



Hidden lines

Skier takes an engineer's approach to backcountry. See the short film in Middlebury. Arts + Leisure.



Home ice

MUHS girls' hockey goalie makes tough saves during home game against U-32. See Page 1B.



Craftspeople

Local teacher brings ancient Japanese boat building skills to the college. See Page 3A.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Locals push back on ICE's actions

Show their solidarity with immigrants

By MARIN HOWELL
ADDISON COUNTY — As the number of recent arrests, detentions and acts of violence by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials climbs across the country, local citizens are joining Americans across the country in growing numbers to push back.

In addition to well-attended protests against ICE this past weekend in Vergennes, Bristol and Middlebury, a group of Addison County residents is taking another approach to help members of the immigrant community feel welcomed and safe.

The group is leading an effort called "Signs of Solidarity," an

initiative that's popped up in other parts of the country and asks businesses to display signs showing support for the immigrant community in their establishment. It also seeks to create private spaces for employees that ICE officials wouldn't be able to access without a warrant signed by a judge or a property owner's permission.

Along with the signs, the effort also offers resources for

community members about their rights in the event of an encounter with ICE.

"We're a small group of concerned citizens, and we're concerned about the safety of our community," said Theresa MacCallum, a community member involved in the effort. "We were just discussing, 'How can we have a community where people

(See *Solidarity*, Page 10A)

Vergennes could vote on a local option tax on March 3

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

VERGENNES — Voters will likely be asked on Town Meeting Day to weigh in on implementing a local option tax, which officials say could generate roughly \$200,000 a year for Vergennes coffers.

City councilors have yet to

approve the ballot measure, but intend to do so in the coming weeks.

The city is considering applying all three possible local option taxes, or LOTs, allowed under state laws — that is a 1% tax on rooms & meals, alcohol

(See *Vergennes*, Page 7A)



Remembering Renee

SOMBER-FACED PROTESTERS at Triangle Park in Middlebury Saturday evening hold candles in memory of Renee Good, a Minneapolis mother who was shot and killed by a federal ICE agent on Jan. 7. About 300 showed up in Middlebury that night. Others protested in Bristol and Vergennes. See photos on Page 11A.

Photo by Jim Mendell

Waterline upgrade in Bristol progresses

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Bristol selectboard members on Monday got an update on the Bristol West project, the second phase in an ongoing effort to replace around half of the lines in the town's aging water distribution system.

Bristol voters in November 2024 agreed to bond for up to \$3.95 million to support the Bristol West project, which will consist of some or all of Munsill Avenue and Maple, Pleasant, Church, Elm, Taylor, West, Park, and School streets. The project is expected to take place over the 2026 and 2027 construction seasons.

The first leg of the multi-phased replacement effort focused on Pine Street. Future "Bristol East" and

(See *Bristol waterline*, Page 14A)

ACSD on cusp of limited school choice

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The Addison Central School District board is considering a policy change that would give Middlebury-area parents more flexibility in determining which among the ACSD's soon-to-be five K-5 schools they'd like to

enroll their children.

At issue are proposed amendments to ACSD's policy C30, which governs school residency. That policy currently requires students to attend the school in the town where they live, unless there are emergency

(See *School choice*, Page 7A)

Middlebury struggles to finalize town budget

Board considering revenue tweaks

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury selectboard has made progress in reducing the property tax impacts of a draft fiscal year 2027 municipal budget, but board members said they know they'll have to do more by Jan. 27, the date by which they must finalize a spending plan that voters will field at their March 2 annual meeting.

And based on deliberations at their Tuesday, Jan. 13 budget meeting, town officials seem more inclined to dip into local option tax surplus money to further blunt an FY27 property tax increase, rather than make more cuts.

Driven by such costs as debt service on the \$17 million Ilsley Library expansion and renovation project, contracted

increases in town employee wages and benefits, and needed upgrades to town infrastructure, the selectboard in early December was looking at an FY27 budget calling for \$16,525,287 in town spending — a 13.54% increase that would have demanded a 14.8-cent hike in the current municipal tax rate of 93 cents per \$100 in property value.

Convinced that such an increase wouldn't fly with local

voters, town officials sharpened their pencils and returned to the selectboard on Tuesday with a revised spending proposal of \$15,981,545, reflecting a 9.85% increase that would require a 10.9-cent hike in the municipal tax rate.

A penny on Middlebury's tax rate raises roughly \$100,000. The municipal rate is only part of the overall property tax liability. There's also the education tax,

(See *Middlebury*, Page 14A)



By the way

The Addison County Housing Coalition invites community members to participate in a Thursday, Jan. 22, candlelight walk and vigil to commemorate Vermont Homelessness Awareness Day. The event will take place from 4:30-6 p.m. in downtown Middlebury. Participants will gather at College Park (across from the Academy Street Bus Stop) for a candlelight walk down Main Street, culminating at the Town Green Gazebo.

(See *By the way*, Page 7A)

Monkton general store in the works

By MARIN HOWELL

MONKTON — For over 16 years, Adrienne Raphael helped implement various programs supporting communities overseas through her career in the international development sector. These days, her work is focused on a community much closer to home — her hometown of Monkton, where she's working to open a general store and coffee shop.

(See *Monkton*, Page 8A)

OV schools to warn 3% spending hike

By J.T. PRICE

BRANDON — After strenuous attention to questions of transparency extending from last week's meeting, the Otter Valley Unified Union School board voted to approve an FY27 budget that would come in at \$28,841,285, or a 2.92% increase from last year — bettering the board's target of 3%.

(See *OVUU*, Page 8A)



Like clockwork

STEVE WARNER, FOREGROUND, and brother Mike Warner methodically check the two-dozen machines and the cows they are milking at a Monument Farms milking parlor on Saturday morning. They keep the operations moving and manage to collect tens of thousands of pounds of milk from nearly 600 cows in just one morning. See more photos on today's Ag Pages, 12A and 13A.

Independent photo/Steve James

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Middlebury sewer plant upgrades come into focus

Picture for \$50M upgrade is filled in with some new equipment selected

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — A voter-approved, \$49.5 million makeover of Middlebury's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) won't begin for another two years, but behind the scenes, town officials are starting to make big decisions on how that critical project will unfold.

On Thursday, Jan. 8, the town's Infrastructure Committee unanimously backed two major technology overhauls at the WWTP designed to make the facility more efficient for the next 20 years: A centrifuge, to de-water waste coming into the plant; and an indirectly heated biosolids dryer, to reduce the final wastewater treatment residue into a marketable Class A fertilizer.

The committee's recommendations will now move up the pipeline to the selectboard for final approval as the town readies for final design of the 25-year-old WWTP at 243 Industrial Ave. The plant was due for an overhaul four years ago. Replacement parts are now difficult to find for the plant, which in 2024 treated around 378 million gallons of domestic and industrial wastewater. In addition, the facility receives 2.5 million gallons of septage per year from haulers of septic tank waste trucked in from properties throughout the county.

The current WWTP uses an antiquated belt-press for dewatering sludge, which is then stabilized with lime to create a Class EQ ("exceptional quality," by federal standards) sludge that's then applied to farm fields.

"Those (belt press/lime treatment processes) don't fit the future," explained Jennie Auster, an engineer with the firm Wright-Pierce, which is helping Middlebury navigate the design of its WWTP makeover. "We looked at this (project) as a blank slate, as far as what could be put in there."

Equipping the Middlebury WWTP with a centrifuge and a biosolids dryer would allow the plant to operate with far less troubleshooting and substantially reduce its biosolids output, according to Wright-Pierce. That "less is better" goal becomes even more desirable given the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) rigorous standards for Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, better known as "PFAS." PFAS are synthetic chemicals found in many conventional products, including clothing, paper packaging for food and sludge. The chemicals accumulate in body tissues, and exposure to certain PFAS has been linked to increased risk of thyroid cancer and liver damage.

Middlebury WWTP sludge is regularly tested and thus far hasn't exceeded an EPA threshold for PFAS that would require the substance to be landfilled at a substantial cost. Local officials believe that reducing the biosolids to a cake-like consistency would reduce the town's exposure to a big landfill bill.

Wright Pierce evaluated three de-watering equipment alternatives for the Middlebury WWTP, including a centrifuge, a rotary press — a slowly rotating

"Those (belt press/lime treatment processes) don't fit the future."
— Jennie Auster



THIS BIOSOLIDS DRYER is being advanced as part of a series of major upgrades at the Middlebury wastewater treatment plant. Photo courtesy of Wright-Pierce

cylindrical screen that compresses sludge under pressure — and a screw press, which uses rotation and the compression of a screw to remove water.

Auster recommended the centrifuge, which would use centrifugal force generated by high-speed rotation to separate sludge solids from liquid. The liquid would be recycled through the WWTP system and the solids would be passed through the drying process.

A centrifuge could be accommodated within one of the current WWTP buildings, according to Auster. It's an upgrade that would cost an estimated \$4,713,000 in operating costs during the 20-year life expectancy of the project, compared to \$8.4 million for the rotary press and \$8.7 million for the screen press, according to Wright-Pierce.

Another advantage: "The centrifuge removes the most water at the front-end of the process," Auster said.

Middlebury WWTP Superintendent Jeremy Rathbun said his department's first choice was the rotary press, which could reduce sludge to around 16% solids, as opposed to around 21% with a centrifuge. But WWTP officials have modeled all three

technologies and would be content with a centrifuge, he added.

"I think you could make the centrifuge work here; it's a very reliable system," he said.

The 21% solid material would then move on to a drying process, to get it to the 90% level. Auster said her company checked out these four drying options for the Middlebury WWTP: A belt dryer, a rotary drum dryer, a paddle dryer, and a biosolids dryer. Auster said the latter choice best fits Middlebury's needs, in part because it could be accommodated within existing infrastructure; would carry a relatively low (by industry standards) project cost of \$12.4 million; and is readily available (along with servicing) in the U.S.

It should also be noted a biosolids dryer would cost an estimated \$28.4 million to operate during the 20-year life expectancy of the upgraded WWTP — the lowest of the four sludge drying options presented by Wright-Pierce.

Middlebury WWTP will need to have a separate storage space for the dried sludge, a product

that can generate dust, Auster acknowledged. Town officials are hopeful owners of the 1,500-acre Adams Farm will be able to spread the Middlebury biosolids in their new, dryer form.

Selectman and Infrastructure Committee member Fred Dunnington asked if the new upgrades might generate unpleasant odors. Dunnington — who has the benefit of hindsight as the shire town's former, longtime town planner — harkened back to the pre-2000 WWTP located off Lucius Shaw Lane. Aromas that periodically wafted from that plant on some days gave rise to the derisive nickname of "Stinkbury." The town at one point gave property tax discounts to Seymour Street residents in recognition of the odors that forced them to keep windows shut and their clotheslines barren.

Auster assured Dunnington that the odors would be treated within the self-contained biosolids drying equipment.

She's been looking at additional efficiencies that could save Middlebury more money in its

wastewater treatment process. Among her ideas: Establishing an on-site water system at the plant that she said could save \$2.4 million over the 20-year cycle of the improved WWTP. The savings would be derived from not having to use municipal water for plant operations.

An additional \$5 million in savings could be derived from powering the dewatering/drying operations with natural gas, as opposed to electricity. Members of the Middlebury Energy Committee will be closely monitoring that discussion. The town will need to decide on natural gas or electricity within the next four months, Auster said, noting the effort to get the WWTP project to final design.

Emmalee Cherington, director of engineering for Middlebury Public Works, said final design work for the WWTP project could take up to two years. A construction period of up to three years will ensue. This would lead to project completion in 2030.

Rathbun is excited to see progress.

"By proceeding with this design, I think we would minimize risk as much as humanly possible..." he said. "I think it's going to give the users of Middlebury a very good end product."

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

"I think you could make the centrifuge work here; it's a very reliable system."
— Jeremy Rathbun

Commodore Club turns corner, awarded large grant

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

VERGENNES — The Little City's young Commodore Club learned Tuesday it is the recipient of a hefty state grant that founder Martha DeGraaf said will allow the afterschool and out-of-school program to become a permanent fixture in Vergennes.

The city-run initiative quickly filled the gap left when the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vergennes ceased operations last March. Now it could get up to \$75,000 per year for the next

three years as an awardee of the state Agency of Education's program track grant. That amount would add about \$6,250 a month to the club's current \$2,400 monthly budget that it uses to pay for rent, salaries, food and other expenses.

"This grant represents a significant increase and allows us to move from a short-term operation to a sustainable, long-term program," said DeGraaf, who is also

the recreation and programming coordinator for the city.

The city-run program, which has 62 5th- to 12th-graders registered from Vergennes, Ferrisburgh, Pantons, Addison and Waltham, will ideally be run on donations and grants, said City Manager Ron Redmond.

This is the first time to his knowledge that the city has ever implemented a program of this

kind. Up until now, he said, the endeavor has been like "flying the plane and building it at the same time."

DeGraaf continues to plan for other long-term investments, namely the purchase of the clubhouse at 20 Armory Lane, which used to house the Boys and Girls Club; the Commodore Club currently rents the space from the B&G Club board.

The city entered into a facilities use agreement last March that expires on Town Meeting Day, when they were hoping to have voters cast yes or no ballots on the purchase of the building, likely for \$1, creating a sense of urgency on DeGraaf's part.

But on Saturday, DeGraaf and Redmond learned the board is able to continue the current arrangement for the time being, which they are working on solidifying until November with the hope of putting a question about the purchase of the building

on next November's general election ballot.

DeGraaf and Redmond intend to present the city council with a draft of the updated agreement in February.

"We have had informal conversations with board members (not the board) about the city paying \$1 plus closing costs for 20 Armory Lane, but those details have not yet been put in writing," Redmond said.

The news of the board's new deadline on the sale of the building gives the city more time to plan.

"Realizing that we now have more time, we can now literally land the plane and take time to develop more complete financials that we can show to our voters in advance of the November election," Redmond said.

MUNICIPAL ALLOCATIONS

The news of the grant comes about a week after Ferrisburgh allocated \$1,500 in its budget proposal for the Commodore

Club. Vergennes and Pantons had already agreed to include \$5,000 and \$1,500 in their respective budgets, and DeGraaf was preparing to ask Addison and Waltham for an appropriation.

During that Ferrisburgh selectboard meeting when the funds were discussed, members discussed the possibility of contributing a larger sum of money in the future when the Commodore Club had a firmer plan in place, which could come in the near future.

"This grant helps us establish a permanent afterschool program and invest in quality staff and meaningful programming for kids in our area," DeGraaf said.

"It also demonstrates that the Agency of Education values after-school opportunities in our community. By working closely with ANWSD afterschool programs, we are building something strong and impactful for local families."

"This grant represents a significant increase and allows us to move from a short-term operation to a sustainable, long-term program."
— Martha DeGraaf

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Jan 14 - Jan 20

Vergennes boatbuilder is taking craft to a new level

Brooks hones skills learned in traditional Japanese way and passes them on

By J.T. PRICE

VERGENNES/MIDDLEBURY — In fishing villages and municipalities along the coastline of Japan, a Vergennes man is known by the keepers of ancient traditions simply as “the American.” Although, in one particular village, Douglas Brooks says, they call him “the crazy American. Because nobody could believe that a foreigner would come along and want to study this craft.”

Brooks is bringing building practices learned in Japan to Middlebury College students this month, and will work on a documentary film on his work later this winter.

“This craft” is that of building wooden boats, or “ukaibune,” the creation of which, depending on the exact type in question, dates back some 1,300 years to Gifu, where cormorant fishing first took root in Japan. Some 500 years ago, an emperor showed up there with imperial caravan in tow to observe the cormorant fishermen at their work, which brought out the noblemen in imitation of his example. Today, and in fact for the past 125 years, cormorant fishing aboard traditional wooden vessels is performed mainly for tourists. Prior to the mid-20th century, the majority of those tourists were Japanese, still following the example of that long-ago emperor.

Brooks showed up more recently. His first trip to Japan was in 1990, shortly before his 30th birthday, at the behest of Nobu Hayashi, a former college roommate who is a native of Hiroshima. Brooks had been working for five years as the resident boatbuilder at the Maritime Museum of San Francisco, helping the curator maintain the collection of historic boats and making replicas for public exhibition. For years he had been saying “no” to Hayashi’s repeated entreaties to his dear friend to come visit his native country, until one day a plane ticket arrived in the mail. Hayashi had finally given Brooks no choice but to oblige.

As opposed to the average



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE STUDENTS work in silence to hone wooden pieces into the timber frame of a traditional Japanese tea house. This J-term class uses hands-on construction to explore the technical aspects of Japanese carpentry and to enlighten themselves on the cultural underpinnings of apprentice learning vs. Western styles of verbal learning.

Photo courtesy of Douglas Brooks

tourist to Japan, Brooks was “always pursuing boats,” and he had had his fill of the well-known sites before his focus turned toward the water. It was fairly early in his interactions with Japanese masters of boatbuilding that Brooks realized how in attempting to maintain the master-apprentice system these builders had written almost nothing down.

In the United States, the apprentice system died out, by and large, over a hundred years ago. “The Industrial Revolution did not just industrialize the means of production; it industrialized education,” says Brooks. “We had a birth of vocational schools. We took craft training into a school-based situation. Whereas in Japan, it remained ... largely an oral tradition.”

Brooks was utterly stunned to recognize as much, as the realization dawned on him that these ancient practices were at risk of dying out with the masters who held the secreted knowledge.

He recounts an exchange with one of the first boatbuilders to whom he apprenticed himself. The boatbuilder brought out a plank of wood and said, “These are my father’s drawings. These are my grandfather’s drawings.”

It didn’t take long for Brooks to see, “Wait a second, these are all incomplete. You can’t build a boat from any of these (drawings).”

“That’s right,” the master said, looking him in the eye. “There’s information missing. Those are

my secrets.”

Through tact and sensitive inquiry over tea, Brooks was able to learn those secrets.

“You have no idea how unthinkable it is for me to share this with you,” the master told Brooks.

Years later, at a different apprenticeship, another master told Brooks, “If you’d have walked in here 10 years ago, I’d have thrown you out.”

When another discovered that Brooks’s father had served on the American side during World War II, the man and his wife took the deepest of breaths. And the man asked, “Doko?” Or ‘Where.’

Europe, said Brooks.

And the master breathed a sigh of relief.

What had changed to encourage the sharing of

boatbuilding secrets? All of these builders, to a man, were aging, and following the upheaval of World War II and Japan’s joining the world economy, the young men who would formerly have served as apprentices had moved to the big cities to work for multinational corporations or the like. Brooks has now apprenticed to nine boatbuilders in Japan; he was the sole apprentice to seven.

“There’s no way to reverse-engineer (an ancient Japanese craft),” Brooks says. “Unless you work alongside a master, there’s no way to interpret what little documentation they leave

“There’s no way to reverse-engineer [an ancient Japanese craft]. Unless you work alongside a master, there’s no way to interpret what little documentation they leave behind.”

— Douglas Brooks

Middlebury to vote \$1.5M water bond

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury residents on Town Meeting Day will be asked to support a \$1.5 million bond to complete the final stage of a three-phased, 11-year effort to replace an almost 10,000-foot-long stretch of aging water main adjacent to Foote St., between Route 7 and Quarry Road.

It was in 2008 that the town began replacing the existing 6-inch, cast-iron Foote Street water main with a new polyethylene-wrapped ductile iron main. The project, according to Middlebury Department of Public Works Engineering Director Emmalee Cherington, was broken into three phases to spread out the financial impact.

With the first two project phases completed back in 2015, the remaining work involves replacement of 2,600 feet of water main between Route 7 and Lower Foote Street, with a 12-inch ductile iron main.

“This effort will strengthen the town’s (water system) redundancy and its ability to provide consistent flow to the storage tanks on Chipman Hill. In addition to waterline improvements, the completion of the project will allow the town to pave the section of roadway from Route 7 to just north of the Lower Foote Street intersection,” Cherington said.

The town is applying for \$1.5 million through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to support the project with a low-interest loan, which would in turn soften the impact on municipal water rates. Public support for the project through a bond vote would greatly enhance the town’s prospect of securing the DWSRF loan, according to Cherington.

“It would be a very minimal impact on water rates, because it’s only a 2% interest loan, tracked

over a 20-year cycle,” Cherington said, adding, “sometimes they also forgive a portion of the load, and that opportunity might be available as well.”

That said, it will be a competitive application process. So Middlebury will be competing with other communities for a finite amount of money. Fortunately, Cherington already secured a \$500,000 loan toward the Foote Street project through last year’s DWSRF application cycle.

If Middlebury voters approve the bond on March 3 and the loan comes through, Cherington hopes to put the project out to bid this summer. The DWSRF loan would require the work to be completed within two years.

“This (water line) would be a relatively simple installation,” she said, saying the work could be accomplished during a single summer construction season.

This year will indeed be a big one for water projects in the county’s shire town. Cherington said a “considerable amount” of work has already been done to prepare Chipman Hill for the new, 1.3-million-gallon municipal water storage tank. It was in March of 2023 that Middlebury residents voted 948-102 in favor of the new water tank, designed to supplement the current, 1.5-million-gallon receptacle in that same Chipman Hill area that now delivers municipal water to 6,000 year-round consumers.

Cherington said folks will begin to see the new tank go vertical in May or June, with a three-month construction timeframe.

And in other water news, Middlebury is now searching for an additional municipal well source. The Middlebury Infrastructure Committee is scheduled to be updated on that search on Thursday, Jan. 8.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.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
Congregational Church of Middlebury

Join us 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 for two decades. The author of *The Curious Listener*, *Tin Pan Opera*, and *An Introduction to America’s Music*, he has presented at several national and international conferences on music history.

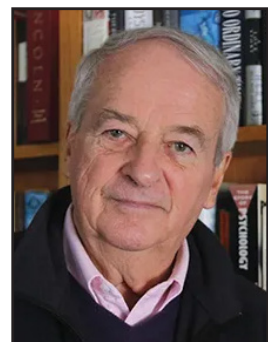


Only in Later Life: A Condition Like No Other

Tuesday, January 27, 1:30 - 3:00 PM
Congregational Church of Middlebury

Fitzgerald famously stated “there are no second acts in American lives,” but this class will challenge that idea. In the first five or six decades of life, we are preoccupied with making our material mark and forging sustaining relationships. When those challenges are behind us, we become, if we allow ourselves, liberated to ask the greater question: What has it all meant?

Richard Hawley, Ph.D, is a lifelong teacher, writer, and musician. He has published 30 books and dozens of articles, stories and poems. Over the past 14 years, he has published six volumes of his ongoing project, *On My Way Out*, a sustained consideration of what, in his words, “later life has to say.”



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Editorials

We're all stronger and safer through 'Signs for Solidarity'

In a page-one story in today's *Addison Independent*, we highlight the effort of area residents to support Addison County's immigrant community through "Signs of Solidarity." That initiative brings awareness of the civil and legal rights of employers and their immigrant employees to stave off illegal requests or actions by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents. Under Trump, ICE forces have been greatly expanded and instructed to use what many Americans are describing (and showing through video) as brutal, and seemingly illegal, tactics to arrest, question and deport as many immigrants as possible — often without due process.

Vermont has witnessed such arrests, but nothing compared to what's been happening in the nation's larger Democratic-led cities and in blue states like Minnesota — the current hot spot of Trump's dictatorial ire.

The purpose of "Signs for Solidarity" is to counter the fear ICE imposes on the immigrant community. And, as area doctor Jack Mayer says, don't be fooled that ICE isn't actively detaining members of our communities today, noting that over 100 Vermonters were detained by ICE officers in 2025 with several individuals being arrested in their workplace.

"I think we're going to see more of this," Mayer said. "Even though probably most Vermonters would say, 'Oh, well ICE is not here,' they are here, and they're becoming more emboldened as they're recruiting more and more ICE agents."

While being prepared is part of the effort's focus, another aspect is to encourage area businesses to designate a safe space inside their offices where immigrant employees could be if ICE comes to a business unannounced and without a judicial warrant. Such knowledge, Mayer said, "will just give people more of a sense of what is legal and what are the boundaries of ICE's jurisdiction."

To that end, area businesses are invited to learn more about "Signs of Solidarity" and to help make Addison County's immigrant community "feel safe and welcome," Mayer said. Importantly, the more businesses that sign up, the safer (united in solidarity) everyone in the community is.

Sadly, safety is a valid concern. Today, the number of people detained in ICE facilities stands at 68,000-plus as of last month — an infamous record only Trump could be proud of. Moreover, ICE-inflicted unrest in Minneapolis recently resulted in ICE officer Jonathan Ross shooting and killing Renee Good at point-blank range when she attempted, unarmed and without any criminal reason for the officer to detain her, to drive away from him in her car. What's almost worse, is that the U.S. Department of Justice under Attorney General Pam Bondi is refusing to pursue any investigation of the officer's conduct (as is common with any other police action), while Trump — with his dictatorial impulse carried to an extreme — suggested that Good's "bad attitude" was reason enough to be killed. Combined it's a shocking decline of our democracy, and a rapid move toward a police state.

By being prepared, Vermonters can hopefully avoid the worst of ICE's tendency to use excessive force in what are often illegal ways, while offering support to a valued part of our communities. More information about the initiative can be found by emailing indivisiblemiddlebury@gmail.com.

Angelo Lynn

Guest edit

Sanders: Trump's march to authoritarianism must end

Editor's note: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) released the following statement this Monday regarding the Trump administration's investigations into Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell and Trump's political opponents. More recently, he's also called out Trump for ICE's irresponsible attacks on citizens in Minnesota.

"Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell is a conservative Republican. I voted against his nomination based on policy disagreements. In a democracy, debate and disagreement are normal.

"But Donald Trump does not "disagree" with his opponents. In his pursuit of absolute power, he attempts to destroy anyone who stands in his way. He is actively prosecuting Powell not because the Fed Chair broke the law, but because he won't bend the knee to Donald Trump. This is what happens in dictatorships, not democracies.

"When Senator Mark Kelly spoke out against Donald Trump's authoritarian rhetoric and threats toward political opponents, Trump didn't disagree. He had his Defense Department investigate Kelly for misconduct and threatened to have him executed.

"When Letitia James, the Attorney General of New York, enforced the law in her state — and won the case based on the evidence — Trump had her charged with a crime.

"From former FBI Director James Comey to Special Counsel Jack Smith, Senator Adam Schiff, Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, John Bolton, Mark Milley, Anthony Fauci, and Presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama, Donald Trump doesn't disagree with his opponents.

"He seeks to intimidate and destroy them as part of his march to authoritarianism.

"Republicans, Democrats and independents have profound disagreements today regarding some of the major issues facing our country. But there is one issue on which we must be united. We must not allow political disagreement to become a crime. We must not allow our great country, the United States of America, to become an authoritarian society.

"Trump's persecution of his political opponents must end."

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Ice Out for Good

A PROTESTER IN Vergennes this past Sunday holds up a sign tying the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to a lack of courage. Protests this past weekend in the Little City, Middlebury and Bristol joined others across the country in condemning ICE's actions following the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Renee Good by ICE officer Jonathan Ross in Minneapolis.

Photo by Jim Mendell

Ruminations on trip to 'Old South'

Recently we drove from Vermont to Savannah, Georgia. Down through the steel towns in Western Pennsylvania and back up along the East Coast. It was a journey sparked by reading "Sleeping with the Ancestors," the Rokeby Museum book club selection last year that made me realize I knew almost nothing about the "Old South." What I didn't realize, until we were there, was how strong and wrong my prejudices and preconceptions were.

In Winchester, we walked the streets of a town that had changed hands 71 times during the Civil War. In Florence we were at the epicenter of the Civil Rights Movement. In Charleston, we visited Boone Hall and learned about the power and creativity of the Gullah People. They endured through the culture of slavery perpetrated by rich, white planters. They endure still as descendants share their culture of art, history, music, language and culinary skills with the wider public.

In Savannah we were introduced to the city laid out by James Oglethorpe. His dream: a colony that would be intentional, beautiful, equalitarian and thriving; a refuge for those excluded from the dominant culture in England, especially those unjustly imprisoned. His requirements: no slavery, no lawyers, no rum and no Catholics (for fear they would encourage the Spanish in Florida to take over the colony).

Coming home, we stopped in Williamsburg, recalling childhood visits with our families and the short form of history that we learned from elementary school textbooks.

Driving south, I had been increasingly angry about the way a small group of rich white men were taking over "my" America and destroying a way of life that for many of us included hard work, honesty, compassion, peace and neighborliness. In my mind, I concocted theories of "billionaires' disease" — a form of addiction that is contagious and seemingly irreversible. It is characterized by losing the ability to experience satisfaction or to appreciate nature, kindness or other people. It destroys the individual from the inside out, first eliminating their capacity for empathy, then undermining their sense of truth or right, and finally spreading beyond the individual to entire families, communities and nations.

I despaired of finding an intervention or treatment that could cure those afflicted with this disease. How might they arrive at the desire to find healing? Where were the peer recovery coaches who could or would want to help them? How might those of us suffering from their actions help to change them?

Spending time in the sites of American history that had been through similar periods of distress, I experienced the hope that perhaps we are in a cycle (See *Ruminations*, Page 5A)

Ways of Seeing

By Cheryl Mitchell



'Fishing' doesn't mean 'catching'

My brother Marty waved goodbye to his wife last summer as she wished us luck in a way that says "you'll need it" as he added his bait box tackle and empty Igloo Playmate to the back seat next to mine.

Up north, near where my brother lives, they have general stores that sell whatever you need for anything from fixing dinner to fixing your toilet. So Marty and I stopped in at Matt & Molly's Meat, Seafood and Plumbing Supply. I took a left at the U-bends and a right at the ribeyes and pulled out a six-pack of Budweiser. Marty entered through the seafood section and straight past the sirloins to make his own choice from the beverage section.

We set off for our day of fishing. The intent is to replace each beer in the cooler with a trout. It doesn't always happen that way, but let's be honest ... it never happens that way.

As we approached the pond, Marty spoke with an odd duality. He seemed certain that the pond was packed with trout while equally certain it was empty. I looked at our gear and thought, "What are we casting for? Schrodinger's fish?"

The mud around the pond was deeper than anticipated. I struggled to take a step with my right foot, then readied myself to pull up the left and ... that came out too easily. I looked back to see the face of a moose smiling back at me from the toe of my Dam

Tough sock. So now here's a senior citizen standing in the mud with a beer belly half full of Bud attempting to balance on one foot while reaching back for a boot. I knew I was going down.

I put both hands out to break my fall. Now I'm in up to my elbows, one booted foot mired in the muck and the other leg straight out behind like the tail of a prize-winning bird dog. Rather than trying to extricate the vacated boot, I miraculously managed to rehouse its former occupant.

Returning myself to an upright position, I swatted away the attacking deerfly, unintentionally throwing a handful of muck directly at my brother. My first strike was an accident, the return fire ... not so much. After our fun in the mud, we naturally decided to stick to the slippery rocks instead.

Despite the mud and bugs, we enjoyed the day as we emptied our coolers and contemplated the consequences of returning with our coolers empty. We made another stop at Matt & Molly's and headed home. We handed Marty's wife the two coolers. As she slid back the lids, her eyes opened wide with surprise. She found six rainbow trout, cleaned and

filleted in each cooler. "I must say boys, I'm impressed. But can you explain why this fish has a tag that says, 'Farm Raised in Idaho'?"

Letters to the Editor

Terrible week gets even worse

During a terrible week, Americans have seen the horrifying killing of an unarmed woman in broad daylight by agents acting under orders from the current occupant of the White House. The president also stated that week that the only thing that can stop him is his own morality.

Mr. Nixon resigned after serious accusations, but arguably these were far less serious than the killing of unarmed civilians in broad daylight.

Perhaps Congress could look at legal measures to remedy this situation.

Robert Anderson
Bristol

A tribute to Lady of the Mails

A tribute to Judy, the wonderful woman who brings the mails to Ripton:

JUDY

Judy, Our Lady of the Mails, braves hard roads and aggressive elements, the unexpected turn of events that can hazard every mile of carrying, protecting and keeping whole, love letters, birthday cards, wedding invitations, letters from summer camp, bills, payments and tax notices; pleas for help to back the candidate, save the children, stop the cruelty, help the poor, tax the rich, eliminate the stench of corruption, of pollution, of war; bringing the votes of the People to the polls to be gathered, to be counted, to state the future, to change what was to what will be instead. And she is, even so, modest, smiling, unhindered by the small stuff. She makes your mail arrive for you to gather up and take with you along with her good wishes her respect, and her genuine affection.

Millard Cox
Ripton

No escape from real problems

It's The NFL Playoffs!!

It's the NFL playoffs, game jerseys at the Store. Those losing health insurance — 22 million, or more.

It's the NFL playoffs, let's place a bet. While millions of children, lose their safety net.

It's the NFL playoffs, how's your division? As Congress oversees confusion and recision.

It's the NFL Playoffs, what's the injury report? Let's go grab a dictator, like it's just another sport.

It's the NFL Playoffs, so the broadcasters bray. In city and farmland immigrants have nothing to say.

It's the NFL playoffs, zombies watching their screens. Adults and children, don't worry about vaccines.

It's the NFL playoffs, someone's making money. Food and rent are up, some don't find that funny.

It's the NFL playoffs, let's celebrate the year.

Don't look behind the screen, there's nothing to fear.
John C. Mahoney
Burlington

Letters to the Editor

Call for ethics investigation is unwarranted

I am appalled and shocked that our Vermont pro-Palestinian groups are filing an ethics complaint and calling for the resignations against the five Vermont legislators who traveled to Israel on a much-needed fact finding mission. These legislators were going to Israel, a strong U.S. ally and democracy, to see what happened on October 7th and what has been happening in Israel since then.

There has always been a common practice for our political leaders to travel to different parts of the world to help them see the points of view of those "on the ground." I know for a fact that many in these pro-Palestinian

groups have gone to Israel as well on their own fact-finding missions. Is the fact that our legislators went on the invitation of the Israeli government rather than the Palestinian Authority making this an ethical question?

Once again, these groups, Jewish Voice for Peace and Vermont coalition for Palestinian Liberation, are using erroneous information to describe the lawmakers visit. Their blatant anti-Zionist, anti-Israel, and sometimes antisemitic propaganda statements are not only inflammatory but are also not factual. These actions demonize Israel, collectively target Jews, normalize

antisemitic and anti-Zionist rhetoric, and creates hostile environments for Jewish families, students, and civic leaders here in Vermont.

It is my hope that these actions are not allowed to go any further in our "open-minded" Vermont and they will not try to stifle the opinions of the "other" and our legislators will not feel that they always have to toe the line.

These actions are absurd and will only cause more divisions in our state. It makes me and others very fearful to speak out against this biased statewide movement.

B'shalom (in peace),
Marv Greenberg
Middlebury

Trump is now untethered

Xi Jinping, Vladimir and Stephen plant the seeds from which US self-destruction grows.

Our Supreme Leader appears lost in the middle of a simple thought, as if suffering a stroke, detached from reality, logic and common decency. His selection of words, which is important if you wish to create a sentence, is worse than absurd and potentially dangerous. He's likely to award himself the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Historians agree, the perfect Patriot, since Athenians invented democracy in 507BC, emerged in 1930's Germany, reflecting a remarkable similarity to present-day America. The warnings are largely ignored, while the ecosystem is at risk. Big Bird, who teaches behavior, has been fired.

There's nothing patriotic, loyal or sane about conducting undeclared wars, foreign or domestic, for distraction and profit, while removing the governed from governance. Narcissism (NPD) is a mental illness. "And so it goes..."

Alexander Lyall
Middlebury

No justification for ICE shooting

I have just watched the video that records the shooting of Renee Nicole Good in Minnesota. What a sickening sight. There could be no justification for that, in my mind, and even for the most jaded among us. The taking of her life was murder.

There was no attempt to disable the vehicle, no hesitation

to deploy deadly force directed through the windshield and open window. The fact that the shooter quickly exits the scene is telling.

There are those who say to me that the president is just doing what he promised. That mindset is sickening in itself. We are in big trouble here.

David Lewis
New Haven

It's time to change leadership

An out of control White House has gone too far and into the realm of frightening and needing to be stopped immediately. This led me to sending the following comments to Rep. Becca Balint's website which I now forward as a letter to the editor.

President Trump and his cronies/appointments (e.g. Miller, Hegseth, Bondi, Nome) must be impeached and or removed. They are dangerous, destroying democracy and bringing shame to the U.S.A. They are the actual threat facing our nation. Please help your Republican colleagues understand that they are now being seen as complicit, self-

serving cowards.

I am not a left wing radical. I am an American-born senior citizen who has lived through many decades and administrations. We survived Watergate because Republicans at that time eventually did the right thing — put country over party. Pledge of Allegiance was to the nation and not to a self-appointed 'king pin.' Please remind your Republican colleagues who might still have a backbone, conscience and moral compass of this.

Thank you Rep. Balint, for speaking out and holding your ground.

Paula Nath
Middlebury

How do we preserve our beloved democracy?

The killing of Renee Nicole Good by an ICE agent on January 7th is reminiscent of the 1970, fatal shooting of four students at Kent State University by Ohio's National Guardsmen. Ms. Good and the four students were American citizens acting lawfully when they were gunned down.

Similarities also exist between current neighborhood sweeps, detention, and deportation of Latino, Black, and Muslim immigrants and our government's aggressions against Black political activists in the 1960s-70s. The commonalities include demonizing these groups as dangerous threats to public safety, economic stability, and national security; and denying them due process. Ms. Good was immediately labeled a "domestic terrorist," by Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, an accusation echoed by Trump and Vice President Vance prior to conducting any investigation of the incident. Video of what transpired has shown this allegation to be unfounded!

In the 1960s-70s demonizing contributed to the use of deadly force against twenty-eight members of the Black Panthers. As of January 7th, four immigrants have been killed while being apprehended by Federal agents and 31 have died while in ICE custody.

We're also aware of the parallels between Germany's Fascist regime under Hitler and the Trump administration. Most notably the racist, policy-driven, institutionalized violence and retribution against anyone defined as enemies within; the capitulation and acquiescence of legislative and other institutional guardrails; and the expansionist attacks against other countries.

Notwithstanding the commonalities that exist between

past and current transgressions, there are significant differences. The technologies of surveillance, intelligence gathering, communications, institutional violence, and military operations; the speed with which Trump and his administration are able to implement their dystopian Project 2025 vision, and the funding of these functions far outstrips what was available in the America of the 1960s-1970s or Germany in the 1930s-1940s. Hitler had his cadre of loyal storm troopers. Trump has an army of federal agents at his command that outnumbers the armies of hundreds of countries. Trump's army is swelled by the 1,500 January 6th insurrectionists he pardoned and their supporters. Many of those who were pardoned and their sympathizers marched on our Capitol this January 6th to commemorate their attempt to overthrow the 2020 Presidential election and send a message... they're standing back and standing by!

As formidable as Nazi Germany was in the 1930s-40s Hitler didn't have the immense military power the U.S. wields. Over the past 12 months Trump and his Secretary of War, Hegseth, have demonstrated that the U.S. will use its military might anywhere they feel like doing so. As Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller summarized, "We live in a world that is governed by strength, that is governed by force, that is governed by power. These are the iron laws of the world." Extremely conservative estimates indicate that 750 civilian deaths have resulted from our bombings of Yemen, Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Nigeria; our strikes against boats in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific have killed 115 without any proof of drug trafficking; and our taking control of Venezuela has killed

approximately 75 people. They are clear examples that Trump believes might makes right.

These attacks have been conducted without any credible purpose other than seizing resources and/or enabling the sphere of domination we seek in the Western hemisphere. Now we're threatening Greenland.

Trump and his administration are acting with impunity; our tax dollars pay for their crimes. Our Supreme Court has provided Trump with immunity from criminal prosecution for actions taken while in office. Republicans elected to Congress over the past ten years compose a new wave of enthusiastic Trump sycophants. They know that they and their policies, including those that ignore and/or exacerbate the affordability crisis are immensely unpopular. Is there anything they won't do to remain in power?

I realize that protesters who act with force against our government, even in self-defense, risk giving Trump and his adherents a rationale to employ the Insurrection Act and martial law. I understand that a general workers' strike, especially one that is prolonged or the mass refusal to pay our taxes will severely hurt the participants while leaving corrupt, profiteering plutocrats unscathed.

I ask myself what is the tipping point? If my government has no compunction about demonizing and killing law-abiding Americans who are exercising their Constitutional rights; if my government has no compunction about attacking and murdering the people of other countries they brand as "shitholes," then what recourse is left to preserve our democracy and more important, our humanity?

Ron Rubin
Middlebury

Letters to the editor

The Addison Independent encourages readers to write letters to the editor. We believe a newspaper should be a community forum for people to debate issues of the day. Because we believe that accountability makes for responsible

debate, we will print signed letters only. Be sure to include an address and telephone number, too, so we can call to clear up any questions.

If you have something to say, send it to: Letters to the Editor, Addison Independent, 58 Maple St., Middlebury, VT 05753. Or email to news@addisonindependent.com.

Ruminations

Continued from Page 4A

in which we can change some fundamental ways we undertake governing ourselves. When I got home, there was a note from my friend Beatrice that responded perfectly to my musings on the drive. She included a link to a piece entitled: "Who Do We Choose to Be In the Age of Collapse?" It lays out seven steps for transforming our current challenges into opportunities for building a stronger, more resilient future, one in which we are all respected and cared for.

The first step is "Strengthen

our Local Communities" and it resonated with me. It made me so grateful to be living in Addison County, Vermont, surrounded by people who care, by institutions working for positive change, and by processes that make it easy for us to be engaged in civic life. The late Sister Janice Ryan used to remind us that we need a place to stand if we want to leverage change in the world. It is very clear to me that we are creating that solid ground for one another through our myriad acts of caring and working for social justice.

I used to think that channeling

the spiritual dimensions of the Divine for all of us to see (often called being transparent to the ground of being) was a gift given only to extraordinary people like Jesus, Thich Nhat Hahn, St. Theresa or Dorothy Day. Now I have an inkling that, by serving on committees, taking part in discussions, volunteering our time and resources, attending public gatherings and sharing with our neighbors, we are all becoming transparent to the ground of being. Wherever we stand, if we are standing in love, is sacred ground.

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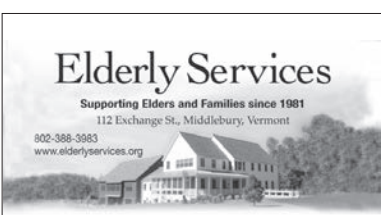
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Housing program kicks off this month

The Community and Housing Infrastructure Program allows municipalities and developers to borrow money for infrastructure for a housing development — and then use the property tax revenue boost from the new homes to help pay back the debt.

By CARLY BERLIN

The city of St. Albans recently bought the longtime office building of the local newspaper. Officials want to build apartments there — but first, the place needs work, and a new state program could help foot the bill.

Dirty soil must be cleaned up on the site of the former *Saint Albans Messenger* printing press, and water, sewer and parking need upgrades before the city can court a developer to build the 14 homes and ground floor commercial space that officials envision, said St. Albans City Manager Dominic Cloud.

To finance that site work, local officials plan to turn to a new state program: The Community and Housing Infrastructure Program, or CHIP, which allows municipalities and developers to borrow money for infrastructure like roads, sidewalks and sewers for a housing development — and then use the property tax revenue boost from the new homes to help pay back the debt.

The program could unleash \$2 billion in infrastructure spending over the next decade.

The initiative officially launches this month, after lawmakers and Gov. Phil Scott authorized its creation last summer. State officials opened a pre-application interest form and have kicked off a series

of training sessions to drum up interest from municipal leaders and homebuilders.

“We basically have a once in a generation opportunity here,” said Jessica Hartleben, executive director of the Vermont Economic Progress Council, which oversees the program.

CHIP is essentially a scaled-down version of Vermont’s existing tax increment financing program and is aimed at smaller towns. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns is standing up technical assistance to support municipalities in applying.

As the program gets off the ground, bigger municipalities with plenty of TIF experience — like St. Albans — have begun eyeing it for projects that fall beyond their existing TIF districts. But some smaller towns have begun to register their interest, too.

The Rutland County town of Fair Haven recently acquired a 24-acre former racetrack donated by a co-founder of the Castleton-based lighting company Hubbardton Forge. The town plans to utilize CHIP and ultimately spur the construction of middle-income homes for sale on the site, the *Rutland Herald* reported in late December.

Housing built via CHIP must be used as primary homes while the infrastructure debt gets paid off.

Projects with a certain amount of affordable units get incentives, like the ability to retain a higher level of tax revenue. The local selectboard or city council will need to hold a public hearing on a municipality’s project before plans advance.

CHIP faced considerable scrutiny before its passage last legislative session. Democrats in the House pushed for more guardrails around the initiative, arguing that any new development that might have occurred even without help from the tax incentive would result in foregone property tax revenue to the overstretched Education Fund. Its loudest proponents — including the Scott administration and a new pro-housing lobby — argued that boosting the state’s overall housing supply would help spread the burden of high education costs.

When the market itself isn’t producing enough housing, local governments should play an active role in building more homes, said Cloud, from St. Albans.

“The city can use all the tools that the Legislature has given us to level the playing field and get the projects that we want,” he said. “The Messenger building is a great example of that.”

Applications for CHIP will open by the end of January, according to Hartleben.

Note: This story, by Report for America corps member Carly Berlin, was produced through a partnership between VTDigger and Vermont Public.



VETERAN BOATBUILDER Douglas Brooks of Vergennes has some interesting projects lined up as he gets ready to retire. He’s bringing fine woodworking practices learned in Japan to Middlebury College students this month (as shown here), and next month in Japan he will work on a documentary film on the craftsmen who shared their boatbuilding prowess.

Photos courtesy of Douglas Brooks

Boatbuilding

(Continued from Page 3A)

made, but with whom he had not yet been able to line up an apprenticeship. The prospect seemed indefinite, until last spring when Tenkyou wrote to Brooks saying, “I’m retiring. I’m building my last boat. And you have to be here to document it.”

The project will take place in Miyoshi, “a beautiful spot where three rivers come together,” and cormorant fishing has been pursued, according to local lore, for some 450 years during the May to October “ayu” fishing season. Brooks and Motomura are currently fundraising for the trip. Learn more about the documentary film project online at givebutter.com/a/WCc2y. Tax-deductible donations can be made to the Brooks/Motomura “Building the Cormorant Fishing Boat” project through checks payable to the Center for Arts and Learning, with ‘Douglas Brooks/BOAT’ in the subject line, and mailed to Center for Arts and Learning, 46 Barre St., Montpelier, VT 05602.

While the community in Miyoshi has been extremely welcoming, going so far as to donate housing and an automobile while launching a standalone website, American philanthropists have recognized the value, even the necessity, of preserving a dying craft. Brooks speculates that this is due to cultural reasons.

“As Vermonters,” says Brooks, “we’re surrounded by our cultural heritage and we appreciate it, we love it, and we want to preserve it. We get that.” In point of fact, it was the formerly Vermont-based Freeman Foundation, once located in Stowe, which first gave Brooks a grant for his work.

“I wouldn’t be here [today] without them,” he says.

AMERICAN STUDENTS

Further, the knowledge and practices that Brooks receives in Japan he is more than willing to teach to American students, including those at Harvard, Cold Springs and Middlebury College. This J-term, he is leading another Japanese building course here in Middlebury up on the hill.

“Many of my students have never driven a nail with a hammer,” Brooks says with rueful affection. “It’s amazing, this generation, how divorced they

are from craft.”

His students are continually surprised to learn on the first day of class that the course will be taught in silence, as is the old way in Japan.

“The most common comment is, ‘I thought I knew what it meant to focus and this class just took that completely beyond anything in my imagination.’”

While some of his abler students have some degree of upbringing within the practice of carpentry — “a granddad with a shop in the garage,” for example — Brooks finds that oftentimes his best students tend to be women.

“The ones who have no experience woodworking. [Too often] the guy who has a shop and builds birdhouses is the student you can’t seem to reach. Because he thinks he has to project this knowledge. Because we’re doing woodworking. And [he feels he must] a priori be an expert. No. Let it go. Shut up. And let it in.”

This is the fifth Winter Term course Brooks has taught at Middlebury College. The students are

building the timber frame for a small Japanese teahouse, which will be unveiled in a public ceremony at the college on Jan. 29. Construction of the teahouse serves as a backdrop for students to explore the technical aspects of Japanese carpentry and the cultural underpinnings of apprentice learning.

It is hoped that students will see how the apprenticeship system stands in stark contrast with our Western notions of teaching and learning. Exploring how apprenticeship and tea ceremony reflect aspects of Buddhist training will shine a light on students’ accepted notions.

Brooks says the approach he uses in class is very Zen Buddhist. Invariably, the first step during any apprenticeship Brooks has undertaken in Japan is grabbing the broom and sweeping the boatbuilding shop to perfection. Then, and only then, does the master permit him to take the next step.

In the Western mentality, it’s too frequently about “how great I am,” Brooks says.

He acknowledges that in his younger years, he has been that guy himself:

“I made mistakes initially. And I’ve learned to be humble. I’ve learned how to embrace it.”

“Many of my students have never driven a nail with a hammer... It’s amazing, this generation, how divorced they are from craft.”

— Douglas Brooks

ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Bruce S. Brown, 76, of New Haven

NEW HAVEN — Bruce S. Brown, 76, died unexpectedly at his home in New Haven, Vt., Dec. 27, 2025. He was born March 19, 1949, in Middlebury, Vt., to Clyde and Lyda (Jewett) Brown. He grew up in Weybridge, Vt., and attended elementary school there. He graduated from Middlebury Union High School with the class of 1968.

Bruce is survived by his brother, Thomas and wife Cathy of Whiting, Vt.; his half-sister, Barbara Ringey of Middlebury, Vt.; a half brother, Alan Brown of Virginia Beach, Va.; and many loved ones near and far.

Bruce was predeceased by his parents, Lyda (Jewett) Brown in 1998, and Clyde Brown in 2004; his brother-in-law, Albert Ringey; and a nephew, Jeff Ringey.

Bruce was employed by J.P. Carrara and Sons for 45 years.

Bruce was a proud member of



BRUCE S. BROWN

the Green Mountain HOG group, and he loved riding his bikes. In August 2007 a moose stepped out in front of his bike and almost ended things. As it would turn out

Bruce recovered, the moose died, and The Moose Foundation was born. Bruce considered Aug. 6 to be his 2nd birthday because we all know how differently it could have turned out.

Bruce loved to talk. He would spend hours on the phone, but it wasn’t only on the phone — if he saw you in the store he would talk all the way to check out.

Country Music — another love. He had a radio tuned to 98.9 WOKO 24/7.

A celebration of life is being planned for Spring 2026 — time and place still to be determined.

For those who wish, contributions in Bruce’s memory may be made to The Moose Foundation, 183 Colchester Road, Essex Junction, VT 05452 or The Big Change Round UP that is done every Spring by WOKO.◊

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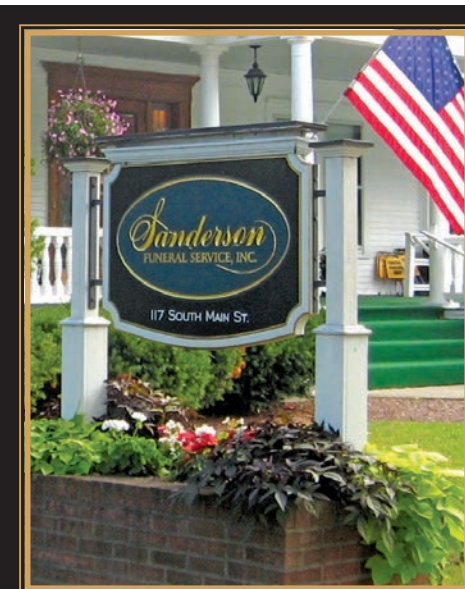
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SKILLED CRAFTSMAN DOUGLAS Brooks says that women are often his best students when teaching woodworking because they often don’t have experience in the craft and are therefore more open to learning new skills.



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Adirondack Sports buys 'Vt. Sports'

MIDDLEBURY — After a dozen years of publishing *Vermont Sports Magazine*, Addison Press Inc. has sold the publication and its digital properties to Adirondack Sports & Fitness LLC of Clifton Park, N.Y.

Adirondack Sports & Fitness, owned by Darryl and Mona Caron, publishes *Upstate Sports* (formerly *Adirondack Sports*) magazine monthly, and hosts two large outdoor recreational sports and travel shows — the Summer Expo in March and the Winter Expo in October — in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. The company has been around for 26 years.

"We're happy *Vermont Sports* will continue to thrive under this new leadership," said former owner and co-publisher Angelo Lynn. "It's a good marriage to join the recreational activities of upstate New York with those of Vermont and New England."

Addison Press purchased *Vermont Sports* in 2013 from Sky Barsch. Under the guidance of Lynn and co-publisher/editor Lisa Gosselin Lynn, the magazine has grown to 36 to 42 pages per issue with a four-color glossy cover. It has New England-wide distribution and editorial content that has been recognized with multiple awards from the New England Newspaper and Press Association. The website, email newsletter and social media have also grown significantly.

"We've had a decade of success with this publication, and Lisa and her team have covered a lot of great



stories, but it's time to move on and we're glad to have found such a qualified buyer to carry on that legacy," said Lynn. Addison Press will continue to publish *Vermont Ski + Ride Magazine*, as well as its newspaper, the *Addison County Independent*.

The Carons are avid athletes and outdoor enthusiasts with ties to Vermont as well as long-time readers of *Vermont Sports*.

"We've enjoyed skiing, biking, events, races and travel in Vermont for many years. Kate Carter started a wonderful magazine 35 years ago, and *Vermont Sports* was one of our inspirations for starting *Adirondack Sports* in 2000. We look forward to continuing the *Vermont Sports*

legacy that Angelo and Lisa built and ensuring its ongoing success," Darryl Caron said. "Whether it's upstate New York or Vermont, there's no shortage of great stories to tell — and we love helping advertisers reach our active, interested readers," Mona Caron added.

The new team includes co-editor and business partner Mona Kulkarni Caron (UVM, '91) and art director Karen Chapman, plus contributing writers, photographers and distributors, and two new staff members in Vermont. Darryl and Mona met at the photocopyier at a previous job (their first conversation was about skiing in Vermont) followed by their engagement two years later on Mount Mansfield. They look forward to working with *Vermont Sports*' contributing writers, photographers, vendors, advertisers and readers.

The magazine will reappear with a new design, 12-month publishing schedule, and increased circulation, starting with the February issue. The recreational sports and travel expos will be expanded to include more coverage of Vermont and New England.

Anyone who would like to reach out to the new owners may contact Darryl Caron, publisher/editor, at Darryl@AdkSports.com or 518-877-8788.

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)
at the Town Green Gazebo. Then the scheduled speakers will include Charter House Coalition Executive Director Heidi Lacey, the Rev. Johnny Daigan Widell, and representatives of the Bread Loaf Mountain Zen Community, Vermont Cares, and the Turning Point Center of Addison County. A list of homeless persons who've passed during the last year will be read, followed by a moment of silence. LED candles will be provided for attendees, along with warm drinks and snacks.

Do you live in Bristol and still have that old 2025 Christmas tree hanging around? Turns out your post-yule liability is a goat gourmand's four-star meal. Cecil Foster of the Masons of Libanus Lodge #47 recently learned from a local Boy Scout that goats love to feast on past-their-prime Christmas trees. So in the spirit of community service and hyper-recycling, members of Libanus Lodge #47 will be picking up spent Christmas trees (beginning at 8:30 a.m.) curbside in the Bristol Village area this Saturday, Jan. 17, as far east as Blaise's Mobile Home Park in Rocky Dale, and as far south as Hewitt Road. They'll go as far west as Burpee Road, up to the intersection of North Street and Burpee Road, and all points in between. If you have any questions, email Foster at cecil@gmavt.net. The goats thank you.

The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) and Community Bank have launched their annual Warmth Support Program match campaign, to assist folks who are facing the difficult

reality of balancing heating costs with other necessities like food and medicine. Now through Feb. 28, Community Bank will match every Warmth Support Program donation, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$25,000. The Warmth Support Program provides emergency funding for heating fuel and basic electrical needs, preventing life-threatening crises. The need for this support is significant; last year alone, the program provided emergency assistance to 2,670 neighbors throughout the Champlain Valley, protecting seniors and families during the most unforgiving months. To learn more or to donate, please visit cvoeo.org/warmth.

Addison County's jobless rate ticked up slightly in November to 2.4%, up from a September rate of 2.3%, according to the most recent statistics released by the Vermont Department of Labor (DOL). The county's workforce in November was pegged at 21,251 people, of which 520 were actively seeking employment, according to a state DOL whose data gathering continues to be impacted by last year's federal government shutdown. Vermont's jobless rate in November was 2.6%, reflecting an increase of one-tenth of one percent from September's estimate. The state's civilian labor force participation rate was 64.2% in November, a decrease of two-tenths of one percent from September's estimate. The November unemployment rates for Vermont's 14 counties ranged from 2.3% in Chittenden County to 4.3% in Orleans County. For the latest DOL news and resources, visit labor.vermont.gov.

The Annual Meeting of the Addison County 4-H Foundation will be held on Monday, Jan. 26, at 6:30 p.m. at the UVM Extension office on Pond Lane in Middlebury. For more information, contact 4-H Educator Martha Seifert at 802-656-7547 or email to martha.seifert@uvm.edu.

Correction: A By the Way listing in last week's paper about Middlebury's "Looking for Resources" webpage mistakenly listed Gather's drop-in hours as being from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. In fact, the hours are those same days, but from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sorry about that mistake.

Town Line First Response (TLFR) will be offering a free educational CPR course open to all members of the community on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m. at Bridport Central School. Learn life saving techniques in a friendly, hands-on session. Please note that no CPR cards will be handed out; the course is for educational purposes only. TLFR is a volunteer organization, primarily serving the towns of Bridport and Addison, providing crucial emergency medical response and rescue services, stabilizing patients until ambulances arrive. The organization also offers community training like CPR, functioning as a vital part of the local public safety network alongside fire departments. For more info, contact TLFR Training Officer Geoff Nelson at 802-349-3305, or gsnelson@gmavt.net.

School choice

(Continued from Page 1A)
circumstances that might compel the superintendent to OK a transfer request.

The new policy — due for a second review by the ACSD board on Jan. 26 — would facilitate intra-district elementary school choice, limited by available classroom spots and with the proviso that it not conflict with ACSD's class-size policy (D6). That policy requires classrooms to have a minimum of 10 students in not more than two grades.

"Generally speaking, there's room for two or three students in a classroom being able to move to another," Superintendent Wendy Baker told the board at its Monday, Jan. 12, gathering at Middlebury Union Middle School.

"Most people aren't interested in leaving their school," she added. "We don't expect a mass exodus at any one of our schools or classrooms, per se."

Policy C30 currently includes four emergency school transfer justifications, including:

- If a student is a victim of a violent criminal offense in or on the resident school grounds.
- If continuing enrollment in the student's current school for the remainder of the school year, is deemed in the student's best interest, following a change of the parent/guardian's official

residence.

- If a significant family and/or student circumstance of an educational, medical, financial, or personal nature would be relieved by a change in attendance status.

- If a request is made "to enroll a student in a school prior to the parent/guardian moving into that school's attendance area with documentation showing the move will occur within two months of the start of the school year or the date of the transfer submission, whichever is later."

ACSD provides PreK-12 public education to children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. All seven communities had their own K-5 schools until seven months ago. The district shuttered Ripton Elementary last June due to declining enrollment. Low student numbers and a desire to deliver single-grade instruction, when possible, prompted the ACSD board to OK a merger of the Shoreham and Bridport K-5 students at Bridport Central School, beginning next fall. Plans call for the Shoreham Elementary School to be converted into a district preschool next year.

The ACSD central office received around 10 transfer requests last year from parents seeking to move one or more of their children from one district

K-5 school to another. Around half fit one or more of the four exiting emergency criteria and were thus granted, according to Baker.

Among the transfer requests the district can't accommodate based on the current version of C30:

- Geography. A family might live in East Middlebury and find Salisbury Elementary more convenient for them and their child.
- Preference for a specific program or teaching group at a neighboring school.
- A family must suddenly move from one ACSD town to another but wants their child to maintain continuity in the same school.

The amended C30 policy could allow these kinds of non-emergency transfer requests for each school within the district, using a lottery when requests exceed transfer capacity. The superintendent would annually assess and recommend transfer capacity numbers for each school and grade level based on enrollment projections, staffing, program needs, classroom capacity and equity considerations.

Younger siblings of students transferred under C30 wouldn't be guaranteed enrollment in the same receiving school if there's no room, but would be given separate priority if transfer capacity exists. What about transportation for

Vergennes

(Continued from Page 1A)
and sales. Municipalities that wish to adopt the rooms & meals or alcohol LOT must also adopt the other.

The city would retain 70% of that money and send the remaining 30% to the state.

"We had a meeting ... at Lulu's five months ago or so, and that is what we heard... I mean, no one wants to be taxed, but we're OK with this tax, as long as

the transferring students? It would be the family's responsibility, though ACSD would offer "reasonable options to assist" with transportation, if possible.

The superintendent would report annually to the board on application numbers, school/classroom capacities, lottery outcomes, waitlist movement, demographic/equity indicators, and recommendations for future capacity adjustments.

EQUITY QUESTION
ACSD officials on Monday seemed generally pleased with the C30 policy revisions, but a few board members raised concerns about whether it could be equally accessed by all district families.

For example, could a low-income family in Bridport overcome potential transfer

hurdles as easily as a more affluent family in Weybridge?

And board member Mary Heather Noble noted there could be more limited transfer opportunities for children in the district's smaller schools that are rubbing up against ACSD's class size policy of at least 10 students in not more than two grades.

"Does (a school transfer) become more likely of an option for students and families coming from (Middlebury's) Mary Hogan (Elementary School), for example?" she asked. "Is this as available for students and families in our smaller classrooms as it is for students and families in our biggest classrooms?"

Baker replied most of the district's K-5 classrooms are averaging 15 students, though

she singled out anticipated small incoming kindergarten and first-grade classes this fall at Cornwall's Bingham Memorial School.

"It's an opportunity that should be available to most families," Baker said.

She added the district's class-size policy gives her the latitude to move below the 10-student minimum if she's confident "the education program isn't going to be jeopardized."

Baker acknowledged the new process would come with kinks to work out, and she promised not to do that in a vacuum.

"If anomalies show up in the process, I'm coming back to you," she told the board.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



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Monkton

(Continued from Page 1A)

Efforts are underway to convert a garage at 216 Monkton Ridge into the new general store and coffee shop, with plans to open the business sometime this year.

"I'm just really excited," Raphael said of the project. "Monkton is such a vibrant community; we have such a strong sense of place here like many communities. I've had a lot of excitement about the project."

Raphael was born and raised in Monkton, where she lives with her family. Her husband, Ben, is the founder of the custom cabinetry and woodworking business Wooden Hammer in town and will be helping out with the project.

Raphael has been working on the effort since this past May. She'd previously worked for Tetra Tech, a company that offers civil engineering and consulting services for projects across the globe. Through her work at Tetra Tech, Raphael had more recently been working on a program aimed at supporting women and promoting gender equality in other countries.

That was until the Trump Administration began dismantling the United States Agency for International Development last year. The agency officially shut down this past summer and Tetra Tech — which worked with USAID funding — furloughed dozens of employees.

Raphael was among those impacted by the dismantling of the agency.

"I lost my job, but also lost the whole industry I had been working in," she recalled.

She took some time to explore what to do next. Raphael said she knew she wanted to continue working in service to others and had been looking to become more involved in her community.



MONKTON RESIDENT ADRIENNE Raphael has long worked to support communities overseas through her work in the international development sector. Her work has more recently shifted to her home community of Monkton, where she's working to convert this garage at 216 Monkton Ridge into a general store and coffee shop space expected to open sometime this year.

Photo courtesy of Adrienne Raphael

She ultimately landed on the general store and coffee shop effort.

"I talked to a lot of people around the state, I explored a lot of ideas, and what I settled on was there was really this need in the community, and I wanted to see what I could do to fill that need," Raphael said.

She pointed to conversations that have unfolded in Monkton in recent years centered around establishing a general store after the former Monkton General Store closed at the end of 2019.

"After a lot of reflection I decided this was the direction I wanted to go in," she said.

Raphael and her husband had purchased the 216 Monkton Ridge property about two years ago and rented out the two apartments located in the duplex on the site. The property is located across the street from the former general store.

She noted the stand-alone garage

on the property will be converted into the general store and coffee shop space. The business will be located on the lower level of the building, which is about 1,150 square feet. The building's upper floor will be converted into a one-bedroom apartment.

"Everyone knows housing is such an issue in Vermont, and this way we were able to create another rental property that provides more housing in Monkton and offset some of the risk of taking on a small business," Raphael explained.

The store and coffee shop will feature a few tables and space for community members to sit, have a cup of coffee and talk with one another.

"That was critical to the project from my perspective, just providing that community space," Raphael said.

She plans to serve drip coffee along with espresso drinks and

is looking to partner with Brio Coffeeworks in Burlington, which offers various support to cafes that serve its coffee, such as menu development and equipment repair. Raphael said she'll also look to offer breakfast sandwiches and some pastries.

As for the general store, she said she'll aim to stock the space with essential items and local goods.

"We have some amazing vendors, artisans, producers in Monkton that I'd love to provide another space for them to sell their goods, and we have some amazing businesses in Monkton that I'm looking forward to collaborating with," Raphael said, pointing to apple orchards and a coffee roaster in town.

The project has received approval from the town's Development Review Board and lined up contractors to tackle the effort. Raphael is working on state permitting requirements and talking with a bank about funding.

The effort has so far secured \$56,250 in state Downtown and Village Center tax credits, as well as a \$25,000 Building Communities grant. Raphael said the Building Communities grant will support the development of a new septic system.

Raphael hopes to open the apartment and general store/coffee shop space around the same time, though the apartment might be completed a bit sooner. She's confident the project will be completed this year, with the next phase hopefully beginning this month.

OVUU

(Continued from Page 1A)

The budget also included the funds necessary to retain a middle school social studies teacher whose position had previously been placed in jeopardy.

Then, following an extended debate and the airing of community concern against such a move, the board said a final decision would be made on whether to transplant the Caverly program to Lothrop at the next scheduled meeting on Feb. 3.

"I think we've discussed ourselves out," Chair Laurie Bertrand said at the end of the night, with the meeting having run more than an hour over the allotted time.

The evening began with numerous community members advocating alternately for the preservation of the Caverly preschool as it is and, less directly, for the retention of the middle school social studies position held by Zachary Poynter. Speakers implored the board to recognize that while the decision to retain that position may ultimately rest with RNEU Superintendent René Sanchez and OVUHS Principal Michael Ruppel, the funding the board would approve for FY27 was not merely a number but a decisive factor.

Board member Barbara Ebling said voting to provide funding that could be used for the position would "affirm our belief in the excellence of the education we are offering. We believe student instruction is a priority."

In discussing the prospect, both Sanchez and Principal Ruppel signaled a wish to keep Poynter on staff, with Ruppel expressly advocating for his teacher and Sanchez citing a change in factors that had initially guided him to advance the cut.

Still, the board took pains to clarify that their approving the additional amount to preserve the role (\$102,000) didn't mean the decision had been made, but only that they'd provided Sanchez the option to restore the post. Every outward indication seemed to be that he would. The long-term issue at play is that student enrollment at OVUHS are dropping, which could necessitate further staff reductions down the road, preferably through attrition of more senior teachers whose compensation packages often double that of junior faculty.

For his part, Poynter, who sat quietly in attendance off to one side, looked understandably relieved once the meeting had concluded.

Concerns over the fate of the preschool program at Caverly were not so easily allayed. It was suggested that last week's motion to move the program to Lothrop — put forward by board member Kevin Thornton and seconded by board member Paul Lathrop — might have violated the state's Open Meeting Law. (For unrelated reasons, Lathrop resigned his seat from the board at the conclusion of last week's meeting.)

However, Dina Atwood, the OVUU school board's legal counsel, advised Director of Business & Finance Brenda Fleming mid-meeting that since no school was voted to be closed — and only an educational program to be moved — such concerns did not apply. Further, Bertrand said, the matter had been publicly discussed for more than two months.

Nevertheless, she pushed for the OVUU board to take up the matter

again in light of what they had heard during the public comment portion of the meeting—essentially, to retake the vote for this week in the interest of transparency, now that the matter had been properly "warned."

That proved more easily said than done, as a motion to rescind last week's vote failed (with a two-thirds majority needed — eight votes in favor and four against, with Lathrop's seat empty). Board member Gabe McGuigan called last week's vote "legal, binding, and proper." Debate looped around the question of whether a motion to rescind that vote would set a bad precedent for the board going forward, by which every decision it makes would be open to subsequent reversal, or whether any motion that diverged from the wording of last week's vote must be held for the ensuing meeting so the new motion, in turn, could be publicly warned.

What wasn't in doubt was the passionate advocacy by which board member Brett Mullin and multiple community members spoke out on behalf of preserving the pre-K program at Caverly.

Donna Wilson, a former educator at Caverly, said she was dismayed at the prospect of the move, since the program couldn't be duplicated away from the 45 acres in nature providing "sensory play and environmental awareness." Additionally, she wondered whether the Burditt Fund could be called upon to make up for any budgeting shortfall, which Bertrand dismissed as a possibility.

"The board considers the Burditt Trust Fund an available use for non-operating costs, such as a major repair or new construction items. Operating costs should really be covered by the budget," she clarified.

Caverly parent Jennifer Brittenham, with strong emotion in her voice over Zoom, called the program "valued, effective, and deeply loved." Other voices reinforced her stance, calling Caverly "paradise for preschoolers," "a special little school," and "like stepping into a fairy house."

Mullin placed emphasis on the fact that moving the program would save only an estimated \$13,000 and echoed community concern over whether the school playground at Lothrop could be converted for pre-K use in time for next school year.

H said the most supportive (attitude toward) the move "he'd encountered is 'I won't oppose that,' whereas the passion among those who wish for the program to remain in place was abundantly clear."

Advocates for the move, including Lothrop School principal Stacey Farrington, sought to correct last week's suggestion that the decision was meant to provide greater convenience for teachers and staff who must hop between two different school locations. Rather, "it's about the services they can provide students once a week instead of once a month," Farrington said. Those services included P.E., art, music, a library, access to the school nurse and school counselor, Big buddy programs, the 4 Winds program, and walks to Pantown Farm.

"Caverly can remain available for experiential learning," Farrington said. "It's hard. I'm not negating that."

Board member Natalie Steen, who supports the move, said, "It's not just about the money, but looking down the road to when there could be just five or six students (at Caverly). I'd rather use taxpayer money to fix the Lathrop School. Things do need to change. I'm trying to think about the future."

Board member M. Fernanda Canales, one of those whose vote on the move is in the balance, said that what must be done is to think "more programmatically as to what students would gain."

Board discussion on the issue will continue at the Feb. 3 meeting, followed by a likely vote.

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Vermont sees an increase in flu cases

By Olivia Gieger, VtDigger

VERMONT — Flu is surging around the country, and Vermont is not immune to the national trend, though the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent dashboard for the disease identifies the state's illness prevalence as lower than much of the U.S.

In Vermont, about 20-25% of tests have come back positive this season, according to a state dashboard with data through Jan. 3.

Statewide, nearly 8% of visits to a Vermont emergency room or urgent care were due to flu-like illnesses; nearly 6% were related to diagnosed flu cases, according to the state data available through Jan. 3. Both rates were much higher than this same period last year.

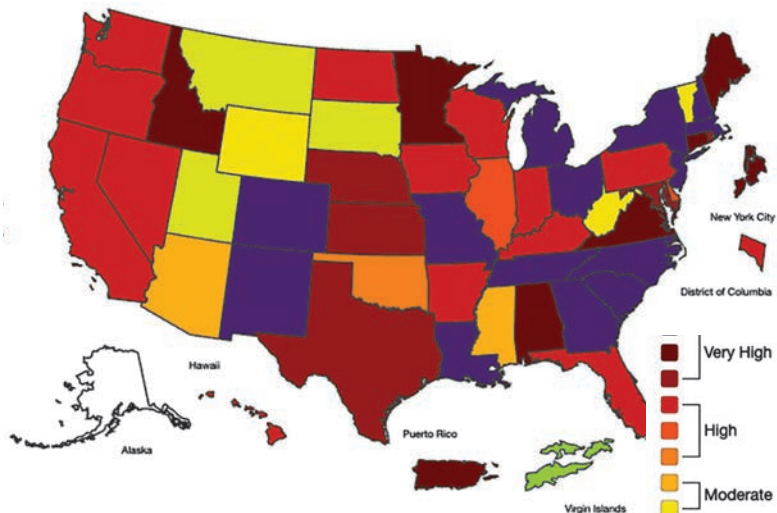
The overwhelming majority of these tests have come back positive for one particular strain of influenza A, which is the most common of the four flu virus types. This year, a particularly vicious subvariant of that strain, subclade K, has dominated most flu cases across the country. While Vermont's testing does not have that extra level of granularity, it's likely these cases in the state are subclade K, said John Davy, the health surveillance epidemiologist at the Vermont Department of Health.

Experts are not yet sure whether this strain is so prevalent due to the fact that it spreads more easily or due to it being more dangerous. But it's clear that the illness has been especially brutal this season: In New York, the state has had the highest number of flu cases ever reported in a single week. In Connecticut, doctors told a local news outlet that the surge is the highest they've ever seen.

At UVM Medical Center, the illness prevalence mirrors statewide numbers, confirmed Phillip Rau, a spokesperson for the Burlington hospital. That is starting to trend downward, Rau added, though Vermont's flu season generally lasts into late March.

The hospital currently has around 20 people admitted with the flu or related health concerns, he said.

Rutland Regional Medical Center, the state's second largest hospital after UVM Medical Center, is seeing a much earlier spike in cases than in years past. In December, the hospital had 106 positive flu cases,



compared with just 17 in December 2024, according to the hospital's spokesperson Gerianne Smart.

As of Jan. 13, the Rutland hospital has confirmed 88 cases of flu this month so far, while last January there were 125 cases the entire month.

Smart said this early surge may be due to the fact that more severe symptoms lead people to seek out care.

Wastewater testing — done at six sites in Vermont — also shows flu increasing in the state. The most recent reports show "high" levels of flu in wastewater, though earlier in December levels were "very high." Montpelier and Burlington sites show a higher concentration of the illness than the Ludlow and Middlebury sites.

Davy, at the health department, explained that it's important to assess all of these available data points together. "Each has its kind of strengths and weaknesses, reflecting a slightly different sort of phenomenon on the ground," he said.

He said that the reason the CDC's dashboard may show lower rates in Vermont than in neighboring states may be due to differences in how each state calculates and reports flu occurrence and may be because Vermont's smaller population makes the data more responsive to smaller shifts in behavior — like a dip in the number of people seeking care over the holidays.

It doesn't mean that there's a shortage of flu in the state. He pointed to the outbreak reports that the health department receives from institutions — places like schools and nursing homes. Those show a growing number of flu cases, which he said can be a useful indicator for the rest of the state.

Over one-fifth of patients with flu-like illness in Vermont are children under 5 years old, according to the state data from Dec. 28 to Jan. 3 — a "big, disproportionate amount," compared to the state's population that age, Davy said.

"These are populations where vaccination can have a really positive impact," Davy said.

The variant arose this summer, and thus was not incorporated as a reference strain in this year's flu vaccine, though early research from England shows this year's shot does convey some immunity.

"Subclade K may be more likely to evade a vaccine, but folks' immune systems are still going to benefit," Davy added. "It could mean the difference between a real severe illness that you spread to a lot of people and a more minor illness that you're less likely to spread."

In Vermont, only 32% of the population, or around 208,000 people, have received the flu vaccine so far this season, according to a state dashboard.

The surge comes in the midst of changing guidelines from the CDC surrounding childhood immunization, including a demotion of the flu vaccines from something the federal body recommended for all children, to an immunization it recommended only after children or their guardians discuss with a doctor. Last week, Vermont state health officials held firm to their existing guidelines recommending that all children receive the vaccine against flu.

Davy noted the majority of pediatric flu deaths are children who did not receive the flu vaccine.



JACK MAYER AND Theresa MacCallum are among a group of residents taking part in Signs of Solidarity, an effort that asks local businesses to display the signs pictured here in their establishment to show support for the immigrant community. Along with providing the signs, the group is also talking with business owners about their rights in the event that officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, come for a visit.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

Solidarity

(Continued from Page 1A)
can walk around and just feel that they're safe?"

"And that they're welcomed," added Jack Mayer, another resident taking part in the initiative. "They're essential people in our community."

MacCallum said the group's signs and information have come from the Indivisible.org website, and citizens involved in the nonpartisan Indivisible Middlebury organization have been working together on the effort.

ICE activity has ramped up in the year since President Donald Trump took office.

ICE arrests are happening more frequently across the nation. The number of people detained in ICE facilities reached a record

68,000-plus last month and several encounters with immigration agents in the past year have resulted in officer-involved shootings, including last week when 37-year-old Renee Good was fatally shot by ICE officer Jonathan Ross in Minneapolis on Jan. 7.

Good's killing prompted the latest round of street protests, which attracted a reported 490 sign-wielding protesters on Sunday, and more than 300 similarly minded citizens in Middlebury on Saturday evening.

In Vermont, more than 100 people were detained by ICE and Border Patrol officials

in 2025, according to Migrant Justice, a human rights organization founded and led by immigrant farmworkers. Mayer listed several of the detentions that have taken place over the past year, including

multiple instances where individuals were arrested while at their workplace.

"I think we're going to see more of this," he said. "Even though probably most Vermonters would say, 'Oh, well ICE is not here,' they are here, and they're becoming more emboldened as they're recruiting more and more ICE agents."

Mayer and MacCallum also referenced data showing that over 70% of people detained in ICE custody have no criminal conviction, and of those with convictions, many are for nonviolent and minor offenses like traffic violations.

They noted residents are particularly concerned about individuals being denied the right to due process. Several Vermont communities, including in Addison County, have passed resolutions supporting due process and condemning actions that violate that right.

"Whatever peoples' feelings are about immigration, the basic right of due process is everyone's right on the soil in the United States," MacCallum said.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Mayer said one aim of Signs of Solidarity is ensuring people know what their rights are. Community members involved in the effort have cards available with information about those rights, such as the right to remain silent protected by the Fifth Amendment and the Fourth Amendment protection from unreasonable

searches and seizures.

Residents taking part in Signs of Solidarity are asking local businesses if they have a spot in their establishment that can be designated as a private space, one ICE agents wouldn't be able to legally enter without a judicial warrant or permission from the business.

"We're hoping this will just give people more of a sense of what is legal and what are the boundaries of ICE's jurisdiction," Mayer said. MacCallum noted Addison County falls within 100 miles of the Canadian border, a zone in which Border Patrol agents conduct operations.

"I think for our local businesses, just to know their rights in the event that a Border Patrol person shows up, for their employees and for their customers, is very, very important to know ahead of the game instead of when or if it happens," MacCallum said.

In addition to those resources, the effort also offers local businesses signs reading "We Stand With Immigrant Families" and "Vermont Strong For Democracy" to display at their establishment.

The group has already begun connecting with businesses in the area, and Mayer said they've received interest from several establishments.

"The few businesses that I have already visited, it was very positive," MacCallum said.

She said the group is currently working in Middlebury but hopes the effort will expand.

Mayer noted the group is eager to distribute signs to residents in other towns and share the resources with them.

"We're hoping that this will be a public display of support for immigrants, and that it will be contagious," Mayer said. "I think there's always some hesitancy about businesses putting up signs that might be interpreted as partisan in some way, but I think courage is contagious, and when one business makes this public statement about the importance and safety of our immigrants then others will follow."

A key piece of the effort is starting conversations, he said.

"What we're trying to do is share concerns and really what matters is the conversation that we have about this and how critical this is for our democracy," he said.

Those interested in joining the Signs of Solidarity effort can email indivisiblemiddlebury@gmail.com.

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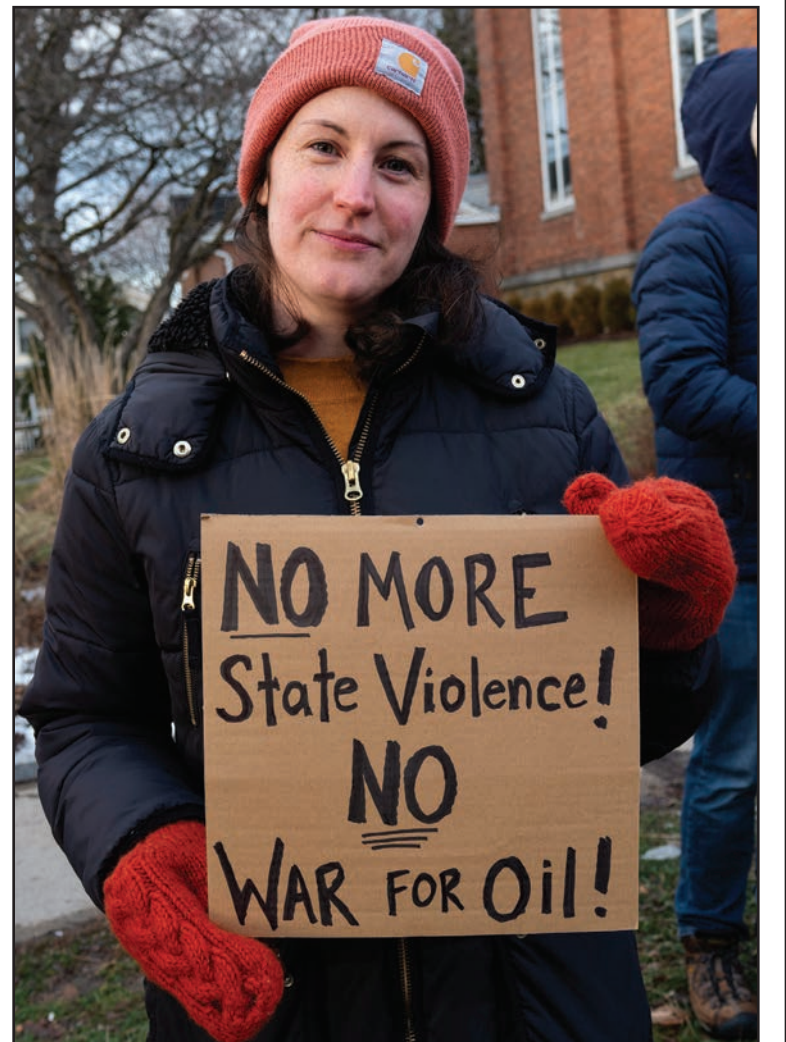
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Enough is enough

ALMOST A YEAR after the Trump administration began a crackdown on civil liberties under the guise of immigration enforcement, Addison County just keeps coming out in huge numbers to protest. On Saturday in Middlebury and Bristol and then on Sunday in Vergennes, hundreds of Vermonters came out — many with biting witty but heartbreaking signs — to protest the latest outrage: an ICE agent's shooting of a woman in Minneapolis.

Photos by Jim Mendell and Jonathan Blake



ADDISON COUNTY

Agriculture News

Tune up your herd at Dairy Sustainability Day

MIDDLEBURY — Mark your calendar for Dairy Sustainability Day, which will take place, March 5, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 27 at 49 Wilson Road in Middlebury.

Join representatives from UVM Extension teams from

across Vermont — including the Champlain Valley Crops, Pasture & Soil Program, the Northwest Crops & Soils Program, and the UVM Agricultural Business Team — for a free workshop focused on dairy sustainability. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Session highlights will include genetic selection strategies for dairy herds and a precision agriculture approach to enhancing sustainability and resiliency in dairy cropping systems and herd management.

For all questions, contact Carly Bass at cbass1@uvm.edu.

UVM's SHREC Lab accepting soil health samples

BURLINGTON — The University of Vermont's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and UVM Extension, in partnership with the UVM Food Systems Research Center and ARS Food Systems Research Unit, this month announced the launch of the Soil Health Research and Extension Center, or SHREC — a new statewide hub for research, testing and Extension focused on building healthy soils and resilient agricultural systems.

It offers soil health testing services to farmers and gardeners in Vermont and across the region.

In addition to soil health testing, SHREC provides applied soil health research results, outreach materials, and educational opportunities throughout the state.

SHREC is dedicated to providing soil health testing services that reflect the realities of Vermont's farming systems. By testing local soils, we can create a database of how different management approaches such as tillage, grazing management, cover cropping, and crop rotation affect soil health in our area.

Located in the Jeffords Building on the UVM campus, the

SHREC Lab will offer soil health testing services in addition to the routine soil testing capabilities of UVM's current Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab.

Farms that need updated soil samples can get in contact with emma.sandman@uvm.edu. UVM Extension can help gather soil samples, provide probes and offer supplies.

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about the Soil Health Research and Extension Center, or SHREC.

1. Is SHREC different from the existing UVM soil testing lab?

Yes. The Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab (AETL) is still here to help with routine soil nutrient analysis for both commercial growers and home gardeners. SHREC provides additional soil health testing options for land managers who want to understand more about their soil's physical and biological characteristics and how they respond to management changes. To learn more, check out the lab websites. For AETL: go.uvm.edu/aetl. For SHREC: go.uvm.edu/shrec.

2. Which soil health tests does SHREC offer? How much do they cost?

- Permanganate oxidizable carbon (POXC) — Measures a pool of organic matter that supports microbial activity and that is responsive to management practices. Fee is \$12.50.
- ACE protein — Measures soil protein, a source of organic

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Spotted by paparazzi

WHILE PATIENTLY WAITING their turn at the Monument Farms milking parlor this past Saturday, two cows gaze over at a curious visitor who they fear may ask for autographs.

Independent photo/Steve James

Start planning for the Big E now

VERMONT — Vermonters and Vermont businesses who serve the agriculture industry are invited to apply to vend in the Vermont Building at the Big E Fair this coming autumn. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets invites Vermont businesses to apply to this opportunity.

The Vermont Building is one of six public market style buildings on the Avenue of the States at the Big E, a 17-day fair and exposition that takes place each September

in West Springfield, Mass. During this event, which brings in approximately 1.6 million people each year, the Vermont Building hosts a variety of Vermont food and retail businesses that showcase the best of what our state has to offer. The 2026 Big E fair will take place Sept. 18-Oct. 4.

This annual event provides a unique regional marketing opportunity to Vermont businesses. It is among the top five largest fairs in the United States, with daily attendance regularly exceeding

100,000 people, and is the premier event of the year for many vendors. Fairgoers from all over the Northeast come to the Big E looking to find unique products and to get a head start on their holiday shopping. Last year alone, total sales in the Vermont Building exceeded \$2 million!

The application to vend in the Vermont Building will be open from Jan. 16 until March 1. Visit the Vermont Building webpage (agriculture.vermont.gov/) (See *The Big E*, Page 13A)

Walk will show how to improve forest health, diversity

LEICESTER — Patch cuts in forest management are used to create wildlife habitat, diversify forests, enhance resiliency and encourage new growth.

Landowners interested in improving their properties in this way are invited to join County Forester and Vermont Coverts Cooperator Mark Raishart at his family's working forest in Leicester for an exploration of forest management in action. The forest walk will take place Saturday, Jan.

31, from noon to 2 p.m.

Together, participants and Vermont Coverts will examine how patch cutting has been used on the land and see the results of this work in different stages, including an area that has been heavily used by foraging bears and a new small patch cut in progress. Along the way, observers will visit an Audubon-certified Bird Friendly sugarbush to discuss diverse management goals for the property, including maple syrup production,

timber harvesting, wildlife habitat, water quality, flood reduction, recreation including hunting, biodiversity, and carbon storage. The walk will end at Raishart's sugarhouse for warm drinks and snacks.

Plan for a half-mile of walking on uneven and wet terrain. Families with children are welcome. Register online at tinyurl.com/PatchCuts4Wildlife.

Directions and additional details will be provided at registration.



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The Big E

(Continued from Page 12A) bigevendor) to view the Request for Applications or learn more about vending in the Vermont Building. For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact Selina Rooney at selina.rooney@vermont.gov or 802-522-7811.

View the Request for Applications online at tinyurl.com/BigEvermont26.

VT DAY & NEW ENGLAND DAY

Businesses interested in trying their product out at the Big E without a multi-day commitment are encouraged to first participate

by vending at Vermont Day or Harvest New England Day, two single-day events that take place on the lawn of the Vermont Building. The application to vend at Vermont Day and Harvest New England Day 2026 will open in spring.

Vermont Day: Saturday, Sept. 26, is a celebration of all things Vermont and is one of the busiest days of the fair, bringing in nearly 180,000 visitors in 2024.

Harvest New England Day: Friday, Oct. 2, is a single-day, farmers market style event celebrating New England's food and fiber producers.

SHREC Lab

(Continued from Page 12A) nitrogen that can be converted relatively quickly into plant-available forms and is responsive to management practices. Fee is \$14.

- Wet aggregate stability — Measures whether soil aggregates will break down when exposed to external forces such as rainfall and tillage. Fee is \$27.

- Respiration — Provides a proxy for biological activity. Fee is \$25.

- Total carbon/total nitrogen — Measures the total amount of carbon and nitrogen in the soil, including the active and relatively inactive pools. Fee is \$22.

A basic soil textural analysis is included with all sample submissions. More information on each test and future test offerings are on the SHREC website.

3. How do I take a soil sample and send it to SHREC?

For several of the tests that SHREC performs, collecting samples to a 6-inch depth with a standard soil probe works fine. However, if you are sending samples for an aggregate stability test, use a narrow shovel to avoid damaging the soil aggregates. One other difference is that soil samples for SHREC need to be kept cool to avoid any

negative effects on soil biology. The SHREC website offers more information on how to take a soil sample (go.uvm.edu/shrecsample) and how to submit samples to SHREC (go.uvm.edu/shrecsubmit). The website accepts online credit card payments through a secure link.

4. Why does the SHREC Submission Form ask for management information?

Soil health changes as a direct result of how a field is managed. SHREC collects management information associated with each soil sample to build a robust database of soil health results and how they relate to particular management practices. This information will inform how best to interpret your testing results to achieve and maintain healthy soil.

5. What else does SHREC do?

SHREC will also offer soil health extension activities and programming efforts, including soil health field trials, on-farm demonstrations, educational materials, and events. For example, the 2024 Soil Health Indicator Webinar Series is now available on the SHREC website (go.uvm.edu/shrec). Look for more information on these outreach efforts in the future.



Down to business

BROTHERS MIKE, LEFT, and Steve Warner take a quick snapshot then return to milking Holsteins and Jerseys at Monument Farms dairy in Weybridge this past Saturday morning. The gentlemen usher the cows into the parlor, clean their teats, attach the milking machine, troubleshoot any snafus and move the animals back to the barn. This tandem handled around 580 cows for the first milking of the day; the animals would return for a second session later on Saturday. Steve Warner said he'd been milking cows for more than six decades.

Independent photos/Steve James



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Middlebury

(Continued from Page 1A)
typically the much larger piece of the combined property tax pie. Roughly two-thirds of Vermont households pay at least a portion of their education taxes based on income.

So how did officials shave around 2.6 cents off what was originally pegged as a potential 14.8-cent tax increase?

A lot of it came from slicing around \$224,000 in capital improvement projects that town staff had initially recommended for FY27. Some of the casualties include reduced commitment to paving and sidewalks, town office technology and security, planning for a potential new Department of Public Works facility, and a plan for video surveillance of the lower parking lot (below the Cross Street Bridge).

Generating the loudest public outcry has been a proposed pull-back of a \$15,000 town commitment to a concrete skatepark being planned near Mary Hogan Elementary School.

More than 25 people wrote letters to town officials protesting the proposed pull-back of funding, and around a dozen additional skatepark boosters made their discontent known at Tuesday's meeting. Among them was Ethan Murphy, president of the Middlebury Skatepark Project group.

"A 10- to 11-cent (rate) increase? You've never done that before. People are going to be hurt by that kind of increase."

—Victoria DeWind

Murphy explained the skatepark project has been a four-year volunteer effort that's included private fundraising, grants and many hours of planning aimed at producing a \$562,000 facility open to skateboarders of all ages — including children who fall through the cracks of team sports.

"I'm here, along with my fellow skatepark advocates, to make the case that the Middlebury skatepark project is a town project — and it's well underway," he told the board. "The unfortunate decision to cut funding at this time undermines the investments the town of Middlebury, the Middlebury Skatepark Project and Middlebury community have already made."

He added cutting the \$15,000 — equating to one tenth of 1% of the overall FY27 budget draft — could have a "profound effect on private fundraising as we look to bring the project to completion."

The skatepark is currently in the design phase. Selectboard members, by the end of their Tuesday meeting, said they'd heard the skatepark advocates loud and clear, and would move to restore the \$15,000 commitment.

But they conceded that something has to give. Resident Victoria DeWind asked the board about individual budget line items that seemed to her to be inflated or low, urging the panel to make reductions.

"A 10- to 11-cent (rate) increase? You've never done that before," she said. "People are going to be hurt by that kind of increase."

Efforts to cut the budget — without affecting programs — is easier said than done, according to town officials. Roughly 5 cents of the potential 10.9-cent municipal rate hike relates to mandated debt service on the voter-approved Ilsley Library project. Contracted employee wage increases, surging health care premiums are also among fixed costs. And the board is reluctant to further reduce its commitment to capital projects, knowing the dangers of deferred maintenance.

So the board will focus on the Local Option Tax, or LOT, surplus fund.

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

The selectboard, with voter permission, has used LOT surplus each year to help pay for some capital projects without ratcheting up more financial pain on local taxpayers. The LOT fund is expected to have a \$1,951,868 balance by the end of this fiscal year, according to Town Manager Mark Pruhenski. The draft FY27 budget reflects use of LOT surplus, including \$350,000 to help pay down the Ilsley project debt.

CHANGE IN COLLEGE GIFT
While LOT surplus has become a dependable tax stabilization tool for Middlebury, another relied-upon revenue stream is in limbo. Middlebury College and town around three decades ago negotiated the first in what

would become a series of 10-year agreements through which the institution would make annual payments to the town in recognition of the impact it has on municipal services. The most recent 10-year agreement expired around two years ago, and the two parties have yet to forge a new agreement.

The current FY26 budget reflects a \$340,000 college "gift in lieu of taxes." Town staff have estimated \$200,000 for FY27, which would be a \$140,000 reduction.

Middlebury selectboard chair Brian Carpenter said talks with the college will continue. But the institution's desire to take on a new 10-year agreement

being tempered by its own budget-balancing effort and by recent financial commitments it's made to the Ilsley Library project, the new municipal building and recreation center, and other community projects.

The *Independent* will take a deeper dive into the 10-year agreement process next week.

Meanwhile, the selectboard will continue to consider budget changes in advance of Jan. 27.

"This is an ongoing process," Selectman Dan Brown told those assembled for Tuesday's budget meeting. "Where we're at tonight is not necessarily where we're going (to) end up... I can tell you that I personally don't like the (potential FY27) tax rate at all."

He added he hopes to see other residents weigh in with the same fervor as the skatepark boosters.

"I love to see you fight for \$15,000," he said. "Now we just need the rest of us to fight for the other (\$15.9 million) that goes along with that."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

"This is an ongoing process. Where we're at tonight is not necessarily where we're going to end up."

— Selectman Dan Brown

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How Vt. pays for schools — how it might change

Editor's note: This article was written by the editor of VtDigger.

Vermont's education funding system is notoriously complicated and totally unique.

Following years of rising property taxes — and a watershed 2024 election animated, in part, by a debate over how the state pays for its schools — lawmakers entered the 2025 legislative session poised to consider major changes.

And while the Legislature began to transform how public school is paid for in 2025, the debate is slated to continue in 2026.

To understand where we're going, it's important to understand where we've been. Here's how the system has worked in recent years.

Vermont pays for education on a statewide basis, meaning property taxes from across the state are pooled and then redistributed. As a result of the state's complex funding system, budget decisions in individual communities impact tax rates across the state.

School district budgets are built by local school boards in consultation with district officials and voted on at the local level, often on Town Meeting Day in March. What voters approve is what the state will fund, and property tax rates are set at a per-\$100 of property value rate to pay for it.

Roughly two-thirds of the entire state's education budget is paid for with property taxes. The remainder is covered through the sales tax and portions of other taxes — such as rooms, meals, purchase and use — as well as state lottery proceeds and federal and state Medicaid money.

Every year, the Legislature passes the "yield bill," which helps set homestead, non-homestead, and income-sensitized property tax rates in order to fund the voter-approved budgets in each school district.

Homestead property refers to primary residences. Non-homestead property includes everything else, from second homes and apartments to businesses and camps. The annual non-homestead tax rate is uniform statewide. Homestead property tax rates, however, are impacted by local school spending decisions.

A resident's homestead property tax rates go up and down based on how the school district's per-pupil spending compares to a state average. Per-pupil spending is a technical term that, in short, refers to the amount of money spent by a school district divided by the number of students in the district.

But not every student is counted equally. Like other states, Vermont uses student weights to adjust for those who are more expensive to teach, including English learners and economically disadvantaged students. Those students are weighted as more than one student in the calculation.

A majority of homestead property tax payers receive some discount based on their income. These taxpayers are sometimes referred to as "income-sensitized," and Vermont uses a property tax

credit system to support income-sensitized taxpayers.

Yet another layer of complexity is added when the so-called common level of appraisal, set annually for each town by the state Department of Taxes, is added to the equation.

Historically, the common level of appraisal, expressed as a percentage, reflects the difference between a town's appraised property values and what the department considers to be fair market value. For example, if the property in a town is found to be appraised on average at 85% of market value, the common level of appraisal would be 85%.

To come up with a property owner's education property tax rate, the base rate — set by the Legislature only for non-homestead property, adjusted by school district per-pupil spending for homestead property — is divided by a town's common level of appraisal. This can lead to towns within the same school district having very different property tax rates.

Since July 2025, the common level of appraisal has worked slightly differently, though the formula is not any less complex. The percentage reflects the difference between a town's appraised property values and the statewide average appraised value as both compare to fair market value. For example, if statewide property values are at 95% of fair market value, the new appraisal level of the town above would be 85% divided by 95%, or 89%.

Much of how Vermont pays for education could change because of the passage in 2025 of Act 73. The new law envisions a major departure from Vermont's current system by shifting budget decisions away from school districts and their communities and to the state via a foundation formula.

Used by most states in the country, a foundation formula would provide each school district with a set amount of money based on the number of students enrolled, with additional weights to account for the increased costs of educating certain students, such as English learners and students with disabilities.

School districts' governing boards could still set their budgets and choose how to spend that money but would have to operate within the confines of the set amount the formula allocates.

Districts would be able to choose to spend more than what the formula provides by raising funds from local property taxpayers with voter approval. But that spending, called supplemental spending, would be capped at 10% of a district's budget. That cap would be ratcheted down every year until the cap hits 5%.

However, the new formula is dependent on lawmakers first agreeing to a new map of consolidated school districts this legislative session. The formula would then be phased in over a five-year period and would not go into effect until 2028.

Bristol waterline

(Continued from Page 1A)

"Rockydale" phases will cover other parts of Bristol.

At the selectboard's Jan. 12 meeting town engineer Steve Palmer of VTM Engineering said things are going well with the project, which was released for bid on Dec. 31.

"To date, we have 14 contractors that have reached out to us for plans and bid specs, which is great, this is right where I was hoping we would be," he said.

Palmer said he is hoping to hear from a few more contractors before the pre-bid meeting for the project, which is set for Jan. 22. Bids are due on Feb. 12, he said.

"I'm hoping either by the last meeting in February or the first meeting in March we'll have a recommendation for you folks," he told the selectboard.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Selectboard members during the meeting also took another look at a fiscal year 2027 spending plan for the town. The budget draft reviewed on Monday reflects around \$4,201,839 in total expenditures, an increase of 11.31% over the current

year. The amount supported by taxes is currently expected to rise by 12.97%, to \$3,755,359. Selectboard member Ian Albinson noted those figures reflect updates to salaries in the Bristol Public Works Department related to overtime numbers.

Selectboard members discussed some of the line items seeing increases, such as \$50,000 for building maintenance at Holley Hall (up from \$12,000 for FY'26). Bristol Town Administrator Gregory Faust said that money is needed to address deferred maintenance in the building.

"I just don't want to get in a situation where we've got a major plumbing issue, and we're not budgeted for (it)," he said. "But I mean these are known things, it's not speculative in any way that these need to be fixed, we know it needs to be fixed."

The selectboard will continue discussing the FY'27 budget at a future meeting. The board's next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 26 at 6 p.m. at Holley Hall and on Zoom. It must warn a budget before Feb. 1.

SPORTS

ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- School News
- Legal Notices
- Classifieds
- Police Logs



TIGER SAWYER WITSCHER takes a shot during Monday night's game against U-32. The senior earned an assist in the game.

Independent photo/Steve James



JUNIOR GOALIE HEAVEN Ross made a number of close saves, and 25 saves overall, during Monday night's game in Middlebury against U-32, including this one.

Independent photo/Steve James

Tiger girls' hockey falls to U-32

MUHS goalie made great saves

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — Though the Middlebury Union High School girls' hockey team fell 5-3 to U-32 during a home game on Monday night, that margin could have been much higher were it not for a number of close saves and quick defensive thinking from the local team's goalkeeper.

Junior goalie Heaven Ross managed to stop multiple breakaway attempts at Middlebury's Memorial

Sports Center, coming off her line to shutter a sprinting U-32 player who had gotten past the defense. She blocked powerful shots from long- and mid-distance, caught a couple in the air and stopped the puck from slipping past the goal line during scrambles in front of her net.

"She made some nice saves," Coach PJ Lalonde said of Ross, who is in her first season as MUHS's starting goalie.

By the end of the game, Ross had saved 25 of U-32's 30 shots. Though the shooting was practically even by the end of the game, the Tigers led in shooting in the first two periods, 13-10 and 12-6, respectively.

"It didn't go our way. But we had a lot of really, really nice plays, a lot of great opportunities," Lalonde said.

"They really battled super hard, very impressed with the way they played. Some things we could clean up, you know, defensively, might have cost us a couple goals.

But other than that, that's a great team, I felt like we're pretty evenly matched, just an overall solid effort."

Winning more puck battles might have led to a better outcome too, Lalonde added.

MUHS and U-32 went back and forth during the first period, with both teams generating some good chances, but unable to capitalize.

The Tigers got one of their best chances to take the lead with about 15 seconds left in the first

(See Hockey, Page 4B)



MUHS SENIOR QUINN Doria skates with the puck up the ice at Memorial Sports Center during Monday night's game against U-32.

Independent photo/Steve James



VUHS SENIOR THEO Elzinga shoots a jump shot during Saturday's game against Hazen in Vergennes. He was the Commodores' leading scorer with 15 points.

Independent photo/Steve James

Boys' hoops have mixed results

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — In what was a light week for local boys' high school basketball teams, with Middlebury and Mt. Abe winning close games. Then MUHS fell in a second game, and VUHS was also defeated in the past seven days.

TIGERS VICTORIOUS, THEN VANQUISHED

MUHS beat Fair Haven on the road, 56-45, last Friday night. The Jan. 9 game was the teams' only scheduled match up during the regular season.

(See Hoops, Page 2B)

Locals do well at track & field championships

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

BURLINGTON — Two local indoor track & field programs, one long-standing and another in its second year, had multiple runners place in individual events during the Vermont Indoor Track Championships on Saturday.

From Vergennes Union High School, which has had a team for 17 years, senior Carter McGuire's second place finish in the 600 meters (1:30.41) was the biggest win of the day from either school.

A young VUHS relay team made of sophomores Lauren Hill and

Georgia Kunkel, junior Isabelle Van Voorst and senior Eleonor Wilkinson-Sachs also grabbed a notable finish for VUHS, earning third place in the 4x400 meter relay (4:50.23). The same quartet also placed sixth in the 4x200m relay (2:04.95).

The Commodore boys' relay teams also had success. Sophomore Rowan Neffinger, seniors Chance Koenig and Carter McGuire, and freshman Quin Dubois placed fifth in the 4x200m relay (1:45.90) and the 4x400 relay (4:00.42).

(See Track, Page 3B)

Tigers girls' hoop wins over Mt. Abe Eagles

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The three-pointer that Tiger Louisa Orten hit about a minute into Middlebury Union High School's home game against Mt. Abe wasn't just the first basket on the scoreboard Friday night — it was a glimpse of what was to come.

Middlebury's sophomore point

guard hit two three-pointers in the first quarter, sank two more later in the game and scored 17 — almost half of the points that lifted MUHS above Mt. Abraham, 40-24, for the Tigers' fifth win of the season.

"We're feeling good," MUHS junior Isabel Quinn, a co-captain, said after the game. After Orten,

(See Tigers, Eagles Page 3B)



EAGLE SOPHOMORE OLIVIA Sawyer throws a pass to one of her teammates during a game against MUHS this past Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

Sports BRIEFS

Nordic skiers ski well at Ole's

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

WARREN — Local high school Nordic skiers earned top-three places in both the boys' and girl's 5K races at Ole's Cross County Center in Warren late last week.

Dozens of varsity skiers from different nooks of the state competed in the Jan. 8 race, which was hosted by Harwood.

"It was a beautiful, relatively warm and sunny day on a freshly rolled course," said Jay Harrington, coach for Middlebury Union High School.

For the MUHS boys' team, sophomore Jorgen Pirrung placed second in 12:08, just 5 seconds behind the top skier of the day from Montpelier. Pirrung finished almost 5 seconds in front of the third place finisher.

Tiger sophomore Gabriel Perchemlides finished exactly a

(See Skiers, Page 2B)

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball	
1/7 Milton vs Mt Abe	45-21
1/7 MUHS vs Missisquoi	34-33
1/7 VUHS vs Stowe	69-21
1/9 MUHS vs Mt Abe	40-24
1/13 Mt Abe vs Missisquoi	35-30
1/13 MUHS vs Colchester	51-36
1/14 VUHS vs Richford	Late

Boys' Basketball	
1/9 MUHS vs Fair Haven	56-45
1/9 Mt. Abe vs Otter Valley	58-54
1/10 Hazen vs VUHS	65-60
1/13 Rutland vs MUHS	62-42
1/14 Mt Abe at Missisquoi	Late
1/14 VUHS at Winooski	Late

Boys' Hockey	
1/10 MUHS vs Saranac	6-5

Girls' Hockey	
1/7 MUHS vs Stowe	3-0
1/12 U-32 vs MUHS	5-3
1/14 Brattleboro at MUHS	Late

COLLEGE SPORTS	
Men's Hockey	
1/9 Trinity vs Midd	5-2
1/10 Wesleyan vs Midd	4-2
1/13 Midd at St. Mike's	2-1
Women's Hockey	
1/9 Midd vs Conn College	2-1

(See Scoreboard, Page 4B)

In Winooski, soccer is a sanctuary

By PETER LINDHOLM

Editor's note: Columnist Karl Lindholm earned a week off and his son Peter is picking up the slack for his dad.

The stalwart Winooski defenseman, whose younger sister was screaming “move your bald a**” at him from behind the goal, had once again swiped the ball away from an overwhelmed Alburgh first-year and advanced the ball to the midfielder, whose parents sat swaddled in winter gear (despite the temperate October weather) on the sidelines.

The midfielder crossed the ball to the striker, who could be found on the weekends riding his bike around downtown and asking questions to amused passersby. He sidestepped a defender and grounded the ball under the keeper's outstretched arm. 4-0 Spartans.

The teachers in the crowd erupted in cheers, as did the cohort of children on the playground behind us, looking up from burying each other in woodchips and fallen leaves. During the school day this activity would have been my job to address, but I was, as I told the kids, “off the clock.”

Except none of us were off the clock. Earlier that school day, we received a report that two Winooski High School students had been stopped and questioned by ICE on their way back to school from a free block. The report was confirmed by several other community sources, and for the first time, we initiated our “sanctuary school protocol.”

Although we hadn't yet had ICE at our doors, we've grown used to teaching and learning with their specter hanging over our heads. During the summer, our indomitable superintendent, Wilmer Chevarria, was taken into custody and questioned for hours, presumably partially due to the district's outspoken

stance in opposition to the Trump Administration's immigration policies. A student arrived home from school to find their father in detention; several students had missed school for fear of leaving their families.

And since this day, a student and his mother have been taken into ICE custody in Dilley, Texas, and the district has been the target of a racist online attack campaign after raising a flag in support of our many Somali families. Nationally, ICE agents in Minneapolis shot a woman in cold blood for the “crime” of driving away. Like in soccer, our clock is always running.

Our task that day was to ensure that no student traveled home without adult support. We rode buses, we drove children home, we walked the streets with the droves of kids who make their way home from school on foot every day. We survived the initial rush of dismissal with no issues. However, the remaining educators, including me, found ourselves with a very “Winooski” problem: the middle school soccer games.

As in their home countries, soccer for our students is no game. Each grade has a lively recess match that almost always requires mediation from yours truly, the friendly neighborhood behavioral interventionist. When my students earn positive breaks from class for completing their work or behaving especially responsibly, many of them want to kick a ball around my office or watch highlights on my computer and debate endlessly who is the “GOAT,” Messi or Ronaldo. And given the large families that make up these communities, almost every student had a friend or relative playing in the games.

This love of soccer is a beautiful thing for our district. It keeps the students connected to the countries they left behind, left to come to a country whose current government

would sooner see them in cages than on the field. But on this day, it was particularly dangerous. ICE would be prohibited from entering the school without a warrant, but nothing could stop them from coming to a soccer field, or waiting around the field for families to leave without the protection we had been able to offer them earlier in the day.

So the soccer fields became our muster point. To avoid panic, we relied on the tried and true “grapevine” system of disseminating information around a school. We put the word out that if you wanted a ride home, there were teachers available at the soccer games. With the benefit of hindsight, we would have been more direct about the cause of the danger. But like in soccer when the defense is bearing down, we didn't have the luxury of time.

Shortly after Winooski's fourth goal, I felt a tug at my sleeve. Four Somali children, three students of mine in the elementary school and one older student who lived near them, stood at my side. They were shuffling, eyes cast down to the yellowing grass. “Can we have a ride home,” murmured the oldest, seeming almost ashamed. I knew these kids and I knew their families; they had come to America because of a promise of safety and opportunity, one that our government has never quite honored and is now bent on breaking. But thankfully, our communities are not our government.

We walked toward the parking lot, leaving behind shouts of excitement, perhaps another goal. Around us other teachers were escorting other students home, laughing brightly at a joke. And above us the October sun was setting, a golden ball blazing brightly against the darkening sky.

Peter Lindholm graduated from Middlebury Union High School in 2013 and Middlebury College in 2017.5. He is in his fourth year working at Winooski Elementary School and is studying at the University of Vermont for a master's in social work.



PETER LINDHOLM



SENIOR RYKER MOSEHAUER dribbles past Hazen players during Saturday's game.

Independent photos/Steve James

Hoops

(Continued from Page 1B)

Junior Colin Chicoine's 17 points were the most of any Tiger that evening. Senior Cooke Riney and junior Taylor Altomose brought in 13 points and six rebounds each.

When it came to rebounds, senior Jonathan Kafumbe was in the lead with 10. He also scored three points and assisted his teammates five times.

Junior Ryan Brouillard scored eight points and junior Tim Laframboise put up two points and rebounded six times.

“It was a balanced team effort to get a good win,” Coach Chris Altomose said.

Four days later in Middlebury, MUHS fell to Rutland, 62-42. During that Tuesday night game, Riney put up 17 points.

The 2-6 Tigers face Missisquoi at home on Saturday at 12:30 p.m., in what will be the first of two regular season meetings, as will a game three days later against VUHS in Vergennes.

COMMODORES FALL TO HAZEN

In Vergennes this past Saturday, VUHS lost to Hazen, 65-60. The team from Hardwick led in scoring in every quarter except the third, when the Commodores put away 19 to the visitors' eight.

Commodore senior Theo Elzinga was the lead scorer for VUHS, generating 15 points. He



RYAN WRIGHT GETS ready to set up an offensive play during Saturday's game against Hazen. The senior scored 11 for the Commodores, but the home team lost, 65-60.

also led the team in rebounds, grabbing 11 (four offensive and seven defensive).

Junior Cohen Howell wasn't far behind Elzinga with 14 points. Senior Ryan Wright scored 11 and junior Quinn LeBeau scored eight.

VUHS played at Winooski on Wednesday in a game completed after deadline for this edition.

Up next, VUHS hosts Milton on Saturday at 2:30 p.m. This will be the Commodores' first time

playing Milton.

EAGLES FLY OVER OTTERS

In what was a close game this past Friday evening, Mt. Abe beat Otter Valley for the second time this season.

Of the 58 baskets that lifted the Eagles above their opponent's 54, Mt. Abe senior Cooper Cook scored 18 points, senior Charlie Germon scored 14 and sophomore Dustin Abbott scored 9.

The Eagles played Missisquoi on Wednesday after the *Independent's* deadline.

Mt. Abe will host Winooski this Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

BASKETBALL Wrap-Up

Skiers

(Continued from Page 1B)

minute after Pirrung, a time that earned him fourth place.

For the girls' team, Mt. Abe senior June Yates-Rusch, who practices and attends races with MUHS, took third place in 14:43.7. She crossed the finish line behind two racers from Montpelier, who completed the course with 14:14.4 and 14:31.4 times.

The race also marked a special occasion for MUHS junior

Graham Zieger and sophomore Sadie Jette, who Harrington said skied in their first varsity distance races. Zieger placed 24th (16:47.6) in the boys' race, and Jette placed 21st (20:42.2) on the girls' side.

Here's how other local racers did:

- Boys:
- MUHS junior Nate Cook Yoder placed sixth (14:31.0)
 - MUHS senior Kaden Hammond placed fourteenth (15:06.7)
- Girls:

- VUHS junior Ellie Eckels placed ninth (16:35.7)

- MUHS sophomore Meredith Carr Perlow placed tenth (16:38.0)

- MUHS freshman Avery Thompson placed eleventh (16:39.4)

MUHS will host its next meet at the Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton this coming Monday, Jan. 19, at 10 a.m. It's Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which is a school holiday.

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TIGER CO-CAPTAN ISABEL Quinn threads through traffic under the basket on her way to scoring a layup during a home game against Mt. Abe last Friday.

Independent photos/Steve James

Tigers, Eagles

(Continued from Page 1B) The nine points Quinn scored during the game were the most for MUHS. “We definitely have found a lot more areas to improve on, but overall, it was a good win for us.”

MUHS Coach Eric Carter was happy with his team’s performance in Friday night’s game, which came about a third of the way into the season.

“We shared the ball. We got some scoring from quite a few players,” he said.

For the Tigers, junior Alice Livesay and sophomore Willow Heywood put up five points each, and sophomore Lillian Paquette and freshman Ava Wood each scored two.

Shortly after Orten hit her first three to get MUHS on the board, Quinn made a basket on a foul.

Though Quinn missed her extra shot, another early Mt. Abe foul helped the Tigers widen the

gap to 8-0 about two and a half minutes into the game. Orten found Heywood in the paint, a play Orten repeated with other Tigers in all four quarters. Heywood made the layup despite being fouled, and made her extra free throw.

The Tigers held Mt. Abe to zero points until there was about 4:45 left in the quarter, when Eagle senior co-captain Genevieve Forand, who scored five points during the game, got her team on the board with a layup even though she was fouled. She made her extra shot, bringing the score to 10-3.

Forand scored again not long after, making it 10-5, and then her fellow senior captain Brooke Ryersbach scored a three pointer to make it 10-8. Ryersbach led Mt. Abe in points, with eight during the game.

Orten answered Ryersbach with her second and third three-pointers, with about 1:15 seconds and 30

“Improving our offense is a big thing. Defensively, I think we do just fine.”

— Mt. Abe Coach Koran Cousino



EAGLE BROOKE RYERSBACH drives by a Tiger defender during Friday’s game at MUHS.

seconds left. The quarter ended the Tigers leading, 16-8.

The middle quarters were a bit slower for the Tigers. Mt. Abe kept MUHS to seven and four points, respectively, in the second and third periods.

“I think we didn’t defend well early, and then we sort of sorted some things out and defended her really well in the middle of the game,” Mt. Abe Coach Koran Cousino said, referring to Orten.

A low score has been the M.O. for the Eagles, according to Cousino.

“Improving our offense is a big thing,” she said. “Defensively, I think we do just fine.”

Offensively the team saw success breaking the Tigers’ press throughout the game.

“The hard work is breaking the press and then the easy work is running the offense,” Cousino said. “So let’s break the press, and reward ourselves with running our offense, and not break the press and then throw it away.”

Eagle sophomores Samantha Guilbeaut and Edda Twyman, and senior Isla Underwood were all able to capitalize on the offensive opportunities Mt. Abe generated. They scored seven, two and one points, respectively.

The widest gap of the game came in the fourth quarter, when MUHS found a stride similar to the first quarter. With about 2:15

Track

(Continued from Page 1B)

The VUHS boys placed eighth as a team and the girls tied with Lyndon for 14th in Division 2.

“Overall, the season has been a good one,” Coach Brad Castillo said.

“Strong regular season performances and improvements were welcome surprises despite holiday schedules, weather and sickness,” he continued. “With all of that, we were able to bring it all together and have an incredibly successful state championship meet. They are a hard-working group that have earned their success.”

For Mt. Abe, which fielded an indoor track and field team for just a second year this season, junior Truman Sawyer’s fourth-place finishes, one in the 300 meters (30.91) and another in the long jump (5.95 meters), were the best showings of the competition. Also for the Eagles, sophomore Jaret Sturtevant placed fifth in the 55m hurdles (8.95).

The points they scored helped the boys’ team earn 10th place at states.

On the girls’ side, sophomore Sloane Gryzb placed ninth in the 2-mile race (13:29.14). Her finish was the best for the Mt. Abe girls, who didn’t earn any team points.

“The season went well in my

second year as coach,” coach Dustin Corrigan said. “Our young team broke many school records this year including boys’ 300m, boys’ 600m, boys’ 1,000m, boys’ 1 mile, boys’ 2 mile, boys’ 55m hurdles, boys’ 4x200m, girls’ 1 mile and girls’ 2 mile.”

He also noted a new team-building activity.

“We also create a new annual community run event, The Bristol Turkey Trot, that we presented this past Thanksgiving,” Corrigan said.

Looking forward to next year, Corrigan hopes the program will field a bigger team, an assistant coach and host a larger Turkey Trot.

“I also hope to see more of our athletes competing at a level next year that scores points (must place top six in an event to score points), and see an athlete (or multiple athletes) from our program qualify for New England,” he said.


“We have a few who were very close this year, particularly Truman Sawyer and Jaret Sturtevant.”

Here’s how other local athletes did at the meet:

- VUHS:**
- Isabelle Van Voorst, sixth, 300m (46.12).
 - Eleanor Wilkinson-Saches, ninth, 600m (2:00.43).
 - Freshman Quin Dubois, seventh, 55m hurdles (10.15).

FROM MT. ABE:

- Freshman Del Guilmette, 1 mile (5:03.22); ninth, 2 mile (10:59.89).
- Junior Jackson LaMarche, ninth, 55m hurdles (10.46).
- Juniors Jackson LaMarche and Truman Sawyer, and sophomores Jaret Sturtevant and Julian Schuler, seventh, 4x200 relay.
- Sophomores Julianna Murphy, Sloane Gryzb and Charlotte Desilets, and freshman Emily Wells, 11th, 4 x 200 relay (2:11.06).



Upcoming Events

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

Saturday, January 17:
12:45 - 2:45 PM 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

Thursday, January 22:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Tuesday, January 27:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

Thursday, January 29:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating



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TIGER POINT GUARD Louisa Orten pops up for a jumper during a home game against Mt. Abe last Friday. She was the leading scorer with 17 points.



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Hockey

(Continued from Page 1B)

period when two Tigers found themselves in front of the net. The puck traveled a short distance from the left corner of the goal back across the goal to the right of it to the stick of another Tiger, but she was unable to knock it in.

Though the game was scoreless going into the second period, U-32 got on the board shortly after it began.

About two minutes in, Emily Tringe took a shot from the middle right that went right into the side-netting.

MUHS sophomore Nova Bojanowski tied it up for the Tigers a couple minutes later, after getting a pass from senior Kenyon Connors, and taking a mid-distance shot from the left.

About two minutes later, U-32 scored their second goal off a short pass right in front of the net, and two minutes after that tallied a third goal.

Seconds before the second period ended, U-32 closed it out with a fourth goal while MUHS



SENIOR LIA CALZINI skates up the rink with the puck during Monday night's home game against U-32. She scored the Tigers' final goal in a 5-3 loss.

Independent photo/Steve James

was down a player after a penalty. Ross was able to make a save on a breakaway, but U-32 did capitalize on the deflection.

The Tigers opened the scoring in the final period, gaining some momentum after a promising attempt from senior Lia Calzini. She got the puck and was able to

get a shot off but it flew into the wall. A foul was called on U-32.

With about six minutes left in the period, after two Tiger shots were deflected, MUHS senior Ireland Hanley scored on an assist from senior Sawyer Witscher, bringing the score to 4-2.

U-32 scored again off a pass in

front of the Tigers net about 10 minutes into the period, making it 5-2.

But the Tigers didn't give up. Calzini got a breakaway and scored one more for the home team with about three minutes left in the game, bringing the final score to 5-3.

MUHS boys' hockey earns fifth win of season in nailbiter

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' hockey team beat Saranac in a nailbiter this past Saturday. After many goals scored during the three periods, the Tigers left New York with a 6-5 win in overtime.

Tiger junior Gabriel Quesnel came to his team's aid when they needed it most, scoring both of his goals in the last seven minutes of play.

While he capitalized in those final critical minutes, junior Asa Pratt, who assisted Quesnel's first goal, set the tone for the team earlier in the game with two goals assisted by senior Joe Sullivan, who scored one himself.

Senior goalie TJ Baron finished the game with 18 saves.

"It was a back and forth game, but the team showed a lot of resilience and mental toughness," MUHS Coach Jordan Stearns said.

The Tigers started off strong, with a goal 38 seconds into the game from Pratt, who was assisted by Sullivan. The MUHS defense and Baron denied all of Saranac's scoring attempts in the first period.

It wasn't until 1:33 into the second period that Sullivan scored a second goal for Middlebury, assisted by junior Jase Kozak. Saranac answered quickly with a goal about 90 seconds later.

But that wasn't going to fly for Middlebury seniors Jaxson Heffernan and Ethan Mulcahy, and junior Otto Siegfried.

About a minute and a half after Saranac's first goal, Heffernan got the puck to Siegfried, who got it to Mulcahy for another MUHS goal just after three minutes into the period.

Saranac scored again just after six minutes into the period, but was

outscored in the second 3-2 after Sullivan and Pratt connected again for a second goal about eight minutes and 12 seconds in. Sullivan's goal capped scoring for the period.

Though MUHS led 4-2 going into the third period, Saranac fought back, scoring twice before Quesnel got MUHS on the board in the final period with the help of Pratt and sophomore Evan Northrup. Their play

brought the score to 5-4 with just over three minutes left in the game.

Though that would have been a plenty exciting end to a well-fought game, Saranac tied it up with their own late goal, with just 1:18 left.

"Instead of getting down on ourselves, the team came out in (overtime) strong and we scored early in OT showing that resilience and mental fortitude," Stearns said.

Almost two minutes into the extra time senior Adrien Malhotra found Quesnel, who made the score 6-5 about 1:53 into overtime.

The Tigers' season record was 5-3 after beating Saranac. Next the team plays Champlain Valley Union High School on Jan. 17 for their first and only scheduled meeting during the regular season.

Local girls' hoops see continued success

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — In recent girls' high school basketball play, Middlebury and Vergennes both celebrated wins in the lead-up to the MUHS vs. VUHS faceoff this coming Monday.

Mt. Abe was one of the Tigers' victims in a game played this past Friday (See story on Page 1B). But the Eagles bounced back with a win of their own.

VUHS BURRIES STOWE

The Vergennes Union High School girls' team repeated successes from last week, beating Stowe, 69-21, on Jan. 7, and marking a four-game winning streak.

The Commodores kept a wide margin throughout the game — they only allowed Stowe 10 points at half, and had scored 38 themselves. Ashtin Stearns topped the scoring for VUHS, with 23 points. The

senior is on track to hit 1,000 career points, and had 27 to go ahead of a home game Wednesday night against Richford, which was played after press deadline.

Stearns didn't just help the Commodores offensively — she totaled five steals during the game.

Junior Georgia Krauss carried the team in rebounds, retrieving an unclaimed ball 14 times against Stowe. She also contributed 11 points.

Ayla Kittredge, the sole freshman on the team, showed why she made the cut — after Stearns, her 12 points were the most any other Commodore scored.

Sophomore Sidi Miguel stole the ball from Stowe nine times, senior Ava Francis scored 10 points and assisted four baskets, and senior

Amelia Geroux scored 4 points, had 6 rebounds, 3 steals and 3 assists.

For the first time this season, the Commodores play White River Valley at home on Friday at 7 p.m.

Before taking on MUHS, the team plays White River on Jan. 16.

Monday's local tilt is at the Middlebury Union High School gym at 7 p.m. As of Tuesday, the Tigers and the Commodores had each had only lost one game this season.

MUHS WIN THRICE

The Tigers celebrated more wins this past week, against Missisquoi, Mt. Abe and Colchester.

In what was the first of two regular season meetings planned for MUHS and Missisquoi, the Tigers edged the Thunderbirds,

34-33, on Jan. 7.

Sophomore Louisa Orten scored the majority of those points, finishing the game with 18. Sophomore Lillian Paquette score 6 and had 7 deflections and junior Isabel Quinn totaled 5 steals and 6 deflections.

The Tigers are scheduled to visit Missisquoi's turf on Jan. 30 at 7 p.m.

After Middlebury defeated Mt. Abe on Friday night, 40-24, the Tigers on Tuesday beat Colchester, 51-36. Orten, sophomore Willow Heywood and Quinn scored 12 points apiece. Sophomore Sophie Simpson brought in 8 points.

Quinn led the team in rebounds, grabbing 12. Orten and Simpson snagged seven and eight, respectively.

The 6-1 Tigers take on Enosburg Falls at home on Thursday night.

MT. ABE IS 1 FOR 3

Before falling to MUHS on Jan. 9, Mt. Abe lost to Milton on Jan. 7, 45-21

Containing the game's high scorer, Milton senior Marlie Bushey, proved difficult for the young Mt. Abe team, Eagle Coach Koran Cousino said. Bushey is "a very versatile scorer," according to Cousino. She scored 30 of Milton's 45 points.

Cousino attributed the 10-point margin at half (22-12) to a Milton press that was tough for his team to break.

On the Eagle side, senior Gen Forand brought in the most baskets for her team, scoring 9 points. Sophomore Sophie Underwood led the team in rebounds (7), and had two assists and four steals.

Mt. Abe celebrated their first win of the season on Tuesday night. The final score against Missisquoi was 35-30.

Sophomore Samantha Guilbeault led the Eagles with 15 points and 13 rebounds.

"Looking forward, the young Eagles are looking to improve their free throw shooting and decrease turnovers," Cousino said.

Next up for Mt. Abe is an away game against Burr & Burton on Friday at 7 p.m. The Eagles previously lost to that team 45-28 on Dec. 18.



BASKETBALL Wrap-Up

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS	
Girls' Basketball	1/19 S Burlington at MUHS 6 PM
1/15 Enosburg Falls at MUHS 7 PM	1/17 MUHS at Lamoyille 1 PM
1/16 White River at VUHS 7 PM	COLLEGE SPORTS
1/16 Burr & Burton at Mt Abe 7 PM	Men's Hockey
1/21 Mt Abe at Colchester 7 PM	1/17 Midd at Williams 3 PM
1/19 VUHS at MUHS 7 PM	1/20 Midd at Norwich 7 PM
1/21 VUHS at Fairfax 7 PM	1/23 Bowdoin at Midd 7 PM
1/23 VUHS at Twinfield 7 PM	1/24 Colby at Midd 3 PM
1/24 Enosburg at Mt Abe 12:30 PM	Women's Hockey
1/24 Winooski at MUHS 12:30 PM	1/17 Midd at Amherst 7:30 PM
Boys' Basketball	1/18 Midd at Amherst 3 PM
1/17 MUHS vs Missisquoi 12:30 PM	1/23 Midd at Bowdoin 7 PM
1/17 Mt. Abe vs Winooski 12:30 PM	1/24 Midd at Bowdoin 3 PM
1/17 Milton at VUHS 2:30 PM	Women's Basketball
1/20 MUHS at VUHS 7 PM	1/16 Conn Coll at Midd 7 PM
1/23 MUHS at Mt Abe 7 PM	1/17 Midd at Tufts 3 PM
1/23 VUHS at Missisquoi 7 PM	1/24 Midd at Williams 3 PM
Boys' Hockey	Men's Basketball
1/17 CVU at MUHS 7 PM	1/16 Midd at Conn College 7 PM
1/21 MUHS at Missisquoi 7:45 PM	1/17 Midd at Tufts 3 PM
1/24 MUHS at Milton 7 PM	1/19 Keene St at Midd 7 PM
Girls' Hockey	1/24 Williams at Midd 2 PM
1/17 Woodstock at MUHS 5 PM	Scoreboard
1/21 MUHS at Harwood 6:30 PM	(Continued from Page 1B)
1/24 Missisquoi at MUHS 7 PM	1/10 Midd vs Conn College 4-2
Wrestling	Women's Basketball
1/15 MUHS at Colchester 5 PM	1/9 Midd vs Trinity 64-62
1/16&17 VUHS/Mt Abe at Essex Tourn	1/10 Wesleyan vs Midd 56-40
1/21 MUHS/Mt Abe at OV 6 PM	1/13 Smith College vs Midd 65-52
1/21 VUHS Hosts Duals 5:30 PM	Men's Basketball
1/23 ConVal at VUHS 6 PM	1/9 Trinity vs Midd 79-62
1/24 Mt Abe et al. at VUHS Tourn	1/10 Wesleyan vs Midd 86-62
Nordic Skiing	
1/19 MUHS hosts at Rikert 10AM	
Gymnastics	
1/15 MUHS at Essex 6 PM	

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SUMMER JOURNALISM WORKSHOP

Deadline To Apply, April 3, 2026

- ✓ Tuition Free Program For Students Interested In Journalism
- ✓ 2026 Boston Workshop Dates, June 20 - 27

NEHSJC

nehsjc.org

community calendar

jan 15 THURSDAY

New Haven Comes Together final meeting in New Haven. Thursday, Jan. 15, 6-8:30 p.m., Town Hall, 70 North St. Final meeting of the VCRD Community Visits program to build action plans around community priorities. Participants will vote on Points of Vision and break into task forces focused on expanding housing opportunities and creating community gathering spaces. Free dinner and childcare provided. All are welcome. More info at bit.ly/NewHavenTogether.

"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.



Learn life-saving skills

ADMINISTERING CPR HELPS save lives, and it's always good to know what to do in an emergency. You can learn CPR techniques at Townline First Response's free community CPR course on Tuesday, Jan. 20. The course will take place at Bridport Central School at 7 p.m., and while you won't get a CPR card, you will brush up on life-saving skills. For more information, contact Geoff Nelson at 802-349-3305 or gsnelson@gmavt.net.

of the community. Learn life-saving techniques in a friendly, hands-on session. No CPR cards will be issued; this course is for education and awareness only. Free. More info: Geoff Nelson, 802-349-3305, gsnelson@gmavt.net.

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.

\$15 and include a sheet of three cards for each regular game; winner-take-all games are \$1 per sheet. Cash prizes based on attendance. 50/50 raffle tickets are \$1 each or \$5 for six. Food available for purchase.

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

Poetry Club in Monkton. Saturday, Jan. 17, 9:30-10:45 a.m., Russell Memorial Library, 92 Monkton Ridge. Monthly Poetry Club led by Melanie. Participants are invited to bring favorite poems, either original work or poems by favorite authors, to share and discuss. Held in the library's conference room. Free.

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.

Music jam in Middlebury. Sunday, Jan. 18, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Middlebury VFW, 530 Exchange Street. Community music jam sponsored by the Champlain Valley Fiddler's Club. Open to fiddlers, other musicians, and anyone who wants to play an instrument or sing. Refreshments available. 50/50 raffle and door prize. \$3 cover charge.

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.

Community CPR course in Bridport. Tuesday, Jan. 20, 7 p.m., Bridport Central School, 3442 Route 22A. Educational CPR course hosted by Townline First Response and open to all members

Learn life-saving skills

ADMINISTERING CPR HELPS save lives, and it's always good to know what to do in an emergency. You can learn CPR techniques at Townline First Response's free community CPR course on Tuesday, Jan. 20. The course will take place at Bridport Central School at 7 p.m., and while you won't get a CPR card, you will brush up on life-saving skills. For more information, contact Geoff Nelson at 802-349-3305 or gsnelson@gmavt.net.

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\$15 and include a sheet of three cards for each regular game; winner-take-all games are \$1 per sheet. Cash prizes based on attendance. 50/50 raffle tickets are \$1 each or \$5 for six. Food available for purchase.

jan 26 MONDAY

Cribbage Night in Bristol. Monday, Jan. 26, 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.

jan 28 WEDNESDAY

Mount Independence history talk: "How two decisions involving Mount Independence made George Washington angry" in Brandon. Wednesday, Jan. 28, 6-7 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. An illustrated talk by Steve Zeoli, president of the Mount Independence Coalition, examining controversial decisions involving Mount Independence during the early years of the Revolutionary War and their impact on George Washington and the fight for independence.

jan 21 WEDNESDAY

Blood drive in Vergennes. Wednesday, Jan. 21, noon-4:30 p.m., Cross Life Church, 1759 Route 7. Community blood donation clinic hosted by the American Red Cross. Appointments are recommended but walk-ins are welcome as space allows. More info or to schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org.

Stretch and neuromuscular therapy with Bean Camara in Brandon. Wednesday, Jan. 21, 5:30-6 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. See Jan. 7 listing.

jan 22 THURSDAY

Cookbook Club meeting in New Haven. Thursday, Jan. 22, 6 p.m., New Haven Community Library, 78 North St. Monthly potluck-style Cookbook Club. Participants bring a recipe to share based on a theme. January's theme is cookbooks from the library's collection. Scholarship funds available to help offset ingredient costs. Free. More info at librarian@nhcl.org.

Community discussion on vaccines and healthcare in Brandon. Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m., Brandon Town Hall, 1 Conant Square. Community discussion on vaccines. Moderated by Bernie Carr, with questions from the audience. Speakers include George Fjeld, MD; Ben Bearnot, MD; David Schneider, MD; and Abigail Wikoff, FNP-C. Free.

"Small but Mighty: Shrews, Voles and Other Vermont Small Mammals" in Salisbury. Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Alyssa Bennett of Vermont Fish & Wildlife will discuss small but mighty mammals. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

jan 23 FRIDAY

Community Supper in Middlebury. Friday, Jan. 23, 5-6 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Regular Friday night community supper. Menu varies, meat and vegetarian offerings available.

jan 24 SATURDAY

Third annual puzzle challenge in Middlebury. Saturday, Jan. 24, 11 a.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2 Duane Ct. Teams of 1-4 compete in the annual puzzle challenge. Registration required; register your team at isleypubliclibrary.org.

Book page snowflake stars in Vergennes. Saturday, Jan. 24, noon, Bixby Free Library, 258 Main St. Transform old books into snowflake stars to decorate your home. All materials provided; bring your own book if you wish. RSVP required, email miranda.degreenia@bixbylibrary.org.

jan 25 SUNDAY

Pancake breakfast in New Haven. Sunday, Jan. 25, 7-10:30 a.m., New Haven Town Hall cafeteria, 70 North St. All-you-can-eat breakfast to support the New Haven Volunteer Fire Department. Proceeds go towards equipment, training and gear. Menu includes pancakes, French toast, eggs, bacon, sausage, potatoes and beverages. \$15 adults, \$10 children ages 6-11, children under 6 free.

Public bingo in Vergennes. Sunday, Jan. 25, 1-3:30 p.m., Vergennes American Legion Post 14, downstairs, 100 Armory Lane. Community bingo hosted by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 14. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. Bingo packets are

jan 29 THURSDAY

"Waterfowl Management, Research and Conservation" in Salisbury. Thursday, Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Andrew Bouton of Vermont Fish & Wildlife will discuss the birds living on our shared water bodies. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

jan 30 FRIDAY

Community Supper in Middlebury. Friday, Jan. 30, 5-6 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 2 Main St. Regular Friday night community supper. Menu varies, meat and vegetarian offerings available.

jan 31 SATURDAY

Postpartum Care Swap in Bristol. Saturday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m., Bristol Federated Church, 37 North St. Community swap hosted by The Blooming Circle, a postpartum mom support group in Addison County. Families are invited to donate, swap or take postpartum and baby items, including recovery essentials, breastfeeding and pumping supplies, maternity and postpartum clothing and bottles. All items must be clean, safe and in good condition. No broken or expired items, cribs or car seats. Free. More info at 802-373-2989 or thebloomingcircle.802@gmail.com.

Patch cuts for wildlife and forest resiliency in Leicester. Saturday, Jan. 31, noon, Foxglove Farm, 777 Delorm Rd. Join Addison County Forester and VT Coverts Cooperator Mark Raishart for a guided walk through his family's working forest and bird-friendly sugarbush to explore patch cuts used to create wildlife habitat, diversify forests and enhance resiliency. Walk covers about a half mile on uneven and wet terrain and ends at the sugarhouse with warm drinks and snacks. Families welcome. To register, email mark.raishart@vermont.gov.

Winter Traveling Book Club in Ferrisburgh. Saturday, Jan. 31, 1-2 p.m., Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, 4472 Basin Harbor Rd. and online. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum launches its Winter Traveling Book Club with a discussion of "Benedict Arnold's Navy" by James Nelson. This hybrid discussion takes place in person with tea and snacks or online via Zoom. Readers may attend one or all sessions in the January-April series, hosted by institutions around Addison County. Free, registration required at lcmm.org.

King Pede card party in Ferrisburgh. Saturday, Jan. 31, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center, 3279 Route 7. King Pede card party begins with a sandwich supper, followed by an evening of cards and games.

New Haven residents to advance community priorities on Jan. 15

NEW HAVEN — All New Haven community members are welcomed and encouraged to join the third meeting of the New Haven Comes Together Community Visit process on Thursday, Jan. 15, from 6-8:30 p.m. at the New Haven Town Hall. Attendees will review points of vision for the future of New Haven, and join task forces to advance community priorities. Community members can sign up for these task forces by attending the meeting or online at bit.ly/NewHavenTogether. Dinner and drinks will be served, and childcare will be provided.

On Dec. 11, New Haven residents came together for the second step of the New Haven Comes Together process to review a list of 22 opportunities for action, generated from the input of over 160 community members, and choose their top priorities for action. Through a two-round voting process, New Haven residents chose two priorities and are forming local task forces that will work to:

- Expand Housing Opportunities
- Create Community Gathering Spaces

At the meeting on Jan. 15, participants will create action plans and identify resources for each action priority with support from a team of state, regional, and Federal partners. Members of the Visiting Resource Team who will attend the meeting and provide support include staff from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Addison County

Regional Planning Commission, Addison County Economic Development Corporation, and USDA Rural Development.

Community members are invited to come to the meeting and join a task force, regardless of whether they have participated in the process so far.

"The upcoming meeting is an exciting turning point where community members will transition from conversation and prioritization to action planning, and begin the work to make their community priorities a reality," Alyssa Johnson, VCRD Community Visit Program Director said. "Now is a great time to join your neighbors to help support the future of New Haven!"

Community members can sign up online at bit.ly/NewHavenTogether, or come to the meeting to learn more.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)'s Community Visit process was invited to the community by the New Haven Selectboard. In the past 25 years, VCRD has worked with over 90 Vermont towns to bring residents together through their facilitated and structured process to share ideas and move toward common solutions.

The New Haven Comes Together Community Visit is funded with support from the Northern Border Regional Commission, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Community Foundation, National Life Foundation, Lintilhac Foundation, Wisdom Connection, Porter Medical Center, and VCRD supporters and donors.

(See Together, Page 6B)

YOU REALLY OTTER STOP BY!

- Fresh breads baked daily
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DELI OPEN TILL 2PM

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Addison County Parent/Child Center
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 388-3171

- Community Playgroups
- Parent Education Classes
- Home Visits
- Pregnancy Prevention Programs
- Parent Training & Child Center

Helping Young Families Get The Right Start

Reader Comments

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

A subscriber from Middlebury, Vt. writes:

"Great local coverage. Promotes community – valuable resource to stay informed."

Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT





On a merry mission

AROUND 20 MEMBERS of the Middlebury Rotary Club joined with several Middlebury Union High School football players and coaches and two Casella drivers plus their trucks this past Saturday morning at the start of the annual Merry Mulch Christmas Tree pick-up. Casella account manager Dennis Poole said an estimated 300 trees were picked up, and it went very smoothly. "It only took about three and a half hours start to finish again this year and we had a great breakfast provided by Middlebury Bagel," Poole noted.

Photo by Max Kraus

Lincoln

Have a news tip? Call Dawn Mikkelsen at 453-7029

NEWS

LINCOLN — Beginning Saturday, Jan. 17, the Lincoln Library invites you to view a sample of Dale Cockrell's vintage camera collection. Before smartphones, capturing moments on film was a true art form. Stop by to look at some of the tools behind the art. The collection will be available through the end of February.

The library is looking for more volunteers to help with shoveling snow on Tuesdays. It is one of those much needed tasks and essential to keeping the library accessible and safe. If you can spare some time on the occasional Tuesday morning, they'd love to welcome you to the snow shoveling team. Thanks to Jamie & Tina, Sally, Christie and the dog folks who are covering all the other days.

Bundle up and bring your appetite. The countdown to Lincoln's biggest weekend is on. Hill Country Holiday will be held on Friday, Feb. 6, through Sunday, Feb. 8, and the schedule has been finalized.

On Friday, Feb. 6, there will be a taco dinner at Burnham Hall from 5 to 6:30 p.m. to benefit Lincoln Sports. After dinner, stick around the hall for contra dancing from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. All ages are welcome. A donation is suggested.

On Saturday, Feb. 7, the parade will begin at 11 a.m. This year's theme is winter sports. There will be a preschool performance at the store. Participants will march from Burnham Hall to the library. After the parade, the library will be offering a soup and sweets lunch from noon to 1:30 p.m. The preschool spaghetti dinner and meatball competition will be held downstairs at Burnham Hall from 5 to 6:30 p.m. After dinner you'll want to stay at the hall for the ever famous variety show at 7 p.m. If you are interested in showing off your talent, please email nategusakov@gmail.com to sign up.

On Sunday, Feb. 8, there will be sledding and jack jumping practice runs from 10 a.m. to noon on the Lincoln Sports sledding hill. There will be bonfires and hot food for sale. At 12:45 p.m. the third annual jack jumping race will be held. To register and sign a waiver, please visit lincolnsports.org by Thursday, Feb. 5.

Whether you're marching in the parade, grabbing a bite to eat or enjoying the variety show, there's something for everyone. Grab your gear, tell your friends, and start planning your weekend.

Until next time ... In The Seed Of Winter Lies The Promise Of Spring.

Monkton

Have a news tip? Contact Liz Pecor at rascal0406@gmavt.net

NEWS

MONKTON — Join in for the fun at the Russell Memorial Library every Wednesday for Storytime with Julie. Every Wednesday from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime introduces your toddler to the joy of reading and skills that will help them to succeed in school. They will read, sing, dance, rhyme, and get a little silly! All are welcome to join in on this fun and free

activity. Contact the library at 802-435-4471 if you have questions. If no answer, leave your name and number and someone will get back to you.

Also at the library, join Melanie on Saturday, Jan. 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. for the monthly Poetry Club. This month it will be held in the library's conference room due to the community room

already being occupied. Bring your favorite poems, your own or a favorite author to share. Hope to see your there!

The Monkton Museum & Historical Society's next monthly meeting falls on Martin Luther King's birthday, Monday, Jan. 19. The MMHS hopes you will join them in sharing personal memories about how MLK's call of service

impacted you. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. with a short video at 7:15 p.m. At 7:30 p.m. there will be a discussion about the video and how you can translate the message into service to your own community via local history. This event is free and open to all. Light refreshments will be available. Call Lauren with any questions at 802-233-1397.

births

• Courtney and Phillippe Savoy of Bristol, Jan. 9, at Porter Hospital, a boy, **Gordon McGehee Savoy**, brother to Jake and Courtney Jr. and grandson of Marilyn and Gil Savoy, Kim Schumacher and Ben Westbrook.

New Haven

Have a news tip? Contact Kim Callahan at kimcallahan99@gmail.com.

NEWS

NEW HAVEN — The third and final meeting for the Vermont Center for Rural Development's Community Visits program is this Thursday night, Jan. 15, from 6-8:30 p.m. in the Town Hall. This meeting will build action

plans for community priorities chosen through the New Haven Comes Together process.

The meeting will start with an opportunity to vote on "Points of Vision" brainstormed at the December meeting. Then

community members will break into task force groups to define next steps and develop action plans with help from statewide and regional experts and resource providers. The two task forces (See New Haven, Page 10B)

Together

(Continued from Page 5B)

For more information, visit bit.ly/NewHavenTogether, or contact Johnson at VCRD at 802-222-6896 or alyssa@vtrural.org.

VERMONT COUNCIL ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of the locally-defined progress of Vermont's rural communities. VCRD is a dynamic partnership of federal, state, local, nonprofit and private partners. Actively non-partisan

with an established reputation for community-based facilitation, VCRD is uniquely positioned to sponsor and coordinate collaborative efforts across governmental and organizational categories concerned with policy questions of rural import. The organization has facilitated community processes with over 90 towns, resulting in hundreds of locally defined projects including new childcare centers, wastewater infrastructure, downtown redevelopments, and much more.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Vergennes Union High School

Ava Francis

Ava Francis is Vergennes Union High School's latest Student of the Week. She lives with her mom and two older brothers in North Ferrisburgh.

Ava's favorite class at VUHS has been AP Biology. She says that Sarah Thompson, who teaches the class, connects with students well and helps them enjoy the rigorous work and content. Ava believes her dual-enrollment classes have accelerated her learning beyond what is offered in the school building, stating, "There are so many paths and classes offered that you might not think to take as a high school student." She earned High Honors for all semesters in high school and also received the University of Rochester Bausch + Lomb Honorary Science Award in her junior year.

Beyond academics, Ava is a four-year Varsity soccer and basketball player. This year, she helped the soccer team win the State Championship. On that big win, Ava shares, "It felt amazing to represent our school and community. I will never forget the moments after the game when we came together as a team to celebrate." Ava joined the National Honor Society in 11th grade and is the secretary this year. She is also a member of the VUHS Green Team & Math Team and serves as the community liaison for the Class of 2026.

Outside of school, Ava works at Park Squeeze in Vergennes and Danforth Pewter in Middlebury, valuing the social skills she is developing in these settings. In her free time, Ava enjoys spending time with friends and family. Thanks to a renewed interest in reading novels, she has transformed her relationship with her phone and social media, noting it feels like a healthy and important life choice.

Her advice to younger students? "Don't be scared to do a lot in terms of school, sports and within the community. Even if it sometimes feels like you can't handle the challenges, keep trying!" Ava notes that following this advice to stay busy and engaged has helped her find her passions and purpose.

Ava plans on attending college to pursue a career in Radiology. She is excited to experience new things, meet new people, and continue to step out of her comfort zone. We wish Ava continued success!



Ava Francis
VUHS

Middlebury Union High School

Nathan Stefani

Middlebury Union High School is proud to recognize senior Nathan Stefani as its Student of the Week. Nathan, the son of Mark and Jennifer, lives in Middlebury and has one sister who is currently studying in London.

During his time at MUHS, Nathan has been deeply involved in the school's music and arts programs, including band, marching band, choir, select choir and acting in school productions. He said music has been a particularly meaningful part of his high school experience, as it allows for creative expression while fostering a strong sense of community. Among his favorite classes are DP Music and Language and Literature. Nathan credits Ms. LeBeau, Mr. Krahn and Mr. DeBruyn for having a positive influence on his academic and personal growth, as they continually challenge him to do his best.

Nathan has frequently earned honor roll recognition and most recently starred as "Jack Kelly" in the MUHS fall production of "Newsies." Beyond school performances, he has participated in numerous music festivals and is also an active member of the Scholars' Bowl school trivia team.

Outside of school, Nathan has spent many summers working at Camp Yawgoog Scout Reservation in Rhode Island, where he teaches merit badges. He is highly involved in Boy Scouts through Troop 543 in Bristol, participating in a wide range of volunteer opportunities through the organization.

In his free time, Nathan enjoys hiking and spending time outdoors. His involvement in Scouts and summer camp has helped him build strong friendships and meaningful connections that he values greatly.

Reflecting on his high school experience, Nathan believes one of the most important lessons he has learned is not to be afraid of meeting new people and forming new friendships. He also encourages others to step outside their comfort zones, try new activities, and take on challenges.

Following graduation, Nathan plans to attend college to study geology, though he has not yet committed to a school. Middlebury Union High School congratulates Nathan on his many accomplishments and wishes him continued success throughout his senior year and beyond.



Nathan Stefani
MUHS

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For Rent

Public Meetings

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For Rent

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Help Wanted

sionalism. 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

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More Help Wanted ads can be found on Page 10B.

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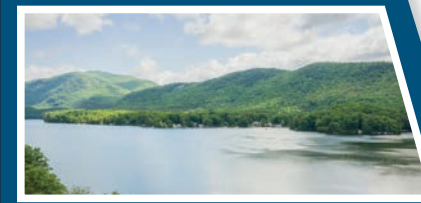
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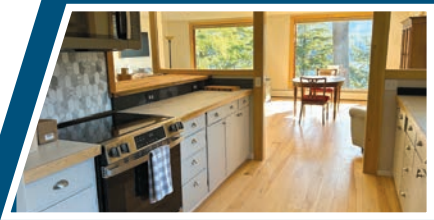
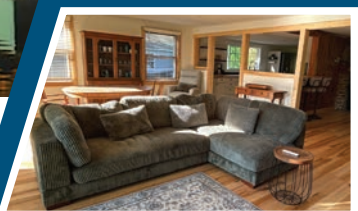
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Help Wanted

Midd police issue drunken driving citation

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police cited Anthony Morocho, 22, of Elmhurst, N.Y., for driving under the influence near the intersection of College and Weybridge streets on Jan. 8.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Responded to a collision involving a car and a school bus in Court Square on Jan. 5. Police said no one was injured.
- Assisted driver whose vehicle had skidded off Quarry Road and Lodge Road on Jan. 5.
- Responded on Jan. 5 to a Pinewood Road home where resident Suzanne Gagnon, 70, had died of natural causes.
- Responded to Porter Hospital after receiving a report of threatening on Jan. 6.
- Gave a ride to an elderly resident seen walking on South

Middlebury Police Log

Street Extension at around 5:40 a.m. on Jan. 6.

- Enforced the winter overnight parking ban downtown on Jan. 6 and again on Jan. 7.
- Mobilized, along with Middlebury firefighters, to a reported structure fire on Benedict Lane on Jan. 7.
- On Jan. 8, loaned the department's K-9 team to Vermont State Police for an investigation on Town House Road in Addison.
- Gave a ride home to a patient who had been discharged from

- p.m. on Jan. 8.
- Checked the welfare check of a Jayne Court resident on Jan. 8.
- Investigated a shoplifting incident at a Washington Street business on Jan. 8.
- Conducted a welfare check on a person who'd arrived in Middlebury by train on Jan. 8.
- Received a complaint about two speeding vehicles on Route 7 South on Jan. 9.
- Investigated a complaint about a caller allegedly threatening staff at an Exchange Street business on Jan. 9.
- Helped a local person who was locked out of their house on Evergreen Lane on Jan. 9.
- Assisted a drunken person on Main Street on Jan. 10.
- Investigated a noise complaint in the Case Street area on Jan. 10.
- Cited Miguel A. Reyes

Fernandez, 33, of Shoreham for driving with a suspended license near the intersection of Route 30 and South Street on Jan. 11.

- Helped mediate a custody dispute at a Court Street residence on Jan. 11.
- Responded to what police described as a "verbal disturbance" at a North Pleasant Street residence on Jan. 11.
- Assisted with a child custody dispute at Middlebury PD on Jan. 11.
- Responded to a complaint about someone shouting in the Jayne Court neighborhood on Jan. 11.
- On Jan. 11, loaned the department's K-9 team to Vermont State Police to check out a vehicle that authorities believed might contain illegal drugs.

New Haven

(Continued from Page 6B) for the community-led initiatives will work to:

Learn more about initiatives to expand housing opportunities and create community gathering spaces, and sign up to join one or more task forces on the website: bit.ly/NewHavenTogether.

Free childcare and dinner will be provided during the event.

All are welcome — students and family members, business owners, those who work in town, year-round and seasonal residents — anyone who cares about the New Haven community! Even if you were unable to attend the first two sessions, you are welcome to join this third event to help make a difference for the town.

Many thanks to the New Haven selectboard and to Pam and Julie for bringing this program to our community and for the work involved in making it happen!

FIRE DEPT. PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Come enjoy the first breakfast of the season! Sunday, Jan. 25, 7-10:30 a.m. at the town hall cafeteria.

It's an all-you-can-eat breakfast for \$15/adult, \$10/child (6-11) and kids under 6 eat free. There will be plain and blueberry pancakes, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, potatoes, coffee, tea, hot cocoa and orange juice.

As a volunteer fire department, the organization is financially responsible for all of the apparatus, equipment, training and fire gear.

These fundraisers happen throughout the year to help offset some of these costs through public support. This pancake breakfast is the perfect opportunity to gather the public together for a good time over some "good eats."

All money goes back to the department for the purchase of new equipment and gear. Without the public's support, the fire department would not be able to do what they do.

Come support your local fire department! All are welcome.

Can't make the breakfast? Send the department a donation to Box 120 New Haven, VT 05472.

Future breakfast dates are Feb. 22 and March 22

LIBRARY NEWS
Stop by the Library to share your favorite book of 2025 or take a look at what other patrons have read and enjoyed.

Storytime at the library is every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. Bring your little charges to the library for a story and craft and make some new friends while visiting with your neighbors.

The Cookbook Club is open to all — participants bring a recipe to share based on a

monthly theme to a potluck-style meeting. Email librarian@nhcl.org to get on the email list. The January theme: cookbooks in the library's collection. The library has also received a donation for a scholarship fund to help offset the cost of ingredients if anyone is interested. Just get in touch with Ruth at the library.

The Cookbook Club will meet on Thursday, Jan 22, at 6 p.m.

The library has started its 125th year of serving New Haven and surrounding communities and is holding its annual appeal for help in this milestone year. Your tax-deductible gift can help the library expand its collections of printed and non-printed materials, offer more programs for kids, families and adults, and invest in new resources to meet evolving community needs.

The library is one of our town's greatest assets — a place for gathering, learning, and connection. Your support will

help to strengthen this essential community resource for the next 125 years and beyond. You can send a donation to the library at 78 North St., New Haven 05472 or go online to the website at www.nhcl.org/support to make a secure, online contribution.

Thank you to everyone who has already given to the annual appeal. The library looks forward to serving the community for at least another 125 years!

THANKS, ROAD CREW!

Many thanks to the New Haven Road Crew for tackling some tricky weather so far this year to keep our roads safe and clear for the buses, cars, walkers, runners and the occasional cyclists. We appreciate all you do to help us get to work, school, our homes and neighbors when it can be so icy dicey. Stay safe everyone and thank you to our amazing road team.

Happy 2026 to all!

Public Notices Index

Public Notices for the following can be found in this **ADDISON INDEPENDENT** on Pages 10B and 11B.

- EBI Consulting (1)
- Ferrisburgh (1)
- New Haven (1)
- State of Vermont (1)
- VELCO (1)
- Waltham (1)

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 application 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:

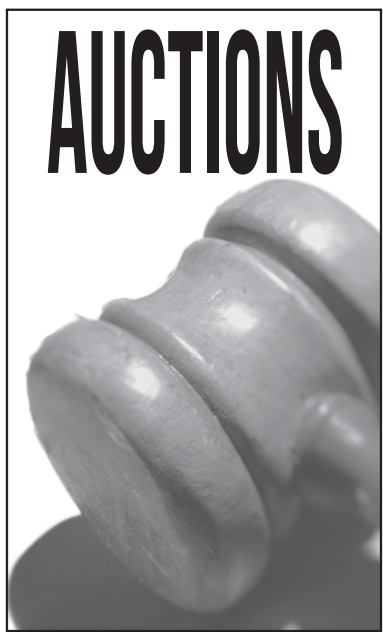
1. **Sign up to receive written notification** from your local electric utility of plans to apply herbicide on any ROW within 1000' of your property or the property where you reside. Check nearby poles for tags identifying the utility and/or pole number, complete the form below and submit it to your 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?	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 15TH, 2026			



MARKET REPORT ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES			
RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT			
Sales for 1/8/26 & 1/12/26			
	COST		
BEEF	LBS.	/LB	\$
B. Dykema	1280	1.70	\$2159.00
Westminster	1120	1.70	\$1904.00
Gosliga	1785	1.60	\$2856.00
Correia	1540	1.60	\$2464.00
Rowell Farm	1995	1.56	\$3112.20
J. Allen	1715	1.50	\$2572.50
Vorsteveld	1525	1.45	\$2211.25
Ethan Allen	1375	1.45	\$1993.75
CALVES	\$		
A. Blier			\$1368.50
Conants			\$1368.90
Deer Valley			\$1482.00
Degraaf			\$1339.00
R. Forbes			\$1360.00
Gm Mtn Dairy			\$1343.90
Total Beef - 245		Total Calves - 173	
We value our faithful customers. Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs. call 1-802-388-2661			

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addisonindependent.com/help-wanted

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Horse down on ice, deputies respond

ADDISON COUNTY — On Jan. 9, Addison County Sheriff's Department deputies looked into a call about a horse that had fallen on the ice in the middle of a field off Hawkins Road in Ferrisburgh. Officers assisted the caller with locating the animal's owner and called a veterinarian.

Between Jan. 4 and 10, the sheriff's department completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 17 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations, attempted to serve 15 pieces of civil process around the county, assisted a family with a car seat inspection and performed two VIN verifications for a Starksboro resident and four VIN verifications for New Haven residents.

In other recent activity, Sheriff Michael Elmore and his deputies also:

- On Jan. 5 attended RADAR training at the Police Academy in Pittsford.
- On Jan. 6 assisted with a broken-down tractor trailer on Route 22A in Bridport.
- On Jan. 6 deputy attended

Sheriff's Log

LiDAR training at the Police Academy.

- On Jan. 6 transported a person from jail to the Middlebury courthouse for a hearing.
- On Jan. 7 assigned extra deputies to the courthouse for a jury draw.
- On Jan. 7 assisted rescue with a medical call in Shoreham.
- On Jan. 8 escort of an oversized load from Middlebury to New Hampshire.
- On Jan. 9 Sheriff Elmore attended a Sheriff's Association meeting in Montpelier with other sheriffs from around Vermont.
- On Jan. 9 stood by for a moveout due to a relief from abuse order in Cornwall.
- On Jan. 9 assisted state police with a traffic stop on Route 7 in Waltham.



Anti-imperialism

A SMALL GROUP set up at the old Maverick gas station just as school was letting out one day last week and displayed a sign protesting the U.S. invasion of Venezuela the previous weekend. One participant observed there were "many honks and waves, and thumbs-up — and a few of the opposite, but mostly positive."

Photo courtesy of Bethany Barry

Police look into VUHS students tattooing at school

VERGENNES — Vergennes police are investigating a Jan. 5 report of Vergennes Union High School students giving each other tattoos at school. No further details were forthcoming.

Last week Vergennes police conducted seven traffic stops, six directed patrols, one foot patrol and a VIN number inspection; took fingerprints four times; dealt with a parking problem; and responded to several mental health related calls.

In other recent activity, officers:

- On Jan. 6 checked the welfare of a city resident and determined he was OK.
- On Jan. 7 went to Vergennes Union Elementary School to run the walk- and bike-to-school safety program.

Vergennes Police Log

- On Jan. 7 responded to a transformer explosion on Mt. View Lane; VUHS briefly locked down because of the explosion.
- On Jan. 7 addressed a complaint about an upsetting sign on School Street that the property owner subsequently agreed to re-write.
- On Jan. 7 checked the welfare of an individual and determined they were OK.
- On Jan. 7 were informed about a possible sexual misconduct at VUES involving one student, according to an officer with

the department. Superintendent Sheila Soule said there are staff members being investigated for allegations of sexual misconduct. She did not answer other questions citing student privacy laws. The investigation is ongoing.

- On Jan. 8 were informed of a person experiencing a mental health crisis that medical personnel responded to.
- On Jan. 8 contacted the Counseling Service of Addison County case manager of a woman with a history of mental health challenges who repeatedly calls the police department. VPD asked the case manager to contact the patient.
- On Jan. 8 checked the welfare of a Vergennes resident.
- On Jan. 8 assisted state

police responding to a domestic disturbance in Addison.

- On Jan. 9 responded to a domestic disturbance in Vergennes that, in the end, did not require law enforcement action. The respective parties spent the night separately.
- On Jan. 10 attended a community meeting regarding the Commodore Club and other matters in the old Boys and Girls Club building.
- On Jan. 11 helped somebody amid a mental health crisis and had them taken to the hospital for treatment.
- On Jan. 11 helped settle a child custody dispute.
- On Jan. 11 were present during a protest on the Green for security and traffic safety.

Public Notices

can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 10B and 11B.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Cellco Partnership and its controlled affiliates, doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless), is proposing to collocate antennas at a top height of 70ft on an 80-ft Silo located at 2488 Lemon Fair Road, Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont 05753. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Project 250057892PR, EBI Consulting, 21 B Street, Burlington, MA 01803, EBI-PNReplies@ebiconsulting.com or at (617) 715-1822.

TOWN OF FERRISBURGH NOTICE OF HEARING

The Ferrisburgh Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold the following public hearings on **Wednesday, February 4, 2026**, at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall at 3279 US Route 7, beginning at **7PM**. The hearings will also be available to participants remotely via Zoom; the link will be included in the agenda posted on the Town's website (ferrisburghvt.org) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

- Application Number 25-128:** Amend approved permit #08-73 to allow installation of kitchen in existing guest house; change use of existing guest house to 1-bedroom accessory dwelling; and add short-term rental use to the existing main house and existing guest house; Applicants: Kirsten & William Brashares; 2130 Bulton Bay Road; Parcel ID number 13/01/51.3; Shoreland District (SD-2) & Rural Residential District (RR-2); Conditional Use.
- Application Number 26-001:** Amend approved permit #25-091 to alter the roof geometry of the five commercial buildings; Applicant: Vermont Toy Storage, LLC; 270 Legacy Lane; Parcel ID number 05/01/44.11 Lots 2 and 3; Highway Mixed-Use District (HMU-2); Conditional Use.
- Application Number 26-002:** Amend approved permit #25-091 to allow outdoor storage until all five proposed commercial buildings are completed; Applicant: Vermont Toy Storage, LLC; 270 Legacy Lane; Parcel ID number 05/01/44.11 Lots 2 and 3; Highway Mixed-Use District (HMU-2); Conditional Use.
- Application Number 26-003:** Amend approved permit #25-091 to add professional, personal, office, and/or service uses; Applicant: Vermont Toy Storage, LLC; 270 Legacy Lane; Parcel ID number 05/01/44.11 Lots 2 and 3; Highway Mixed-Use District (HMU-2); Conditional Use.
- Application Number 26-004:** Add 15-space parking lot with stormwater treatment and remove/restore portion of existing impervious private road; Applicant: Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation; 787 Kingland Bay State Park Road; Parcel ID number 04/01/34; Shoreland District (SD-2), Conservation District (CON-25), & Rural Agricultural District (RA-5); Conditional Use.

The files for the above applications are available for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office. Persons wishing to appear and be heard may do so in person or be represented by an agent or an attorney. Communications about the above hearings may also be filed in writing with the Board or the Zoning Administrator at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall or by email to zoning@ferrisburghvt.org.

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 4464(a)(1)(C) and 4471(a), participation in this local proceeding is prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

Troopers say two drivers were drunk behind the wheel

ADDISON COUNTY — Vermont State Police alleged that two different drivers were drunk while driving on Addison County roads this past week.

In the first instance, troopers on Jan. 8 at 8:20 p.m. responded to a crash in the area of Elmendorf Road and Doolittle Road in Shoreham. Police report that the driver, identified as Jason Babcock, 46, of Shoreham, displayed multiple signs that he was impaired. After further investigation, they arrested Babcock for suspicion of driving under the influence, or DUI. Ultimately they cited Babcock for refusing to take a DUI test.

The second case came three days later on Jan. 11, when just before 5 p.m. state police were notified of a vehicle operating erratically. Troopers located the vehicle and pulled it over on Route 116 near River Road in Bristol. In the end, police cited Stephanie Rotax, 41, of Waltham for DUI.

Meanwhile, Vermont State Police last week wrapped up a four-month investigation in an alleged sexual assault that took place four years ago in Whiting.

On Sept. 5, 2025, detectives with the Vermont State Police

Vt. State Police Log

Bureau of Criminal Investigations began an investigation into an incident that occurred on Aug. 28, 2021. Last week they said they had determined that Carson P. Bertrand, 21, of Whiting committed the offense of sexual assault by having nonconsensual sex with a juvenile victim.

On Jan. 9, police served Bertrand with arresting papers citing him with sexual assault. He was served at the Southern State Correctional Facility, where he is being held for charges unrelated to this investigation. On this past Sept. 4, Bertrand pleaded not guilty to aggravated sexual assault charges stemming from an incident earlier in 2025.

In other recent activity, state police:

- On Jan. 7 at around 11:35 p.m. responded to a one-car crash on Lincoln Road in Ripton. Troopers found that the driver had fled the scene. Through investigation, they identified him as Brandyn M. Walsh, 33, of Brandon. Troopers located Walsh on Jan. 10, at which

time they cited him for leaving the scene of an accident.

On Jan. 10 at 8:10 a.m. logged a report of a domestic disturbance on North Fayston Road in Waitsfield. Troopers investigated and decided that 36-year-old Richard H. Gaboury II of Granville had assaulted a domestic partner and caused them to fear for their safety. The next day, state police found Gaboury and cited him for domestic assault, interference with access to emergency services and grand larceny.

On Jan. 10 just before 9 a.m. were dispatched to a two-vehicle crash on Old Hollow Road at the intersection with Four Winds Road in Ferrisburgh. Police report that Sam Moriglioni, 19, and Caleb Wright, 28, both of Ferrisburgh were the drivers of the two vehicles. No injuries were reported, and no charges are pending. State police were assisted on scene by Ferrisburgh Fire Department and Charlotte Rescue.

On Jan. 12 responded to family disturbance off Dove Lane in Starksboro. After investigating, police sought and found Michael

Gardner, 55, of Starksboro and cited him for violating a relief from abuse order. They also arrested him on an outstanding warrant and lodged Gardner at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility with bail set at \$2,500.

On Jan. 13 shortly before 11 a.m. stopped a motor vehicle on Route 7 near Route 17 in New Haven for an observed motor vehicle violation. Police cited David Saltis, 40, of Poultney for violation of conditions of release and driving with a criminally suspended Vermont license.

On Jan. 13 caught up with a suspect they had been seeking for three weeks. On Dec. 22 troopers got a report of a dispute at a Leicester home. They determined that 25-year-old Brianna Brayton, who was called a transient from Rutland County, had committed the offense of criminal threatening after threatening to cause property damage and physical harm to a 73-year-old Leicester woman. When law enforcement caught up with Brayton on Tuesday they cited her for criminal threatening.

TOWN OF WALTHAM NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING WALTHAM SELECTBOARD

A public informational meeting open to Town of Waltham Residents will be held at the Town Clerk's Office on Thursday, January 22, 2026 @ 6:00 pm to discuss the following information:

The Waltham Selectboard, Road Contractor and staff will present information concerning the present state of Waltham's roads, short-term and long-term plans for repair and upkeep, and how this impacts the 2027 and beyond town budget. The meeting is public and residents are encouraged to attend in person or via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82318613897?pwd=Y1QlQFYFTc50Hl2Pxm6hNk0hPbbw6.1>

PLEASE NOTE: This is an informational meeting to provide data and to engage the community concerning current road status and to gain input impacting highway work and plans moving ahead.

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).

Unemployment Insurance Self-Employment Assistance Program.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 25P049

AGENCY: Department of Labor

CONCISE SUMMARY: This addition to the Employment Security Board Rules, implements provisions of § 1340a regarding the Self-Employment Assistance Program that is paid through the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. The rule adds procedure for application of benefits through the Employment Assistance Program, as well as what criteria will be considered by the Commissioner in determining eligibility and whether to approve the program. It contains definitions, outlines the application process, and criteria for approval as well as termination from the program.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Robert L. Depper III, General Counsel, Vermont Department of Labor, 5 Green Mountain Drive, P.O. Box 488, Montpelier, VT 05602 Tel: 802-522-8669 E-Mail: robert.depper@vermont.gov URL: <https://labor.vermont.gov>

FOR COPIES: Jared Adler, Staff Attorney, Vermont Department of Labor, 5 Green Mountain Drive, P.O. Box 488, Montpelier, VT 05602 Tel: 802-863-7294 Email: jared.adler@vermont.gov

TOWN OF NEW HAVEN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4464, a public hearing before the Development Review Board of the Town of New Haven will be held at the Town Offices, 78 North Street, New Haven, VT 05472 on Monday, February 2, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. to consider the following:

- Application #2025-DRB-12-WV: A Waiver Request submitted by Mary Blacklock for a proposed addition to her home per Section 333 of the New Haven Zoning and Subdivision Regulations adopted April 2024. The parcel is identified as #215 and is located at 73 North Street in the Neighborhood-Commercial (NC) zoning district.
- Application #2026-DRB-01-CU: A request submitted by applicant Melinda Besette to operate a mobile barber shop on land owned by John and Bridget Kipp at 5343 Ethan Allen Highway, identified as parcel #295 in the Highway Commercial zoning district, per Section 329 of the New Haven Zoning and Subdivision Regulations adopted April 2024.
- Application #2026-DRB-02-BLA: A request for a boundary line adjustment submitted by Emily and Eugene Charlebois in accordance with Section 910 of the New Haven Zoning and Subdivision Regulations on parcel #45 located at 2962 North Street in the RA-2 and RA-10 zoning districts.

Please note that participation in the local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal. The hearing will be held as a hybrid meeting, either in person at the Town Offices, or by remote:

<https://zoom.us/j/98142119190?pwd=U0pFdDQ2a1ZRZvCRkN4ZGcyYUF3dz09>

Meeting ID: 981 4211 9190
Passcode: 4jYbTA

An electronic copy of the application may be obtained by emailing: newhavenzoning@gmavt.net; a hard copy is available at the Town Offices during normal business hours, and can also be found on the Town's website at: <https://www.newhavenvt.com/>

New Haven Zoning Administrator
(802) 453-3516

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SMALL MAMMALS BIOLOGIST Alyssa Bennett updates us on local bat populations.



ALYSSA BENNETT

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VERGENNES, VT
WWW.HARE.DOG



SCOTT KLUEVER WALKS, floats and drives through Alaska's eight national parks.



HEAR MALT EXECUTIVE Director Kevin Fox talk about the Amazon rainforest and conservation.

Local Audubon group gets us thinking about conservation

ADDISON COUNTY — The Otter Creek Audubon next week will kick off its four-part Cabin

Fever Lecture Series, which will feature local experts discussing birds and wildlife. These talks, often recorded and shared on YouTube and Middlebury Community Television, will cover topics including Northeast bird habitats, Alaska's national park, bats and the Amazon.

The talks, which are free and open to everyone, will be held monthly on Thursday evening. Ilsley Library will host three of them in the Mini Ilsley space in the National Bank of Middlebury's Duclos building, 30 Main St., Middlebury; Bixby Library on Main Street in Vergennes will host the other talk.

Here's the lineup:
Recipes for Bird Habitat in Northeastern Working Forests
Jan. 22, 7 p.m. - Ilsley Mini Library, Duclos Building, Middlebury

Fen Levy-O'Malley from Audubon Vermont will present a portion of their graduate research from Northern Maine, exploring how changes within the forest products industry have impacted birds. They will also brew up a recipe for healthier, more resilient, and more bird-friendly commercial forests.

Exploring Alaska's Eight National Parks
Feb. 12, 7 p.m. - Ilsley Mini Library, Duclos Building, Middlebury

OCAS board member Scott Kluever will tell us of his experiences exploring the eight National Parks in Alaska: Wrangell-St. Elias, Kenai Fjords, Katmai, Glacier Bay, Lake Clark, Denali, Kobuk Valley and Gates of the Arctic. He explored with his family, on foot, by car and by inflatable raft during his time living in the 49th State.

Bats: Disease, Devastation, and Hope

March 19, 5:30 p.m. - Bixby Memorial Free Library, Vergennes
Alyssa Bennett, small mammals biologist for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, will update us on local bat populations. Vermont is home to nine species of bats, each with their own unique habitat needs and threats. Come learn about this fascinating group of species, the research they are doing to battle disease and help populations recover, and how Vermont is a national leader in bat conservation.

What Conservation Work in the Amazon Actually Looks Like in Practice

April 16, 7 p.m. - Ilsley Mini Library, Duclos Building, Middlebury

Middlebury Area Land Trust Executive Director Kevin Fox will give a presentation about his former work as director of the USAID Amazon Regional Environment Program, leading U.S. efforts to protect ecosystems and support communities to empower their conservation stewardship in places like the Amazon Rainforest. He will tell us about stories from the field including challenges, partnerships, setbacks, unexpected successes and opportunities.

AGWAY CELEBRATE 2026 with the TOP TEN Deals now through January 26, 2026!

HURRY! Offer good on in-stock items only AND the BEST STUFF will Sell-Out FAST!

#10 40% Off

All Christmas Lights, Décor, Christmas Pet Toys, and Christmas Pet Treats.

While Supplies Last, Final Sale.

#9 30% off all sweatshirts – Men's, Women's, and Kids'

carhartt BERNE

#8 40% Off

Select Carhartt & Berne Workwear

Coats, Vests, Lined Bibs and Lined Button-Up Shirts.

#7 20% Off

Leashes, Collars and all other Pet Toys

#6 Buy 2 – Get the 3rd FREE!

DOG WASH Dog Wash Tokens

#5 Half Price

Pet Tags

Custom Engraved While You Wait!

#4

Generic Black Oil Sunflower Seed

\$14.99 20lb
\$24.99 40lb

Happy New Year and Thank you for your Business & Support!

All offers good on in-stock items, while supplies last. Offers expire 1/26/26.

#3

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION COUPON

\$1.50 EACH

SUET PLUS SINGLES

In-stock items only, while supplies last. Cannot be combined with any other discount, in-store offer or coupon. Limit 12 per customer. Valid through 1/26/26

AGWAY MIDDLEBURY AGWAY COUPON

#2

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION COUPON

\$25 OFF

On Regular priced clothing Only

purchase of \$100 or more

In-stock items only, while supplies last. Cannot be combined with any other discount, in-store offer or coupon. If item is already on sale, you get whichever is the best deal!

Valid through 1/26/26

AGWAY MIDDLEBURY AGWAY COUPON SKU: CLOTHING COUPON

#1

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION COUPON

\$5 OFF

ANY purchase of \$20.00 or more

This Coupon MAY BE COMBINED with EVERY other coupon offer or discount! Limit 1 per customer.

Valid through 1/26/26

AGWAY MIDDLEBURY AGWAY COUPON SKU: CTOP10

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Calendar

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ARTS + LEISURE

The Addison Independent

January 15, 2026



THE VERMONT BACKCOUNTRY SKIER WORKS TO FIND HIDDEN LINES

See story on pages 8-9.

Adam Kruszyna and his skiing adventures in the backcountry of Jay Peak are the focus of a short narrative ski film coming to Dana Auditorium in Middlebury on Jan. 23, at 5 p.m.

PHOTO / GEORGE WEED

Celebrate Bianca Stone's newest book release on Jan. 17

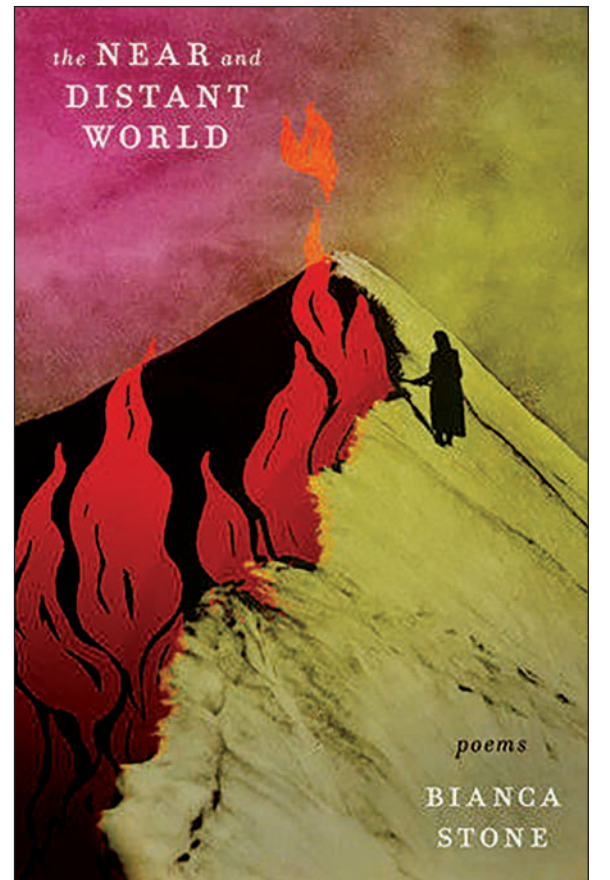
Come celebrate Vermont Poet Laureate Bianca Stone's new book, "The Near and Distant World" (Tin House, January 2026), on Saturday, Jan. 17, in the Anderson Studio & Jean's Place Bar. The evening will begin with a community cocktail hour from 6-7 p.m., followed by a reading, talk, and audience Q&A from 7-8:30 p.m. Admission operates on a suggested donation basis of \$5-\$20, though no one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

Stone is an award-winning poet and writer whose work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Poets & Writers*, and *The Nation*, among many other publications. She is the author of several books, including "What Is Otherwise Infinite," which received the 2022 Vermont Book Award. In 2013, Stone co-founded the poetry-based nonprofit Ruth Stone House, where she organizes readings and retreats, teaches poetry courses, and hosts the "Ode & Psyche" podcast.

"The Near and Distant World" showcases Stone's signature blend of lyric intensity, emotional clarity, and expansive imagination, offering readers a powerful new body of work from one of Vermont's most vital literary voices.



Town Hall Theater will host a celebration for Bianca Stone's new book "The Near and Distant World" on Jan. 17.



Space is limited and registration is encouraged for this event, with donations supporting Town Hall Theater's ongoing

literary and community programming. For more information, visit townhalltheater.org or call 802-382-9222.

Mark Salveit presents 'Ego Tourism' at the Bixby

The Bixby Memorial Free Library in Vergennes will present a "gently hilarious, thought-provoking one-man show that blends memoir, comedy, and philosophy."

Interesting!

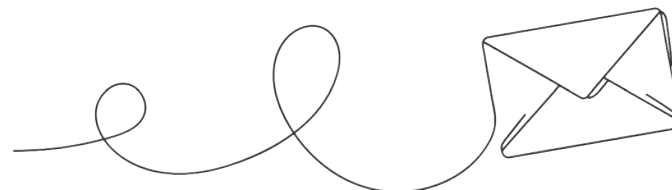
Yep, Mark Salveit is that "one-man,"

and he'll draw on his 50 years of fascination with Chinese Taoism, using humor and real-life experiences to explore the ineffable ideas of Taoism — without ever quite explaining them.

This show is free and open to all and will take place at the library on Thursday, Jan. 22, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.



Mark Salveit will perform a hilarious one-man show on Thursday, Jan. 22.



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THE ADDY INDY

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Clever, classic comedy takes the stage in Middlebury, Jan. 23

Town Hall Theater, in collaboration with Middlebury College, will present "Urinetown", the Tony Award-winning musical by Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis. Performances will take place on the Rothrock Mainstage at Town Hall Theater on Friday, Jan. 23, Saturday, Jan. 24, Tuesday, Jan. 27, and Wednesday, Jan. 28, at 7:30 p.m. There will be a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday, Jan. 25.

A bold, hilarious, and surprisingly heartfelt musical, "Urinetown" is a razor-sharp satire of corporate corruption, unchecked capitalism, social and environmental irresponsibility — and musical theatre itself. Set in a not-too-distant future ravaged by a decades-long drought, the story imagines a city where private toilets are outlawed and citizens must pay to use public restrooms controlled by a single tyrannical corporation: the Urine Good Company (UGC). When one unlikely hero dares to challenge this system, a revolution is sparked, asking timely questions about power, justice and what happens when the people finally rise up.

This production of "Urinetown" is the culminating work of Middlebury College's Winter Term (J-Term) Music Department course, "Making a Musical: Process and Performance" taught by Craig Maravich (director), Carol Christensen (music director), and Glendon Ingalls (pit conductor).

"The show operates on this level of clever, witty and silly comedy while also asking some very thought-provoking questions about the moment that we are in," Maravich said. "And you'll notice that there isn't one mention of potty humor. It's a remarkable piece of theatre that is a love story, a political piece, and a comedy."

The immersive, interdisciplinary program brings together students, faculty and professional theatre-makers in partnership with Town Hall

Theater. More than 40 Middlebury College students are involved across the cast, orchestra pit, design team and stage crew, alongside a team of student teaching artists from Middlebury College's Beyond the Page program, who are working with Town Hall Theater to bring workshops connected to the show into local schools.

"Our students are creating and learning in the disciplines of music,

acting, voice, stage management, design, and teaching artists bringing this work to the community," Maravich added. "This type of learning opportunity and partnership keeps building each year and I think it's vital. Not only is it vital artistically, but it is vital in all the ways it connects us across our different spheres of community."

Tickets to "Urinetown" cost \$8-\$25 and are available at townhalltheater.org or by calling 802-382-9222.

"IT'S A REMARKABLE PIECE OF THEATRE THAT IS A LOVE STORY, A POLITICAL PIECE, AND A COMEDY."

— Craig Maravich

Get Involved

THE LOOP WITH CRAIG MARAVITCH: THE ELEMENTS OF FOLLY

Be part of the artistic process on Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 5 p.m. The Loop series invites the audience, to explore the elements of folly. Director Craig Maravitch, CLE Director Lindsay Pontius, the company of "Urinetown," and Beyond the Page actors will lead an immersive experience full of slapstick, buffoonery and wordplay, as the group explores laughter as a foil to authority and power, and as a tool to promote thoughtful dialogue.

The group will meet at town Hall Theater. Suggested donation \$5-\$20 but no one turned away for lack of funds.

When: Tuesday, Jan. 27, 5 p.m.

Where: Town Hall Theater, Middlebury



Carol Christensen is the music director for "Urinetown," which will be played at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury beginning on Jan. 23.



MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES



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UPCOMING MUSIC

The Hokum Brothers play for pizza, Jan. 23


Uh, that headline may or may not be true... but you can certainly hear The Hokum Brothers play while you're enjoying a slice at Rockers Pizzeria (191 Main St) in Vergennes on Friday, Jan. 23, from 6-8 p.m. This show is part of the Vergennes Opera House Off-Stage Series.

The Hokum Brothers is Vermont's

premiere comedy band, featuring Woody Keppel, Allan Nicholls and Gus Ziesing. This playful band presents a kitschy blend of ragtime, folksy tunes, vaudeville and early jazz. More than anything, the Hokum Brothers' music is catchy and fun, ensuring audiences will be tapping their feet and wearing their happy faces long after the show is over. Free and open to all.



The Hokum Brothers bring their catchy and fun music to Rockers Pizzeria in Vergennes on Friday, Jan. 23, from 6-8 p.m.


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

Sparrow Art Supply owner's work on display

Beth S. Bluestein is the featured artist and owner of Sparrow Art Supply this month. This new collection of original watercolor paintings by Bluestein captures the fleeting, spectacular glow of winter sunsets, that one fragile moment of color after the gray and before we're plunged into dark-ness. It's a reflection on light, time, and finding something beautiful in the in-between. On view through January.

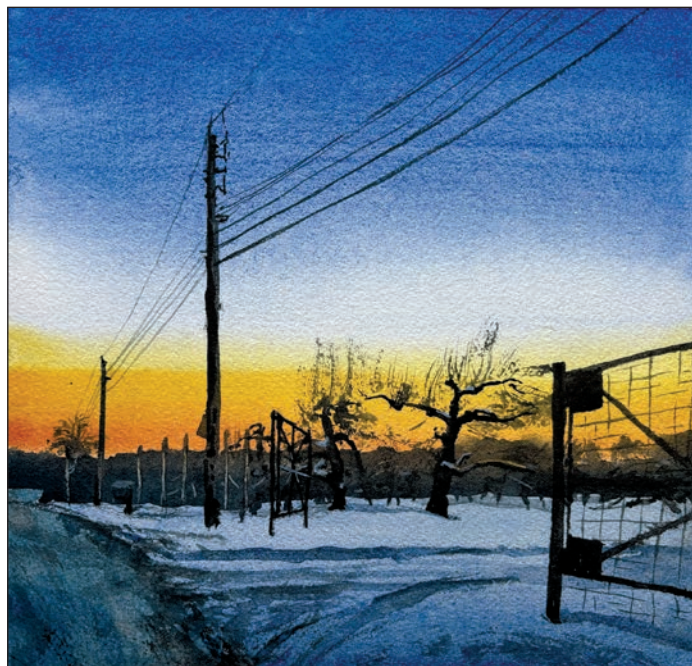
"Winter sunsets have a spectacular and fleeting glow, that one fragile moment of color after the gray and before we are plunged into darkness," shared Bluestein. "This collection is a reflection on light, time, and finding something beautiful in the in-between. In the long winters of Vermont, these glimpses of color can feel like a lifeline. Sometimes they appear on the drive home from work, while running errands, or in a quick glance out the window before making dinner. They're easy to miss, but when you catch one, it feels like everything slows down for a moment. These paintings are my way of holding onto that feeling."

Come see Bluestein's work in person at Sparrow Art Supply throughout January. Artworks are available to purchase in the store.



Watercolors by shop owner Beth Bluestein are on display at Sparrow Art Supply in downtown Middlebury. Stop in to see them in person.

ART ON EXHIBIT



"Watercolor 4" by Beth Bluestein is on display at Sparrow Art Supply in downtown Middlebury for the month of 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. Your attention is focused on finances and deeper connections, Aries. This is the week to speak honestly about budgets, debts or your investments with a partner.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Taurus, the spotlight is shining on your relationships, whether in love or business. Expect some meaningful conversations that define your approach going forward.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. Your focus turns to work and wellness as part of your daily routine this week, Gemini. You may feel a strong urge to get more organized and capitalize on resolutions made.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Your inner child is leading the way for the week, Cancer. Spend time on hobbies, connect with children or plan a memorable date night. Don't be afraid to take a creative risk.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Leo, your energies are best spent on your home and family life right now. You may be dealing with a domestic project, a renovation or sorting out a matter with a relative.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Communication is your strongest tool this week, Virgo. With ideas flowing, you may be up to signing an agreement or running errands. You may want to reconnect with an old friend.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Libra, review your income streams and spending habits to give you a clear picture for the new year. This isn't about cutting things out, but about understanding what you value.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. It is your time to shine and redefine yourself, Scorpio. With cosmic energy focused your way, you have the drive and the focus to launch a personal project or make a major change.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Take some necessary steps back for quiet work and rest, Sagittarius. This week favors wrapping up older projects so you can think more clearly. Don't over-schedule yourself.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Capricorn, social activities and future goals take center stage right now. It might be wise to start networking or join a new group that will open you up to different people.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. This is an important period for your career, Aquarius. If you've been mulling over making a move, now is the time to get a jump on it. Your professional achievements are getting noticed.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Pisces, finalize plans for a trip or a new pursuit, such as returning to school. Seek experiences that will broaden your horizons. Adventure beckons you this week.

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS
JAN. 16 — Lin-Manuel Miranda, actor/singer-songwriter (46)
JAN. 17 — Jim Carey, actor/comedian (64)
JAN. 18 — David Ruffin, soul singer/musician (d)
JAN. 19 — Dolly Parton, singer-songwriter (80)
JAN. 20 — Questlove, musician (55)
JAN. 21 — Ethan Allen, Revolutionary War hero (d)
JAN. 22 — Sam Cooke, singer-songwriter (d)

CALENDAR

Jan. 15 – Feb. 13

2026

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.

FREE LIVE MUSIC IN BRANDON. Friday, Jan. 16, 7-9:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. Live music with pianist and vocalist Ana Guigui in the Brandon Inn ballroom. Piano and vocals from 7-8 p.m., followed by singalong and unplugged karaoke from 8-9:30 p.m. Free. More info at thebrandoninn.com.

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 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.

FREE LIVE MUSIC IN BRANDON. Saturday, Jan. 17, 7-9:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. See Jan. 16 listing.

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, which follows Thomas Smallwood, who bought his own freedom and helped lead others out of slavery. 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.

Continued on next page

MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091		MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION: P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753		Please see the MCTV website, www.middleburycommunitytv.org, for changes in the schedule; MCTV events, classes and news; and to view many programs online. Submit listings to the above address, or call 802-388-3062.	
Channel 1071 Through the Night: VT Media Exchange, Bulletin Board Thursday, January 15 4 a.m. Democracy Now 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10 p.m. Democracy Now Friday, January 16 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. The Talk - Janet McKenzie 6:15 a.m. Press Conferences 7:30 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 3 p.m. Energy Week 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 10 p.m. Democracy Now Saturday, January 17 7 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 8 a.m. Energy Week 10 a.m. Selectboard 04:00 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 5:30 p.m. Eckankar	7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. The Talk 9 p.m. Energy Week Sunday, January 18 8:30 a.m. The Talk 9 a.m. Catholic Mass 9:30 a.m. Press Conferences 11:00 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 1 p.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Congregational Service 6:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Energy Week 11 p.m. Democracy Now Monday, January 19 4:30 a.m. Democracy Now 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 Tuesday, January 20 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 2:30 p.m. The Talk 4 p.m. Congregational Service 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. Energy Week Wednesday, January 21 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. The Talk 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now Channel 1091 Thursday, January 15 6 a.m. Tai Chi 6:30 a.m. Yoga 7:30 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting	3 p.m. Foltz Studio 4 p.m. Sports 8:30 p.m. Meet the Author Friday, January 16 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7 a.m. Meet the Author 8 a.m. Hannaford Career Center Board 2 p.m. All Brains Belong 4 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. ABA Basketball Saturday, January 17 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. All Brains Belong 9:30 a.m. Meet the Author 10:15 a.m. HCC Board 3 p.m. High School Sports 7 p.m. Foltz Studio Sunday, January 18 5:30 a.m. HCC Board Meeting 8:30 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 12 p.m. Foltz Studio	1 p.m. High School Sports 6 p.m. All Brains Belong 8 p.m. School Board Meeting/s Monday, January 19 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 3:30 p.m. High School Sports 6:30 p.m. ACSD Board 10:30 p.m. Authors and Poets Tuesday, January 20 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 5 p.m. Authors and Poets 8 p.m. Foltz Studio Wednesday, January 21 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Science and Nature 12 p.m. School Board Meeting/s 8 p.m. All Brains Belong	

Top Pick

Lunchtime Concert Series

St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Vergennes will host another lunchtime concert on Wednesday, Jan. 28, at 12:15 p.m. Come hear guitarists and vocalists Sallie Mack, former co-founder and co-director of the Ripton Community Coffee House, and Rosi Gowdey, storyteller and social change advocate. The duo will offer a concert of eclectic music with a repertoire of folk, bluegrass and ballad, and original compositions as well. This hour of music is free and open to all.

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.

FRIDAY, JAN. 23

"THE HIDDEN LINES" FILM SCREENING IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Jan. 23, 5-8 p.m., Dana Auditorium, Sunderland Language Center, Middlebury College, 356 College St. Follow skier Adam Kruszyna as he blends intuition and engineering to map, revisit and ski backcountry terrain in northern Vermont, building a deeper connection to place. Free, open to the public.

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. 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 vergennessoperahouse.org.

FREE LIVE MUSIC IN BRANDON. Friday, Jan. 23, 7-9:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. Live music with pianist and vocalist Ana Guigui in the Brandon Inn ballroom. Piano and vocals from 7-8 p.m., followed by singalong and unplugged karaoke from 8-9:30 p.m. Free. More info at thebrandoninn.com.

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.

FREE LIVE MUSIC IN BRANDON. Saturday, Jan. 24, 7-9:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. See Jan. 23 listing.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE J-TERM MUSICAL: "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.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE J-TERM MUSICAL: "URINETOWN" IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Jan. 23 listing.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 28

LUNCHTIME CONCERT SERIES IN VERGENNES. Wednesday, Jan. 28, 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 6 Park St. Guitarists and vocalists Sallie Mack, former co-founder and co-director of the Ripton Community Coffee House, and Rosi Gowdey, storyteller and social change advocate, present an eclectic concert of folk, bluegrass, ballads and original compositions. Free and open to all.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE J-TERM MUSICAL: "URINETOWN" IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Main Stage, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Jan. 23 listing.

FRIDAY, JAN. 30

FREE LIVE MUSIC IN BRANDON. Friday, Jan. 30,

7-9:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. Live music with pianist and vocalist Ana Guigui in the Brandon Inn ballroom. Piano and vocals from 7-8 p.m., followed by singalong and unplugged karaoke from 8-9:30 p.m. Free. More info at thebrandoninn.com.

SATURDAY, JAN. 31

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB SKI/SNOWSHOE IN GOSHEN. Saturday, Jan. 31. Cross-country ski to the Sugar Hill Reservoir from Chatfield parking. Round trip will be about 6 miles. Dogs welcome on leash only. Contact Morris Earle at morrisearle@gmail.com or 802-734-0984. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

WINTER TRAVELING BOOK CLUB IN FERRISBURGH. Saturday, Jan. 31, 1-2 p.m., Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, 4472 Basin Harbor Rd. Meet at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum or join online to discuss "Benedict Arnold's Navy" by James Nelson. Part of the Maritime Museum's Winter Traveling Book Club. Free with registration. More info at lcmm.org.

FREE LIVE MUSIC IN BRANDON. Saturday, Jan. 31, 7-9:30 p.m., Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. See Jan. 30 listing.

SUNDAY, FEB. 1

CHORAL EVENSONG IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Feb. 1, 4 p.m., St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3 Main St. Choral Evensong featuring English composer Alan Ridout's cantata "St. Edward the Martyr." Free.

TUESDAY, FEB. 3

IRISH MUSIC NIGHT WITH RAMBLETREE IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Feb. 3, 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.

SATURDAY, FEB. 7

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN SHELBURNE. Saturday, Feb. 7, Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Road. Hike the Farm Trail from the Welcome Center at Shelburne Farms. Easy to moderate hike of about 6 miles with 350 ft. elevation change. Contact Ken Corey at 802-349-3733 or

kencorey53@gmail.com to register. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

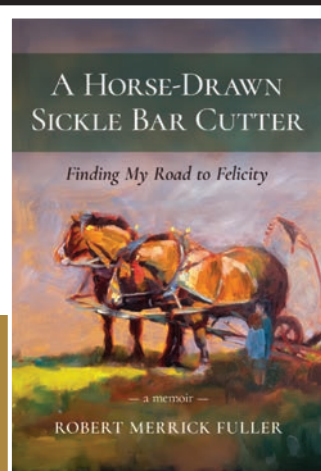
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11

"THE LIBRARIANS" FILM SCREENING AND PANEL DISCUSSION IN BRANDON. Wednesday, Feb. 11, 6 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. Indie Lens Pop-Up, presented by ITVS, Independent Lens and Brandon Free Public Library, will host a special screening of "The Librarians," featuring a panel discussion with BFPL librarians. The film follows a courageous network of besieged librarians as they unite to examine how book restriction policies are shaping library collections. Register by emailing info@brandonpubliclibrary.org or calling 802-247-8230.

THURSDAY, FEB. 12

NEW NOVEL ON MARIE CURIE RELEASE PARTY IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72-76 Merchants Row. Join Vermont Book Shop for an

See *CALENDAR* on page 15



“Narrated in a straightforward manner and sprinkled with personal photographs, Fuller sweeps readers into a story of both people and places...”

— *Publishers Weekly*

Available now at Vermont Bookshop in Middlebury, Recycled Reading in Bristol, Phoenix Books in Burlington, bookshop.org, and other online stores.



Barton native Adam Kruszyna stars in "The Hidden Lines," a short narrative ski film that will screen at Dana Auditorium in Middlebury on Friday, Jan. 23, at 5 p.m.

PHOTO / ADAM KRUSZYNA

An adventurer finds more than fresh powder in this film

Adventure has a certain level of contagion.

Oh, God... What's contagious now?

No, no, nothing like everything else winter brings ... Let's try again. Have you ever met someone so deeply passionate about something you have to follow them? These people have such a laser focus on mastering a skill or completing a goal — their energy is magnetic, and it can pull you along for a ride.

By **ELSIE LYNN PARINI**

Jonas Spaulding and George Weed are here to tell you about their friend Adam Kruszyna, through the short, narrative, outdoor adventure film "The Hidden Lines" that will screen at Dana Auditorium in Middlebury on Friday, Jan. 23, at 5 p.m. The film is open to all and free for students, with a suggested \$10 donation for the public.

"What began in the 250-acre forest behind his childhood home (in Barton) has grown to include the rugged backcountry of Jay, Vt." reads a brief

"GETTING TO SEE THE INCREDIBLE TERRAIN YOU COULD REACH ON YOUR OWN TWO LEGS WAS ALL I NEEDED TO START LEARNING."

— Adam Kruszyna

description of the film. "In 'The Hidden Lines,' we follow Adam as he returns to previously written-off zones with a more refined eye, revisiting terrain with a methodical blend of intuition and engineering precision. His goal is not just to ski the best lines on the East Coast, it's to connect to them deeply, and in doing so, connect to something larger than skiing."

Spaulding (director) brings the passion for the outdoors. Weed (producer) brings the passion for film. And Kruszyna (lead skier) brings it to the next

level.

"I learned to ski at Burke Mountain at the age of 5, just a short drive away from home," shared Kruszyna, who is currently on a guided ski expedition with Northeast Mountaineering in northern Georgia (the country). "At just 14, I started backcountry ski touring. I was hooked on it after hiking up to the base of Tuckerman's Ravine in New Hampshire on a day trip led by Northwoods Stewardship Center. Getting to see the incredible terrain you could reach on your own two legs was



Adam Kruszyna pauses in the sun of the Jay Peak backcountry.

PHOTO / EVAN DAIGLE

"I WANTED TO TELL A STORY ABOUT ADAM. HE HAS AN ENGINEERING APPROACH TO UPHILL, AND AN ARTISTIC APPROACH TO DOWNHILL."

— Jonas Spaulding

all I needed to start learning."

Together, Spaulding, Weed and Kruszyna — all recent graduates of the University of Vermont — came together to put this passion project together with the help of Frame 15 (Weed's film company based in New York City), some choice Vermont sponsors and two other featured skiers: Caleb Kessler and Matt Scheeler.

"This film is more than what I like to call 'shred-its,'" said Spaulding, explaining the term. "Yeah, we all know those ski films that look cool, but most of us can't jump on a plane and go to Alaska... They're unrealistic for the average viewer to relate to. I wanted to do everything opposite from that.

"I wanted to tell a story about Adam. He has an engineering approach to uphill, and an artistic approach to downhill," continued Spaulding, who grew up in Hartland, Vt., and now calls Strafford home. "The skiing in the Jay backcountry is tight tree skiing. Where I might be able to do three to four turns and stop, look around and figure out my line... Adam has been able to ski 500-foot continuous lines up there."

"I don't come anywhere close to Adam's brand of outdoorsiness," compared Weed. "I mean I grew up building tree forts, and huts in the woods with neighbors and siblings, and my dad is a big hiker and outdoors person..."

Typical backyard stuff.

"Adam is not typical," Weed said. "Adam creates spreadsheets of all his gear and routes; meticulously analyzes his routes — he knows where he made the wrong turn so he can make a right turn... He controls all the variables he can. And he also realizes there's so much out of his control"

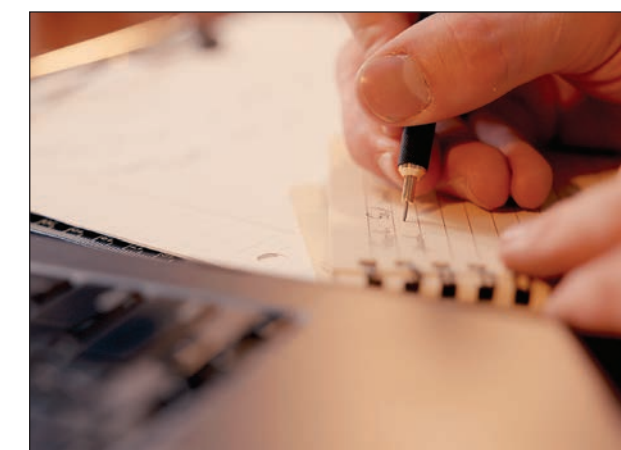
"I do this so I can make the most of everyday adventuring," explained Kruszyna, who holds his bachelor's in mechanical engineering. "The time I spend out in the backcountry learning terrain (often on days where the skiing isn't all that good) allows me to go out when the snow and conditions are good and truly maximize my day. There are so many incredible ski lines all over Vermont; you just have to go out there and find them."

"So much of skiing is about trying to out-do," Weed said. "Who can drop a bigger cliff or rotate another turn... Adam's measured approach is



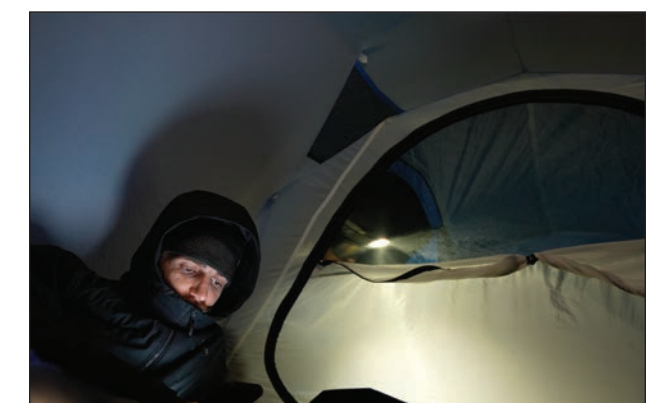
Jonas Spaulding directed "The Hidden Lines." He'll be at the Middlebury screening on Jan. 23.

PHOTO / ADAM KRUSZYNA



Adam Kruszyna records notes from his findings in the backcountry at his home in Barton, Vt.

PHOTO / HENRY WEED



One of the featured skiers in "The Hidden Lines," Caleb Kessler bunkers down for the night in the Jay backcountry.

PHOTO / GEORGE WEED

inspiring. He doesn't go for the hugest cliffs. It's more in tune with what the average skier has at their disposal."

"I hope viewers of the film get to see the amazing adventures that can be had in Vermont, but also, I hope the message of community and the importance of place rings through as well," Kruszyna added. "The film highlights the community I have found here through my adventures, and I wouldn't be doing what I do without it. So often people recreating in the outdoors, and especially skiers, look to travel for their adventures. While I certainly understand both sides of this, one main takeaway of the film is how much fun can be had close to home."

"The Hidden Lines" was the first narrative film Frame 15 worked on as a team. It premiered in 2025 at Zero Gravity in Burlington and had a second screening in Burke. And now, thanks to an invitation from Middlebury College student-led Outdoor Interest House (nod to Rick Walker '275), "The Hidden Lines" is coming to Dana Auditorium in Middlebury on Friday, Jan. 23.

Mark your calendars and get swept up in this crew's passion on screen and off — Kruszyna and

Spaulding will be there in-person. It'll be quite a ride!

"It was my passion project this year," Weed said, noting that it's not the type of project that pays the bills for his company, but nevertheless, "I want to keep making stuff like this as well. It feels inspiring and fulfilling."

Editor's Note: Interested in following these fellows to see what adventure they take next? Do it.

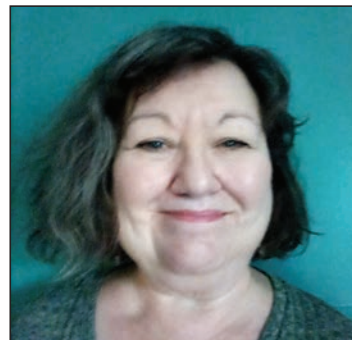
Jonas - @jonas.spaulding

Adam - @akruszyna

George - @framefifteen

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

ALL ABOUT BUILDING A DISH GARDEN



Deborah Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener who volunteers as a garden columnist and participates in Bennington County Extension Master Gardener Chapter activities.

While indoor gardening helps stave off post-holiday blues and cabin fever, windows providing full sun can be scarce. Light stands take up needed space. What's a gardener to do? Build a dish garden!

By **DEBORAH J. BENOIT**

Dish gardens are collections of plants sharing a single container. Terrariums are enclosed dish gardens.

To build a dish garden, select a container deep enough to hold a few inches of soil. It can be a shallow ceramic pot and matching saucer or a decorative casserole dish that's no longer used in the kitchen. An old gallon pickle jar, an unused aquarium, or any glass container with a lid can become a terrarium.

When using a container without a drainage hole, you'll need to take extra care that the plants' watering needs are met without overwatering. Accumulation of excess water can lead to root rot. For containers with drainage, use a light potting mix. For terrariums and containers with no drainage, start with a layer of gravel. Add a thin layer of activated charcoal to help prevent bacterial growth. Finish with a few inches of light potting mix.

Select plants that share the same requirements for light, water, and humidity. They should be slow growing and naturally small in size. Terrarium plants should also be suited to an environment with high humidity.

Humidity-loving plants like miniature African violets (*Saintpaulia*), polka dot plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*), and button fern (*Pellaea rotundifolia*) do well in terrariums. Cacti and succulents are best suited for open dish gardens. If you've fallen in love with a glass container but the plants you want to use prefer a dryer environment, leave the lid off to allow moisture to escape.

Now comes the fun part: designing and planting your miniature garden. Use a piece of paper or cardboard cut to the dimensions of the planting area to layout your intended design. Be sure to allow room for any embellishments you plan to include.

Depending on the container, you may only need a spoon for planting. If you're building a terrarium in a glass container that's deep or has a small opening, attaching a spoon to a dowel makes reaching the soil easier. Kitchen tongs can help position plants.

Once plants are in place, consider adding

See **GARDEN** on page 11



Terrariums are enclosed dish gardens and can hold a number of plants and mosses.

PHOTO / DEBRA HELEBA.

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GARDEN

continued from page 10

pebbles, aquarium gravel, or sand in fun colors. Tiny figurines or other decorations

can add interest to a miniature landscape.

Finally, give your plants a drink of water. Because terrariums are enclosed, they won't lose much moisture from evaporation, so water sparingly, adding it by spoonfuls to the soil to achieve desired moisture levels.

Place dish gardens in a well-lit location. Depending on the plants selected, this could be in or near a sunny window or under a grow light. Terrariums should never be in direct sun.

A terrarium won't require much maintenance. Depending on how airtight the lid is, it may be months before you need to add water. You may eventually need to do some pruning to maintain the size and structure of the plants you've chosen. Always remove any dead or damaged foliage.

A dish garden will require more attention. In addition to watering,



Dish gardens can come in all shapes and sizes to house various indoor plant collections. This ceramic log houses succulents.

PHOTO / DEBRA HELEBA

pruning can help maintain the plants' size and shape. If they become overcrowded or outgrow the container, consider removing and repotting them.

Contact the University of Vermont Extension Master Gardeners Helpline at go.uvm.edu/gardenhelpline if you have questions about dish gardens or home gardening in general.

As the snow piles up outside, a dish garden or terrarium can be a welcome reminder that spring and a return to outside gardens are on their way.



Pet of the WEEK

Send us a picture of your pet!
news@addisonindependent.com

What is Pet of the Week?

Here at the Addy Indy we LOVE our pets. We also love publishing here at the local newspaper. So... put them together and you get PET OF THE WEEK, where we publish the news of how fabulous your pets are for FREE!

All you have to do, dear reader with opposable thumb, is send a picture to our news team with a short description of your best buds.

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Hoodoo

Hoodoo is looking for an understanding person who will let him warm up on his own timeline. We know from his foster provider that once he realizes he has nothing to be afraid of, he opens up and is an affectionate and friendly cat. Because Hoodoo is in a foster home, we ask that you submit an adoption application first, and then we can schedule a meet and greet.



Olive



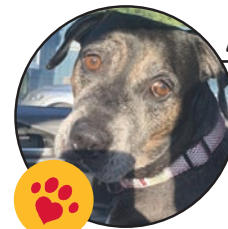
Lovely **Olive** has had a sheltered but loving life so far. She had just one owner since she was a kitten and has not lived with other cats or dogs. She was a bit unsure of how to act when she first arrived, but with patience, love, and tasty treats, she has been figuring out how to 'cat' properly and is relaxing into her environment. She will make a lovely companion for a low-energy home.

Sassy



Sassy arrived to us with other cats from her previous home. She gets along with cats, dogs and kids but she finds the shelter environment a little overwhelming. She is on the shy side but receives affection well, we think once she is out of the busy shelter setting, she will settle in nicely to a new, loving home.

Astrid



Astrid is part of our Home-to-Home program, still residing with her family. She is a 60 lb., affectionate, and playful dog. She loves her people and would do best in a home where someone is around most of the time. Astrid does well at daycare and parks, but requires careful management if living with another dog. She'd do best in a cat-free home.

Zellie



Zellie is also part of our Home-to-Home program. Zellie is a 65 lb. lap dog who is chill and always looking for cuddles. She is intelligent, food-motivated, and highly trainable. Zellie is house-trained and responsible when left home alone. She would do best in a home without other pets or children.

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PUZZLES

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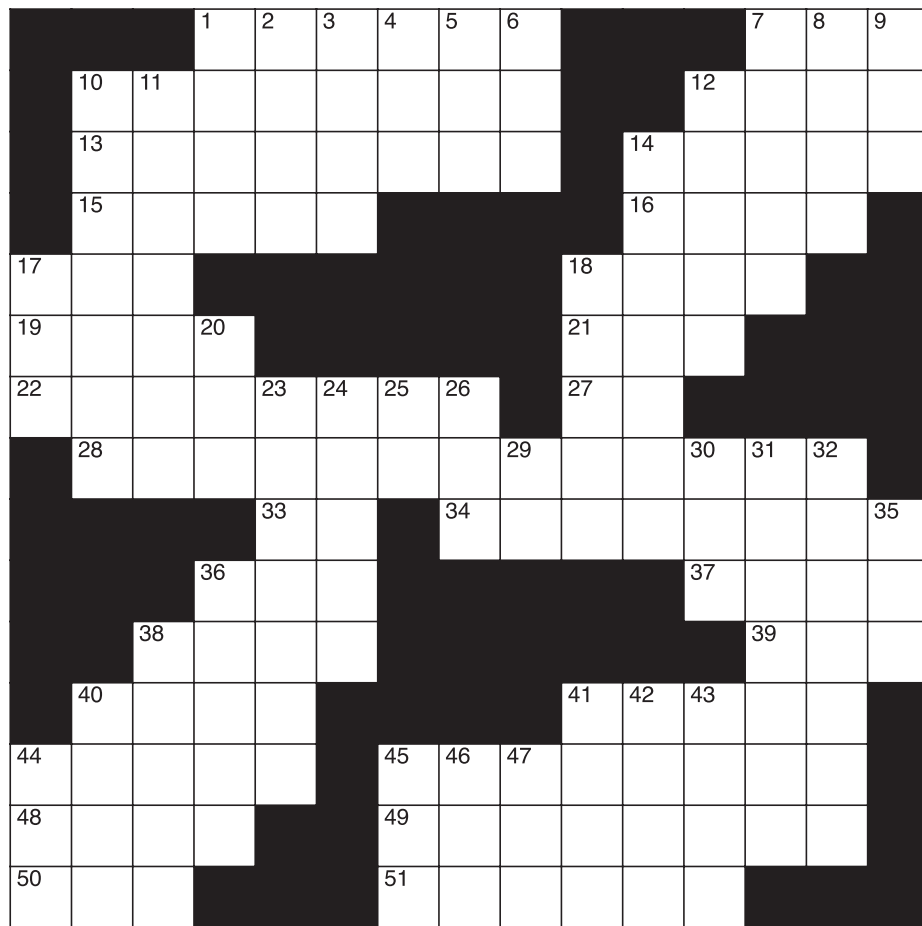
- 1. Mechanical lever
- 7. Rocky peak
- 10. Leave a country
- 12. Discount
- 13. D.C. ballplayer
- 14. Partner to "oohed"
- 15. Engine sound
- 16. Japanese ornamental box
- 17. Fido is one
- 18. Amounts of time
- 19. DiFranco and Phyo are two
- 21. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 22. Make secret plans
- 27. "Tiny Bubbles" singer

- 28. "His Airness"
- 33. Morning
- 34. Perfected
- 36. Winger guitarist
- 37. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 38. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 39. A way to save money
- 40. Pulpit
- 41. Make ecstatically happy
- 44. Once more
- 45. Works on
- 48. Nocturnal S. American rodent
- 49. State again
- 50. Expression of disappointment

- 51. Type of door

DOWN

- 1. Yugoslavian communist leader
- 2. Exchange rate
- 3. High school dance
- 4. Peter's last name
- 5. When you anticipate arriving
- 6. Israeli city __ Aviv
- 7. Goat-like mammals
- 8. Margarine
- 9. End-of-the-spectrum color
- 10. Make poisonous
- 11. Popular beverage
- 12. Actress Lathan



	5			1				4
		4	3					
6		1	8		9			
			2					
		9	5	8		1		
							7	6
4	8			5				
	7					4		
1			6					2

Sudoku

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Puzzles come in three grades: easy, medium and difficult.

Level: Medium

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 15.

- 14. Where planes land and depart
- 17. Political fundraising entity
- 18. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era
- 20. Buffer used in microbiology
- 23. Light, open carriage
- 24. Metrical feet
- 25. Email subject line feature

- 26. A street with lots of nightmares
- 29. Rapper Rule
- 30. River in Scotland
- 31. One who settles a dispute
- 32. Most chummy
- 35. We all have our own
- 36. Arab tribe
- 38. Slap
- 40. Ottoman military commanders
- 41. Scottish or Irish

- Gaelic language
- 42. Emit coherent radiation
- 43. Sun or solar disk (Egyptian mythology)
- 44. Inclined to
- 45. Olfactory reference syndrome
- 46. Chest muscle (slang)
- 47. Body part

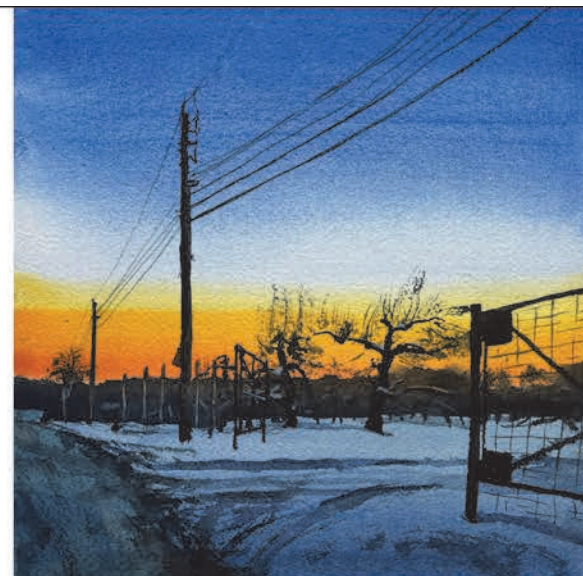
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46 OSSIE ROAD, MIDDLEBURY

This charming East Middlebury village home blends classic New England character with modern updates. Just steps from shops, dining, playground, and a park with tennis, swimming, and fishing, the location is ideal. Renovated in recent years, the home features an open floor plan with exposed beams, a quartz-and-stainless kitchen, and a spacious, fully fenced yard. Upstairs offers a primary suite with en-suite bath, two additional bedrooms, a full bath, and second-floor laundry hookups.



\$416,000

MLS# 5072686

2112 MIDDLE ROAD, SALISBURY

Experience the best of Vermont living in this country home, perfectly suited to capture sweeping, long-range mountain views. Set on 18 acres, the land gently descends to the Middlebury River, providing private access for fishing and other activities. Designed with versatility in mind, the home functions beautifully as a spacious single-family residence or a multi-family property. Just 10 minutes from downtown Middlebury—an ideal blend of comfort, convenience, and Vermont charm.



\$1,200,000

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MIDDLE ROAD, SALISBURY

118.20 Acres of prime agricultural land with exceptional mountain views. Unlock the possibilities of this remarkable parcel, offering a blend of open land, natural beauty, and endless potential. With ample space for livestock, gardening, or larger-scale farming, this property delivers both functionality and tranquility in a serene rural setting. For those seeking additional opportunities, a bordering residential property is also available—see MLS 5072767.



\$899,000

MLS# 5072769

COLUMBUS SMITH ROAD, SALISBURY

Discover the perfect setting for your dream home on this inviting land. With a fully approved septic design already in place, you can move confidently toward construction. The primary building site has been thoughtfully cleared, offering a head start on your plans, while additional layout options remain available to suit your vision. A rare opportunity to build exactly what you want in a naturally stunning setting.



\$425,000

MLS# 5072771



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This affordable 3 Bedroom, 1.5 Bath East Middlebury village home with a charming vibe, nice layout, good bones, and many newer systems it is ready for you to bring your vision and make the mostly cosmetic updates that would bring out its full potential. Some new flooring and repair of cat damage needed.
MLS No. 5068676 | \$ 315,000

for more information, contact:



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Jill Fraga
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144 Fields Road, Middlebury
This 4-bed, 3 bath home offers the option of comfortable single level living, with a nicely finished lower level for additional space. Located on the outer ring of Fields Road, this home is nicely situated to enjoy western exposure, privacy and wetland views in the back with a convenient in-town neighborhood location.
MLS No. 5070346 | \$625,000



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The Hirschfield International Film Series will screen "No Other Choice" directed by Park Chan-wook on Thursday, Jan. 15.

Film series shows free flick at Dana Auditorium

Hirschfield International Film Series will screen "No Other Choice" directed by Park Chan-wook, on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 7 p.m. in Dana Auditorium on the Middlebury College campus. Come at 6:30 p.m., for free pizza, popcorn, and snacks.

The plot: After being unemployed for several years, a man devises a unique plan to secure a new job: eliminate his competition.

Free and open to all. This film series is hosted once a month. Check middlebury.edu/college/academics/film-media-culture for regular updates.

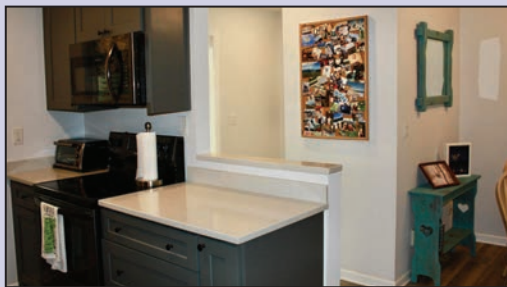
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956 BUTTERNUT HILL RD., WAITSFIELD
MLS# 5060588 \$220,000

Enjoy year round activities with this completely renovated one bedroom, one bath condo nestled in the woods. The kitchen boasts black stainless steel appliances, quartz countertops and new cabinets. The bathroom includes a new shower and vanity with ceramic tile flooring. Coretec waterproof flooring has been installed throughout the unit. New ceiling fans, new heaters with remote thermostats and new water heater. The living area has a propane gas stove fireplace for those chilly nights and sliding glass doors that open up to the woods. Common area has tennis courts, in-ground pool and large deck with a BBQ area. Pool house includes a sauna, bath/shower and free laundry. Explore the multi-use trails accessible from the property, and nearby swimming holes. This unit is within 15 minutes of both Sugarbush and Mad River Glen Ski Areas!



Open House this Saturday, January 17 from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM!

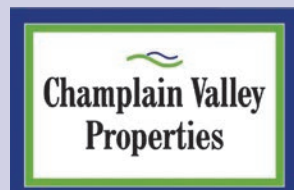


70 Court Street, Middlebury, VT
802-989-7522 | ChamplainValleyProperty.net



29 MOUNT PLEASANT DRIVE, BRANDON
MLS #5071791 \$499,000

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!



CALENDAR

continued from page 7

evening with Weybridge author and psychologist Devon Jersild to celebrate the launch of her debut novel "Luminous Bodies." A reception with light fare and a cash bar will follow the event. Books will be available for purchase and signing. Free with registration.

FRIDAY, FEB. 13

ISIDORE STRING QUARTET IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center, Olin C. Robison Concert Hall, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. The award-winning Isidore String Quartet returns to Middlebury with the world

premiere of Billy Childs' "Quartet No. 4," written for the ensemble, alongside arrangements of Bach and Brahms. \$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.



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T	A	P	P	E	T	T	O	R				
E	M	I	G	R	A	T	E	S	A	L	E	
N	A	T	I	O	N	A	L	A	A	H	E	D
V	R	O	O	M				I	N	R	O	
P	E	T			E	R	A	S				
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C	O	N	S	P	I	R	E	H	O			
M	I	C	H	A	E	L	J	O	R	D	A	N
A	M			M	A	S	T	E	R	E	D	
R	E	B						E	B	A	N	
S	A	T	I					I	R	A		
A	M	B	O			E	L	A	T	E		
A	G	A	I	N		O	P	E	R	A	T	E
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8	5	3	7	1	6	9	2	4
7	9	4	3	2	5	6	1	8
6	2	1	8	4	9	3	5	7
3	4	7	2	6	1	5	8	9
2	6	9	5	8	7	1	4	3
5	1	8	4	9	3	2	7	6
4	8	6	9	5	2	7	3	1
9	7	2	1	3	8	4	6	5
1	3	5	6	7	4	8	9	2



NEW LISTING

RIPTON | Fire Brook Rd | MLS #5073189
26.10 ACRES | \$245,000

Permit in the works for a septic system before closing for construction. Access via Fire Brook Road (shared with others) and a ROW. Power poles on the property. Will need a driveway. Make an appt!



MIDDLEBURY | 376 South Ridge Dr | MLS #5068284
SOUTH RIDGE | 0.60 ACRES | \$199,000

Build-ready lot in the South Ridge neighborhood served by town water and sewer. Well-spaced homes with mature landscaping, a 7.5 acre public park, and great access to amenities.



MIDDLEBURY | Middle Road North | MLS #5068334
0.49 ACRES | \$149,000

Electric, natural gas, public water, and sewer, at the street for this rare in-town building lot just across the road from Middlebury Union Middle School. You'll be close to everything!

Get your ducks in a row—the build plan is often best initiated over the winter months!

A few of our favorite benefits of shopping for land in the winter time: better visibility allows you to see the natural topography of the land; you can identify winter-specific issues related to accessibility, snow melt, and icy spots; time to line up crucial contractors closer to your build-preference window. Worried about perc tests? Work in a contingency to a successful test right in the contract!

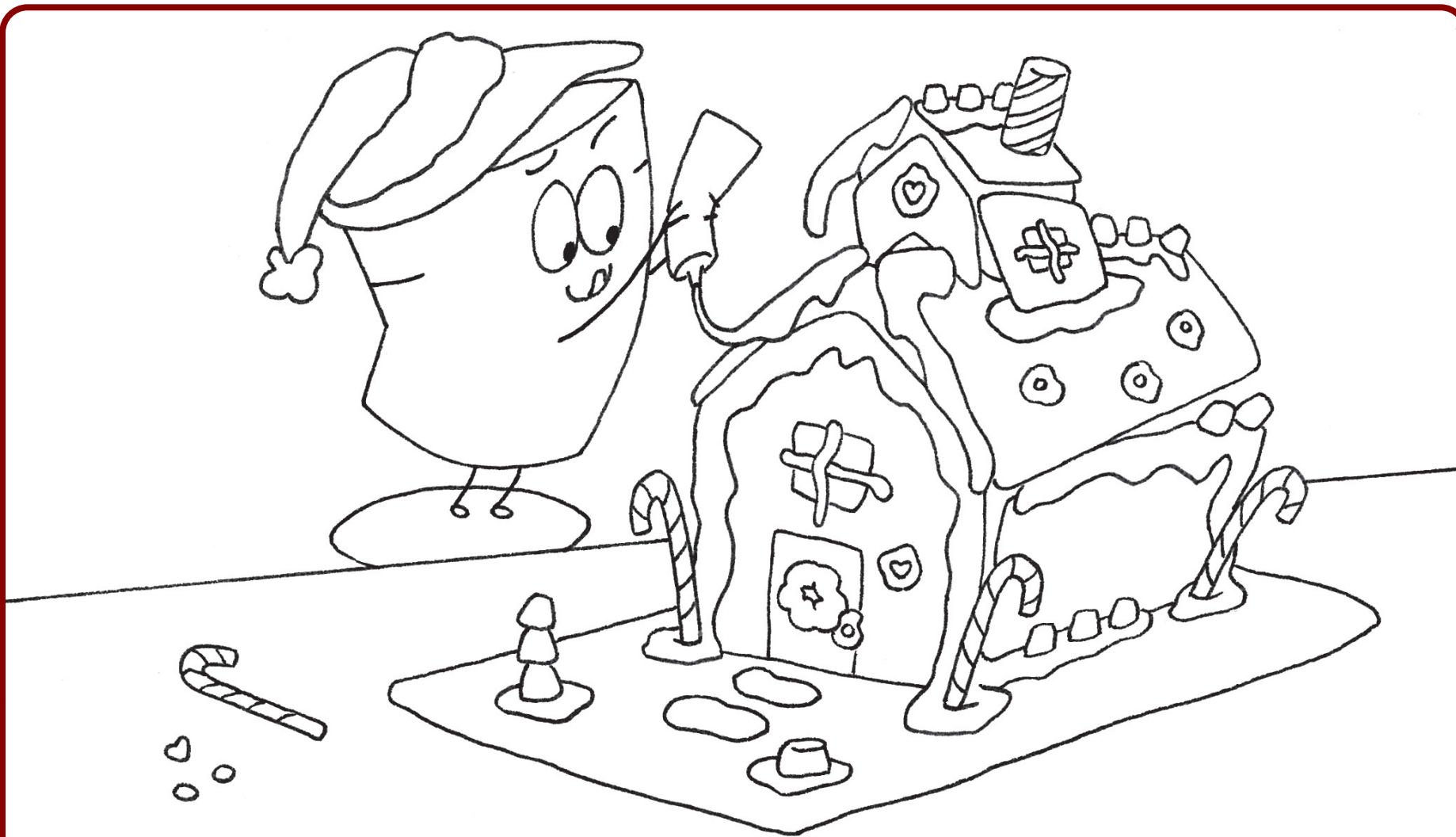


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Feel free to tear out this coloring page or go to addisonindependent.com/contests for a printable version.

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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