



Young at art

Young thespians will help Town Hall Theater welcome the winter solstice. See Arts + Leisure.



Solid results

With a win and a tie this past weekend, Panther men's hockey crested .500. See Page 1B.



Magical time

See photo spreads from holiday kick-offs in Vergennes (Page 11A) and Middlebury (Page 9A).

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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DREAM fosters local connections

College students mentor youths

Part 1 of 2

By MARIN HOWELL

MIDDLEBURY — On a recent Friday evening, a group of local youths and Middlebury College students gathered in the college's Forest Hall for mural making, hula hooping and other activities.

Those in attendance were all involved in the DREAM Program, an organization that aims to close the opportunity gap with mentoring programs and activities for youth living in affordable housing neighborhoods across the Northeast.

Middlebury College is one (See Students, Page 16A)



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE SENIOR Tamika Samuels takes a break from painting during a DREAM gathering at the college this past Friday. Samuels is one of several Middlebury College mentors working with DREAM, an organization that aims to close the opportunity gap through mentoring programs and other activities for youth across the Northeast.

Independent photo/Steve James

Middlebury eyes projected 13.5% town spending hike

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury selectboard's yearly exercise of molding a municipal budget has been somewhat of a rocking chair affair in recent years. Proposed spending plans during that span have largely reflected inflationary increases, tamped down with local option tax surplus money and sound planning.

But planning for the fiscal year 2027 municipal budget is off to an unusually frenetic start.

Paced in large part by debt service on the \$17 million Ilsley Library expansion and renovation project, contracted increases in town employee wages and benefits, ongoing

maintenance and improvements to town infrastructure, and recommended tech investments at the town offices, the first draft of Middlebury's FY27 municipal budget suggests \$16,525,287 in spending.

That bottom line, if left unchanged, would represent a \$1,976,752 (13.54%) increase compared to the \$14,548,535 FY26 general fund budget that voters approved this past March. And selectboard members at their Tuesday meeting were gobsmacked to learn that the draft budget would require a 14.8-cent (15.96%) increase in the municipal property tax rate. This would (See Middlebury, Page 10A)

City housing plan gets \$1M grant, land

Workforce housing project boosted

By ANDY KIRKALDY

VERGENNES — Vergennes got some million-dollar news this week on the housing front.

A big grant and a property transfer moves forward the effort to develop 74 units of workforce housing on a 14.4-acre parcel off North Main Street that mostly lies behind the Vergennes police station. The project is called "Vergennes North."

On Monday, the Northern

Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) announced that its \$37.2 million of federally funded grants to communities in northern Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire and New York included \$1 million to Vergennes to put toward the cost of building a road and related infrastructure for that project.

On Tuesday, Peter Kahn, a principal in Vergennes Housing Partners LLC, which is proposing (See Vergennes, Page 12A)

OV school spending draft slips under 3.5% increase

By J.T. PRICE

BRANDON — On Monday, Dec. 8, Otter Valley Unified Union (OVUU) school board took a detailed look at a first draft of the Brandon-area school district's FY27 draft budget, which carried a proposed increase in spending from this year's budgeted \$28,022,999 to \$28,997,687 for FY27.

That represents a 3.49% spending increase.

The "very, very preliminary" tax increase estimate, as stated by Director of Business & Finance Brenda Fleming, came

in at 3.20% before the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is weighed in each of the six towns in the district. And, anticipated as well, are "income sensitivity" considerations which as many as two-thirds of tax-paying families in the district may qualify to receive.

After CLA is weighed, the proposed tax increase estimates are: Brandon, 7.6%; Leicester, 6.2%; Pittsford, 3.87%; Sudbury, 11.95%, and Whiting, 22%. Goshen, which reappraised this year, would potentially see a tax (See Otter Valley, Page 10A)



Winter fun

WITH SEVERAL INCHES of snow and temps dipping below zero over the past week and a half, winter has truly arrived. Some people are making the most of the change of seasons by cross country skiing at Rikert Outdoor Center at Bread Loaf in Ripton.

Independent photo/Steve James

ACSD weighs size of its budget increase

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The Addison Central School District board on Monday received an initial draft of a fiscal year 2027 PreK-12 budget of \$52.9 million that reflects around a 4.9% increase in overall spending and an estimated

3.7% increase in education taxes.

But school directors cautioned the spending plan will undergo changes during the coming weeks before being finalized in January for a Town Meeting Day vote in the ACSD-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury,

Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge.

In the meantime, district officials will continue to massage expense and revenue numbers based on students' and taxpayers' needs, as well as directives from state and federal government. (See ACSD, Page 12A)



By the way

Addison County residents showed their generosity, yet again, to those struggling with poverty and contending with natural disasters. Officials at (See By the way, Page 10A)

HOPE shop spreading cheer for the holidays

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Sue Perine playfully refers to herself, Faith Parkins and Ginie Olson as the three "chief elves" of the Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects (HOPE) Holiday Shop at 282 Boardman St. in Middlebury.

And one can see them put their yuletide mission into motion these days at the shop, which — thanks to the enormous generosity of Addison County residents and businesses — ensures that no children in our area will go without gifts during this special time of year. (See HOPE shop, Page 16A)



THE HELPING OVERCOME Poverty's Effects Holiday Shop at 282 Boardman St. in Middlebury is busy dispensing free gifts to local families facing economic challenges. Pictured here, left to right, are Holiday Shop volunteers Pearl Riney, Kathryn Schloff and Sue Perine.

Independent photo/John Flowers

Willowell institute will train outdoor educators

By MARIN HOWELL

MONKTON — The Willowell Foundation team knows a lot about place-based education.

For over two decades, the organization has offered a range of educational programs rooted in the local community and aimed at connecting students with the world around them throughout their learning experiences in collaboration with Vergennes Union High School and others.

Now, the Willowell Foundation is teaming up with Vermont State University (VTSU) to offer educators an opportunity to experience and learn more about a place-based education approach.

The Institute for Place-Based Education will kick off this spring. (See Willowell, Page 18A)

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New nonprofit supports Vt. news media

VERMONT — A newly formed nonprofit dedicated to supporting and sustaining Vermont journalism has elected its first board of directors.

Founded in June 2025, the Vermont Journalism Coalition represents more than 40 newspapers, television stations, radio stations and digital news outlets across the state, including the Addison Independent. Its mission is to represent the shared interests of professional news organizations in Vermont and to advocate for the principles of journalism.

In its first leadership elections late last month, the coalition selected nine people to serve on its board:

- Dom Amato — Assistant news director, WCAX-TV
- Bridget Higdon — Publisher and editor, O'Rourke Media Group (*Saint Albans Messenger*, *Essex Reporter*, *Milton Independent*, *Colchester Sun*)
- Lisa Scagliotti — Editor and publisher, *Waterbury Roundabout*
- Paul Fixx — Editor, *Hardwick Gazette*
- John Flowers — Senior

reporter, *Addison County Independent*

- Lisa Loomis — Editor, *Valley Reporter* in Waitsfield
- Tim Calabro — Editor and publisher, *White River Valley Herald* in Randolph
- Mark Davis — News director, Vermont Public radio and tv
- Cassandra Hemenway — Editor-in-chief, *The Bridge* in Montpelier

Last week, the board chose the officers who will serve on its executive committee. Davis was elected president of the board, Higdon as vice president, Hemenway as treasurer and Calabro as secretary.

Davis, who previously reported for the *Valley News* and *Seven Days*, said he was honored to serve as inaugural president of the coalition.

"Our work will help foster connections between Vermont's news outlets and allow us to work together on editorial and economic matters of joint interest as we all navigate a landscape that grows more challenging by the year," he said. "Vermont has long been blessed with a vigorous, collegial

press corps, and we are determined to build an organization that helps those proud traditions endure."

Higdon, who oversees the newsrooms of four Franklin County and Chittenden County newspapers, said she was "very much looking forward to setting this new organization up for success."

"The VJC will help elevate and advocate for the more than 40 news outlets keeping us informed on a daily basis," she said. "If Vermonters value that work, it's important that we put our policies and our dollars where our mouth is."

The board's first task will be to hire a part-time executive director to lead the coalition on a day-to-day basis. Potential candidates for the position can learn more about online at tinyurl.com/VJCdirector.

The coalition launched its website last week, at www.vermontjournalism.com.

Support for the coalition is provided by the Vermont Community Foundation's Press Forward Vermont initiative and the University of Vermont's Center for Community News.



BRISTOL'S LIVINGSTON FARM has launched a Gazebo Giveaway Sweepstakes, through which community members can donate to the Addison Food Hub and be entered into a raffle for the 12-foot-by-16-foot, fully-screened gazebo pictured here. The fundraiser will run until Dec. 24.

Photo courtesy of Jenn Livingston

Gazebo offered to entice Food Hub donations

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — A Bristol business is looking to support community members this season through an ongoing fundraiser and giveaway.

Livingston Farm is currently collecting donations for the Addison Food Hub — an offering of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. Community members that donate \$10 or five non-perishable food items are entered into the Gazebo Giveaway Sweepstakes, which will run until Dec. 24.

At the end of the giveaway, a winner will be drawn and receive a 12-foot-by-16-foot, fully-screened gazebo from Livingston Farm.

"The gazebo raffle is a creative way for community members to help local families — without asking anyone to donate food or stand in line at a collection site," said Jenn Livingston, marketing manager at Livingston Farm. "Every dollar raised goes directly toward helping neighbors who may be struggling silently with keeping warm and fed this season."

Livingston noted earlier this fall community members were at risk of losing food assistance benefits, and local support systems were seeing an increase in demand.

"We just felt like we could connect with other community

groups to hopefully move the bar of raising money for the Addison Food Hub and the Feeding Champlain Valley initiative," she said of the inspiration behind the fundraiser.

Feeding Champlain Valley is a program of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) that works to address hunger across the state through four food shelves and other initiatives. The Addison Food Hub in Middlebury distributes "fresh produce, shelf-stable items, and culturally relevant foods," to Addison County residents through its site at 616 Exchange St., Suite 1.

Addison Food Hub and Feeding Champlain Valley officials said there's been a substantial increase in needs this year. A recent Feeding Champlain Valley report states the program expects more than 40,000 visits to its food shelves, "requests for a food delivery, guests for a hot meal and emergency calls" this holiday season.

"Everything is more expensive. And usually food is the first thing that gets cut. It's not unusual for

someone to come in and say they had to skip a meal," said Anna McMahon, associate director of Feeding Champlain Valley.

Feeding Champlain Valley and CVOEO have a goal of feeding 10,000 families by the end of this month, but the organization as of Monday had resources available

to feed only 3,800.

All proceeds from the ongoing Gazebo Giveaway Sweepstakes will go toward Feeding Champlain Valley's Addison Food Hub. Community members can donate online through the Livingston Farm website or in person at the business's Bristol showroom.

Each \$10 donation and food drop-off counts as three entries into the giveaway.

There is also a free entry option. The fundraiser kicked off on Nov. 17 and has so far raised \$1,400 and collected food donations from 35 donors. Livingston noted the team is hoping to reach 100 donors by Christmas Eve, when the winner of the giveaway will be announced.

For more information visit tinyurl.com/livingstonfarmgiveaway.

"Everything is more expensive. And usually food is the first thing that gets cut. It's not unusual for someone to come in and say they had to skip a meal."

— Anna McMahon

Training offered to help problem gamblers

WATERBURY — The Vermont Department of Mental Health is offering free Problem Gambling Essentials Training for mental health and substance use treatment providers.

The 10-week, online program begins on Jan. 13 and gives clinicians tools to support individuals struggling with gambling, a condition affecting an estimated 11,000 adults statewide, according to the 2021 Survey of Publicly Funded Problem Gambling Services in the United States. Participants who complete the training will receive 30 continuing education credits (CEUs) and will be eligible

to earn a Vermont Problem Gambling Specialist (PGS) certificate. The PGS certificate allows agencies or private practice to be listed TR at no cost as referral sources on the Vermont Gambling Helpline.

Sessions cover gambling basics, co-occurring disorders, assessment, ethics, harm reduction, working with families, and LGBTQIA+ cultural competence. Instructors include nationally recognized experts Jody Bechtold, Dr. Lori Rugle, and Jodie Nealley, who is in long-term recovery from problem gambling.

Problem gambling often co-occurs with anxiety, depression

and substance use disorders and carries significant social and economic costs nationwide.

"There's a real need for more providers who can understand, recognize, and support people affected by problem gambling," said Vermont Department of Mental Health Commissioner Emily Hawes. "By expanding the number of trained specialists across the state, we're making it easier for people to get help close to home. We're excited to help grow this network across Vermont."

Registration is now open. To sign up or learn more, visit The Vermont Gambling Help Provider Resources Webpage.

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Bixby Library hires experienced director

VERGENNES — The Bixby Memorial Free Library has lined up a new leader.

In the Dec. 5 edition of the Vergennes institution's monthly newsletter, the trustees announced that Jennifer Pearson would be the Bixby's new library director. She will start fulltime on Jan. 12.

"We'll be making a more formal announcement in a few weeks," Erin Roche, president of the Bixby Board of Trustees, said in the newsletter.

Pearson replaces Catharine Hays, who in September wrapped up a successful five-year run as Bixby director.

Pearson has more than 20 years of experience in not-for-profit

and for-profit management of programs, projects and products.

In Tennessee, Pearson was the director of the Marshall County Memorial Library, which serves a population of 35,000. She left that job after more than eight years, and for the past year she was director of the city of Lewisburg. For almost two years before that she was a consultant with EBSCO Information Services, where she helped install a new library services system at the Library of Congress.

Her connection to libraries is long and distinguished. For more than seven years she was on the board of the Association for Rural & Small Libraries, of which she

was the president in 2019 and 2020. She's been interviewed by and quoted in national publications — not only those devoted specifically to libraries, but also in the magazines *Wired* and *Fast Company*. She's also appeared twice on the national public radio show "Marketplace."

In welcoming Pearson to the job, Roche noted her Southern lineage.

"Jennifer will be relocating from Tennessee, so if you have any tips for winter in Vermont, suggestions for things to do in the five towns, or if you just want to be the first to introduce yourself, she asked me to pass along her email address: jennifer.pearson@bixbylibrary.org. Roche said.

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Another state leader calls for Vekos' resignation

Sexual assault victims say state's attorney didn't do her job, didn't care about them

By ALAN J. KEAYS & CHARLOTTE OLIVER
VTDigger.org

The head of the Vermont Democratic Party is calling on Addison County State's Attorney Eva Vekos to resign.

The *Addison Independent* over the past two years has chronicled a series of complaints against the county prosecutor, including this past winter when a two-part investigative series sharing observations by local residents who were victims of crimes but said Vekos did not fairly represent them in court and furthermore was unprofessional.

Addison County's entire legislative delegation called for Vekos's resignation after she was cited for driving under the influence in January 2024 and then said she didn't feel safe around state police.

The furor mounted on Monday when VTDigger published its own story in which sexual assault survivors criticized her handling of their cases and described ethics complaints filed against her.

Vermont Democratic Party Chair Lachlan Francis had enough.

"Eva Vekos is unfit to serve as State's Attorney, and she should resign from her office immediately — as a majority of Addison County legislators called for last year, even before the latest ethics complaints and allegations of bullying crime victims came to light," Francis said in a statement Monday afternoon.

If Vekos decides to seek reelection to another four-year term, Francis added, the party would not support her candidacy.

"She will not have access to our resources or infrastructure, and we will work to recruit and support a strong primary opponent," he said. "Addison County deserves law enforcement leaders capable of holding the public's trust, and that will never be Eva Vekos."

VTDigger's story described Vekos's conduct that led to two formal ethics complaints filed against her regarding her treatment of sexual assault survivors.

In a statement to VTDigger late Monday afternoon, Vekos, a Democrat, challenged the allegations made against her and criticized the state party that supported her when she ran in 2022.

"The Democratic Party doesn't know anything about me or the successes of my office," Vekos said in the email. "They have never shown any interest in the work of the criminal court in Addison. So their opinion means little to me."

Vekos is up for reelection in November 2026.

In January 2024, Vekos was arrested by Vermont State Police on a drunken driving charge after she allegedly drove to a suspicious death investigation in Bridport intoxicated. She has since pleaded not guilty to that charge, which remains pending.

Since Vekos's arrest, detectives with the Vermont State Police New Haven barracks in Addison County have sent cases they investigate to the Vermont Attorney General's office, rather than Vekos's office,

to avoid a conflict of interest.

MONDAY'S STORY

A Bristol small business owner said she hoped she and her 15-year-old daughter would be treated respectfully when they pursued a criminal complaint against the teenager who sexually assaulted her daughter, VTDigger reported on Monday. Instead, the business owner says she was sworn at by Eva Vekos, the embattled state's attorney in Addison County. State's attorneys are elected in every county in Vermont to lead the office that works with police and sheriffs' departments to prosecute cases in court.

"Her general attitude toward victims is so derogatory," the business owner said of Vekos. She filed a formal ethics complaint against Vekos, whose troubles have piled up since she was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol nearly two years ago.

Because of how the business owner and three other crime victims say Vekos handled their cases, they felt invalidated, belittled and demeaned. In three of these cases, the victims said Vekos denied them the opportunity to give meaningful input on plea deals she was negotiating with the defense on the sentences their offenders would face. It was "kind of like a 'screw you' situation," said a college student from Vermont who was a victim in a sexual assault case.

Martha Bowdish, a victim advocate at Addison County Unit for Special Investigations, which investigates sex crimes, has also filed a formal ethics complaint about Vekos with the state Professional Responsibility Board, which handles allegations of attorney misconduct.

The board of Atria Collective, a Middlebury organization that worked closely with Vekos's office, also raised concern, saying, in a statement to media, that staff has witnessed "countless instances" of victims' rights being violated during Vekos's time in office.

"In case after case, our agency has observed, State's Attorney Vekos neglecting to prioritize both the safety of victims and survivors and the well-being of the community," Atria Collective's board of directors wrote.

Vekos's tumultuous relationship with victims and their advocates came to light after the 2024 DUI charge. The state investigated a medical leave she took soon after the charge. Then it temporarily suspended her law license. A judge declined to throw out her case. This past fall, her attorney pushed for a deal that could allow the charge to be cleared from her record. Her next court date is Dec. 16.

Vekos declined multiple requests for an interview to discuss the complaints outlined in this story. She responded to some questions via email but declined to discuss

others, saying she is constrained by privacy laws.

"I stand by the work done in every case handled by my office," she wrote.

"There is no State's Attorney in Vermont — or prosecutor anywhere — who has been able to fulfill the wishes of every crime victim," she wrote, adding that prosecutors must weigh other factors like the strength of evidence and available resources.

To be sure, prosecutors routinely weigh their chances of winning a conviction as they consider making plea deals. But victims and advocates who criticized Vekos argue she did not meaningfully

consult with victims before agreeing to a case's resolution and that she treated them egregiously. Two victims said the outcomes of their cases led them to fear for public safety.

Vermont law states that crime victims "shall be treated with courtesy and sensitivity" by courts and prosecutors. To ensure victims receive support, state law also guarantees crime victims the right to a victim advocate, someone trained to walk victims through court processes.

Victims rights were adopted by Vermont and many other states in the 1980s in response to complaints from victims that they were left behind in overburdened criminal justice systems. The goal was to better support victims and create avenues for their voices to be heard in the legal system.

Victim advocates are state employees who work in every Vermont state's attorney's office. They often handle about 600 cases each, about double the number recommended by a study often cited by state officials. In Addison County, staff from other organizations, including Bowdish and Jena Santa Maria, who directs advocacy for Atria Collective, have stepped in to help.

VTDigger has decided not to name these sexual assault victims or their families, and does not identify sexual assault victims without their consent. VTDigger also interviewed two people who work closely with Vekos's office who spoke on the condition their names not be used in this story for fear of retaliation.

'SHE HAD A VENDETTA'
The Bristol small business owner helped her teenage daughter contact police in 2017 after she was sexually assaulted by a teenage boy who was also under the age of 16.

After police found probable cause, a deputy state's attorney at the time, Rebecca Otey, filed charges against the teenager who assaulted the business owner's daughter. He faced up to a life sentence, court documents show.

He pleaded guilty to the charge in 2018 and avoided serving time in prison on the condition he take part in a program for youthful offenders, court documents show.

He could remain in the youthful offender program if he made a "good faith effort at treatment" and did not commit a crime of violence, his plea agreement said.

But court records show he lost his placement in the youthful offender

"Addison County deserves law enforcement leaders capable of holding the public's trust, and that will never be Eva Vekos."

— Lachlan Francis

"The Democratic Party doesn't know anything about me or the successes of my office ... They have never shown any interest in the work of the criminal court in Addison. So their opinion means little to me."

— Eva Vekos

program and was eventually arrested in 2023. By this time, he was a 21-year-old man. Juvenile court records, detailing his time in the program, are confidential.

Vekos was now serving as Addison County's state's attorney. After spending most of her career as a defense attorney, often representing juveniles, she was elected to be the county's top prosecutor in 2022.

Vermont law gives crime victims the right to get timely notifications of their offender's release. But in 2023, the man who sexually assaulted the business owner's daughter was released from jail, court records show. Vekos did not give the business owner any notice, according to the business owner and a person who works closely with cases in Vekos's office.

The business owner, in a private meeting with the state's attorney, said she told Vekos she had violated her daughter's rights. According to the business owner, Vekos responded, "This is f***ing ridiculous. I don't have time for this."

"That's pretty much set the whole tone for that meeting, where she was just using profanity right and left," the business owner said. "She was just so condescending and so arrogant," she added later on.

The business owner went on to report the profanities when she filed an ethics complaint against Vekos in 2024 with the state board that handles allegations of attorney misconduct. She shared that complaint with VTDigger.

After that meeting, things changed for her daughter's case. "From that day on she didn't like that I had called her out and she was gonna do everything she could to make sure that he wasn't prosecuted," the business owner said.

"I would go that far, to say that she had a vendetta and like she was going to prove to me that she could do what she wanted and screw the victims," the business owner said.

"Vekos believes she is above the law," the business owner wrote in her ethics complaint.

Vekos didn't address this claim directly when asked to respond to a list of complaints.

In February, Vekos agreed to give a six-year deferred sentence to the man convicted for his original sexual assault charge from 2017, court documents show. If he followed his conditions of probation for those years, he would then have a clean record.

The business owner said she considered that possibility "very very dangerous."

The business owner wrote in her ethics complaint that Vekos violated her and her daughter's rights by entering into the deferred sentence agreement with the defense before consulting her. A person who works closely with the cases in Vekos's office confirmed that the business owner and her daughter were not consulted.

In conversations with the business owner, Vekos did not know basic facts about the case and admitted she did not have time to read the entire file, the business owner wrote in her ethics

complaint. The complaint is still pending before the state's attorney misconduct board.

A few months later, this June, the man was cited for violating his probation conditions by moving to a different part of the state, according to court documents. Typically, when someone convicted of a crime violates their probation conditions, the person is sentenced after they admit to the violation in court. In this case, the man could have seen up to life in prison on his original charge.

Instead, Vekos dropped the violation of probation he was facing this summer, court documents show. That was despite the business owner's insistence that Vekos prosecute the violation, the business owner said. The man was able to continue serving his years of probation outside of jail.

"I have zero faith in the Addison County court system because of Eva. Like, zero faith," the business owner said, using Vekos's first name. "Every time I go to court, I always expect the worst. Always. Because that's probably what's going to happen."

Vekos, asked to respond to the business owner's complaints, said she could not do so for confidentiality reasons. In an email, she said: "My office is dedicated to supporting crime victims in all cases, which we do every day."

COMPLAINTS OF RETALIATION

After advocates for the Middlebury special investigations unit and Atria Collective complained about Vekos's behavior, Vekos largely declined to communicate with them, surfacing concerns that victims weren't being served.

"Eva Vekos has instructed her staff not to communicate with my organization," Santa Maria, the advocacy director for Atria Collective, wrote in an email in

(See Vekos, Page 13A)

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Guest editorial

Saunders: Act 73 is about building a better ed system

Editor's note: Last week we offered a perspective on how to understand the projected 12% property tax rate hike. This week we run an op-ed by Vermont Sec. of Education Zoie Saunders. It's a feel-good message that explains the administration's approach to education reform.

We pushed back on the lack of data the administration has provided to justify its top-down approach to funding education and its call to significantly consolidate Vermont schools. The agency agreed it could do a better job of producing those facts and pledged to do so in the ensuing months. They also cited a policy brief released a year ago which projects \$183 million in savings based on implementation of a foundation formula and consolidating Vermont's current 119 school districts into five, which included combining Addison County with Chittenden and Franklin Counties to create a school district with 34,000-plus students.

That plan was roundly criticized by the legislature and few think it is likely to be adopted, but it serves as a basepoint for potential savings. Vermont currently spends an estimated \$2 billion on its K-12 school system, so the administration's projected savings — at its most extreme consolidation — is about 9%.

Sec. Saunders rightly notes that Act 73, the educational reform bill, deals with much more than consolidating school districts and saving money. And while "affordability" was the main reason cited for making such drastic changes in the state's education system last winter — not "building and sustaining the best education system in America," as Saunders suggests below — there is much in Act 73 that deals with academic improvement. Below is Sec. Saunders' op-ed in which her intention, as stated by her staff, "is to provide Vermonters with a broader picture of the goals of Act 73 and Education Transformation."

By Vermont Sec. of Education Zoie Saunders

Education Transformation in Vermont is not just about property taxes. It is about building and sustaining the best education system in America.

At a moment when nearly every other state is diverting dollars away from public education, Vermont has chosen a different path. Earlier this year, a bipartisan coalition passed Act 73 — a bill that doubles down on public education as the great equalizer, the pathway out of poverty, and the engine that fuels our economy.

Having the best education system in America is not just about test scores. It is about giving every student the opportunity to succeed, regardless of economic disadvantage, language status, or the town they call home.

Giving every student in Vermont the opportunity to succeed requires us to ask why these opportunities remain so uneven. Why do some students not have access to the same course offerings as their peers in other districts? Why do some students attend districts with nearly half the per pupil spending as others? Why do rural and economically disadvantaged areas struggle to offer competitive teacher salaries on par with wealthier pockets of the state? Why are there persistent achievement gaps between students from historically marginalized backgrounds and their peers?

The root cause of our inequities is a simple but hard truth: we are not organizing or operating our statewide education system well. Because of that, we are not directing resources to the places where they can make the greatest difference — supporting students and paying teachers competitively.

The good news is that we have a plan. During the 2025 legislative session, the Governor, the Agency of Education, and the General Assembly worked together to develop a roadmap that positions Vermont as a national leader in education.

Given the magnitude of the change proposed, Vermonters have questions, as they should. Will this plan save money? Will this plan actually give kids more opportunities? Will this plan better support teachers? Will this plan result in a more predictable and equitable approach to funding our education system?

We did our homework, and the answer is yes.

Extensive cost modeling was conducted throughout the legislative process. We built budgets, we adapted the plan based on educator input, and we engaged independent school finance experts. Their review, based on research, data and best practices, confirmed that the plan does what Vermonters expect: It puts teaching and learning first, it aligns with education and management best practices, it directs more resources to students and staff, and it strengthens Vermont's statewide commitment to equity.

The resulting bipartisan bill, Act 73, represents one of the largest education investments in the country.

Vermont is on the cusp of something special.

A generational investment combined with generational change means that we can maintain smaller elementary schools through thoughtful staffing while shifting resources to create more robust middle and high schools. We can expand mental health and behavior supports, we can enhance electives and special programs, and we can even create new, innovative pathways for high school students.

It all sounds good, right? Yes, and it is possible — but only if we are willing to change.

That change requires moving to larger districts for Vermont to ensure the generational investment of Act 73 reaches all students. Let's be clear: larger districts create economies of scale that can determine whether a school can offer advanced courses, hire a reading coach, or afford a strong continuum of supports.

Ultimately, education transformation is about Vermonters coming together to acknowledge our challenges and tackle them collectively.

Right now, local communities are fending for themselves. The status quo has put local school boards and districts in a difficult position where staffing and programming cuts are being made and schools are being closed, all while property taxes continue to rise and families continue to be priced out of local communities.

We cannot ask local communities to fend for themselves. We cannot ask local communities — on their own — to boost educational outcomes while bending the cost curve of funding education. We cannot ask a fragmented structure to deliver world-class results. We have to do this together.

Change is hard, but Vermonters have shown we can do hard things by coming together.

Let's come together to follow through on the bipartisan plan to build the best education system in America — a plan that puts students before politics, raises teacher pay, and creates opportunities and programs that rival every other state in the country. Our kids deserve nothing less.



Color

MARY HOGAN ELEMENTARY School third-grader Rowan Avalon seems to have taken a cue from the mural behind her when creating her own piece of art during a session at Middlebury College this past Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

True meanings of adages helpful

The holiday season can be a time to reflect on our shared traditions, our collective wisdom; societal values passed on in stories, traditions, and also through phrases and proverbs. Recently I've noticed how we often misinterpret well-known phrases by using them the out of their original context or dropping lines entirely. These omissions or misinterpretations have given me pause and maybe they will you, too.

As Vermonters, we have inherited an egregious example of omitting lines and thereby misunderstanding intention in the popular analysis of Frost's poem "Mending Wall." We all quip "like Frost says, good fences make good neighbors" when Frost's actual intention in this poem was to question that very notion when he points out there are no cows to fence in, and "before I built a wall I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out." He laments that his farmer neighbor won't question the need for fences but instead "He will not go behind his father's saying, and he likes having thought of it so well." Our artists are our cultural interpreters and we owe it to the 1958 National Poet Laureate and 1961 Vermont Poet Laureate to take a little time and try to understand the intended meaning of this iconic poem so as not to cheat the author.

Falling into what some consider the "nefarious" zone of misinterpretation for self or political gain underlies the fact that Charles Darwin never actually said "survival of the fittest" when describing his theory of evolution. He said "natural selection," which he meant as "best suited to a particular

environment." But Herbert Spencer, English philosopher and economist of the time, coined the "survival of the fittest" phrase. Spencer initiated a movement called "Social Darwinism" and believed that social programs designed to support people's welfare and quality of life "wholly reject the condition of man's earthly being, and altogether lose sight of one of the great and universal laws of creation... take away the demand for exertion, and you will ensure inactivity." Contorting Darwin's assertion that the most adaptable species survive, Spencer asserts that only the fittest survive and therefore adherence to Darwin's rule means everyone for themselves in a race to being the "fittest." Darwin did eventually repeat "survival of the fittest" but it was not his original theory and it is now disputed by many biologists as being misaligned with his intentions. Imagine if our culture could live up to Darwin's true intention and embraced an ideology of "adaptability" to our environment as success instead of needing to be better than another? Would we collaborate more? Value more diverse perspectives? How would we view one another if our aim was adaptability instead of competition?

Perhaps being well-rounded would help make us more adaptable. But wait, isn't it true that "a jack of all trades is a master of none" and isn't that a bad thing? Think again! Turns out this classic proverb has a second part to it! The full proverb says, "Jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than" (See *Ways of Seeing*, Page 5A)

Ways of Seeing

By Hannah Sessions



Aging gracefully in the Green Mts.

In 1916 Robert Frost published a volume of poems called "Mountain Interval." The title referred both to the upland valley where his wife Elinor and he once lived on a marginal farm and to the several indelible years they remained there. Bristol, Lincoln, Ripton and Goshen are among the little mountain settlements here in Addison County that even today can evoke similar feelings of enclosure and intimacy within their heavily glaciated terrain. They're like nests in the high forked branches of a mature sugar maple's crown.

When moving to Bristol to raise our family, Rita's and my feeling could be summed up as "Well, here we are." We were settling into a landscape and a time that we hoped would frame our life together. Now, almost 50 years later, we seem to be occupying a different sort of interval. As the two of us knock at the door of 80, it's clear that many of the political and environmental dangers occupying us now will not be resolved in our lifetimes. A recent item in the news noted the disproportionate participation of retirees in the No Kings demonstrations. One personal challenge for us politically engaged Boomers will also be to cultivate a measure of equanimity, in order to experience this concluding chapter of life with pleasure and gratitude. Many summers since 2002 I've given talks at Bread

Loaf on Robert Frost as a naturalist. These have often taken place at Writers' Conference picnics near the poet's cabin on the Homer Noble Farm. This year I focused on "Hyla Brook," a poem from that 1916 collection of Frost's resonating with my own desire at this point for a sense of balance between loss and hope.

By June our brook's run out of song and speed. Sought for much after that, it will be found Either to have gone groping underground (And taken with it all the Hyla breed That shouted in the mist a month ago, Like ghost of sleigh-bells in a ghost of snow)— Or flourished and come up in jewelweed, Weak foliage that is blown upon and bent Even against the way its waters went. Its bed is left a faded paper sheet Of dead leaves stuck together by the heat—

A brook to none but who remember long. This as it will be seen is other far Than with brooks taken elsewhere in song. We love the things we love for what they are.

There are so many things to appreciate in this (See *Visions of Renewal*, Page 5A)



Visions of Renewal

By John Elder

Letters to the Editor

Downtown Midd shone in event

Thank you for a bustling buoyant stroll in downtown Middlebury last Thursday despite very chilly temps. Our police officers served popcorn and the new college president served hot cocoa in Canon Park. Across the street, the Sheldon Museum opened its doors for kids to enjoy the holiday trains and more.

Bravo!

Laura Asermily
Middlebury

Kirkaldy will be sorely missed

Andy Kirkaldy will certainly be missed by the Addison County community! As Karl Lindholm's tribute nicely captures, Andy has been a staple of the school sports and rec sports scene around the county for decades and is an all-around great guy. His presence will be sorely missed!

Hopefully someone in the next generations will take up the call to become the next person willing to be woven into our community as a sports ambassador for all ages.

Best to him and his family!

Terry Eagan
Sudbury

Opposing RFK draws praise

Thank you, Vt. State Health Commissioner Rick Hildebrandt, for standing up for science and public health against RFK Jr.'s latest attack on vaccine policy.

Without evidence of harm, and based on incompetent and erroneous analysis of peer reviewed studies, RFK Jr.'s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to turn back the clock to pre-1991 and withdraw the recommendation that all newborns receive Hepatitis B vaccination. Hepatitis B is completely preventable with birth dosing of the vaccine within 24 hours. Once infected, 90% of infants will continue to carry the virus leading to liver damage, cirrhosis and possible liver cancer. Hepatitis B is sexually transmitted and by blood or drug injections, but it also spreads by contact with razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers, broken skin, body piercing, tattooing and acupuncture, among other portals of transmission. Babies are particularly susceptible to infection.

Women are tested before birth for the virus, but the very people who are most likely to be infected are less likely to have prenatal care and have the blood test. Approximately 15% of pregnant women do not receive the blood test. Our current strategy of universal vaccination at birth avoids this problem and has worked exceedingly well with almost no adverse effects from the vaccine. Many lives have been saved.

As a Vermont primary care pediatrician (retired 2021) I am (See *Mayer letter*, Page 5A)

Notes of appreciation

Many made city event a success

Sending sincere thanks to the droves of people who came out last Saturday night for the 1st Annual Ho Ho Ho Holiday Roll Lighted Tractor Parade. Hosted by Vergennes Partnership, we are grateful for our sponsors: Bourdeau Bros., Feed Commodities International, National Bank of Middlebury, Linda's Apparel & Gifts and Gevry Firewood.

Traveling up from Church Road, then circling City Park, people lined the streets and gathered just like they do for the Little City's Memorial Day parade. Special thanks to VP board member Kathleen Clark, NBM Vergennes branch manager, for her significant role in making the event a success; we're already planning for the second annual!

Christine Garrow
Executive Director,
Vergennes Partnership

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Letters to the Editor

Trump attacks on immigrants without basis in fact

Gee, that's funny. Until recently, I was not aware that "Trump" must actually be a Native American name. I will leave it to others to assign some unfortunate tribal identity. That aside, even the Paleo-indians hunting woolly mammoths in the shadow of the glacier were, technically, immigrants. After they were settled in, they had themselves 20,000 years of belonging to the land before the first disease-riddled Europeans put an end to that long co-operation. Now we have arrived at this

shameful, xenophobic, Nativist purge, run by an ICE queen who proudly took credit for shooting her own puppy. I have the feeling she'd like to keep going along those lines, but this time around, targeting bipeds who annoy her.

The last I heard, the Trump clan first cast their malevolent shadow over the New World as arrivals from Germany. It is a matter of historical record that Donnie's grandfather was quick to grasp the possibilities. He founded a chain of what were once delicately referred to as "Bawdy Houses."

But that is history, and as Donnie's niece Mary has pointed out about her uncle: "Donald is innocent of history."

I am glad for his sake that he's innocent of something. Not that it bothers him. Why would it? I would bet the beer money that the most powerful man in the world is likewise innocent of Greek Drama. The Greeks have sustained a reputation for being correct. Do you suppose they got it wrong about hubris? Let's hope not.

David Munford
Middlebury

Do former checks on presidential power still apply?

There has been a great deal of genuine concern about the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Trump v. United States* (2024). The general impression is that it grants immunity to the president for almost all official acts — even ones which would normally be regarded as unlawful or even criminal. I share that concern, but it should not have come as a surprise ruling.

Trump v. United States repeatedly cites precedent: *Fitzgerald v. Nixon* (1982) in which broad immunity was granted to the president for official and peripheral actions. *Fitzgerald* involved a situation all too frequent in the current Trump administration: a federal employee is denigrated by the president and then fired. *Fitzgerald* suffered that

fate and sued to retain his position. The court ruled against him citing presidential immunity. The language in *Fitzgerald* on immunity is broad — but the specific issue was civil law. It was not much of a step then for Trump to include possible criminal acts under presidential immunity. Not much of a step? Maybe it was.

There is a passage in *Fitzgerald* that speaks to guardrails for presidential excess beyond any law or court ruling. It is worth quoting today.

"The rule of absolute immunity for the President will not leave the Nation without sufficient protection on the part of the Chief Executive. There remains the constitutional remedy of impeachment...The

President is subjected to constant scrutiny by the press. Vigilant oversight by Congress also may serve to deter Presidential abuses of office...Other incentives to avoid misconduct may include the desire for reelection, the need to maintain prestige as an element of Presidential influence, and a President's traditional concern for his historical stature."

So. How well are these informal checks on Presidential power working today? Fox news? Congressional oversight? Prestige? Desire for re-election? (Forbidden for now but...) Traditional concern for historical stature?

Dennis O'Brien
Middlebury

Could second-home taxation help housing crisis?

Dear Sen. Hardy and Reps. Scheu and Sheldon:

The attached letter "Taxing second homes differently would be fair", Greg Hughes, Bethel, as published in the *Addison Independent* Dec. 4 edition, to me suggests a brilliant start towards limiting the loss of our available affordable housing stock: taxing second homes and, most particularly, rental or other investment properties at a higher rate than the rate for primary residences.

Particularly in light of the rampant acquisition of housing

stock by private equity concerns, now appearing in Vermont, and also given the increasing Air BnB conversions seen in resort and other areas, this should at least slow the accelerating conversion of affordable residential housing stock into luxury second homes and short-term rentals.

Perhaps any legislation could include a grandfathering of existing long-term affordable (as defined) rental properties.

Unlike raising income taxes on millionaires, a popular but controversial suggestion with serious downsides, this to me

seems a no-brainer to any voter who isn't also a real estate developer or investor. (Or perhaps to some in the tourist industry.)

If there are significant other downsides, I would appreciate knowing what they are. If not, I would appreciate your support in moving this idea forward.

Thank you all for your consideration, and for all you do on behalf of me and all your constituents.

Elizabeth
Tillinghast Oettinger
Middlebury

Mayer letter

(Continued from Page 4A) sensitive to the fragility of our public health care system in general and vaccine policy in particular. My practice depends on state-bought vaccines from the CDC for free distribution to Vermont's health care providers. No monetary barrier to vaccinating our children. Will that continue for non-recommended vaccines? Can we rely on private insurance to cover vaccines that are not recommended by CDC? We're about to find out, and I dread the long-term impacts of lowered levels of immunity in our kids. Casting doubt on the need for this vaccine encourages vaccine skepticism, and immunization rates will fall.

RFK's ACIP also recommended that those who receive the vaccine have an unreliable and unnecessary blood test for antibodies afterwards. Drawing blood from a baby, which

is often traumatic, for an unreliable test. Another disincentive for parents to vaccinate their babies.

Professional societies like Vermont's chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics immediately responded with an urgent appeal to continue universal vaccination and to disregard the new CDC pronouncement.

The vigorous response from professional societies and grass-roots defenders of evidence-based public health measures are resisting RFK Jr.'s ideologic and unscientific efforts to undermine our precious vaccination programs. Each time a vaccination program is impaired, disease results. We are already seeing a resurgence of whooping cough and measles due to under-vaccination. Unvaccinated children have died.

It is with shock, sadness, horror

and shame that we are witnessing the demise of the CDC and the ACIP. Once the epitome of public health excellence, the CDC is now reduced to a fringe political, conspiratorial cabal of anti-vaccine opportunists and extremists. Our public health infrastructure is crumbling. Children will bear the consequences. It will take a generation to restore the CDC to competence and rebuild its tattered reputation.

The bugs are always with us. Don't bet your kids' lives on a hope and a prayer. We had a public health system that was the envy of the world until RFK Jr. took over and began systematically dismantling it and undermining confidence in vaccines.

This will not end well.
Jack Mayer, MD, MPH
Middlebury

Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A) a master of one." In other words, it's preferable to know and be interested in lots of things; better not to obsess in the relentless pursuit of "expert" status in one thing but to find yourself in many different fields of work and study, to be led by curiosity and not status. Perhaps it's not surprising that many studies link happiness to having hobbies.

But curiosity is a dangerous thing — after all, didn't it harm a feline? In fact, the proverb "curiosity killed the cat" was

originally (in late 1500s England) "care killed the cat," meaning too much worry or concern is a bad thing. In the early 1900s it was changed to "curiosity" but quickly a second portion was added and the full proverb now states, "curiosity killed the cat but satisfaction brought it back." Turns out, the lesson we should take to heart is that knowledge gained makes curiosity worth the risk!

As Vermonters, we owe it to Frost to "go behind (our) father's saying(s)" even if we

have "thought of (them) so well"; to examine these proverbs and sayings for what may have been dropped off, twisted or left behind and to ask why. For now, let us go forth and be stubbornly multi-tasking, inherently curious, and forever questioning the fences we encounter in order to adapt and survive together!

Hannah Sessions is a lifelong Vermonter, farmer, cheesemaker and artist living in Leicester with her husband, dog, and 175 dairy goats. She has two grown children.

Visions of Renewal

(Continued from Page 4A) beautiful lyric, including the shifting rhyme-scheme that gives it such a fluid, expressive feeling. At its heart is the memory of tree frogs ("the Hyla breed") singing in early spring over an ephemeral brook that had appeared after the melting of winter's snow. By June, however, when the poem is set, both song and brook are gone. The yellow and orange flowers of jewel weed, leaning this way and that where the water has "gone groping underground," are traces of that earlier moment of boisterous life. Frost is always aware of loss in the successional beauty of the woods. In one gorgeous line he registers the fact that the vanished treefrogs and their ephemeral stream had themselves resulted from the earlier disappearance of all those beautiful drifts amid the trees: "The ghost of sleigh-bells in a ghost of snow."

From our present standpoint Rita and I can look back at the fullness of our lives and forward to a future in which our grandchildren, currently living in Vermont, Ohio, Pennsylvania and California, will need to find their own paths. As institutions falter and patriotic aspirations sometimes feel overthrown, this moment can feel defined by absence, like a spring brook only visible now as a scattering of "dead leaves stuck together by the heat." In encountering medical challenges keeping us closer to home she and I can also perceive our own diminishment. So we remind one another daily that happiness comes from loving the life one has. Frost amplifies this wisdom in his mysterious final line: "We love the things we love for what they are." What then is Hyla Brook when no longer visible above ground? Both a residue and a promise, it seems to me — "a faded paper sheet" on which something may yet be written. Something old and something new, as memory and imagination marry in this moment.

Frost's poem speaks to the dialogue between activism and aging in Rita's and my generation. A photo from one recent demonstration in Vergennes shows Rita and my amputee brother Lyn in their wheelchairs and me kneeling between them. Lyn is wearing his camo cap with "U. S. Army" on it, and we refer to this as a picture of "the Wheelchair Brigade." It offers

an image of tenacious hope. Frost could affirm seasonal loss through remembering the annual cycles of return. Looking back at our family's decades here in the Green Mountains, we recall so many vivid seasonal markers, like snowshoeing expeditions up Mt. Abraham to celebrate the New Year. Such outings are not in the cards for us now, any more than we can realistically anticipate the healing of our divided country within own life-spans. But we

can avoid despair at the present sinking of the national water-table by visualizing future seasons of aspiration and renewal arising from this moment in the woods.

Bristol resident John Elder retired after a long career as an educator at Middlebury College and the Bread Loaf School of English. His last four books have combined discussions of poetry and music, evocations of the Vermont landscape, and memoir.



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Letters received by Monday, December 15th, may be published with names in our December 18th edition.

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Obituaries

Audrey Marion Keyes, 92, of Bridport

BRIDPORT — Audrey Marion Keyes, of Bridport, Vt., passed away peacefully on Nov. 28, 2025, at the age of 92.

Born on March 22, 1933, in Middlebury, Vt., Audrey was a lifelong Vermonter whose life was deeply rooted in her community and family. She graduated from Middlebury High School and went on to build a long and dedicated career at Middlebury College, where she worked in the President's office providing secretarial support until her retirement.

Audrey was a devoted member of the Bridport Congregational Church for many years. Her love of music found expression in the church choir, where she sang faithfully and contributed to the spiritual life of her congregation. Her commitment to community extended beyond the church. She was also very active in both the Bridport and Pomona Granges,



AUDREY MARION KEYES

where she held several offices and played an important role in supporting local agricultural and civic initiatives.

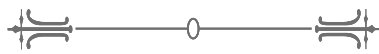
Audrey found joy in quiet pastimes such as reading and solving crossword puzzles — activities that reflected her

thoughtful nature and sharp mind.

She is lovingly remembered by her daughters Betty Law (Mike) of Colchester, Vt., and Nancy Woodard (Tony) of Bridport, Vt.; her son Jerry of Ft. Myers, Fla.; seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. She is also survived by sisters Barbara Swinton, Cindy Belanger and Louise (David) Richmond. Audrey was predeceased by her beloved husband, Bill; her daughter Becky Lewis; and sons Will Keyes and Kenny Keyes. She was also predeceased by her parents, Leon and Janet Swinton, and her sisters and their spouses, Mary and Ed James and Peggy and Larry Clark; and brother-in-law Fred Belanger.

A memorial service will be held at a later date in the spring or summer to honor Audrey's life and legacy.

May her memory bring comfort to those who knew and loved her. ◊



Sybil L. (Shandrow) Sheehy, 101, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Sybil L. (Shandrow) Sheehy was born Sept. 2, 1924, to Hollis and Agnes Shandrow of Bridport, Vt., and died Nov. 11, 2025, at age 101. She was a resident of Middlebury, Vt.

Sybil graduated high school in Middlebury in 1942 and went on to a career as a HR manager for General Electric in Schenectady, N.Y. In 1980 she retired to Florida and married Patrick Sheehy. After Pat passed away she returned home to Middlebury in 1987. She spent 38 years volunteering with the Catholic Daughters, Community House, Red Hats and especially Neat Repeats.

She enjoyed shopping, antiquing and having lunch with friends. She cared for her baby

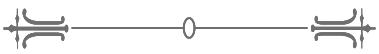


SYBIL L. (SHANDROW) SHEEHY

brother John Shandrow Sr., who passed at age 90. Sybil's 101 years were well spent.

She is survived by nephew John Shandrow Jr. and wife Linda Shandrow; grandnieces Samantha Shandrow and Nicole Cote (Shandrow); grandnephews Nicholas Piper and Ryan Piper and; several great-greatnieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, Patrick Sheehy; brother, John Shandrow Sr.; and nieces Sandra Piper Shandrow and Linda L. Shandrow.

A catholic mass will be held at St Mary's Church in Middlebury Dec. 13, at 11 a.m., followed by a burial at St Mary's Cemetery. Special thanks to all the relatives and special caregivers that made Sybil's life complete. Donations in lieu of flowers to Neat Repeats or Middlebury Home Health and Hospice. ◊



Carlotta Prichard Tippet, 92, of Panton

PANTON — Carlotta Prichard Tippet, devoted mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and cherished friend passed away peacefully at her home on Thursday, Nov. 13.

Born Sept. 20, 1933, in Montgomery, Ala., she was the beloved daughter of Major General Vernon Edwin Prichard and his wife Charlotte Blesse. As a child, Carlotta lived in post-war Germany and Washington D.C. During her 56-year marriage to Paul Tippet Jr., they shared many adventures, relocating more than a dozen times, including a brief stint overseas. After raising their children in Ann Arbor, Mich., they moved to Vermont and purchased a small farm in Shrewsbury. Ultimately, they built a house in Panton, Vt., where they lived through their final days.

Carlotta will be remembered for her nine decades of fun, warmth, humor, and unwavering love for her family. She was passionate about her many dogs, gardening, interior design and the time spent with her children and grandchildren.

Carlotta was preceded in death by



CARLOTTA PRICHARD TIPPETT

her husband, Paul. She is survived by her children, Paul and Holly; grandchildren Tip and wife Bari, Preston and wife Claire, Fiona and husband Ariel, and Declan and wife Taylor; and grandchildren Maren and Kellan.

A private service will be held in summer of 2026.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Homeward Bound. ◊

Michael Dean Thompson, 82, Vergennes

VERGENNES — Michael Dean Thompson, died on December 2, 2025, at his home in Vergennes, Vt.

Mike was born Aug. 24, 1943, in Kenton, Ohio. He was the eldest son of Margaret "Kate" (Ward) Clifford. His biological father, whom he never met, was Virgil Temple. Gale Thompson was a loving father to Mike until he died when Mike was six. Kate and her second husband Ernest "Ernie" Clifford raised Mike and his seven siblings, moving from Ohio to Vermont in 1949.

Mike is survived by his first wife and the mother of his four children, Sandra (Plummer) Choquette. His surviving children are Michele Sands of Minnetonka, Minn.; Michael Dean Thompson II of Williston, Vt.; Tiffany Shaw of New Haven, Vt.; and Ginger Cloud of Barre, Vt. He is also survived by his wife, Helene (Sears), and her children, Katha Bolduc, Isaac Butcher and Amy Chamberlin.

Mike also leaves behind his grandchildren and a great-grandchild. Mike is survived by his siblings Pam (Thompson) Cross, Patricia (Clifford) Neate and Constance (Clifford) Gilbert. He was preceded in death by Gale "Tweet" Thompson, Sharon (Thompson) Roberts, David "Danny" Thompson and Charles "Chuck" Clifford.

Michael Thompson proudly served his country with distinction, demonstrating profound courage as a military medic. He served in active duty in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam as a Fleet Marine Force (FMF) Corpsman — the U.S. Navy medics who serve with Marine Corps ground units. During his service in the Vietnam War, his rank was Senior Line Corpsman. He was a senior member of the planning leadership, recognized for his extreme bravery in treating the wounded under heavy fire during engagements that resulted in high casualty rates for his unit.

He also served in the National Guard in Vermont from 1978 to 2004, where he was Medical Battalion Chief and the cook for D Battery in Vergennes. Mike was a long-time member of the American Legion Post 14 in Vergennes where he found comfort and camaraderie.

For his service and sacrifices, he received many awards including a Purple Heart and a Gold Star.

Following his military service, Mike worked as a telephone lineman and in retirement delivered the Burlington Free Press.

Mike was a natural storyteller and quick to tell a joke. He was a



MICHAEL DEAN THOMPSON

sensitive soul who carried deep pain from his combat service and early life. This struggle regrettably led to more pain, both for himself and those in his life. He wrote poetry, gardened and nurtured others through cooking. Mike's greatest peace was found in nature — he enjoyed nothing more than a day hunting in the woods or fishing on the lake.

The family is holding a private remembrance.

How Do You Feel

You sit at home and watch T.V.

And sip a refreshing drink, cold

iced tea

The news comes on and then you

hear

The All-Star game is drawing

near.

Then you see a far-off land,

Where men are dying in the sand.

A frown appears across your

face,

You're tired of hearing about this

place.

Who cares about Viet Nam

across the sea?

It's far away and doesn't concern

me.

You would rather hear the

Beatles play

Than learn about the world today,

But stop and think a moment or

two and ask yourself,

Does this concern you?

It's great to be alive and free,

But what about the guy across

the sea?

He's giving up his life for you

So that you can live in liberty.

He's far away and fighting a war,

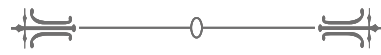
Instead of fight at your front

door.

This man who lives in filth and

slime,

How can he do this all the time?



Victor Lavoie Sr., 82, of Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Victor Lavoie Sr., 82, of Ferrisburgh Vt., passed away peacefully at his home on Dec. 5, 2025, surrounded by his family.

Victor was born on March 4, 1943, to Fred and Gladys (Allen) Lavoie of Belle Mead, N.J. He was proudly honorably discharged from the Army National Guard after six years of service.

In 1966, Victor married the love of his life, Barbara Pellek, in New Jersey. Victor and Barbara went on to have five children, Joe (Terry), Mickey (Pat), Arlene (Jason), Victor Jr. (Jessica) and Ham/Brian (Becca); and one bonus daughter, Tina.

After moving to Vermont, he became the proud owner of Twin Pond Farm and later a truck driver for Lamell Lumber until his retirement in 2013, after which he



VICTOR LAVOIE SR.

spent his days hunting and fishing with his boys and grandchildren, tractor pulling, raising beef cattle, going on trips with his honey, and going to the casino.

Victor was predeceased by his

He's about your age, so why should you care about a war someone else should share?

You call him vile names and make fun of his cause,

Yet he is always first to win your wars.

You lucky guys, you laugh and sneer,

Because you really know no fear,

But this young man faces death each day,

But he's always got something funny to say,

Like no mail today, O what sorrow,

What the hell, there is always tomorrow.

The morale is low, the tension is high,

Some men even break down and cry.

He wants to go home and see his loved ones.

He fights all day and watches all night,

He's tired and sick, but he is ready to fight.

The college crew thinks he's a fool,

But that is what makes him cruel.

You don't appreciate what he'll do,

Like give his life for you.

He sacrifices much, yet asks little in return,

Just so you can stay free.

He believes in freedom and the American way,

No parties and fun for this young man,

Until he comes home again some day.

The days are hot and so are the nights,

Oh! What wonders a cold can of beer can do.

He dreams of cold beer and a nice thick steak,

Then someone shouts, we got a village to take.

Some will be heroes because they are brave,

Others will die and face a wreath on their grave.

You'll recognize him as he walks by,

That saddened look in his eyes.

He walks by so proud, yet looks so mean,

He's called the world's fighting machine.

So now how do you feel? ◊

— Michael Thompson

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Jody L. Cousino

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ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Charles C. Kemp, 66, of Leicester

LEICESTER — Charles C. Kemp, age 66, passed away on Dec. 4, 2025, at his home, surrounded by loved ones.

His happiest moments were spent with the love of his life, Sadie, along with his two children and six grandchildren. Charles's hobbies included time with his family, as well as his love for gaming, NASCAR, and building models.

He is predeceased by his parents, Richard and Mabel; brother James; brothers-in-law Douglas and Edson; and sisters-in-law Lenora, Patricia, and Kathy.

He is survived by his beautiful wife, Sadie; son Joseph and his wife Faith; daughter Amanda; and six incredible grandchildren, Cayce, Raychel, Dylan, Richard, Eva and Kyler; his sister Kathy and



CHARLES C. KEMP

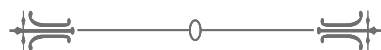
her husband Paul; sister Sandy and her husband Kevin; and brother Rob and his wife Jennifer; and dad, Robert Haskins. Several nieces, nephews and cousins also survive him.

Charles spent his life working to take care of his family and loved ones before settling at GE in Rutland, where he retired in the fall of 2019. He was well respected and loved by many, including two life-long friends, Dennis Denis and Alfred Pickett. He will continue to be loved and remembered by all.

In lieu of flowers the family ask that memorial gifts may be made to your local animal shelter or a charity of one's choice.

Friends may call at the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon, Friday, Dec. 12, from 2-4 p.m., followed by a celebration of his life at the Brandon American Legion from 4-7 p.m.

A private graveside committal service and burial will take place, in the Spring, at Pine Hill Cemetery. ♦



Michael L. Francis, 61, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Michael L. Francis, born on Oct. 25, 1964, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, at the age of 61 after battling cancer for the past 14 years.

He was born in Burlington, Vt., the son of Clifford and Winifred (Shores) Francis of North Ferrisburgh, Vt. Mike graduated from Vergennes High School, class of 1982, and went on to attend UVM for Cheese Making/Manufacturing. Mike worked at International Cheese as a manager until 1991, when he started Mr. Mike's Cleaning Service, which he owned and operated until his passing.

Mike has been with the love of his life, Tina, since 1991.

They moved to Middlebury in 1994, where they raised their family. He has been a staple in the community since then. Mike enjoyed snowmobiling with his sons, and family vacations at the ocean, enjoying the hot sun with his feet in the sand. For the past five



MICHAEL L. FRANCIS

years he has enjoyed camping in his RV at Smokerise Campground with his wife Tina.

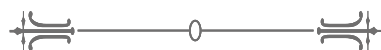
Middlebury Police department put it best "He will be remembered for his quick wit, sharp sense of humor, and the unmistakable warmth that he brought everywhere he went. Above all what stood out most about Mike was his unwavering love, pride and absolute devotion to his family.

Anyone who knew Mike could see how central they were to his life and that love will remain his enduring legacy. He will be deeply missed"

Mike is survived by his wife, Tina; sons, Traven (Rebecca) of Brandon, and Michael (Natalia) of East Middlebury; and daughters, Lindsey of Saint Albans and Shyanne of Lincoln; his sister Sherry (Tim) Lyon of Starksboro; brother Hank (Eva) of Bethel, Wash.; sister Deborah (Bill) Geehan of East Middlebury; and brother Norman of Bristol. He is also survived by grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Mike was predeceased by his father, Clifford; mother, Winnie; sister Barbara; and brother Ronald.

There will be calling hours on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 4-7 p.m., at Brown-McClay Funeral home in Vergennes, and a closed funeral from 7-8 p.m. There will also be a celebration of life open to the entire community at the Vergennes Legion Post 14 on Saturday, Jan. 10, from 1-4 p.m. ♦



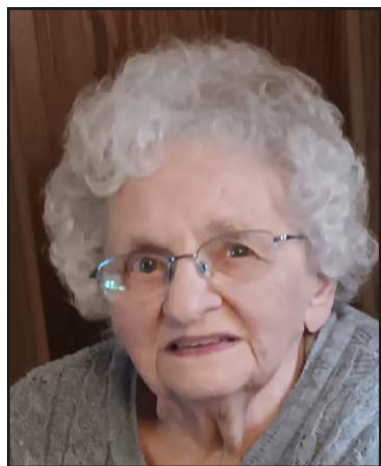
Lucille Mayette (Bryce) Jimmo, 93, of Bristol

BRISTOL — Lucille Mayette (Bryce) Jimmo, 93, passed away peacefully on Dec. 7, 2025.

Born in Colchester, Vt., on Sept. 24, 1932, Lucille spent her childhood on her family's farm in Cambridge — a place she carried in her heart all her life. She often spoke of those early days with affection: taking lunch out to her father, gathering sap by his side, or sharing a Sunday supper of crackers and milk. She cherished her father's familiar call: "Come on, Suki. We've got work to do."

Lucille worked many jobs throughout her long life, each one allowing her to connect with people she came to care for deeply. Her first "outside of the house" job was waitressing at the original Snap's Restaurant. She served as a teacher's aide at Bristol Elementary School, worked as a customer service representative at both Bristol banks, and retired from Martin's Hardware as a cashier at the remarkable age of 84. In every role, she was known for her kindness, her humor, and the way she made everyone feel welcome. As one community member shared, "She has left a legacy in this town."

More than anything, Lucille loved her family. She delighted in hearing about the lives and adventures of her children,



LUCILLE MAYETTE (BRYCE) JIMMO

grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Her love for family, shaped by her farm upbringing and strengthened by the challenges she faced along the way, was the steady center of her life. Though she knew hardship, she never allowed it to dim her spirit.

Lucille was predeceased by her husband, Leon Jimmo; her father, Olin Bryce Sr.; her mother, Dorothy Levins; her brothers Carroll, James and Dickie Bryce; her sister Virginia (Bryce) Hanker; her stepsister Glenna Mae; her stepchildren Michael and Karla Jimmo; her son-in-law Michael Gleason; and her daughter-in-law Elaine Dearborn.

She is survived by her brother Olin Bryce Jr.; her stepsister Esther Meyer; and by her children, Anne Gleason, Alan Powell, Charles Powell, Dawn Jimmo (Richard), Douglas Powell (Suzanne), Lisa Powell, and Brad Jimmo. She also leaves behind 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, all of whom brought her tremendous pride and joy.

A celebration of Lucille's life will be held at a later date, when family and friends can gather to remember her warmth, her stories, and the gentle strength that defined her. ♦



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Peter Purinton Hallock, 85, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — Peter Purinton Hallock, 85, of Lincoln, Vt., passed away peacefully on Dec. 1, 2025, in Burlington, Vermont due to complications following a stroke at his home a week prior. He was surrounded by family until the time of his passing.

Peter was born on Oct. 26, 1940, in Burlington, Vt., to Kenneth and Clara Hallock. He grew up in Waltham, Vt., and attended the one-room schoolhouse there, followed by Vergennes High School, where he enjoyed his friends and sports. He went on to enlist in the U.S. Navy, proudly serving as a cook during the Vietnam War on the U.S.S. Lorain County and NAS Brunswick Maine, where he rose to the rank of Culinary Specialist Petty Officer Second Class.

Peter was a rolling stone and spent his life traveling and working, whether it was as a farmhand, baker, wood cutter, gardener or egg supplier. He valued friendships and family.

He is survived by his children,



PETER PURINTON HALLOCK

Kelli Hallock-DuBois, Karin Ippolito, and Kevin Hallock; two grandchildren, Amber DuBois and Emily Hallock; and a great-granddaughter Lola Houghtaling. He leaves his brother, Kenley Hallock, Machinery Technician Chief Petty Officer United States Coast Guard (ret); and sister, Valli (Hallock) Gebo. He also leaves several nieces and nephews who

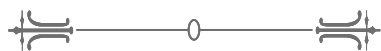
spent much of their childhood with Uncle Pete.

He is predeceased by parents, Kenneth and Clara Hallock of Lincoln; sister Elisse (Hallock) Gebo of Ferrisburgh, and brother-in-law, Albert Gebo.

The family would like to thank the Lincoln community that helped out and watched over Mountain Man while living and working on the Potato Hill Farm.

There will be a Memorial Service at Brown McClay Funeral Home, 48 South Maple Street, Vergennes, on Sunday, Dec. 14, from 2-3 p.m. A cemetery service will be held in the Spring at Sunset View Cemetery in Waltham, where he will join his parents and other family. In memory of Peter, donations can be made to the United Church of Lincoln Deacon's Fund at https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithe.ly/give-one-time/1350323 for assistance to those in the Lincoln community.

To send condolences to his family, please visit www.brownmcclayfuneralhomes.com. ♦



Janet Ruth (Ryan) Lizotte, 78, of Bridport

BRIDPORT — Janet Ruth (Ryan) Lizotte, 78 years old, of Bridport, passed away on Dec. 2, 2025, at Porter Medical Center, surrounded by the love she had cultivated. Janet was born on July 2, 1947, in Middlebury to Ernest and Ruth (Atwood) Ryan.

A lifelong resident of Bridport, Vt., Janet graduated from Middlebury Union High School in 1965. On July 1, 1967, Janet married the love of her life, Carroll Thomas Lizotte. Together, they were lifetime residents of Bridport, dwelling on the land given to them as a wedding gift. Janet worked for more than 35 years for Middlebury College in the custodial department, specializing in the athletics department, where the team's attire looked brand new for every game.

Janet was known by the community as a person who was selfless, understanding and kind. She would always step up to help a neighbor in need. She was a staunch



JANET RUTH (RYAN) LIZOTTE

supporter of the Bridport Volunteer Fire Department and an avid equine lover, raising many horses of her own. Her hands were rarely still. Janet enjoyed knitting, sewing, crocheting, painting, cross stitch, diamond art, Elvis and country music.

Janet is survived by her three devoted daughters and their families, Laurie Ballantine and her husband Daniel; Kathy McIntyre and her husband Erik; and Tanya Lizotte; and her grandchildren, Tyler Ballantine, Keith McIntyre and Kyle McIntyre. She is also survived by her sister, Elizabeth Rheaume, and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Janet was predeceased by her husband, Carroll Thomas "Tom" Lizotte; her parents, Ernest and Ruth Ryan; her brothers, Robert, Ronald, and Ernest Ryan Jr.; and her cherished granddaughter, Adasen Ballantine.

A celebration of her life and burial will take place in the spring of 2026. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Bridport Fire and Rescue, located at 125 Crown Point Rd., Bridport VT 05734. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of the Sanderson Funeral Home in Middlebury, Vt. ♦

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Obituaries are on pages 6A, 7A and 8A

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ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Eileen Anne Gagné, 94, formerly of Middlebury

PAWLEYS ISLAND, S.C. — Eileen Anne Gagné, 94, passed away peacefully at her retirement home in Pawleys Island, S.C., on Dec. 3, 2025. Eileen and her late husband Clement Gagné lived in the Middlebury area for 43 years, from 1952-95.



EILEEN ANNE GAGNÉ

Eileen was born on Nov. 30, 1931, in Philadelphia, Pa., to Augustine G. O'Rourke and Helen Burgmann O'Rourke. She grew up in a close-knit community of Irish Catholics and was educated at Ascension of Our Lord School and Little Flower High School.

She married Clement Gagné of Adams, Mass., on July 28, 1951, and they moved to Middlebury, where Clement established an optometric practice. Eileen was active in the church and community, serving as a member of the St. Mary's Parish Council and the Porter Hospital Auxiliary; as a Guardian ad Litem in the Vermont Family Court; and on the Executive Committee of the Lund Family Center.

Clement and Eileen retired to Surfside Beach, S.C., in 1995. They lived in the Ashton Glen community for 18 years, then in

Murrells Inlet. After Clement's death in 2018, Eileen moved to the retirement community Lakes at Litchfield in Pawleys Island. While in South Carolina, Eileen volunteered at Surfside Library, was a member of the Rock'n'Ettes, and sang with the Coastal Choral and the Serendipity Singers.

Nothing gave Eileen more pleasure than spending time with her children and their families, particularly at reunions and wedding celebrations. She was always at the ready with

encouragement and kindness.

Eileen is survived by six children: Lisa Jordan (Carl) of Houston, Texas; Kim (Nussy) of London, UK; Craig (Phyllis) of Athens, Ga.; Christopher (Sue) of Longmeadow, Mass.; Colin of McMinnville, Ore.; and Mark (Nancy) of Williston, Vt. She is also survived by 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, as well as two brothers-in-law, William J. Greilich Jr. of Exeter, N.H., and Robert P. Gagné of Sonora, Mexico, and their families. She was pre-deceased by a daughter-in-law, Suzy Unruh Gagné of Oregon, and a grandson, Garrett Mather Gagné of Longmeadow, Mass.

The family is grateful to Lower Cape Fear Life Care hospice services and to the caregivers from Live Long Well Care.

Memorials in Eileen's name may be made to the Garrett M. Gagné Memorial Scholarship Fund at St. Lawrence University, 23 Romoda Drive, Canton, NY 13617, or to the Lund Family Center, PO Box 4009, Burlington, VT 05406.

Services are planned for the spring at St. Mary's Church in Middlebury. ◇

Kathryn 'Kay' Gamache, 75, formerly of East Middlebury

RED BANK, N.J. — On Dec. 5, 2025, Kathryn "Kay" Gamache passed away at her residence in Red Bank, N.J., with her daughters by her side.



KATHRYN "KAY" GAMACHE



Kay was born in Elizabeth, N.J., to the late Edward and Freda Brownell. She attended Hillside High School, Weequahic High School, and spent her senior year at Bristol High School after her family moved to Lincoln, Vt. She graduated on D-day, June 6, 1944. She signed up for the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, which provided her with a nursing education. She attended nursing school at Heaton Hospital in Montpelier, Vt. After graduating she attended basic training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, then served during the Korean War at Walter Reed Army Hospital, Valley Forge Army Hospital, and finally at the VA Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y., with a rank of 1st Lieutenant.

She and her husband Larry raised their three children in Brooklyn until his untimely passing, which left her widowed at the age of 35 with three children under the age of 10.

Kay then moved to South Plainfield, N.J., to be near her brother and his family, where she continued to raise her children.

She became a school nurse in Greenbrook, N.J., to have similar hours to her children, as well as summers off with them.

During this time, she earned a

B.A. degree from Trenton State College.

In 1979 she returned to her beloved Vermont, where she lived in East Middlebury. After she relocated to Vermont she worked at Porter Hospital in the OR for 25 years until her retirement.

Kay had many talents. She was an artist and a piano player. She was a piemaker extraordinaire! She loved sewing, knitting, and crocheting, and she sewed many of her daughters' clothes, as well as for her grandchildren.

Kay moved back to New Jersey in 2005 to be closer to her daughters and grandchildren. She resided in Jackson, N.J., and finally in Red Bank, N.J., living at the Atrium at Navesink Harbor.

She was predeceased by her parents, her husband Lawrence,

and her son Chip Gamache, as well as her brother and sister-in-law Edward and Marjorie Brownell. She is survived by her daughters and their husbands, Nicki and Al Colantoni and Laurie and Vic Kurliew, as well as six grandchildren and their spouses — Terri and Chris Melissinos, David and Danielle Colantoni, AJ and Erin Colantoni, Shelley and Justin King, Kristen and Mike Delucca, and Vic and Dana Kurliew. She also leaves behind 14 great-grandchildren — Cassie, Colin, Benny, Rylee, Joey, Sophia, Jaxon, Faith, Max, Leah, Olivia, Paige, Lincoln, and Penny. She also leaves behind two nieces, Karen Leimann and Mary Ann Osborne, and two nephews, Kevin Brownell and Fred Gamache.

There will be no services. ◇

Susan Ann Demers, 62, formerly of Middlebury

CONWAY, S.C. — Susan Ann Demers, age 62, went to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025.



SUSAN ANN DEMERS

Sue was born in Worcester, Mass., April 8, 1963. She was the daughter of Malcolm and Barbara (Anderson) Wade. She grew up in Middlebury, Vt., where she received her early education and graduated from Middlebury Union High School, class of 1981. She worked in human services providing care for the disabled and elderly during various periods of her career.

She married Paul Demers Aug. 5, 1989. They resided in Hardwick, Vt., where they co-founded and co-owned Paul Demers Logging Company in 1990. They moved to Concord, Vt., in December of 1997, where they raised their family and grew their business. She was co-founder and co-owner of P&S Furniture and Demers Hearth & Fireplace, which grew to four

locations.

She welcomed her mother into her family home for extended periods to provide support after the loss of her father. She was enriched through many close friendships within her church family at Union Baptist Church. She and her

husband moved to Conway, S.C., in August of 2024, where they enjoyed the retirement of their dreams at the beach.

She is survived by her husband, Paul Demers; her son, Luke Demers; her daughter, Hannah Demers; her stepson, Holden Demers and his wife Tabby Demers; her four dearly loved grandchildren, Chloe, Ainsley, Miles, and Mason Demers; her sister, Brenda Wade; her brother, Scott Wade and his wife Angie Wade; her brother, Charles (Chuck) Wade; along with many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her father, Malcolm Wade Jan. 24, 2007, and her mother, Barbara Wade Jan. 21, 2023. Her celebration of life will be held at Union Baptist Church (932 US-5, Waterford, Vt., 05819) Saturday, Dec. 13, at 1 p.m., with refreshments served afterward. All are welcome to join the celebration. ◇

Margaret (Paddock) Mierop, 96, of Bristol

BRISTOL — Margaret (Paddock) Mierop passed away at home Dec. 9, 2025. Margaret was born Aug. 14, 1929, to Joseph and Blanche (Martin) Paddock in Augusta, N.J. She graduated from Newton High School in 1946.

She married Abraham Mierop in 1947. They farmed in New Jersey, New York, and bought a farm in Bristol, Vt., in 1968. She loved growing up on a farm and raising her family there. Her "boys" were her life. Margaret loved music and playing the organ and piano. She was a church organist and played for many weddings at different churches in the area. Margaret also loved children and teaching them about Jesus.

She is survived by her "boys," twins Abraham and David (Crystal) Mierop of Bristol, Vt., and John Mierop of Leicester, Vt.; her granddaughters, Jackie and Jenifer Rivera from Maryland, Tiffany Mierop from New Hampshire, and Samantha Mierop from Bristol, Vt., who took care of her until the end. She also had three great-granddaughters.

She was predeceased by her parents, husband, siblings, daughter Susie and son Bradley.

We would like to thank Home Health and Hospice and Bayada caregivers for all their help and support.

A private burial service will be held at a later date. ◇



MARGARET (PADDOCK) MIEROP

Obituaries are on pages 6A, 7A and 8A

Randall Thurber celebration of life

BRISTOL — The family of Randall Thurber, who died on Nov. 15, 2025, invites you to join us in a celebration of his life Saturday, Dec. 20, from 1 to 5 p.m., at the American Legion Hall, 100 Armory Lane, Vergennes, Vt. ◇



RANDALL "RANDY" B. THURBER

OPINION? news@addisonindependent.com

Letters to the Editor

Legislature must slow down school consolidation

I was dismayed to read that the Scott Administration and the leadership of the Vermont House and Senate are determined to continue pushing the top-down, forced school consolidation plan envisioned by Act 73. Gov. Scott called the work of the Act 73 redistricting task force a failure.

The task force spent most of this year developing recommendations for the way forward. According to their

report over 5,000 Vermonters contributed input through public hearings, an online comment portal, and various surveys. According to the report:

- Participants worried that larger schools, long bus rides, or additional system changes could weaken connection and stability.
- Concerns about losing local voice or access to existing school choice options were widespread.
- They expressed a need for

stability after years of change.

- Families shared concerns about longer bus routes, limited access to extracurricular activities, and safety — particularly in rural regions.

- Many questioned whether redistricting would meaningfully reduce costs or improve outcomes, noting that major cost drivers — health care, transportation, and special education — lie outside district governance structures.

- Rural residents worried that consolidation could deepen inequities by shifting opportunities toward population centers and leaving students with fewer local options.

- Vermonters expressed frustration with a process perceived as rushed or lacking data, asking for more time, clearer evidence, and meaningful local partnership before major changes proceed.

The task force recommends voluntary consolidation for some districts and better collaboration among school districts to cut expenses, among other ideas. And it expressed doubt that consolidation will save money — studies of school consolidation elsewhere have been inconclusive.

The legislature needs to slow down the process, take the task force's recommendations seriously, and come up with a more flexible plan that is more in line with what taxpayers have made clear they want. If soliciting the opinions of hundreds of Vermonters who are not happy with what the legislature has put forward and then reflecting that back to the government is a failure then democracy in Vermont is more at risk than I thought.

Spencer Putnam Weybridge



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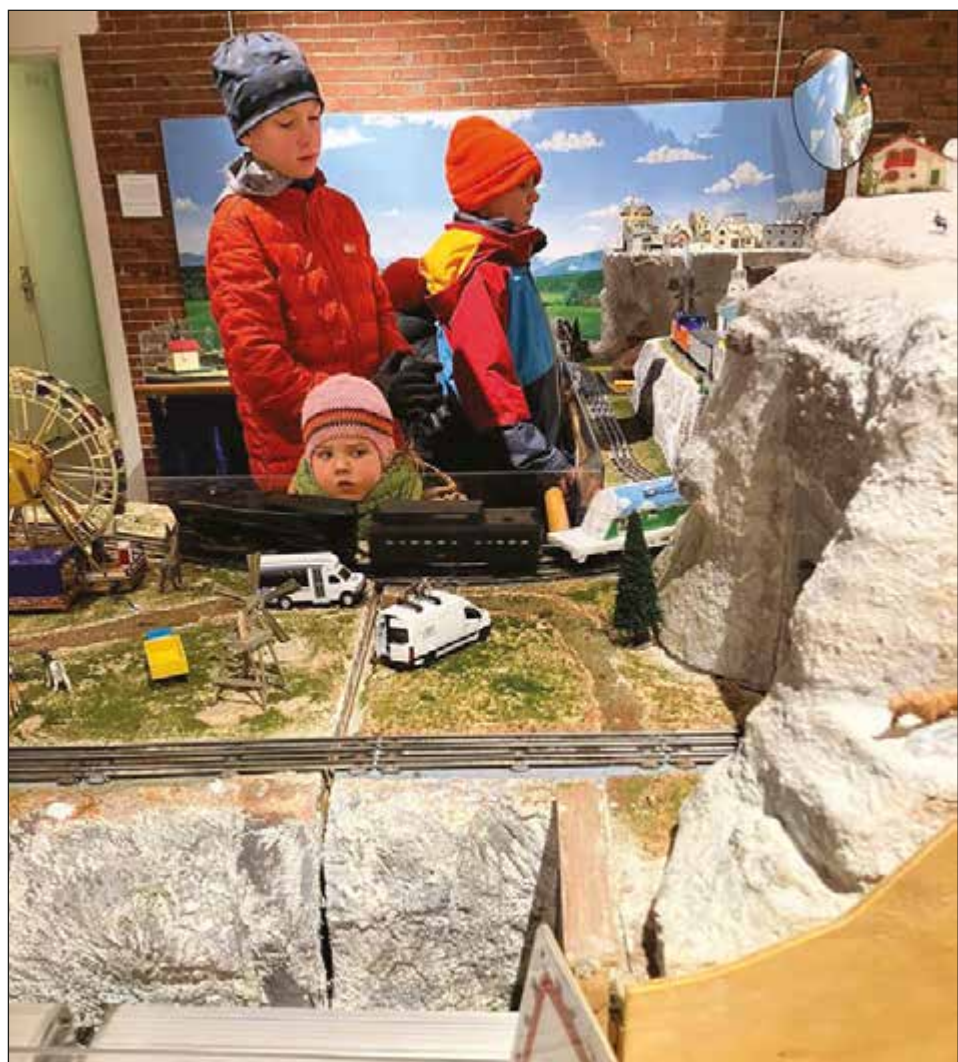
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Very Merry Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY KICKED OFF the holiday season this past weekend with its Midd Night Stroll downtown shopping event and First Saturday festivities two days later. Horse-drawn wagon rides (top left) were a highlight for some. Santa (shown surrounded by kids bottom left) and Mrs. Claus (below) met a ton of well-behaved kids at Town Hall Theater on Saturday morning. The host Better Middlebury Partnership handed out over 200 toys donated by Maple Landmark and sold IPJ-sponsored chocolate bars with help from elves and winter intern Alyssa Provost. At Thursday's Midd Night Stroll, kids young and old check out the huge model train display at the Sheldon Museum (left). Middlebury College President Ian Baucum serves hot drinks at the Cocoa Hut in Cannon Park (above) while Middlebury police hand out popcorn (top right).

Photos courtesy of BMP and Laura Asermily



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Middlebury

(Continued from Page 1A)
create a new municipal property tax rate of \$1.0783 per \$100 in property value.

"It would be disastrous to have this kind of sticker shock at town meeting and have the whole budget go down," selectboard member Fred Dunnington said, echoing his colleagues' collective commitment to reduce the budget ask before it's fielded by townspeople on Monday, March 2.

Selectboard members said they're committed to trimming the budget request. On Tuesday, they asked town staff to return to the board on Tuesday, Dec. 15, with potential cuts that would shave \$300,000 to \$500,000 from the draft's \$1,976,752 increase.

Selectboard member Dan Brown said he'd like to see the 14.8-cent increase pared to below 10 cents.

A cent on Middlebury's tax rate currently raises around \$100,000.

In Vermont, the town rate is only part of a community's overall property tax liability. There's also the education tax, which is typically the much larger piece of the combined property tax bill. Roughly two-thirds of Vermont households pay at least a portion of their education taxes based on income.

So where's Middlebury's FY27 municipal budget bump coming from?

According to documents provided by the town, the scheduled debt service payment and anticipated additional operating costs for the voter-approved Ilsley Library makeover — now well underway at 75 Main St. — accounts for more than half of the overall 13.54% municipal budget hike reflected in this draft. In other words, without those Ilsley expenses, the general fund

increase would be at 5.85%, according to Middlebury Town Manager Mark Pruhenski.

Middlebury's debt retirement obligation for FY27 is pegged to jump by \$762,240, from the current \$2,237,521, to \$2,999,761.

Ilsley boosters raised an impressive \$6.3 million in donations to help draw down the costs of the library makeover, which is renovating the original 1924 structure and adding an 8,000-square-foot addition. The \$17 million in debt is to be covered by the \$6.3 million in donations, \$552,064 in tax credits and rebates, \$5.8 million in surplus Middlebury local option tax proceeds, and a \$4.5 million municipal bond.

HOW MUCH LOCAL OPTION
It should be noted the library officials had originally penciled in \$2 million in grants they had applied for and hoped to apply to the project. When those grants didn't come through, the selectboard this past January agreed to apply \$5.8 million in local option tax (LOT) surplus — instead of the original target of \$4 million — to make up for the lost grants.

Middlebury launched its local option tax in 2008 to help pay off debt on the \$16 million Cross Street Bridge project. The 1% taxes on rooms, meals, sales and alcohol has been generating substantially more each year than is needed for debt service and maintenance of the span.

The status of Middlebury's local option tax surplus was a hot topic at Tuesday's selectboard meetings. The board and Town Treasurer Nicholas Gill spent almost an hour discussing how much of in LOT surplus funds might be available — not only to cover debt for the library project,

but also to bankroll several capital improvement projects on the town's to-do list next year.

The FY27 municipal budget draft assumes LOT collections to be \$1,350,000, with \$256,264 in local option tax revenue transferred to the town's general fund, according to Pruhenski. That's the same amount going to the general fund as the current year.

Selectboard members have asked town staff to double-check the LOT surplus projections to ensure the town can meet its FY27 debt service commitment for the library and for other capital projects without ratcheting up more financial pain on local taxpayers.

BUDGET DRIVERS

Other factors driving up the draft FY27 municipal budget request include:

- Contracted employee wages and benefits, set to rise by \$692,654, to a total of \$7,484,274.
- Public works capital and operational expense, reflecting an increase of around \$109,000. Dave DiBiase, director of public works operations, cited surging road salt prices as among reasons for the increase. He explained the per-ton price of salt has risen from \$98 to \$113 just this year, and the town typically budgets for around 1,600 tons annually. DiBiase added sand costs have also gone up.

"We've started putting down salt a month earlier than usual," he said of the recent snow and cold temperatures.

- \$138,000 in technology investments, to upgrade software and equipment.
- Around \$100,000 in capital upgrades for Middlebury police, including technology, security, HVAC, radio system and tactical equipment purchases.

The public can weigh in on the budget at any of its upcoming meetings. The board will revisit the budget Dec. 16 and will hold a special budgeting hearing in Jan. 13.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



"It would be disastrous to have this kind of sticker shock at town meeting and have the whole budget go down."

— Fred Dunnington



Direct from Broadway

ONCE AGAIN, LOVERS of musicals were treated to top-flight entertainment through this year's 20th edition of "Broadway Direct," held this past Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5 and 6, at the Vergennes Congregational Church. The church provided a heaven-sent stand-in for the Vergennes Opera House, which is undergoing renovations. This year's cast of magnificent performers was again culled by Vergennes's own Bill Carmichael Walsh, an accomplished singer/actor in his own right. Joining Bill (above, far right) on stage Friday in performing a series of songs from "Phantom of the Opera" and other celebrated Broadway musicals were, back row, (L-R): Brian Golub, Madison Micucci, Elisa Van Duyn; and front row, (L-R), Caitlin Walsh (Bill and Sue Walsh's daughter) and David Postlewate. At left, Postlewate showed that he had some really great pipes.

Independent photos/John Flowers

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)
Sunrise Orchards in Cornwall announced this week that a shipping container full of much-needed supplies has arrived in Jamaica, in aid to orchard workers affected by Hurricane Melissa. Supplies included food, tarps, tools, bedding and cash. Through Sunrise, donors also kicked in \$78,000. Organizers gave special thanks to contributors rk Miles, Champlain Valley Equipment, Agway, Smith & McClain, Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Tractor Supply, Shaw's Supermarket, Little Pressroom, the Addison Independent, Lincoln United Church and Middlebury College.

The town of Ferrisburgh is still collecting photos of the community for its annual town report and website, so if you have any that are of good quality, email them to townclerk@ferrisburghvt.org. Officials are specifically looking for "vibrant, high-resolution" photos that capture everyday life, local landmarks, nature scenes, and community events throughout the seasons. It can be pictures of local parks, hiking trails and natural beauty; photos from recent community events and festivals;

images that highlight unique local architecture or history; or day-to-day snapshots of life in the town (pets are welcome, too). You must own the rights to the photo and be an adult, or have a parent/guardian submit on your behalf. If your photo features recognizable people, you must obtain their permission. By submitting the photo, you confirm you have this permission. Photos should be high-resolution (at least 300 dpi for potential print use) and in JPEG or TIFF format.

The Vermont Department of Health is reporting a significant rise in pertussis (whooping cough), a very contagious respiratory disease that often affects school-aged children. While there are no reported cases this point in our area, school nurses are providing help to prevent and treat any cases that might occur. Early symptoms look like a common cold (runny nose, low fever, mild cough) and usually appear up to days after exposure. Later symptoms can include severe coughing fits with a "whoop," vomiting during/after coughing fits, difficulty sleeping, struggling to breathe and rib fractures. Early treatment is crucial to prevent

severe symptoms and shorten illness. Pertussis spreads easily through respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes. Help prevent illness by staying up to date on vaccines, washing hands, covering coughs, and keeping children home when sick. For questions, contact your school nurse or healthcare provider, or visit to healthvermont.gov/whoopingcough.

The Middlebury United Methodist Church on Thursday, Dec. 18, will presents its 15th Annual Christmas Benefit Concert and Hymn Sing, with proceeds going to organizations that house and feed folks in economic distress. The event will be held in the church at 43 North Pleasant St., beginning at 7 p.m. The concert will feature a wide variety of musical styles and genres performed by artists from Addison County and beyond. All will be invited to join in singing cherished Christmas hymns, before enjoying refreshments in the fellowship hall. Donations are encouraged and will benefit the Charter House Coalition Emergency Shelter and food program in Middlebury, as well the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity Food Shelf.

Otter Valley

(Continued from Page 1A)
decrease of 44%.

OVUU falls under the umbrella of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union (RNESU), which also has a budget, though much smaller than the school district's.

The RNESU proposed spending increase at 4.81% will fold into the OVUU budget. That increase breaks down as 73% of the increase going to special education with the 27% remainder going to transportation and central office costs.

There will be "some pain and adjustments" for the district to meet next year's budget projection, Fleming said. The RNESU district will eliminate one speech language pathologist position while also cutting a bus driver position for the second time in two years. Further, one English teacher is set to retire.

One new position is also included in the proposed budget: curriculum coordinator, a year-round position, working through the summer, meant to take information from the current school year and decide how best to reassign resources for next year.

"We are attempting to be frugal as possible to keep costs down," RNESU Superintendent René Sanchez told the *Independent* following Monday's meeting. "The criteria that guide us in doing what's best for our students are 1) attendance, 2) academic

performance, 3) social/emotional learning and behavior, 4) graduation rates, and 5) college/career and life readiness. We want to make sure that if we have to make cuts those things are still in the forefront."

During her budget proposal presentation, Fleming offered the motto that "attrition is our friend," when it comes to reducing costs in the district, meaning that any positions that are reduced will be to the benefit of the overall budget.

Much of the spending increase in the past year can be attributed to the cost of rising salaries and benefit expenses, as well as rising health care insurance rates.

As a result of the Barstow open borders policy, which the RNESU board previously supported, preschool enrollments led to an \$86,000 increase in the overall OVUU and Barstow Unified Union budgets. That increase has been incorporated into the new FY27 budget.

The Caverly Preschool has been recommended to move into Lothrop Elementary in Pittsford, while the Whiting Preschool is proposed either to close and return the pre-school building or maintain it and rent it out to generate new revenue. Whereas in the past, there has been some community resistance to these proposed moves, Stacey Farrington, the

principal of Lothrop Elementary, spoke up over Zoom to say that she has been having conversations with citizens in the community. "People know it's going to happen, it's just a question of when," she said.

Superintendent Sanchez called the proposed FY27 budget "very fiscally responsible."

Looking ahead to possible courses of action in accordance with the three proposals by the School District Redistricting Task Force — which are 1) Cooperative Regional Education Services, 2) conversion to a Comprehensive Regional High School, or 3) Strategic Voluntary Mergers — such questions were ultimately tabled until next week's meeting, on Tuesday, Dec. 16, when the board is expected to discuss the issue at length.

Given the potential that the Leicester school might close as part of a voluntary merger with the Sudbury elementary school, board member Barbara Ebling stated that "Leicester should have a conversation as a community."

With respect to Act 73, Superintendent Sanchez observed that "we are in the ballpark for our board's request of a 3% increase." School districts are going to be under pressure to come together while looking for "economies of scale," he said, as a way to exert downward pressure on rising tax rates.

Rolling into the holidays

SANTA GOT HELP from the local farming community in spreading good cheer to folks in the Little City this past Saturday, Dec. 6. It was Vergennes's first-ever Holiday Roll Tractor Parade. The parade, which drew an estimated 1,200 spectators, included a festive lineup of tractors, riding mowers and side-by-sides — all decked out in holiday lights. Clockwise, from top right: The parade machines line up at City Green; Cooper Corcoran drives his Cub Cadet 1811 pulling a 2006 Craftsman LT2000 Mud Mower, the crowd gathers at the City Green, 1st-place winner Alaric Bourgeois drives his John Deere with a gift-bearing snowman hitching a ride, and one of the larger tractors prepares to enter Main Street.

Photos courtesy of Penny Delisle, Lisa Godfrey, Todd Poole and Julie Nelson Basol



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ACSD

(Continued from Page 1A)

Superintendent Wendy Baker, Business Manager Matt Corrente and administrators of all eight ACSD schools have mapped out initial needs projections for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Baker, in a Monday email to the ACSD community, noted the more challenging economic landscape on which the FY27 budget is being forged.

Among the new variables: A Vermont Department of Taxes forecast of a 12% tax increase, on average, across the state; a Legislature that during the coming five months will continue to reform the way public education is delivered and financed; and an unexplained drop in the number of ACSD children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. It's a metric that — in this new period of universal free school meals — is harder to define but has a direct bearing on state aid to education. ACSD and its counterparts statewide are seeking more clarity on the free and reduce lunch calculations.

Baker, in her email and during comments made at Monday night's ACSD board meeting, sought to put the tax department's forecast in context with school financing.

"Almost half of the projected statewide average increase is attributable to the Legislature using FY25 surplus money to buy down the FY26 tax rate," she said, noting last year's big assist from the Legislature.

"They may now choose to collect that money back from taxpayers," she added, while acknowledging school budgets statewide are expected to rise due to inflation.

School officials said it's too early to predict how a \$52.9 million FY27 budget would affect individual tax rates in each of the seven ACSD towns. That will depend, in part, on each community's CLA, or common level of appraisal. CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the Vermont Department of Taxes — compare towns' property tax assessments to fair market value. Ratios created with that study are then used to adjust school tax rates upwards or downwards to equalize tax collection among all Vermont municipalities.

BUDGET DETAILS

The first version of the ACSD FY27 budget reflects, among other things:

- A net reduction of 2.4 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions. On the one hand, it eliminates 11.6 FTEs that are currently on the books, including some administrative, custodial and teaching positions associated with the now-shuttered Ripton Elementary School; three special educator posts at Middlebury Union Middle School (two the district has been unable to fill; another that will be vacated by a retirement); and a Mary Hogan Elementary kindergarten post, reflective of a current

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Shoreham-Bridport school merger can't be appealed

By JOHN FLOWERS

SHOREHAM — The Addison Central School District board's recent decision to merge Shoreham's and Bridport's K-5 student population at Bridport Central School (BCS) beginning next fall is final and cannot be appealed, according to ACSD officials, including ACSD Superintendent Wendy Baker.

The board has received pleas from members of the Shoreham community to keep their elementary school open and see if its current multi-grade classroom system pays educational dividends.

But the board — citing

declining enrollment and falling standardized test scores among Bridport and Shoreham pupils — approved the student merger, noting it would allow children from both towns to attend single-grade classrooms at BCS.

Both schools currently serve around 45 students.

The merger plan also calls for Shoreham Elementary School (SES) to be turned into a new district Pre-K hub.

Some Shoreham residents continue to fight for their school. Among them is parent Abigail Murphy, who at Monday's ACSD meeting asked if there was any way the student merger could be

challenged or overturned.

"I would like to know what the appeal process is for your decision. I believe that the decision that was made regarding Bridport and Shoreham school consolidation was grossly unfair, untimely, and imprudent," Murphy told the board.

She specifically chastised ACSD board Chair and Shoreham delegate Barb Wilson for not pushing to keep SES open.

"The decision (the board) made also makes Shoreham a second-class community," Murphy continued. "The impact that having no school in our town will have far-reaching effects on

the social, cultural, and financial wellbeing of Shoreham. The decision you made does not make sense for the children, who are likely to go through yet another upheaval in their education next year or the year after when Act 73 (the state's public education reform law) is finally pushed through the Vermont Legislature."

District officials checked into Murphy's question on whether of the Shoreham-Bridport school merger could be appealed. On Tuesday, Superintendent Baker provided the following response: "The board has the authority to make these decisions. There is no right of appeal in this instance."

demographic trend at that school.

Administrators are proposing to use some of those savings to address staffing needs in other areas. For example, the spending plan reflects the hiring of two new administrative assistants to help special educators write state-mandated reports of their work with students learning through Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs, and other alternative programming. This data-entry work, according to Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Olga Nelly Collazo, is best absorbed by clerical workers to maximize case managers' time with students and parents.

ACSD has 365 students with IEPs. Baker and Collazo said an administrative assistant has already begin aiding MUMS special educators with clerical work, and it's been of great help.

"What I'm hearing across the district is that there are fewer missing minutes now than there

were last year," Baker said, adding the clerical assist could help ACSD recruit more special educators.

She reported this from a Vermont Department of Education official: Roughly 2,500 people hold special education licenses in the state, and only around half of them are working under their license.

"This is a statewide challenge," she said.

No classes at Ripton Elementary, as well as a merged Shoreham/Bridport K-5 student body at Bridport Central School. Shoreham Elementary, beginning next fall, will host a new district PreK program operating in two classrooms. As previously reported by the *Independent*, the board took this action due to declining student numbers and out of a desire to ensure single-grade K-5 instruction for both Shoreham and Bridport children.

This merger isn't expected to save the district money in the short-term; Shoreham educators have been invited to join the Bridport Central fold, and the new PreK will need to be staffed in a retrofitted Shoreham Elementary space.

An estimated \$1.3 million in out-of-district special education tuition and transportation expenses. Corrente told the board that all but \$68,000 of those expenses would be covered by state funding, but the \$1.3 million figure must still be included in ACSD's budget request to voters.

Baker said cannot divulge how many special education placements are covered by the \$1.3 million, as doing so could identify specific children.

Several major budget drivers, including a contracted 3% increase in employee salaries, a 7.4% increase in health insurance premiums, and a 5% hike in dental insurance costs, and a 4% surge in inflation.

A projected 9% increase in the tuition rate for Patricia J. Hannaford Career Center. The ACSD, the Addison Northwest and the Mount Abraham Unified school districts all tuition students to the career center for those interested in career and technical education.

A 2.1% (\$650,000) increase in required personnel, to help pay for a new instructional specialist

at Mary Hogan, a 0.2 FTE Spanish teaching post at Mary Hogan, and three FTE PreK positions.

A 10.17% (\$123,000) increase in "required non-personnel" items, including a new driver education vehicle.

A 12.1% (\$1.5 million) increase in "specialized services," including the aforementioned two administrative assistants, a 0.5 FTE driver education worker, and the \$1.3 million in special education placement costs.

A 2.2% (\$121,000) reduction in "student opportunities." Part of that savings is derived from a reduction in International Baccalaureate fees and adjustments to employee benefits, according to Corrente.

A 10.4% (\$125,000) bump in "student equity investments," including the hiring of behavioral interventionists at Middlebury Union High School and the Salisbury and Bridport elementary schools.

The ACSD board will next revisit the draft FY27 budget at its Monday, Dec. 22, meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the MUHS library.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

Vergennes

(Continued from Page 1A)

to build those 74 units, told the *Independent* the partnership had that day completed the purchase of the 14.4-acre property from Vermont Industrial Parks LLC, an entity related to J.P. Carrara & Sons of Middlebury. Kahn declined to reveal the purchase price until he talks to the seller.

Kahn was happy to talk about the NBRC award for a project he has described in the past as creating "74 units of housing affordable to people of middle income, in multi-family dwellings, duplex and single-family homes."

"We had applied for it a year ago and didn't get it, so this was a really pleasant surprise this came through. It's great," Kahn said. "We are delighted."

Essentially, Kahn said, the NBRC funding can be put toward Vergennes North's complete "road and related infrastructure" needs. The grant specifies "a city road."

"That grant is for the road, curb, sidewalks, streetlights, water, sewer, utilities and stormwater," Kahn said.

The grant will go to and be managed by the city of Vergennes. City Manager Ron Redmond credited Addison County Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Alex Armani-Munn for working with Vergennes Housing Partners on the successful application.

Redmond and Kahn both pointed

out the group had unsuccessfully applied for a grant in 2024.

"It wasn't the first time they had taken a run at it," Redmond said. "What happened was they perfected (the application)."

The grant won't cover all the infrastructure costs, however, and Kahn said Vergennes Housing Partners will explore avenues to cover those overall costs.

That could include private financing, he said, as well as possibly another public-private route Kahn and Armani-Munn discussed with the city council back in late September — creation of a project-based Tax Increment Financing District.

The central idea behind Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is that a municipality can bond to provide infrastructure that allows the private sector to create more valuable real estate. Then, higher property-tax revenue generated from the improved property not only pays back the bond, but also leaves the municipality with property assessed at a higher rate than previously, thus generating more tax revenue. TIFs have been profitable for at least a half-dozen Vermont communities.

Project-based TIFs or Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) projects are a new concept authorized by the Legislature in its most recent sessions. Both rental and homeownership projects are

eligible, and Vergennes North would blend both. But rules for CHIP projects are not set to be announced until early next year.

INFRASTRUCTURE
Kahn hopes the Vergennes City Council will consider Vergennes North for the CHIP program once the path is clear.

"The rules for CHIP are not out until January," he said. "Then we go meet with the city council."

Back in October Redmond said there are a couple drawbacks to a CHIP proposal. Communities are limited in how much they can bond for, and he said again this week the costs for completing the rebuild of the city's sewer treatment plant and wastewater system are rising, while the city's Green Street fire stations is "falling in on itself." Thus Vergennes has to be careful in allocating its bonding resources, he said.

Also, in October Redmond said he was concerned that even a streamlined CHIP TIF could take too long to work out to meet the Vergennes Housing Partners' timetable.

What is that timetable?
If all goes well, Kahn said Vergennes North could break ground next fall.

"If we can catch the tail end of the construction season of 2026, that's what we're shooting for," he said. "That's somewhat optimistic, but also somewhat realistic."

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Vekos

(Continued from Page 3A)
 May. She called Vekos's behavior an example of retaliation.

In that email, Santa Maria said, Vekos's behavior "violates the spirit, if not the letter, of Vermont's victims' rights laws."

Similarly, after Bowdish filed an ethics complaint about Vekos in April, the prosecutor told her office not to communicate with Bowdish, according to an annual report from Bowdish's investigations unit describing the fallout.

Bowdish declined to comment on her ethics complaint.

Vekos restricted Bowdish's badge access and removed her from a state's attorney software platform, preventing Bowdish from getting updates on cases, the annual report said.

Instead, Vekos was sending information on cases to other staff in Bowdish's office, according to the report. That information was "often late and inaccurate," the report said.

"Bottom line, victims are suffering," the report said.

At least five victims in cases investigated by Bowdish's office retained their own attorneys due to lack of support from Vekos, according to the report. "This is something that has never happened before," the document said.

Vekos, in responding to questions via email, said the decision to cut off contact with Bowdish was based on advice from her attorney. Vekos said she took Bowdish off the court's software systems back in 2023 because Bowdish, as a member of the public, shouldn't have access to the platform.

When asked to respond to Santa Maria's claim, Vekos said, "There has never been any sort of retaliation against advocates in the community." Santa Maria declined to comment.

While conflicts between Vekos and the two community partners stewed, the only advocate directly employed by Vekos's office, Katie Dutton, resigned in April. Dutton declined to comment.

After Dutton left Vekos's office, the position sat vacant for about three months. "When the office is understaffed, the whole team pitches in to make sure the job gets done," Vekos wrote in a July email in response to a request for an interview.

During those months, Vekos's strained relationships with Bowdish and Santa Maria bubbled to the surface. During that time period, emails sent from Bowdish describe instances in which Vekos declined to meet with victims if Bowdish was present. Those emails were obtained by VTDigger through a public records request.

Maggie Zraly, who was hired as the victim advocate in Vekos's office this past summer, declined a request for an interview but said her office has been a "supportive environment" where she can serve victims.

Bowdish's ethics complaint is still pending. **'SHE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT...COMMUNITY SAFETY'**

Three crime victims, in addition to the business owner,

told VTDigger that Vekos mistreated them. They said Vekos was disrespectful and did not take their input into their cases seriously.

A 45-year-old Starksboro woman is the mother of one of those victims. The Starksboro woman said she has advocated for her daughter since she was sexually assaulted at age 15.

Police affidavits describe how a 24-year-old man groomed the woman's daughter and started picking her up late at night while her parents slept. The Starksboro woman contacted police when she looked at her daughter's phone and found pictures of the man sexually assaulting her.

The man was charged with four felony sexual assault counts, each of which could carry up to 20 years in prison, along with other charges.

The Starksboro woman and a person who works closely with cases in Vekos's office said the assigned advocate, Bowdish, would email Vekos multiple times asking for updates about the case days before a hearing and oftentimes Vekos wouldn't respond until minutes before court.

The mother and her daughter told Bowdish they opposed a plea deal, and Bowdish shared their opposition with Vekos, the Starksboro woman said.

"Even though Eva heard the things we were saying, she still went ahead with her plea deals as she made them," the Starksboro woman said.

In September, Vekos scaled back the charges against her daughter's assailant to just one misdemeanor, court records show. He pled guilty and was sentenced to five years of probation, court documents show.

For the man's sentencing in court, the Starksboro woman's daughter wrote a statement to the judge, saying she did not agree with the outcome and that Vekos had never consulted her. It was the third time Vekos made a plea agreement without consulting her or her mother, the daughter said.

"This man destroyed my life. There are videos of me out there — god knows where. Do you know how terrifying that is? Do you care? It's very clear Ms. Vekos doesn't," the daughter wrote.

"She doesn't care about me or community safety. Ms. Vekos cares more about giving him the best deal than actually upholding the law," she wrote.

Asked about complaints against her, Vekos said via email wrote:

"There are several other additional sex assaults with child victims that I have prosecuted, including one involving a serial offender whose trial I personally conducted, leading to a guilty verdict and a sentence of 20 years to life."

When asked what cases she was referring to in a follow-up email, the prosecutor did not specify in her reply.

Beyond Vekos's prosecution of sex offenses, other victims take issue with Vekos's emotional insensitivity in their cases.

Tina Galante-Cram, a nurse who lives in Bristol, said Vekos was insensitive in her daughter's

case.

Galante-Cram's daughter, Jaida Cram, died after being injured in a car crash in April. Police affidavits say that Cram's boyfriend was driving under the influence of marijuana with a suspended license.

It's been hard to know how to live without her daughter.

"I'm not supposed to outlive my daughter," Galante-Cram said in an interview in downtown Bristol, wearing a pink shirt printed with a picture of her daughter's face.

Galante-Cram was 14 years old when she gave birth to her daughter and she put everything she had into raising her, she said. She wears her daughter's ashes in a pendant around her neck.

After her death, Cram's boyfriend was charged with three felony crimes related to the crash, including manslaughter, court documents show. The case has since been moved to juvenile court.

Without first consulting the mother, Galante-Cram said Vekos



ADDISON COUNTY STATE'S Attorney Eva Vekos appears in Chittenden County Superior criminal court in Burlington on Oct. 1, 2025.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

surprised her by proposing in court to amend the boyfriend's probation conditions to allow him to attend Cram's memorial.

Galante-Cram said she was shocked. Vekos should not have ever proposed such an idea to the court, especially without

consulting her first, she said. "I don't want the killer mourning my child," Galante-Cram said.

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VERMONT—One of our native wildlife species historically played an important role on Thanksgiving Day. North America's native wild turkeys were the ancestors of the Thanksgiving turkey on our dinner table nowadays.

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destruction, when land was cleared for farming and only 25% of the state was covered by forest.

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This is just one of many wildlife restoration success stories we can be thankful for in 2025. Funding for Vermont's wild turkey restoration was derived from the sale of hunting licenses and a federal tax on hunting equipment.

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Bristol Area Indivisible marks one year

By JOHN FLOWERS
BRISTOL — Around 35 members of the Bristol Area Indivisible group dutifully slogged through slushy roads on Sunday evening for a meet-up east of Bristol Village.

Were they planning for the next “No Kings Day” or similar protest of the Trump administration’s stance on immigration, reproductive rights or free speech? Not really.

While Sunday’s gathering at Bristol’s Hogback Mountain

Brewing included some rally cries, it was mostly about marking the grassroots organization’s one-year birthday.

It was soon after the election of President Donald Trump that a group of Bristol-area folks formed the local Indivisible alliance. According to the group’s “who we are” statement on its website, it formed to “support forward-thinking leaders and advocate for those harmed by federal and state actions, and work for a new vision of our federal system of

government. We work together to defend and strengthen democracy and promote justice through education, non-violent action, and mutual support.”

The group is affiliated with the national Indivisible.org and has a kinship with Middlebury Indivisible.

“It’s been a good year, but we’ve got more work to do,” Bristol Area Indivisible co-leader Sarah Stott told participants at Sunday’s gathering, which also served as a collection point for donations of

money, warm clothing and food for farm workers.

Her spouse and fellow group co-leader Howard Jennings said the organization is becoming better positioned to increase its ranks, outreach and impact. Bristol Area Indivisible last week joined the Facebook and Instagram social media platforms. It currently has an email list of around 500 people, who receive the Bristol Indivisible’s regular “action alerts” exhorting them to attend protests, (See *Bristol Indivisible*, Page 15A)

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Lincoln

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NEWS

LINCOLN — A winter gear swap fundraiser will be held in the multipurpose room at the Lincoln Community School (LCS) on Sunday, Dec. 14. This extravaganza is a FUNdraiser for the Friends of LCS and the group’s continued support of the LCS Winter Ski Program — an annual program that gets all LCS students outside on skis.

Gear swap items can be dropped off at 3:30 p.m., and the swap will open at 4 p.m. There will also be a tater tot poutine potluck at 4:30 p.m. Please bring a poutine topping to add. Tots, curds and gravy will be provided. Ski movies will be shown at 5 p.m.

A \$10 donation at the door to support getting kiddos on skis this winter is suggested.

Stop by the library and check out

its annual holiday table featuring some giftable items available in exchange for a donation. Come on in and find the perfect gift for someone you love while supporting a great cause.

The library will close at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24, and be closed on Friday, Dec. 26 and Wednesday, Dec. 31. The library will be open Friday, Jan. 2, but there will be no story time.

REMINDER: The Fiber Arts Circle meets on Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. at the library. The Fiber Arts Circle is a wonderful place to share a portable craft that you are working on, ask questions, learn something new, share ideas and generally chat while working on a project. So whether you are doing some knitting, crochet, embroidery, felting or whatever, bring a piece and your curiosity and join us in a sharing circle focused on community and handcrafting.

Until next time ... Accept What Is. Let Go Of What Was. Have Faith In What Will Be.



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Monkton

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NEWS

MONKTON — Come to the East Monkton Church at 405 Church Road for a Welcome Winter celebration on Sunday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m. You will be outside so dress warm! If the weather is really bad, the event will be inside, but there will be no heat. Outside there will be a fire pit, music and cookies with hot cider. There will also be family-friendly activities of making paper lanterns, a ‘scent of the season’ bag and a scavenger hunt. Eugenie Doyle will read from one of her wonderful children’s books, “Sleep Tight Farm.” A suggested donation of \$10 will help keep the doors open for more of these multi-generational events. There will be handouts for home activities to take also. Many thanks to local sponsors, whom you can find listed on the church website eastmonktonchurch.org. For more information contact Lauren at laurenparren@gmail.com.

Join the Monkton Poetry Club on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. The meeting will be in the Community Room of the town offices at 280 Monkton Ridge. Bring a poem or two to share, written by you or another author. Join in with other poem lovers for an enjoyable morning of comradeship. For more information contact Melanie at cotem@ymail.com, or call 802-425-4441.

Ho! Ho! Ho! Who do you know? Santa Claus is coming to town! Old St. Nick will be at Monkton Volunteer Fire Department on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. for this wonderful yearly free event. He may come via fire truck so the reindeer can rest up, but he’ll be merry and bright to hear your wishes for his delivery on Christmas Eve night. So don’t delay, come early to see him arrive. There will be cookies and refreshments for your enjoyment too! Contact Logan at logang.young@gmail.com with questions.

Do you have your Christmas tree or wreath yet? Troop 525 Boy Scouts are selling trees and wreaths at 265 Mountain Road every weekend until Christmas from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can also pick up a tree or wreath by the ‘honor system’ through the week any time and put your payment in their drop box. These wonderful local trees and wreaths are a great way to support your local troop and get a good buy also. Trees are priced at \$55 for a 6- to 8-foot tree. An 8- to 10-foot tree cost \$65. All wreaths are \$25. Check these great deals out on the northern end of Mountain road. Happy holidays and thank you from our Scouts!

Bristol Indivisible

(Continued from Page 14A)
write letters and assist in getting like-minded candidates elected in Vermont and in other states.

"Since our founding in November of 2024, this group has been totally awesome," Jennings said. "As you know, our mission is: to work together to defend and strengthen democracy and promote justice through education, non-violent action and mutual support."

Jennings cited Trump's recent sagging poll numbers as evidence that his popularity is waning and his policy decisions are drawing increased opposition.

"These are not just polls. The dissatisfaction across our whole society is reflected in the landslide victories in the 2025 elections," he said, referencing wins by two prominent Democrats who won election to governor in their respective states: Abigail Spanberger in Virginia and Mikie Sherrill in New Jersey.



HOWARD JENNINGS

Indivisible, in its second year, will continue to work on the local and national levels.

"Things change very rapidly in Washington, so we need to be nimble," she told Sunday's gathering. "We urge you to read our weekly action alerts, attend our chapter meetings and also get involved in our action groups

and our community resistance gatherings."

She noted her local organization has six "action groups" that deal with policy and education, migrant support, communications, events, membership and "big tech." The Bristol group also offers small "community resistance groups meetings" at people's homes where folks talk about current challenges facing the nation and how they might be addressed.

Stott and Jennings made another major announcement Sunday evening: Bristol Area Indivisible will soon have to function without them. The pair will relocate next spring to Oregon to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



MEMBERS OF THE Bristol Area Indivisible group met Sunday evening for a one-year birthday party that included collection of food, warm clothing and money for farm workers. The grassroots group has helped mobilize events — such as "No Kings Day," in protest of Trump administration policies. Pictured here is the group's co-leader, Sarah Stott, at Sunday's gathering at Bristol's Hogback Brewery. Independent photo/John Flowers

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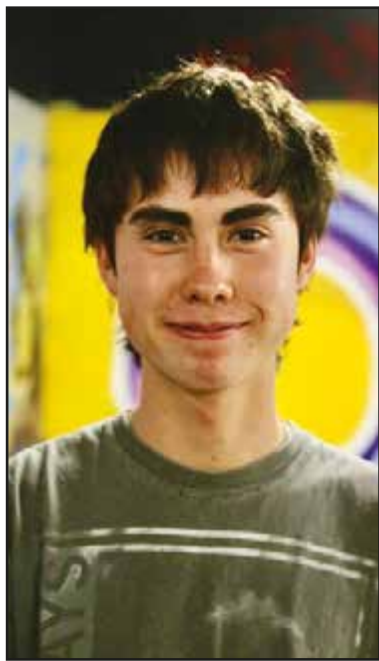
(Continued from Page 1A)

of four institutions in northern Vermont involved in DREAM's Village Mentoring program, through which youth are matched with a mentor from a local college for weekly group activities.

"It's a lot like a de-stressor because you do so much in school, so being able to spend time with kids, and honestly become a kid myself, it's just a lot of fun," Bianca, a first-year student at Middlebury College, said of the program.

DREAM — which stands for Directing through Recreation, Education, Adventure and Mentoring — got its start in 1998, originally providing programming for children living in a housing development in the Upper Valley. Students at Dartmouth College helped offer the weekly mentoring program that ultimately became DREAM, now a nonprofit.

"Village Mentoring is our original model," said Paul Espina, DREAM's senior youth service manager for northern Vermont. "We gather mentors from the same college and pair them with youth from the same or multiple of the same housing community. That way we are able to combine the best practices of one-on-one and group mentoring because there is a



JUDE KUYKENDALL

sense of community with mentors already and the mentees already."

DREAM PROGRAMMING

He noted DREAM has coined that model "Village Mentoring." The organization offers a variety of other programs, including afterschool enrichment and a free Camp DREAM during the summer.

"DREAM's goal is to reduce the achievement gap, and we know that the summer slide is a very big

part of that," Espina said, referring to the learning loss that can occur over students' summer breaks. "It is an order of thousands of dollars more between the average amount of summer enrichment that at-risk youth receive as opposed to more resourced youth. So, we offer two free camps for all of the youth in our program."

Espina said the organization previously identified a need for more mentoring in Vermont, particularly in the Northeast Kingdom. DREAM received a grant to develop a high school program, and the organization now offers a Guided Mentoring program that connects high school and elementary-age youth in communities around the state.

Bristol Elementary School and Mount Abraham Union High School are among the learning communities taking part in the Guided Mentoring program, and a similar offering runs at Middlebury Union High School. (See a story on Bristol programs next week.)

DREAM also offers a scholarship fund for the youth in its Village Mentoring program. Each eligible child receives an account, which accumulates contributions until their high school graduation.

Several students at Middlebury College serve as mentors for



LOCAL YOUTH WYATT Lussier, left, and Middlebury College senior Maggie Harper paint together at the college this past Friday. Both are a part of DREAM's Village Mentoring program, through which local kids are matched with a mentor from the college for weekly group activities.

Independent photos/Steve James

DREAM, which currently connects with around a dozen local youths through Village Mentoring in Middlebury. The program is open to children ages 5 (after completing one year of kindergarten) to 18. Espina noted DREAM participants are on average 8-10 years old.

"After the pandemic we saw a sharper drop off of our teenagers, and we're slowly working to bring that back," he said.

AT THE COLLEGE

DREAM programming at Middlebury College typically takes place on Fridays, with local youths coming to campus for a variety of activities or taking part in field trips. While events largely unfold in a group setting, mentors are paired with a mentee for team activities and additional support.

"It just allows for extra attention put on every single mentee, which is really helpful," said Jude Kuykendall, mentor coordinator for the DREAM program at Middlebury.

The group setting of Village Mentoring is part of what drew Kuykendall to the program. He noted past activities with the group have included sledding, movie

nights and an Easter egg hunt.

"That was probably my favorite," Kuykendall said. "We spent like an hour before the kids got there putting eggs around the quad outside the student center."

Other popular activities have included baking cookies and carving pumpkins for Halloween, a favorite event for first-year student and mentor Saori.

"It was the first time I've ever carved one, and I had a lot of fun with the kids, just helping them out," she said.

Mentors said they've enjoyed getting to take part in such activities.

"It's such a nice break from school, and you can just be a kid again," said Tamika Samuels,

event coordinator for the DREAM program at Middlebury.

Kuykendall said he also enjoys seeing mentees' excitement during group activities.

"This is just a space for them to have fun, and as long as that's happening, we're doing what we're supposed to," he said.

On Friday mentees and mentors worked with local artist Michael Kin on the Middlebury Skatepark-Community Mural

Project, an effort aimed at creating a collaborative mural space at the site of the future concrete skatepark in Middlebury that community members have been working toward. Plans for the mural call for a series of workshops with Kin, during which participants are invited to paint one-foot-square panels that will later be incorporated into the finished mural.

Local DREAM participants last week were also gearing up for the culminating event of the fall semester, a trip to Williston's Get Air indoor trampoline park on this past Sunday. DREAM activities will resume once college students return to campus in January.

"I think J-term is a good time because as students we have a lot of free time and creative energy to do something pretty exciting," Kuykendall said.

He noted the DREAM program at Middlebury College is looking to recruit more student mentors, particularly after losing several former participants to graduation this past spring.

"A majority of the mentors are underclassmen, which is really exciting for the future of DREAM," he said.

Students interested in getting involved in the DREAM program at Middlebury College can reach out to dream@middlebury.edu.

"This is just a space for them to have fun, and as long as that's happening, we're doing what we're supposed to."

— Jude Kuykendall



WILLOW HOSANNA, A ninth-grader at Middlebury Union High School, paints a panel for the Middlebury Skatepark-Community Mural Project during a DREAM gathering at Middlebury College this past Friday.

HOPE shop

(Continued from Page 1A)

A trip through the shop on Monday saw shelves stacked with books, toy trucks and cars, Barbies, craft kits, puzzles, magic markers, coloring books and so much more. Parents from households meeting an income level of less than 200% of the poverty guideline (\$64,000 for a family of four) are invited to schedule a visit to the shop, where they can pick out, for free, the following, per child 12 and under: A stuffed toy, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a coloring book and markers, two gifts, a game, a book and three stocking stuffers.

Teens (up to 18) are also entitled to two gifts; a game; a hat, gloves and scarf; toothbrush; toothpaste; and stocking stuffers.

One very generous and enterprising craftsperson — who wants to remain anonymous — has donated a huge boxful of quilts to dispense while the supply lasts.

"The quality of gifts this year has been incredible," Perine said as she glanced about the shop, the mood perfectly set with Christmas music.

And the Holiday Shop elves don't allow the adults to leave without picking out something for themselves. Each is allowed to take one household item, from a selection that on this day included cookware, coffee makers, comforters and more.

This is Perine's second year as a Holiday Shop volunteer, and she continues to be moved by the gratitude expressed by those

benefitting from the free shopping spree.

"It gives me the chills," she said.

The Holiday Shop has been a seasonal HOPE fixture for years. This year's edition opened on Dec. 6 and will serve eligible families through noon on Christmas Eve. Parents who believe their household is eligible should call HOPE at 802-388-3608 to apply and schedule a visit. Families are served discreetly and with plenty of support; there are at least two volunteers on hand at any given time while the shop is open, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Meanwhile, HOPE continues to welcome Holiday Shop donations of funds or unwrapped, "modestly priced" gifts — examples of

which can be found at hope-vt.org/holiday-shop. Jeanne Montross, HOPE's executive director, noted teens can be the toughest to shop for. But the HOPE list makes it easier with suggestions like these: Bluetooth speaker with nightlight, popcorn makers, nail art kits, LEGOs (200+ pieces), fleece throws, panini makers, essential oil diffusers, temporary tattoo markers, magnetic fidget pens and stuffed animals.

It should also be noted that several Addison County businesses have taken Holiday Shop gift ideas and circulated them among their employees and customers to collect items and deliver them in bulk to HOPE. Participating businesses include the National Bank of Middlebury, G. Stone Motors, G. Stone Commercial, Two Brothers Tavern, Middlebury Indoor Tennis

and Simmons Precision Products.

Middlebury College, as usual, will be a major player in HOPE's holiday gift dispersal efforts, while other businesses and organizations in the area are doing their own gift and food drives.

Some participating businesses have taken HOPE's Christmas tree-shaped tags bearing gift suggestions that are distributed to folks able to help the Holiday Shop effort.

When all is said and done, Montross expects the shop will have served more than 400 households this holiday season — around the same as last year.

Repeat Holiday Shop visitors this month will find the same abundance and friendliness, but there's one new feature: HOPE has secured a translator to assist roughly 30 Spanish-speaking

families in our area who qualify for free gifts.

Montross marvels at how volunteers and donors come together each year to help the less-fortunate receive necessities like food and clothing, and also gifts on special occasions.

"People have been very generous," she said.

And more people have been looking for bargains during these volatile economic times for low- and middle-income families, Montross noted. Marion's Place — HOPE's resale shop at 334 Boardman St. — has been busier than ever, according to Montross.

"They've been breaking (sales) records this past weekend," Montross said. "Last Saturday, they did almost \$5,000 (in business)."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.




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Vergennes Police Log

VERGENNES — Vergennes police focused on safety again last week, conducting 23 traffic stops for moving violations, many during eight cruiser patrols designed to monitor city streets.

A ninth cruiser patrol was intended to enhance a different form of safety. On Friday night, Dec. 5, department officers conducted a city-wide patrol due to below-freezing temperatures, in particular looking for disabled vehicles with operators in need of aid.

Police between Dec. 1 and 7 also conducted one foot patrol and a VIN inspection, processed four fingerprint requests, and:

- On Dec. 1:
 - Responded to a report from a South Water Street apartment tenant of someone trying to gain entry; police after arrival decided the report was unfounded.
 - Issued winter parking ban notices.
 - Helped a resident back into her South Water Street apartment because she was worried someone might have entered it. Police said no one was there.
- On Dec. 2:
 - Enforced the city's winter parking ban.
 - Checked the welfare of a South Water Street resident on behalf of a family member and learned the individual was fine.
 - Helped a Vergennes resident unlock a vehicle.
 - Were asked by a family member to check the welfare of a First Street resident who had missed medical appointments. The complainant called back and said

the individual was OK.

- Officers helped an out-of-state individual to recover an iPad that had been misplaced at a Virginia airport and brought to Vergennes by a resident. Police said the resident was helpful and turned the iPad over to police, and there are no charges pending.
- Helped a New Haven Road resident whose Amazon packages had been delivered to the wrong address.
- Assisted a South Water Street resident with an issue involving a neighbor.
- Responded to the untimely death of an 83-year-old man, whose passing police said was due to natural causes.
- On Dec. 3:
 - Dealt with a two-car head-on crash at the intersection of Main and South Water streets. Police said one driver was transported to the UVM Medical Center for evaluation, and the accident remains under investigation.
 - Assisted a state police trooper at a traffic stop in Ferrisburgh.
 - Assisted Homeland Security and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force with a search warrant for child sex abuse material.
- On Dec. 4:
 - Responded to Vergennes Union High/Middle School to the report of a sexually explicit photograph being distributed by a juvenile. Police said an investigation is ongoing.
 - Helped push a disabled vehicle that was blocking a portion of South Maple Street and was on a blind hill; they pushed it into Maple

Manor to prevent further incidents. The vehicle was later towed.

- Stopped a tractor-trailer unit traveling south on Route 7 in Ferrisburgh because its trailer door was open. Police told the driver about the problem.
- After a Macdonough Drive custody exchange helped get necessary prescription medication to a juvenile in need.
- On Dec. 5:
 - Sent an officer to represent the Vergennes Police Department at the Middlebury College Hockey First Responders night.
 - At the station helped two individuals sign up for conflict resolution.
- On Dec. 6:
 - Responded to a loud music complaint at Hillside Acres, but found no one on arrival.
 - Participated in the holiday tractor parade through downtown.
 - Helped facilitate the exchange of property between two people who currently have an active protection order.
- On Dec. 7:
 - Looked unsuccessfully for a suspicious person reported in the First Street area.
 - Assisted a South Water Street resident with concerns about a neighbor.
 - Responded to the report of a noise complaint and a requested welfare check on a Hillside Acres resident. Police determined there was no emergency.

Paper art sought for Middlebury art exhibit

MIDDLEBURY — Edgewater Gallery in Middlebury is planning a juried exhibition of paper artwork and it is seeking submissions from local artists of work that explores paper as material or concept.

Paper is one of the most familiar and flexible artistic materials. It can be drawn on, folded, cut, layered, printed, woven or cast, among many other things. It carries the weight of both idea and labor, holding marks, textures and traces of process. Edgewater's "The Work of Paper" exhibition looks at paper not just as a surface, but as something that does work: it holds, supports, conceals, absorbs, resists and transforms.

Artists are invited to submit work that explores what paper can do and what paper can mean. Submissions may include handmade paper, collage, drawing, printmaking, artists' books, sculpture, pulp work, or mixed-media experiments where paper plays a vital role. Both traditional and unconventional approaches are welcome.

All media and approaches are welcome, as long as paper — materially or conceptually — plays an essential role.

Submissions are due Jan. 15,



2026; the show dates are Feb. 28-March 28, 2026. Submit your work online at tinyurl.com/EdgewaterPaper.

Selections for the show will be made by Danny Volk, curator of Modern & Contemporary Art at the Southern Vermont Arts Center in Manchester. He combines his experience as a curator, artist and educator to build thoughtful, inclusive exhibitions. His work bridges contemporary practice and community connection, encouraging dialogue between artists, audiences and the stories materials can tell.

Edgewater Gallery has two locations in Middlebury: 6 Merchants Row-On the Green and 1 Mill St.-At the Falls.

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Sheriff says speeder went 80 mph near pedestrians

ADDISON COUNTY — Deputies from the Addison County Sheriff's Department observed a car speeding in Cornwall on Dec. 4 and attempted to pull it over. The driver fled and the deputy followed her noting that the car's speed rose above 80 mph. Sheriff Michael Elmore in his weekly log reported that during the chase pedestrians were present and the roads were slushy and snow covered.

Vt. State Police Log

Eventually the car stopped and the deputy arrested Samantha Hatch, 23, of Whiting and cited her for excessive speed and negligent driving.

Between Nov. 23 and Dec. 6, Sheriff Michael Elmore and his deputies completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 43 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations, fingerprinted 8 people for background checks, provided free car seat inspections to five different families, provided VIN inspections for residents of Ferrisburgh and Cornwall, and attempted to serve 10 pieces of civil process around the county.

In other recent activity, Elmore and his deputies also:

- On Dec. 1 assisted VSP with a call on Lake Dunmore Road in Leicester.
- On Dec. 1 helped serve a no trespass order in Salisbury.
- On Dec. 1 assisted Middlebury police with a call on Route 7 in Salisbury.
 - On Dec. 3 assisted Counseling Service of Addison County with a welfare check on a Shoreham resident.
- On Dec. 3 gave VSP a hand at a crash on Route 17 in Addison.
- On Dec. 4 completed a background check in Middlebury.
- On Dec. 4 helped serve a no trespass order in Ferrisburgh.
- On Dec. 4 followed up on a truancy issue at Vergennes Union High School
- On Dec. 5 participated in a truancy meeting for a student at Middlebury Union High School.
- On Dec. 5 transported a person from the courthouse to jail after a hearing.
- On Dec. 5 participated in Middlebury College's "First Responder Night" hockey game.

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ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT
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- On Nov. 24 assisted Vermont State Police (VSP) with a case in New Haven.
- On Nov. 25 arrested Thomas George, 30, of Shelburne and cited him for violating court ordered conditions in Middlebury.
- On Nov. 25 assisted VSP with a traffic stop on Route 7 in Salisbury.
- On Nov. 25, helped out a driver who had struck a deer on Route 22A in West Haven.
- On Nov. 26 assisted VSP with an arrest on River Road in New Haven.
- On Nov. 28 served a subpoena on a Ferrisburgh resident on behalf of Burlington police.
- Salisbury — A deputy observed a vehicle speeding on Lake Dunmore Road. While attempting to stop the vehicle, it fled at a high rate of speed and headed North, also running from Middlebury PD. The operator was later identified as Patrick Cota (33) of Bristol after he was taken into custody in Burlington. Cota was charged with attempting to elude, criminal DLS, excessive speed, negligent operation, and violation of conditions of release.
- On Nov. 28 arrested Sabrina Wedge, 42, in Vergennes and cited her for petit larceny. The sheriff reported that Wedge admitted to stealing donated bottles and cans from the Boy Scout drop off in Monkton in early November.
- On Nov. 28 transported to jail two people who had been arrested by Vergennes police.



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Willowell

(Continued from Page 1A)
with courses for the credit-bearing certificate program offered over the next two years.

"It just seems like the logical next phase because it's been (27) years in developing these sort of rich programs," said Leanne Ruell, coordinator of educational programs at Willowell. "It just seems like we've got such a foundation of educators who really know their stuff when it comes to this, (with Willowell Foundation founder and Executive Director Matt Schlein) being at the helm of it all."

The Willowell Foundation was founded by Schlein in 2001, around the time he started the Walden Project — an outdoor, public education program run through Vergennes Union High School. While that program ended last year, the spirit of the offering lives on in "The Walden Year," a similar program for students age 16-19 offered at Willowell's Monkton property.

Over the years, the Willowell Foundation has grown its offerings to include a variety of camps, projects and outdoor education programs for preK-12 students. Schlein pointed to other place-based education offerings that have unfolded in the region since Willowell's founding, such as The Moosalamoo Center at Otter Valley Union High School, and Ferrisburgh Forest Fridays supported by Willowell.

"I think there's a recognition that kids do well when they can have a variety of environments and experiences in concert with their education," Schlein said. "It's not about one solution. It's not like 'This is the way to do it,' it's really about how can you engage the resources around you and create an emergent experience that the kids feel connected to?"

Schlein said the idea behind the Institute for Place-Based Education has been a part of informal conversations with various partners throughout the years. He noted the

place-based, outdoor education approach has been around for long enough that its healthful effects on students are now well-documented.

"I feel like the desire is there in many school communities, like how can we make this happen," he said. "It just seemed like the confluence of our past experiences, the connections that we have within the community of place-based educators and the need around creating rich, interdisciplinary educational experiences that speak to a kid's sense of agency and a sense of wellness."

Willowell and the VTSU Center for Schools have previously collaborated on course offerings. Ric Reardon, executive director of the VTSU Center for Schools, and Tara Lidstone, assistant director of the center, said that in 2013, the center sponsored a course that included representatives from Willowell and several other organizations.

"We knew then that Matt and his team were a unique and viable partner to pursue! Since then, we have sponsored other courses with Matt, who we have great respect for as an educator and a visionary, although those were often set up as stand-alone offerings," they wrote. "We have experimented more recently at our Center bundling courses with similar content for educators looking to do more extensive study in areas like structured literacy, trauma-informed practice, and respectful behavior management and then tying them to certificates of completion."

Reardon noted the Center for Schools was established around 23 years ago after educators in southern Vermont raised concerns about a lack of professional development opportunities offered in their part of the state.

"For years, we've offered these single, three-credit courses in reading, math, science, social studies, for the educators who need those to stay licensed, and then we'll also offer some kind of unique courses, and that's where we first met Matt," he said.

Reardon said the center has found educators want to dive deeper into content areas like place-based

education.

"We go looking for powerful learning opportunities that we know have already been created, and then we try to figure out ways in which that learning can be translated into a credited course," he said of the center's work.

COURSES OFFERED

The institute will be open to current VTSU students and others interested in the course offerings. Each course will be worth three graduate credits through VTSU. Students seeking a certificate through the program must complete five of the seven courses offered.

Courses are also open to educators seeking professional development opportunities.

"They're stand-alone courses, but there will be a through line of really supporting teachers and aspiring teachers to create an approach to their teaching that allows them to utilize the resources in their community," Schlein said.

Lidstone and Reardon said the courses can be offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

"When we do that, we closely monitor the differentiation required to address both degree levels (undergrad and grad), assuring that the content itself is not compromised while the assignments and projects are differentiated in ways that respect and acknowledge the degree level each student is working at," they wrote.

Reardon noted the 15-credit certificate program allows students to dive deeply into the subject matter and could be applied toward a master's degree at VTSU.

"Most importantly, current educators will be able to dedicate the time needed to fully understand the benefits of place-based education and cultivate a readiness for the unknown possibilities that 'place' presents in supporting deep learning in their respective classrooms and schools," Reardon and Lidstone wrote. "Aspiring Vermont educators will gain a deeper understanding of how place-based education might inform their instruction and learning environments as they start out on their educational journeys. They will immediately be able to connect their assigned curriculum



LEANNE RUELL, LEFT, and Matt Schlein of the Willowell Foundation are among those behind the new Institute for Place-Based Education, a credit-bearing certificate program for educators offered through a partnership between Willowell and Vermont State University. The institute will offer its first courses this spring, with additional course offerings unfolding over the next two years.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

to their local environments, foster real-world problem-solving, elevate their own enthusiasm through relevant, personalized instruction, and develop their own students' sense of identity and stewardship."

The institute will offer its first two courses beginning in March — "The Writing of Place" and "The Literature of Place." Both courses will be based at the Willowell Foundation Land in Monkton, with students enrolled in the writing course also visiting the Ruth Stone House in Goshen.

Peter Houskeeper, director of the Walden Year, will lead the course on the literature of place. Students in the writing course will work with a handful of writers and poets — Bianca Stone, Ben Pease, Schlein and Ruell.

The sites of future courses will depend on the focus of those offerings and are expected to include the Robert Frost Trail, the Henry Sheldon Museum and potentially an opportunity for teachers to visit classrooms in Scandinavia.

"We hope that it will be like a spiraling out, where people can feel what it means to have that sort of education firsthand, be able to integrate that feeling and then figure out how to transmute that and give that same experience to their students," Ruell said. "Because we can't really teach what place-based is without showing firsthand, without having the feeling of what

that means be attached."

The institute will work with several organizations, including the Vermont Council of Teachers of English, the New Perennials Project, the Henry Sheldon Museum, Ruth Stone House and Treleven Farm. Ruell also credited Willowell Administrative Director Tasha Ball as another collaborator behind the effort.

"Addison County is particularly fertile ground for (place-based learning) because we have such an interesting and engaging community, so inviting that into the classroom is only a good thing," Schlein said.

As the partnership unfolds, Ruell said she's looking forward to experiencing the courses alongside educators.

"I'm in my wheelhouse when I'm engaging with texts and with people," she said. "I'm so excited to be experiencing what they will be experiencing and seeing how it will develop and grow from its baby phase."

Schlein noted he's excited to gather around the fire with students again, a common activity during his time leading the Walden Project.

"I believe in the power of what happens when thoughtful people sit around a fire and have thoughtful conversations," he said.

To learn more about the institute visit www.willowell.org/institute-for-placebased-education.

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Panther men's hoop drops a pair

BRUNSWICK, Maine — The Middlebury College men's basketball team dropped two games played at Bowdoin College this past weekend as part of the annual NESCAC-University Athletic Association Challenge. The Panthers thus concluded first-semester play with a 4-3 record.

SATURDAY GAME

On Saturday the Panthers lost an 11-point second-half lead and dropped a 79-77 decision to the University of Rochester.

Rochester took a 16-9 lead in the first half, but the Panthers went on 13-3 and 19-10 runs to lead by 43-33 at the break. Seven Panthers scored in the 19-10 surge.

Middlebury still led by 56-45 when the Yellowjackets went on a 24-8 run to take a 65-62 advantage with 6:41 left. Tomiy Adetosoye scored 11 points for Rochester in that stretch.

Two free throws by Sawyer Ramey and a Jackson McKersie layup later bookended an 8-4 Panther run that trimmed the deficit to 72-70 at with 3:33 to go.

The teams then traded baskets as the clock ran down. A layup by Evan Flaks and two Dominick Ducree free throws made it 75-74, Rochester, with 2:22 remaining.

The teams traded points until Rochester made two free throws in the final 11 seconds to make it 79-75, rendering moot an Evan Flaks layup at the buzzer.

Kuba Cwalina led the Panthers with 15 points. Flaks and Ian Murray each scored nine. Mark Newell had a team-high seven rebounds as Middlebury outrebounded Rochester, 43-37.

Adetosoye led Rochester with 26 points.

(See Men's hoop, Page 2B)

Score BOARD

COLLEGE SPORTS

Men's Hockey

12/5 Midd vs Amherst.....3-2

12/6 Hamilton at Midd.....0-0
(Hamilton Wins Shootout, 3-2)

Women's Hockey

12/5 Midd vs Utica.....5-1

Women's Basketball

12/6 Midd vs Colby-Sawyer.....73-37

Men's Basketball

Tourney at Bowdoin

12/6 Rochester vs Midd.....79-77

12/7 Carnegie Mellon vs Midd.....70-57

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball

12/12 MUHS at VUHS..... 7 PM

12/12 Mt Abe at Harwood..... 7 PM

12/15 Fair Haven at Mt Abe..... 7 PM

12/15 Danville at VUHS..... 7 PM

12/18 Mt Abe at FH Tour..... 5:30 PM

12/19 St Albans at MUHS..... 7 PM

Boys' Basketball

12/13 Mt Anthony at Mt Abe..... 12:30 PM

12/13 VUHS at Colchester..... 2:30 PM

12/15 Mt. Abe at Randolph..... 7 PM

12/15 MUHS at Harwood..... 7 PM

12/18 St. Albans at MUHS..... 7 PM

12/18 CVU at VUHS..... 7 PM

12/18 Mt Abe at U-32..... 7 PM

12/20 Harwood at VUHS..... 2:30 PM

Boys' Hockey

12/12 Rutland at MUHS..... 7 PM

12/17 MUHS at Woodstock..... 6 PM

12/20 Hartford at MUHS..... 7 PM

Girls' Hockey

12/10 MUHS at Stowe..... 7:15 PM

12/13 Stowe at MUHS..... 5 PM

12/20 Rutland at MUHS..... 5 PM

Wrestling

12/13..... VUHS at ConVal Tournament

12/13..... Mt Abe at NAC Tournament

12/16 Essex & SBHS at VUHS..... 6 PM

12/17 MUHS at Spaulding..... 6 PM

12/19&20..... VUHS/Mt Abe at Lowell Tnt.

Indoor Track

12/13 VUHS/Mt. Abe at UVM..... 8 AM

12/21 VUHS/Mt. Abe at UVM..... 8 AM

Nordic Skiing

12/16 MUHS Hosts at Rikert..... 3 PM



HAMILTON GOALIE AKSEL Reid lost his stick in a scrum during Saturday's game in Kenyon Arena, but still manages to stop Panther sophomore Jack Silverman on the doorstep in overtime.

Independent photo/Steve James

Panther men skate to a victory and a tie

Hockey team remains unbeaten at home as first semester concludes

By ANDY KIRKALDY

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College men's hockey team this past weekend at home rallied to claim a win on Friday night, 3-2 over Amherst, and on Saturday played Hamilton, the sixth-ranked team in NCAA Division III, to a 0-0 stalemate through three periods and overtime, only to lose the second

point in a shootout.

The results pushed Coach Jack Ceglarski's young Panthers' record to 4-2-2 and their unbeaten streak to six games after opening the season with two road losses. In those six games they have allowed just six goals, with strong defense in front of junior goalie Andrew Heinze. Their 3-2-1 NESCAC record is good for third place.

With junior forward Remy Mack out with an injury, 10 of the 12 forwards and seven of the nine defensemen the Panthers dressed on Saturday were freshmen or sophomores.

Especially given the experience level, Ceglarski has been pleased with the growth of his blue line corps, especially in keeping undefeated Hamilton scoreless

despite the Continentals' edge in offensive pressure.

"A team like Hamilton is going to make you defend, and that's what they did. I thought our guys stayed strong," he said. "We limited their danger-area shots."

At this point Ceglarski acknowledges the offensive execution is lagging a bit behind (See Men's hockey, Page 2B)



PANTHER JUNIOR GOALIE Andrew Heinze makes a pad save on Saturday to deny Hamilton's Jackson Krock during the men's hockey game in Kenyon Arena.

Independent photo/Steve James



PANTHER FRESHMAN CADEN Morgan finishes high to score against Hamilton in the shootout during Saturday's hockey game in Middlebury.

Independent photo/Steve James

Women's hockey tops Utica, 5-1

UTICA, N.Y. — Panther women's hockey wrapped up its 2025 action on Friday, Dec. 5, with a 5-1 victory over host Utica.

The Middlebury College team, ranked No. 4 in NCAA Division III, enter the holiday break with a 6-1-1 record. Utica dropped to 3-6.

Middlebury will return to action on Jan. 3 with a 5 p.m. home date against No. 6 Endicott, the only team to defeat the Panthers this season.

Against Utica, Middlebury took the lead at 12:27 of the first period, when Caroline Thomas redirected home a Susannah Ward shot. Alison Giebler provided the second assist.

Middlebury added two more goals in each of the second and third periods. At 4:38 of the second period, Thomas tipped in an Avery McInerny shot from just inside the Utica zone to make it 2-0.

Britt Nawrocki made it 3-0 with a power-play strike with 13:02 gone, tapping home a pass at the right post from Callia Ferraris, with Olivia Gordon also assisting.

Middlebury made it 5-0 with consecutive goals about three minutes apart in the third period. McInerny tipped in a pass from Olivia McManus at 4:42, and Adrienne Hall flipped in a shot from close range at 7:31.

Utica's Maya Jerome scored on a power play with 7:48 left on the clock to break up the shutout.

Panther goalie Sophia Will made 26 saves, and Utica's Katherine Sheahan made 30.

Women's hoop closes semester with big win

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College women's basketball team wrapped up first-semester play on Saturday by breezing past the visiting Colby-Sawyer Chargers, 73-37.

With the victory, the Panthers improved to 6-2 heading into the holiday break. The Chargers dropped to 3-5.

Middlebury erased an early lead with a 13-2 run to take a 17-10 lead after the first quarter. Islay Moore and Sarah Chenette combined for nine points in the run.

The Chargers kept within striking distance for most of the second period, but Middlebury pulled away late in the period, and a Callie Messina three-pointer helped extend the lead to 34-21 at the break.

Then the Panthers held their visitors without a made field goal in the third period, outscoring the Chargers by 17-4 in the quarter to put the game out of reach with a 51-25 advantage entering the final 10 minutes.

Moore scored in double figures for the third straight game and finished with a career-high 14 points. She also shares the team lead with five rebounds. Chenette (12 points), Catherine Carrafiello and Emma Kirck (four points, three assists and two steals) also finished with five boards as the Panthers outrebounded the Chargers, 45-29.

Messina added eight points, and Molly Keaveney and Carrafiello contributed seven points apiece.

Tanner Drury and Catherine Chick scored 10 apiece for Colby Sawyer.



PANTHER SOPHOMORE CENTER Reece Brednich carries the puck into the Hamilton zone as Continental Connor Thue defends.

Independent photo/Steve James



PANTHER SOPHOMORE EDDIE Moskowitz (92) and freshman John Halverson hunt the puck in front of the Hamilton goal during Saturday's men's hockey game in Kenyon Arena.

Independent photo/Steve James

Men's hockey

(Continued from Page 1B)
the defensive execution. But he and his players believe it is just a matter of time before the Panthers break out on the attack.

"Right now we have a couple kids who are a little snake-bit," he said. "Especially in the NESCAC, with the level of play it's hard to score. Scoring goals is always a little tricky and very difficult, but I think we're going to start to grow."

FRIDAY GAME

On Friday the Panthers shrugged off a 2-1 first-period deficit to defeat Amherst, 3-2. Heinze backstopped the win with 29 saves as Middlebury was outshot, 31-21.

Middlebury's Jack Silverman scored the game's first goal 5:46 after the initial puck drop. John Halverson fed Tyler Wishart behind the goal, and he found Silverman near the left faceoff dot for a one-timer.

Amherst equalized at 10:12, when Romulus Riego de Dios scored from the right side on a feed from Oliver Flynn.

The Mammoths took the lead with a shorthanded goal with 2:22 left in the period. Josh Burke took a long feed from Zack Jesse and finished inside the right post.

Both teams had chances in the second period. At 2:27 Halverson skated past three defenders from the Mammoth blue line only to see goalie Vincent Lamberti make a right pad save.

The Mammoths earned a power-play with 7:30 left, but Heinze denied their best opportunity by stuffing Oliver Flynn at the right post.

Wishart made it 2-2 at 11:09 with his first Panther goal. Eddie Moskowitz sent the puck to a cluster of players in front of the goal before Wishart had a shot blocked. Luc Malkhassian's bid was saved, and Wishart cashed in that rebound.

Just 13 seconds into the third period Landon Brownlee gave the Panthers the 3-2 lead. Lamberti saved a low shot, but Brownlee tapped the rebound home for what was his first Panther goal.

Heinze made 14 of his saves in the third period, including two when Amherst pulled Lamberti for the final 1:37. Panthers also blocked two shots in the final stretch to help nail down the 3-2 win over the 3-3-1 Mammoths.

SATURDAY GAME

Hamilton arrived Saturday with a 7-0 record, and left with their first tie, although a 3-2 shootout victory gave them two points in the NESCAC standings to one for

Middlebury. Hamilton dropped into a first-place tie with Bowdoin in the league standings.

Hamilton carried most of the action and outshot the Panthers, 31-19. Heinze thus finished with 31 saves, and Continental goalie Aksel Reid with 19.

But the Continentals had to hold off late third-period and overtime pressure from the Panthers to preserve the tie.

In the opening period play was even for the first few minutes. Reid stopped Bobby May's shot from the blue line at 2:08, and Hamilton's Liam Varnecky hit the side of the right post shortly afterward. Two minutes later Heinze gloved a hard Ryan Sordillo shot from the left circle.

Middlebury had a chance at 15:52 of the period on a power play, but Reid slid to deny Halverson's shot ticketed for the left side.

With 2:13 left in the first period, Heinze stopped a Trey Williams bullet from the right circle.

In the fourth minute of the second period, Heinze thwarted Vincent Gould's point-blank bid, and his follow-up sailed high.

Two minutes later Hamilton's Devon de Vries's blast clanged off the right pipe.

At 8:01, Reid denied a Cole Thomas shot from the right point. The Panthers also killed a power play, with Heinze denying Max Bulawka from the bottom of the right circle.

Panther Reece Brednich had a one-on-one chance vs. Reid 3:06 into the third period, but the goalie denied his high backhand shot.

Middlebury had chances on a power play that began at 11:04. James Schneid fired a wrist shot that whistled just high, Halverson and Eddie Moskowitz battled in vain for a loose puck in front of Reid, and Halverson fired another shot over the bar.

With three minutes to go Malkhassian tried to flip a shot inside the left post that Reid denied, and Panther defenseman Christian Wood blocked Carson Hall's chance from close range as the horn sounded. That was one of his six blocked shots on the day.

Skating 3-on-3 in the extra session, the Continentals were assessed a delayed penalty and Heinze went to the bench for an extra skater for 1:06. The Panthers fired wide twice before the penalty was enforced. With the penalty time winding down, Reid saved shots by Silverman and Jackson Morehouse seconds apart at the left post even though the goalie had

lost his stick in a scrum.

In the final seconds Heinze stopped a Connor Thue blast from the left circle, sending the game to a shootout.

May and Caden Morgan converted in the shootout to give Middlebury a 2-1 lead, but goals by Hamilton's Luke Tchou, de Vries and Sordillo eventually gave Hamilton the lead in the sixth round.

Then Wishart tried to stuff a bid under Reid's right pad, an attempt that the linesman ruled failed, to the vocal dismay of Panthers on the bench and fans in the stands who loudly insisted the puck crossed the line by several inches. Phone video seemed to support their case.

To be fair, the Panthers had opportunities to win earlier.

"We got the chances late in the third, and obviously in overtime, to put them away, but we didn't capitalize on that. But I think for us it's a really good learning (experience)," Ceglarski said.

Despite the disappointing ending to the weekend, Ceglarski was upbeat about his team's future.

"I think we're playing some pretty good hockey. I think the first weekend was a pretty good wakeup call for us, especially for the younger kids to realize how hard it is to play here," he said. "But I really like where we're at. We're defending really well. Our goalie's playing well right now. If we can keep that up, once the goals start to bounce our way I think we're going to be in a really good place."

Men's hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)

SUNDAY GAME

On Sunday Carnegie Mellon defeated the Panthers, 70-57. The Tartans held a 37-27 halftime lead and stretched it to as many as 18 early in the second half.

Carnegie Mellon outrebounded the Panthers, 48-39. The Tartans hit 48.3% of their shots from the floor and limited Middlebury to 29.6% shooting. Nikola Demitrovic scored 20 points and hauled in 12 rebounds to lead Carnegie Mellon, and Buckley DeJardin added 18 points.

Murray paced Middlebury with 18 points and eight rebounds. Cwalini scored 13 points, reaching double figures for the seventh straight time, and Justin Fuerbacher added eight points.

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Transient flees police, breaks into house

ADDISON COUNTY — When police were called to Leicester for a camper blocking the road last Friday morning it ended up with them putting a man in jail with bail set at \$25,000.

Vermont State Police responded to multiple reports of a Four Winds RV off the road and partially blocking the roadway near 220 Lake Dunmore Road in Leicester at around 7 a.m. on Dec. 5. Upon their arrival, troopers found Rutland County Sheriff's deputies on scene. They identified the driver of the camper as 44-year-old Leon Forrest, whom they described as transient.

Police report that Forrest went off the roadway, fled the scene on foot, broke into a nearby dwelling, and damaged several items in the residence before returning to the RV. Since, police said, Forrest had no rights to enter the dwelling and no expectation of access to it, they arrested him.

They then took him to the New Haven Barracks and cited him for burglary, felony unlawful trespass, two counts of unlawful mischief, and disorderly conduct.

Superior Court, Criminal Division, in Middlebury set the large bail and, not having the money, Forrest was jailed at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional in Rutland. The office of probation and parole also held Forrest for the violations, troopers noted. State police were assisted on-scene by deputies from the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, Brandon Rescue and Carrara's Towing Service.

In a separate notable incident, Vermont State Police this week asked for the public's help in solving a burglary at an Addison store.

Authorities are trying to identify the people who broke into the Four Corners Store on Route 22A in Addison after 3 a.m. on Nov. 22. A trooper said his agency's investigation shows that two individuals of average height and build arrived at the store in a dark-colored, older-model Subaru Outback at 3:12 a.m. that Saturday morning. The suspects broke the glass on the front door to get in, causing \$463 worth of damage. They spent about three minutes inside and left with \$6,025 worth of cigarettes and knives.

The two people are wanted for burglary, grand larceny and unlawful mischief.

Anyone with information regarding this case is asked to call the state police barracks in New Haven at 802-388-4919 or leave an anonymous tip online at vsp.vermont.gov/prevention/tipsubmit.

Meanwhile, as the snows of winter arrived in the Champlain Valley, state police were busy with several motor vehicle crashes this

Vt. State Police Log

past week.

Starksboro roads were snowy and slushy on Dec. 3 at 1:15 p.m., when troopers were dispatched to a report of a one-car rollover crash on Route 17 roughly one mile east of Route 116. Police said that Samantha Sawyer, 42, of Starksboro was driving a 2014 Ford Expedition eastbound on Route 17 when the vehicle fishtailed, left the road, overturned down an embankment, and came to rest on its roof. Sawyer was uninjured and identified as the only occupant in the vehicle.

Troopers were assisted at the scene by Bristol police, the Bristol Area Rescue Squad, and Bristol firefighters.

Also, Whiting roads were reported to be dry on Dec. 2 when troopers were dispatched to a pick-up crash on South Main Street near the Shoreham-Whiting Road in Whiting at around 5 a.m. Police report that Malachi Sheldrick, 20, of Brandon was driving a 2016 Ford F150 southbound on South Main when he lost control of the vehicle, and it went off the road, struck a utility pole, and came to rest in a field. South Main Street was temporarily closed while the utility pole was repaired.

Sheldrick was taken to Porter Medical Center by Middlebury Regional EMS for treatment of suspected minor injuries.

The Whiting Fire Department and Green Mountain Power aided on scene.

Later that day, roads were reported to be snowy and icy at 2:30 p.m., when troopers were dispatched to a two-vehicle crash in Lincoln on South Lincoln Road near Sugar Hill Bush Road. Police said Geoffrey Booth, 62, of Lincoln slowed down his 2009 Buick Enclave to make room for a snowplow coming in the opposite direction, when the 2020 Ford Edge driven by Deborah Cousino, 61, of Lincoln was coming up behind the Buick and couldn't stop in time to avoid striking it. No injuries were reported. Lincoln firefighters assisted on scene.

On Dec. 4 just before 3 p.m. the roads were snowy when troopers responded to a two-vehicle crash at the intersection of Middlebrook and Shellhouse Mountain roads in Ferrisburgh.

Police report that Mark

Pomerantz, 39, of St. Albans was driving a 2019 Subaru Legacy when he failed to stop at a stop sign, entered the intersection and struck the front driver's side of a 2015 Acura MDX driven by 48-year-old Daniel Brisson of Ferrisburgh. No one was injured, but both vehicles sustained damage. Ferrisburgh firefighters assisted on scene. State police ticketed Pomerantz for failing to stop.

Finally, on Dec. 8 shortly before 9 a.m., troopers were dispatched to a one-car crash on Route 22A in Panton. Police report that Mercedes Oxfordkemp, 34, of Orwell was driving a 2020 Kia Soul northbound on 22A when she hit a patch of snow and lost control of her vehicle, resulting in it leaving the roadway to the right side. Oxfordkemp was transported to Porter Medical Center for reported minor injuries.

Troopers were assisted on scene by the Vergennes Fire Department, Bristol EMS and CDR Towing.

In other recent activity, troopers:

- On Dec. 3 at 10:45 a.m. stopped a car on Route 7 in Ferrisburgh and ended up arresting Nathaniel T. Natoli, 52, of Florence because the trooper alleged that Natoli had a warrant out for his arrest from Grand Isle County. Bail was set at \$200. Natoli reached out to the *Independent* and said, among other things, that "the entire matter was simply an attempt to embarrass, and waste my time and my own resources and reputation, and doing so is wasting the state of Vermont's resources."
- On Dec. 6 just before 1:30 a.m. got a report about a simple assault in Shoreham. After investigating, police said they determined that Steven Barrera, 27, of Vergennes knowingly caused bodily injury to another person, and they cited him for simple assault and unlawful mischief.
- On Dec. 8 announced that they had made an arrest in their investigation of a Nov. 25 theft from the Dollar General store on Monkton Road in Ferrisburgh. Police allege that Will C. Phillips, 28, of Panton stole a donation container from the store. They cited him for petit larceny.
- On Dec. 9 at 8:15 p.m. were told about a simple assault in New Haven. Through investigation police said they determined that Leonard Kenyon, 60, of Middlebury attempted to injure someone and then lied to police about it. They cited Kenyon for simple assault and provided false information to a police officer.

Man arrested on outstanding warrants

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police on Dec. 3 arrested Kevin Odell, 47, of Middlebury on outstanding warrants, including for fentanyl sales and distribution with death resulting. Police said Odell was later released from custody with conditions stipulated by the court.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Responded to a report of a man walking in the middle of North Pleasant Street at around 3:30 p.m. on Dec. 1.
- Cited Leonard R. Kenyon, 60, of New Haven for eluding police, driving without the vehicle owner's consent and possession of stolen property, all after he allegedly fled police on Route 7 North in a stolen vehicle on Dec. 1.
- Assisted the U.S. Secret Service with what police described as an ongoing investigation on Dec. 2.
- Defused a verbal domestic dispute at a Cobble Road address on Dec. 2.
- Gave a ride home to a stranded, discharged patient at Porter Hospital on Dec. 2.
- Assisted a school bus driver who complained of out-of-control students affecting the driver's ability to operate safely on Seymour Street during the afternoon of Dec. 2. Police said the case has been referred to the school's administrators and resource officer.
- Received a report of a couple having a loud argument while walking along Washington Street Extension on Dec. 2.
- Responded to a car-versus-deer crash on Painter Road on Dec. 3.
- Enforced the town's overnight winter parking ban downtown on Dec. 3.
- Gave a ride home to a stranded, discharged patient at Porter Hospital on Dec. 4.
- Checked on the welfare of a person who had reportedly expressed thoughts of self-harm on Dec. 4.
- Responded to a report of people loitering at the Main Street post office on Dec. 4.

Middlebury Police Log

- Began an investigation into an alleged domestic assault in a vehicle parked off Court Street on Dec. 4.
- Helped a local resident dealing with fraudulent emails on Dec. 4.
- Were asked to check out undefined suspicious activity at 260 Court St. on Dec. 4.
- Responded to a report of a man who had possibly overdosed at the Maplefields store on North Pleasant Street on Dec. 5. Police said the man was OK.
- Dealt with a landlord-tenant issue at a Case Street home on Dec. 5.
- Tended to a juvenile issue at Middlebury Union High School on Dec. 5.
- Responded to a report of a man allegedly driving with a suspended license on Court Street on Dec. 5.
- Helped a person search for a

lost purse in the Court Street area on Dec. 5.

- Served a no-trespass order on Dec. 5 to a person who was wasn't wanted at a Kings Row address.
- Confiscated marijuana from a driver following a traffic stop at the intersection of Case and East Main streets on Dec. 6.
- Investigated a report of a phone argument involving two local juveniles on Dec. 6.
- Responded to a report of adults chasing a child on Main Street on Dec. 6.
- Responded to a report of cows that had wandered near East Main Street on Dec. 6.
- Helped Vermont State Police at the scene of a motor vehicle crash near the intersection of Route 125 and Lemon Fair Road in Weybridge on Dec. 6.
- Gave a ride home to a stranded, discharged patient at Porter Hospital on Dec. 7.
- Arranged towing for vehicles that were violating the town's overnight winter parking ban at around 12:40 a.m. on Dec. 8.

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Auctions



MARKET REPORT
ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES
 RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT
 Sales for 12/4/25 & 12/8/25

BEEF	LBS.	/LB	\$
Goodrich	1920	1.70	\$3264.00
P. Livingston	1830	1.68	\$3074.40
Westminster	1770	1.55	\$2741.50
Rowell Farm	1870	1.50	\$2805.00
Iroquois	1825	1.50	\$2737.50
Vorsteveld	1755	1.45	\$2544.75
Monument	1835	1.40	\$2569.00

CALVES	\$
J. Field	\$1176.00
T. Hescock	\$1104.00
B. Dykema	\$1097.40
Barnes Bros	\$1061.10
Vorsteveld	\$1008.00

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AN EVENT?
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ONLINE AUCTION
(#1720) LANDSCAPING EQUIPMENT
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PREVIEW: Tuesday, Dec. 16 from 11AM-1PM
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MEMORIAL SPORTS CENTER

Upcoming Events

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 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Sunday December 14:
 12:45 - 2:15 PM Public Skating

Tuesday, December 16:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating
 3:15 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

Thursday, December 18:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Sunday December 21:
 2:00 - 3:00 PM Public Skating

Tuesday, December 23:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating
 3:15 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck



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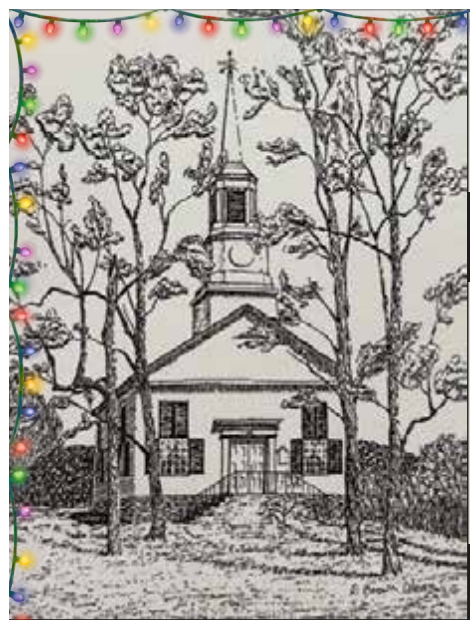
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Mass at Night - Dec. 24, 7:30 pm - St. Mary's
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Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.



**ADDISON COUNTY
INDEPENDENT**

community calendar

dec 11 THURSDAY

Magic on Main in Vergennes. Thursday, Dec. 11, 4-7 p.m., downtown Vergennes. Main Street and Green Street shops stay open late with festive drinks, tasty treats, store giveaways and activities. Enter at each shop for a chance to win one of four \$100 Vergennes Green gift certificates. Free. More info at vergenesdowntown.org/magic-on-main.

Moonlight Madness in Brandon. Thursday, Dec. 11, 4-8 p.m., downtown Brandon. Shop local this holiday season and take advantage of opportunities throughout town. Many shops will offer 20% off and be open 'til 8 p.m. More info at brandon.org, info@brandon.org, 802-247-6401.

Winter Village in Brandon. Thursday, Dec. 11, 4-7 p.m., Green Park, Center St. A European-style Christmas market with food, music, shopping and holiday cheer. Enjoy twinkling lights, mulled wine, spicy sausage sandwiches, handmade crafts and greenery, rich cocoa, live performances, fire pits and café seating.

Wreath making workshop in Vergennes. Thursday, Dec. 11, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Bring greenery into your home this holiday season with a custom-made wreath. Limited space; reserve your spot by emailing miranda.degreenia@bixbylibrary.org.

Midd Night Stroll in Middlebury. Thursday, Dec. 11, 5-8 p.m., downtown Middlebury. Shop handmade gifts from local artisans, including at National Bank of Middlebury, during the second stroll night.

Henry Sheldon Museum and store open during Midd Night Stroll in Middlebury. Thursday, Dec. 11, 5-8 p.m., Henry Sheldon Museum, 1 Park St. Find gifts at the museum store, visit the Trains exhibit, make seasonal crafts in the Makerspace and enter the decorated Christmas tree & wreath raffle. Free. More info at henrysheldonmuseum.org.

"Bringing Up Beaver" presentation in Salisbury. Thursday, Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple S. Licensed wildlife rehabilitator John Aberth will discuss "Bringing Up Beaver," his book about raising an orphaned beaver kit and the two-year journey to release it back into the wild.

dec 12 FRIDAY

Holiday crafting in Ferrisburgh. Friday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Rokeby Museum, 4334 Route 7. Rokeby Museum offers holiday crafting sessions, inviting participants to create seasonal projects and enjoying the museum grounds and trails. Trail map available online for walking, skiing or snowshoeing. More info at rokeby.org.

Wreath making workshop in Vergennes. Friday, Dec. 12, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. See Dec. 11 listing.

Winter Village in Brandon. Friday, Dec. 12, 4-7 p.m., Green Park, Center St. See Dec. 11 listing.

Candy cane hunt with Santa in Bristol. Friday, Dec. 12, 5 p.m., Bristol Town Green, intersection of West and North St. Candy cane hunt with Santa on the town green. More info at bristolvtrec.com.

Free hot chocolate and carols on Main Street in Bristol. Friday, Dec. 12, 5-7 p.m., Main Street. After the candy cane hunt, enjoy a free cup of hot chocolate and holiday entertainment from Bristol CORE. Free. More info at discoverbristolvt.com.

dec 13 SATURDAY

Monthly Wildlife Walk in Middlebury. Saturday, Dec. 13, 8-10 a.m., Otter View Park, Weybridge St. Otter Creek Audubon and the Middlebury Area Land Trust invite community members to help survey birds and other wildlife at Otter View Park and the Hurd Grassland. Meet at the parking area of Otter View Park at the intersection of Weybridge St. and Pulp Mill Bridge Road. Birders of all ages and abilities welcome. More info at 802-388-6019.

Holiday Market in Middlebury. Saturday, Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., VFW Post 7823, Exchange St. Shop local and support farmers, crafters, businesses and musicians. Music by Cindy Hill and Tom Hanley. Hosted by the Middlebury Farmers Market.

Visit Santa at Maple Landmark in Middlebury. Saturday, Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Maple Landmark, 1297 Exchange St. Santa visits the Maple Landmark factory with free sign-ups for timed slots. More info at maplelandmark.com/santa.

Mountain View 4-H craft and vendor sale in Bridport. Saturday, Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Bridport Central School, 3442 Route 22A. The annual sale features vendors and crafters along with 4-H members selling handmade crafts, baked goods and lunch. Free admission.

American Red Cross blood drive in Bristol. Saturday, Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., St. Ambrose Church, 20 West St. Community blood drive hosted by the American Red Cross. Appointments at RedCrossBlood.org or 1-800-RED CROSS.

31st annual Christmas cookie sale in Vergennes. Saturday, Dec. 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (or until sold out), Champlain Valley Christian Reformed Church, 73 Church St. The cookie sale features a large selection of Dutch specialties, fancy homemade cookies and other treats for sale. Choose and package your favorites and enjoy hot cider and festive music while you shop. More info at 802-417-4300.

Terrarium Workshop in Salisbury. Saturday, Dec. 13, 10:30 a.m., Salisbury Congregational Church, downstairs in the library, 853 Maple St. Join terrarium guru Mirjam Brett to create miniature worlds in glass containers and learn how to care for finished terrarium. Materials provided; participants may bring tiny holiday figures to include. \$30 per person, ages 10 and up. Registration required; call or stop by the library. More info at 802-352-4198, salisburypubliclibrary@gmail.com.

Kids' holiday ornament decorating in Vergennes. Saturday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Half Round Room, Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Drop in to decorate a holiday ornament to hang on the tree or give as a gift. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

Winter Village in Brandon. Saturday, Dec. 13, 12-7 p.m., Green Park, Center St. See Dec. 11 listing. On Saturday, Santa will visit the Brandon



Santa sightings

SANTA SPREAD GOOD cheer at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury this past weekend, where he and Mrs. Claus greeted these three festive elves. And he'll be back again this weekend. On Friday, see Santa in Bristol for a candy cane hunt on the town green. On Saturday, catch him at Maple Landmark in Middlebury, at the Brandon Town Hall and at the Platt Memorial Library in Shoreham for cookies and crafts. On Sunday, Santa will ride the Toys for Kids Train, which stops at the Middlebury Amtrak station at 6 p.m. to hand out candy canes and collect unwrapped toys for kids in need.

Photo courtesy of Better Middlebury Partnership

Town Hall, where there will be family games, crafts and entertainment from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Fiber Arts Circle in Vergennes. Saturday, Dec. 13, 12-2 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Bixby's Fiber Arts Circle every other Saturday. Bring a work-in-progress or use yarn and knit/crochet kits from the Library of Things. All experience levels and ages welcome. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

Cuss and Cut Block Printing in Brandon. Saturday, December 13, 1 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. Learn linoleum block printing and let the profanities fly as you create. Ages 18 and up, no experience necessary. Spots are limited, please email info@brandonpubliclibrary.org to register.

Cookies and a Craft with Mr. Claus in Shoreham. Saturday, Dec. 13, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Platt Memorial Library, 279 Main St. A quieter, simpler visit with Mr. Claus. Write your list for Santa, make a holiday craft, enjoy cookies or a candy cane, and pick up a free book in the cozy library. Free and open to all.

Bingo at St. Peter's Church in Vergennes. Saturday, Dec. 13, doors open 5 p.m., games 6 p.m., St. Peter's Parish Hall, 85 South Maple St. Family-friendly bingo with cash prizes, 50/50 raffle and refreshments. Sponsored by the St. Peter's Historic Preservation Committee to benefit restoration of the church bell tower.

Takeout Only Chicken and Biscuit Supper in Vergennes. Saturday, Dec. 13, 5-6 p.m., Vergennes United Methodist Church, 129 Main St. (across from the Vergennes Opera House). Chicken and gravy over biscuits with stuffing, vegetable, cranberry sauce and dessert. Adults \$12. Takeout preorder only; orders due by 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 11. To order call 802-877-3150.

Ugly sweater party in Vergennes. Saturday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Addison County Eagles Club, 67 New Haven Rd. Wear your ugliest seasonal sweater, join the fun and support a good cause! Live music by Johnny Devil Band at 8 p.m. Ugly sweater contest with prizes. Snacks provided by the Auxiliary. Monetary donations accepted at the door to support the Commodore Club's newly formed food pantry. Ages 21 and up

dec 14 SUNDAY

Audubon Christmas bird count in Middlebury. Sunday, Dec. 14, all day, all of Bridport and Cornwall and parts of Addison, Middlebury, Salisbury, Shoreham and Whiting. Backyard bird watchers who live within a 15-mile radius of the Lemon Fair River are invited to report the maximum number of each species of bird they see at their birdfeeders. Field watchers will also count birds in the vicinity. For more details, contact Kris or Jim Andrews at jandrews@VtHerpAtlas.org. Free.

Breakfast buffet in Vergennes. Sunday, Dec. 14, 8-10 a.m., St. Peter's Parish Hall, 85 South Maple St. Menu includes omelets, scrambled eggs, French toast, plain and blueberry pancakes with maple syrup, sausage gravy on biscuits, cornbread, home fries and mini muffins. Juice, tea and coffee available. \$13 adults, \$8 children 8-12; under 8 free. Sponsored by Vergennes Council of the Knights of Columbus.

Welcome Winter in Monkton. Sunday, Dec. 14, 2 p.m., East Monkton Church, 405 Church Rd. The historic East Monkton Church Association hosts a Welcome Winter celebration with a fire pit, hot cider, cookies and family-friendly activities. Eugenie Doyle will read from her children's book "Sleep Tight Farm." Held outdoors, with the option to move into the unheated church if the weather is severe. Suggested donation \$10. More info at eastmonktonchurch.org.

Winter gear swap fundraiser in Lincoln. Sunday, Dec. 14, 4 p.m., Lincoln Community School, 795 East River Rd. A fundraiser supporting the Lincoln Community School's winter ski program, which gets all students outside on skis. Gear drop-off begins at 3:30 p.m.; swap opens at 4 p.m. Watch ski movies and enjoy a tater tot poutine potluck — bring a topping to share. A \$10 donation is suggested to support the program.

Toys for Kids Train stop in Ferrisburgh and Middlebury. Sunday evening, Dec. 14. The Vermont Rail System's Toys for Kids Train

makes its final stops of the day in Ferrisburgh/Vergennes train depot at the Park and Ride, 5-5:30 p.m., and at the Middlebury Amtrak Station, 30 Middle Seymour St., 6-6:30 p.m. It's part of the Marine Corps League of Vermont's Toys for Kids program. Meet Santa, enjoy a candy cane and donate new, unwrapped toys for children in need across the state.

dec 15 MONDAY

Stone Motors Stuff a Truck holiday toy drive in Middlebury. Ongoing through Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2149 Route 7 South and 36 Boardman St., Middlebury. Drop off new holiday toys or cash donations to Stone Motors stores to help HOPE deliver Christmas presents to Addison County kids.

Thankful Tree in Ferrisburgh. Ongoing through Jan. 7, Union Meeting Hall, 41 Middlebrook Rd. The Friends of the Union Meeting Hall present their annual Thankful Tree display, featuring messages of gratitude collected from local elementary schools and community members in a lighted outdoor exhibit.

American Red Cross blood drive in Brandon. Monday, Dec. 15, noon-4:30 p.m., Brandon Congregational Church, 1 Carver St. Community blood drive hosted by the American Red Cross. Appointments at RedCrossBlood.org or 1-800-RED CROSS.

Christmas bingo in Middlebury. Monday, Dec. 15, 4:30 p.m., Addison County VFW 7823, 530 Exchange St. Monday night Christmas bingo with doors opening at 4:30 p.m., quickies starting at 6:15 p.m. and regular bingo at 7 p.m. \$1,000 jackpot guaranteed to be won. Ham dinner, regular bingo menu and special homemade desserts. Open to the public. Benefits veterans programs.

dec 16 TUESDAY

Kids' gift crafts: button machine in Vergennes. Tuesday, Dec. 16, 3-4:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Design a one-of-a-kind button with fun designs, patterns or messages. Perfect to wear or give as a handmade gift. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

Tunes and Treats in Ferrisburgh. Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m., Ferrisburgh Union Meeting Hall, 41 Middlebrook Road. This festive community event features holiday music by the Commodore Jazz Band and Singers, along with treats to share. More info at unionmeetinghall.org.

dec 17 WEDNESDAY

Brush Hour in Brandon. Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6-7 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. Relax with paint-by-numbers; materials provided. Free.

dec 18 THURSDAY

Cookbook Club in Brandon. Thursday, Dec. 18, 5:30-7 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. Share dishes and discuss the month's cookbook. Free.

Christmas Benefit Concert and Hymn Sing in Middlebury. Thursday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m., Middlebury United Methodist Church, 43 North Pleasant St. Christmas concert featuring a wide variety of music performed by artists from Addison County and beyond. All are invited to sing cherished seasonal hymns. Free, donations benefit the Charter House Coalition and CVOEO's Addison Food Hub.

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Holiday Services

ADDISON COUNTY — A number of Addison County-area churches have set their schedules for special Christmas events and services. Note that these plans may change. If your church service isn't listed, please email the information to calendar@addisonindependent.com and we will run it in the weeks coming up to the holidays.

ADDISON

West Addison United Methodist Church will hold a Christmas Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 7 p.m. This service replaces the regular morning worship service that day. All are invited to attend. No service on Christmas Day.

BRANDON/FOREST DALE

St. Thomas & Grace Episcopal Church will hold Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 6 p.m.

BRIDPORT

Bridport Church will hold a Christmas Eve service in the Meeting Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. **Saint Bernadette's Catholic Church** will hold Christmas Day Mass at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 25. Christmas Eve masses will be held at St. Mary's in Middlebury (see Middlebury listing).

BRISTOL

Saint Ambrose Roman Catholic Church will celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Monday, Dec. 8, at 5:30 p.m. Rorate Mass will be held on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 6:30 a.m. Confession schedule during Christmas week is as follows: Sunday, Dec. 21, from 7:30-8:15 a.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 23, from 7-7:45 a.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 23, from 6:30-8 a.m. and Wednesday, Dec. 24, from 1-2:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. Christmas Day Mass is at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 25.

EAST MIDDLEBURY

The East Middlebury United Methodist Church and the Middlebury United Methodist Church will hold a combined Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m. at the East Middlebury Church, located at the corner of 2 Church Street and Route 125 in East Middlebury.

MIDDLEBURY

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Saint Mary's) Catholic Church will celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Monday, Dec. 8, at 12:05 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. St. Mary's will hold two Christmas Eve Masses on Wednesday, Dec. 24: Vigil Mass at 4 p.m. and Mass at Night at 7:30 p.m. (choral prelude begins at 7:15 p.m.). Christmas Day Mass will be held at St. Bernadette's in Bridport at 9 a.m. (see Bridport listing).

The Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society will hold two Christmas Eve services on Wednesday, Dec. 24. The 4 p.m. service will feature an all-ages pageant with group candle lighting and singing of "Silent Night." The 7 p.m. service, "We Are the Light of the World!" will explore the Christmas Spirit with songs, music, poetry and candle lighting. All are welcome. Attend either service in person or online via Zoom link at cvuus.org.

The Congregational Church of Middlebury, UCC will hold weekly Sunday services at 10 a.m. Christmas Eve services will be held at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. **Memorial Baptist Church** will hold weekly Advent Sunday services at 10 a.m. A Christmas Eve candle lighting service will be held at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. A Christmas Day service will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 25.

The Middlebury United Methodist Church and the East Middlebury United Methodist Church will hold a combined Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m. at the East Middlebury Church, located at the corner of 2 Church St. and Route 125 in East Middlebury.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church will hold Advent nighttime concerts on Thursday, Dec. 4, 11, and 18, at 12 noon. Concerts are free and all are welcome. On Sunday, Dec. 14, there will be an Advent Lessons and Carols service at 4 p.m. On Wednesday, Dec. 24, a Christmas Eve pageant and Holy Eucharist will be held at 4 p.m.; and at 8:30 p.m. there will be a Carol Prelude followed by a Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist at 9 p.m. The Christmas Day Holy Eucharist takes place on Thursday, Dec. 25, at 10 a.m. On Sunday, Dec. 28, there will be a 10:30 a.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols service. All services

are in person; some will be broadcast on Zoom. Please visit ststephensmidd.org for Zoom links and more information.

ORWELL

First Congregational Church of Orwell will hold a Christmas Eve service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 7:30 p.m. **St. Paul Catholic Church** in Orwell will hold a Christmas Eve Mass on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 6 p.m.

RIPTON

Ripton Community Church will hold a Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols and seasonal music on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 5:30 p.m.

SHOREHAM

Shoreham Congregational Church will hold a Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. Advent services will be held at 10 a.m. on the following Sundays: Nov. 30, Dec. 7, Dec. 14, Dec. 21.

STARKSBORO

The South Starksboro Friends Meeting will hold a Quaker Christmas Day Service on Thursday, Dec. 25, at 4 p.m., with carol singing and silent meeting for worship. All are welcome.

VERGENNES

Saint Paul's Episcopal Church will hold a Christmas Eve Festival Service of Holy Eucharist on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m.

Vergennes United Methodist Church will hold a Christmas Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m. All are invited to attend. No service on Christmas Day.

Saint Peter's Catholic Church will hold Rorate Mass on Saturday, Dec. 13, at 6:30 a.m. Confession will be held at the following times during Christmas week: Friday, Dec. 19, from 12:30-1:45 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 20, from 3:30-4:15 p.m. and Monday, Dec. 22, from 9:30-11 a.m. and 6:30-8 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass is at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. Christmas Day Mass will be held at midnight and 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 25.

WEYBRIDGE

Weybridge Congregational Church will hold a Christmas Eve worship service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 5 p.m.



Dec. is the start of bird feeding season

VERMONT — Winter bird feeding is a great way to observe and learn about our year-round bird residents such as black capped chickadees, nuthatches and blue jays. This winter is also predicted to be a great year for seeing birds that visit Vermont in the winter, including evening and pine grosbeaks, and redpolls.

"Currently, limited food resources north of us will pull more birds south in search of cone seeds and berries," said Jillian Kilborn, Vermont Fish and Wildlife's bird project leader.

Here are some basic bird-feeding tips from Vermont Fish and Wildlife:

- Make your own feeding mixture to maximize the number of species visiting your yard. Black oil sunflower seed is a favorite of many birds, but when mixed with "thistle" (or "nyjer") or cracked corn you will be sure to attract a wide variety of species. Don't forget the suet to attract woodpeckers and even chickadees.
- Mix up the type of feeders you use. Hopper feeders are great for large birds such as blue jays, while tube feeders are best for smaller birds. Elevated tray feeders will attract birds that usually feed on the ground including juncos and larger bodied winter visitors such as evening grosbeaks.
- Place your feeders near natural habitat, or even add a habitat for birds to hide. A Christmas tree is a great addition to a snowbank next to your feeder to provide quick cover.
- Keep your feeders clean. Only put out enough food for a day, and wash feeders every couple of weeks in a 10% bleach solution and let dry to prevent the spread of bacteria and disease.
- If you decide to feed birds, remember:
 - Feeding can expose birds



BIRD FEEDERS, WHETHER a traditional seed dispenser or a suet feeder like this one serving a red-bellied woodpecker in Weybridge, offer an easy and safe way to interact with wildlife. Installing them after Dec. 1 limits the potential to attract bears, keeping you and the birds safe.
Photo by Susan Humphrey

to hazards they might otherwise avoid. The risks of predation are higher close to people, especially from domestic cats — the leading cause of bird deaths in North America. Keep cats inside and take feeders down if predators become frequent visitors. Also, Vermont Fish and Wildlife recommends placing feeders either within three feet of windows, or greater than 30 feet from windows. This has been shown to minimize high speed window strikes.

• Don't feed birds when bears are active. Most bears are in dens from Dec. 1 to April 1, but some will delay hibernation or re-emerge to feed during periods of warmer weather. Remove bird feeders immediately if you see signs of bears or know a bear is active in your community. Bears that learn to associate food with a house, even only once, will continue to return, potentially leading to

property damage and dangerous encounters with people. Also, it is illegal to feed bears in Vermont.

• Once you've started feeding the birds, keep your feeders stocked. Although wild birds are not entirely dependent on bird feeders, they can become accustomed to this easy food source. If you wish to stop feeding during winter months, gradually taper off the amount of food you provide rather than stopping abruptly, giving the birds a chance to find other food sources. This is especially important when food is scarce in late winter or during periods of extreme weather.

• Immediately remove feeders if there are reports of HPAI (Avian Influenza) or even a bacterial infection outbreak. Concentrating birds at a feeder only contributes to the spread of diseases. If you find a dead bird visit the Avian Influenza Wildlife Health Bulletin on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website for more information on when to report, and what to do.

• Report your observations! While watching your bird feeders, you can participate in one or more bird monitoring projects by looking up the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch and eBird — all collect important information for understanding bird populations.

As winter sets in, find a comfortable spot inside where you can watch the birds visiting your feeders. Figure out what birds they are, observe how they interact with each other, and see what they prefer to eat. It's an easy way to learn more about the lives of the birds around you.

"With the extra visitors we anticipate in Vermont coming from the north this winter, you have a chance of seeing see some new, colorful surprises," said Kilborn.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Otter Valley Union High School

Marissa Dick

Marissa Dick is Otter Valley Union High School's Student of the Week. Marissa lives in Pittsford with her mom, dad and three dogs.

In her free time, Marissa loves spending time with friends, being outdoors, hanging out with her dogs, and playing field hockey. She especially enjoys the social aspect of school and loves connecting with friends, attending sports games, and going all out for spirit weeks. The sense of community, particularly within OV's athletics, is one of her favorite parts of high school.

Marissa's favorite classes are math and science. She names Ms. Blow as her favorite teacher, noting that she always makes students feel included and is willing to help with any problems that arise.

A dedicated and accomplished student-athlete, Marissa has made the Honor Roll for the past three years. She served as captain of the 2024–2025 varsity field hockey team, was a Southern Vermont League First Team field hockey player, and is a recipient of the St. Lawrence Book Award.

Marissa says the most important lesson she's learned in high school is to "always try your hardest and focus on yourself. If you're constantly comparing yourself to other students, then you can't do your best work." To underclassmen, she offers this advice: "As long as you're trying your best and focusing on yourself, there's nothing stopping you from getting the grades you want."

After graduation, Marissa plans to attend a college or university to study dental hygiene.



Marissa Dick
OVUHS

Mount Abraham Union High School

Wyatt Moyer

Mt. Abraham Union High School is proud to recognize Wyatt Moyer as our Student of the Week. Wyatt lives in Starksboro with his parents, Rachel and Peter.

Wyatt has earned Transferable Skills and Academic Highest Honors throughout high school. His favorite classes include Piano, AP United States History, and AP English Language & Composition. Wyatt is a dedicated student and credits his teachers for going "above and beyond" to cultivate an engaging, meaningful learning environment. When asked about his favorite teacher, he shared that Mrs. LaRose, his chorus and piano teacher, "is solely responsible for allowing me the time and giving me the knowledge necessary to pursue a passion that I had never known I had, that being, playing the piano and singing. She is an unbelievably dedicated teacher."

Along with his academic achievements, Wyatt has made significant contributions to the performing arts program at Mt. Abe. He is the school's first student lighting designer and director for the Fall Musical. Since 10th grade, he has also served as the student light tech lead for both the fall and spring musical productions. Outside of school, Wyatt works as a clerk at the Lincoln General Store, enjoys writing, volunteering at the United Church of Lincoln, and playing the piano. Wyatt also enjoys public speaking and frequently delivers sermons at the United Church of Lincoln.

Reflecting on his experience at Mt. Abe, Wyatt says, "When I sat in the 9th grade transition night assembly and listened to high schoolers tell me that the next four years would fly by, I scoffed and probably said something like, "Yeah, right." But, they were right. So if there's one thing I have to say, it's that as much as you may not enjoy school on the day-to-day, value the experiences you have, take any and all opportunities you can, and make the experience yours. You only get high school once, and the depth, breadth and value of the educational opportunities this school offers truly gets overlooked until you get nearer to graduation. Take advantage of them as soon as you can!"

Looking ahead, Wyatt plans to attend college in Vermont and study Business Administration, with the long-term goal of obtaining a master's degree and becoming an ordained minister. We are grateful for the contributions Wyatt has made to the Mt. Abe community and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



Wyatt Moyer
MAUHS

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CLASSIFIEDS

Public Meetings

AL-ANON OFFERS HELP and hope to anyone who has been affected by a loved one's drinking. Middlebury hosts an online meeting Sunday night 7:15pm and a face to face one Wednesday at 1:30pm at CVUUS (2 Duane Court Middlebury near the high school) that you can also access by Zoom. Visit vermontalananonlateen.org for links and list of other meetings in the region. If you'd like to speak to an Al-Anon member, call our answering service (866-972-5266) and an Al-Anon member will call you back.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in person meetings are available. For a list of local virtual meetings visit <http://bit.ly/district9aa>. For more information visit <https://aaavt.org/> or call the 24 hour hotline at 802-802-AAVT (2288).

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS is a 12 step program offering recovery from compulsive eating and food behaviors. For meeting times and general information please visit www.oavermont.org or call (802)863.2655.

THE TURNING POINT CENTER of Addison County is open for in-person services, Monday through Friday, 10am-4pm, 79 Court St, Middlebury. We are available by phone 24/7 at 802-388-4249.

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.

Public Meetings

VERGENNES FREE THINKERS Founded in 1935 on the principle of one alcoholic helping another to achieve sobriety, A.A. is an effective and enduring program of recovery that has changed countless lives. A.A. has always been committed to making its program of recovery available to anyone, anywhere, who reaches out for help with an alcohol problem. The Vergennes Free Thinkers meeting was created in January of this year to maintain a tradition of free expression, conduct a meeting where alcoholics may feel free to express any beliefs, doubts or disbelief they may have, to share their own personal form of spiritual experience, their search for it, and/or their rejection of it, without having to accept anyone else's beliefs or having to deny their own. Meetings are held with a high regard for compassion and inclusion without judgment or exception. If you think we can help, please join us on Thursdays at 6pm by contacting Vergennesfreethinkers@gmail.com for Zoom and in-person meeting information.

Services

BROWN'S CONSTRUCTION renovations, interior/exterior painting, drywall, plumbing/electrical services. Fully insured w/ 30+ years of experience covering Northern Addison and Southern Chittenden, references available. Call 802-238-4864

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.

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

EVENING FRONT DESK/ CONCIERGE. Swift House Inn - Middlebury, Vermont. We're hiring a front desk professional to anchor our evening shift. This position plays a pivotal role: greeting arriving guests, fielding questions, supporting restaurant reservations, and ensuring the property is secure and guest-ready for the next day. If you thrive on creating memorable experiences and want to grow in the hospitality industry, this is for you. Swift House Inn has 20 guest rooms across three historic buildings, and is home to Jessica's at Swift House Inn, one of Vermont's most celebrated fine dining restaurants. Responsibilities: Welcome and check in arriving guests with warmth and professionalism. Answer phones, manage room and restaurant reservations. Provide local recommendations and concierge-style service. Troubleshoot guest concerns and offer proactive solutions. Liaise with Jessica's restaurant team for smooth communication. Keep common areas tidy, cozy, and well-presented. Follow nightly checklists and procedures. Lock up buildings and hand off to the overnight security team. You Are... Deeply interested in the hotel and lodging industry. A natural host who loves creating great guest experiences in Addison County. Communicative, warm, and gracious under pressure. Obsessed with details and good systems. Reliable, punctual, and self-directed. Shift & Compensation. Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Schedule: Part-time, includes some weekends and holidays. Pay: \$20-\$22 Hourly, commensurate with experience, bonuses and tips. Apply Today. Email your resume and a short note to owner@swifthouseinn.com. Learn more about us at swifthouseinn.com

For Rent

2-BEDROOM; East Middlebury. No Pets, No Smoking. \$1300 plus utilities. Semi-furnished. First & last security deposit. 802-771-4686.

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.

Help Wanted

PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT Wanted to help 77 year old man in Addison on Saturdays and Sundays for 3-4 hours a day. Help with cooking, housework, and chores. \$25 an hour. Contact ellenresnik@gmail.com

Help Wanted

SPRAY FOAM TECHNICIAN Looking for a hard-working, physically fit individual to spray foam and cellulose on renovation and new construction projects. Will train the right individual. Starting wage \$22 an hour with room for growth. Please email your name, any relevant experience or why you are interested and available start date. Please contact Gina. rgale@mgalebuilders.com

For Rent

BEAUTIFUL 2 BEDROOM HOUSE Newly renovated 1860's farmhouse in Shoreham. Furnished. \$1800/month plus some utilities. Non-smoking and no pets please. Call/email for photos. 802-897-2448 hescoc@sover.net

For Rent

BRANDON ESTATE 5 Bedrooms 3 bath \$4800 Furnished See Craigslist at <https://vermont.craigslist.org/apa/d/forest-dale-bedroom-updated-stone-home/7889936398.htm> or call 802 377 9394

Help Wanted

ACSD Addison Central School District

FACILITIES POSITIONS
Addison Central School District is seeking two full-time Custodians, Monday through Friday to work second shift and a Grounds Technician.
The Grounds Technician would be located at Middlebury Union High School. Requirements of the position are being able to work outside in all weather conditions, must be able to operate a variety of manual and power equipment/tools, climb ladders and lift 80 lbs unassisted. These positions are full-year positions. Addison Central School District offers competitive wages.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS INCLUDE

- Health, Dental, Life AD&D, Long Term Disability coverage
- Contribution to up to a family health insurance plan contribution to a Health Savings Account or a Health Reimbursement Arrangement
- Access to a flexible spending account
- Single dental insurance plan funded by the school district with the option to purchase dependent coverage
- Long term disability plan with a 90-day elimination period, benefit pays 66 2/3% of salary, funded by the school district
- Life insurance valued at \$30,000, funded by the school district

OTHER BENEFITS

- Paid time off
- Retirement through the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System
- Employee Assistance Program

Apply by submitting a letter of interest, resume, and three current reference letters via School Spring or by sending a hard copy to: Bruce MacIntire, Director of Facilities Addison Central School District 49 Charles Avenue Middlebury, VT 05753
Applications will be accepted until positions are filled. E.O.E.

For Rent

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE - 2000 sq ft to 7000 sq ft - Tall ceilings, loading docks, plenty of parking. Middlebury - 802-558-6092

Help Wanted

For Rent

COMPANY COMING? 2-bedroom rustic lakefront winterized cottage available for short-term rental on Lake Dunmore, 10-15 minutes to Middlebury and Brandon. Sleeps 4, comfortably furnished, heated, fully equipped kitchens, bathrooms with showers. TV, WiFi. krnorthcove@gmail.com; 802 352-4236

Help Wanted

For Rent

Help Wanted

For Rent

Help Wanted



Leading construction company is seeking Carpenters and Lead Carpenters in the Addison & Chittenden County area.

We offer a rewarding work environment with comprehensive compensation packages ranging from \$65,000/yr to \$95,000/yr based on experience. Benefits include paid holidays, 3+ weeks paid time off, 401k, employer healthcare contribution, profit sharing, bi-annual bonuses, and more.

Scan the QR code below to text your contact info and experience or email us at admin@smithmclain.com.



Come build with us!



Got a seasonal gig? Find your dream job with help from the Addy Indy.



addisonindependent.com/help-wanted

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities



Meals on Wheels Volunteers

RSVP of Addison County is looking for drivers to help deliver meals for Meals on Wheels.

If you are interested in delivering meals please call us at 802-388-7044.



Addison Independent CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM

ADDISON INDEPENDENT
58 Maple Street, Middlebury, VT 05753
802-388-4944
addisonindependent.com • email: classifieds@addisonindependent.com

Cash in on our 4-for-3 rates! Pay for 3 issues, get 4th issue free! An ad placed for consecutive issues runs the 4th time for free!

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Or, submit your classified ad on our website: addisonindependent.com

DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

RATES
• 25¢ per word • minimum \$2.50 per ad
• 50¢ internet listing per issue • minimum 2 insertions

- Special 4 for 3 rates not valid for the following categories: Services, Opportunities, Real Estate, Wood heat, Attn. Farmers, For Rent & Help Wanted
- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notices | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> Att. Farmers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Card of Thanks | <input type="checkbox"/> Help Wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personals | <input type="checkbox"/> For Sale | <input type="checkbox"/> Cars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Meetings** | <input type="checkbox"/> Trucks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free** | <input type="checkbox"/> For Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> SUVs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost 'N Found** | <input type="checkbox"/> Want to Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage Sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Heat | <input type="checkbox"/> Boats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn & Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Wanted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Rentals |

** no charge for these ads Spotlight with large ✓ \$1

PLEASE PRINT YOUR AD...

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

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.

Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

For Rent

LINCOLN: Attractive home to share with retired professional gentleman. Avid reader who appreciates the outdoors. Reduced rent of \$300/month in exchange for support around the house, light snow shoveling, and "just in case" presence at night. Loveable small dog! Sorry, no additional pets. Private bedroom, office, bath. 802-863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

MIDDLEBURY ONE BEDROOM Small, ground floor. Very nice, very convenient in-town location, perfect for person who does not drive. \$795 plus heat and electric. Non-smoker, no pets. 802-388-5474.

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

ONE BEDROOM Bristol, no smoking, pets upon approval, heat included, walking distance to town, first month plus deposit \$925. 802-352-1031

For Rent

MIDDLEBURY: Rent separate space on the outskirts of town from retired professional couple in their 70s. Apartment has kitchenette, W/D, large combined living room/bedroom area. \$850 plus utilities. Home-share Guest responsible for shoveling walkway and stairs to the unit. Available after March 1. Sorry, no pets. 802-863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

PAINTING STUDIO FOR RENT Serene, bright, and spacious painting studio available January 1, 2026. 20'x30' open floor plan with 11-foot ceilings and plenty of ventilation. Located in Orwell, Vermont, less than 30 minutes from Middlebury. \$930 per month, heat and electric included, 12-month lease. Contact John@Hubglass.com to schedule a viewing.

WOODLAND APARTMENTS 2 Bedroom and Studio Apartments Available in Bristol Vermont. Go to WoodlandApartmentsVT.com for availability/pictures!

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.

VERGENNES WILLOW APARTMENTS Is currently taking waitlist applications for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. No smoking/no pets. Income limits apply- Rent rate based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191. www.SummitPMG.com.

Wood Heat

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

Att. Farmers

1ST CUT, SMALL square, \$3.25. 2nd cut small square, \$4.25. 802-377-5455.

NOTICE OF SELF-STORAGE LIEN SALE

116 SELF STORAGE, BRISTOL, VT
Notice is hereby given that the contents of the self-storage unit listed below will be sold at public auction by sealed bid at the 116 Self Storage facility. This sale is being held to collect unpaid storage unit occupancy fees, charges and expenses of the sale.

The entire contents of the self-storage unit listed below will be sold, with the proceeds to be distributed to 116 Self Storage for all accrued occupancy fees (rent charges), attorney's fees, sale expenses in relation to the unit and its sale. Any proceeds beyond the foregoing shall be returned to the unit holder.

Contents of the unit may be viewed on 12/26/2025 commencing at 10 a.m. Sealed bids are to be submitted on the entire contents of the self-storage unit. Bids will be opened one-quarter of an hour after the unit has been viewed on 12/26/2025. The highest bidder on the storage unit must remove the entire contents within 48 hours after notification of their successful bid. Purchase must be made in cash and paid in advance of the removal of the contents of the unit. A \$50.00 cash deposit shall be made and will be refunded if the unit is broom cleaned. 116 Self Storage reserves the right to accept or reject bids.

Unit #38 - A. Bill

Public Notices Index

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

116 Self Storage (1)
Addison County Courthouse (2)
Brandon (1)
Middlebury (1)

Middlebury Festival on the Green (1)
State of Vermont (1)
Vergennes (1)

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.

WARNING

Annual Meeting of the Middlebury Summer Festival on-the-Green, Inc.

The officers, directors, and all parties interested in the Middlebury Summer Festival on-the-Green, Inc. are hereby warned and notified to meet in person at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3 Main St, Middlebury, at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, to transact the following business:

- 1) Approve the minutes of the last Annual Meeting;
- 2) Hear reports from Festival Committees;
- 3) Elect Officers and Directors for 2026;
- 4) Discuss unfinished business from 2025;
- 5) Discuss new business for 2026.

A Zoom option will be available. Community members interested in attending in person or via Zoom should email info@festivalonthegreen.org

Dated at Middlebury, Vermont
December 11, 2025
Patricia A. Boera, Secretary
Middlebury Summer Festival on-the-Green

TOWN OF BRANDON NOTICE OF TAX SALE

The resident and non-resident owners, lienholders and mortgagees of the real estate in the Town of Brandon, in the County of Rutland, and State of Vermont are hereby notified that real estate taxes assessed by the Town of Brandon for the 2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024-2025 property tax years, and delinquent sewer fees assessed by the Town of Brandon, remain, either in whole or in part, unpaid upon the following described real estate in the Town of Brandon as indicated below, to wit:

Kenneth Baron and Sara Engle: Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .14 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 16 Carver Street, Brandon, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Kenneth Baron and Sara J. Engle and Timothy C. Engle and Robin R. Engle in a Warranty Deed from Timothy C. Engle and Robin R. Engle dated August 8, 2005, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 177 at Page 366. Reference is made to a Quit Claim Deed from Kenneth Baron and Sara J. Engle and Timothy C. Engle and Robin R. Engle to Kenneth Baron and Sara J. Engle dated April 9, 2008, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 196 at Page 393. (Parcel I.D. #0087-0016).

Robert J. Bunnell: Delinquent 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024-2025 Property Taxes and Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .76 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 71 Maple Street, Brandon, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Robert J. Bunnell in a Quit Claim Deed from Paula A. Krauss dated September 20, 2012, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 217 at Page 783. (Parcel I.D. #0039-0071).

Community Ventures LLC: Delinquent 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024-2025 Property Taxes

Being 1.80 acres of land, more or less, a mobile home park with twelve (12) sites, located at Conway Terrace, Brandon, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Community Ventures LLC in a Warranty Deed from Joseph Bresette dated August 2, 2019, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 243 at Page 653. (Parcel I.D. #0102-0001).

Beverly Cram: Delinquent 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Property Taxes and Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being a 1973 Fantasy mobile home with serial number 299111, located at 81 Conway Terrace, and being more particularly described in a Vermont Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale from Tennile Flores to Beverly Cram dated March 9, 2018, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in the Mobile Home Bill of Sale Book. (Parcel I.D. #0102-0081).

Michael A. Gerow: Delinquent 2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Property Taxes and Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .23 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 225 Furnace Road, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Michael A. Gerow and Sadie E. Gerow by Warranty Deed of David A. Larock dated September 22, 1995, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 123 at Page 35, and a Vermont Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale from Bean's Mobile Homes, Inc., d/b/a Bean's Homes, to Michael Gerow dated May 21, 2018, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in the Mobile Home Bill of Sale Book, which references a 2019 Redman Model F35225 14x52 mobile home with serial number 122000HA007092A. Reference is made to a Final Order and Decree in the matter of Sadie Gerow v. Michael Gerow, Rutland Family Court Docket #16-1-07Rddm, dated October 2, 2007, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 226 at Page 615. (Parcel I.D. #0007-0225).

Eric Grenier and Bobbie Sue Grenier: Delinquent 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Property Taxes

Being 2.0 acres of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 818 High Pond Road, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed in a Warranty Deed from Florence Smith to William Dutton and Brendon Dutton and Eric Grenier and Bobbie Sue Grenier dated December 3, 2015, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 229 at Page 385. Reference is made to a Quit Claim Deed from William Dutton and Brenda Dutton to Bobbie Sue Grenier dated November 18, 2021, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 252 at Page 643. Also included is a mobile home described in a Vermont Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale from Foster Brothers Farm, Inc. to William and Brenda Dutton and Bobbie Sue and Eric Grenier dated December 4, 2015, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in the Mobile Home Bill of Sale Book, being a 1981 Hallmark Homes Benchmark Columbus 14x60 mobile home with serial number BP21567 56142FDJ. (Parcel I.D. #0074-0818).

Patricia Lafayette: Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .40 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 69 Carver Street, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed in an Executor's Deed from Sean Stearns and Christopher Stearns, Co-Executors of the Estate of Nancy M. Stearns to Patricia Lafayette dated September 22, 2017, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 236 at Page 704. (Parcel I.D. #0087-0069). The mobile home originally on the property at the time of purchase by Patricia Lafayette was destroyed by fire and was replaced with a single-family dwelling that is also subject to this tax sale.

Lucas R. Manchester and Beth G. Manchester: Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .72 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 89 Furnace Road, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed in a Warranty Deed from David F. Davis and Margie Davis to Lucas R. Manchester and Beth G. Manchester dated August 9, 2011, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 213 at Page 42. (Parcel I.D. #0007-0089).

Roberta Palshan: Delinquent 2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Property Taxes

Being a 1985 Titan 14x52 mobile home with serial number RAD314068, located at 25 Pratt Road, and being more particularly described in a Vermont Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale from Albank, a division of Charter One Bank, FSB, Successor of Albank, FSB, to Roberta Whittemore, also known as Roberta Palshan, dated January 28, 1999, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in the Mobile Home Bill of Sale Book. (Parcel I.D. #0108-0025).

Phillip A. Stannard, Jr. and Chris R. Stannard: Delinquent 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Property Taxes and Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .17 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 35 Maple Street, Brandon, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Phillip A. Stannard, Jr. and Chris R. Stannard in an Executor's Deed from Brian G. Austin, Executor of the Estate of June Austin, late of Brandon, Vermont, dated May 21, 2021, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 250 at Page 476. (Parcel I.D. #0039-0035).

Patricia M. Tuliano: Delinquent 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Property Taxes

Being 10.00 acres of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 640 Slab Fence Road, Brandon, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Patricia M. Tuliano in a Warranty Deed from Irving J. Smith and Brian P. Smith dated December 15, 1975, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 83 at Page 17. (Parcel I.D. #0026-0512).

Richard J. Weldon and Karen M. Weldon: Delinquent Sewer Fees

Being .20 acre of land, more or less, with dwelling and any and all improvements thereon, located at 33 Carver Street, Brandon, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Richard J. Weldon and Karen M. Weldon in a Warranty Deed from Judith T. Walden and Donna T. Burt dated July 12, 1988, and recorded in the Brandon Land Records in Book 99 at Page 265. (Parcel I.D. #0087-0033).

And so much of said real estate will be sold at public auction at the Brandon Town Clerk's office, a public place in said Town of Brandon on the 26th day of February, 2026 at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon, as shall be requisite to discharge such taxes and sewer fees with costs and fees, unless previously paid. Be advised that the owner or mortgagee, or the owner's or mortgagee's representatives or assigns, of lands sold for taxes shall have a right to redemption for a period of one year from the date of sale pursuant to 32 V.S.A. §5260.

Any questions or inquiries regarding the above-referenced sale should be directed to the following address:

Carroll, Boe & Kite, P.C.
ATTN: James F. Carroll, Esq. or Wanda M. Murray, Paralegal
64 Court Street
Middlebury, Vermont 05753 Telephone: (802) 388-6711

Carroll, Boe & Kite, P.C. and the Town of Brandon do not give any opinion or certification as to the marketability of the titles to the above-referenced properties as held by the current owners/taxpayers.

The only acceptable form of bid payment at the day of tax sale is bank check payable to Carroll, Boe & Kite, P.C., Real Estate Trust Account. No personal checks will be accepted.

Dated at Brandon, Vermont this 24 day of November, 2025.

Seth Hopkins, Town of Brandon
Delinquent Tax Collector

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT CALEDONIA UNIT

CIVIL DIVISION DOCKET NO. 25-CV-01071

FARM CREDIT EAST, ACA
Plaintiff,

v.

COREY T. CAYIA and
MARCEL P. LECLAIR
Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE

By virtue and in execution of the Judgment and Decree of Foreclosure by Judicial Sale dated September 26, 2025, for a breach of a Mortgage dated October 28, 2024, and recorded in Book 65, Page 188 in the of the Town of Sheffield Land Records (the "Mortgaged Property"); and for the purpose of foreclosing the same, the Mortgaged Property will be sold at public auction on **Thursday, January 29, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.** at the Mortgaged Property, located at 1636 Blake Pond Road in Sheffield, Vermont, more particularly described as follows:

"... a parcel consisting of 213.00 acres, more or less, together with any other improvements thereon or appurtenances thereto, located at 1636 Blake Pond Road in the Town of Sheffield and being all and the same lands and premise conveyed to Corey Cayia and Marcel LeClair by warranty deed from Karl R. Johnson and Lisa T. Johnson dated June 24, 2022 and recorded in Book 65 at Page 188 of the Sheffield land records..."

Please note that this is a Class 4 Road and if the road is impassable, the auction will be held at the intersection of Drake Place Road and Blake Pond Road.

TERMS OF SALE: The Mortgaged Property will be sold "AS IS WHERE IS" to the highest bidder for cash or wire funds only. The sale of the Mortgaged Property is subject to confirmation by the Vermont Superior Court, Caledonia Unit, Civil Division. The Mortgaged Property will be sold subject to unpaid taxes, municipal assessments, and superior liens, if any.

The commercial equipment at the Mortgage Property will be sold separately in an online sale from January 29, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. until Monday February 2. Additional information regarding the auction for the commercial equipment can be found at <https://www.thcauction.com/02022026-secured-creditor-sugaring-sheffield-vt-1725>.

The public sale may be adjourned one or more times for a total time not exceeding 30 days, without further court order, and without publication or service of a new notice of sale, by announcement of the new sale date to those present at each adjournment or by posting notice of the adjournment in a conspicuous place at the location of the sale. Notice of the new sale date shall also be sent by first class mail, postage prepaid, to the mortgagors at the mortgagors' last known address at least five days before the new sale date.

Defendants Corey Cayia and Marcel LeClair are entitled to redeem the Mortgaged Property at any time prior to the sale by paying the full amount due under the Mortgage referenced above, including the costs and expenses of the sale.

MORTGAGED PROPERTY DEPOSIT: A non-refundable deposit for the Mortgaged Property in the amount of \$10,000.00 shall be paid by the high bidder by cash, certified check or bank draft to Thomas Hirschak Co., which shall hold the deposit until the closing. The balance of the purchase price for the Mortgaged Property shall be due and payable within the latter of 10 days from the date of confirmation of said sale by the Vermont Superior Court, Caledonia Unit, Civil Division or 45 days from the date of public auction. If the balance of the purchase price for the Mortgaged Property is not paid within the period set forth herein, the deposit shall be forfeited and shall be retained by Plaintiff herein as agreed liquidation damages and the Mortgaged Property may be offered to the next highest bidder still interested in the Mortgaged Property.

PURCHASE AND SALE CONTRACT: The high bidder for the Mortgaged Property shall be required to sign a no contingency contract of Purchase and Sale at the public auction, agreeing to purchase the Mortgaged Property in its "AS IS WHERE IS" condition, as a result of being the successful and high bidder at the sale.

OTHER TERMS TO BE ANNOUNCED AT SALE: Inquiries can be made to Thomas Hirschak Co., 1878 Cadys Falls Road, Morrisville, VT 05661; (802) 242-2245. Additional information regarding this auction can also be found at <https://www.thcauction.com/01292025-farm-crediteast-cayia-sheffield-vt>

Dated: December 8, 2025.

FARM CREDIT EAST, ACA

By: Ryan M. Long
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30 Main Street, Suite 500
P.O. Box 1489
Burlington, VT 05602-1489
(802) 864-0880
rlong@primmer.com

Leicester

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

NEWS

LEICESTER — The Leicester Historical Society is sponsoring Prize Bingo on Sat, Dec 13, at 1 p.m. at the Senior Center at the Four Corners. Refreshments will be served, and all are welcome. Bingo will begin again in April.

The Leicester Historical Society is once again sponsoring the Annual Memory Tree in front of the Meeting House. Submit

names, clearly written, to Diane Benware at 1594 Old Jerusalem Road, Salisbury, VT 05769, along with payment. Cost is one dollar per name, six names for \$5. Names/payment may be left at the Town Office. The tree will be lighted at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec 20. Names will be published on the town website between Christmas and New Year's Day.

The Leicester Selectboard is working on the 2026 budget. Residents who have concerns or suggestions are encouraged to contact the Town Clerk with their message, and she will forward concerns to the Selectboard for consideration.

All budget items will be voted by Australian Ballot in March 2026.

Public Notices

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

WARNING

COUNTY OF ADDISON ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 133(3)(a), the taxpayers of the County of Addison are hereby given notice that the annual meeting to discuss the final budget for 2026-2027 will be held at 9:00 am on Monday, January 12, 2026. The meeting will be held in the County Clerk's office at the Frank Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury.

More information and extra copies of the budget may be obtained by contacting the Addison County Clerk at 802-388-1966 or addisoncountyclerk@gmail.com.

Patricia Ross, Assistant Judge & Nicole Wilkerson, Assistant Judge

REVENUE:	2026-2027
County Tax 0.00581614 estimated	\$437,668.00
Interest Earned	\$2,400.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$15.00
Passports	\$13,500.00
Wills for Safekeeping	\$11,000.00
Total Income	\$ 464,583.00

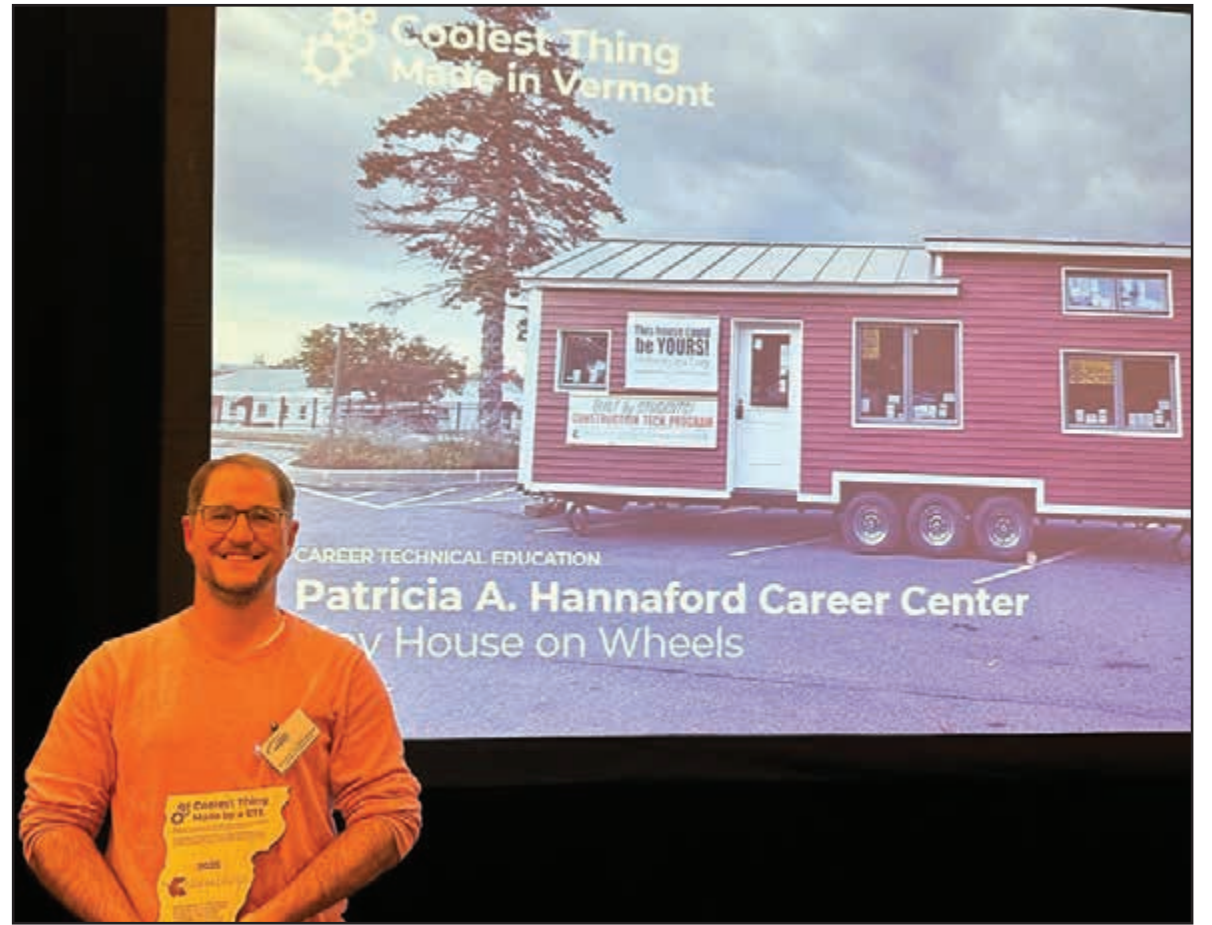
EXPENSES	
Court	
Contingency	\$300.00
Contracted Services	\$7,550.00
Dues & Membership	\$1,500.00
Insurance	\$2,950.00
Passport/Budget Advertising	\$2,100.00
Office Expense	\$2,950.00
Court Personnel	
Benefits	\$ 7,056.00
Salaries	\$73,652.00
Audit	\$16,000.00
Court Subtotal	\$114,058.00

Probate Court	
Contingency	\$470.00
Dues	\$235.00
Supplies/Equipment	\$25.00
Training & Education	\$420.00
Probate Court Subtotal	\$1,150.00

EXPENSES CONTINUED	
Sheriff's Building	
Building & Grounds	\$9,500.00
Capital Improvements	\$50,000.00
Custodial	\$2,850.00
Inspections	\$2,500.00
Insurance	\$7,000.00
Utilities	\$20,000.00
Sheriff's Building Subtotal	\$91,850.00

Sheriff's Department	
Insurance/Bonds	\$29,000.00
Office Supplies	\$1,000.00
Telephone	\$4,000.00
Training	\$40,000.00
Valcour/Spillman	\$3,500.00
Personnel	
Total Benefits	\$15,768.00
Total Salaries	\$94,257.00
Sheriff's Dept. Subtotal	\$187,525.00
Sheriff Capital Reserve	\$ 70,000.00

Total Expenses	\$464,583.00
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HANNAFORD CAREER CENTER Construction Technology Instructor Nick Cantrick accepts the **Coollest Thing Made in Vermont** award for the Career Center's tiny house at a ceremony in Burlington recently.

Career center earns 'Coolest Things Made in Vt.' awards

MIDDLEBURY — The Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center recently not one, but two "Coolest Things Made in Vermont Awards" bestowed by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.

The awards recognize the state's most innovative manufacturers and the next generation of technical talent. They were presented during the annual Vermont Manufacturing Summit on Nov. 20.

The top prize went to BETA Technologies for its groundbreaking all-electric ALIA aircraft, capable of both conventional takeoff and landing and vertical takeoff and

landing. Designed and built in Vermont, ALIA represents a fully integrated approach to the future of aviation—from advanced propulsion systems to charging infrastructure.

Hannaford, based in Middlebury and serving 17 Addison County towns, won the award for Coolest Thing Made by a Career Technical Education or STEAM Program. The specific program honored was the Tiny House on Wheels. Students from the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center received top honors for designing and building a fully functional Tiny House on Wheels, crafted to provide affordable housing for a local resident. The project showcases applied learning, craftsmanship, sustainability, and the community-minded spirit that defines Vermont's Career Technical Education programs.

"This event highlights the power of CTE in the lives of students, and the importance of CTE for Vermont. The innovation of these kids demonstrates what young people can do when given access to Career Technical Education. CTE is not just a leg up for their future goals, it is a launchpad," said Nicole MacTavish, superintendent and director of the Hannaford Regional Technical

School District.

Among the finalists in this category who also received recognition was Hannaford's Mobility Device for Disabled Children. It is a student-created adaptive mobility device that transforms a toy car into life-changing technology for a local child.

More than sixty submissions were entered by manufacturers and student teams across the state, an impressive reflection of the innovation, creativity, and technical skill that fuel Vermont's manufacturing sector. From aerospace and advanced engineering to adaptive technology and community driven housing solutions, this year's entries highlight the sector's powerful contributions to Vermont's economic vitality.

"The Vermont Chamber is proud to champion Vermont's manufacturers, industries that make living, working, and thriving in Vermont possible," said Amy Spear, president of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. "The Coolest Thing awards celebrate not only remarkable products, but the skilled workforce, ingenuity, and partnerships that strengthen Vermont's economy. We are honored to recognize the leaders and students who are shaping the future of manufacturing in our state."

"The Vermont Chamber is proud to champion Vermont's manufacturers, industries that make living, working, and thriving in Vermont possible," said Amy Spear, president of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. "The Coolest Thing awards celebrate not only remarkable products, but the skilled workforce, ingenuity, and partnerships that strengthen Vermont's economy. We are honored to recognize the leaders and students who are shaping the future of manufacturing in our state."

STATE OF VERMONT RUTLAND SUPERIOR COURT RUTLAND COUNTY, SS. DOCKET NO. 25-CV-04878

RE: Abandoned Mobile Home of Warren Keough
19 Bridge Park, Brandon, Vermont (Forestdale)

Forestdale Mobile Home Park, Inc., Plaintiff
V.

Warren Keough, Defendant

NOTICE OF HEARING

Please take Notice that the attached Verified Complaint, Abandoned Mobile Home, will be heard before the Rutland Superior Court on the 17 of December, 2025, at 1 o'clock in the p.m.

Interested parties are invited to attend and show cause, if any, why the transfer of the mobile home to the park owner, without a public sale, should not be granted.

Dated at Rutland, Vermont this 21 day of December 2025.

/s/ Nichol McKeighan
Clerk of the Court

STATE OF VERMONT RUTLAND SUPERIOR COURT RUTLAND COUNTY, SS. DOCKET NO. 25-CV-04878 Rncv

RE: Abandoned Mobile Home of Warren Keough
Forestdale Mobile Home Park, Inc., Plaintiff
V.

Warren Keough, Defendant

VERIFIED COMPLAINT OF ABANDONED MOBILE HOME

Park Owner - Forestdale Mobile Home Park Inc.,
101 Tremont St., Barre, Vermont 05641

Name of Mobile Home Park - Forestdale Mobile Home Park, Inc.

Mobile Home Owner - Warren Keough

Last Mobile Home Resident - Warren Keough, 19 Bridge Park, Brandon, Vermont (Forestdale)

Mobile Home Description: 1979 Olympic Mobile Home, 14 x 56, Serial Number 2560. Located at 19 Bridge Park, Brandon, Vermont 05733 (Forestdale)

Creditors:

- 1) Forestdale Mobile Home Park, Inc., for back rent and current rents in the amount of \$1,272.00.
- 2) Town of Brandon for past due and current Taxes in the amount of \$795.44.
- 3) Town of Brandon/ Brandon Fire District #1 for past due water and sewer in the amount of \$4,260.21.

Facts supporting the claim that the mobile home has been abandoned:

- 1) No one has lived in the mobile home in over a year
- 2) No heat
- 3) No water
- 4) No electricity

Statement of amount due to park owner:

- 1) August lot rent - \$318.00
- 2) September lot rent - \$318.00
- 3) October lot rent - \$318.00
- 4) November lot rent - \$318.00

Total amount due \$1,272.00

The above information is true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. Dated at Barre, this 4th day of November 2025.

/s/ Eugene Bisson, President
Forestdale Mobile Home Park, Inc.

STATE OF VERMONT COUNTY OF WASHINGTON

Before me, personally appeared Eugene Bisson, known to me, and he did swear and subscribe to the truth of the foregoing.

/s/ Crystal Bresette
Notary Public

SPREAD THE WORD

Email it to:
news@addisonindependent.com

CITY OF VERGENNES NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Development Review Board will hold a Public Hearing on December 29, 2025, at 7 pm as the first order of new business, for the following purpose:

To consider Site Plan Review for Application #2025-40 by 345 East St. LLC to create an additional Dwelling Unit within the Principal Structure on the Property located at 3 East St. Reviews will consider Article VII, Article XII, Article XIV Section 1401, Section 1402, and Section 1408 (A.) and Article XVI Section 1603.

Please note that the hearing will be held as a "hybrid meeting", with participation either in person, by ZOOM, or by phone. The in-person meeting will be held in the One Credit Union Conference Room located at 63 School Street, Vergennes, Vermont

Meetings are accessible via Zoom:
Meeting ID: 828 0065 2431
Meeting password: 5CKESb

Join by phone: Dial 1 (929) 205-6099; For participants joining by phone: To raise your hand during the meeting, press *9. To mute/unmute during the meeting, press *6

If you experience any difficulty in accessing this meeting, contact the City of Vergennes Zoning Administrator at 802-989-6315.

Persons seeking eligibility to Appeal must establish status as an Interested Person as defined in Article VI Section 603 of the City of Vergennes Zoning and Subdivision Regulations AND participate in the Public Hearing either in person or in writing in order to take any subsequent Appeal. The City of Vergennes is an "on the record" Appeal municipality with regard to Appeals to the Environmental Court from Development Review Board Decisions. This means that the Environmental Court shall only consider Testimony and Evidence provided during Public Hearings on the Application. Interested Persons should therefore assure that their participation in the Public Hearing proceedings is complete and represents the totality of their Testimony and Evidence.

A copy of the application is available for public review at City Hall or by contacting David Austin at zoning@vergennes.org.

December 8, 2025
David Austin
Zoning Administrator

PROPOSED STATE RULES

By law, public notice of proposed rules must be given by publication in newspapers of record. The purpose of these notices is to give the public a chance to respond to the proposals. The public notices for administrative rules are now also available online at <https://secure.vermont.gov/SOS/rules/>. The law requires an agency to hold a public hearing on a proposed rule, if requested to do so in writing by 25 persons or an association having at least 25 members.

To make special arrangements for individuals with disabilities or special needs please call or write the contact person listed below as soon as possible.

To obtain further information concerning any scheduled hearing(s), obtain copies of proposed rule(s) or submit comments regarding proposed rule(s), please call or write the contact person listed below. You may also submit comments in writing to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, State House, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 (802-828-2231).

Green Mountain Care Board: Rule 5.000: Oversight of Accountable Care Organizations.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 25P042

CONCISE SUMMARY: This rule establishes revised standards and processes, consistent with Act 62 of 2025, that the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) will use to certify Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and review, modify, and approve the budgets of ACOs. First, as of January 1, 2026, the GMCB will no longer review the budgets of all ACOs operating in Vermont, as required by the current GMCB Rule 5.000. Instead, the GMCB will only review the budgets of ACOs that contract with Vermont Medicaid and/or Vermont commercial payers. The GMCB will not review the budgets of ACOs that contract only with Medicare. Second, as of January 1, 2027, all ACOs operating in Vermont must be certified by the GMCB. This is a revision from the current GMCB Rule 5.000, which requires certification only for ACOs that contract with Vermont Medicaid and/or Vermont commercial payers. Third, this revised rule includes revisions to ACO certification and budget review criteria, consistent with Act 62 of 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Angela Pellegrino-Wood, Green Mountain Care Board, 112 State St. 5th floor Montpelier, VT 05602 Tel: 802-461-5740 E-Mail: Angela.Pellegrino-Wood@vermont.gov URL: <https://gmcbboard.vermont.gov/aco-oversight>.

FOR COPIES: Mark Hengstler, Green Mountain Care Board, 112 State St. 5th floor Montpelier, VT 05602 Tel: 802-249-0519 E-Mail: Mark.Hengstler@vermont.gov.

***** This draft Selectboard meeting agenda is subject to change.

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING
ROOM 116 – LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
TOWN OFFICES – 77 MAIN STREET
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025 - 7:00 P.M.

Also available via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85326839855>
By Phone: +1 646-558-8656 (not toll-free)
Webinar ID: 817 7882 7558

For those wishing to watch but not participate:
Selectboard meetings are livestreamed to MCTV's YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/MCTV/Vermont>
and also broadcast live on Comcast Channel 1071

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 7:00 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call to Order 2. *Approval of Agenda 3. *Approval of Consent Agenda <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3a. *Approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 2025 Regular Selectboard Meeting 3b. *Acceptance of Selectboard Subcommittee Meeting Minutes (if any) 3c. *Approval of Applications - Renewal of State Licenses/Permits (if any) 3d. *Approval of Check Warrants 3e. *Consent Agenda Placeholder 3f. *Consent Agenda Placeholder 3g. **Town Manager's Report |
| 7:05 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. **Citizen Comments (opportunity to raise/address issues not otherwise included in this agenda) |
| 7:10 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. *Town Energy Committee - Two Applications - Appointments |
| 7:15 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. **Town Plan Development - Update & Progress |
| 7:25 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. **Kevin Chu - Housing Presentation & Discussion |
| 8:05 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. **Continued Review of Draft FY2027 General Fund Budget - Local Agencies - Funding Requests |
| 8:35 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. *Approval of Listers' Grand List - Errors & Omissions Report |
| 8:40 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. **Board Member Concerns 11. Executive Session - Not Anticipated 12. Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session |
| 8:45 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. *Adjourn |

*Possible Decision **Discussion

ARTS + LEISURE

The Addison Inc.

December 11, 2025

LONGEST NIGHT SHINES*

LOCAL THEATER REFLECTS ON A SEASON OF ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

These young performers were part of Town Hall Theater Center for Engagement and Learning's summer production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." They will also be performing for the second time in the solstice festivities at the theater on Dec. 21. Pictured, from left to right, are Ade-lynn Leonard, Til Boyce, Vivienne Rafferty, Sara Miranda-Ngaiza and Bodhi Kenna.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALEB KENNA

Cold. It's cold, cold, cold! We hear ya and agree... Brrrrrr! But still, there's no excuse to miss the winter solstice celebrations coming on Dec. 21 to Town Hall Theater in Middlebury.

The party begins for the whole family at 2 p.m., in the new wing of the downtown theater. Come in out of the cold to craft popcorn garlands and edible fruit and birdseed ornaments for some wild an-imal friends. There will also be hot cocoa, hot mulled cider and light nibbles.

BY ELSIE

LYNN PARINI

Ahhh, getting warmer yet?

At 2:30 p.m., the merriment will move into the Anderson Studio where you'll enjoy a variety of short, solstice-themed pieces including an interactive reading, a snowball fight featuring cat puppets made by our youngest solstice class participants and a traditional revels performance like a Mum-mer's play with slapstick theater and a magical world of puppets. The cast stars actors from The Young Company: Til Boyce,

Adelynn Leonard, Sara Miranda-Ngaiza, Lydia Cheresnick and Ten-lyn Wetzel, accompanied by several professional guest performances. Participating artists include Clint Bierman, Barbara Paulson, members of Courageous Stage and the New American Ensemble.



Mother Spring and Father Frost, from No Strings Marionette Company, will be part of the solstice celebrations at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on Sunday, Dec. 21, beginning at 2 p.m. COURTESY PHOTO

Now that everyone's warm... the revelries will head outdoors to hang the bird treats on a big, beautiful evergreen tree in the Maloney Plaza. There will be dances and toasting and a closing so-lemnity back inside to honor the day.

"We're excited to invite the community to come together for an afternoon of holiday festivities and to celebrate the new Center for Learning and Engagement, which has served over 400 children and adults in its first year!" said CLE Director Lindsay Pontius.

Woah, that's an impressive first-year number. Let's dig deeper.

"We held 40 classes, involving over 530 individuals," Pontius elaborated in an interview this week. "We had 350 youth, 180 adults and 20 excellent faculty!"

Courses this year have been all over the map. Name it and it just might have happened! Seriously, try it. Yoga for parents — yep, they even offered free childcare. Self-defense for seniors — check. Screen acting — of course. Culinary? Ballet? Pole Dancing... Yes, yes and yes!

After Pontius's beginning acting class ended, her students were begging her to do it again.

SEE SOLSTICE ON PAGE 3

LINCOLN MAGIC

TOM VERNER & JANET FREDERICKS

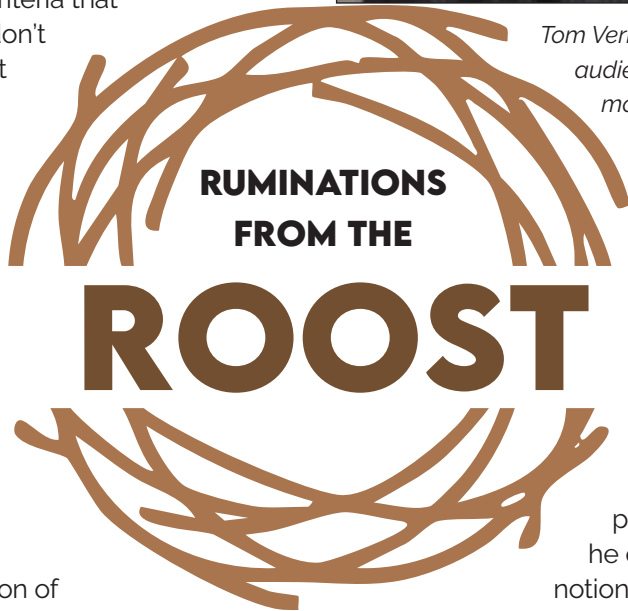
Once in a great while, I feel as if I have slipped and fallen into the river and when I regain my footing, I find fish in my pockets. My objective this winter was aimed at uncovering the notable people and unique events in Addison County that have convinced me I have chosen the right place to live out my remaining years.

BY **STEVE HARRIS**

Using criteria that even I don't

completely grasp, I first chose Tom Verner and Janet Fredericks of Lincoln to profile, and a whole world of amazement has revealed itself. I have seen them perform their magic act in front of many audiences over the last 23 years and have contributed annually to their 501(c)(3) Magicians Without Borders as an expression of my approval and desire to support their work. But until now, I have never made the effort to understand where they came from, how they met and what inspired them to devote their lives to such direct, yet complex generosity, and do it from the home they have made in Lincoln. First, I will share with you some seemingly unrelated data points they have inspired me to explore that will help explain my current state of wonder.

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was an erudite psychologist credited with establishing "humanistic psychology" while undertaking a lifetime of teaching, writing and laying the foundation for The Humanistic Psychology Institute (established in Old Saybrook, Conn., in 1971). Maslow's instincts ran counter to the orthodoxy of his time. He believed that psychologists could be most effective by "focusing on (and encouraging) the positive qualities in people, as opposed to treating them as a bag of (pathological) symptoms." In Maslow's philosophical universe, an actualized individual can ascend through three levels of happiness in their lives: The Pleasant Life (where opportunities for pleasure are fully appreciated), The Good Life (where life's pleasures are shared with another through intimate engagement)



Tom Verner and Janet Fredericks of Lincoln have been performing magic in front of many audiences over the last 23 years, but what makes them so magical? Steve Harris shares more about this local couple's lives.

COURTESY PHOTO

and finally, The Meaningful Life (where the fruits of personal fulfillment are shared for a purpose larger than the self). By helping to consolidate ideas of positive encouragement, he essentially repackaged notions of human transformation and growth that go back to Plato and predate Christianity. His work was one of the 10 most cited psychologists during the 20th century. Stick with me, you'll see what this has to do with these folks in a few more sentences.

How many psychologists does it take to screw in a light bulb? Just one, but only if the bulb really wants to change...

TOM VERNER

Tom Verner was raised in Castle Shannon, a working-class, Irish-Catholic neighborhood in the suburban hills of Pittsburgh with a younger sister Patti and his older brother Jim. He attended St. Anne's parochial school in the turbulent wake of his older brother's reputation as a rebellious and disruptive predecessor amongst the same nuns. When Jim left the region early for the Marine Corps (See the sidebar about Jim, page 9), Tom embraced his family's deep religious convictions and spent seven years of his post high school years in a cloistered monastery. There he continued his classical education in the solitude and community of ritual and study.

When Tom left the monastery, he "tumbled out

of the 13th century into the world of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll." His continuing education would take him to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh where he gobbled up a four-year degree in literature and philosophy. His dormitory was St. Joseph's House of Hospitality. There he listened to and learned from his 150 indigent, mostly alcoholic roommates and helped to run a soup kitchen that fed 400 meals a day to a wider population of society's discards.

A subsequent two years in the Peace Corps took him to the Middle East, preparing him for eight additional years of higher education in the Hartford, Conn., area. In 1979, he was awarded a PhD from the aforementioned Humanistic Psychology Institute.

His pattern of education and service continued at the Blue Hills Treatment Center where his career as a clinical psychologist began in their Day Program. One of his patients was a magician addicted to heroin, and they agreed at the outset that the patient would teach the rudiments of performative magic to Tom, while Tom would reciprocate with the restorative advice and support of talk therapy. This relationship would culminate in the two of them opening a retail business in Hartford called The Magic Shop. Thus began the third stage of what Tom describes as a river delta of personal growth where the three streams of his experience; "...private counseling practice, teaching and performing magician began to blend." He would eventually need them all.

At this point in his life, Tom became one of the 10 most highly educated psychologist/magicians in the 20th century...I'm so sure of this, I refuse to fact check it!

SEE ROOST ON PAGE 8

SOLSTICE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Why? I don't really know," she said. "Maybe it's the love of being together, part of a group, part of an ensemble, or pushed outside their comfort zone. They

wanted all of that... We're really tap-ping some kind of vein and we're really excited about it."

"I loved every minute of that class," said Nina Vila of New Haven, who took Pontius's beginners acting class that ran for nine weeks this fall. "There were 12 students including myself and I didn't know 10 of them, which I loved. We became a community right away..."

For me, I wanted to get out of my comfort zone in a safe and creative environment. Lindsay provided that for me and for all of us. I love that THT is providing adult classes for people who want to explore their creative side."

And for youth, too.

Keziah Wilde a 2024 graduate

"I LOVE THAT THT IS PROVIDING ADULT CLASSES FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO EXPLORE THEIR CREATIVE SIDE."

— Nina Villa



Keziah Wilde sits with a STEAM class taught by Carol Buzby during a no-school day, where the kids made hot air balloons.

COURTESY PHOTO

of Middlebury College, started her job as assistant director for the CLE almost exactly a year ago. "My first project was the solstice show," she remembered. "It's full circle because the group of 10- and 11-year-olds who signed up for the solstice class last year are doing it again this year..."

"They're a great group," Wilde said. "They became our young company and were the cast of the spring/summer show 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' too... It's so fun to see them here again for this year's solstice show as 11- and 12-year-olds now!"

Wilde has high hopes to get more kids and adults involved in the second year of

programming.

"I took Jeremy Holm's acting for the screen class this year and it was really high quality," Wilde said. "There were five or six of us in the class and there could have easily been 20."

In year two of CLE programming, Wilde hopes to offer her own stand-up comedy class for youth. The hope is that the class will be nine weeks during the January-April session.

"There have been so many small moments that feel successful this year," Wilde said, remembering a partnership with Middlebury Area Land Trust camps this summer where kids painted their faces, pretended they were fantastical creatures and put on a show in the woods for their parents. "It's all about helping kids understand that they don't need to think about themselves as 'actors;' perform-ing is more of a life skill."

See the young company kids perform their second solstice show, along with many others, on Sun-day, Dec. 21. All the festivities are free, with donations welcome. Registration through town-halltheater.org are appreciated. Oh, and if you're thinking of attending Night Fires (see story on page 4) on the 21st too, there's no problem. These early solstice celebrations will be wrapped up with plenty of time for the Night Fires show at 4 p.m.

Stop in & discover our Enchanted Holiday Forest!



The shop is bursting with a huge selection of:

- Thoughtful Gifts ~ for everyone on your list!
- Ornaments & Seasonal Decor
- Fresh Holiday Blooms
- Terrarium Kits & Fairy Houses
- So much more!



Stop in. Get inspired.
Deck your halls in style.

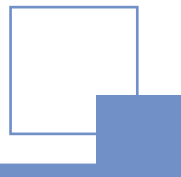
Open 7 days a week during the holidays • 802-989-0083

228 Maple Street, Midd., VT Down the Alley to Marble Works

For more information about the store and our online offerings, please visit our new website toadhallvt.com or follow us



UPCOMING MUSIC



Middlebury Messiah Sing: join the chorus!

Come enjoy the annual Middlebury Messiah Sing, a community tradition since 1984, hosted by the Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main Street, Middlebury, beginning at 2 p.m., on Sunday, Dec. 21. Nearly 300 singers and players join us each year to make music together with enthusiasm and joy.

Singers, string players and all who enjoy music are warmly welcomed to sing or play along — or simply come to watch

and listen — as soloists from the local community perform, and together the congregation sings favorite choruses from "The Messiah" by George Frederic Handel, composed in 1741. Jeff Rehbach will conduct.

The vocal soloists sing with or conduct choirs throughout Vermont. Adam Hall, Erin Grainger, Joe McVeigh, Leila McVeigh, Jessica Allen, and Wendy Taylor will return to sing a number of

SEE MESSIAH ON PAGE 15



Middlebury's annual Messiah Sing will be held at the Congregational Church of Middlebury on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 2 p.m. This holiday tradition dates back to 1984!



Hey Rob, what's for
Sunday Supper?

SUNDAY SUPPER

A comforting three-course prix fixe dinner at a special price! Regular menu also available.

Follow @swifthouseinn on Instagram to get the latest menu.



JESSICA'S
AT
SWIFT HOUSE INN

25 Stewart Ln. Middlebury, VT
802-388-9925
swifthouseinn.com



Night Fires returns to celebrate the longest night of the year at Town Hall Theater, Dec. 19-21, with music, poetry, dancing and costumes.

COURTESY PHOTO

Night Fires returns

SHOW HONORS DARKNESS AND LIGHT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

WHEN:

Friday, Dec. 19 & Saturday, Dec. 20, 4 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 21, 4 p.m.

WHERE: Town Hall Theater's Rothrock Mainstage

TICKETS: \$15 - \$45

Night Fires, a celebration of the winter solstice and a deeply beloved holiday event for many devoted fans, has been singing songs, telling stories, speaking brave and beautiful words since 1982. This year's performances, presented by Theater Group Limited, are set in an imagined first-ever Interdependence Day Celebration in a Vermont park, on the longest night of the year, as people gather to honor the great heroes of the world: children, adults, animals, folks in all walks of life, public figures and those known only to their own families or to the trees. As always, the theme is both a celebration of the "return" of the light, but also of the fruitful darkness, bringing in and honoring truly deep and sometimes terrible darkneses of the soul which bring light to others in various astonishing ways.

Because of theme and setting, there is less music from all around the world than in most Night Fires productions: this year featuring songs by the likes of Leonard Cohen, Sinead O'Connor, Sting, Violeta Para, Johnny Cash, Moira Smiley, Nick Cave, Brandi Carlisle and Rani Arbo as well as some traditional music. Original texts for this particular show — as well as poetry by Naomi Shihab Nye, Mary Oliver, Robert Bly, Sharon Olds, Maxine Kumin, Wendell Berry and others — weave the story together, while several exquisite dances round up the whole. There's even some humor.

Pre-show songs by the likes of Jim and Clara Carroll begin 20 minutes before the show.

SEE NIGHT FIRES ON PAGE 15

ART ON EXHIBIT

BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD

7 Center St, Brandon. For more info visit brandonartistsguild.org or call 802-247-4956.

"Merry & Bright" a Holiday Art Market of original artworks by more than 35 Vermont artists and artisans. Free and open to all. On view through December.

EDGEWATER AT THE FALLS

1 Mill Street, Middlebury
For more info visit edgewatergallery.com, call 802-458-0098 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com.

"Impressions" brings together three local printmakers — Matt Brown, Daryl Storrs and William Hays — whose work demonstrates how this process of image-making can yield distinct languages. On view through Dec. 31.

JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant Street, Middlebury
Visit townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery or call 802-382-9222 for more info.

"Shadow, Light, and In Between." Thomas Munschauer will display 18 oil paintings and two watercolors, most of them new works in this new exhibit. He will also include a collection of his popular small format framed pieces. On view Nov. 7-Jan. 17, 2026.

JOHNSON EXHIBITION GALLERY

78 Chateau Road, Middlebury
For hours and info visit middlebury.edu/events

"Where Absurdity Meets the Mundane: Memories Uncovered." The Fall 2025 ART700 class presents their capstone thesis exhibition of art works, including painting, photography, illustration, design, sculpture, installation and more! On view Dec. 5-12.

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury
For more info visit photoplacegallery.com.

"FROZEN: Cold, Quiet, Pure." This photography captures the distilled essence of winter — its clean lines, soft textures, and silent spaces. Think snow-covered hills at dawn, delicate frost crystals, breath turning to mist, frozen rivers, or the quiet geometry of ice. This exhibit was selected by juror Paula Tognarelli. On view Dec. 5-27.

SHELDON MUSEUM

1 Park Street, Middlebury
For more info visit henrysheldonmuseum.org

"Stitching Memories: Daughters, Samplers, and Family Records." The six samplers on display in the Judd Harris House were all made by girls whose father or grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War. This local exhibit was curated by Middlebury College student Julia Breckenridge. On view May 21-Jan. 3.

SEE EXHIBITS ON PAGE 14



ARIES: March 21/April 20. Aries, you have been looking for some new ways to make some extra money, and now might be the time to start putting your plan in motion. Good fortune awaits.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Passion is on your mind this week, Taurus. Get together with a spouse or romantic partner and enjoy an evening with just the two of you. Embrace this chance to let the sparks fly.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. A gift would be a wonderful surprise for a loved one or friend this week, Gemini. Perhaps there is something that this person has had an eye on for some time now?

CANCER: June 22/July 22. A group activity may bring new information and people into your life, Cancer. You might meet people from different backgrounds. Keep your eyes and ears open.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Leo, you might be interested in expanding your horizons. You could think about attending a lecture or seeing a documentary on a particular subject. The education will enlighten.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Virgo, a long-awaited phone call or text from a person who has been out of touch for some time could come through this week. This may reopen the lines of communication between you both.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Libra, if finances have been on your mind, now is a good time to read the financial pages or study the stock reports. You also may want to sit down with a financial planner.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. Scorpio, keep communication with business partners warm, open and honest. This will help you see your ideas come to fruition. It's always easier to catch flies with honey than vinegar.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Sagittarius, your tasks should go smoothly and quickly this week, particularly any paperwork you may have. Others are willing to help out if you need it.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Capricorn, newfound communication heightens the relationship you have with a romantic partner this week. Feelings and memories are shared willingly, and you may learn something new.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. A number of interesting visitors may come to your home this week, Aquarius. At least one may present some fascinating facts on a subject that is new to

you. Enjoy the interaction.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Pisces, expect some interesting new neighbors to move in shortly. A friend will likely introduce you to these people, and a relationship could bloom.

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

DEC. 12 — Edvard Munch, artist (d)
DEC. 13 — Diego Rivera, artist (d)
DEC. 14 — Tycho Brahe, astronomer (d)

DEC. 15 — Gustave Eiffel, civil engineer (d)
DEC. 16 — Wassily Kandinsky, artist (d)
DEC. 17 — Ludwig van Beethoven, composer (d)
DEC. 18 — Paul Klee, artist (d)

CALENDAR

DEC. 11-27
2025



THURSDAY, DEC. 11

POETRY AND MUSIC IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Dec. 11, noon-12:45 p.m., Unity Hall, Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Senior pastor and poet Andrew Nagy-Benson will read his work, accompanied by Ronnie Romano on piano, in this quiet and reflective midday program celebrating the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Free. All are welcome.

ADVENT NOONTIME CONCERT IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Dec. 11, noon, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3 Main St. Lynette Combs of Montpelier will play seasonal music of Bach, Berlioz and the mid-20th century composer Hugo Distler. Free.

CLASSIC FILM CLUB IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Dec. 11, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main Street. Screening of "The Thomas Crown Affair" starring Faye Dunaway, followed by discussion. Free. Popcorn provided.

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. Middlebury Acting Company presents Dickens's witty, socially conscious and heartwarming tale of Ebenezer Scrooge's journey from miser to benefactor, guided by ghosts and unforgettable characters. Tickets at addisonarts.org/

event/a-christmas-carol. Pay what you can; for assistance with pricing email melissa@middleburyactors.org.

"THE ROOMMATE" IN BRISTOL. Thursday, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. Middlebury Community Players' Company Be, in collaboration with Bristol Recreation Department, presents this Broadway comedy. Open seating; all tickets \$10, cash or check only. Reservations are not required, but to be added to a reservation list call 802-377-3540. More info: middleburycommunityplayers.org.

FRIDAY, DEC. 12

GLASS STUDIO OPEN HOUSE IN NORTH FERRISBURGH. Friday, Dec. 12, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 2257 Fuller Mountain Road. See Dec. 5 listing.

OPEN HOUSE AND ARTIST RECEPTION IN BRISTOL. Friday, Dec. 12, 4:07 p.m., Bristol Suites, 19 Main St. Acrylics and oils by Brenda Myrick and watercolors from the estate of her mother, Barbara Lane, on view throughout the inn; all work for sale year-round. Complimentary wine and small bites, plus a drawing for a free print. Free and open to all.

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Dec. 11

listing.
KRAMPUSNACHT "TOUCH THE WILD" IN ROCHESTER. Friday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., 185 Brandon Mountain Road. The fireside solstice gathering returns to explore how we can touch the wild through song, story and ritual in the frosty night air. Tickets available at baldmountaintheater.org.

"THE ROOMMATE" IN BRISTOL. Friday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. See Dec. 11 listing.

SATURDAY, DEC. 13

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE/SNOWSHOE TO WORTH MOUNTAIN IN HANCOCK. Saturday, Dec. 13. Snowshoe to Worth Mountain near the Snowbowl. Expect to cover 4-5 miles with around 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Dogs welcome on leash only. More info at morrisearle@gmail.com, 802-734-0984, gmcbreadloaf.org.

GLASS STUDIO OPEN HOUSE IN NORTH FERRISBURGH. Saturday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 2257 Fuller Mountain Road. See Dec. 5 listing.

THE MET: LIVE IN HD "ANDREA CHÉNIER" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Dec. 13, 1 p.m., Anderson Studio at Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Giordano's passionate tragedy stars tenor Piotr Beczala as the virtuous poet ensnared by the French Revolution, with soprano Sonya Yoncheva as Maddalena di Coigny and baritone Igor Golovatenko as

Carlo Gérard. Tickets \$10-\$24 at addisonarts.org.

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Dec. 13, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Dec. 11 listing.

"THE ROOMMATE" IN BRISTOL. Saturday, Dec. 13, 2 and 7:30 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. See Dec. 11 listing.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING CONTEST IN BRANDON. Saturday, Dec. 13, 5 p.m., around Brandon. String up your lights in preparation for the contest. Judges will tour Brandon starting at 5 p.m. and evaluate decor across four categories: residential traditional, residential whimsical (includes inflatables), civic and commercial. Call in your own place or someone else's to ensure judges see the display. Judges may also nominate favorites. More info at info@brandon.org, 802-247-6401.

SHANE MURLEY BAND IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Dec. 13, 5-8 p.m., Rosie's Restaurant, 887 Route 7. Live music from the Shane Murley Band at Rosie's Restaurant. Part of Rosie's December live music series.

KAT WRIGHT & BRETT HUGHES HOLIDAY SHOW IN LINCOLN. Saturday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 E. River Rd. Kat Wright and Brett Hughes bring their 12th annual holiday show back to the Burnham Hall stage for a

magical evening of music that embodies all the holiday feels. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets at sevendaystickets.com.

KRAMPUSNACHT "TOUCH THE WILD" IN ROCHESTER. Saturday, Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., 185 Brandon Mountain Road. See Dec. 12 listing.

HIGH HORSE HOUSE CONCERT IN NEW HAVEN. Saturday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m., private home, New Haven (address provided with ticket purchase). Progressive acoustic string band High Horse plays an intimate house concert. Tickets \$30, attendance limited to 46. Concert will be audio and video recorded; purchase includes consent to be filmed and recorded for artistic and promotional use. Tickets by Venmo @ [don-sheldon-4](https://www.venmo.com/don-sheldon-4) or by check payable to Ron Yara, mailed to Don Sheldon, 3345 Quaker Village Road, Weybridge, VT 05753. More info at 802-557-7589.

SUNDAY, DEC. 14

GLASS STUDIO OPEN HOUSE IN NORTH FERRISBURGH. Sunday, Dec. 14, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 2257 Fuller Mountain Road. See Dec. 5 listing.

BRANDON FESTIVAL SINGERS IN BRANDON. Sunday, Dec. 14, 3 p.m., Brandon Congregational Church, 1 Carver St. Annual concert that brings together singers and musicians from area communities for a joyous

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.middleburycommunitytv.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 802-388-3062.	
Channel 1071 Through the Night: VT Media Exchange, Bulletin Board Friday, December 12 5:30 a.m. Milk With Dignity 6:30 a.m. Democracy Now 7:30 a.m. Congregational Service 9 a.m. Yestermorrow - Retrofitting Passive House 10 a.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 5:30 p.m. Democracy Now 6:30 p.m. Yestermorrow Saturday, December 13 4:30 a.m. Democracy Now 7 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 9 a.m. Energy Week 10 a.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 5:30 p.m. Eckankar 6 p.m. Yestermorrow 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Press Conferences Sunday, December 14 6:30 a.m. Yestermorrow	9 a.m. Catholic Mass 9:30 a.m. Addiction Recovery Channel 11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 3 p.m. Yestermorrow 4 p.m. Congregational Service 5:30 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 6:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Energy Week 11 p.m. Democracy Now Monday, December 15 5:30 a.m. Eckankar 6 a.m. Energy Week 10 a.m. Selectboard 4:30 p.m. Press Conferences 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. All Things LGBTQ Tuesday, December 16 5 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 6 a.m. Democracy Now 9:30 a.m. Eckankar 10 a.m. Selectboard 3 p.m. Yestermorrow 4 p.m. Congregational Service 5:30 p.m. Democracy Now	7 p.m. Selectboard LIVE 10 p.m. US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Wednesday, December 17 5 a.m. Yestermorrow 6:30 a.m. Democracy Now 7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass 10 a.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Democracy Now 7 p.m. Selectboard, Press Conferences Thursday, December 18 5 a.m. Democracy Now 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 5 p.m. Democracy Now 8 p.m. Yestermorrow 9:30 p.m. Eckankar Channel 1091 Friday, December 12 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Yoga for Kids	11 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 4:30 p.m. Kim's Art Show 5 p.m. Elder Artist Oral History Project 6 p.m. Foltz Studio Saturday, December 13 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 11 a.m. ACSD Board 4:30 p.m. Kim's Art Show 5 p.m. Foltz Studio 6 p.m. Elder Artist Oral History 7 p.m. State Board of Education Sunday, December 14 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 11 a.m. ACSD Board 4:30 p.m. Kim's Art Show 5 p.m. Elder Artist Oral History 6 p.m. Foltz Studio Monday, December 15 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. ACSD Board	10:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 3:30 p.m. Kim's Art Show 4 p.m. Foltz Studio 6:30 p.m. ACSD Board Tuesday, December 16 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. ACSD Board 10 a.m. Foltz Studio 11 a.m. Elder Artist Oral History 1 p.m. ACSD Board 4 p.m. Songwriter's Notebook Wednesday, December 17 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 8 a.m. ACSD Board 4 p.m. Kim's Art Show 4:30 p.m. Foltz Studio 5:30 p.m. State Board of Education Thursday, December 18 6 a.m. Tai Chi 6:30 a.m. Yoga 8 a.m. State Board of Education 10:30 a.m. Author Talk 12 p.m. ACSD Board Meeting	

Christmas celebration. Free, a portion of donations will go to charity.

DARKNESS TO LIGHT: A PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Dec. 14, 4 p.m., St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3 Main St. The Choir of St. Stephen's presents a Lessons and Carols service that moves from darkness to light and features choral music from the Renaissance to the 21st century. Free.

TUESDAY, DEC. 16

TUNES AND TREATS IN FERRISBURGH.

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m., Ferrisburgh Union Meeting Hall, 41 Middlebrook Road. This festive community event features holiday music by the Commodore Jazz Band and Singers, along with treats to share. More info at unionmeetinghall.org.

IRISH MUSIC NIGHT WITH RAMBLETREE IN MIDDLEBURY.

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7-9 p.m., Two Brothers Tavern, 86 Main St. A high-energy mix of classic Irish tunes, sea shanties, world music, rock, funk, reggae and original material. Free.

THURSDAY, DEC. 18

POETRY AND MUSIC IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, Dec. 18, noon-12:45 p.m., Unity Hall, Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Middlebury College writer-in-residence and professor emeritus Jay Parini will read his work, accompanied by Ronnie Romano on piano, in this quiet and reflective midday program celebrating the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Free. All are welcome.

"CHRISTMAS IN THE AIR" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, Dec. 18, noon, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3 Main St. Community carol sing-along. Music Director Robert Ludwig will lead sacred and secular songs of the season and share stories about the history of several favorites.

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB STARGAZING IN ADDISON.

Thursday, Dec. 18. Learn some of the major stars, asterisms, constellations and deep-sky objects on a night near the new moon. In the event of poor observing conditions, the outing will be rescheduled. Group limit eight. To register, contact Ken Corey at kencorey53@gmail.com or 802-349-3733. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

FRIDAY, DEC. 19

GLASS STUDIO OPEN HOUSE IN NORTH FERRISBURGH.

Friday, Dec. 19, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 2257 Fuller Mountain Road. See Dec. 5 listing.

"NIGHT FIRES" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Friday, Dec. 19, 4 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. A magical Winter Solstice dream play created and directed by Marianne Lust, now in its fourth decade, featuring a mix of new performers and "old-timers" with a wholly new story each year. Tickets \$15-\$45 at addisonarts.org/event/night-fires-2.

SATURDAY, DEC. 20

GLASS STUDIO OPEN HOUSE IN NORTH FERRISBURGH.

Saturday, Dec. 20, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 2257 Fuller Mountain Road. See Dec. 5 listing.

"NIGHT FIRES" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, Dec. 20, 4 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Town

Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Dec. 19 listing.

O & SCHU IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, Dec. 20, 5-8 p.m., Rosie's Restaurant, 887 Route 7. Live music from O & Schu as part of Rosie's December live music series.

HOLIDAY MUSIC AT THE TILLERMAN IN BRISTOL.

Saturday, Dec. 20, 6 p.m., the Tillerman, 1868 N. 116. Enjoy joyful holiday music in the barn by the band Sunday Morning. Drinks available. More info at thetillermanvt.com.

SUNDAY, DEC. 21

GLASS STUDIO OPEN HOUSE IN NORTH FERRISBURGH.

Sunday, Dec. 21, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 2257 Fuller Mountain Road. See Dec. 5 listing.

SOLSTICE IN THE SHIRE: THE SHORTEST DAY IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row.

Create edible ornaments,

enjoy holiday treats and beverages and take part in an interactive performance of solstice stories celebrating the shortest day. Surprise performances by local actors and musicians. Free; donations accepted.

ANNUAL MESSIAH SING IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Joyful community sing-along of selections from Handel's Messiah, led by Jeff Rehbach. All are welcome to join and sing favorite choruses or play in the orchestra. Suggested donation \$5-\$10 adults, \$10-\$25 families. More info at jeff.rehbach@gmail.com, 802-382-7493.

"NIGHT FIRES" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Dec. 21, 4 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Dec. 19 listing.

SHANNON WRIGHT & FRIENDS HOLIDAY CONCERT IN

BRANDON. Sunday, Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. A holiday concert for everyone with music to herald the season. Free.

MONDAY, DEC. 22

LUNCHTIME CONCERT IN VERGENNES.

Monday, Dec. 22, 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Vergennes. Guitarists and vocalists Sallie Mack, former co-founder and co-director of the Ripton Community Coffee House, and Rosi Gowley, storyteller and social change advocate, offer an eclectic concert of original compositions, bluegrass, ballads and more. This hour of music is free and open to all.

SATURDAY, DEC. 27

SPENCER LEWIS IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, Dec. 27, 5-8 p.m., Rosie's Restaurant, 887 Route 7. Live music from Spencer Lewis as part of Rosie's December live music series.

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JANET FREDERICKS

Janet Fredericks was uprooted from her home in Teaneck, N.J., and transported as an infant by train with her five older siblings to Essex Junction, just missing the privilege of becoming a native Vermonter by her out-of-state birth. Two more real Vermonter siblings were born into her working-class, Irish-Catholic family as dad worked as a traveling salesman, and her "frustrated artist mother" took on the endless tasks of homemaking for a household of 10.

Janet built upon her Rice Memorial High School diploma by attending three different college institutions in three different states, yielding a BFA from Barry College in Florida. Having listened to the common suggestions that her interest in the visual arts would need to be supported by a real job, she began teaching art in Florida while caring for her son, Orion. It wasn't long before she and Orion (currently a sculptor of large kinetic pieces, some of them flammable...ofredericks@hotmail.com) returned to Vermont and Janet was teaching art at various schools, pursuing her own work at the same time. As a visual artist, her quiet and observant work applies disciplined skill to "Peak Experiences" (Maslow's label for what Tom calls "Angel Moments") for any audience that cares to pay attention. The overview of her multi-media portfolio is available to review at

janetfredericksstudio.com. One illuminating scrap of language she has offered therein to explain her work reads; "It is through reverent observation that we know the world. Let's start there." Starting there would take her all over the world filling uncounted journals and sketch books with her reverent observations.

COMING TOGETHER

Both Janet and Tom were retained as faculty in the now-dissolved Burlington College, where they first met. In 1998, they decided to take one of each other's classes while teaching their own. Here the two lives started braiding together to create a single "barber pole" of capabilities, allowing them to refine the art of performing and learning at the same time. In 1999, Janet agreed to share Tom's home in Lincoln, where they added a spacious studio/workshop space. She also continues to find the time to offer workshops three or four times a year, so that fellow artists can gather to teach and learn from one another.

In 2002, they co-founded the non-governmental, not-for-profit Magicians Without Borders. That story is beautifully documented at their website, magicianswithoutborders.com. What is not obvious is the nearly instantaneous transformation of Janet into the mime/clown "La Fleur," Tom's partner and foil on stage. She is the silent anchor of his message, that "the impossible

is possible." Determined to accompany him wherever their message is needed, she invented and perfected her costumed character at the tender age of 50 after a few brief lessons from a "professional mime," and dove right into what Tom refers to as "the firm."

After over 120 trips to 47 chaos-filled countries where they have performed for more than 1.5 million refugee and orphaned children, Magicians Without Borders is well on its way to becoming a permanent expression of concern and hope for the displaced and persecuted people of the world. From Brazil through Ukraine and India, nine Sorcerer's Apprentice Educational Programs are functioning to ensure a steady stream of talent and compassion will continue the relief effort they began on their own initiative more than two decades ago.

When I asked them to encapsulate why they chose Lincoln, as their home base for a life of peripatetic generosity, they answered...

Tom: "After arriving in the village to visit friends
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Tom Verner and Janet Fredericks perform magic.

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in the 1970s, my moving from place to place every few years was over. The physical beauty and community culture of Lincoln (a blend of old-timers and new arrivals) I fell in love with almost immediately."

Janet: "I knew two resident artists before I moved to Lincoln...and had taught multiple-day workshops at this place with Tom as a fellow-teacher and then as my husband. It was as if this remote village environment was calling me. I was raised in Burlington, and by the time I moved here, I was ready. It has now been my home for 25 years, it's where I go to recharge, work, teach and explore."

Lucky Lincoln!

- sbh

Steve and Judith Harris reside in Lincoln where their recently built cabin is the world headquarters of their consulting business. They will not be camping in the relative comfort of the southeast this winter but will instead remain at home while Judith attends to their clients and Steve attempts to create monthly episodes of "Ruminations from the Roost". Steve promises a travelogue, without the travel. Each episode will present a profile of a local "community fixture", folks that Steve has selected, based on criteria that remain unclear even to the author. Furthermore, these sketches will offer examples of the many ways he finds to cherish and be grateful for his life in Addison County.

JIM VERNER (AUTHOR'S NOTE)

I met Jim Verner before I met his brother, Tom. Four of us had been called to action early on a spring Sunday morning in 1994 to voluntarily drop and clean up an enormous pine tree that had been uprooted by ferocious winds the night before. It had tipped into its neighbor and was threatening to fall into River Road from the steep hill above to maim or atomize the unwary motorist. Jim was the logger, I was the rookie limber. With our two working chainsaws, we introduced ourselves and waited above the road for other neighbor/volunteers to interrupt traffic.

Jim dropped the tree right where it needed to rest across the road so we could limb, buck and coax the bones and brush out of the right-of-way. After 10 minutes of cutting, dragging and rolling, we were both drenched in sweat and filthy, so we sat for a while chatting and connecting. What unfolded was the kindness and generosity of a saintly lumberjack. We were strangers when we met that morning, but friends when we parted. I never saw him again.

A few years later, I met his brother Tom one clear summer evening while sitting quietly on

a dark porch watching a full moon rise over Mt. Abraham. When Tom told me that Jim had died, I was stunned. That he lived in town had been strangely comforting, no matter how lightly known. His gentle way of speaking and working made a deeper friendship and a lasting relationship seem inevitable. He had that effect on people. The loss of this man was personal and profound.

It has helped to learn the details; that he died on his brother's couch surrounded and cared for by his mother, his nieces and his best friend, Tom. A rare and unpronounceable genetic defect had taken him early, compounded by the accumulated stress of his early adulthood full of rebellion, risk taking and too much fun. Jim was such a calm and caring person when we met, the effort

it must have taken for him to transform himself into the man he was meant to be must have been substantial. He spent the last eight years of the 53 he was given living in Lincoln, working in the woods and helping Tom create the sheltering refuge for his extended family that the Verner household became, and still is. While hardly knowing him, there is still a Jim-shaped hole in my heart.



JIM VERNER

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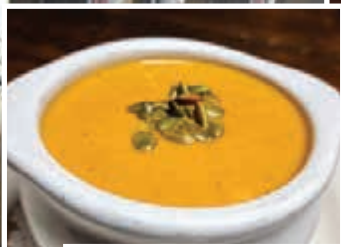
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PUZZLES

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ACROSS

1. Spiritual leaders
7. A type of solution
13. Fortified wine
14. Edible mollusk
16. They precede C
17. A way to compare
19. Government lawyer
20. "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
22. The eighth month (abbr.)
23. Very willing
25. __ ex Machina
26. Makes happy
28. Type of berry
29. A doctrine
30. Popular Dodge truck model
31. Dekagram
33. Naturally occurring

solid

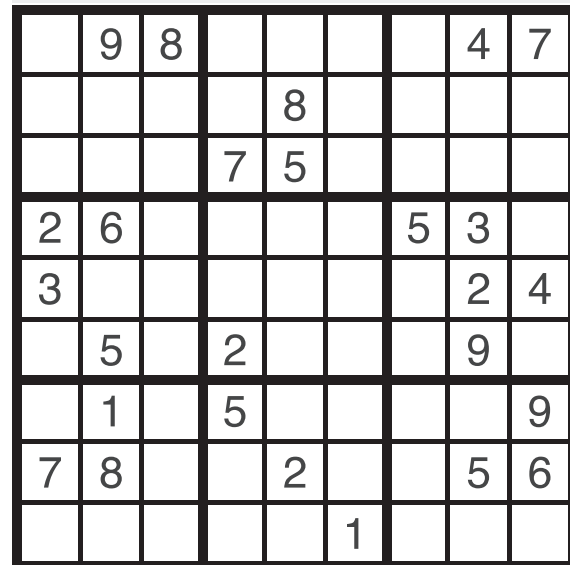
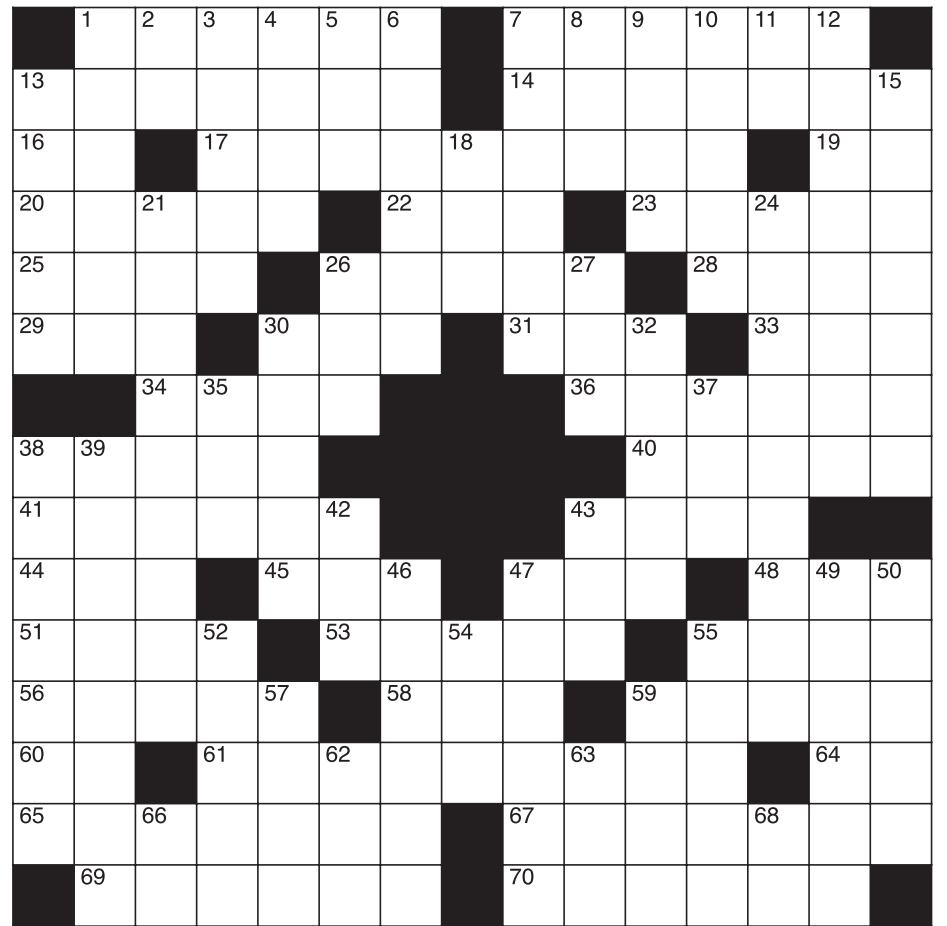
34. Company officer
36. Villains
38. Cricket frogs
40. Influential German psychologist
41. Endured
43. A female domestic
44. You can get stuck in one
45. Cigarette (slang)
47. Fiber optics network
48. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
51. Employee stock ownership plan
53. Belonging to the bottom layer
55. Sound
56. MLB legend Hank

58. Very attractive person

59. Late beloved sportscaster Craig
60. South Dakota
61. Mocking
64. Symbol for gold
65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
67. Humor
69. Shawl
70. Preliminary patient assessment

DOWN

1. Animal disease
2. Commercial
3. Necklace material
4. Containers
5. A way to save for your future



Sudoku

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 14.

6. Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
7. Dipped down
8. Head injury (abbr.)
9. Lay about
10. Intestinal
11. Opposite of yes
12. Caused to be loved
13. Spiritual leader of Islam
15. Businesslike
18. Not in
21. Number above the line in a fraction
24. An animal with its own day
26. Pouch
27. Swedish krona
30. Start over
32. Field flowers
35. Fourteen
37. A visual way to interact with a computer
38. Up-to-date
39. Campaigns
42. Touch lightly
43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
46. Violent seizure of property
47. Supporter of the Pope
49. Anxiety
50. Body fluid
52. One who's faking it
54. Title of respect
55. Chilean city
57. City in central Japan
59. Silk garment
62. A form of dance
63. Automobile
66. The man
68. Justice Dept. head honcho

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ASK A MASTER GARDENER

— DECORATE NATURALLY THIS HOLIDAY —

As you prepare to decorate your home this holiday season, consider the bounty of garden elements and other natural options available to brighten up your holiday displays. Many of these can be gathered up at no cost and, better still, can be simply tossed in the compost pile during clean-up.

BY **AMY SIMONE**



Amy Simone is a UVM Extension Master Gardener volunteer from South Burlington.

Juniper, spruce, pine, fir, cedar, holly, and boxwood branches are just some ideas of evergreens that you might already have in your yard to choose from.

Remember that in gathering these branches, you are trimming the tree or bush so consider the plant's shape as you cut. Curating your greens from a variety of plants increases the different textures and hues of green in your décor and decreases the number of branches needed from each plant.

If your yard does not offer up enough greenery, visit your local garden center. They should have everything from bulk stems as material for your own creations, to fresh wreaths and garlands, either already decorated or ready for you to adorn with your own natural elements.

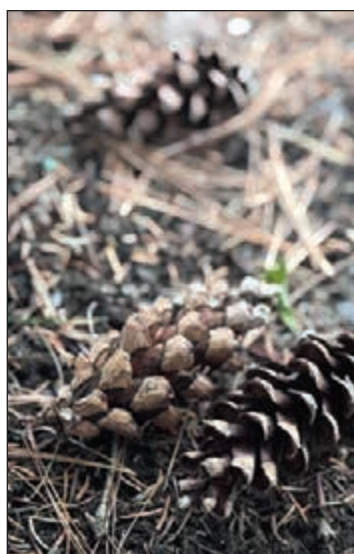
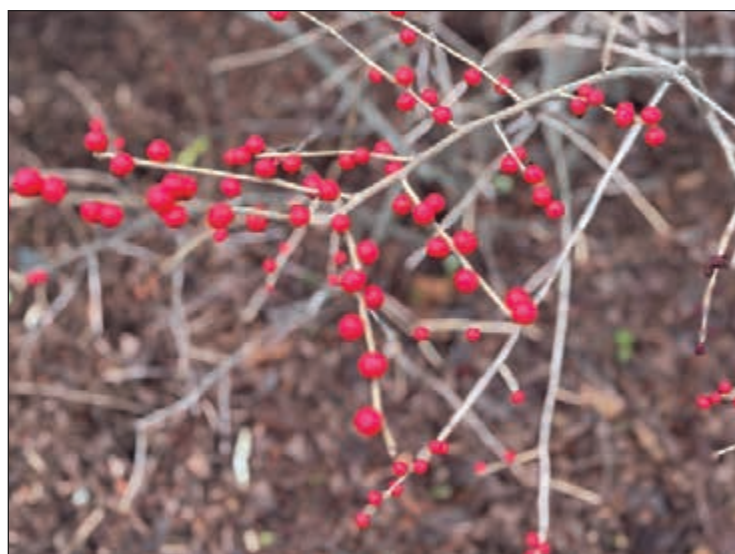
Place greens in a festive container with

a waterproof liner filled with water or fitted with a block of moistened oasis. Hammer the cut ends of the woody stalks to allow them to absorb water better.

Maintain the moisture in the containers to ensure the longest life of your greenery. Wherever possible, place natural garlands and wreaths in cooler locations to prolong their beauty.

Take a stroll around your yard to look for twigs, ideally volunteers that have already separated from the tree or shrub. Birch and dogwood are two plants that offer interesting features and colors. These can be added to tall narrow containers with other natural elements. Or, if you have a larger stick with small branches, it can be mounted to a wood base and adorned with ornaments or lights.

Houseplants can also be called upon
SEE GARDEN ON PAGE 14



Snip a few winterberry branches to add pops of natural color to your holiday decor. Or gather pine and other conifer cones for use in your natural holiday decor. Be sure to clean them first.

PHOTOS / AMY SIMONE

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Tao



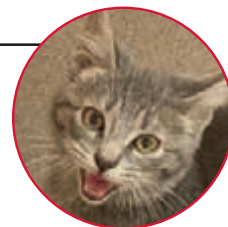
This is **Tao!** A 3-year-old Plott hound/beagle mix, waiting for the right family to come along! He likes other animals and does well with both cats and dogs, but people are his biggest love. He needs a unique situation, bordering on a miracle: he needs a household where a family member will be present at all times. This is crucial for Tao while working on his separation-related behavior training. Tao can be a bit shy when meeting new people, but once he warms up, he will be right on your lap for cuddles. He's more comfortable with women. He loves to be outside and enjoys long hikes as well as car rides. He likes puzzle toys and playtime with other dogs. His hound nose is great at detecting hidden treats and picking up interesting scents in the yard!

Ayana



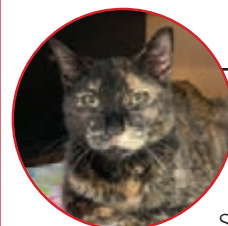
Ayana is a sweet 1-year-old mixed breed looking for a new start. She's playful with other dogs and loves to solve puzzle toys. We don't have much history of Ayana so we're unsure of how she would do in a home setting with other dogs, cats or children. She's a bit shy getting to know new people, but with reassurance, she warms up fast and shows off her goofy personality. She walks well on a leash and is food motivated.

Ankara



Ankara arrived at the shelter with her sisters and initially had been the most outgoing of the bunch. She's curious, playful, and has done well with meeting the other kitties at the shelter!

Holly



Meet **Holly!** She grew up on the streets of New Jersey until a wonderful person took her in and was determined to give her a better life! She has been quite happy since arriving at Homeward Bound. She quietly observes everything that goes on around her and absolutely LOVES "Cat TV" as you can see in her profile picture. She loves to watch the birds on the screen and she would most likely love to perch in a window and take in the sights from a safe and happy home.

Katy



Katy was living an indoor/outdoor life before arriving at the shelter. She is shy but lovely and wants to take comfort in other cats. Once she gets comfortable with you, she flops over and gives you her belly. There was a dog in her previous home that she did her best to avoid. Anyone who is interested in making her a part of their family should be prepared for her perhaps still wanting access to the outdoors.



Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



Want to learn more?

Call or check our website. We may have a pet for you!
802-388-1100 | HomewardBoundAnimals.org
236 Boardman Street | Middlebury, VT



144 FIELDS RD., MIDDLEBURY
\$625,000

THE HOME

A LOOK AT ADDISON COUNTY PROPERTIES FOR SALE

Comfortable single-level living in town

This 4-bed, 3 bath ranch-style home offers the option of comfortable single level living, with a nicely finished lower level that provides additional space. Located on the outer ring of Fields Road, this home is nicely situated to enjoy western exposure, privacy and wetland views in the back, while still part of a development and close to community. Entering through the formal foyer with access from both the front stoop and the attached two-car garage (with ramp) there is ample room to welcome guests and kick off your shoes. The foyer flows seamlessly into both the spacious, eat-in kitchen; featuring maple cabinetry and granite counter tops, as well as into the great room with cathedral ceilings, a gas fireplace and open living/dining areas. The living room also features French doors which provide access to the light filled sunporch with glass/screened windows, tumbled marble flooring, wetland views and access to the small back yard. Down a short hall from the great room, you'll find a ¾ bath, laundry closet and two bedrooms, including the homes large primary bedroom suite with a 4-piece bath and walk-in closet. The mostly finished lower level consists of a large family room, another full bath, two additional bedrooms, and an unfinished portion for storage and mechanicals. Outdoors, many will appreciate access to the MALT trails right around the corner, and the in-town location.

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**MIDDLEBURY
86 OSSIE ROAD**

**MLS #5068258 | \$417,000
3 BD | 2 BA | 1673 SF | 0.26 ACRES**

Curb appeal in East Middlebury with many recent improvements, an inviting eat-in kitchen with pantry, built-ins, and charm. Add a lovely porch, elongated garage, blooming perennials, and a level lawn for play.



**CORNWALL *NEW PRICE!*
3958 VT ROUTE 30**

**MLS #5065493 | *NOW \$655,000*
5 BD | 5 BA | 4232 SF | 2.60 ACRES**

This historic home enjoys Green Mtn views and includes a partially finished barn. Hardwood floors, abundant natural light, newly updated kitchen, plus a one-bedroom in-law suite above the attached garage.



**MIDDLEBURY
118 THREE MILE BRIDGE ROAD**

**MLS #5053529 | \$389,000
3 BD | 2 BA | 2232 SF | 1.10 ACRES**

Classic 1820 Colonial offers an expansive and flexible living space with historic charm, an oversized attached garage and insulated workshop, with an additional large barn (once a thriving antique shop).



**SUDBURY
2395 BURR POND ROAD**

**MLS #5062348 | \$549,000
4 BD | 4 BA | 3100 SF | 33.00 ACRES**

C. 1817 post and beam on 33 acres with a versatile outbuilding ready to accommodate. Authenticity, charm, and history throughout the home ready for its new owners to create their own lifetime of memories!



**SALISBURY
130 SMEAD ROAD**

**MLS #5060367 | \$624,000
3 BD | 2 BA | 2084 SF | 8.00 ACRES**

Charming, well cared for home, with a classic wraparound porch, in-ground pool, and lovely plantings. The outbuildings create a true homestead: workshop, equipment storage, space for hobbies, or housing for animals.

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144 Fields Road, Middlebury

This 4-bed, 3 bath home offers the option of comfortable single level living, with a nicely finished lower level for additional space. Located on the outer ring of Fields Road, this home is nicely situated to enjoy western exposure, privacy and wetland views in the back in a convenient in-town neighborhood.

MLS No. 5070346 | \$625,000



82 Ossie Road, Middlebury

This affordable 3 Bedroom, 1.5 Bath East Middlebury village home with a charming vibe, nice layout, good bones, and many newer systems it is ready for you to bring your vision an make the mostly cosmetic updates that would bring out its full potential. Some new flooring and repair of cat damage needed.

MLS No. 5068676 | \$ 315,000



204 West River Road, Lincoln

Tastefully restored, this 3 bedroom, 2 Bath Lincoln village cape has just undergone a full renovation, enhancing the homes historic character through the seamless integration of modern design elements including new kitchen, baths and limestone veneer plaster walls! Come see it in person.

MLS No. 5055620 | \$ 495,000

for more information, contact:



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EXHIBITS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

“Material Narratives: Ornament & Identity.”

Organized by students of Professor Erin

Sassin's course at Middlebury College, this exhibition is the result of meticulous research and thoughtful curation.

Students assembled a diverse collection of objects that show how adornment across centuries and cultures both shapes and reflects the human experience. On view through Jan. 3.

“Vermont Female Farmers.” This striking portrait series by JuanCarlos González offers a powerful and intimate look into the lives of farmers shaping the landscape and future of Vermont agriculture. Complementing

the photography are agricultural-related artifacts and ephemera from the Museum's collection. These additions create meaningful dialogues between past and present, offering reflections on our Addison County landscape and farming heritage. On view through Jan. 3.

SPARROW ART SUPPLY

44 Main St., Middlebury

For more info visit sparrowartsupply.com

“Kati Christoffel & Heather Rusch Zelonis” are the two local featured artists. Their work will be featured in a shared celebration of the changing seasons. Kati's plein air watercolors capture shifting light and color across the landscape while Heather's block prints explore the quiet rhythms of winter. On view through December.

GARDEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

to act as a canvas for string lights or lightweight ornaments.

Look to Norfolk pine, rosemary,

and other houseplants with a desirable shape and ability to support some adornments.

To add some brighter color to your natural décor, tuck in some cuttings from winterberry, American cranberry bush, sumacs (in the *Rhus* family of plants), red chokeberry, and holly berries. Keep in mind that holly and winterberries are toxic to pets and humans.

For additional texture and color, check your yard for dried perennial stalks, especially those with interesting seed heads. These can be added to garlands, wreaths, and containers.

Pine and other conifer cones are prolific and can be collected easily. Cones gathered from nature should

be prepared prior to use. Soak them in two-parts warm water to one-part white vinegar for 30 minutes. They may need to be weighed down if they try to float.

Stir the water every 10 minutes to dislodge any debris and bugs. Shake off excess water and lay out on a towel or cooling rack to dry completely.

This process will remove any sap and disinfect them as well. Use the clean cones to beautify wreaths and garlands, in centerpieces, or tie many along natural fiber twine to create a string of cones to hang on the tree.

After enjoying your natural holiday display all season, remove any non-compostable elements and add the rest to your compost pile.



PHOTO / AMY SIMONE

PUZZLE

SOLUTIONS

DEC. 11, 2025



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MESSIAH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

solo arias at this year's sing. New at this year's event will be soprano Jane Beaumont Snyder who sings with the Aurora Chamber Singers in Burlington, and tenor Blair Jia, a 2023 graduate

of Middlebury College who has returned to town since then to solo with the Community Chorus and the St. Stephen's choir. They will be accompanied by chamber music players David Gusakov and Emily Sunderman, violins, who teach at the Middlebury Community Music Center; Bill Pierson, viola; Dieuwke Davydov, cello; Christopher Foster, trumpet. David and Dieuwke founded the Champlain Philharmonic Orchestra 20 years ago. Jeff Buettner and Ronnie Romano, organist and choir director at the Congregational Church, play harpsichord and organ.

Music scores are provided (or bring your own) for singers; if you play a string instrument, flute, oboe, or bassoon, orchestra parts are also available at the reading.

Donations are welcome at the door to honor the soloists.

The Messiah Sing is presented with support from the Congregational Church of Middlebury UCC and the Middlebury Community Music Center. Contact Jeff Rehbach at jeff.rehbach@gmail.com or 802-382-7493 (mobile/text) for more information.

NIGHT FIRES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

A NOTE ABOUT BRINGING CHILDREN TO THIS EVENT
Kids of all ages are welcome, and there are young ones who've considered Night Fires a favorite event of theirs as they grew up. Do know that Night Fires is an adult production not intended in any way as a "play for children" and is performed without intermission. This year's play contains some darker moments that may or may not at all be comfortable for very young hearts.

General admission: \$15-\$45. Tickets are available at townhalltheater.org or by calling 802-382-9222.

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This lovely home is really only about 4 years old. The current owner purchased the property after a major fire and ripped down much of the old structure. The electrical, plumbing, heating, bathrooms, kitchen, floors, windows, sheetrock, roof, siding, etc. were all replaced. The oversized one car garage is insulated and heated. There is also a very nice storage shed in back that has a new 1-car garage door and is perfect for additional storage.



200 BUTTERNUT RIDGE, MIDDLEBURY
MLS #5053422 - \$460,000

This beautiful home is located in a very nice older neighborhood with established trees giving the back yard and porch a sense of privacy that is rare to find in a neighborhood.

Are you a history buff? If so, you can own this wonderful piece of Vermont history. The "Old Blacksmith Shop" in Cornwall has been a part of the Harding/Witherell families for generations. They are now ready to have the next owners take over this interesting and historical property. Located just off Route 30, the blacksmith shop is built from coursed limestone and believed to be fashioned into place in the late 1700's. There is a good deal of history in the attached documents. It is a part of the US National Register of Historical Places. There are many antique tools included within the shop. There is no doubt that many stories were traded here!



1488 ROUTE 30, CORNWALL
MLS #5055719 - \$49,000

This beautifully appointed 4-bedroom, 3-bath home offers exceptional space, comfort, and versatility for today's modern living. Two inviting living areas and a generously sized kitchen are perfect for entertaining or everyday family life. The home features hardwood and porcelain tile floors and a large deck with beautiful views. The spacious primary bedroom boasts an updated en suite bath and ample closet space. Upstairs, you'll find a large sitting area, 3 bedrooms, a full bathroom and a unique bonus room. The finished attic offers two additional rooms, and the partially finished basement includes a kitchen and half bathroom, making it perfect for a home business, in-law suite, or rental potential. Central vacuum throughout. This home is full of possibilities!



163 STICKNEY RD., WHITING
MLS #5049132 - \$499,900

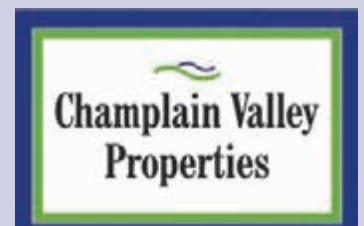
This is a beautiful first floor end unit. You can live very comfortably on one floor, but there is a partially finished basement for a wonderful office, craft/TV space or family room. This unit has many fabulous features: a year-round sunroom which looks out onto Battell Woods, a large living room with bay window, a primary bathroom with large walk-in shower and double sinks, a beautiful 4-year old kitchen with granite counters and stainless steel appliances, hard surfaced flooring throughout, washer and dryer on the main floor and recently installed heat pumps. The one car garage is close and convenient. This is a great condo - easy to move right into!



17 TWIN CIRCLE, MIDDLEBURY
MLS #5071045 - \$385,000



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