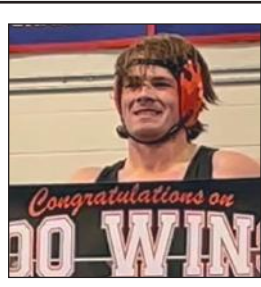




Spellbinding

Dancer incorporates shimmering gold & iridescent fabrics at a college premiere. Arts + Leisure.



Big wins

Local wrestlers pile up victories at annual MUHS tournament and other meets. See Sports, Page 1B.



Food baskets

The Middlebury Lions provided holiday assistance for families in need. See Page 6B.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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MAUSD predicts tax hikes

District officials point to rate drivers beyond local control

By MARIN HOWELL
BRISTOL — The Mount Abraham Unified School District Board on Tuesday unanimously adopted a fiscal year 2027 budget to put before voters that reflects \$37,862,780 in total expenses, a rise of 8.51%, or \$2,968,337, over the current year.

The spending plan is expected to translate into a 0.19% increase in the district's homestead tax rate.

However, the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) factor is expected to further drive up tax rates in each of the district's four member towns, resulting in projected increases ranging from 3.09% in Bristol to a 17.81% rise in Starksboro.

Taxpayers who pay education taxes based on their income are expected to see a decrease.

Board members on Tuesday acknowledged the steepness of

the anticipated tax increases and the limited control school officials have over factors driving them.

"Is it up to us to go to our legislators or just show up in Montpelier, both as board members and as taxpayers?" school board member Kathi Apgar asked. "What more is it going to take? I mean we're doing everything we can, and preparing these kinds of" (See MAUSD, Page 10A)

OV district finalizes Whiting, Leicester school plan

By J.T. PRICE
BRANDON — "Time to make hard choices" became the unofficial refrain of the first Otter Valley Unified Union school board meeting of 2026.

Director of Business & Finance Brenda Fleming at the Tuesday gathering presented a revised

budget for fiscal year 2027 that represents a 2.93% spending increase, down from the projected 3.49% increase put forward in December. The reduction of some \$154,042 from the prior budget draft arose through deliberations of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union in the preceding days.

The OVUU board gave the decision of whether to cut or maintain a middle school social studies teaching position to RNESU Superintendent René Sanchez in consultation with OVUHS Principal Michael Ruppel. (See OV district, Page 12A)



County's first baby

NEW YEAR'S DAY ushered in more than the dawn of a new year for Whiting's Margaret Smithson and Larry Tucker. The couple, at 3:45 p.m. on Jan. 1, welcomed new son Henry Lawrence Tucker, who was born at Middlebury's Porter Hospital. He is held here by 9-year-old sister Hazel.

Photo courtesy of Porter Hospital

ACSD gets bad news on school repairs

Budget rules limit bonding capacity

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — The Addison Central School District (ACSD) board has spent the past five months reviewing a variety of potential capital improvements to Middlebury-area school buildings so they can better deliver educational programming.

But it's looking increasingly likely that the ACSD might have to shed programming in order to afford even a fraction of the more than \$60 million in physical upgrades that a consultant — and district administrators and (See ACSD, Page 10A)



Shame

ALTHOUGH THE CURRENT administration would like people to forget about the riot at the U.S. Capitol five years ago this week, many locals are determined that we won't. More than 100 people gathered in Middlebury's Court Square on Tuesday, Jan. 6, to wave signs and encourage honks. Few people around here have forgotten. See more photos on Pages 2A & 4A.

Independent photo/Steve James

Ferrisburgh & other towns chip in for Commodore Club

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

FERRISBURGH — A promise by the Ferrisburgh selectboard this week to send some much-needed financial support to Vergennes came as a big shot in the arm to a youth program there that supports young people in area.

On Tuesday night, Ferrisburgh's five-member selectboard voted unanimously to include \$1,500 for a fledgling Vergennes-run Commodore Club youth program in the town budget to be considered by residents on Town Meeting Day.

This follows similar municipal appropriations in Pantton and

Vergennes.

"I feel really encouraged," said Martha DeGraaf, the Vergennes recreation and programming coordinator who started and helped grow the Commodore Club. "This effort is rooted in listening to our communities and responding to a real need, and seeing people come together across towns to support young people is what gives me the most hope. It reinforces that we're building something meaningful together."

DeGraaf and the Vergennes Recreation Department first stepped (See Club, Page 13A)



By the way

A \$17 million makeover of Middlebury's Ilsley Library at 75 Main St. has crested 2026 with great momentum. Ilsley Director Dana Hart said the ongoing expansion and renovation of the shire town's library is now more than halfway done, with a grand opening tentatively slated for this August. So what's new at the construction site? The new windows are now installed. (See By the way, Page 13A)

Career Center seeks bigger net

School choice might fill seats

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center leaders are asking state officials to ramp up school choice among Vermont's 17 Career and Technical Education hubs, a move that could allow

PHCC to increase its enrollment and thus lower its tuition rate.

Currently, the state's Career and Technical Education centers are grouped into 15 separate service areas. PHCC currently draws its enrollment from students in the 17 towns served by high schools in Middlebury, Vergennes and Bristol. It's a catchment area that encompasses all Addison County

towns west of the Green Mountains except Orwell, Goshen, Leicester, and Whiting; those towns send their CTE students to the Stafford Technical Center in Rutland.

In short — PHCC officials want to make it easier for students residing outside Addison County to attend programming at the Middlebury career center, which (See Career Center, Page 12A)

Ripton man takes Progressive Party helm

By JOHN FLOWERS
RIPTON — Ripton's Bill Hunsinger is good at a lot of things, whether it be brewing beer, parenting a daughter or serving on his town's selectboard.

But his biggest talent might be saying "Yes."

He and his spouse Jenna are stalwart volunteers within their

adopted mountain town, diving headlong into community projects that unite and feed their neighbors.

Another "yes" from Bill this past Nov. 9 assured he'll be sharing his time, goodwill and activism beyond the confines of Ripton, population 739. On that date, he agreed to serve as chair of the Vermont Progressive Party, a

perch from which he'll help shape, advocate for, and implement his party's priorities throughout the Green Mountain State.

Hunsinger's election, according to a Progressive Party press release, "signals a strategic shift for the party, focusing on rural representation and moving away" (See Hunsinger, Page 13A)

Students pen career guide for peers

By MARIN HOWELL
MIDDLEBURY — As they near graduation, college students are faced with a familiar and often daunting question — What's next?

A group of students from Middlebury College and Oxford and Harvard universities have created a resource aimed at helping their peers

answer that question and explore how to use their skills to tackle the world's bigger problems.

The career guide and broader project is called "How To Want Better Things," and offers 20-somethings a framework for navigating professional life in a way that is both meaningful to them and

impactful to the world around them.

"We want to tap into that desire that our newer generations increasingly have to incorporate some sort of social benefit into their career," said Camiel Schroeder, a Middlebury College senior involved in the effort. Schroeder and fellow group (See Career Guide, Page 14A)



Happy New Year!

CROWDS WENT to the Rec Park in Middlebury on Dec. 31 to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks ring in 2026. But because they were launched high above the shire town, there were plenty of good vantage points from which to enjoy the fiery blossoms, including this spot on Main Street's Battell Bridge.

Photo by Jonathan Blake

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Remember

JANUARY 6 HAS become a day of accountability. Five years ago this week, protestors stormed the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., with the aim of stopping the legitimate transfer of power from the head of one political party to the head of another. Police officers were assaulted, property was damaged, lawmakers were put in fear of their lives, and a few people died. More than 100 people gathered in Court Square this Tuesday, Jan. 6, to remind us what happened. Many drivers honked their support. One driver rolled down his window and expressed his loud support for our current president, but no one was injured.

Independent photos/Steve James

After delays, Vergennes bakery reopens

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

VERGENNES — For the first time since August, Vergennes Laundry recently welcomed customers into the cafe, now at a newly renovated location on Main Street.

“It’s been such a joy to see everyone come back and be so supportive and be really excited about the new space,” said owner and head cook Nadia Dole.

The soft-opening in mid-December allowed fans of the eatery, which also usually serves pastries and meals inspired by Middle Eastern and French cuisines, to once again pop in to sip coffee and shop. But there was a time when Dole, who has owned Vergennes Laundry for five years, thought she and her business would be leaving the Little City.

Early last year she found out her lease at 247 Main St. wouldn’t be renewed in August and she planned to move the business to Woodstock. But early in the summer Dole had a coincidental run-in with the landlord of the 205 Main St. and made plans to move there. Then renovations at the new place took longer than expected.

Now, about six months after what she described as fate, four months after beginning the move and three months later than she expected to be back up and running, Dole

said the soft-reopening has been “unbelievable.”

“I was unsure. My fear was that it would feel like a step down from where we were, and people have said the absolute opposite. It’s bright and beautiful, and then they’re coming in and they’re bumping into old friends, and so it’s been such a joy, like to be on this other side and have people love it and fill seats and hear the chatter.”

Vergennes Laundry is currently open Sunday-Tuesday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for coffee and retail, but come mid-January Dole hopes to be fully open, serving the cafe’s baked goods, breakfast and lunch.

As far as the menu goes, Dole said “old favorites,” like the Turkish eggs, eggs benedict, cardamom buns and croissants are here to stay. But she also has some new additions cooking too.

Tarts are on tap, as are more savory pastries, Dole said. “We’re going to have a cake of the week as well, like a shared cake for everyone.”

Another new addition Dole hopes to roll out by mid-February are Sunday and Monday night dinners.

“It’s a time where there is no place to eat, and we’ve always wanted to do it, and we were prepared to do it in our last spot

when we realized we had to move, we had to pivot.”

She said dinner offerings could include starters like oysters, hummus, roasted vegetables, salads and homemade olives, and main courses like chicken Milanese, mussels and fish.

But long before Dole could start delivering on her menu, she first had to take on the task of transforming what was once an office space for Jackman Fuels into a functional restaurant.

Back when she embarked on the extensive renovations, she expected it to take about four to five weeks, which has been drawn out because of sporadic construction schedules, and in December due to a permitting issue that has since been resolved.

As of Dec. 30, there were still some electrical issues that needed to be addressed, and after the holidays Dole’s small staff was scheduled to spend two weeks training in the eatery’s two kitchens — one for baking and one for cooking. The latter is open, giving customers a peek at how their meals are made.

About two weeks out from being fully open, while reflecting on the ordeal of securing a space and the renovations, Dole said she’s “feeling very lucky.”

“Exhausted, but lucky.”

Ed reform process reaches pivotal point

Locals administrators weigh in on challenges, opportunities

By MARIN HOWELL and JOHN FLOWERS

ADDISON COUNTY — When the Vermont Legislature reconvened in Montpelier this week, lawmakers had a big question awaiting them in the 2026 session — how to move forward with the process of transforming Vermont’s education system.

That process was set in motion this past summer and established in Act 73, a landmark education reform package signed into law on July 1. Baked into the law was the creation of the School District Redistricting Task Force, an 11-member panel charged with proposing new school district boundaries and configurations to the General Assembly by Dec. 1.

The task force was asked to come up with a few redistricting map proposals for lawmakers to consider, but instead recommended a “phased roadmap” with three key strategies to guide change. Those three components are:

- Cooperative Education Service Areas. The task force states the regional shared-service structures encourage collaboration between districts on services like special education and transportation.
- Strategic voluntary mergers, “based on educational value, community priorities, and fiscal sustainability — not arbitrary size targets.”
- Comprehensive regional high schools.

“This roadmap reflects Vermont’s geography, honors community identity, and targets the real drivers of cost and inequity,” reads the task force’s Dec. 1 report. “It offers an actionable, evidence-

based foundation for long-term improvement, and provides the Legislature with a clear direction for strengthening the quality, affordability, and resilience of Vermont’s public education system.”

It’s unclear how the process established with Act 73 will continue to unfold, with potential change hinging on lawmakers’ action this legislative session. Any new school district boundaries would need to be approved by the General Assembly this year for implementation in the 2028-2029 school year.

In the meantime, local superintendents shared their thoughts on the task force’s report, expressing gratitude for the panel’s efforts and pointing to the work that lies ahead.

LOCAL DISTRICTS RESPOND

Patrick Reen, superintendent of the Bristol-area Mount Abraham Unified School District, shared his appreciation for the “time, care, and thoughtful effort the School District Redistricting Task Force dedicated to this important work.”

“Their findings help illuminate a reality many of us experience daily: many of the challenges we face in educating students in Vermont are rooted in our lack of scale,” he told the *Independent*.

“I am encouraged by the Task Force’s exploration of Cooperative Education Service Areas as a promising way to address some of these challenges, and I agree that we must also thoughtfully examine the number of school districts and superintendent offices across the state,” he continued. “These conversations are not easy, particularly because our local communities care deeply about their schools and their school districts. That strong sense of connection is something to celebrate, even as it makes conversations about change more complex.”

Reen noted the state and its local communities face “difficult decisions as we work to improve learning experiences for students, strengthen the teaching experience for educators, and ensure affordability for taxpayers.”

“At the same time, I am hopeful. If we remain future-focused, and stay open to change, we have real potential to make meaningful improvements in all of these areas,” he said.

Amy Cole is superintendent of the Lincoln School District, which educates preK-12 students in Lincoln. Cole said she is grateful for the hard work members of the task force put into their charge.

“The report effectively emphasizes the complexity of the issues involved and sheds light on the idea that a single solution may not be suitable for every community,” she said.

“As the leader of a small district, (See Response, Page 3A)

“I agree that we must also thoughtfully examine the number of school districts and superintendent offices across the state.”

— Patrick Reen

“I appreciate that our state leaders recognize the critical role that community schools play in small rural communities. These schools are critical to the educational, cultural and economic vitality of these small communities.”

— Amy Cole



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Response

(Continued from Page 2A)

while we share similar challenges as other larger districts, I appreciate that our state leaders recognize the critical role that community schools play in small rural communities," Cole continued. "These schools are critical to the educational, cultural and economic vitality of these small communities. Every effort should be made to preserve these community schools while ensuring that student needs are met in a way that is also affordable to taxpayers."

During a brief interview, Addison Central School District Superintendent Wendy Baker applauded the task force's work and recommendations.

"I think there are three things (in the report) that are important," she said. "Through the collaborative agencies (the task force) is

proposing, we have the potential to address our biggest cost drivers, and that's exciting. We're also

"Through the collaborative agencies (the task force) is proposing, we have the potential to address our biggest cost drivers, and that's exciting."

—Wendy Baker

"For those three reasons, I think the report is grounded in what's both important and what's real about our pathway forward," Baker continued.

She and her colleagues statewide will watch carefully this winter as

lawmakers decide whether to take the task force's advice or pursue a different route to reforming public education and the way it's financed.

"I think there's a narrative that continues to be advanced that we need dramatic cost savings that a different path toward redistricting could have provided," Baker said. "The redistricting task force did not agree with that assumption and some of the evidence for that. Yet that political narrative persists, so we'll have to determine how those things reconcile during the upcoming legislative session."

Lincoln School District gets first look at capital improvement plan

By MARIN HOWELL

LINCOLN — The Lincoln School Board recently got a closer look at what capital projects the district could tackle at Lincoln Community School in the coming years, as well as what those projects could cost.

At the board's Dec. 23 meeting, Superintendent Amy Cole and Facilities Director Rob King presented a draft Capital Improvement Plan that details projects completed in recent years and a five-year plan for potential future work at the elementary school.

Cole noted the document is a work in progress aimed at helping forecast long-term budgeting, and no final commitments have been made to the projects highlighted in the draft plan.

During the Dec. 23 meeting, school board members reviewed the document and asked questions about some of the projects highlighted in it.

"By asking questions, one about the finance piece, but also just about some of the projects I think you're going to appreciate that we have a better depth of knowledge about what this building needs and how we should sort of plan for it budgetarily and so forth," Cole told the board.

The Lincoln School District educates preK-12 students in the mountain town, including at the Lincoln Community School (LCS). Cole noted the draft document shows work that's been done at the elementary school over the past two years, projects being completed over the current school year, and what improvements need to be completed in future years.

The draft capital improvement plan and the cost estimates it includes build off of a 2023 facilities audit of the building completed by the Agency of Education, as well as work done by King and estimates provided by vendors.

"(King) very quickly knows more about this building, well, than anybody quite frankly; has been in every duct and part of the basement and has done an incredible amount of work," Cole said.

The draft document includes a breakdown of completed and potential future project costs organized by category, for example in the areas of electrical, plumbing or HVAC work. Overall, projects the district could take on over the next five years are estimated to total \$747,221, based on the draft plan.

The document also identifies funding sources that have supported past projects and where funding for future improvements could come from, including reserve funds, grants and the district's operating budget. A spreadsheet included in the document further details past and future projects along with their associated costs.

Cole noted work on the document is ongoing.

"This is a living document that we're going to need to be making updates to frequently," she said.

During the conversation King pointed to some of the work that's been completed at LCS more recently, including repainting all of the hallways and work on carpets throughout the halls.

"We've done some HVAC work, some evaluation of the systems, been able to replace some internal parts where we didn't have to

replace a whole system," King said. "But there's going to be points down the road where we're going to have to start looking at, instead of just replacing the innards of the system, we're going to have to replace the whole system, and those are the things that we're going to have to talk about in the future and what the board would like to do in those long-term situations, so that's kind of what this capital improvement plan is for."

School officials discussed some of the bigger ticket items identified in the draft document, particularly a parking lot pavement project. King noted the parking lot itself is expected to cost \$65,500.

Asked why that project has risen to the top of the list of needed improvements, King noted the driveway is cracking, which is expected to start requiring work to address in the future.

"We're going to get to a point where repairing costs are going to get more expensive than just replacing it," he explained.

King pointed to HVAC as an area he sees the building being more vulnerable in but noted there are aspects of those systems that put the district in a fortunate spot.

"If we're willing to act frugally and talk about things, I think there's a lot of things that we can fix or take care of and it won't be a big deal," he said.

The school board planned to schedule a guided walk through the LCS building, as well as a time to continue discussion of the draft facilities plan with Cole and King. School board members at the meeting thanked King and Cole for their work on the document.

"The work you've done is what the district has been needing for many years, and it feels like you've been a really good team in it," Lincoln School Board Vice Chair Deirdre Kelly said.



Sen. Bernie Sanders, left, Rep. Becca Balint, center, and Sen. Peter Welch.

Photos by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Vermont's congressional delegation condemns U.S. actions in Venezuela

By ETHAN WEINSTEIN, VTDigger.org

Vermont's congressional delegation condemned the U.S. military's attack on Venezuela over the weekend that led to the capture of the country's leader, Nicolás Maduro.

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt, and Vermont Democrats U.S. Sen. Peter Welch and U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, all labeled Maduro a brutal authoritarian but said President Donald Trump's attacks on the South American country exceeded his constitutional authority.

"Trump's attack on Venezuela will make the United States and the world less safe. This brazen violation of international law gives a green light to any nation on earth that may wish to attack another country to seize their resources or change their governments," Sanders said in a statement.

U.S. forces entered the Venezuelan capital of Caracas overnight Friday into Saturday, and more than 100 U.S. aircraft helped neutralize the country's air defenses, the *New York Times* reported. Current news reports say about 80 people were killed, up from 40 cited on Tuesday, though Trump said no Americans were killed in the attack.

American troops captured both Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, later transporting them out of the country. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said Maduro would face charges in the U.S. of narco-terrorism conspiracy and cocaine importation conspiracy, among other charges.

Trump said Saturday the U.S. would "run" Venezuela while a transfer of power took place. The details of that plan have not been made clear, though many of Trump's comments focused on growing the Venezuelan oil

industry. The country is currently being ruled by leaders of the same dictatorial party led by Maduro.

Vermont's top federal lawmakers wasted little time in condemning the military escalation. They had similarly criticized the staging of Vermont Air National Guard members to support the military buildup against Venezuela.

"President Trump's hunger for a regime-change war makes it clear he doesn't care about how this unauthorized and illegal action could cause further chaos and suffering in Venezuela. Has he learned nothing from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya?" Welch said in a statement Saturday. "This could lead us into another forever war, risking the lives of U.S. service members and hurting the economy."

Balint, in her own statement, said the U.S. had made "these horrible mistakes before."

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Editorials

Trump's joy ride to mayhem

It's difficult to grasp how much has gone wrong since Trump assumed office a year ago. Far from the most productive president in his first year, the more accurate claim is he's done more damage.

In one realm — mayhem — he's a leader.

Consider: the deficit is skyrocketing and will continue to throughout his second term, while DOGE's projected savings were a total bust; cost-of-living remains high and health care, food, and housing have soared; he's made a mockery of our once-prized system of justice; fraternized the military so its political independence is compromised; his presidential pardons reek of injustice; he's wrecking the nation's economic future by abandoning renewable energy; his trade wars drove prices up for consumers and American businesses while China often prevailed; he lies so frequently trust has vanished; and, most recently, his kidnapping of Venezuela's president and his wife is not only illegal by U.S. and international law, but sets the worse precedent imaginable.

Even dumber is his threat to use military force to take over Greenland. Such stupidity shouldn't need to be seriously considered, but it is because of the president's inability to grasp anything beyond self-indulgence.

Greenland is an independent sovereignty (not owned by Denmark, but supported by them), and as NATO allies work with the U.S. to secure sea passages and resources for the good of the alliance. America already has a military base on the island and access to critical materials if it desires. In short, America has everything Greenland could offer, and it's virtually cost-free. That is, Denmark spends its own resources to defend the country, provide social services (health care, food, retirement, housing needs, etc.) Why would Trump want to take on a country at American taxpayer's expense?

There's a reason. As it is, he sees no personal gain. If Greenland is under his control, he imagines he can pillage and plunder (by getting kickbacks from cronies extracting mineral wealth), which is also what he means when he says, "I'm going to run Venezuela." Or more specifically, he'll let others manage the unraveling country, while he'll privately manage the flow of oil from Venezuela — and the graft that follows.

What other motivation makes sense? The American people don't gain either way. On the contrary, American taxpayers will likely subsidize American companies, who would profit from extracting the natural resources. Trump simply gets kickbacks for the contracts arranged.

Trump's actions do bring into focus where we are as a country: We're being led by a petty tyrant who breaks U.S. and international law with impunity, kills innocents without remorse, and brazenly threatens countries with military might. Moreover, members of his administration, particularly Vice President JD Vance and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller, are aiding and abetting these crimes with an astoundingly undemocratic premise — might makes right.

It's that break with law and order — a key tenant of democracy — and embracing a self-serving agenda ruled by military aggression that's truly troubling. Trump has never sworn (at least with any intent) to follow the Constitution or any set of laws, but most Republicans have been stalwart law-and-order disciples.

What Trump is asking of his party's leadership, and of the GOP voter, is to abandon the rule of law. He wants to lead like a dictator. He's been telegraphing this for years. Most Americans just didn't believe he was serious. The question now is whether Republicans give him the keys and check out, or will they finally stand up for democracy.

If they don't, the history books may show that Benedict Arnold didn't hold a candle to Traitorous Trump.

Angelo Lynn

Gov. Scott's one-sided story

Let's give credit to Gov. Scott in his State-of-the-State Address this Wednesday for putting his political capital on the line. Being governor is not just saying you're for or against something and letting the political battles carry the day, it's about carrying the torch, particularly on controversial issues, and getting your priorities across the goal line.

Last year, Scott took the lead on education reform and in his opening address this year he again used his bully pulpit to champion Act 73 in the face of mounting opposition. His address was an impassioned statement on why Vermont needs education reform, and what he hopes will come of it. In it, he cites several damning facts of the current system: the rising costs, the inequities between schools, the lack of resources for teachers, the inefficiencies of the current system.

But he tells a partial story. He gently hints at the losses to come (the large number of school closings if the state is to save significant chunks of money) but isn't forthright about how significant those must be.

He also errors by drawing a needless red line in the sand and by dismissing the solid work of the Legislative Task Force.

The red line was drawn when he said: "I want to be clear. I will not sign a budget or an education bill or tax bill that deviates from Act 73 or fails to fix what's broken." It's folly to think Act 73 is the perfect bill and no aspect needs to be changed, and it's folly to allow Scott to be the lone arbiter of what he judges will "fix what's broken." The governor's statement should be that he pledges to work with the Legislature to fix what's broken. No political hyperbole about dying on one's sword is needed; just a commitment to solve the problem.

In dismissing the Task Force's Work, he misstates their expansive report as simply trying to thwart progress. Not so. First, the Task Force embraced Act 73's Foundation Formula as a needed action that would provide more savings that consolidation, and it fixes Scott's objections to the gross inequities school-to-school. Second, the Task Force's research demonstrated that savings from cooperative school agencies would be as effective as consolidation, but without the disruption of closing schools. Other states have pursued that same model with success. The task force also embraced a more gradual transition to larger regional high schools.

There's a lot there on which to collaborate.

Vermonters know there are two sides to this complex story. Hopefully, Gov. Scott and the Legislature do too.

Let's tell both stories with full transparency. Inform each school district how many schools are likely to be closed in that district to achieve equity and the savings needed. Lay out the completed vision, 10 years out, with options, and see what Vermonters say. The worst thing we can do is be afraid to tell voters the full story, including the messy downsides.

Angelo Lynn



Love, not hate

MOST OF THE signs at the Jan. 6 vigil on Court Square in Middlebury this Tuesday were strident in tone — Defend Democracy, Truth Matters, Traitor. But one message peeked through that was a little lighter, and at least as instructive. Three hearts and a smile.

Independent photo/Steve James

Age doesn't define us as people

I was in a community meeting when, once again, someone mentioned that our group needed young people in it to teach us old folks how to spread our message via social media. After all, the conversation continued, older people don't know how to use TikTok, YouTube, Instagram or other social media that younger people frequent. I made an extremely snappy comment about being tired of hearing this. I didn't appreciate the generalization and, furthermore, I didn't use TikTok or Instagram because I don't like them, not because I have an age-related inability to fathom their mechanisms. I was ticked off, in case you don't get my drift.

I apologized for my tone. In that moment I'd had it with hearing about yet one more thing anyone over 40 can't, shouldn't, or won't do. But what also troubled me was the assumption that young people would, could or wanted to teach us how to navigate social media. Because young people are concerned about social and political issues, I'm sure that many of them would be happy to offer their ideas, knowledge and skills. Many of them are already doing so. If young people wanted to join our group, I wanted them to do so for reasons of their own, not to be assigned a particular role.

For most of my adult life, I've belonged to social movement groups. When I was a young adult, I was usually the youngest person in the room. Older people often had expectations of what my role in the group should be, based on my age. They had plans and they needed young people's help to get those plans

out there; not necessarily to help shape them, but to disperse them. These elders were well-intentioned and yet myopic.

I'm not on a moral high horse here. I've experienced sexism, racism, ageism and homophobia — to name a few — and I have my own biased perspectives. What I try to do — and it is an ongoing and worthwhile effort — is give people the benefit of the doubt. That's the main reason I apologized for my snarky response to the comment about older people and social media. I'd made assumptions about the person's reasons for their view, based on their age.

Recently, I read Karen Walrond's book "Radiant Rebellion: Reclaim Aging, Practice Joy, and Raise a Little Hell." Walrond offers perspectives on aging by sharing conversations with experts, as well as results of studies and statistical data. What emerges is the need to push back on the message that older people are the same (like assuming that none are tech savvy). Thinking we're too old to do something is often internalized. I recognize my internalized ageism when I capitulate to thinking I didn't or couldn't do something because of my age. While I don't expect to eliminate this feeling altogether, staying curious and trying new things helps to mitigate it.

I believe that the most impactful groups and communities are those that value all generations. People of all ages have something to teach and something to learn:

(See Ways, Page 5A)

Ways of Seeing

By Ruth Farmer



Holidays are chaos for parents

Before I had a baby, I'd scoff when people would tell me how dysregulated their kids were after the holidays. These routine-bound parents struck me as rigid and uptight. Everybody deserves a little fun, right? Extra treats, running wild with cousins, playing fast and loose with bedtime — it seemed like the frothy good stuff, the icing on the cake of a well-spent childhood. But now that I'm a parent, I've changed my tune. Our daughter's first Christmas is now more than a week in the rear view mirror, and we're all still recovering.

We made it to my mother's house on Christmas Eve, our car stuffed with baby gear, presents and diapers. Forget the parents who shepherded her there — our daughter was the main attraction. Everybody wanted to watch her crawl and eat. They clapped when she clapped. They pointed where she pointed. Our daughter delighted in being passed from lap to lap. We schlepped our stuff upstairs to a room with four twin beds and a broken doorknob. I set up our daughter's playpen; my sister read her "The Night Before Christmas." And then it was time to go to bed. But the baby refused to sleep. Every time I lowered her into her playpen, she'd wail and wail. Crying it out is OK at home, but crying it out at 2 a.m. in a packed house of relatives didn't feel fair. So we took turns sleeping with her in our narrow twin beds, holding on tight, wedging pillows behind her back and hoping she wouldn't fall out. By morning, we

were bleary-eyed and exhausted.

Christmas Day brought all the usual excitement — presents, a big family meal, a romp outside, and, of course, no nap. The baby socialized her little heart out, even as dark circles grew under her eyes. That night, we decided to take a different approach to our sleeping arrangements. We pushed two twin beds together, shoved a blanket in the crack, and covered them in a king sheet. This worked until a 2 a.m. diaper change,

when our daughter, diaperless for mere seconds, peed all over the bed. I wanted to change the sheets. My husband proclaimed this was too much and throwing down a towel would suffice. "It's fine," he said. "I'll sleep on the pee." So we switched sides of the bed. I found myself without any covers, so I decided to turn on the light. But I couldn't find that either. As I groped the wall in pursuit of the light switch, I accidentally closed the door. It clicked ominously. We were locked in.

"What are we supposed to do now?" I asked, my voice rising in mild panic. "Should I call the house phone? It'll wake everybody up."

"We don't do anything," my husband replied. "We go back to sleep. We'll wake up the whole house in a couple hours when one of us has to pee."

"Alright," I said, resigned, climbing back into bed. (See Clippings, Page 5A)

Clippings

By Sarah Harris



Letters to the Editor

Population stability is good

The Vermont Futures Project advocates increasing the population of our state to 802,000 by 2035, citing the economic challenges that come with a stable population. But VFP is silent on what would happen if that goal were to be achieved. Would they then have us level off at 802,000? If so, all the effects of stability would return. VFP must make the case that stability at that level is better than the stability we have now. If stability is the problem, the alternative is perpetual population growth. Is it desirable to have a Vermont of a million people? Two million? 10 million?

Just because population growth has been our history does not mean that it is desirable. Humans need food, use cars, produce waste, and heat homes. Any per-capita environmental gains we make in these areas are reduced when the number of people increases. It becomes worse when laws designed to protect the environment are repealed or curtailed in order to benefit developers. The real crisis we face now is a carbon crisis, and requirements for new construction ought to prohibit or severely limit combustion heating, for one example.

There is no question that Vermont has an obligation to see that no one is living without shelter. But in my view the state of Vermont ought not to give tax breaks to businesses, or to gut environmental protections, in order to grow the population. We have a land that requires protection, and we need to reduce, not increase, our carbon footprint. Population stability is not a crisis — it's something to celebrate.

Jerome Shedd
Ripton

Explanation for signs of fascism

Over the past few weeks you may have driven by individuals holding "Signs of Fascism" on the Cross Street Bridge, at Triangle Park or along Main Street in Middlebury. This is why.

One sign of fascism is control of the media. A second sign of fascism is using a shared grievance to exert power and control over the masses. A third sign of fascism is the normalization of corruption.

From its inception corruption was an integral part of Nazi culture. As Nazism gained traction, corruption along with looting and bribery became the norm. High-level government officials were gifted cash, vast land holdings and lucrative tax exemptions. High-ranking officers in the Wehrmacht were rewarded in similar fashion in exchange for their loyalty. Methods were "legally" devised to strip "undesirables" of their businesses, homes and personal possessions including art, furs and jewelry.

In fascist Italy under Mussolini corruption became commonplace. The government took over the economy, industry and trade unions through graft and bribery. Debt forgiveness and pardons were bestowed on loyalists, including criminals. As in Germany there was little accountability among the elite. As a result, lawlessness and injustice became the norm.

In Spain, Franco leveraged a "reward" system to concentrate power and loyalty among the chosen few. The fascist government devised a highly effective propaganda system to spread Franco's message along with disinformation and falsehoods. It also manipulated the judiciary to exact retribution from political enemies and protect corrupt individuals and practices from legal action.

Today, looking at what is currently taking place in the United States we see the following:

- Our country's leader awarded a new, \$400 million jet from Qatar! Soon to become Air Force One after approximately \$1 billion in upgrades.
- Lavish gifts made to a Supreme Court justice. Gifts worth over \$4 million.
- Enforcement and watchdog agencies stripped of their authority.
- Congressional approval side-stepped or avoided in order to change historical and cultural (See Wiger-Grohs letter, Page 5A)

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Solar's great, not the only answer

I have extensive personal experience with solar power (since 1987). I am not offering ideology. I am describing the facts I have lived while using multiple forms of locally generated renewable energy.

I am a huge fan of solar power, and I have walked the walk for most of my adult life. Solar is a fantastic option, and it has improved dramatically over the last four decades. However, I also acknowledge intrinsic limitations that become unavoidable in the heart of a Vermont winter — precisely when we are most dependent on electricity for heat, light and safety.

Bill McKibben's book "Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization" is a wonderful summary of the clear benefits of solar power and the hopeful possibilities as that come with scaling it responsibly.

My own experience and conclusions align closely with McKibben's call for a responsible path forward. I recognize that some may perceive an intrinsic

bias in any person who speaks strongly about energy. But anyone who has used solar seriously, through multiple winters, will recognize the same concern: output is not simply a matter of enthusiasm or policy. It is constrained by physics — short days, low sun angle, storms and snow cover. These are universal and unchangeable constraints in a northern climate.

Community Forum

This week's writer is *Anders Holm, a resident of Ferrisburgh and owner of a building in downtown Middlebury beside the Middlebury Falls.*

Unless we develop truly massive seasonal battery storage — at a scale that is, at present, economically unfeasible — solar alone is not going to generate sufficient power during the winter months. That means other sources must be entertained seriously, not as ideological adversaries but as practical partners in a reliable portfolio.

My personal "experiment" with solar began as something simple and practical: recharging the batteries for my Walkman using small solar panels in Stockholm — a high-latitude city (north by any *(See Holm forum, Page 7A)*)

Lawmakers face full '26 agenda

Greetings, neighbors in Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton and Starksboro. As one of your representatives in Montpelier, I'm heading into the legislative session. I want to give folks an update on what might be on the legislative agenda, as well as share my perspective on the issues.

Legislative Review

by Rep. Herb Olson
D-Starksboro

Education. Montpelier will again tackle how to provide an excellent education for our students at a cost we can afford. What changes are needed to our education tax system? What level of services should we expect schools to provide? Will we see much larger school districts, and how will that impact community trust in our schools? Will Montpelier try to close community elementary schools, even those that educate their students well, and are cost-effective? I don't know all the answers, and I'll listen to anyone, but here's what I'm thinking right now.

• We need to fix our tax system. There is so much that doesn't make sense. For example, in one of our local school districts, education spending is projected to increase only modestly, yet homestead taxes are increasing by double digits even in towns with recent revaluations. I'm open to all options that keep taxes reasonable, predictable and equitable, but we can't continue with a system that doesn't work for taxpayers.

• Ultimately, taxes reflect expenses. We need to take a close look at state-promoted spending, as well as whether some of what we fund from property taxes could be funded from other revenue sources. Not an easy task!

• I support the recommendations of the Redistricting Task Force. I can imagine the school districts in Addison County collaborating to achieve significant savings by sharing common expenses: e.g. administrative leadership, business and finance services, procurement and purchasing, IT services, professional development, facilities and capital planning, etc. I can also imagine an Addison County regional high school, integrated with the Hannaford Career Center, providing a secondary education with greater depth and breadth for students. Some school districts may need a nudge to start the collaboration process.

• Before a school is closed, the community where the school is located must have a meaningful voice in the decision. To me, that means a town vote. I trust the voters more than I trust Montpelier to make this decision. Fix the property tax! Leave our schools alone!

Housing. Housing has become unaffordable, driving young families out of state, and stifling local businesses. It's taken a long time to arrive at this unhappy spot, and it will take concerted, prolonged efforts to get us out of the mess. There is no single, magic solution, but I will be proposing two pieces of legislation that might help. First, make water and wastewater systems less costly to build, while maintaining essential health and environmental protections. Second, allow more land to be available for housing without a state permit, and encourage the construction of affordable and livable manufactured

home communities.

Primary care. Good access to primary care is essential for patients, yet many practices aren't accepting new patients, and it takes far too long to get an appointment. Meanwhile, Vermont has some of the highest premiums in the nation, and better access to primary care could reduce health costs. I will be proposing primary care access legislation to reduce the insane amount of time practitioners spend on paperwork, reform byzantine billing requirements and costs, attract primary care medical students and residents to Vermont, and work to ensure that all Vermonters, including the uninsured, have good access to primary care.

I'll also be following many other issues, such as data privacy, Career Technical Education, freedom for workers to change their job or start their own business, and fair treatment of immigrants. It also will be an exceedingly difficult budget year as Vermont adjusts to federal funding cuts.

Please let me know if you have thoughts on these or any other issues, and please reach out to me during the session if you have any questions or concerns: 401-829-1678.

Stay warm, people! Good news: the days are getting longer.

Letters to the Editor

Amid small political victories, more work to be done

On Jan. 1 I felt exhilarated and hopeful watching Zohran Mamdani's inaugural as New York City's next mayor. The expressions of joy and optimism were palpable while attendees listened to Mamdani and our own Bernie Sanders espouse their vision for uplifting lower income and working-class families of NYC who, like millions of Americans, have been besieged by the costs of daily living.

Two days later we attacked Venezuela to oust President Nicolás Maduro, seize control of the country and its oil resources, erode the international rule of law (not unlike Trump and his administration are doing in the U.S.) and plant our bootheel on the sphere of domination we seek in the Western hemisphere. Trump's news conference later that morning stood in stark contrast to Mamdani's and Sanders's vision for the future.

Mamdani spoke of justice and dignity, building affordable housing, free bus transportation, a hefty raise in the minimum wage, reasonably priced, universal childcare, requiring the wealthy to pay their fair share of taxes, and equality under the rule of law.

Trump focused his remarks on the ability of the U.S. to exert the power of our military anywhere we like, taking control of Venezuela's government, and temporarily running the country. He said

U.S. oil companies will rebuild Venezuela's oil infrastructure and expressed his willingness to send in troops to protect their efforts. Nothing was mentioned about how our incursion into Venezuela will benefit Americans other than wealthy oil magnates, how long we might be there, or how our presence in Venezuela would ease our affordability crisis.

Trump's claims of how we'll pay for taking control of Venezuela are reminiscent of his first term promises of getting Mexico to assume the cost of expanding the wall on our southern border. In fact, our reckless adventure in Venezuela will cost us millions, if not billions of taxpayer dollars.

Trump will not be President forever. But the aspirations of Vice President Vance, Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, Director of Budget and Management Russell Vought, and the life-long tenures of right-leaning Supreme Court Justices aren't going away anytime soon. Neither is white Christian Nationalism, white supremacy, or organizations like Erika Kirk's Turning Point. They are fully aware that with the help of Trump and Pam Bondi's Department of Justice they must sabotage the 2026 midterm elections to maintain their power and pursue the promises of Project 2025.

Already, significant efforts

at rewriting election rules, gerrymandering (redistricting), and threats against election officials, including violence against them and their family members are underway. They are compounded by DOJ's demand that 22 states turn over their voting registration lists in an effort to purge likely Democratic voters. These initiatives are being challenged in court but it's anyone's guess what the outcomes may be or how long it might take to reap positive results.

It is important to celebrate victories like Mamdani's of which there have been many. But we cannot be complacent or unaware that for millions of people, voting is secondary to economic survival while for others life still goes on comfortably. The near future isn't somewhere out there waiting to happen to us. We choose and shape the future we desire. We must work to realize that future and reclaim our democracy! Now we must do everything feasible to ensure the 2026 midterm elections are free and fair and turn out such a huge margin of Democrat and Independent wins in the House that the integrity of the results cannot be questioned or forestalled. Then we can celebrate in grand style, mindful that keeping our democracy requires ongoing vigilance and effort!

Ron Rubin
Middlebury

Wiger-Grohs letter

(Continued from Page 4A)

landmarks and traditions. • Accountability among the nation's highest ranking officials has become almost nonexistent. • Congressional approval side-stepped in order to make strikes on Venezuelan boats and civilians.

And, strikes on Nigerian civilians. The above information hopefully explains why some individuals have chosen to stand up and gather weekly in Middlebury with "Signs of Fascism."

Judy Wiger-Grohs
Middlebury

Clippings

(Continued from Page 4A) If worse came to worse, there was always that package of clean diapers.

I woke up at 5:45 a.m. to a sharp kick in the back. The baby was awake. I texted the family group chat.

"We're trapped, and I have to pee!" I wrote. Minutes later, my mother's boyfriend was at the door, screwdriver in hand. We were free — and officially exhausted.

Somehow we packed the car. The baby slept the whole way home. She went to bed early that night, and slept well into the next day. The circles under her eyes are only

started to dissipate four or five days later. As for me — now I understand those parents complaining about

their dysregulated children. I am so glad to be home. And I'm ready for a long winter's nap.

Ways

(Continued from Page 4A) A baby can teach us the value of curiosity.

A toddler can teach us to be brave enough to try.

Young adults can teach us to step into our fullness.

Elders can teach us the value of experience.

This has always been a multi-generational world, just as it has always been a world of people with different ethnicities and races. Yet we often compartmentalize people, expecting particular contributions or behaviors based on a category we've placed them in. We can't afford this myopic thinking. The Earth needs us to do better. I'm not one for doing New Year's resolutions, but if I were to make a resolution this year, it would be to remember we all have value, no matter our age.

Ruth Farmer is a published essayist and poet. She is sole owner of *Farmer Writing and Editing* (www.ruthfarmer.com).

Elderly Services Inc. ESI College



J.S. Bach's Dance Music: Moving the Body and the Soul

Tuesday, January 20
10:00 - 11:30 AM
The Congregational Church of Middlebury

Join **Larry Hamberlin**, Professor Emeritus of Music at Middlebury College, for an exploration of the lively dance rhythms of keyboard music by the eighteenth century's greatest musical genius, J.S. Bach.

Larry Hamberlin taught music courses at Middlebury College for two decades. The author of *The Curious Listener*, *Tin Pan Opera*, and *An Introduction to America's Music*, he has given presentations at several national and international conferences on music history.

Register Now!

<https://elderlyservices.org/esi-college-winter-2026/>
or call 802.388-3983



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Attention
Addison County
Middle School Students

National Civics Bee
by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The Addison County Chamber of Commerce is excited to share an incredible opportunity for our Addison County middle school students to engage in civics, showcase their ideas, and compete for recognition and prizes through the 2026 National Civics Bee, a nationwide, nonpartisan competition organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Students in grades 6–8 are invited to participate. Live competition takes place on May 9, 2026. **Deadline for submissions is Feb. 3rd!** To apply, visit www.addisoncounty.com/civicsbee

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ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Phyllis Conway McKnight, 79, formerly of New Haven

BATH, Maine — Phyllis “Rory” Conway McKnight passed away Dec. 25, 2025, at Maine Health Mid Coast Hospital in Brunswick, Maine, after a long illness. Born to Phyllis Irene Creaser and John Thomas Conway on July 11, 1946, in Proctor, Vt., Rory was the proud and devoted mother of two sons and a loving partner and wife to her Vermont game warden husband.

Survivors are: sons, James McKnight of Alna, Maine and Robert “Chip” McKnight and wife Bethany of Orrington, Maine; sister, Elizabeth Haskell of Bath, Maine; brother, John

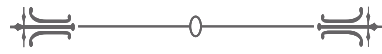
Conway of Bath, Maine; and three grandsons, Elijah McKnight, Gideon McKnight, and Greyson McKnight of Maine.

Rory was predeceased by her husband, Robert F. McKnight; baby son Sean; and mother, Phyllis (Creaser) Conway. At Rory’s request, there will be no services.

During her many years living in New Haven, Rory was a hospice caregiver and volunteer for the Addison County Home Health and Hospice. Memorial gifts may be made in her memory to ACHHH, P. O. Box 754, Middlebury, VT 05753. ◊



PHYLLIS ‘RORY’ CONWAY MCKNIGHT



Bessie A. Sessions, 85, of Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Bessie A. Sessions, a longtime resident of Ferrisburgh, Vt., passed away peacefully in the comfort of her home with her daughters by her side Dec. 13, 2025.

Bessie was born Feb. 3, 1940, in Burlington, Vt., and raised on Roads End Farm in Pantown, Vt., the daughter of Dean and Alberta (Sprague) Jackson. She graduated from Vergennes High School and UVM with a B.S. in Home Economics Education.

Bessie was predeceased by her

husband, Wendell H. Sessions, her parents, and nephew Eric. She is survived by her very special twin daughters, Sarah and Betsey; sister Janice Jackson; brothers Roger and Richard (Jeanne) Jackson; nephew Stephen (Dianne) Jackson; and great nephew and nieces Andrew, Kristine, Anne and Maddy.

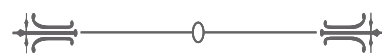
In keeping with her wishes there will be a private service at a later date.

The family wishes to express their heartfelt and sincere thanks to the staff of Addison County Home

Health & Hospice for the care and compassion they gave Bessie.

Those who wish may make contributions in her memory to the Addison County Home Health & Hospice through the office of Devlin Funeral Home 332 North Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201

Arrangements are in the care of Devlin Funeral Home, Bennington, VT. Those wishing to express online condolences, please visit devlinfuneralhomevt.com. ◊



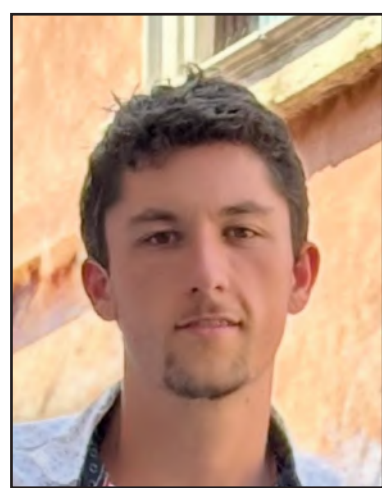
Ryan Thomas Pepe, 24, of East Thetford

EAST THETFORD — Ryan Thomas Pepe, beloved son, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin, friend, teammate and coach, passed away unexpectedly Dec. 30, 2025, in Hanover, N.H.

Ryan was born Dec. 28, 2001, in Lebanon, N.H., the son of Michael and Kami Pepe, and was big brother to Nolan Pepe, of East Thetford, Vt. He is also survived by his grandparents, Donald and Mary Pepe of Whiting, and Paula Mayer of Middlebury; great uncle Paul Mayer of Middlebury; uncles, Jim and Chris; aunts, Jane and Elizabeth; and many cousins, especially Lucas, Aiden, Forest, and Sam. His extended family lives primarily in Connecticut and Vermont, yet reaches as far as Italy, where Ryan made two special trips in the last two years. Ryan was pre-deceased by his grandfather, Phillip Williams of Middlebury.

While having had great family adventures around the world, Ryan’s favorite place was always Thetford, and he couldn’t imagine wanting to live anywhere else. He attended Thetford Elementary School and Thetford Academy (TA), where he was a high honors student, served as captain of the soccer and baseball teams, played the trombone, and participated in the rock-climbing club. He was also a member of White River Junction’s Post 84 American Legion Baseball team for several summers.

When COVID hit in 2020, Ryan was heartbroken that his senior year baseball season was cancelled as he and his teammates had “big plans” to bring the Championship back to TA for the first time since 1986. When he couldn’t win it as



RYAN THOMAS PEPE

a player, he was determined to return to TA in the role of Assistant Coach during his college and early working career. He was thrilled to be part of the 2023 season when his brother Nolan was a senior, and they did indeed secure the Division 3 Championship. Since then, he has continued to help coach soccer and baseball.

After high school, Ryan went on to the University of Vermont to “study the sciences.” There he was especially excited to be part of UVM’s baseball team when they won the 2022 and 2023 NECBA Championships, the latter of which was made all the more special because Ryan and Nolan finally got to play together. They continued to play together for a Burlington-based summer league team.

Ryan was genuinely at his happiest when on some kind of playing field, be it a baseball diamond, soccer pitch, hockey rink, or his beloved Child’s Pond.

For two summers, Ryan worked at Long Wind Tomato Farm, where

he became good friends with several of the Jamaican workers. He loved the lighthearted time with them playing music, learning about Jamaican cooking, as well as playing soccer and dominos. He visited his Jamaican friends last winter in Spring Garden, Jamaica, which was something he looked forward to doing again. In fact, he had recently sent a barrel of goods to one friend whose village was hit hard by the recent hurricanes. This was typical of Ryan; he was always ready to help in any way that he could.

After graduating from UVM in 2023 with a bachelor’s degree in Biological Science, Ryan immediately began working at Novo Nordisk in West Lebanon, N.H., as a Cell Therapy/Lab Technician. There, he made friends and was learning about stem cell science and how it could be used for Parkinson’s and Cardiac Disease research.

Other interests of Ryan’s were hiking, weight-lifting, drawing, history, cooking, gardening, making home movies with his brother, watching the Sox and Pats, and cuddling up with our cat, Django, who is a bit lost without him, as we all are.

He was a bright light that touched many lives.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to a suicide prevention organization of your choice, the American/Jamaican Red Cross, or Camp Kesem, which Ryan supported.

A memorial gathering will be held on Saturday, Jan. 10, from 1-3 p.m. at the Rand Wilson Funeral Home in Hanover, N.H. A celebration of life will be held in the summer.

An on-line guestbook can be found at rand-wilson.com. ◊

Stanley Owen Sargent, 83, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — Stanley Owen Sargent, 83, passed away peacefully Dec. 19, 2025, at his home in Lincoln, Vt., surrounded by loved ones. Stanley was born Feb. 2, 1942, in Bristol, Vt., to Leslie and Mae (Lamott) Sargent.

As a proud veteran, Stanley served his country in the United States Army from 1962 to 1968. Stanley enjoyed spending his time with friends and fellow veterans at the American Legion, playing pool and socializing. Stanley spent much of his time outdoors. Whether mowing his lawn and preserving the wildflowers or deer hunting, the land and his home on Elder Hill brought him much happiness. Stanley was a longtime tree removal expert, continuing to work into his late seventies.



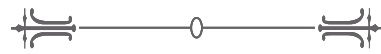
STANLEY OWEN SARGENT

When he wasn’t outside splitting wood or trimming trees, he could be found on the golf course

connecting with friends.

He leaves behind his son, Brett Sargent and stepson, Wilder Wheelock; his daughters, Stacey Sereno (Michael) and Stephanie Mulvill (Matt), both in Connecticut; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; his beloved sister Barbara Martell of New Haven, Vt.; and many nieces, nephews, and close friends from the Post 19 American Legion. Stanley was predeceased by his longtime partner, Linda (McDurfee) Sargent; his parents, Leslie and Mae; his siblings Viola, Theodore “Bud”, Charlie, Eugene “Zeke”, Raymond, Patsy, Les, Donald, Nancy, Jimmy, and Saunnie.

A celebration of life will be held in the spring. ◊



Jay Alan Galusha, 58, of Clinton, Maine

CLINTON, Maine — Jay Alan Galusha, 58, of Clinton Maine, passed away Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026, with his wife by his side after a three-year illness. Jay was born Oct. 28, 1967, in Camden, Maine, and adopted at birth by Blynn and Florence (Wentworth) Galusha.

Jay’s childhood summers were spent on Prince Edward Island in Canada. He enjoyed sports and boy scouts. In adolescence Jay developed a love of antique cars — primarily mustangs — and was an avid car collector. His favorite was a 1964 completely original Cobra. In 1986 Jay began racing cars and his dragster in Oxford and Winterport Speedways. He raced until October 2025, when he was forced to retire due to worsening health.

Jay was a key member of the Clinton community. He owned Galusha’s store/deli/ gas station, Galusha’s II redemption center and gas station, Clinton Laundry, Post office and apartments. In 2025 the town dedicated the town report in his name, and The Jay Galusha Dog



JAY ALAN GALUSHA

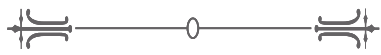
Park was named after him for his love of his rescue dogs and cats. He was in the Clinton and International Lions Club for 33 years. For the past 14 years Jay has hosted the Lions Club Car Show. He has donated to many organizations and sponsored children’s sports teams.

Jay is survived by his wife, Mary (Alexander) formerly of Brandon,

Vt. After meeting in 2021, Jay and Mary set off to see the world, including Hawaii, many Caribbean islands and the Panama Canal. They married Feb. 26, 2023. Their love was a once-in-a-lifetime love, and she will miss him forever.

Survivors include stepdaughter Paige Willard; two step granddaughters, Sara and Olivia Vaughan of N.Y.; two aunts; sisters Jenny Galusha of Maine and Tamara Ball and Tracey Murray of New Hampshire; many cousins and friends. Jay was predeceased by his best friend, Scott Libby in 2024 and his parents in 2014.

Calling hours are Friday Jan. 9, from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m., at Veilleux Lawrey Brothers and Reddington Funeral home, 8 Elm Street, Waterville, Maine. Funeral will be Sunday Jan. 11, at noon, at the Brown Methodist Church, Church Street, Clinton. In lieu of flowers Jay had asked that donations be made to Fernald Field Dragway PO Box 173, Minot, Maine or Almost Home Dog Rescue Portland, Maine. ◊



David Allen Crawford, 84, formerly of Middlebury

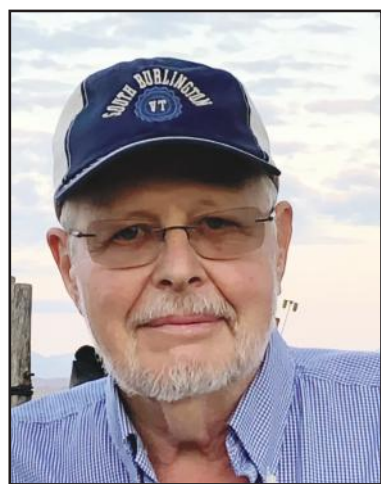
SOUTH BURLINGTON — David Allen Crawford, age 84, passed away peacefully Dec. 31, 2025, at an assisted living facility, surrounded by his loving family.

David Allen Crawford was born March 22, 1941, in Newark, N.J., to Bertha Crawford (Batchelder) and Walter Freeman Crawford. He spent his childhood in South Orange, N.J. He is an alumnus of Wilmington College (1964) and attended the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania.

While attending Wilmington College, he met his first wife, Mary-Ruth. They married the day after graduation and shared 14 loving years, building a foundation of memories that remained an important part of his life story.

In 1981, he met Marcia, and they married in 1989. Together they shared 44 cherished years filled with love, companionship, and enduring care until his passing.

David moved with his family to Middlebury, Vt., in 1967, to serve as the Town Manager. He performed this role with unwavering dedication and a deep sense of pride. Throughout his career, he embraced a wide range of management positions across Vermont and New Hampshire, from municipal government and school supervisory districts to the private sectors, including architecture, construction,



DAVID ALLEN CRAWFORD

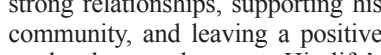
and real estate management. Known not only for his hard work but also for his genuine warmth. David took great joy in building strong relationships, supporting his community, and leaving a positive mark wherever he went. His life’s work reflected both his professional skill and his heartfelt commitment to the people and places he served.

Beyond his work, David was known for his love of steam trains, fire trucks and camping. He cherished spending quality time with his family. He will be remembered for his kindness and positivity. He had a steadfast belief in the inherent good of every person and the value to be found in every

challenge.

He is survived by his wife, Marcia (Myers); his former wife, Mary-Ruth (Kilpack); his children, Juliette C. Lombard and her husband Andre, Carl K. Crawford and his wife Kimberly (McNary), Kimberly C. Lucia, and Katherine C. Lucia; his stepson Christian Junker and his wife Karen; his grandchildren, Nathan, William, Samuel, Felicity, and Phoebe; his step-granddaughter Isabel Junker; and his siblings, Charles K. Crawford and Diane C. Ludwick.

Honoring David’s wishes, no visiting hours or funeral service will be held. A celebration of life will take place Saturday, March 22, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Ridgewood Condominiums Clubhouse on Lexington Green, in South Burlington, Vt. ◊



SARA JANE HOWE

Sara Jane Howe, 79, of Vergennes

WILLISTON — Sara Jane Howe, 79, died in Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington Thursday, Dec. 18. The family invites you to view further information and share your memories by visiting www.awrichfuneralhomes.com. ◊

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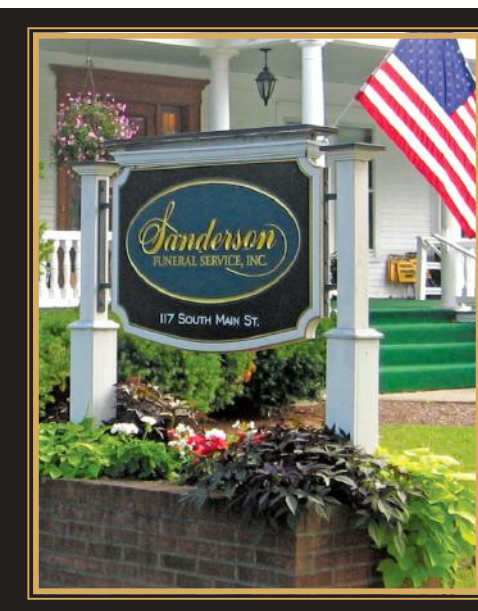
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The Independent will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing. For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the Independent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

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

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



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Clara Yu, 77, formerly of Middlebury

RICHMOND, Va. — Clara Yu, 77, died Jan. 1, 2026, while traveling on a cruise in the Caribbean with her beloved husband, John Deppman.



CLARA YU

Clara was born into an unsettled world in Chongqing, the “wartime capital” of China. She was the third daughter in a family of five children, at a time when her parents had hoped for a son. She was tiny, only four pounds at birth, and her malnourished mother took her to the shore of a tributary of the Jialing River, intending to feed her to the water as a charitable act of a quick death. However, Clara cried loudly at the critical moment, attracting the attention of a passing doctor who gave her mother a duck egg to keep her alive.

Despite these challenging beginnings, Clara was deeply loved by her parents and siblings. Her intelligence was evident early on as she taught herself to read at the age of six after declining (somewhat to her mother’s relief) to attend the first year of school.

Eventually, the family moved to Taiwan, and Clara was enrolled in school, where she found she flourished in an academic environment. She went on to study in the United States and to earn her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. Clara built her career in higher education, spending much of her time at Middlebury College as a faculty member, Vice President and Director of the Language Schools and Schools Abroad, and the founder and Director of the Center for Educational Technology.

In 2001, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation convened a summit on “Technology in Liberal Arts Colleges” to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing liberal arts colleges in the new century.

Presidents, chief academic, financial, and information officers from 44 residential liberal arts colleges came together for this meeting. As a result of its brainstorming sessions, the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education (NITLE) was born, and Clara was appointed as NITLE’s first director.

During the summer of 2005, while enjoying her first year of retirement, Clara received a call from the president of Middlebury College, asking her to visit the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, Calif., (MIIS), as the college was considering an affiliation with MIIS, which led to its eventual acquisition. Clara took over the presidency of MIIS in January of 2006 and navigated the merger of the two institutions.

Clara married John Deppman in 1997, and they shared a life rich with adventure, friendship and mutual devotion. They formed lasting friendships in Monterey during Clara’s presidency of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, in Fort Myers, Fla., where they spent many happy years

at Pelican Preserve, and most recently in Richmond, Va., where they moved several years ago.

For all her remarkable professional achievements, Clara was never happier than when she was doing something for someone else. In quiet, personal ways, she took great joy in supporting and providing for others.

Clara approached life with deep reflection and personal conviction. She was vibrant, funny, loyal and generous to a fault. While her death leaves her family heartbroken and wishing for more time, they take comfort in knowing how fully she lived, how deeply she loved, and how intentionally she engaged with the world around her.

In addition to her husband, John Deppman, Clara is survived by her three sisters, May Yu Tsao of Wisconsin, Hsiang Yu Pan of New York, and Alice Yang Yu of Taiwan; and by her ten nieces and nephews, Linda, Lani, Carol, Naikang, Hsulin, Cynthia, Kai, Peter, Leonard, and Julia. Her parents, Xi-Lai Yu (father) and Xu Shu-Jin Yu (mother) predeceased her, as did her older brother James Zhao Yu.

She is also survived by John’s children, Ann Deppman (Vance DeBouter), Hsiu-Chuang Deppman (Jed Deppman), and Benjamin Deppman (Lesley); her 10 stepgrandchildren, Victor, Kenton (Aubrianna), Alden, and Jack DeBouter, Formosa (Francesco) and Ginger Deppman, and Jack, Lydia, Calvin, and Josie Deppman; and one step great-granddaughter, Liana. Her stepson, Jed Deppman, predeceased her.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that those who wish to honor Clara’s memory perform small acts of kindness in whatever way feels meaningful to them. ☐

Tim Heffernan, 87, of Bristol

BRISTOL — Timothy James Heffernan, 87, of Bristol, passed away on Monday, Jan. 5, following a recent health setback. Heffernan, a United States Air Force veteran who was born and raised in the Bristol/Starksboro area, will be celebrated and interred this spring. A more complete obituary is forthcoming.

ADDISON COUNTY School Briefs

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Madelyn Garza of Middlebury has been named to Southern New Hampshire University’s 2025 Dean’s List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who’ve earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.50 to 3.699 for the term are named to the dean’s list.

SNHU is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution with a 93-year history of educating traditional-age students and working adults. It offers classes online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, N.H.

Beaver association topples fraudulent website

MONKTON — Back in October, a member of a local conservation commission alerted a Vermont Beaver Association (VBA) volunteer about a suspicious website that had been set up. This site was called vermontbeavers.org. This site was directing Vermonters to fraudulent information about Vermont’s beavers. This act was a direct threat to the VBA’s newer website, vermontbeaverassociation.com, which had been launched in 2024 by Addison County residents.

The association filed a complaint with the State Attorney’s office, which eventually determined that vermontbeavers.org was indeed a fraudulent site. There were many red flags that help determine this, but several obvious ones included fake phone number, address, expert profiles, events and fundraising efforts.

Several other agencies, including the fraud department at the FBI, also investigated the site. This culminated in it being removed from the Google search engine.

While it still pops up through other search engines, the site itself is now inactive.

This is a big win for the VBA, which advocates for education on how to manage beavers in non-lethal ways and emphasize the importance on their presence in the environment. The association strives to build bridges between many like-minded organizations in all corners of the state. Students from three different colleges have been participating in the VBA’s discussions covering hydrology, geology and restoration.

The VBA website will be updated in the coming weeks to reflect the association’s 2026 legislative priorities.

Editor’s note: This story was provided by Bev Soychak of Monkton.



Holm forum

(Continued from Page 5A)

American measure, though still south of the Arctic Circle).

Even back in 1987, I could tell that solar power worked magnificently during the summer months — when days are extraordinarily long in Sweden — and that it did not work nearly as well in the winter months.

Solar power works. Over decades, what began as an early experiment became a way of life: two Vermont homes powered by the sun, one of them net-positive over a full year.

My homes were grid-tied, and I was grateful for that. When panels produced richly in June, the grid absorbed the excess. When the roof was a snowfield in January, other sources of generation kept daily life stable. That is what a serious energy system does: it turns seasonal extremes into continuity.

This is why Vermont’s debate over removing older dams deserves a rational, historically literate discussion. Many of these structures were built by Vermonters at great expense for clear public purposes — often power. Some are truly obsolete hazards and should come out. But if a site still produces — or could be modernized to produce — local renewable electricity with lower-impact technology, then removing it casually means something permanent: that generation potential is unlikely to be recovered on that river in our lifetimes.

And it is not hard to imagine a future where Vermonters look back on today’s choices and say: we built these solar farms with pride, and later we removed them with equal conviction. That’s not an argument against solar — it’s a warning about moral certainty and about confusing “installed” with “solved.”

The same sober reassessment is emerging around biomass. Wood heat is part of Vermont’s lived winter culture, and advanced wood systems can be efficient. But “biomass is automatically clean” is no longer a free pass. Biomass is receiving increasing scrutiny, and some in Montpelier are beginning to consider legislation to curtail the burning of wood in Vermont.

Then there’s the quiet lesson written on the landscape: the near-absence of small residential wind turbines. That absence isn’t because Vermonters forgot wind; it’s because small wind is brutally

site-dependent and often unreliable unless the site has sustained, clean airflow — conditions most backyards simply do not have. If it were dependable at a household scale across most of the state, we would still see it everywhere.

Japan makes the reliability point even more starkly — because its geography forces the same physics Vermont faces. Japan has pursued solar aggressively, and parts of Japan sit at a similar latitude to Vermont. Yet even with aggressive deployment, Japan has recognized that solar alone is insufficient for a modern society’s constant demand and has moved to resume nuclear power in many plants as part of its reliability and decarbonization strategy — even after the Fukushima disaster. This is not a cultural preference; it is an acknowledgment that the laws of physics still apply.

So the conclusion remains simple and non-ideological: all energy has impacts. Hydropower’s impacts tend to be local and tangible; large solar’s land-use impacts are real and often under-discussed; biomass is increasingly contested; small wind is highly situational. Meanwhile, climate change is already delivering catastrophic floods and punishing droughts that can overwhelm the very riparian systems we claim to protect.

At the national level, there are renewed discussions and major investments aimed at building modern nuclear power plants. If pursued at scale, this will be done at massive expense — borne either by taxpayers or by utility payers. These are simple facts we face in our current environment.

I write as the President of Middlebury Electric Company, and I recognize that some may presume an intrinsic bias because I have personal interest in restoring

a run-of-the-river hydroelectric facility. I acknowledge that perception up front. But the seasonal variability of solar exposure at northern latitudes is not a matter of opinion — it is well documented, predictable and experienced by anyone who has relied on solar power through multiple winters. For that reason, my central point is not “hydro versus solar.” It is that a diversified portfolio is absolutely necessary if we want dependable electricity and wish to avoid unpleasant consequences when winter demand is high and solar output is lowest.

As local history tells it, the emergence of hydroelectric power in downtown Middlebury brought electric lighting to the village for the first time and sharply reduced dependence on oil-based lighting — an illumination method that, in many communities, carried a well-known fire hazard. The arrival of electric light was met with celebration, and the facility operated seamlessly for decades until 1966, when it was removed — ironically, in the era when nuclear power was rising to prominence.

We have kicked the can down the road for decades because we have had access to sources of electricity that were irresponsible or dangerous — and every one of those choices has carried consequences. It is time for Vermont to engage in a realistic and preemptive discussion about how to most responsibly utilize our local resources for maximum benefit and minimum impact. This must be done with clear eyes: all power production has impacts, but those impacts pale in comparison to the increasingly devastating effects of climate change, which are the direct result of an irresponsible and shortsighted past. A diversified portfolio is not a slogan; it is a necessity.

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Learn about nature in Salisbury this winter

SALISBURY — Once again, the Salisbury Conservation Commission has organized a series of free winter presentations on Thursday nights at the Salisbury Meeting House, which is located at 853 Maple St. Presentations will begin this coming Thursday, Jan. 8, and continue every Thursday until Feb. 19. Here are the topics and speakers for all the presentations and the details for the first two.

Jan. 8, David Allen of Middlebury College, “The Ecology of Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases.”

Jan. 15, Pam Grove, Institute of Arctic Biology, “Ice-Age Megafauna in Arctic Alaska.”

Jan. 22, Alyssa Bennett, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife (F&W), “Small but Mighty: Shrews, Voles, & Other Vermont Small Mammals.”

Jan. 29, Andrew Bouton, F&W, “Waterfowl Management, Research, & Conservation.”

Feb. 5, Margaret Fowle, Audubon Vermont, “Grassland Bird Conservation in Vermont and Beyond.”

Feb. 12, Luke Groff, F&W, “Vermont’s Timber Rattlesnakes.”

Feb. 19, Jed Murdoch, UVM, “Mapping Wildlife Connectivity.”

The series kicks off on Jan. 8 at 7 p.m. when David Allen comes to the Salisbury Meeting House to deliver a presentation on “The ecology of ticks and tick-borne diseases.”

Allen, an associate professor of

Over the last three decades, tick populations and cases of tick-borne diseases have increased dramatically in Vermont.

Biology at Middlebury College, grew up in Springfield, Vt., in the 1980s and 1990s without ever seeing any ticks. He returned in 2010 and, like many others, was surprised and dismayed by how often he encountered them. This spurred his current research interest. He studies the ecological, climate, and landscape factors that determine tick-borne disease risk. He uses a mix of fieldwork, lab-based, and modeling methods.

Over the last three decades, tick populations and cases of tick-borne diseases have increased dramatically in Vermont. Tick

populations and their associated pathogens are influenced by a complex set of drivers that are both biotic (e.g., deer and mouse populations) and abiotic (e.g., climate). As a result, it is challenging to pinpoint a single cause of this increase in tick populations. This talk will give a brief introduction to tick biology and then discuss research efforts to understand what drives tick-borne disease risk in Vermont.

The series continues on Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. when Pam Groves talks about “Ice-Age Megafauna in Arctic Alaska: Extinction, Invasion, Survival.”

For the last 30 years, Groves has been a research scientist at the Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Her Ph.D. is from the University of Alaska, where she studied muskoxen and a distant relative of theirs, the takin, in China.

Pam and her partner, Dan Mann, have worked on the North Slope of Alaska collecting bones from Ice Age megafauna. They have used those bones and other environmental data to try to understand how those animals responded to the climate change at the end of the Ice Age and what led to the extinctions of most of them.

News Briefs

Gov. Scott calls education ‘our most critical challenge’

By SHAUN ROBINSON
VTDigger.org

MONTPELIER — In his annual address to Vermont legislators Wednesday afternoon, Gov. Phil Scott urged members of the House and Senate to move forward with the next stages of the sweeping education reform project they started last year, at his administration’s urging.

But as the 2026 legislative session got underway this week, it has seemed far from certain that the process of creating new school districts and developing a new funding model — with the goals of improving educational quality and making the system less expensive overall — will advance at the pace the governor wants.

Speaking to a joint assembly of legislators for his State of the State address in the House chamber, Scott called education reform “our most critical challenge.”

“This session, we have the opportunity — and the obligation — to continue this transformation in order to build the best public education system in the nation, at a cost taxpayers can afford,” he said.

The half-hour speech was notable in that it focused almost entirely on that one topic,

including details as specific as the names of teachers around the state, whom the governor said he was pitching his plan to, directly. Many of the governor’s education proposals were included in the 2025 law known as Act 73.

Scott framed the need to evolve the state’s education system as important for preserving the public’s trust in state government — at a time, he noted, when that trust is low.

“We don’t need to be asked to do the right thing,” he said. “We just need to do it.”

Scott also used his speech to preview, albeit briefly, that there would be “hard choices” to make when building the state’s budget for the 2027 fiscal year, which starts in July 2026 and runs through June 2027. House and Senate leaders have already said they expect that some existing programs will need to be cut as support from the federal government, especially for key human services programs, wavers.

“This year’s spending package has required difficult decisions,” Scott said of his administration’s budget proposal, which he will present in another address later this month.

Vt. lawmakers swing into action

By OLIVIA GIEGER
VTDigger.org

Happy first day back to school session! How was your summer? The floors are a little cleaner and the eyes are a little brighter as the both the Senate and the House of Representatives begin their second year of the biennium.

The House gavelled back into session Tuesday morning after some seemingly requisite first-day-back technological hiccups and all-but-obligatory mentions of creemeees and Carhartt, lest lawmakers forget they’re in Vermont.

As if compelled by some invisible force, the conversations in the halls and on the chamber floors all seemed to drift toward addressing the unfinished business of last year’s big education bill.

“If last year asked a lot of us, this year will ask even more,” House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, told her colleagues, nodding to some of the challenges on education, housing and health care.

So, as lawmakers go back to the books to figure out how to organize the state’s schools, I

decided to talk to the building’s school-aged visitors about how it feels on the first day of session.

Winnie Liu is an eighth-grader from Montpelier who was mere hours into her first day as a legislative page when we spoke: “It’s not as busy as I expected at first, but it’s going really smoothly and all the directions are clear,” she said of day one. We will have to see how she feels come May.

For Liliana Klimanska, a high school exchange student visiting Vermont, “it’s a really nice opportunity to see, not from the TV or from the news, but from inside, how people behave, how people interact with each other and how they create this whole community. You can actually see that they’re casual with each other, they connect, and they appreciate each other’s efforts to make Vermont better. It’s really cool.”

That picture of a body going back to school was clear for Klimanska’s peer, Amelie Richter, a German exchange student: “Even before it started, you could see all of the House people just talking with each other, like us coming back after a holiday break.”

— Olivia Gieger

Jewish group faults lawmakers for Israel trip

By SHAUN ROBINSON
VTDigger.org

MONTPELIER — A Jewish group that opposes Israel’s military campaign in Gaza has lodged ethics complaints against the five members of the Vermont House who traveled to Israel last September on a trip that was sponsored by the Israeli government.

The Vermont and New Hampshire chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace argued in filings last week that by accepting invitations to go on the trip, the Democratic and Republican legislators ran afoul of state laws limiting what gifts public officials should accept.

The lawmakers are Rep. Sarita Austin, D-Colchester; Rep. Matt Birong, D-Vergennes; Rep. Gina Galfetti, R-Barre Town; Rep. Will Greer, D-Bennington; and Rep. James Gregoire, R-Fairfield. In all, 250 legislators from all 50 states attended the trip, which was described as the largest-ever gathering of U.S. state legislators in Israel.

According to an Instagram post from Israel’s government at the time, the lawmakers “witnessed the magnitude of the October 7 tragedy, experienced Israel’s innovation and cutting-edge technology, tasted our incredible cuisine, and met with Israel’s leaders — including the Prime Minister, the President, the Foreign Minister, and many others.”

At a press conference Tuesday in the Statehouse members of

Jewish Voice for Peace, and several other advocacy groups, lambasted the lawmakers’ decision to travel to Israel and demanded they resign.

Officials from the Israeli government valued the trip at \$6,500 per person, according to records attached to the ethics complaints that Jewish Voice for Peace filed.

“As elected representatives of Vermont, they implicated our state in Israel’s atrocities,” said Ashley Smith, a member of the Vermont Coalition for Palestinian Liberation, one of the groups at the press conference, speaking to a crowd of dozens of people.

Israel’s ground and air campaign against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip has killed more than 70,000 people, according to local health authorities. Israeli strikes have destroyed vast swaths of buildings and other infrastructure in the enclave. At the same time, the United Nations has declared a famine there, saying that more than half a million people face “starvation, destitution and death” as a result of Israel’s war.

An independent U.N. commission determined last year that Israel has committed four “genocidal acts” in Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023. The Hamas attacks on that day that prompted the campaign killed about 1,200 people and led to 250 being taken hostage.

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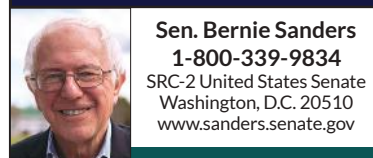


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WHITING'S MARGARET SMITHSON and Larry Tucker on Jan. 1 welcomed new son Henry Lawrence Tucker, a strapping lad of 7 pounds, 9.2 ounces, born at Porter Hospital. Henry is the couple's second child; he joins Hazel, age 9, who's off to a wonderful start as a big sister. Per his mom, Henry wasn't in a hurry to leave the womb. Margaret, 39, was scheduled to be induced, but Henry finally decided to meet the world on his own. Henry becomes a third generation of his family to be born at Porter. "It was wonderful. Everything went great. We're happy to have him here," Margaret said of the family's new addition.

Photo courtesy of Porter Hospital

Four ACSD board seats up for grabs

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Residents in Middlebury, Bridport and Salisbury have until Jan. 26 to file petition papers for four available seats that will be up for grabs on the Addison Central School District (ACSD) board this coming March 3.

The ACSD board governs PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. The panel has been wrestling with many challenging issues lately, including declining enrollment, tight budgeting, school closures (Ripton Elementary), the merging of K-5 student populations (Shoreham and Bridport) and deferred maintenance needs of its school facilities.

The ACSD board is made up of 13 elected members, with proportional representation. Middlebury holds seven of the 13 seats, with the remaining six

towns holding one each. Each representative runs at large in the seven-town district, for a term of three years.

This March will see the expiration of the terms of incumbents Tricia Allen of Middlebury, Suzanne Buck of Bridport, Jason Chance of Middlebury and Ellie Romp of Salisbury.

Citizens interested in running for school board must be 18 years or older, must be a resident of the town represented by the board seat, and must submit a nominating petition signed by 60 voters or 1% of the ACSD checklist — whichever is less.

The petition must clearly indicate the office and term length on the petition prior to circulating it for signatures, and the candidate's name must appear on the petition exactly as it appears on the voter checklist. The nominating petition, accompanied by a Consent of

Candidate form, must be filed with the town clerk by the end of business on Jan. 26.

The ACSD board's stated mission is to "provide high quality, equitable and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students. Board members represent the interests of all students in the district, not just the town in which they live."

The *Independent* will provide thorough coverage of the 2026 ACSD board candidates following the Jan. 26 filing deadline and before Town Meeting Day.

To learn more about the work of school boards, or if you're interested in running for the ACSD board, please visit the Running for School Board page of the Vermont School Board Association website.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

MAUSD

(Continued from Page 1A)

budgets year after year after year is totally defeatist."

"I give this board and our staff and our teachers incredible kudos for being able to climb over that hurdle every year and trying to keep a positive outlook to do exactly what we need to do for our students, but it is totally defeatist until something changes in Montpelier," Apgar continued.

BUDGET FIGURES

The spending plan reflects a 7.3% increase in healthcare premiums, a potential 20% reduction in federal funding and increased revenue in the areas of tuition, transportation and special education.

Superintendent Patrick Reen said the latest budget figures also reflect increased revenue from board-approved tuition for the upcoming academic year. He said that bump in revenue has more than offset a couple of increased expenses, specifically:

- The addition of a 0.2 full-time equivalent guidance counselor at New Haven's Beeman Elementary School to "bring Beeman into alignment with where other schools are and help meet some need that Beeman had," Reen explained.

- A \$35,000 increase in the educational software line of the budget. Reen said the district had used COVID funding to add educational software that has proved helpful to students.

"It has been underfunded, and we decided that we needed to sort

of true that up. It looks like we're going to continue those things that are being really helpful, and making it happen took an additional (\$35,000) to do it," he said.

"So, expenses went up a little bit, revenue went up more, so what was originally looking like about a \$1.5 million need for one-time money reduced to about \$1.3 (million)," Reen said, referring to the school board's decision to meet its budget target with one-time funds and savings realized through attrition rather than evaluating other potential position reductions.

The spending plan reflects \$29,108,585 in education spending (total expenses minus incoming revenue) for the upcoming fiscal year, an increase of 2.6%. Spending per pupil is expected to rise by about \$504, or 3.45%, to around \$15,132. That's based on a projected 1,923.59 students next year (technically, it is the long-term weighted average daily membership). That is a drop of 15.06. Long-term weighted average daily membership is an adjusted count of the district's students.

Based on those figures, the district's homestead tax rate is expected to increase by less than a penny, from \$1.6903 per \$100 of assessed property value to \$1.6935. "This is in effect what the board has control over," Reen said of the equalized homestead tax rate. "Beyond that are things outside of your control."

He noted the CLA has a substantial impact and, when it comes to the overall projected change in tax rates, is "almost directly what you can see generating these increases." The CLA is a ratio used by the state to make adjustments when assessing education property taxes to ensure the level of taxation is equal among all Vermont towns.

TAX IMPACT

According to figures presented on Tuesday, after CLAs are applied:

- Bristol is projected to see a 5.86-cent increase in its FY'27 tax rate, or \$58.61 more per \$100,000 of assessed home value. That's an increase of 3.09% from FY'26.

- Monkton: 12.23-cent increase, or \$122.28 more per \$100,000. An

increase of 10.85%.

- New Haven: 11.10-cent increase, or \$111.05 more per \$100,000. An increase of 6.09%.

- Starksboro: 19.57-cent increase or \$195.69 more per \$100,000. An increase of 17.81%.

"Somebody in Starksboro... if they have a \$300,000 house, they're looking at close to a \$600 tax increase for schools," Apgar said. "These are big numbers that we're talking about here when you're looking at folks who are stressed already and that may not qualify for the income sensitivity, and there's a lot of them out there."

An estimated two-thirds of residents pay education taxes based on their income. MAUSD residents who pay based on their income are expected to see a decrease in their school taxes of 8.1%. That estimate is based on the 2023 median household income for Addison County of \$88,478.

Reen pointed to ongoing work in the Vermont Legislature, which upon reconvening on Tuesday resumed efforts to explore changes to Vermont's public education system that address ongoing affordability issues. Explorations are also underway in MAUSD, which during the past several months has dug into evaluating a handful of educational delivery models as part of an effort to reduce costs while continuing to offer quality programming.

"I think we are doing our due diligence to continue to work to make change in a way that is more affordable to our taxpayers but also better for our students and better for our teachers," Reen said. "And I think that same notion is our work before us as a state."

Reen also warned that some things are still subject to change this budget season. Members of Gov. Phil Scott's administration last month said the state could use a \$75 million surplus to soften forecasted property tax increases. It's a move that could result in lower tax rate increases in three MAUSD towns and a decrease in Bristol.

"It would have a pretty significant impact of bringing everything down a bit if that \$75 million is applied," Reen said.

ACSD

(Continued from Page 1A)

educators — have suggested for K-5 school buildings in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Salisbury and Weybridge, along with Middlebury Union middle and high schools.

The ACSD board on Monday spent around 90 minutes wrestling with a fixup plan for district school buildings, many of which are showing substantial wear and deterioration because maintenance has been deferred. District leaders have been preparing a state-mandated capital improvement plan reflecting priority repairs during the next five years.

It hasn't been easy, for an assortment of reasons. Vermont's public education system is bracing for seismic change through Act 73, a law passed last year that, among other things, calls for the state to transition to a "reimagined system of public education," featuring larger school districts, a weighted student funding formula, and a statewide tax rate.

It's a controversial new law that's drawn criticism for its emphasis on school consolidations/closures to reflect Vermont's ongoing decline in student enrollment. And ACSD board members — who have already shuttered one school (Ripton Elementary) and agreed to merge Shoreham and Bridport K-5 students at Bridport Central School beginning this fall — are also concerned about something Act 73 doesn't address: state aid for school construction projects, something Vermont stopped doing in 2007.

"We've done part of what the state wants us to be doing... and it's still leaving us between a rock and a hard place," board member Jess Venable-Novak said in referring to an ACSD's consolidation effort that hasn't thus far produced enough financial wiggle room for substantial school repairs at a price taxpayers could afford.

It's a quandary in part influenced by inflation; fixed costs like contracted employee salary

increases; double-digit annual increases in health insurance premiums; and a state law that imposes a financial penalty on school districts that spend beyond a certain threshold.

Matt Corrente, ACSD business manager, explained the problem on Monday through numbers. And here's context for the ACSD board's reluctance (at this point) to pitch a substantial school improvement bond: District officials are poised to endorse a fiscal year 2027 PreK-12 education spending plan of \$42,531,832 for voters to field on March 3. That budget reflects a 2.8% spending increase compared to this year — and a 3.44% bump in per-pupil spending. It's a budget that would keep ACSD at 96% of the state's so-called "excess spending threshold"

of \$16,331 per student. Districts that run afoul of that mandate — specified in Act 183 of 2024 — are assessed a premium tax on spending that exceeds the threshold.

LITTLE WIGGLE ROOM

So there's just 4% wiggle room between ACSD's proposed FY'27 budget and the state's spending threshold. ACSD board members appear committed to not exceeding the per pupil spending threshold.

Based on the proposed FY'27 spending plan, ACSD could add \$1.5 million in annual debt service before hitting the threshold, according to Corrente. This suggests a maximum of \$15 million in short-term or \$25 million in long-term bonding capacity, he added.

But here's the kicker; these amounts "don't take into account the additional budget drivers, such as wage growth and healthcare costs, that are likely to rise faster than the rate of inflation, thereby narrowing the margin below the excess spending threshold,"

Corrente said.

On the plus side, ACSD has \$5,123,531 in capital reserves, money it could tap for smaller renovation projects. But Corrente explained that the district has been advised to keep its reserves at a minimum of \$11 million, a sum equal to three months of its overall budget.

It's also unclear what would happen to ACSD's reserves when, or if, the state might elect to merge it with another school district through Act 73. School districts are assured their autonomy for the next two years.

Corrente told the board that "regardless of bond length and amount, approximately \$1.5 (million) of new annual debt expenses would push education spending to the (penalty) threshold."

WHAT TO FIX

He and ACSD Facilities Committee Chair Jason Chance presented the board with a draft five-year capital plan totaling \$22.3 million. It would cover:

- \$595,000 in security upgrades and small repairs at the Cornwall, Bridport, Weybridge, Salisbury and Mary Hogan elementary schools, as well as at MUMS and MUHS.

- A more secure entry and storage area at Bridport Central.

- A secure entry, and HVAC improvements in MUHS's H-wing.

- Renovations to Mary Hogan Elementary's C-wing.

The plan suggests \$15 million-\$20 million of that sum could be bonded, with the balance coming from reserves.

Chance stressed the project estimates are preliminary and could be lowered after final design and by downsizing the scope of work.

"I don't want people to look at this and say, 'No, we can't do anything,'" he told his colleagues. "We have options."

But board members remain concerned about budget impacts beyond their control — including Act 73, wages and health insurance.

"Assuming those costs continue to rise and if we adopt a bond for \$22.3 million, we would also be making a decision — I think inherently — to cut programming to afford those improvements," board member Ellen Whelan-Wuest said. "Within a few years we're hitting that (state spending) threshold, even without adding bond payments to it," she added.

Board member Steve Orzech said he believes Vermont's moratorium on school construction aid has become more than a cost-saver for the state. He argued it's become a cudgel for expediting school closures.

"When schools are falling apart, they get closed," he said. "They're trying to starve us of capital because they're trying to close schools. It's one of the few levers they have left to pull, and they're pulling it."

The ACSD board will continue to work on its five-year buildings repair plan. And the board promised to share the district's capital improvement conundrum with the Vermont Agency of Education.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Bristol Beat

New state rep. begins her tenure

Editor's note: In October, Gov. Phil Scott appointed Lincoln Democrat Karen Lueders to fill the Addison-4 House seat vacated when Rep. Mari Cordes of Bristol moved out of state this past summer.

As I head to Montpelier for the first time and begin representing the towns of Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton and Starksboro, I appreciate the unique and strong sense of community in each of the four towns, and also the local interconnectedness among the four towns, (and New Haven too, although not in this district). Whether it's the energy around the Jerusalem School House in Starksboro, the History Museum

in Monkton, the Hub teen center in Bristol, the refurbishing of the beloved General Store in Lincoln, these are but single examples of a long list to be found in each of the towns, where people are coming together and making a positive difference.

The theme of neighbors helping neighbors runs throughout.

I hope to engage in thoughtful problem solving on the major issues we are facing in housing, health care, property taxes,



Legislative Review

by Rep. Karen Lueders, D-Addison-4

education, small business and work opportunities, (of which there are many in the four towns), among others. The issues are complex and interrelated. Efforts to address them must be carefully examined and understood and then implemented in a way to create genuine systemic improvement.

I am interested in the perspective and thoughts of the residents of Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton and Starksboro and I plan to travel to each town to meet and listen, and also to establish some regular hours on Mondays to meet with folks.

The upcoming session contains enormous challenges in the context of huge reductions in federal revenue in areas that have traditionally had support. This upcoming legislative session will require wisdom, patience and respect for others. The session must be geared toward thoughtful and informed work that sustains our vibrant communities, and as part of this makes sure that these are communities in which we can afford to live.

I am greatly looking forward to working with my colleague, Rep. Herb Olson, D-Starksboro, to represent you to the best of my/our ability.

Respectfully yours
Rep. Karen Lueders,
Addison - 4
Karen.Lueders@vtleg.gov

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Fun had by all

BRISTOL'S HOLLEY HALL brims with moving bodies one night last week when a large crowd took part in a New Year's Eve contra dance. Red Dog Riley performed live music with Don Stratton calling the steps at the Dec. 31 event.

Photo by Jonathan Blake

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Bristol Legion hosts blood draw

BRISTOL — Local people will have an opportunity to donate blood in Bristol next week.

The American Red Cross said it is teetering on a blood shortage this winter, which could lead to a disruption in lifesaving care.

It is urging donors to make an appointment to give blood or platelets now.

The Red Cross blood supply is under pressure following a busy holiday season when winter weather and packed schedules made it even tougher to ensure hospitals have the blood products needed for critical care. Without immediate action, doctors may have to make difficult decisions about which patients receive blood transfusions and who will need to wait. Donors with types O, A negative and B negative blood are especially needed now.

The next chance to give blood in Bristol is this coming Tuesday, Jan. 13, noon-5 p.m. at American Legion Post 19, which is at 56

Airport Drive near the high school.

For the seventh year, the Red Cross and the National Football League are partnering in January for National Blood Donor Month to urge individuals to kick off 2026 with a blood donation. As a thank-you to donors, those who come to give Jan. 1-25 will be automatically entered for a chance to win a Super Bowl LX giveaway. The winner and guest will get to enjoy Super Bowl LX in Santa Clara, Calif. For full details, visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl.

Make an appointment to give blood or platelets by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

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Career Center

(Continued from Page 1A) has one of the highest CTE tuition rates in the state and has the capacity to accommodate scores of additional students.

Nicole MacTavish, PHCC superintendent, stressed the center's red-carpet rollout to out-of-county students shouldn't be construed as poaching.

"We're only talking about students who otherwise wouldn't have a seat in another CTE center," MacTavish said. "This kind of change would be staggeringly impactful for Addison County and hundreds of kids."

The numbers, according to MacTavish, tell the story of antiquated CTE service areas that hold wildly divergent student populations.

The four school districts feeding PHCC contain a total of 1,100 high school students. PHCC currently serves 32% (347) — one in three — of the high school students in its service region.

Meanwhile, the adjacent Stafford Technical Center service area contains seven school districts serving 32 towns, with roughly 2,100 resident high school students. MacTavish said that Stafford Director Melissa Connor recently told Vermont lawmakers that her career center last year received 447 applications for 278 available program spots. That means 169 Stafford-eligible students couldn't receive CTE in their service area.

MacTavish's message: Why not send at least some of those kids north to PHCC?

"I could take 200 more students tomorrow without any additional costs, except for supplies," MacTavish told the Addison Central School District board on Dec. 22.

She singled out specific Stafford-

eligible towns that are located closer to Middlebury than Rutland: Benson, Brandon, Sudbury, Orwell, Goshen, Leicester and Whiting.

Chittenden County is served by two CTE hubs — the Center for Technology Essex, and Burlington Technical Center. It's a service region that includes nine high schools, serving 7,000 resident high school students. That's six times more students than the PHCC service region.

Current CTE center data shows that 131 students are on waitlists to the north and south of Middlebury, according to MacTavish.

"These students could be attending programs at Hannaford Career Center, and we would provide transportation," she said. "If Hannaford Career Center were able to serve even half of these 131 students... our tuition would decrease by over \$14,000 (34%) per student."



"If Hannaford Career Center were able to serve even half of these 131 students... our tuition would decrease by over \$14,000 (34%) per student."

— Superintendent Nicole MacTavish

As previously reported by the Independent, county voters on March 3 will field a fiscal year 2027 PHCC spending proposal of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% hike. Career center officials are forecasting an FY27 career center tuition rate of \$38,894 — an 11% bump. Around \$783,000 of the proposed spending plan is related to debt service, largely related to an \$8.1 million bond that voters OK'd back in 2022 to renovate PHCC's Charles Avenue and North Campus buildings in Middlebury.

So what's keeping Chittenden and Rutland county students from attending PHCC? Nothing really, according to state statutes governing CTE. But transportation and class scheduling are real barriers.

Most students attend CTE programming only part of the day, while attending conventional classes at their high school for the remainder. Current state law requires that transportation be provided to students within their CTE service area, and that it can be extended to students outside that area. "We ran the numbers, and it's definitely doable," MacTavish said of making bus runs to collect students from neighboring counties. "We are in the process of revamping our transportation fleet, which is pretty decrepit. We won a grant for two vans, and we just replaced our two (smaller) buses. It definitely pays off to go get a group of students and bring them down."

Going forward, MacTavish said she'd favor a more formal school-choice system for CTE, or a realignment of the career center service areas to give more equitable access to student population.

"Either of those (scenarios) would provide relief for Addison County," she said.

APPEALING PROGRAMS

PHCC runs 24 programs, and MacTavish believes all of them hold regional appeal. They include Intro to STEM, Intro to Agricultural Sciences, Engineering & Architecture Design, Power Equipment, Automotive Technology, Culinary Arts, Medical Professions and Diesel Power Technology. PHCC is the only CTE center in the state that offers training for film and stage vocations, through Addison Repertory Theater.

Expanding access to CTE programming is winning support, according to MacTavish.

"Every legislator I've spoken with... to a person, has told me, 'This is a no-brainer.'" MacTavish said. "However, the level of change that may or may not be coming is a complete unknown. I don't know where it's going to land."

She's referring to Act 73, which has placed school consolidations, regional high schools, a new funding formula, and other possible public education system resets on the table.

ACSD board member Ellen Whelan-Wuest has suggested PHCC might be better off working with other CTE centers to work out transportation and other issues for out-of-district placements, rather than trying to make a change at the state level during what promises to be a busy and complex year in Montpelier.

ACSD Board member Mary Heather Noble said she hopes the state can work with CTE centers to resolve the enrollment issue.

"It's such an obvious problem that obviously needs to be addressed," she said.

It's indeed an obvious problem for smaller CTE districts like PHCC, but not every school district is in a hurry to correct it. State aid follows each child to the school district they attend, so each student's exit costs the home district revenue and economies of scale in a state that's seen 40 years (and counting) of K-12 enrollment decline.

"There's a disincentive," MacTavish conceded, of districts embracing CTE choice. Rep. Peter Conlon, D-Cornwall, chairs the House Education Committee. He noted the state isn't standing in the way of CTE choice but acknowledged the difficulties of making it work in a rural state like Vermont.

"It all boils down to seat time in a car or on a bus," he said. John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

"Every legislator I've spoken with... to a person, has told me, 'This is a no-brainer.'" — Nicole MacTavish

Sheriff's dept. keeps roads safe

ADDISON COUNTY — On Jan. 2 County Sheriff Mike Elmore reported that Samantha Hatch, 23, of Whiting crashed her vehicle on Route 30 in Cornwall on the evening of Jan. 1 and did not report it.

A passerby reported seeing the vehicle off the road on Jan. 2 and a sheriff's deputy investigated, finding that Hatch had returned to attempt to remove the vehicle. The deputy cited Hatch for leaving the scene of an accident.

On New Year's Eve, Sheriff Elmore and several deputies performed a high visibility patrol to keep impaired drivers off the road. They stopped 36 vehicles and made one arrest for driving under the influence.

That evening, they stopped a car driven by Evan Ho, 29, of Philadelphia, at 90 mph in a 40 mph zone in Shoreham. Elmore said Ho showed signs of impairment, and he was arrested and transported to the Middlebury Police Department, where he was cited for driving

Sheriff's Log

under the influence, excessive speed and gross negligent driving. Eventually Ho was taken to Grace House in Rutland for detox.

Between Dec. 29 and Jan. 3, the sheriff's department completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 79 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations and attempted to serve 11 pieces of civil process around the county. During that period, Elmore Sheriff taught a Taser class to several deputies on Dec. 29.

In other recent activity, Elmore and his deputies also:

- On Dec. 29 assisted a car that slid off the road in Cornwall.
- On Dec. 29 assisted with traffic control for a slide off in Shoreham
- On Dec. 29 assisted with a medical call in New Haven.

- On Dec. 30 assisted a Middlebury landlord with an eviction.

- On Dec. 30 helped state police with a trespassing complaint on Boro Hill in Monkton.

- On Dec. 30 assisted a Vergennes landlord with an eviction.

- On Dec. 30 conducted two background investigations.

- On Dec. 30 helped remove several cats from a Starksboro home due to an upcoming eviction.

- On Dec. 30 came upon a small herd of cows loose in the roadway on East Street in New Haven. The deputy helped corral them back into their enclosure.

- On Dec. 30 transported a person to jail following their arraignment at court in Middlebury.

- On Dec. 31 assisted a Starksboro landlord with an eviction.

- On Jan. 2 completed a background investigation.

- On Jan. 2 assisted the Chittenden County Sheriff's Department with a transport for the Accountability Court.

OV district

(Continued from Page 1A)

Then the OVUU board preceded to drive down costs a degree or two further by passing motions to approve the move of the Whiting School program to Leicester (7 yea, 2 nay and 3 abstentions) and the Caverly Preschool program to Lothrop Elementary in Pittsford (8 yea, 2 nay and 2 abstentions).

While a few board members expressed concern, in the interest of transparency, that the two motions were not "warned" in the meeting agenda, community members will still have the opportunity to make their voices heard at the Jan. 13 board meeting. At least one of the abstentions, Barbara Ebling, signaled that while she would probably have voted to approve the moves, she felt it would be more appropriate to wait another week to hold the vote.

However, other members of the board reasoned that since the FY27 spending plan will be voted on at that same meeting, it ultimately made the most sense to vote on moving the two education programs beforehand.

The consolidation of the educational programs will offer the incoming students additional resources, and reduce the amount of faculty and staff travel between school locations.

Further, the Caverly school building, "a special place" as characterized by board member Brett Mullin, can be made occasionally available as a field trip location for students of all ages, "a classroom in the woods," pending further planning.

Lothrop School Principal Stacey Farrington said her staff is ready for the Caverly move.

"Children will have more opportunities in the building," she said.

Board member Gabe McGuigan compared the pending changes to

an experience he had recently while visiting Florida on vacation and driving past his grandparents' old house, which he described as having been repainted with a gate put up and generally a new look about it. "It's a big change emotionally, but still better that I'm not there," he said.

Although the immediate projected cost savings for the moves are not enormous (approximately \$50,000 for FY27), that amount stands at roughly half of what it would cost for OVUU to maintain the middle school social studies position while still coming very close to reaching the target of a 3% spending increase.

Regarding that position, board member Paul Lathrop spoke up in support of social studies teacher

Zachary Poynter, whom Lathrop said is both admired and well-liked by students and a valuable member of the Otter Valley Middle School teaching faculty. At the same time, the meeting began with board Chair Laurie Bertrand reading a letter from a community member who expressed dismay at rising tax rates and expressing the wish that even if such decisions are difficult, cuts be made to keep taxpayer costs under control.

OTHER BUSINESS

The board also approved tuition rates for next year: \$24,000 for both the elementary and high school, while preschool tuitions will be set by the state. Tuition is paid only by families sending children living outside the school district. The rate of \$24,000 is a marked increase from the current \$19,900 paid by

elementary school students and a marginal increase for out-of-district high school students, who currently pay \$22,155.

The recommendations of the Monitoring Report 2.1, which has to do with privacy regarding how information collected by the school is used, was passed unanimously.

In person at the meeting, which found multiple board members participating via Zoom in light either of illness or the inclement weather, was OVUHS student and senior class president Braeden Waldie, who spoke of his interest in history and politics as the motivation for his attendance.

While prefacing his remarks with an apology for what he characterized as overly negative remarks at a prior

meeting, board member Lathrop questioned how extra funding was spent during the COVID pandemic and whether OVUHS graduates were really where they needed to be to thrive at competitive colleges and universities. In particular, he pointed to the 'no homework' policy for elementary and middle school students, which presents students a real challenge once they reach high school.

Board member Natalie Sheen spoke up via Zoom to remark that, as a parent whose two children both attended OVUHS, and one of whom had special needs, and are now thriving at college, she did not think "we are failing our kids."

"We have a cultural problem," Sheen said. "Kids are not focused."

Whereas decades ago students tended to follow what their teachers said, she observed that current students are quick to disagree. And the pandemic led to a number of mental health issues, the addressing of which is how that extra funding was largely spent on added support staff, which has since been cut.

Student representative Waldie spoke up to share how the cost of college is a primary reason many of his peers choose not to pursue a bachelor's degree.

"Kids are choosing trade school rather than getting into a lot of debt," he said.

With respect to community pushback in favor of central office cuts rather than "student-facing" positions, Superintendent Sanchez said that with respect to curriculum officers, they started with five before the pandemic, then went up to 10, and are slated next year to have only three. His point was that belt-tightening in the central office is already well underway. For those community members who wish to make themselves heard in that respect, they must attend RNESU meetings, which is the board that makes central office budgetary and hiring decisions.

Any community member who might be interested in running for a school board seat is encouraged to attend an information session next Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 5 p.m. in the Otter Valley Union High School Library. Commented Ebling with a smile, "Suddenly, we're the hottest gig in town."

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Hunsinger

(Continued from Page 1A)
from 'fusion' candidacies with Democrats."

"I am incredibly honored to have the opportunity to work alongside Progressives across Vermont who fight every day to better the lives of working-class families," Hunsinger said following the party's annual convention in Barre. "We will always remain committed to empowering and strengthening our small and rural communities and promoting a fair and inclusive democracy that works for all Vermonters."

Hunsinger originally hails from the Lake George, N.Y., area. After a short stint in Castleton, he and Jenna settled in Ripton around nine years ago. They have a young daughter, Ruby.

His politics have always been left of center, even while residing in a region that had elected conservative Republican U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik. Hunsinger recalled knocking on doors in 2008 in support of presidential candidate Barack Obama.

In 2010, he took a hiatus from politics, in part because he'd become disillusioned with the Democratic Party.

"They talk a lot about fighting for the working class and working families, but I just didn't see that," said Hunsinger, a former Otter Creek Brewing employee who now works in quality assurance at an Addison County energy manufacturing company. He declined to share the company's name, per an agreement with his employer that allows him to pursue his public service.

Around two years ago, he was invited to attend a gathering of Ripton's Progressive town committee. He liked what he heard. The party was (and still is) advocating for such issues as universal healthcare, workers' rights and preserving local schools during these challenging times of declining enrollment.

"From that (Ripton meeting), I ended up working my way up to getting onto the Progressive Party's State Committee and doing a lot of work with their elections committee," Hunsinger said. "It's only been a couple of years, but there are a lot of opportunities (with the Progs) to make change."

Hunsinger's star has risen at a meteoric pace within the Vermont Progressive Party.

When Ripton's Millard Cox last summer stepped down as chair of Addison County's Progressives, Hunsinger filled the breach. He began a reorganization process that included igniting new interest in the Prog platform and trying to get a party foothold in each Addison County community.

"The work I was doing and the energy I was bringing to our county was noticed at the state level," Hunsinger said.

Around a month before the Vermont Progs' Nov. 9 state convention in Barre, Hunsinger said "multiple people" reached out



BILL HUNSINGER OF Ripton has seen a meteoric rise in his standing within the Vermont Progressive Party. He's the party's newest chair, and he's bringing new energy and ideas to the party's mission and outreach.

Photo courtesy of Bill Hunsinger

and encouraged him to seek the top spot within the party. Longtime party chair (and former state senator) Anthony Pollina had announced his retirement after a nine-year run.

"It was totally unexpected and certainly not something I was thinking to pursue," Hunsinger said.

"But I have a problem — I say 'yes' to things," he added, with a chuckle.

So after fewer than three years within the Vermont Progressive Party ranks, Hunsinger was unanimously anointed its new leader at the convention. He had no competition.

"I think the reason I had so much support is because I talked about what I wanted to do in Addison County, and transfer that to the state," he said.

GRASSROOTS STATEWIDE
It's a strategy that emphasizes local service — such as holding community suppers, food drives and other charitable efforts — to give a grassroots identity to the party's statewide goals of helping working families and those in need.

"It's as much a way to build community in our communities, as anything else," Hunsinger said.

He believes the state's biggest power brokers hail from cities like Burlington and Montpelier. Hunsinger is concerned that rural Vermonters are getting lost in the shuffle.

"I want to commit to building community and helping people," he said. "There are ways to do that on the state level that seem good, but I'd rather make sure the work we're doing is in the individual communities, going out and doing

"I want to commit to building community and helping people."

— Bill Hunsinger

good things. And we're not doing it to get votes in an election, to look good or to fundraise."

Still, Hunsinger acknowledged that the Progressive Party will need to be vocal in the Statehouse this winter. He promised the party will continue to speak against Act 73, the state's public education reform law, which is seeking to shrink (and consolidate) the state's public-school footprint in recognition of declining student numbers.

He noted Ripton will be voting on the formal closure of its K-5 school on March 3.

"No one is going to win with Act 73. Small towns are going to lose their schools and the big towns are also going to have issues," he said, while vowing to convey his Act 73 concerns to lawmakers and encourage other citizens to do the same.

Advocating for strong healthcare and childcare supports are also at the top of Hunsinger's 2026 priority list. And he's concerned about the dearth of housing in the state. In addition to advocating for new home starts, Hunsinger believes communities should consider bans on short-term rental housing that currently sits vacant for multiple months each year.

"If you're going to own housing exclusively for profit, you're going to have to contribute to the community in some way," he said. "Either live in our community or don't profit off our community."

In concert with picking Hunsinger as their chair, Vermont Progressives in November selected Cindy Weed, of Enosburg Falls to serve as vice chair;

Carter Neubieser of Burlington as secretary; and José Aguayo of Montpelier as assistant secretary.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

Vermont offers ice fishing clinics

RUTLAND — The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department will be conducting Introduction to Ice Fishing Clinics open to the public this winter.



"Families in Vermont sometimes turn to ice fishing during the winter months for a popular family outing," said Fish and Wildlife Education Specialist Corey Hart. "Our educational fishing programs provide new anglers with the information they need to be successful, and additional programs will be added in the months ahead."

Residents are welcome

to register for a clinic on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website under Upcoming Events. If ice is not suitable, the program will be cancelled, and participants will be notified in advance.

The following programs are:

- Introduction to Ice Fishing for Trout When: Saturday, Jan. 3, 8 a.m.-11 a.m. Where: Knapp Pond 2, Cavendish.

- Introduction to Ice Fishing When: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 9 a.m.-noon. Where: Lake Iroquois Access Area, Williston.

- Introduction to Smelt Fishing: When: Friday, Jan. 23, 4-7 p.m.

Where: Woodward Reservoir, Plymouth.

- Ice Fishing Festival: When: Saturday, Jan. 31, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Where: Lake Elmore, Elmore State Park, Elmore.

- Introduction to Smelt Fishing: When: Thursday, February 26, 5-8 p.m. Where: Waterbury Reservoir, Blush Hill Access, Waterbury.

For more info, contact see letsgofishing@vermont.gov or call 802-505-5562. 5-8 p.m. Where: Waterbury Reservoir, Blush Hill Access, Waterbury.

For more info, contact see letsgofishing@vermont.gov or call 802-505-5562.

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)

"From Main Street, passersby can finally see into the space, giving a real sense of the light and activity the new addition will bring," Hart stated in a recent emailed project update. "(Window) installation is largely complete and making a big visual impact, both from the exterior and interior of the building. The natural light and views in the new building are stunning." Also, framing of the interior walls on the first floor is almost complete. There are now corridors to walk down and doorways through which to enter. "It is a great satisfaction to stand inside the future Community Room and imagine the many programs we will enjoy in the years to come," Hart said. She anticipates the new addition's roof will be completed later this month. Stay tuned, and in the meantime, Middlebury library services will continue to be delivered through the temporary "Mini Ilsley" in the Duclos building at 30 Main St., generously loaned by the National Bank of Middlebury.

The tinsel and ornaments have been put back into storage after a festive Christmas... Now what do you do with the tree? Don't chuck it; it can serve a higher purpose than being tossed into your scrap pile. Volunteers from the Middlebury Rotary Club and the Vergennes

Lions Club will pick up trees curbside in the shire town and Little City on Saturday, Jan. 10. If you miss this curbside collection opportunity, or don't live in either Middlebury or Vergennes, any county resident can bring their Christmas trees to the Addison County Solid Waste Management District (ACSWMD) transfer station at 1223 Route 7 South in Middlebury for free anytime during the month of January. The ACSWMD will grind the trees into mulch chipping in the spring.

Former Middlebury selectboard member and Safe Routes to School leader Laura Asermily reminds her fellow citizens that helpful information is only a few scroll-taps away in the event of a winter storm or other crisis. There's a "Looking for Resources" page on the town of Middlebury's website that provides a wealth of information on ways to stay warm and get help, including contact info for the Charter House Emergency Shelter, Tri-Valley Transit (for public transportation), medical services, childcare, community supports for folks fleeing domestic violence. The "Looking for Resources" page can be accessed at tinyurl.com/bde795s5. It's a brochure that's updated biannually and maintained by the town with Asermily's help.

Also be advised that Gather, Middlebury's drop-in living room and warming site at 76 Court St., is now open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Patch cuts in forest management are often used to create wildlife habitat, diversify forests, enhance resiliency and encourage new growth. Join Addison County Forester, Mark Raishart, at his family's working family forest in Leicester on Jan. 31 for an exploration of forest management in action. He'll show how patch cutting has been used on the land and the results of this work in different stages, including an area that's been heavily used for food by bears and a new small patch cut in progress. Attendees will tour the property and Audubon-certified Bird Friendly sugarbush to discuss diverse goals on the acreage — including maple syrup production, timber harvesting, wildlife habitat, flood reduction and water quality, recreation and hunting, biodiversity and carbon storage. This free event, from noon to 2 p.m., is being offered through the peer-to-peer network of Vermont Coverts and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. Families with children are welcome. Directions and additional details will be provided at registration, which you can do at tinyurl.com/3k74hzrk.

Club

(Continued from Page 1A)

in to form the Commodore Club and fill the void left by the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vergennes when that organization went on hiatus this past March.

Of the 62 5th- to 12th-grade kids registered in the program, 19 are from Vergennes, 18 are from Ferrisburgh, 11 are from Pantton, eight are from Addison and six are from Waltham.

In the past, the Ferrisburgh selectboard allotted \$500 to the former Boys and Girls Club. But board members wanted to match Pantton's allotment, and also said there was still \$500 left over from 2025 that the Boys and Girls Club never spent.

Before the Ferrisburgh vote on Tuesday night, Pantton officials

"If as a selectboard they chose not to put the appropriation on, then I will ask community members to sign a petition at the same rate that was in the previous year appropriations for the former Boys and Girls Club."

— Martha DeGraaf

voted to include the same allotment in its budget proposal, and Vergennes plans to include a \$5,000 appropriation for the Commodore Club in its next budget proposal.

DeGraaf is seeking similar pledges from Waltham and Addison.

"If as a selectboard they chose not to put the appropriation on, then I will ask community members to sign a petition at the same rate that was in the previous year appropriations for the former Boys and Girls Club," DeGraaf said.

In addition to seeking funds from the five participating towns, Vergennes could possibly purchase the Armory Lane building that formerly held the Boys and Girls Club and where the city's Commodore Club currently operates under a one-year facility use agreement. That contract expires in early March, and the purchase of the building must be voted on by Vergennes residents.

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Career guide

(Continued from Page 1A)

member Sam Loescher, a sophomore Feb at Middlebury, have long been interested in figuring out what drives students to make certain career decisions. Around a year ago, Schroeder began diving into related research and working with other students to put together op-eds on the topic.

"All of these colleges select for incredibly idealistic and driven students," Loescher said. "They want to be ambitious, and they want to positively impact the world, and once they get to these schools, they so often feel like they have to make a choice between doing public service and doing something that's impressive, that's prestigious, that's high-powered, whatever that means."

The group found many other students resonated with that experience, and they began coalescing their work into a larger manuscript. The resulting career guide challenges career advice that encourages students to "follow their passion" and instead suggests an "outside-in thinking" that asks what global issues need solving and how the reader's skills can address those problems.

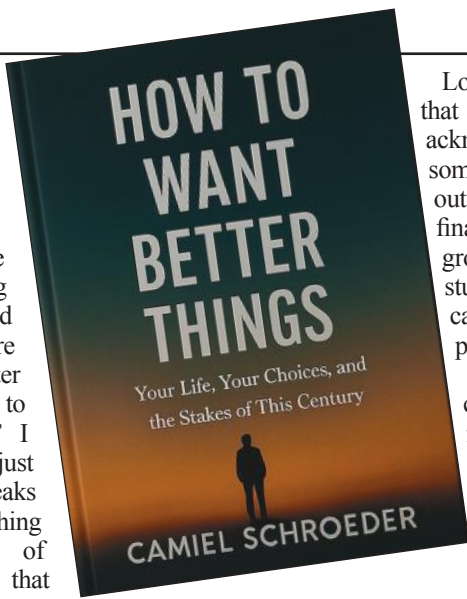
Loescher and Schroeder have been joined in the effort by Zach Chen, Lincoln Duckson, Tyler Stark and Alex Vellins.

"In writing a book that seeks to close that gap and say, 'No, actually, maybe the most ambitious thing to be doing is seeking the biggest impact

you can have, and these traditional paths that people feel like they're being pulled down, there are better things to strive for.' I think that just really speaks to something in a lot of students that many, many people feel, but it's hard to express and few people are talking about it," Loescher said.

Schroeder noted there can be a lack of visibility on college campuses about career opportunities that prioritize making change on big issues.

"You would like to help out with climate change or like to contribute to solutions in global poverty, but there's no real precedent around you of what a career in that field would look like," he said. "The built-out, fleshed-out tracks here all lead to two or three corporate industries that don't really move the needle on those issues, and if that's your passion then we think that's great, you should definitely pursue that, but we also think there's a lot of people who default to those routes in lack of seeing another alternative."



Loescher echoed that sentiment, acknowledging that some may need to seek out certain careers for financial reasons; the group doesn't want students to avoid career paths seen as prestigious.

"A lot of great careers, very impactful careers, start in prestigious places," he said. "While we're not saying students shouldn't go into those fields, what we definitely are saying is students need to be more aware of how difficult it is to exit into an entirely different industry once they go in."

Schroeder said the group has found that many students are looking to make a difference through their careers but run into challenges when it comes to logistics.

"We hope with a book like this to make that a lot more visible; the fact that as a Middlebury student you are bright and ambitious enough to be able to do these things and it doesn't have to be an 'or or,'" he said. "You can choose a job that makes you stable and gives you all these opportunities as well as a job that allows you to contribute to whatever you deeply care about."

INSIDE THE BOOK

The career guide is made up of two parts; the first tells why pursuing



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE STUDENTS Sam Loescher, center, and Camiel Schroeder, right, are among the group of students behind "How to Want Better Things," a career guide and broader project that offers students a framework for navigating professional life. Loescher and Schroeder are pictured at a recent speaking event focused on the book.

Photo courtesy of Camiel Schroeder

a career focused on doing good for others is important for both the reader and the world at large.

"We walk through a lot of the research on the various benefits that come with being in a career that's aligned with your values, a career that feels close to your norms," Schroeder said.

The second part of the book explores what such a career could look like, zooming in on issues facing the world today and related jobs addressing those challenges. The guide includes anecdotes and stories of individuals like Paul Farmer, a doctor who helped develop the global health and social justice organization Partners In Health.

"With those stories we hope to show that this is what awaits if you do go an alternative route,

this is what you can do, this is the potential you have as a Middlebury student or any other student really if you're bright, smart and ambitious," Schroeder said.

While the book offers some concrete examples for potential career paths, it's more broadly aimed at offering readers an approach to navigating professional life. For example, thinking about different issues in the sense of how big is the problem, how much a student could help solve the problem, and how many people are currently addressing the problem, Loescher explained.

"That's really what we're trying to get across; if you can take a framework and apply it to your personal interests, your skills, etc., then you're very likely to land in a career where you can see that

you're really making an impact," he said. "And that will lead to much more durable senses of purpose and fulfillment than if you were just to pursue your passion, whatever that might be."

Schroeder and Loescher said now is a particularly important time to pursue such careers.

"This century really does feel like it could be defining for the mid- to even long-term future," Loescher said, pointing to risks of nuclear war, creation of powerful artificial intelligence systems, and recent cuts to USAID, among other developments. "If we all just continue going into the same careers that are about our own self-actualization ... we really feel that it may be too late to create the type of future we all desperately want."

The group hopes to present this moment as an opportunity for students.

"How lucky are we where we're born at the right time, in the right circumstances, where we could actually help," Loescher asked. "And help in this case could mean profoundly different lives, profoundly less suffering for so many people. That is what drives us, it's what inspires us, and we think it's what's going to drive and inspire our readers."

The students noted their work has also been inspired by materials like "Doing Good Better," by William MacAskill and Peter Singer's essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." They acknowledged "How to Want Better Things" isn't the first resource on this topic and pointed to organizations like 80,000 Hours that highlight impactful career opportunities.

Loescher and Schroeder said they've been personally inspired by the organization's advice, but are hoping to provide a resource that is more accessible to students.

"We like to say we're aiming to be the top of the funnel," Loescher said. **MAKING CONNECTIONS**

While their main audience is made up of college students, Loescher and Schroeder said they hope the guide can be informative for readers established in their careers as well.

"Some of the most encouraging feedback I've gotten were all from 30-, 40-year-olds here in Middlebury town that thought it was equally relevant for their own stories," Schroeder said. "A lot of the framework and templates we give I think are more universal than age-bound."

The group is currently working to secure a publisher for the career guide and said the book is still several months from being published. In the meantime, they've shared early chapters on audio streaming services like Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

They've also spent recent months traveling to different colleges and universities to talk with students about the book.

"Our big takeaway was just the ubiquity of this message," Loescher said. "It's not a Middlebury problem, I mean we knew that, but it's great to hear it confirmed. People everywhere are really feeling this, especially given the way things feel like they're going right now. There are so many people who feel very dissatisfied with the status quo."

The group plans to visit more schools moving forward, as well as engage with students through ramped up media efforts.

The Middlebury duo said they're keeping their goals realistic when it comes to the book's impact, and they're excited about the connections they've made.

"We think that even if one student or one reader who engaged with our content makes a change and redirects their career in some meaningful way, we would consider it a success," Schroeder said.

To learn more about "How to Want Better Things" visit www.howtowantbetterthings.org/#hero.

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Three local wrestlers pass the century mark

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — When Middlebury Union High School wrestler Tucker Wright accepted a banner during the Hubie Wagner Invitational in Middlebury last week his face was serious with blood dripping down his nose from one of his battles.

Despite the haggard look, the junior could not have been happier — he had scored his 100th career win and won the title in the 215-pound weight class in his own gym.

“I couldn’t have done it in a better place, right at home,” Wright told the *Independent* on Friday.

And he wasn’t the only wearer of Tiger orange and black to surmount the 100-win mark recently. Fellow junior Wyatt

Kennett, who as of Sunday was undefeated this season, claimed the 175-pound title at Hubie Wagner, which took place Dec. 29 and 30 (see story on Page 1B), which gave him win 99. Then Kennett himself earned number 100 on Saturday, Jan. 3 in the Scott Legacy Invitational at Mt. Anthony Union High School in Bennington. Kennett described as an “exciting” accomplishment. Like his teammate, Kennet was presented with a banner after hitting the milestone.

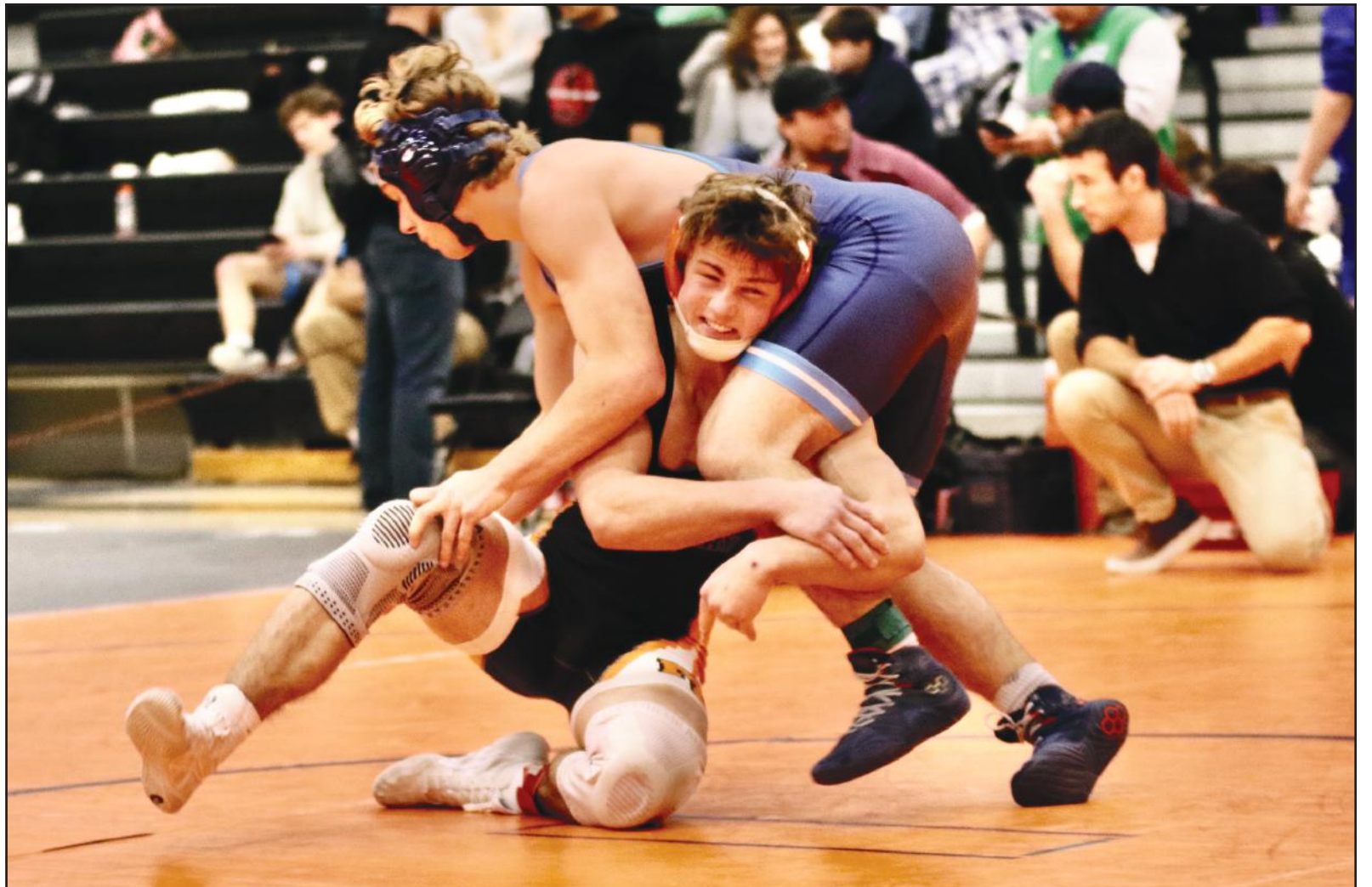
Tiger Coach Ethan Raymond was impressed.

“To get it as a junior is (an) even bigger deal,” Raymond said after the Hubie Wagner, referring to Wright. “Not to mention, he got it really early in his junior (See *Century*, Page 2B)



MUHS WRESTLER TUCKER Wright stands tall at the Hubie Wagner tournament in Middlebury last week after securing his 100th win as a Tiger and the 215-pound title. The benchmark is a significant milestone for high school wrestlers.

Independent photo/Steve James



TIGER JASON SPERRY took first place in the 157 pound weight class during the Hubie Wagner Invitational meet last week.

Independent photo/Steve James

MUHS wrestlers kick off season with a solid start

Three Tigers take home individual wins at annual Hubie Wagner tourney

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — Wrestlers from 15 teams brought some energy back into an otherwise empty and quiet Middlebury Union High School for a day of matches last week at the 53rd annual Hubie Wagner Invitational, and the Tigers had a large measure of success, taking third place overall and putting up individual winners too.

Five days later, the team carried that momentum to Bennington

for the Scott Legacy Invitational at Mt. Anthony Union High School, where all of the seven Tigers wrestlers who attended placed in the top four in their weight classes. The team took fourth place overall.

At the Hubie Wagner, MUHS put up three first place winners in juniors Jason Sperry, Wyatt Kennett and Tucker Wright, who wrestled, respectively, in the 157, 175 and 215 pound weight classes.

MUHS as a team took third place at the tourney, with the team from Winnisquam, N.H., taking first, and a team made up of kids from two New York towns — Granville and Whitehall — beating the Tigers by half a point for second.

In addition to the team win and the three titlists, four more of 14 MUHS wrestlers placed in their weight classes.

Juniors Colton Murray and Parker Carl, at 150 and 165,

respectively, placed second; and sophomore Miles Goetz at 120 and senior Steven Lackard at 285 both placed third.

MUHS Head Coach Ethan Raymond was happy with how his wrestlers performed, and said they were right on target.

“Other than just the outcome of the thing, which went extremely well, I feel like we look good for as early in the season as we are as well,” he said.

(See *Wrestling*, Page 4B)

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball

1/2 VUHS vs Blue Mtn	55-26
1/2 MUHS vs OV	59-21
1/5 MUHS vs Harwood	53-38
1/5 VUHS vs Mt. Abe	58-43
1/7 Mt. Abe vs Milton	Late
1/7 MUHS vs Missisquoi	Late
1/7 VUHS vs Stowe	Late

Boys' Basketball

12/30 Randolph vs Mt. Abe	81-47
1/2 Fair Haven vs Mt. Abe	69-29
1/3 Hartford vs MUHS	58-44
1/6 MUHS vs Otter Valley	59-55
1/6 Fair Haven vs VUHS	61-49

Boys' Hockey

12/29 N Country vs MUHS	3-1
12/30 MUHS vs Woodstock	8-3
1/3 MUHS vs St. J.	5-1

Girls' Hockey

12/30 Burr & Burton vs MUHS	4-3
1/3 MUHS vs Rutland	5-1
1/7 MUHS vs Stowe	Late

Wrestling

1/7 MUHS vs Fair Haven	Late
1/7 Mt. Abe vs Mill River	Late

COLLEGE SPORTS

Men's Hockey

1/3 Hobart vs Midd	7-0
1/4 Midd vs NEC	4-0

Women's Hockey

1/3 Endicott vs Midd	1-1
(Endicott wins shootout, 2-1)	
1/6 Midd vs Suffolk	7-0

Women's Basketball

12/29 Midd at Puget Sound	36-42
12/30 Midd at Pacific Lutheran	81-49
1/3 St. Lawrence at Midd	67-58
1/6 Emerson at Midd	69-44

Men's Basketball

Tourney in Brooklyn*	
12/28 Wheaton vs Midd	82-78*
12/29 Midd vs Medgar Evers	91-47*
1/2 Midd vs Lasell	102-96
1/6 WPI vs Midd	85-57

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball

1/9 Mt. Abe at MUHS	7 PM
1/13 Missisquoi at Mt. Abe	7 PM
1/13 MUHS at Colchester	7 PM
1/14 VUHS vs Richford	7 PM

(See *Schedule*, Page 2B)

Wins hard to come by for local boys' basketball

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' basketball team broke through on the win column this week in a home game vs. Otter Valley. Elsewhere in boys' hoop Vergennes and Mount Abe came up short.

MUHS TIGERS

The Tigers had cause for celebration this week — they recorded their first win of the season on Tuesday night. MUHS beat visiting Otter Valley by a margin of just two baskets in their home court on Tuesday night. The game marked the Tigers' first win of the season.

Though MUHS went into halftime with a 37-33 lead, the

game came down to the wire — the teams were tied at 42 points heading into the final quarter. The home squad managed to score 17 points in that period; the visitors just 13.

Junior Colin Chicoine led scoring for MUHS, putting up 23 of the team's 59 points. Juniors Ryan Brouillard and Taylor Altemose also contributed 11 and 10 points, respectively, to help their team top the Otters' 55 points.

It was a bounce-back for the Tigers, who had fallen at Hartford on Jan. 3, 58-44.

Middlebury travels to Fair Haven for a game this Friday evening, and will play at Rutland (See *Boys' hoop*, Page 2B)

Local girls' hoopsters hit winning streaks

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — In local high school girls' basketball, Middlebury and Vergennes were both double winners, but Mount Abe fell to one of its local rivals.

MUHS

Middlebury Union High School girls' hoop heralded in the new year with two victories, both by large margins. The team defeated Otter Valley 59-21 and Harwood 53-38.

Sophomore Louisa Orten scored more than 20 points in both games.

On Jan. 2 against the Otters, Orten led scoring for the Tigers with 27 points. Juniors Isabel Quinn and Alice Livesay scored 6 and 8 points, respectively, and freshmen Ava Wood and Emma Quinn scored 8 and 6 points, respectively.

Three days later against Harwood, Orten scored 22 points, Isabel Quinn scored 10 and Lillian Paquette garnered 8. Vs. Harwood, the Tigers led at the end of the first three quarters,

widening the margins during each one. The score was 15-14 after the first, 27-19 at halftime and 38-28 after the third.

The Tigers were due to play their fifth game of the season on Wednesday at Missisquoi on the road after press deadline.

Middlebury will host Mount Abe on Friday at 7 p.m. and travel to Colchester on Tuesday evening.

VUHS & MOUNT Abe

VUHS added two wins to their record this past week. The Commodores beat Blue Mountain 55-26 on Jan. 2 and Mount Abe 58-43 on Jan. 5.

From VUHS senior Ashtin Stearns, freshman Ayla Kittredge, junior Georgia Krauss and senior Amelia Giroux scored 18, 10, 10, and 8 points, respectively.

Sophomore Samantha Guilbeault was the high scorer from Mount Abe, tallying 15 points. She also had 11 rebounds. Senior Brooke Ryersbach (See *Girls' hoop*, Page 4B)



VERGENNES UNION HIGH School gymnast Isabella Audy, who practices with the MUHS team, begins a flip off the beam during a meet against Montpelier on Monday at MUMS. Audy tied for first in this discipline.

Independent photo/Steve James

MUHS gymnastics wins meet

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — Whether it was cartwheeling and flipping across the blue mats in the Middlebury Union Middle School gym, careening toward the vault before going airborne, or balancing after a hop on the beam, local high school gymnasts' performances earned them top slots during a Monday meet against Montpelier.

The Middlebury Union High School Tigers also secured a team win, with a score of 104.9-21.70.

Throughout the two-hour meet, MUHS's second of the season, the girls moved in clusters from apparatus to apparatus, sat cross-legged, and scrunched up holding their knees to their chests, watching their teammates quietly so they could concentrate. Claps broke out when a gymnast finished, and words of encouragement when (See *Gymnastics*, Page 3B)



SENIOR ALIXIS WILLIAMS hops above the beam during a home meet against Montpelier on Monday.

Independent photo/Steve James

Nordic skiers glide through cold weather at Huntington meet



By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

HUNTINGTON — Three local high school Nordic skiers secured top-five finishes during the Dec. 30 Sleepy Hollow Classic Relay in Huntington.

They were just a few of the dozens of varsity skiers from several participating schools. Several more skiers raced that day at the JV and middle school levels, too.

At the varsity level, skiers were paired with a partner and alternated skiing three 1.7K laps. Junior varsity and middle school athletes completed 1K laps.

“It went great,” MUHS Assistant Coach Laura McIntosh said of the meet, which Middlebury Union High School co-hosted with Fairfax’s Bellows Free Academy and Essex at the Sleepy Hollow Nordic Center.

She said while the conditions were excellent, it was extremely cold. That can make it difficult for skiers to manage during a relay race because they’re pushing themselves when skiing, but then have to stop and wait for their partner.

“Our kids showed a lot of grit,” McIntosh said.

Tiger skier Jorgen Pirrung, a

sophomore, joined forces with Burlington High School senior Bjorn Petersen for the race. The pair placed second with a time of 33 minutes, 17.1 seconds, finishing just under 30 seconds behind the first place team from Champlain Valley Union High School.

On the girls’ side, the top local skiers were June Yates-Rusch, a Mount Abe senior, and Ellie Eckels, a Vergennes Union High School junior, who took fifth with a time of 43 minutes, 23.3 seconds. They were about 10 minutes behind the top-finishing duo.

Other local duos included:

Boys:

- Tiger Gabe Perchemlides and Rupert Suhr from North Branch School placed ninth with a time of 37:18.0.

- Tigers Kaden Hammond and Graeham Zieger placed 23rd in 45:20.4.

Girls:

- Tigers Meredith Carr Perlow and Avery Thompson placed 14th in 49:32.6.

MUHS has three more races scheduled, including another race at Sleepy Hollow on Jan. 19 and a home meet on Feb. 19 at the Rickett Outdoor Center in Ripton.



MIDDLEBURY UNION High School junior Wyatt Kennett proudly displays the banner proclaiming his 100th win on Saturday in a tournament at Mt. Anthony.

Photo courtesy of Wyatt Kennett

Century

(Continued from Page 1B)

year. So that’s really good.”

Wright won the state championship in the 175 weight class last year and placed third during his freshman season. Kennett won the Vermont title at 165 last year and was fourth in 2024.

Raymond said they are in a position to hit another significant benchmark.

“(They) should get to 100 pins by the time (they’re) a senior, which in Middlebury history only one other person has done,” Raymond noted.

As far as other goals for the season, Wright said he’s shooting for another state title, and placing in the New England competition. Kennett said he’d like to secure another state championship title, too.

Over the weekend, a third local wrestler, Mount Abe junior Mason Atkins also hit the benchmark. He scored his 100th career win this past Saturday at the annual Scott Legacy Tournament at Mt. Anthony. Atkins ended up second to MUHS wrestler Jason Sperry at 157 pounds.

Boys’ hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)

on Tuesday.

MOUNT ABE EAGLES

The Eagles stomached two home losses last week, falling to Randolph 81-47 on Dec. 30 and to Fair Haven 69-29 on Jan. 2.

Against Randolph on that Tuesday, Eagles **Jaran Griffin**, **Charlie Germon** and **Waydon Cherington** led the team in scoring with 8, 9 and 10 points, respectively.

A few days later in the home game against Fair Haven, Cherington again helped the Eagle cause by contributing 8 points. Ultimately, Mount Abe fell to the

Slaters.

Mount Abe will reload for a game at Otter Valley on Friday at 7 p.m.

VUHS COMMODORES

In their only game in the past 10 days, VUHS fell to Fair Haven, 61-49, on Tuesday night. For the Commodores, senior **Ryker Mosehauer** led scoring with 14 points. His teammate, junior **Cohen Howell**, brought in 10 points for the team.

Early in the game, Vergennes had a 10 point lead on their opponents, but Fair Haven closed the gap and then some, outscoring the Commodores 34-11 in the second and third quarters.

Vergennes will host Hazen on Saturday at 7 p.m.

Schedule

(Continued from Page 1B)

1/15 MUHS vs Enosburg.....7 PM
1/16 White River at VUHS..... 7 PM
1/16 Burr & Burton at Mt Abe..... 7 PM

Boys' Basketball

1/9 MUHS at Fair Haven..... 7 PM
1/9 Mt. Abe at Otter Valley 7 PM
1/10 Hazen at VUHS..... 7 PM
1/13 MUHS vs Rutland..... 7 PM
1/14 Mt Abe at Missisquoi 7 PM
1/14 VUHS at Winooski..... 7 PM
1/17 MUHS vs Missisquoi 12:30 PM
1/17 Mt. Abe vs Winooski..... 12:30 PM
1/17 Milton at VUHS 2:30 PM

Boys' Hockey

1/10 MUHS at Saranac 1 PM
1/17 CVU at MUHS 7 PM

Girls' Hockey

1/12 U-32 at MUHS.....7PM
1/14 Brattleboro at MUHS 7 PM
1/17 Woodstock at MUHS 5 PM

Wrestling

1/8 MAU & OV at VUHS..... 6 PM
1/10 VUHS/Mt Abe at Mill River Tourn
1/13 Mt Abe at Fair Haven 6 PM
1/14 MUHS Hosts VUHS + 6 PM
1/15 MUHS at Colchester 6 PM
1/16&17 VUHS/Mt Abe at Essex Tourn

Indoor Track & Field

1/10Championship Meet at UVM

Gymnastics

1/15 MUHS at Essex..... 6 PM

Dance

1/17 MUHS at Lamoille..... 1 PM

COLLEGE SPORTS

Men's Hockey

1/9 Midd at Trinity 7 PM
1/10 Midd at Wesleyan 3 PM
1/13 Midd at St. Mike's 6:30 PM
1/17 Midd at Williams 3 PM

Women's Hockey

1/9 Conn College at Midd 7 PM
1/10 Conn College at Midd..... 3 PM
1/17 Midd at Amherst.....7:30 PM

Women's Basketball

1/9 Midd at Trinity..... 7 PM
1/10 Midd at Wesleyan..... 3 PM
1/13 Smith College at Midd.....5 PM
1/16 Conn College at Midd.....7 PM
1/17 Tufts at Midd.....3 PM

Men's Basketball

1/9 Trinity at Midd..... 7 PM
1/10 Wesleyan at Midd..... 2 PM
1/16 Midd at Conn College..... 7 PM
1/17 Midd at Tufts 3PM

MUHS NORDIC SKIER
Meredith Carr Perlow, above left, completes her leg at the Sleepy Hollow relay and tags Avery Thompson to continue the race on Dec. 30. Left, Tiger Nordic skier Kaden Hammond, #37, tags teammate Graeham Zieger in competition at the Sleepy Hollow Classic Relay last week.
Photos courtesy of Laura McIntosh



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Sunday, January 11:
1:45 - 3:45 PM Public Skating

Tuesday, January 13:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

Thursday, January 15:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Sunday, January 18:
1:45 - 3:45 PM Public Skating

Tuesday, January 20:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

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Gymnastics

(Continued from Page 1B)
they needed a boost.

At the end of the meet, the victors in each event (uneven bars, beam, vault and floor), and overall winners, were crowned, and given the opportunity to stand proud on the make-shift podium. MUHS Coach Natalia Little made out of pads in the middle of the freestyle mat that covered half the gym.

Senior Alixis Williams secured the all-around first place with 28.65 points, beating out her independent teammate Isabella Audy (she's a Vergennes Union High School junior who practices with the Middlebury team) by a fraction of a point. Williams's second place win in the floor (7.45 points) and second place tie in bars (5.5 points) with a Montpelier gymnast lifted her ahead of Audy, who placed third in bars with 5.4 points, and fourth in floor with 7.1 points.

Ruby Murphy, a Middlebury ninth-grader, finished in third place with 25.90 points.

Williams and Audy also tied for first in beam with 7.8 points, and the pair were in a three-way tie for second in the vault competition with Lydia Cadorette of U-32. All three scored 7.9 points.

"Alixis and Isabella are both very strong, solid athletes who will

continue to grow throughout the season — both improved on their scores since the first meet," Little told the *Independent*.

During their first meet on Dec. 27 in Brattleboro, Williams and Audy were also neck and neck in the all-around rankings, with Audy topping Williams, 27.2 to 27.1, for third place. During that meet, Audy placed fourth in vault, sixth in beam and third in floor. Williams finished fifth in vault, sixth in bars, fifth in beam and fourth in floor. Middlebury's Murphy placed sixth all-around. She placed seventh in vault.

In team scoring, Brattleboro defeated MUHS, 126.3-89.7.

Other Tigers on the podium after Monday's home meet were:

Vault:
• Murphy tied for sixth place with 7.6 points.

Bar:
• Murphy, fifth with 5.3 points.
• Chloe Kretchel, sixth with 5.10 points.

Beam:
• Murphy, fourth with 6.4 points.
• Leah Warner, fifth with 6.35 points.
• Kretchel, sixth with 6.3 points.

Floor:
• Mady Richard, fifth with 7.0 points.



MUHS SENIOR ALIXIS Williams flies toward the vault during Monday's meet against Montpelier at Middlebury Union Middle School. She tied for second in this discipline and won first place in the all-around.

Independent photo/Steve James



MUHS SENIOR EMILY JOHNSON leaps during her performance in the floor event during Monday's gymnastics meet at Middlebury Union Middle School.

Independent photo/Steve James



FRESHMAN RUBY MURPHY competes in the floor event during a meet against Montpelier on Monday.

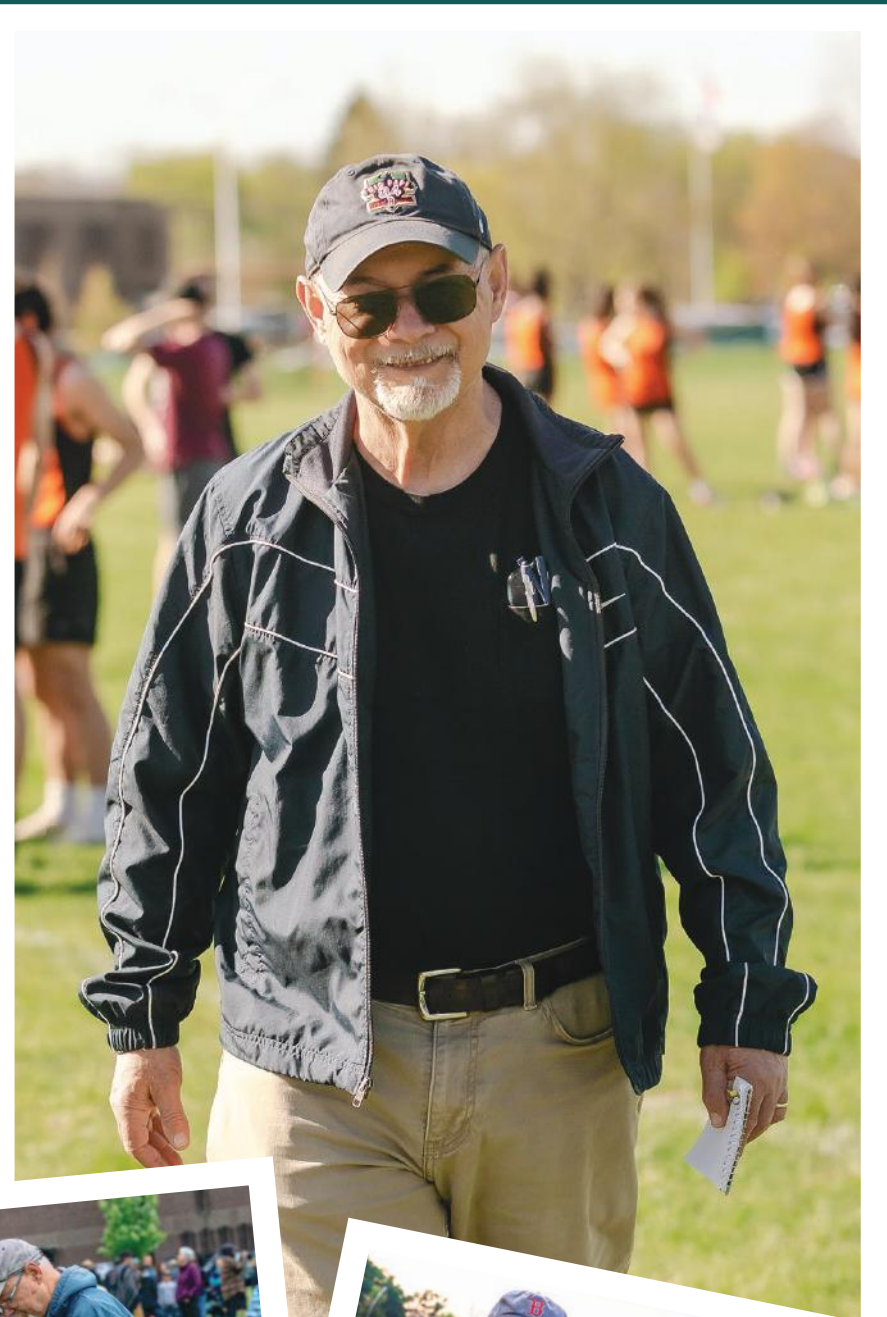
Independent photo/Steve James

Thank you, Andy!

After covering Vergennes news since 1994 and local sports since 1999 for the Addison Independent — a 31-year run of dedicated reporting — Andy Kirkaldy is hanging up his cap.

Thanks, Andy, for serving our community and celebrating our local athletes.

Enjoy your retirement!



ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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EAGLE WRESTLER MASON Atkins tussles with a wrestler during the Hubie Wagner Invitational meet last week.

Independent photo/Steve James



TIGER TUCKER WRIGHT fights an Essex opponent during the Hubie Wagner Invitational meet last week. The match marked Wright's 100th win.

Independent photo/Steve James

Wrestling

(Continued from Page 1B)

In Bennington on Saturday, Jason Sperry and Wyatt Kennett took first, at 157 and 175, respectively; Tucker Wright, Miles Goetz and Steven Lackard took second, at 215, 120 and 285; Colton Murray took third at 150; Parker Carl fourth at 165.

Before the Dec. 29-30 and Jan. 3 tournaments, the Tigers competed in two other meets, one at Souhegan High School in New Hampshire, where the team placed fifth, and the Lee Van Slyke Memorial Duals in New York that Raymond said they attended to test themselves against some tougher competition.

His wrestlers have kicked off the season with personal achievements, too. At last week's invitational, Wright celebrated his 100th career win, and Kennett earned that lofty achievement just this past weekend. Over the weekend, a third local wrestler, Mount Abe junior Mason Atkins also hit the benchmark (see related story in this section).

Several other local wrestlers had success at the Hubie Wagner Invitational, which had a limited schedule on the first day because the ice storm kept many traveling teams at home.

From Mount Abe:

- Junior Isayah Isham placed first at 144 pounds at the Hubie Wagner Invite.
- Junior Mason Atkins, 2nd at

157 pounds at Hubie Wagner.

- Freshman Forest Turner placed fourth at 126 pounds at Hubie Wagner.

The day of the Hubie Wagner, wrestlers from Vergennes attended another tournament at Noble High School in Maine. And on Saturday they traveled to Keene, N.H. Results were not immediately available.

Mount Abe wrestlers attended the Scott Legacy Tournament at Mt. Anthony in Bennington on Saturday, where they took sixth place overall. Isham (144 pounds), Atkins (157), Bradley LeVangie (132), Lincoln Painter (165) all placed second in their respective weight classes. Forest Turner placed fourth at 126 pounds.

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Sen. Peter Welch
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1510 Longworth House
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Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4115
BalintPress@mail.house.gov.

ADDISON COUNTY School Briefs

NEWTON, Mass. — Spencer Gebo, a Lasell University student from Vergennes, was named to the Dean's List for his academic performance during the fall 2025 semester.

To be named to the Dean's List, Lasell students must complete at least 12 credits as a full-time student and achieve a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Girls' hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)

scored an even 10. VUHS was scheduled to take on Stowe on Wednesday, and Mount Abe faced Milton; those games were played after the *Independent's* deadline.

After playing at Middlebury on Friday, Mount Abe will host Mississquoi on Tuesday at 7 p.m. Vergennes is off until Wednesday, when they play Richford.



TIGER WYATT KENNETT pins an opponent during the Hubie Wagner Invitational meet last week.

Independent photo/Steve James

Bristol police look into stolen vehicle report

BRISTOL — Bristol police on Dec. 19 received a report of a vehicle stolen from Main Street. Police reported that the vehicle was found abandoned in Hinesburg, and there are no suspects at this time.

Between Dec. 14 and 27 Bristol police completed 32 foot patrols, conducted three traffic stops and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School 12 times, at Bristol Elementary School 13 times and at local businesses 10 times.

Police also processed 13 fingerprint requests, conducted one welfare check and responded to one 911 hang-up call that was dialed by accident.

In other recent activity, Bristol police:

- On Dec. 15 received a report of a lost dog that went missing on Main Street. The animal was later located by its owner.
- On Dec. 16 spoke with Boy Scout Troop 543 about safety.
- On Dec. 16 responded to

Bristol

Police Log

a motor vehicle complaint on Frances Place.

- On Dec. 17 assisted someone on West Street.

- On Dec. 18 received a report of someone throwing trash on the side of Rockydale Road. An investigation is ongoing.

- On Dec. 18 Bristol's community resource specialist helped connect a community member with local resources.

- On Dec. 18 initiated a property watch for a police district resident.

- On Dec. 19 helped Bristol's Public Works Department with the removal of a tree across Plank Road.

- On Dec. 19 responded to an issue involving a juvenile on Main Street.

- On Dec. 19 received a report

of a vehicle operating erratically. Police stopped the vehicle on East Street and did not observe any signs of impairment.

- On Dec. 20 patrolled the town green area during Bristol's Lumen festival.

- On Dec. 21 received a late report of a theft from a motor vehicle on Main Street. An investigation is ongoing.

- On Dec. 22 Bristol's community resource specialist assisted families with getting presents for the holidays.

- On Dec. 24 responded to a citizen dispute on Mountain Street.

- On Dec. 24 responded to a motor vehicle complaint on West Street.

- On Dec. 27 received a report of an attempted phone scam on Basin Street.

- On Dec. 27 received a dog that was at large on Mountain Street. Police reported the dog's family was located, and warnings were issued.

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community calendar

jan 8 THURSDAY

“Regenerative Economics: Revolutionary Thinking for a World in Crisis” in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 8, 4:30 p.m., Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest, Room 103, 531 College St., Middlebury College. Join writer and economist John Fullerton and UVM Economics Department Chair Donna Ramirez-Harrington for a conversation exploring what regenerative economics means for the future of business, finance and global systems. For more information, contact Minna Brown at mbbrown@middlebury.edu.

Creative Approaches to Social Change panel in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 8, 5-7 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center 125, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. The Middlebury College Conflict Transformation Collaborative presents a panel discussion featuring theatre-maker and University of Montana Co-Lab for Civic Imagination founder Michael Rohd. Part of the 2025-26 Conflict and Social Change series. Registration requested at middlebury.edu/events.

“Home Organizing for Effective Cleaning” in Vergennes. Thursday, Jan. 8, 5:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Rachel Rose, a professional cleaner and life coach, will share practical strategies for organizing and designing your living space so tidying takes less time and feels more manageable.

True Crime Podcast Club in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 8, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, NBM Meeting Room, 30 Main St. Join fellow sleuths to discuss this month’s true crime podcast, “Noble Podcast.” For participants 18 and older. Listen to the podcast wherever you get your podcasts. Free.

Tech Night: Bring your own device in Salisbury. Thursday, Jan. 8, 6 p.m., Salisbury Congregational Church, downstairs in the library, 853 Maple St. Get help with phones, laptops and other devices at this drop-in tech help night. Louis Moore will answer questions about PCs and Android devices, while Alissa will assist with Mac-related issues. Free. More info at salisburypubliclibrary@gmail.com, 802-352-4196.

“The Ecology of Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases” in Salisbury. Thursday, Jan. 8, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Middlebury College biology professor David Allen discusses tick biology and the ecological and climate factors driving the rise of tick-borne disease risk in Vermont. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

jan 9 FRIDAY

Community Supper in Middlebury. Friday, Jan. 9, 5-6 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Regular Friday night community supper. Menu varies, meat and vegetarian offerings available.

jan 10 SATURDAY

Monthly Wildlife Walk in Middlebury. Saturday, Jan. 10, 8-10 a.m., Otter View Park parking area, intersection of Weybridge St. and Pulp Mill Bridge Road. 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. Birders of all ages and abilities welcome. For more information, call 802-388-6019.

“The Hills Are Alive With the Sound of Music” singalong in Ripton. Ripton Community Church, Route 125, 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, 3 p.m. Community singalong featuring old and new favorites. Bring an instrument if you’d like to play. Refreshments will be available. Free. For more information, call 802-388-6107.

jan 11 SUNDAY

Charity fundraising breakfast in Bristol. Sunday, Jan. 11, 7:30-10 a.m., Libanus Lodge #47, corner of North and Elm streets. The Masonic Lodge hosts its monthly charity breakfast, with all proceeds donated to a person or group in need in the Five Town Area. Menu includes homemade corned beef hash, eggs to order, bacon, sausage patties and links, home fries, pancakes and blueberry pancakes, French toast, Vermont maple syrup and Cabot butter, assorted juices, homemade apple bread pudding and coffee from Vermont Coffee Company. \$9 adults, \$5 children under 12.

Breakfast buffet in Vergennes. Sunday, Jan. 11, 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.

Afternoon Groove Dance Party in Middlebury. Sunday, Jan. 11, 1-2:30 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Community dance party open to all ages and abilities. Shake off the holidays and recharge while moving to the music of DJ Dougie. Families, friends and neighbors welcome. Free.

Adult volleyball in Lincoln. Sunday, Jan. 11, 4-6 p.m., Lincoln Community School multipurpose room, 795 East River Rd. Weekly indoor volleyball for adults. Teens welcome. All skill levels invited, with a supportive atmosphere and coaching for newer players. Fun and free. More info at 802-236-5813.

Mt. Norris Scout Reservation Summer Camp Job Fair in Vergennes. Sunday, Jan. 11, 6 p.m., St. Peter’s Hall, 85 South Maple St. The Mt. Norris Scout Reservation in Eden is recruiting staff for its 2026 summer camp season. Meet camp director Randy Gates and learn about positions for counselors-in-training (ages 15-16) and camp staff (ages 16-21). Job description sheets available. Hosted by Troop 539.

jan 12 MONDAY

Cribbage Night in Bristol. Monday, Jan. 12, 7-8:15 p.m., Libanus Lodge #47, corner of Elm and North streets. Semi-monthly cribbage games hosted by the Masons. Players of all skill levels are welcome.



Ecology and geology

THE ADDISON COUNTY landscape is beautiful and complex, and there are opportunities to learn about our shared environment this week. Head to the Salisbury Conservation Commission’s free lecture series on Thursday at 7 p.m. to learn about the ecology of ticks, join Otter Creek Audubon’s monthly wildlife walk at Otter View Park on Saturday at 8 a.m. to see winter birds, and discover ancient fossils from the Champlain Valley on Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury.

Independent file photo/Steve James

jan 13 TUESDAY

Blood drive in Bristol. Tuesday, Jan. 13, noon-5 p.m., American Legion Bristol Post 19, 56 Airport Drive. Community blood donation clinic hosted by the American Red Cross. Appointments are recommended but walk-ins are welcome as space allows. To schedule an appointment visit redcrossblood.org.

Fossils of the Champlain Valley in Middlebury. Tuesday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, NBM meeting room, 30 Main St. Middlebury College student Alexis Hartz presents a program on the Ordovician Period and the ancient environments of the Champlain Valley, exploring how paleontologists use rocks and fossils from Vermont and New York to understand past climates. Free.

jan 14 WEDNESDAY

After-school crafting in Lincoln. Wednesday, Jan. 14, 3-5 p.m., Lincoln Library, 222 West River Rd. After-school crafting session with supplies provided. Free.

Friends of the Union Meeting Hall programming committee meeting in Ferrisburgh. Wednesday, Jan. 14, 7-8 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall, 3279 Route 7. Monthly meeting of the Friends of the Union Meeting Hall Programming Committee to discuss and plan upcoming events. Open to all; participants do not need to be Ferrisburgh residents. More info at unionmeetinghall@gmail.com.

jan 15 THURSDAY

“Ice-Age Megafauna in Arctic Alaska: Extinction, Invasion, Survival” in Salisbury. Thursday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Pam Groves of the Institute of Arctic Biology explores how Ice Age animals responded to climate change and what led to widespread extinctions. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

Winter into Spring Musical Library Tour in Lincoln. Thursday, Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m., Lincoln Library, 222 West River Rd. Five Town Friends of the Arts, in partnership with the five-town libraries, presents the 2026 Winter into Spring Musical Library Tour. The opening concert will be held at the Lincoln Library and feature music by Richard Ruane and Beth Duquette.

jan 16 FRIDAY

Coffee and book talk with Matthew Dickerson in Middlebury. Friday, Jan. 16, 2-4 p.m., The Residence at Otter Creek, 350 Lodge Road. Author and Tolkien scholar Matthew Dickerson presents a talk on his work, followed by audience questions and a book signing. Light snacks and refreshments provided. Open to the public; RSVP to Shannon Sunderland at 802-483-4657 or ssunderland@residenceottercreek.com.

Community Supper in Middlebury. Friday, Jan. 16, 5-6 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Regular Friday night community supper. Menu varies, meat and vegetarian offerings available.

jan 17 SATURDAY

Community potluck supper in Shoreham. Saturday, Jan. 17, 4:30-7 p.m., Shoreham Congregational Church, Fellowship Hall, 28 School St. Meet new friends and neighbors at this community potluck supper open to all. Families especially welcome. Bring a main dish, soup, side, bread or dessert to share, along with your place setting and utensils. Beverages provided. Free. Snow date Sunday, Jan. 18, at 4:30 p.m.

Live music by Detour in Vergennes. Saturday, Jan. 17, 6-10 p.m., Vergennes American Legion Post 14, 100 Armory Ln. Live music by Detour featuring hits from the 1950s and 1960s and classic rock and roll. Come dance the night away and enjoy friends, music and community spirit. Admission by donation. Open to the public.

King Pede card party in Ferrisburgh. Saturday, Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center, 3279 Route 7. The Ferrisburgh Grange hosts a King Pede beginning with a sandwich supper, followed by an evening of cards and games.

jan 18 SUNDAY

All-you-can-eat pancake breakfast in Addison. Sunday, Jan. 18, 7-11 a.m., Addison Fire Station, junction of Routes 17 & 22A. All-you-can-eat pancake breakfast benefiting the Addison Volunteer Fire Department. Menu includes plain and blueberry pancakes, locally produced maple syrup, sausage, bacon, home fries, coffee, hot chocolate and orange juice. Funds will be used to purchase equipment. \$10 adults, \$7 kids under 12. More info at 802-759-2237.

Contra dance in Middlebury. Sunday, Jan. 18, 3-5 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Court. Free, all-ages contra dance. No experience or partner needed. Richard Hopkins will call and teach non-gendered dances, with music by a live band. Families welcome. Please park at MUHS.

Adult volleyball in Lincoln. Sunday, Jan. 18, 4-6 p.m., Lincoln Community School multipurpose room, 795 East River Rd. See Jan. 11 listing.

jan 19 MONDAY

Martin Luther King Jr. Day community gathering in Monkton. Monday, Jan. 19, 7 p.m., Monkton Town Hall Community Room, 92 Monkton Ridge Rd. The Monkton Museum and Historical Society hosts a community gathering honoring Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday. Share memories of MLK’s impact, watch a short video, and discuss how to put his call to service to work in our community. Light refreshments available. Free.

jan 20 TUESDAY

Rokeby Museum virtual book group. Tuesday, Jan. 20, 6-7 p.m., online. The 2026 Rokeby Museum Virtual Book Group discusses “Flee North: A Forgotten Hero and the Fight for Freedom in Slavery’s Borderland” by Scott Shane, which follows Thomas Smallwood, who bought his own freedom and helped lead others out of slavery. Free. More info at rokebymuseum.org.

100+ Women Who Care Addison County meeting in Addison County. Tuesday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m., Zoom. First-quarter meeting of the local 100+ Women organization. Members will vote on funding for one of three nonprofit nominees: Early Care & Learning Partnership, Opera Company of Middlebury or Migrant Justice. The Zoom link will be sent to members, and new members are welcome to join. More info at 100wacvt.org.

SVUUSD budget will reflect 2.65% increase

FAIR HAVEN — Recent headlines have suggested Vermont education taxes could rise by an average of 12% statewide if no legislative action is taken. While that may reflect a statewide projection, it is not what is happening in the Slate Valley communities of Castleton, Fair Haven, Benson, Orwell, Hubbardton, and West Haven, according to a Dec. 22 press release from Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) Superintendent Brooke Olsen-Farrell and board chair Julie Finnegan.

The SVUUSD delivers PreK-12 education to students in Orwell, Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton and West Haven.

“Slate Valley has consistently spent well below state spending benchmarks, and this year is no exception,” the pair said through the press release.

As of Dec. 22, the proposed SVUUSD fiscal year 2027 budget, scheduled for school board approval on Jan. 12, reflects a 2.65% increase in spending year to year — which is lower than inflation — and a 3.76% increase in education spending, according to Olsen-Farrell.

“This budget is consistent with

what was approved by Slate Valley voters last Town Meeting Day,” Olsen-Farrell and Finnegan said through their press release. “These numbers reflect years of deliberate, responsible work by the school board, administration, and staff to control costs while maintaining and improving student outcomes.”

These efforts are occurring in the context of a significant long-term enrollment decline. During the past 15 years, SVUUSD has lost approximately 25% of its student population, requiring ongoing adjustments to staffing, programming, and facilities.

In response, SVUUSD has reduced 32 positions, including three administrative roles; closed a school as part of consolidation further adjusted staffing; and is planning for an additional reduction of approximately 13 positions next year, eventually bringing the total of positions reduced to 45.

“These are difficult and often emotional decisions, but they demonstrate fiscal discipline and a commitment to responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars,” Olsen-Farrell and Finnegan stated.

“At the same time, it is important to be honest: there are challenges in our education system, both (See SVUUSD budget, Page 6B)

Local health administrator joins the Age Well board

COLCHESTER

— A face familiar to some Addison County residents is one of the three new members of the board of Age Well, a nonprofit dedicated to helping older adults live independently and safely at home.

Craig Stevens, district director for the Vermont Department of Health in Addison County, joined the board along with Jodi Frei, a licensed physical therapist and healthcare IT expert who has held leadership roles at OneCare Vermont

“Age Well is rooted in a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our older Vermont community; the organization believes in empowering older adults to live with dignity and independence,” Stevens said in a press release. “As a board member, I am dedicated to advocating for an organization that supports Vermont values, which emphasize self-reliance, practicality, strong community ties and a deep appreciation for independent thinking and resilience.”

— Craig Stevens

focusing on quality improvement, data systems and community health strategy; and Vijay Desai, co-founder of Technology for Tomorrow (T4T), a nonprofit offering affordable technology education.

Stevens has over 30 years of public health leadership. He is the founder of Stevens Consulting and has led statewide initiatives in dementia planning, healthy aging, and health information technology. On the Age Well board he will serve on the Finance and Development committees.

“Age Well is rooted in a deep

thinking and resilience.”

Age Well services include Meals on Wheels, care coordination, wellness programs, transportation and caregiver support. With these three new leaders on board, Age Well is poised to expand programs, strengthen partnerships, and meet the growing needs of Vermont’s aging population. Age Well CEO Jane Catton said in the release, adding that their collective expertise ensures that older Vermonters can continue to age with dignity, independence and connection.





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Shoreham church to host a potluck

SHOREHAM — The Shoreham Congregational Church will host a Community Potluck Supper on Saturday, Jan. 17, from 4:30 to 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This event is open to all, and families are especially welcome.

Bring a dish to share — a main dish, a soup, a side dish, a bread dish, or a dessert — along with your place settings and eating utensils. The church will provide beverages.

This is a great chance to meet

your other community neighbors and make new friends.

The snow date for this event is the next day, Sunday, Jan. 18, at the same time. Please note that Monday, Jan. 19, is a school holiday as well.

Indoor volleyball offered for all on Sundays

LINCOLN — Are you looking for something fun to do on Sundays? Adults and teens are welcome from 4 to 6 p.m. for indoor volleyball in the Lincoln Community School multipurpose room. All skill levels are welcome. Whether you're a beginner or a backyard pro, come hang out and play. It's fun and it's free.

The library will be offering an after-school crafting session on Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 3 to 5 p.m. Supplies will be provided.

5 Town Friends of the Arts, in partnership with the five town libraries, presents the 2026 Winter into Spring Musical Library Tour showcasing incredible musical talent right here in our own backyard. The music begins at the Lincoln Library on Thursday, Jan. 15, with Richard Ruane and Beth Duquette. All shows start at 7:30 p.m. and are free to the public. Come

Lincoln
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NEWS

experience the best local sounds in the heart of our community.

During January and February Paul Forlenza's photographs will be on display in the library's community room. As a photographer, Paul's passion is to create compelling images that evoke powerful feelings and spark cherished memories. Paul's intention is to blend art with storytelling to capture moments that remind viewers of a distinct place, time and feeling. Paul says this about his exhibition at the library: "The work I am displaying is a culmination of my 50+ years of photography. These are some of my favorite images and represent my strongest work."

His photographs have been exhibited at the New Britain Museum of American Art and the Smithsonian Museum of Air and Space. His images have also been published in the *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post* and *Vermont Life*.

SAVE THE DATE
It's almost February and that can only mean one thing...Hill Country Holiday is right around the corner. Mark your calendar for Feb. 6 through 8 for a weekend of the traditions we all know and love. There will be the parade, spaghetti dinner, variety show, sledding, jack jumping and plenty of winter fun. The schedule is being finalized, so look for a complete list of events, times and locations in the coming weeks.

Until next time ... Coming Together Is A Beginning; Keeping Together Is Progress; Working Together Is Success.

County 4-H Foundation to hold meeting on Jan. 12

MIDDLEBURY — The Annual Meeting of the Addison County 4-H Foundation will be held this coming Monday, Jan. 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the UVM Extension office on Pond Lane in Middlebury.

Vermont 4-H offers projects in areas including livestock, veterinary science, technology, engineering, food and nutrition, gardening, sewing, arts and crafts, photography, shooting sports, archery, and more. Former members of local 4-H clubs

say that through 4-H they have learned patience, perseverance and teamwork. According to the UVM Extension, Addison County clubs include: Addison Flaming Manes and Green Mountain Grazers in Addison; Better Days 4-H Club and Mountain View 4-H in Bridport; Cedar Lake 4-H Shooting Sports and Fiber Flock in Bristol; Cornwall Musketeers, Maple Valley Dairy 4-H Club and Vermont Homeschoolers 4-H Club in Middlebury; Critter Creek 4-H

Club and Salisbury Swamp Riders in Salisbury; Kellogg Bay 4-H Club in Ferrisburgh; Leicester Otters in Leicester; Mt. Independence in Orwell; New Haven Dairy and New Haven Twilight Tails in New Haven; Primecuts, Shoreham Early Birds and Silver Hooves in Shoreham; Weybridge Willing Workers in Weybridge; and Whiting Cloverleaves in Whiting.

Contact Martha Seifert at 802-656-7547 or email to martha.seifert@uvm.edu.



ON A COLD December morning, members of the Middlebury Lions Club assemble 27 holiday food baskets before distributing them to needy families around the county.

Lions fill holiday bellies with food baskets

MIDDLEBURY — On the morning of Saturday, Dec. 20, a handful of Middlebury Lions Club members set out to deliver holiday Food Baskets around Addison County, embracing the 20-degree air and fleeting sunshine.

These baskets provide food assistance to families in-need during the holiday season — a season that can be of particular financial strain. Included in each Food Basket was a frozen turkey, various canned food,

stuffing, potatoes, rolls, pumpkin pie and a half-gallon Monument Farms Milk.

The Food Basket campaign is not new for the Middlebury Lions, who every year purchase food items, out of their own members' pockets, to make as many as 30 baskets, in an effort to give the gift of a full holiday meal "with all the fixings." This year the Lions procured and delivered 27 Food Baskets, and look forward to this effort next December.

SVUUSD budget

(Continued from Page 5B)
locally and statewide, that require attention," they continued. "Acknowledging those challenges should not overshadow what is working. Even while tightening budgets, Slate Valley students are making academic gains,

with improvements in literacy and mathematics, and in some grade levels outperforming other Rutland County districts and state averages."

The duo is encouraging community members to "look beyond the headlines, attend school

board and committee meetings, review budget materials, and ask questions. The data that guide our decisions are public and accessible. Educational progress and fiscal responsibility are happening side by side in Slate Valley."

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Otter Valley Union High School

Ethan Dukette

Otter Valley Union High School is happy to introduce its Student of the Week: Ethan Dukette. Ethan lives in Leicester with his mom, dad, brother and sister, along with one dog and one cat.

Ethan was in the Moosalamoo Outdoor Education program for two years as a freshman and a sophomore. He gained considerable skills and knowledge about the environment, Vermont history, and wilderness survival.

As a junior, he attended Stafford Technical Center's Automotive Technology Program.

In addition to his academics, Ethan played on the Otter Valley Football team, this past fall in the running back and defensive end position. This spring he plans to return to the lacrosse team. Ethan was also busy in October and November working on the set crew for the Otter Valley musical production of "Annie."

Outside of school, he works at Hannaford and enjoys spending his free time with loved ones and going four-wheeling. And he has an affinity for a certain classic hot rod.

At school, Ethan's favorite part of the day is hanging out with his buddies. When asked what advice he would give to other students, he keeps it simple: Have fun.

After graduation, Ethan plans to go directly into the workforce.

Everyone at Otter Valley Union High School wishes Ethan all the best in his future endeavors!



Ethan Dukette
OVUHS

Mount Abraham Union High School

Paige Guilbeault

Mt. Abraham Union High School is proud to recognize Paige Guilbeault as our Student of the Week. Paige lives in Bristol with her mom, dad, and three younger siblings.

Paige has earned Highest Academic Honors every semester throughout her high school career. Her favorite subject is math, particularly Pre-Calculus. Paige appreciates the opportunities Mt. Abe offers, sharing that she enjoys being able "to make connections and try new things through different extracurriculars and classes." When asked about her favorite teacher, Paige noted that Mr. Foster stands out because "he allows me to ask questions that help me understand the material better and is always a friendly face in the hallways."

Along with her strong academic achievements, Paige is highly involved in the Mt. Abe community and beyond. She is the founder and captain of the volleyball team, serving in that role for all three years. Paige is also a Bristol Fire Department Cadet, Vice President of the Music Department, a mentor, and a Vermont Young Playwrights winner. In addition, she has attended the Hugh O'Brian Youth (HOBY) Leadership Seminar, the Vermont State Athletic Directors Association (VSADA) Student Leadership Conference, and Green Mountain Girls' State.

Outside of school, Paige works during the summer at Lake Iroquois, where she helps with invasive species protection. In her free time, she enjoys playing volleyball and spending time with friends and family.

Reflecting on her time at Mt. Abe, Paige shared, "Being in a more rural school, it can sometimes feel like there are fewer opportunities available. My advice is to make your own opportunities. If you face an obstacle, especially when it's something you're passionate about, push through, because your determination can open doors for other people. The best thing I did in high school was make a team that brought people together and taught them about a sport I love."

Looking ahead, Paige plans to attend a four-year university, majoring in engineering and minoring in math, while continuing to play volleyball at the club or Division III level. After college, she hopes to attend law school. We are grateful for Paige's dedication to the Mt. Abraham community and wish her all the best!



Paige Guilbeault
MAUHS

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Students of the Week are chosen by school teachers and administration.

Congratulations, Ethan and Paige!

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- Storm Damage Clean up
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YOU DON'T NEED A BIG BUDGET TO MAKE A BIG IMPACT

We know what it's like to wear a lot of hats. You're running your business, serving customers, answering the phone, doing the books...
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We offer flexible pricing and local support, so you can grow at your own pace, no tech experience needed. We're real people, right here in Addison County, and we're ready to help you take the next step.

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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

Public Meetings

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 ver-

Public Meetings

montalanonateen.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

Public Meetings

an Al-Anon member will call you back.

For Rent

Public Meetings

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in person meetings are available. For a list of local virtual meetings visit <http://bit.ly/district9aa>. For more information visit <https://aavt.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.

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

Public Meetings

inclusion without judgment or exception. If you think we can help, please join us on Thursdays at 6pm by contacting [Vergennes-freethinkers@gmail.com](mailto:freethinkers@gmail.com) for Zoom and in-person meeting information.

Public Meetings

VERMONT SUPPORT LINE Are you struggling with a challenging situation? Do you have feelings of sadness, loneliness, isolation, anger, or depression? You don't have to face it alone. Talk with a caring person who under-

Public Meetings

stands what you're going through today by calling or texting the free and confidential Pathways Vermont Support Line available 24/7 at (833) VT - TALKS.

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

FOR RENT

RELAX AT LAKE DUNMORE

An easy 20-minute drive to Middlebury, 15 minutes to Brandon.



BEAUTIFUL 4-SEASON COTTAGE ON LAKE DUNMORE

3 bedrooms (5 beds) 2 baths 3-night minimum

Relax in this lovely cottage with modern upgrades and a bright, open space with a large deck and screened porch. The large open kitchen and living room/dining room makes this a perfect spot to gather with friends and family. Lake access with a kayak launch and equipped with two 2-person kayaks just steps away, plus miles of hiking and biking trails just across the lake at Moosalamoo National Recreation Area.



SCAN TO VIEW THE LISTING.



STUNNING LAKEFRONT 4-SEASON CAPE WITH DOCK

3 bedrooms (5 beds) 2 baths 3-night minimum

Beautifully renovated in 2025, this bright lakefront cottage has sunny gardens, a private dock and a fire pit by the lake. Enjoy an open floorplan with large windows overlooking the lake, a fieldstone fireplace with gas insert, and new outdoor deck at the house. The house is perched in a private and sunny opening over the lake; an outdoor staircase leads down to the lake and lower patio with firepit seating and private dock.



SCAN TO VIEW THE LISTING.

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Highway Department Road Crew Member

The Town of Monkton is seeking qualified applicants to join the Highway Department road crew. This position requires experience in highway maintenance and repair; mechanical ability, record keeping and communication skills. The position is full-time, 40 hours per week, requiring a flexible schedule which may include nights, weekends and holidays, as well as overtime.

CDL is preferred, must pass a drug test, and be dependable and willing to be on call during winter hours.

Hourly rate \$25 - \$30.

For more information or to apply, please attach a letter of interest outlining your experience and qualifications for the position with three references to the Monkton Selectboard (selectboard@monktonvt.com), the Town Administrator (townadministrator@monktonvt.com), and Road Foreman (highway@monktonvt.com).

The Town of Monkton will be considering applicants until the position is filled. Full job description is available at Town Hall or online at Monktonvt.com.

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.

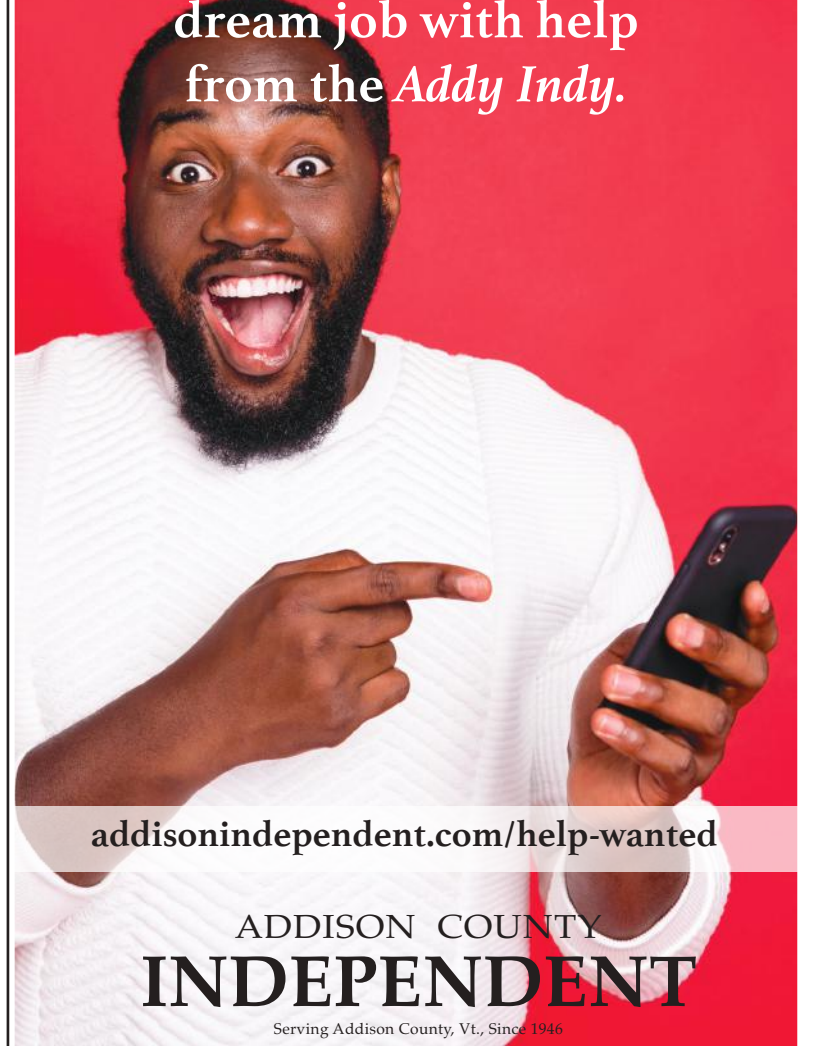
Scan the QR code below to text your contact info and experience or email us at admin@smithmccain.com.



Come build with us!



In print or online, find your dream job with help from the Addy Indy.



addisonindependent.com/help-wanted

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Serving Addison County, Vt., Since 1946

New Year's Resolution: Become an RSVP Volunteer!

RSVP of Addison County connects volunteers age 55 and up with organizations that need their support.

RSVP provides a wide range of opportunities from delivering healthy meals to neighbors, helping community members with transportation, to reading to a companion, or providing support to children of all ages. RSVP will help you find an opportunity to fit with your causes, interests and schedule.

Learn how you can make a difference!

To learn more, please visit www.volunteersinvt.org or contact us at 802-468-7056



AmeriCorps Seniors

Addison Independent CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM

ADDISON INDEPENDENT
58 Maple Street, Middlebury, VT 05753
802-388-4944
addisonindependent.com • email: classifed@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!

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Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

• 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 |

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of runs: _____
Spotlight Charge: \$ _____
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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.

RATES

DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

- 25¢ per word • minimum \$2.50 per ad
- 50¢ internet listing per issue • minimum 2 insertions

Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

Services

BROWN'S CONSTRUCTION renovations, interior/exterior painting, dry-wall, 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!

FREE SCHWINN ELLIPTICAL Good working condition. 802-989-5773, text or leave a message

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

Help Wanted

MANUFACTURING TECHNICIAN (FILLING) Join the Tata Harper Filling Department as a Manufacturing Technician! This hands-on position is responsible for setting up and operating filling equipment, ensuring products are filled into primary components accurately and efficiently, and maintaining compliance with all Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Pay Rate: \$19/hour. Key Responsibilities: Operate and maintain filling machinery, monitor product flow, weights, and quality, and complete documentation accurately. Follow safety procedures, perform equipment cleaning and sanitization, and maintain a clean, organized work area. Support team members and communicate any production or quality issues promptly. Qualifications: Manufacturing experience preferred, but not required; Strong attention to detail and ability to follow directions; Team-oriented and adaptable in a fast paced environment; No sensitivities to fragrances or aromas; Able to lift up to 50 lbs and stand for extended periods. We offer a supportive, collaborative environment with opportunities to learn and grow. Apply today! Send your resume to tna_hr@ap.tataharper.com

Free

MANUFACTURING TECHNICIAN (PACKAGING) Join the Tata Harper Packaging Department as a Manufacturing Technician! This hands-on role is responsible for setting up and operating packaging equipment, assembling products, and ensuring all work meets quality, safety, and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards. Pay Rate: \$19/hour. Key Responsibilities: Operate and maintain packaging machinery, complete required documentation, inspect lot codes and components, and keep a clean, organized work area. Support production flow and assist team members as needed. Qualifications: Prior manufacturing experience preferred, but not required; Strong attention to detail and ability to follow directions; Team-oriented with good communication skills; Able to stand, bend, and lift throughout the shift; No sensitivities to fragrances or aromas. We offer a supportive, safety-focused environment with opportunities to learn and grow. Apply today! Send your resume to tna_hr@ap.tataharper.com

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 ellenrenrik@gmail.com

For Rent

2-BEDROOM; East Middlebury. No Pets, No Smoking. \$1300 plus utilities. Semi-furnished. First & last security deposit. 802-771-4686.

For Rent

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

For Rent

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 202-350-0001.

For Rent

BRANDON ESTATE 5 Bedrooms 3 bath \$4800 Furnished See Craigslis at <https://vermont.craigslis.org/apa/d/forest-dale-bedroom-updated-stone-home/7889936398.htm> or call 802 377 9394

For Rent

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE - 2000 sq ft to 7000 sq ft - Tall ceilings loading docks, plenty of parking. Middlebury - 802-558-6092

For Rent

LAKE DUNMORE 2-bedroom lakefront winterized cottages available for short-term rental. 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

For Rent

MIDDLEBURY ONE BED ROOM 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.

For Rent

VERGENNES VALLEY VIEW APARTMENTS is currently taking waitlist applications. Occupants must be 62+ years of age. No smoking/No pets. Income limits apply - Rent based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity. 802-247-0166 TTY: 800-253-0191 www.SummitPMG.com.

For Rent

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 802-247-0166 TTY: 800-253-0191. www.SummitPMG.com.

For Rent

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

For Rent

Att. Farmers 1ST CUT, SMALL square \$3.25. 2nd cut small square, \$4.25. 802-377-5455.

For Rent

CORN SILAGE for sale Excellent quality and large quantity available. 518-307-3941

For Rent

HAY First and second cut 4x4 round bales, stored \$25 and up. 518-321-2886

MARKET REPORT

ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES
RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT

BEEF	\$
Iroquois	8.80
Nop B	9.60
Blue S	1.50
J. Allen	2.50
Sunder	4.00
Vorse	4.00
P. Liv	2.00
CALV	\$
Barne	0.00
Elysia	0.50
White	4.00
J. Will	5.00
Sunde	7.60
Wilcor	9.00

Total Beef - 155 Total Calves - 212

We value our faithful customers.
Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs.
call 1-802-388-2661



CONSIGNMENTS WANTED

WINTER FIREARMS & SPORTING GOODS ONLINE AUCTIONS

ONLINE AUCTIONS: Tues. & Wed., Feb. 24-25 @ 10AM
PREVIEW DATE: Monday, February 23 from 11AM - 1PM
ITEMS LOCATED: 131 Dorset Lane, Williston, VT



DEADLINE TO CONSIGN IS FRIDAY, JAN. 23, 2026.
To Consign, Email/Call us at: ffl@thcauction.com | 802-888-4662

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PUBLIC NOTICE?

Email us at: legals@addisonindependent.com

STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT

DOCKET NO.: 25-PR-06733
IN RE ESTATE OF: STANFORD K. PRITCHARD

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

Dated: 12/22/25
Marjorie Robbins
% Lesley B. Deppman, Esq.
56 Court Street, Middlebury, VT 05753
802-388-6337
ldeppman@midlaw.com

Publication: Addison Independent
Publication Date: 1/8/26
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division
Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD

Tuesday, January 13, 2025, 7:45pm
Town Offices, Large Conference Room
77 Main Street
Middlebury, Vermont 05753

(Video conference information provided below)
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84274370945>
Phone one-tap: +13052241968, 84274370945# US
Webinar ID: 842 7437 0945

PUBLIC HEARING & INFORMATION MEETING on PRELIMINARY PROPOSED TOWN GENERAL FUND BUDGET

(Includes capital project funds) for FY2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027)

Your comments, suggestions and input are important and appreciated. If you can't make the meeting on the 13th, we invite you to submit your input via e-mail, townmanager@townofmiddlebury.org, or mail, 77 Main Street, Middlebury, Vermont 05753.

Copies of the proposed budget may be obtained from the Town's website, <https://www.townofmiddlebury.org/>, at the Town Manager's office, 77 Main Street, or by calling 802-388-8100.

If you need special accommodation to attend this meeting, please contact the Town Manager's Office as early as possible.

WARNING TOWN OF CORNWALL CAPITAL PLAN & BUDGET INFORMATIONAL MEETING

The Select Board of the Town of Cornwall will hold an informational meeting regarding the proposed Capital Budget. The informational meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom video conference and in person at the Cornwall Town Hall. Copies of the Capital Plan and Budget are available at the Town Office during regular hours. For further information, please call Sue Johnson, Committee Chair, at 802-462-2324 or email at ssquared628@gmail.com.

Town of Cornwall is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Topic: Selectboard and Capital Public Hearing
Time: Jan 20, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3049483370?pwd=OkZrSbRa4Hv5lws1ZQR0bWVlDdCQlb.1&omn=83136081988>
Meeting ID: 304 948 3370
Passcode: 1975

Public Notices Index

Public Notices for the following can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 10B and 11B.

Addison Central School District (1)	Evermorth (1)
Addison County Courthouse (1)	Middlebury (2)
Bristol (1)	Orwell (1)
Cornwall (1)	State of Vermont (1)
	VELCO (1)
	Vergennes (1)

ACT 250 NOTICE MINOR APPLICATION 9A0043-2

10 V.S.A. §§ 6000 - 6111

The City of Vergennes has filed application #9A0043-2, deemed complete on December 19, 2025, for a project generally described as upgrades and improvements to the existing Vergennes Wastewater Treatment Facility, as follows: (1) construction of a new Influent Building; (2) new Sequencing Batch Reactors (SBRs); (3) modifications to the existing Control Building and Blower Building; (4) demolition of the existing Headworks Building and existing solar panel infrastructure; (5) re-lining of Lagoon 1; and (6) decommissioning and filling of Lagoon 2. Various site improvements including stormwater infrastructure upgrades, site piping modifications, site grading, and full-depth pavement reconstruction are also proposed. The project is located at 36 Canal Street in Vergennes, Vermont. The application may be viewed on the Land Use Review Board's Act 250 Database (<https://anrweb.vt.gov/ANR/Act250/default.aspx>) by entering project number "9A0043-2."

No hearing will be held, and a permit may be issued unless, on or before January 28, 2026, a party notifies the District 9 Commission in writing of an issue requiring a hearing, or the Commission sets the matter for a hearing on its own motion. Any person as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1) may request a hearing. Any hearing request must be in writing, must state the criteria or sub-criteria at issue, why a hearing is required, and what additional evidence will be presented at the hearing. Any hearing request by an adjoining property owner or other person eligible for party status under 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1) (E) must include a petition for party status under the Act 250 Rules. To request party status and a hearing, fill out the Party Status Petition Form on the Board's website: <https://act250.vermont.gov/documents/party-status-petition-form>, and email it to the District 9 Office at: Act250.Essex@vermont.gov. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law may not be prepared unless the Commission holds a public hearing.

For more information contact the District Coordinator listed below.

Josh Donabedian
District 9 Coordinator
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Joshua.Donabedian@vermont.gov

ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS PERIODIC NOTICE

The Federal Environment Protection Agency requires that the public, persons employed in, and parents of students attending any school building containing asbestos of a friable (possible crumbling) nature must be notified of its presence and location. Further, the agency requires that inspections be made and that maintenance be performed to eliminate risk.

Inspections were made of all schools in the Addison Central School District in 1979 by the Vermont Department of Health. In those inspections, asbestos was found in the boiler rooms and pipe lagging of the following schools: Bridport, Cornwall, Mary Hogan, Middlebury Union High School, and Weybridge. Asbestos is also found in the floor tiles of the School District, but it is encapsulated in the tile. It presents no hazard unless it is disturbed and crumbles. No risk to inhabitants of the building was indicated as long as adequate maintenance is performed.

New cycles of inspections will be performed periodically. An Asbestos Management Plan for each school has been developed by the State and a copy is available for inspection in each school.

Eric Warren, Designated Person - Asbestos Addison Central School District

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).

Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) Amendments.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 25P047

AGENCY: Department of Public Service
CONCISE SUMMARY: The Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) regulate the design and construction of residential buildings to require adequate thermal insulation, low air leakage, effective and efficient mechanical, ventilation, electrical, service water-heating and illumination systems and equipment to enable effective use of energy in residential buildings. This is an update to the RBES to allow the 2020 Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards as an option for the purposes of complying with Vermont's residential building energy code. This update allows adherence to the requirements in either the 2020 RBES or 2024 RBES for compliance purposes with no substantive changes to the 2020 RBES or 2024 RBES as originally adopted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Brittny Wilson, Department of Public Service 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620 Tel: 802-828-2811 E-mail: brittny.wilson@vermont.gov URL: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov>

FOR COPIES: Ben Civiletti, Department of Public Service 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620 Tel: 802-622-4388 E-mail: benjamin.civiletti@vermont.gov

Vermont Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBES) Amendments.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 25P048

AGENCY: Department of Public Service
CONCISE SUMMARY: The Vermont Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBES) regulate the design of building envelopes for adequate thermal resistance and low air leakage and the design and selection of mechanical, ventilation, electrical, service water- heating and illumination systems and equipment in commercial building construction. This is an update to the CBES to allow the 2020 Vermont Commercial Building Energy Standards as an option for the purposes of complying with Vermont's commercial building energy code. This update allows adherence to the requirements in either the 2020 CBES or 2024 CBES for compliance purposes with no substantive changes to the 2020 CBES or 2024 CBES as originally adopted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Brittny Wilson, Department of Public Service 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620 Tel: 802-828-2811 E-mail: brittny.wilson@vermont.gov URL: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov>

FOR COPIES: Ben Civiletti, Department of Public Service 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620 Tel: 802-622-4388 E-mail: benjamin.civiletti@vermont.gov

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A spot of jolly red

IN HONOR OF last month's Christmas bird count, sponsored by the Otter Creek Audubon Society, Weybridge resident Susan Humphrey provided this list of birds spotted from inside the house: chickadees, downy woodpeckers, blue jays, goldfinches, house finches, Carolina wren, titmice, juncos, male red-bellied woodpeckers, white-breasted nuthatches, a dove and, of course, cardinals! We're sure that the beautiful plumage of this cardinal put everyone in a Christmas mood. Photo by Susan Humphrey

Man cited for abuse of vulnerable adult

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police cited Timothy D. Tracy II, 20, of Middlebury for violating a vulnerable adult protection order, resisting arrest and assault on a police officer, following an investigation at a Jackson Lane home on Jan. 2.

Middlebury Police Log

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Arranged tows for several vehicles in violation of the overnight winter parking ban downtown on Dec. 29.
- Investigated the reported theft of a shotgun from a local resident on Dec. 29.
- Assisted multiple drivers whose vehicles had skidded off Route 125 and Upper Plains Road in East Middlebury on Dec. 29.
- Responded to a report of a plow truck flipped on its side on Cady Road on Dec. 29.
- Received a report of downed power lines on Maple Street on Dec. 29.
- Performed a good deed for a disoriented raptor in Leicester during the early morning of Dec. 29. An officer found an owl in distress on Route 7 in Leicester near Fern Lake Road. The officer assisted the owl out of the roadway, after which it regained its composure and flew to a nearby tree line.
- Assisted a local resident who on Dec. 30 reported receiving harassing messages.
- Investigated a crash, without injuries, on Mill Street on Dec. 30.
- Assisted a person who had expressed thoughts of self-harm on Dec. 31.
- Assisted Middlebury Regional EMS on a medical call in the High Street area on Dec. 31.
- Issued a no-trespass order on Dec. 31 to a woman who wasn't wanted at Hannaford supermarket.
- Issued a "notice to vacate" order to a woman who had pitched a tent under the Cross Street Bridge off Bakery Lane on Dec. 31.
- Seized suspected illegal drugs from a vehicle that police had stopped on Court Street on Dec. 31.

Middlebury police K-9 Guinness alerted on the vehicle, which prompted the search and seizure, according to police, who at press time hadn't announced any arrests in connection with the case.

- Cited Fletcher Johnson, 31, of Middlebury for violating his conditions of release, following a traffic stop on Court Street Extension on Dec. 31.

- Checked the welfare of a Perkins Lane resident on Jan. 1.
- Assisted Vermont State Police at a crash scene at the intersection of Cobble Road and Route 116 in Bristol during the morning of Jan. 1.
- Checked on a tent that someone had set up under the Cross Street Bridge on Jan. 1.
- Responded to a reported dispute between some people in the Case Street area on Jan. 2. Police said the case remains under investigation.
- On Jan. 2, spoke with a local woman who alleged her lighter had been stolen.
- Assisted Vermont State Police with a drunk driving stop at the intersection of Court Street and Mary Hogan Drive at around 11:45 p.m. on Jan. 3.
- Investigated a report of someone allegedly stealing some bales of hay from a South Munger Street location on Jan. 3.
- Responded to a report of an intoxicated man allegedly walking in and out of Route 7 South at around 5:15 p.m. on Jan. 4. Police said the man was under the influence, reported having a place to stay for the night and declined assistance.

- Mediated a dispute between a recently separated couple in the North Pleasant Street area on Jan. 4.

Public Notices can be found in this **ADDISON INDEPENDENT** on **Pages 10B and 11B.**

HEARING NOTICE TOWN OF ORWELL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

The Orwell Development Review Board will meet in person on Wednesday, January 21st, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Orwell Town Clerk's Office located at 436 Main Street, Orwell, VT.

By Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88129886127> or phone 1-646-558-8656 Use meeting ID: #881 2988 6127 to conduct the following business:

1. Permit #8-44-25: David Martin for a 2-lot subdivision located at 16 Horton Road, Orwell, VT.
2. Permit #9-49-25: Vincent Aveta for a Waiver for a Car Port located at 505 Singing Cedars Road, Orwell, VT.
3. Permit #9-53-25: Matthew Bushee & Carol Shaw for a Final 2 lot Subdivision located on Fisher Road, Orwell, VT.
4. Permit #9-54-25: Horace Carpenter for a Waiver for lot frontage and side setbacks located at 283 North Orwell Road, Orwell, VT.

Information pertaining to this matter may be viewed M, T, Th & F 9:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:30 at the Orwell Town Clerk's Office located at 436 Main Street, Orwell, VT. Daniel Redondo, Chair Orwell Development Review Board

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.

RFP for Design Build Services - Willow Apartments, Vergennes

Addison Housing Works and Evernorth are requesting design-build services for the renovation of a 16-unit property across 3 buildings for multifamily accommodation, located on one site in Vergennes, Vermont. Interested firms must have comparable experience with renovation and construction of multi-family housing and a bonding capacity of at least \$2,500,000. For additional information contact Jack Turvey at Evernorth at jturvey@evernorthus.org or 802- 330-1717. Completed qualifications are due by Friday, January 16th, 2026, at 12pm. Davis Bacon residential wage rates may apply. Minority-owned, women-owned, locally-owned and Section 3 businesses are strongly encouraged to respond.

TOWN OF BRISTOL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Bristol Development Review Board will hold the following hearings on January 27th, 2026, beginning at 7:00 P.M. The hearings will be held in person at the Town Office, located at 1 South Street. The hearings will also be available via Zoom and login information is below.

- Permit #25-406: Michael Lyons of Town Highway #28 (Parcel #120104) is requesting Final Plat Review for a 2-lot subdivision subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations Article IX, SECTION 930.
- Permit #25-404: Randy Russell of North 116 Road (Parcel #070101) is requesting Preliminary Plat Review for a 6-lot subdivision Unified Development Regulations Article IX, SECTION 930.

Copies of the zoning permit applications and decisions are available for review at the Bristol Zoning Office during regular business hours.

Remote Access: via Zoom <https://zoom.us>
• Meeting ID: 857 8676 1083 • Passcode: 805823
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87551027651?pwd=mJnqMmaORm2lufotvEE-BidxObjJLJl.1> Phone In: +1 646 931 3860
Phone In: +1 646 931 3860

Arrest warrants, drunk driving keep police busy

Vt. State Police Log

ADDISON COUNTY — A Vermont State Police officer saw a motor vehicle violation on Court Street near Mary Hogan Drive in Middlebury at 15 minutes before midnight on Jan. 3. The trooper said driver Andre H. Desautels, 67, of Bridport showed signs that he was impaired.

The trooper took Desautels to the Middlebury Police Department for processing and cited him for driving under the influence. He is scheduled to answer the charge in court on Jan. 12.

In unrelated recent activity, state police arrested three people on arrest warrants in separate incidents.

The first case also involved a second charge. On Dec. 30 police received a complaint that someone was trespassing at the garage of a Monkton home. Troopers looked into it and said they determined that Codey Paquin, 33, of Monkton had entered the garage after being served a legal notice that doing so would be considered trespassing. Also, police said, Paquin had two active arrest warrants in Vermont.

Troopers located Paquin, arrested him and cited him for unlawful trespass and took him to the Addison Superior Court, Criminal Division, to answer

for the arrest warrant. Troopers were assisted by deputies from the Addison County Sheriff's Department.

The second arrest on a warrant happened that same day, Dec. 30, when at a little after 2 p.m. troopers responded to a disturbance at a South Bingham Street home in Cornwall. Police found Darrell Gevry, 59, of Cornwall, whom they found had two active warrants for his arrest. Troopers took Gevry to Addison County Superior Court for arraignment, and then Gevry was jailed at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility for lack of \$500 bail.

The third incident took place

on Jan. 2 at around noon when troopers located Jamie Prim, 55, of Middlebury at a residence in Middlebury. They arrested Prim on an active warrant, took Prim directly to Addison County Superior Court for arraignment. Prim was released with conditions.

The only other case that locally stationed state police reported on was a one-car crash on New Year's Day. At around a quarter to 11 a.m. on Jan. 1, troopers were dispatched to Route 116 in Bristol. Police said Kierra Fay, 25, of Bristol was driving a 2016 Chevy Trax southbound on the highway when she left the roadway and struck a tree. Fay reported possible minor injuries.

Troopers were assisted on scene by the Bristol Fire Department, Bristol Rescue and Middlebury police.



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM 116 – LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM TOWN OFFICES – 77 MAIN STREET TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026 - 7:00 P.M.

Also available via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84274370945>
By Phone: +1 (305) 224-1968 (not toll-free)
Webinar ID: 842 7437 0945

For those wishing to watch but not participate: Selectboard meetings are livestreamed to MCTV's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MCTVVT> and also broadcast live on Comcast Channel 1071

AGENDA

- | | |
|------|--|
| 7:00 | 1. Call to Order
2. *Approval of Agenda
3. *Approval of Consent Agenda
3a. *Approval of the Minutes of the December 16, 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. *Policy Review Committee - Update
3f. Consent Agenda Placeholder
3g. **Town Manager's Report |
| 7:05 | 4. **Citizen Comments (opportunity to raise/address issues not otherwise included in this agenda) |
| 7:10 | 5. **Isley Public Library - Renovation & Expansion Project - Update |
| 7:20 | 6. *Road Naming (Private Road) |
| 7:30 | 7. Department of Planning & Zoning - Updates
7a. **Middlebury Town Plan - Staff Update
7b. *Letter of Support - Addison County Regional Planning - Draft County Plan |
| 7:45 | 8. **Public Hearing - Town FY2027 General Fund Budget |
| 7:55 | 9. **FY2027 Town Budget - Continued Review of Draft Budget |
| 8:25 | 10. Approval of Bond Documents for Town Meeting
10a. *Approval of Declarations of Intent to Bond
10b. *Approval of Resolutions of Necessity to Bond for Finance Construction |
| 8:35 | 11. **Review Draft 2027 Town Warning
12. Agenda Placeholder |
| 8:45 | 13. **Board Member Concerns |
| 8:50 | 14. **Executive Session - Attorney Analysis |
| 9:00 | 15. *Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session |
| 9:05 | 16. *Adjourn |
- *Possible Decision **Discussion

Important Annual Notice Regarding Herbicide Use in the Maintenance of Electric Utility Rights-of-Way

The Vermont Public Utility Commission has set forth rules under PUC Rule 3.600 pertaining to the use of herbicides in the maintenance of electric utility rights-of-way (ROW). Each spring, herbicide applications may begin on or after April 1st. These rules afford you important rights and duties. Vermont electric utilities maintain electric line rights-of-way with several methods, including the selective use of herbicides on trees and brush. They also encourage low-growing shrubs and trees which will crowd tall-growing species and, thus, minimize the use of herbicides. Methods of herbicide applications may include stump, stem injection, basal, soil, and foliar. **Only electric utility rights-of-way that have tall-growing tree species with the potential of threatening the electric utility system are treated.**

If you reside on or own property in Vermont within 1000' of an electric utility right-of-way:

1. **Sign up to receive written notification** from your local electric utility of plans to apply herbicide on any ROW within 1000' of your property or the property where you reside. Check nearby poles for tags identifying the utility and/or pole number, complete the form below and submit it to your local electric utility by mail before February 15th, 2026 to be added to the notification list. If determined to be qualified, you will receive notification from the utility at least 30 days prior to scheduled herbicide application.
2. **You are responsible to make your local electric utility aware** of the location of any potentially affected water supply, and of any other environmentally sensitive area where herbicide application ought to be avoided.
3. **Watch and listen for public service announcements** in newspapers and radio ads noting upcoming herbicide applications.
4. **Check with your local electric utility** regarding the vegetation management cycle near your particular line.
5. **You have the right** to request, in writing, that the utility refrain from applying herbicides in the process of clearing the right-of-way, and the utility may offer alternatives such as herbicide stump treatment or herbicide stem injections.
6. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever at no cost to you if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **distribution lines**, bringing electric service directly to individual customers.
7. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever by paying a \$30 administration fee if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **transmission lines** or **sub-transmission lines**, bringing electricity to or between substations.

For more details, or to ask additional questions, please contact your local electric utility, or one of the following:

(leave blank for local electric co. mailing address and phone)	Agency of Agriculture Public Health & Ag. Resource Mgmt 116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602 1-802-828-2431	Department of Public Service Consumer Affairs & Public Information 112 State St., Montpelier, VT 05620 1-800-622-4496
--	---	--

Based on the information above, if you believe you qualify to be notified in advance of pending herbicide applications in the rights-of-way, mail the request below to your local electric company before February 15th, 2026.

Resident/Property Owner Request to be Added to Herbicide Treatment Notification Mailing List			
Name	Town/City of Affected Property		
Street Address	Home Phone Number		
Town	Work Phone Number		
State	Zip Code	O.K. to use work number? (circle one)	Yes No
Electric Utility Account Number	Best time to contact you		
Affected Property: Year-Round Residence Summer Residence Commercial Property Water Supply Organic Farm Land Other (Circle all that apply)			
Line/Pole Identification: Utility Initials		Pole Numbers	
Please fill out this request completely to help us determine if you qualify for herbicide treatment notification. MAIL THIS REQUEST TO YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC UTILITY AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE BEFORE FEBRUARY 15 TH , 2026			

Vergennes Police Log

VERGENNES — On Jan. 2 Vergennes police were called to investigate a possible sex offense in the city. Authorities were still looking into it early this week.

Separately, on Jan. 1 at around 8:47 p.m., a Vergennes officer clocked a vehicle traveling 77 mph in a 30 mph zone on Main Street. Police pulled over the car, and issued Benjamin Isadore Schlesinger, 18, of Short Hills, N.J., a speeding ticket and cited him for excessive speed and careless and negligent driving.

Between Dec. 29 and Jan. 4, city police also conducted three directed patrols, made 16 traffic stops and took fingerprints three times.

(See Vergennes, Page 12B)

Molly Gray, Tim Ashe seek return to state office

By SHAUN ROBINSON of VTDigger & Addy Indy
 BURLINGTON — Two well-known politicians have announced that they are running for statewide office as the new year dawns.

Molly Gray, the former Vermont lieutenant governor who also ran, unsuccessfully, for a seat in Congress, wants her old job back. On Monday, she announced her campaign for the state's second-highest office.

Meanwhile, former Chittenden County State Sen. Tim Ashe on Friday announced that he is running for another of Vermont's five constitutional offices: state auditor. Ashe is currently deputy, was the leader of the state Senate and lost the 2020 election for lieutenant governor to Gray.

GRAY FOR LT. GOV.

Gray is running as a Democrat; if she wins the party's primary in August, she'll likely face current Lt. Gov. John Rodgers, a Republican first elected to the post in 2024, in the general election in November.

In Vermont, the lieutenant governor has few day-to-day responsibilities besides presiding over the state Senate when it's in session. But those in the position can, and often do, use it to advocate for specific issues. Gray said she would be a stronger opponent of President Donald Trump's administration, and the policies and proposals coming from the White House, than Rodgers has been in his first year in the post.

"There are no ceremonial offices right now," Gray, who's from Newbury though now lives in Burlington, said in an interview last week. "No one can afford to sit it out or stand on the sidelines at a time where the fundamental rights of Vermonters are under attack — regularly."



TIM ASHE

(To be sure, Rodgers has said he does not support Trump and spoke against some of the administration's actions at a major anti-Trump protest in Montpelier in April.)

Gray was joined by family members and several dozen supporters for the announcement Monday. Her campaign announced endorsements from nine current members of the state Senate — including its leader, President Pro Tempore Phil Baruth, D/P-Chittenden Central, as well as the chair of its powerful Appropriations Committee, Washington County Democrat/Progressive Sen. Andrew Perchlik.

The campaign also has the backing of 22 current members of the Vermont House, according to materials provided to reporters. Former Democratic Gov. Howard Dean also endorsed Gray and was on hand for Monday's launch.

Gray was elected lieutenant governor in 2020 after beating out a crowded field of Democratic primary opponents. She was in the job for less than a year before launching her campaign for what was then an open U.S. House seat. After a bruising campaign, she lost the primary to Becca Balint, who easily won the general election that fall.

After leaving office in 2023, Gray was tapped to serve as the first executive director of the Vermont Afghan Alliance. The Burlington nonprofit supports Afghans who are resettling in the state, offering a variety of programs such as a driver education initiative tailored to women who were not allowed to drive in their home country.

Gray said that role has given her firsthand experience with what she called the "extreme cruelty" of the Trump administration's policies. She pointed, for example, to how the administration has paused visa and other programs for Afghan nationals, while those already in the country have also been stripped of temporary permission to stay.

"It's ongoing chaos, right?" Gray said. "It's been one blow after another."

In addition to using the office's bully pulpit to respond to news from Washington, D.C., Gray said she's motivated to run for lieutenant governor again because of her own experiences — giving birth to her son, Jack, since she has left office, as well as caring for her mother, who lives in Newbury and has multiple sclerosis.

"I've experienced firsthand a health care system in crisis. Trying to access rural care in rural Vermont is extremely challenging right now," she said. "We're deeply concerned, as I think many, many families and many Vermonters are."

Gray said that if she wins this year's election, she is not interested in leaving the role for higher office, as she tried to do in 2022. That includes both running for governor and a seat in Congress, she said.

"If I'm lucky enough to earn the support of Vermonters — and have the chance to work for them again — I'll stay in the job as long as there's ability to problem solve and to get things done," Gray said.

Monday morning, after Gray's announcement, a second candidate signaled he may enter



MOLLY GRAY

the race.

Ryan McLaren, a former aide to Vermont Democratic U.S. Sen Peter Welch, told VTDigger he was "seriously considering" running for lieutenant governor.

"I've spent the last decade listening to the hopes, fears, aspirations and struggles of everyday Vermonters. For many, the future has never felt more uncertain," McLaren said in a statement. "Our communities are struggling and people are tired of the status quo — hungry for new voices and better politics. Frankly, I am too."

McLaren, of Essex Junction, has not previously run for statewide office.

ASHE FOR AUDITOR

Ashe spent 12 years in the Vermont Senate — four of them as its leader.

Now he hopes to replace his current boss, Auditor Doug Hoffer, who has held the post since winning election in 2012.

After Ashe lost his race for lieutenant governor and wrapped up his state senate career in 2020, Hoffer appointed him as his deputy in April of 2021.

As the title implies, the state auditor exams the state government's books, like an accountant. The most visible

product of the State Auditor's Office is its audit reports, which look at both financials and performance. The auditor generally gets the most attention from the public for its investigations on how state officials are doing their jobs.

Ashe said he was running to ensure that Vermonters get excellence from their state government.

"I intend to use the tools of the Auditor's office to help make sure they get it, by ensuring taxpayer-funded departments and programs deliver results," he said in announcing his run on Friday.

He said Vermonters are frustrated by rising health insurance premiums, the scarcity of affordable homes to own and rent, homelessness and public safety problems, and property tax increases. He said that, nevertheless, some people are optimistic, and that he is too.

"I look forward to using my experience — which includes four-plus years as the Deputy State Auditor, a decade developing hundreds of units of affordable housing, and service as the president of the board of Vermont's largest non-hospital primary care organization — to hold government accountable to make progress on the bread-and-butter issues that matter most to Vermonters," Ashe said in a press release.

As State Auditor, he said he'd work with the executive and legislative branches to identify risks to Vermonters' interests, such as financial mismanagement, inadequate preparation for weather-related emergencies, and the policies of President Trump.

"I'll lead this work not with the goal of placing blame but of making things better," he said.

VTDigger's Ethan Weinstein contributed reporting

Vergennes

(Continued from Page 11B)

In other recent activity, the department:

- On Dec. 29 mediated a dispute between two Thomas Circle neighbors. One called to report issues with the other. After Vergennes police contacted them, the second neighbor agreed to stay away from the first and their property.

- On Dec. 29 were told of a hit and run on Scovell Lane about a week after it happened. According to the caller, the car had a large dent on it the morning of Dec. 23. Vergennes police asks that anyone with information contact the department.

- On Dec. 29 began investigating a possible fraud after taking information from a citizen.

- On Dec. 29 helped a Philadelphia-area police department figure out who owned a vehicle they were looking into. A Vergennes resident was the last listed owner. Vergennes police confirmed for South Chester County PD that in 2024 the car was sold legally.

- On Dec. 30 opened a case for insurance purposes after a minor parking lot crash at the Vergennes Animal Hospital.

- On Dec. 30 assisted a tractor-trailer driver who had run out of fuel on Main Street.

- On Dec. 31 advised a complainant of an unwarned work zone to contact the city.

- On Jan. 2 gave a woman a ride to her residence from a former partner's residence that she refused to leave.

- On Jan. 2 took a call related from a city woman who reported that someone was trying to enter her apartment. Police said she has a history of mental health issues and made repeat calls of a similar nature.

- On Jan. 3 took a report at the police station of a dispute between Walker Avenue neighbors.

- On Jan. 3 helped a person get personal belongings from another person's apartment.

- On Jan. 4 a little before 2 p.m. responded to a two-car crash on Main Street. There were no injuries; the driver wanted police to document it for insurance purposes.

ARTS + JOURNAL

The Addison Independent

January 8, 2026

NEW DANCE
PERFORMANCE

CASTS A SPELL

Daniel Miramontes brings the premiere of "A Spell For Remembering" to the Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theater on Saturday, Jan. 10, for an evening of dance, collaborative experimentation and joyful excess. The show is free and open to all.

PHOTO / TASO PAPADAKIS

A

By **ELSIE
LYNN PARINI**

Are you starting to feel the January slumber coming on? Chilly temps, chunky sweaters and a cup of cocoa by the fireside are nice, but maybe you're ready to get up and shake off that snow and ice! This Saturday, come see the premiere of "A Spell For Remembering" — an evening of dance, collaborative experimentation, and joyful excess led by artist-in-residence Daniel

Miramontes at the Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theater in Middlebury.

"The performance incorporates shimmering gold and iridescent fabrics and materials, fans, disco balls, and papel picado (meaning "punched" or "perforated" paper)," said Miramontes, who moved to Vermont late last summer to begin as the artist in residence at Middlebury this past fall. He's here for the entire 2025-2026 academic school year.

The premiere will feature four new works with professional dance artists Zoe Cushman

"THE PERFORMANCE INCORPORATES
**SHIMMERING GOLD AND
IRIDESCENT FABRICS AND
MATERIALS, FANS, DISCO BALLS,
AND PAPEL PICADO."**

— Daniel Miramontes

Walders, Tristan Koepke, Charlotte "C" Macko, Katelyn Sanchez, and alexx shilling, alongside original compositions and live performance by Mclean Macionis, and additional performances by Middlebury College dance faculty Laurel Jenkins, and first-year student Isabelle Eaton-Neubert. The performance is free and will be held at 7:30 p.m. A post-show discussion will follow the show, moderated by Maura Keefe, a contemporary dance historian and Scholar-in-Residence at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

If you weren't under a blanket, and love to

dance, then you maybe took advantage of the Jan. 7 Movement Matters Workshop that coincided with this Saturday's show. If you missed that opportunity to get some hands-on experience with the performers, keep your eyes peeled... these workshops pop up regularly and are free and open to all.

Alright, let's get to know Daniel Miramontes a little better, shall we?

He earned his MFA in Dance this past May from the University of Maryland, College Park, and was one of only two graduate students in dance to receive a Maya Brin Graduate Assistantship because of interdisciplinary expertise and research interests.

But it all started way before that...

Miramontes, who grew up in Lake Elsinore, Calif., said that he got into dancing with his cousins, while listening to Spice Girls and

See *DANCE* on page 2



MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

WINTER/SPRING 2026



NAHRE SOL
FRIDAY, 1/16 • 7:30 PM



ISIDORE QUARTET
FRIDAY, 2/13 • 7:30 PM



TIME/LIFE/BEAUTY
FRI., 3/6 & SAT., 3/7 • 7:30 PM



LE CONSORT
WEDNESDAY, 3/11 • 7:30 PM



GOITSE
TUESDAY, 3/17 • 7:30 PM

Tickets: \$30/20/10/5
802-443-MIDD (6433)

See the full 2025–2026 season online:
go.middlebury.edu/pas



DANCE

continued from page 1

Venga Boys in their garage back when they were just five or six years old.

"I danced a bit towards the end of high school," he said. "I wanted to study

dance in college so in my early years of dance training I took as many classes as I could at Mt. San Jacinto Community College, where I received really great training in jazz, ballet and modern dance."

Miramontes transferred to Cal State University, Long Beach, where he received his BFA in Dance, and was dancing five days a week taking classes in ballet and modern, improvisation and choreography.

"I performed so much while I was there," Miramontes said. "The exposure to different ways of making and moving provided a well-rounded experience for me. I also was heavily involved in costumes and costume design, the dance department had their own costume shop, so I worked closely with designers Liz Carpenter and Kelsey Vidic."

During his undergrad experience, Miramontes also studied at the American Dance Festival in the summers. When he graduated, he taught dance and physical education at a high school in Long Beach, Calif, and joined the dance faculty at The Wooden Floor (a nonprofit youth dance organization). All the while Miramontes was still creating his own choreography and performing; including co-founding the Los Angeles-based dance series "Gold Series" and the "Gold Collective."

But Miramontes was "craving an expansion." And so, he began his pursuit of an MFA.

Not a year out of the program and Miramontes is here in Middlebury, bringing us the premiere of a show you won't want to miss. Let's learn some more about the show from Miramontes.

How do you describe yourself as an artist?

I describe myself now as a Mexican American dance artist, choreographer, educator, designer and scholar, whose choreographic research examines the intersections of performance, interdisciplinary practices, and materiality within contemporary dance.

My choreographic work investigates how embodied movement and crafted materials converge to create multi-sensory, layered narratives that speak to

"THIS DANCE IS ABOUT THE MAGIC OF BEING TOGETHER, AND CLOSING THE GAP OF DISTANCE, OF TIME, AND DIFFERENT DANCE PERFORMANCES... A SPELL FOR REMEMBERING."

— Daniel Miramontes

Continued on next page

identity, visibility and the body's relationship with space and objects.

My dancing is rooted in modern and postmodern dance, and is enriched by improvisation and somatic exploration, yielding a nuanced approach that draws on both minimalism and maximalism as tools to examine complex social and aesthetic themes.

What can viewers expect from "A Spell For Remembering?"

Viewers can expect an evening of original dance choreography performed by an intergenerational group of artists with live musical accompaniment by McLean Macionis.

My choreographic work is full bodied, precise and investigative, integrating improvisation with specificity, and a sustained engagement with materials and materiality. In short, viewers can expect a little bit of everything.

What brings these performing artists together?

This project marks the first time we are all in process together, and these are artists who I want to continue being in creative spaces and conversations with. While each dancer brings a distinct artistic style shaped by their individual training, influences and performance histories, what brings us together is our shared love of dance, the way we each love dance, and my memories of them / our mutual processes.

What does the title of this event mean?

I have been thinking a lot about what carries me forward as an artist... In the studio I find myself calling in/remembering choreographies and friends I miss dancing with, so I imagine that I am dancing with them. I also work deeply with materials (fabric and mylar in particular), and what I love about working with materials is that



Katelyn A. Sanchez is one of the professional artists collaborating in "A Spell For Remembering." Here Sanchez is pictured dancing with fabrics. Come see for yourself on Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m.

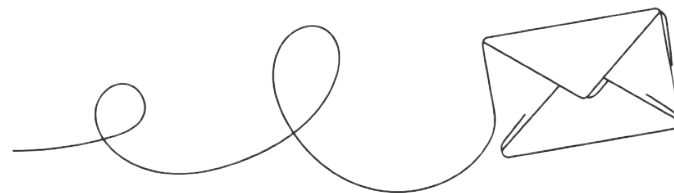
COURTESY PHOTO

they invite me to consider something else, to consider them, and imagine how they might want to perform alongside me/us. So, this dance is about the magic of being together, and closing the gap of distance, of time, and different dance performances... a spell for remembering.

Should we stay for the post-show discussion?

The post show discussion will be moderated

by Dr. Maura Keefe, a contemporary dance historian and Scholar-in-Residence at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, where she writes about, lectures on, and interviews artists from around the world. The discussion serves as an invitation to linger with the performance, opening space for audience questions and reflection, and allowing the performance to continue unfolding through conversation.



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UPCOMING MUSIC

More Tunes

Winter into Spring Musical Library Tour begins Jan. 15

The 5 Town friends of the Arts along with the 5 Town libraries presents the third annual Winter Into Spring Musical Library Tour. The series will feature Richard Ruane and Beth Duquette in January, The Town Hollers in February, Ukulele Clare and Rebecca Padula in March, Sara Grey and Kieron Means in April and Helen Hummel in May. The venues will be libraries in each of the five towns (Lincoln, Starksboro, Monkton, New Haven and Bristol). All shows start at 7:30 p.m. and are free with donations welcome.

Richard Ruane and Beth Duquette at Lincoln Library: Jan. 15

Richard Ruane and Beth Duquette live in the tiny Vermont towns of Ripton and South Lincoln, along the ridge of the Green Mountains. Their music owes a strong debt to tradition but isn't bound to it. Ruane, an award-winning songwriter, pens the bulk of their material. Their music features the kind of tight harmonies often associated with sibling acts that have grown up together. They take turns on lead vocals as well as full duets. Duquette has a lovely, soulful alto voice. It blends beautifully with Ruane's warm baritone.



Ruane is also a multi-instrumentalist and swaps off from guitar to four-string tenor guitar, ukulele, octave mandolin and mandolin. They often are joined by bassist/vocalist Mitch Barron, performing as Bread and Bones.

Based in Vermont, their music has taken them throughout the Northeast, down to Texas where Ruane was a songwriting finalist at the Kerrville Folk Festival's New Folk Competition, and over to Chicago where they played on the Folkstage radio show on WFMT. They have appeared in the Falcon Ridge/Grassy Hill Emerging Artist Showcase at the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, on the Bound for Glory radio show on WVBR, Ithaca, N.Y., and at Caffè Lena in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Town Hollers at Starksboro Library: Feb. 19

Hailing from the western foot of Camel's Hump, the Town Hollers are a fiddle-tune-sawing acoustic jam band that pushes the genre into unexpected grooves. With the typical old-timey and grassy instrumentation



See MUSIC on page 13



Pianist and YouTube star Nahre Sol will play a solo concert at the Mahaney Arts Center on Friday, Jan. 16.

Pianist Nahre Sol will make her Vermont debut in Middlebury, Jan. 16

The Middlebury Performing Arts Series will present multi-faceted pianist and composer, innovative educator, and YouTube sensation Nahre Sol in her Vermont debut on Friday, Jan. 16 at Middlebury College's Mahaney Arts Center. Classically trained, yet also versed in improvisatory and new compositions, Sol offers a fresh take on chamber music. Her wholly original content has amassed over 75 million views and more than 800,000 subscribers to her YouTube channel.

Sol has a penchant for making the familiar classical (like "Fly Me to the Moon in the Styles of 6 Classical Composers.") Audiences can expect to hear new takes on recognized tunes and original music that's playful, colorful, agile, emotional and picturesque.

About the Artist

Nahre Sol performs, composes and teaches an eclectic mixture of music that draws from improvisation, the avant-garde, traditional Western forms and harmony, jazz, and minimalism. She has gained renown through her notable series on YouTube, with videos that distill her distinct perspective as a classically trained pianist with an insatiable appetite for new ideas about music theory, harmony, practicing and composition.

See NAHRE SOL on page 13





JESSICA'S
AT
SWIFT HOUSE INN

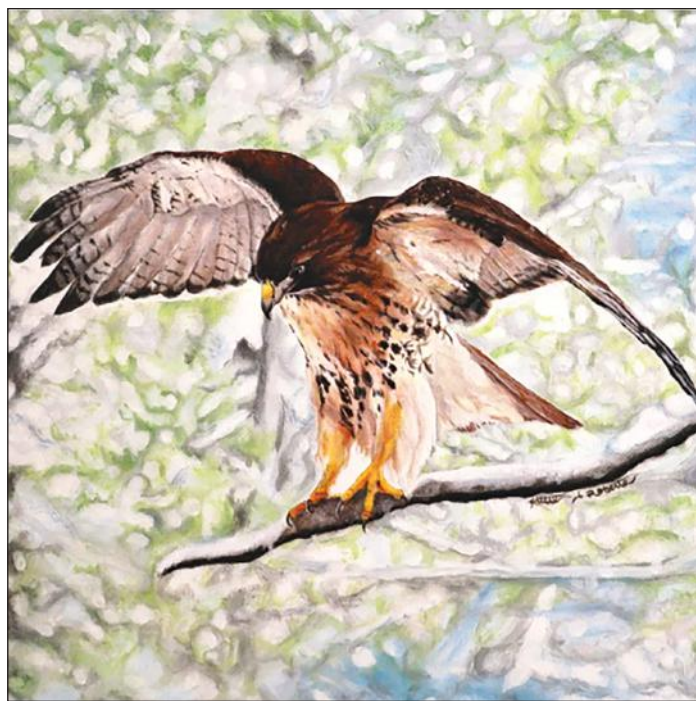
WINE WEDNESDAYS ARE BACK!

Join Sommelier Ella Donnelly-Wright for themed wine tastings every Wednesday through May. Drop by between 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Complimentary nibbles included. Deep discounts on featured wines.

January 7: Pop, Fizz, Bubbles!
January 14: Oregon, Uncorked
January 21: Sip Your Way Through Spain
January 28: Chardonnay, Anything but Basic

25 STEWART LN. MIDDLEBURY, VT SWIFTHOUSEINN.COM @SWIFTHOUSEINN

ART ON EXHIBIT



Artwork by Katie Roberts is on display in Bristol at Art on Main through January.

ART ON MAIN

25 Main Street, Bristol

Call 802-453-4032, email aom@gmavt.net or visit artonmainvt.com for more info.

Katie Roberts presents a collection of landscape and wildlife paintings created with water-soluble oils. Her work highlights the beauty and vulnerability of the natural world, emphasizing themes of conservation, preservation, and our connection to the land and the animals that inhabit it. On view Jan. 2-31.

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.

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury

For more info visit photoplacegallery.com.

"Filling the Frame" invites photographers to celebrate more: layered compositions, intersecting subjects, overlapping lines, patterns, and textures that fill the space with intention. How close to chaos can you come and still make an engaging, aesthetically compelling picture? Juror Dallas Crow selected up to 35 images in the Middlebury exhibition gallery and another 40 images for the online gallery. On view Jan. 2-31.

Get your exhibit listed.

EMAIL ELSIE: elsie@addisonindependent.com

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. Minor obstacles are in your path, Aries. It's easy to get frustrated right now. Once you clear the hurdles it will be smoother sailing before long. Remain patient.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. You treasure family and friends, Taurus. This week calls for an important decision that could affect them all. It may be challenging, but you will make the right call.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. Gemini, you may have to reset your priorities, as new information has come to the surface. Prioritize responsibilities so major issues are taken care of first.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Unavoidable situations may cross your path this week, Cancer. It is important that you stay the course. Committing to tackling things head-on is the most productive approach.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. It may be tempting to shirk your responsibilities right now, Leo. Resist that temptation. Keep your head down and keep on working. It will soon prove worth it.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Virgo, be confident and listen to your instincts, Libra. Do so before taking on any important tasks that might turn up in the days or weeks to come. A surprise might be around the corner.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Your energy will remain high this week, Libra, enabling you to come up with some innovative ideas that have true staying power. Pursue your options.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. The conditions are right for finishing an important task, Scorpio. You will be able to come up with wonderful ideas that have true staying power. Pursue your options.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Sagittarius, you have been working hard lately and this may result in an overactive and tired mind. You should factor in a break so you can recharge your body and spirit.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Focus on keeping your cool even if that proves difficult, Capricorn. Be the bigger person in all of your interactions. You have a strong ability to control of your emotions.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Aquarius, you may feel uneasy or worried for unknown reasons. Trust your gut in this instance and steer clear of trouble should it try to get in your way this week.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Family tops your list

of priorities right now, Pisces. You are likely to spend considerable time with loved ones in the days to come. Relish in all the opportunities to connect.

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JAN. 9 — Simone de Beauvoir, social theorist, write (d)
JAN. 10 — Barbara Heporth, artist (d)

JAN. 11 — Eva Hesse, sculptor (d)
JAN. 12 — Haruki Murakami, author (77)
JAN. 13 — Julia Louis-Dreyfus, actor (65)
JAN. 14 — Berthe Morisot, artist (d)
JAN. 15 — Moliere, playwright (d)

CALENDAR

January 8-27

2026

THURSDAY, JAN. 8

WINTER TERM POP-UP

PERFORMANCE: TIMOTHY CUMMINGS ON PIPES IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Jan. 8, noon, Mahaney Arts Center Upper Lobby, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. Take a midday music break with cookies and hot cocoa and enjoy a pop-up performance by Timothy Cummings, featuring traditional repertoire on Scottish smallpipes and whistles. Free. Open to the public.

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO SOCIAL CHANGE PANEL IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, Jan. 8, 5-7 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center 125, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. The Middlebury College Conflict Transformation Collaborative presents a panel discussion featuring theatre-maker and University of Montana Co-Lab for Civic Imagination founder Michael Rohd. Part of the 2025-26 Conflict

and Social Change series. Registration requested at middlebury.edu/events.

SATURDAY, JAN. 10

THE MET LIVE IN HD: "PURITANI" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 10, 1 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. The Met Opera's live broadcast of Bellini's final masterpiece, featuring soaring melodies, virtuosic coloratura, and a love story set against the English Civil War. \$24 adults, \$10 students. Tickets at addisonarts.org.

"THE HILLS ARE ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF MUSIC" SINGALONG IN RIPTON.

Saturday, Jan. 10, 3 p.m., Ripton Community Church, Route 125. Community singalong featuring old and new favorites. Bring an instrument if you'd like to play. Refreshments will be available. Free. For more information, call 802-388-6107.

LIVE MUSIC AT ROSIE'S IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, Jan. 10, 5:30-8 p.m., Rosie's Restaurant, 886 Route 7 South. The genre-bending Shane Murley Band performs country, folk, alt rock, R&B and more at Rosie's Restaurant.

DUO DULCE IN VERGENNES.

Saturday, Jan. 10, 6-8 p.m., 10 Green Street Wine Bar, 10 Green St. Intimate classical concert featuring John Dunlop on cello

and Laura Markowitz on violin. Free. Wine, beer, nonalcoholic beverages and hors d'oeuvres available for purchase. More info at vergennesoperahouse.org.

TINA FRIML'S BIG APPLE COMEDY IN MIDDLEBURY.

SOLD OUT. Saturday, Jan. 10, 8 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Hometown comedian Tina Friml headlines a night of New York City-style laughs in the Anderson Studio. Bar opens at 6 p.m. Adults \$20, students \$10. Tickets at addisonarts.org.

"A SPELL FOR REMEMBERING" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Rd. An evening of dance works led by artist-in-residence Daniel Miramontes, exploring collaborative experimentation, embodiment and co-creation. Free. Open to the public. More info at middlebury.edu/events.

SUNDAY, JAN. 11

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE/SNOWSHOE IN KEENE VALLEY, N.Y.

Sunday, Jan. 11. Enjoy a 4.6-mile round trip hike up Snow Mountain. Easy and moderate terrain with an elevation gain of about 1400 feet. Snowshoes

and/or micro-spikes may be required depending on conditions. Group size limited to 8. It's a 45-minute drive from the entrance to Crown Point State Historic Site. Contact Barry Francis at barryfrancis@gmavt.net for details. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

AFTERNOON GROOVE DANCE PARTY IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Jan. 11, 1-2:30 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Community dance party open to all ages and abilities. Shake off the holidays and recharge while moving to the music of DJ Dougie. Families, friends and neighbors welcome. Free.

THURSDAY, JAN. 15

HELEN WHYBROW AUTHOR TALK: "THE SALT STONES" IN VERGENNES.

Thursday, Jan. 15, 5:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Vermont author Helen Whybrow will discuss her newest memoir and reflect on raising a family, tending a herd of sheep and fully inhabiting a piece of land. The book was recently longlisted for the National Book Award and featured on NPR.

"VERMONT CINEMA: HOW AND WHY?" in Ferrisburgh.

Thursday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall, 3279 Route 7. Filmmaker Jay Craven presents a free talk

exploring his five-decade career creating place-based films rooted in Vermont and New England. This Vermont Humanities event is hosted by the Friends of the Union Meeting Hall. ADA access currently limited due to elevator maintenance. Concessions available for purchase. Free. More info at unionmeetinghall@gmail.com.

FRIDAY, JAN. 16

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE/SNOWSHOE IN CHARLOTTE.

Friday, Jan. 16, Charlotte Wildlife Refuge, 1489 Greenbush Road. Chill out and experience some of the many jewels of the Charlotte Wildlife Refuge, a biodiverse park with beautiful views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks. Easy three miles. Contact Ken Corey at 802-349-3733 or kencorey53@gmail.com to register. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

NAHRE SOL ON PIANO IN MIDDLEBURY.

Friday, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center, Olin C. Robison Concert Hall, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. Middlebury College's Performing Arts Series presents the Vermont debut of classically trained pianist and composer Nahre Sol, whose work spans chamber music, ambient soundscapes, improvisation

Continued on next page

Woodworking Classes



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MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091		MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION: P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753		
<p>Channel 1071 Through the Night: VT Media Exchange, Bulletin Board Thursday, January 8 4 a.m. Democracy Now 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 3 p.m. VT Truth & Reconciliation Commission 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10 p.m. Democracy Now Friday, January 9 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Press Conferences 6:30 a.m. The News Project 7:30 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 3 p.m. Job Talk 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 11 p.m. Democracy Now Saturday, January 10 7 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 8:30 a.m. Montpelier Happy Hour 10 a.m. Selectboard 1 p.m. On Being Brave</p>	<p>4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 5:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Truth & Reconciliation Sunday, January 11 5 a.m. Truth & Reconciliation 9 a.m. Catholic Mass 9:30 a.m. Press Conferences 11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 1 p.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Congregational Service 6 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, January 12 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. SHEnanigans 5:30 a.m. Eckankar 6 a.m. Public Affairs 10 a.m. Selectboard 1 p.m. Press Conferences 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. All Things LGBTQ</p>	<p>Tuesday, January 13 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 6 a.m. Press Conferences 9:30 a.m. Eckankar 10 a.m. Selectboard 1 p.m. Montpelier Happy Hour 4 p.m. Congregational Church 7 p.m. Selectboard (Live) 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. Energy Week Wednesday, January 14 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Press Conferences 7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass 10 a.m. Selectboard 5:30 p.m. Stopping Scams 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now</p>	<p>10 a.m. Authors and Poets 12 p.m. State Board of Education 4 p.m. Sports 8:30 p.m. Authors and Poets 10 p.m. Holiday Concerts Friday, January 9 5:00 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7 a.m. School Board Meetings 2 p.m. VT Humanities 4 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. ABA Basketball Saturday, January 10 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 8 a.m. Foltz Studio - Hiking Pein Air 9:01 a.m. Meet the Author - Ruth Reichl 11 a.m. State Board of Education 3 p.m. High School Sports 7 p.m. VT Humanities Sunday, January 11 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga</p>	<p>7 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7:30 a.m. Snap Shot "Religion is Always In the Room" 12 p.m. High School Sports 6 p.m. Memories of Salisbury Monday, January 12 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. School Board Meetings 3:30 p.m. High School Sports 6:30 p.m. ACSD Board (Live) 10:30 p.m. Authors and Poets Tuesday, January 13 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. School Board Meetings 5 p.m. Authors and Poets 8 p.m. Pecha Kucha Night Wednesday, January 14 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Science and Nature Programs 12 p.m. School Board Meetings 8 p.m. Pecha Kucha Night</p>

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.

soundscapes, improvisation and more. \$30 general admission, \$20 Middlebury ID holders/PASS members, \$10 youth under 21, \$5 Middlebury students. Open to the public. Tickets at go.middlebury.edu/tickets.

SATURDAY, JAN. 17

LIVE MUSIC AT ROSIE'S IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 17, 5-8 p.m., Rosie's Restaurant, 886 Route 7 South. The Morning Dudes celebrate the repertoire of Jerry Garcia and The Grateful Dead live at Rosie's Restaurant.

LIVE MUSIC BY DETOUR IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Jan. 17, 6-10 p.m., Vergennes American Legion Post 14, 100 Armory Ln. Live music by DeTour featuring hits from the 1950s and 1960s and classic rock and roll. Come dance the night away and enjoy friends, music and community spirit. Admission by donation. Open to the public.

BIANCA STONE BOOK RELEASE PARTY IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 17, 7-8:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72-76 Merchants Row. Town Hall Theater presents Vermont Poet Laureate Bianca Stone celebrating the release of her new book, "The Near and Distant World." The evening includes a cocktail hour from 6-7 p.m., followed by a talk, reading, and Q&A. Tickets \$5-\$20 at addisonarts.org. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

TUESDAY, JAN. 20

ROKEBY MUSEUM VIRTUAL BOOK GROUP. Tuesday, Jan. 20, 6-7 p.m., online. The 2026 Rokeby Museum Virtual Book Group discusses "Flee North: A Forgotten Hero and the Fight for Freedom in Slavery's Borderland" by Scott Shane. Free. More info at rokebymuseum.org.

IRISH MUSIC NIGHT WITH RAMBLETREE IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Jan. 20, 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.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 21

HELEN WHYBROW AND ETHAN TAPPER TALK IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Vermont Book Shop

and Town Hall Theater present a conversation with award-winning Vermont writers Helen Whybrow and Ethan Tapper about how their lives on the land inspired their recent books, "The Salt Stones" and "How to Love a Forest." The authors will discuss writing, land stewardship and relationships to place. Books available for purchase. Free with registration. More info and registration at addisonarts.org.

THURSDAY, JAN. 22

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HOGBACK MOUNTAIN SNOWSHOE IN GOSHEN. RESCHEDULED FROM JAN 10. Thursday, Jan. 22, Blueberry Hill Inn, 1245 Goshen-Ripton Road. Snowshoe for about 3 miles around Hogback Mountain at Blueberry Hill Inn. Great views! Dogs welcome on leash only. Contact Morris Earle at morrisearle@gmail.com or 802-734-0984. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

FRIDAY, JAN. 23

VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS IN CORNWALL. Friday, Jan. 23, 5 p.m., Cornwall Congregational Church, 2598 Route 30. Middlebury Community Music Center String Ensembles, directed by Emily Sunderman, present Vivaldi's "Winter" from The Four Seasons. Free. More info at mcmc-vt.org.

LIVE MUSIC AT THE BOBCAT IN BRISTOL. Thursday, Jan. 22, 5-8 p.m., Bobcat Cafe, 5 Main St. Emerging folk/pop/indie artist Madigan Linnane performs live at the Bobcat. No cover charge.

EGO TOURISM WITH MARK SALVEIT: A ONE-MAN SHOW IN VERGENNES. Thursday, Jan. 22, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Free Library, 258 Main St. This humorous one-man show, which Salveit performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2025, blends comedy, memoir and insights drawn from the creator's curiosity about Chinese Taoism. Free. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE J-TERM MUSICAL: "URINETOWN" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. The culminating production of Middlebury College's J-Term

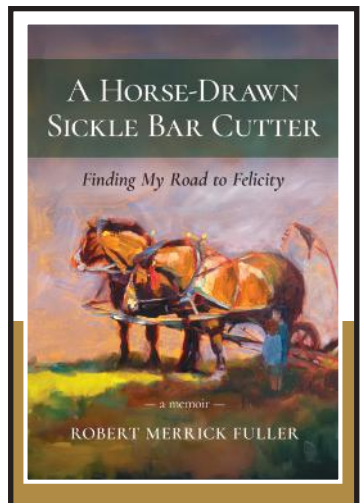
course "Making a Musical: Process and Performance." "Urinetown" is a satirical musical lampooning corporate greed, social irresponsibility and musical theater itself, while also telling an unexpected love story. Tickets go on sale Monday, Jan. 5, at noon. Shows continue through Wednesday. Tickets at addisonarts.org.

THE HOKUM BROTHERS IN VERGENNES. Friday, Jan. 23, 6-8 p.m., Rockers Pizzeria, 191 Main St. Vermont's premiere comedy band performs a playful mix of ragtime, folksy tunes, vaudeville and early jazz. Part of the Vergennes Opera House's "Off Stage" series. Free. More info at vergennesoperahouse.org.

SATURDAY, JAN. 24

LIVE MUSIC AT ROSIE'S IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 24, 5-8 p.m., Rosie's Restaurant, 886 Route 7 South. The Bob Gagnon Trio performs live at Rosie's Restaurant.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE J-TERM MUSICAL:



“If there is one thing that Robert Fuller wants readers to grasp while reading his memoir, it is that anyone can make their life what they want it to be. After all, as he states throughout, if he can do it, anyone can.”

— Independent Book Review

Available now at Vermont Bookshop in Middlebury, Recycled Reading in Bristol, Phoenix Books in Burlington, bookshop.org, and other online stores.

"URINETOWN" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Jan. 23 listing.

SUNDAY, JAN. 25

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE/SNOWSHOE IN LINCOLN. Sunday, Jan. 25. Difficult hike/snowshoe up the Battell Trail to the lean-to and possible ascent of Mt. Abraham. Plan for full winter conditions, snowshoes required. At least 3-6 miles with more than 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Contact Ellen Cronan at 908-595-2926 for more information. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE J-TERM MUSICAL: "URINETOWN" IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Jan. 23 listing.

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB BREAD LOAF SECTION ANNUAL MEETING IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Jan.

25, 6:30 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Business meeting followed by a talk from Keegan Tierney, GMC's Director of Field Programs. Doors open at 6:15 p.m., meeting starts at 6:30. All are welcome. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

TUESDAY, JAN. 27

THE LOOP WITH CRAIG MARAVITCH: THE ELEMENTS OF FOLLY IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 5 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Explore folly, laughter and power with director Craig Maravitch, Town Hall Theater's Lindsay Pontius, the company of "Urinetown" and Beyond the Page actors. Bar opens at 4:30 p.m. Suggested donation \$5-\$20; no one turned away for lack of funds. More info at addisonarts.org.

See more

CALENDAR LISTINGS

Online!

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MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES



NAHRE SOL, PIANIST AND COMPOSER
FRIDAY, 1/16 • 7:30 PM

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See the full 2025-2026 season:
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ROBERT COMPTON POTTERY

Contemporary couple perfects ancient crafts

Robert Compton and Christine Homer have dedicated their lives to art and the business of earning a living from products made by hand. Potters and weavers pursue occupations that produce one-of-a-kind useful objects that have been with humankind from the beginning of civilization. In industrialized societies, available options include a wide variety of mass-produced products at a fraction

By **STEVE HARRIS**

of the cost. The most common way around the nature of the modern marketplace is for the craftsman to find a partner that makes a "conventional income" willing to create the financial shelter in which art can flourish.

Robert and Christine are both artists and can tell you that there are clear sacrifices they have made and risks they have taken to immerse themselves in their respective crafts, but they can also enumerate rewards and satisfaction that can't be had any other way. It takes rare confidence to devote your life to swimming against the current, but for unicorns, the struggle is instinctive and feels more like a privilege. Perfecting ancient skills and finding a way to thrive and travel widely too

is a puzzle these two have solved with imagination and determination. I find it difficult not to admire them with the effusive enthusiasm of a Taylor Swift fan...

Robert's studio is a former dairy barn located at 2662 N. 116 Rd, Bristol. It is a fixture on the northern outskirts of the village sporting a familiar sign at the end of a serpentine driveway. The homestead also incorporates Christine Homer's weaving studio and showroom for her hand-crafted fabric pieces featuring shawls and scarves. The renovated structures and new additions have been color-coordinated and built with locally sourced and durable materials kept well painted and maintained. Robert began a 50-year remodeling campaign in 1973. What he has created is a fully integrated campus that includes all the features of a large studio and gallery, including:

an elevated, custom-modified farmhouse (which



Robert Compton and Christine Homer sit with their pup Nara at their home-studio in Bristol.

COURTESY PHOTOS



has provided a home for Robert and Christine, from which they have cared for and fed a variety of livestock over the years, including chickens, pigs, sheep, goats, golden retrievers and an occasional horse)

raw material warehouses (wool, clay, firewood and various ingredients for glazes and dyes)

IT marketing equipment and photo-studio (website management)

Working studio (including ergonomically designed and custom-built stand-up wheel and a wide variety of hand-constructed kilns)

a distribution center (which includes order processing with extensive record keeping of purchases and purchasers, inventory storage, and pick/pack and shipping facilities)

educational studio and showrooms (workshop

classrooms and pictorial customer education)

When viewed in retrospect, this comfortable home and business landmark can be seen as the inevitable result of heroic ambition, an orderly and long-planned evolution dedicated to the business of art and education. When described by Robert and Christine, their origins and development are littered with the surprises and unplanned coincidences that are common to most of us. In many ways, their destinies found them as much as they recognized and built their future selves.

Robert was raised in the farming landscape of southern New Jersey and worked on dairy and truck farms in his youth. Choosing the agricultural college at UVM in Burlington was a natural choice that he could embrace. After a tumultuous freshman year of adjusting to the rules of academic life, he was looking for "an easy A" from a non-academic course and decided to take a pottery class to bolster his undistinguished GPA.

In those halcyon days, good grades were necessary to maintain a student deferment from the military draft. (Back when America

See *ROOST* on page 9



was GREAT, academic performance was evaluated over a trap door of enforced military conscription and a quick trip to the exotic fields and farms of Vietnam. Before hostilities sputtered to an end in 1975, over half a million "draftees" from our generation were directed to enforce the hubris of an ill-considered foreign policy. They accounted for one-third of the American casualties.)

After Robert graduated Cum Laude (Latin for "attaboy!"), he founded Mad River Pottery in a roadside rental located in Moretown, Vt., snuggled up against the pavement of Route 100. He still has the sign announcing his arrival to the craft-buying public of 1972 in rural Vermont. His collection of stoneware mugs and bowls was displayed on outdoor wooden shelves complete with a payment box for an unsupervised retail operation. To Vermont's credit, he was never cheated. In 1973, Robert purchased the address he still calls home in Bristol.

Christine was raised in Westchester, N.Y., and graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art that same year. She spent the next five years as a re-enactor/hostess at the Phillipsburg Manor, a pre-revolutionary Dutch milling site on the banks of the Hudson River in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. Working in full period dress, she demonstrated traditional crafts and farm skills. Conversing with curious visitors, she learned to milk cows, spin and weave wool fibers on antique processing equipment, cook over an open fire and manage a water-powered grist mill and museum.

By 1979, Robert had further developed his professional commitment and had spent five years improving the Bristol farmstead. Three Lincoln area potters were renting studio time, which was helping with the mortgage. He was developing his nascent business and expanding the complexity of his enterprise. Christine came to Vermont that fall for a contemplative visit to her college roommate/pal. One evening, she met Robert for the first time when sitting next to him for dinner.

A three-month round trip across the continental U.S. ensued almost immediately in Christine's modest sedan. Her developed talent for rustic self-reliance caught Robert's attention as he was anticipating a future of a similar lifestyle. She was especially relieved to find she had fallen in love with a person that held a similar reverence for the past and the determination to find a marketplace for an undervalued product. Their road compatibility was also to become essential to a future 25-year period of semi-annual international trips they would take together. Robert's reputation for innovation and kiln-building would lead to invitations to speak and conduct workshops in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom on multiple occasions.

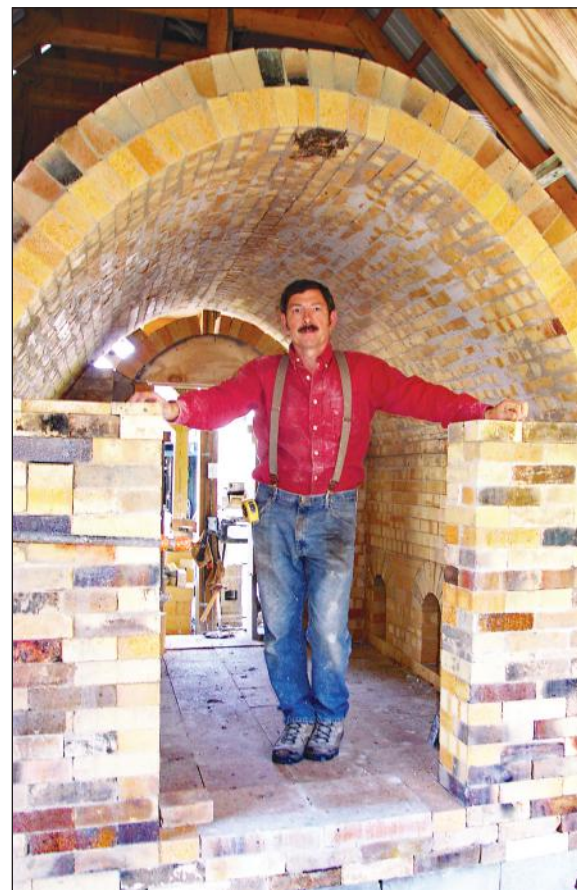


Every successful craft business has a website, but robertcomptonpottery.com is as much an online memoir as a direct marketing tool. Not only does it present a catalogue of the gorgeous items in their inventory, but it also further tracks the artistic footprints of these two remarkable people. For further emersion, try a visit to twistowool.wordpress.com where Christine's world of weavers is more completely revealed. The histories, images and videos available to anyone with an internet connection offer an intriguing invitation to a world of ancient craft and production running parallel to our more obvious world of noise drama and distraction.

Their current new item in active production is the "History Mug." Created to memorialize historically significant and interesting individuals. The commercially slip cast mugs are treated with a polyester coating that allows Robert and Christine to imprint a biographical sketch, an image of the subject and a contextual panel to fill out the shell of the cup. As avid readers fascinated with the past, they research the source material as a team, agree on the content of brief biographical copy and produce the mugs in numbers to service the demand. The finished products are retailed in museums and historic battlefields, but certain curious examples have been based on recommendations made by relatives and friends. There is an ever-growing variety on display, and for sale, at the studio.

History Mugs are far removed from traditional craft pottery, but the direct marketing fulfillment network Robert and Christine have carefully constructed and maintained over the last 40 years is perfectly suited for this affordable product line. The labor required is also easier on worn backs than the 1,000-pounds-of-clay-throwing-per-day habits of yesteryear. Early photos of Robert show a trapeze artist's physique, all shoulders, and arms. Fitness and vigor persist for them both due to an active life full of long days of serious work.

What makes their accomplishments unique is Robert's bottomless imagination for inventing products that buyers are eager to purchase, and Christine's relentless productivity and continual refinement of management and business skills. I use the phrase "their accomplishments" advisedly because they complete and supplement each other in everything they have



built as a married couple, and everything they are still producing.

When you decide to visit the studio, set aside adequate time and prepare to be educated, entertained and impressed. Delve into the virtual description as preparation for a personal visit whenever the "open" sign is hanging along Route 116. A little background will help you better appreciate how the fastidious facilities and welcoming owners of this pottery and fiber enterprise have been thriving for forty years. Give them a call when you arrive (802-453-3778), and one or both will be glad to show you what's on offer and how it came to exist. Anything you purchase will provide lasting value for your family and will help embellish memories that your family and friends will always cherish. The co-benefit of spending time with these calm, humorous and centered (pun intended) artisans is discovering another good reason for deciding to live in Addison County and sharing in the beautiful evidence of lives well lived.

— 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 of 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.

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

HOUSEPLANT CARE DURING THE WINTER



Debra Heleba is the statewide outreach and education program manager for UVM Extension Community Horticulture program and leads the Extension Master Gardener and Vermont Master Composter programs.

W

By **DEBRA HELEBA**

inter has officially arrived, bringing unique challenges in caring for houseplants.

At this time of year, we experience less intense and fewer hours of sunlight. For most indoor plants, the lack of daylight signals a special kind of dormancy called quiescence. During this period, plants conserve their energy and enter a resting period. For most houseplants, quiescence means that their growth slows considerably. Some plants, like alocasias and caladiums, may even lose their leaves during this period. This is completely normal, and they should rebound in the spring.

Some varieties of cacti and succulents may experience a deeper dormancy to protect themselves from the stress of shorter daylight hours.

For all houseplants, winter care starts with reducing water. UVM Extension Master Gardener volunteer Judy Mirro, affectionately known as the Houseplant Hero, says we tend to over-love our plants by giving them too much water. This is especially true in the winter. We need to hold off watering our houseplants until the potting media is truly dry. A moisture meter is a helpful tool to gauge when to water plants. It measures the moisture of the soil media so you can tell when it is dry, and plants need to be watered.

An inexpensive alternative is a chopstick. Insert it into the potting media. If soil sticks to the chopstick, the soil is moist, and the plant doesn't need to be watered. If no soil sticks, it is time to water.



A moisture meter can help you determine if houseplants need water.



A yellow sticky trap is placed horizontally over the soil surface to monitor for fungus gnats.

PHOTOS / DEBRA HELEBA

While plants need less water during the winter, many need increased humidity. The colder temperatures and indoor heating we experience during Vermont winters mean that humidity levels drop. Tropical plants will especially benefit from boosting humidity from a humidifier or grouping plants together. Alternatively, use pebble trays filled with water under the plants and avoid placing plants near heat sources, such as the woodstove and vents.

You will also want to place plants away from drafty spots. Houseplants thrive best in consistent temperatures, so avoid placing them too close to windows.

Because houseplants are in a resting state, winter is also a time to refrain from fertilizing and transplanting unless absolutely necessary. It's best to wait to renovate plants until spring. However, one important winter care practice is cleaning leaves. Use a damp cloth to wipe any dust from houseplant leaves to maximize sunlight absorption during winter's low light conditions. You can also give them a gentle, lukewarm shower, ensuring that all water drains from their pots.

Cleaning leaves is also a great time to scout for pests on houseplants. Spider mites are a common foe in the winter as they thrive in low-humidity conditions. Fungus gnats are also common winter houseplant pests and become problematic with overwatering. Keep an eye out for symptoms like the webbing of spider mites, sticky honeydew left by aphids, white cottony mealybugs, and bumps along stems that may be scale. You can also use yellow sticky traps to monitor for fungus gnats.

If you note any of these or other symptoms of decline with your houseplants, feel free to contact the UVM Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Helpline at go.uvm.edu/gardenhelpline, where you can upload a photo or two of the issue. Houseplant Hero Judy or another EMG volunteer will help you navigate your houseplant woes.

With a little extra attention to light, placement, and humidity, but not too much love in the form of water, your houseplants will survive the winter and be ready to thrive when spring returns.

Audition for Middlebury Community Players' spring musical of 'Nunsense' next week

Middlebury Community Players announces auditions for our spring 2026 production — the musical comedy sensation "Nunsense," by Don Goggin, to be performed at Town Hall Theater April 24 through May 3.

The production is being directed by Peter Kristoph with music direction by Annette Franklin and choreography by Kendra Gratton, who's also serving as assistant director. Dora Greven is stage managing and Kush Sharma is producing, mentored by Mary Longey.

"Nunsense" features five good-hearted, well-intentioned female characters who just happen to be nuns! When 52 sisters are accidentally poisoned by the convent's cook, the remaining five nuns of the Little Sisters of Hoboken put on a musical revue to raise money for the funerals of four still-unburied sisters. Highlighting their "secret talents" from their pre-convent lives, they sing, dance and entertain their way through a series of vaudeville-like numbers, often with great comic effect.

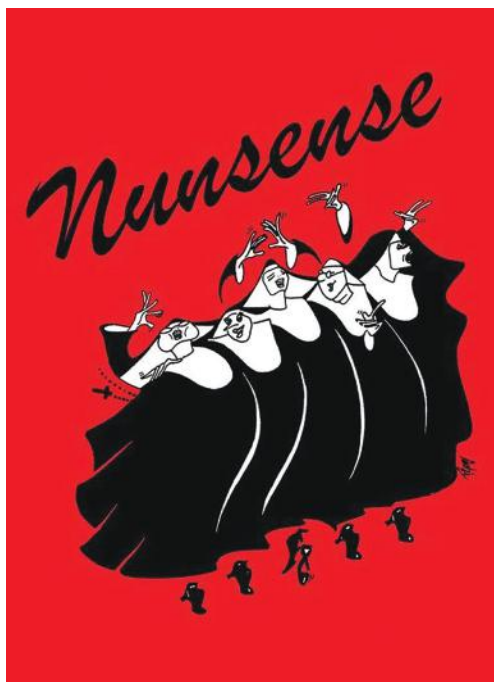
Audition details: Sunday, Jan. 11, at 1:30 p.m. (registration 1-1:30 p.m.) and Monday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. (registration 6:30-7 p.m.), in the Anderson Studio in the new wing of Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row, Middlebury. Entrance is through the lower plaza doors. Come to one audition session only. If unable to attend either of the audition sessions, contact the director at pkristoph@gmail.com.

Participants do not need to prepare anything in advance. They will be asked to read a scene or two from the play. And they will be taught a section of a song from the show, as well as a short piece of choreography. A script will be available for perusal at the Town Hall Theater box office, Monday-Friday between noon and 5 p.m., in advance of the audition dates.

CASTING ROLES:

SISTER MARY REGINA, MOTHER SUPERIOR (REVEREND MOTHER) - 50s-70s. A feisty Sophie Tucker-type who can't resist the spotlight. Vocal range: B3-F5 (Mezzo-Soprano)

SISTER MARY HUBERT, MISTRESS



Middlebury Community Players is casting for the spring 2026 musical "Nunsense!" Come audition on Jan. 11 and 12 in Middlebury.

IMAGE / CONCORD THEATRICALS

OF NOVICES - 40s-70s. The second in command, she is always competing with the Mother Superior. Vocal range: G3-F5 (Mezzo-Soprano)

SISTER ROBERT ANNE - 20s-40s. A streetwise tough character from Brooklyn and a constant source of aggravation for the Mother Superior. Vocal range: G3-D5 (Alto or Mezzo)

SISTER MARY AMNESIA - 20s-40s. Having lost her memory after a crucifix fell on her head, she is very sweet. Vocal range: Db4-C6 (Soprano)

SISTER MARY LEO - 20s. The novice who has entered the convent with the firm desire to become the first nun ballerina. Some ballet experience a plus, but not required. Vocal range: G#3-G5 (Mezzo-Soprano)

The five actresses will play their characters "straight" — that is, not exaggerated, "campy" versions of nuns. This is key in conveying the infectious humor of the play. First read-through will be Thursday, Jan. 22, at 7 p.m. Rehearsals will be Sunday afternoons and Tuesday and Thursday evenings each week beginning Jan. 25. Rehearsals may be adjusted based on cast availability.

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Casey

Casey is an extremely affectionate and lovely girl. We have a hard time getting a non-blurry picture of her because she is constantly trying to nudge and snuggle staff and visitors! She will make an amazing companion for someone who wants a super sweet and attentive kitty!



Cali

Cali is just as sweet as she is beautiful. It's hard not to fall in love with her the moment you meet her. She has lived with cats and dogs before and will make a family extremely lucky when she becomes a part of their family!

Fiona

Despite the perpetual look of surprise on her face, **Fiona** is a super confident and friendly girl. She arrived to us with her housemates and immediately took to her new surroundings and was nudging and loving on staff! She will make a great addition to any home.



Phoebe

Phoebe is a love! She was initially shy when she arrived with her previous housemates, but settled in quickly and now comes out to greet everyone from her favorite nap spot. She has a quiet, gentle nature and would love to return to being an adored house cat.

Sammy

I'm **Sammy**, a young chap who has a talent for keeping life entertaining. I'm looking for a calm home with someone who has the time to keep up with my very important schedule of play, enrichment, and being adored! I take my hobbies seriously, especially interior design, which involves remodeling my cardboard houses until they're juuust right. Get to know me with a kind, gentle hand, and I promise to show you my very best qualities: silliness, charm, and a whole lot of personality packed into one very busy bunny.



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PUZZLES

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Across

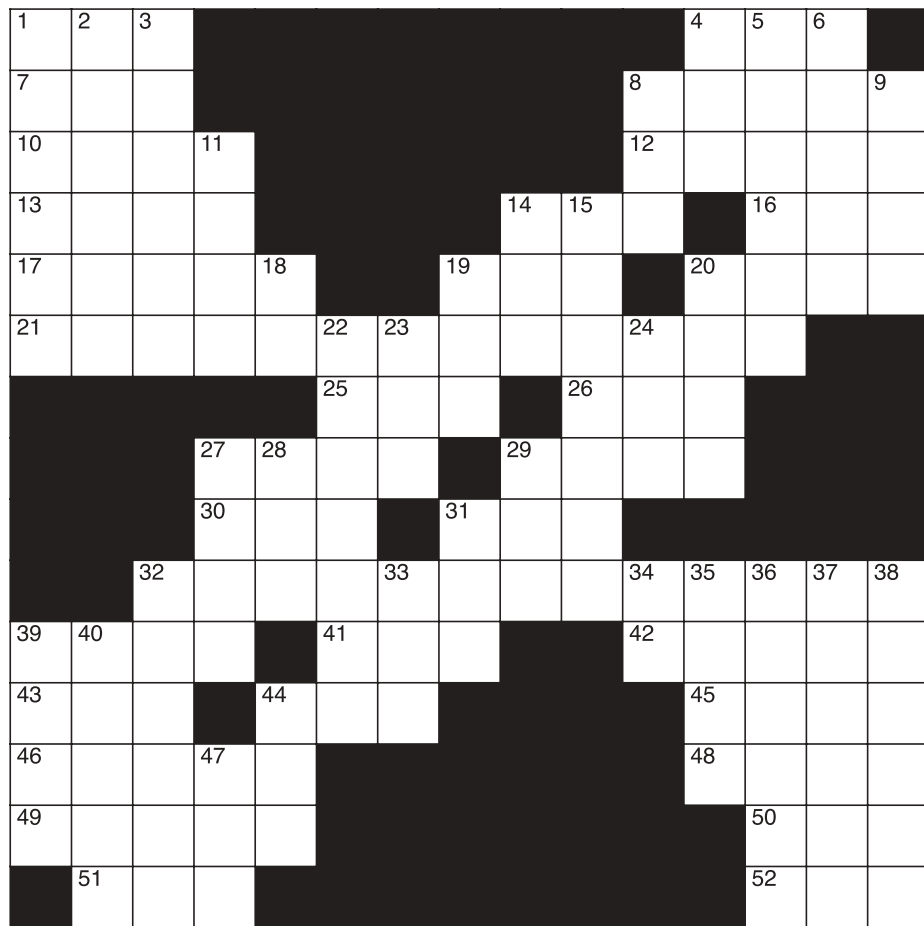
- 1. Former CIA
- 4. Language
- 7. Constrictor snake
- 8. Demand
- 10. Rich man
- 12. Short-tailed marten
- 13. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- 14. Superconducting super collider
- 16. International group of countries within the Americas
- 17. Sacred state for Muslims
- 19. Shock therapy
- 20. Engrave
- 21. Localities
- 25. Paddle

- 26. Periodical
- 27. Dishonestly gained money
- 29. Gain possession of
- 30. Actor DiCaprio
- 31. High schoolers' test
- 32. Mr. October
- 39. Sign of healing
- 41. One's grandmother
- 42. Entrap
- 43. One who simultaneously buys and sells
- 44. __ Francisco
- 45. Web-based data provider of marine life
- 46. Type of snake
- 48. Dark mark or stain
- 49. Member of the Salii

- 50. Former measure of length
- 51. CNN's founder
- 52. Witness

Down

- 1. Acquire
- 2. Console
- 3. Hunting expedition
- 4. Pie _ _ _ mode
- 5. Simple shoes for peasants
- 6. Eurasian shrub
- 8. Reciprocal of a sine
- 9. Work together in harmony
- 11. Grenade
- 14. File extension
- 15. Minute pores in a plant
- 18. Medal of Honor



9							3	
						5		2
5		3				4	7	
		7		5				
3				7			4	8
2			4			3		
	8	6						
				4	6	8	2	
				3		6		

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

- 19. Make a mistake
- 20. Advance slowly, as if by inches
- 22. Sandwich meat
- 23. An awkward stupid person
- 24. Strong tree
- 27. Commoner
- 28. Electroencephalo-graph
- 29. __ Mahal
- 31. Congressman
- 32. Disorderly crowd
- 33. 007's creator Fleming
- 34. Atomic #55
- 35. Part of a door
- 36. Short-tail martens
- 37. Baltimore ballplayer
- 38. Cuddle
- 39. Gang in "The Outsiders"
- 40. Of Croatia
- 44. Body cavity
- 47. Get free of

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 15.

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MUSIC

continued from page 4

of mandolin, guitar, fiddle, upright bass and banjo, the Town Hollers play a swath of fiddle tunes from down south and then add the reedy accordion and harmonica to blend in Quebecois traditions as well as an inventive bunch of originals that draw on Appalachian, Cajun, French and other traditions, with an occasional pinch of dawg.

Ukulele Clare and Rebecca Padula at Russell Memorial Library, Monkton: March 28

This entertaining duo draws deeply from the American Songbook and originals, featuring old and new favorites from jazz, country, folk, and blues. Rebecca backs her smoldering alto with guitar and ukulele. Ukulele Clare is a ukulele shenanigan instigator who brings a lighthearted style to the stage with her ukulele, banjo, and harmonica.



Sara Grey and Kieron Means at New Haven Library: April 16

Sara Grey and her son, Kieron Means, play American music, as distinct from Americana — theirs is the “real deal.” Old-time ballads, cowboy songs and Primitive Methodist hymns are all grist to their individual mill. Grey’s unique frailing banjo style and Means’ blues-inflected guitar are in perfect harmony and this instinctive family symbiosis is what sets them apart.

Helen Hummel at Lawrence Memorial Library (Bristol): May 21

Seasoned solo performer Helen Hummel hails from the Green Mountains of Vermont. Her songwriting reflects the rural landscape of her upbringing and explores many styles. Through classic and original songs, Helen fills out the limits of her vocal range and accompanies herself on bright and playful guitar. Now based in Western Massachusetts, Hummel regularly tours through greater New England performing as a solo act and with a trio.



NAHRE SOL

continued from page 4

In addition to her prolific and popular video work, Sol was the co-host of Sound Field, a music channel by PBS Digital Studios, alongside drummer L.A. Buckner, and has performed across North America and Europe as a soloist and chamber musician. She recently released *Alice in Wonderland*,

her debut album of original works for keyboard. Sol holds degrees from The Juilliard School and The Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. In 2023–24, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg named Sol as its first-ever Creator in Residence. She’s currently pursuing her Master’s in Composition at the Yale School of Music.

Performance Details

Pianist Nahre Sol will perform at Mahaney Arts Center’s Olin C. Robison Concert Hall on Friday, Jan. 16, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 for the general public, \$20 for Middlebury faculty/staff and alumni, \$10 for youth, and \$5 for Middlebury College students; information about free and discounted ticket programs is available at go.middlebury.edu/boxoffice. For tickets, further information, or assistance with accessibility services, call (802) 443-MIDD (6433) or visit middlebury.edu/arts.

Weybridge Haiku Contest seeks entries

OPEN YOUR HEARTS AND IMAGINATIONS TO THE WORLD AROUND US

In recent years, Weybridge’s annual haiku contest has asked writers to open their hearts and imaginations and address the challenging world around them. For this year’s eighth annual contest that prompt is more important than ever.

Julia Alvarez, Weybridge’s co-poet laureate and founder of the contest, best expresses that importance, “In dire and bleak times, there is even more of a need to find and create moments of connection and hope. Sometimes the ‘hope’ lies in accurate seeing and naming. A haiku can give us a way to frame and contain that darkness, and by sharing it with others we create community and connection, which might be the path forward.”

Like previous contests, judges also stress that writers have a blank slate to consider questions big and small, to write seriously and humorously.

“I would be sad if all the haikus were gloom and doom. In the past, we have had delightful haikus on the lives of squirrels, the joys of mud season, and playful ruminations on bears, bees, and birds,” said Martha Winant, a past contest winner and judge.

“Winning” is secondary say the contest’s Weybridge judges: Barbara Brosnan, Carol Calhoun and Kate Selbly, all contest winners. The contest’s purpose is to celebrate the joys of poetry for everyone, especially during April, National Poetry Month.

Begun in 2018, the contest was originally limited to Weybridge residents or writers with a Weybridge connection. Nine writers

submitted 70 haikus that year. The contest is now open to all Vermonters and submissions have steadily increased. In 2025, 107 writers submitted 423 haikus.

Haiku.

The poem should be in the haiku form — either the traditional form of three lines no more than seventeen syllables total (5-7-5) or a short three lines that captures the spirit of the haiku. There is a 10-haiku limit.

Eligibility.

Participants of all ages are encouraged to submit. There is a youth division, through high school, and an adult division. You do not have to be a Weybridge resident but must be a Vermonter. No experience needed. Give it a try!

Deadline.

Submit haikus to George Bellerose, contest administrator, by Feb. 27. Email georgebellerose@gmavt.net or 80 Meetinghouse Lane, Weybridge, VT 05753. He will forward them to the three judges. Winners will be announced at the end of March to celebrate Poetry Month in April.

Awards.

Judges select three youth winners, both Weybridge and Vermont, and three adult winners, Weybridge and Vermont. Judges also create “Best of...” categories, such as Best Haikus about Climate Change.

Winners can choose from books by Weybridge’s co-poet laureates, Alvarez and novelist/poet Jay Parini, as well from books by Weybridge novelist Chris Bohjalian.

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"One of the unique features of this home is the versatility of the spaces within. Originally built with hospitality in mind, the bedrooms have private bathrooms and are "away" from one another affording the occupant plenty of privacy. In addition, the location at Old Pasture Lane provides the owner a quiet location, distanced from nearby neighbors while the amenities of Middlebury's happening town center are easily accessed. And for the cyclists out there: this location ties you into many paved road route options!"

~ Amey Ryan, Listing Agent



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Rokeby Museum's virtual book group to gather January-March

Rokeby Museum's virtual book group is gathering January through March to reflect on three books. Don't worry you don't have to leave your couch... it's all virtual. Here are the details:

When: Tuesday, Jan. 20, 6-7 p.m.

The Book: "Flee North: A Forgotten Hero and the Fight for Freedom in Slavery's Borderland" by Scott Shane, follows Thomas Smallwood, who bought his own freedom, and led many others out of slavery.

When: Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6-7 p.m.

The Book: "The Message," by Ta-Nehisi Coates in which Coates explores the urgent need to untangle ourselves from the destructive myths that shape our world — and our own souls — and embrace the liberating power of even the most difficult truths.

When: Tuesday, March 17, 6-7 p.m.

The Book: "The Zorg: A Tale of Greed and Murder that Inspired the Abolition of Slavery," by Siddharth Kara. The series of events that doomed the 1780 journey of the ship, Zorg, helped that voyage emerge as the first undeniable argument against slavery.

Sign up links and more info is available at Rokeby.org. Participation is free. All are welcome.

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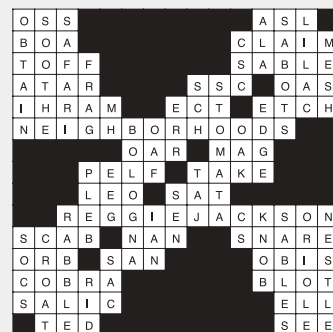
the real estate experts good to know!



PUZZLE

SOLUTIONS

Jan. 8, 2026



9	7	8	5	2	4	1	3	6
6	1	4	3	9	7	5	8	2
5	2	3	6	8	1	4	7	9
8	4	7	9	5	3	2	6	1
3	6	5	1	7	2	9	4	8
2	9	1	4	6	8	3	5	7
4	8	6	2	1	5	7	9	3
1	3	9	7	4	6	8	2	5
7	5	2	8	3	9	6	1	4



**17 STONEGATE DR. MIDDLEBURY
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**29 MOUNT PLEASANT DRIVE, BRANDON
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Welcome to this inviting 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom single-family Cape located in Middlebury. Ideally situated close to downtown, schools, shopping and dining. Inside features an open-concept layout that creates a seamless flow between living spaces—perfect for both everyday living and entertaining. The large primary bedroom includes a private ensuite bathroom. One of the two additional bedrooms is located on the first floor. A dedicated office space adds valuable functionality for remote work or study. The backyard, complete with an above-ground pool, is ideal for summer fun and relaxation. Whether on the back deck or in the back yard, you will have a perfect spot to unwind and take in stunning sunset views.



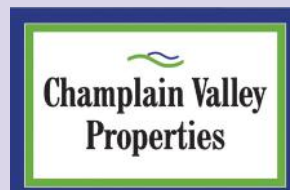
This beautifully maintained 3-bedroom, 3-bath ranch is both spacious and warm and cozy. The natural sunlight in the living spaces is excellent. Many recent updates include solar panels, newer roof, newer custom kitchen and stainless-steel appliances, and paved driveway. The very large primary bedroom has a fabulous bathroom with double sinks, both a jetted tub and oversized walk-in shower, and great storage. The .64 acre lot features established garden areas for both flowers and veggies, raspberry patch and lovely mountain views from the large deck. Lower level has a large family room, workout space, a large workshop, and excellent storage. This is a wonderful house in a fabulous location!

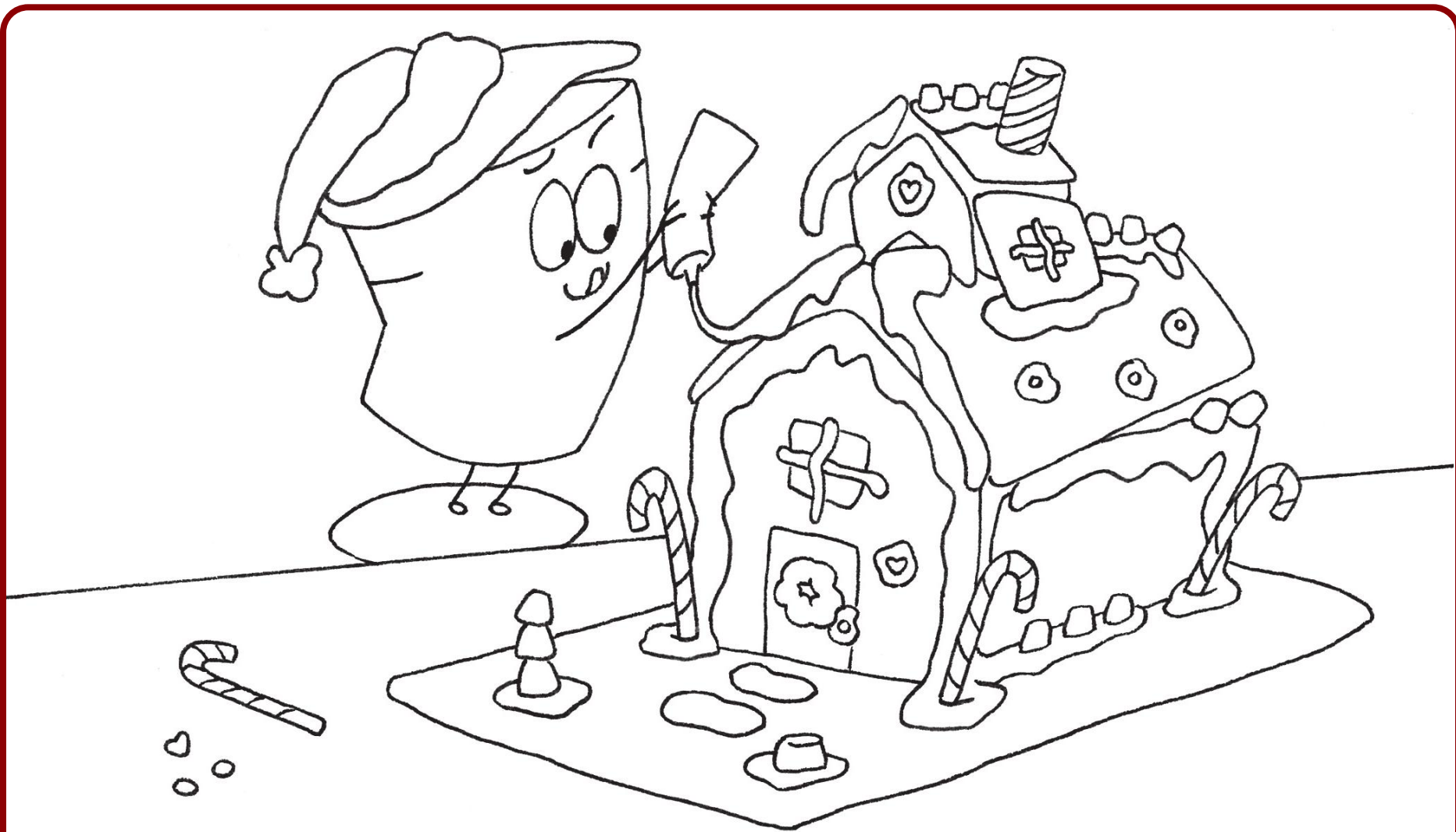


Open House this Saturday, January 10 from 10 AM to 12 Noon!



**70 Court Street, Middlebury, VT
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Feel free to tear out this coloring page or go to addisonindependent.com/contests for a printable version.

Winners will be announced in the January 22nd edition of the Addison Independent.

Two winners from each age group will win a prize from one of our sponsors that can be picked up at the Addy Indy office through February.

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