

Congratulations!

2024 GRADUATES



A special publication of the Addison Independent • June 20, 2024

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Congratulations to the Class of 2024 from our family to yours. We wish you success in all your future endeavors.



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Middlebury grad takes journey from Ukrainian conflict to Yale University

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Diana Herasim's young life has surged like a comet, blazing a path from the rubble-strewn cities of war-torn Ukraine to the sprawling green farmland of a sedate Champlain Valley.

Beneath her gentle brown eyes, quick smile and athletic frame resides a searing motivation born from a vow made at her mother's death bed almost five years ago.

"A big part of this passion for life was given to me by my mom," Herasim, almost 18 years old, said during an interview just a few weeks prior to her graduation from Middlebury Union High School.

"She passed away at the age of 42. I saw her going through this fatal disease but never giving up hope. She was such a role model for me, such an example. When she knew she had around two years of life left, she was still so passionate. I have this whole life in front of me and want to do as much with it as I can. I'm incredibly grateful to my mom for that lesson in life."

Diana Herasim arrived at MUHS in fall of 2021 as a sophomore, courtesy of the Future Leaders Exchange Program, or FLEX.

It was supposed to be a

10-month stay, but that all changed when the Russian Army invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. She'd been slated to return to her homeland on June 20 of that year.

With a single fusillade, her life's trajectory — and the safety of her family — had been dramatically altered.

"It wasn't clear to me at the beginning of the war what my plan would be or whether I would be able to go back," she said. "But within a couple of months, it became clear that returning (would be impossible)."

Her hometown of Kherson was among the first Ukrainian communities to absorb the brunt of a pulverizing Russian attack, according to Herasim.

"My family had to flee the town and find a place to stay. They're still all in Ukraine, unable to leave," Herasim said of her dad, brother and maternal grandmother.

They first sought refuge in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Snihurivka. But that community soon came under fire, with bombs damaging the home in which the family was staying. From there, they settled temporarily in a small village, amid Spartan conditions.

"It was the safest area they could get at, at that point," she

"MY FAMILY HAD TO FLEE THE TOWN AND FIND A PLACE TO STAY. THEY'RE STILL ALL IN UKRAINE, UNABLE TO LEAVE."

— Diana Herasim



DIANA HERASIM GRADUATED from Middlebury Union High School this month after a three-year experience marked by war, a pandemic and a very mature outlook on life.

Independent photo/John Flowers

said. "The (phone) connection was better at that point, so I was able to call them — which made me feel much better."

Herasim speaks daily with her 26-year-old brother, Vladyslav, and a couple times a week with her dad and grandma.

"I call him before school for at least 15 minutes," she said. "I need (the daily conversations). Being away from my family for three years, it makes me feel like I'm still part of the family."

Her remaining relatives are now scattered throughout Ukraine.

"They're holding on and are as safe as they can be right now," Herasim said.

While understandably terrified for her family and concerned for Ukraine's survival, Herasim realized she needed to dodge some figurative shrapnel 4,000 miles away from the war zone. She was at the time of the invasion just four months from a scheduled plane ride back to Ukraine — if there were any airports left standing.

"My education was at risk," she noted of an additional worry.

Some sun peaked through the clouds when she learned her student exchange sponsors would give her a one-year extension to complete a junior year at MUHS.

(See MUHS on Page 4)

MUHS

(Continued from Page 3)

“That was nice, because my visa would be extended and (the exchange program) would financially support me; it was a kind offer that I accepted,” she said.

A second extension wasn't in the cards, but Herasim successfully secured “juvenile immigrant” status for her senior year. Her Middlebury host family — Jessica Allen and Jeff Buettner — agreed to become her legal guardians as she sought U.S. citizenship and completion of her high school career.

‘KIND OF A NORMAL STUDENT’

Now no longer part of an exchange program, Herasim refers to herself as “just kind of a ‘normal’ student here.”

But one would be hard-pressed to label her “normal,” per the

dictionary definition of “usual, typical or expected.”

At MUHS, Herasim was:

- Among the top 10% in her graduating class.

- President of MUHS's Model United Nations organization, and co-president of Student Coalition on Human Rights.

- A member of the MUHS Student Council and part of a peer leadership program that helped incoming middle schoolers acclimate to high school.

- A soprano in the MUHS choir and with the Camerata Singers.

Outside school, she is:

- Learning to play piano, with Allen providing tutelage.

- A lover of animals, she volunteers at Homeward Bound, Addison County's Human Society.

- A former boxer who's now a serious bodybuilder. Herasim wants to revisit boxing during college.

- Polylingual, able to speak five languages. Her English is

incredibly polished, especially for someone *who's largely self-taught*.

Herasim at times feels like she's won the lottery but realizes her family and peers in Ukraine never even got a chance at a winning ticket.

“It's very sad seeing my former classmates in Ukraine struggling so hard to get their education right now. They're all scattered, trying to find places where they can study,” she said.

Herasim noted that, unfortunately, Ukrainian schools haven't placed much emphasis on foreign languages. And that's made for a more difficult transition for Ukrainian students receiving offers to continue their studies in safer countries, she explained.

Since Herasim already had a solid foundation in English, she was able to assimilate and “it was, to an extent, easier for me to obtain this high-quality education (at MUHS),” she said.

LEARNING ENGLISH

So how did she learn English in an environment where it wasn't spoken or taught?

Knowing FLEX had just a 2% acceptance rate and placed a premium on language skills, she started self-teaching herself around two years before applying for the program.

Herasim immersed herself in YouTube videos, U.S. films, online apps, vocabulary flashcards, a short stint with a tutor — anything that would increase her proficiency in English.

“It worked successfully for me,” she said with a smile.

So successfully she's currently learning a sixth language — Mandarin Chinese. Acquiring languages has become one of her hobbies, along with singing, bodybuilding and having fun with a growing network of friends.

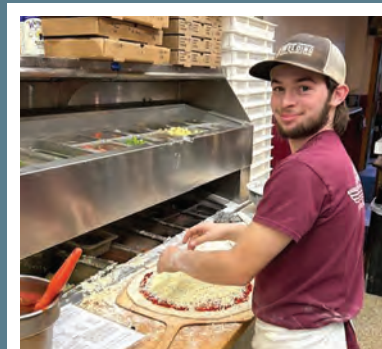
“It's been hard to balance hobbies and school during the

(See ROTARY on Page 12)

Nino's Pizza Congratulates the Class of 2024



Kaitlyn Brown - MUHS



Matt Cole - OVUHS



Tyler Kimball - VUHS

Way to go Kaitlyn, Matt and Tyler!

You studied your trades, enjoyed your sports, made time for family, your interests (travel, hunting, mechanics, friends) and you worked. You made Nino's an awesome place to work.

You took great care of each other this year. Your professionalism and work ethic are top tier.

Thank you. We love you and appreciate you.

Tiger grads get thoughtful, rousing send off from peers

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury Union High School Class of 2024 members Maura Connelly, Diana Herasim and Milo Rees addressed their classmates at the school’s graduation on Saturday, June 8, at Memorial Sports Center. All three students were chosen by their peers to speak at this year’s commencement ceremony.

MUHS uses the Latin Honors system to reflect the accomplishments of each student. Under this system, students who achieve a cumulative GPA equal to or above a 4.00 receive the designation of Summa Cum Laude. Students with a GPA between 3.75 and 3.99 qualify

for Magna Cum Laude. Maura and Diana each graduated with the Summa Cum Laude designation and Milo graduated Magna Cum Laude.

Diana and Milo are candidates for the full International Baccalaureate Diploma and Maura is a candidate for IB certificates. All three students have contributed to MUHS in myriad ways, including serving as Peer Leaders, where



MILO REES



MAURA CONNELLY

they have mentored newly-enrolling ninth-graders as they transitioned from middle school to high school.

Maura was named a Vermont Presidential Scholar by the Vermont Agency of Education, and she has been involved in the school’s human rights club. Diana has been active in Model UN, choir, and participated in Girls State last summer. Milo was the recipient

of the Dorey Cup in 2023, acknowledging his academic and athletic accomplishments. He has been a member of the varsity soccer and tennis teams and was a founding member of the MUHS chess club.

This fall, Maura will enroll at the University of Vermont, Diana will be attending Yale University, and Milo will be studying at Williams College. They are part of an extended group of talented Tigers who are planning to pursue higher education, attend trade school, participate in apprenticeships, or pursue employment after graduating from Middlebury Union High School.



Seniors in the spotlight

THIS YEAR'S MIDDLEBURY Union High School Senior Play, “Legally Blonde Jr.,” pulled in many members of the Class of 2024 — some of whom hadn’t appeared on stage since grade school. While the play focused on Elle Woods, the not-really-dumb blonde, MUHS seniors of all stripes showed off their talents.

Photo by Jason Duquette-Hoffman

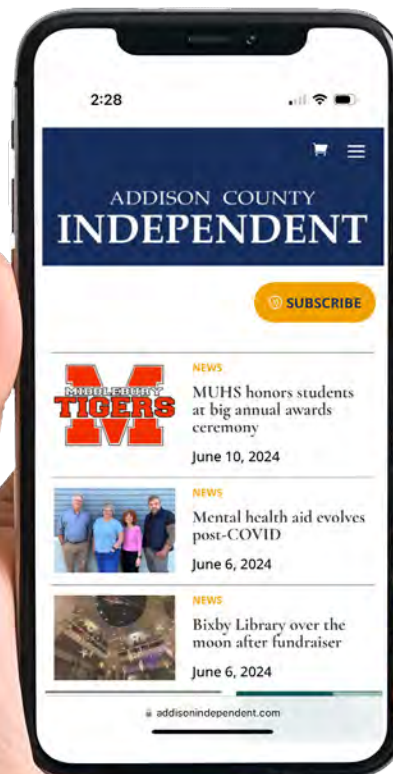
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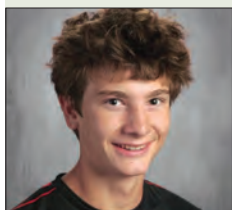
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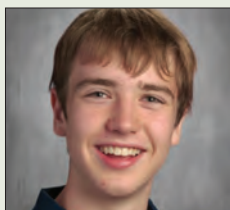


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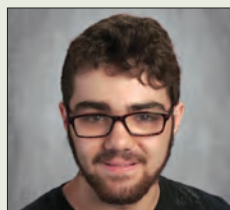
Iver
Anderson



Asa
Baker-Rouse



Kellan
Bartlett



Dante
Beck



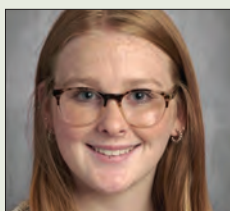
Hope
Bellinger



Bowie Blue
Berlos



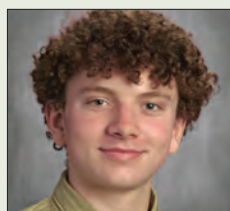
Brandy
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Emersyn
Brookman



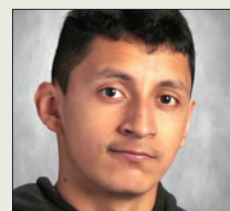
Kaitlyn
Brown



Caleb
Burrows



Cassey
Calzini



Cristian
Camey-Beltran



Audry
Carpenter



Max
Carpenter



Robin
Chamberlain



Amelia
Coburn



Maura
Connelly



Addison
Copeland



Julian H.
Cotell



Grace
Culver



Andre
Davio



Emma
Deering



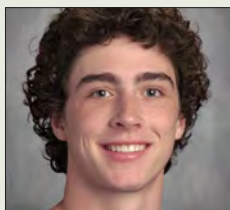
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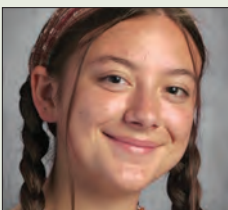
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Disorda



Noah
Doherty-Konczal



Toby
Draper



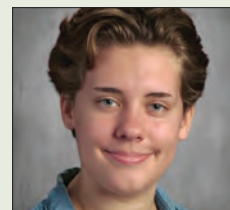
Simone
Duquette-Hoffman



Gabby
Ellis



Eddie
Fallis



Lily
Finn


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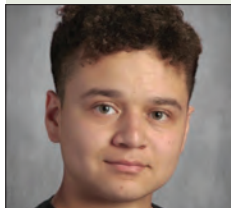
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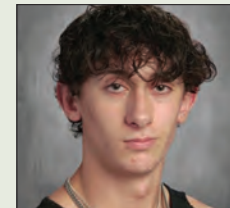
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Gillett



Charlotte
Graham



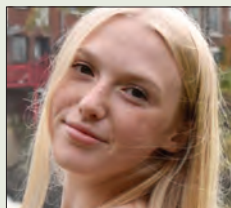
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Stella
Hardy-Mittell



Baxter
Harrington



Jolee
Heffernan



Eliot
Heminway



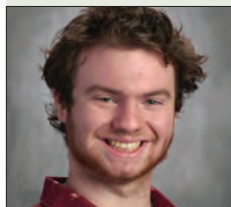
Diana
Herasim



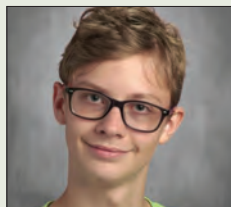
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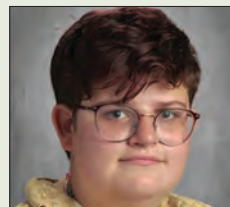
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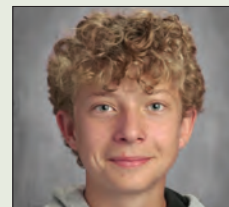
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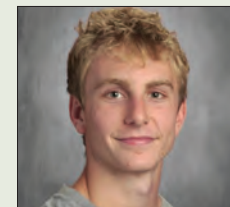
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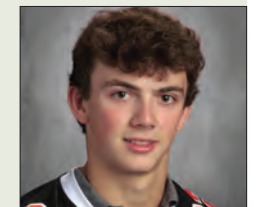
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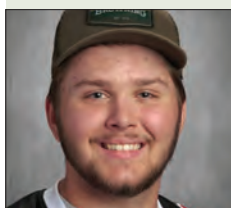
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Zach
Jette



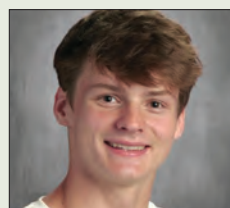
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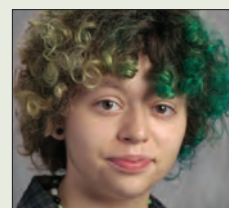
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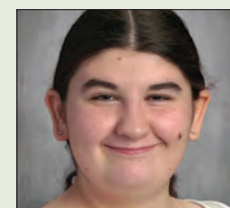
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LaFlam



Owen
Larrow



Arlo
Leduc



Harley
Leno



Kailey
Leonard



Galvin
Li



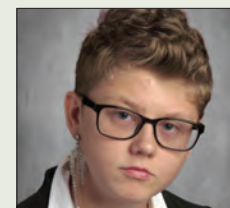
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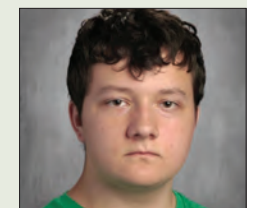
Orlinne
Maceno



Clyde
Malhorta



Matthew
Manchester



Jonas
McDermott

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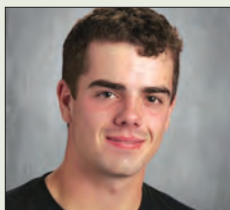
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**Brady
McDonough**



**Connor
McNamara**



**Galvin
McNulty**



**Elliot
Monk**



**Erin
Mulcahy**



**Reanna
Nazareth**



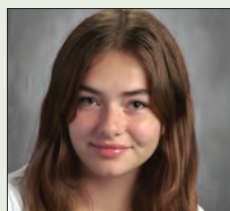
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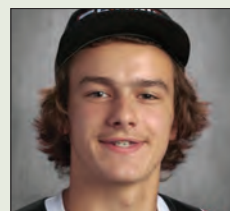
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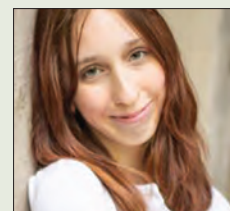
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**Caroline
Nicolai**



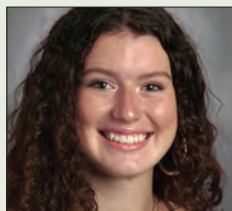
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**Emma
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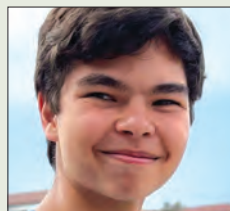
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Paquette**



**Georgia Peach
Parmelee-Varkoutas**



**Laila
Pease**



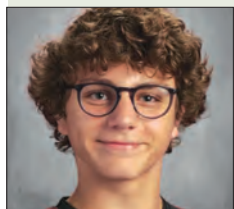
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Peterson**



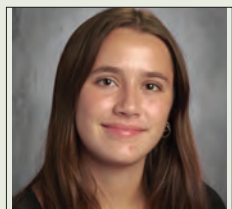
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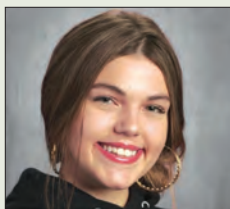
**B
Porter**



**Milo
Rees**



**Sienna
Rubright**



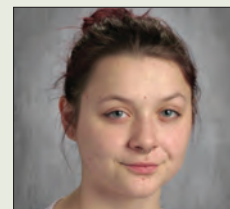
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Saldi**



**Sara
Sansone**



**Oak
Slavin**



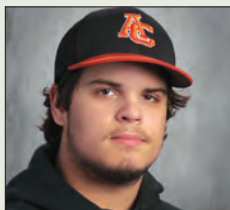
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Smith**



**Wyatt
Stearns**



**Eric
Sumner**



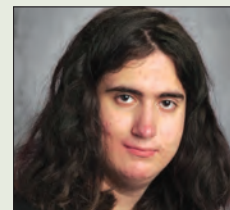
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**Silas
Taylor**



**Jeremiah
Tellier**



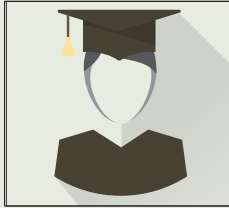
**Benjo
Torres**

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Ayden
Trombley



Reese
Valley



Micha
Voorhees



Amalia
Ward



Cole
Warren



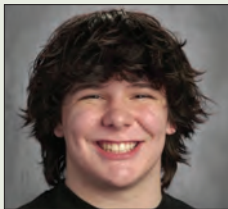
Shyanne
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Harper
Werme



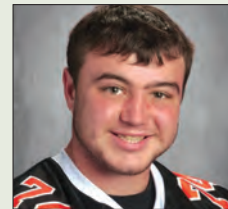
Hayden
Weston



Chris
White



Dinah
Whitmarsh



Timothy
Whitney



Isabella
Wilber

Congratulations to all of the 2024 Graduates and especially to our current team members!



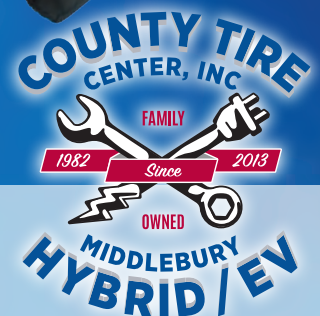
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ROTARY

(Continued from Page 4)

college application season; it was very demanding,” Herasim said. “But I feel like now I’m finally at a point where I have the time to actually socialize, resume my gym schedule and learn languages — things that I love.”

Herasim has found the U.S. education system different from what she’d been accustomed to.

In Ukraine, she explained, all schools have a curriculum that’s set by the government.

“We all study the same subjects every year,” she said, noting she took around 20 different classes during her last year of schooling in Ukraine.

“Both the U.S. and Ukraine (education systems) are pretty intense and challenging,” she said. “The education in the U.S. is much more focused; I can choose the six or eight subjects I

take here, put myself into it and really enjoy what I’m doing.”

She believes MUHS’s International Baccalaureate curriculum — and her experiences here in general — have made Herasim “a much more open-minded person” when it comes to appreciating different points of view.

“I’m a very political person and I feel like open-mindedness comes in very handy in politics,” she said, adding the IB program promotes critical thinking, adopting a “world view,” while learning about cultural differences.

“Those are skills I wasn’t able to fully develop before coming to the U.S.,” she said.

The launch of hostilities in Ukraine prompted to express her political views publicly, including at various community events in support of Ukraine. She found kindred spirits in her guardians, Allen and Buettner. They had had experience living

“BOTH THE U.S. AND UKRAINE (EDUCATION SYSTEMS) ARE PRETTY INTENSE AND CHALLENGING... THE EDUCATION IN THE U.S. IS MUCH MORE FOCUSED; I CAN CHOOSE THE SIX OR EIGHT SUBJECTS I TAKE HERE, PUT MYSELF INTO IT AND REALLY ENJOY WHAT I’M DOING.”

—Diana Herasim

in Ukraine and shared Herasim’s passion for music.

“There were many cultural connections that made me choose them,” she said, noting around 10 families had generously offered to take her in for her senior year.

She had initially stayed locally with the Wright family — until they moved to Utah. They offered to take Herasim with them, but she had become invested in the Middlebury community by then.

ROTARY CONNECTION
“The (Middlebury) Rotary Club has been sponsoring me in many

ways and the school has been very supportive, so I decided it would be more reasonable for me to stay here. I know people here are going to help and are helping. I was vulnerable in many ways at the time, so I decided to stay,” she said.

And it’s worked out well for her.

Herasim will attend Yale University this fall, where she plans to double-major in political science and history, on a pre-law

Continued on next page



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track. She'll move into Yale on Aug. 18 — the third anniversary of her arrival in the U.S.

After Yale, it'll be on to law school.

"I haven't yet decided what sphere of law I want to pursue, but it will probably be Constitutional law," she said confidently.

Her path to a successful career seems well charted in the U.S., but her heart remains in Ukraine.

"It's very complicated right now. I'm planning on building my future and my career in the U.S. Of course, I'm hoping very strongly to go back and visit Ukraine at some point," Herasim said.

At one point she thought she'd be reunited with her grandma, who recently sought entry into the U.S. through the "United for Ukraine" program. The Middlebury Rotary Club offered its assistance and identified housing and a local sponsor. But sadly, Diana's grandmother experienced some health

problems that kept her from making the trip.

"I want to visit Ukraine as soon as I can, but right now it's not looking possible for another three or four years," she lamented, noting the war.

"The situation in Ukraine is getting to a very extreme point right now," Herasim added. "We're on the verge of human rights being violated, which I don't think would happen if more help was provided. Now, almost all the (Ukrainian) men are fighting; it's getting to a point where we need more help."

She's deeply appreciative of the support her country's received thus far from the U.S. and other nations.

"I would ask to keep it coming, because it's no secret that Ukraine is not only fighting for its people and its sovereignty, but also for democracy," Herasim said. "That seems to align with U.S. values."

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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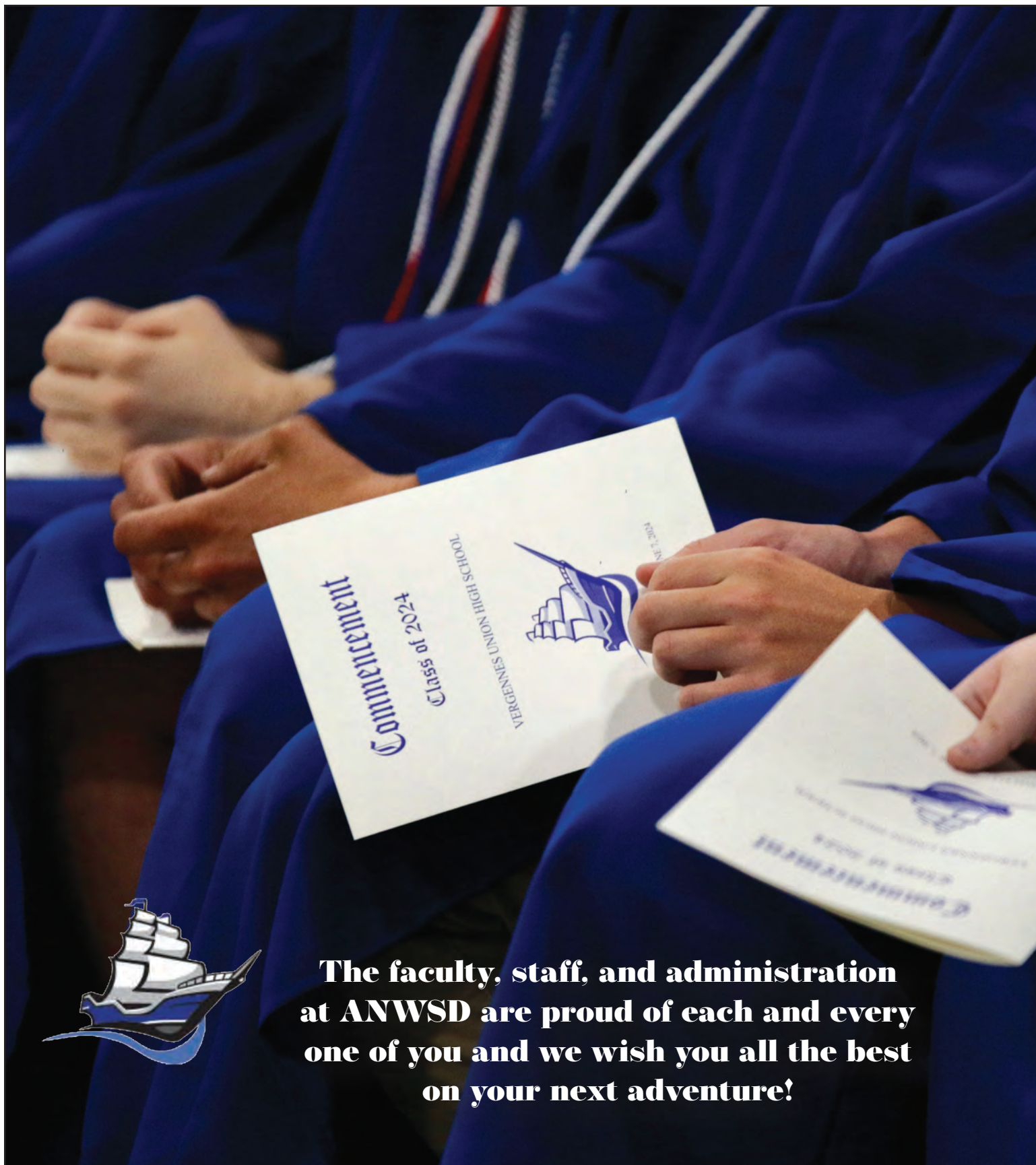
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VUHS career went from lockdown to center stage for Cal Gramling

By JOHN S. McCRIGHT

VERGENNES — The high school careers of the Class of 2024 may have started under the cloud of the COVID pandemic, but, like many newly minted Vergennes Union High School grads, Calvin Gramling is putting that community experience in the rearview mirror and look ahead.

The beginning of his ninth-grade year during the fall of 2020 is a little fuzzy in Gramling's memory.

"I barely remember my first week at VUHS," Gramling recalled during a recent interview. "We weren't allowed to do a lot of activities because of the pandemic, and I was only in school for two of the days. It was nice to see everyone and be able to talk and share our experiences from the long 'summer break.'"

But ninth-grade wasn't the first time he'd strolled down the hallway of the high school. Cal has two older siblings who preceded him at VUHS: Ian, who graduated in 2017, and Bess, part of the class of 2019.

"I spent a lot of time in the high school before I was a student there," Cal remembers. "My mom was very involved in my siblings' activities such as the musical and band, so I would tag along and see a glimpse of the high school experience. It was nice to have my siblings to see what opportunities were available to me when I got to high school. That way, I could start doing the things I wanted to pretty early on."

He seemed to have learned that lesson pretty well, because Cal Gramling was active in both studies and extracurriculars. Although he may have come off as reserved or disorganized to some of his classmates, he wonders if that's just because he took part in a variety of things.

"I tried to involve myself in as many clubs and activities as I could so I'm sure there's a lot of



LIKE THE REST of the Class of 2024, Calvin Gramling started his high school career under the confines of the COVID pandemic. But by senior spring (above), Vergennes Union High School had returned to a state where Gramling, center in blue jump suit, and other VUHS students could stage a musical — "Mama Mia!" — free of masks.

Right, the winning VUHS Boys' four-by-800-meter relay team of, from left, Grey Fearon, Riley Gagnon, Calvin Gramling and Calder Rakowski pose after their repeat victory in the D-III championship meet this past May. Gramling, Gagnon and Rakowski graduated June 7.

Photos by Phil Gramling



different concepts of who I am," he observed. "But I always try to be kind, friendly and joke a lot (even if the jokes aren't funny)."

He said his sister, Bess, was very active in the VUHS musical program, which then took up a big chunk of his own childhood. It's not surprising this inspired him to join in the experience. He played roles in popular VUHS musicals all four years — "Elf the Musical," "Bye Bye Birdie," "Newsies" and "Mama Mia."

"I'd say singing came a little easier than I thought, but dancing took a lot of practice," Gramling said.

The VUHS Auditorium wasn't the only place where Gramling got to show his talents to the public. One of his favorite memories from high school was his junior year Homecoming Parade, when each grade had to choose a music genre

and the Class of '24 chose rock.

"It was a ton of fun putting together the float and I remember walking in the parade with some wild outfit and a guitar," Gramling said. "It was always a fun way to get all the grades together in a bit of friendly competition."

The taste for competition was fulfilled on the track and cross country course, where Gramling excelled. He's grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of a state champion relay teams in track — *twice!* In 2023 and again in 2024, Gramling joined with fellow Class of '24 members Calder Rakowski and Riley Gagnon, along with Grey Fearon (Class of '25) to with the Division-III title in the 4-by-800-meter relay. The quartet also won the Vermont indoor 4x800 title this past January, and in his junior year, Gramling claimed the indoor 800-meter open title on his own.

Like most track & field athletes, it's not the pain of the competition that Gramling recalls most vividly, but the camaraderie of the team.

"I'll always remember track and cross country for the community before the sport," he said "My teammates were always kind, supportive and making me laugh. It's really a sport where you can get out of it what you put into it. I've felt really fortunate that the sport I love also led to winning.

"It is also a really mental sport, which personally has led to struggles to stay focused," Gramling added.

Extracurriculars aside, members of the VUHS Class of 2024 were in school for book learning ... right? For Gramling, the classroom was certainly an important place. He describes his academics as "fairly typical," staying within the walls of

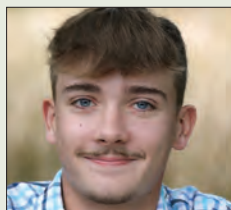
(See VUHS on Page 17)

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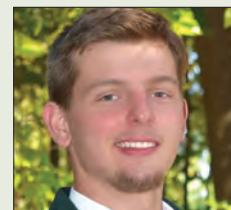
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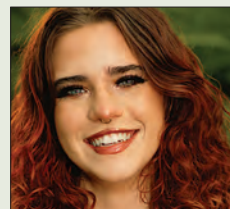
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Autumn Eriksen



Mackenzie Anne Flint



Maci Leigh Forgues



Oakley A. Francis



Riley Gagnon



Madelyn Anita Giroux



Calvin Oliver Gramling

VUHS

(Continued from Page 15)

the main building and not venturing out to the Walden outdoor learning experience of the Hannaford Career Center. But while he was there, he buckled down and took a broad range of courses, weighted toward the Humanities.

While every teacher had their own special impact on Gramling, he says Michael Thomas had the most profound effect on his future and his intention to become a teacher.

“As my English teacher for the last three years, he simultaneously changed my viewpoint on reading and writing, and exemplified a teaching style I respect and hope to use qualities of in the future,” Gramling said.

This fall, Gramling is heading off to Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., where he hopes to major in Anthropology and also study History and Music.

“After I graduate, I hope to get

my teaching license and then teach high school Social Studies, either in Vermont or a nearby state,” Gramling said. “I’d feel fulfilled if I get to do that for the next 50 years.”

Change and growth are the mark of high school for most teenagers. And 18-year-old Cal Gramling saw a lot of change between the fall of 2020 and commencement this month.

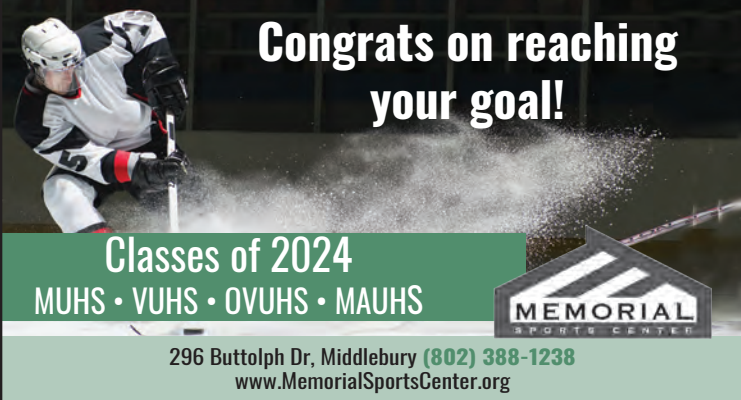
“It’s a bit sad, but I feel like high school really started for me in my junior year,” he said. “I don’t really remember a ton from my freshman year just because it was so disconnected ... Though once most of the regulations were lifted and we could get back to a normal schedule, COVID’s effect kind of became a memory more than a reality.

“I feel really happy with how my high school experience went,” he continued. “I think there are a few clubs and activities I wish I might have started earlier, but I find it more valuable to think about what I can do in the future.”



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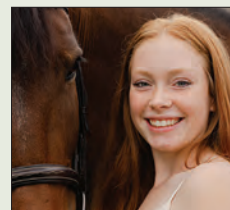
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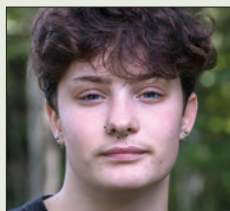
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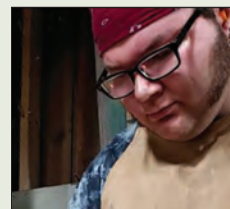
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MAUHS grad explored new horizons in and out of classroom

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Abel Atocha acknowledges that it's comfortable for students to stick to the status quo while navigating high school.

"It can be really easy to join a club that all your friends are in or take a class that all your friends are in or do something that you know you're good at," the 2024 Mount Abraham Union High School graduate said during a recent interview.

While it's easy to live inside one's comfort zone, Atocha has sought to venture outside of his during the past four years, from pursuing challenging courses to joining the football team his senior year after having not played since fifth-grade.

He said trying new things has been a rewarding part of his time at Mount Abe and is an approach he'd recommend to prospective

high schoolers.

"A piece of advice would be to try different things that maybe aren't necessarily the easiest," he said. "Doing stuff like that has been pretty impactful for me. Like (taking challenging courses), I really enjoyed those classes and that was very beneficial for me to get outside of my comfort zone."

Atocha has added several rigorous courses to his schedule throughout high school.

During the pandemic, Atocha completed the equivalent of two years' worth of Spanish classes in one academic year. As a result, during his senior year, he took part in Mount Abe's "Do Unto Others" program, volunteering as a teacher's assistant for Spanish 5.

Atocha has also taken advantage of the Virtual High School courses offered through Mount Abe, taught by educators



MOUNT ABRAHAM UNION High School graduate Abel Atocha's high school experience has been filled with trying new things, from clubs to challenging courses. He's found such opportunities to be rewarding and encourages younger students to take advantage of new and challenging activities.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

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around the country and accessed through a web-based platform.

"You're able to take online classes that Mount Abe doesn't offer, for free," Atocha explained. "I've taken about four of those throughout high school, which allowed me to explore specific interests that Mount Abe didn't really offer classes for, which was really fun."

Atocha took online AP Psychology and Calculus, as well as learned about topics like the International Space Station, introductory law, and the Middle East.

Virtual High School classes are one of several opportunities offered at Mount Abe that Atocha recommends younger students check out.

"I don't think people know exactly how much stuff is available," he said. "Granted, Mount Abe's not a huge school, it doesn't have the most money, but there are definitely opportunities, you just have to look a little bit

harder."

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Outside of the classroom, Atocha has taken part in several of the extracurricular activities Mount Abe has to offer.

He's run track and cross country, tried out Nordic skiing, and played for Mount Abe's soccer and football teams.

Participating in different sports during high school gave Atocha a chance to meet a variety of fellow students, he said.

"That was the biggest thing for me, just getting to know a bunch of people at Mount Abe from all different grade levels," Atocha said. "Sometimes, if you don't do that stuff, you can just know the kids you're in classes with."

Sports, particularly football, also offered Atocha an opportunity to push himself and hone new skills.

"Football was really new to me. I hadn't played since fifth grade,

(See MAUHS on Page 21)

MAUHS

(Continued from Page 20)

so playing again senior year was pretty fun,” Atocha said. “It was sort of a challenge, too. I was not that good going into it, so trying something new that I wasn’t great at and trying to get better at it was fun.”

In addition to sports, Atocha has kept busy throughout high school taking part in clubs at Mount Abe. He was part of the school’s Environmental Action Group and the Eagle Leadership Society. The program, created by English teacher Addie Thompson and athletic director Devin Wendel in 2019, encourages students to be leaders inside and outside of the school.

“That’s been a fun way for me to get more involved in the community; the school community and the wider community as well,” Atocha said

of the program.

He said his favorite activity the group took part in this year was pairing upperclassmen with freshmen advisory groups.

“You get to know those kids and answer any questions they have about Mount Abe and then just be there to get to know more people, so some of the younger kids have a friendly face in the school,” Atocha said.

A good portion of Atocha’s free time throughout high school has been dedicated to working at his family’s business, Green Mountain Adventures in Middlebury. In the summer, Atocha works full-time helping out with the store and kids’ summer camps.

“(Working has) probably been the most rewarding activity for me because I get to meet so many different people... There are a bunch of college parents and kids from across the country that are pretty cool to meet and talk with,” he said.

From working at his family’s

business to taking part in clubs and sports at Mount Abe, many of the activities Atocha’s found to be the most impactful throughout high school have been the ones that allowed him to get to know more of the surrounding community.

“It feels good to go into the grocery store and know people, or to walk around town and know people,” he said. “I think it’s important to not only be a part of the community but be an active part of the community and helping out.”

Now, Atocha is preparing to step away from the community he’s long been a part of and enter a new one across the country. Atocha will attend Pomona College in Claremont, Calif., this fall.

It’s likely some of the opportunities he took advantage of in high school will come in handy when he heads out West. For example, he plans to walk-on to the college’s football team and knows the Spanish classes he took at Mount Abe will come in handy

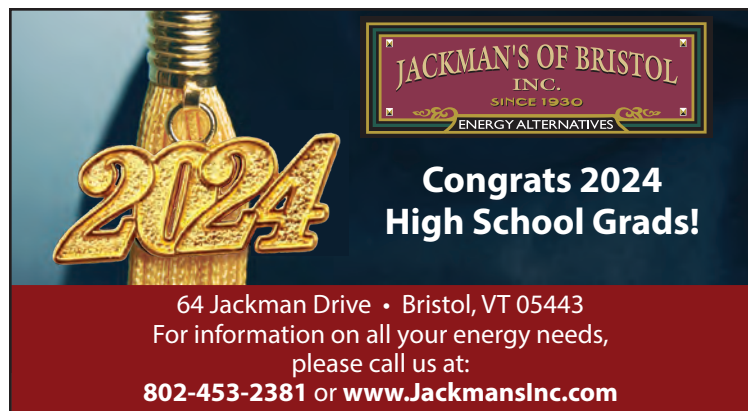
in Southern California, where there’s a larger Spanish-speaking population.

In general, he feels that pushing himself outside of his comfort zone during the past four years has helped prepare him for the new chapter he’ll soon begin.

“Just being willing to take a risk and try something new or explore something you’re interested in and passionate about on your own ... I think is going to be really helpful in college with classes and clubs,” Atocha said.

He’s confident he’ll find his footing on Pomona’s campus, among other students who are eager to challenge themselves.

“I really like the school and the environment,” he said. “It seemed like it was really rigorous academically, but the kids also seemed really nice and personable. It seemed like there are a lot of people who are in clubs and sports and stuff outside of just academics, so I think it’ll hopefully be a good fit.”



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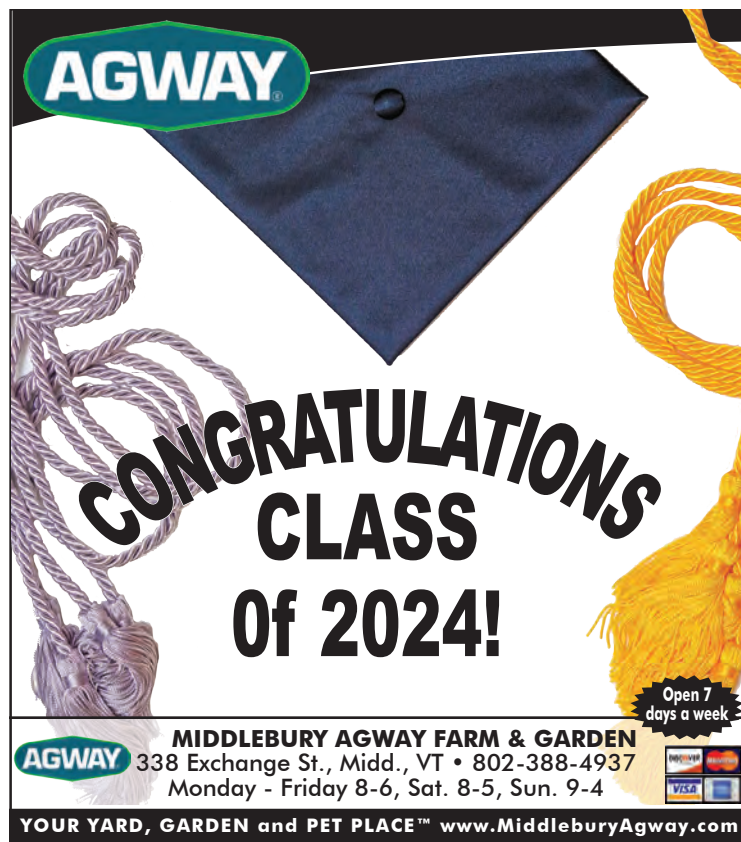


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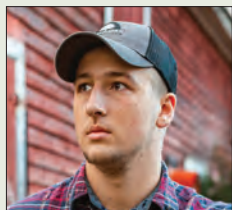
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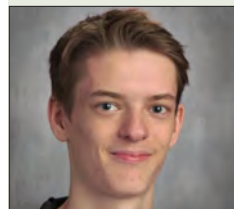
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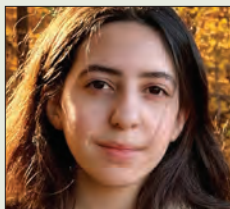
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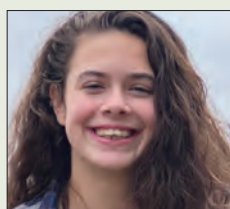
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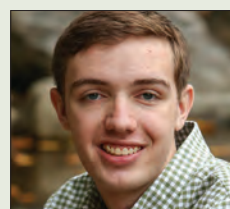
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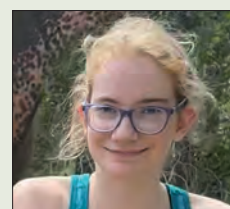
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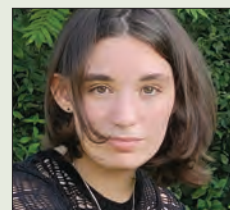
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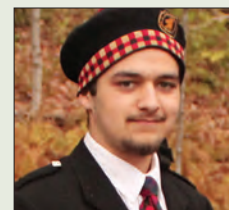
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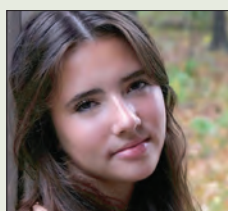
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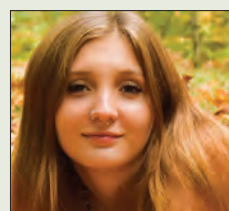
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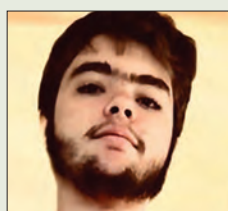
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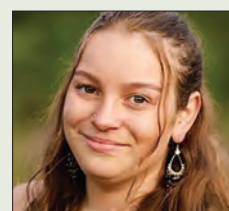
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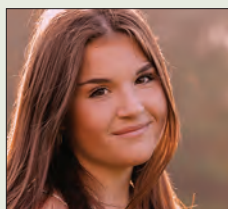
Judah Jackson



Carsyn Jennings



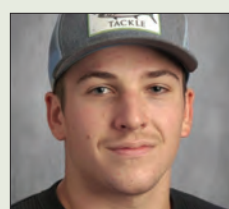
Ryan Jennings



Greta Jennison



Finley Kaeck



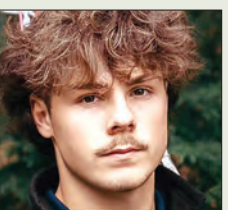
Olin Kidder



Helen Kihm



Dawson Kleinfeldt



Noah Ladeau



Reese Laliberte



Sierra Lavoie



Mason Livingston

Congratulations

MOUNT ABE UNION HIGH SCHOOL



**Benjamin
MacDonald**



**Samuel
Mangini**



**Carter
Markwell**



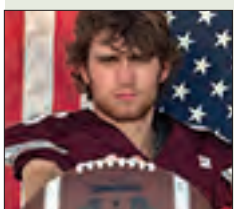
**Dylan
Mason**



**Luke
Mayer**



**Jordan
McDowell**



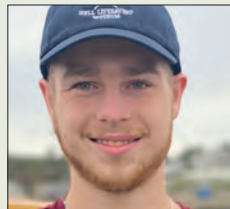
**Connor
Meacham**



**Dinara
Meyers**



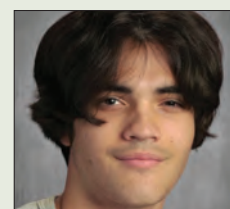
**Andrew
Nolan**



**Teagan
Obarski**



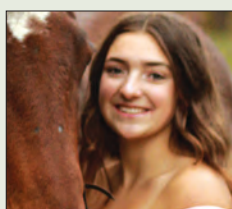
**Teagan
Obarski**



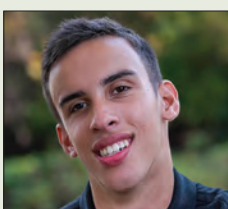
**Wes
Perdue**



**Emma
Reen**



**Hailey
Roberts**



**Michael
Sayre**



**Jordan
Schroeder**



**Isabella
Shea**



**Jude
Smith**



**Julia
Sonneborn**



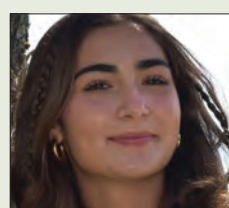
**Siena
Stanley**



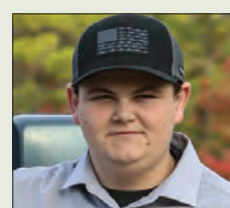
**Shelby
Stevens**



**Anna
Stilwell**



**Ellison
Thomas**



**Mattison
Tierney**



**Toby
Tillotson**



**Kalin
Tingiris-Shean**



**Joanna
Toy**



**Alexander
Vukoder**



**Josephine
Wagers**



**Kaydence
White**

Congratulations

OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL ADDISON COUNTY GRADUATES



Isaiah Bagley



Matthew Cole



Chase Cram



Aiden Decker



Cole Disorda



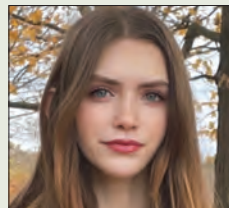
Abigail Hayes



Baker Larock



Savannah Mitchel



Jholia Pschorr



Mykenzie Thibault



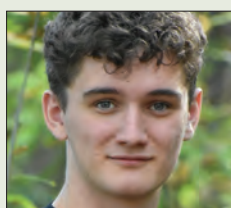
Owen Thomas

Congratulations

FAIR HAVEN UNION HIGH SCHOOL ORWELL GRADUATES



Ian Barber



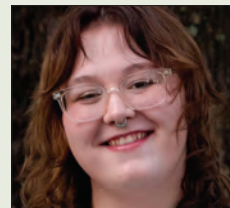
Caleb Brown



Jacob Clifford



Savana Kirby



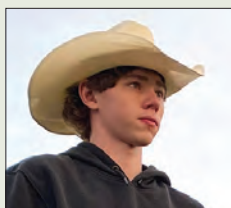
Riley Legault



Ethan Lowell



Matthew Maurice



Joseph Porter



Connor Spencer



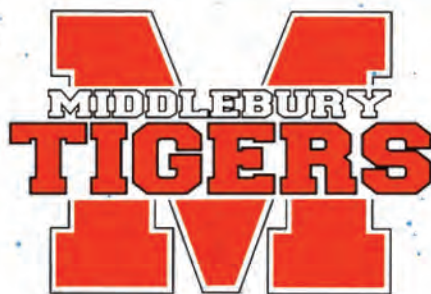
Patrick Stone



Mason Williams



Clara Young



**We are proud of you,
Addison County graduates!**



CAREER CENTER 2024

The Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center provides vocational and technical education to students and adults in the 17 Addison County towns served by the Addison Central, Addison Northwest and Mount Abraham Unified school districts. Students take time away from their home high school to take part in hands-on and classroom instruction at the Career Center's main campus and satellite campus in Middlebury. On May 29, the Career Center held a Celebration of Learning at the Middlebury Union High School Auditorium where it recognized youngsters who had participated in nine of its professional training programs. What follows is students and their instructors who were honored that night.



Design & Illustration

Left to right: Robin Andrus, Robin Chamberlain, Peter Chiles, Axel deBoer, Jeremy Holzhammer, Georgie Kiel, Maggie Noble, Silas Quinn, Joyce Ross and Avery Vant. Not pictured: Evva Dicovitsky, Stella Hardy-Mittell, Jelde Meyer. Instructor Lisa Rader is at the podium.



Construction Technology

Left to right: Jamison Huizenga, Jordan McDowell, Owen Larrow, Riley Disorda, Dylan Stowe, Tim Whitney, Wyatt Stearns, and instructor Nick Cantrick. Not pictured: Blake Bowen.

CAREER CENTER 2024



Diesel Power Technology

Left to right: Carter Markwell, Eric Sumner, Robert Cavoretto, Instructor Gretchen Cotell, Dylan Odell, Devin Brisson and Mason Livingston.



Medical Professions

Left to right: Kaitlyn Brown, Emerysyn Brookman, Emma Deering, Instructor Jennifer Baker, Zoe Reid-St. John, Julian Cotell, Hunter Lloyd and Brandy Bishop.

CAREER CENTER 2024



Sustainable Agriculture

Left to right: Shyanne Wedge, Josephine Wagers, Toby Tillotson, Elaina Sheldrick, Hailey Roberts, Emma Reen, Alexis Holbrook-Duval, Maci Forgues, Gabrielle Ellis, Emma Derringer and Gabriella Currier. Instructor Kelley Mills is at the podium.



Natural Resource Management

Left to right: Instructor Aaron Townshend, Caleb Foster, Brady McDonough, Aiden LaDuke, Casey Calzini, Jacob Kemp, Carter Paquette, Gavin McNulty, Cole Warren and Assistant Julie Almeter.

CAREER CENTER 2024



Human Services

Left to right: Carsyn Jennings, Shelby Bartlett, Alexander Vukoder, and Instructor Ultima Danforth.



Culinary Arts

Left to right: Instructor Chef Jillian Huizenga, Skylee Devoid, Carley Cook, Alina Arias, Thomas Bishop and Emmett Block.



Addison Repertory Theatre

Left to right: Max Carpenter, Jude Smith, Benjo Torres, Sarah Heath, Ella Kozak, Remy Howe, Hannah Gallivan, Instructor Eric Reid-St. John.

**THE FUTURE IS YOURS.
WE CAN'T WAIT.**



*Candlelight
Cabinetry*

**CONGRATS
TO ALL OF THE
2024 GRADUATES!**



B

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From all of us at Rainbow Pediatrics,
Congratulations 2024 Graduates!

It has been our pleasure
to watch you grow.



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