backgrounds in science are ignored. The commissioner doesn't need any training or background in science. Gov. Scott chooses the commissioner. Gov. Scott knows how to play his hand but, at some point, he's going to fail.

Dogs and other animals (including protected and endangered ones) have been killed and injured by body-gripping traps. It's only a matter of time before a person or a child gets caught in one. It may have already happened since VT Fish and Wildlife buries these reports. Gov. Scott is against body-gripping traps having setbacks or being marked for public safety.

A woman and her dog were attacked and chased for miles by coyote hounds, and it was buried and hushed by the department. A couple and their dog were attacked by a pack of bear hounds for 45 minutes — all suffered injuries. No laws were broken in Vermont. No apologies from Scott to the victims. It's his policies that were directly responsible.

Scott supports hounding. He does not side with property owners who repeatedly deal with hounders trespassing on their property or the victims of hound attacks.

Media and news outlets don't report much on wildlife policy or animal cruelty even after serious issues are brought to their attention. So, many Vermonters have no idea how backwards Vermont really is when it comes to these issues.

If you care about wildlife and want to see science-based environmental policies implemented in Vermont; if you care about your dog, animal welfare, and want perpetrators of animal abuse to face some kind of consequence; then Scott needs to go. Your dog wants a new governor, and so do I.

Alana Stevenson
Charlotte

ADDISON COUNTY

School News Briefs

Eli Burgess of Lincoln, a student at Clark University in Worcester Mass., co-created an app that teaches teens communication skills and gives parents a reprieve from worry. The app, called ParentLock, is a phone safety app specifically built for families on a family phone plan. The goal is to encourage better communication between adults and their kids, something Burgess struggled with as an early teenager.

ParentLock, which is still being developed, will allow parents to lock a child's phone if the child does not communicate about their location or avoids phone calls.

The app is meant to build good habits and then be deleted once communications improve, says Burgess, a management major. ParentLock is targeted for families with children ages 12 to 16.

Response

(Continued from Page 1A)

the behavior problems have been shrinking all children's learning opportunities as well as affecting working conditions for educators.

A group of seven Mary Hogan educators brought their concerns to the board on March 11, and their accounts of disruptive student behavior were affirmed by seven months of data that school directors digested at a gathering on Monday (see related story on Page 1A).

Mary Hogan teachers Deb Levesque, Raven Payne, Adam Gould, Melissa Flint, Jenna Hogan, Frankie Wisnowski, Jessica McCauley and Megan Sears on March 11 provided a joint statement to the ACSD board that painted a disconcerting picture of a committed school administration and staff battling persistent disciplinary problems, some of which have temporarily halted classroom activities.

"We have seen desks tipped over, chairs thrown, materials and student work destroyed, bookcases cleared, as well as verbal threats to both students and adults," reads a portion of the statement specifically attributed to Flint, Gould, Payne and Wisnowski, who are all first-grade teachers.

"Both adults and students have been kicked, punched, bit, and slapped by other students," their statement continued. "There have also been a number of times when profanity has been projected through the classroom and halls for other students to hear."

The educators acknowledged a broader contributor to the student unrest.

"The behaviors of some Mary Hogan students reflect the increasing volume and intensity of our broader community's mental health challenges," they said.

Challenges with no quick fix, especially given the dearth of mental health workers both locally and statewide. The counseling Service of Addison County — with whom ACSD partners — currently lists 27 vacancies, ranging from school-based clinicians to psychiatrists.

Meanwhile, current Mary Hogan staff must troubleshoot problems as best they can.

"Our principals are frequently called away from meetings or other aspects of their administrative roles to support student behavior," reads the teachers' statement. "Often, there are multiple classroom evacuations within the course of a week. These incidents not only deprive students of learning time, they also compromise our students' sense of safety. With some frequency, hallways are blocked off."

When forced to evacuate a classroom, teachers quickly leave (sometimes without teaching materials) in search of a safe place within the building to resume coursework with the rest of their class, the educators explained.

"This has happened many times, sometimes multiple times a day, with loss of learning time for our students," the teachers' statement reads. "In some incidents, we have been blocked from leaving the classroom due to dangerous actions. We have also been blocked from returning to our rooms, remaining outside the building for 45 minutes because our entire hallway was closed due to unsafe student behavior."

The *Independent* reached out by email to the five of the seven Mary Hogan educators who voiced concerns at the March 11 ACSD board meeting. Sears — who also serves as co-president of the Addison Central Educators Association — responded.

She referred to the teachers' statement and added, "We believe the administration has heard us. We trust they are working on solving these problems as they think forward to next year. We look forward to hearing what solutions they put in place."

Mary Hogan educators have made these specific requests:

• That the district invest more "budgetary and staff resources" to expand the Wellness & Learning Center (WLC) at Mary Hogan. The WLC was created last year to help elementary school students in need of "specialized social-emotional and behavioral supports" during the academic day. The program has been so successful that district officials are looking to set up a second WLC at either Mary Hogan or Ripton Elementary School.

• That four teachers be maintained at every grade level at Mary Hogan "for 2024-25 and beyond."

"This would assist in reducing class size to restore our ability to educate Middlebury's children in the safe, supportive manner they deserve," the teachers said.

• That the board looks "intensively" at incident report data and social emotional student needs when making spending decisions at Mary Hogan for the rest of this academic year.

"We are not asking you to compromise resources in other schools, but rather to look at adding resources to successfully support the Mary Hogan community through the end of the year while the district continues to plan for next year," they said.

• Last, but far from least, preservation of the Student Response Coordinator (SRC) position based at Mary Hogan School. The district created the SRC post — along with several others — with federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds that will sunset this year. Faced with an FY'25 budget crunch, the SRC was among a couple of ESSER-funded posts that school leaders chose not ask taxpayers to absorb.

Last June Middlebury Union Middle School Co-Principal Michael Dudek stepped down from his position to become the ACSD's first-ever SRC. The job made him the point person on investigations of hazing, harassing and bullying cases at district schools.

His duties have also included processing incident reports and ensuring follow-up with affected families, staff and students.

BAD BEHAVIOR SPIKES

Sadly, Dudek has been real busy. He's headquartered at Mary Hogan, where he's been most needed. Officials noted preK-12 student-behavior cases spiked to a high of 346 in January when Dudek was asked to temporarily fill a leadership role at Cornwall's Bingham School.

There have been more than 200 behavior incidents reported in first grade alone at Mary Hogan since the district began collecting such data last October, the teachers noted.

"Without SRC's presence, our counselors and administrators are stretched thin, responding to a higher volume of incidents, leading to disruptions in student services and administrative availability," the teachers said.

At a March 25 ACSD board meeting, board member Ellen Whelan-Wuest acknowledged the importance of the SRC role. She also noted the fiscal irony of the district being unable to fill complementary, budgeted positions like speech-language therapists and special educators.

"Are we now going to make a bad situation worse — maybe much, much worse — by the elimination of that position in a building that desperately needs it?" she wondered on Monday.

Mary Hogan Principal Jen Kravitz is among fans of the SRC post, which she believes could be broadened if allowed to survive.

"If that position were funded and continued, I think we'd be able to use it even more effectively," she said. "I've been reluctant to put too many responsibilities into that position, because I know it might go away at any time and we'd have to rejigger things. But having the ability to know there's someone else who can help support students has been super-helpful."

But restoring the position in the fall will take more money — or a reshuffling of resources — in an FY-25 spending plan that voters OK'd back on March 5.

ACSD Superintendent Tim Williams said he and his staff are working behind the scenes to try and save the SRC.

"We are exploring options to shift funding for budgeted FY'25 expenses to fund the requested position," he told the *Independent*. "Whether or not we are able to do so remains to be seen."

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

Unrest

(Continued from Page 1A)

might've let one or more reportable incidents slide, or because some school administrators might still be negotiating a learning curve using Educlimber.

Officials stressed the district can't draw any firm conclusions or trends from just seven months of Educlimber data, but that will come with more numbers during the months and years ahead. The statistics, over time, could help inform the ACSD's deployment of staff and other resources toward tackling behavioral issues.

See Nicole Carter's full report on ACSD student-behavior with further statistics. It is posted with this story online at addisonindependent.com.

"The more we collect this data over a shorter period of time, the more accurate it's going to be," Malcolm said.

Carter, during a 72-minute presentation to the board, classified the "major" behavior incidents into 17 categories, such as fighting/aggression, dangerous acts, threatening, verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, weapons-related offenses and theft.

Of these major offenses, according to Carter, fighting/aggression topped the list with 168 incidents, followed by dangerous acts (64), threatening (18) and making false threats (14). There were also six documented weapons-related cases and three cases of threats made to staff, according to Carter's report.

The "minor" behavior incidents included 14 categories of offenses, such as disruptive behavior, skipping classes, showing disrespect, refusing a request, using bad language, cell phone use, academic dishonesty, leaving school grounds and dress-code violations.

Of these "minor" offenses, according to Carter, disruptive behavior (273) accounted for the lion's share of reported cases, followed by skipping classes (140) and showing disrespect (78).

YOUNGER OFFENDERS

Somewhat counterintuitively, most of the "major" offenses were linked to the younger, rather than older, students, according to the report. Mary Hogan Elementary saw 182 of those incidents, while 80 were reported at Middlebury Union Middle School and 48 at Middlebury Union High School.

Seventy-two of the major incidents were ascribed to first-graders, followed by kindergarteners (38), second-graders (35), seventh-graders (31) and sixth-graders (30).

Notcoincidentally, concern about student behavior at Mary Hogan has been building since last fall. Several educators from that elementary school described their classroom challenges (see related story on Page 1A), and recommended corrective actions, at the March 11 ACSD board meeting.

While acknowledging each child is unique, Carter named a common, root cause for the bad behavior students are exhibiting in the classroom.

"Students who struggle with behaviors in school struggle because they are lacking skills," she told the board, citing, as an example, coping skills. "We help kids by helping them to build skills.

"When the disruption ends, we know the skills are growing," Carter concluded.

Trouble is, the district doesn't have enough social workers, clinicians, paraprofessionals and other staff to impart the skills some students need to be successful in the school setting, according to Carter.

"Students who struggle with behaviors in school struggle because they are lacking skills … We help kids by helping them to build skills."

— Nicole Carter

She said around 80% of ACSD students are currently learning in the general classroom setting for their entire school day. Other students spend a portion of their day in the classroom, and the balance receiving specialized services tailored to their needs.

Roughly 3% of the student population requires placement in an alternative public or private school system, to receive individualized or therapeutic services, according to Carter. There are no residential programs in Vermont for students with the most profound needs, and few specialized school options (public or private) for those who can't thrive in a conventional education setting, Carter noted. She placed annual transportation costs for specialized schools at more than $100,000 per student.

The ACSD — and indeed all the county's public school districts — are in the same boat due to a lack of resources and a dearth of takers for special education jobs, according to Carter.

"This is not just an ACSD thing… (The Mount Abraham and Addison Northwest school districts) are in the same amount of pain we are; they're feeling it the same way and they want you all to know it's the whole county. So we're trying to work with them in a new way."

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

One of those combined efforts has been the Addison Consortium Program, or ACP, which serves a dozen special needs students in grades 9-12 from the ACSD, ANWSD and MAUSD. The *Independent* reported last March on a proposed expansion of the ACP to serve 12 middle schoolers (grades 6-8) — four children each from the three districts.

Carter announced the ACP will stop being a shared program on July 1. The ACSD will run it and "it will be for ACSD students, and if there are any additional spots, they'll be priority tuition from the other two school districts. The idea is to increase capacity."

Last September, the ACSD established a Wellness & Learning Center (WLC) at Mary Hogan School. The WLC was set up to serve ACSD elementary school students in need of "specialized social-emotional and behavioral supports" during the academic day. The program has been so successful that district officials are looking to set up a second WLC at either Mary Hogan or Ripton Elementary School.

Meanwhile, Carter and her colleagues will continue efforts to ensure students' needs are being met by a fragile specialized services system.

"We have lots of problems we need to solve," she said.

Ongoing challenges include:

• Few to no applicants for special educator, mental health clinicians, intensive-needs paraeducators to fill vacancies.

• What Carter called "a drastic reduction" in Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC) service providers to work with local students. Carter explained CSAC is itself facing a major staffing shortage in trying to deal with its own client roster.

While shorthanded, the ACSD is trying to meet its specialized services obligations by:

• Delivering services virtually when possible, if a local provider is unavailable.

• Prioritizing attention to the most intensive needs.

• Shifting staffing patterns, so the most highly trained people are providing the most needed services.

• Increasing staff training and professional development.

• Collaborating with the neighboring Mount Abe and Addison Northwest school districts to find countywide solutions for the special services quandary.

Backsliding on special services would be detrimental to the entire student population, Carter warned.

"Lack of staffing and space for specialized services impacts the general ed classrooms because attention and resources from administrators, general ed teachers, paraprofessionals and school counselors is prioritized to support specialized services needs first," she said.

ACSD School Board Chair Barb Wilson was grateful for the data and said she looks forward to seeing updated stats during the coming months.

"Hopefully, we can help these kids," she said.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Climate matters
Perspectives on Change

As climate crisis rages, Green Mountain National Forest misses the boat

By HOWARD JENNINGS

A year ago, the Green Mountain National Forest staff (GMNF) requested public comments on a proposal for logging almost 12,000 acres at Telephone Gap east of Pittsford. The project has now advanced to the Environmental Assessment stage of approval, and we have a chance to comment again by midnight April 8 (details below).

It is widely understood that cutting mature forests is bad for the climate. Last year the public responded with over 1,300 comments against logging and less than 100 in favor. This was a record. In addition, petitions were circulated by groups around the country who were concerned about the Telephone Gap project; and over 13,000 signatures against the logging were submitted to the GMNF. Clearly the public is very concerned about climate change and the role of logging in accelerating it.

Apparently the GMNF is not, based on the very minimal changes made in this new round of the proposal. They still propose logging almost 12,000 acres — in aggregate an area larger than the city of Burlington. Most of the stands proposed for cutting are 80 to 150 years old.

The Save Public Forests coalition, of which I am a member, believes we must stop it. The GMNF staff are good, dedicated professionals who care deeply about our forests, but they are trapped in a box of outmoded science, backward policies and perverse incentives that compel them to do the wrong thing for climate change now, when we critically need them to do the right thing.

In addition to their climate benefits, our old forests also are very complex ecosystems that support a huge variety of species of plants and animals, many of which are under threat and some nearing extinction. The Forest Plan talks about promoting biodiversity through cutting older forests to create early successional habitat, but this is mostly for the benefit of non-endangered game species for hunting, not true biodiversity. The world is in the beginning of the sixth mass global extinction, this one largely human-induced, and we are threatening the very food chain of which we are a part. Intact forests also provide critical flood control and protect our water quality.

The importance of old forests in stopping climate change

I appreciate the thinking behind some positive tweaks of the GMNF proposal, but these are just tweaks, and they leave the vast amount of logging of older forests in the proposal. Old and mature forests are unequivocally one of our best weapons in slowing climate change. Globally forests take out of the air about 30% of the worldwide carbon emissions that cause climate change. A 2023 study led by a forest carbon expert, who spent a career at the U.S. Forest Service, found that northeastern United States forests could double their stored carbon by 2100 if we simply allowed them to grow older. We can't win the climate fight if we keep cutting them down. When we cut a forest, the areas that are logged flip from being huge carbon sinks to sources of carbon released to the atmosphere for about 20 years after cutting.

Even then the small amount of carbon taken up by the young trees is nothing compared to what was sequestered by the huge old trees, and they won't catch up for many decades. Watch this 8-minute PBS Terra Weathered video about the science (click or type into your browser): tinyurl.com/forest-Carbon.

In 2022 President Biden signed an executive order directing the U.S. Forest Service to protect mature and old growth forests to mitigate climate change. The Forest Service is the largest steward of old and mature forests in the country; but instead of conserving them, they are accelerating logging and climate change, counter to the executive order. Certainly, we need wood products, but we should not be cutting more than our needs. Nationwide and in Vermont we are cutting more timber than we use and exporting much of it to other countries. We also burn much for biomass electricity generation, which is more polluting than coal, not carbon neutral as claimed. Our position at Save Public Forests is that we should preserve our forests on public land and let the private forests cover the need for timber.

Climate crisis more urgent than ever

Scientists have been warning for decades that we would face a "tipping point" of possibly no return if the global average temperature exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above the baseline. In 2022 it was projected we might exceed that as early as 2030 — a scary eight years away then. Last year was the hottest on record and we nearly passed 1.5 degrees! In 2024 it is entirely likely we will pass that point. We won't all die if we do, but the worldwide and local damage will be huge, and it will be much harder and more expensive to bring it down if we overshoot 1.5. Here is an ominous PBS Terra Weathered video about tipping points. tinyurl.com/36mztmta (click or type into your browser). This is not an abstraction or a future event. It is affecting millions of people globally, nationally, locally and personally. My grandson Arlo, who is now three, and all our young people, will live in an increasingly degraded world. Here are some examples of what that means.

Globally the UN says that as many as 100 million people will need to migrate to escape flooding and untenable conditions in the very near future. In the Southwestern U.S., drought and reduced river flow are threatening water supplies, crops and whole cities. At the current rate of depletion, in five years the Lake Powell water reservoir above the Grand Canyon, will be so low it will be unable to provide water or electricity to much of the surrounding region. That will be crippling to regional economies and have ripple effects for the U.S. economy. People are already losing their homes and their life savings.

Ironically, as the land gets hotter and drier, the atmosphere becomes loaded with moisture (atmospheric rivers) and dumps it periodically in catastrophic floods such as we saw in Vermont last summer and the winter before in California. Wildfires in the West Coast and Canada blanketed much of our country in harmful, lung burning smoke.

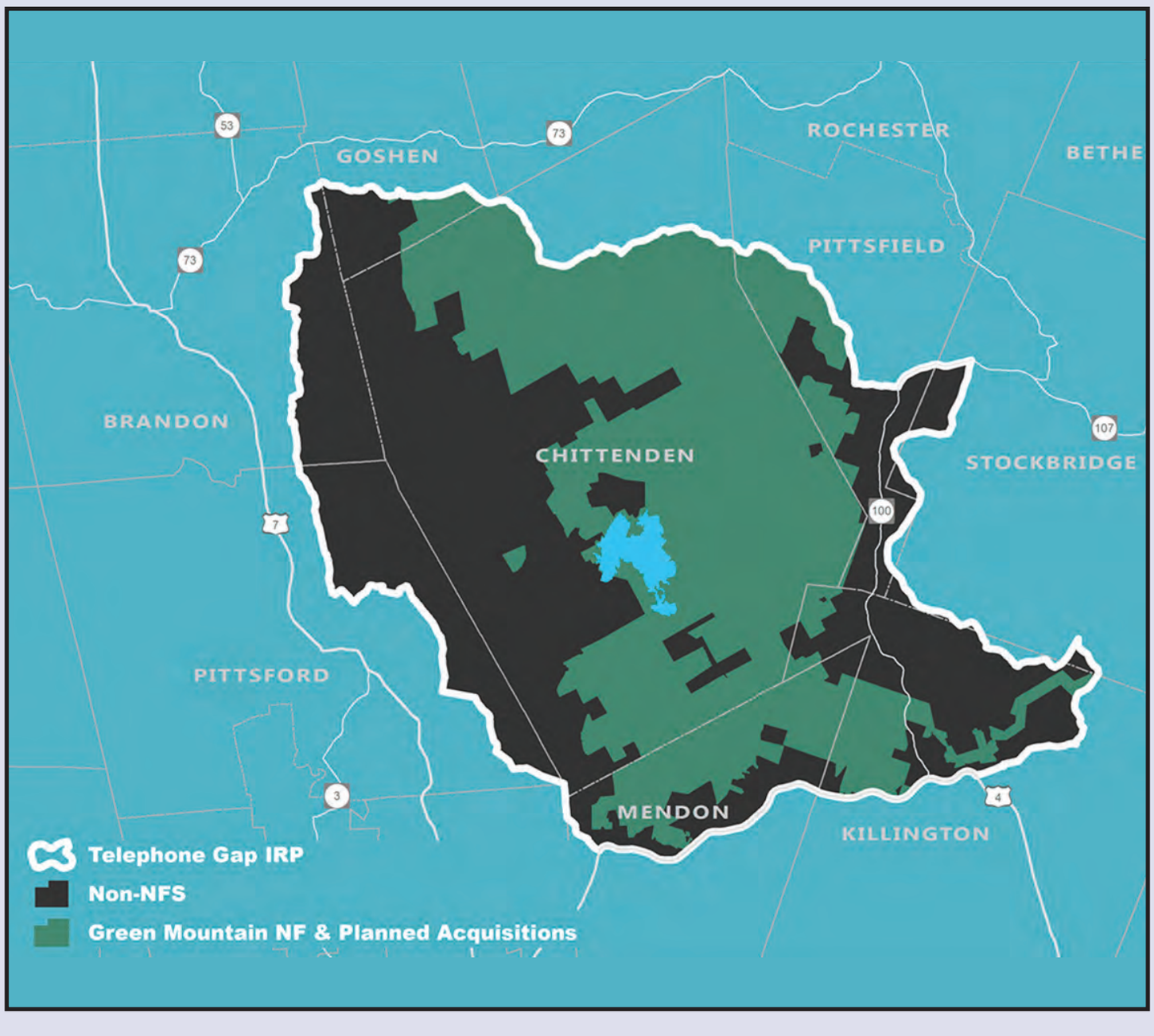
HOWARD JENNINGS

The insurance industry is struggling with mounting losses from fires and hurricanes, and many insurers are pulling out of California and Florida and other states. My own insurance agent warns that this will be a growing crisis everywhere, as companies struggle to survive and refuse to insure properties or deny losses. The economic consequences of this are mind-boggling.

We are beyond the 11th hour in the climate crisis, and every sector of our economy must do its part to avoid disaster. Failure is unthinkable. The forestry sector is no exception, and Telephone Gap is where we must draw the line in Vermont.

Please join this climate fight! For the sake of our young people, failure is not an option.

Bristol resident Howard Jennings is the former research director of Mobility Lab, a transportation think tank in Virginia. He is now volunteering with Save Public Forests, a collective effort of scientists, researchers, ecologists and individuals from many organizations seeking practical, science-based solutions to climate change, forest degradation and the biodiversity crisis.



There are actions Vermonters can take to protect Telephone Gap

By HOWARD JENNINGS

Here is what the GMNF proposes and the action you can take:

As required under the National Environmental Policy Act the GMNF Environmental Assessment has put forth alternatives:

Alternative A – Do nothing. Save Public Forests believes the GMNF should choose this alternative and put Telephone Gap on hold at least until early 2025, when the US Forest Service will do a nationwide Forest Plan amendment process. That will update agency stewardship of mature and old-growth forests, spurred by President Biden's Executive Order. The current GMNF Plan that Telephone Gap is based on was done in 2006 before much of the current best science on climate and forests had been done. We strongly support Alternative A.

Alternative B – The Modified Proposed Action preferred by GMNF drops 41 acres of proposed logging identified as "old forest" by Vermont Fish and Wildlife. This is a positive tweak but not meaningful against almost 12,000 acres, so we reject this alternative.

Alternative C would drop 661-acres that were identified with "late-successional" characteristics, but this is not in the Proposed Action.

Alternative D proposes to reduce harvest intensity and the amount of road construction to lower the fossil-fuel impact of logging operations.

We applaud the concepts considered in both alternative C and D, but these changes are only being considered across a relatively small portion of the project area and are not incorporated into the Modified Proposed Action preferred by GMNF.

Three things you can do by Monday April 8 at midnight (eclipse day):

1. Submit an official comment tinyurl.com/m8uyf5ye (even a couple of sentences) expressing your feelings on the alternatives above.

2. Sign our Petition. tinyurl.com/ye4fuk5v This is less official but still very meaningful.

3. Call or write our Senators and Representative. This is a federal matter, and they want to know how we feel.

• Rep. Becca Balint: 202-225-4115, balint.house.gov/contact.

• Sen. Bernie Sanders: 202-224-5141, sanders.senate.gov/contact/contact-form.

• Sen. Peter Welch: 202-224-4242, welch.senate.gov/email-peter.

Please join this climate fight! For the sake of our young people, failure is not an option.

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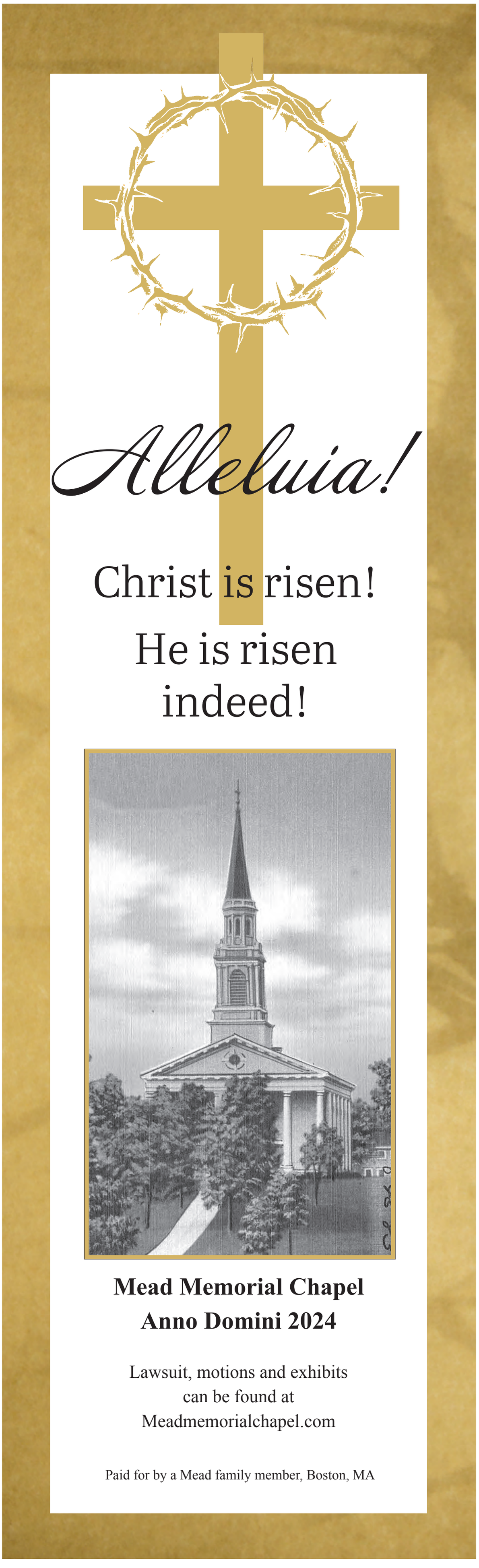

MEMBERS OF THE *Addison Independent* staff joined with reporters, editors and production staff from *Seven Days* and the Vermont Community Newspaper Group at the New England Newspaper and Press Association Convention in Waltham, Mass., on Saturday to celebrate the strong showing of Vermont publications in the Better Newspaper Competition.

NENPA winners

(Continued from Page 1A)

typically in the top group of finishers among New England's largest non-daily publications, this year the newspaper earned top honors for the coveted General Excellence award — besting the *Ellsworth American* (based in a suburb of Bangor, Maine), which took second, and *Seven Days,* which placed third.

"It's always a great feeling to take top honors among some of the best newspapers in the region," long-time Editor and Publisher Angelo Lynn said. "It's a true reflection of the high quality of work we do and of the hard work every member of the team contributes. It's a big commitment to bring the news to the county each week in print, and five days a week through our websites, newsletters and social media, and it's humbling to have that work honored by our peers and others throughout the six states.

"And, of course, we hope it's appreciated by our readers and supporters — they're the reason we work so hard to produce the best possible newspaper week in and week out."

> *"It's always a great feeling to take top honors among some of the best newspapers in the region It's a true reflection of the high quality of work we do and of the hard work every member of the team contributes."*
>
> *— Editor and Publisher Angelo Lynn*

Other Vermont newspapers also did well at the convention. *Seven Days* won 18 first-place awards and 12 second- and third-places, also among the largest weekly newspapers. The Vermont Community Newspaper Group, which includes the *Stowe Reporter*, *the Stowe Guide* and three community weeklies in Chittenden County, competing in the under 5,000 circulation division, won 13 first-place awards and twice that many second and third places among its seven publications. And The Brattleboro Reporter won first in General Excellence among daily newspapers under 15,000 circulation.

Independent news editor John McCright recognized that the news staff works hard day in and day out to provide the region with information they need to build a strong community. But he was gratified when an outside group like NENPA recognizes the effort.

"I'm so proud to work with such a hardworking, clever and collegial group of people," McCright said. "Thanks to everyone!"

For the *Addison Independent*, the newspaper won 14 awards for advertising, 16 awards for news/editorial.

The awards were presented to:

Advertising awards:

• Classified Ad Promotion: First place, advertising staff for Help Wanted ad promotion.

• Best Contest: First place, Jenna Hunsinger for the Garden Game.

• Excellence in Revenue Collaboration and Partnership: First place, advertising and production staff for the Field Days Program.

• Health Ad: First place, Jesse Norford for ACHHH campaign, and second to Christy Lynn for the Porter Pediatrics campaign.

• Advertiser campaign: First place, Christy Lynn and Elsie Parini for their series of ads for Bradford Kitchen + Bath; third place, Katy Foote for her campaign for Hare and the Dog.

• Local Online Ad: Third place, Katy Foote for an Otter East ad.

• Real Estate Display: Third place, Jesse Norford for a Berkshire Hathaway ad in the Lake Dunmore Fern Lake Association directory.

• Special Section Advertising: Third place, production manager Sue Leggett and associate advertising manager Jenna Hunsinger for the annual Easter Worship Guide.

• Themed Multiple Advertiser Pages: First place, entire ad and design staff for Midd Night Stroll pages.

• Advertising Sales Media Kit: Second place, Jenna Hunsinger.

• Best Ad Designer. Second place, Sarah Pope; and third place, Elsie Parini.

News awards:

• Arts & Entertainment Reporting: Second place, David Weinstock for a story on the unique auditions for the Middlebury Opera Company.

• Solutions Journalism: Third place to John Barstow and crew for their collaboration with the *Independent* to organize and publish the Climate Matters column.

• Editorial Commentary Pages: First place for the editorials, columnists, op-eds, community forums and presentation of letters to the editor.

• Humor Columnist: Third place, Jessie Raymond.

• Living Pages: First place, Elsie Lynn Parini for the *Independent's* Arts + Leisure section, which she edits, designs and writes.

• Climate and Weather Reporting: Third place by Marin Howell for her story on bees.

• News Feature Photo: First place, John S. McCright.

• Overall Design for a Supplement: Second place, Sarah Pope for "Celebrating Our Children."

• Racial, Ethnic or Gender Reporting: First place, Andy Kirkaldy, for a story on a MUHS girls' team skipping a game with a team because its fans had previously used slurs; it included a larger look at racism at high school sports events.

• Serious Columnist: Third place, Faith Gong, for her Faith in Vermont column.

• Sports Action Photo: First and second places, Stephen James (See the photos on page 3B).

• Sports Feature Photo: Third place, Steve James.

• Sports Columnist: First place, Karl Lindholm for the second year in a row.

• Best Sports Section: First place led by Andy Kirkaldy, Sue Miller on graphic design, photographer Steve James and the rest of the staff.

• **General Excellence:** First among the largest (5,000 circulation and higher) non-daily newspapers in New England.

Vermont Ski + Ride Magazine:

• Front Page Specialty Publication: First place, Lisa Lynn.

• Local Personality Profile: First place, Lisa Lynn for a profile on actor John Fusco.

• Racial, Ethnic or Gender Issue Coverage among specialty publications: First place, Lisa Lynn for a story on why snowsports have remained predominantly white and what's being done to address that in Vermont and beyond.

• Sports Feature Photo: Second place, Lisa Lynn.

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So sweet

MARK AND CATIE Raishart tap around 500 maples on their Foxglove Farm in Leicester. Unusually, they tap red maples, rather than the celebrated sugar maple. It doesn't seem to matter — the 150 gallons of syrup they produce is as sweet as any you're going to taste. After the heavy snowfall on Saturday, the crowd at the sugarhouse on Sunday was not huge, but they were appreciative.

Independent photos/Steve James

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Lincoln

(Continued from Page 1A)

fellow Addison County residents.

"The cultural study is about looking outward, but we've been making connections to where we live, too, and there's so many migrant workers in Vermont from Mexico and down south," Ellis said. "(It's) kind of making this connection outside of our state and our country while still keeping our eyes on how it relates to people who live here with us."

The cultural studies program takes place at the elementary school each winter. During the intensive four- to six-week study, students learn about various aspects of another culture in multi-age groups.

This year, groups explored different elements of Mexican culture, such as embroidery, geography and lele dolls, a traditional handmade toy.

"(Groups) usually dive deeper into each subject, so in embroidery they learned about the stitch, about why the embroidery looks the way it does, and how it started," explained Tiffany Dennison, the kindergarten teacher at LCS.

Evidence of the groups' work was on full display at the celebration on Thursday. Stations around the gym exhibited students' studies of Spanish, aqueducts, GIS-mapping and other topics.

The elementary school also invites a cultural ambassador to take part in the annual study and help students dive into the culture of focus.

"We try and get someone who was born there and has had experiences there, so when they come and talk to us, we get a very authentic explanation," Dennison said of the ambassador's role.

This year, LCS welcomed Alejandra Perez as cultural ambassador. Perez lives in Bridport but is originally from Querétaro. She runs a Mexican cuisine business, Doña Alejandra Tacos, and visited LCS during its study to share her culinary and other expertise with students.

STUDENTS SERVE UP tres leches cake and other authentic Mexican fare with cultural ambassador Alejandra Perez at Thursday's fiesta. Perez shared her culinary expertise and facts about her hometown of Querétaro, Mexico, with students during their study of the region this winter.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

LCS students and staff also corresponded with video pen pals at the Tlalnecapam School in Veracruz, Mexico. At Thursday's festival, attendees viewed a video from Mexican students, who offered a tour of their school, pointing out familiar sights and sounds like a woodpecker and macadamia tree.

In another one of the video exchanges, LCS students showed their pen pals around their school, highlighting the outdoor classroom and garden, among other features.

Dennison said the video exchange was one of the highlights of this year's cultural studies program. She noted it was the second year LCS students have corresponded with schools across the globe.

Last year, staff and students at the elementary school connected with video pen pals in Limbe and Mabeta, Cameroon, thanks to a collaboration with Sarah Laird, co-director of the Bristol nonprofit People & Plants.

"I think because it was the second exchange, (students) were a little more animated and comfortable to speak to the camera and very excited to get the reply," Dennison said. "We ask each other questions, and it's pretty rich. It's rich for them to see and connect to other kids their age and in another country."

Dennison added the cultural studies program tends to offer rewarding learning opportunities for students at LCS.

"I feel (with) this type of learning, kids are really able to delve deep into something that interests them," she said. "It's a pleasure to see kids really enlightened by all the information that they get from this diving into a certain part of another culture."

STUDENTS AT LINCOLN Community School tried out embroidery as part of their study of Mexican culture this winter. Here, a student shares work with LCS Principal Tory Riley during the culmination of the cultural studies program this past Thursday.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

STUDENTS AND PARENTS on Thursday got a look at how the Aqueduct of Querétaro, like the model pictured here, once carried water around the Mexican city. The aqueduct was one of several aspects of Querétaro students explored during their study of the region this winter.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

HANDMADE LELE DOLLS were among the student projects exhibited at the Lincoln Community School's annual cultural celebration this past Thursday.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

County students participate in Brain Bee

BURLINGTON — On Feb. 10, the Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont hosted the 2024 edition of the Vermont Brain Bee. Thirty-six students representing 10 high schools participated in the 15th Annual Vermont Brain Bee, or VBB. This event tests students' knowledge about the inner workings of the brain and nervous system, how we function and potential diseases.

Emma Blanchard, a senior from South Burlington High School (SBHS), captured first place. Alaina Tyler from Champlain Valley Union High School (CVU) earned second place; Sophie Kellogg from SBHS and Kennedy Desautels from Burlington Technical Center (BTC) tied for third.

Middlebury Union High School ninth-grader Cullen Myers made it to the final round of eight students (out of 35) to compete in the Final Oral Round of the VBB.

In addition to SBHS, CVU, BTC and MUHS, participating schools included Rice Memorial, St. Johnsbury Academy, Colchester High School, Mount Mansfield, Essex High School and Brattleboro Union.

After partaking in written and practical examinations, which included real brain specimens, the students observed two neurological and psychiatric case presentations by Sharon Leach, Ph.D., a neuropsychologist at the Stern Center for Language and Learning, and Abby Ryan, Ph.D., who works as a neuropsychologist at the University of Vermont Medical Center. The cases presented this year involved neurological disorders of attention, anxiety, epilepsy and dementia. Many of the students showed they were learning to think clinically by generating questions about the possible differential diagnosis presented in the cases.

Following these cases, all students were tested through the first oral round, where questions were projected on a screen in the front of the room and students were given 30 seconds to answer each question.

Prior to the final oral round, Flatbread Pizza was served for lunch and a Keynote Presentation was given by Vermont Brain Bee Coordinator Lisa Bernardin, M.S., who delivered an engaging keynote talk, "Our Brains and How They Change." It was described as a compelling and insightful story about her experience with TBI, or Traumatic Brain Injury.

"I was very inspired to see how Lisa (Bernardin) overcame her accident and

(See Brain Bee, Page 13A)

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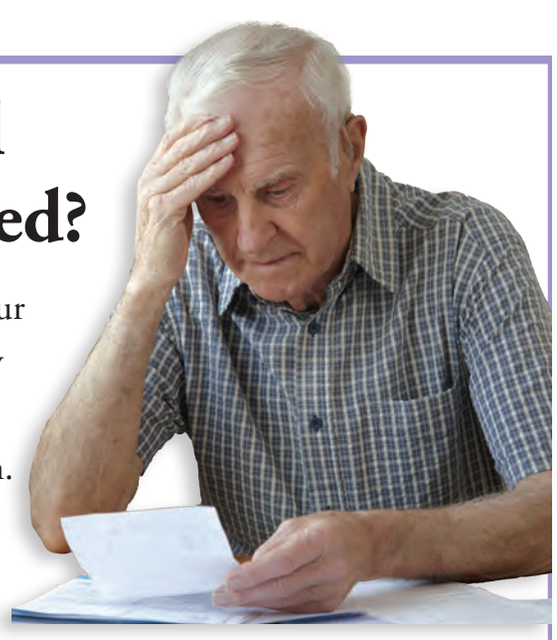

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Proceeds to support the Libanus Lodge, who has supported the People, and Projects throughout our Community.

Supported in part by the Addison County Independent.

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)

American Heart Association. The Salisbury school raised an impressive $1,586.44 this year for the Heart Association to support its work raising awareness about cardiovascular disease, supporting lifesaving scientific research and education efforts, and for the Heart Association's grant program for schools. Students posting the highest fundraising totals earned rewards like jump-ropes and balls, and also had a chance to "pie" (well, whip cream) "Ms. T" in the face. School officials thank the students, their families, and of course Thornton for being such a good sport, and for her work running the local American Heart Challenge.

The Middlebury-area unemployment rate rose slightly from 2.4% in January to 2.5% in February, according to the most recent data released by the Vermont Department of Labor. The Middlebury area in February reported a local workforce of 19,663 people, of whom 482 were seeking jobs. The current 2.5% jobless rate is still lower than the 2.9% rate the county reported in February of 2023. Meanwhile, the statewide jobless rate in February was listed at 2.3% — unchanged from January. The February unemployment rates for Vermont's 17 labor market areas ranged from 1.8% in Woodstock to 5.5% in Derby. The comparable U.S. rate in February was 3.9%, an increase of two-tenths of a percent from the revised January estimate.

Vekos

(Continued from Page 1A)

records — he was seeking. Sleigh said he'd not heard a response.

The Supreme Court, in its 4-page-plus ruling, said the medical records are not the issue. Rather, it was an inadequate response in the eyes of the high court.

"We note that this case is not about whether respondent's medical records should be provided to Disciplinary Counsel. Should a question arise about whether certain records are privileged, the rules provide a process by which issues may be pursued," the court said.

> *"The issue here is solely about whether (Vekos) responded to a lawful demand for information under Rule 8.1. She did not."*
>
> *— Supreme Court ruling*

"The issue here is solely about whether respondent responded to a lawful demand for information under Rule 8.1. She did not," the order, signed by the five justices, noted.

Vekos can continue to serve as Addison County State's Attorney in a reduced role. Her two deputies would have to appear for court hearings in her cases. A state's attorney in Vermont doesn't have to be a lawyer.

The Supreme Court didn't prescribe a specific length for the interim suspension.

Alexander, disciplinary counsel for the Vermont Professional Responsibility Board, began investigating Vekos after learning she'd been arrested on a DUI charge after arriving at a homicide scene in Bridport the night of Jan. 25.

Vekos was taken to the state police barracks in New Haven, where she refused to provide a court-approved breath test. She also wouldn't submit to having her fingerprints and mugshot taken, police said. Vekos pleaded not guilty in Vermont Superior Court in Middlebury on Feb. 12.

The Vermont Attorney General's Office has stepped in to prosecute the Vekos case, which Chief Judge Thomas Zonay ordered moved to Chittenden County going forward.

Alexander had asked Sleigh to address the DUI charge and how it bears on the fitness of Vekos to practice law.

On Feb. 15, Sleigh provided a legal response and a copy of a press release about Vekos taking her medical leave.

The next day, Alexander emailed Sleigh to request "relevant health records and (to) perhaps speak to her treaters." Sleigh didn't immediately respond, the court said.

In a follow-up email 10 days later, Alexander said he might seek the interim suspension for failure to cooperate. Sleigh responded saying that Vekos "plans on returning to work soon" and "there's no reason for you to examine her health records or speak to her treaters" because "she has no mental or physical issues that would impede her ability to practice law."

The response was not good enough for Alexander. He pushed for "an explanation and related documentation of the medical reasons for the leave," the court noted. Alexander also wanted a clarification about how soon Vekos would be back to work.

Alexander also wrote that he might contact medical providers used by Vekos. Sleigh maintains that would be improper.

Sleigh has said he attempted to have the inquiry moved to Vermont Superior Court where the legal process could play out before a judge and not leave it up to a state prosecutor.

Sleigh's petition to the Vermont Supreme Court seeking the transfer was rejected in a written order by Associate Justice Karen Carroll without comment.

The whole court later agreed to hold a hearing on the case and arguments were conducted a week ago.

ANWSD

(Continued from Page 1A)

approved a proposal for voter consideration on Tuesday that cut about $750,000 from the roughly $28.2 million plan that lost more decisively on Town Meeting Day, 1,282-1,012.

Reductions had included cutting 1.5 positions paid for until this school year by pandemic-era federal funds, including the ANWSD Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Coordinator; some spending on technology equipment and "middle school incidental" purchases, such as furniture; and a contracted social worker.

ANWSD also saved money by ceding responsibility for a special needs program, once based in the Addison Central School building, to the Addison Central School District. ANWSD will continue to tuition students to that program.

But property tax impacts due to low Common Levels of Appraisal were still significant even with those cuts, and though the reductions lowered the district-wide tax rate from $1.5411 per $100 of assessed property value to $1.5371.

According to ANWSD estimates, district homestead tax rates after CLAs were applied would rise by an average of about 15%, although the majority of taxpayers, who pay based on their incomes, would not bear the full brunt of those increases.

That is less than the tax impact of the first budget, which would have increased homestead tax rates by an average of about 19.2%, according to the district.

For example, under the first spending plan, taxes on a $300,000 home in Vergennes would have risen by about $940 for those not paying based on their incomes. But under the spending plan defeated on Tuesday, taxes on the same city home would have gone up by about $700.

Still, ANWSD Board Chair John Stroup said on Wednesday morning he thought those projected increases probably led to the narrow defeat.

"It remains a higher than normal increase in tax rates over previous years, and clearly that is a hard part for many people to get behind," Stroup said. "Although it's quite close, we're not far off, we still have some more work to do."

Stroup said he would almost certainly call a special board meeting for this coming Monday, April 1, to "debrief, regroup and figure out a timeline for the next vote."

One problem that ANWSD board members and administrators alike said the defeat caused is the district must now quickly send out, per its contract with the teachers' union, Reduction in Force (RIF) notices to many faculty members, including to many who probably won't lose their jobs with the district.

ANWSD Superintendent Sheila Soule said the district will almost certainly be sending out many more RIF notices than is necessary.

But she added the district must be prepared for the unlikely scenario that it cannot get a budget passed before July, when state law will allow ANWSD to move forward by borrowing only up to 87% of its current spending, a limitations that would mean cutting another $5.4 million. Meeting that target would mean drastic measures ANWSD must be ready to make, Soule said.

"I need to have the right to hold back positions until I have an operating budget," Soule said. "In determining the RIFs, I'm trying to determine what the drastically reduced budget would look like, and that means things like eliminating electives, eliminating everything but the very minimum required courses and issuing RIF notices to everyone else, knowing that's a very unlikely situation … We will hopefully have a budget by July 1 where that's not at all the reality."

But the resulting uncertainty could lead to the loss of teachers to other districts, Stroup and Soule said, as well as creating personal stress.

"That's unfortunate both for the district and those employees. It's unfortunate for those employees because they're now uncertain about their future," Stroup said. "And it's unfortunate for the school district because it now puts us at a place where we could lose really good people."

Stroup and Soule also said the Monday meeting would most likely consist largely of discussion and planning, not production of a new budget and vote date — although looking ahead Soule said Tuesday, May 7, was a strong possibility.

"We are going to have to listen and learn and figure out what our next steps are," Stroup said. "We have to talk about what next. What kind of cuts (to make), if any, what to do with the Education Stabilization Fund. That's possible to be used, but comes with some risk. And if we are going to make cuts, then the administration has to tell us what we're going to do given the priorities that we set."

Soule said from administrators' point of view, they will be looking for those priorities from the board before they make another spending proposal.

"I think I need to hear from the board what direction they want to head in. The board has all the options in front of them. They can decide to bring the very same budget out. They could decide that the budget needs to be reduced further. Part of that is you've got to read the tea leaves of what the message was the voters were trying to send," Soule said. "I think the meeting on Monday will be more of discussion about a direction."

Then, she said, the board's meetings on April 8 and 15 will probably be focused on a new spending scenarios and budget adoptions for a likely May vote.

Soule also emailed a statement to the community after the commingled votes were counted on Tuesday night.

It read, in part:

"The Board and Administration will need to regroup and reconsider our next steps carefully. We understand the importance of addressing the needs and concerns of our community while also being mindful of the fiscal responsibilities we bear.

"As we navigate this setback, we want to reassure you that we remain committed to our shared vision of building a kind, collaborative, and creative community that nurtures inclusivity and accessibility for all. While the path forward may be uncertain, we are unwavering in our dedication to serving our community's best interests.

"Your feedback and input continue to be invaluable to us as we chart our course forward. We will take this opportunity to reflect, listen, and engage with you to identify alternative solutions and approaches that align with our collective goals and aspirations. Though this may be a challenging moment, we remain hopeful and determined."

Brain Bee

(Continued from Page 12A)

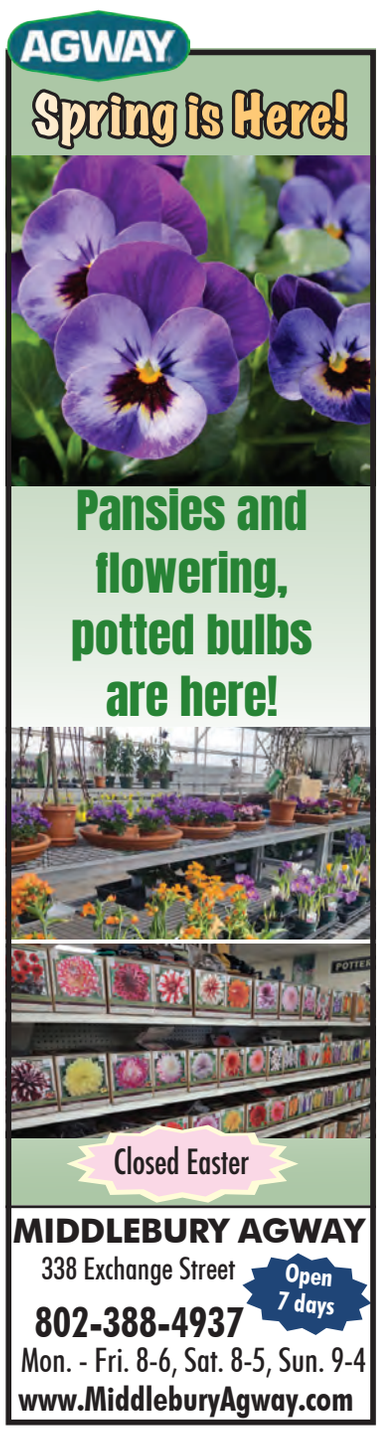
used it as an opportunity to inform others of the impacts of TBIs," said Rice Memorial senior Emilie Buttolph. "It takes a special person to overcome a TBI and an even stronger person to think of how they can help others with their experiences. I am very grateful to her for bringing the Brain Bee to Vermont, and hope that we can keep this program alive in our little state."

Scores from the first oral round, the written exam, and the practical exam were calculated. The top eight students sat in front of the audience while questions were displayed overhead and responses judged by two UVM neuroscientists: Tony Morielli and Alicia Ebert. Twenty questions later, Blanchard was named the winner.

The team title was won by South Burlington High School, which consisted of student participants Sophie Kellogg, Emma Blanchard, Elizabeth Nahstol, Charlotte Visger, Mateo Duracak and Paige Poirier. CVU took second as a team due to the hard work from Elle McAvey, Jack Daly, Sebastian Lemos, Alaina Tyler and Winston Ross. The third-place Rice team included Guillaume Bouramia, Emilie Buttolph, Jin Jeonghun and Keira Underwood.

There are now more than 60 competitors going to the national Brain Bee, which organizers said is proof that high school students' interest in neuroscience is growing across the country. Bernardin would love to reach more students in rural parts of Vermont so that they, too, can participate in this exceptional, exciting and free event.

For more information visit vermontbrainbee.com.



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Spotlight on Vergennes

Residents mull over Little City housing

By ANDY KIRKALDY

VERGENNES — About five dozen Vergennes residents and officials who came in person or by Zoom to the Vergennes Opera House to attend Monday's citywide Housing Conversation agreed on a basic premise: Their community needs more housing.

They also mostly supported in principle solutions suggested by the Vergennes Planning Commission — permitting more housing by easing land-use regulations, including in most residential districts and even in districts with zoning that now favors commercial, office or even industrial uses.

"I was encouraged by the enthusiasm, that there were a lot more people on board with the things that we were proposing than I would have expected," said Planning Commission Chair Shannon Haggett in a follow-up interview with the *Independent*.

He added, "It's encouraging to see that there's recognition we need to do something about housing, and there's support for being creative in addressing that shortfall."

Haggett said Monday's conversation was in many ways the initial public move toward updating the city plan to allow more housing in Vergennes, a process that could take a year or more and will include public hearings to be held by the planning commission and city council for first proposed plan updates, and then zoning changes to reflect the updated plan.

"We wanted to know thoughts and feelings of the community before we propose any amendments to the plan or regulations," he said. "So it's the first step of what could be a lengthy process."

> *"I think it's a great idea to add housing options to properties in the Northern Gateway District, like near Kennedy Brothers etc. … It seems like we need more housing, not more business space."*
>
> — Carrie Macfarlane

People on Monday sounded ready to consider changes.

For example, in a Zoom chat that was one of six discussion groups created after Haggett's introductory overview, several residents suggested such an approach.

"I think it's a great idea to add housing options to properties in the Northern Gateway District, like near Kennedy Brothers etc.," said resident Carrie Macfarlane in the Zoom chat. "It seems like we need more housing, not more business space."

In his Tuesday interview, Haggett described similar sentiments coming from members of the other five groups, which gathered around tables set up in the Vergennes theater.

"The big thing was 'Yes, we want to explore and encourage infill housing in all the current residential districts.' There were a lot of people marking up the maps for Medium Density Residential and saying, 'Let's do infill housing there,'" he said. "There was a willingness to support housing in both the business and industrial districts. And then, yes, in the Northern Gateway, there was a lot of both multi-family and multi-use support."

Haggett defined infill housing as the addition of an apartment to a single family home, or that of a smaller second separate "accessory dwelling unit" on a lot already occupied by a home.

He added that many who attended also backed discussions about housing with Vermont officials on the land the state owns in the city's northwest quadrant. That property includes the roughly 60-acre Northlands Job Corps property. State land in total makes up about 25% of the city's 2.5 square miles.

Macfarlane and a Zoom chatter identified only as Ashley both backed talks with state officials about residential land use.

"I'm in favor of increased housing on state-owned land," Ashley wrote.

Haggett said sentiment was widespread for working with state officials to allow residential development.

"There was a tremendous support for the state properties and what to do there, and really of all housing types," he said.

City Manager Ron Redmond, who coordinated the Zoom chat, posted in the chat that eventual development of that state land was not an impossible dream.

"There's an increased willingness by the state to talk about this that wasn't there 10 years ago," he wrote. "Meetings like this will help us with zoning and planning for that eventual outcome. I believe the state recognizes that this is in their best interest."

SETTING THE STAGE

Haggett opened Monday's meeting by reviewing a 2023 Addison County Regional Planning Commission survey on housing issues to which almost 800 county residents responded, about 83.6% of whom agreed there was a housing shortage.

Other survey takeaways were:

- In choosing a place to live, top priorities are reliable internet; proximity to services such as shopping, health care and dining; availability of municipal water/sewer; and nearness of family and friends.
- Lack of available housing and its high cost are the most prominent housing problems.
- All types of housing are lacking in county communities.

> *"There was a willingness to support housing in both the business and industrial districts. And then, yes, in the Northern Gateway, there was a lot of both multi-family and multi-use support."*
>
> — Shannon Haggett

Despite challenges — Haggett listed Vergennes's small size and its large percentage of state-owned land — he said the city's robust police, fire and recreation departments; sewer and water service; and strong downtown and schools are all pluses for attracting residents.

"We're well positioned as a city," Haggett said at the meeting.

With help from state officials and federal programs, city officials have also for years taken steps to pave the way to create more housing, Haggett told the attendees, listing a series of earlier efforts on which planners are building.

Vergennes in 2020 was selected by state officials for an "Enabling Better Places" case study on the possibilities of reducing downtown zoning setbacks, allowing accessory dwelling units on existing properties and easing parking requirements.

In 2023 Vergennes was chosen for a "Vermont Homes for All Toolkit" case study that examined how housing could be added to existing neighborhoods through infill methods.

Also in 2023, Vergennes adopted regulations that, according to the presentation, "increased building envelopes in Historic Neighborhood and High-Density Residential Districts," allowing greater housing densities, and "reduced parking requirements throughout the City," all changes that allowed more residential units per lot.

Further in 2023, Vergennes successfully applied for a Neighborhood Development Area. That designation offers municipalities and developers some permitting and financial incentives for new and/or infill housing within walking distance of their designated downtowns or village centers.

LOOKING AHEAD

Vergennes and Ferrisburgh have also just been jointly awarded a grant to study — mostly from a transportation standpoint, but also from other outlooks — how to develop the area around the train depot and park-and-ride lot that sits in Ferrisburgh just over the city line.

"We'll be working with Ferrisburgh on this and trying to figure out what to do with land use and housing," Haggett said.

All those elements will be in play over the months to come as planners update the current city plan, with zoning changes to follow that reflect the plan. Haggett said it could be a year or more before any zoning and subdivision amendments are adopted, with hearings allowing residents to weigh in along the way.

"It's going to take a while, and in that process there is lots of room for additional public input," he said.

One thing that Haggett acknowledged was not a hot topic on Monday except in the Zoom chat was affordability. Haggett did say Addison Housing Works Executive Director Elise Shanbacker suggested, in one group, allowing as many residential units as possible in larger historic homes in order to help keep them preserved or affordable.

In the Zoom chat resident Alicia Grangent pointed out that it's one thing to create housing, and another to have people be able to pay for it.

"We don't have enough options for housing and I foresee an increase in workforce options without the ability to house those people locally," Grangent wrote. "Also it's important to add that an increase in housing should have units that are affordable."

Another Zoom chatter, Mike Greenwood, was optimistic: "I believe there are lots of opportunities both in existing and in new projects."

Redmond said city officials would compile the results of Monday's meeting and publish them at vergennes.org.

Police investigate illicit drug deal

Vergennes Police Log

VERGENNES — Among actions between March 18 and 24 Vergennes police heard an allegation of a drug deal, helped calm a Vergennes Union Elementary School student having a tough day, aided a motorist with a flat tire on Main Street after dark, dealt with a stalking complaint, and before the weekend snowstorm warned downtown vehicle owners not to leave them out overnight on city streets.

During those seven days Vergennes police also conducted 12 patrols in cruisers and four on foot as well as one traffic stop, processed a pre-employment fingerprint request, responded to two false alarms, and:

On March 18:

- Took a report from the Maplefields convenience store that an apparent illicit drug deal had occurred in the business parking lot over the previous weekend.
- Spoke to two women at the station who came in to ask if their vehicle had been the subject of a be-on-the-lookout request. Police said the women also made allegations of domestic violence at a Panton residence, and they learned that the Addison County Unit for Special Investigations was looking into the case.

On March 19:

- Went to VUES and helped staff deescalate a student who had been described as out of control; an officer spoke directly to the student.
- Conducted a pre-employment background check.

On March 20:

- Stood by with a flashlight after dark to allow a motorist to safely change a flat tire on Main Street.
- Responded to a report of a semi stuck on the hill near Otter Creek, but it was gone when they arrived.
- Went to Middlebury to help police with the stabbing case in the village; city police said the suspect was in custody when they arrived.
- Checked the welfare of an Armory Lane resident, who was found to be OK.

On March 21:

- Contacted Addison Housing Works, the landlord in the case, to handle a complaint by one Walker Avenue resident that a neighbor was stalking her. An Addison Housing Works representative told the alleged stalker to stay away from his neighbor, police said.
- Tried to serve a citation on behalf of Vermont State Police operating out of the Williston barracks, but could not find the person to be cited.

On March 22:

- Took reports of fender-benders in the Shaw's Supermarket parking lot and on First Street.
- Issued a no-trespass order to a person who was unwanted at an Armory Lane apartment.
- Notified owners of vehicles in advance of the weekend snowstorm they should not leave their vehicles parked on city streets overnight in violation of the city's winter parking ban.

On March 23 notified the owner of a Panton Road business that one of its doors was unlocked after hours.

On March 24 responded to a report of a confused elderly woman wandering in a Main Street apartment building. Police said the Vergennes Area Rescue Squad took her to a hospital for help.

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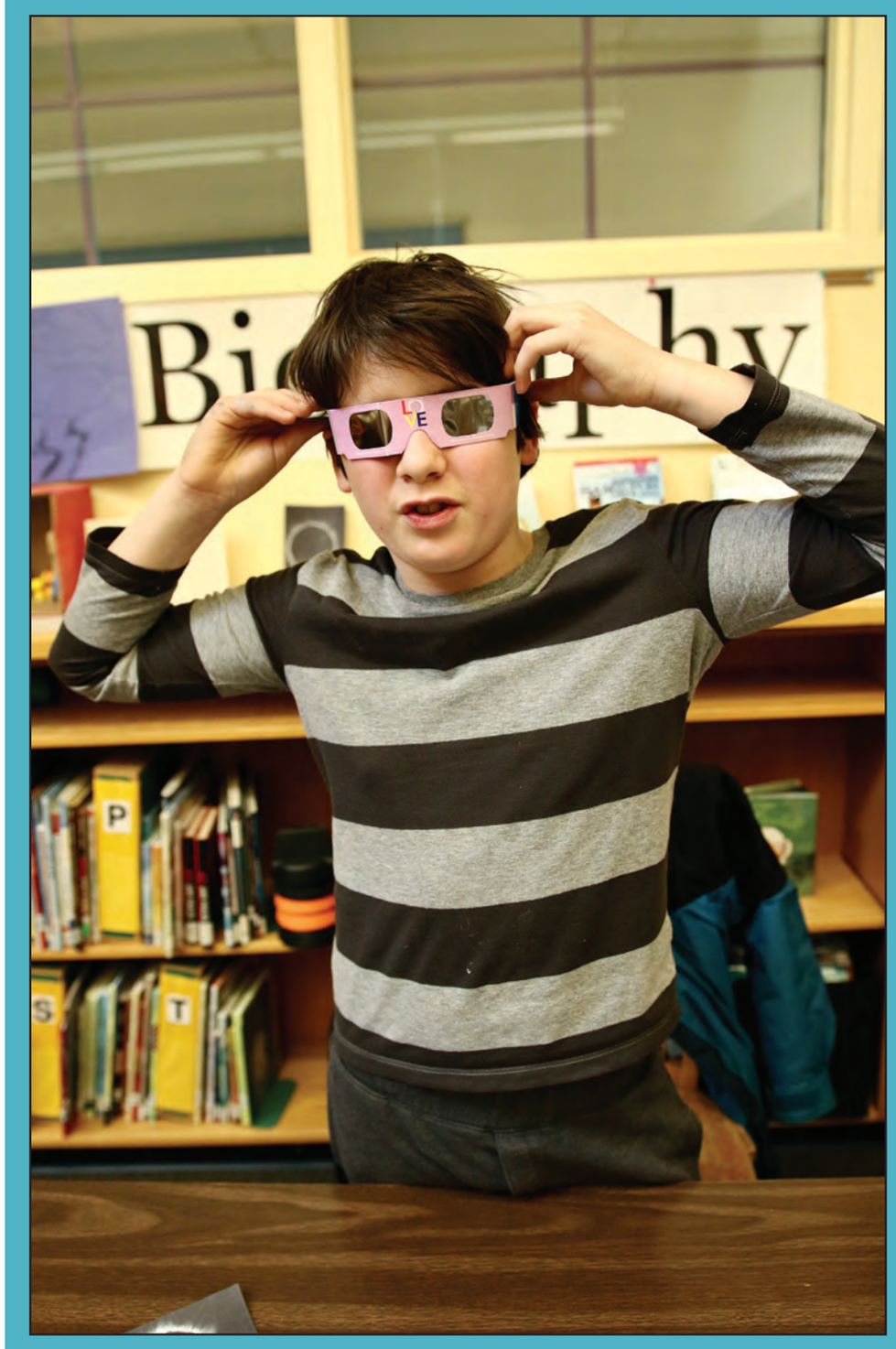

Eyes on the sky

THE APRIL 8 total solar eclipse is less than two weeks away, and students at Mary Hogan Elementary School are getting ready for it. Pupils spent time learning about the once-in-a-lifetime astronomical event this past Wednesday, March 20, with the help of some kid-sized models. Pictured here, clockwise from above, are Julian Stein; Zara Trump; Matilda Boyce; fourth-graders displaying their eclipse paraphernalia; Christopher checking out a model of the celestial show; and Jack Simpson squinting at a miniature moon.

Independent photos/Steve James

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Little Village

(Continued from Page 1A)
members in need.

Collaborators are hoping to further expand the initiative by growing more produce and eventually serving as a processing and storage facility for surplus crops gleaned and donated from other area farms.

Through their efforts, collaborators are hoping to address gaps in the local food system and ensure more community members have access to nutritious food.

"Feeding people is so crucially important," HOPE Executive Director Jeanne Montross said. "We grow enough food in this community to feed everybody, so connecting the dots, salvaging the harvest that would otherwise be lost, that's really important to us."

Ralston and HOPE have teamed up several times over the years to distribute food to Addison County residents. When Ralston and his spouse, Deb Gwinn, purchased the former Dow Farm around two years ago, it provided another opportunity to collaborate on addressing food security in the area, namely by growing and distributing crops produced at the farm to Addison County residents in need.

Ralston began working with Anna Freund, HOPE's food programs coordinator, who organized groups of volunteers from Middlebury College, the Addison County Relocalization Network and other organizations to help harvest and process crops grown at Little Village Acres.

This past year was the farm's first producing crops, and it was a particularly challenging growing season plagued by a late spring frost and excessive summer rains. Still, Little Village Acres yielded over 5,000 pounds of potatoes to distribute to community members and area food shelves.

"As soon as it was washed and bagged it went to people," Ralston said of the inaugural crop.

Freund said the ongoing partnership has provide opportunities for increased community engagement.

"I think that's a really big piece; engaging volunteers, engaging possibly a younger generation and forming a relationship with the land, helping people to gain life skills and just helping people to feel more connected and that we're all together," she said.

The partnership has also helped support HOPE's ongoing efforts to ensure community members have access to fresh produce.

Through the nonprofit's gleaning program, HOPE and its volunteers harvest thousands of pounds of surplus crops from area farms, which are then distributed to local food shelves and other community partners. Last year, the nonprofit gleaned over 34,000 pounds of local produce.

The collaboration comes at a time when HOPE is seeing an increase in demand for food assistance in the county.

"Food is a real, real challenge. Right now, the prices in food stores are not going down. They're absolutely outrageous and we have more people needing food," Montross said. "2023 there was a 41% higher demand for our food shelf than there was in 2022, and that's continuing into this year so far; that we're seeing new people and they legitimately don't have enough food."

Collaborators said the ongoing partnership helps provide HOPE with a more consistent supply of vegetables and fill in some of its produce gaps.

"You take what the glean will give you, and it may be a lot of squash, a lot of carrots, but it may not be onions or garlic," Ralston explained. "We met this winter with (Anna's) team and others to look at what those gaps were, and then our farm could plan a growing season where we could attempt to fill those gaps, so that we would have a reliable amount of produce to give."

AFTER HARVEST

This past year, the farm also provided a makeshift station for volunteers to wash and bag harvested potatoes.

Montross noted the importance of having access to such a site.

"I was remembering (HOPE staff) in the summer had gleaned turnips, and they had crusty, muddy dirt all over. It was clogging our sinks; it was making a mess. Then we were trying to store them without getting contact bruises," she said. "What we used to have to do to try and deal with this food was huge, so having the appropriate, efficient facilities is really, really crucial."

IN 2023 STAFF and volunteers at Little Village Acres farm helped harvest and process over 5,000 pounds of potatoes to distribute to residents and area food shelves. Here, Paul Ralston of Little Village Acres, left, exhibits a portion of the crop with Lilah Krugman and Lindsey Berk of the Addison County Relocalization Network and HOPE's Anna Freund.

Photo courtesy of Anna Freund

Ralston said Little Village Acres is planning to build a facility that would provide an upgraded after-harvest processing site.

The team has so far drilled a well on the property and created sedimentation areas so that when harvested crops are washed, the excess dirt is saved and can be returned to the fields.

> *"Food is a real, real challenge. Right now, the prices in food stores are not going down … 2023 there was a 41% higher demand for our food shelf than there was in 2022, and that's continuing into this year."*
>
> *— Jeanne Montross, HOPE*

Once complete, the facility will provide refrigerated storage space for various types of crops, which Freund said would help address a key need.

"This collaboration may also increase our ability to glean more from other farms as well because it will increase our storage capacity. That's one bottleneck that we have here," Freund said, adding that certain types of fruits and vegetables cannot be stored together, which creates challenges.

Ralston noted that Salvation Farms, a Lamoille County nonprofit that the team has worked with in the past, received an appropriation from the state to build the kind of clean-and-pack facility the Middlebury nonprofit is looking to construct.

"I've been following that and learning from that and trying to replicate some of the things that they're doing here in Addison County," he said.

The team sees several other potential benefits of the future facility, such as providing a space to process and store surplus crops from other local farms or host cooking classes.

However, Little Village Acres' plans have reached a bit of a standstill due to discrepancies between state statutes related to farming and local zoning ordinances.

For example, Ralston noted that processing crops from other farms would violate an aspect of Middlebury's zoning regulations known as the "50% rule."

"The state statute says '50% of Sales,' which is a different standard from Middlebury. We would be in compliance with the state but not the town," he explained. "We hope the Legislature can clarify and standardize the criteria for what's call 'Qualifying Products for Accessory on-farm Businesses.' The outside produce would be much more volume than the farm will produce, hence the quandary."

Ralston noted that Rep. Matt Birong, D-Vergennes, has introduced legislation (H.128) that would address those barriers, such as by updating the definition of accessory on-farm business and exempting those businesses from needing an Act 250 permit.

Little Village Acres's plans for a processing and storage facility are on hold while the proposed legislation makes its way through the Statehouse, though Ralston said the team is feeling optimistic.

"We're hopeful," Ralston said. "We've been trying to provide information, and lots and lots of farmers have testified."

In the meantime, collaborators are busy planning for the second year of crop production at Little Village Acres. Ralston said current plans are to grow around 20,000 pounds of potatoes, as well as peppers, cabbage, onions, Roma tomatoes and butternut squash.

Little Village Acres is also looking to hire a part-time seasonal farmer/gardener to help manage crops at the farm. This growing season, volunteers will once again help with harvesting and other tasks at Little Village Acres.

"We're learning as we go, and we'd love to find someone with the experience, so we don't have to learn it all by trial and error," Ralston said.

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SPORTS

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Mid men's lax downs league foe Conn College

By ANDY KIRKALDY

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College men's lacrosse team overcame a slow start on Friday to defeat visiting NESCAC foe Connecticut, 14-10. The game was moved from Saturday to dodge the incoming weekend snowstorm.

The Panthers also picked up a non-league win at Springfield (0-8) on Tuesday, 23-15, a game in which they took an 18-3 halftime lead.

The Panthers improved to 4-4, 3-1 in NESCAC play, while the Camels dropped to 1-4, 0-4 in NESCAC. Middlebury's record is somewhat misleading: It includes a pair of two-goal losses to teams ranked No. 5 and No. 8 in NCAA Division III as of March 18, and a two-goal loss in a Sunday road game outside of Boston after a Saturday setback in Maine to No. 9 Bowdoin. Middlebury as of March 18 was ranked No. 19 nationally even with a sub-500 record.

This past Friday, the Camels took an early 3-1 lead, with only junior middie Patrick Jamin finding the net for Middlebury. The Panthers pulled to within one goal with 4:42 remaining during the initial period on the first of sophomore middie Cooper DeMallie's three goals, and they were pressing for the tie.

But Camels Cole Foster and Liam Horkan (who led the Camels with three goals) each put the ball in the net during the quarter's final 22.8 seconds as their team took a 5-2 lead into the second quarter.

Two things happened to change the tenor of the game in the second period. First, Middlebury junior defender Henry Tarr twice stripped the ball from Camel attackers, bolted town the field, and fired the ball into the Connecticut net, once at 13:32 and again at 11:20.

Coach Dave Campbell said Tarr's efforts helped spark a turnaround for the Panthers.

"Henry Tarr scored two big goals in transition back-to-back," Campbell said. "I thought we were really tight on offense, which has kind of been our M.O. on offense for the last few weeks, and that

(See Lacrosse, Page 2B)

MIDDLEBURY JUNIOR ATTACKER Russell Thorndike applies pressure on a Connecticut midfielder during the Panther men's lax team's home win on Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

MIDDLEBURY JUNIOR ATTACKER Billy Curtis looks to make a play against Connecticut in the Panther men's lacrosse home victory Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

MIDDLEBURY SOPHOMORE MIDFIELDER J.D. Farkas has the inside track to scoop this ground ball during the Panther men's lax team home victory on Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

Sports BRIEFS

MUHS hockey players honored

MIDDLEBURY — Two members each from the Middlebury Union High School girls' and boys' hockey teams received postseason honors.

From the Tiger girls' squad, senior defender Lily Finn was named to the Lake Division A Second Team, and junior goalie Ruby Hubbell received Honorable Mention. Finn was also selected to play in the annual Rotary All Star Hockey Classic on March 16, but was unable to participate.

Two seniors from the Tiger boys' team were selected for the Rotary All Star Hockey Classic — forwards Toby Draper and Eddie Hodde. Both skated for the Austin team that defeated the Harris team, 7-4, with Draper scoring a goal.

Score BOARD

COLLEGE SPORTS

Women's Lacrosse

3/21 Midd vs TCNJ	14-6
3/22 Midd vs Conn	14-3

Men's Lacrosse

3/20 Union vs Midd	11-9
3/23 Midd vs Conn	14-10
3/26 Midd vs Springfield	23-15

Baseball In Florida

3/20 Midd vs Lawrence	19-7
3/22 Midd vs Johns Hopkins	7-5
3/23 Kalamazoo vs Midd	5-2
3/23 Midd vs Kalamazoo	15-3

Softball in Florida

3/20 Midd vs St. Lawrence	9-1
3/20 Midd vs W. Paterson	6-1
3/21 Kalamazoo vs Midd	11-8
3/21 Midd vs. S. Virginia	15-6
3/22 Midd vs Endicott	Canceled
3/22 Midd vs Wis-River Falls	Canceled

Schedule

COLLEGE SPORTS

Women's Lacrosse

3/30 Wesleyan at Midd	Noon
4/2 Midd at St Lawrence	5:30 PM
4/4 RPI at Midd	5:30 PM
4/6 Colby at Midd	Noon

Men's Lacrosse

3/30 Midd at Wesleyan	1 PM

(See Schedule, Page 3B)

Panther women roll on with two victories

Midd team prevails over NESCAC foe

By ANDY KIRKALDY

TRENTON, N.J. — The Middlebury College women's lacrosse team picked up two more one-sided victories late last week, both on the road, to improve to 7-0. The Panthers, ranked No. 1 in NCAA Division III, will next host NESCAC foe Wesleyan this Saturday at noon.

On this past Thursday, the Panthers defeated previously unbeaten host The College of New Jersey, 14-6. Middlebury's eight-goal margin of victory against the 10th-ranked Lions (5-1) was actually their smallest of the season.

In a game moved to Friday due to Saturday's impending snowstorm, the Panthers prevailed at NESCAC foe Connecticut, 14-3. Middlebury took leads of 5-0 after one period and 10-1 at halftime before going into cruise control.

After Caroline Adams gave Middlebury an early 1-0 lead, the Lions went up, 2-1, at 6:34 of the first quarter on goals by Marissa Lucca and Morgan Vaccaro.

Then the Panthers took control with a 7-0 run spanning the next 13:56. Anna Spehr started the surge and added another goal during the run. Adams scored the final goal of the surge and assisted three of the goals, Hope Shue and Susan Rowley each scored twice, and Sara Ellinghaus chipped in the other goal as Middlebury took an 8-2 lead at 6:56 of the second period.

Three times during the rest of the game, TCNJ cut the lead to five goals, the final time at 10-5 late in the third quarter. But the Lions could come no closer.

Shue, Rowley and Spehr each finished with three goals, and Adams added two goals and three assists. Three Panthers chipped in a goal apiece, including Maggie Coughlin, who added three assists. Ellinghaus tied for the team lead with four ground balls and also caused three turnovers, while Adams controlled eight draws. Panther goalie Gina Driscoll made two saves, and the Lion goalie Julie Charest made 15.

In a game moved to Friday due to Saturday's impending snowstorm, the Panthers

(See Women's lacrosse, Page 2B)

OV Benoit siblings place at wrestling New Englands

FITCHBURG, Mass. — Two Otter Valley Union High/Middle School wrestlers, siblings Colby and Reece Benoit, placed at the Youth New England Wrestling Tournament, held in Fitchburg on March 18 and 19.

Colby Benoit took second at 124 pounds in the boys' 15-and-under category in what OV team organizer Greg Babcock called "a stacked bracket." Babcock added that was the best finish for any Vermont competitor at the tournament.

Reece Benoit took fifth in an also competitive girls' 12-and-under 101-pound field, Babcock said.

Also competing at the tournament from the OV middle school and Little Otters wrestling programs were Brady Babcock, Landon Wilcox, Caleb Woodward and Ethan Kenyon.

Greg Babcock also noted that the OV middle school team won the state tournament in Barre on Feb. 17, with first-place finishes from Brady Babcock at 81 pounds and Colby Benoit at 124; a second-place effort from Emmett Mallory at 154; third-place efforts from Lucas Whitney at 106, Woodward at 112 and Kenyon at 169, and fourth-place finishes from Camden Giles at 81, Landon Wilcox at 106 and Maddox Davis at 130.

BROTHER AND SISTER Colby, right, and Reece Benoit, both representing Otter Valley, earned podium finishes at the Youth New England Wrestling Tournament, held in Fitchburg, Mass., on March 18 and 19.

Photo courtesy of Greg Babcock

Lacrosse

(Continued from Page 1B)

kind of loosened us up and gave us some momentum."

Tarr and his compatriots on defense — juniors Nate Ruoss and Dylan Fagan and senior Teddy Curran joined him on low D, and Drew Dummer saw a lot of time at long-stick middie — also settled in in front of sophomore goalie Hayden Kern. After the first quarter, the Camels found it harder to get good looks on goal.

After scoring five times on seven shots on goal in the first period, Connecticut scored only five more times in the final three quarters on 17 shots on target, and Kern finished with 14 saves.

At the other end of the field, offensive Assistant Coach Troy Haefele tweaked the Panthers' tactics, which became more productive.

"Coach Haef actually changed up what we were doing on offense. We went back to some old stuff that we did, and the guys just took to it, and we just started putting the ball in," Campbell said. "Their goalie (Will Rice, who made 18 saves) was hot early, but we gave him a lot of stuff. We did a much better job of placing (shots) after that."

Both goalies held the fort for five minutes after Tarr's second goal. Finally, Tom Conley tied the game for the Panthers at 6:21, sweeping across the box from left to right and placing the ball back into the left side of the net. Seventy seconds later, the Camels took their last lead: Aidan McAvoy rolled from behind the left side of the net and found the lower right corner.

But the genie was out of the bottle for Middlebury. Conley, on the left side, took a diagonal feed from Jamin and whipped a bullet home, and at 2:44, sophomore attacker Logan White scored in transition from Jamin, and the Panthers led at the half, 7-6.

Conley, on another strong feed from Jamin, made it 8-6 just 40 seconds into the second half, and the teams traded goals for the rest of the quarter. Patrick Atkins scored two unassisted goals for Connecticut, and DeMallie, from Conley, and Russell Thorndike, from White with the Panthers a man up, answered each time for Middlebury. That made it 10-8 going into the final 15 minutes.

A Panther penalty allowed Horkan to make it 10-9 at 14:09in the fourth period, and Horkan tied the game briefly at 10:08. Kern stopped Horkan's initial point-blank bid, but Horkan dove to scoop in the rebound.

But the Panthers were still clicking and closed out the win with four unanswered goals, while not allowing another shot on Kern. At 9:00, DeMallie netted what proved to be the game-winner, swooping into the box from the right and firing into the upper right corner.

Senior attacker William Ryan got open out front and whipped home a Conley feed at 7:32, Dummer bounced home a 15-yard bomb at 7:32 set up by Thorndike, and Ryan iced the cake with 1:36 to go on a left-to-right feed from Jamin.

On Tuesday against Springfield, the Panthers scored nine goals in each of the first two quarters, while Kern stopped three of the 13 shots he faced during the first half as Middlebury bolted to its insurmountable 18-3 halftime lead on the way to the 23-15 victory.

White led the Panthers with six goals, DeMallie recorded his second straight hat trick, and other offensive contributors included Curtis (two goals, two assists), Ryan (two goals, assist), and Thorndike and Will Ford (two goals apiece). Matt Dailey and A.J. Noyes shared time in the Middlebury goal in the second half. Mason Nocito scored four goals, and Jake Degman added three for the Pride. Two Springfield goalies combined for eight saves.

The Panthers are off the pace they set in 2023, when they finished 18-3, took second in NESCAC and won two NCAA games. They are still missing injured senior defender and captain Luke Simpson, who Campbell called the team's best player during the past two seasons; he could return at some point this spring.

In the meantime, Campbell said the team is working hard to get to where it needs to be, but must iron out a number of wrinkles.

"Little things all over the field (need to improve), offense, defense, faceoffs, riding, man-up, man-down," he said. "We just need to be a little bit better in every area, which is probably asking a lot, but we're capable of doing it."

The Panthers remain in contention in NESCAC play, with their 3-1 record good for second place behind three 3-0 teams: Tufts, Wesleyan and Bowdoin. Middlebury visits Wesleyan on Saturday in an important matchup.

"We've done OK in conference so far, so hopefully we can keep that going," Campbell said.

PANTHER JUNIOR MIDDIE Patrick Jamin fires home the first goal for the Middlebury men's lax team in a Friday home victory over Connecticut.

Independent photo/Steve James

PANTHER JUNIOR DEFENDER Henry Tarr celebrates the second of his two critical second-quarter fast-break scores during Friday's Middlebury men's lacrosse victory.

Independent photo/Steve James

PANTHER SOPHOMORE GOALIE Hayden Kern goes low for the stick save against Connecticut's Patrick Atkins during the Middlebury men's lacrosse home game Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

Women's lacrosse

(Continued from Page 1B)

prevailed at NESCAC foe Connecticut, 14-3. Middlebury took leads of 5-0 after one period and 10-1 at halftime before going into cruise control. The Camels dropped to 4-3, 1-3 in league play.

Shue led the offense with four goals, Adams scored three times, and Kelcey Dion had two goals and an assist. Driscoll made two saves in the first half and allowed one goal. Elizabeth Savage played the second half in goal for Middlebury and stopped five of seven shots on her net and also led the team with four ground balls. Katie Coughlin scored twice for the Camels, and goalie Violette Nidds made nine saves.

15th Annual Food from the Heart Food Drive

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Saturday, March 30
9am to 3pm

- Donate canned and/or boxed foods
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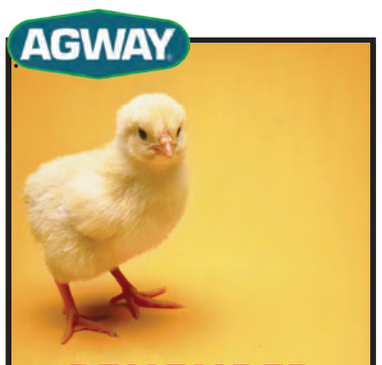

AGWAY

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Winner winner

ADDISON INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPHER Steve James's sports photos brought home gold, silver and bronze in the Better Newspaper Competition this past weekend. At the annual convention of the New England Newspaper and Press Association, James's photo of girls' soccer action won first place in the Sports Action Photo category. In the fall 2022 photo, MUHS goalie Kassidy Brown dives on the ball just ahead of charging VUHS striker Ava Francis. James also earned second place in Sports Action Photo for an image of Evan Laroche armwrestling, and third place in Sports Feature Photo for his picture of Otter Valley basketball players mobbing teammate Connor Denis after he made a buzzer-beating basket that won the game.

Independent photos/ Steve James

Trout season opens April 13

MONTPELIER — Vermont's trout fishing season opens Saturday, April 13.

Despite lingering snow cover in some areas of the state, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says anglers can still have fun and be successful early in the season if they keep a few strategies in mind.

"Just like any other time of year, anglers fishing early in the spring should adjust their tactics based on conditions," said State Fisheries Biologist Shawn Good. "Trout will become more active with warmer water temperatures. If you can find a good location and present your bait or lure without spooking the trout, you'll have a good chance of catching a few fish, and enjoy a nice day outside."

Good adds that finding a small to medium low-elevation river or stream that is not too murky from spring runoff can be key. Trout are coldblooded and may be slow to bite especially with low water temperatures, so it is important that they can also see your bait, lure or fly.

Larger baits can often be more effective for enticing early-season trout into biting. Spin-anglers should try nightcrawlers, egg imitations, or bright colored spoons and spinners. Fly anglers may find success in the early season by drifting large, more visible flies such as wooly buggers, streamers, or San Juan worms along the bottom in slower pools and runs.

Trout will often hold close to the bottom in the deeper areas of streams during high flow conditions to conserve energy. Choose locations and tactics that allow you to fish using a slow retrieval right along the bottom. Focus on deep holes behind current breaks created by big boulders, downed trees or log-jams where trout may be resting. If possible, approach the hole from downstream as trout will often orient themselves facing the current.

> *"Just like any other time of year, anglers fishing early in the spring should adjust their tactics based on conditions."*
>
> — *State Fisheries Biologist Shawn Good.*

While Vermont offers excellent and diverse fishing opportunities for wild trout, stocking also occurs in many lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers where wild trout populations are low or absent. This generally happens each year once the ice has melted and following spring runoff.

"Early in the season, like on opening weekend, you'll probably have more success if you focus on waters known to hold wild trout," said Good. "Despite unpredictable weather during early spring, each year anglers report catching impressive trout during opening weekend."

Good also reminds anglers to check the department's website frequently as updates are made to the Trout Stocking page. "

Anglers who like to fish and release their catch don't need to wait for opening day. Nearly all waterbodies are now open year-round to catch-and-release fishing for trout in Vermont. Check the 2024 Vermont Fishing Guide and Regulations which is available free from license agents.

A helpful overview of the fishing regulations can be found atvtfishandwildlife.com.

The department reminds anglers that in almost all cases regulations have been simplified. For any river, stream, lake, or pond not listed in the Index of Rivers and Streams or Index of Lakes and Ponds go to General Fishing Regulations on page 52.

ANGLERS CAN IMPROVE their chances of success by fishing their fly, lure or bait slowly along the bottom when Vermont's trout season opens on Saturday, April 13.

Photo courtesy of VTF&W

Schedule

(Continued from Page 1B)

4/3 Midd at Hamilton.....5 PM
4/6 Midd at Colby.....1 PM

Baseball

3/27 Midd at RPI..... 3:30 PM
3/29 Midd at Hamilton..... 3:30 PM
3/30 Midd at Hamilton (2) ..... Noon
3/31 Midd at W. New England ..... Noon
4/3 Union at Midd ..... 3:30 PM
4/6 Bowdoin at Midd ..... 3:30 PM
4/7 Bowdoin at Midd (2)..... Noon

Softball

3/27 Midd at RPI..... 3:30 PM
3/29 Midd at Hamilton..... 3:30 PM
3/30 Midd at Hamilton (2) ..... Noon
4/3 Union at Midd (2)..... 3:30 PM
4/6 Bates at Midd (2) ..... 1 PM
4/6 Bowdoin at Midd (2)..... Noon

..... *Schedules, especially at the high school level, change often due to weather and transportation and officiating availability. Please consult school websites to confirm dates and times.*

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community calendar

It's almost time

THE TOTAL SOLAR Eclipse is almost here. Check calendar listings for the numerous events leading up to and on the day of this rare celestial phenomenon.

mar 28 THURSDAY

Solar eclipse preview in Middlebury. Thursday, March 28, 4-5 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Join Vermont Astronomical Society to learn about the total eclipse on April 8, how to view it safely, and other interesting topics.

Palliative Support Volunteer Training on Zoom. Thursday, March 28, 4-5:30 p.m. The Palliative Care Department and Palliative Support Services at Porter Medical Center will host a new Palliative Support Volunteers training, which will conclude April 16. Includes six scheduled group Zoom sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4-5:30pm, conversations with subject matter experts, self-study, and dyad learning, connecting with current volunteers, exploring the art of presence and listening, and practices that will increase your own confidence around entering an intense experience. Once volunteers complete this training, they will be able to be matched with folks living with a serious illness to provide companionship and support and bring comfort to those at end of life by sitting vigil. More info: Louella Richer at lricher@portermedical.org. Advance registration required. Must commit to six sessions.

"The Importance of Wildland Forests for Climate Resilience and Human Health" in Middlebury. Thursday, March 28, 7-8 p.m., Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest, 531 College St. Susan Masino of Trinity College and Ed Faison of the Highstead Foundation will give the third talk in the "Forests for Climate, Forests for Life" series. Refreshments served; free and open to the public.

mar 30 SATURDAY

New Haven Ladies Union Rummage/Attic sale in New Haven. Saturday, March 30, 8 a.m.-noon, New Haven Congregational Church, Town Hill Rd. Rada ware, bake sale, puzzles, kitchen items and much more. More info call Carol at 802-989-2367.

Bake sale in Orwell. Saturday, March 30, 9 a.m., Buxton's Store, 499 Main St. Come to the Orwell Fortnightly Club's bake sale and find delicious baked goods for your Easter table: pies, cakes, cupcakes, breads/rolls and more. Come early for the best selection. All proceeds support Orwell Fortnightly Club's mission to give back to the community. Community service projects, local scholarships, and homemade desserts without the extra work? Yes, please!

Solar telescope and sun spotter demonstration in Vergennes. Saturday, March 30, noon, Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St.

apr 1 MONDAY

Drop-in Korean drumming class in Middlebury. Monday, April 1, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Middlebury College Freeman International Center Bunker. Learn Korean Drumming. Free drop-in class. E-mail Shelby Kimmel skimmel@middlebury.edu for directions or with questions.

apr 2 TUESDAY

Addison County Riverwatch field season orientation. Tuesday, April 2, 7 p.m., Zoom. Join us for a one-hour virtual orientation to Addison County River Watch's upcoming busy field season. River work starting in April comprises both water quality monitoring and river buffer plantings. We have a wide variety of fulfilling outdoor opportunities for volunteers who wish to engage in the cause of enhancing water quality. This orientation will go over River Watch's goals, tasks and how volunteers can help. Contact us for the Zoom link at acrpc.org/regional-programs/natural-resources/acrwc.

apr 3 WEDNESDAY

Historical society meeting in Shoreham. Wednesday, April 3, 6:30 p.m., Platt Memorial Library, 279 Main St. The Shoreham Historical Society will hold another meeting to work on planning more for the future. What programs do we want? How often do we want to meet? Please join us.

apr 4 THURSDAY

Right Tree, Right Place: A Spring Walking Tour and Presentation in Middlebury. Thursday, April 4, 5:30 p.m., College Park, across from Shiretown Market, 54 College St. Join Tim Parsons, Landscape Horticulturist at Middlebury College, on a walking tour of the trees of College Park and nearby Twilight Green. The talk will include tips on how and where to plant trees as well as care of the tree in the first year and beyond. Free. More info at middleburytreecommittee@gmail.com.

"Remembering The Dawn Land": A virtual presentation on the historical novel by its Joseph Bruchac. Thursday, April 4, 6 p.m., virtual on Zoom. The area we now refer to as Western New England has been the homeland of Native people for at least 10,000 years. Relying on oral traditions and the related elements of natural history, archaeology, cultural survival, indigenous language and the living land itself, Bruchac takes us back to that ancient time. Donations appreciated. Register in advance at tinyurl.com/Dawn-Land-Bruchac. Questions? contact programassociate@abenakiart.org.

apr 5 FRIDAY

Community dinner in New Haven. Friday, April 5, 5:30 p.m., New Haven Congregational Church, Town Hill Rd. Enjoy a free meal of spaghetti, meatballs, salad, bread and a cookie while mingling with fellow community members. More info contact Dawn at 802 349-0352.

apr 6 SATURDAY

Spring Breakfast in Shoreham. Saturday April 6, 8:30-10 a.m., Shoreham Congregational Church, School Rd. Feast on plain or blueberry pancakes or French toast with Vermont maple syrup, sausages, home fries, quiche and beverages. Cost $10 adults/$5 children/ $30 families. A great chance to enjoy good food as you chat with your neighbors and friends. Raffling off a spring basket of goodies; tickets $1 each or 10 for $5. Please bring a non-perishable food item or paper product for the Food Shelf to help those in need.

Music with Anna in Orwell. Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m., Orwell Free Library, 473 Main St. Immerse your little ones (ages 3-6) in the joy of music with early childhood music educator Anna Laufenberg. Through hands-on instrument exploration, interactive sing-alongs, and creative movement, cultivate a love for music while fostering creativity. Free.

Book Sale in Middlebury. Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St.

"Solar Eclipse Storytime" in Brandon. 10:30-11:30 a.m., Brandon Public Library, 1 Conant Square. Storytime this week will focus on the solar eclipse.

Last chance solar eclipse program in Vergennes. Saturday, April 6, 11 a.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. A variety of activities and also information on how to safely view the eclipse. Free eclipse sunglasses are available to library card holders (limit three per family). For more information on these fun and informative eclipse events, visit bixbylibrary.org.

Youth Ministry Bingo in Vergennes. Saturday, April 6, 5 p.m., St. Peter's Parish Hall, 85 South Maple St. Doors open at 5 p.m., Bingo starts at 6 p.m. This is a family friendly event. All cash prizes, 50/50 raffle. Refreshments sold. This event is sponsored by St. Ambrose and St. Peter's Youth Ministry to benefit the on-going program costs.

apr 7 SUNDAY

Spring breakfast in Middlebury. Sunday, April 7, 8-10 a.m., VFW, 530 Exchange St. Menu includes pancakes, sausage gravy/biscuits,, bacon, hash, sausage, hash browns, eggs to order, scrambled eggs, toast, coffee and orange juice. Adults $12/ children $ 6. Open to the public. All benefits support Veterans programs.

apr 8 MONDAY

Legislative breakfast in Weybridge. Monday, April 8, 7-8:45 a.m., Weybridge Congregational Church, 2790 Weybridge Rd. Bridport Grange and Addison County Farm Bureau invite all to chat with legislative representatives over breakfast. Meal starts at 7 a.m. Program starts at 7:30 a.m. The purchase of breakfast is not required to attend, however it is a nice thank you to our hosts, to help defray the cost of opening their hall so early.

The Great Middlebury Solar Eclipse Celebration in Middlebury. Monday, April 8, 12:30-4 p.m., Middlebury Rec Park, Mary Hogan Dr. Get your eclipse glasses and join the big event, organized by the rec departments of Middlebury and Brandon, Isley Public Library, Brandon Free Library, Better Middlebury Partnership, ACSD & MESA. Food trucks, disc golf, music, games, pump track and mini ramp.

Solar Eclipse party in Monkton. Monday, April 8, 1-4:30 p.m., Town Hall, 280 Monkton Ridge. Get your eclipse glasses and join in. Food vendors Queen Bee and ReMarcAble Bakery will be there. Please RSVP to help us better plan for the party at forms.gle/4GmxWscgpFdRG49j6. The library and the town hall have a limited number of eclipse glasses to distribute, and a limited number of glasses will be available at the event.

apr 10 WEDNESDAY

"Vermont vs. Hollywood: 100 Years of Vermont in Film" in Middlebury. Wednesday, April 10, 10:30 a.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Amanda Kay Gustin of the Vermont Historical Society will provide background and share clips of films ranging from 1919's "Way Down East" to 2005's "Thank You for Smoking." A Vermont Humanities Council Program. Free and open to the public.

apr 11 THURSDAY

"Feminism, Fascism and the Future" conference in Middlebury. Thursday, April 11, 5-7 p.m., Franklin Environmental Center, The Orchard-Hillcrest 103, 531 College St. In recent years, feminist scholarship and gender studies have come under increasing attack from right-wing politicians across the globe. This symposium aims to shed light on the intersection of feminism and fascism, examining how the rise of fascist ideologies poses a threat to gender studies, feminism and LGBTQ rights in Europe, Latin America and the United States. More info at tinyurl.com/Gensler2024.

apr 12 FRIDAY

"Feminism, Fascism and the Future" conference in Middlebury. Friday, April 12, 9:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Franklin Environmental Center, The Orchard-Hillcrest 103, 531 College St. See April 11 listing.

apr 13 SATURDAY

Prize Bingo in Leicester. Saturday, April 13, 1 p.m., Senior Center, Leicester Four Corners. All are welcome and refreshments served.

Takeout only turkey and all the fixin's supper in Vergennes. Saturday, April 13, 5 p.m., Vergennes United Methodist Church, Main Street, across from the Vergennes Opera House. Menu includes roast turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetable, roll and dessert. Adults $12. Take out preorder only. Must place order by 7 p.m., Thursday, April 11, at 802-877-3150.

apr 14 SUNDAY

Masons breakfast in Bristol. Sunday, April 14, 7:30-10 a.m., Masonic Lodge, 4 Elm St. Sausage gravy with homemade biscuits, scrambled eggs (or over easy if you ask us to flip them), bacon, sausage patties, sausage links, home fries, pancakes, blueberry pancakes, French toast, all with Vermont maple syrup and Cabot butter, assorted juices, homemade apple bread pudding, fresh fruit salad and coffee. Adults $9/ children under 12 $5. All profits donated to a person or group in need within the Five Town Area.

Breakfast Buffet in Vergennes. Sunday, April. 14, 8-10 a.m., St. Peter's Parish Hall, 85 S. Maple St. Omelets to order, scrambled eggs, French toast, bacon, sausage, fruit, plain and blueberry pancakes, maple syrup, sausage gravy on biscuits, corn bread, home fries, mini muffins, juice, milk and coffee. Adults $12/children 8-12 $7/immediate family $32 (maximum). Offered by Vergennes Knights of Columbus to support their community service programs.

"One Room Schools of Ferrisburgh" slideshow in Ferrisburgh. Sunday, April 14, 2 p.m., Ferrisburgh Community Center, Route 7. Join the Ferrisburgh Historical Society and Charlie Langworthy and see what the schools looked like before consolidation. Hint, it was a much simpler time.

apr 20 SATURDAY

Repair fair in Middlebury. Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m., American Legion, 49 Wilson Rd. A family-friendly event with fabulous raffle prizes where one can enjoy refreshments, learn basic repair skills and get their favorite items fixed by their neighbors in Addison County. To volunteer or pre-register an item for repair, call 802-388-2333 or go to www.AddisonCountyRecycles.org/repair-fair. Free.

Twist O'Wool auction in Monkton. Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m., Monkton Central School, 1036 Monkton Rd. The Twist O' Wool guild is holding its annual auction of fiber art supplies and tools. Everyone is welcome. Come and get some new supplies or pick up a new craft.

CALENDAR ONLINE
addisonindependent.com

Starksboro Meetinghouse gets $100,000 boost

STARKSBORO — The Preservation Trust of Vermont has given a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant of $100,000 to the Starksboro Meetinghouse to support exterior repairs, structural improvements, and the expansion of the Starksboro Cooperative Preschool.

The meetinghouse, constructed in 1840 in the Gothic Revival style, has a long history of serving the community. The first floor was built to house three of Starksboro's congregations while the lower level was home to the original town hall. It was the Civil War recruitment post, the founding home for the Starksboro Public Library, and the host of a community Christmas candlelight service for over 50 years. The upper floor is still open for community purposes and the lower level is now home to the Starksboro Cooperative Preschool (SCP). Bruhn funds will support upgrades to ensure that the building continues to serve the Starksboro community, including its youngest residents.

The Starksboro Meetinghouse project and the Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant program are supported by the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The program supports the preservation and restoration of buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities with fewer than 7,500 residents.

BASKING IN THE GLOW of the setting sun, the Starksboro Meetinghouse can look forward to exterior repairs, structural improvements, and the expansion of the Starksboro Cooperative Preschool, thanks to a grant of $100,000 from The Preservation Trust of Vermont.

Photo courtesy of Keegan Tierney

Notes of appreciation

Mamma Mia crew thankful for support

Anyone who grocery shops for their household knows how expensive it is to put food on the table right now. When a group of parent volunteers began discussions for how to feed the cast and crew of Vergennes Union High School's production of Mamma Mia during their technical rehearsals/performance week, we knew we'd need some community support to help our dollars stretch as far as possible.

We reached out to several local restaurants and food-service businesses and were unsurprised by their prompt, generous responses. Each of our donors gave easily and enthusiastically, enabling us to provide our students and their support team with delicious meals and a welcome chance to sit together each evening before the night's work commenced.

We are grateful for the kind support of the following businesses: Black Sheep Bistro, Community Market, Dakin Farms, Green Peppers, Maple Meadow Farms, Middlebury Bagel and Deli, Middlebury Natural Food Co-op, Mister Ups, Park Squeeze, 3 Squares Café, and Vermont Cookie Love.

Amanda Letendre & Alexandria McGuire
(Commodore Friends of Music, parent volunteers)

GMC talk correction

In the March 21 edition of the *Addison Independent* the photograph of the salamander on page 7B was missing attribution. Credit goes to photographer Rich Kern.

Reader Comments

Here's what one reader has to say about us!

A subscriber from Middlebury writes:

"Love the Independent and the team who makes it all happen!"

Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Leicester

Have a news tip?
Call the Addison Independent at 388-4944.

NEWS

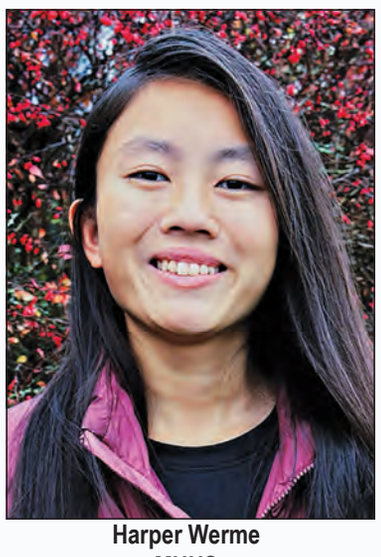
LEICESTER — Town Clerk Julie Delphia reminds dog owners of the need to register dogs before April 1. Cost information is available on the town website or by calling the office at 802-247-5961. To avoid penalties and fees, get this done before the dog census is completed.

The Leicester Historical Society is once again sponsoring Prize Bingo on Saturday, April 13, at 1 p.m. at the Senior Center at the Four Corners. All are welcome and refreshments served.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Middlebury Union High School

Harper Werme



Harper Werme
MUHS

Harper Werme is Middlebury Union High School's next Student of the Week. A resident of New Haven, she attends MUHS through the state's public school choice program. She is the daughter of Janet Castle and Dan Werme; the family has two cats, Ivan and Scout.

Harper is a well-known student leader in many areas within our community. She is a member of various school activities and captains the girls' varsity soccer team, a team she has been a member of since 9th grade. Harper serves as the team's center midfielder and says the leadership of Coach Livesay makes for a lot of fun. She also plays as the outside back on a Nordic soccer club team in Essex Junction from November to July. Harper serves as a coach at the Summit Soccer School for K-2nd graders during the summer. She enjoyed her role as a Peer Leader as the 9th graders transitioned from MUMS to MUHS at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. When the senior play, "Legally Blonde," was staged in mid-March, Harper performed as part of the ensemble. "It was fun being with my classmates for rehearsals and pulling it all together!" she says.

Our teachers respect her focus in the classroom and ability to work both independently and collaboratively within groups. They note her focus and desire to delve deeply into the subject matter and appreciate her attentiveness in class. Her academic record demonstrates her ability to grasp difficult concepts and is testimony to her dedication to her studies. She especially enjoys the experiments done in Physics class with Mr. Harrington. As a sophomore, Harper completed a year-long research project focused on her love of soccer. Her final project included presenting a series of videos for players to learn more about the game, build skills and become a team player.

As Harper looks ahead to the final weeks of her senior year, she reflects on her friendships and thanks her teachers for creating a respectful learning environment. In hindsight, she says, "The four years have gone so fast!" She is looking forward to college and is narrowing down her choices, hoping to remain fairly close to home at a smaller, four-year liberal arts institution. We are confident that a bright future awaits Harper.

Vergennes Union High School

Sam Moriglioni

Sam Moriglioni
VUHS

Sam Moriglioni of North Ferrisburgh is Vergennes Union High School's Student of the Week. Sam really enjoys school, even when he has off days. He likes to learn new things and ask questions. His favorite classes are literature and arts. He has received awards from some of his teachers and was tapped to go to the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership conference. Sam is an artsy person, dabbling in everything from sculpture to photography. "You can probably find me crocheting something new every week," he says.

Sam does lights and sound for VUHS musical productions as well as set painting and make-up. He is a member of VUHS's Gay Student Alliance and has helped set up community events for Pride and Peace One Day. He is hoping to speak at this year's Pride event as a trans student and spread some joy.

Sam has done lots of babysitting and pet sitting and is currently looking for a job. Along with the rest of the senior class, he was a part of a Community Service Day where he cleaned up and rebuilt part of a playground. The next year he cleaned out the Boys and Girls Club garden. He thinks it's really important to volunteer in the community, no matter how small it is.

Sam loves art and all things crafty and expressive. He loves exploring and going out into nature and finding rocks or mushrooms. A big crochet fan, he especially likes to make clothes and accessories.

Sam says one of the biggest lessons he has learned at VUHS is how important it is to connect with people and come together to do good for the community. "It can be hard to come together as students, especially if we have different interests and opinions," he says. "I've been really grateful to have opened myself up to people and not worrying about what they think of me."

After graduation, Sam plans on attending Vermont State University at the Johnson campus for a major in Media Arts. He is also considering a minor in Psychology or Business. Ideally, he wants to become an editorial photographer and stylist. Sam has a bright future ahead of him, and all of us at VUHS wish him well.

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Students of the Week are chosen by school teachers and administration
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If you are interested in advertising in Student of the Week contact advertising@addisonindependent.com

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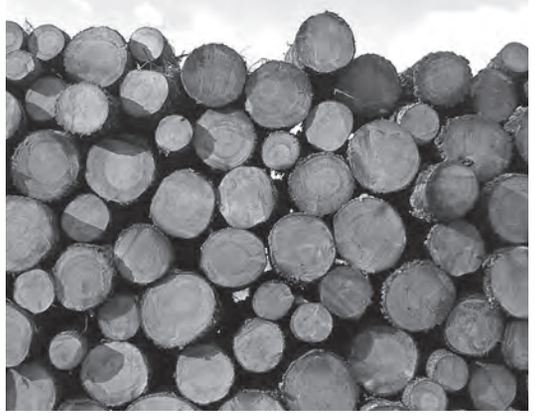

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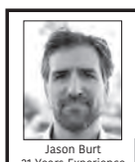

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THE TURNING POINT CENTER of Addison County is open for in-person services, Monday through Friday, 10am-4pm, 54A Creek Road, Middlebury. We are available by phone 24/7 at 802-388-4249.

Public Meetings

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Public Meetings

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Help Wanted

Public Meetings

Help Wanted

Public Meetings

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The Independent assumes no financial responsibility for errors in ads, but will rerun classified ad in which the error occurred. No refunds will be possible. Advertiser will please notify us of any errors which may occur after first publication.

Number of words: _____
Cost: _____
# of runs: _____
Spotlight Charge: _____
Internet Listing: $2.00
TOTAL: _____

Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

Public Meetings

VERMONT SUPPORT LINE Are you struggling with a challenging situation? Do you have feelings of sadness, loneliness, isolation, anger, or depression? You don't have to face it alone. Talk with a caring person who understands what you're going through today by calling or texting the free and confidential Pathways Vermont Support Line available 24/7 at (833) VT - TALKS.

Help Wanted

Part-Time Office Assistant

WowToyz, a successful and established manufacturer of high-quality, educational toys for over 30 years, is looking for a motivated individual to be part of our growing company! The successful candidate must be dependable, eager to learn new processes, and willing to jump in when a need is observed. This is a position for a detail-oriented team player with confidence, energy, and great organizational and communication skills.

Retirees are welcome and encouraged to apply! We offer flexible work schedules and competitive wages.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Enter purchase orders into our proprietary computer software system

Answer phone, transfer calls, and assist with customer service

Friendly, professional, and service-focused positive attitude

SKILLS & REQUIREMENTS

Ability to organize and prioritize tasks with minimal supervision

Ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with all levels of the organization

Analytical abilities and aptitude in problem-solving

Experience in Microsoft Office Suite or data entry software is beneficial but not a requirement

Part-Time Warehouse

WowToyz in Vergennes is seeking part-time help for the morning shift in our warehouse, picking and packing orders and unloading trucks. Ideal candidates are organized, dependable, and able to work 20-30 hours/week, Mon-Fri. ***Retirees are welcome and encouraged to apply!*** We offer flexible work schedules and competitive wages.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccinations required for all employees

To apply email contact information and work history to: resumes@wowtoyz.com

Services

CONSTRUCTION: ADDITIONS, RENOVATIONS new construction, drywall, carpentry, painting, flooring, roofing, pressure washing, driveway sealing. All aspects of construction, also property maintenance. Steven Fifield 802-989-0009.

MELISSA'S QUALITY CLEANING Services. Residential and commercial. Fully insured. Great rates. Reliable and thorough cleaning. 802-345-6257.

Help Wanted

K. A. Bagley inc.

Full-Time Positions Available including snowplowing, light shop work, equipment operation, & landscaping

Seasonal Positions Available including lawn care & landscaping

Immediate positions available working Monday – Friday and some Saturdays. Paid Holidays, partial uniforms, new bonuses available, & competitive pay.

To apply, call 802-352-9088
Salisbury, VT

Work at the Sheldon Museum Store Assistant

The Henry Sheldon Museum seeks an outgoing and friendly Museum Store Assistant to join its dynamic team. The Museum Store Assistant welcomes all visitors to the Museum and provides assistance to customers in the Museum Store.

This is a part-time, seasonal position early May through early January, 3 days (20 hours) per week, Saturdays a must. Occasional evenings during special events. $17-$19/hour.

For a full job description and more information about how to apply, please visit henrysheldonmuseum.org/work-at-the-sheldon.

The Henry Sheldon Museum is an equal opportunity employer.

Services

ODD JOBS: WEED flower beds, some landscaping, property clean up, brush cutting, lawn work. Call us today, we do other jobs too. 802-999-2194, John.

Help Wanted

COLBY HILL LANDSCAPE COMPANY

Spring is Coming

LANDSCAPERS WANTED

Colby Hill Landscape Company, located in Bristol, is hiring for the 2024 Landscape season. We are looking to hire people to work on Hardscapes (walkways and patios) as well as plantings and some garden maintenance.

We offer:
- A great work environment
- Paid Holidays
- Retirement plan

Experience helpful but we are willing to train.

Work to begin April 1, 2024

Please contact Dave Brett at: (802) 363-9958

Middlebury Eye Associates

Middlebury Eye Associates, Inc. is seeking team members who are quick learners, have a positive attitude, and are team players.

Qualified candidates should have excellent customer service skills, enjoy working with patients, and the ability to follow up consistently. Expectations include working well in a fast-paced environment, strong multi-tasking skills, and outstanding attention to detail. Prior experience in health care, working with electronic medical records, and working with patients is strongly preferred. The position is 32-40 hours a week and offers benefits including healthcare, paid time off, disability, life insurance, and a retirement plan.

Please submit a cover letter and resume to kgallison@middleburyeye.com.

Free

DIGITAL ACCESS View obituaries, calendar listings and classifieds online at addisonindependent.com. Don't miss out on events, garage sales, or opportunities- check out our free digital listings. Looking to read more? Become a subscriber!

Help Wanted

Addison County Parent/Child Center

VAN DRIVER JOB OPENING
Addison County Parent/Child Center

We are seeking a van driver who will transport children, youth, and parents to our center from around Addison County.

Strong candidates must have a clean driving record and experience **with children and families.**

Great working environment and benefits. This is a 20-hour position with hours split between mornings and afternoons.

Please contact **Donna Bailey at dbailey@addisoncountypcc.org**

seedsheet

Seasonal Help Needed

Looking for extra income this spring?

$20 an hour

NO Heavy Lifting
NO Customer Facing
Flexible Schedules

Seedsheet is looking for seasonal help in processing customer orders. We are looking for team members with strong attention to detail and a desire to create a great product for our customers.

Full and Part-time schedules are available.

Available shifts:
Evening shifts available starting at 4pm

Please email: **jobs@seedsheets.com** for more information.

seedsheet
38 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT 05753

Lost and Found

FLIP PHONE LOST in greater Middlebury area. Reward. 802-388-7531.

Help Wanted

RIDE NEEDED from Vergennes to Porter Nursing Home with assistance. Willing to pay. Call 802-870-7033.

For Rent

5,000 SQUARE FEET available. Exchange Street, Middlebury, VT. 802-349-8544.

✓

ALL REAL ESTATE advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or persons receiving public assistance or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertisement for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD Toll-free at 1-800-424-8590. For the Washington, DC area please call HUD at 426-3500.

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE - 3000 sq ft - Middlebury. Loading dock. Tall ceilings. $2,500.00 p/month. 802-558-6092.

Help Wanted

Vermont Soap

SOAP FOR THE PEOPLE

Production Team Members

Vermont Soap is looking for attentive, reliable and responsible people to work in our production department.

This position requires basic computer skills, attention to detail, the ability to sit or stand for long periods of time and the ability to lift up to 50lbs. Must be a team player and also able to work independently.

This is a full time position (Mon-Fri 7-3:30) with paid vacation time, paid holidays, 401k with employer match, and more!

Please send cover letter and resume to nichole@vermontsoap.com.

For Rent

CORNWALL: SHARE HOME with lovely views with senior gentleman who enjoys classical music and reading. No rent (just utilities share) in exchange for cooking evening meals and lending a hand around the house/yard. Private bath. 802-863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

DRY, WINTER/SUMMER STORAGE SPACE in Addison. Available storage space in my barn for summer/winter storage. The barn is structurally sound and weather-tight with electricity. No heat or running water. The barn is also available for lease. The entrance door measurements are 8' wide by 7' high. For more info: 802-363-3403 or rochon_m@yahoo.com.

FURNISHED ROOM: East Middlebury. Separate entrance. All included; w/d, wifi, kitchen, & parking. Security and references required. $600 per month. Text Rochell 802-989-8941.

GOSHEN: SPACIOUS HOME in peaceful, rural location, 14 miles to Middlebury. $650/month, all included, plus light snow removal. 802-863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/RETAIL. 1,250 sq.ft. Exchange Street, Middlebury. 802-388-4831.

MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.

Help Wanted

For Rent

VERGENNES VALLEY VIEW APARTMENTS is currently taking wait list applications. Occupants must be 62+ years of age. No smoking/ No pets. Income limits apply - Rent based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity. 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191 www.SummitPMG.com.

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or persons receiving public assistance, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination."

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertisement for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD Toll-free at 1-800-424-8590. For the Washington, DC area please call HUD at 426-3500.

Wood Heat

DRY OR GREEN firewood for sale. Delivery available. 802-349-4212.

Att. Farmers

HORSE BLANKET WASH and repair. Accepting non-leather (for now) horsewear of all kinds for cleaning and repairing at my Weybridge location. Call or text Sue Miller at 802-377-5945 or email svdwmiller@icloud.com with "horse" in the subject line for more information.

WHITNEY'S CUSTOM FARM WORK Pond agitating, liquid manure hauling, drag line aerating. Call for price. 462-2755, John Whitney.

Wanted

OLD & USED GUNS WANTED

Rifles, Hand guns, Shot guns

Top prices paid.

P: 802-775-2859
C: 802-236-7213

Public Notices Index

Public Notices for the following can be found in this *ADDISON INDEPENDENT* on **Pages 9B and 10B.**

Addison (1)
Addison Central School District (1)
Addison County Courthouse (1)
Cornwall (1)
Hancock (1)
Middlebury (1)
Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District (2)
Slate Valley Unified School District (1)
Vermont State Housing Authority (1)

TOWN OF CORNWALL

The Town of Cornwall is looking for a Scope of Work Proposal.

The Town of Cornwall is looking to upgrade the Town Maintenance garage. The existing garage needs to be modified to allow additional and larger equipment to be housed inside. There also is the need for additional space for maintenance work inside. The existing space is now quite limited for the above-mentioned needs.

Objective: The Town is considering adding on 2 work bays. We are also looking at bringing the restroom and break room up to standards. At this time, we will also need to address the current septic layout to accommodate expansion.

The work stated above is open for suggestions and advice or other ideas. We want to discuss proposals and ideas to decide whether or not this project is feasible or if other options need to be looked at.

The project implementation timeline is proposed for fiscal 2025/2026. All interested parties, please respond to:

Town of Cornwall
2629 Rt. 30 • Cornwall, VT 05753
or 802-989-0514 or 802-989-5776

ATTENTION DAIRY FARMERS

COMPLETE DAIRY DISPERSAL!!

THE PHILIP R. MARCH FARM INC.

To be held at his farm: 5258 Rt. 30 Pawlet, VT 05761

SATURDAY, APRIL 6TH AT 10 AM SHARP!

275 Head Holstein Dairy Freestall Herd

25,000 LB. PLUS HERD AVERAGE

BUTTERFAT 4.3 - PROTEIN 3.3 - SEMATIC CELL 180

ARTIFICIALLY SIRED PUREBRED HERD - HIGHLIFE, WILLOW RED, MC DONALD RED, REBEL RED, WEBSTER, HANDY, PARFECT, ROMPEN, MAGNUM, WOODLAND

A DAIRY HERD WITH EXCELLENT UDDERS, MANY 1ST & 2ND CALF HEIFERS, MILKING 80-100 LBS. WITH BRED HEIFERS DUE SPRING, SUMMER, & FALL, OPEN HEIFERS AND YEARLINGS, AND CALVES - TOP SEMEX AND SELECT SIRE BRED A-2 ARTIFICIALLY SIRED DAIRY FOR OVER 3 GENERATIONS- CURRENTLY MILKING 139 COWS, 40 BRED HEIFERS, 24 BRED/BREEDING AGE, 51 YEARLINGS, 10 CFS

ALSO FOR SALE: (3) 2015 LELY A4 - 2 LEFT HAND, 1 RIGHT HAND

SALE COMMENT: TOP CONDITION, YOUNG HERD! SOME RED CARRIERS & RED/WHITES IN THIS QUALITY HERD

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR FINE DAIRY REPLACEMENTS!!

Sale Managed By: T.G. Wisnowski & Sons
Addison County Commission Sales Inc.

Auctioneer: Jon Nop• Info: **802-388-2661** OR **802-989-1507**

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK / ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

Lunch will be served!!

Bears are waking from their winter hibernation

MONTPELIER — The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has begun to receive reports of bears coming out of their dens and is urging Vermonters to take steps now to prevent conflicts with bears over the spring and summer.

"Vermonters need to act to prevent bear conflicts now, even if they have never had a bear visit their property before," said Jaclyn Comeau, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's bear biologist. "Do not wait to take down your birdfeeders and bearproof your yard until a bear comes to visit."

Bear incidents have been on the rise over the past several years. Officials believe this trend is a result of Vermont's healthy black bear population learning to associate people and food over multiple generations.

Shorter winters also mean that bears are emerging from their dens earlier in the spring. In recent years bear activity has begun in mid-March, roughly two weeks earlier than what is typically thought of as the start of bear aware season in northern New England.

"Mid-March is the time for Vermonters to take down our birdfeeders, make sure our garbage is secure, and protect our backyard chickens and bees with an electric fence," said Comeau. "This helps teach bears that our yards and neighborhoods are not good places to search for food. But it will only work if everyone does their part."

The department asks Vermonters to take the following proactive steps for coexisting with bears:

• Take down birdfeeders between mid-March and December.

• Store garbage in bear-resistant containers or structures; trash cans alone are not enough.

• Follow the steps on our web page for composting in bear country.

• Use electric fences to keep chickens and honeybees safe.

• Request a bear-resistant dumpster from your waste hauler.

• Feed your pets indoors.

• Never feed bears, deliberately or accidentally.

"Preventing bears from having access to human-related foods is key to successful coexistence with these long-lived and intelligent animals," said Comeau.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife also asks Vermonters to submit reports of bears engaging in potentially dangerous behavior like targeting birdfeeders and garbage, feeding on crops or livestock, or investigating campgrounds. Reports can be submitted on the department's Living with Black Bears web page. The data help biologists keep track of bear incidents and provide early interventions to head off conflicts.

"At the end of the day, purposely feeding a bear is not just bad for the bear," said Comeau. "It is also dangerous for you, it causes problems for your neighbors, and it is illegal. If bears are finding food on your property it is your responsibility to remove that attractant and report a problem before the situation escalates."

AUCTIONS

MARKET REPORT
ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT

Sales for 3/21/24 & 3/25/24

BEEF	LBS.	COST /LB	$
K. Rousseau	1685	1.215	$2047.28
J. Macglaflin	1885	1.19	$2243.15
Conants Riverside	1890	1.185	$2239.65
Woodnotch Farm	1515	1.185	$1795.28
A. Brisson	1675	1.18	$1976.50
Lucas Dairy	1335	1.17	$1561.95
M+L Quesnel	1660	1.16	$1925.60

CALVES	LBS.	COST /LB	$
Vorsteveld Farm	90	9.10	$819.00
Barnes Bros.	106	8.75	$927.50
A. Brisson	96	8.75	$840.00
H. Sunderland	93	8.00	$744.00
Wilcon Farm	88	7.80	$686.40

Total Beef - 121 Total Calves - 179

We value our faithful customers.

Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs.

call 1-802-388-2661

STATE OF VERMONT SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION ADDISON UNIT
DOCKET NO.: 22-PR-00921
IN RE ESTATE OF: LAUREN BROE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Lauren Broe, late of Cornwall.

I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.

Dated: 03/21/24

Executor/Administrator:
Margo Stefanic
381 East Branch Road
Brookville, PA 15825
570-357-4070
margostefanic@yahoo.com

Publication: Addison Independent
Publication Date: 3/28/24
Address of Probate Court:
7 Mahady Court

Public Notices

can be found in this ***ADDISON INDEPENDENT*** on **Pages 9B and 10B.**

FULL PASSPORT SERVICE

The Addison County Clerk located in the **Frank Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury** is available to accept passport applications and provide passport photos.

REGULAR HOURS
Monday - 8:30am to 4:00pm
Tuesday - 9:00am to 12:30pm
Wednesday - **Closed**
Thursday - 12:30pm to 4:00pm
Friday - 9:00am to 12:30pm

APPOINTMENTS REQUIRED
For appointment, go to **www.addisoncountyclerkvt.com** or call 802-388-1966.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Looking for employees who worked at Bread Loaf Construction located in Middlebury, VT from 1970-1984.

Please call
(618) 973-2090
www.mrhfmlaw.com

TOWN OF HANCOCK REQUEST FOR BIDS

The Town of Hancock is seeking bids for a 3-year road grading contract. Bidding information available at www.hancockvt.org or by calling 802-431-5158.

ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SPRING DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

April is screening month for preschool children from Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge!

The ACSD Early Education Program provides services to children identified as having disabilities or delays in meeting developmental milestones. We also collaborate with area preschool and childcare programs to address the needs of our local preschool children. Screenings help to identify children who would benefit from additional support before entering kindergarten.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's developmental progress, your district early education program is offering screening for children ages 3-5 who are not enrolled in kindergarten. Screening is conducted in a playful environment, and provides information on your child's speech and language development, motor, social and early academic skills.

The screening will take place at the Mary Hogan Elementary School, 201 Mary Hogan Drive, in Middlebury and will happen on April 5, 12, and 19, 2024.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call Deb Martin at 802-382-1761.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY MOSQUITO LARVICIDES

On or after April 15th, 2024, the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District (OCW) will be applying ground and possibly aerial treatments of mosquito larvicides on surface waters in the towns of Brandon, Goshen, Leicester, Pittsford, Proctor, and Salisbury to control mosquito larvae populations. Those treatments will use Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti), Bacillus sphaericus (BS), and Spinosad, which are bacterially derived larvicides. Ground applications of Cocobear (mineral oil) and Methoprene may also be used in selected wet areas to target mosquito pupae and prevent adult emergence.

Exclusion requests need to be renewed annually. Please send a written request to the OCW mail or email address below.

In accordance with paragraph 6.06 (a) of the Vermont Rule for the Control of Pesticides, the OCW has been granted a permit to conduct larvicide applications from the Secretary, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets.

Further information can be obtained from:
Jeff Schumann, OCW Board of Trustees Chair or
Will Mathis, OCW Operations Coordinator
Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
P.O. Box 188
Brandon, VT 05733
(802) 247-6779
ocwicd@gmail.com
https://ocwicd.com

Comments or complaints about OCW larvicide operations should be addressed to:
Director, Public Health & Agricultural Resource Management Division
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901
(802) 522-6973
Steve.dwinell@vermont.gov

PUBLIC NOTICE VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Beginning April 1, 2024 at 8 am, Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) will be opening its waiting list for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to receive applications from families qualifying for VSHA's Disaster and Move-up Preference, as defined below. We continue to accept applications for the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program.

Disaster Preference: This preference is available to Vermont families displaced from their Vermont home, due to fire, flood, natural disaster, or condemnation by a local, state, or federal agency.

Move-up Preference: This preference is available to families who are currently receiving rental assistance through a time limited program administered by VSHA and in compliance:

- VSHA Continuum of Care Program- Rapid-Rehousing
- VSHA Family Unification Program for Youth in Transition (FUP-Y)
- VSHA Foster Youth to Independence (FYI)
- VSHA Continuum of Care Program- Shelter + Care

Information on how to apply on-line or request a paper application can be found by visiting VSHA's website at Applications for Section 8 Assistance - Vermont State Housing Authority (vsha.org)"

"Applications can also be obtained at our office located at One Prospect Street, Montpelier, VT between the hours of 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. Monday – Friday, or by contacting affordablehousing.com at 888-406- 4003

This Notice is being provided in accordance with VSHA's Administrative Plan for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, which mandates the Authority to provide public notice when opening its waiting list.

For Additional information call: 802-828-3295 (voice); 800-798-3118(TTY); 800-820-5119(messages)

WARNING - INFORMATIONAL MEETING SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

(Towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, West Haven)
Video call link:https://meet.google.com/isa-bvcy-yzv Or dial: (US) +1 252-662-0070 PIN: 776 860 500#

APRIL 10, 2024

The legal voters of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) consisting of the towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell and West Haven are hereby warned and notified to meet at Fair Haven Union Middle High School Band Room on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 6:30 PM to conduct the following business:

Article 1: To hear the Board of School Directors of the SVUUSD present its estimate of expenses for the ensuing year.

APRIL 11, 2024 The meeting shall then be recessed to Thursday, April 11. 2024 for the purpose of voting on the following articles at the usual polling places in the member districts by Australian ballot, said ballots being brought to Bomoseen Fellowship Bible Church following the closing of the polls in the member districts where they will be commingled and counted by the Board of Civil Authority of the constituent districts.

The Town Offices will be opened for voting as follows:

Town of Benson	10:00 AM -7:00 PM	Benson Community Hall
Town of Castleton	8:00 AM -7:00 PM	Castleton Fire Station
Town of Fair Haven	10:00 AM -7:00 PM	American Legion Post 49
Town of Hubbardton	10:00 AM -7:00 PM	Hubbardton Town Hall
Town of Orwell	10:00 AM -7:00 PM	Orwell Town Clerk's Office
Town of West Haven	10:00 AM -7:00 PM	West Haven Town Hall

Article 2: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend Thirty Million Eight Hundred Seventy-One Thousand Six Hundred Thirty-Five Dollars $30,871,635.00 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

Informational Hearing: Said persons and voters are notified and warned that the meeting on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. will also serve as an informational hearing to discuss Article 2, which will be voted on by Australian ballot on Thursday, April 11, 2024.

Dated at Fair Haven, Vermont Received and Recorded March 18, 2024

Dated at Fair Haven, Vermont
March 18, 2024
Patricia Beaumont, Chairman
Slate Valley Unified Union School District

Received and Recorded
March 18, 2024
Elisabeth MacKay, Clerk
Slate Valley Unified Union School District

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY MOSQUITO ADULTICIDES

On or after May 1st, 2024, the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District (OCW) may be making ground applications of adulticides along the public and private roads in the towns of Brandon, Goshen, Leicester, Pittsford, Proctor, and Salisbury to control adult mosquito populations. Applications of PermaSease (a synthetic pyrethroid insecticide) and Fyfanon (in the malathion family) will be made with ultra-low volume truck-mounted sprayers. Zenivex E-4 RTU (a non-ester pyrethroid) may be substituted for PermaSease or Fyfanon.

At least six hours in advance of spraying to control adult mosquitoes, specific route information and the pesticide(s) to be used will be posted to https://ocwicd.com/public-notice. The OCW also provides email notifications of all planned spraying. To subscribe to the spraying notification email list, please send a request to: ocwicd@gmail.com.

The OCW's published spray routes can be viewed at: https://ocwicd.com/route-maps.

The OCW call center phone number is (802) 247-6779; the call center will take requests for treatment during the season.

If you wish to opt out of <u>all</u> adult mosquito treatment and not have the road(s) abutting your property sprayed, please send a written request to the OCW. If you submitted an opt out (No Spray Zone) request for your property last year AND there have been no changes in ownership, contact information, or property boundaries, an email to the OCW containing your 911 address and requesting No Spray Zone status again this year will suffice. If you did not submit an opt out request last year and/or there have been changes in ownership, contact information, or property boundaries, please send a letter to the OCW address given below listing the name(s) of the property owner(s), his/her/their contact telephone number(s), the 911 address of the property, and a property map which clearly shows the property boundaries along the public right of way. Property maps can be obtained from Town Clerks or online at https://maps.vcgi.vermont.gov/ParcelViewer. Upon receipt of your request an OCW employee will contact you and then will mark your property as a No Spray Zone. Opt out requests must be renewed annually.

In accordance with paragraph 6.07 (a) of the Vermont Rule for the Control of Pesticides, the OCW has applied for a permit to conduct truck-mounted mosquito adulticide applications from the Secretary, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets.

Further information can be obtained from:
Jeff Schumann, OCW Board of Trustees Chair or
Will Mathis, OCW Operations Coordinator
Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
P.O. Box 188
Brandon, VT 05733
(802) 247-6779
ocwicd@gmail.com
https://ocwicd.com

Comments or complaints about OCW adulticide spraying operations should be addressed to:
Director, Public Health & Agricultural Resource Management Division
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901
(802)522-6973
steve.dwinell@vermont.gov

PUBLIC NOTICE TOWN OF ADDISON

The Addison Planning Commission meeting will be held on **Monday, April 15, 2024 at the Addison Community Center School at 6:30 PM. (former Addison Central School).**

1. To approve the meeting minutes for February 19, 2024.
2. To Approve the work meeting minutes for February 19, 2024.
3. To transact any business found necessary before the board.
4. To allow time for public comment interaction, if needed.
5. Continue to work on updating & reviewing the Zoning Regulations & public hearing.
6. Open public hearing up at 7:00PM for presentation and public interactions on the Rough Draft of the "Zoning & Subdivision Regulations. Will be able to view a copy of the Regulations or inquire for a copy from the Town Clerk's Office at 802-759-2020. Finger foods for refreshments.
7. Adjournment - stating time.

Deliberative Session if needed ---after the meeting.
We are planning to have a work meeting after the regular monthly meeting if needed.

Jeff Kauffman Jr., Chair
Starr Phillips, Secretary
Addison Planning Commission

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY BOARD AND COMMISSION VACANCIES

Each year at this time the Town of Middlebury Selectboard makes its annual appointments to volunteer positions required by State Statute, and local and regional boards and commissions. If you are interested in any of the following positions, please submit an Application for Appointment available on the Town's website https://www.townofmiddlebury.org/government/boards_and_commissions/index.php, or by contacting Beth Dow at bdow@townofmiddlebury.org. Please submit Applications for Appointment to the Manager's Office, 77 Main Street, Middlebury, or e-mail to bdow@townofmiddlebury.org, by Monday, April 1, 2024. If you would like to find out more about any of these positions, please contact Beth Dow at 388-8100, Ext 202.

The number in ( ) indicates number of positions open

<u>Four Year Term</u>
Conservation Commission (2)

<u>Three Year Terms</u>
Planning Commission (2)
Design Advisory Committee (2)
Development Review Board (3)
Downtown Improvement District Committee (2)
Parks and Recreation Committee (1)
Deputy Health Officer (1) (Will require Vermont Health Dept. training.)

<u>One Year Term</u>
Addison County Regional Planning Commission Delegate (3)
Addison County Regional Planning Commission Alternate (2)
Addison County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee Delegate (1)
Addison County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee Alternate (1)
Fence Viewer (3)
Maple Broadband Communications District Delegate (1)
Maple Broadband Communications District Delegate Alternate (1)
Sports Commission (3)
Town Agent (1)
Town Grand Juror (1)
Town Service Officer (1)
Tree Warden (1)

Vt. State Police Log

ADDISON COUNTY — On Wednesday, March 20, at about 7:30 a.m., Vermont State Police responded to a report of a two-car crash on Route 7 at the intersection with Route 22A in Ferrisburgh. Police said their investigation showed that Joshua Laraway, 48, of Shelburne was driving a 2006 Saturn Vue northbound on Route 7 when he stopped at a red light.

Troopers report that Laraway was followed by a 2005 Kia Sedona driven by Brian Larrow, 36, of Ferrisburgh, and Larrow did not stop. His Kia rear-ended Laraway's Saturn, damaging the Saturn's trailer hitch and the Kia's front end.

Neither driver was injured, but Laraway was taken to UVM Medical Center to be looked at.

Larrow was given a traffic ticket for following too closely, which carries a $220 fine and three points on his insurance.

The investigating trooper is requesting anyone who witnessed this crash to please call the New Haven barracks at 802-388-4919 or leave an anonymous tip online at vsp.vermont.gov/tipsubmit.

Vision Grant to help educate kids on ag

VERMONT — The Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grant, offered by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, supports innovative projects that address contemporary issues facing communities, agriculture, health and Vermont youth through farm to school and early childhood initiatives.

The agency is accepting grant applications through April 11.

A total of $150,000 is available through this competitive funding opportunity. The minimum award is $5,000 and the maximum award is $50,000. Schools, school districts, early childhood educators, afterschool programs, and non-profits working in partnership with other organizations in the Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Network are eligible to apply.

Farm to school and early childhood defines a variety of efforts aimed at educating and engaging children and young adults on the connections that exist between agriculture, nutrition, community and health.

Farm to school and early childhood is a broad term. It defines a variety of efforts aimed at educating and engaging children and young adults on the connections that exist between agriculture, nutrition, community and health. The Vision Grant is designed to support innovative projects that engage youth in addressing contemporary problems such as climate change, food security, food sovereignty, nutrition and health equity, racial justice, and agriculture workforce development through farm to school and early childhood activities.

Strong proposals will be scalable and/or replicable, prioritize youth leadership, and demonstrate a significant impact on Vermont youth.

Successful applicants will be required to provide a match equal to 25% of the total grant award. Matching funds can be in the form of cash, in-kind services or a combination of both. Cash match is not a requirement, but proposals that leverage additional funding will receive preference over those that meet the match requirement through in-kind services alone.

Applicants will be required, through qualitative and/or quantitative evidence, to identify a farm to school and early childhood related challenge impacting their community. Applicants will then need to demonstrate how their proposal seeks to address that challenge. Proposals must center youth in their scope. Strong proposals will:

- Clearly articulate the problem they seek to address
- Engage multiple community stakeholders
- Demonstrate a high likelihood of success
- Demonstrate an ability for the project to be easily scaled and/or replicated
- Demonstrate the likelihood of continued impact beyond the grant period

For more information on the Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grant program and to apply, head online to agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/ftsec-vision-grant.

Police are investigating altercation between kids

Bristol Police Log

BRISTOL — Bristol police on March 15 received a report of an altercation between juveniles at the Bristol Town Green. Police are investigating the incident.

Between March 10 and 23 Bristol police completed 37 foot patrols and one car patrol, conducted 15 traffic stops, and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School 15 times, at Bristol Elementary School 14 times, and at local businesses 11 times.

Police also processed 13 fingerprint requests and helped one person gain access to their locked vehicle.

In other recent activity, Bristol police:

- On March 11 responded to a report of unlawful mischief on Adirondack View. An investigation is ongoing.
- On March 11 assisted Bristol Elementary School with a truancy concern.
- On March 11 helped individuals involved in a disagreement reach a solution.
- On March 11 assisted someone on Plank Road who was the target of an internet scam.
- On March 12 helped South Burlington Police obtain a witness statement.
- On March 12 received a theft complaint on West Street. Police determined vehicle registration plates had been stolen and entered them into a law enforcement database system.
- On March 14 received a delayed report of a crash involving a deer on North Street. Police completed a report for insurance purposes.
- On March 19 responded to a motor vehicle complaint at the intersection of Main and North streets. Police did not observe any violations.
- On March 20 responded to a motor vehicle complaint on West Street, but the vehicle was gone when police arrived.
- On March 20 picked up a dog on West Street and returned the animal to its owner on South Street.
- On March 20 responded to a citizen dispute on West Street. The individuals involved were gone when police arrived.
- On March 23 responded to a crash on Stoney Hill.

Man cited for attempted murder after stabbing

Middlebury Police Log

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police cited Jerry L. Hoffman, 31, of Middlebury for attempted murder, after he allegedly stabbed a man multiple times during an incident on College Street during the early evening of March 20.

Middlebury Regional EMS took the victim to Porter Hospital, and then to UVM Medical Center, for treatment of his injuries. Police said Hoffman fled the scene and ran into Otter Creek, still armed with two knives. Police said Hoffman eventually complied with commands to drop the knives and was taken into custody. He was then taken to Porter Hospital to be evaluated for exposure to the cold water.

After being released from the hospital, he was booked at MPD headquarters and then taken to the Marble Valley Correctional Facility, where he was held without bail.

Please see the more complete report of the incident on Page 2A.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Helped Brandon police process an impaired driver at Middlebury PD on March 18.
- Assisted Middlebury Regional EMS with a man experiencing mental health issues in the Abbey Pond Road area on March 18.
- Responded to a report of a student with a vape pen at Middlebury Union High School on March 18.
- Warned two drivers not to park their vehicles on the closed portion of Three Mile Bridge Road on March 18.
- Responded to downtown Middlebury on March 18 on a report of a woman experiencing a mental health crisis and threatening to harm herself.
- Responded to a report of a woman in crisis downtown on March 18.
- Investigated a person for possibly driving with a criminally suspended license on Court Street on March 18.
- Assisted a juvenile in crisis in the Buttolph Drive area on March 19.
- Assisted a Court Street Extension business with a person who had allegedly been loitering and causing a disturbance on March 19.
- Assisted Vermont Fish & Game officials with an injured beaver downtown on March 19.
- Checked on a report of a suspicious vehicle at the Memorial Sports Center off Buttolph Drive on March 19.
- Investigated a reported juvenile problem in the Mainelli Road area on March 20.
- Took charge of three bikes that had been abandoned in the South Village Green area on March 20.
- Investigated a road rage allegation in the Washington Street Extension area on March 20.
- On March 21, assisted a woman who had questions about court orders.
- On March 21, checked on a report of a drunken man causing a traffic hazard while walking on North Pleasant Street. Officers were unable to locate anyone.
- Received a report that a counterfeit $100 bill had been passed at a Court Street business on March 22.
- Investigated a possible restraining order violation in the Merchants Row area on March 22.
- Returned a loose dog to its local owner on March 22.
- Received a report about a drunken man allegedly walking along North Pleasant Street during the evening of March 22.
- Checked on the welfare of a person in the Main Street area on March 23.
- Enforced the town's overnight winter parking ban downtown on March 24.
- Assisted a parent on March 24 who had been locked out of their vehicle by a child who was still inside.
- Assisted Counseling Service of Addison County in checking on a local client in crisis on March 24.
- Responded to a report of a verbal dispute between two people in the Valley View Drive area on March 24. Police said both people had left upon their arrival.

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GUESS WHAT?

THE ADDY INDY WAS NAMED #1

1ST

THE BEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER IN NEW ENGLAND

THANKS

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We're thrilled to share that The New England Newspaper and Press Association awarded **YOUR PAPER** first place in the **General Excellence** category among large weekly newspapers. We couldn't be prouder of this designation, which recognizes the work of our journalists, advertising representatives, designers and support staff who all come together every week to produce and deliver the paper. Every member of this staff is critical to our operation and we want to say **THANK YOU** to each of them.

Of course, a newspaper isn't viable without a strong readership and advertising base willing to support the news we share each week. So, **THANK YOU** to every reader. **THANK YOU** to every advertiser. **THANK YOU** to every supporter through our new **ADDY ALL-STARS** program. We owe this award to all of you.

— With gratitude from the Lynn family, publishers of the Addison County Independent since 1984

IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD, THE ADDISON INDEPENDENT RECEIVED TOP HONORS FOR:

- Best Health Ad
- Single Advertiser Campaign
- Local Online Ad
- Real Estate Display Ad
- Special Section Advertising
- Themed Multiple Advertising Pages
- Ad Sales Media Kit
- Classified Ad Promotion
- Best Contest
- Excellence in Revenue, Collaboration and Partnerships
- Best Ad Designer
- Arts & Entertainment Reporting
- Solutions Journalism
- Climate Change or Weather Reporting
- Editorial Commentary Pages
- Humor Columnist
- Living Section/Arts+Leisure
- News Feature Photo
- Overall Design of a Special Section
- Racial, Ethnic or Gender Issue Coverage
- Serious Columnist
- Sports Action Photo
- Sports Feature Photo
- Sports Columnist
- Best Sports Section

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ARTS + LEISURE

The Addison Independent March 28, 2024

WHAT IF YOU ONLY HAD A HUNDRED DAYS?

Grace Experience and Stephen Shore star in "Hundred Days" by Abigail and Shaun Bengson. Middlebury Acting Company will present this uplifting and challenging love story, directed by Margo Whitcomb and accompanied by a live band of Middlebury College students and alums at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater, April 4-7.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES

MACO BRINGS "HUNDRED DAYS" BY ABIGAIL AND SHAUN BENGSON TO THE MIDDLEBURY STAGE

As the snow melts away and the early bulbs push through the crystalized dirt, we're given a performance by the Middlebury Acting Company to help us process a question that is spring eternal: How do we make the most of the time that we have?

BY **ELSIE** LYNN PARINI

This is the fundamental question that creators Abigail and Shaun Bengson explore in "Hundred Days" — "an uncensored, exhilarating and heartrending true story about embracing uncertainty, taking a leap and loving as if you only had 100 days to live," as described on the website hundreddays.org. Grace Experience and Stephen Shore star in the theatrical concert that will take the stage of the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury, April 4-7.

"There's a lot of singing," Shore said in a recent interview alongside Experience — his partner on and off the stage.

"It's especially touching and special to work on this piece together," Experience added, not only because she's acting a love story with someone she actually loves, but also to a place she loves. "The play is set in Queens and I have so many wonderful memories in Queens… there's a line in a song: 'I'll sing the glorias, the lights over Astoria' — that gets me every time."

"The premise is two individuals finding each other and realizing they are soulmates," Shore explained. "It's earth shattering for them… and the stakes are high. What if you only had 100 days to live? How would you spend that time? It can be terrifying and exhilarating… it's like being at the top of a rollercoaster about to dive down — exhilarating, but worried what can happen?"

"Yes, there is terror in the uncertainty," echoed Experience, who grew up in Lincoln and is the daughter of novelist Chris Bohjalian and artist Victoria Blewer, who reside in Weybridge. "The beautiful thing about this performance is that it ends with joy and love. That's what makes this doable."

"As originally conceived, the creators referred

SEE DAYS ON PAGE 3

Four-part course on the American Musical is back in town

When Doug Anderson first taught a course on the "American Musical," he didn't have a lot of technology at his disposal. He had, basically, a pile of cassette tapes.

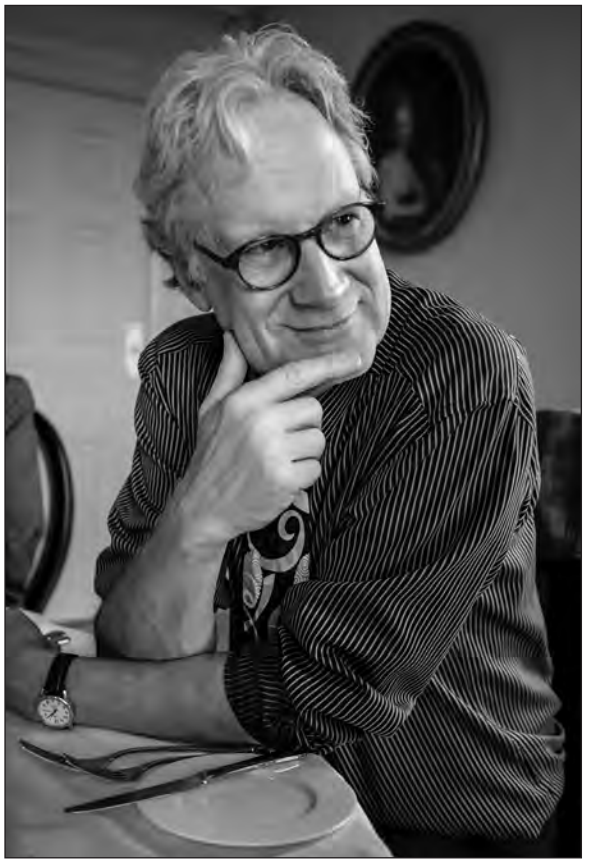
"When I taught the course at Middlebury College 20 years ago, I would play a tape and try to explain in words what someone like Ethel Merman was like." Now he simply presses a button and there she is on Town Hall Theater's big screen, belting out "Everything's Coming Up Roses."

"You suddenly realize why this force of nature was once one of the biggest stars in the world," said Anderson, who will be bringing the four-part course back to the THT beginning April 15. "And you'll never, ever forget her."

Each of the four sessions — Mondays, April 15, 22, 29 and May 6 — includes historic footage of star performers, as well as live performances from some of the area's best performers. Each session will be held at the Town Hall Theater; start time is 7 p.m.

"These classes are extremely entertaining. To see rare footage of vaudeville performers from the 20s, or clips of important musicals you've somehow missed, or to hear a local performer dig into a ballad by Sondheim…well, it's a series of stunning revelations," Anderson said.

The class appeals to people who love musicals, but Anderson is quick to explain that it has a broader reach.



DOUG ANDERSON

"A study of the musical is really a study of 175 years of American cultural history. Musicals reflect very precisely who we were and what we valued at any given moment, what we felt about race, war, gender, the Great Depression and so much else. Musicals have always had a lot to say."

"And of course," Anderson continued, "the music is utterly fantastic."

> "A STUDY OF THE MUSICAL IS REALLY A STUDY OF 175 YEARS OF AMERICAN CULTURAL HISTORY… **MUSICALS HAVE ALWAYS HAD A LOT TO SAY**."
>
> — *Doug Anderson*

The course will be given on four consecutive Mondays beginning April 15. Anderson enjoys teaching it to a live audience.

"It's really best to see these historic clips on the big screen, with a great sound system," he said. But the course will also be streamed simultaneously, so anyone in the world can take part. It's also possible for someone to attend some of the classes at the theater and take in others online. Each class runs from 90 minutes to 2 hours, with a break in the middle. "It's like seeing a great show," Anderson summarized, "but with insight and background information that takes it all to a new level."

Tickets are $80 for an individual to take part in the four-session series, and $100 for a household to join the series.

College students explore 'risk and necessity' of touch, pets and ribbon dancing

The Middlebury College Department of Theatre will present "The Found Dog Ribbon Dance," a modern comedy about love and longing and the power of touch, written by Dominic Finocchiaro, directed by Olga Sanchez Saltveit. The performance will take place on April 4-6, in the Seeler Studio Theater at the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury.

Norma, the professional cuddler, has found a dog! Her quest to return the dog to its rightful family leads Norma to curious encounters with unpredictable people and the possibility of a new chance at love. Yay! This quirky romantic comedy about loneliness, oxytocin, and the power of the music of Whitney Houston, explores the risk and necessity of touch, the importance of pets, and the joy of ribbon dancing.

DETAILS

THE FOUND DOG RIBBON DANCE
APRIL 4-6
SEELER STUDIO THEATER, MIDDLEBURY

Dominic Finocchiaro's works have been produced and developed around the country, including with Roundabout Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Echo Theater, the Civilians, Clubbed Thumb, Portland Center Stage, the Kennedy Center, PlayPenn, Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, Dixon Place, and the Amoralists. He is a MacDowell, Marble House, and UCross Fellow, MFA, Columbia University, and Lila Acheson Wallace Fellow at the Juilliard School.

"The Found Dog Ribbon Dance" will be performed on Thursday, April 4 through Saturday, April 6 each evening at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, at 2 p.m., in the Seeler Studio Theatre at the Mahaney Arts Center. Join in a lively post-show talkback and discussion with playwright Dominic Finocchiaro following the Friday performance.

Tickets are $15 for the general public; $10 for Middlebury College faculty, staff, alumni, emeriti, and other ID card holders; $8 for youth (under 21); and $5 for Middlebury College students. For tickets or information, call 802-443-6433 or visit middlebury.edu/college/box-office.

DAYS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to it as a theatrical concert," explained Margo Whitcomb, director of the MACo production of "Hundred Days." "That's absolutely right. The Bengsons are performers not actors. They did not attempt to live the narrative, to embody the narrative. It was much more presentational and narrated; and still incredibly dynamic and interesting."

For the Middlebury stage, Whitcomb is trying to capitalize on Experience and Shore's "equal talents as actors as much as musicians," she said. "I'm trying to have them embody the piece."

Experience and Shore, who play Abigail and Shaun Bengson, respectively, are up for the challenge.

"They really sing their hearts out and leave everything on the floor," said Shore, who also plays guitar on stage. "They are totally vulnerable to each other. That forces you to re-examine… Am I living my life in a way I'm happy with? Are there things I can do right now to bring more joy? What do I want to say before I'm gone? What's special about this performance is that it's not a solo piece; it's two people telling their story."

"It's a rock concert; it's a love story," Experience shared. "There is gorgeous poetry in the writing. Viewers can expect to be on their feet dancing — maybe crying a little — and then dancing again."

"I do feel like at this moment, having come through the pandemic, living with so many threats to our safety and sense of security surrounding us every day — within all of us, we all have a much more acute sense of how fragile life is," Whitcomb said. "I tap into that.

"In [Abigail and Shaun's] case, it's daring to love someone; and the fear of it not being sustained for whatever reason," continued Whitcomb, who also teaches acting at the University of Vermont. "I think everyone can relate to that. The piece is about walking through that fear and coming out the other side. It is very life affirming; it is not a tragedy. As the last song says, 'What else can we do?' This play is a celebration of the commitment to live, love and risk."

Whitcomb is assisted by Sarah Pope (hey, it's my coworker here at the *Addison Independent*!). Musical director Ronnie Romano is orchestrating a live band for the show featuring Middlebury College students and alums Madison Middleton, Xander Bowles, Chelsea Robinson, Kai Fukuda and Jonathan March.

Performances will be held at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury, April 4-6, at 7:30 p.m., and April 7, at 2 p.m. Tickets cost $33-$44. For tickets and more info call 802-382-9222 or visit townhalltheater.org.

"IT'S A ROCK CONCERT; IT'S A LOVE STORY … VIEWERS CAN EXPECT TO BE ON THEIR FEET DANCING — MAYBE CRYING A LITTLE — AND THEN DANCING AGAIN."

— Grace Experience

DID YOU KNOW?

Abigail Nessen-Bengson actually grew up in Middlebury. Yep! She has since gone on to have a successful national career as a singer/songwriter/performer. She and her husband Shaun have received the Jonathan Larson and Richard Rodgers Awards and nominations for the Drama Desk, Drama League, and Lucille Lortel Awards.

GRACE EXPERIENCE & STEPHEN SHORE

Middlebury College students and alums Madison Middleton, Xander Bowles, Chelsea Robinson, Kai Fukuda and Jonathan March under the direction of Ronnie Romano, will accompany Grace Experience and Stephen Shore in Middlebury Acting Company's production of "Hundred Days" by Abigail and Shaun Bengson. The show will be performed April 4-7, at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury.

INDEPENDENT PHOTOS / STEVE JAMES

Sparrow Art Supply announces its debut show at 44 Main St

GREEN GOLD: A CELEBRATION OF NEW BEGINNINGS OPENS WITH A PUBLIC RECEPTION ON FRIDAY, APRIL 5

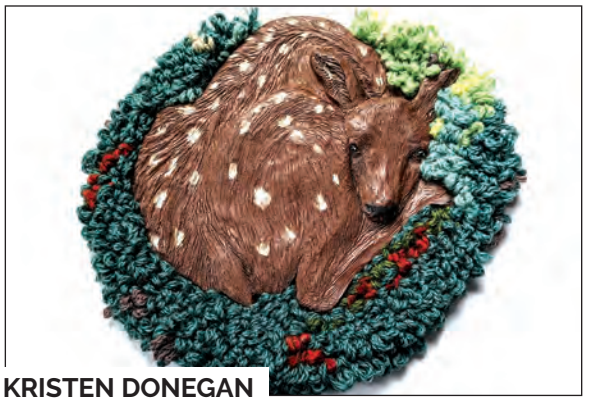
"Green Gold," Sparrow Art Supply's debut exhibition at 44 Main Street, is a celebration of new beginnings. With a nod to Robert Frost's iconic poem, "Nothing Gold Can Stay," seven artists explore growth, transition and renewal. From ephemeral landscapes to abstract compositions, this collection invites contemplation of and appreciation for life's golden moments. Some artworks incorporate literal interpretations with natural motifs and vibrant hues, while others delve into the concept of fresh starts in more conceptual ways. Spanning all mediums, including painting, ceramics, stained glass, and mixed media, each piece offers a unique perspective on the fleeting nature of life.

The artists featured in "Green Gold" are Jim Bruce, Kristen Donegan, Zarabeth Duell, Julia Morrison, Ethan Quillen, Summer Stratton, and Sarah Wesson.

ETHAN QUILLEN

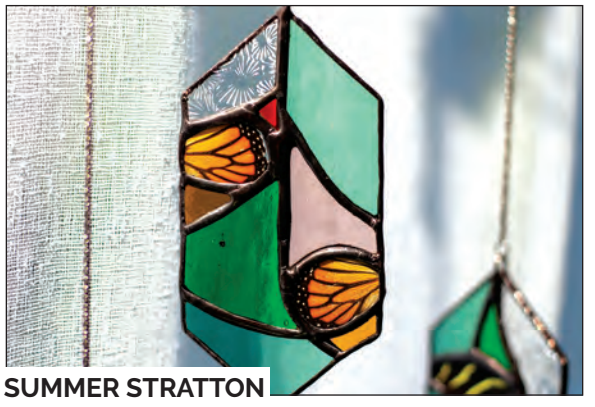
JIM BRUCE

JULIA MORRISON



KRISTEN DONEGAN

SARAH WESSON



SUMMER STRATTON

ZARABETH DUELL

FROM THE ARTISTS:

JIM BRUCE

When I immerse myself in Robert Frost's poetry, it conjures a sublime natural world where discovery and realization intersect. I strive to straddle the literal values with metaphorical values associated with the natural progression from joyous innocence to heightened awareness and understanding.

KRISTEN DONEGAN

What is anticipation, new life, pollination and all that is germinating in the dark and should be protected- guarded, cherished- for its fleeting beauty and elegance in a moment that is sure to pass and could easily be missed.

ZARABETH DUELL

Drawing inspiration from Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay," my collection showcases a diverse collection of art, from ephemeral ink drawings, to layered watercolors, to sashiko-style embroidery mixed media. These pieces collectively portray the brief but enchanting presence of spring from the poet's timeless reflection.

JULIA MORRISON

I remembered this lovely moment from a block party during the first summer of covid. A nod to the new meaning of what a bubble meant during covid, a close knit chosen crew that we deemed safe but also a bubble as all that is youthful, whimsical, and light. The idea of nothing gold can stay resonated with me while reflecting on the fleeting nature of youth in conjunction with bubbles of all sorts.

ETHAN QUILLEN

Like the passage from season to season, the pots I make, the glazes and slips I use, mark stages of creativity and exploration. These three vessels were thrown last year, but they shine with this year's glaze. Hues of blue and green flowing white at the edges. Like thawing water at spring that feeds the rebirth of nature.

SUMMER STRATTON

This year, I've spent a lot of time in the woods with my dog — processing emotions with a hand on my heart while noticing the creatures that carry on around me. I just love the ephemeral nature of it all. These stained glass pieces celebrate the ways that nature holds me up and carries me towards better versions of myself.

SARAH WESSON

As primarily a plein air painter, I am acutely aware of how light changes from minute to minute and hour to hour. Dawn shifts to dusk, clouds move in, children grow up, flowers wilt and autumn leaves drop to the ground. Just for that moment or hour, with brush in hand, I bear witness to the evanescent nature of all things and for that I am grateful.

"Green Gold" will be on view through May 11. Sparrow Art Supply is hosting a celebratory reception on Friday, April 5, from 5-7 p.m., free and open to the public with treats by Thistle and Honey Baking and complimentary wine by Dedalus Wine. The show will also be available to view and for purchase online at sparrowartsupply.com.

ART
ON EXHIBIT

BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD
7 Center Street, Brandon
For more info visit brandonartistsguild.org or call 802-247-4956.

"In the Path of Shade" a celestial celebration that captures the awe-inspiring essence of a solar eclipse. On view March 1-April 28, with a reception on Friday, April 5, from 5-7 p.m.

DAVIS FAMILY LIBRARY
110 Storrs Avenue, Middlebury
For more info visit middlebury.edu/library or call 802-443-5494.

"The Lesbian House (1972-1973): Photographs by Bee Ottinger, class of 1970." Middlebury College Special Collections's new exhibition of photographs by alumna Bee Ottinger. On display in the atrium through April.

EDGEWATER AT THE FALLS
1 Mill Street, Middlebury
Visit edgewatergallery.com, call (802) 458-0098 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com for more info.

"New Work" by Sara Katz. Abstract painter Sara Katz presents a series of new large works on panel this February at Edgewater Gallery at the Falls. Katz's work is informed by her agricultural background, interest in the natural world and Japanese heritage. She finds that painting abstractly most successfully conveys the feelings she has for a place or for a botanical form. She works with a palette drawn from the natural world, varied mark making, and simplified forms from the landscape and botanical world to create her dynamic and bold compositions. On view Feb. 10-March 30.

EDGEWATER ON THE GREEN
6 Merchants Row, Middlebury
Visit edgewatergallery.com, call (802) 989.7419 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com for more info.

"Introducing Bonnie Baird." *Baird's paintings are filled with an emerging fullness of heart. In her paintings, light infuses life into atmosphere, becoming the magic that conjures a personal memory. Her paintings simultaneously evoke a simple lament and heartfelt joy. On view through April.*

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY
3 Park Street, Middlebury
For more info visit photoplacegallery.com.

"Traces." An exhibition of photographs that show a hint of people and events come and gone by, as told by the traces left behind. Any capture method and all processes, including black and white, alternative process and monochromatic toning, are welcome. Juror Jeff Curto selected approximately 35 images for exhibition in the Middlebury gallery, and 40 more for the online gallery. On view March 8-29.

SEE EXHIBITS ON PAGE 15

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. Grit and guts will get you what you deserve this week, Aries. You may have an opportunity to make a good deal of money, so give this plan careful consideration. Ask for advice if the need arises.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Taurus, there has been change in your life and you may want to blame the stars. Things will move out of your comfort zone and you will have to sharpen your ability to adapt.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. Gemini, you may be questioning the relationships in your life at the time being, but don't worry too much. If you hit a rough patch, things will clear up in a few days.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. A big shift in your perception and attitude will bring new components to your life that you may not have anticipated. This week you'll certainly have a few eyes-wide-open moments.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. There will be no hiding out this week, Leo. You will soon learn that things will come your way at a rapid pace. Do your best to keep up, mighty Lion, as it's bound to be exciting.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Virgo, you might be willing to throw caution to the wind and get away on a moment's notice. There are affordable ways to do this if you are willing to do your homework.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Libra, even though some drama may be swirling in your universe, you find it tolerable because it's coming at you in small portions. Just stay on the sidelines as much as possible.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. Scorpio, if boredom has set in, it's better to look to new experiences instead of doing something rash just for the thrill. See which classes you can take or find new restaurants to explore.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Self-care and healing are what you should focus on right now, Sagittarius. You may have been pushing your needs to the side lately and you need to make this a priority.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. You are not normally characterized as "impulsive," Capricorn. But you may surprise everyone this week. An opportunity to travel or another adventure could drop in your lap.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Try to create some tranquil spaces at home, Aquarius. You can use a haven, especially when a lot of stuff is thrown at you outside your home.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Pisces, you may be on a mission this week to get things done. Don't rush in your efforts to complete everything or you are bound to make mistakes that are not easily fixed.

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 29 — Eric Idle, comedian (81)
MARCH 30 — Francisco Goya, artist (d)
MARCH 31 — Octavio Paz, poet, Nobel laureate (d)
APRIL 1 — Milan Kundera, novelist (d)
APRIL 2— Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor (d)
APRIL 3— Jane Goodall, primatologist (90)
APRIL 4— Dorothea Dix, social reformer (d)

CALENDAR

MARCH 28-APRIL 8
2024

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

JAY PARINI'S "ROBERT FROST – SIXTEEN POEMS TO LEARN BY HEART" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 29, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. Come celebrate Frost's 150th Birthday with Town Hall Theater and the Vermont Book Shop, by paying homage to Frost's greatest work. Featuring live poetry, book signing and birthday cake. Free, but registration required at townhalltheater.org.

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB LECTURE IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 29, 7 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Herpetologist Jim Andrews will present "Selected Reptiles and Amphibians of the Central Green Mountains." He will discuss the identification, natural history, distribution and conservation of the salamanders, frogs, snakes and turtles that we are most likely to encounter in the Green Mountains of Central Vermont. Free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

OCTET PERFORMANCE OF HAYDN'S "THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 29, 7 p.m., Memorial Baptist Church, 97 S. Pleasant St. An hour-long work that sets each of the last sayings of Jesus to music. Since 1991, a group of Vermont musicians has carried on a tradition of offering this piece to Vermont audiences during Holy Week. Sung in German with English translation provided. Free and open to all. More info contact membaptistvt@gmail.com.

SOPHIE SHAO AND FRIENDS IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 29, 7:30 p.m., Robison Hall, Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. Cellist Sophie Shao has a gift for assembling impromptu chamber ensembles that are brimming with passion and talent. The concert program will include Messiaen's Quartet for The End of Time, and Vermont composer David Ludwig's Spiral Galaxy. Tickets: $25/20/10/5 available at go.middlebury.edu/tickets or 802-443-MIDD (6433).

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

WILLOWELL BOOGIE BENEFIT IN LINCOLN. Saturday, March 30, 6-9:30 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd. Come to the Willowell Foundation's benefit dance and silent auction. Live music by The Almendros, a cash bar, and a silent auction packed with exciting items from local businesses and artists. All funds raised will support Willowell's scholarship fund for youth programming for programs such as Pond Brook Middle School, New Roots, Wren's Nest and summer camps. All are welcome to this fun-filled, family friendly evening in support of nature-based programming in Addison County. Tickets $10 at the door. Kids age 12 years and younger are free.

KING PEDE CARD PARTY IN FERRISBURGH. Saturday, March 30, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center, 3279 Route 7. Sandwich supper followed by the games. King Pede involves "trick-taking" such as in Hearts, Spades or Pitch. This is a game of skill so come prepared to use your strategic thinking.

"JUST GETTING BY" ON SCREEN IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 30, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. A sweeping, and yet intimate look at the lives of Vermonters who are struggling with food and housing insecurity. "Just Getting By" focuses on everyday people: working families, folks who are homeless and are accessing food shelves and soup kitchens, people who are living in the temporary hotel/motel program, New Americans grappling with the cost of living in the U.S.A, Native people creating innovative farming practices and folks on the ground providing services to their fellow Vermonters in need. Tickets $17, includes applicable fees, available at 802-382-9222, townhalltheater.org or tickets@townhalltheater.org.

KRISHNA GUTHRIE BAND IN VERGENNES. Saturday, March 30, 7:30 p.m., Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. The Guthrie family story is interwoven into the fabric of American music. While Krishna Guthrie incorporates elements of his lineage, from the folk roots of his great-grandfather Woody to the masterful storytelling of his grandfather Arlo, he's not afraid of adding influences from his own generation as he carves his own initials in the family tree. Tickets $15 advance/$20 at the door, available at vergennesoperahouse.org.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

GEORGE BELLEROSE: "PORTRAITS OF A FOREST: MAN AND MACHINE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, April 2, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. A healthy forest is a multi-generational responsibility. To be good stewards of the land is this generation's challenge. The book "Portrait of a Forest: Men and Machine" through day-in-the-life photography and wide-ranging interviews helps us understand the people and policies that will determine if we meet that responsibility. Belrose is an author and photographer living in Weybridge.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN SALISBURY. Thursday, April 4, Silver Lake. Join Morris Earle on the trail of the trailing arbutus and his search for wildflowers. Easy to moderate pace hike of less than 4 miles round trip and a few hundred feet of elevation change. Contact Morris for details at 802-734-0984 or morrisearle@gmail.com. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

"SHARING THE TRAIL: GET TO KNOW THE MAMMALS OF THE TAM" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, April 4, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Join us for a talk on the different habitat preferences and activity levels of mammals on the TAM and learn how human activities can affect them. Explore the activity of these mammals through photos and videos from trail cameras set by Middlebury College students this past fall and hear what they can tell us about the trail's community.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091

MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION:
P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753

Please see the MCTV website, www.middlebury communitytv.org, for changes in the schedule; MCTV events, classes and news; and to view many programs online. Submit listings to the above address, or call 388-3062.

Friday, March 29
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
5 a.m. Telecom Plan Public Input Session
6 a.m. Legislative Breakfast
7:30 a.m. Congregational Church
10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs
3 p.m. Energy Week
4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Church
5:30 p.m. Legislative Breakfast
8 p.m. Selectboard

Saturday, March 30
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
5 a.m. Legislative Breakfast
9 a.m. Telecom Plan Public Input
10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs
4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service
5:30 p.m. Eckankar
6 p.m. Energy Week
7 p.m. Catholic Mass
7:30 p.m. Telecom Plan Public Input
8:30 p.m. Legislative Breakfast

Sunday, March 31
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
5 a.m. Selectboard
8 a.m. Energy Week
9 a.m. Catholic Mass
9:30 a.m. Legislative Breakfast
11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service
12:30 p.m. Energy Week
1:30 p.m. Public Affairs
4 p.m. Congregational Service
5:30 p.m. Telecom Plan Public Input
6:30 p.m. Eckankar
7 p.m. Catholic Mass
7:30 p.m. Energy Week
8:30 p.m. Dr. John Campbell
9:30 p.m. League of Women Voters

Monday, April 1
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
5:30 a.m. Eckankar
6 a.m. Press Conf., Public Affairs
9 a.m. Energy Week
10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs
4 p.m. Vote for Vermont
5 p.m. Legislative Breakfast

Tuesday, April 2
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
6 a.m. Vote for Vermont
7 a.m. Press Conf., Public Affairs
9:30 a.m. Eckankar
10 a.m. Selectboard
4 p.m. Congregational Services
7 p.m. Selectboard
11 p.m. Energy Week

Wednesday, April 3
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
5 a.m. Energy Week
6 a.m. League of Women Voters
7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service
9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass
10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs
4:30 p.m. Press Conferences
7 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs

Thursday, April 4
Overnight: State House, Public Affairs
7 a.m. Telecom Plan Public Input
8 a.m. Congregational Services
9:30 a.m. League of Women Voters
12 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs
8:30 p.m. Telecom Plan Public Input
9:30 p.m. Eckankar
10 p.m. Vote for Vermont

Channel 1091
Friday, March 29
5 a.m. All Things LGBTQ
6 a.m. Tai Chi
6:25 a.m. Songwriter's Notebook
7:30 a.m. At The Ilsley
10:30 a.m. VYO Mid-Winter Concert
12 p.m. School Board Meeting/s
5:30 p.m. VYO Mid-Winter Concert
7 p.m. Novelist & Historian Jack Kelly: "God Save Benedict Allen"
8:09 p.m. Norwich Book Store Author Talks

Saturday, March 30
6 a.m. All Things LGBTQ
7 a.m. Tai Chi
7:25 a.m. Author Talks
11:30 a.m. At The Ilsley
1 p.m. School Board Meeting/s
5:30 p.m. A Total Solar Eclipse
6:30 p.m. VYO Mid-Winter Concert
8 p.m. "God Save Benedict Allen"
9:09 p.m. Author Talks

Sunday, March 31
6 a.m. All Things LGBTQ
7 a.m. Tai Chi
7:25 a.m. Me2/ Burlington Orchestra
9:01 a.m. "The Great Vermont Flood of July 2023" Presented by Meteorologist Gabe Langbauer
10 a.m. First Tuesdays
11 a.m. Moccasin Tracks
12 p.m. "God Save Benedict Allen"
2:30 p.m. A Total Solar Eclipse
3:30 p.m. VYO Mid-Winter Concert
5 p.m. Author Talks
9:30 p.m. At The Ilsley

Monday, April 1
8 a.m. All Things LGBTQ
9 a.m. School Board Meeting/s
1 p.m. Author Talks
4 p.m. Me2/ Burlington Orchestra
5:06 p.m. Word Time with Miss Markee
5:30 p.m. VYO Mid-Winter Concert
7 p.m. A Total Solar Eclipse
8 p.m. At The Ilsley - A Garden Talk

Tuesday, April 2
5:30 a.m. VYO Mid-Winter Concert
7 a.m. Chair Yoga
8:05 a.m. Tai Chi (25)
8:30 a.m. Word Time With Miss Markee
10 a.m. School Board Meeting/s
5 p.m. "God Save Benedict Allen"
8 p.m. Cabin Fever Lecture Series -Mosquitoes Suck

Wednesday, April 3
6 a.m. A Total Solar Eclipse
7 a.m. Chair Yoga
8:05 a.m. Tai Chi
8:30 a.m. Word Time With Miss Markee
12 p.m. School Board Meetings
8 p.m. Festival On the Green
10 p.m. The History of Coinage

Thursday, April 4
5 a.m. Music in the Morning
7:05 a.m. Tai Chi
7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s
2:50 p.m. The History of Coinage
4 p.m. A Total Solar Eclipse
5 p.m. All Things LGBTQ
6 p.m. School Board Meeting/s

"HUNDRED DAYS" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, April 4, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. An uncensored, exhilarating and heartrending true story about embracing uncertainty, taking a leap, and loving as if you only had 100 days to live. Created by Abigail and Shaun Bengson, this performance features Grace Experience and her partner Stephen Shore. The show explores a fundamental question: How do we make the most of the time that we have? Produced by the Middlebury Acting Co. Tickets $25-$44, available at townhalltheater.org or 802-382-9222.

"THE FOUND DOG RIBBON DANCE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, April 4, 7:30 p.m., Seeler Studio Theatre at Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. Middlebury College Theatre Department will present Dominic Finocchiaro's modern comedy about love and longing and the power of touch. The show presents Norma, the professional cuddler who has found a dog! Her quest to return the dog to its rightful family leads Norma to curious encounters with unpredictable people and the possibility of a new chance at love. Tickets $15 general public; $10 for Middlebury College ID card holders; $8 for youth under 21; and $5 for Middlebury College students; call 802-443-6433 or go to middlebury.edu/college/box-office. Repeats Friday and Saturday.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

PHOTOGRAPHY OPENING RECEPTION IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, April 5, 3-7 p.m., PhotoPlace Gallery, 3 Park St. This exhibit highlights all genres of landscape: natural, urban, industrial and abstract.

EXHIBIT OPENING AND GRAND REOPENING CELEBRATION IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, April 5, 5-7 p.m., Sparrow Art Supply, 44 Main St. Celebrate Sparrow Art Supply's new location at this grand reopening party with a reception for the exhibit "Green Gold." The exhibit celebrates new beginnings featuring the works of seven local artists. With a nod to Robert Frost's iconic poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay," this collection shares the excitement of a fresh start and appreciation for life's golden moments.

ART OPENING IN BRANDON. Friday, April 5, 5-7 p.m., Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St. The guild member show "In the Path of Shade" is a celestial celebration that captures the awe-inspiring essence of a solar eclipse. Join us for the opening reception. The show runs through April 28.

VERMONT YOUTH ORCHESTRA IN VERGENNES. Friday, April 5, 7 p.m., Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. The VYO features the most advanced young musicians from Vermont, New Hampshire and northern New York. Touring internationally, they have performed in Spain, Portugal, Iceland, Germany, the Czech Republic, France and China. Tickets $15 adults/$5 students, available at vergennesoperahouse.org.

"NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD" ON SCREEN IN BRANDON. Friday, April 5, 7-9 p.m., Brandon Town Hall, 1 Conant Sq. Zombies rise from the grave in this 1968 horror film classic. Was this due to an eclipse? Come find out.

"HUNDRED DAYS" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See April 4 listing.

"THE FOUND DOG RIBBON DANCE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m., Seeler Studio Theatre at Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. See April 4 listing.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

ECLIPSE PREPARTY IN BRISTOL. Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m-1 p.m., Lawrence Memorial Library, 40 North St. Pick up free solar eclipse glasses and enjoy some solar eclipse activities before the event. Glasses on a first-come, first-serve basis, one per person or three per family. A special Eclipse display will teach community members all about this once-in-a-lifetime. Family-friendly activity upstairs.

"THE 1932 ECLIPSE" EXHIBIT IN BRANDON. Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Brandon Museum & Visitors Center, 4 Grove St. Stop in and learn about what happened when the skies went dark on Aug. 31,1932, and other Brandon facts and pick up a free pair of viewing glasses. Free planetary popcorn and beverages will be provided throughout the day.

"OBSERVING CELESTIAL PHENOMENON" PRESENTATION IN BRANDON. Saturday, April 6, 11 a.m., Brandon Museum & Visitors Center, 4 Grove St. Join local historian John Peterson as he explores how people have responded to heavenly spectacles through the ages.

"THE FOUND DOG RIBBON DANCE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, April 6, 2 and 7:30 p.m., Seeler Studio Theatre at Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. See April 4 listing.

"MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT" IN BRANDON. Saturday, April 6, 5:30-6:30 p.m., The Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. American tenor Joshua Collier, accompanied by piano and bass, will perform some of his favorites from The Great American Songbook, a canon of American popular songs and enduring jazz standards written mainly during the first half of the 20th century.

"AMONG THE STARS CABARET" IN BRANDON. Saturday, April 6, 7-10 p.m., Brandon Town Hall, 1 Conant Sq. An upscale evening of music and fun. Savory tidbits and sweet treats will be provided. Tipples available for purchase including a signature "Solar Eclipse cocktail." Doors open at 7; festivities to follow. Tickets $15, available in advance at Carr's Gifts, 21 Center St., or at the door the night of the show.

THE CHAMPLAIN PHILHARMONIC IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, April 6, 7:30 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. The philharmonic's spring concert includes Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78, by Camille Saint-Saëns; pianist, composer and UVM Professor David Feurzeig's "Stride Rite" based on Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" but with a ragtime twist; and PDQ Bach's clever and humorous "Grand Serenade for an Awful Lot of Winds and Percussion." Tickets $15 general admission/$10 seniors/$5 students, available at champlainphilharmonic.org or at the door.

"HUNDRED DAYS" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, April 6, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See April 4 listing.

RANI ARBO & DAISY MAYHEM IN LINCOLN. Saturday, April 6, 7:30 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 E. River Rd. This musical ensemble consists of Rani Arbo (fiddle, guitar), Andrew Kinsey (bass, banjo, ukulele), Anand Nayak (electric and acoustic guitars) and Scott Kessel (percussion). Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets general to generous $15/$20/$25. All funds after expenses go directly to the performers. More info at burnhampresents.org.

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

"THE 1932 ECLIPSE" EXHIBIT IN BRANDON. Sunday, April 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Brandon Museum & Visitors Center 4 Grove St. See April 6 listing.

SUMMIT WINDS - U.S. ARMY BAND ENSEMBLE OF THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION IN VERGENNES. Sunday, April 7, 2 p.m., Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. Summit Winds is a chamber woodwind ensemble from the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) Band located at Fort Drum, N.Y. Through their impeccable military bearing, professionalism and excellent musicianship, their aim is to build community, steward tradition, honor the

SEE CALENDAR ON PAGE 14

TOP PICK

Join Otter Creek Music Festival at American Flatbread in Middlebury on Wednesday, April 3, for some delicious pizza and tasty jazz. A portion of every flatbread sold directly supports OCMF 2024, so bring your friends!

The Evan Allen Trio will be there previewing their festival-opening performance on July 19. They'll be performing from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Come out for dinner and some jazz. Reservations are recommended.

PUZZLES

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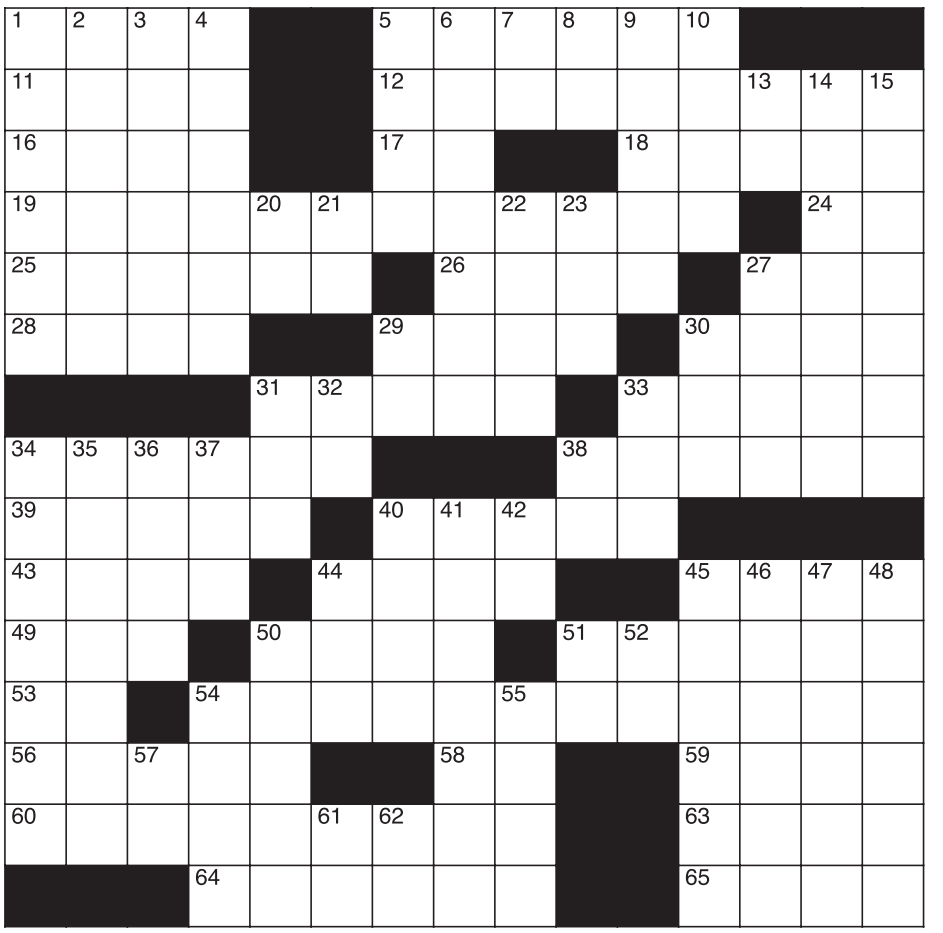
ACROSS

1. Database management system
5. Medical procedures
11. __ Clapton, musician
12. Defender
16. Exert oneself
17. Indicates position
18. Quay
19. Atrocities
24. A way to address an adult man
25. Ends
26. Unable
27. Taxi
28. Gratuities
29. A famous train station
30. Japanese persimmon
31. Sours
33. Beneficiary
34. Baseball official
38. Confused situation
39. Unworldly
40. Yemen capital
43. Type of soil
44. Beloved beverage __-Cola
45. Lying down
49. __ Angeles
50. Fail to amuse
51. Collapsible shelter
53. Commercial
54. Taste property
56. Lordship's jurisdictions
58. It cools your home
59. Dismounted
60. Charge in a court of law
63. One less than one
64. Spoke
65. Famed garden

DOWN

1. Show a picture of
2. Small sultanate
3. Unfortunate incident
4. A way to ski
5. Abba __, Israeli politician
6. Observed
7. "Westworld" actor Harris
8. Belonging to me
9. Shoelace tube
10. Takes to civil court
13. Early multimedia
14. Produces anew
15. Horse races
20. Of I
21. Equally
22. Changes color
23. A place to stay
27. Town in Galilee
29. Mathematical figure
30. Klingon character
31. They __
32. Atomic #58
33. Showed up extinct
34. Loosen grip
35. Unpleasant smell
36. Innermost membranes enveloping the brain
37. Esteemed college "league"
38. Partner to Pa
40. Small American rail
41. A salt or ester of acetic acid
42. Sodium
44. Military figure (abbr.)
45. Lighted
46. Paid to get out of jail
47. All of something
48. Ohio city
50. More abject
51. A radio band
52. Scientific development (abbr.)
54. Monetary unit
55. Scored perfectly
57. A punch to end a fight
61. The Golden State (abbr.)
62. The Beehive State (abbr.)



Sudoku

4				7			6	
	8				4	7		9
			5					2
		1						
2	7	3	1					8
5	4				6	8		1
			3					7
		2		5		9		

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Puzzles come in three grades: easy, medium and difficult.

Level: Medium

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 13.

44 MAIN STREET, MIDDLEBURY, VT

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

NEXT DOOR

Third time's the charm: Weybridge artist opens exhibit at Supreme Court Gallery in Montpelier

MATERIAL MATTERS: PHOTOGRAPHY AND MIXED MEDIA COLLAGE BY VICTORIA BLEWER

This spring the Vermont Supreme Court Gallery presents "Material Matters," a collection of hand-colored and black and white photographic images and mixed media collage by Weybridge artist Victoria Blewer.

As a photographer and visual artist, Blewer explores a variety of photographic media that derive from silver-print black and white and hand-colored images of agricultural structures. Represented in this exhibition are many photographs to which are applied oil paint to produce a hand-tinted time-captured image. These traditional photographic processes, achieved with the use of Kodak's 35mm infrared film, create experiential visual effects. Even with the dwindling supplies of non-digital photography materials, Blewer has managed to continue this tradition.

"I'm not the sort to live my life based on a bumper sticker," Blewer said, "but one stuck with me as I realized that technology was forcing me to re-imagine everything I have done or may do next as an artist: 'Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.' And isn't growth what every artist strives for? I remain confident that I'll be able to create new and different work as long as the fates allow. The material matters. But so does the vision."

This is the third attempt to hang her work

in the Vermont Supreme Court Gallery. The first two scheduled shows were postponed due to COVID in the spring of 2020, and then again because of the extreme flooding in the summer of 2023. Blewer has been patient; this show is a long time coming!

Will it be worth the drive — yes, definitely! "Material Matters" will hang in the Vermont Supreme Court Gallery, 111 State Street, Montpelier from April 4-June 28, with an opening reception and art walk on Friday, April 5, from 4-7 p.m. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 p.m. (Except for a lunch hour break.)

> "I REMAIN **CONFIDENT THAT I'LL BE ABLE TO CREATE NEW AND DIFFERENT WORK** AS LONG AS THE FATES ALLOW. THE MATERIAL MATTERS. BUT SO DOES THE VISION."
>
> — *Victoria Blewer*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Blewer was born in New York City, and is a graduate of Smith College in Northampton, Mass. She refined her art with classes at The New School in New York City, the International Center of Photography (ICP), the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, N.Y., and the University of Vermont. She moved to Vermont as a young artist in the late 1980s.

Blewer has exhibited her photography broadly and has won many national and regional awards. Her work has also appeared in numerous newspapers, magazines and books.

She lives in Weybridge, with her husband, well-known novelist and author Chris Bohjalian.

To learn more about Victoria Blewer and her work visit victoriablewer.com.

"New Barn," hand-colored photograph, 2024. The entire piece is 14"x 43."

IMAGES COURTESY OF VICTORIA BLEWER

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

HOW TO GARDEN IN A COLD FRAME

Andrea Knepper is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from Bolton.

BY **ANDREA** KNEPPER

Get a jump start on the growing season by adding a cold frame to your garden. A cold frame allows you to start some plants two to four weeks before the recommended planting time.

Any cool-season vegetable is a suitable candidate for growing in a cold frame. Popular choices include lettuce, spinach, kale, radishes and scallions.

With the new plant hardiness zones (planthardiness.ars.usda.gov), gardeners in many locations in Vermont will be able to plant in a cold frame beginning in early April. Check the upcoming weather forecast before planting. When outside temperatures are in the 40s, you can expect the average temperature within the cold frame to be comfortably above 50 F.

Prepare the soil in your cold frame with the same care and attention as you would for other garden beds. Lettuce, in particular, prefers well-drained, nutrient-rich soil, so make sure to amend your soil accordingly.

Plant your vegetables according to the spacing and depth recommendations on your seed packets. Leafy greens like lettuce, spinach and kale can be densely seeded and harvested before reaching full maturity. Refer to the seed packet for additional care and growing instructions. Remember to water your plants in the cold frame whenever the soil feels dry.

Monitoring temperature and airflow within the cold frame is essential. Temperatures can quickly rise too high for cool-season vegetables, so close attention is necessary. Prop open the lid of the cold frame to regulate temperature and promote airflow. A small opening of just a couple of inches can be enough. Be sure to close the lid in the evening to protect your vegetables from overnight cold temperatures.

Early spring isn't the only time a cold frame is useful. Cold frames also can be used for hardening off warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, eggplants and peppers that you have started indoors. Transplants purchased from a local greenhouse or garden center are typically hardened off before sale although these can be placed in a cold frame for a week or longer before planting in the garden.

While you might need to bring your plants indoors overnight during particularly cold spells, often simply closing the lid on the cold frame is sufficient. Keep an eye on the weather forecast when using your cold frame for hardening off plants.

Fall presents another opportunity to benefit from a cold frame. You can plant cool-season vegetables in the cold frame toward the end of the season.

This can extend your growing season by two weeks or more beyond the first frost. Follow the same process to enjoy a late harvest of leafy vegetables, scallions and radishes well into the fall.

Lettuce grows best in well-drained, nutrient-rich soil, so soil should be amended accordingly before starting this cool-season vegetable in a cold frame.

PHOTO / ERDA ESTEMERA/UNSPLASH

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Pet Spotlight

This is Wheel!

Wheel is a 4-year-old Checkered-mix rabbit who is fully litter box trained. She was adopted not long ago, but returned to the shelter because she didn't get along with the other rabbit in the home. Not fond of being held or mingling with other rabbits, Wheel finds solace in burrowing into fuzzy blankets and exploring her surroundings with curiosity. She is a tender soul who enjoys gentle pats on the head and would do best in a quiet, laid-back home.

Though shy at first, Wheel quickly becomes your best friend when tempted with tasty treats. In fact, she's SO motivated by treats (vegetables) that shelter staff have started trick training her and they are quite certain she is going to be a superstar! They've even ordered a rabbit jump for her to try! Wheel is a fan of other engaging activities like stacking cups and solving puzzle feeders.

Read more about Wheel on page 16

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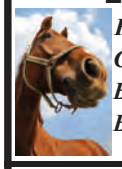

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Pets In Need

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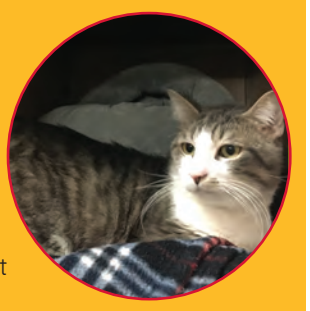
Abe

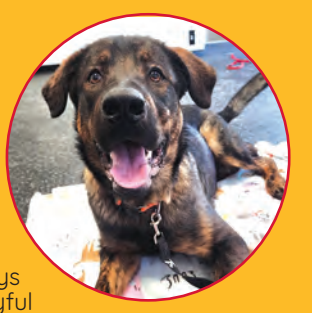


Abe is a friendly 1-year-old with a sweet, shy temperament. He was surrendered by his owners due to housing instability. Abe is currently on an anxiety medication that has really improved his shyness. He has not gotten along with cats in the past and has not been around dogs.

Coco Bean

Coco Bean is sweet and shy. She is approximately 10 months old and has lived an indoor/outdoor lifestyle. She enjoys the company of other cats and spends most of her time with her cat friends in hidey spots.

Bear

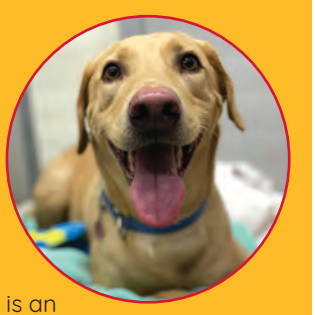


Bear is a 7-month-old, 76-pound German Shepherd/Rottweiler mix and is still growing. He has a lot of puppy energy and can be jumpy when excited, but is very smart and learns new cues like a champ. He is extremely food-motivated and enjoys solving puzzle toys. Bear is very playful and will need a lot of physical and mental exercise. He absolutely loves his people and is very friendly to visitors. Bear does not get along with other dogs in the same household and needs to be the only pet. He can live with older children. He is still an adolescent and will need a lot of training. He is a big, goofy youngster who is looking for an active family capable of handling his size and energy.

Buck

Buck is a 5-year-old lab mix. He loves being around people and is dog-friendly, but does seem to be selective with other male dogs. He is very food-motivated. Buck is not housebroken but is figuring it out. We are unsure how he is around cats, but has been around children and was fine with them.

Jack



Jack is a 5-year-old, 67-pound lab mix. He is a nervous guy who needs a quiet home. Jack does not get along with other pets in a home setting but is fine passing dogs out for walks. He absolutely loves peanut butter, is housebroken, and knows a few basic commands. Jack is an active dog who enjoys an outdoorsy lifestyle with hikes and swims in the river. He is a big cuddle bug and wants to be near his humans.

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THE HOME

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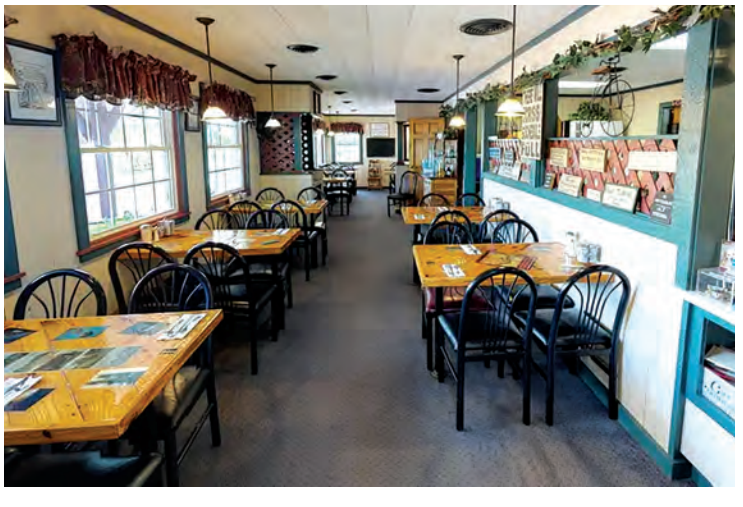

The Bridge Restaurant, a long time favorite is now for sale! This property, which houses both a 1-2 bedroom home and commercial building, offers a chance for buyers to reinvent themselves. This established 40-seat, family-style restaurant (with a take-out creemee window) is turn-key and awaiting its next entrepreneur. The traffic count is over 4,100 vehicles a day — so there is a lot of visibility. The adjacent home is an updated 2 bedroom (currently it is a 1 bedroom suite but could be converted back), 2 bathroom home with attached two-car garage. There are many upgrades at the restaurant such as, new roof, upgraded septic system, as well as an upgraded HVAC and exhaust system. On your down time you can enjoy the deck or take a walk across the bridge.

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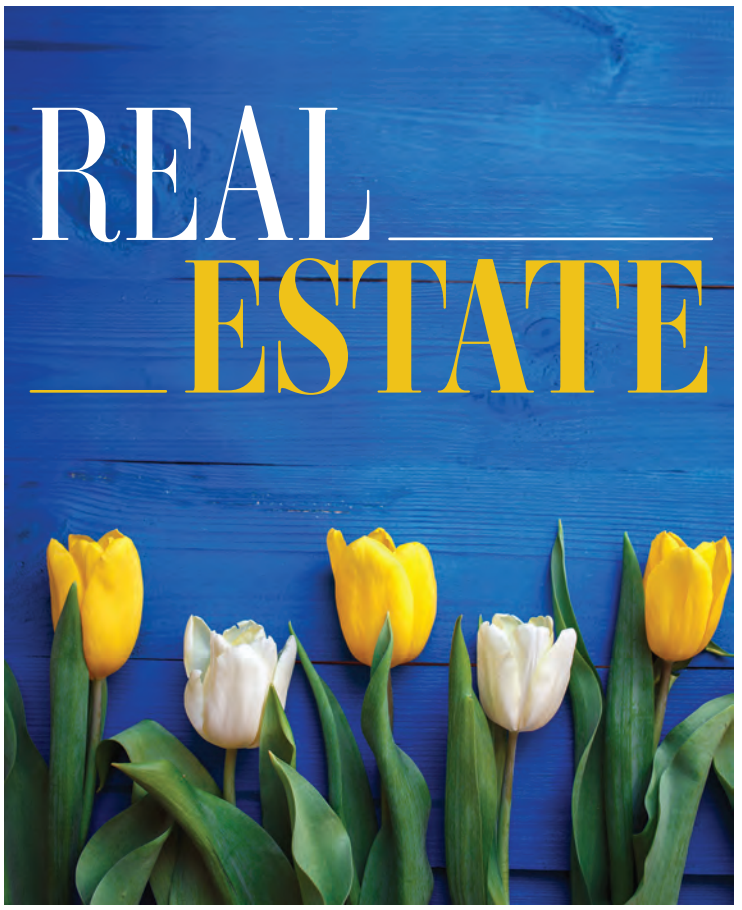

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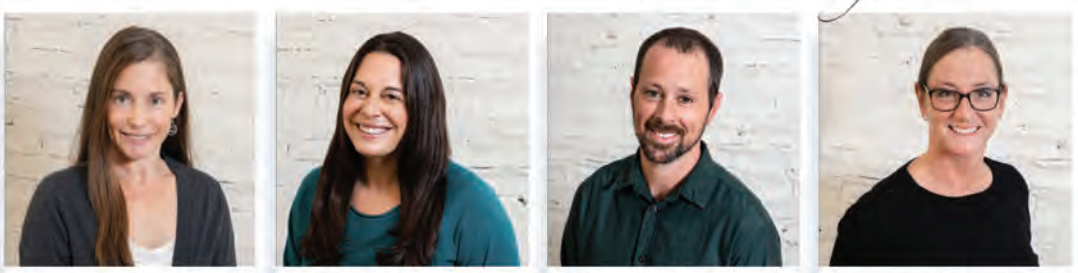

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IPJ Real Estate

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61 OLIVER HOWE COURT

MLS #4988902 | $369,000
3 BD | 3 BA | 1860 SF | 0.50 ACRES

This charming three bedroom home sits right on the backside of the town fields. Within a short walk to the town center, which includes the elementary school, town clerks office and library. Home was newly built in 2017 with a nicely functional floor plan, spaciously basement and all the comforts of modern construction. This three bedroom home has a spacious primary suite with walk-in closet, and attached full bath. Additional bedroom share another full bath. Walk out your sliding glass door to a large deck overlooking your backyard and the heart of the Shoreham village. 20 minutes to Middlebury and 20 minutes to Vergennes.

BRANDON *NEW LISTING!*
2365 FOREST DALE ROAD

MLS #4988619 | $349,000
3 BD | 1 BA | 1698 SF | 1.85 ACRES

The Sellers have made a lot of improvements since purchasing the property. A large mudroom gives you plenty of space to kick off your boots and hang up your gear before entering the rest of the home. Walk in and you will be greeted by the brand new kitchen with custom cabinets and quartz countertops! The kitchen is open to the sunny dining room leading to the living room, with hardwood floors throughout the main level. An additional room makes a great office, or could be a first floor bedroom option. The renovated full bath is off of this space. Upstairs are four rooms- laid out like two suites. Perfect for bedroom/sitting room/ office, or bedroom/playroom. A detached, two car garage is handy for car and equipment storage. The Sellers took great care with the yard as well, planting blueberry, raspberry, blackberry and cranberry bushes, along with cherry and apple trees and two types of grapes! Enjoy watching all of this come to life this spring and summer!

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CALENDAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

fallen and bolster morale by engaging local, regional, national and international audiences through world-class musical performances. Free.

ZOMBIE WALK IN BRANDON. Sunday, April 7, 1 p.m., top of Park Street to The Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. Grab some friends, classmates, sport teammates, family members, dress up like a zombie. Gather at the top of Park Street and walk/stagger/moan your way to the lot in front of the Brandon Inn to participate in Flash Mob dance of "Thriller." There will be prizes, so be creative. Immediately after, shuffle into Central Park to enjoy vendors, music and food.

"NATIVE AMERICAN ECLIPSE BELIEFS" IN BRANDON. Sunday, April 7, 2 p.m., The Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. Abnaki Peggy White Buffalo Moon Rozell will be dressed in full regalia to tell us about traditions of local Native American tribes celebrating and honoring celestial occurrences.

"HUNDRED DAYS" IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, April 7, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See April 4 listing.

NESHOBE ART SHOW IN BRANDON. Sunday, April 7, 2:45- 3:30 p.m. Conant Square Gallery, 4 Conant Sq. An exhibit of Neshobe School students work focused on the essence of a Solar Eclipse.

MAIDEN VERMONT AND MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE COMMUNITY CHORUS IN BRANDON. Sunday, April 7, 7-9 p.m., Brandon Town Hall, 1 Conant Sq. An evening of music with two talented choruses from Central Vermont — Vermont's own women's barbershop chorus and Middlebury College students, alumni, staff, faculty and community members joining together.

MONDAY, APRIL 8

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB SYZYGY WATCH: A SOLAR ECLIPSE HIKE. Monday, April 8. Location TBD. Expect a moderate to difficult hike of 1-2 miles and great views. Be prepared for winter hiking conditions, bring plenty of warm layers and snacks and something comfortable to sit on. The duration of the eclipse is approximately 2.5 hours, with totality occurring between 3:26 and 3:29 p.m. Eclipse glasses will be provided. Limit 8 participants. Contact betheliason@gmail.com for more information. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

THE GREAT MIDDLEBURY SOLAR ECLIPSE CELEBRATION IN MIDDLEBURY. Monday, April 8, 12:30-4 p.m., Middlebury Rec Park, Mary Hogan Drive. Get your eclipse glasses and join the big event, organized by the rec departments of Middlebury and Brandon, Isley Public Library, Brandon Free Library, Better Middlebury Partnership, ACSD & MESA. Food Trucks, disc golf, music, games pump track and mini ramp.

MONKTON'S SOLAR ECLIPSE PARTY. Monday, April 8, 1-4:30 p.m., town hall. Please RSVP to help organizers better plan for the party: forms.gle/4GmxWscgpFdRG49j6. Please make some time to get your solar eclipse glasses, the library and the town hall have a limited number to distribute. The event will also feature food vendors, including Queen Bee and ReMarcAble Bakery.

ECLIPSE WATCHING AT LAKE CHAMPLAIN MARITIME MUSEUM IN FERRISBURGH. Monday, April 8, 1-4:30 p.m. Picnics welcome; limited glasses available.

ECLIPSE VIEWING FUN IN BRANDON. Monday, April 8, 2-4 p.m., Estabrook Park, 760 Grove St. The Brandon Recreation Department will be having games to keep the kids busy leading up to the eclipse, including a "Nerf War" from 2:30-3 p.m.— chase any lingering zombies away. Battle your way through an obstacle course. (Nerf only, no paint pellets or other ammo). Open to all, with plenty of parking and restrooms.

"RING IN THE ECLIPSE" IN BRANDON. Monday, April 8, 2-4 p.m., Brandon area churches. Solar eclipses have been viewed as a sign of the divine throughout history. Our downtown churches will be open from 2-4 p.m. for reflection, or just to enjoy these historical buildings. They will ring in the eclipse at 2:14 p.m., leading to the peak of the eclipse, which starts at 3:26 p.m.

SOLAR ECLIPSE VIEWING WITH MIDDLEBURY AREA LAND TRUST IN MIDDLEBURY. Monday, April 8, 3-4 p.m. at Riverside Park in Middlebury's Marble Works. Opportunity to be part of the Eclipse Soundscape Project. BYO glasses.

EXHIBITS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

72 Porter Field Rd, Middlebury
For more info visit middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions.

"Derrick Adams: Sanctuary" featuring 50 works of mixed-media collage, assemblage on wood panels, and sculpture that reimagine safe destinations for the black American traveler during the mid-20th century. On view Jan. 26-April 14.

"David Plowden: Portraits of America." This exhibition is arranged around the major themes that dominated the artist's body of work: locomotives, steam ships, steel mills, bridges, small towns, and the agricultural landscapes of the Midwest. On view Jan. 26.-April 14.

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"Green Gold," Sparrow Art Supply's debut exhibition at 44 Main Street, is a celebration of new beginnings. In this exhibit seven artists explore growth, transition and renewal. Spanning all mediums, including painting, ceramics, stained glass, and mixed media, each piece offers a unique perspective on the fleeting nature of life. An opening reception an celebration of the new space will be held Friday, April 5, from 5-7 p.m., free and open to the public, with treats by Thistle and Honey Baking and complimentary wine by Dedalus Wine. The exhibit will be on view through May 11

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MLS

WHEEL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Our shelter Reiki volunteers enjoy sitting with Wheel and they have all reported what Zen energy she gives off. She flops on her back while they sit with her and rolls around on her blanket! If you are looking for a loyal companion who thrives on gentle interactions and cozy atmospheres, Wheel could be a perfect match for you!

For questions about Wheel, please call Homeward Bound, 802-388-1100, ext. 109, or email smalls@homewardboundanimals.org.

HOME

Spring Edition

Inside:

- Think of pollinators when cleaning up your garden..... Page 3C
- Do your research when buying lawn equipment..... Page 5C
- Some renovations can help sell your home ..... Page 8C
- Plan carefully before you do it yourself..... Page 10C
- Vermonters are buying a lot of heat pumps..... Page 11C
- Middlebury Makerspace offers tools that you can use .... Page 14C

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For pollinators' sakes, don't spring into garden cleanup too soon!

By JUSTIN WHEELER
Xerces Society

Spring is here. A time when warmer weather naturally turns a winter-weary homeowner's thoughts towards tackling outdoor chores. The first warm weather of the season may coax us out into the yard, but pollinators in your garden aren't ready to take a chance on the first warm day.

Chrysalides still cling to last season's dried standing plant material. While you may begin to see bumble bees and ground-nesting bees emerge as flowering trees and shrubs burst into bloom, they still need cover during chilly nights and heavy spring showers. While mining bees, mason bees, carpenter bees, and bumble bees may be out and about by early April, other species such as sweat bees are still hiding out, waiting for the warmer days that arrive in May. Meanwhile, last year's leaf litter is still providing protection for both plants and invertebrates against late-season frosts.

If you haven't tempted fate yet by relegating the snow shovel to the back of the garage, and if you're still wearing wool socks and long underwear – it's too early. Go make some hot chocolate and keep knitting that scarf you've been working on all winter.

So when is the right time to unleash your itchy green thumbs and reach for the rake? Unfortunately there isn't a hard and fast answer to this question, and the exact date will vary based upon where you are in the country. To offer some guidance, consider asking yourself the following questions.

Here's some suggestions on how to determine when spring cleaning won't bug your pollinators.

Have I put away the snow shovel, mittens, and winter coats?

If you haven't tempted fate yet by relegating the snow shovel to the back of the garage, and if you're still wearing wool socks and long underwear — it's too early. Go make some hot chocolate and keep knitting that scarf you've been working on all winter.

Would I plant tomatoes now?

Any gardener will tell you it's not a good idea to plant your tomatoes outdoors until evening temperatures are reliably in the 50s. The tender tomato will shut down and suspend growth and fruiting if subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees or above 90 degrees. If it's time to plant tomatoes in your area, chances are conditions are neither too hot nor too cold for pollinators to be out and about.

Is the lawn growing tall?

Cool-season lawns begin growing when soil temperatures reach 50 degrees. In all but the warmest climates, if grass is growing enough to justify regular mowing, it's probably a safe bet that most pollinators have emerged.

To help pollinators the most, wait a little longer to mow. No Mow May is a movement to allow grass and wildflowers in lawns to grow unmown until after May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators when floral blooms can be less common. If you do mow before then, consider reducing intensity or frequency.

Have I paid my taxes?

In northern states mid-late April should be the earliest you consider cutting back perennials and clearing garden debris. Keep in mind that some bees don't emerge until late May, so the longer you can tolerate your "messy" garden the better.

Are apples and pears finished blooming?

Apricot, peach, plum, and cherry trees are the earliest to bloom, coinciding with the emergence of many ground-nesting bees. Apple and pear trees bloom between mid-April and mid-May. If you can manage to wait until apple trees are no longer in bloom, then you should be safely in the clear from disturbing those pollinators that emerge a little later than the rest.

Resist the temptation of spring fever

We get it, it's tough to turn a blind eye to the "messy" garden, especially when gardening magazines, catalogs, and TV ads provide temptation daily. Each spring we beg gardeners and homeowners to press pause and find other ways to occupy their weekends.

Instead of disturbing critical habitat, read a book, do a jigsaw puzzle, do your taxes, tidy up the garage, or clean the gutters. While you may be eager to get outside and play in the garden — there will be time enough to toil in the soil before you know it!

Editor's note: This story was provided by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

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- Antifreeze
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- Ammonia
- Auto body filler
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- Brake fluid
- Bug spray
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- Oven cleaner
- Paint thinner/turpentine
- Parts cleaner
- Pesticides/herbicides
- Photographic chemicals
- Pool chemicals
- Primers or shellacs
- Rechargeable batteries
- Roach traps/poison
- Rug/upholstery cleaner
- Solvent-based Glues
- Stains
- Stump remover
- Tars or resins
- Transmission fluid
- Tub & tile cleaner
- Varnish
- Weed killer/fertilizer
- Wood preservative

Household hazardous waste includes any unused product that is poisonous, reactive, corrosive, or flammable.

You can easily identify hazardous products by reading packaging labels. Look for key words such as **Warning! Danger! Poison! Caution!**

Improper disposal of these products poses a risk to human health and the environment.

*All compact fluorescents (CFLs) are accepted at no cost; other types of general purpose fluorescent bulbs are free to recycle in quantities of 10 or fewer per day. A per-bulb nominal fee applies for more than 10.

Not accepted: laboratory chemicals, pharmaceuticals, fireworks, flares, explosives, smoke detectors, ammunition, and radioactive waste.

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MEMBERS OF THE Bristol Fired Department arrived at the home of Alice Leeds on a recent sunny Thursday morning to check air quality after a small but dramatic explosion of one of the coils on the electric stove while cooking oatmeal. While there, the firefighters also installed new carbon monoxide detectors — for free. "We appreciate their invaluable service to our community," Leeds said. "You folks are the greatest!"

Firefighters pictured from left are Adrian Ludka, Nathan Booska, Brian Wendel, Brett LaRose and James Cole. Not pictured are those outside staffing Bristol's Engine #1, Kevin LaRose and Terry Farr.

Photo courtesy of Alice Leeds

Tips to prevent fires, stay safe

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reminds homeowners about the risk of home fires during the winter months and on into the spring. The organization also offers simple but critical ways to prevent fires and stay safe.

According to NFPA, heating equipment is the leading cause of U.S. home fires between December and January, while cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires year-round. The third-leading cause of home fires is electrical equipment, with three in 10 electrical fires occurring between November and February. Also, more than a third (34 percent) of Christmas tree home fires occur in January.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

• Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffeemaker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.

• Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets.

• Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.

• Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance, a discolored or warm wall outlet, a burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance, flickering or dimming lights, or sparks from an outlet.

COOKING SAFETY

• Keep a close eye on what you're cooking; never leave cooking food unattended. For foods with longer cook times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.

• Clear the cooking area of combustible items, keeping anything that can burn — such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging and paper towels — at least three feet away from cooking equipment.

• Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.

• Create a "kid and pet free zone" of at least three feet around the cooking area and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

• Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.

OTHER TIPS

Smoke alarms, which reduce the risk of dying in a fire by more than half (54 percent), must be installed in all required locations and working properly. Home escape planning is another critical element of home fire safety, as people may have as little as two minutes to escape a home fire from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Knowing what to do when the smoke alarm sounds and using that time wisely is critical to safety.

"Our goal is to make sure people know what the main causes of home fires are and how to prevent them," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of NFPA Outreach and Advocacy. "A little added awareness, effort, and planning can go a long way toward minimizing those risks."

What to know when picking new interior doors

Metro Creative photo

Renovation projects run the gamut from patio paver installations to home additions to exterior lighting projects. There's no end to the ways homeowners can tweak their properties as they aspire to renovate and transform the interior and exterior of their homes.

Interior door replacement projects can dramatically alter how a home looks, especially when existing doors are dated, damaged and/or fading. Though homeowners may have grand visions of a new kitchen or outdoor living room when beginning such projects, they may not know where to begin when the time comes to replace interior doors. The following rundown can help homeowners as they begin to explore their options and start down the path of replacing interior doors.

Materials

Interior doors are manufactured from an array of materials, some of which may be more effective at reducing noise than others. Wood, medium-density fiberboard (MDF), solid-core, hollow-core, and even metal and glass are some of the materials categories for interior doors. Homeowners can define what they prioritize with each door and then choose the material that aligns best with that goal.

Installation

The cost of installation is another variable to consider when replacing interior doors. If the frame of the door is being replaced along with the door, homeowners may benefit from using a professional installation team, as removing an existing frame and installing a new one is a complicated project. Pre-hung doors come ready to hang with hinges already attached, so skilled do-it-yourselfers may be able to hang these on their own. Installation costs can be expensive, but homeowners with little DIY experience are urged to work with professionals so a job can be completed correctly, on time and within budget.

Style and design

Style and design merits consideration as well, and homeowners are urged to afford ample time to explore a wide array options that might be more expansive than homeowners realize. Hinged doors, pocket doors, French doors, and barn doors are just some of the styles homeowners can choose from, and it may make sense to choose various styles when replacing all or most interior doors in a home. Each type of door typically comes in an assortment of designs as well, and it can take time to choose the right design for a given home.

Hardware

Doorknobs, locks and other hardware is easy to take for granted. However, homeowners replacing their interior doors will need to make these choices when picking new doors. Standard hardware offerings may disappoint upon installation, so afford ample time and attention to doorknobs and other hardware to ensure the finished product impresses from the get-go. Customization of hardware may add a little extra to the final cost, but it should not be enough to bust a budget and will likely result in a more impressive finished product.

Interior door replacement can create a whole new look inside a home. Homeowners are urged to afford themselves ample time to consider their many options when replacing interior doors.

— Metro Creative

Small renovations can add up to a big difference

Home renovation projects were high on homeowners' priority lists during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout much of 2020, people across the globe were forced to spend much of their time at home as leaders and governments across the globe sought to prevent the spread of COVID-19. More time at home compelled millions of homeowners to invest more in their properties, thus sparking a renovation boom.

By early 2023, the renovation boom that marked the initial days of the pandemic appeared to have

(See Renovations, Page 6C)

Do research when you're buying yard equipment

With the weather warming up, now is the time to think about how you want your yard to serve your family, pets and wildlife. Maybe you're aiming to have the best yard on the block, want to install an outdoor family room or outdoor office, or want to expand your space for entertaining. Perhaps your kids or pets could use a better space for play. Regardless of need, now is the time to get "backyard ready" for spring. What tools do you need?

"Completing big outdoor jobs is always easier with help from outdoor power equipment," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, or OPEI. "The right outdoor power equipment can help you get the work done faster and can help you safely maintain your yard."

Here are some tips from Kiser to help you select the machinery you need to get the job done.

Plan your needs. Draw a sketch of your yard. Include any major features like trees, bushes, an herb or vegetable garden, flower beds, lawn furniture, play or sports equipment, an outdoor patio, or bird bath. Note where maintenance may be required. Will bushes need to be trimmed back from your home or garage? Do you want to put in some flowering bushes or a tree? Are you planning to install a fence and more grass for your pet? Now list the tools and equipment needed to take care of your yard, and what will make the job easier.

> *"Completing big outdoor jobs is always easier with help from outdoor power equipment."*
> *– Kris Kiser*

Consider equipment needed. Visit your garage or shed and find your lawn and garden tools. Wheel out your mower and get out other equipment. Look it over and make a list of what is needed or could be upgraded. Repair anything that needs attention or identify where a newer or other machine is required. If you have a large vegetable garden, you may need a cultivator or tiller. If you have a large lawn, an upgrade to a riding lawn mower might make mowing easier. A string trimmer might make caring for bushes or trimming grass near a fence line easier. A pole pruner can help trim back limbs that are too high to reach safely with a saw, and a leaf blower can clear leaves faster than a rake.

Research equipment online before you buy. Think about efficiencies of scale. The right equipment can mean more time for other activities, and make doing yard work more enjoyable, too. Doing online research in advance will help you pick the right equipment for the job. Outdoor power equipment can be gas, electric or battery powered, and technology is rapidly having an impact on product design. There are even robotic lawn mowers available today. Equipment may be sized to handle a smaller job or a massive one. Ultimately, your decision should be based on your needs.

Ask questions. Talk with the staff at the store or ask online about the equipment. In the store, ask to pick up and hold equipment to determine its "fit" for you. Discuss safety features and ask about manufacturer fueling and care instructions. Find out how often equipment may need to be serviced.

Make a plan for storage and maintenance. Store your equipment in a cool and dry place. It also should typically be serviced at the end of the fall and the beginning of the spring. Put service dates on your calendar with a reminder.

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Renovations

(Continued from Page 5C)

burst. In May 2023, the popular home improvement retailer Home Depot reported its sales had fallen by 4.5 percent in the first quarter of the year and that its income had fallen by more than 6 percent from the same period a year earlier. That marked the end of what Home Depot CEO Ted Decker characterized as "a three-year period of unprecedented growth" in the home improvement sector.

Home Depot's decline in sales was attributed to a number of factors, including a pivot among homeowners from large projects to smaller renovations. Inflation and the looming threat of a recession have led many homeowners to emphasize smaller projects. With that in mind, the following are some small renovations that can have a big impact.

• Storage addition: Regardless of where storage is added, be it the kitchen or a home office or a laundry room, extra space to keep items out of view can dramatically alter the look of a home. Unused kitchen walls can be transformed with some inexpensive, easily hanged shelves, while some laundry pedestals with storage drawers can help keep washrooms clear of clutter.

•Polish floors: Elbow grease might be the biggest expenditure when cleaning hardwood floors. Some wood flooring experts advise homeowners to polish their floors once every two to four months depending on how much foot traffic the floors get. A fresh polishing can make floors look brand new and ensures dirt and dust are not hanging around as uninvited houseguests.

• Paint: Painting is another inexpensive option for budget-conscious homeowners who want to update their homes. There's no shortage of places in a home, both inside and out, where a fresh coat of paint can make a statement without breaking the bank. Fading paint on bedroom walls and kitchen cabinets can be painted over with a fresh coat of the same color or even something more vibrant. Outside, apply a fresh coat to a wooden deck or paint over brick siding to create a whole new look.

• Molding: Crown molding can add a touch of elegance to any room. Rooms can be transformed in a single weekend with the installation of new or replacement crown molding. A simple molding installation is a task many do-it-yourselfers can handle on their own, while homeowners with less DIY experience may benefit from hiring a contractor to create a layered molding look.

Homeowners are pivoting away from costly renovations to more budget-conscious projects. Various less expensive undertakings can transform spaces at a fraction of the cost of more extensive renovations.

— Metro Creative

Let 'er rip

THE SAWDUST FLIES so it's good that carpenter Cooper Smith-Stackhouse moved outside before he cut up some wood trim for a remodeling project at a Middlebury home recently. One would expect that he moved inside after the recent heavy snowfall.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

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Tips to revitalize a garden this spring

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that pays a host of significant dividends. Many people love gardening because it allows them to spend time outdoors, and that simple pleasure is indeed a notable benefit of working in a garden. But the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture notes that gardening provides a host of additional benefits, including helping people get sufficient levels of exercise, reduce stress and improve mood.

With so much to gain from gardening, it's no wonder people look forward to getting their hands dirty in the garden each spring. As the weather warms up, consider these tips to help bring a garden back to life.

• Discard the dead weight. Winter can take its toll on a garden, even in regions where the weather between December and early spring is not especially harsh. Discard dead plants that have lingered into spring and prune any perennials that need it. Branches that fell during winter storms also should be removed at this point if they have not previously been discarded.

Mulching benefits a garden by helping soil retain moisture and preventing the growth of weeds.

• Test the soil. Soil testing kits can be purchased at local garden centers and home improvement retailers. Also, check out UVM Extension for soil tests. Such tests are inexpensive and can reveal if the soil needs to be amended to help plants thrive in the months to come.

• Mulch garden beds. Mulching benefits a garden by helping soil retain moisture and preventing the growth of weeds. Various garden experts note that mulching in spring can prevent weed seeds from germinating over the course of spring and summer. That means plants won't have to fight with weeds for water when the temperature warms up. It also means gardeners won't have to spend time pulling weeds this summer.

• Inspect your irrigation system. Homeowners with in-ground irrigation systems or above-ground systems that use a drip or soaker function can inspect the systems before plants begin to bloom. Damaged sprinkler heads or torn lines can deprive plants of water they will need to bloom and ultimately thrive once the weather warms up.

• Tune up your tools. Gardening tools have likely been sitting around gathering dust since fall. Serious gardeners know that tools can be expensive, so it pays to protect that investment by maintaining the tools. Sharpened pruners help make plants less vulnerable to infestation and infection. Well-maintained tools like shovels and hoes also make more demanding gardening jobs a little bit easier, so don't forget to tune up your tools before the weather warms up.

It's almost gardening season, which means gardeners can start on the necessary prep work to ensure their gardens grow in strong and beautiful this spring.

— Metro Creative

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Easter blooms bring a little spring inside

By DEBORAH J. BENOIT
UVM Extension Master Gardener

It's no surprise that the Easter lily (*Lilium longiflorum*) is the most popular floral gift for Easter giving, but did you know that, contrary to its name, it isn't a spring-blooming flower?

When grown outdoors, they bloom during the summer. Commercial growers go through a carefully timed process to coax them to bloom at the proper time each spring.

Easter lilies are commonly sold as a plant, but their white, trumpet-shaped flowers often take center stage in cut flower arrangements. They symbolize rebirth, new beginnings and hope.

After the holiday, potted Easter lilies can be planted in your garden after all danger of frost has passed. Be sure to introduce them to the outdoors over the course of several days by bringing them out for a while each day, gradually increasing the number of hours.

Easter lilies are hardy in U.S. Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zones 5-11, possibly Zone 4, if protected from winter temperatures by sufficient snow cover and a generous layer of mulch. Choose a sunny location with soil that drains well. The leaves will eventually yellow and die back in the fall.

As beautiful as they are, be aware that every part of an Easter lily can cause stomach upset in dogs if eaten but is highly poisonous to cats. That includes the yellow pollen that is easily shed. If you have pets, be sure to keep Easter lilies well out of their reach.

In addition, the pollen can permanently stain fabric. An easy way to prevent the spread of pollen is to simply remove the anthers (the yellow part of the flower that produces pollen).

Of course, Easter lilies aren't the only flower popular for Easter gift giving.

THE EVER-POPULAR EASTER lily, sold as a potted plant or cut flowers, symbolizes rebirth, new beginnings and hope.

Photo by Ashlee Marie/Pexels

Daffodils (*Narcissus*) are one of the first flowers to emerge as winter ends and are true harbingers of spring. They appear in cut flower bouquets and as potted plants at florists around this time of year. Their bright yellow, trumpet-shaped blooms represent rebirth and are a popular gift for Easter.

Daffodils are hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-8. While bulbs are traditionally planted in the fall, potted daffodils can be transferred to the garden after flowers have faded. Simply deadhead the flowers and allow the greenery to continue to grow until it dies off naturally. Remove from the pot and plant in the garden once temperatures have warmed and the ground is workable.

Like daffodils, tulips (*Tulipa*) are a classic spring-blooming flower. They're available in a rainbow of colors and can be found at florists as cut flowers or potted plants. The egg-shaped flowers can represent rebirth and love.

TULIPS, A SYMBOL of rebirth, are a classic spring-blooming flower, often gifted to someone special around Easter time.

Photo courtesy of Deborah J. Benoit

Tulips are hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-7. Potted tulips can be transplanted in the garden in the same manner as daffodils. Like daffodils, they're toxic to dogs and cats if eaten.

You may already be familiar with other holiday cacti — Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) and Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) — but have you heard of the Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*)? Its flowers come in shades of red, orange and pink. It's easy to care for and generally considered pet friendly.

Like other holiday cacti, Easter cactus is actually a succulent. Treat it to bright, indirect sunlight and water when the soil feels dry. It's hardy only to USDA Hardiness Zones 10-12, so while it can spend warmer months outside (avoid hot, direct sunlight), be sure to bring it back indoors before there's danger of frost.

Whether you receive Easter flowers as a bouquet, a potted plant or a mixed-bulb planting, they're a wonderful way to celebrate and a sure sign of spring.

Deborah J. Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from North Adams, Mass., who is part of the Bennington County Chapter.

Renovations that sell homes

The adage "there's a lid for every pot" suggests that, even in relation to the real estate market, there's bound to be a buyer for every home on the market. Price is a significant variable in the minds of potential buyers, but there are additional factors that can affect the impression people get of a given home.

Certain home features can tip the scales in favor of sellers. In fact, various renovations can help sell homes more readily. And these renovations need not cost a fortune. Putting a home on the market can be stressful, but these renovations may help it sell fast.

> *Although painting is relatively inexpensive and a job that some do-it-yourselfers can tackle, it's not a task relished by many.*

• A fresh coat of paint: Although painting is relatively inexpensive and a job that some do-it-yourselfers can tackle, it's not a task relished by many. Painting is messy, it takes time, and requires moving furniture. In fact, prepping a room for painting often is the toughest component of any painting job. But fresh coats of paint can create a strong first impression. Choose a neutral color and get painting. Jennie Norris, chairwoman for the International Association of Home Staging Professionals, says gray is a "safe" color that has been trending in recent years.

• Minor bathroom remodel: Remove dated wall coverings, replace fixtures, consider re-glazing or replacing an old tub, and swap old shower doors for fast fixes in a bathroom. If there's more room in the budget, replacing a tub, tile surround, floor, toilet, sink, vanity, and fixtures can cost roughly $10,500, says HGTV. You'll recoup an average of $10,700 at resale, making a minor bathroom remodel a potentially worthy investment.

• Redone kitchen: The kitchen tends to be the hub of a home. This room gets the most usage and attention of any space, and it's a great place to focus your remodeling attention. The National Association of the Remodeling Industry estimates that homeowners can recover up to 52 percent of the cost of a kitchen upgrade upon selling a home. Buyers want a functional and updated kitchen. Trending features include drawer-style microwaves and dishwashers, commercial ranges, hidden outlets, and even wine refrigerators.

• Updated heating and cooling system: Better Homes and Gardens reports that homeowners may be able to recoup 85 percent of the cost of new HVAC systems when they sell their homes. Heating, cooling and ventilation components are vital to maintain. You don't want buyers to be taken aback by an older system, and many millennial buyers are not willing to overlook old mechanical systems.

• Fresh landscaping: A home's exterior is the first thing buyers will see. If they pull up to a home with eye-catching landscaping and outdoor areas that are attractive yet functional, they're more likely to be intrigued. Often buyers will equate a home that features an impressive exterior with upkeep inside as well. The American Nursery Landscape Association says the average homeowner may spend $3,500 for landscaping.

Improving a home's chances to sell quickly and at a higher price often comes down to making smart improvements that catch the eyes of buyers.

— Metro Creative

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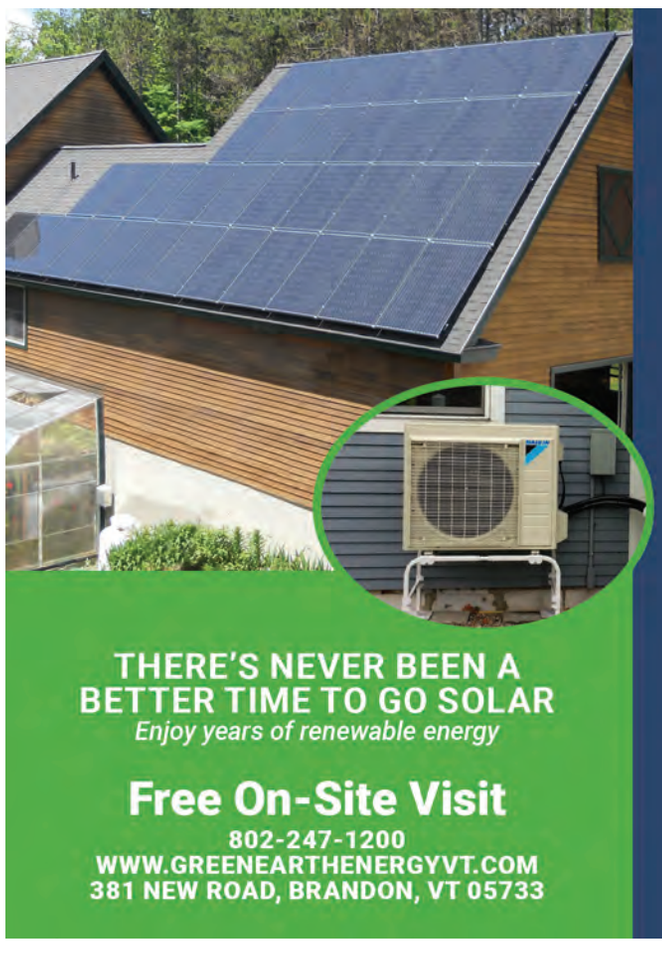
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IN ORDER TO root properly, red twig dogwood cuttings should be placed with the buds pointing up in a clean container with about 2 to 3 inches of water in a spot that gets natural light and not direct sun.
Photo courtesy of Bonnie Kirn Donahue

Here's how to propagate dogwoods and willows

By BONNIE KIRN DONAHUE
UVM Extension Master Gardener

Looking for versatile, native shrubs? Look no further than willows (*Salix spp.*) and dogwood (*Cornus spp.*).

Both species are exceptional landscape plants. They have strong roots that can help secure steep banks and prevent erosion. They grow in tough conditions, and after being cut down, they grow right back.

Willows are some of the first plants to flower in the spring, offering much needed early pollen and nectar to spring pollinators. They have a lovely wispy look in the summer, and some varieties have colorful stems in the winter.

Dogwoods, especially red twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), have white, pollinator-friendly flowers in the spring, and fabulous bright red stems in the winter.

Another quality they both share is that they can be easily propagated in water. This can be a fun, simple and low-cost project before the growing season starts.

In late winter/early spring, before the shrubs have come out of dormancy, look for stems in their first-year of growth that are about the width of a pencil with big, healthy buds. Make a clean cut at the base of the stem, and remove any extra branches.

If you take cuttings after the buds have already started to leaf out, remove new growth from the bottom part of the stem that will be submerged in water.

Cut the cleaned stems to 8 to 10 inches long, being careful to make cuts just beneath leaf nodes. The nodes are places with hormones that will stimulate growth. Depending on the length of your stem, you may get 4 to 6 cuttings out of one branch.

Metro Creative photo

Place stems in a clean container with about 2 to 3 inches of water. Make sure that the buds are pointing up in order to root properly. Place the container in an area that receives natural light, but out of direct sun. Refill and refresh water as needed.

Roots should start to grow within a week or two. Once roots have developed further, the cuttings can be placed in containers with potting soil. Plant the stems about halfway into the soil (about 4 inches deep).

Keeping the cuttings moist at this stage is critical to their survival. Willows in the wild are often found in wet areas, so they naturally need more water. Dogwoods are found in riparian areas and need less water when mature, but keeping the soil moist is necessary while the cuttings are getting established.

Place containers in an area outside of direct sunlight to avoid drying the cuttings out. You will know the propagation worked when leaves start to grow from the stem. Keep the plants well watered until planting. Planting in the ground should be done ideally in the spring or fall.

Bonnie Kirn Donahue is a UVM Extension Master Gardener and landscape architect from central Vermont.

Discover your backyarding personality

Spring and backyarding — the act of doing indoor activities such as dining, working, entertaining and exercising in our own backyards — go hand in hand. As homeowners prepare to create the yard of their dreams this spring, the TurfMutt Foundation, which celebrates 15 years in 2024 teaching families how to save the planet one yard at a time, encourages them to start by identifying their backyarding personality type.

"Knowing your backyarding personality type can help you be better prepared to craft a yard that is not only beautiful but is also purposeful and specifically suited to how you backyard," says Kris Kiser, President & CEO of the TurfMutt Foundation. "There really are no rules. Create an outdoor area that reflects your unique personality and style while supporting the things you like to do in your green space."

Here are TurfMutt's backyarding personality types to help inspire you to "yard your way" this spring:

• **Outdoor Athlete:** Likes to stay active in the fresh air.

The Outdoor Athlete's gold medal backyard might include a strip of grass for running sprints, built-in outdoor fitness equipment, or even a lap pool to channel your inner Michael Phelps.

• **Nature Lover:** Favorite thing is watching birds and backyard wildlife.

The perfect backyard for Nature Lovers will feature native plants in bright colors that bloom year-round to attract, feed, and shelter pollinators and backyard wildlife. The Nature Lover will also need to find the perfect perch for backyard wildlife viewing.

• **Work from Home Pro:** Seals business deals in the sunshine.

A quiet corner of the yard complete with seating and shade (and a strong Wi-Fi signal) is the start to a beautiful and functional outdoor office. Other creature comforts like an outdoor heater, string lights, curtains, a warm rug, or even a semi-enclosed patio can enhance the space.

• **Landscaper:** Makes neighbors green with yard envy.

Put the right plant in the right place so your yard is always thriving and consult the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map to find plants that will do well in your location with minimal input. Having the right outdoor power equipment is key to success for Landscapers, who know when to call in the professionals to help with their backyarding to-dos.

• **Entertainer Extraordinaire:** Loves nothing more than treating great friends to delicious burgers in the backyard.

Ambiance is everything for this backyarder. String some lights, build a fire pit or fireplace, and even create an outdoor kitchen if the budget allows. Patio furniture and outdoor seating with comfortable cushions are a must, and colorful flowers in pots add a just-right touch.

• **Zen Master:** Wants an outdoor

(See Backyarding, Page 10C)

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Snugging up the details

LOCAL CARPENTER COOPER Smith-Stackhouse of Grass Roots Carpentry uses a chop saw, above, to cut baseboard for a Middlebury client's dining area. After using the power saw, he switches to a human-powered pull saw, left, on the fine detail work required to make the pieces fit together perfectly.

Independent photos/Marin Howell

Backyarding

(Continued from Page 9C)
space to relax and unwind.

A hammock strung between a couple of shade trees, a soothing water feature that also beckons backyard birds, and simple, manicured plantings are just a few ways to create a peaceful setting outside.

• **Kid Zone Creator:** "Fun" is your middle name, and creating kid space is the name of the game. Safe space that lures kids away from their screens and into the great outdoors right outside your home begins with a large patch of turfgrass, perfect for sports practice, cornhole, or pitching a tent. Trees are great for zip lines, treehouses, and swings. You can even plant a garden to teach kids about the origins of the food we eat.

• **Pet Pamperer:** Designs their yard as a pet sanctuary. Who needs a dog park when you have a pet playground in your own backyard? Hardy turfgrass, sturdy plants, lots of shade trees, and shrubs that naturally section off pet "business" areas from the rest of the yard are some of the features you may want to consider. (Be sure to select non-toxic plants that are safe for pets.) Go all out with a splash pool or a sandbox for digging.

How DIY can be bad for homeowners' bottom lines

Homeowners know it can be tempting to go the do-it-yourself (DIY) route when starting a home improvement project. Home repairs and renovations can be costly, and the notion of saving money on such projects compels many homeowners to try their hand at home improvements. However, the DIY approach can be costly as well, and if things go awry, homeowners may end up with empty pockets and unfinished projects.

Online tutorials and advertisements for home improvement retailers can make DIY seem like a snap. However, there are potential pitfalls to consider that could make the ostensibly less expensive DIY route far more detrimental to the bottom line than homeowners may recognize.

• **Permits:** Permits ensure work is done in accordance with local codes, which are designed to ensure the safety of residents and their neighbors. Licensed contractors know which permits are necessary for projects they're hired to work on, and many even procure permits for their clients (homeowners are urged to read estimates and contracts to determine who will be responsible for acquiring the appropriate permits). DIYers may not know about local permits, and therefore go ahead with projects without procuring any. That can be harmful in the short- and long-

(See Bottom lines, Page 11C)

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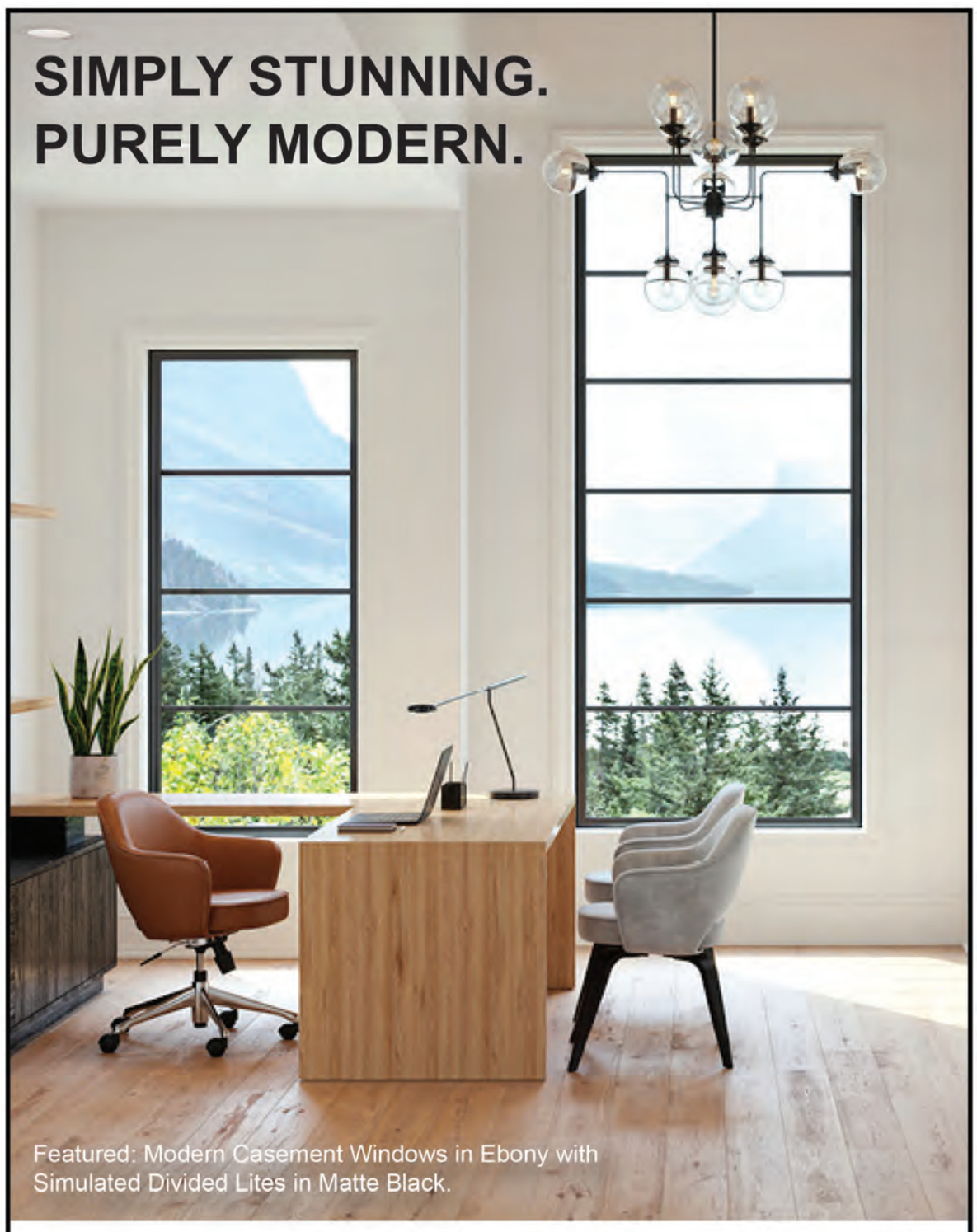

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Bottom lines

(Continued from Page 10C)

term.

In the short-term, a failure to procure the appropriate permits can make a home less safe and potentially lead to costly fines and necessitate a complete do-over of the project. In the long-term, homeowners who did not secure the appropriate permits may not be given a certificate of occupancy (CO) when putting their homes on the market, which can make it very difficult to sell the home.

Even experienced contractors make mistakes, so DIYers, particularly novices, can anticipate making a few errors along the way.

• **Ancillary costs:** The ancillary costs of DIY are not often noted in online tutorials. However, such costs can dramatically increase the amount of money DIYers shell out in order to complete projects on their own. Ancillary costs include but are not limited to the price of tools and equipment; disposal fees for materials that will need to be discarded; and the cost of permits. These costs are often included in estimates provided by contractors, but they're easily overlooked by novice DIYers.

• **Repairs:** Even experienced contractors make mistakes, so DIYers, particularly novices, can anticipate making a few errors along the way. Minor mistakes may not prove too costly, but more significant mishaps can quickly negate any cost savings associated with DIY renovations. The cost to fix DIY mistakes varies depending on the project, but a 2019 survey from Porch.com found that the average DIY mistake cost homeowners $310 and added five and a half hours to the overall time spent to complete a project. It's worth noting the Porch.com survey was conducted prior to the dramatic increase in materials costs related to inflation in recent years. So it's reasonable to assume that fixing DIY mistakes in 2024 could end up costing considerably more than a few hundred dollars.

Before diving in to DIY, homeowners may want to consider the real costs associated with forgoing professional experience in the potentially misplaced hopes of saving a few dollars.

— Metro Creative

Vermont leads the Northeast in zero-emissions heating systems

Some 63,000 heat pumps installed in Green Mountain State

WINOOSKI — More Vermonters have been warming their homes with heat pumps this winter. That's because Vermont leads the Northeast when it comes to installations of the ultra-efficient, all-electric and emissions-free heating systems.

Vermont has installed more heat pumps per capita than any other state in New England, according to Efficiency Vermont installation data through 2023. This heat pump leadership in 2024 also marks a decade of Efficiency Vermont's groundbreaking point-of-sale discount program, offered in partnership with Vermont's electric utilities, which makes heat pumps more affordable and accessible to Vermonters statewide.

"Vermont now has more than 63,000 heat pump systems heating homes and businesses. That includes more than 11,000 installed in 2023," said Phil Bickel, the heat pump program manager at Efficiency Vermont. "More and more people are learning just how effective heat pumps are at keeping their homes warm and comfortable. And in most cases, keeping their bills lower than if they were using fossil fuels to heat their homes."

The Green Mountain State leads New England in per capita installations of ducted and ductless "mini split" heat pump systems, with 97 heat pumps for every 1,000 residents (based on the latest U.S Census estimates). Hot on Vermont's heels is Maine, which boasts more heat pumps overall — more than 131,000 rebates issued — for a per capita rate of 94 heat pumps per 1,000 residents. That's according to Efficiency Maine, which plans and implements energy efficiency programs in the Pine Tree State. Massachusetts, with its 7 million residents, has fewer than 30,000 heat pumps installed. That's a per capita rate of about 4.

Other notable heat pump landmarks in Vermont include:

• More than 57,000 residential and nearly 6,000 commercial heat pump systems installed. This includes ducted heat pump systems and ductless "mini split" heat pump systems. Rebates from Vermont's electric utilities have been crucial to this success. Discounts and bonuses from Green Mountain Power, Burlington Electric Department, Stowe Electric Department, Vermont Electric Cooperative, Washington Electric Co-op, and 11 municipal utilities in the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority have all helped Vermonters add heat pumps to their home.

(See Zero-emissions, Page 13C)

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WOOD ASHES, WHEN applied according to soil test results, can be used to amend garden and lawn soils for optimal plant growth.

Photo by Bonnie Kirn Donahue

Wood ash can be an asset to gardens

By BONNIE KIRN DONAHUE
UVM Extension Master Gardener

Wood ashes are a surprisingly useful byproduct of winter heating. In addition to household uses such as making soap or adding traction to driveways, wood ashes can be used to amend your garden and lawn soils.

Wood ash, like limestone, is high in calcium, and can raise soil pH to provide the most optimal plant growth.

The pH of soil is important because it helps make certain nutrients more available for plants to use in the soil. For example, when soil pH falls outside of optimal ranges, critical nutrients for plant growth, like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, calcium and magnesium, may be less available for plants to take up.

pH is measured on a scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (alkaline). An optimal soil pH for most vegetable and berry crops is 6.5 to 6.8. Generally, a 6.0 to 7.5 pH should support most crops. Different species have their own pH preferences, however, so be sure to look up the preferred pH of your plants prior to amending the soil.

Blueberries like acidic soil with a pH of 4.5 to 5.2, so they probably won't appreciate wood ash. Azaleas also prefer acidic soils with a pH between 4.5 and 6.0. Vegetables such as asparagus, kale and beans need basic soils with a pH between 6.0 and 8.0, while many landscape shrubs and trees, such as dogwood, do best in alkaline soil (5.5 to 6.0).

Before adding amendments, first get a soil test to measure the existing pH of your soils. The test will tell you the pH and offer amendment options.

The University of Vermont Extension Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab offers soil testing. For information, go to go.uvm.edu/ae-testing.

Following your soil test results, you can apply a thin layer of wood ash (remove any large charcoal pieces) on top of your soil. Use an application rate of 15-20 pounds of wood ash (one five-gallon bucket) per 1,000 square feet. One cord of wood will produce approximately 20 pounds of wood ash. For more information, check out: go.uvm.edu/wood-ash.

Moisten the soil prior to applying the wood ash to help it adhere to the soil and become less airborne. Ash can be irritating, so protect your skin and lungs when spreading it. Lightly water the area to help the ash adhere to the soil.

Make sure that the wood ash you are using contains only untreated, naturally grown wood. Using wood ash that is contaminated by oil, chemicals or plastic can transfer the contamination to your soils. Wood ash from pellet stoves and bonfires also should be avoided

Wood ash can be added in very small quantities to compost piles, keeping an eye on the pH. Optimal compost pH for microorganism activity is between 5.5 and 8.0. The key is knowing the pH of your compost pile before you add wood ash and spreading a thin layer of ash across the pile (versus dumping it in).

This year, after getting your soil tested, try using leftover wood ashes in your garden and on your lawn. This low-cost soil amendment just might be something you add to your garden to-do list from now on.

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Zero-emissions

(Continued from Page 11C)

• More than 100 air-to-water heat pump systems installed. Vermont was the first state to launch heat pump offers for homes that heat using hot water, usually from a boiler. This first-ever air-to-water heat pump (AWHP) program has been emulated by states like Massachusetts and New York. As a result of this work, Energy Star awarded these products the Emerging Technology Award as they work toward national standards to certify AWHPs with the Energy Star label. Get up to $6,500 back with rebates on air-to-water heat pump systems.

• More than 180 heat pump installers in Vermont's workforce. These heat pump specialists are at work in all 14 Vermont counties through the Efficiency Excellence Network (EEN). The EEN is Efficiency Vermont's statewide trade group of independent contractors. Several HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) businesses have fully pivoted to heat pumps. The EEN has also expanded Vermont's workforce to install and maintain these systems.

"Heat pumps are the not-so-secret weapon to combating climate change in Vermont and beyond — and it's important that Vermonters have the support and guidance they need to figure out if they are the best fit for their homes," said Peter Walke, Efficiency Vermont's managing director. "For those who make that choice, they'll keep your home warm without the greenhouse gas emissions of fossil fuels thanks to clean, renewable electricity in Vermont's grid. They'll also help our state meet mandatory emissions reductions in the decades ahead. And the financial contributions and joint promotion with our utility partners are helping ensure that every Vermonter who wants a heat pump can afford one."

Vermont's heat pump success is no accident. It's the result of years of work coordinated by Efficiency Vermont. That includes working with manufacturers to ensure heat pumps are vetted for Vermont's cold climate. Working with regional partners to set performance and quality specifications for cold-climate heat pump technology. Working with the supply chain to ensure the types of heat pumps needed for our northern climate are available. Working with local technicians and contractors so they're trained to install and maintain these machines. And working with our utility partners to promote and incentivize heat pumps to customers.

> *"It's important that Vermonters have the support and guidance they need to figure out if heat pumps are the best fit for their homes."*
> *– Peter Walke, Efficiency Vermont managing director*

It also involves working with regional wholesalers to ensure a smooth rebate process that lowers the up-front costs for heat pump buyers.

"At F.W. Webb, we strive to educate contractors about rebates so they can help homeowners save money by upgrading to high-efficiency heat pumps," said Laura Bassett, energy program manager at F.W. Webb, the largest wholesale distributor for HVAC in the Northeast. "Efficiency Vermont's diligence in streamlining the heat pump rebate process has resulted in greater clarity and easier implementation for distributors and contractors using the program."

"The collaboration between Vermont utilities and Efficiency Vermont's innovative program management is a winning model for other states to follow," said Rebecca Foster, CEO of sustainable energy nonprofit VEIC, which operates Efficiency Vermont. "At this critical time for our planet, it's important to not just celebrate these milestones — but share how we achieved them, and make clean energy solutions accessible to as many people as possible."

Alongside utility partners and trade allies, Efficiency Vermont is also advancing:

• Heat pump water heaters, with more than 17,800 installations. The efficiency and energy savings of heat pumps can provide your home with hot water, too. Vermont was among the first states to support retail and distributor programs for heat pump water heaters. Rebates can help you save $300 (or more) on a new heat pump water heater.

• Bringing heat pump efficiency to your laundry. Heat pump washers and dryers are up to 40% more efficient than standard electric models. But they don't just save energy. Their advanced moisture sensors and lower drying temperatures are gentler on your clothes. They can even dry delicates you wouldn't otherwise put in the dryer. Get up to $400 cash back on an Energy Star "Most Efficient" dryer with heat pump technology.

• Exploring new heat pump applications and technologies. Efficiency Vermont is testing the versatility and efficiency of heat pumps in new ways. Pilot projects include window-based heat pump units for renters. These are about the same size as a window air conditioning unit, and can both heat and cool rental units. Plus, there's a "thermal battery" project where heat pumps work in tandem with hot water tanks. These "thermal batteries" use a steady supply of hot water to heat your home. All while maximizing efficiency and operating when clean electricity is most abundant.

Heat pumps are up to 300% more efficient at heating than fossil fuels. That's because heat pumps use electricity to move heat, rather than burning fuel to make heat. This allows heat pumps to keep a home at a steady, comfortable temperature with just a fraction of the energy used when fuel is burned to heat a home. In most cases, heating with heat pumps instead of fossil fuels means a big savings on your heating bill—and a big reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It's one reason why Americans are buying more heat pumps than gas furnaces. And it's why 25 states have pledged to install 20 million heat pumps by 2030.

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Get to work on woodshop projects

Middlebury College sophomore Talia Trigg used the tools at the Middlebury Makerspace one afternoon earlier this month to cut some wood for a personal project.

The makerspace, which includes a wood shop with table saws, band saws, drill press and hole punchers for every project, is located downstairs in the college's Johnson Memorial Building, Room 102.

And the woodshop, as well as the whole makerspace, welcomes members of the community to come use the tools and facilities woodworkers, decorators or just plain do-it-your-selfers, who can get help and advice and use the fancy equipment there. There are 3-D printers, CNC machines, laser cutters, sewing machines and other technical equipment, plus experts who can tell you how to use them.

From absolute beginners to experts; from kids to college students to professionals in need of gear, the makerspace aims to be an accessible home, but it requires an active community of caring people like you to keep it humming. So come see the current curricular, extra-curricular and community projects — and ask lots of questions.

The Middlebury Makerspace is a community that brings together people and ideas with tools and support in a beautiful sun-filled space. From absolute beginners to world-class experts, we come here to learn, to grow, to share and to make cool things.

The space offers training sessions on safety, vinyl cutter, laser cutters, 3-D printers, fabric arts and the woodshop.

For open hours, check out the Middlebury Makerspace calendar online at makerspace.middcreate.

Addison Independent photos/Steve James

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INCORPORATING HOUSEPLANTS, SUCH as a prayer plant and golden pothos, into an office setting helps create a more pleasant work environment and reduce stress and elevate mood.
Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Add a home office plant

Reduce stress, elevate your mood

By DEBORAH J. BENOIT
UVM Extension Master Gardener

If you're working in an office tucked away in a spare room at home, you know that practicality rules — your office is a place for productivity. That often means a computer, printer and related equipment, along with a lot of paper and hard surfaces. Adding something living and green just might help alleviate the tedium of hours at the keyboard and stress of looming deadlines.

Adding plants to your workspace can provide some of the same benefits as an escape to the garden, all without leaving your desk. Houseplants, or, in this case, office plants, can distract the senses and ease stress, especially during winter months when a visit to the park or garden for some green therapy isn't an option.

To successfully incorporate plants into an office setting, there are several things to consider. How much space can you devote to a plant or plants? What are the growing conditions in your office? What are the sources of light? Does the temperature fluctuate? And finally, how much time do you have to maintain your office plants?

Generally speaking, an office will have limited light sources, either few or no windows and artificial light. The climate may or may not include air conditioning, and conditions may be quite different on weekends if the office is closed.

The peace lily (*Spathiphyllum spp.*) will do well in an office environment. It thrives in low light or bright, indirect light, but avoid direct sunlight. A weekly watering is best, but if you get sidetracked, it will let you know when it's thirsty. One look at its sad, drooping leaves will send you off for the watering can.

Prayer plant (*Maranta leuconeura*) with its patterned leaves adds more than just green to the office color scheme. It adds interest as its leaves fold up at night and relax during the daylight hours.

It prefers bright, indirect light, but avoid placing in a sunny window, which will cause the color to fade. Keep the soil moist (but not wet), and mist to increase humidity.

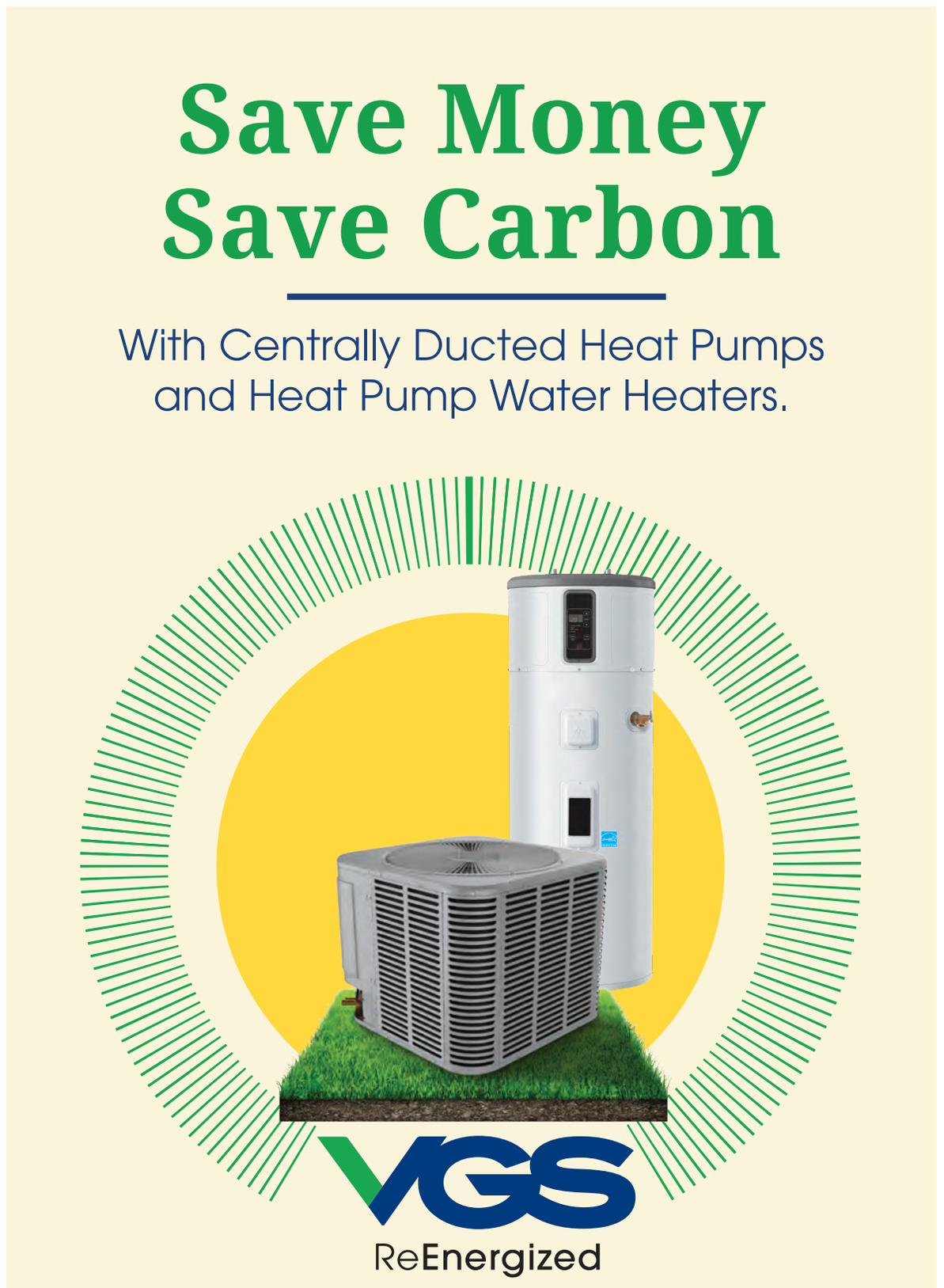
Rex begonia (*Begonia rex-cultorum*) is a great choice for the desktop. Foliage is the star, with many options for leaf color and texture. Rex begonias do fine in low light. Foliage can burn in direct sunlight. Allow the top of its soil to dry between waterings, and then water well.

Lucky bamboo (*Dracaena sanderiana*) is an easy-to-care-for plant that's tolerant of low-level and artificial light. It prefers moist soil or can be grown in water alone.

If you're looking for a little drama, include a trailing vine such as golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*). Grow it in a hanging basket in bright, indirect light, keeping soil moist, but not soggy. Placed on a shelf, pothos will cascade in a green waterfall and, as it grows, the vines will happily drape along the top of a bookcase.

But what if you have absolutely nowhere to put a plant? Try an air plant (*Tillandsia spp.*). These are unobtrusive plants, requiring no soil, not even a pot. They do need light (bright, indirect) and water (weekly by a thorough misting, more often in a very dry setting).

There are many plant possibilities for the office. For the small amount of time needed to care for them, they can bring a bit of the natural world into the workplace, help reduce stress, elevate mood and simply make the office a more pleasant and attractive place to be.



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We had a variety of questions which they happily addressed. Their knowledgeable staff was well versed with applicable regulations and requirements, building codes and even wind loading concerns. They truly went out of their way to make sure we were educated on the system and pleased with the installation.

This was a very rewarding experience which began with a goal of wanting to make our home fully renewably powered by working with a local team and culminated with meeting great members of our community, keeping our dollars local while also supporting other American renewable technology manufacturers. We found kindred spirits at BE and we can't recommend them highly enough!

Megan Nedzinski and Joshua Faulkner – South Starksboro, VT

"We are loving our new heat pump - it's like our house suddenly got bigger! The room has been warm even on recent cold nights - very impressive."

-Viveka Fox
and
Peter Macfarlane,
Addison, VT

"Bristol Electronics makes it easy for you to go solar.

From the detailed, patient explanations, to the rebates, estimates and permits, Bristol Electronics takes care of it all. I obtained several quotes from various companies but it was Bristol Electronics who ultimately won my business with their friendly, approachable attitude and superior knowledge of the technology. When I began this project I was uneducated and apprehensive. Now I find myself encouraging my friends and family to call Bristol Electronics for a free quote and explanation because I truly believe in their product and company. They are highly skilled and professional in every respect.

Stephen and his crew encouraged my children's curiosity and made learning fun for them. Little things like making handprints in the cement of our solar system sparked talks about reducing your carbon footprint and how everyone can help, even children. The whole experience could not have been easier or better. Seeing the power meter run backwards is just icing on the cake."

Heather Shepard – Bristol