



New beginning

Middlebury multi-media artist Alice Eckles is bringing her art alive in 2026. See Arts + Leisure.



Big battle

MUHS and VUHS girls' hoops teams took a nail-biter down to the last minute. See Page 1B.



Get healthy

Read what doctors have to say about flu season, plus more health news in our special section.

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CONTRACTORS' TRUCKS LINE up at the Stonecrop Meadows subdivision off Seminary Street Extension one day last week, where progress is being made on the seven buildings above ground and several foundations waiting for walls. The new Middlebury neighborhood is expected to contain 70 housing units by the end of this year, with an ultimate goal of 250.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

Stonecrop neighborhood is taking shape

70 units are planned by end of year

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — The largest planned neighborhood in Middlebury's history continues to take shape and is projected to grow to 70 housing units by the end of this year. That's according to Summit Properties, the company developing

Stonecrop Meadows on 35 acres off Seminary Street Extension. "It's going great," Summit COO Zeke Davisson told the *Independent*. "Construction has been going really well, and the modular construction process is working great." Ground was broken 11 months

ago. The phase-one modular structures are being constructed off-site by East Montpelier's Huntington Homes. Six families are already living in what's envisioned as a 250-unit neighborhood that's to be built in phases. All six of those units were sold through the Vermont Housing Finance Agency's Middle-Income

Homeownership Program. Structures visible on site right now include:
• a building that will include 35 units or rental housing for families—to be ready for occupancy by this summer.
• 20 townhomes and duplexes, with a foundation ready to receive
(See *Stonecrop*, Page 8A)

Orwell expert puts AI ethics on world stage

By SARAH HARRIS
ORWELL — You won't find artificial intelligence governance expert Kay Firth-Butterfield at home in her sprawling Orwell farmhouse much this month.

Her new book, "Coexisting with AI: Work, Love and Play in a Changing World," was published by Wylie on Jan. 13. She's been in London giving evidence to a British parliament committee on AI and human rights, then at a conference in Munich, where she spoke about AI's risks to society. Now she's in Davos, Switzerland,

for the World Economic Forum's high-profile annual meeting, where leaders and politicians convene to discuss the world's most pressing issues. There, Firth-Butterfield is speaking on several panels and won, along with several teammates, a Jan. 21 public debate sponsored by *The*

New York Times. The topic: "AI will succeed where humans have failed."
"I'm taking the part where I'm saying I don't think that's true," Firth-Butterfield said with a smile in a recent interview in Orwell.
(See *AI expert*, Page 10A)



By the way

The Middlebury Police Department reminds the community of its "Project Good Morning" program. It offers an almost-daily check-in from the police department to provide participants and their families peace of mind, while helping seniors and disabled citizens maintain an independent lifestyle. If you live in Middlebury and believe you or a family member could benefit from Project Good Morning, contact Middlebury PD Dispatch at 802-388-3191 between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, to learn more about the program. Or email etracy@middleburypolice.org.

Gov. Phil Scott recently
(See *By the way*, Page 2A)

Care home coming to E. Middlebury

By JOHN FLOWERS
EAST MIDDLEBURY — Addison County Home Health & Hospice (ACHHH) workers have been traveling for the past 57 years to care for people wherever they are. Now ACHHH is creating a home of its own, to better serve folks whose ailments are undermining their independence. After a year of searching, Home Health leaders found — and quickly closed on — a 2,963-square-

foot, five-bedroom home at 427 East Main St. in East Middlebury. It is being renovated into a residential care home for up to eight medically frail adults. The future Level III care home is now being built out with the goal of welcoming its first residents this spring or summer, according to ACHHH Executive Director Deb Wesley. Residents will include ACHHH clients flagged by staff as requiring more extensive care.
(See *ACHHH*, Page 12A)

Riverflow has a transformative first year

Eyes growth at Monkton land

By MARIN HOWELL
MONKTON — Talking with members of Monkton's Riverflow Community about their first year up and running, there's a word that comes up often — transformative. The intentional community for individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities opened its doors at 57 Cedar Lane in October 2024. It's a place for all community members to live, work and navigate life together. Members of the community say being part of Riverflow has changed their lives for the better. "Riverflow has transformed the (resident) friends' life profoundly — transforms the families whose adult children come to live here, it transforms all the people who work here,
(See *Riverflow*, Page 13A)



RIVERFLOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS stand with a Christmas tree they harvested last month. Located in Monkton, Riverflow is an intentional community for individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities that opened its doors 2024 and is now planning its next stage of growth.
Photo courtesy of Hannah Schwartz

College support for town morphs

New focus on growing grand list

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury College officials are proposing to pare back on what have been two decades of annual payments to the town of Middlebury, while pivoting to investments like housing and entrepreneurship that officials believe could have a more sustainable and lucrative payoff for the community. At issue are a series of annual "gifts in lieu of taxes," or GILT, the town and Middlebury College

"The college controls 6,000 acres of land and the campus is on 300 acres."
— David Provost

agreed to in 2004. The agreement was devised as a way for the college to contribute in a more robust way to municipal services it enjoys as a nonprofit private institution. The original GILT was a 10-year pact that the two sides renewed in 2014. The terms provide for two annual payments. In short, one of the payments is based on 5% of the value of a \$1 million investment from the college's endowment fund. The second payment is based
(See *College*, Page 8A)



J-TERM STUDENTS EXAMINE historical cookbooks in Davis Family Library's Special Collections as part of a winter term course on "Endangered Food" taught by Alexa Duchesneau.
Photo courtesy of Alexa Duchesneau

Students dive into J-term

Courses explore the impact of sports, endangered food and death literacy

By MARIN HOWELL
MIDDLEBURY — A new year is well underway, and with it, another winter term at Middlebury College. The college's winter term — often called J-term as it takes place in January — offers

students and instructors an opportunity to dive deeply into one class over the course of four weeks. Visiting instructors and Middlebury College alums join college faculty in offering a variety of courses on topics
(See *J-Term*, Page 10A)

Bristol gears up for poetry celebrations

By MARIN HOWELL
BRISTOL — Community members are invited to join in on a months-long celebration of poetry kicking off in Bristol this week. "PoemVillage" will consist of four months' worth of free poetry workshops and other community events. The festivities will culminate in April, when residents' original poems will be displayed around Bristol for National Poetry Month. "PoemVillage is about bringing the voices of Bristol to the forefront," said Courtney Radford, executive director of the nonprofit Bristol CORE. "We're looking forward to spreading creativity, fostering connection, and highlighting what makes Bristol so special: its people and the way this community shows up for one another." Radford said the Bristol programming was inspired by
(See *Bristol*, Page 12A)

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IN THIS WELL-LIT room at BH Studio in a Bridport garage, Blair Heagerty can control the visual environment to capture a wide range of aesthetics during photography sessions. She calls it a blank canvas.

Photo courtesy of Blair Heagerty

Photographer brings business into focus

Bridport artist's customers everywhere

By JOHN FLOWERS

BRIDPORT — Blair Heagerty has always had an artistic eye, particularly when it comes to photography.

Little did she know that her keen interest in cameras would lead to a career that would allow her to earn a living in a craft that she recently brought with her to Bridport.

Heagerty is the driving force behind BH Studio, a home-based business from which she offers the essentials of corporate (both big and small) photography built on what she refers to as “brand storytelling and playful experimentation.”

It took a while for her career path and Vermont residency to come into focus.

She first considered making a living through photography in 1996. She was a high schooler living in Florida. Sadly, photography classes on her school had filled up. But her mom

came to the rescue, finding her an opportunity to learn her chosen craft at the Crealdé School of Art in Winter Park, Fla.

It was an afterschool class for the then-teenage Heagerty. Her fellow Crealdé students were mostly retirees with more fanciful plans for their cameras.

“It was with a bunch of sweet, older folks who were picking up a hobby; this was back when people were using film and darkrooms,” she recounted with nostalgia.

It’s an experience that launched her love for black-and-white film photography, which she would take on the road during gap-time between high school and college. She went to Iceland (multiple times) and Brazil, among other places.

“I just wanted to experience the world,” Heagerty said. “And it helped me build up a portfolio.”

It was during one of her trips — cruising the length of Route

66 with a friend — that Heagerty spontaneously applied for a coveted spot in the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. It includes courses in photography that offer students a lot of creative freedom in pursuit of art making, according to Heagerty.

“It was a far-off dream, but I thought I’d try,” she said.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

When she returned to Florida, she was thrilled to find an Art Institute acceptance letter in her mailbox.

“It was a big surprise, but I think it was also kismet,” she said.

She enrolled and took a variety of photography classes, along with a slew of elective courses she believed would help hone her artistic skills, including fashion, robotics and optics.

It was around this time that digital photography was making inroads,

and the School of the Art Institute in Chicago — from which she earned a Bachelor of Arts in 2005 — was on the cutting edge.

From there, it was on to a brief internship with celebrated photographer Haley Murphy in Venice, Calif. While there, Heagerty learned some of the intricacies of commercial photography. Murphy’s clients included Coca Cola, a huge company looking for the most optically pleasing depictions of its ubiquitous products.

“It was so different to go from a high-concept, gallery-focused art school to ‘this is what commercial photography looks like,’” Heagerty said. “It wasn’t the artist’s entire vision; it was, ‘this company has this kind of gameplan, and we’re hiring a photographer to carry out the idea and make it tangible in a way that feels connected with the (the client’s creative team).’”

She’d always assumed she



BRIDPORT RESIDENT BLAIR Heagerty is bringing to Addison County her commercial photography skills and services for businesses all over the country.

Photo courtesy of Blair Heagerty

wouldn’t like ceding creative control of an artistic project. But she warmed to the collaborative aspects of commercial photography.

“Every artist would like to have a certain amount of control, but I really like the teamwork, making something together,” Heagerty said.

And she was good at it. Before opening BH Studio in Bridport late last year, Heagerty spent two years as lead photographer at the American apparel brand Chubbies, building two full production studios for its ecommerce team, and creating its photography brand guidelines.

She then became director of photography at SFGate, an independent online news source for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Her duties included overseeing all editorial imagery, collaborating with photographers, designers and illustrators, and developing visual storytelling to pull readers into every story.

Most recently, Heagerty served as director of photography & retouching at Lovevery, a company that provides Montessori-inspired play kits and learning resources for babies and toddlers.

A few years ago, Heagerty, her husband and their two children finally realized their dream of moving to Vermont. And if you have children, you might have already heard of Blair’s husband, Matthew Heagerty. He’s the author of very popular graphic novels for young folks.

(See Heagerty, Page 3A)

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)

announced a range of committee and board appointments made in the fourth quarter of 2025. The local appointees include Karen Lueders of Lincoln at Addison-4 district House representative, Danial S. Sargeant of Granville as justice of the peace, and Krista Siringo of Bristol as a member of the State Advisory Panel on Special Education. Boards and commissions serve an important role in state government, giving Vermonters numerous opportunities to serve their state and communities. The governor’s office is currently soliciting applications to fill vacancies and upcoming term expirations. All those interested in serving on a board or commission should visit the governor’s website at governor.vermont.gov/boards-commissions to apply.

Here’s a very early heads-up that the 12th Annual Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival has changed its dates. MNFF12, originally announced for Aug. 19-23, has moved to August 26-30, returning to its traditional time slot prior to the Labor Day weekend. Much more information about MNFF12 will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead.

Beat the winter doldrums and put the annual Med47 Foundation Indoor Yard Sale on your calendar: Friday, Feb. 27, from 2-7 p.m.; and Saturday, Feb. 28, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., both days at the New Haven Town Hall at 78 North St. This is a favorite winter treasure hunt, with something for everyone. Everything is clean and in good working order. The event will feature many tables full of well sorted items, ranging from craft supplies to tools and everything in between. And it’s all for a great cause; the Med47 Foundation raises

money to support area rescue squads, first responders and scholarships for students considering careers in emergency healthcare fields. Organizers of the yard sale will accept items right up until the event, as long as they’re clean and working. Items that will *not* be accepted: Books, cassettes & VHS, outdated electronics, bed pillows, anything a baby sits in, clothes (except for winter wear or work clothes/boots), and large furniture (unless okayed). For more info, call 802-233-8334, or email med47foundation@gmail.com. Learn more at [Facebook.com/med47foundation](https://www.facebook.com/med47foundation).

We’ve already reported that the Bridport and Shoreham K-5 student populations will be merged at Bridport Central School beginning this fall, and the Shoreham Elementary School will begin a new life as an Addison Central School District PreK program. Now comes word from the ACSD central office that Jenny Urban will continue as the full-time principal at Bridport, and current Shoreham Principal Lashawn Whitmore-Sells will join her as a 0.5 full-time-equivalent principal. Whitmore-Sells will also be the preschool administrator at Shoreham.

The Milk & Honey Quilters Guild will meet at Middlebury American Legion Post 27 on Tuesday, Jan. 27, for a program that will feature Chester-based art quilter Linda Diak. Linda will demonstrate her many methods of intricate quilting and appliqué, and she’ll also present a virtual trunk show of her work. Members can view this hybrid Zoom meeting by visiting the milkandhoneyquilters.com website. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.



Tandem repeat

STEVE YOUNG AND Jill Dunn this past weekend clinched the title of Middlebury Indoor Tennis’s Mixed Doubles Champions for the second year in a row. Facing the 2023 Club Mixed Champions Victoria Fischer-Luksch and Caleb Kenna in the finals for the second year running, Dunn and Young prevailed in a close third set tiebreak to retain their title. Both teams played superbly in the 6-1, 0-6, 1-0 (10-7) match with many momentum swings. Congratulations to both teams for a terrific tournament and to all the mixed doubles teams who participated in a fun-filled tennis weekend.

CORRECTION: The Vergennes police log in the Jan. 15 edition incorrectly attributed a statement to Superintendent Sheila Soule regarding investigations

involving staff. Soule did not make that statement and does not comment on confidential student or personnel matters. The editor and reporter apologize for the error.

CORRECTION: An article in our Jan. 8 edition incorrectly stated the days Vergennes Laundry

is open. The restaurant is open Wednesday to Sunday. We regret the error.



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AT THE JAN. 25 meeting in Middlebury, Green Mountain Club Director of Field Programs Keegan Tierney will show off the tremendous trail work done on the trail in 2025. Photo credit: GMC staff



THIS NEW SHELTER under construction at the Battell overnight site on Mount Abraham will be featured in the Bread Loaf Section annual meeting on Sunday.

Legislative series set for 2026

ADDISON COUNTY — Organizers of this year's Addison County Legislative Breakfasts series have announced five gatherings for local lawmakers to update their constituents about goings on in the Vermont Statehouse this session.

The series — sponsored by the Bridport Grange and Addison County Farm Bureau — will kick off on Monday, Feb. 9, at 7:30 a.m. at the St. Peter's Parish Hall in Vergennes. As with all the breakfasts, food will be offered 30 minutes prior to the start of the program, which on Feb. 9 will end at 8:45 a.m.

The ensuing three breakfast gatherings will each be from 8:30-9:45 a.m. on Saturdays: Feb. 21, at Bristol's American Legion Post 19; March 14, at the Weybridge Congregational Church; March 21, at the Shoreham Congregational Church.

The final gathering of the 2026 session will be a legislative luncheon on Saturday, April 11, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, at Middlebury's American Legion Post 27. Folks planning on attending the luncheon are asked to RSVP to Bill at 802-881-8836 or wjscottjr@comcast.net.

All are welcome to attend these legislative gatherings to listen and ask questions of local representatives and state senators about what they've been working on this session. Attendees are invited to make a donation to help defray the costs of securing the venues.

Moderators for the gatherings will include Tim Buskey, Charlie Roy, Cheryl Connors and Bill Scott.

Learn about our banner trail work at hiking club meeting

MIDDLEBURY — The Bread Loaf Section of the Green Mountain Club (GMC) will hold its 51st Annual Meeting this Sunday, Jan. 25, from 6:30-8:15 p.m. at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society (2 Duane Court) in Middlebury.

Doors open to the public at 6:15 with a brief social time, followed by the annual meeting at 6:30. Following the business meeting, at about 7 p.m., guest speaker Keegan Tierney, GMC's director of Field Programs, will present a review and photos of the several

outstanding 2025 trail work projects accomplished by club staff and many volunteers.

Working on the trails is a dynamic process as the GMC adapts to changes in use and the climate and the resulting impacts to the trail and the hiking season. The club's programs

have the hiker in mind — both to maintain the trails and shelters and to support the hiking community by investing in resources for all to enjoy Vermont's hiking trails.

The Green Mountain Club's mission is to make the Vermont mountains play a larger part in the

life of the people by protecting and maintaining the Long Trail System and fostering, through education, the stewardship of Vermont's hiking trails and mountains.

Light refreshments will be served. This event is free and open to the public. More info at midducc.org.

Lincoln School District to warn \$5.4M spending plan

By MARIN HOWELL

LINCOLN — The Lincoln School Board last week unanimously adopted a fiscal year 2027 budget proposal to send to voters that reflects \$5,407,140 in total expenditures, an increase of \$227,895, or 4.4%, over the current year.

That \$5.4 million spending figure is higher than the one included in an earlier budget draft reviewed by the school board last month. Brittany Gilman, accounting and budget manager for the Lincoln School District, noted the increase is due to higher-than-anticipated announced tuition for the Mount Abraham Unified School District.

The Lincoln School District educates preK-12 students in Lincoln. Students in grades 7-12 have school choice, with many students attending Mount Abraham Union Middle/High School.

"The major change in this iteration was Mount Abe announced tuition was significantly higher than what we had anticipated, so that led to an increase of ... around \$200,000," Gilman explained.

Gilman said she went through the budget and tried to offset the

increase, making reductions in the areas of the district's food service contribution and legal fees.

"I kind of just went through and places that felt obvious to shave off, I did, but really it was nothing all that significant," she said, later noting that process offset around \$75,000 of the increase.

Gilman said she also increased the portion of a prior year surplus being added to revenue by \$24,000. District officials have eyed putting that surplus toward reducing taxes, and Superintendent Amy Cole said other districts are making similar moves.

"The regional superintendents check in with each other every so often, and it is a tough year for everybody," she said. "There's quite a few districts that are putting money in, pulling out of their ed reserve to buy down taxes and looking at cutting."

At the Jan. 13 meeting, board members asked questions about the latest budget draft and discussed potential tweaks. District officials decided to add \$20,000 to incoming revenue based on funds the district expects to receive, as well as reduce

a professional development line item by \$20,000, with school board members pointing to a veteran staff at the Lincoln Community School and how actual spending in that area has previously come in lower than what was budgeted.

BUDGET FIGURES

The FY27 budget ultimately adopted by the board reflects \$869,544 in revenues, an increase of \$131,694, or 17.85%, from FY'26. Education spending (total expenses minus incoming revenues) is expected to total \$4,537,596, up \$96,201, or 2.17%, from the current year.

Per pupil education spending for FY27 is projected to be around \$13,709.58 based on current state data, an increase of 1.89%, or \$253.58. That figure is based on an anticipated 330.98 in long-term weighted average daily membership for next year, an adjusted count of the district's students.

District officials currently project the spending plan will translate to a tax rate of \$1.1326 per \$100 of property value, an around 8-cent increase over the current year, after the Common Level of Appraisal is

applied. The CLA is a ratio used by the state to make adjustments when assessing education property taxes to ensure the level of taxation is equal among all Vermont towns.

Details on the forecasted tax impact for residents who pay education taxes based on their income was not available as the *Independent* went to press on Wednesday, but district officials expected those figures would be available on the district's website (lincolnsd.org/budget-1) in the coming days.

During the Jan. 13 meeting, Lincoln School Board Chair Jeanne Albert noted the projected tax rate is

still historically low for Lincoln and that some factors at the state level that impact the overall tax rate are subject to change.

In his budget address on Tuesday, Gov. Phil Scott proposed putting \$105 million toward property tax relief, a move he said would cut a 12% average property tax increase forecasted across state by about half. So, it remains to be seen what the actual tax impact will shake out to in Lincoln and elsewhere in the state.

Lincoln residents can learn more about the proposed FY27 spending plan during a community budget information night set for Tuesday, Feb. 10.

Heagerty

(Continued from Page 2A)

"We'd been trying to put our roots down," Blair said. "We finally got to a place in our career where we could have a little more space, live closer to family, and find the right spot."

Matthew's family is from the Westboro, Mass., area. The Heagertys found in Vermont a state exuding "community, inclusivity, caring, a focus on the environment, no big billboards, and the ability to connect with other humans," according to Blair.

DOWN TO BUSINESS

Soon after settling into their Bridport home, Blair Heagerty began to fashion BH Studio in an on-site garage. She was meticulous in its outfitting.

"I'd built out studios for other

companies before," she said. "I went into (the start-up) knowing what I needed with my budget."

While Heagerty doesn't mind traveling to clients for shoots, she's got a fine setup in her garage. It's very bright, with ample lighting to manage the aesthetics during photography sessions. The intent is to portray the product in its most enticing form — per the customer, with professional advice.

"It's a blank canvas," she said of the studio

Her services include e-commerce product photography; concept-driven visuals crafted to support campaigns, storytelling, and brand moments; digital ads; streamlined, efficient sessions ideal for micro and early-stage brands needing a volume of high-quality visuals at

once; and studio sessions tailored to major brand moments — such as launch campaigns, limited editions, holiday pushes, and new product expansions.

BH Studio is still in its infancy, but Heagerty is already working with some local and out-of-state clients. Overnight mail and digital photography allow Heagerty to send clients her work with a few keyboard taps and receive products at her studio to photograph.

"My process is grounded in joy, humor, optimism and genuine collaboration," she said. "I believe the best creative work happens when people feel comfortable, supported, and excited, when the energy in the room is light, the ideas are flowing, and everyone feels like part of the process."

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Editorials

Scott's 'disciplined' budget is a Band-Aid, Dems say

Gov. Phil Scott's budget plan for fiscal 2027 is what we have come to expect: a "disciplined" approach that keeps state government operating at minimum capacity but solves few problems.

Scott did keep the budget to a 3% growth rate, which fits anyone's definition of responsible, and he included \$105 million to cut the projected state tax rate from 12.5% to about 5.5%, as was widely predicted.

But holding the budget to 3% also means reduced services. That's particularly true this year because every state faces significant cuts in federal aid imposed by Trump's big bad bill. Trump's bill will mean substantial cuts in Medicaid to schools (driving up local costs), aid to the homeless (also driving up state expenditures), cuts to energy efficiency programs and drastic cuts to renewable energy (both of which drive up costs to homeowners), and on and on and on.

Be that as it may, Scott's budget makes a few creative tweaks to put some money back in the transportation fund to deal with troubling shortfalls there, and does what it can to provide services with spending that's lower than inflation.

It is not, however, a budget that deals with the state's most substantial problems. Vermonters know that health care costs are driving residents out of the state. It's one of the main drivers of costs in education spending and strains small and large businesses. They remember the cost analysis of the state's health care system done two and three years ago and the ultimatums needed to fix the problem — yet, the governor's budget all but ignores the issue.

Similarly, creating more affordable housing was addressed by tweaking regulatory reforms noted in his state-of-the-state address, not by any meaningful commitment of financial resources set aside in the budget.

House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, gave the Democratic response to the governor's budget address when she aptly said, "we're looking for long-term solutions here, not Band-Aids."

That puts the onus on Democrats to articulate a better response to the crises Vermont faces — a challenge that has no easy fixes and has often stumped their leadership as well.

Angelo Lynn

Trump as the 'Mad King'

As Trump plays the role of Mad King in Davos, America stands embarrassed and belittled. Embarrassed because only a pathological narcissist would write an official letter to Norway's leaders admitting he was pursuing the takeover of Greenland because he didn't get the Nobel Peace Prize. Belittled because Trump is single-handedly destroying America's global leadership, while giving China huge openings to rise as the preeminent nation and failing to stop Russia's resurgence in Ukraine and beyond.

There's some validity to the argument Trump's insistence on conquering Greenland serves to divert public attention from rising grocery prices, the war against Ukraine, a failed tariff policy that continues to increase the price of goods for American consumers, and ICE policies and tactics that are threatening our national security from within. But it's equally clear that as Trump begins his second year in office, his daily chaos (even over just the next year until the mid-terms) will result in a greatly diminished America.

Columnist Tom Friedman sums it up well in Wednesday's *New York Times*: "Trump is the most un-American president in our history. It was obvious from the day Trump trashed Senator John McCain, an authentic American war hero and patriot, for having been shot down in combat and taken prisoner. What kind of American would denounce McCain, who was held captive for over five years in a North Vietnamese prison camp after spurning early release, knowing it would be used as propaganda? No American that I know..."

"Trump's worst un-American impulses and intellectual laziness were contained in his first term in the White House by a group of serious advisers. This time around, there is no one to contain them. He has surrounded himself with sycophants. So, Trump is now basically running our country the way he ran his companies — as a one-man show free to make terrible deals.

"That management style led to six bankruptcy filings by his companies. Unfortunately, today we're all his shareholders, and I fear he is going to bankrupt us as a nation — morally for sure, if not one day financially and politically. Trump's behavior has become so reckless, so self-absorbed, so obviously contrary to American interests... that the question must be asked: Is America now being ruled by a mad king?"

Friedman concludes that while Russia and China have long sought to upend America's leadership in the world they were unable, until Trump led that unraveling at the start of his second term.

"Russia and China dreamed that one day something would happen where America would lose its allies and NATO would be fractured. Without economic allies, America could never be as influential in trade negotiations with China, and without America's military might, NATO would be hard pressed to prevent Russia from retaking parts of Central and Eastern Europe that it lost control over after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

"And then one day their dreams came true. The American people elected a man who, no matter what he tells us, is taking us to a future not of 'America first,' but of 'America alone' and 'Me first.'"

The evidence to prove Friedman's case is growing more abundant with each passing day.

Angelo Lynn



Party girl

WHILE EVERYONE ELSE was keeping eyes on the Middlebury Union High School court during halftime of the Tigers vs. Commodores girls' basketball game on Monday evening, three-year-old Amalie Santa Maria-Rule of Vergennes danced to her own soundtrack.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

Letters to the Editor

Senator isn't representing us

I have been an active participant in Peter Franzoni's efforts to get Vermont towns and cities to adopt resolutions reaffirming their commitment to constitutional protections for all Vermonters regardless of their immigration status. Unfortunately, the Addison selectboard ignored their citizens' request to take it to a vote, but I did send an email to all our state representatives.

In a response to my email (too long to publish here) asking his support for several bills already submitted to the state legislature addressing unconstitutional federal immigration actions, Sen. Steve Heffernan had this to say: "Thank you for your email. Federal will supersede any law Vermont makes when it comes to immigration." That's it, nothing else!

I urge his constituents to contact Sen. Heffernan and demand that he stand up for all of us! May I suggest that we vote him out of office the next time around?

Mary Saudade Addison

Is murder being condoned?

What?! Wait!! Our government condones the murder of private citizens in this country citing flimsy justifications ("she behaved badly"). Then in the next breath, our government pledges to rescue protesters in another country who are being killed ("Help is on its way," "take over"). There must be a name for this.

David Lewis New Haven

Tyrant-in-chief should leave

Another day another outrage from this tyrant and his federal administration! We've seen over the past year how they've lawlessly and cruelly waged war on the American people, the world, our environment, truth and justice. They've been turning the U.S. into a s*hole country for sure, as they vilify with their racist policies other countries and peoples.

They've wrecked our economy for the benefit of profiteers. They've waged piracy on the high seas and violated the basic rules of international law. They've sold out Ukraine. They've threatened other countries with invasion. They've propped up the colonial, Zionist regime in their genocidal war against the Palestinians and Arab world. They've lied and lied on a daily basis to the American people. I could go on, but you know the rest. You basically can't trust our government anymore!

Now, just this month, their Gestapo-like ICE and border agents have started killing people with impunity, including innocent U.S. citizens that get in their way, as they carry out their lawless actions to deport mostly innocent refugees to hell-hole foreign prisons. Where are the MAGA-morons now, when they used to complain during previous administrations that "jack-booted federal agents" were stamping on their rights and taking their guns? Wow, what a contradiction!

This tyrant needs to be ICE'd — Impeached, Convicted and Excised from our nation's consciousness! AND his henchmen need to be nothing less than jailed. We need to take our country back from these maniacs. I'm afraid peaceful protests aren't enough.

Thank you.

Bruce Acciavatti Salisbury

Time to explore Trump's exit

Donald Trump was inaugurated for the second time a year ago this week. In that year, his administration has done great damage to our country, firing hundreds of thousands of civil service employees, gutting agencies, rolling back regulations and protections, invading U.S. cities to attack and detain both

(See Willis letter, Page 5A)

Get back in the saddle... or not

I started taking English riding lessons late last summer to immerse myself in equestrian culture for a writing project that involves horses. At the ripe age of 52, I hadn't yet developed the muscle memory to ride intuitively and successfully. But it didn't matter, I loved my assigned lesson pony, the adorable Peekaboo Rain. I absolutely loved brushing his coat, picking out the mud from his shoes, and feeding him apples after training sessions.

But no matter how much I tried to win him over, he was reluctant to follow my lead and even bit me once. My trainer Sofie Clark led me through challenging drills in the paddock, steering with no hands, trotting over bars, and developing more ways of communicating with my legs. On a lovely autumnal trail ride, Peekaboo startled, and I slid off the saddle and landed on soft grass. I was shaken, and my arm was a little numb. But I decided to get back on the horse.

Two weeks later, we had a technical training session in the paddock. If my legs were not explicitly telling Peekaboo to "trot," he slowed way down. It was exhausting to remember to keep my heels down, my arms down, my head up, and a firm tone to my voice. I just couldn't understand how to be strong enough to move my hips up and down while "hugging" his torso with my legs.

After an hour of this, Peekaboo startled at something in the distant field and squirmed his back. I lost my balance and grabbed for the reins but remembered the bit in his mouth. The harrowing descriptions from Black Beauty flashed in my mind, so I let go.

I landed with full force flat on my back, knocking the wind right out of my lungs. I couldn't move or breathe. Peekaboo stood on the far side of the paddock refusing to make eye contact with me. Sofie rushed over, white as a sheet. I just wanted to get up and shake it off. But I was completely consumed by pain, I struggled to stand only to crumple on to all fours. This hurt more than giving birth!

She knelt by me and tried to comfort me. She balled up her coat, put it under my head, and calmly asked if she should call the paramedics.

"No," I croaked vehemently, terrified at the potential medical bill. "I'll be fine. I'll take two Tylenols and two Advils, and I'll be fine."

"I really think you should go to the emergency room," she insisted. "Or do you just want to go home?"

The thought of the emergency room filled me with dread, not just for the impending hospital bill, but because I had a DJing gig in two days that I was looking forward to. I felt like a supreme dumbass.

No, this could not be happening. We called Matthew, my husband, who was cooking breakfast at Swift House Inn (we are the owners), and he agreed that I should come straight home.

It must have taken a lifetime to walk across the hard packed dirt floor of the arena. Every step was tiny, slow, excruciating, and embarrassing. I could feel a distinct sensation in my back that if I didn't clutch Sofie for support my torso would just topple over.

(See Ways, Page 5A)

Ways of Seeing

By Serena Kim



Treatment of immigrants is unjust

Catalina has lived in the United States for two decades, since being brought illegally as an eight-year-old. Fourteen years ago, she was accepted into the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, meaning she's lawfully present in the U.S. But in August, ICE agents arrested her at an airport and threw her into detention. She was still there three weeks after a judge terminated immigration proceedings, because ICE wanted to appeal — which would take many more months.

Komalpreet came without inspection after fleeing persecution at home. After being caught by ICE, she was released immediately, since she poses no threat to anyone, has no criminal history, and is cooperating with the government. She applied for asylum and was given a work permit so she could support herself while the application was decided. Yet she was arrested again in October, despite being pregnant, and detained in what a court termed "abysmal" conditions. Since her detention, she's suffered malnutrition and elevated bilirubin levels that may cause her to lose the baby.

These are just two of the thousands caught in the savage new policy that was cooked up this summer by the Department of Homeland Security and the



Community Forum

This week's writer is Erin Ruble, an immigration lawyer living in Addison County.

increasingly inaptly named Department of Justice. For decades, most people have been given the chance to argue they should be released on bond while legal proceedings determined whether they had a right to remain in the U.S.

Not everyone was eligible for bond, of course, and not everyone who was eligible was granted it. Still, for those like Catalina and Komalpreet, who are not dangerous and who have a demonstrated track record of cooperation, release can be crucial. Some of these released immigrants care for critically ill family members; others take care of children, or are the only ones who financially support their families.

The system works; a recent study demonstrated that over four-fifths of noncitizens show up for their immigration proceedings. Of those who don't, often the reason is practical, such as not getting

the hearing notice or lacking transportation to the court (which can be located hundreds of miles from their homes).

This summer, though, our government decided for the first time that anyone who had crossed the border without reporting at a border station is subject to mandatory detention during immigration proceedings,

(See Ruble, Page 5A)

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Letters to the Editor

We can't let government violence be the 'new normal'

The year I graduated from college, four students were shot dead by the Ohio National Guard during a campus demonstration. This shocking event sparked widespread protests, shutting down colleges nationwide. My school, like others, suspended classes and exams, replacing these with faculty teach-ins, to help us process what had just happened.

Looking back, the violence of that day in May 1970 was a relatively isolated event. No other national guard members shot at student demonstrators. The Nixon Administration didn't defend it or demonize the victims.

Contrast this with the government's response to the recent murder of Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old Minneapolis mom. Good was in her car, attempting to observe and document ICE operations in her neighborhood. When agents screamed at and threatened her, she tried to slowly drive away. She was a U.S. citizen who had not committed any crime justifying an ICE arrest; they had no authority to detain her. And yet as she attempted to move away, she was shot in the face three times at close range. Her last words to the officer before the shooting were "That's fine, dude, I'm not mad at you." After the shooting he used an expletive to describe her.

Shocking as this murder was, the Trump administration's

response was just as unnerving. They falsely claimed the agent acted in self-defense, that Good tried to hit him with her car, despite clear video evidence to the contrary. Worse was implicit justification of the murder because Good was a "leftist provocateur." So is it open season on pro-democracy demonstrators? Is the MAGA free-speech, small-government crowd now calling for a death sentence for peaceful protest?

To top it off, Trump's FBI is stymying local prosecution. Unlike in typical investigations, the FBI is not sharing evidence with local and state authorities, preventing them from building their own case. If federal charges alone are filed, the defendant can be set free by a presidential pardon. State convictions are not subject to this get-out-of-jail-free ploy.

These dangerous departures from the rule of law — government agents killing protestors, an Administration defending these actions, the Justice Department precluding local investigation — are chilling. If there are no consequences for this crime, other agents will be encouraged to repeat it. So we — citizens, civic organizations, businesses and yes, leaders from both parties — need to demand that this stop.

Can colleges cancel the first

week of classes for teach-ins, explaining why recent events have gone too far? Can religious leaders publicly denounce the administration's tactics, counteracting the patina of righteousness that some evangelicals have bestowed on Trump?

Can Congress stop its regular work and hold nationally televised hearings about the illegal recent actions of ICE agents? Will they grill Kristi Noem about her training and recruitment strategies for ICE and Border Patrol? Can the recently bloated ICE funding be quashed unless serious reforms are made?

Will business leaders make public statements of their deep concern, and refuse any corporate contributions to those who back these administration practices? And importantly, can Republican leaders stand up to defend democracy and denounce what is happening?

Is a national strike by workers and students called for now?

We cannot let the escalation of violence against our citizens become the new normal, something we protest on Saturday, and then move on. If we don't stop it, the escalation and intimidation will continue, and our democracy will be next on the critical list.

Peg Kamens
Bristol

Willis letter

(Continued from Page 4A) citizens and immigrants alike. The list goes on, long and tragic. Now the president is threatening war with Greenland and Denmark, and thus with our longstanding friends and allies of NATO.

It's time for leaders and others to say what seems obvious: This president is delusional, emotionally unstable, and very dangerous — to our nation and the world. He creates his own reality (climate change is a hoax, "groceries" is an old-fashioned word, immigrants eat cats and dogs). He spends too much time posting unhinged texts, putting his name on national institutions, weaponizing the DOJ to go after anyone who opposes him, and insulting reporters who ask

questions he doesn't like.

He could be working on affordability and healthcare. And he lies routinely and never takes responsibility for his actions.

Imagine if local leaders or businesspeople behaved like the president — if the bank teller lied about your account, or the doctor lied about your health tests? What if your car mechanic posted 27 texts about you one evening, and called you "nasty" when you asked questions? What if your selectboard decided to annex part of a neighboring town, because it had a flourishing business (or a wonderful town forest)? Or a store clerk double-charged you and denied it despite the receipt?

Behavior the President exhibits regularly would get him fired, or

worse, if we experienced it in our local lives. In threatening to take over Greenland and go to war with NATO allies (for no good reason) the president is leading us over the cliff, economically, politically and more.

World War III begins to loom on the horizon. We have already forfeited our leadership position on the world stage and are now seen as an untrustworthy and threatening pariah.

To repeat, President Trump is a delusional, emotionally unstable and dangerous man and needs to be removed from office, for the safety and future of our nation, and of the planet.

Heidi Willis
Salisbury

Ruble

(Continued from Page 4A) no matter what their circumstances or how long they have lived here.

It can take years for immigration cases to finish — considerably longer than the prison terms for many violent offenses. Three-quarters of people being detained have no criminal convictions, but they are being held in prison-like conditions — often, in fact, inside actual prisons.

Keep in mind that immigration violations are civil, not criminal. The government isn't allowed to punish noncitizens the way they would a criminal convicted of armed robbery or even theft. Yet the food served causes health and often religious problems, the facilities are loud and bright at all hours so people cannot sleep, and blisteringly hot and freezing cold by turns. Inmates are sometimes physically or sexually abused, and those with medical conditions (whether preexisting or arising from the conditions they are kept in) receive profoundly inadequate medical treatment. My own clients

have developed diabetes, paralysis and stroke-like symptoms inside, gastric problems, and severe depression.

To detain anyone in these conditions for the years it might take to finish removal proceedings is brutal; to do so to people who have no criminal history, cooperate with the government, and want only to support themselves and their families is a travesty.

Federal courts have rejected the government's vicious new policy in a self-described "tsunami" of cases. Until recently, however, the judges' orders only extended to each individual plaintiff, and most noncitizens lack the resources to file a case in federal court. So even while the DHS was continually being told that its policy was unlawful, it was still detaining each new noncitizen that fell under its terms.

Now our clients are finding that even after we get a judge to order their release, it's still not over, since the DHS has begun loading them with additional conditions

the judge didn't require, like ankle monitors — which cannot get wet and require you to sit for two to three hours while they charge — and travel restrictions that can limit their connection to work, family, even their own lawyer's office.

Needless to say, this is all very expensive. At the same time that the government is slashing health benefits, national park staff, and grants for crucial scientific research under the guise of saving money, it has entered into another billion-dollar contract just for private supervision of noncitizens. Trump estimates the cost of building extra jails for all the people it would like to detain at \$45 billion.

This is not enforcement. It is part of the government's strategic gambit to make it so personally taxing to each individual noncitizen to assert her right to stay in this country that she will just stop trying.

That is an abuse of the laws. It is a violation of individual rights, and it makes a travesty of America's commitment to justice.

Ways

(Continued from Page 4A)

She drove the two of us over to the parking lot of Swift House and ran in to talk to Matthew in the kitchen. He couldn't leave because he was in the middle of restaurant service, so she kindly agreed to take me to the nearby emergency room after all.

At Porter Hospital, I received an X-ray and a CT scan that revealed a compression fracture in my L1 vertebra. It looked like a squashed marshmallow with a delta of hairline fractures. If I bent over, twisted, or lifted anything, more hairline fractures would occur. I was making tiny short breaths to manage the pain... until they piped dilaudid into my IV.

By the end of my visit, I felt great! I was cracking jokes with the nurses and trying to get back into my riding breeches. But the doctor gave me strict instructions to stay in bed for the next four to six weeks. Later a spine specialist revised that to eight weeks.

The toughest challenge has been



SERENA KIM

the mental one. I've had to sit still while everyone else picks up the slack (thank you, Matthew!), to accept help without guilt, to let myself be cared for instead of powering through. Friends have shown up with gifts, soup, baked treats, and quiet visits. I'm learning that I don't always have to work so hard. Sometimes it's my turn to receive help. Sometimes it's OK not to put my

back into it. But perhaps the biggest lesson of all is this: Sometimes you shouldn't get back in the saddle.

Serena Kim co-owns Swift House Inn with her husband Matthew Robinson. She is a DJ, a writer, and editor. She currently serves on the board of the Addison Independent Trust and is interim board chair of the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival.

Elderly Services Inc. ESI College

Only in Later Life: A Condition Like No Other
 Tuesday, January 27, 1:30-3:00 PM
 The Congregational Church of Middlebury

F. Scott Fitzgerald famously stated "there are no second acts in American lives." Fitzgerald himself did not live to test the hypothesis, but this class will challenge it with argument and evidence. In the first five or six decades of life, we are necessarily preoccupied with making our material mark and forging sustaining relationships. When those developmental challenges are behind us, we become, if we allow ourselves, liberated to ask and answer the greater question: What has it all meant?

Only in Later Life: Wonders and Surprises
 Tuesday, February 3, 1:30-3:00 PM
 The Congregational Church of Middlebury

This second class about the nature of later life explores the kinds of experiences that can only occur in later life. Shakespeare's King Lear and other masterworks have chronicled the inevitable decline and losses experienced in later life, but those very losses can open up - make room for - depths of feeling and understanding previously impossible. Beyond decline and loss, later life reveals insights and offers pleasures too little remarked on in the larger culture's consideration of "old age."

Both of these lectures are presented by lifelong teacher, writer, and musician **Richard Hawley, Ph.D.** Hawley 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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ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

John E. Hendy, 87, of Salisbury

SALISBURY — John E. Hendy, 87, of Salisbury, Vt. passed away surrounded by family Jan. 13, 2026, at Porter Medical Center. John was born on July 6, 1938, in Barton, Vt. He was predeceased by his father, John D. Hendy; mother, Ella (Valley) Hendy; and brother-in-law Don Boss. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Donna (Dyke) Hendy and children Jo Anne Roy of Deerfield Beach, Fla.; Judy Austin and husband John of Salisbury, Vt.; Janet Hendy of Laverne, Tenn.; and Michael Hendy and partner Helen Pampinella of Weybridge, Vt. He was a beloved Jiddo to his grandchildren: Kelsey, Brad, Rowan, Harper, and Ellie. He is also survived by his dear sisters: Jean Boss, Carole Bealko (Don), and Donna Starling (Bill), also many cherished nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

John grew up in Barton, Vt., and graduated from Barton Academy in 1957 while working at the family John Deere dealership. That same year John, along with his father moved their families to Middlebury, Vt., where they bought out Marshall Tractor, thus expanding Hendy Bros. to two locations. Shortly thereafter the Barton store was sold and the next 50 years John's life was spent successfully operating the



JOHN E. HENDY

Middlebury dealership until he sold the business to Judy and Michael and retired. Even after retirement he continued to go to work every day, helping out any way he could. He particularly enjoyed conversing with customers and employees.

John enjoyed spending time with his sisters, brothers-in-law and his cherished friends. He enjoyed traveling with friends and family to many memorable destinations including Haiti, Hong Kong, Australia, Morocco, Amsterdam, and Alaska to name a few.

John enjoyed a well-manicured lawn and took pride in keeping his yard looking good. He was a consummate putterer, always

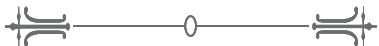
picking, pruning, watering, cutting, and raking anything in his yard that he felt needed attention or cleaning. He loved spending time with his family and friends at his home on Lake Dunmore. He and Donna hosted a family reunion annually for many years and those reunions provide a treasure trove of memories for us all.

While in High School John joined the Army National Guard and proudly served for six years. John was a member of the Knights of Columbus for many years and a parishioner of St. Mary's Church in Middlebury. He also served on the board of the New England Dealers Association for several years.

Calling hours were held from 3-6 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 18, at Sanderson Funeral Home, located at 117 South Main Street, Middlebury, Vt. A funeral mass was held at 10 a.m., Monday, Jan. 19, at St Mary's Church in Middlebury, Vt.

John's family would like to thank the staff at Porter Hospital for helping John in his final days.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to www.stmary.vermontcatholic.org/give St Mary's Church at 326 College Street, Middlebury, VT 05753. Messages of condolence may be made at www.sandersonfuneralservice.com.

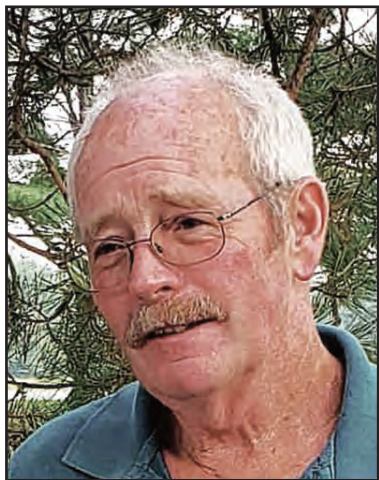


Dale Howard Stone, 73, of Bridport

BRIDPORT — Dale Howard Stone, age 73, passed away peacefully Jan. 9, 2026, surrounded by loved ones.

Dale is survived by his wife of 54 years, Ann (Duffresne) Stone; sons, Stacy Stone (Vivian) and their son Kaidan of Bothell, Wash., and Tracy Stone (Hildie) of Bridport and their children, Sumra, Christopher Stone (Jacqueline) of Bridport, and Brady Stone (Amanda) of Benson; great-grandson, Ronen Stone and his mother, Norma (Jackson) Stone; and sister, Linda (Stone) Riley and her husband Leighton, all of Bridport.

Dale graduated from Middlebury Union High School, class of 1970. Following graduation he enlisted in the Vermont Air National Guard in Burlington. He began his working



DALE HOWARD STONE

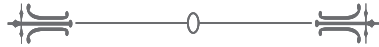
career as a carpenter, a machinist, a fuel delivery driver, and then for the Town of Bridport for 27 years before retiring.

He was predeceased by his father, Roger Stone. Dale became a caretaker for both his grandmother's properties. During his retirement he busied himself with his hobbies — splitting firewood, woodworking in his basement, caring for his lawn and neighboring lawns, and spending time spoiling his dog. He thought his dog was smarter than most people. He will be missed by many.

A gathering in celebration of his life will take place Feb. 1, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Bridport Community Hall.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made, in his memory to Bridport Fire & Rescue, 82 Crown Point Road, Bridport, VT 05734.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon. ◊



Donald E. Little, 90, formerly of Vergennes

SOUTH BURLINGTON — Donald E. Little, of South Burlington, passed away Jan. 16, 2026, at the age of 90. Born Feb. 6, 1935, he lived a life defined by service, creativity, and dedication to his community.

Don was a founding member of the Vergennes Rescue Squad, where he and fellow members worked tirelessly to raise funds for the town's first ambulance. He went on to volunteer as an EMT, offering care and calm to neighbors



DONALD E. LITTLE

in need. Professionally, Donald worked as a technical illustrator for Simmons,

contributing his skill and precision to major projects including Apollo 11 and several major airlines. His talent extended far beyond the drafting table. He was an award-winning competitive marksman throughout New England and New York, earning respect and recognition across the region.

Above all, Don's greatest passion was painting. His artwork featuring landscapes, seascapes, wildlife, and traditional Vermont scenes all captured the serenity of the world around him. He achieved national recognition after winning the Massachusetts Waterfowl Stamp Competition in both 1993 and 2005. His legacy will continue to live on through the beauty of his art.

Don is survived by his wife, Betty Little; his children Steven (Mary) Little, Lori (Brian) Kasupski, and Matthew Morse; his grandchildren Sara, Travis, Anna, Tyler, Allie, and Sam; and his nine great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters Robin (Michael) LeBeau, Beth (Jerry) Elzinga, and Nancy Warner, as well as his nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his siblings Gilbert Little and Winona Morin.

A graveside service will be held in the spring. ◊

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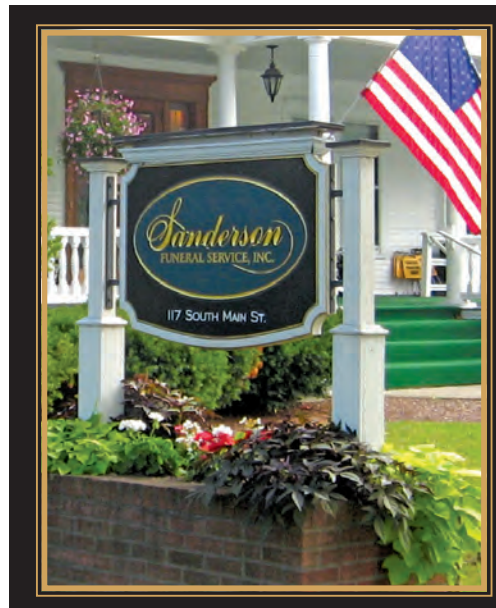
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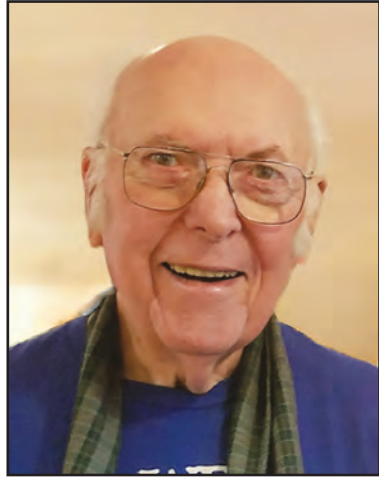
Malcolm Wadsworth Chase Jr., 88, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Malcolm Wadsworth Chase Jr., known to nearly everyone simply as Mal except his family as Sonny, was a brilliant scientist, devoted family man, gifted musician, enthusiastic coach, relentless puzzle-solver, and master of the perfectly timed humorous aside. He passed away Jan. 16, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of curiosity, kindness, laughter, and love.

Born on June 17, 1937, in Waltham, Mass., Mal was the youngest of three children born to Malcolm and Audrey (Bissett) Chase, following sisters Barbara (Chase) Coleman and Dorothy (Chase) Holmes. He grew up in Belmont, Mass., with summers spent in Chatham — continuing a deep family connection to Cape Cod, even as the first generation not born there. Those Cape summers, and his lifelong love of family history, would remain close to his heart.

Mal's intellect was unmistakable. A graduate of MIT, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1959, later completing a Master's Degree in Physical Chemistry at the University of Vermont and a Ph.D. from Florida State University. Though his credentials were formidable, Mal wore his brilliance lightly. He had a way of moving seamlessly from a serious discussion to a mischievous smile — often punctuated by a clever bit of trivia, a historical fact, or a perfectly timed joke.

It was at the University of Vermont that Mal met the love of his life, Patricia Durland Wood, in a moment that felt destined: Mal was playing the organ at the Ira Allen Chapel, Pat was singing in the choir, and harmony followed. They married in 1963 and began a life together that spanned decades, states, careers, churches, ice rinks,



MALCOLM WADSWORTH CHASE JR.

softball fields, and choir lofts.

Mal spent 18 years at Dow Chemical in Midland, Mich., where his work in research — particularly on the JANAF tables — took him around the world. His travels included multiple trips to the Soviet Union during the Cold War as part of a scientific exchange, an experience that matched his love of history and global curiosity. At home, he was just as dedicated: coaching his children in ice hockey, baseball, soccer, and softball, playing basketball and softball himself (first base and pitcher). He loved sports not for glory, but for the people.

In 1986, Mal joined the National Bureau of Standards (now NIST) in Gaithersburg, Md., where he spent 13 years conducting research and leading teams. Outside the lab, he was deeply involved in the Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church, serving as building manager and making lasting family memories — especially playing co-ed softball alongside his children.

After retiring in 1999, Mal and Pat moved to Middlebury, Vt., where his second "career" of

service truly flourished. He drove the bus for Project Independence and volunteered tirelessly at the Congregational Church of Middlebury, where he held nearly every role imaginable — trustee, deacon, historian, choir member, handbell conductor, guest organist, Men's Lunch Bunch convener, and more. If something needed doing, Mal quietly stepped in.

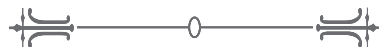
And yet, for all his accomplishments, Mal will be remembered most for who he was in everyday moments. He loved M&Ms, ice cream, playing cards, and a good puzzle. He had a great smile, a contagious laugh, and a gift for making everyone feel like family — whether you had known him for years or just minutes. His love for his children and grandchildren was unmistakable and unconditional.

Mal is survived by his beloved wife, Pat; his children, Matt (Alycia), Cathy and Tim (Carrie); his grandchildren, Hope, Lauren, Chloe and Dillon; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and "honorary" grandchildren who were lucky enough to be claimed by his warmth.

A celebration of Mal's life will be held at the Congregational Church of Middlebury on Saturday, Jan. 31, at 11 a.m. A graveside service will take place later this summer in Chatham, Mass. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Congregational Church of Middlebury, Vt.

The family would like to thank the church community, Addison County Home Health & Hospice and Heather Blair and her team of caregivers for their support over the last number of months.

Mal lived with curiosity, generosity, and joy — and he leaves behind a world made better by his presence. ◊



Margaret Marie Raymond, 82, of Shelburne

SHELburne — Margaret Marie Raymond, age 82, passed peacefully with family by her side Jan. 18, 2026, at her home in Shelburne.

Margaret was born in Rutland March 25, 1943. She was the daughter of Francis and Pauline (Carr) Howland. She received her education in East Middlebury and Ferrisburgh schools, and graduated from Vergennes Union High School, class of 1961. Her working career included secretarial, retail and manufacturing positions. She enjoyed spending time with her family, knitting, crocheting, jigsaw puzzles, bird watching (especially hummingbirds) and adventuresome trips with her partner, Robert.

She is survived by two sons, Robert Raymond Jr. and his wife

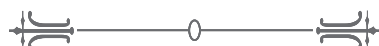


MARGARET MARIE RAYMOND

Joyce of Addison and Andrew Raymond and his wife Heather of Ferrisburgh; seven grandchildren, Eric and partner Debbie of North

Carolina, Danielle (Timothy) McNeill of North Carolina, and Dylan (Rachel) of Vergennes, Morgen Clark of Michigan, Broc Clark of Addison, Holden Clark (fiancée Abigail Roy) of Addison and Jeb Martell of Ferrisburgh; three great-granddaughters, Ashlynn, Ava and Ari; and a great-grandson, Jackson all of North Carolina; and her loving partner, best friend, soul mate, Robert Raymond Sr. of Shelburne. Several cousins also survive her. She was predeceased by her parents; three brothers, Robert, Dan, and David; as well as her daughters-in-law, Doreen and Laurie.

A memorial service in celebration of her life will take place, Friday, Jan. 30, 2026, at 1 p.m. at the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon. ◊



Joannes Jozef 'Jan' de Boer, 83, of New Haven

NEW HAVEN — Joannes Jozef "Jan" de Boer, 83, passed away peacefully with his family by his side at his home in New Haven Jan. 14, 2026, after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Jan was born in Westwoud, the Netherlands on March 21, 1942, son of Piet and Trien de Boer.

Jan is survived by his wife of 51 years, Tinie; and children, Cristy Harding and her husband Martin of Brandon, Vt.; Joris Jan de Boer of Pantown, Vt.; Annemarie de Boer of New Haven, Vt.; Hans de Boer and wife Michelle of Elmore, Vt.; and daughter-in-law Anja Wurm of Waltham, Vt. He was the beloved Opa to his grandchildren, Matthew and his wife Mickayla, Johan and his wife Pamela, Axel, Mariska, Allegra and Matheo; and Opa two to his great-grandchildren Mason, Markus and Natalie. He is also survived by 13 siblings and their spouses, Tinie's 7 siblings and their spouses, as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his parents (Piet & Trien), his in-laws (Joh & Trien Krul), brothers Cees, Arie and Jan Joris, and brother-in-law Koos Smit.

As son, Hans, so eloquently wrote:



JOANNES JOZEF "JAN" DE BOER

"Trying to figure out what to say: it's been a very long journey. You've traveled far and you've successfully hauled more than your fair share of the load. You've overcome a lot of obstacles along the way, but you've always recovered, stood back up tall and kept going; always carrying more than your fair share regardless of what it cost you in the moment.

But we've come to the point where the machine isn't running so good anymore. It's not just a head gasket, and doing the valves, or replacing some gears in the

transmission...This time, we have a knock in the crank shaft, the main seals are leaking, the heads have been warped too much from pushing the engine, and we've already shaved them down past their tolerance. All we can do now is pour in enough fluids to idle you back home; let you rest and idle down and decide when we turn the key off for the last time.

You've gone more miles than most could imagine possible and done things that most wouldn't try and succeeded. Thanks for showing us what it means to be determined and to focus on the goals.

Thank you for teaching each of us how to be a good person, the difference between right and wrong, how to treat others with respect and how to not waste time on people who don't deserve our respect.

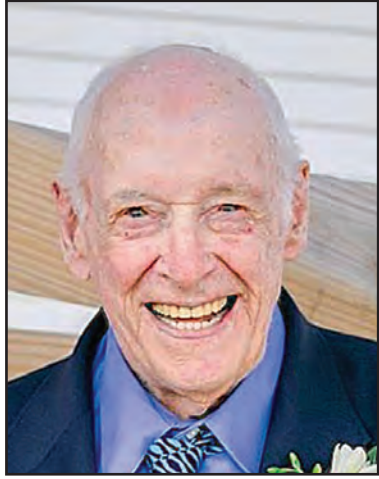
I appreciate you." Jan's final days were spent at home, where he enjoyed making improvements and "playing" each and every day. Since he requested that we hold no services, we will instead be doing a celebration of his life at the farm on Sunday, May 24, 2026, at 2 p.m. All friends and family are welcome to come join us. ◊

OBITUARY Guidelines

The Independent will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing. For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the Independent offers a free notice of passing up to 100 words, subject to editing by our news department. Photos (optional) with either paid obituaries or free notices cost \$10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to obits@addisonindependent.com. Submissions must be received by 11 a.m. on Wednesday for publication in the Thursday paper. Email obits@addisonindependent.com or call 802-388-4944 for more information.

Harold Arthur Adams, 99, of Brandon

BRANDON — Harold Arthur Adams, 99, passed away peacefully with family by his side at Helen Porter Rehabilitation & Nursing Home on Jan. 15, 2026. Harold "Harry" was born in Windsor, Conn., on Feb. 11, 1926, son of Alvie Henry Adams and Florence Kingsland Adams. Harold's parents moved the family to the Arnold District when he was a young boy. Harold was proud of being a resident of Brandon, Vt.



HAROLD ARTHUR ADAMS

He was predeceased by his wife of 70 years, Rebecca (Becky); his sister Ione Lee, and granddaughter Christy Carswell. Harry and Becky had five children, Ken (Barbara) of Plattsburgh, N.Y.; Dan (Kristie) of Pittsford, Vt.; Steve (Mary) of East Dorset, Vt.; Linda (Stephen) of Goshen, Vt.; and Cindy Carswell of Middlebury, Vt.; nine grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren, and five nieces and nephews. His niece, Patty Lee Jaquith (Gary) of Wallingford, Vt., was especially close to Harold.

With daily assistance from his daughters, Linda and Cindy, Harold lived in his own home until last summer when nursing home care was required. Harold also received excellent care from home aides Diane Bryant, Ashley Adams, and Jodi James. The nursing staff at Porter Rehabilitation and Nursing Home were very professional and caring. While at Porter, Harold also received extra-special devoted care from his daughter, Linda. Harold very much appreciated the many years of friendship shown by his long-time Arnold District neighbors, Kurt and Theresa Kimball; fellow American Legion members Aaron Tucker and Andy Mitchell; and Gary Clark.

Harold graduated from Brandon High School in June 1944 and entered Army basic training at Ft. McClellan, Ala., in September. In January 1945, Harold crossed the North Atlantic aboard the Queen

for baling, extreme winter cold that froze water pipes in the dairy barn, machinery breakdowns, and milk prices that barely covered expenses.

For relaxation, Harold was an avid hunter and fisherman. He especially enjoyed the challenges of deer hunting and teaching rifle safety. His favorite fishing location was East Creek, and he couldn't be persuaded to fish lakes and ponds! Harold loved telling hunting and fishing stories and he had a great sense of humor.

For the last decade of his working life, Harold was a machinist for General Electric Co. in Rutland, Vt. After retirement, he was an active member of the Brandon American Legion Post 55, volunteered for the Brandon Food Shelf, and spent many hours in his woodshop making ice fishing tip-ups and trellises. He also shared his love of sports and fishing by organizing pick-up baseball games with local youth and bringing kids fishing at East Creek.

Friends are welcome to join family members for a wake and funeral service at the Miller and Ketcham Funeral Home, 26 Franklin St., Brandon, Vt., on Jan. 24, at 1 p.m., where friends may call from noon until service time at 1 p.m.

Following the ceremony the family will receive friends, for a time of remembrance, at the Warner Brook Training Center, 1040 Corn Hill Road, Pittsford, Vt.

A graveside committal service and burial, with Military Honors, will take place, at a later date in the family lot at Pine Hill Cemetery.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made in Harold's memory to the Brandon Area Rescue Squad at P.O. Box 232 Brandon, VT 05733 or the Brandon American Legion Post 55 at 550 Franklin Street Brandon, VT 05733. ◊

Jean Hurlburt Smith, 96, of New Haven

NEW HAVEN — Jean Smith, age 96, of New Haven passed away at her home Jan. 20, 2026, after a long life of service to her family and community.



JEAN HURLBURT SMITH

Jean Avis Hurlburt Smith was born in Monkton July 24, 1929, to George and Rachael Hurlburt. She had an idyllic childhood growing up on their farm. She often told of playing with their pet woodchuck and hiking up the hill to Lost Pond to play. She spoke of enjoying the January thaws and freezes that allowed them to ice skate all the way to New Haven Junction.

She attended school in New Haven and told of her father bringing her by horse and sleigh when the roads weren't plowed. Being a very studious child, she skipped a grade and graduated a year early in her class of six.

She went on to the University of Vermont to study music to become a teacher. During her collegiate summers, she had fun adventures with her jobs. One summer she went to Maine; for two summers, she went to Montana to work on a dude ranch, and another summer was spent working and living at the Dog Team Tavern.

After graduating from UVM, she taught music in Stowe. In April of 1952, she married her high school sweetheart, Langdon Smith, shortly after he returned from serving in the Air Force in the Korean war. They moved in with her parents while Langdon worked with her father and brother on the family farm. By the fall of 1953, their oldest son was born, and things began to feel a little bit crowded. They began looking for a farm of their own. In the fall of 1954, they began renting a farm in New Haven. The house wasn't in good enough shape to bring a family into, so they stayed in Monkton and added a daughter to their family.

In the spring of 1955, they moved to the Crest of Hill farm in New

Haven, where they raised their family. Jean was very involved in the farm along with raising their children, and in 1956 welcomed child number three. An excellent cook, she kept busy cooking, loving the children, driving the tractor and lending a hand wherever she was needed. She was very involved with the New Haven Congregational church ladies' group, helping with their dinners and bake sales. Child number four arrived in 1961.

In 1964, Jean and Langdon joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) and that became the center of their lives. That was also the year that they went from renting to owning their farm. In 1966 another child was born that completed their family. While Langdon served on the school board, Jean was involved in the school, helping wherever she could. Her children have fond memories of coming home to a plate of warm chocolate chip cookies with a glass of milk.

Jean was actively involved in her church in helping others by providing help, especially with meals, for those in need. Even when she was no longer a member of the local Congregational church, she participated with them by cooking her remarkable rolls,

bread and pies for their dinners.

She excitedly welcomed grandchildren and so enjoyed watching them grow and loved going and watching their activities, especially when they were involved in music. She spent countless, loving hours teaching her grandchildren to play the piano and violin. After they sold the cows in 1997, Jean and Langdon worked with a cell phone company to allow them to place cell phone antennas on one of their silos as the first cell silo site in Vermont.

With the cows gone, she wasn't good at just sitting; even with a huge garden, she needed more opportunities to help others. She began to work with different care groups, helping, as she would say, "old people," which she did into her late eighties. After Langdon passed, she would often ask her children why Heavenly Father has left her here. Those who were lucky enough to be around her knew that while it may have not been what she wanted, she was here for us.

She was the quintessential optimist. Her children would stop in and see her on some cold winter days and comment on how terribly cold it was outside and she would reply, "but the sun is shining and it's so warm inside." She always wore a smile and had a hug and kind words for everyone she met. She will be so missed by all who knew her, but she is once again reunited with her loving husband all those who have gone on before.

Jean is survived by her five children, Lanny (Cathy), Maralee, Mark (Kelly), Karen (Randy), and Steve (Erika); along with seven grandchildren, Rachael, Lance, Leslie, Lucas, Lindsey, Heather and Allishia; and 14 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m., at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 133 Valley View Dr. Middlebury. ◊

Letters to the Editor

Attack on Venezuela is a fourth sign of Fascism

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

One sign of fascism is control of the media. A second sign of fascism is using a shared grievance to exert power and control over the masses. A third sign of fascism is the normalization of corruption. A fourth involves attempting to expand territory through armed conflict.

From time immemorial, civilizations, for one reason or another, have attempted to expand their territory. Expansion often occurred through armed conflict. Think ancient Rome, ancient Greece, the various Chinese dynasties and the Incan Empire. However, while these societies utilized armed conflict, they also used negotiation, diplomacy and forming alliances.

Fascism is different in that the goal is not only territorial

expansion but also societal homogeneity. Its goal is the eradication of all ideas, principles, philosophies, individuals and religions that are not in alignment with fascist ideology. Fascists use fear, intimidation, physical harm and death to achieve their goal.

Nazi Germany proceeded in this goal by expanding its territory into Poland, France, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, Norway and the Soviet Union.

Fascist Italy proceeded in this goal by taking over parts of Albania, Yugoslavia, Egypt and Ethiopia.

Looking at what is currently taking place in the United States we see the following:

Invading Venezuela and "temporarily" taking over of its government.

Wanting Canada to become the 51st State.

Discussing the annexation of Greenland.

Threatening invasion of Cuba, Mexico, Iran, Panama and Columbia

These countries are threatened and wanted primarily because of their abundant natural resources and strategic importance. Not because they are a threat to our national security.

The above information hopefully explains why some individuals have chosen to stand up and gather weekly in Middlebury with "Signs of Fascism." All are welcome to join us.

Author's note... I am not attempting to present a complete analysis of what occurred in Germany and Italy prior to and during World War II and provide a thorough comparison to what is currently going on in the United States. Authors, academics and historians have spent decades researching and writing on the subject. "Signs of Fascism" is meant to get each of us to think about what went on then and what is going on in this country right now.

Judy Wiger-Grohs
Middlebury

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WORKERS AT MIDDLEBURY'S Stonecrop Meadows subdivision do exterior and interior labor on duplexes (left) and a multi-unit standalone building (right). Six units off Seminary Street Extension are already occupied and 70 could be ready for habitation by year's end.

Stonecrop

(Continued from Page 1A)
one more six-unit townhome during the second week in February, according to Davisson.

"By the end of this spring, we'll have 26 for-sale homes ready and the multi-family building will be open; interest is high in the community," he said. "Then we'll be moving on to the next phases."

Summit, in partnership with the Vermont's Congressional delegation and organizations like the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board secured millions of dollars in federal grants, low-interest loans and tax credits to help make Stonecrop financially viable and accessible to folks of multiple income levels. The project also received major buy-in from Middlebury College. The institution bought the Stonecrop property to reduce the upfront development costs and bridged a \$2.5 million funding gap in late 2024 to ensure the timely start of construction.

"We're catching our breath a little bit, but come May, (home drops at Stonecrop) are going to start up again," Davisson said.

Stonecrop received preliminary master plan approval from the town for around 250 units. Summit submitted a final subdivision plat for 184 units. The opportunity to build the full 250 is still on the table, thought the company has to figure

out how to work around a wetland and finance that full number.

"We're currently in the design phase for the next 100 units," Davisson said.

Market forces, labor and other factors will influence the pace and final scale of Stonecrop, he added.

"The design phase is always easier than the financing," Davisson said. "There's less workforce and affordable housing subsidies around the state right now, so we're trying to figure out what the market needs and what part of the market we think we can serve based on today's construction costs. That's a tough nut to crack."

Federal COVID-era American Rescue Plan Act money several years ago provided a key financial lift for Stonecrop at a time when the housing market was tightening and product supply lines were stifled by a paralyzed economy. Davisson

noted the ARPA days are now gone.

"What we're trying to figure out is whether (to access) loan products that reduce the interest carry, the previous investments in infrastructure that we can leverage for future phases and look for further efficiencies — like the modular construction," he said. "We're trying to do everything we can to build really high-quality homes as affordably as we can so the biggest number of people in Addison County can afford to buy and rent."

Middlebury's IPJ Real Estate is helping Summit sell the homes that are ready. Summit is handling the leases for the rental units, projected to be ready in May or June.

"Demand is high," Davisson said.

For more information, go to summitpmg.com.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



A 35-UNIT RENTAL property takes shape in the heart of the Stonecrop Meadows subdivision, rising above land off Middlebury's Seminary Street Extension.

Independent photos/John S. McCright

College

(Continued from Page 1A)

on the town's grand list value, multiplied by Middlebury's total municipal tax rate. These formulae last year yielded \$340,000 for the town to use for municipal operations.

A penny on Middlebury's municipal tax rate raises roughly \$100,000. So, the \$340,000 cash infusion from the college last year covered 3.4 cents on the tax rate that otherwise would've been covered by property owners.

The GILT seemed to work well for both the town and college — until 2024, when the latest 10-year pact expired. Both sides have been talking about a new extension, but the college — through its treasurer and executive vice president of finance & administration, David Provost — has signaled the GILT will likely look different, at least for a while. That's because the institution (a) would like to help the town grow its grand list, and with it, its own revenue stream; and (b) the college needs to balance its own books, which has proved elusive, according to Provost.

"The college has been trying to balance its budget for the past 12-15 years," he told the *Independent* during a recent interview in his Old Chapel office. "We made a commitment to the board of trustees, this year, that said we will identify a multi-year strategy to balance the operating budget at Middlebury College."

The college last spring announced a series of strategies to mop up an anticipated \$14.1 million deficit, including limiting employee benefits, offering early retirement incentives, and growing undergraduate enrollment during the coming years. In line with that effort, the college last year saw 53 posts vacated through retirement; only 24 of them have been filled, according to Provost.

One of the college's austerity measures includes reducing its annual gift to the town.

"This wasn't about, 'Let's target the town,'" Provost said. "We've made a lot of efforts to right-size our budget; this is a small portion."

So how will the college cut back? It's proposing to phase out, by fiscal year 2028, the portion of the GILT payment tied to the town's grant list. That payment, for FY26, amounted to around \$150,000, according to town and college officials. The college would continue to pay the GILT portion tied to the \$1 million endowment investment, Provost said.

"The answer is simple; we've got to grow our grand list, so those of us on the list today aren't carrying the burden of 10% tax increases every year."

— David Provost



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE TREASURER and Executive Vice President of Finance & Administration David Provost hopes his institution can help grow the town's grand list, which would spread out responsibility for municipal property tax increases.

Independent file photo/Steve James

Based on the latest talks with the college, the town has penciled in \$200,000 in GILT revenue for its FY27 budget. That would represent a \$140,000 decline from last year and comes at a bad time. Selectboard members have been trying to reduce the impact of a draft FY27 budget of \$15,981,545 that would require a 10.9-cent rise in the current municipal tax rate of 93 cents per \$100 in property value. Around 5 cents of the potential municipal rate hike relates to mandated debt service on the voter-approved Ilsley Library renovation and expansion project.

While the town-gown talks have been held in private, selectboard Chair Brian Carpenter last week publicly shared some insights that didn't betray the town's bargaining strategy.

"We're working on how (the GILT) looks going forward," he said. (College officials) are pointing out that when they made that agreement, they weren't giving us \$600,000 a year for the Cross Street Bridge, they weren't giving us money for a town office and recreation facility, and \$1 million for the library.

"They are under a lot of pressure from their trustees to have a balanced budget," he added. "They continue to crunch the numbers to see what works."

Provost recited the cumulative financial tally of the college's donations to community projects and causes. **MIDD SUPPORTS PROJECTS**

It was in 2010 that Middlebury's \$16 million Cross Street Bridge project was completed. The college agreed to assume \$9 million of the debt, with the town covering the balance through a local option tax that's generating a surplus beyond what's needed to pay off — and maintain — the downtown span.

The college's debt service during the 30-year project bond amounts to \$600,000 annually.

Here are other community projects to which the college has made commitments during the past 12 years:

- A pledge in 2013 to pay \$5.5 million toward the \$7.5 million construction of the newest Middlebury municipal building at 77 Main St. and the recreation center at 154 Creek Road.

The college's annual debt service contribution to that project is roughly \$270,000 each year, according to Provost.

"So there's \$870,000 in payments to the town of Middlebury that didn't exist when the GILT was contemplated," Provost said of the college's annual bridge, municipal building and rec center aid.

- A \$1 million contribution last year to the Ilsley Public Library project.

- A \$1 million donation last year to the Town Hall Theater expansion and renovation project.

- Roughly \$6 million in support for the recently completed expansion and renovation of Otter Creek Child Center.

- A \$4 million investment in Stonecrop Meadows, a 218-unit residential neighborhood that's being built in phases on 35 acres off Middlebury's Seminary Street Extension. The college's buy-in was aimed at stabilizing rents and purchase prices for the new units

and is in line with its current effort to create more housing options for its employees.

It should also be noted that the college is Middlebury's largest property taxpayer; it pays roughly \$1.2 million annually on town holdings that don't contribute directly to its educational mission.

Provost said the college would be open to sweetening the GILT when its debt obligation for the Cross Street Bridge expires. That would be around 2038.

"The proposal to the town is that we'll continue to pay the endowment portion (of the GILT). Until the last bridge payment, we don't want to keep paying the other piece of it," he said.

In the meantime, Provost pledged the college would pursue other initiatives he believes would strengthen the town — including housing development and student business-starts.

Middlebury College acquired — and then made available — the property on which Stonecrop is being built. It's not looking like a one-off.

"The college controls 6,000 acres of land and the campus is on 300 acres," Provost said. "My approach has been, 'Can't we be a more strategic partner in the economic vitality of the region. And that's

what you're starting to see... We're prepared, if we're successful at Stonecrop, to develop other lands."

Provost noted 3,000 acres of the college's lands are in mountainous areas, like Ripton — another town with which the college has maintained a GILT.

But the other 3,000 acres is here in the Champlain Valley.

Some of that real estate was donated by alums and friends. Other holdings were strategic purchases. The college snapped up considerable land during the mid-20th century to protect its interests during state and local conversations about a possible westerly bypass around the shire town. That bypass debate has shifted north, to Vergennes. The college now has a surfeit of land that some of its leaders believe could, in select locations, help solve Middlebury's and the state's housing crisis.

"The answer is simple; we've got to grow our grand list, so those of us on the list today aren't carrying the burden of 10% tax increases every year," Provost said.

He'd also like to see students gain a toehold in the state and local business sector. Middlebury College during the past few summers has seen around 50 of its students move into Champlain College housing while working at Hula, the Vermont Center for Emergency Technology, and BETA Technologies, to name a few.

These are experiences that are planting seeds for future careers in the Green Mountain State, Provost believes. If properly nurtured, those seeds could shift the narrative of a graying state.

"We can't say we have a declining demographic of high school-age students when we — at our high-water mark — bring 40,000 students into this state," he said of Vermont's myriad higher-education players. "You get them to grow some roots while they're here, they'll stay. For Vermont to solve its challenges, this is what we have to do."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Scott outlines 'disciplined' \$9.4 billion budget

Budget is about 3% larger than the current year.

By SHAUN ROBINSON, VtDigger

MONTPELIER — Vermont Gov. Phil Scott proposed a \$9.4 billion budget to state lawmakers on Tuesday that he called a "disciplined" spending plan in the face of waning support — and more cuts likely to come — from the federal government.

Scott's proposal, which lays out spending for a one-year period starting in July, is about 3% larger than the state budget he and the Legislature enacted last year. But he said his latest plan calls for fewer new initiatives, largely because the state no longer has COVID-19 pandemic-era federal relief funding available for new uses.

He also pointed to how the state's top economists lowered previous estimates, in a report last week, for the amount of revenue the state will bring in through June. That decrease, which is only about \$8 million, nevertheless indicates that legislators need to be frugal, Scott told a joint session of the House and Senate Tuesday afternoon.

Last year's budget was about 5% larger than the budget before that. Scott framed his latest proposal as a return to state spending levels that predate the pandemic.

Still, "even the traditional funding we've come to expect from Washington is uncertain," the Republican governor said. "So, it's more important than ever to focus on the issues we can control, stay disciplined and set clear priorities so we make sure Vermonters get the most out of the resources we do have."

Tuesday's spending plan covers the 2027 fiscal year, which will start in July 2026 and end in June 2027. The governor's address was legislators' first look at his spending priorities for the upcoming year. Now that they have his proposal in hand,

they'll start developing their own version of a budget that will ultimately need Scott's signoff.

At a press briefing earlier in the day, officials from Scott's administration pointed to how Vermont is poised to lose hundreds of millions of dollars from cuts to Medicaid and other human services programs over the next several years under President Donald Trump's sweeping tax and spending law, in addition to other proposals Trump has backed.

Scott's proposal would leave available \$70 million lawmakers set aside last year to respond to future federal cuts, the officials said. But they acknowledged that amount would likely be far from enough to fully plug the gaps in numerous key programs.

"That's just the harsh reality," said Sarah Clark, Scott's secretary of administration.

The governor's budget would take \$30 million legislators previously set aside — and which could, also, be used to respond to federal cuts — for property tax relief. It would add that sum to \$75 million in surplus state revenue that Scott has already indicated he wants to use to help out taxpayers, for a total of \$105 million for that purpose.

In all, Scott officials said that money would "buy down" the average property tax increase projected across the state in the upcoming school budget cycle from about 12% to about 5.5%.

About half of the projected 12% tax hike would come from an expected jump in school spending, though districts are still in the process of formulating their budgets for the 2026-27 school year. The other half of the spike is the result of a fiscal hole left by Scott and legislators' decision to use about \$100 million to blunt property taxes in 2025.

Scott said the property tax buydown was a stopgap measure to provide relief while lawmakers attempt to advance the key provisions of last year's sweeping education reform law, Act 73. His administration

has been adamant the plan will lower the costs of education, though critics have questioned whether the path will result in savings.

The governor voiced support, specifically, for a plan by Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Baruth, D/P-Chittenden Central, to put a cap on school district spending in the 2028 and 2029 fiscal years, based on districts' spending in the prior year. He said his support demonstrated "to the naysayers that we can work together to solve this problem."

At the same time, Scott's speech Tuesday comes just weeks after he threatened in his State of the State address to veto a final state budget later this year unless he sees the education funding changes he wants to see under Act 73. Baruth and other legislative leaders expressed frustration with that ultimatum.

Transportation funding, 'accountability court'

Scott's budget proposal also calls for cutting the amount of state revenue from the tax on new vehicle purchases that is used to pay for schools. Compared to the current year's budget, Scott wants to reduce the amount of the purchase and use tax directed to Vermont's Education Fund by \$10 million this year, he told legislators.

Instead, that money should be directed to the state's Transportation Fund, he said. The state is facing major challenges funding its transportation system as revenue from taxes on gasoline, which support road paving and other key projects, has long been falling.

State transportation revenues are expected to be about \$33 million short of what is needed to access as much matching federal grant funding as possible for transportation projects. In the upcoming fiscal year, that shortage could leave about \$165 million in federal dollars on the table, according to legislative analysts.

Administration officials indicated Tuesday that the Vermont Agency of

Transportation could need to lay off additional employees — beyond reductions it made last fall — as a result of funding challenges, though they did not provide specifics.

Scott said his goal is to eliminate the use of vehicle purchase tax revenue for education costs completely in the future. In responses to reporters after the speech, Democratic leaders in the Legislature expressed tepid support for that idea, saying they needed to see more details about how the governor would make up the resulting hole in the Education Fund.

"It is a problematic solution, in that it puts new pressure on the Ed Fund over the next five years," Baruth said. "There's a long-term, structural plan that's needed."

"We're looking for long-term solutions here — not Band-Aids," said House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, speaking about the governor's address as a whole.

Scott also said his administration would, again, present a package of changes to Act 250, the state's signature land use law, that would make it easier for new housing to be built in certain parts of the state. He is also asking legislators to approve a \$4 million annual appropriation for a program that funds repairs to vacant rental housing.

The governor proposed spending about \$21 million in the upcoming year on the state's emergency shelter program that allows people to stay in motels, though reiterated he wants to see the program ended as soon as possible. He also panned what he called energy policies the Legislature has passed that make life in Vermont less affordable.

To address "escalating public safety concerns," Scott proposed \$500,000 for at least one new location of a specialized "accountability court" that hears cases from repeat offenders. A pilot of the initiative has been operating in Burlington since last fall. Clark, Scott's administration secretary, said Rutland was a likely next location.

High school wrestlers, others hurt in Monkton two-car crash

ADDISON COUNTY — Vermont State Police are pointing to snow- and slushed-covered roads as a factor in a two vehicle crash this past Saturday that sent eight people to the hospital — including three high school wrestlers and their coach.

Police said that around 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 17 a 2025 GMC Yukon XL and 2017 Toyota Tacoma pick-up crashed head-on on Bristol Road near Hardscrabble Road in Monkton. Troopers say that Chao XU, 35, of McLean, Va., was driving the Yukon northbound when he lost control of his vehicle due to road conditions, and it slid into the southbound lane, crashing into the southbound pickup, piloted by Christopher Glaski, 53, of Bennington. Both vehicles sustained severe contact damage to their front ends and airbags deployed.

Occupants of both vehicles were taken to UVM Medical Center. Police described the injuries

sustained by Xu and his three adult passengers as minor. Glaski and one juvenile passenger sustained moderate injuries, and two other juvenile passengers in the Tacoma were seriously hurt.

Officials at the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union school district identified the three Bennington juveniles as members of the Mount Anthony Union High School wrestling team, and Glaski as a coach. Firefighters and ambulance crews from Middlebury, Bristol and Monkton responded, along with state police.

State police said traffic tickets and court action were pending.

In other recent activity, state police on Jan. 14 just before midnight observed a suspicious vehicle at the Waterbury Town Pool. Police talked with the occupant of the vehicle and ended up citing Richard Gaboury II, 36, of Granville for violation of conditions of release and violation of an abuse prevention order.

Vt. State Police Log



Tennis royalty

THRILLING FINAL MATCHES in the 2025 Club Singles Championships at Middlebury Indoor Tennis on the second weekend of January resulted in two new club champions. Jeanne Blackmore clinched the Women's Singles title in straight sets with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Lindsay Repka. Charles Young won the Men's Singles title, defeating Jenry Morsman, who held the title for the past nine years, in a 6-3, 6-4 victory. MIT's Heather Potter congratulated the new singles champions and all 19 players who competed valiantly in this year's singles competition.



INDIVISIBLE MIDDLEBURY

January 20th marked the end of the first year of Donald Trump's second term as President. It was a chaotic, confusing, tumultuous and cruel year as the President and his administration worked to dismantle our democratic institutions and norms. Tariffs implemented at the whim of the President disrupted farmers and small businesses, making planning for growth nearly impossible. Shoppers watched in dismay as the cost of their grocery carts continued to grow. Non-partisan civil service employees were terminated indiscriminately. USAID was slashed or eliminated completely, leaving millions overseas to die or suffer due to lack of medicines and aid. Insults and threats offended and alienated longstanding nation friends, allies and partners in defending democratic principles and ideals. These nations now view us as a Rogue Nation, as we threaten Canada, Greenland, Mexico and other nations with takeover, a follow-up to the move to take over Venezuela. The bullying and intimidating rhetoric of the Administration now threatens the stability of NATO, an alliance which has kept us safe for 70 years. Trump Administration policies, as of October 2025, eliminated \$1.5 trillion in healthcare funding, terminated employment for more than 300,000 federal workers, froze or canceled more than \$90 billion in grants and foreign aid, stripped civil service protections from 30,000 employees, and eliminated oversight positions in every major federal agency. The nation's ability to examine banks, investigate financial crimes, conduct scientific research, forecast weather, respond to cyberattacks, research climate change, and develop new energy technologies has been degraded in ways that will take decades to rebuild and restore. Guardrails removed, the President and his circle's corruption runs rampant. Trump's Bitcoin scheme alone has made him and his family richer by billions. The President continues to wage war on minority and marginalized groups, attacking DEI policies, and is using ICE agents to indiscriminately detain immigrants and citizens alike.

Most crucially, President Trump has abandoned the Constitution and the Rule of Law. He has stated that he is not sure it is the President's job to protect and defend the Constitution, after swearing an oath to do just that. He told the New York Times that the only boundary he obeys is his "own sense of morality". What does morality look like when we see the Trump Administration spread disinformation and dangerous rhetoric while attacking the free press and the right to peacefully protest? Or when his administration, from the Department of Defense to the Department of Justice, routinely ignores norms, laws, and numerous court orders, while spending millions of taxpayer dollars persecuting the President's perceived political enemies?

We have reached a critical inflection point in this great American Experiment. The President, propped up by Administration loyalists, and a deferential Supreme Court and Congress, is rapidly pushing our country towards authoritarian rule. Will 2026 mark the start of that rule in America? Or will we pushback, and celebrate 250 years of the continued existence and evolution of our democratic form of government?

The answer will come from Ordinary Citizens. Does Democracy matter? Will we step up to demonstrate, write letters, contact legislators, run for office, help our neighbors? Will we organize, work together and reclaim our democracy? Democracy is not a spectator sport, or something you can purchase online, but a government "Of the People, By the People, and For the People". We encourage and invite all those who cherish democracy and America to find ways to get involved, as all are needed to protect democracy, which grants us all the possibility of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Sponsored by the 900-plus members of the pro-democracy group,
Indivisible Middlebury
 indivisiblemiddlebury@gmail.com

J-term

(Continued from Page 1A)

ranging from staging a musical to building the Japanese teahouse.

This January marks the third that Middlebury College Head Baseball Coach Mike Leonard and alum Scott Langerman '87 have teamed up to offer a class on "Sports & Society: How Sports Transcend Their Sidelines."

"The one thing that Scott and I feel really strongly about as a learning goal for this class is, 'Can students think more critically about something that maybe they just observed at face value,'" Leonard said. "Our goal at the end is that students look at sports in a more complex way, in a more critical way."

Reflecting on the origins of the course, Leonard and Langerman said they saw a lack of courses on sports and the impacts sports have on society. They knew there was a strong interest in sports at the college and had both seen firsthand how lessons learned through sports extended far beyond the fields and courts they unfolded on.

Langerman has over 25 years of experience in the sports and entertainment industries, including serving as founder and CEO of ACE Media, the content arm of the NFL Players Association. Before taking over the reins of the college's baseball program in 2016, Leonard played baseball at the University of Connecticut and spent time in the Boston Red Sox system.

"My identity is very much wrapped up into sports, both as an athlete and now as a coach," Leonard said. "Where I have evolved and grown is thinking about the ways in which sport impacts so many things, and it's a very liberal arts subject to look at the world through because we're looking at business, we're looking at social impact, we're looking at transferable skills like leadership and communication and resilience."

Langerman noted the goal is for the course to follow a narrative throughout the month, with students exploring a different theme each week. For example, looking at the personal impact, economics of and social impact of sports.

Students also get to connect with professionals working in various parts of the sports industry. Leonard and Langerman both share their stories with students, who also hear from current coaches at Middlebury, college alums working in areas like professional baseball, and a variety of other guests speakers.

"A lot of people say, 'Oh, I want to go work in sports,' but they don't really know what that means or the breadth of opportunities that might be available," Langerman said. "Part of what we try to do is touch as many aspects of the sports industry as we can, so those people who are still trying to figure out what they want to do with the rest of their life, or if they've said they really want to work in sports, hopefully we open a few more eyes on what that means."

Students complete weekly journal entries and work in small teams to put together presentations throughout the course. Leonard



STUDENTS AT MIDDLEBURY College head outside for an activity in Alexa Duchesneau's winter term course on "Endangered Food." The class is one of many being offered this winter term, which offers students and instructors an opportunity to dive deeply into one course throughout the month-long term.

Photo courtesy of Alexa Duchesneau

pointed to the different topics those presentations center around, such as ideas students have for changing sports or pitching a docuseries or reality show.

In addition to helping students look at sports through a more critical lens, Langerman and Leonard are also hoping the course allows pupils to build relationships.

"The class dynamic is important in relationship building," Langerman said. "I'm really pleased this year, we've got a diversity of sports, of ages, we have of nonathletes, we have athletes, which I think is really important. I think it's really important for a freshman and a senior to get to know each other, and they'll both

"Sports impact so many things ... we're looking at business, we're looking at social impact, we're looking at transferable skills like leadership and communication and resilience."

— Mike Leonard

bring different things to each other."
ENDANGERED FOOD

Alexa Duchesneau is in her second year of teaching a winter term course on "Endangered Food." Duchesneau is an Anthropology Ph.D. candidate at Yale University, studying the nutritional ecology of monkeys.

"My research is trying to figure out what the nutritional requirements of monkeys are," she said. "I'm trying to figure out if what individuals eat throughout their lifetime influences their lifespan, how many kids they can have, other fitness metrics, and if what they've eaten throughout their lifetime makes them more or

less resilient to climate disasters, specifically drought."

She noted that a lot of the framing of her research is centered around the human diet, which is how she became interested in how the human diet has changed and what new dietary changes mean for humans' health and fitness.

Duchesneau's class looks at the evolution of the human diet with a focus on specific foods, "following their trajectory from our first archeological record to how they've transformed to what we're eating today," she said.

Throughout the course, students explore what diets have looked like during different time periods, study historical cookbooks in the college's Special Collections, and heard from naturalists and farmers working to bring back "diverse and wild food systems."

For example, students have learned about restoration efforts focused on the American chestnut, a tree that was common in eastern U.S. forests until a blight wiped out millions of American chestnut trees in the 1900s. Students also visit local farms, such as Middlebury's Werner Tree Farm and Champlain Orchards in Shoreham.

Students' final project focuses on a native foodway, a term that refers to the diet and culinary practices of a specific group, region and/or time period. Diving into various foods through the final project has been a favorite part of the course for students, and one that Duchesneau enjoys as well. She said past projects have explored foods like cider jelly, ancient beer and birch syrup.

"A variety of things," Duchesneau summed up.
DEVELOPING DEATH LITERACY

This January, Francesca Arnoldy is teaching a new course on "Developing Death Literacy," something she said she's seen more community members engaging with throughout her career as a community doula and educator. Through her work, Arnoldy supports individuals through birth, death and grief. She is also the

(See Students, Page 12A)

AI expert

(Continued from Page 1A)

It's an argument the former college professor and British human rights barrister is comfortable making. Firth-Butterfield recognizes AI's benefits, but she's skeptical that the promises championed by Silicon Valley tech leaders — an abundant economy, a healthier population, solving climate change — will actually come to pass. If we aren't careful, Firth-Butterfield cautioned, AI could destabilize democracy and erode education and human rights.

"AI has been sold to us as a magic wand that will be able to do all the things that we've made a mess of," Firth-Butterfield said. "But it's causing its own problems. Although we're told that AI will cure climate change, at the moment it's a very energy- and water-hungry machine. This is a tool that can disrupt the act of democracy, the act of voting, the act of understanding. These are serious matters that go to the integrity of our society."

In "Coexisting with AI" Firth-Butterfield teaches people how to determine what role they want the technology to play in their lives. AI-powered children's toys, robotic romantic partners, AI in business and medicine, autonomous weapons systems and AI-enabled elder care are all topics Firth-Butterfield tackles as she explores how artificial intelligence is changing our world.

"I wanted to write the book because I believe that the questions that the use of AI is posing are questions that everybody should have an opinion upon and be able to express," Firth-Butterfield said.

She noted that while many people are using large language models such as Chat GPT, Gemini and Claude, they don't really understand how they work.

"There's a poor level of AI literacy," she said, "even though there's widespread adoption of it."

Large language models, she noted, may seem like they're generating thoughtful or credible information, when in reality they simply predict the word that's most likely to come next. They're prone to errors and hallucinations. They can produce shoddy work. And, for now at least, they're not a substitute for subject matter expertise. And that's why Firth-Butterfield advises that people use AI wisely.

"You want to use the right type of AI for the job in question, and have the expertise to check it. If you use it wisely, you can gain benefits. If you use it unwisely, it might turn around and bite you."

Firth-Butterfield didn't set out to become an artificial intelligence expert. She started her career as a human rights barrister in England, and then went on to be a judge. But she wasn't satisfied with that work. Firth-Butterfield is the type of person who likes to pose thought-provoking questions, not make quick judgments.

And she missed advocating for her clients.

When Firth-Butterfield moved to Austin, Texas, where her husband's family is from, she became a professor, teaching human rights and international politics at St. Edward's University. She grew interested in the idea that AI might become superintelligent and started to research and write about it. In 2014, on a plane to Texas from London,



KAY FIRTH-BUTTERFIELD

she sat, by chance, next to the CEO of Lucid.ai, a since-dissolved artificial intelligence startup. They struck up a conversation about an article on artificial intelligence that had recently appeared in *The Times of London*. By the end of the 10-hour plane ride, the CEO asked her to become the company's — and the world's — first chief AI ethics officer.

Firth-Butterfield agreed, but with a few caveats.

"I said I wouldn't do it if they locked me in the broom cupboard and wouldn't let me go to meetings with investors," she recalled.

Firth-Butterfield wanted to be part of the senior leadership team, with direct access to the board, so that she would be able to flag any concerns. The company agreed, and the position propelled her onto an international stage.

Artificial intelligence use has skyrocketed in the years since — and Firth-Butterfield's profile has risen accordingly. She served as the inaugural Head of AI at the World Economic Forum and co-founded the Responsible AI Institute at the University of Texas. Firth-Butterfield now runs Good Tech Advisory, where she advises companies, governments, nonprofits and think tanks on responsible AI use. She's been recognized in *The New York Times* and *Forbes* 50 over 50 and was awarded *TIME Magazine's* 100 Impact Award for her work.

COMING TO VERMONT

How did Firth-Butterfield end up in Addison County? It wasn't because of her career. After overcoming breast cancer several years ago, Firth-Butterfield found she couldn't tolerate the Texas heat. She'd visited Vermont several times and always thought it was a place she'd love to live.

"I remember sitting in what is now the Haymaker in Middlebury when my daughter was three," Firth-Butterfield recalled, "and thinking that I'd like to live here. And now I do."

She, her husband, Walter Burrough, and their two dogs and two cats moved to Orwell last spring (the daughter has grown up and gone off into the world). When Firth-Butterfield isn't on the road, you're likely to find her visiting with neighbors at the Orwell Free Library's Friday morning coffee hour or hosting friends for a delicious feast (in addition to being an AI expert, Firth-Butterfield is also an excellent cook).

Ultimately, Firth-Butterfield hopes that her book helps people make thoughtful decisions about how to integrate AI in their lives.

"It looks at the good things we can do with AI, and also the things I think you should think about. I hope it sets people up to be able to participate in what our future looks like, and what our children's future looks like."



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE Head Baseball Coach Mike Leonard, left, and alum Scott Langerman are once again teaming up this J-term to lead a course on "Sports & Society: How Sports Transcend Their Sidelines." Each year the winter term sees a variety of courses offered on topics ranging from making a musical to building a Japanese teahouse.

Independent photo/Marin Howell



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VUHS senior chosen for Senate Page program

VERGENNES — Vergennes Union High School senior Quincy Sabick has been selected as one of only two Vermont delegates to the United States Senate Youth Program.

Sabick earned this honor through years of meaningful leadership and civic engagement. For the past three years, she has served as the student representative on the Addison Northwest School District Board, where she consistently brings student perspectives forward with respect and care for her peers.

"She does more than show up. She does the hard work and understands the responsibility that comes with representing her fellow students," said VUHS Principal Jody Chamberlin.

Within the school, Sabick leads the Green Team environmental group; serves as an editor of the student newspaper, *The Current*; and remains deeply engaged in her academic and extracurricular commitments. She has challenged herself through Advanced Placement and dual enrollment coursework. This year, she is participating in our German Exchange program and will complete German IV to be fully prepared to immerse herself in that experience.

"These choices reflect her curiosity and commitment to learning beyond the classroom," Chamberlin noted.

Sabick's leadership also extends beyond VUHS. This past summer, she was elected Governor at Vermont Girls State and later served as a U.S. Senate Page, sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders, during the summer of 2025. She is a youth Representative on the Vermont Climate Council. In each setting, she stood out for her ability to listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions, and approach leadership as service.

In the community, Sabick is co-president of the Leos Club (the



VUHS SENIOR QUINCY Sabick poses with U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders while she was a Senate page in 2025. Sabick was recently picked as a Vermont delegate to the U.S. Senate Youth Program.



QUINCY SABICK

youth arm of the Lions Club), where she helped lead service projects, such as refurbishing a food shelf, helping at an elementary school vision screening, and reading to young children.

"What sets Quincy apart is her balance of ambition and humanity," Chamberlin said. "She pays attention to others, values different perspectives, and leads in ways that bring people together. She makes our school and community stronger through both her actions and her presence."

Vermont's second delegate is Daniel Mann, a senior at Thetford Academy.

One of last year's U.S. Senate Youth Program delegates was also a VUHS senior at the time — Grey Fearon of Pantton.

The 64th annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week will be in Washington, D.C., March 7-14. Two student leaders from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity will spend a week in Washington experiencing their national government in action. Students must be actively serving in high-level elected or appointed leadership positions.

Student delegates will hear major policy addresses by senators, Cabinet members, officials from the departments of State and Defense and directors of other federal agencies, as well as usually participate in meetings with the President and a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. All transportation, hotel and meal expenses will be provided by The Hearst Foundations. In addition, each delegate will also be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate studies, with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science.

Dog, drones used in search for teen

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police deployed Middlebury police K-9 Guinness to the Mary Hogan Drive area at around 6 p.m. this past Friday, Jan. 15, to search for a person described as a "suicidal teen." Police also deployed multiple drones in the search, which culminated in the teen being located by her mom, according to police.

Middlebury Police Log

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Conducted a foot patrol downtown on Jan. 12.
- Investigated a report of a goat on the loose on East Main Street on Jan. 12.
- Served a no trespass order on Jan. 12 on a person who wasn't wanted at the Charter House Emergency Shelter.
- Responded to a report of someone needing medical assistance in the Fields Road area on Jan. 12.
- Provided a courtesy ride to a patient who had no other way to get home after having been discharged from Porter Hospital at 9:25 p.m. in Jan. 13.
- Assisted Middlebury Regional EMS on a medical call to Middlebury College campus on Jan. 13.
- Tended to a "juvenile issue" at Mary Hogan Elementary School on Jan. 13.
- Cited Tanya M. Brace, 36, of Middlebury for driving with a criminally suspended license, and being in violation of a court order, following a stop at the intersection

of Three Mile Bridge Road and Halladay Road on Jan. 13.

- Cited Deyvi Corona Sanchez, 23, of Winooski for driving under the influence, following a stop at the intersection of Route 7 and Foote Street on Jan. 14.
- Provided a courtesy ride to a patient who had no other way to get home after having been discharged from Porter Hospital at 8:12 p.m. in Jan. 14.
- Searched in vain for a driver who had reportedly been operating unsafely on Route 7 South during the evening of Jan. 14.
- Helped employees at a Court Street business deal with an unruly customer on Jan. 14.
- Responded to a disorderly conduct complaint in the Bakery Lane area on Jan. 14.
- Served a no-trespass order on Jan. 14 on a person who wasn't wanted on Mary Hogan School campus.
- Responded to a report of a person having a mental health crisis at the Stewart's Shop on Court Street on Jan. 14.
- Assisted Vermont State Police in their search for a suicidal woman on Porter Medical Center campus on Jan. 15. Police said the woman was found and she received medical care.
- Assisted MREMS on a medical call at a South Pleasant Street location on Jan. 15.
- Captured a dog found on the loose in the North Pleasant Street area and took it to Homeward

Bound on Jan. 15.

- Responded to a report of a truck striking a tent on Bakery Lane on Jan. 15.
- Investigated a vandalism complaint in the Bakery Lane area on Jan. 15.
- Cited Douglas P. Campbell, 28, of Middlebury for unlawful trespass and unlawful mischief, following an investigation in the Ossie Road area on Jan. 15.
- Helped resolve a citizens' dispute in the Jackson Lane area on Jan. 16.
- Helped a Case Street resident who reported receiving a harassing phone call on Jan. 16.
- Investigated a report of a drunken person in the Buttolph Drive area on Jan. 17.
- Separated some people who were having a dispute in the Jackson Lane area on Jan. 17.
- Helped a person whose vehicle was locked in a Main Street construction site on Jan. 17.
- Assisted a local person who had received a harassing phone call on Jan. 17.
- Were informed that a driver had left the scene of an accident off Boardman Street on Jan. 18.
- Responded, with MREMS, to assist a person experiencing a mental-health crisis on the Route 7 South area on Jan. 18.

ADDISON COUNTY School News

Two Addison County students have been named to the dean's list for the Fall 2025 semester at Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y. dean's list students must

achieve a minimum 3.25 grade-point average and also carry at least 14 credit hours. Earning the designation were **Timothy Geist** of Orwell and **Trevor Schnoor** of Weybridge.

Ryan P. Marcotullio of University in Potsdam, N.Y. Bristol, a junior majoring in mechanical engineering, was named a Presidential Scholar for the Fall 2025 semester at Clarkson

University in Potsdam, N.Y. Presidential Scholars must achieve a minimum 3.80 grade-point average and carry at least 14 credit hours.

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City police conducts dozens of traffic stops

VERGENNES — Vergennes Police Officers conducted numerous traffic stops last week. In addition to the 30 stops, officers also conducted 10 directed patrols, two foot patrols and took fingerprints three times.

In other recent activity, the department:

- On Jan. 12 issued a denial of a stalking order. Police say the applicant intends to continue pursuing one.
- On Jan. 12 helped a person cleaning a Vergennes bank retrieve his keys, which he had locked inside.
- On Jan. 13 helped a woman who was known by police to struggle with mental health issues.
- On Jan. 13 issued several tickets to the driver of a notably damaged vehicle that officers noticed traveling from Green Street onto Main Street. Officers stopped the vehicle to investigate if a crime, for example the possibility of leaving the scene of an accident, had been committed. The tickets were issued due to violations during the incident.
- On Jan. 14 patrolled an area of Monkton Road where a man nobody recognized was said to be sitting on a neighbor's tractor. Police didn't see anyone who matched the description: a white male in his late 50s wearing a red hoodie and carrying a backpack. The owner of the tractor was contacted.
- On Jan. 14 instructed an individual who was illegally dumping at an Armory Lane apartment building to stop.

Vergennes Police Log

- On Jan. 14 were notified of a possible sex offense and began investigating.
- On Jan. 15 took a call regarding car parts being removed from a car being stored at a local storage facility, though took no enforcement action after the owner was contacted and uninterested in pursuing criminal charges.
- On Jan. 16 were notified of a domestic issue in which family members were fighting, but who were separated before police arrived.
- On Jan. 16 were told of a suspicious person on Main Street and investigated.
- On Jan. 16 were told of missing items on Main Street.
- On Jan. 16 had three cars towed due to winter parking ban violations after owners did not respond to police attempts to contact them.
- On Jan. 18 issued Christal Ramos, 43, of Vergennes a citation for consuming alcohol, a violation of her conditions of release from a prior court appearance. Police discovered this after responding to a residence where Ramos was said to have visited drunk and disorderly, but who had left before an officer arrived. The complainant requested a no trespass notice against her.



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ACHHH

(Continued from Page 1A)

“This will become people’s home, so they have care support systems, the things they need to be well and to get well,” Wesley said as a crew from Salamander Construction toiled away on an estimated \$500,000 in improvements to the building.

The upgrades — which will include a stairlift — are designed to make the facility safer, comfortable and compliant with state regulations for a Level III care home. A Level III home typically offers room, board, personal care, general supervision, and medication management for those unable to live on their own, but who don’t require a nursing home.

Addison County Home Health and Hospice has been providing home care and hospice care for Addison County residents in their homes since 1968. Its nurses, social workers and therapists become trusted partners in patients’ and families’ lives and are often involved in the difficult conversations that can occur when a loved one is no longer able to live safely in their home.

Residents of the new ACHHH facility will live in a home-like setting with 24-hour staffing, receiving nursing oversight, three nutritious meals each day and snacks, medication management, assistance with activities of daily living, laundry services and “opportunities for socialization and engagement.”

Officials promised a “person-centered focus that honors residents’ preferences.”

Residents will have a variety of payor sources, including private pay and Medicaid, Wesley noted.

So, who might fit the profile of benefiting from a spot in the new ACHHH home?

It could be an Addison County resident in their late 70s who suffers from chronic wounds, congestive heart failure, diabetes, or COPD and can no longer manage at home.

“We see so many people with chronic care needs who can no longer care for themselves,” Wesley explained. “Family support systems aren’t available, resources aren’t available; people are struggling in their own homes.”

They might need help preparing meals, switching oxygen tanks, remembering to take meds and getting around with a walker.

“We have so many frail elderly people living with chronic conditions that just can’t get to a state of health, because they don’t have the resources — emotional or physical — to be able to get to that optimal wellness. They just can’t be alone,” Wesley said.

And they won’t be alone at 427 East Main St.

“We will create a cohesive team for each resident including nursing, therapy and social work staff and community partners,” Maureen Conrad, ACHHH’s director of marketing & development, stated through a press release announcing the care home project.

While the interior of the home is currently in stripped-down mode, it’s potential is undeniable.

It’s a grand, 19th-century abode with a central kitchen, impressive woodwork, a living/dining area adorned with a wall-size window, and a sprawling, wrap-around



ADDISON COUNTY HOME Health & Hospice Director of Marketing & Development Maureen Conrad, left, and Executive Director Deb Wesley check out progress on a new care home in East Middlebury the organization plans to open in the spring.

Independent photo/John Flowers

porch fronting East Main Street. You can imagine the residents chatting over a morning cup of coffee, greeting passersby headed to the nearby Waybury Inn or Harold Curtiss Park, just a stone’s throw away on School House Hill Road.

Indeed, the home is bordered by sidewalks and a main street, the land is flat and safe for walking. It’s located within a short drive of physicians’ offices and Porter Medical Center. The interior features plenty of room for socialization, greeting visitors, and enjoying privacy when desired.

Addison County, ACHHH officials noted, has one skilled nursing facility (Helen Potter Rehabilitation & Nursing), which

“We see so many people with chronic care needs who can no longer care for themselves. Family support systems aren’t available, resources aren’t available; people are struggling in their own homes.”

— Deb Wesley

occasionally the state,” Conrad said. “We feel strongly that our neighbors deserve to remain in their beloved community.”

AN EXPENSIVE JOB

As one can imagine, putting the new care home on the map isn’t an inexpensive undertaking.

Wesley said the ACHHH board agreed to use some of the nonprofit’s reserve funds to acquire the East Main Street house. The organization is now seeking donations to complete the \$500,000 in renovations. Keep an eye on the ACHHH website and contact Conrad at MConrad@achhh.org if you’re in a position to donate.

“There are limited options for placements for medically frail individuals in our community, and we have had numerous instances when Addison County residents have had to move out of the county and

Wesley sees the new ACHHH venture as an important addition to a changing mosaic of healthcare services in our region.

“We don’t get well when we don’t provide those building blocks of care,” she said. “This will allow us to really offer a place for people to have those building blocks of care.”

“Everyone will be able to eat in the dining room. The kitchen is cozy. This will be their home as long as they want it to be.”

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



THIS HOME AT 427 East Main St. in East Middlebury is being renovated so that Addison County Home Health & Hospice can run it as a new care home for folks with chronic ailments who can no longer live independently.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

Bristol

(Continued from Page 1A)

similar events in other parts of the state, specifically PoemCity: Montpelier and PoemTown: Randolph.

“We’re building off of these beloved traditions and putting our Bristol spin on it,” she said.

Radford noted local artist and poet Lily Hinrichsen had participated in PoemCity: Montpelier and expressed an interest in bringing the offering to Bristol, an idea Radford had in the back of her mind when she came across a grant opportunity through the Vermont Arts Council. Bristol’s PoemVillage is being supported by the Vermont Arts Council’s Arts Project Grant and organized by the Bristol CORE and the Lawrence Memorial Library.

“It’s been percolating in the back of our minds, and with the support of the Vermont Arts Council, we decided it was time to go for it,” Radford said.

PoemVillage activities will get underway this month, starting with a Jumpstart Journal workshop set for Sunday, Jan. 25, from noon-2 p.m. at the Lawrence Memorial Library. Other upcoming events include:

- A documentary screening of “Come See Me in the Good Light” on Friday, Jan. 30, at 6:30 p.m. at the Lawrence Memorial Library.

- Other Loves: Queer Romance Poetry Through the Ages on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at the library.

“PoemVillage will consist of community gatherings, events,

and educational opportunities throughout January, February, March and April,” Radford said. “In January and February, the focus is on educational workshops to help any budding poets, or poets who want to brush up on new styles to learn and write before the February 28th submission deadline.”

CALL TO POETS

From now until Feb. 28, community members of all ages are encouraged to submit an original poem to be featured in a literary gallery around Bristol at the end of the PoemVillage programming.

All Vermonters are invited to submit their work as part of PoemVillage. More information on submission guidelines and upcoming events can be found at discoverbristolvt.com/poemvillage. Radford noted plans are still in the works for future community events and residents are encouraged to keep an eye on the website for updates on PoemVillage activities.

While PoemVillage will wrap up in April, Radford said the team plans to put together an archive of community members’ poetry featured in the gallery, and residents could see the program return to Bristol in the future.

“2026 is the first year we have coordinated something like this, all thanks for the Arts Project Grant,” she said. “We hope the community will respond positively and enjoy what we have planned. If so, we’d love to continue PoemVillage for years to come.”

Students

(Continued from Page 10A)

author of several books on death literacy and loss.

“The pandemic shifted many people’s perceptions. It felt like a reckoning,” Arnoldy said. “Death came close, and loss was everywhere — from mourning those who had died to grieving life as we had known it. Those of us in deathcare recognized it as a call to action.”

Students in Arnoldy’s course have identified their own care webs, addressed death in letter form and reviewed explanations of death literacy, “and the importance of increasing awareness as individuals and as a society,” Arnoldy said. Pupils have also discussed the natural process of dying with support from experts, including local guest speaker Dr. Diana Barnard.

“Each student is currently completing a comprehensive ‘Resource Directory’ focused on a town or city of their choosing that includes services related to end-of-life care,” Arnoldy added. “They’ll be offering the finished file to organizations that might find it beneficial.”

Students have also been exploring the power of storytelling as a tool, beginning by setting expectations for talking about death respectfully.

“We consider how our words might land. When details have been heavy for us to carry, we can assume they might be for others as well, so we look for thoughtful ways of safely explaining. And we find the line between what is personal and what is private to

avoid over-sharing and feeling too vulnerable,” Arnoldy explained. “Storytelling is an ancient form of passing down wisdom, though, and we’re built for it. Real-life stories help us connect with complex concepts. The process enables us to humanize death and grief, which is the ultimate goal.”

Those lessons and other coursework prepare students for the culmination of the class — a “Death Literacy Story Share” event, where students will share a story about a personal loss.

“It doesn’t need to be about a death but will include an ending that held significance,” Arnoldy explained. “They’ll be weaving some of what they’ve learned about death and grief literacy into their narrative. It’s a brave, generous act, and I’m so proud of their efforts.”

The event will be open to a small audience, with pupils receiving two tickets to give to college faculty, staff or fellow students.

Arnoldy said her hope is that students in the course will leave “a small space in their living for the reality of loss — that it will quietly, gently encourage them to be present and engaged throughout their days.”

“I also hope they now have more language and understanding to be able to navigate endings, both for themselves and others,” she continued. “Lastly, I hope that as their knowledge has increased, their fear has somewhat decreased, but that they allow their relationship with death to be naturally complicated and ever-changing.”



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Riverflow

(Continued from Page 1A) and it transforms the people who donate to Riverflow," said Elizabeth Campbell, whose son Jesse has Down Syndrome Regression Disorder and is among Riverflow's four founding residents, or friends. "It's a circle that just gets wider and wider and wider, in a good way," she continued.

That circle is preparing to get even bigger, as the Riverflow team is working to welcome more people into the community with the construction of a second home on the property and additional residences down the road.

"It's very special to be here at a time when the community is just one house," said Seneca Gonzalez, co-householder of Riverflow's first home and a member of the board of directors. "You get to really live into the space, and thinking about more people coming, that's what makes it community."

FIRST YEAR

When the Riverflow Community opened in 2024, it marked the culmination of years of work and advocating at the state level. Campbell had joined many other parents in pushing the state to expand housing options for Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities beyond a "shared living" model likened to adult foster care, where providers are compensated for supporting one or two individuals with developmental disabilities.

Those efforts led to the creation of Act 186 in 2022, a law that in part developed a position within the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living to help expand housing options for Vermonters with developmental disabilities. It also provided pilot grants to support the creation of

alternative housing models, one of which was awarded to Campbell and Waitsfield residents Amy and Jim Caffry to help fund Riverflow.

Over time, the team grew to include board members, staff, volunteers, founding friends, and householders who maintain Riverflow's first therapeutic home, called Willow House. Together and with support from donors, state organizations and community members, they worked to form the nonprofit and revitalize the eight-bedroom Willow House along with the 30-acre property it sits on.

Walking through Willow House offers a glimpse into daily life at Riverflow. One room has become a spot for needle felting, stocked with supplies and community members' vibrant creations. The basement has been transformed into a woodshop and candle-making space, with a home gym also in the works.

Outside, a farm is beginning to take shape. A three-sided pole barn marks the first building constructed toward that vision and is expected to house sheep in the spring. Community members also tend to a chicken coop on the property.

Life at Riverflow largely follows a weekly routine that offers community members stability.

"The thing about that is it puts the nervous system at ease, and so then there's not this constant kind of wondering and on edge of 'when is that thing happening?'" — they know," Gonzalez explained.

Gonzalez noted that building such a rhythm is a core value of the Camphill Movement, an international social change initiative focused on creating life sharing, therapeutic communities where individuals with and without intellectual and developmental

disabilities live, work with and care for one another. Riverflow has been inspired by the Camphill Movement.

While the weekly routine offers a stabilizing foundation, a person-centered approach to daily activities and other parts of life at Riverflow allows community members to move through each day however is best for them.

"Within that very stable rhythm that's kind of like this heartbeat, this pulse that's holding everybody, there's this individualizing, too," said Hannah Schwartz, Riverflow's executive director.

It's a way of life that reaps benefits for all community members, including residential coworkers like Valor Marsh.

"I don't think I've ever been in a place where I've been so settled and happy," Marsh said.

Campbell said the rhythm of life at Riverflow has been beneficial for her son Jesse.

"This environment is, for the first time in Jesse's life, a rhythm that resonates with his special needs," she said.

She said Riverflow has also made a difference in her life and that of Jesse's brother.

"For families like mine, and the three other families who have children here at Riverflow,

the whole family is transformed," she said.

"It's just life-changing for the siblings to know that the responsibility for their sibling with intellectual disability is being carried by a community and not just the family."

It's a comfort many families of Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities are still seeking as they look for housing options for their children. An open house at Riverflow this past May welcomed around 200 people into Willow House, many



MEMBERS OF MONKTON'S Riverflow Community often take part in activities like woodworking and needle felting, and have created the pieces displayed here.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

of whom were families of and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"They are desperate for what Riverflow provides," Campbell said.

Members of the Riverflow community hope it can serve as an example of what's possible.

"All of these intentional community models the state has been scaling to say, 'How can we meet the need,' and I hope they invest in communities like Riverflow," Schwartz said.

Schwartz noted the state has been helpful in creating Riverflow, which completed phase one of plans for the community debt free thanks in part to support from the Vermont Housing Improvement Program,

VLITE, and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, along with private donations.

PLANS FOR GROWTH

The team is now headed into phase two of building the Riverflow community, which calls for constructing a road on the property and the addition of another home. Future plans also include building small cottages, a barn and a community center at the site.

Riverflow is working to raise around \$1.7 million to support phase two, and more information can be found at www.riverflowcommunity.org.

Schwartz and her team are working through permitting and hope to get started on phase two projects in the spring. Riverflow is looking to work with Huntington Homes, a custom modular homes manufacturer, on the second house. That house will allow Riverflow to add

more householders and four new friends to the community.

If all goes to plan, Riverflow will welcome those new community members by early 2027. Schwartz said the team has already done trial visits with and met the four friends that will be joining Riverflow.

As they look forward to growth on the horizon, the Riverflow team joyfully reflected on the community that's been built over the past 15 months. They credited the donors, community members and organizations who have helped make Riverflow a reality.

"It's amazing what has happened in a short amount of time," Campbell said. "We have a lot of fundraising ahead of us, but we have such goodwill surrounding the community."

"And such generosity," Schwartz added. "We've really been supported, and I do feel Vermont is really behind us."

"For families like mine, and the three other families who have children here at Riverflow, the whole family is transformed."

— Elizabeth Campbell

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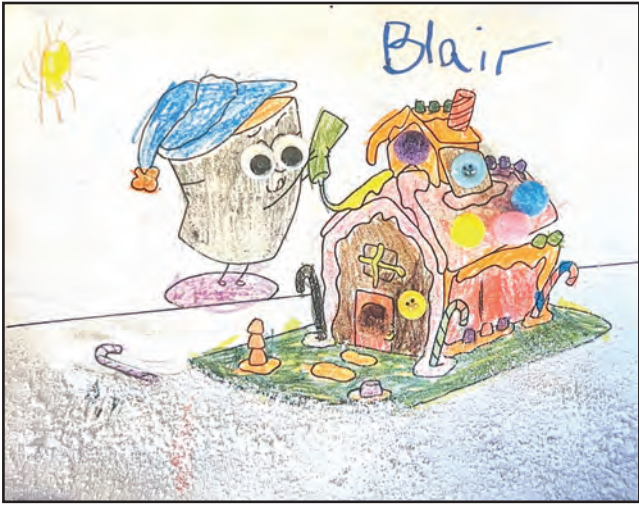
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Congratulations to the following winners:



Blair Birkett
Age 4 - Bristol



Leni Lengyel
Age 4 - Middlebury



Louise Copeland
Age 6 - Weybridge



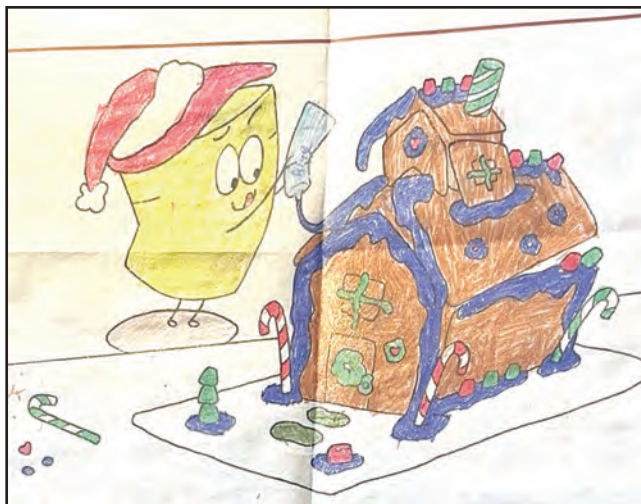
Shea Zeno
Age 5 - Starksboro



Elizabeth Anderson
Age 7 - Middlebury



Nora Zeno
Age 7 - Starksboro



Finley Newton
Age 9 - Middlebury



Liam Liberty
Age 11 - Middlebury



Autumn Spritzer
Age 14 - Middlebury



Benny Bessette
Age 14 - New Haven



Mark Favreau
Adult - East Middlebury



Sarah Tolgyesi
Age 18 - Cornwall

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Stearns nets 1,000 points

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
VERGENNES — A foul shot is a lot of pressure on any day. But there might be a little more when you're standing on the free throw line, knowing you've scored your 999th point since your freshman season, and that NBC-TV cameras are rolling just in case you hit 1,000. Vergennes Union High School senior Ashton Stearns didn't let that stop her in a game in the Commodore gym this past Friday evening. She sunk the shot and became the second VUHS girls' basketball player and the seventh VUHS hoopster to hit the threshold, earning that title from the free throw line. "It was just super stressful in the beginning, but my team really made sure that it wasn't stressful, and they made it super fun," Stearns said of the minutes leading up to the shot that broke the threshold. "But it was gonna happen (See Stearns, Page 4B)"



COMMODORE SENIOR AMELIA Giroux darts passed Middlebury's Isabel Quinn during Monday's girls' basketball game in Middlebury. Giroux put up six points that night, though VUHS fell to the Tigers, 48-45.

Independent photo/John S. McCright



MUHS SOPHOMORE CO-CAPTAIN Louisa Orten dribbles toward the Commodore hoop during Monday's home game against VUHS. Orten exploded for 28 points, making her the game's highest scorer, and helping get the Tigers a 48-45 victory over the Commodores.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

MUHS girls' hockey wins two

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School girls' hockey team scored 15 goals in two games in the past week and only allowed one into the Tiger goal. Sophomore Nova Bojanowski had her hand in five of those goals. Then the Tigers headed into an away game against Harwood on Wednesday night after press deadline. MUHS dominated with nine goals to Brattleboro's one on Jan. 14 at the Memorial Sports Center. MUHS, who outshot their opponent 61-11, shared the wealth

during what was their only scheduled game against the southern Vermont team this regular season. The Tigers' nine goals were scored by seven different players and assisted by six. Bojanowski and sophomore Maggie Collins each had their hands in three goals that night. Bojanowski wasted no time. Just 18 seconds into the game, she found senior Kenyon Connors for the first goal of the game. Two more early successes gave the Tigers a 3-0 lead just over two minutes in. (See Two wins, Page 2B)

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball

1/14 Richford vs VUHS	44-35
1/15 Enosburg Falls at MUHS	32-30
1/16 VUHS vs White River	74-29
1/16 Burr & Burton vs Mt Abe	48-28
1/19 MUHS vs VUHS	48-45
1/21 Mt Abe at Colchester	Late
1/21 MUHS at Fair Haven	Late
1/21 VUHS at Fairfax	Late

Boys' Basketball

1/14 Mt Abe vs Missisquoi	72-44
1/14 VUHS vs Winooski	50-40
1/17 MUHS vs Missisquoi	77-53
1/17 Mt. Abe vs Winooski	51-49
1/17 VUHS vs Milton	61-42
1/20 MUHS vs VUHS	62-60

Boys' Hockey

1/17 CVU vs MUHS	8-2
1/21 MUHS at Missisquoi	Late

Girls' Hockey

1/14 MUHS vs Brattleboro	9-1
1/17 MUHS vs Woodstock	6-0
1/21 MUHS at Harwood	Late

COLLEGE SPORTS

Men's Hockey

1/17 Midd vs Williams	4-2
1/20 Midd vs Norwich	3-2

Women's Hockey

1/17 Midd vs Amherst	1-1
(Midd wins shootout, 1-0)	
1/18 Amherst vs Midd	3-1

Women's Basketball

1/16 Conn Coll vs Midd	57-48
1/17 Tufts vs Midd	67-53

Men's Basketball

1/16 Conn College vs Midd	78-66
1/17 Tufts vs Midd	75-62
1/19 Keene St vs Midd	89-87

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball

1/23 VUHS at Twinfield	7 PM
1/24 Enosburg at Mt Abe	12:30 PM
1/24 Winooski at MUHS	12:30 PM
1/26 Williamstown at VUHS	7 PM
1/27 MUHS at Milton	7 PM

(See Schedule, Page 3B)

A week of wins for boys' hoop

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
ADDISON COUNTY — Local boys' high school basketball teams touted many successes this past week, with wins all around. Here's how Middlebury, Vergennes and Mt. Abraham teams did this week:

MUHS

The Tigers beat host Missisquoi, 77-53, on Jan. 17. Junior **Colin Chicoine** scored 23 points, junior **Taylor Altomose** scored 18 and senior **Jonathan Kafumbe** grabbed 10. MUHS meets Missisquoi again in February. The Middlebury team came out on top again, this time in a close game against Vergennes on Tuesday night in the Little City. The score was 62-60. Tiger senior **Cooke Riney** put up 21 points, the game high. Chicoine scored 17, Altomose had 13 and Kafumbe sunk 10.

For the Commodores, senior **Ryker Mosehauer** tallied 10 points on Tuesday.

MUHS takes on Mt. Abe on Friday in Bristol, and Milton on Jan. 28 at home. They'll see both teams again later in the season.

VERGENNES

Though the Commodores fell to the Tigers on Tuesday, VUHS also celebrated two wins in the past week.

The first came on Jan. 14 in Winooski, where the Commodores won, 50-40. Game statistics were not immediately available. VUHS and Winooski face off again in Vergennes in February.

They got another win against Milton on Jan. 17 at home, beating the Yellow Jackets, 61-42. Junior **Cohen Howell** scored 16 points for the Commodores. Mosehauer put away 12, junior **Jude Bragg** scored nine points and senior **Ryan Wright** scored eight points. VUHS and Milton play again in February.

(See Boys' hoop, Page 3B)

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
MIDDLEBURY — With just 15 seconds left in Monday night's game, it looked like the Vergennes Union High School girls' basketball team, trailing by two points, would get a chance to tie the score with host Middlebury Union High School. But Tiger freshman Ava Wood thwarted that attempt, making a decisive run towards the end-line, swooping in and smacking the ball out of bounds before it could get to the intended Commodore. It was just one example of the tough defense that helped the Tigers beat the Commodores, 48-45, during what was a back and forth game from beginning to end.

Tiger girls' hoop edges out Commodores

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
RIPTON — Middlebury Union High School senior Mary Harrington secured second place during the Nordic ski team's last home meet at the Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton on Monday. She finished the 5K skate race in 14:09.6, about 10 seconds after the top skier from St. Johnsbury Academy.

Harrington's teammate, senior June Yates-Rusch, who travels and practices with MUHS but attends Mt. Abe, came in about a minute after at 15:17.0, which secured her fourth place.

The two veteran skiers were just two of the roughly 200 high school athletes (varsity and JV) who spent the final day of their long weekend competing at the race, dubbed "The Crumb" because the cross country skiing facility is centrally located in Vermont, just as the crumb is considered the center of a loaf of bread, according to the Rikert Outdoor Center website. "This is a really big race for a mid-season race," said MUHS Coach Jay Harrington. About 13 schools participated, up from about six that a meet at this time of year might attract, he added. Four other local varsity skiers

joined Harrington and Yates-Rusch in the girls' field, which had over 60 competitors.

The MUHS girls took fourth

"I think we really (were) talking at the end and really talked and communicated," said Emma Quinn, another freshman who played a big part in the Tigers' defense that night. She also helped out her team by scoring five points, as did Wood with three.

The Jan. 19 meeting was the first since the teams played at VUHS in

December, which was a close win for the Tigers, 43-36.

MUHS Coach Eric Carter agreed with Quinn's defensive assessment of the game.

"When you play good defense, they have to trust each other. And so you started to see them rebuild a little trust there," he said.

(See Tigers/VUHS, Page 4B)

Local girls' varsity skiers take top spots in large field



OVER 200 NORDIC skiers from 13 schools participated in Monday's invitational race at Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton, including June Yates-Rusch, at left, seen here at the start of the first of two laps on the 5K course.

Independent photo/Angelo Lynn



TIGER STEVEN LACKARD celebrates with coach Ethan Raymond on Thursday after the MUHS senior earned his 100th career victory at a double-dual meet in Colchester.

Area wrestlers nab podium finishes in mid January

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

The Middlebury Union High School wrestling team dominated at two double-dual meets this week, and had a successful competition in Connecticut over the weekend. Additionally, Vergennes tallied a number of podium finishes during a weekend tournament in Essex.

Both a Tiger senior and a Commodore junior hit an impressive milestone during the past week.

MUHS faced Mill River and Vergennes on Jan. 14, then wrestled Plymouth, N.H., and Colchester the next evening — beating all four opponents in dual meet formats.

On the 14th in the Tigers' home gym, Middlebury beat Mill River 46-16 and Vergennes 49-18. On Jan. 15 in Colchester, MUHS topped Plymouth 47-30 and Colchester 42-21.

Personal wins were also on tap on that Wednesday and Thursday. The Tigers only lost four matches across the two days. Of the 42 victories the team amassed, 22 were by pin, Coach Ethan Raymond said.

It was a particularly successful two days for senior Steven Lackard who hit the century mark for wins, making him the third MUHS wrestler to achieve the milestone this season. Lackard went into this past Wednesday's competition with four more to go, getting two that night and two the following night. All four wins were pins in the 285-pound weight class.

In addition to Lackard's two wins vs. Mill River and VUHS, junior Tucker Wright won twice (one pin and one forfeit) at 215 pounds, junior Wyatt Kennet won twice (two forfeits) at 190, sophomore JJ Bougar won twice (See Wrestling, Page 3B)

Goodbye to a poet who loved the outdoors

My poet friend Luci Shaw passed away last month. I can't say the news was a complete surprise; she was in her mid 90s. Nonetheless, the loss still came with a sense of sadness. Although her name may be unknown to most readers of this column, she has had a significant literary and spiritual impact.

I met Luci nearly 20 years ago when I was invited to be part of a writers' group known as the Chrysostom Society (after Saint John Chrysostom, a fourth century saint and Archbishop of Constantinople known for his excellent sermons denouncing the abuse of authority both political and religious). Luci had been one of the founding members of the group some 20 years before that, along with her good friend Madeleine L'Engle, the prolific novelist and much-loved author of "A Wrinkle in Time."

Some of my most fun memories of Luci are of her telling stories about her adventures with L'Engle, in part because I have a shelf full of L'Engle novels, which were formative in my life going back to my high school years. As an adult and a writer, I have drawn from L'Engle's non-fiction work "Walking on Water" — both a memoir about her writing life and also an extended essay about what it means to write well and about the interplay of writing and faith — more wisdom and insight than from any other book on writing. It turned out that Luci was instrumental in the book in several ways. She not only convinced a reluctant L'Engle to write it, and

then had her first husband, Harold Shaw, (who later died of cancer) put it into print with his publishing house. The most fun part of the story is how L'Engle one day walked into Luci's house with a box of notes and essays but no chapters or organizational structure, and dumped them on Luci's kitchen table with the message that her own work on the project was finished. Luci then spent weeks reading the various essays, internalizing them, and then organizing them into a coherent whole.

In the 1990s, poet-pastor-author Eugene Peterson was working on one of the most well-known Bible translations of the past century, known as "The Message" — a translation that has sold over 20 million copies. One of Peterson's goals in translating the Psalms and other Biblical poetry was to capture not just the words, but also the poetic spirit of the original poetry, in modern poetic imagery but conveying the same underlying meanings as the original. Peterson repeatedly turned to Luci Shaw as his consultant on the project, asking her input on the actual poetry of his translations.

Luci was already in her 80s when she accepted a nomination to be the president of the Chrysostom Society. (I was fortunate to serve for three years as her vice president.) She had more energy and ideas than anybody else in the group. She rarely missed our annual gatherings, even into her

early 90s. The year before she died, she and her husband John flew down to Santa Barbara to join us. We arranged a golf cart to get her around the hilly college campus where we met, and she still managed to stand up and give a reading.

One year at our meeting, she was assigned as a passenger to my car for the two-hour drive from the San Antonio airport to a beautiful but remote retreat center in the Hill Country of west Texas. It was early spring, before the Texas heat had scorched the landscape. She insisted that, instead of driving the faster interstate route, I take a quiet back road along the Guadalupe River, lined with meadows and wooded hills. And then she repeatedly had me stop so that she could get out and admire (and photograph) the wildflowers.

Luci loved the natural world, and over her life as a poet she practiced what it meant to be attentive. Even in her 90s, she and her second husband, John, continued to tent camp — mostly, I think, in coastal Washington state near where she lived. And she was proud of it too, sleeping on camping pads listening to a nearby river and the wind in the trees overhead. She also continued to write poetry until her last days, often sharing nearly a poem a day on her social media. Months before she died, she had a new collection released, with another scheduled to be released this year. My last time visiting her



MATTHEW DICKERSON
Outdoor Columnist

Big week for girls' hoop

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — It was an exciting week for girls' high school hoops, with Middlebury and Vergennes fighting to the end in what was an exciting game on Jan. 19, and a Commodore and a Tiger each surpassing 25 points in single games.

The Mt. Abe team has been quiet since falling in a home game last week.

EAGLES

The Eagles fell to visiting Burr and Burton on Jan. 16, 48-28. Sophomores **Olivia Sawyer** and **Edda Twyman** were Mt. Abe's high scorers, putting up 12 and 8 points, respectively. The game was the two teams' only planned matchup this season.

The team had a break before heading to Colchester on Wednesday in a game played after deadline for this edition. Mt. Abe has two home games planned — against Enosburg on Jan. 24 and Winooski on Jan. 27. They've seen neither yet this season. They'll see both teams again later in the season.

MUHS TIGERS

The Tigers fell to Enosburg Falls at home, 32-30, on Jan. 15, ending a winning streak. Though the Tigers lost, sophomore co-captain **Louisa Orten** was still the high scorer of the game with 18 points. Junior co-captain **Isabel Quinn** scored 6. MUHS will get another chance to beat the Hornets when they play at Enosburg on Feb. 10.

The Tigers rallied for a well-

fought win against VUHS on Jan. 19. MUHS beat VUHS, 48-45. See full story on Page 1B.

The Tigers have an upcoming game on Jan. 24 at home against Winooski, who they take on for the first time this season. Then they head to Milton for a game on their turf on Jan. 27. This will also be the first time the two teams meet this season.

COMMODORES

Vergennes fell to Richford, 44-35, on Jan. 14, ending a winning streak. Junior **Georgia Krause's** nine points made her the leading scorer for VUHS that evening, with senior **Ashtin Stearns** and freshman **Ayla Kittredge** each getting seven.

On Friday, Jan. 16, the Commodores beat White River Valley, 74-29. Stearns led in points, with 27, which also pushed her over the 1,000 career-point threshold (see story on Page 1B). Senior **Ava Francis** scored 10, and senior **Libby Ringer** and Krause both put up 8 points for VUHS.

The Commodores took on Fairfax on the road on Wednesday after deadline.

VUHS has a full schedule upcoming. They take on Twinfield in Marshfield on Friday, for the first of two planned meetings this season. Visiting Vergennes on Jan. 26 is Williamstown, who the Commodores previously beat, 74-40; VUHS will play Danville on the road on Jan. 28, also a second meeting. VUHS previously defeated the team 69-39.

College to host girls' sports clinics

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College Department of Athletics will host a free clinic for youth girls in kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) in honor of National Girls and Women in Sports Day. The clinic will take place this Sunday, Jan. 25, from 9 a.m.-noon and features a variety of sport stations run by Panther women student-athletes.

Sign up online at tinyurl.com/GirlsInSportsAtMidd. Please complete the Activity Release Waiver and upload it to the registration form.

Participants who signed up prior by Wednesday, Jan. 21, will receive a free t-shirt. Organizers said they cannot guarantee t-shirts for day-of registrants, but they do welcome folks to register on the day of the event. If you are registering on the day of, please arrive at 9 a.m. in the lobby of the Peterson Family Athletic

Complex. Below are the full details, including the schedule:

- 9-9:30 a.m. - Registration
- 9:30 a.m. - Welcome + Dividing into groups
- 9:50 a.m.-11 a.m. - Sport station rotation

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- Soccer
- Speed & Agility
- Intro to Strength Training
- 11:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - Leadership Tips and Closing

Please ensure your child(ren) wear comfortable clothing with sneakers, pack a water bottle, and a snack if you think your child will need one. Guardians are welcome to stay and watch throughout the event.

Please direct questions to Ali Paquette at apaquette@middlebury.edu.

Two wins

(Continued from Page 1B)

About a minute-and-a-half after Bojanowski and Connors connected, senior co-captain Lia Calzini scored off an assist from senior Sawyer Witscher. Just 12 seconds later sophomore Becca Seeley got the puck to senior co-captain Ireland Hanley to get the Tigers on the board for the third time.

After that early first period frenzy, Collins assisted senior co-captain Quinn Doria at 8:23 and Calzini scored again at 9:54 off a second Seeley assist. That closed the scoring for the period, during which time the Tigers took 33 of

their 61 shots.

Middlebury went into the second period building on the momentum from their 5-0 lead, scoring three more goals in the next 15 minutes. Hanley scored unassisted, then junior Julia Morrissey off Collins' second assist and freshman Reese Muzzy off Bojanowski's second assist, making the score 8-0 going into the third period.

Collins got a sweet reward for helping out her teammates with two other goals earlier in the game. Bojanowski got the puck to junior Kate Kozak, who got the puck to Collins for the Tigers' only goal of the final period.

It would have been a shutout had Brattleboro not managed to get one of their two third period shots by the Tigers with 7:20 left in the game.

But the Tigers managed to shut out Woodstock, 6-0, on Saturday.

Bojanowski was again eager to get the Tigers rolling. About two minutes into the first period she got the puck to Morrissey, who got it to Kozak for the first goal of the game.

Bojanowski and Morrissey worked together again on the second goal about a minute later, with Bojanowski assisting Morrissey.

Then just over three minutes into the second period, Doria went out on her own to get a third goal for the Tigers. About three minutes and four minutes later Hanley followed up with two goals, assisted by Connors and junior Ida Blackwell.

Calzini scored the final goal of the game, and was assisted by Muzzy, who got the puck from Witscher.

Up next, the Tigers take on two teams for their first and only planned matchups of the regular season. Middlebury hosts Missisquoi this Saturday, Jan. 24 and will head to North Country for a game on Jan. 28.

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Boys' hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)

On Friday the Commodores take on Missisquoi on the road, in what will be the first of two planned meetings during the season. The team takes on Otter Valley in Brandon on Monday for the first and only planned game between them this season. And on Jan. 29 they will play at home against Crown Point for their sole matchup of the regular season.

MOUNT ABE

The Eagles secured a win on Jan. 14, defeating Missisquoi by a large margin. At halftime Mt. Abe led by nine points (36-27), then a 23-7 scoring differential in the third period helped the Eagles finish the game with 72 points, to Missisquoi's 44.

Sophomore **Dustin Abbot** was the high scorer for Mt. Abe, putting up 16 points for the Eagles. Senior **Charlie Germon** scored 13.

"Mt Abraham had a balanced attack with 11 players getting in the scoring column," Coach Martin Clark said.

The Eagles won again on Jan. 17 in a close game in Bristol against Winooski. The score was 51-49. Clark said it was back-and-forth. Germon and Abbot were the team's high scorers, putting up 11 and 10 points, respectively.

"Winooski closed the gap ... and took the lead 47-46 with 47 seconds left in the game," Clark recounted. Charlie Germon and his brother, sophomore **Noah Germon**, came through on late-game free throws, Clark said, making four out of five between the two of them, helping the team win.

The Eagles on Jan. 28 play at Enosburg, who the team will see again in February.



MOUNT ABE SKIER June Yates-Rusch, who skis with the MUHS team, powers her way to a fourth-place finish at Monday's race.

Independent photo/Angelo Lynn

Nordic

(Continued from Page 1B)

On the boys' side, three local skiers competed in the 80-plus man varsity race. Middlebury, which raced Kaden Hammond, 17th place, Nate Cook Yoder, 27th, and Graeham Zieger, 62, did not include enough finishers for a team score among 13 schools competing.

Before finishing at the front of the pack, Harrington and Yates-Rusch had to climb a handful of inclines on the course, the biggest of which

was early in the 2.5K loop, which skiers completed twice.

After the racing was done, the team took some time to congratulate their two seniors.

"They have been a part of the team for all four years," coach Laura McIntosh said. "And we wish them a great rest of the season and will miss them next year, for sure!"

Here's how other local racers did:
BOYS:



MUHS'S MARY HARRINGTON skates with power toward a second-place finish at Monday's race. It was the third day of consecutive racing for Harrington, who had competed in the Eastern Cup championships the previous two days where she placed 3rd out of 117 racers in the 7.5K freestyle, and fourth in the 10K classic competition on Sunday.

Independent photo/Angelo Lynn

- MUHS Hammond, 17, 14:44.6
- MUHS Cook Yoder, 27, 15:12.1
- MUHS Zieger, 62, 17:13.2
- GIRLS:**
- MUHS Harrington, 2, 14:09.6
- Mt. Abe Yates-Rusch, 4, 15:17.0
- MUHS sophomore Meredith Carr-Perlow, 18, 17:18.0
- MUHS freshman Avery Thompson, 29, 18:39.5
- MUHS sophomore Sadie Jette, 41, 20:07.1
- MUHS freshman Penny Lickun, 51, 21:22.9

MUHS gymnasts top season high scores

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School gymnastics team beat their season high score twice in the past week during meets against Essex and South Burlington.

On Jan. 14 MUHS totaled 106.75 points in Essex, though the home team scored 132.4 points. The Tigers again topped their season high five days later on Jan. 19 at home with 110.4 points, just 9.95 points shy of South Burlington's 120.35.

During those meets, four of Coach Natalia Little's gymnasts placed in the top six across the four disciplines (vault, bar, beam and floor) and the all-around category. Many of the top finishes over the two days of competitions can be attributed to senior Alixis Williams and junior Isabella Audy, a Vergennes Union High School athlete who competes with MUHS.

Several local athletes also set personal records, or PRs.

After Monday's meet against South Burlington, Little was proud to tout her team's progress this season.

"Overall we had a great meet, all of our scores are continuing to grow as seen in the team score as well as the PRs," Little said.

On Monday, Williams took first in floor, scoring 7.80 points. She was MUHS's sole first-place finisher of the night.

Audy tied for sixth in that event with a gymnast from South Burlington. Her score was 6.60.

Audy also tied for second place in vault with a South Burlington gymnast. Her 8.40 score was also a personal record in the event. Williams placed fourth in the vault with 8.25 points.

Williams was the highest scorer for Middlebury on the beam, placing fifth with 8.10 points. Her teammate

ninth-grader Ruby Murphy placed sixth with 8.00 points.

"Both Alixis and Ruby completed their acro series on beam without falling tonight as well, which was very exciting," Little pointed out.

Williams placed fourth in the all around with 30.45 points, and Audy placed sixth, 29.60.

A few days earlier at Essex, Williams PR'ed in floor with 8.15 points, and junior Nataly Johnson did the same but in the beam event with 7.2 points.

Williams, Audy and Murphy also took first, second and third in all around.

Here's the other personal records local gymnasts set during the meets: Against Essex Murphy scored 7.2 on floor and against S. Burlington scored 8.0 on vault.

Against Essex senior Emily Johnson scored 7.1 on floor.

Against Essex freshman Helen Quayle scored 7.0 on floor.

Wrestling

(Continued from Page 1B)

(two forfeits) at 175, junior Parker Carl won once on a pin and lost 9-2 to Mill River's Ethan Patch at 157, junior Jason Sperry won twice (two pins) at 157, junior Colton Murray won twice (two pins) at 150, freshman Walter Farnsworth won twice (one pin, one forfeit) at 126 and sophomore Miles Goetz won twice (one pin and one by a 9-7 decision) at 120.

On this past Thursday, Wright (215) won twice on a pin and a forfeit, Kennet (190) won twice on pins, Carl (175) won twice on pins, Sperry (165) won twice on pins, Murray (157) won twice on pins, junior Sawyer Malzac (150) won once on a forfeit and lost once by pin, Farnsworth (126) won once on a forfeit and lost once on a pin, and Goetz (120) won once on a pin and lost 6-2 to

Mason Sheltra Colchester.

Five members of the MUHS team traveled to New Milford, Conn., on Saturday for a meet, where the Tigers competed against 16 other teams and took sixth place. Tiger Parker Carl at 165 pounds pinned Landon Cote of Berlin (Conn.) High School to claim the title. Three other Tigers — Goetz (120), Sperry (157) and Lackard (285) — all placed second in their weight classes.

Vergennes and Mt. Abe competed closer to home in Essex on Friday, Jan. 16, and Saturday, Jan. 17. They finished 11th and 14th, respectively, out of 31 teams.

VUHS junior Stephen Kittredge (132) placed third and won his 100th match during the tournament. Also from VUHS, sophomore Addie Smith (113) placed 5th, and was the sole

Schedule

(Continued from Page 1B)

- 1/27 Winooski at Mt Abe 7 PM
- 1/28 VUHS at Danville 7 PM
- 1/30 Mt Abe at Milton 7 PM
- 1/30 Blue Mt at VUHS 7 PM
- 1/30 Missisquoi at MUHS 7 PM

Boys' Basketball

- 1/23 MUHS at Mt Abe 7 PM
- 1/23 VUHS at Missisquoi 7 PM
- 1/26 VUHS at OV 7 PM
- 1/28 Milton at MUHS 7 PM
- 1/28 Mt Abe at Enosburg 7 PM
- 1/29 Crown Pt at VUHS 6 PM
- 1/31 Mt Abe at VUHS 2:30 PM
- 1/31 MUHS at Enosburg 2:30 PM

Boys' Hockey

- 1/24 MUHS at Milton 7 PM
- 1/28 Burlington at MUHS 7 PM
- 1/31 MUHS at N Country 3 PM

Girls' Hockey

- 1/24 Missisquoi at MUHS 7 PM
- 1/28 MUHS at N Country 6 PM
- 1/31 CVU at MUHS 7 PM

Wrestling

- 1/23 ConVal at VUHS 6 PM
- 1/24 Mt Abe et al at VUHS Tourn
- 1/28 Mt Abe Hosts VUHS + 6 PM
- 1/29 MUHS at BBA 5:30 PM
- 1/31 VUHS/Mt. Abe at Mt. Greylock

Gymnastics

- 1/30 MUHS at CVU 7:30 PM

Dance

- 1/31 MUHS hosts 1 PM

COLLEGE SPORTS

Men's Hockey

- 1/23 Bowdoin at Midd 7 PM
- 1/24 Colby at Midd 3 PM
- 1/30 Midd at Tufts 7PM
- 1/31 Midd at Conn College 3 PM

Women's Hockey

- 1/23 Midd at Bowdoin 7 PM
- 1/24 Midd at Bowdoin 3 PM
- 1/27 Potsdam at Midd 7 PM

Women's Basketball

- 1/24 Midd at Williams 3 PM
- 1/27 Midd at MIT 5:30 PM
- 2/1 Bates at Midd 1 PM

Men's Basketball

- 1/24 Williams at Midd 2 PM
- 1/26 Midd at City College of NY 5 PM
- 2/1 Midd at Bates College 1 PM

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Stearns

(Continued from Page 1B) when it was gonna happen," she said. "It was great to have it at home."

Heading into the game against White River Valley, which VUHS won 74-29, Stearns was 20 points shy of 1,000. After the co-captain put away the final point she needed in the 3rd quarter, she managed to put up seven more before the end of the game. That made Stearns the highest scorer of the night by 17 points.

VUHS Coach Billy Waller recalled what it has been like watching Stearns grow as a player since before she was in middle school.

"Right away, you could see how determined she was to be the best basketball player she could be," he

said. In fact, Stearns said it has been a goal of hers since she was a little kid to break 1,000 points.

Waller said as far as shooting goes, Stearns can hold her own from anywhere.

"In her early years, she made her mark as a three-point sharpshooter, but has grown into a well-rounded scorer who can score at all three levels, with an improved mid-range game and the ability to get to the basket out on the break," he said, adding that she's also eager for a tough defensive matchup.

"The part that I am most proud of, is how much she recognized her teammates in helping her get to this milestone," he said.

Just because Stearns has surpassed the 1,000-point milestone doesn't mean she's done trying to break records. During a Monday night game at Middlebury Union High School, which VUHS lost in a close and well-fought 48-45 game, Stearns put up 13 points, bringing her to 1,020.

Those brought her that much closer to breaking the 1,069 record for most points in the history of VUHS girls' basketball program, and helped her climb closer to the second-most points in the school's history (the record second-post points at VUHS is 1,088. Stearns is hoping to break both those barriers in the remaining games of her final season.

The record for most points by a VUHS basketball player is 1,597, set by Jesse Epstein in 2003.

Tigers/VUHS

(Continued from Page 1B)

While Quinn and Wood helped hold down the fort on defense, Tiger point guard Louisa Orten led the offense. The sophomore has been scoring 10 to 20 points a game, but blew that stat out of the water with the 28 she put up against the Commodores. The next highest scorer was VUHS senior Ashtin Stearns, who came away from the evening with 13 points. That at least added on to her 1,000-plus point career (see story on Page 1B).

VUHS Coach Billy Waller said Orten's not easy to defend.

"I thought Ashtin did a good job on her. I thought Sidi (Miguel) did a good job on her," he said. "I had Amelia Giroux on her at the end, all three of those girls did the best they could, because that's a college level player."

Orten put up points during high pressure moments that night. After a chaotic minute of play at the end of the second quarter, she dribbled to her team's offensive half just outside the three point line and managed to put up a tie-breaking buzzer-beater. That basket gave the Tigers a three-point lead going into halftime. The score was 20-17.

After a third back-and-forth quarter, the Tigers went into the fourth frame with the lead again, this time it was 35-31. But with about a minute and a half left in the game, the Commodores had tied it up, 44-44.

It was scoreless for the next minute and 15 seconds, until Orten again came through during a critical

moment. She put up a two-point shot from inside the paint, bringing the score to 46-44 with just 16 seconds left.

With just 5.4 seconds on the clock, freshman Commodore Ayla Kittredge was fouled and found herself on the line for two shots. She had already put up nine points, including the shot that tied the game in the fourth quarter. She made her 10th point of the game from the free throw line and closed the gap with MUHS to just one point with about 5 seconds left in the game.

With about three seconds left, the Commodores fouled junior Isabel Quinn, who had already scored seven points in the game. The MUHS co-captain made both her shots from the line, bringing the final score to 48-45. There it stayed as the last few seconds clicked away.

"They always give us a heck of a game," Carter said. "And playing games like that makes us be a better team going forward."

The other Tiger junior was Alice Livesay, who tallied three points.

Four Commodore seniors also got on the scoreboard: Ava Francis (six points), Amelia Giroux (6), Summer Gosliga (4) and Faith McAllister (1). Commodore junior Georgia Krause scored five.

VUHS looks to restart in a game at Twinfield on Friday evening and then hosts Williamstown on Monday at 7 p.m.

The Tigers next play on Saturday, when they host Winooski at 12:30 p.m.



TIGER FRESHMAN FORWARD Emma Quinn eyes the competition as she pulls down a defensive rebound during Middlebury's 48-45 victory over visiting Vergennes Union High School on Monday.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

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MUHS boys' hockey falls to CVU

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' hockey team fell, 8-2, to Champlain Valley at home on Saturday. The Tigers' senior goalie, TJ Baron, made 37 saves.

The Tigers kept their opponent to one goal in the first period, but CVU came back from the locker room for the second with a mission in mind. The team scored three more goals before junior Gabriel Quesnel got MUHS on the board off an assist from senior Sutton Rubright.

CVU got one more past the

Tigers with just over 20 seconds left in the period. The Redhawks scored three more goals early in the third period.

For the Tigers, senior Adrien Malhotra scored off an assist from junior Jose Kozak, who got the puck from sophomore Evan Northrup.

MUHS is scheduled to play Missisquoi on the road Wednesday evening after press deadline.

The Tiger boys will play at Milton on Saturday. After that, MUHS takes on Burlington at home on Jan. 28. They're scheduled to see both teams again at the end of the regular season.

Public Notices

can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 4B and 10B.

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This draft Selectboard meeting agenda is subject to change.

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AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 7:00 | 1. Call to Order
2. *Approval of Agenda
3. *Approval of Consent Agenda
3a. *Approval of the Minutes of the January 13, 2026 Selectboard Meeting
3b. *Acceptance of Selectboard Subcommittee Meeting Minutes (if any)
3c. *Approval of Applications - Renewal of State Licenses/Permits (if any)
3d. *Approval of Check Warrants
3e. *State Agency of Transportation - Certificate of Highway Mileage
3f. Consent Agenda Placeholder
3g. **Town Manager's Report |
| 7:05 | 4. **Citizen Comments |
| 7:10 | 5. **Isley Public Library - Renovation/Expansion Project Update |
| 7:20 | 6. *Town Disposal Policy - Policy Review Committee |
| 7:30 | 7. **Public Health & Safety Committee - Selectboard Update |
| 7:40 | 8. *Finalize FY2027 General Fund Budget |
| 8:00 | 9. *Citizen Petition for Town Meeting Warning - 'Incremental Implementation of Green Mountain Care' |
| 8:15 | 10. *Finalize Annual Town Meeting Warning |
| | 11. Agenda Placeholder |
| 8:25 | 12. **Board Member Concerns |
| 8:30 | 13. **Executive Session - Attorney Analysis |
| 8:40 | 14. *Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session |
| 8:45 | 15. *Adjourn |

*Possible Decision **Discussion

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community calendar

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 ilsleypubliclibrary.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.

Girls sports clinics in Middlebury. Sunday, Jan. 25, 9 a.m.-noon, Peterson Family Athletic Complex, 219 South Main St. Middlebury College hosts a free sports clinic for girls in kindergarten through eighth grade in honor of National Girls and Women in Sports Day. The clinic features a variety of sport stations run by Panther women student-athletes. Register at athletics.middlebury.edu or day-of onsite. Kids should wear sneakers and comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle. For more information, email Ali.Paquette@middlebury.edu.

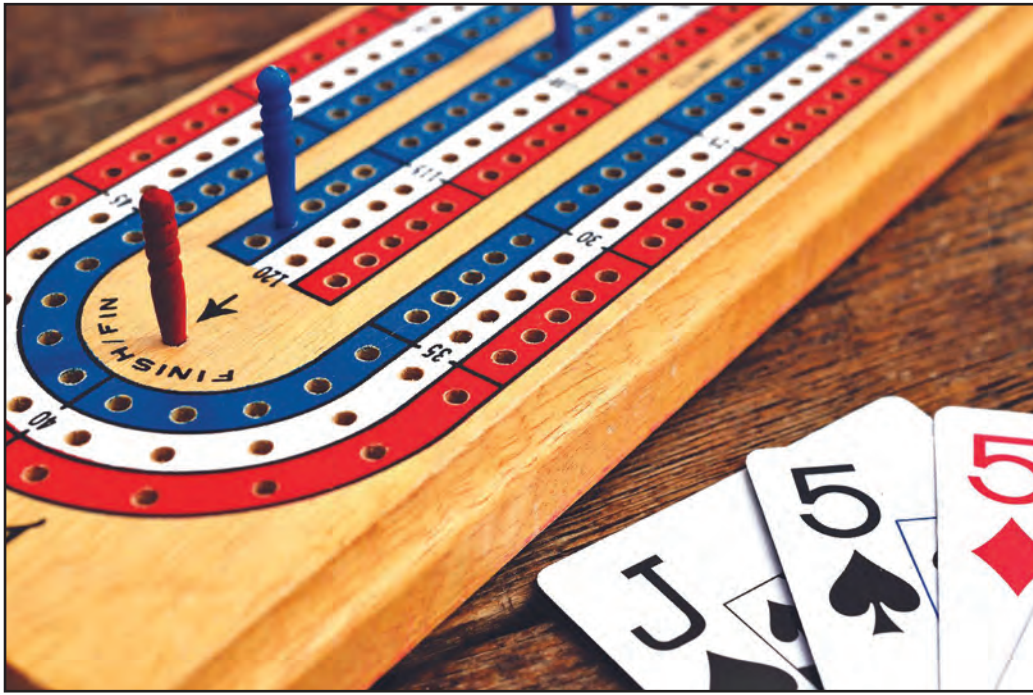
Public bingo in Vergennes. Sunday, Jan. 25, 1-3:30 p.m., Vergennes American Legion Post 14, downstairs, 100 Armory Lane. Community bingo hosted by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 14. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. Bingo packets are \$15 and include a sheet of three cards for each regular game; winner-take-all 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.

Green Mountain Club Bread Loaf Section annual meeting in Middlebury. Sunday, Jan. 25, 6:30-8:15 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. The Bread Loaf Section of the Green Mountain Club holds its 51st annual meeting, featuring a review of a banner year of trail work. Following the business meeting, guest speaker Keegan Tierney, GMC director of field programs, will present photos and highlights from 2025 trail projects completed by staff and volunteers. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. with brief social time. Free and open to the public.

jan 26 MONDAY

Monday Night Bingo in Middlebury. Monday, Jan. 26, doors open at 4:30 p.m., Addison County VFW Post 7823, 530 Exchange St. Weekly Monday night bingo with a \$1,000 jackpot. Quickies at 6 p.m., with regular bingo at 7 p.m. The kitchen is open from 5-6:30 p.m. with menu orders, nightly specials and homemade desserts. Open to the public. Proceeds benefit veterans programs.

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.



Time for game night

JANUARY CALLS FOR games — and getting out the house to spend time with neighbors doesn't hurt either. This coming week, play bingo two days in a row: join the Vergennes American Legion for public bingo on Sunday at 1 p.m., and head to the Addison County VFW in Middlebury for bingo on Monday starting at 4:30 p.m. If you prefer cribbage, head to Bristol on Monday night for the Masons' semi-monthly cribbage game at 7 p.m., where all ages and skill levels are welcome.

jan 27 TUESDAY

Community sing and dessert potluck in Middlebury. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7 p.m., Otter Creek Yoga, 99 Maple St #12, in the Marble Works. Otter Creek Yoga hosts a community sing featuring songs of resistance, solidarity and joy. Proceeds benefit the Yoga Equity Project, a nonprofit creating access to yoga and meditation for BIPOC Vermonters. Admission by donation. More info at joanna@ottercreekyoga.com.

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 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.

The Sacred Nap in Middlebury. Friday, Jan. 30, 7 p.m., Otter Creek Yoga, 99 Maple St #12, in the Marble Works. Otter Creek Yoga hosts an hour of relaxation to benefit Yoga Equity Project, a nonprofit creating access to yoga and meditation for BIPOC Vermonters. Admission by donation. If you're interested in attending, email joanna@ottercreekyoga.com.

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 lcmcm.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.

feb 1 SUNDAY

Breakfast buffet in Middlebury. Sunday, Feb. 1, 8-10 a.m., Addison County VFW Post 7823, 530 Exchange St. Pancakes, sausage gravy and biscuits, bacon, hash, sausage, hash browns, scrambled eggs, omelets, eggs to order, toast, coffee and orange juice. Open to the public. Proceeds benefit veterans programs. \$13 adults, \$7 children.

feb 2 MONDAY

Monday Night Bingo in Middlebury. Monday, Feb. 2, doors open at 4:30 p.m., Addison County VFW Post 7823, 530 Exchange St. Weekly Monday night bingo with a \$1,000 jackpot. Quickies at 6 p.m., regular bingo at 7 p.m. The kitchen open 5-6:30 p.m. with menu orders, nightly specials and homemade desserts. Open to the public. Proceeds benefit veterans programs.

feb 4 WEDNESDAY

"River Memories: Exploring Settlement Patterns on Waterways in Vermont" in Brandon. Wednesday, Feb. 4, 4 p.m., Otter Valley Union High School library, 2997 Franklin St. Otter Valley Union Middle & High School's Community Engagement Lab invites community members to read the Vermont Humanities Community Read selection, "The Light Pirate" by Lily Brooks-Dalton, and attend this talk by historian Alan Berolzheimer, who will examine how historic settlement patterns along Vermont's waterways have contributed to present-day flood risks. Free and open to the public. Request a free copy of the book by contacting Nicole Vachon-Hanlon at nvachon-hanlon@mesu.org.

Stretch and neuromuscular therapy with Bean Camara in Brandon. Wednesday, Feb. 4, 5:30-6 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. Join Bean Camara of Brandon Stretch and Neuromuscular Therapy for a four-part series of self-care talks followed by strengthening, stretching and self-care techniques you can do at home to help you feel and move better.

"Bringing Conservation Home" in Middlebury. Wednesday, Feb. 4, 6:30 p.m., Eastview, 100 East View Terrace. Naturalist, biologist and former park ranger Monica Przyperhart will discuss her work and how to implement conservation locally. Sponsored by the Middlebury Conservation Commission.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR **CALENDAR ONLINE** addisonindependent.com

Lots of activities on tap at Monkton library, town hall

MONKTON — Happenings at Russell Memorial Library: Story Time continues weekly at the library with Julie McGowan. Every Wednesday from 10 to 10:30 a.m., bring your toddler to join in to read, dance, sing, rhyme and get downright silly with Julie! It's a great way to introduce your child to the skills that will help them in school, plus let them enjoy and realize the joy of reading and socializing.

Contact the library with questions during regular hours of Tuesday and Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 802-453-4471. If no answer leave a message and someone will get back to you.

Another event at the library with Julie happens monthly. Art Night will be held on the second Tuesday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. (for adults only please). Bring your own tools or something you want to work on. This fun night of creativity will help you to get excited about making art and enjoy the company of others while working on or improving your hobby. You can contact Julie directly with questions at juliek1121@gmail.com. The next meeting will be held Feb. 10. Hope to see you there!

Meet with Melanie Cote monthly at the Town Hall Community room for the Poetry Club on Saturdays, usually from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. This month's meeting has already happened, but mark your calendar for Feb. 28 from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. The later start time is due to yoga

Monkton

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

NEWS

restarting from 9 to 10 a.m. Bring your own poem or a poem from a favorite author to the meeting. Enjoy the readings from the other poetry lovers in the group. Contact Melanie with questions at cotem@ymail.com or call 802-425-4441.

The Monkton Museum and Historical Society continues to meet monthly in the Community Room of the Town Hall every third Monday of the month starting at 7 p.m. The MMHS welcomes anyone interested in joining or just to sit in on a meeting to see how the MMHS follows the history of our town. Call MMHS secretary Lauren at 802-233-1397 with any questions.

Join Eugenie Doyle every Sunday at the Monkton Town Hall for Sunday Yoga from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. These classes are free and open to everybody! This is a great way to care for yourself, body and soul. If you are new to town, it's also a great way to meet members of the community. This Ashtanga basics class with modifications allows you to enjoy the camaraderie of a great group. You don't have to register, just show up and join in the fun! Contact Eugenie at edoyle@gmavt.net if you have questions.

Hill Country Holiday, meatball competition returns to Lincoln

LINCOLN — Holiday festivities, the famous meatball competition returns to Burnham Hall Saturday, Feb. 7, in conjunction with the preschool's spaghetti dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Do you have a recipe that deserves the spotlight? Here's how the competition works: Each contestant must arrive at the hall by 4:30 p.m. with a crockpot of 30 to 50 homemade meatballs. The entries must be pre-heated and ready to serve. A notecard containing the recipe, known allergens and the recipe name must be displayed. Entrants should list their contact information on the other side of the notecard.

Three local celebrity judges will provide a score for each meatball on a scale from 1-10. The score of each meatball is entirely up to the judge and their scoring is final. All three judges' scores will be added together for a final score.

The People's Choice Award

Lincoln

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

NEWS

will be decided by the dinner guests. As part of their admission to the spaghetti dinner, each guest will receive a poker chip and place it in a mason jar in front of their favorite meatball. The jar with the most chips at the end of the night wins. It's first come first serve, and we hope the meatballs run out!

Think you have what it takes? Email jakemcd33@gmail.com before Sunday, Feb. 1, to register your entry. Whether you come to compete or simply to eat, this event promises to be a highlight of Hill Country Holiday weekend.

Until next time... "A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook, must bring soul to the recipe."

— Thomas Keller





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ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT





Masons feed goats

CECIL FOSTER, LEFT, Mike Brown and Matt Moyer were among the members of the Masons of Libanus Lodge #47 in Bristol who on Saturday, Jan. 17, collected 50 Christmas trees in the greater Bristol village area that were taken to a herd of goats who cherish the trees as a snack.

Photo courtesy of Cecil Foster



Vermont's annual Free Ice Fishing Day is Jan. 31

VERMONT — Vermont's state-wide Free Ice Fishing Day is Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026.

Free Ice Fishing Day is held annually on the last Saturday in January. The day is geared toward giving new ice anglers an opportunity to try ice fishing before purchasing equipment or a fishing license, but any angler may ice fish on any waterbody open to ice fishing statewide without a license on Free Ice Fishing Day.

To celebrate Free Ice Fishing Day, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is holding an Ice Fishing Festival at Elmore State Park in Elmore. The festival will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is free and open to all ages as well as families with kids.

"The Ice Fishing Festival typically draws 500 to 700 participants for a day of fishing, skill-building and community," said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Jason Batchelder. "The annual event is moved around the state each winter, and we are excited to be back at Lake Elmore for 2026."

Vermont Fish and Wildlife staff, as well as instructors from Vermont's Let's Go Fishing Program, will be on-hand to teach ice fishing skills. These include knot tying, baiting and using ice fishing rods, tip-ups and other specialized ice fishing gear, and

most importantly, how to stay safe on the ice. They will also discuss fishing regulations and fish identification.

Fish and Wildlife staff will operate a fish fry station, serving up samples of locally caught Vermont fish, as well as cooking up participants' catch, and there will be plenty of hot cocoa on hand.

Participants are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather, and ice cleats are strongly recommended.

"Ice fishing is one of the most accessible forms of fishing and can be a great way to introduce people to how much fun fishing can be," said Batchelder. "This festival will demonstrate that ice fishing isn't just about catching fish. It's also a great way to spend some time outdoors with friends and family. You can skate, sled, make a snow fort, and have a cookout — all while waiting for the flags on your tip-ups to signal when you've caught a fish."

Fishing equipment will be loaned for this fun day on the ice, or participants may bring their own.

For more information, go to Upcoming Events on Vermont Fish and Wildlife website.

Registration can be completed online in advance, or people may register when they arrive — although registering in advance will enable participants to get on the ice faster.



"The Ice Fishing Festival typically draws 500 to 700 participants for a day of fishing, skill-building and community."

— Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Jason Batchelder

Durkee named chief banking officer at Community Bank

ADDISON — Matt Durkee of Addison at the beginning of January became Chief Banking Officer of Community Bank, a subsidiary of Community Financial System Inc. (CFSI). He succeeds Jeff Levy, who retired at the end of 2025.

As chief banking officer, Durkee will oversee Community Bank's banking strategy and performance across commercial, small business, and retail banking. His responsibilities will include driving balanced growth, strengthening client relationships, advancing

credit and risk discipline, supporting market expansion, and ensuring alignment between banking operations and the company's broader strategic objectives.

CFSI said in a press release. The role also plays a central part in talent development, operational excellence, and delivering consistent value to customers and communities.

Durkee joined Community Bank



DURKEE

in 2022 and led the bank's New England market and then served as president of Commercial Banking. In that role, he guided commercial growth initiatives, deepened client engagement, and partnered closely with regional leadership teams to deliver strong

results. "Matt is a proven leader with deep banking expertise and a

clear focus on customers, talent, and performance," said Dimitar Karaivanov, CFSI President and CEO. "He understands our markets, our culture, and our corporate strategy, and he is well positioned to lead our banking business while identifying opportunities to deliver customer value."

Community Bank serves customers in upstate New York, northeastern Pennsylvania, Vermont, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Otter Valley Union High School

Hannah Desabrais

Hannah Desabrais is Otter Valley Union High School's latest Student of the Week. She lives in Brandon with her mom, dad, sister and brother.

An active and dedicated student, Hannah stays busy year-round. During the summer, she works as a camp counselor at Camp Kookamunga. Throughout the school year, she plays multiple sports, including field hockey, softball and basketball, and also makes time to spend with family and friends.

At school, Hannah says she enjoys seeing her friends and building strong connections with her teachers. Her favorite subjects are math and English, and one of her favorite teachers is Mrs. Blow. Hannah values the meaningful connections she made in Mrs. Blow's class and appreciates that they have stayed in touch even after the class ended.

Hannah's hard work and leadership have earned her an impressive list of honors. She has been named to the Principal's List, served as a team captain for field hockey, basketball and softball, and received Excellence awards in Advanced Anatomy and Physiology, Advanced Behavioral Science, Geometry, Chemistry, Algebra II and Pre-Calculus. She has also earned the Society of Women Engineers Certificate of Merit for High Honor in Science and Mathematics and the Bausch + Lomb Honorary Science Award.

When asked what advice she would give to younger students, Hannah says, "It's important that when you are faced with a challenge, you push through it because it will only help you to grow in the end."

After graduation, Hannah plans to pursue a career in physical therapy and is considering attending either the University of Vermont or Plymouth State University.



Hannah Desabrais
OVUHS

Mount Abraham Union High School

June Yates-Rusch

Mt. Abraham is proud to recognize June Yates-Rusch as our Student of the Week. June lives in Bristol with her mom, Mary, and cat, Daisy.

Throughout her high school career, June has consistently achieved highest or high honors. She has received awards from the Art Department each year, as well as a PE and English award. June's favorite classes are AP Calculus and Chemistry and her favorite teacher is Mr. Eberhardy. In addition, her favorite class was Sports and Society, where she learned about the impact that sports has on work and communities.

She notes that school makes her feel productive and confident about how she spends her time. Beyond academics, June is an active social member of the Mt. Abe community. She has played Varsity Lacrosse since 9th grade and was the captain of the team last spring. She is also on the Varsity Nordic Ski team and the Varsity Field Hockey Team. She has been an active member of the Eagle Leadership Society for the past two years.

Outside of school, June works as a lifeguard and camp counselor for the Bristol Recreation Department as well as a youth lacrosse referee. In her spare time she enjoys reading, being outdoors and spending time with her friends.

Reflecting on her school experience, June shares, "One of the highlights of my time at Mt. Abe was starting a new sport during my junior year (field hockey). This experience taught me the importance of trying new things, even when they feel unfamiliar or challenging at first. Taking the risk to learn a new sport not only helped me develop new skills, but also led to new friendships and connections that I would not have made otherwise."

Looking ahead, June will be attending St. Lawrence University in the fall. She plans to major in Biomedical Sciences and play lacrosse. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors!



June Yates-Rusch
MAUHS

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Students of the Week are chosen by school teachers and administration.

Congratulations, Hannah and June!

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CLASSIFIEDS

Public Meetings

AL-ANON OFFERS HELP and hope to anyone who has been affected by a loved one's drinking. Middlebury hosts an online meeting Sunday night 7:15pm and a face to face

Public Meetings

one Wednesday at 1:30pm at CVUUS (2 Duane Court Middlebury near the high school) that you can also access by Zoom. Visit vermontalananonlateen.org for links and list of other meetings in the region. If you'd like to speak to an Al-Anon

Public Meetings

member, call our answering service (866-972-5266) and an Al-Anon member will call you back.

Public Meetings

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in person meetings are available. For a list of local virtual meetings visit <http://bit.ly/district9aa>. For more information visit <https://aavt.org/> or call the 24 hour hotline at 802-802-AAVT (2288).

Public Meetings

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS is a 12 step program offering recovery from compulsive eating and food behaviors. For meeting times and general information please visit www.oavermont.org or call (802)863.2655.

Services

BROWN'S CONSTRUCTION renovations, interior/exterior painting, dry-wall, plumbing/electrical services. Fully insured w/ 30+ years of experience covering Northern Addison and Southern Chittenden, references available. Call 802-238-4864

Help Wanted

EVENING FRONT DESK/ CONCIERGE. Swift House Inn - Middlebury, Vermont. We're hiring a front desk professional to anchor our evening shift. This position plays a pivotal role: greeting arriving guests, fielding questions, supporting restaurant reservations, and ensuring the property is secure and guest-ready for the next day. If you thrive on creating memorable experiences and want to grow in the hospitality industry, this is for you. Swift House Inn has 20 guest rooms across three historic buildings, and is home to Jessica's at Swift House Inn, one of Vermont's most celebrated fine dining restaurants. Responsibilities: Welcome and check in arriving guests with warmth and professionalism. Answer phones, contact Me, Laura Ingram, Today (802)989-9496

For Rent

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

For Rent

MIDDLEBURY ONE BED-ROOM Small, ground floor. Very nice, very convenient in-town location, perfect for person who does not drive. \$795 plus heat and electric. Non-smoker, no pets. 802-388-5474.

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

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

Att. Farmers

1ST CUT, DRY ROUND bales, 4x5, \$55.00 each. Round bales for bedding \$35.00. Quantity discounts available. 802-989-0187.

1ST CUT, SMALL square, \$3.25. 2nd cut small square, \$4.25. 802-377-5455.

HAY First and second cut 4x4 round bales, stored. \$25 and up. 518-321-2886

Help Wanted

For Rent

FOR RENT

RELAX AT LAKE DUNMORE

An easy 20-minute drive to Middlebury, 15 minutes to Brandon.



BEAUTIFUL 4-SEASON COTTAGE ON LAKE DUNMORE

3 bedrooms (5 beds) 2 baths 3-night minimum

Relax in this lovely cottage with modern upgrades and a bright, open space with a large deck and screened porch. The large open kitchen and living room/dining room makes this a perfect spot to gather with friends and family. Lake access with a kayak launch and equipped with two 2-person kayaks just steps away, plus miles of hiking and biking trails just across the lake at Moosalamoo National Recreation Area.



SCAN TO VIEW THE LISTING.



STUNNING LAKEFRONT 4-SEASON CAPE WITH DOCK

3 bedrooms (5 beds) 2 baths 3-night minimum

Beautifully renovated in 2025, this bright lakefront cottage has sunny gardens, a private dock and a fire pit by the lake. Enjoy an open floorplan with large windows overlooking the lake, a fieldstone fireplace with gas insert, and new outdoor deck at the house. The house is perched in a private and sunny opening over the lake; an outdoor staircase leads down to the lake and lower patio with firepit seating and private dock.



SCAN TO VIEW THE LISTING.



THE TURNING POINT CENTER of Addison County is open for in-person services, Monday through Friday, 10am-4pm, 79 Court St, Middlebury. We are available by phone 24/7 at 802-388-4249.

VERGENNES FREE THINKERS Founded in 1935 on the principle of one alcoholic helping another to achieve sobriety, A.A. is an effective and enduring program of recovery that has changed countless lives. A.A. has always been committed to making its program of recovery available to anyone, anywhere, who reaches out for help with an alcohol problem. The Vergennes Free Thinkers meeting was created in January of this year to maintain a tradition of free expression, conduct a meeting where alcoholics may feel free to express any beliefs, doubts or disbelief they may have, to share their own personal form of spiritual experience, their search for it, and/or their rejection of it, without having to accept anyone else's beliefs or having to deny their own. Meetings are held with a high regard for compassion and inclusion without judgment or exception. If you think we can help, please join us on Thursdays at 6pm by contacting Vergennes-freethinkers@gmail.com for Zoom and in-person meeting information.

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

CLEANING SERVICE Tired of keeping up with house cleaning? I offer flexible home cleaning services tailored to your need: *Monthly Cleaning: Perfect for maintaining a tidy home with minimal hassle. *Twice-A-Month Cleaning: Ideal for busy households needing more frequent attention. With good references ensuring peace of mind, don't wait - make your life easier and home cleaner today! Contact Me, Laura Ingram, Today (802)989-9496

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Opportunities

Opportunities

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New Year's Resolution: Become an RSVP Volunteer!

RSVP of Addison County connects volunteers age 55 and up with organizations that need their support. RSVP provides a wide range of opportunities from delivering healthy meals to neighbors, helping community members with transportation, to reading to a companion, or providing support to children of all ages. RSVP will help you find an opportunity to fit with your causes, interests and schedule.

Learn how you can make a difference!

To learn more, please visit www.volunteersinvt.org or contact us at 802-468-7056



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Addison Independent

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Or, submit your classified ad on our website: addisonindependent.com

DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

RATES

- 25¢ per word • minimum \$2.50 per ad
- 50¢ internet listing per issue • minimum 2 insertions

• Special 4 for 3 rates not valid for the following categories: Services, Opportunities, Real Estate, Wood heat, Attn. Farmers, For Rent & Help Wanted

- Notices Work Wanted Att. Farmers
- Card of Thanks Help Wanted Motorcycles
- Personals For Sale Cars
- Services Public Meetings** Trucks
- Free** For Rent SUVs
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- Lawn & Garden Real Estate Wanted
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- Adoption Vacation Rentals

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PLEASE PRINT YOUR AD...

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

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

AUCTIONS



MARKET REPORT ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT
Sales for 1/15/26 & 1/19/26

BEEF	LBS.	/LB	\$
Blue Spruce	1365	1.65	\$2252.25
Goodrich	1790	1.60	\$2864.00
Barnes Bros	1635	1.55	\$2534.25
Nop Bros	1910	1.45	\$2769.50
J. Field	1615	1.40	\$2261.00
Vorsteveld	1745	1.38	\$2408.00
Correia	1535	1.37	\$2102.95

CALVES	\$
Barnes Bros	\$1590.00
Shelburne	\$1512.00
Laduc Acres	\$1612.00
Savello	\$1456.00
Elysian Fields	\$1424.00
L. Garvey	\$1406.50
Vorsteveld	\$1404.30

Total Beef - 154 Total Calves - 186
We value our faithful customers.
Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs.
call 1-802-388-2661

Public Notices Index

Public Notices for the following can be found in this **ADDISON INDEPENDENT** on Pages 4B and 10B

Addison County Courthouse (1)

Addison Northwest School District (1)

Middlebury (1)

Mt. Abraham Unified School District (1)

Salisbury (1)

State of Vermont (1)

Trileaf Corporation (1)

VELCO (1)

Email your Public Notices to legals@addisonindependent.com and Jenna makes sure it gets in the paper

Deputy sheriff helps a person who had fallen on the ice

ADDISON COUNTY — On Jan. 16, Addison County Sheriff's Department deputies went to a Middlebury address to serve court paperwork and found a person had slipped and fallen outside and appeared to have been there for some time.

Seeing the injuries, the deputy called the rescue squad, which came and took the injured person to the hospital.

Between Jan. 11 and 17, the sheriff's department completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 101 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations, attempted to

Sheriff's Log

serve 18 pieces of civil process around the county, twice assisted families with a new car seat and performed VIN verifications in Middlebury, Leicester and Monkton.

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

- On Jan. 12 Sheriff Elmore participated in the last meeting for

the county budget.

- On Jan. 12 completed a background investigation in Middlebury.
- On Jan. 123 served a judicial summons to somebody in Leicester at the request of the State Attorney's Office.
- On Jan. 15 provided a ride along with a deputy to a person interested in a law enforcement career.
- On Jan. 15 completed a background investigation in Middlebury.
- On Jan. 15 assisted Middlebury police with a search for a missing person. They were ultimately

located safely.

- On Jan. 16 assisted a driver whose vehicle slid off the road on Town Hill Road in New Haven.
- On Jan. 16 served a citation in Shoreham on behalf of Vermont State Police.
- On Jan. 16 Sheriff Elmore attended truancy meetings at the middle school and high school in Middlebury.
- On Jan. 17 stood by while a person collected their belongings due to a restraining order.
- On Jan. 17 assisted state police with a crash on Fern Lake Road in Leicester.

ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE TO ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES 8-11 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL CHOICE

Vergennes Union Middle and High School, along with all other Vermont public high schools, participates in a statewide system of public high school choice. Under this system, students from VUHS may apply to transfer to any other public high school in the state. For the 2026-2027 school year, the maximum number of students eligible to transfer is set by the ANWSD School Board each January. The actual number will depend on the number of students selected in prior years to continue their enrollment at other area high schools.

To apply to participate in the program for the 2026-2027 school year (grades 9-12):

- Complete an application available from the VUMHS School Counseling Office;
- All applications must be signed by a parent or guardian;
- File the application with the School Counseling Office on or before **February 28, 2026**. Applications received after February 28th will not be accepted.

Notification of decisions to all students who have applied to participate will be provided no later than **April 1, 2026**.

Additional school choice information, including a timeline, is available from the School Counseling Office.

A student's enrollment application may be denied by another receiving school if the student has been expelled or received an extended suspension for violation of Vergennes Union High School's alcohol, substance abuse, or weapons-in-schools policies during the year prior to enrollment in that regional partnership school. Upon enrollment in the receiving school, students are subject to the disciplinary policies and procedures of the receiving school. If selected to attend another high school in the regional partnership, students shall be guaranteed enrollment in that receiving school until graduation as long as they remain residents of the Addison Northwest School District and are not subject to expulsion as a result of the receiving school's policy and federal and state law.

TOWN OF SALISBURY 24 V.S.A. 1061 NOTICE OF PROPOSED CONVEYANCE

The Select Board of the Town of Salisbury intends to convey an Historic Preservation Easement on the Town Hall building located at 918 Maple Street in Salisbury, Vermont. The easement would be co-held by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and the Preservation Trust of Vermont, Inc. The purpose of the easement is to assure that the significant historic features and the structural soundness of the building will be maintained.

The easement is a component of VHCB Grant Agreement #2025-020-001 which provides, in part that VHCB will make a grant in the amount of up to \$200,000 for use by the Town in rehabilitating the building; that the Town will rehabilitate the building to preserve the historic features; and that the Town will execute a Grant of Historic Preservation Easement of perpetual duration. The easement would require that the building be owned in perpetuity by a qualified nonprofit, public, or other entity approved by the VHCB.

A copy of the easement is available at the Town Office. For more information regarding the proposed conveyance contact Deb Brighton brightondeborah@gmail.com.

Unless a petition is filed within 30 days of the posting of this notice, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. Section 1061, the select board will authorize the easement.

This notice is dated January 22, 2026.

MOUNT ABRAHAM UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (Bristol, Monkton, New Haven, Starksboro)

The legal voters of the Mount Abraham Unified School District, consisting of the Towns of Bristol, Monkton, New Haven, and Starksboro are hereby notified and warned to meet in person (Mount Abraham Library) on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM, to consider and act upon the following articles (Articles 1-9) and to discuss the article to be voted upon by Australian ballot (Article 10). Legal voters who attend via Zoom may not act upon articles from the floor but may participate for informational purposes only. The legal voters are further notified and warned that voting on Article 10 shall take place by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. at the official polling places of the respective Towns comprising the district.

Please click the link below to join the Zoom Meeting:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83107177217?pwd=AvROYXVfmGn7PMskkb95Bv8QfbRla.1>
Meeting ID: 831 0717 7217
Passcode: dZF1B9

To be acted upon on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

Article 1: To elect a moderator who shall assume office immediately and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of a successor.

Article 2: To elect a Clerk who shall assume office on July 1, 2026, and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of a successor.

Article 3: To elect a Treasurer who shall assume office on July 1, 2026, and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of successors.

Article 4: To establish the salaries for the elected officers of the District.

Article 5: To authorize the District Board of Directors to borrow money by the issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for the fiscal year 2026-2027 per 16 V.S.A. §562(9).

Article 6: To hear and act upon the reports of the School District directors and officers.

Article 7: To discuss article to be voted upon by Australian ballot (Article 10)

Article 8: To transact any other business which may legally come before this meeting.

Article 9: To adjourn the meeting until 7:00 AM March 3, 2026, when voting by Australian ballot shall commence.

To be voted upon by Australian ballot on March 3, 2026

Article 10: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend Thirty-Seven Million, Eight Hundred Sixty-Two Thousand, Seven Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$37,862,780), which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? The Mount Abraham Unified School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of Fifteen Thousand, One Hundred Thirty-Two and Forty-Three Cents (\$15,132.43), which is 3.45% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.

For the purpose of voting by Australian ballot:

In person voting will be available at local polling places on **Tuesday, March 3, 2026, from 7am – 7 pm**. To request to have an MAUSD absentee ballot mailed to you, please contact your Town Clerk, or use the "My Voter Page" online resource from the Secretary of State which can be found here: <https://mvp.vermont.gov/>. Please make your request for mailed ballots to your Town clerk no later than **Tuesday, February 24, 2026**. Absentee ballots must be returned before the close of the Town Clerk's office on the day before the election, or to the polling place before 7:00PM on the day of the election, in order to be counted.

Voters of the Town of Bristol will vote at Holley Hall located at 1 South St, Bristol, VT 05443. The Polls will open on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM.

Voters of the Town of Monkton will vote at the Monkton Town Offices located at 92 Monkton Ridge, Monkton, VT 05469. The Polls will open on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM.

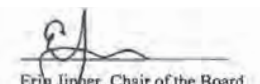
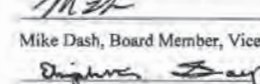
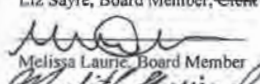
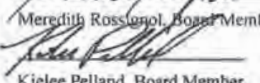

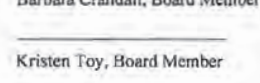
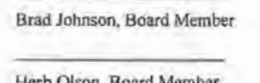
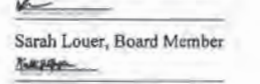
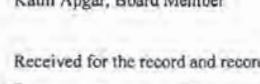
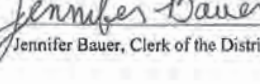

Voters of the Town New Haven will vote at the New Haven Town Hall located at 70 North St, New Haven, VT 05472. The Polls will open on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM.

Voters of the Town of Starksboro will vote at the Robinson Elementary School located at 41 Parsonage Rd, Starksboro, VT 05487. The Polls will open on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 7:00AM and close at 7:00 PM.

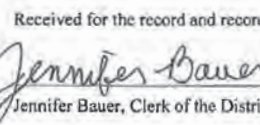
Upon closing of the polls in Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro, the ballot boxes will be sealed, transported to, and re-opened at Holly Hall in the Town of Bristol, where the ballots will be counted and comingled by a tabulator under observation of representatives of the Boards of Civil Authority of the Towns of Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and/or Starksboro under the supervision of the Clerk of the Mount Abraham Unified School District.

The legal voters of the Mount Abraham Unified School District are further notified that voter qualification and registration relative to said meeting shall be as provided in Section 706(u) of Title 16, and Chapters 43, 51 and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

On behalf of the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board of Directors:

	Dated this <u>16</u> day of January 2026
Erin Jipher, Chair of the Board	
	Dated this <u>6</u> day of January 2026
Mike Dash, Board Member, Vice Chair	
	Dated this <u>6</u> day of January 2026
Liz Sayre, Board Member, Clerk	
	Dated this <u>6</u> day of January 2026
Melissa Laurie, Board Member	
	Dated this <u>6</u> day of January 2026
Meredith Rossignol, Board Member	
	Dated this <u>6</u> day of January 2026
Kielee Pelland, Board Member	
	Dated this <u>7</u> day of January 2026
Justin Pearson, Board Member	
	Dated this <u> </u> day of January 2026
Barbara Crandall, Board Member, Clerk	
	Dated this <u> </u> day of January 2026
Kristen Toy, Board Member	
	Dated this <u> </u> day of January 2026
Brad Johnson, Board Member	
	Dated this <u> </u> day of January 2026
Herb Olson, Board Member	
	Dated this <u>13</u> day of January 2026
Sarah Louer, Board Member	
	Dated this <u>17</u> day of January 2026
Kathi Apgar, Board Member	

Received for the record and recorded this 14th day of January 2026 by:


Jennifer Bauer, Clerk of the District

PROPOSED STATE RULES

By law, public notice of proposed rules must be given by publication in newspapers of record. The purpose of these notices is to give the public a chance to respond to the proposals. The public notices for administrative rules are now also available online at <https://secure.vermont.gov/SOS/rules/>. The law requires an agency to hold a public hearing on a proposed rule, if requested to do so in writing by 25 persons or an association having at least 25 members.

To make special arrangements for individuals with disabilities or special needs please call or write the contact person listed below as soon as possible.

To obtain further information concerning any scheduled hearing(s), obtain copies of proposed rule(s) or submit comments regarding proposed rule(s), please call or write the contact person listed below. You may also submit comments in writing to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, State House, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 (802-828-2231).

Brain Injury Program Rule.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 26P001

AGENCY: Agency of Human Services, Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL)

CONCISE SUMMARY: The Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) has long relied on policies and program standards to determine eligibility for, and to administer, Brain Injury Program (BIP) services. DAIL now seeks to codify these policies and standards through the adoption of this new rule, which will modernize some definitions, add clarity regarding continued clinical eligibility, incorporate a required Medicaid policy regarding paying legally responsible individuals, insert federally required Electronic Visit Verification, and add an updated Case Management definition, along with a new "Service Broker" service to comply with federally required Conflict-Free Case Management rules. Once adopted, these BIP Rules will be incorporated into the Health Care Administrative Rules, a set of rules for all Vermont Medicaid services, which is maintained by the Agency of Human Services (AHS).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Megan Tierney-Ward, Agency of Human Services, Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) HC 2 South, 280 State Drive Waterbury, VT 05671-2060 Tel: 802-760-9405 E-mail: megan.tierney-ward@vermont.gov URL: <https://dail.vermont.gov/public-notices-and-hearings>.

FOR COPIES: Stuart Schurr, Agency of Human Services, Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) HC 2 South, 280 State Drive Waterbury, VT 05671-2060 Tel: 802-238-3754 E-Mail: stuart.schurr@vermont.gov

FULL PASSPORT SERVICE

The Addison County Clerk located in the Frank Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury is available to accept passport applications and provide passport photos.

REGULAR HOURS
Monday - 8:30am to 4:00pm
Tuesday - 9:00am to 12:30pm
Wednesday - **Closed**
Thursday - 12:30pm to 4:00pm
Friday - 9:00am to 12:30pm

APPOINTMENTS REQUIRED
For appointment, go to www.addisoncountyclerkvt.com or call 802-388-1966.

Find the Addy Indy On:

For breaking news and updates wherever you are!

@addisonindependent

Important Annual Notice Regarding Herbicide Use in the Maintenance of Electric Utility Rights-of-Way

The Vermont Public Utility Commission has set forth rules under [PUC Rule 3.600](#) pertaining to the use of herbicides in the maintenance of electric utility rights-of-way (ROW). Each spring, herbicide applications may begin on or after April 1st. These rules afford you important rights and duties. Vermont electric utilities maintain electric line rights-of-way with several methods, including the selective use of herbicides on trees and brush. They also encourage low-growing shrubs and trees which will crowd tall-growing species and, thus, minimize the use of herbicides. Methods of herbicide applications may include stump, stem injection, basal, soil, and foliar. Only electric utility rights-of-way that have tall-growing tree species with the potential of threatening the electric utility system are treated.

If you reside on or own property in Vermont within 1000' of an electric utility right-of-way:

- 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.
- 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.
- Watch and listen for public service announcements in newspapers and radio ads noting upcoming herbicide applications.
- Check with your local electric utility regarding the vegetation management cycle near your particular line.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
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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
Electric Utility Account Number	O.K. to use work number? Yes No (circle one)
Affected Property: Year-Round Residence Summer Residence Commercial Property Water Supply Organic Farm Land Other (Circle all that apply)	Best time to contact you
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

ARTS LEISURE

The Addison Independent

January 22, 2026



Alice Eckles stands in front of her work "Kingdom of Heaven," an oil and cold wax piece that belongs to Alexandre Apfel, the owner of Golden Rule Mead in Middlebury.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES

Alice Eckles looks at the New Year with clear resolution

A few weeks into 2026, and it's time for a check-in. How's it going? Are those New Year's resolutions holding up?

Middlebury artist Alice Eckles has some pretty on-point thoughts for this time of year:

By **ELSIE LYNN PARINI**

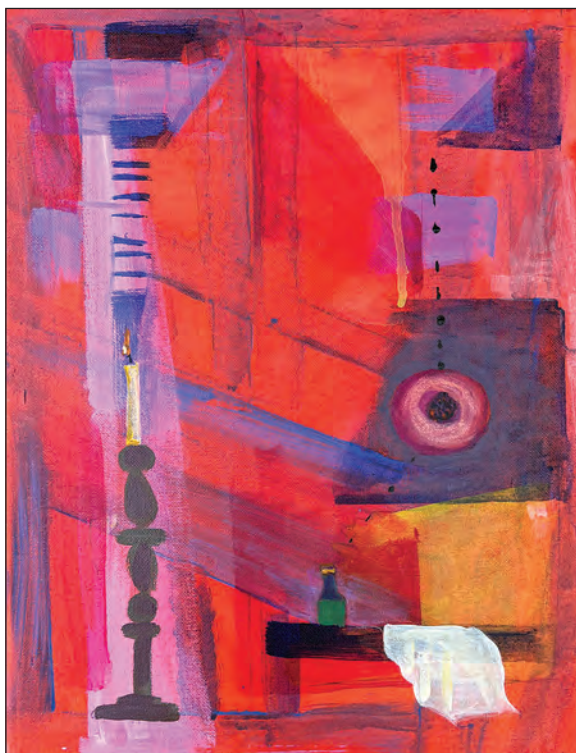
"Out with the old and in with the new," she said during an email interview at the turn of the New

Year. "Sometimes this happens by choice. Change is proof of life.

"Artists often suffer, but I take joy in my suffering on that account because I know what is important to me," she continued. "If I leave one beautiful thing behind or even just my vision — if people can see through my eyes when I'm gone, especially my loved ones — I'll be satisfied on my last day."

Now *that's* a goal.

Heading into 2026, Eckles marked some changes for herself as an artist, namely moving



"Red Light" by Alice Eckles, 17" x 13", acrylic on canvas.

on from her job at Edgewater Gallery and taking down a long-standing exhibition at Golden Rule Mead (2021-2025).

"Alice has a really varied body of work," said Alexandre Apfel, owner of Golden Rule Mead. "When I moved the Meadery here to Middlebury and was getting started, Alice hung her work here for the Vermont Open Studio Weekend in 2021. After the weekend she decided to leave the art, which was incredible for me — it fit the space so beautifully."

Apfel was able to keep a few of her pieces for his own collection including "Kingdom of Heaven," a large work that reminded Apfel of Hilma of Klint (Swedish abstract artist, 1862-1944).

"At the core of Alice's work there's this playful approach to art and living," Apfel said. "It's all very alive!"

"Over the holidays I've had some time to take stock of what's working and what's not working," Eckles said, "and think about how I'll move forward in 2026."

Already this winter, she has picked up a new double-booth at the Rutland Farmers Market

See ALICE on page 3

Damian Stamer finds ‘Angels & Ghosts’

NEW EXHIBIT EXPLORES BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HUMAN AND MACHINE CREATIVITY, JAN. 20-APRIL 19

Curated by Dexter Wimberly, a new exhibit at the Middlebury College Museum of Art presents a continuation of artist Damian Stamer’s acclaimed “Collaboration Series,” featuring evocative oil paintings that emerge from an artistic partnership between human creativity and artificial intelligence. The exhibit opened Jan. 20, and will be on view through April 19.

Born in 1982 in Durham, N.C., where he continues to live and work, Stamer explores the intricacies of time, memory and existence through his paintings. His work addresses fundamental questions about what it means to remember, create and be human, offering reflections on our relationship with technology and its impact on our perception of self and the world.

In this exhibit, “Angels & Ghosts,” Stamer collaborates with the AI image generator DALL·E 2 to create paintings rooted in memories of his childhood. Through this process, he has discovered that occasionally — perhaps one in hundreds of generations — the AI produces images that mysteriously contain angelic and ghostlike forms, despite receiving no explicit prompts to include such spectral elements. These unexpected

manifestations serve as catalysts for exploring memory, belief and the complex relationship between technology and artistic expression.

“My first angel appeared over two years ago and I have been working on these paintings intensely ever since,” Stamer said. “After many solitary hours in the studio, I am excited to share this series with the Middlebury community and the world.”

The exhibition draws compelling parallels to Spirit Photography, a phenomenon popular in the late 19th century when supposed images of ghosts were captured on film. Just as Spirit Photography emerged during post-Civil War upheaval — when society grappled with loss and new technologies — Stamer’s work mirrors our contemporary moment of tension about the swift rise of AI. The series invites viewers to contemplate the nature of belief and faith in an age where technology both fascinates and unsettles us.

“MY FIRST ANGEL APPEARED OVER TWO YEARS AGO AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THESE PAINTINGS INTENSELY EVER SINCE.”

— Damian Stamer

Stamer’s artistic approach combines traditional oil painting techniques with AI imagery. He begins by inputting semi-autobiographical prompts into DALL·E 2, such as: “My photographic childhood memory exploring the bedroom of an abandoned rural North Carolina house filled with old junk.” Without explicitly mentioning spectral elements, the AI produces images imbued with ethereal, ghostlike qualities that Stamer translates onto



Damian Stamer in his studio.

PHOTO / LISSA GOTWALS

linen through meticulous and bold brushwork.

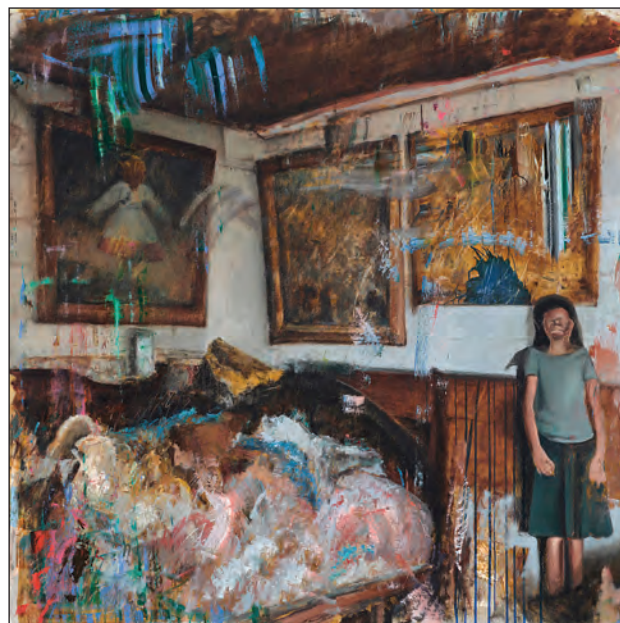
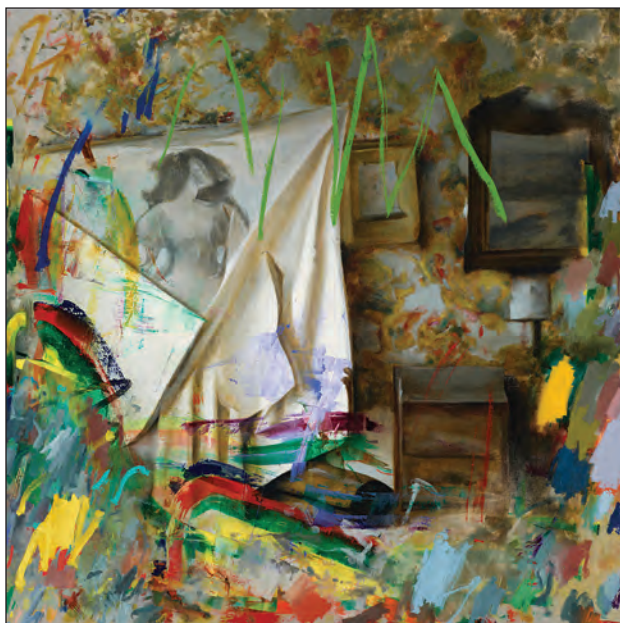
Focusing on interior spaces, the resulting paintings present ghostly figures and angelic forms emerging within abandoned rooms and cluttered spaces. These haunting domestic scenes encourage viewers to look deeper and engage with the works on multiple levels, discovering hidden narratives within familiar yet unsettling environments.

By collaborating with an AI that occasionally introduces unprompted spectral imagery, Stamer raises provocative questions about authorship, intention, and the role of chance in the creative process. His methodical sifting through countless AI-generated images to find these elusive angelic forms echoes ghost hunting and paranormal research, reflecting the enduring human quest to understand the unseen.

“By exploring themes of human creativity, curiosity, faith and skepticism, ‘Angels & Ghosts’ taps into our current technological and social moment,” said exhibition curator, Dexter Wimberly.

The exhibition encapsulates the tension between fear and faith in artificial intelligence. While AI offers unprecedented opportunities for innovation, it also raises ethical concerns and existential questions. Stamer’s work uses AI not merely as a tool but as a true collaborator that brings its own unpredictability and “otherness” to the creative process.

“Angels & Ghosts” challenges viewers to reconsider the boundaries between human and machine creativity while exploring timeless themes of memory, mortality and the search for meaning in an increasingly complex technological landscape. The exhibition offers a unique meditation on how we might navigate our relationship with AI as collaborative partners in the ongoing human story of creation and discovery.



Collaboration 35 (Angel 1), oil on linen, (left) and Collaboration 39 (Ghost 1 – Scary Ghost), oil on linen (right) both by Damian Stamer. These images pull from his prompt to the AI image generator DALL·E 2, “My photographic childhood memory exploring the bedroom of an abandoned rural North Carolina house filled with old junk.”

IMAGES COURTESY / DAMIAN STAMER

ALICE

continued from page 1

(Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.) for the rest of the winter, where she sells her artwork and books, and her husband, Ross Conrad's honey, beeswax, candles,

books and hive products.

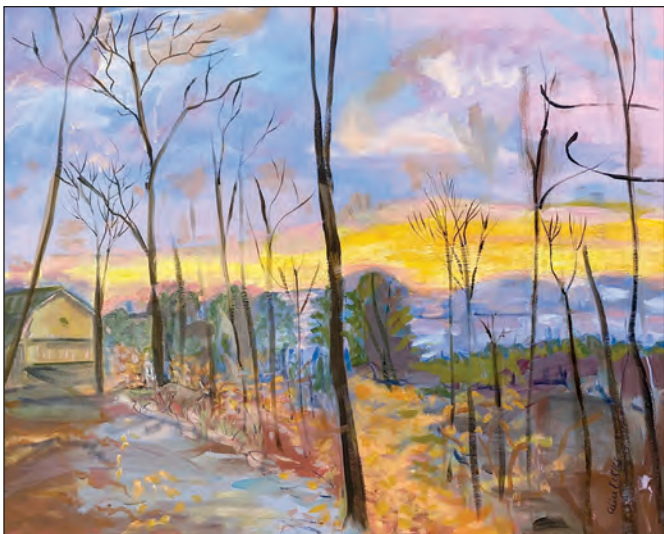
"I keep my planning loose so that I can do what feels right at the time," she said.

Eckles is hoping to repeat several successful efforts from last year, like hosting the Art Spot (an art table where she facilitates "free range art making" for kids and adults) at the Addison County Farmers Market on the green in Middlebury during the summer. She'll also continue to participate in artist groups. She's part of member and juried shows at the AVA Art Center in Lebanon, N.H., Southern Vermont Art Center in Manchester, Vt., and the Vermont Pastel Society. Eckles also exhibits regularly at ART, etc. in Randolph.

"It has been a pleasure to have Alice Eckles as a visiting artist in ART, etc. for many years," said Andrea Melville, owner of the Randolph gallery. "Alice's watercolors and oils capture Vermont's landscapes and little-know-places. Often, they include tiny wildlife images that bring a touch of whimsy to the painting. Her cityscapes portray deep canyons and immense buildings that seem foreign to her more traditional New England scenes."

Melville noted that a variety of Eckles's paintings are currently on view and available at ART, etc., (26 N. Main St., Randolph, or @artetcvt).

"My calling as an artist came early in life," said Eckles, remembering back to her early years growing up in New Orleans. "My mother encouraged me even as a toddler — setting me out with water and a brush in the sun on our driveway in Saint Bernard Parish — so I



"Inhabited Landscape, deer" by Alice Eckles, 24" x 30", oil on panel.



Middlebury artist Alice Eckles stands outside her home earlier this month.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES

could paint in water and watch it evaporate. I was also excited about being an artist because of my grandmother's painting that was always above the couch in my childhood home."

Eckles remembers watching and being inspired by artists painting in the French Quarter... and a print of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" that hung above her crib.

"When we dried the huge heads of the sunflowers from our garden, I was amazed how Van Gogh had made me see the swirled geometry because of his painting," Eckles said.

Change came for Eckles (and many others) on April 4, 1968, when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

"My parents felt the need to respond somehow, so they joined the Ecumenical Institute," Eckles explained. "EI liked to move people around and we were moved to a different communal EI house before I was eight. The new house was in Wichita, Kan. The next year we moved out of EI but continued to live in Kansas."

When it was time for Eckles to pursue higher education, she came to Vermont to go to Bennington College.

"I wanted to get away from Kansas and to get to know my grandmother who was an artist, author and herbalist in Marshfield," she said.

Eckles counts her time at Bennington as the beginning of her formal training as an artist.

"TO ME ART IS MY PROCESS OF LIVING, I FEEL MORE ALIVE WHEN I'M CREATING AND I COMMUNE WITH LIFE, SPIRIT, NATURE, LIGHT AND LOVE THROUGH MY ARTISTIC INVOLVEMENT IN DAILY LIFE."

— Alice Eckles

"I took all different kinds of art classes such as ceramics, music, dance, architecture and performance art. It was a chance to try a lot of different things and provided a space to be in an expansive community of art," she said. "To me art is my process of living, I feel more alive when I'm creating and I commune with Life, Spirit, Nature, Light and Love through my artistic involvement in daily life. Art is like my will to live. What inspires it is kind of beyond me."

Eckles earned her bachelor's degree from Bennington College in 1992 and then continued on to earn a master's in education with Waldorf Certification at Antioch University. She has published two books, "A Phrase Book for Spiritual Emergencies: Essays" and "The Literature Preferred by Wild Boar," a novel; as well as a handmade poetry book. Her chapbook "All the Greif" was published by Zig Zag Lit Mag in September 2024.

Eckles came to Middlebury in the late 2000s to be closer to Conrad (who she was dating at the time), and because "there are so many things I loved about Middlebury — a small, cultured town that has everything you need in a pleasantly walkable downtown."

For Eckles's entire working life, she has supplemented her income with the sales of her artwork.

"It's very hard to make an actual living solely from selling your paintings, and I have never been able to do it," she said. "Yet I have not ceased living. Perhaps it's helped me to build character."

Yes, change happens, but Eckles has remained resolute: she is an artist!

She plans, of course, to continue creating new work and looking for new opportunities to show her work in 2026.

"But I will also be focusing on enjoying beautiful quiet solitude at home," she added. "Peace, quiet and solitude — those are the gifts that I'm giving myself this year... Oh, and focusing on family! Art is all-encompassing and I'm feeling good about the ingredients making up the whole for me this year: solitude, faith, family, friends, home, art, writing."

UPCOMING MUSIC

Quartet kicks off a Wintertide Music three-part series

Three Wintertide Music shows are coming to Middlebury, and it all starts on Feb. 8, with Christine Tassan et les Imposteures. This internationally acclaimed quartet will come to Town Hall Theater's Rothrock Mainstage in Middlebury on Sunday, Feb. 8, at 4 p.m.

With more than 20 years of performing their distinctive blend of Gypsy jazz and reimagined cover songs, Christine Tassan et les Imposteures have carved out a singular place on the international music scene. Led by guitarist Christine Tassan, the quartet were pioneers in a genre traditionally dominated by men and early trailblazers of the gypsy jazz wave that swept across Québec. Their sound is at once timeless and contemporary, appealing equally to longtime jazz devotees and new listeners alike.

The group has released seven albums and performed over 700 concerts at

venues and festivals around the world. Highlights include appearances at the Montreal International Jazz Festival, the Django Reinhardt Festival in Samois-sur-Seine (France), the Liberchies Django Festival (Belgium), and the Northwest Django Fest (USA), along with extensive touring across Canada, Europe, the United States and China. Their album *Entre Félix et Django* received the Opus Award for Jazz Album of the Year in 2017 and earned a Show of the Year nomination in 2018.

This Wintertide performance offers Middlebury audiences a rare opportunity to experience one of the leading ensembles in contemporary gypsy jazz live on stage. Next in the Wintertide series, audiences will enjoy Clint Bierman's *Grunge Unplugged* on Saturday, Feb. 14, and the Vermont Mandolin Trio on Friday, March 27. For tickets (\$15-\$35) and more information, visit townhalltheater.org or call 802-382-9222.



Internationally acclaimed quartet Christine Tassan et les Imposteures will play on the mainstage at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on Sunday, Feb. 8, at 4 p.m.

PHOTO / SYLVIANE ROBINI

More Tunes

Pop-up performance:


Solo guitarist Mark Christensen plays Thursday, Jan. 22

Take a midday music break, enjoy some cookies and hot cocoa, and discover new sounds at the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury. This Thursday, Jan. 22, there will be a pop-up performance featuring solo guitar improvisation with Mark Christensen.



Christensen is a multi-instrumental performer who primarily uses guitar-driven sounds to create improvisational soundscapes. He is currently recording and performing as a solo artist and as a member of Ghost Ghost, the Arty LaVigne Band and The Rough Suspects. Past projects include co-founding Los Angeles alt-celt band Fools and Fodder, Vermont's John Tower Group and Radio Underground, and post-prog jam band Stone Document, as well as collaborations and projects with varied artists from Cyrus Chestnut to Robert Fripp & The Orchestra of Crafty Guitarists.

Mark Christensen will pop-up some solo guitar vibes at the Mahaney Arts Center on Thursday, Jan. 22, at noon, in the lower lobby of the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury.



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

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ART

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.

BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD

7 Center St, Brandon. For more info visit

brandonartistsguild.org or call 802-247-4956.

"Student Art Show" features young artists chosen by art educators from Lothrop, Otter Creek Academy, Barstow, Neshobe and Otter Valley Middle and High School. A public reception will be held Friday, Feb. 6, from 5-7 p.m., with light refreshments. On view Feb. 3-28.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury

For more info visit middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions

"Angels & Ghosts" features evocative oil paintings from artist Damian Stamer's acclaimed "Collaboration Series," that emerge from an artistic partnership between human creativity and artificial intelligence. This exhibit was curated by Dexter Wimberly, and offers a unique meditation on how we might navigate our relationship with AI. On view Jan. 20-April 19.

"Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury" highlights how unequal, and at times violent, encounters among Africa, Europe and the United States have long configured Art History's understandings of African art, and how our interests and epistemologies infuse, shape and distort our representations of Africa in the museum. On view Jan. 20-April 19.

PHOTOPPLACE 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. You are unstoppable this week, Aries. Your famous pioneering spirit is magnified, giving you the green light for major breakthroughs. Take the lead in situations that excite you.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Prepare for a week of unexpected results, Taurus. A significant financial opportunity may appear out of the blue, or you might find yourself feeling extra secure at work.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. Gemini, your social life is booming right now. You are a magnet for excellent ideas and exciting connections this week. Expect conversations that lead to professional opportunities.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Right now, you are hitting a major professional high point, Cancer. All eyes are on you, and your efforts may lead to some well-deserved recognition and rewards.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Prepare for adventure this week, Leo. The cosmos is urging you to expand your horizons and seek new inspiration. Your optimism is contagious as you make your plans.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. This week brings a powerful sense of personal transformation and empowerment to you, Virgo. You have the energy to tackle complex matters and emerge feeling stronger and wiser.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Libra, your relationships are very strong this week. You'll find mutual respect and exciting shared goals through these alliances.

If you're single, expect an unforgettable encounter.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. This week is perfect for optimizing your work-life flow and implementing small changes that will yield huge, positive results, Scorpio. You may need help mapping out goals.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Sagittarius, your sector of creativity, fun and romance are illuminated this week. Plan a date, unleash your artistic side or simply dedicate time to pure play. Delightful experiences await.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Home is the launchpad for success this week, Capricorn. Focus on developing your domestic environment. A refresh or redecoration can work wonders, especially to banish cabin fever.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Prepare for several days of remarkable connections, Aquarius. Your ideas and innovative concepts are sharp, which will compel others to aspire to be in your orbit.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Your personal finances are set for an upward trajectory, Pisces. A new income stream may surface, or you might discover a hidden talent that you can monetize.

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JAN. 23 — Derek Walcott, poet (d)
- JAN. 24 — Edith Wharton, writer (d)
- JAN. 25 — Virginia Woolf, writer (d)

- JAN. 26 — Lucinda Williams, singer-songwriter (73)
- JAN. 27 — Mozart, composer (d)
- JAN. 28 — Colette, writer (d)
- JAN. 29 — Thomas Paine, writer (d)

CALENDAR

Jan. 22 – Feb. 14

2026

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 [morisearle@gmail.com](mailto:morrisearle@gmail.com) or 802-734-0984. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

LIVE MUSIC AT THE BOBCAT IN BRISTOL.

Thursday, Jan. 22, 5-8 p.m., Bobcat Cafe, 5 Main St. Emerging folk/pop/indie artist Madigan Linnane performs live at the Bobcat. No cover charge.

EGO TOURISM WITH MARK SALVEIT: A ONE-MAN SHOW IN VERGENNES.

Thursday, Jan. 22, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Free Library, 258 Main St. This humorous one-man show, which Salveit performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2025, blends comedy, memoir and insights drawn from the creator's curiosity about Chinese Taoism. Free. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

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.

"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.

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB BREAD LOAF SECTION ANNUAL MEETING IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Jan. 25, 6:30-8:15 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. The Bread Loaf Section of the Green Mountain Club holds its 51st annual meeting, featuring a review of a banner year of trail work. Following the business meeting, guest speaker Keegan Tierney, GMC director of field programs, will present photos and highlights from 2025 trail projects completed by staff and volunteers. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. with brief social time. Free and open to the public.

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.

"STALIN BOYS" SCREENING AND Q&A WITH DIRECTOR BIANCA GIAEVER IN MIDDLEBURY.

Tuesday, Jan. 27, 5-6 p.m., Middlebury

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, BulletinBoard Thursday, January 22 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 23 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. The Talk 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 24 7 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 8 a.m. Energy Week 10 a.m. Selectboard 4 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 25 8:30 a.m. The Talk 9 a.m. Catholic Mass 9:30 a.m. Press Conferences 11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 1 p.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Congregational Service 6:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Energy Week 11 p.m. Democracy Now Monday, January 26 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 27 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 Church 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. Energy Week Wednesday, January 28 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 22 6 a.m. Tai Chi 6:30 a.m. Yoga 7:30 a.m. Hannaford Career Ctr Board	12 p.m. ACSD Board Meeting 3 p.m. Foltz Studio 4 p.m. High School Sports 8:30 p.m. Meet the Author Friday, January 23 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:30 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7 a.m. Meet the Author 9 a.m. ACSD Board 11 a.m. HCC Board 4 p.m. High School Sports 9 p.m. All Brains Belong Saturday, January 24 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 9 a.m. Meet the Author 10:30 a.m. ACSD Board 12 p.m. HCC Board 4 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. Foltz Studio Sunday, January 25 5:30 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 7:30 a.m. HCC Board Meeting	11 a.m. Foltz Studio 1 p.m. High School Sports 6 p.m. All Brains Belong 8 p.m. Foltz Studio 9 p.m. Authors and Poets Monday, January 26 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. School Boards 3:30 p.m. High School Sports 6:30 p.m. ACSD Board 10:30 p.m. Authors and Poets Tuesday, January 27 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. School Boards 5 p.m. Authors and Poets 8 p.m. Foltz Studio Wednesday, January 28 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Science and Nature 7 p.m. School Boards 8 p.m. All Brains Belong	

Top Pick

Irish music night in Middlebury on Feb. 3

RambleTree will play in Middlebury on Tuesday, Feb. 3, from 7-9 p.m., at Two Brothers Tavern, 86 Main St. Rambletree brings a high-energy mix of classic Irish tunes, sea shanties, world music, rock, funk, reggae and original material. Free.



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 lcmmm.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 EVENSING 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.

FRIDAY, FEB. 6
STUDENT ART SHOW OPENING RECEPTION IN BRANDON. Friday, Feb. 6, 5-7 p.m., Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St. Opening reception for the annual Student Art Show, which showcases work by young artists from Brandon-area elementary, middle and high schools. Light refreshments served. Exhibit on view through Feb. 28. More info at brandonartistsguild.org or 802-247-4956.

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.

THE MET: LIVE IN HD PRESENTS "THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF KAVALIER & CLAY" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Feb. 7, 1 p.m.,

Town Hall Theater Anderson Studio, 72-76 Merchants Row. Live HD screening of the Metropolitan Opera's acclaimed adaptation of Michael Chabon's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. A free pre-show talk begins at 12:15 p.m. with Larry Hamberlin, Middlebury College professor emeritus of music, included with ticket purchase. Estimated run time is three hours with one intermission. \$24 adults, \$10 students. More info at addisonarts.org.

SUNDAY, FEB. 8
CHRISTINE TASSAN ET LES IMPOSTEURS IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Feb. 8, 4 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Performance by the acclaimed Québécois gypsy jazz quartet, led by guitarist Christine Tassan. Doors open 30 minutes before showtime. \$35 individual table seat, \$25 orchestra/balcony, \$15 students. More info at addisonarts.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 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.

SATURDAY, FEB. 14
GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE/SNOWSHOE BEANE, BIRCH GLEN ADVENTURE IN HUNTINGTON. Difficult snowshoe and bushwhack, roughly 6 miles and 1,000 feet elevation gain. Wander through the Huntington Wilderness Management Area to the Long Trail and Birch Glen Camp. Snowshoes required. Contact Ellen Cronan at 908-595-2926 for more information. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

LOVE SONGS WITH BILL WALSH AND DAN LEVINE IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Feb. 14, 2 p.m., Vergennes Grand Senior Living, 34 North St. Former Broadway musicians Bill Walsh and Dan Levine perform favorite love songs and show tunes for Valentine's Day. Part of the Vergennes Opera House's "Off Stage" series. Free. More info at vergennessoperahouse.org.

DAMN TALL BUILDINGS CONCERT IN LINCOLN. Saturday, Feb. 14, 7:30-10 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd. Bluegrass/Americana band Damn Tall Buildings performs as part of the Burnham Presents Concert Series, blending traditional bluegrass with roots rock and original songwriting. Two sets. Homemade desserts available. Sliding scale \$20/\$25/\$30. Tickets at burnhampresents.org. More info at 802-349-3364.

See more

CALENDAR LISTINGS

Online!

ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM

College, Axinn Center 232, Old Chapel Road. Screening of "Stalin Boys" followed by a Q&A with director Bianca Giaefer. The documentary follows four middle school boys in a Texas border town who develop an unusual obsession with Joseph Stalin and write a play about the Soviet dictator for the Texas State History Fair, confronting their own ideas of power and control along the way. Open to the public.

BACHATA AND SALSA WINTER SOCIAL: CLASS AND PARTY IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7-9 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center Dance Studio, 72 Porter Field Road. Celebrate the end of J-Term with an evening of bachata and salsa dancing. The event begins with a beginner-level bachata class, followed by a night of social dancing. Hosted by the Bachata and Cuban Salsa winter term course and the Middlebury College Dance Department. Open to the public.

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.

THURSDAY, JAN. 29
"FROM AFRICA TO THE AMERICAS" DANCE PERFORMANCE IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. Dance performance highlighting the ongoing contributions of African and African diaspora traditions to contemporary American culture. \$15 general admission/\$10 faculty/staff/\$8 alumni/emeritus/\$5 students. More info at 802-433-6433 or middlebury.edu.

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

Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury

NEW EXHIBIT AT THE MIDDLEBURY MUSEUM OF ART IS THE FOCUS OF THIS MONTH'S ART CLUB MEETING

In the still silence of the gallery, it is tempting to yield to an authority of place; to succumb to an illusion that a display of African art is a neutral and transparent act that conveys only the values and beliefs of the works' makers and users, and not of those who gathered and placed them on view.

This illusion is the focus of the new exhibition "Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury," which opened Jan. 20 and will be on view through April 19.

The exhibit will highlight how unequal, and at times violent, encounters among Africa, Europe and the United States have long configured Art History's understandings of African art, and how our interests and epistemologies infuse, shape and distort our representations of Africa in the museum.

Like the belly of our Kongolesse Nkisi Nkonde (pictured), its curators envision this exhibit — which will feature a selection of historical and contemporary works from the Middlebury



Anonymous (Kongo-Vili peoples, Republic of the Congo or Cabinda Province, Angola), Nkisi Nkonde (Power Figure), 19th century, wood, metal, fiber, goat horn.

COURTESY IMAGE / MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

College Museum of Art's permanent collection — as a mirror in which both Africa and the Global North are reflected, and as a complex

zone of cross-cultural contact that has the power to reveal, educate and effect change.

ART CLUB

Want to get a closer look at this exhibit?

Join the Art Club on Thursday, Jan. 29, at 3:30 p.m., to discuss "Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury exhibit at the Middlebury College Museum of Art."

"From political borders to systems of classification, externally imposed boundaries have long influenced global views of Africa, obstructing and limiting our understanding of its arts," reads a description of the exhibit. "This exhibit aims to transcend them. It will feature a selection of historical and contemporary works from our permanent collection, exploring them through four subthemes: Beyond Primitivism, Beyond Borders, Beyond Categories, and Beyond Sight."

Middlebury College students Greta Costello and Jude Kuykendall will be at Art Club too. These two students contributed to the design of the exhibition.

RSVP to Don Burns at ddbtx1@gmail.com by Jan. 26 to join. Art Club is free and open to all.

COMMUNITY DANCE EVENTS



SCAN
FOR THE FULL
SCHEDULE

Dance Company of Middlebury presents 'From Africa to the Americas'

The Dance Company of Middlebury will present "From Africa to the Americas" on Thursday, Jan. 29, from 7:30-8:45 p.m., in the Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre in Middlebury.

This performance aspires to reconnect the African diaspora to the evolution of American culture, highlighting the ongoing contributions of African traditions to contemporary artistic and cultural landscapes.

Tickets are \$15 for the general public with discounts for college ID holders and students.



The Dance Company of Middlebury will present "From Africa to the Americas" on Thursday, Jan. 29, from 7:30-8:45 p.m., in the Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre in Middlebury.

PUZZLES

Sponsored by

SPARROW
ART SUPPLY

ACROSS

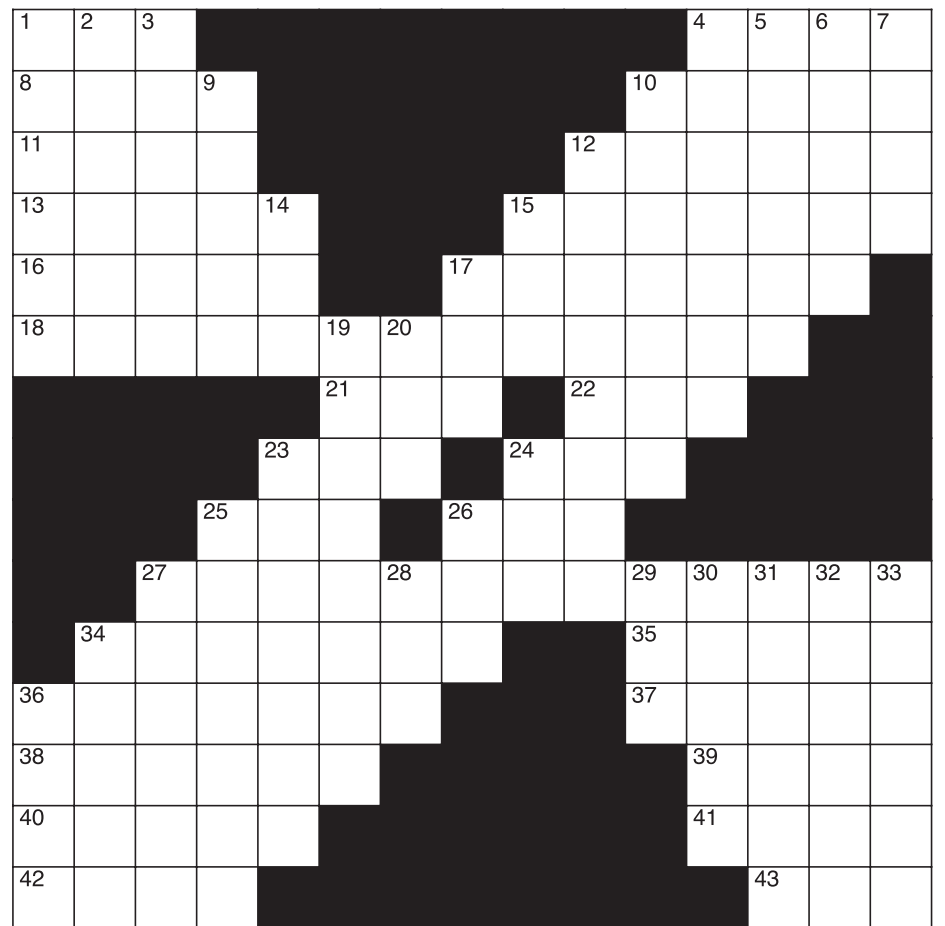
- 1. Racket sport pros
- 4. Make tea
- 8. City South of Moscow
- 10. Spanish bullfighting term
- 11. Egg-shaped
- 12. Could not remember
- 13. French modernist painter
- 15. Persons
- 16. Painful intestinal obstruction
- 17. Professions
- 18. Is up to the task
- 21. Wood or metal bolt
- 22. Tax collector
- 23. A way to save for

- the future
- 24. Georgia rockers
- 25. Midway between north and northeast
- 26. High schoolers' test
- 27. Does not accept responsibility
- 34. One who prepares
- 35. Gout-indicative deposits
- 36. Place to play games
- 37. Book of Genesis character
- 38. Cleans oneself
- 39. Unloaded for money
- 40. Genus of flowering plants

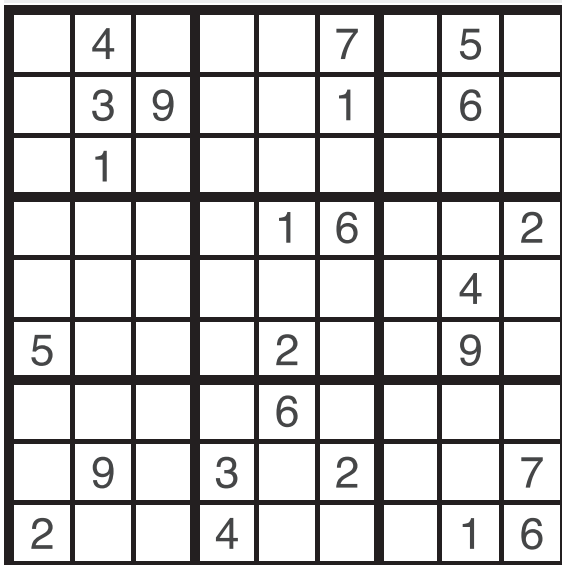
- 41. Take a puff
- 42. Congressmen
- 43. God of battle in Scandinavian mythology

DOWN

- 1. Type of bomb
- 2. South Pacific islands
- 3. Celestial body
- 4. Negotiates
- 5. Consider in a specified way
- 6. Type of group in organic chemistry
- 7. Buddhist monasteries
- 9. Inhabitant of Bering Sea island
- 10. Body part



- 12. Milestone birthday
- 14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
- 15. More (Spanish)
- 17. Chicago ballplayer
- 19. Leaves a place
- 20. Cannot be found
- 23. One's internal body parts
- 24. Tell on
- 25. North American peoples of southwest
- 26. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 27. Extract used for jams and jellies
- 28. Greek goddess of the dawn
- 29. Old English letter
- 30. A way to exaggerate
- 31. Get up and leave
- 32. "Boardwalk Empire" character
- 33. More generous
- 34. Hanging cloth used as a blind
- 36. Ancient Greek sophist



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.

Stay Sharp

Exercise your mind.
With the Addy Indy puzzles every Thursday!



Middlebury, VT
Open Daily
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Spotlight @ Sparrow

Beth S. Bluestein

watercolor

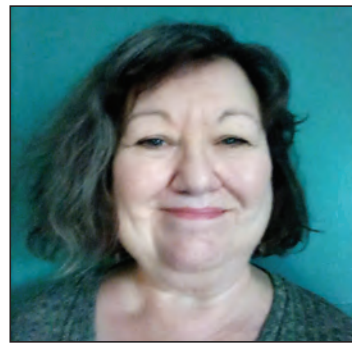
A new series capturing the fragile glow between day and darkness

On view thru January



ASK A MASTER GARDENER

CAN OLD SEEDS STILL GROW?



Deborah Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener who volunteers as a garden columnist and participates in Bennington County Extension Master Gardener Chapter activities.

It's that time of year — seed packet displays are appearing everywhere, from grocery stores to farm and garden supply centers. Garden catalogs arrive in our mailboxes daily, featuring common and exotic vegetable and flower seeds. There's so much temptation.

By **DEBORAH J. BENOIT** If you're a gardener — or want to be one — you likely already have a collection of seed packets from previous years. Before you purchase new seeds, take the time to go through your collection and determine which are likely still usable and which you'll want to replace.

Seeds contain everything needed to produce a new plant. As they age, their viability — how likely a seed is to germinate — lessens. How old is too old depends on the type of seed and the conditions under which they've been stored.

Check your seed packets for a "packed for" date. That's the year the seeds were intended to be planted. Seeds purchased this year will be dated for 2026, but that doesn't mean any leftover seeds at the end of the season should be disposed of. Most seeds are viable for an additional year or two, some more, depending on the type of seed. For example, tomato and kale seeds are usually viable for four years,



while corn and peppers only two, though that can vary. The older a seed is, the lower the germination rate (i.e., the percentage that will successfully sprout).

Just as important, perhaps more so, is how seeds are stored. The best way to store seeds is in a cool, dark and dry location. A sealed glass jar or metal storage container will keep out moisture and help keep seeds safe from mice and other hungry rodents. Temperatures around 40 F are optimal for storage. If you choose to store seeds in the refrigerator, be sure to keep them in an airtight container to avoid humidity.

Testing the viability of seeds is easy to do. You'll need around 10 seeds, a half sheet of paper towel, and a sealable plastic bag. Wet the paper towel thoroughly, then ring out excess moisture. Lay it on a flat surface. Place the seeds in a line about an inch away from the long edge of the paper towel. Fold the paper towel over the seeds and fold it over again to enclose the seeds. Place the folded paper towel in the plastic bag and seal it. Make a note on the bag of the date the test began, the type of seed, and the expected date for germination. The anticipated number of days to germination can be found on the seed packet. Add that number to the start date to get the expected germination date.

Place the plastic bag in a warm place (such as the top of the refrigerator). Check the bag every few days to be sure the paper towel hasn't dried out. On or after the expected germination date, carefully open the folded paper towel to check how many seeds have germinated. If less than half, consider purchasing new seed.

If you're ready to plant, seeds that have germinated can be transferred to a seed starting tray. There's no need to remove the paper if the sprouted seed is attached to it. Just carefully cut around the seed and gently plant the paper with the sprouted seed. See go.uvm.edu/seedstartingbasics for more information on starting seeds.

Winter is an opportune time to sort through old seeds and order new varieties for the coming growing season. It'll be here before you know it.

The University of Vermont Extension Master Gardener Helpline is available online at go.uvm.edu/gardenhelpline to answer your home gardening questions.



The results of a germination test shows that these seeds are viable to plant this season.

PHOTO / DEBRA HELEBA



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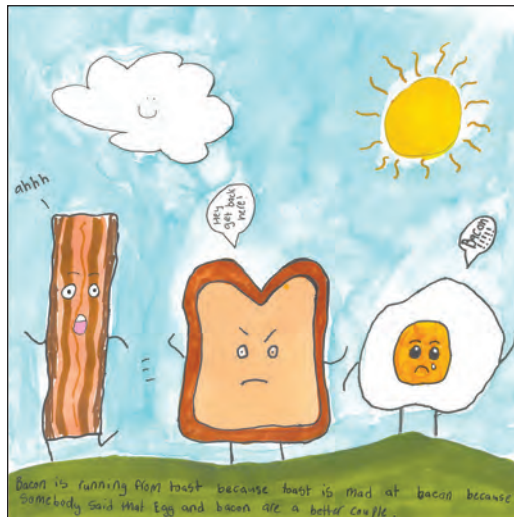
Brandon Artists Guild celebrates young artists with annual show

The Brandon Artists Guild will be hosting the annual Student Art Show at the Center Street Gallery, Feb. 3-28, to celebrate local students and art educators. A public reception is planned for Friday, Feb. 6, from 5-7 p.m., with light refreshments.

The Annual Student Art Show professionally displayed in the gallery showcases work from young artists chosen by Art Educators from Lothrop, Otter Creek Academy, Barstow, Neshobe and Otter Valley Middle and High School. Come and celebrate local art and local young artists in a beautiful setting with fellow community art enthusiasts and friends.

About the gallery

The Brandon Artists Guild is a non-profit, artist-run gallery with 30+ exhibiting members with additional supporting members located in downtown Brandon. As a 501(c)3 non-profit cultural organization we are dedicated to supporting the visual arts and artists



Work by local young artists will be on display at the Brandon Artists Guild, Feb. 3-28.

COURTESY IMAGES

through exhibitions, demonstrations and community art initiatives. Membership dollars and gallery sales help us to fund an annual student art show and make grants to our local art teachers for materials and supplies. Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m., closed Mondays.

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Jasmine

Jasmine has been picking out her favorite snuggle spots and quietly watching the world around her since arriving at the shelter. She does well with other cats, but we don't have any information about her history with dogs, so adopters should prepare for a slow and structured introduction. We think she's pretty fantastic!



Kit



Kit is a sweet guy who came to us after his owner passed away. He's gentle and lovely, so far he prefers to curl up in his favorite bed until a volunteer or staff member sits down with him and then he becomes engaging and affectionate. He may not do well in high energy homes, but

we will continue to get to know him so we can find his perfect match! He did have access to going outdoors in his previous home, he may enjoy that in a new home as well.

Manny



Manny really is the dark orange you're seeing! With his bright pink nose and deep orange coloring, he sort of looks like he stayed out in the sun too long! Manny has previously lived with other cats but has no history with dogs. He's an all-around good boy and is ready to join his forever family.

Sprinkles



It's hard not to smile when you look at Sprinkles. He's a quirky, hunky boy who doesn't seem to know he's a cat. He likes to play with toys by nudging them with the top of his head and pretends to be a turtle by burrowing under his blankets and sticking his head out. He will bring a lot of joy to a home, but it is in his best interests to have a low-energy home. When he is stressed, it manifests with urinary symptoms. He is on a urinary diet along with a supplement.

Bentley



Bentley wants to be a country boy! Too many cars and crowded streets is more than he can handle. Therefore, this 5-year-old is looking for a quiet and calm place where he can be the confident dog he's longing to become. Bentley is a great companion dog with an excellent nose, he loves to use for puzzle games. He's also a master of playing tug, and guess what?! He knows how to speak through buttons! Bentley is housetrained and he would do well with older, calm children. He has a couple of canine friends, but can be insecure when introduced to other dogs. He would prefer to be the only pet.

Homeward Bound
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*This week's property is managed by IPJ Real Estate.
More info at middvermontrealestate.com.*



Rokeby Museum opens once a month, with special talk on Saturday, Jan. 24

This winter, the Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh welcomes visitors into the museum and main "Seeking Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Legacy of an Abolitionist Family" once a month, January-March.

ROKEBY MUSEUM WILL BE OPEN:

Sunday, Jan. 24, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 28, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, March 29, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission is free.

This Sunday, Jan. 24, visitors will also have the option to join a conversation with Jane Williamson, Director Emerita of Rokeby Museum, when they present "Finding Jesse." This talk will trace Jesse's life from enslavement in North Carolina to freedom in Vermont. His story is told through letters in the collection at the Museum and documents at the North Carolina State Archives. The illustrated talk brings the narrative of one freedom seeker out of anonymity and explores his life and his pursuit of freedom.

The talk will take place at 3 p.m., and costs \$5 per person or \$10 per family; or become a member of Rokeby and join the event for free. Email admin@rokeby.org to sign up.

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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS Jan. 22, 2026

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Puzzles, gameshows, dance and an open mic night... What will you choose?

Here are a few random events going on in Addison County that our Arts+Leisure readers might find interesting.

Open Mic at Holley Hall, Bristol

It's a classic open mic night at Holley Hall in Bristol on Saturday, Jan. 24, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Come on out to sing, recite, dance or whatnot... Or watch your neighbors do as much. Open to all.



Great Puzzle Challenge, Middlebury

The Ilsley Public Library's third annual Puzzle Challenge will be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., in Middlebury.

Register a team of one to four puzzlers on the Adult Programs page at ilsleypubliclibrary.org. This year's Puzzle Challenge will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 2 Duane Ct. in Middlebury. For more info call 802-388-4095.



Ecstatic Dance, Addison

Addison Community Center will host an ecstatic dance on Monday, Jan. 26, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Ecstatic Dance is a freeform, movement practice guided by a music wave that is open to anybody — no steps to learn, no experience required. Warm-up starts at 6:30 p.m., opening circle at 7 p.m., and the Ecstatic Wave at 7:15 p.m.



Interested, but also nervous? That's okay, bring a friend along and bring your nervousness along too! Hosted by Marlie Hunt (DJ BeeBody), and Suzanne Hunt.

Wheelz of Steel: A Musical Gameshow, Lincoln

Wheelz of Steel is an interactive audience participation musical gameshow. Ten elite musicians compete to hold aloft the most coveted prize in the universe: Ultimate Chalice of Indisputable Glory.



This fabulous musical gameshow will take place on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 7-10 p.m. at Burnham Hall, in Lincoln.

The game goes like this: The audience selects five famous bands from the American songbook. Then they select five genres in which the song could be played. Those selections go on two wheels — The Wheelz of Steel — which are then spun. Whatever combination comes up that's what needs to be played. The musicians are randomly selected to be in a band of five "Playaz," and they have 10 minutes to put together a song by the chosen band in the chosen genre.

So... Tom Petty/ Bossa Nova? yep... Frank Sinatra/ Grunge? it happens... Prince/ Reggae? You betcha! The audience scores the bands on their efforts and the game goes on, with one Playa rising to the top to claim the coveted prize — The Ultimate Chalice of Indisputable Glory — and to go down in history. Come celebrate the silliness and virtuosity; and see a show like no other. A Lincoln original since 2018.



IPJ Real Estate

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 Sunday, January 25th, 11 am - 1 pm
 unit on view: 10 Brush Lane



Likeness: Stonecrop Meadows duplex kitchen



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• OPEN HOUSE: 10 Brush Lane, Sunday, Jan. 25, 11am - 1 pm!



... I highly recommend joining Stonecrop Meadows and have really enjoyed my time so far!

~ Emma, new resident

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Make a journal or join a book group in Bristol

The Lawrence Memorial Library in Bristol will host two events this month, perfect for literary enthusiasts.

Poem Village: Jumpstart Journal

Join local poet, Lily Hinrichsen and Jane Ploughman, of Plough Girl Press, to create a small book of inspirational writing prompts on Sunday, Jan. 25, from 12-2 p.m. No experience with art or writing necessary for this free workshop. Recommended for ages 15 and up. There are 12 spots available. Register at lawrencelibraryvt.org/events.

January Evening Book Group

Join a book group discussion about "Everything is Tuberculosis" by John Green, on Tuesday, Jan. 27, from 6-7 p.m.

In "Everything is Tuberculosis," Green tells the story of a young tuberculosis patient at Lakka Government Hospital in Sierra Leone, woven through with the scientific and social histories of how tuberculosis has shaped our world and how our choices will shape the future of tuberculosis. Stop by and pick up a copy at the library. Then join this monthly book group's discussion.

For more info call 802-453-2366 or email readmorenow@gmavt.net.

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~ Levi Doria, Listing Agent

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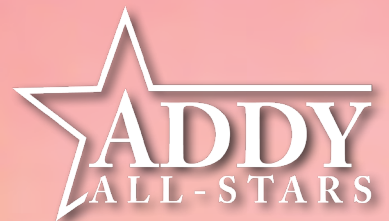


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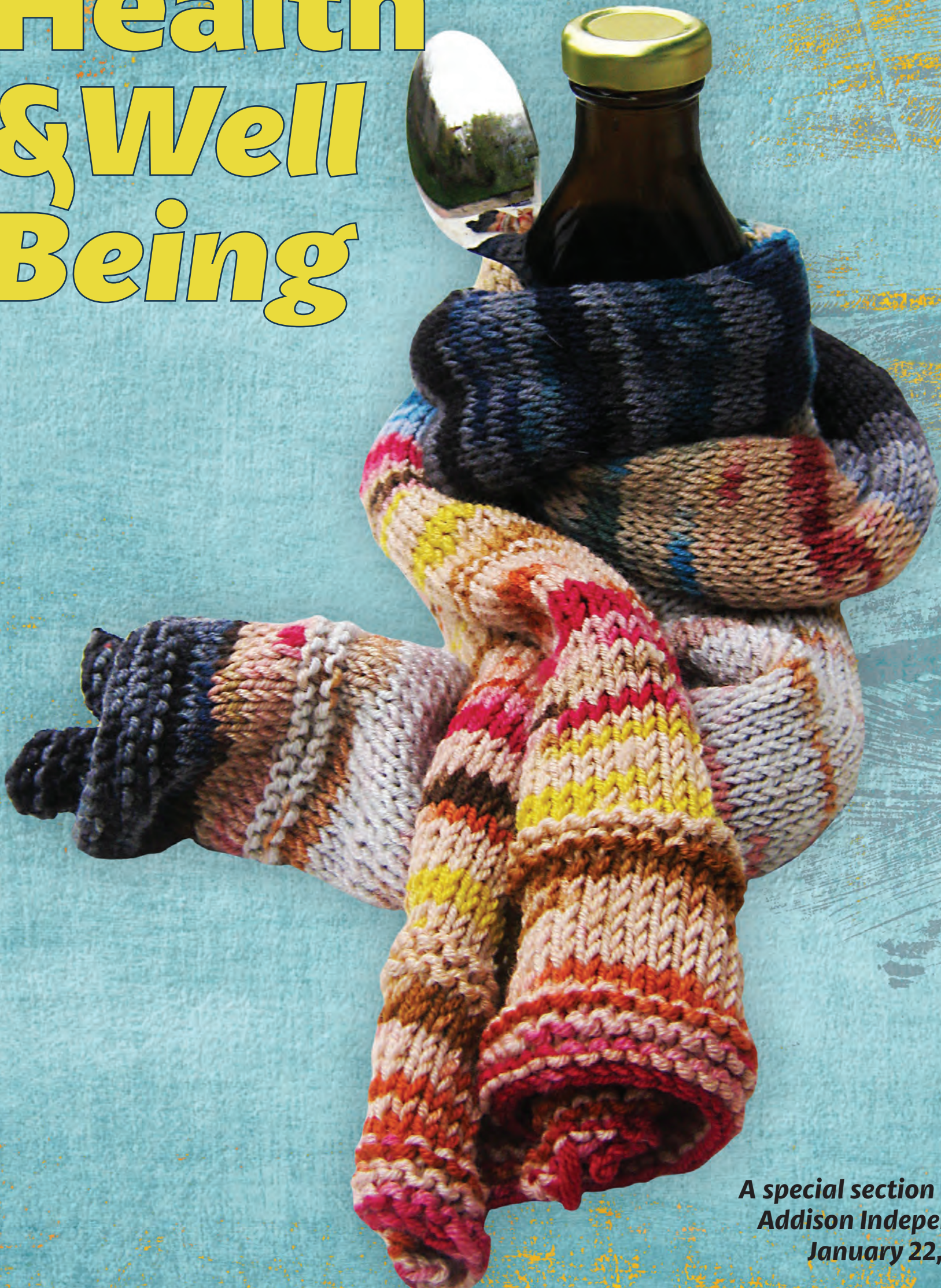
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Health & Well Being



**A special section of the
Addison Independent
January 22, 2026**

This flu season is worse than usual; get a shot

By MARIN HOWELL

ADDISON COUNTY — As temperatures cool down throughout the winter months, flu cases around the country are often ramping up.

This year is no exception.

Local healthcare professionals say they're seeing typical influenza symptoms in cases this year and pointed to some aspects of the current flu season that stand out, such as a relatively early start and a particularly contagious flu strain.

"Overall, this flu season feels moderate but noticeable. It's not the worst season we've seen, but it's been busier than some recent years, especially for families with young kids," said Monica Benjamin, a pediatric primary care nurse practitioner at Porter Medical Center. "We're seeing more missed school

and workdays, and more families dealing with flu on top of other winter viruses, which can make it feel like it's lingering longer than usual."

The ongoing flu season has been more intense than recent years from the perspective of Deborah Wesley, a

registered nurse and CEO of Addison County Home Health and Hospice.

"This year's flu season is more lethal and severe than what we have seen in a long time. The influenza A strain is causing some of our community members to become extremely ill," Wesley said. "Even patients who have had a flu vaccine are becoming ill, although they typically are less sick than those who did not have the vaccination. This is taxing our health care system at every level."

Dr. Francisco Corbalan and Dr. Liz Coogan, both pediatricians at Porter Medical Center, point out that this year's flu season started relatively early.

"We were consistently seeing influenza in November and started seeing a significant increase in cases by early to mid-December," they told the *Independent*.

Local healthcare providers reported seeing classic symptoms in this season's influenza cases, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches and fatigue.

"We are seeing typical flu symptoms which are more severe than normal, and (See Flu season, Page 6)

"This year's flu season is more lethal and severe than what we have seen in a long time. The influenza A strain is causing some of our community members to become extremely ill."

— Deborah Wesley



REGISTERED NURSE MICHELE Christopher gives Kristen Wilson, HR director at Addison County Home Health and Hospice, a flu shot. Local healthcare providers say getting a flu vaccine is key to community members protecting themselves this flu season.

Photo courtesy of Maureen Conrad

VERMONT Sun

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State health experts fault feds on vaccine change

By OLIVIA GIEGER
VTDigger.org

MONTPELIER — The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention scaled back federal guidelines for childhood vaccines on Jan. 5, moving six immunizations out of the “recommended” category. Following the federal action, Vermont officials and health experts are reaffirming the state’s commitment to its existing childhood immunization schedule, which recommends many of the vaccines that the CDC had removed.

The vaccines for flu, RSV, meningococcal disease and hepatitis A and B were among the vaccines removed from the federal recommended category. In Vermont, they remain recommended or required for childcare or school attendance.

The move is the latest in a series of efforts led by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is an outspoken skeptic of vaccines, to move away from established medical science on immunization.

“In Vermont, vaccine policy will continue to be guided by scientific evidence and informed by trusted medical organizations, including the American

Academy of Pediatrics,” state Health Commissioner Rick Hildebrant wrote in a Jan. 6 statement.

“As always, we encourage families to consult trusted health care professionals when making decisions about their children’s health, including their pediatrician, school nurse, or local pharmacist. We also urge caution when sharing or acting on unverified or misleading health information,” his statement continued.

On Jan. 6, he appeared before the Vermont House of Representatives’ Committee on Human Services to address the federal change and to testify about a proposed state bill that aims to protect access to vaccines for those who want and need them in Vermont.

Hildebrant confirmed to lawmakers that the cost of and access to childhood vaccines has not changed with the federal recommendation shift — insurers are still required to cover the costs of these vaccines. But the Health Department is still taking steps to prepare for a future where that is no longer the case as federal policy under President Donald Trump’s administration continues to change.

“We are very concerned about what

this could look like in the future,” he said, adding that he worries this change is “setting the stage” for more drastic restrictions on access to vaccines.

He said the Health Department is working to proactively safeguard vaccine

access in Vermont. The proposed bill H.545 is one path it is taking to do so.

Currently, the state buys vaccines from the CDC, which buys the vaccines from manufacturers in bulk and is able to
(See Feds, Page 9)

“As always, we encourage families to consult trusted health care professionals when making decisions about their children’s health, including their pediatrician, school nurse, or local pharmacist.”

— Vt. Health Commissioner Rick Hildebrant



DR. RICK HILDEBRANT, commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health, speaks before the Senate Health and Welfare Committee at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Jan. 7.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger






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Wash your hands!

The Cleveland Clinic advises that a person can prevent one in three illnesses that cause diarrhea and one in five respiratory infections simply by keeping hands clean. Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to objects like tabletops, door handles and even foods and beverages, which underscores the significance of handwashing.

You should wash your hands frequently, and especially after using the toilet; changing diapers; before, during and after preparing food; before eating; before touching your nose, eyes or mouth (including handling dentures or orthodontic aligners); after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose; and when you arrive home from shopping or being in high-traffic public areas.

The best way to wash hands

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water and use soap if it is available. Any soap will do. Antibacterial products are not essential.
2. Lather up for about 20 seconds, and make sure to get in between fingers, on the back of hands and under the nails where germs like to linger. Don't forget to also wash the wrists.
3. If possible, remove rings and watches before washing hands, or try to at least move the rings to wash under them.
4. Rinse hands well under running water to remove all traces of soap.
5. Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them. It is best to use paper towels or a single-use cloth towel.
6. Use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door in public restrooms. People at home should routinely wipe down faucets and handles with cleansing products to remove germs from these high-touch points. Frequent laundering of towels also can be effective.



SIXTY-SIX-YEAR-OLD Prem Prakash strides to the bar during the International Powerlifting League World Championship before deadlifting the 365 pounds of weight to set a world record.

Photo courtesy of Prem Prakash

Age no barrier to fitness

Prem Prakash, one of Addison County's very active senior athletes, has been at it again. He recently brought home a gold medal from an international competition where he lifted a bar loaded with weights that amounted to more than twice his own body weight.

In the process he set a world record.

Prakash travelled to Wolverhampton, England, and competed in the International Powerlifting League World Championship this past Nov. 19-20. The 66-year-old East Middlebury resident is probably best known in the area as a yoga instructor training both regular citizens and college athletes. So it is no surprise that he keeps his personal body weight at a trim 146 pounds.

In November's competition he won a gold medal in his age and weight class by achieving a personal best and world record 365-pound deadlift.

Prakash was excited to win and seems at least as jacked up about actually compete — at his current age, or any age. As he says, we all age, but we each can chose whether we get "old."

"As we age, it's important we find some physical activity that helps us retain our youthful exuberance for life," he told the *Independent*. "It's also valuable to engage in some form of competition, of striving to fulfill our potential, of engaging in the pursuit of glory."

"We all started life in victory, we all

(See Prakash, Page 11)

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A sedentary lifestyle is bad for kids' health

Physical activity is an important component of a healthy lifestyle for people of all ages. Too often children aren't spending enough time being physically active, and they could pay a hefty price for that as kids and adults.

The digital age has altered childhood for millions of youngsters. Whereas kids once spent much of their free time engaging in unstructured play, typically doing so outdoors, modern kids now live more sedentary lives indoors. Low energy sitting or reclining while looking at a phone or playing video games means children are spending more time than

ever in inactive states, which can lead to long-term, negative health consequences. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only about 24 percent of children between the ages of six and 17 participate in 60 minutes of physical activity each day. The World Health Organization reports that more than 80 percent of the world's school-aged adolescent population is insufficiently physically active. Here's a look at how this lack of exercise is affecting children.

- **Increased childhood obesity:** Inactivity is directly tied to the global rise in childhood obesity, as sedentary

behavior reduces metabolic rates and alters how the body processes fats and sugars, says the WHO.

- **Reduction in cardiovascular fitness:** Without regular exertion, the lungs and heart will not develop the same efficiency as they would if kids were physically active. According to data published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, sedentary childhood habits can contribute to arterial stiffness, which is a precursor to heart disease.

- **Potential for weaker bone structures:** Bone density is built through weight-bearing exercises like jumping and running. Sedentary children run the risk of entering adulthood with weaker bones, potentially leading to orthopedic issues and higher rates of fractures.

- **Adverse psychological effects:** Physical activity releases feel-good chemicals in the body like endorphins and dopamine. Highly sedentary children may be at an elevated risk for anxiety and depression because they are not reaping the benefit of these natural mood boosters.

- **Decreased cognitive function:** Cognitive function could be impacted by low physical movement, which decreases blood flow to the brain, says the National Institutes of Health.

Children can benefit from being active, as it offers protective benefits against various health ailments that can manifest during childhood and even later in life.

— Metro Creative

Please a kid, build an adult with nutritious snacks

Medical professionals note the important role parents can play in helping children build healthy relationships with food. That assistance can begin at an early age so kids get the nutrients they need and learn to enjoy healthy, whole foods. Offering children two or three items at snack time helps them feel in charge of their food decisions, and could set them on a path to lifelong health.

Snack time can be particularly tough for parents, as children may resist anything that isn't potato chips or other foods that do not boast a strong nutritional profile. But many snack foods are both flavorful and nutritious, and parents can offer such items when kids get between-meal hunger pangs.

Fun snacks

Pairing creative presentation with healthy foods often encourages children to try new things. Consider these options for snacks that elevate the fun factor.

- **"Ants on a log":** Parents may have come across these tasty snacks as requests from teachers or at preschool snack time. They're essentially celery sticks filled with cream cheese,

(See Snacks, Page 10)



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Flu season

(Continued from Page 2)

patients are remaining ill for longer than in the past,” Wesley said.

Benjamin said something that’s stood out is how “hard and fast it hits — kids and adults often feel fine one day and very sick the next.

“In children especially, we’re seeing high fevers and extreme tiredness, and some kids also have vomiting or diarrhea, which can be part of flu and often surprises parents as we tend to think of flu as more of a respiratory illness,” she added. “The flu is making people feel really wiped out for several days.”

PREVENTION & TREATMENT

When it comes to protecting yourself from the flu, healthcare professionals stressed the importance of getting a flu shot.

“This year we’ve seen more circulation of a K subclade flu strain that isn’t a perfect match to the vaccine, which means some vaccinated people can still get sick,” Benjamin said. “That said, the vaccine still provides protection, especially against severe illness, hospitalization and complications — and it’s still strongly recommended.”

ACHHH offers around 25 flu clinics annually, providing vaccines at workplaces and the organization’s office. Wesley said ACHHH has given out 392 doses this year, compared to 592 last year.

“The reason for us vaccinating fewer community members this year is not clear — it may be vaccine fatigue, a lack of understanding about the benefits of receiving the vaccine or community members may be receiving them elsewhere,” she said.

Providers noted it’s not too late to get a flu vaccine.

“It does take about two weeks for the flu vaccine to provide the strongest protection against the virus, so there is still time to get protection well before the end of flu season,” Benjamin said.

They offered other advice for community members this flu season, including frequently washing hands and using good handwashing practices, staying home if you’re sick and considering masking up if gathering in a group.

“We are finding that this year’s strain of the (flu) is exceptionally contagious, and it is not only affecting immunocompromised and elderly people. Children and middle-aged people are also being affected,” Wesley said.

Benjamin noted community members can also prioritize sleep, nutrition and hydration, “which really do help support the immune system.”

For those that do end up getting the flu, providers said people can often manage infections with rest, hydration and using acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen to help alleviate fevers and other symptoms.

“Kids and adults should stay home until they’re fever-free for at least 24 hours

without medication,” Benjamin said. “Anyone who has a medical condition that puts them at great risk for complications from flu, like asthma, should seek medical attention even if they are feeling OK.”

WHEN TO SEEK CARE

She added it’s important for people to seek medical care in instances of:

- “Trouble breathing or fast, labored breathing.
- High fevers that aren’t improving, or a fever that goes away and then comes back.
- Signs of dehydration, like very little urine or a dry mouth.
- Extreme sleepiness, confusion or difficulty waking.
- In infants, poor feeding or fewer wet diapers.”

“And always — if something doesn’t feel right to a parent or caregiver, trust that instinct and reach out to a healthcare provider,” she said. “We would rather talk to you and see you in the office than have

you worrying at home.”

Coogan and Corbalan said individuals at an increased risk for serious complications from the flu — a group that includes children under 5 years old and people with a chronic respiratory problem like asthma — are eligible for the antiviral medication oseltamivir, often known by the brand name Tamiflu.

“If you or a family member is in one of these categories, we recommend reaching out to your primary care doctor to see if they should be tested for influenza and/or need treatment,” they said.

Corbalan and Coogan also noted several at-home flu tests can be found at pharmacies.

“Like home tests for COVID-19, false-positive results are unusual but the test isn’t very sensitive and false-negative results are possible,” they said. “So,

if you have a positive result, you can assume you have the flu, but if you see a negative result and still wonder about flu or aren’t sure about the result, you can

reach out to your primary care provider who can help interpret the results and determine if any other testing is needed.”

Looking ahead, Coogan and Corbalan said they can’t predict when flu activity will peak or begin to decline, but “we continue to see increasing cases of influenza-like illnesses in Vermont each week so we can expect

ongoing high rates of influenza for now.” Other healthcare providers echoed that sentiment, emphasizing that prevention remains important as the flu season will continue for a while longer.

“We expect the flu season to stay strong until the end of February and then lessen when the weather starts to warm up in March (we hope),” Wesley said.

“If something doesn’t feel right to a parent or caregiver, trust that instinct and reach out to a healthcare provider.”

— Monica Benjamin

New testing tools show virus amounts in local wastewater

By LYNN BLEVINS
Vermont Department of Health

Vermonters can now check levels and trends of common respiratory viruses detected in wastewater on a new dashboard. The viruses currently include Influenza A, the most common flu virus, and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Wastewater treatment facilities currently participating in the surveillance program are: Burlington–Main, Essex Junction, Middlebury, Montpelier, Ludlow, and South Burlington–Airport Parkway.

SARS-CoV-2 data will be added soon for Brattleboro, Milton, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, and Springfield.

The dashboard shows virus levels (very low, low, moderate, high, very high) for a sewershed of interest or all sites combined. Trends over the last 28 days (decrease, stable, increase) are available for each sewershed. A graph shows levels over time while a map displays the sewershed selected.

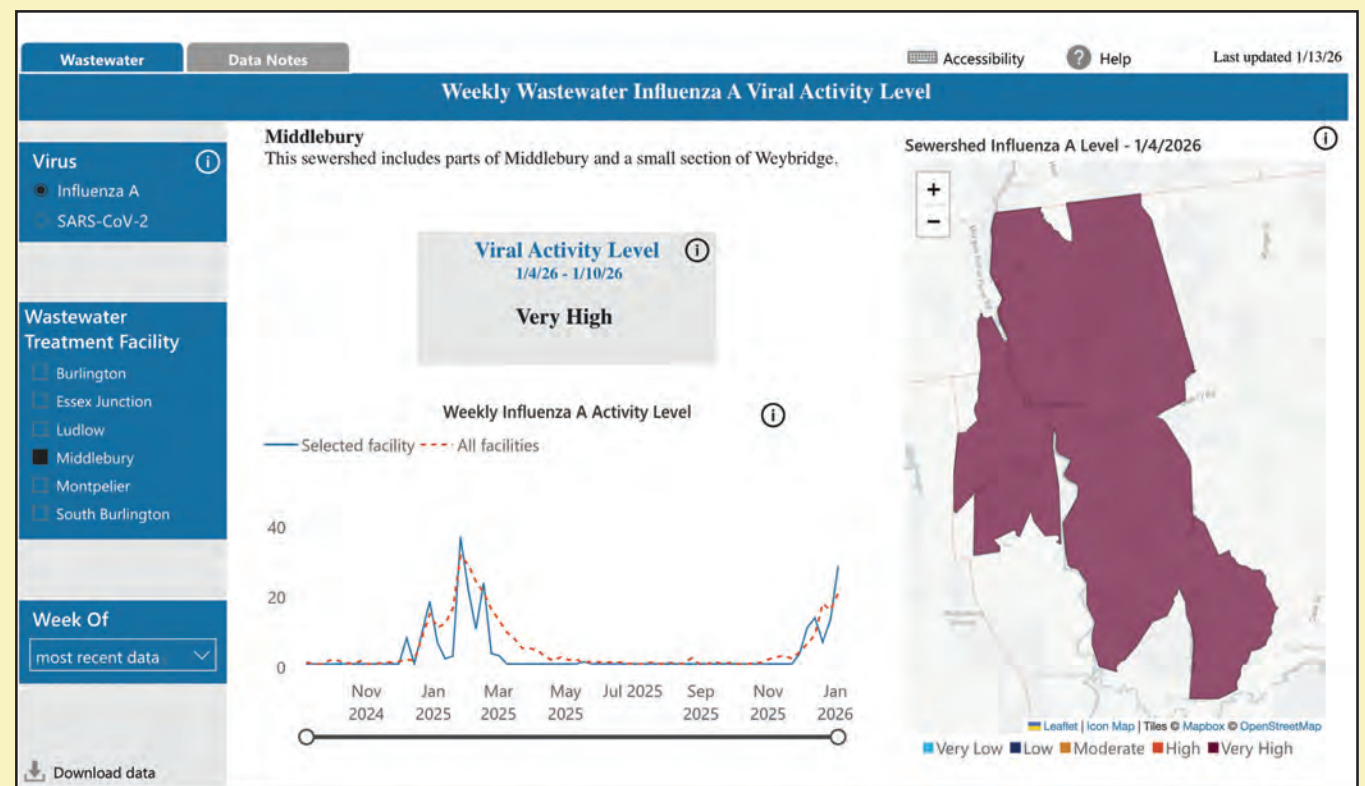
The dashboard is intended for a general audience, with additional statistics and explanations available for those interested in understanding how

the data are calculated.

Wastewater surveillance can identify the presence and estimate the amount of a pathogen in a population (sewershed) without relying on clinical data, such as from hospitals and laboratories. It compliments other types of public health data, often providing signals sooner than other surveillance systems.

Data from a wastewater treatment facility represent people who live, work, play, or travel within a sewershed. People using septic systems or disposable diapers, or who

(See Wastewater, Page 9)



THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT of Health’s new dashboard for Influenza A at the Middlebury wastewater treatment facility shows that in the week ended Jan. 13, the level of flu virus in town was “Very High.”

These daily habits promote health

Health should be a priority, but too often life gets in the way and individuals take a reactive, rather than proactive, approach to their personal well-being. But living healthier need not be so difficult. In fact, research suggests that small, positive changes in how a person lives each day creates a healthier person over time.

A Hologic-Gallup survey on the state of women's health conducted in April 2024 found 63 percent of respondents said it was hard for them to make health a priority. They cited feeling overwhelmed, needing to care for others before themselves, emotional/mental health, and work as the top barriers to focusing on health. But it's important that both women and men recognize that small changes can add up to big results. These healthy habits can help individuals start living healthier lifestyles.

• **Get some exercise.** Regular physical activity is one of the most important things a person can do for his or her health. Exercise helps manage weight, reduces the risk of disease, strengthens bones and muscles, and improves brain health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says adults should aim for at least 150 minutes (30 minutes a day for five days) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week. A great place to begin is with a daily walk, which is a simple and effective habit that does not require a lot of time and no equipment except a good pair of athletic shoes.

• **Wear sunscreen every day.** After washing your face each morning, apply a

facial moisturizer with an SPF of at least 30, or blend equal parts of sunscreen and regular moisturizer, suggests Harvard Health. Use it on the face, neck, ears, and any thinning hair spots on the scalp. Skin cancer is the most common type of the disease worldwide, and wearing sunscreen can help many people avoid it.

• **Spend time outdoors.** It takes just a few minutes in the sun to raise vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for bone and heart health and helps to boost mood. Various studies indicate spending time in green spaces promotes calm and increases happiness.

• **Plan your meals.** Meal planning is not just a way to manage food budgets. It's also a great method to being more mindful of food choices and avoiding impulse buys or meals that may not be as healthy as they can be. Adding more plant-based foods to a diet is a good start. Such foods can reduce the risk of chronic conditions like high cholesterol and hypertension.

• **Stay hydrated.** Hydration supports good digestion, increases energy and may improve brain performance, states Harvard Health. Drink a glass of water each day upon waking up and with every meal. Older adults often do not feel thirst like they did when they were younger, so it is especially important for seniors to stay hydrated.

Healthy habits are more easily adopted when people begin small and make a daily commitment to their overall health.

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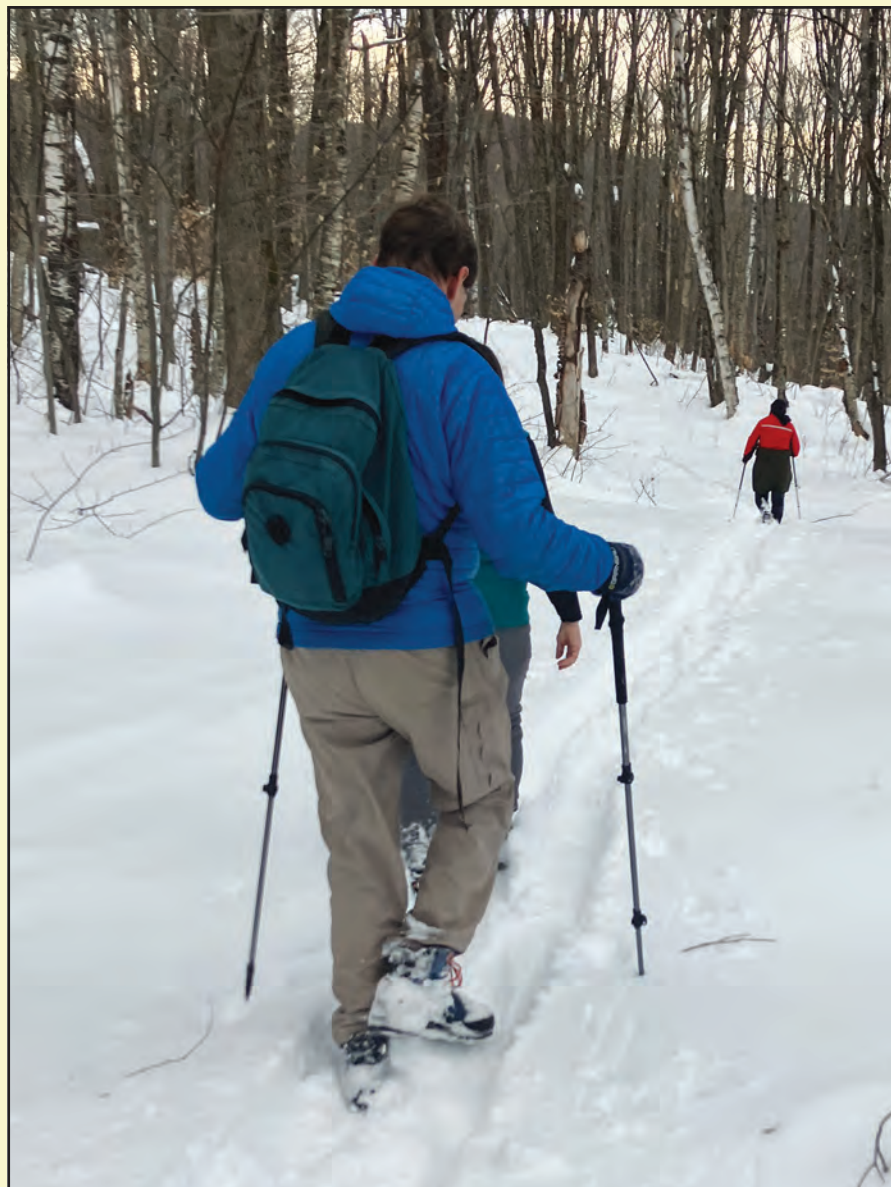
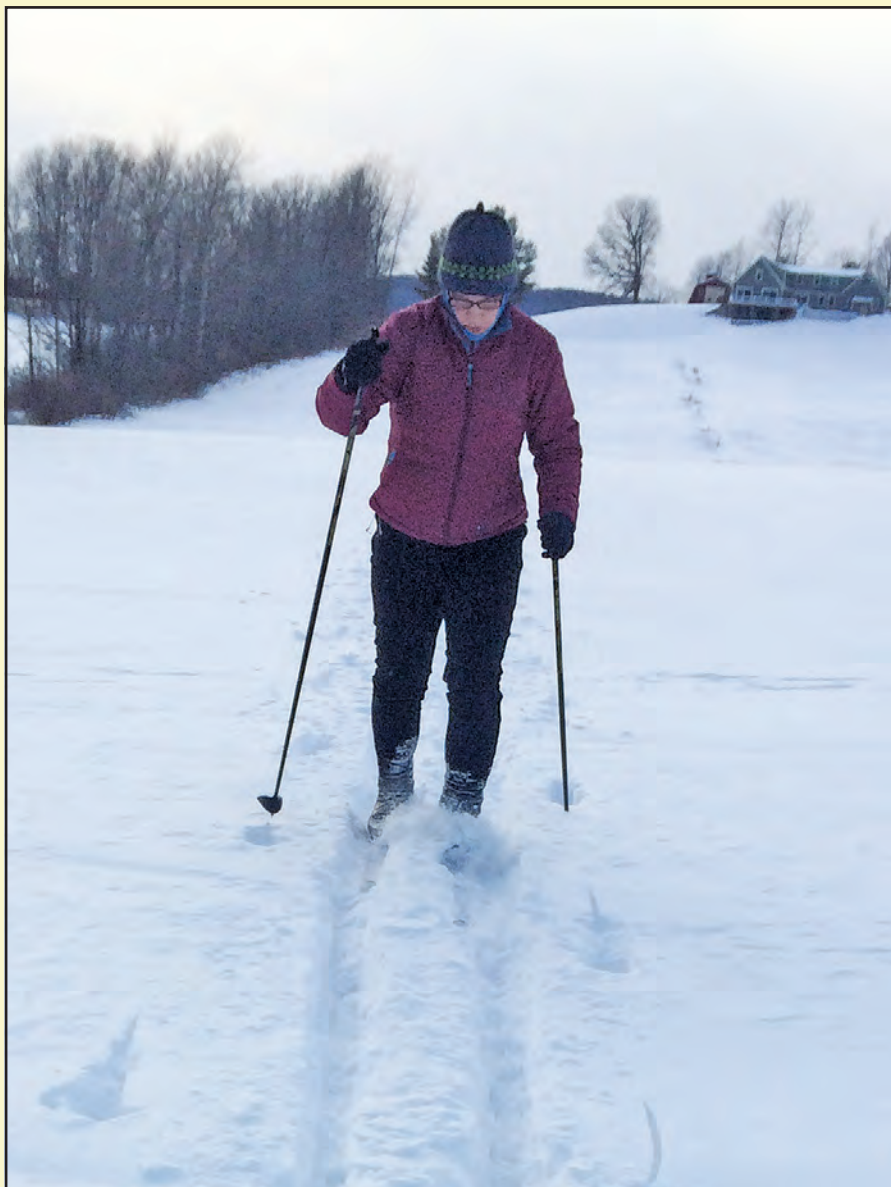
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Cold-weather fun

Don't let the snow stop you from getting outside and moving your body this winter. Activities like cross country skiing, snowshoeing or just walking in the snowy woods all give you a low-impact, full-body workout that boosts cardiovascular fitness, strengthens muscles (legs, glutes, core, arms) and improves balance. Experts say a person can burn 400 to 1,000 calories in an hour engaging in these pastimes. Because they are generally gentle on joints (especially snowshoeing), these activities are accessible for many fitness levels.

In addition, skiing, snowshoeing and walking provide mental health benefits like stress relief by getting your body in motion and immersing it in the natural world around us. Time spent on a ski or forest trail can give you a whole new perspective on the world.

Independent photos/John S. McCright

Building a strong core is about more than body sculpting

Fitness professionals recognize the importance of a well-balanced workout. Much like a diet that includes foods from each of the major food groups can provide the balance of nutrients and vitamins bodies need to achieve optimal health, a workout routine that includes an assortment of strength and cardiovascular exercises is the recipe for a fit and healthy body.

Core exercises are a vital component of a well-rounded workout. Core exercises can help individuals build sculpted abdominal muscles, and while that's a goal for many core devotees, the benefits of core exercises extend well beyond the cosmetic.

• **Build a strong, healthy back:** The International Association For the Study of Pain reports that lower back pain has been the leading cause of years lived with disability across the globe since 1990. Lower back pain can be debilitating, but core exercises strengthen muscles in the core, including those in the back. The

Mayo Clinic notes that core exercises train muscles in the pelvis, lower back, hips, and abdomen to work together, creating greater balance and stability and contributing to a healthy back.

• **Make daily life easier:** Individuals may not realize it, but their cores play a vital role in performing a great number of daily tasks. Core muscles are activated when doing everything from taking out the trash to getting dressed. If those muscles are weak, the cumulative effect of that weakness can add up and contribute to aches, pains and other health problems. Strong core muscles make daily tasks easier and less taxing on the body, providing both short- and long-term benefits.

• **Become a better athlete:** Core training has long been a key component of professional athletes' exercise regimens, and it's just as beneficial to amateur athletes as

well. The Harvard Medical School notes that a strong core powers a host of athletic activities, including golf, tennis, cycling, running, swimming, and team sports like baseball and volleyball. A strong core also benefits outdoor enthusiasts who love to kayak and hike difficult terrain.

• **Sculpt abdominals:** The cosmetic benefits of building a strong core should not be overlooked, as individuals might gain additional motivation to keep exercising and eating right when they see desirable results in the mirror. Core exercises

strengthen and sculpt abdominal muscles, creating a win-win situation for anyone who wants to get healthy and look good doing it.

Core exercises are vital to building a healthier, stronger body.

— Metro Creative





Feds

(Continued from Page 3)
offer lower prices. Yet, earlier in the fall, this reliance on the federal body led to delays in the state’s ability to procure the COVID-19 vaccines.

The bill also includes clearer guidelines for the state’s immunization processes, relying on a committee of local experts, not just federal vaccine panels. It adds details to ensure insurers will continue covering the cost of vaccination and to offer legal immunity for providers who administer the vaccines in good faith, following broadly agreed upon medical science.

Tracy Tyson is a pediatrician and the president-elect of Vermont’s chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She told lawmakers in the Jan. 6 hearing that her organization sees Vermont as setting an important example by solidifying its own state vaccine schedule separate from federal recommendations.

Those at American Academy of Pediatrics “see Vermont as a trailblazer in protecting the relationship between public health, its providers and its patients,” she said.

She still worries there is serious harm

The CDC’s scaling back childhood immunizations “may seem like it’s giving more autonomy to families, but what it’s giving is more confusion, and that is going to lead to more lapses in care.”

— Dr. Tracy Tyson

in the current landscape of shifting federal guidelines. Even though children can still get the vaccines and insurance will cover them, the confusion that many parents face about what protections their child should receive and when is dangerous, she said. It hinders “true, informed consent,” Tyson told lawmakers.

“It may seem like it’s giving more autonomy to families, but what it’s giving is more confusion, and that is going to lead to more lapses in care,” she said of the altered vaccine schedule.

Many health care providers across the state have echoed the state Health Department in reaffirming the safety of the previous CDC vaccine schedule.

“This schedule is grounded in rigorous science and the expertise of immunologists, infectious disease specialists, and public health professionals,” Dartmouth Health Children’s chief physician Keith Loud wrote in a statement, referring to the previous guidelines. The children’s hospital will continue to root its recommendations in the American Academy of Pediatrics schedule.

The Vermont Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Vermont Academy

Wastewater

(Continued from Page 6)
are connected to treatment facilities not participating in wastewater surveillance may not be represented. Wastewater levels and trends can be influenced by external factors, such as heavy rain which can cause pathogens (e.g., from animals) present in the environment to be detected in influent.

The dashboard can be found on the Vermont Department of Health Respiratory Illness Activity website.

Take steps to protect you and your family from getting sick this cold and flu season. Learn more at HealthVermont.gov/StayHealthy.

of Family Physicians and the Vermont Medical Society issued a joint statement echoing the importance of these vaccines.

They are important not only for children’s health, Hildebrandt added in his address to the House committee, but it is also a massive cost-saving tool for the health care system.

“The reason we use vaccines is to prevent expensive and deadly illnesses,” he said, giving the example of a \$10 flu shot that could prevent a child from landing in the emergency room or intensive care unit, racking up hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical bills.

“The data on vaccines is a slam dunk. These are cost saving, not cost generating,” he said.

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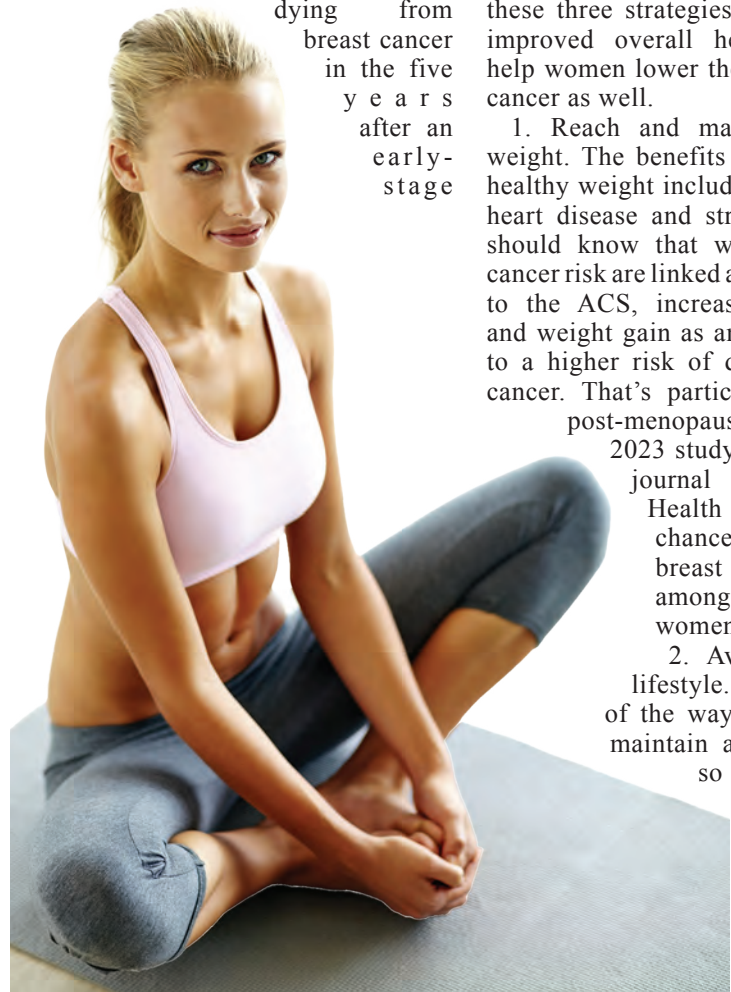
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3 strategies that can lower breast cancer risk

Breast cancer affects millions of individuals each year. The World Cancer Research Fund International reports that breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women across the globe, affecting roughly 2.3 million women each year.

Despite the global prevalence of breast cancer, various organizations report high five-year survival rates, particularly among women whose cancers are detected in the earliest stages of the disease. In fact, a 2023 study published in the journal *BMJ* found that the risk for dying from breast cancer in the five years after an early-stage



to 5 percent in recent years, a notable improvement from the 14 percent risk of death that was reported in the 1990s.

Increased survival rates for breast cancer are welcome news for women and their families. The higher survival rates are a byproduct of the tireless efforts of cancer researchers, who also have discovered links between the disease and certain lifestyle factors. Though there's no way to eliminate one's risk for breast cancer entirely, the American Cancer Society notes certain variables are within women's control. With that in mind, women can consider these three strategies that can lead to improved overall health and might help women lower their risk for breast cancer as well.

1. Reach and maintain a healthy weight. The benefits of maintaining a healthy weight include a lower risk for heart disease and stroke, and women should know that weight and breast cancer risk are linked as well. According to the ACS, increased body weight and weight gain as an adult are linked to a higher risk of developing breast cancer. That's particularly so among post-menopausal women. A 2023 study published in the journal *BMC Women's Health* found that the chances of developing breast cancer increase among post-menopausal women who are obese.

2. Avoid a sedentary lifestyle. Exercise is one of the ways to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, so it makes sense that being physically active can reduce breast cancer risk. The National Cancer

Institute reports that a 2016 meta-analysis of 38 cohort studies found that the most physically active women had between a 12 and 21 percent lower risk for breast cancer than women who were the least physically active. The NCI also notes that additional studies have found that women who become more physically active after menopause also have a lower risk for breast cancer than those who do not.



3. Limit or eliminate alcohol consumption. The ACS urges women who drink to consume no more than one alcoholic drink per day, noting that consumption of even small amounts of alcohol have been linked to an increased

risk for breast cancer. Officials with the MD Anderson Cancer Center note that the link between alcohol consumption and breast cancer risk is low. However, the MDACC notes that alcohol can contribute to unwanted weight gain, thus increasing cancer risk. In addition, alcohol can increase levels of estrogen and other hormones associated with breast cancer.

It may be impossible to completely prevent breast cancer. However, women can embrace strategies that improve their overall health in ways that lower their risk for breast cancer.

— Metro Creative

Snacks

(Continued from Page 5)

peanut butter or seed butter, and topped with raisins.

• Fruit kabobs: Foods on sticks are easy for young hands to grasp. Using blunt wooden skewers, adults can thread grapes, melon chunks, strawberries, granola bar pieces, and maybe marshmallows. The kabobs can be served with a yogurt dip.

• Smoothies: Smoothies are a great option that blend fruits and vegetables into something that may be more palatable to youngsters. Parents can take this snack one step further by freezing the smoothie batter into popsicle molds to create a refreshing dessert.

Quick snacks

Having quick snacks at the ready is essential when hungry kids are around. Children may be more inclined to eat a few smaller meals and snacks than three big meals as they go about their days.

• Cheese sticks: Prepackaged, low-fat cheese sticks or cheese slices are a protein-rich snack that kids can help themselves to when they get hungry between meals. Cheese also can be paired with apple slices or whole wheat crackers.

• Parfaits: Let children create their own yogurt "sundaes" with their favorite ingredients. Have plenty of toppings on hand that can be added to plain or vanilla flavored yogurt, such as berries, bananas, chia seeds, nuts, and granola.

• Hummus: Blended chickpeas can be seasoned with an array of flavors to create hummus varieties kids love. Mixing cocoa powder and honey into hummus also can create a "dessert" hummus that goes well with graham cracker dippers.

Kids might demand less healthy fare at snack time. However, parents can stay a nutritious course and offer many healthy and flavorful alternatives to potato chips.





A SPOTTER BACKS up Prem Prakash as he successfully squat lifts 293 pounds at the International Powerlifting League World Championship in England this past November.

Photo courtesy of Prem Prakash

Prakash

(Continued from Page 4)

won the sperm race; it behooves us to continue to strive to be our best.”

Prakash does weight training three to four days a week, depending on the mode and cycle of his training. Not surprisingly, he also does yoga virtually every day.

On the horizon, his next major

competition is the Olympia Pro in Las Vegas in September. Prakash notes that participants must be classified as “Elite” in order to qualify for the competition.

“It’s a very prestigious event, where Arnold Schwarzenegger made his name,” he said.

Your body will change as it ages

Aging is an inevitable component of life. Young children often cannot wait until they get older because of the freedoms that seemingly come with being more mature. On the flip side, adults often wish they were young again. Time waits for no person, and with aging comes many changes, many of which manifest physically.

The following are some components of healthy aging that go beyond graying hair and wrinkling skin.

Bones, joints and muscles

According to the Mayo Clinic, with age bones may become thinner and more fragile. Joints will lose their flexibility, while muscles lose mass and strength, endurance and flexibility. These changes may be accompanied by a loss of stability that can result in balance issues or falls. It’s common for the body frame to shrink, and a person may lose a few inches from his or her height.

A doctor may suggest a bone-density test or supplementation with calcium and vitamin D to keep bones as strong as possible. Physical activity that includes strength training can help keep muscles strong and flexible.

Body fat

As muscle mass diminishes, body fat can increase. The Merck Manual indicates that, by age 75, the percentage of body fat typically doubles compared with what it was during young adulthood. The distribution of fat also changes, which can adjust the shape of the torso.

Heart

Organs in the body also age, and cells begin to die off, making those organs work less efficiently. The heart is one such organ that changes with age. It pumps more than 2.5 million beats during one’s lifetime. As a person gets older, blood vessels lose their elasticity, and the heart has to work harder to circulate blood throughout the body, reports Johnson Memorial Health. Exercise can help keep the heart as strong as possible.

Urinary tract and kidneys

The kidneys become smaller as a person ages, which means they may not be able to filter urine as effectively. Urinary incontinence may occur due to hormonal changes or because of an enlarged prostate. Furthermore, the bladder may become less elastic, leading to an urge to urinate more frequently.

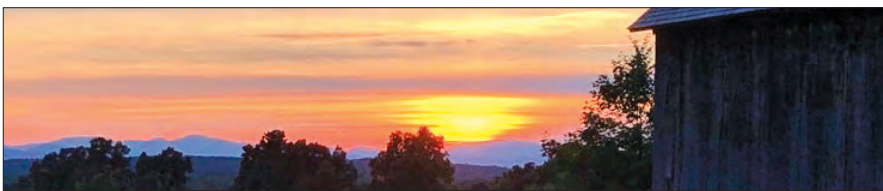
Memory and thinking

Older adults experience changes to the brain as they age. Minor effects on memory or thinking skills are common and not usually cause for worry. Staying mentally active by reading, playing word games and engaging in hobbies can help. Following a routine and making lists (as multi-tasking may become challenging) are some additional ways to address memory issues.

These are just some of the changes that can come with aging. Generally speaking, exercising, using the brain and adhering to a balanced, healthy diet can help keep the body functioning well into one’s golden years.

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Give your brain a break now and then

Fatigue and exhaustion are often discussed in terms that characterize the physical effects that they have on the body. However, mental fatigue can be just as draining as physical exhaustion, even if its symptoms are not as evident as aching muscles or tired feet.

An online medical resource notes that mental fatigue typically arises when individuals focus on mentally challenging tasks for extended periods of time. Many individuals also experienced mental fatigue during the pandemic. Pandemic-related restrictions forced individuals across the globe to confront a number of unforeseen, unexpected challenges, including a sudden shift to remote work and school closures that forced working parents to juggle the rigors of their careers with the difficulties of remote learning. That upheaval contributed to prolonged mental fatigue for many individuals.

Much like athletes need routine breaks from exercise to let their muscles recover, individuals need to look for ways to give their overworked minds a chance to recuperate from fatigue. Each person is different, but these strategies can help people overcome mental fatigue.

- Take breaks from the news. Overconsumption of news is one potential contributor to mental fatigue. That's especially so in the digital age, when the latest headlines are never further than a smartphone away. The Johns Hopkins Women's Mood Disorders Center notes

that limiting news consumption during stressful times can be an effective way to reduce symptoms of stress, including mental fatigue.

- Schedule time to relax. The pressure to feel as if you should always be doing something, whether it's working, taking care of your family or tackling a to-do list around the house, can contribute to mental fatigue. Schedule time to relax and make a concerted effort to keep that time open. Avoid using scheduled relaxation time to work on household chores or check work emails. Instead, use this time to do something you find genuinely relaxing, even if that activity feels like you're doing "nothing."

- Spot the signs of mental fatigue. Another way to overcome mental fatigue is to learn to recognize its symptoms. Recognition of these symptoms allows individuals to use them as alarm bells that alert them when it's time to take a step back and unwind. Mental fatigue symptoms include mood-related issues like increased irritability or anger; difficulty concentrating that makes it hard to finish tasks; zoning out; difficulty sleeping; and engaging in unhealthy behaviors, including overconsumption of alcohol.

The signs of mental fatigue may not be as instantly recognizable as the symptoms of physical exhaustion. But mental fatigue can be just as dangerous as physical tiredness if left unchecked.

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