



## Digging deep

Local psychologist turned novelist gets inside head of scientist Marie Curie. See Arts + Leisure.



## Movin'

MUHS dance team hosts meet as they hope to hip-hop their way to a state title. See Page 1B.



## Big assist

A youth hockey league goes above and beyond to help a family suddenly in need. See Page 2A.

# ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Vol. 80 No. 6

Middlebury, Vermont ♦ Thursday, February 5, 2026 ♦ 48 Pages

\$2.00

## 3 seek 2 spots on Middlebury board

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury voters on Town Meeting Day will decide a three-person race for two three-year seats on the town selectboard.

The candidates, in alphabetical order, are American Flatbread owner Danielle Boyce, incumbent Selectman Dan Brown, and local businessman Peter Jette.

As previously reported by the *Independent*, longtime selectboard Chair Brian Carpenter won't be seeking another term. So the shire town's chief governing board in March will welcome at least one

new face.

The *Independent* reached out to all three hopefuls to get an early look at their credentials and priorities for Middlebury for the next three years. Jette was traveling and unable to contribute to this article; his input will be published later this month.

In addition to deciding a variety of municipal elections, residents of Middlebury, Bridport, Cornwall, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge on March 3 will elect representatives to the Addison Central School District Board. (See *Selectboard Page 20A*)

## ANWSD weighs cost of teachers, taxes

Holds spending hike to 2.4% this year

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — The Addison Northwest School District Board estimates \$28,314,179 will be needed to operate in the fiscal year beginning July 1, up from the \$27,653,000 spending plan that Addison, Ferrisburgh, Pantton, Vergennes and Waltham voters OK'd on Town Meeting Day 2025.

"I feel very good about a proposed budget that will help provide a solid educational experience for our

students while only increasing the budget by 2.39%," said board Chair Mark Koenig.

The three ANWSD schools are Vergennes Union High School, Vergennes Union Elementary School and Ferrisburgh Central School.

The fiscal year 2027 spending is \$661,179 higher than the figure approved in 2025 by a 62-38% margin.

The \$28.3 million spending plan (See *ANWSD budget, Page 11A*)

## Midd pitches 10% hike in spending

Board uses revenues to lower tax impact

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury voters at their March 2 annual meeting will be asked to approve a fiscal year 2027 municipal budget of \$15,998,045, a roughly 9.9% increase compared to the current town spending plan of \$14,548,535.

The selectboard on Jan. 27 (See *Middlebury, Page 19A*)



The Vergennes High School National Honor Society (NHS) will participate in the Vermont Special Olympics Penguin Plunge on Saturday, March 14, at the Burlington Waterfront. (See *By the way, Page 20A*)

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## OLYMPIC-BOUND



OLYMPIC SKIER RYAN Cochran-Siegle pops off the snow amid a flurry of flakes. The 33-year-old Starksboro native will compete for team USA in his third Olympic games, which kick off on Friday.

Contributed/US Ski and Snowboard

## Starksboro native hits hills at Milan Cortina

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

Ryan Cochran-Siegle is going to need more than a rope-tow to get up the Italian mountains he'll soon be skiing down.

The Starksboro native and team USA alpine competitor this week is bound for the Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina, Italy — his

third time at the Games. And he is aiming to be standing atop the podium once again after a silver medal performance in the Beijing super-G four years ago.

"I think I've had some good skiing so far this season. Obviously, there's excitement too, just earning that spot with Team USA," Cochran-

Siegle told the *Independent*.

"But I think where I'm at with my career and like, I know what I'm capable of, obviously trying to go there and ski well, ski to my ability."

Cochran-Siegle, a Mount Abraham Union High School and Mount Mansfield Academy (See *Cochran-Siegle, Page 13A*)



## Looking to the future

MIDYEAR GRADUATES OF Middlebury College enjoy some of their last moments together as a class on Saturday afternoon at the Snowbowl, where many of the 163 newly-minted alumni celebrated after collecting their diplomas on campus. See more photos on Page 10A.

Independent photo/Steve James

## College exhibit zooms in on kimono

By MARIN HOWELL

MIDDLEBURY — You will soon have an opportunity to learn more about a key part of Japanese history and culture — the kimono.

An exhibit at Middlebury College's Johnson Gallery called "Cultural Fabrics: The Kimono Through Literary, Cross-Cultural, and Practical Lenses" opens on Feb. 9. It's been brought to life by a group of college faculty, staff, (See *Kimono exhibit, Page 19A*)

## Bristol-area ballots see few races

By MARIN HOWELL

ADDISON COUNTY — Most voters in the 5-town area won't see any contested races for seats on their local schoolboards and selectboards this Town Meeting Day.

Starksboro residents will weigh in on a two-person race for a two-year (See *Bristol, Page 11A*)

## Sen. Sanders condemns authoritarianism

### Bernie blasts Trump at Bristol meeting

By JOHN FLOWERS

BRISTOL — More than 200 people filled the Mount Abraham Union High School cafeteria on Saturday for lunch and a chance to chew the fat with U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.

Attendees got generous helpings of both good food and Sanders, though they had to be content with the virtual presence of the state's senior senator. A lengthy Senate debate on the latest federal funding

bill on Friday doomed Sanders's plans to personally appear at three meals his staff had cooked up in three different Vermont communities.

He planned to provide sustenance and his take on issues ranging from two recent ICE killings in Minnesota to what he believes has been a steady unraveling of the U.S. democracy under President Donald Trump.

"I know that not everyone

might agree with me, but I believe that (Donald) Trump is the most dangerous president, perhaps in history," Sanders said through a speakerphone address to the folks of all ages who had assembled in Bristol for the meal. "In an unprecedented way, Trump is moving this country toward an authoritarian society."

During remarks interrupted multiple times by applause, Sanders cited a series of what he sees as troubling trends during year one of Trump's four-year second term:

• A growing disparity between the rich and poor. He said the most affluent 1% of the U.S. population owns more wealth than the bottom 93%, with one person — Elon Musk — owning more wealth than the bottom 52%. And Sanders noted that Musk's Tesla company paid zero federal taxes last year.

"We know people in the billionaire class are doing phenomenally well; they have never done better. And (meanwhile), 60% of people are living paycheck to paycheck," (See *Bernie Sanders, Page 17A*)



SEN. BERNIE SANDERS



**MICHELLE PERINNE (PINK hat) expresses words of gratitude during a Feb. 1 fundraiser at Middlebury's Memorial Sports Center that benefitted the Perinne family. Michelle's husband, Pieter, is recovering from injuries sustained in an ATV accident, and the Middlebury hockey community has rallied around the family during its time of need.**

Photo/courtesy of Brit McKenna

## Hockey community nets big assist for family

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The word “teamwork” comes up a lot during games and practices for players involved with the Middlebury Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA).

You can now add “compassion” and “family” to the MAHA lexicon. In a sport that’s often known for tight checking and occasional fisticuffs (in the NHL), members of MAHA have stepped up to help a family whose sole breadwinner has been temporarily incapacitated by a Jan. 2 ATV accident.

Pieter Perinne, a Brandon resident and well-known arborist, was recreating with his father-in-law when he misjudged the steepness of a slope and flipped his ATV. The machine fell onto him, breaking his pelvis, fracturing some of his vertebrae, and tearing some of his muscles.

Fortunately, the accident didn’t sever his spinal cord. But he’s under strict orders not to resume his physically demanding tasks with Highlander Tree Works for the next six to 12 months. Pieter and his wife, Michelle, have three young

boys, ages nine, seven and four. All three of the boys are ice hockey enthusiasts who play in the MAHA youth program.

When Pieter sustained his injuries, the MAHA community wanted to give the family a helping hand.

And they sure have.

MAHA faithful launched a GoFundMe campaign for the Perinnes that as of Wednesday morning had netted \$32,666.

“He is a dedicated father, husband, and a hardworking member of our local community who is usually the first one to offer a hand to a neighbor. This is our chance to return the favor when he needs it most,” reads the GoFundMe page.

This past Sunday, Feb. 1, the Middlebury-area hockey community held a fundraiser for the family at Middlebury’s Memorial Sports Center. Brit McKenna, a lead organizer of that fundraiser, said it raised a super-impressive \$5,839, largely through skating opportunities and a 50/50 raffle.

The Perinne family made an appearance at the event and were clearly moved by the support

they’ve received from what they called their hockey family.

“The hockey family has just been amazing. People from the churches have helped us out, raised money for us. Between Rutland, Brandon and Middlebury, there are so many people who we haven’t even met before who have reached out to us and sent us money to help out with whatever we’ve needed,” Pieter said during a phone interview. “I’m blown away by people’s intentionality, helpfulness and kindness.”

People could’ve turned inward during these politically polarizing times, but they’ve done just the opposite, according to Perinne.

“People feel their first responsibility is to their family and neighbors,” he said. “I feel people are doing such a good job of loving on us and taking care of us. It’s a really bright spot in our regional community — people going out of their way to bless us, who don’t even know us. It’s a really good sign of our humanity, no matter what we believe.”

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

## Bristol won’t vote on police district expansion

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Bristol voters won’t weigh in on whether to expand the Bristol Police Department’s coverage area this Town Meeting Day, though town officials are still looking to explore with the community what the future of the department could look like.

Town officials had recently visited the topic of broadening the police department’s service area to include the entire town, eyeing Town Meeting Day as a date to put the question to voters. The department’s service district currently covers about one square mile in the village area.

During the selectboard’s Jan. 26 meeting, board members acknowledged more work needs to take place before a vote, and that the question requires a broader consideration of what residents want the police department to look like.

“I think ... because the town started with a district police force, the complexities of growing larger to outside are far more complicated than just asking the question, ‘Do people want to go town-wide,’ because there are so many things tied to what the district is, and I think that’s what needs to be looked at,” Selectboard member Ian Albinson said.

Expanding the police

department’s service area is something Bristol residents have previously considered, with past committees and surveys exploring the idea. This past June, Albinson noted that residents continued to bring up the matter, prompting town officials to eye a Town Meeting Day vote on the question.

At that time, board members considered what data would need to be compiled to inform future conversations and community understanding of the topic, such as the general call volume for Bristol, nature of calls and what calls Vermont State Police receive and respond to.

Last week, selectboard members noted the police department question is broader than whether to expand the department’s coverage area.

“I think in the past ... what we’ve done is, ‘What would it take for the police department to go town-wide’ and try to develop a budget, as opposed to ... ‘What do we want the police force to do for the town?’” Selectboard Chair John “Peeker” Heffernan said.

Assistant Town Clerk and

Assistant Treasurer Kris Perlee shared a similar sentiment.

“You could have a public forum ... and in my mind the vision is you walk in and say, ‘Here’s what our police force is today,’ and you take that piece of paper, and you turn it over and it’s blank — What do you want to see?” he said. “Ask the question.”

Albinson said the police department is included in the town plan Bristol will be working to update.

Town officials highlighted other possibilities for exploring the matter moving forward, particularly with community members.

“It would make more sense to have an engaged, informed approach instead of just rushing to put it on (the warning),” Town Administrator Gregory Faust said. “Let’s talk to the voters and see what their input is and let them develop the plan moving forward.”

Board members also noted Bristol’s town meeting (set for Monday, March 2) will offer an opportunity to talk with residents about the police district question and why it is not included on this year’s warning.

*“Let’s talk to the voters and see what their input is and let them develop the plan moving forward.”*

— Gregory Faust

## College Provost McCauley to step down

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury College is expected to begin searching for its next provost, as current Executive Vice President and Provost Michelle McCauley will step down from the role at the end of June.

Middlebury College President Ian Baucom announced the upcoming transition in a Jan. 22 letter to the college community.

“Starting July 1, Michelle will take a sabbatical and pursue her next steps, either as a leader at another institution or through returning to her work as a teacher and scholar on the Middlebury faculty,” Baucom wrote. “I look forward to supporting her in her new endeavors.”

McCauley joined the college’s Department of Psychology in 1995. Following the death of former Provost and Executive Vice President Jeff Cason in 2022, McCauley stepped into the role in the interim. She was later appointed

to the position in 2024.

McCauley has also served as director of the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation, overseen the college’s Conservation Psychology Lab and cofounded The Vermont Center for Behavioral Science Research on Climate and the Environment.

In his Jan. 22 message, Baucom pointed to several of McCauley’s other contributions to the institution through the years, including co-chairing a task force on artificial intelligence and helping guide the conclusion of residential graduate programs at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

“She and her team have been integral to our ongoing strategic planning process and countless other projects,” Baucom wrote. “On a personal and professional level, Michelle has been a wonderful



MICHELLE MCCAULEY

colleague — a wise, selfless counselor, dedicated to the best for our entire Middlebury community.”

Baucom noted the institution will conduct a national search for its next provost, with more details forthcoming.

**The Better Middlebury Partnership is excited to unveil the First Fridays evening hours series in February, 2026.**

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**ADDISON COUNTY**

## School News

Monkton native **Spencer E. Griswold**, a 2013 graduate of Mount Abraham Union High School and 2017 graduate of Clarkson University, recently received his PhD in Astro Physics from the University of Rochester. The son of Bret and Dawn Griswold, Dr. Griswold is currently employed at the University of Wisconsin’s WIPAC (Wisconsin IceCube Particle Astrophysics Center) as a software engineer focused on neutrino astrophysics to observe the next galactic core collapse supernova.

Vergennes Union High School graduate **Torrey Hanna** of Addison was among the Saint Michael’s College student-athletes to qualify for the Northeast 10 Conference Academic Honor Roll for the fall semester. Hanna, a first year St. Mike’s student and member of the Colchester college’s cross country and track and field teams, was among the 36 student-athletes who posted a 4.0 grade-point average for the term.

**CORRECTION:** A restaurant review in the Bird’s Eye View section of last week’s edition accurately mentioned that “Off the Hook” offers food out of the South Mountain Tavern kitchen, but OTH is not connected with a similarly named business in Massachusetts but instead is run out of Bristol by Andy Wohl.

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# New Haven residents explore options

## Gathering attendees discuss housing, community spaces

By MARIN HOWELL

NEW HAVEN — New Haven residents are rolling up their sleeves and diving into work exploring ways to expand housing opportunities and create community gathering spaces in town.

Those efforts were set in motion by a months-long Community Visit program facilitated by the Vermont Council on Rural Development, an initiative aimed at helping neighbors work together to identify priorities for their town and steps to move toward those goals.

Through the “New Haven Comes Together” process, residents ultimately chose two priorities around which they formed task forces — Expand Housing Opportunities and Create Community Gathering Spaces. Those groups will start meeting this month, and New Haven residents are invited to join in on the work ahead.

“I’m personally most excited about the fact that the community is engaged in addressing the things that are going to continue to make New Haven the wonderful place that it is and create opportunities for the community for the future,” said Kim Callahan, a resident involved in the effort. “Bringing people together and having people be engaged is what I’m most excited about.”

The Vermont Council on Rural Development, or VCRD, has worked with over 90 Vermont communities through the Community Visit process, helping municipalities establish goals, develop action plans and access resources to that work.

The effort in New Haven kicked off this past November, when residents gathered to discuss successes, challenges and ideas for the town in areas like affordability and town infrastructure. VCRD Community Visit Program Director Alyssa Johnson said residents came up with over 22 action ideas

for the community.

At a second event in December, residents narrowed that list down to two priorities to move forward: expand housing opportunities and create community gathering spaces.

“When folks met in December and had a conversation about priorities for the future, there was a recognition of community inclusion and welcoming, sustainability, and affordability as underlying themes that went across many of the action ideas,” Johnson said.

She noted residents also brainstormed visions for the community’s future, and a collection of those will be included in a final report on the New Haven Comes Together website in early February.

Last month, community members gathered for the third and final step in the New Haven Comes Together process. At the Jan. 15 meeting, residents met in the newly formed task forces to develop action plans and identify available resources.

“New Haven Comes Together has been an incredible process,” Johnson said. “It’s been inspiring to see the community come together, share ideas for the future, and dive into next action steps. We were struck by the energy and enthusiasm of New Haven residents, and how committed they are to their community.”

She noted that over 10% of the town’s population took part in the process, with more than 170 residents either attending an event or signing up for a task force.

Callahan attended each of the three gatherings.

“VCRD really helped us from the very beginning when we had all these ideas and all these concepts, (and) distilled it into these two actionable groups of folks who are ready and willing to participate, to take these priorities and make them a reality,” she said of the process.

Callahan pointed to instances of residents wanting to get involved in town but not knowing how. She said the New Haven Comes Together process has offered a vehicle to bring residents together.

That’s been the case for Michael Tecca, who grew up in New England and moved to New Haven with his wife from Los Angeles.

“At first, becoming homeowners and getting married took up most of our energy. Now that we’re more settled, we want to give back to what makes New Haven special,” he told the *Independent*. “The New Haven Comes Together events came at just the right time and made it easy for us to get involved.”

### TASK FORCES

Tecca is a co-chair for the Create Community Gathering Spaces task force. He noted that as the group formed, it became clear how residents view community spaces in different ways.

“For some, it means literally rebuilding or reimagining places like the train depot. For others, it means creating spaces through events, like bringing back concerts on the town green, or strengthening existing traditions such as pancake breakfasts,” he explained. “What was most exciting was being in the Town Hall with about 30 people who shared all of these ideas. That naturally led to the idea to form subcommittees based on people’s interests, skills and experiences, so we can work toward these different goals in a coordinated way.”

The task force is set to meet on Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. at the New Haven Town Hall. Tecca noted the group’s meeting schedule will be determined by its members, though the larger task force plans to meet once a month, with subcommittees likely meeting more often.

Callahan is a member of the Create Community Gathering Spaces task force. She pointed to programming that has already started up: a monthly coffee hour for New Haven residents kicked off in January, with another gathering planned for Feb. 7 from 9-10 a.m. at Lincoln Peak Vineyard.

“It’s an opportunity to get together and talk about things in town, visit with neighbors,” Callahan said.

*“It’s been inspiring to see the community come together, share ideas for the future, and dive into next action steps. We were struck by the energy and enthusiasm of New Haven residents.”*

— Alyssa Johnson



COMMUNITY MEMBERS GATHER for a meal during a New Haven Comes Together event this past November. Throughout the months-long Community Visit process, New Haven residents have identified priorities for their town and created task forces focused on two of those priorities: expanding housing opportunities and creating community gathering spaces.

Photo courtesy of Kim Callahan

Jeff Pratt and Rick Shappy are co-chairs for the Expand Housing Opportunities task force. The group’s first meeting is set for Feb. 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the New Haven Town Offices.

Pratt said at that meeting members will get more specific about their goals and the scope of their work.

“From a high level, I think that the lack of affordable housing in New Haven is recognized as a challenge; I think there’s different factions within the group, that that manifests different ways,” he said, pointing to examples like a senior resident wanting to stay in town but needing to downsize or someone not being able to find housing that meets their needs.

“There’s several sort of groups that I think are going to be clearly viable, contributing groups to the New Haven community that just can’t find a good play here,” he

continued. “So, I think that’s what we’re going to end up focusing on, is how to expand the list of options for those groups.”

Pratt said the Expand Housing Opportunities task force also plans to talk about research on areas of challenge and opportunity. For example, he pointed to how septic poses a challenge as the New Haven area has a lot of clay, something the group could look to explore with Middlebury College or other individuals.

Pratt said the task force’s meeting schedule is yet to be determined, though the group could meet bi-weekly or monthly.

He pointed to various factors that together have created an opportune time to pursue this work in New Haven, such as available funding opportunities and resources, as well as ongoing efforts in town to establish a community trust and

explore future uses for the town’s historic train depot.

He credited the community members who have worked to get such efforts off the ground.

“It feels like a bit of an inflection point; that the town is just in the mood to really take on some things and come up with some creative and significant changes,” he said. “So, I take all that to mean, ‘Hey, if we can organize a really focused effort here, I think we can succeed.’”

Johnson noted the work ahead will be driven by the task forces, which have been encouraged to provide the community with regular updates on their work. She said community members can still get involved in those task forces and can visit the New Haven Comes Together website — [tinyurl.com/NewHaventogether](http://tinyurl.com/NewHaventogether) — to sign up for updates on the groups’ work.

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## Editorial

## ICE: Legislators could do more to protect Vermonters' rights

As Vermont legislators consider a host of important bills to manage state affairs, they would be wise to also reconsider how to protect Vermonters in the event that ICE and CBP officers conduct an immigration sweep through the state. As seen in several other blue states, actions by ICE and CBP agents have too often been unwarranted, illegal, unnecessarily brutal and a threat to the communities they infiltrate.

With protests likely, the Vermont legislature should pass and put into action as soon as possible bills to make federal agents pause before they violate basic civil laws and the individual rights of Vermonters.

The Senate has already considered two bills: S.209 and S.208. The first would prevent civil arrests at schools, government buildings, health care facilities and what the bill calls community-based shelters, severe weather shelters and emergency housing. The second bill attempts to restrict when law enforcement officers can wear masks and requires officers to identify themselves verbally or by an obvious badge.

Both are reasonable places to start, but more could be done.

In Colorado, a bill would enable individuals to sue federal law enforcement officials for civil rights violations. Similar bills, under legislation known as “universal constitutional remedies” that allow individuals to sue any local, state or federal official when their constitutional rights are violated, are proposed in California, Washington, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Oregon and Virginia, among others.

In California, a lawmaker is sponsoring two bills, one to require any shooting by ICE or CBP agents be subject to an independent state investigation, and another to bar ICE or CBP agents from using state properties as staging areas.

Minnesota, whose state legislature opens on Feb. 17, will be seeking to require federal agents to meet the same kind of training requirements now in place for local law enforcement, including providing first aid. (ICE agents appeared to reject offers to aid Renee Good after she was shot and killed at close range by an ICE agent, according to a *New York Times* report.)

While state efforts to restrict federal agents in their effort to enforce immigration laws may be challenged by the Trump administration, Vermont Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Baruth, who sits on the judiciary committee, acknowledged that likelihood but said Vermont should join other states to defend the individual rights of its citizens.

“We have to be proactive about that, because I will bet you every cent I have that within the year, Burlington and Winooski will see raids,” Baruth said in a *VtDigger* report, adding that he was comfortable supporting bills the Trump administration might challenge in court. “We’re kind of fighting with our backs to the wall as states.”

## REVAMPING ICE AND CBP

While Vermont should do what it can this session, over the next 10 days Democrats in Congress will be arguing to implement the most necessary reforms possible for ICE and the CBP ahead of a vote on future funding for the Department of Homeland Security. In his newsletter, *Doomsday Scenario*, covering national security and geopolitics through history, Vermont journalist Garrett Graff outlines several specific concerns that need addressing in those talks. Here’s a brief account of his much longer points:

• **1) Basic Uniform and Identification Standards.** “There should be no doubt who is a federal agent and who isn’t,” Graff writes. “Too many times ICE officers and CBP agents are showing up in our communities as indistinguishable from Proud Boys, bounty hunters, or merely even ‘open carry’ enthusiasts.

• **2) Use of Force:** “I would love to see real restrictions on CBP and ICE’s use of chemical agents, like tear gas, pepper spray, and less lethal munitions like so-called rubber bullets or pepper balls, more like the actually dangerous tools they are. In particular, I’d like to see CBP and ICE removed from ‘crowd control’ operations against protesters. There are other agencies better trained at such crowd control and protest policing.”

• **3) Enforcement Standards and Restrictions:** “One of the most useful things Congress could do is a host of reforms aimed at re-drawing where and how enforcement operations can unfold... Looking ahead Congress should mandate that no ICE or immigration enforcement can occur near polling places on election day... Take away the threat that Donald Trump is going to turbocharge 20,000 ICE officers to set up checkpoints near polling places or stage large-scale raids in minority-majority congressional districts during polling hours in November. And anyone who says ‘there aren’t enough ICE agents’ to make a difference in a national election misunderstands how this would work — you don’t need to ‘patrol’ or scare off voters at every polling place. Control of Congress will be decided by a small number of swing districts; deploying 100-200 agents apiece into just 15-20 congressional districts and urban polling places would probably be all they need.”

• **4) Hiring Standards and Training:** “Congress should mandate basic hiring and training standards that at least guarantee ICE officers and CBP agents meet the standards of other federal law enforcement agencies.”

• **5) Detention Facilities:** “Any deal Congress passes must include codifying and clarifying that members of Congress have on-demand access to any immigration detention facility. ICE has played fast and loose skirting congressional oversight and access over the last year, and two separate court orders have had to reaffirm that House and Senate members can conduct no-notice inspections.” It’s also clear, Graff writes, “that the Trump administration plans the next phases of its immigration enforcement to not work in the traditional systems of due process for migrants. We can tell because (the) giant increases in officers, arrest quotas, and detention facilities are balanced with only the most modest of modest increases to the number of immigration judges in the country...”

“If the Trump administration had any plan to balance civil rights and due process with its giant new hiring and construction spree, it would be also tripling or quadrupling or quintupling the new immigration judges. The fact that it’s *not* doing so makes clear that the Trump administration, DHS, and DOJ have no intention of normal due process.”

Graff continues his column by recommending a complete overhaul of the Department of Homeland Security, saying that “America cannot survive as a free society if ICE and CBP continue to operate as they have over the last year — let alone as both agencies are turbocharged and empowered with even more funding, more officers, more guns, and more arrests.”

To read Graff’s full column, go to: <https://www.doomsdayscenario.com/p/accountability-for-ice-and-cbp>.

Angelo Lynn



## Flyin’ high

MADELYN BROCHU SPRINGS forward toward the judges’ table during the Middlebury Union High School dance team’s hip hop routine on Saturday in the MUHS gym. The Tigers took second in the category and hope to do even better at the state meet on Feb. 21 in Vergennes. Brochu said that her team is putting in a lot of work and it is paying off.

Independent photo/Steve James

## America’s regime of cruelty not new

U.S. government officials deported five-year-old José Lopez, born in Detroit, Mich. He and his entire family were forcibly removed to Michoacán, a state in Western Mexico. After they arrived, his parents and one of his brothers died, leaving him and his remaining siblings orphans. José, a U.S. citizen of Mexican descent, along with other family members who were also citizens, had been removed from their country of origin. Lopez and his remaining siblings made their way back to the United States, but it was not an easy path.

This story, and many others like it, happened as part of a repatriation drive that began in 1930, during the Great Depression, but they could easily be stories that we read in the news today. As someone who teaches immigration history, I know that mass abuses of migrants and citizens alike that we are seeing across the nation today are part in an enduring regime of xenophobic, racist, nativism rooted in white supremacist ideologies. In this framing, citizenship does not necessarily offer protections. Former California state Sen. Martha M. Escutia has talked about her own family’s lasting trauma from raids and deportation drives in the early twentieth century, stating that her grandfather “never even walked to the corner store without his passport for fear of being stopped and deported.” Incidentally, as a Mexican American living in the United States in 2026, I never leave the house without my passport either. Lately, however, it seems as though having it may not matter.

In the 1930s, fear of immigrants using American resources in a period of scarcity sparked a movement

at the local and federal level to repatriate any non-citizen who might compete for work. There was no legal recourse for people of Mexican descent, whether they were U.S. citizens or not. Often during raids, any person that appeared to be “Mexican” was deported. Some estimates report that up to 60% of those sent to Mexico were citizens of the United States. For citizens

and non-citizens, many dealt with family separation and lasting trauma.

After the onset of World War II, things shifted. With many men leaving to serve in the war, the U.S. faced significant labor shortages, so in 1943 they worked with the Mexican government to begin a guest-worker program, later dubbed the “Bracero Program.” The Program lasted 22 years and brought workers from Mexico to the United States for short-term contracts lasting three, six or nine months. The program was only open to young, healthy men who were willing to participate in the program. When they enlisted, the aspiring braceros, as they were called, had to endure two grueling medical examinations, one in Mexico and one at the border. The exams included full body examinations in large groups in the nude, and delousing with chemicals such as DDT. Because the process was so difficult, many migrated outside of the program. Several historians, including myself, argue that this created some of the first conversations about “illegal” immigration, where some moved with documents and others did not.

Once the program was well established, officials on both sides of the border felt that too many people

(See *Ways of Seeing*, Page 5A)

## Ways of Seeing

By Mary E. Mendoza



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Once the program was well established, officials on both sides of the border felt that too many people

(See *Ways of Seeing*, Page 5A)

## We must address food insecurity

Vermont is experiencing rising food insecurity — a troubling trend for a state with such a strong agricultural identity. I strongly believe we have an opportunity in this legislative session to strengthen our food system in meaningful, lasting ways. A number of bills have been introduced to increase food processing, donations, and funding, while also providing tools for farmers to remain viable. This will help ensure more Vermontgrown food reaches Vermonters who need it most.

My family background in growing food helps me understand the challenges while our committee consider solutions. One proposal, **H.167**, would formally establish the **Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program** within the Agency of Agriculture. This program would provide local food shelves with stable, predictable funding to purchase fresh produce and proteins directly from Vermont farms. This program would not only support food shelves, but it would make a new market for Vermont farmers.

Strengthening food access also requires supporting the farms that make this food available. That is why the Senate’s **Miscellaneous Agriculture Bill** is so important. In response to a recent Vermont Supreme Court decision, the bill reaffirms that municipalities cannot regulate farming activities or the construction of farm structures — protections that have provided

agricultural stability for two decades. It also includes tax relief measures for certain farm transfers, helping retiring farmers pass their operations on to family members or longtime employees without jeopardizing the future of their land.

Crucially, the bill creates a new “**farm kitchen operation**” category, allowing small and midsize farms to more easily produce value-added foods — the very products that often end up in food shelves, senior meal sites, and school cafeterias.

I believe these proposals will have a positive impact in Addison County and across the state: food shelves stocked with more fresh products, fewer families going to bed hungry, and a predictable funding source that supports both donated food and the steady purchase of healthy, Vermontgrown items. At the same time, the Senate Agriculture Bill would reinforce the agricultural backbone that makes this system possible — supporting farm viability, succession planning, diversified production, and smallscale processing. Together, these policies will create a more stable, locally rooted food pipeline at a time when need is rising.

At a time when more families are struggling to afford food — in a state where farmers are ready and willing to feed them — these bills offer a practical,

(See *Heffernan*, Page 5A)

Letters  
to the Editor

## Food remains a big concern

Not surprisingly, Vermont’s affordability crisis is top of mind during this legislative session. Dealing with the cost of housing, education, and health care are clear priorities. There is another affordability concern, this one existential to Vermonters: Food.

Vermont produces only 14% of the food we eat, and dairy naturally makes up a large share. During this session, the legislature will take up several bills that will decide whether and where Vermonters can grow their own food or food for their neighbors. Our dependence on distant fields and carbon-intensive supply chains threatens our food security and commitment to environmental sustainability.

I urge citizens to stay informed about bills affecting Vermont’s food supply and to contact their legislators in support of Vermonters’ rights and ability to grow our own food.

Paul Ralston  
New Haven

## Local nurses honor Pretti

We echo the poignant statements regarding ICU nurse Alex Pretti shared by The Vermont Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals, National Nurses United, and numerous other unions, groups and individuals speaking out against senseless violence and injustice. We stand with them in solidarity so that our many voices can rise as one in a plea for compassion and empathy at this fraught time for our nation.

As healthcare professionals, we are charged with the most noble of callings: caring for others. It is our duty to honor and revere life, to protect it and to sacrifice for it. The bravery displayed by Alex Pretti is especially stirring because his selfless act to help others embodies what it means to do what we do.

Let it not be in vain. Let it inspire us to care for each other. Let it move us to stand up for our neighbors, our coworkers, our community and our own humanity. Let it help us find the courage to set aside divisions and find within ourselves that quality that defines *real* strength: compassion.

Let this be a tipping point towards justice and peace. We, each of us as individuals, and all of us as human beings, are responsible for creating a better tomorrow.

Maya Schnell of Bristol  
on behalf of Porter  
Federation of Nurses and  
Health Professionals Leadership

## Pass universal primary care

I appreciate the *Addison Independent’s* coverage of healthcare bills ready for consideration by our state legislators. As our federal government destroys healthcare safety nets, we can start addressing the problem here in Vermont. The cost of health insurance is astronomical. Too many people are unable to access care until something catastrophic occurs.

63% of young adults 18-24 are underinsured. They cannot afford out-of-pocket costs, so they delay care. I knew a young woman who should have seen a doctor but couldn’t afford the cost so put it off until cancer had reached an advanced stage. This is wrong.

We all have friends whose health insurance plans carry \$10,000 deductibles, and premiums for these catastrophic plans are not cheap. Many underinsured folks have health insurance through their place of employment, the cost of which further burdens employees.

H.433 proposes a path for addressing this issue, starting with publicly funded universal primary care for all Vermonters. Dr. Dynasaur has successfully provided similar care to low income children, teens and pregnant individuals for 28 years,

(See *Leeds letter*, Page 5A)

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# Letters to the Editor

## This president should not be given carte blanche

The Why Not government headed by Donald J. Trump is in full operation. Why Not shoot people in the street — this is the person who said he could murder a person in the streets of New York City and face no consequence — that it was in Minneapolis is the only difference, no matter who if anyone takes the fall, Trump is responsible ultimately.

Why Not invade a country on supposed drug control enforcement, while pardoning a convicted drug lord? Why Not

incite a riot then pardon convicted participants? Why Not blow up NATO, alienate our American allies, cripple the Constitution while pocketing Dollars for Donald in all ways conceivable.

There are issues to investigate —the deportation or detention of immigrants in citizenship programs, deporting and detaining those here with work permits, the conditions in the detainees holding centers, or even insider trading each time a tariff change occurs, the death of an ex-wife scheduled to testify, the financial scams of

this president.

This Why Not government will stand exposed because there are governors, mayors, senators, legislators, judges, newspaper editors and reporters as well as millions of Americans who believe in the United States virtue, morality, ethics, laws, and honor unlike this Why Not administration's wardrobe of incompetents.

**Christy Alger  
Orwell**

## Artificial Intelligence bound to backfire in the end

I'm not legally allowed to say anything bad about the company I work for.

So here is just a fact: They are keeping wages low & firing people so they can put more money into AI.

Oh, & hey, an unrelated story:

Once upon a time there was a king. He had a jester, a band, some knights... But he was sick of paying everybody. He just wanted to keep his gold for himself. Was that so terrible?

So the king hired a sorcerer to animate rocks to make jokes like the jester, music like the band, war like the knights...

At first the king was happy — "Look at all these savings!" he squealed, throwing gold coins into the air. "Who needs people when you have rocks?!"

"Yes, dear," the queen said, "but..."  
"What, my darling?"  
"Well..."  
The king frowned.  
The queen blurted: "The rocks suck!"  
"Sorry?" the king said, sure he'd misheard.

"Their music," the queen said in a milder tone, "sounds like music, but it's so... nothing. And the jokes are... in the form of jokes, but they're not... anything."

"Ugh," the king thought. "Wives are always saying such nonsense."

"And the knights," the queen continued, "unsettle me."

"You simply don't understand progress, darling," the king assured her, patting her hand.

The next day a messenger told the king no one was paying taxes.

"Whyever not?" the king asked. "Well, sir..." the messenger

hedged.  
"Spit it out!"  
"Well, uh, they have no money, sir."  
"LAZY FOOLS!" the king bellowed, then ordered his sorcerer, "Replace this dunce of a messenger with a rock!"

The kingdom went on — The rocks sang, joked & fought.

The people grew sad, hungry & angry.

The king was restless & bored & didn't know why — Everything was what he wanted! So efficient & servile! He'd even replaced his wife with a rock.

She always agreed with him, didn't have any stupid ideas...

Outside the stone castle, where people had real problems, a revolution was brewing.

The time of kings was nearing an end.

**Lou Gervais  
Vergennes**

## We Americans are better than this

What does it mean, now, to be an American? Does it mean believing that might makes right? Believing that laws are meant to be ignored or broken? That others different than us don't deserve to be living here, or living at all?

That lies, insults and disrespect are appropriate ways of leading and communicating? That basic human decency and dignity matter not at all?

Oh, I hope not. If this is truly what we've become, I am

ashamed to the core. I know that we are so much better than this. That we are compassionate. That we believe in the strength of our laws and the protections of our Constitution. That we want to see our country strive to be good and lead by example.

We are so far from that right now. I don't know how we will get to this better place, but I hope beyond hope that we do.

**Eric Hanson  
Starksboro**

legislative committees. Addressing food insecurity will require all of us — Vermonters supporting Vermonters.

Sen. Heffernan's email is sheffernan@leg.state.vt.us. He is a member of the Senate Agriculture and Education committees.

## Heffernan

(Continued from Page 4A) forwardlooking path toward a more secure and just food system. This work is top of mind for me, but I want to hear from you. If you are involved in agriculture or food security efforts, please reach out. I welcome you to visit our

## Leeds letter

(Continued from Page 4A) with a 98% participation rate. It works.

Removing insurance companies from the primary care formula will save millions of dollars. That's what happened when the state of Montana switched to this

approach for state employees. With reduced costs for health insurance, our public schools and thus our property taxes will become more affordable.

Clearly, the details need to be worked out, but there are loads of good models. The present situation

isn't working. I urge readers to support H.433 at your town meetings or in Australian ballots. Let's encourage our legislators to consider public funded primary care.

**Alice Leeds  
Bristol**

## Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A) were traveling north outside of the program. Mexico wanted to control out-migration so that they maintained a healthy work force in country and the United States wanted to control who came in and how long they stayed. To fix the problem, the Border Patrol began deporting more and more undocumented migrants from 1943 onward. Their deportation efforts culminated in 1954 with a massive deportation campaign with a title so denigrating to Mexican people that I will not use it here. Although some historians argue that the Border Patrol inflated their numbers, we do believe they deported around at least 300,000 people that year alone, and once again, Mexican

American citizens were caught up in the raids and sent out of their home country.

The regime of cruelty that we are seeing today is not new. It has been created and supported by Democrats and Republicans alike, which means that we all share responsibility for sustaining state violence toward both immigrants and citizens. The government-sanctioned violence that we are witnessing across the nation has historically targeted black and brown communities. The shootings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti represent a shift in abuse, where any person who opposes the action of the regime has become disposable. This is a terrifying shift, but for many of us, this horrific violence is simply

a revamped version of old policies and practices that we as Americans have allowed or turned a blind eye to. This is not sustainable and the time for change is now.

Minneapolis is showing us a way forward by no longer accepting this regime of cruelty, but they must not fight back alone. The responsibility to educate ourselves on what has and has not worked in the past, demand for better and different policies in the future, and vote our conscience in the midterms is on all of us now. We must work together to dismantle the regime that we ourselves have built and move toward a more just future.

Mary E. Mendoza is an assistant professor of history and Latino/a Studies at Penn State University.

## Elderly Services Inc. ESI College

### The Disconnection of Community in Corrections

Tuesday, February 10, 10:00-11:30 AM  
Elderly Services, 112 Exchange St., Middlebury

Most incarcerated individuals are released with high expectations but little training, re-entry planning, or structural support, while institutional practices complicate housing, employment and stability. Vermont's 40-45% recidivism rate is a predictable outcome rather than an exception and underscores the need for legislative reform.

Heather Newcomb exposes how prisons create systemic barriers for people they are charged to rehabilitate and examines how we can contribute to meaningful change. As Program Manager for Inclusive Workforce at Vermont Works for Women, Heather now helps women recognize their own strength and shape the next chapter of their lives with confidence and purpose.



### Is the U.S. a Christian Nation? Religion and Politics in American History and Today

Wednesdays February 18 & 25, 10:00 - 11:30 AM  
The Congregational Church of Middlebury

Is the United States a Christian Nation? We will consider different ways to answer that question, exploring various responses the founders had regarding the relationship between "church and state," the range of answers the U.S. Supreme Court has given to that question in the last hundred years, and examine demographic changes and debates in our time, especially with the resurgence of Christian Nationalism.

James Calvin Davis has taught religion and ethics at Middlebury College for 25 years. He is the author of the forthcoming book, *The Character of a Nation: John Witherspoon and the Moral Foundation of the United States*.



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**ADDISON COUNTY**

# Obituaries

## Margaret Lillian Palmer, 91, of East Middlebury

EAST MIDDLEBURY — Our beloved Margaret Lillian Palmer of East Middlebury, Vt., passed away peacefully Wednesday Jan. 21, 2026, in the presence of her family at home.

Her legacy is carried on by three daughters, Debra Piper and her husband Joe Rossino of Auburn, N.H., Joan Thorpe and husband Ron of Starksboro, Vt., and Dawn Piper and her partner Bill Thorpe of Leicester, Vt.; stepchildren Michael Palmer of Salisbury, Vt., David Palmer and wife Darlene of Salisbury, Vt., and Susan Brown and husband Bill of Ludlow, Vt.; five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; sister Kathren Powers of Cornwall, Vt.; and sister-in-law Rachel Longeway of Brandon, Vt.



**MARGARET LILLIAN PALMER**

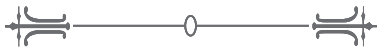
She was predeceased by her first husband, Paul Piper; her son, Scott Piper; and her second husband,

Oakley Palmer. We find comfort knowing they are reunited once more.

Margaret retired from Simmons Precision and was never one to sit still. It was a familiar sight to see her on her John Deere tractor maintaining her yard and extensive flower gardens. She also enjoyed the bone builders class at the local library, frequent trips to Walmart on the Ticonderoga Ferry, and numerous adventures with the Horizon Travel Club.

The family would like to thank Addison County Home Health & Hospice for their compassion and great care of Maggie.

Burial will take place beside her husband Oakley when the sun warms our shoulders in East Middlebury.◇



## Michael John Strong Sr., 59, of Hubbardton

HUBBARDTON — Michael John Strong Sr., 59, of Hubbardton, Vt., passed away unexpectedly Jan. 24, 2026, at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center after a short illness.

Mike was born on April 7, 1966, in Bomoseen, Vt., to Theron R. Strong Sr. and Marie Strong Monroe. Self-employed throughout his life, Mike was known as a jack of all trades and a master of many. He could often be found outside, working on his cars or tinkering with mechanical projects he enjoyed. He loved sharing his life experiences and wisdom with friends and family. Mike was also an animal lover and

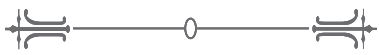
cherished the many pets he had over the years.

Mike is survived by his partner of 31 years, Jen; his son, Michael Strong Jr. (Melissa); his grandchildren, Odin, Finley and Juno; his sisters, Sharon Strong, Melody Strong, and Cris Strong; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother, Theron Strong Jr.; his father, Theron Strong Sr.; and his mother, Marie Strong Monroe.

Arrangements are being handled by Knight Funeral Home in White River Junction, Vermont. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.◇



**MICHAEL JOHN STRONG SR.**



## Loretta Robarge Hawkins, 86, of Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Loretta Robarge Hawkins, 86, of Ferrisburgh, Vt., passed away peacefully Jan. 29, 2026, with her husband at her side.

Born in Morrisville in 1939, Loretta graduated from Vergennes Union High School. For many years she ran the Vergennes video store, where she enjoyed getting to know everyone who came through

the door. Loretta never met a stranger and enjoyed nothing more than a good conversation with friends.

Loretta is survived by her husband, Pete, with whom she spent 28 happy years; several nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; and a few dear friends.

Loretta's family wishes to thank the providers and support staff at Helen Porter Health and Rehab who provided care and comfort in her final days. In accordance with her wishes, a private burial will be held in the spring.◇



**LORETTA ROBARGE HAWKINS**

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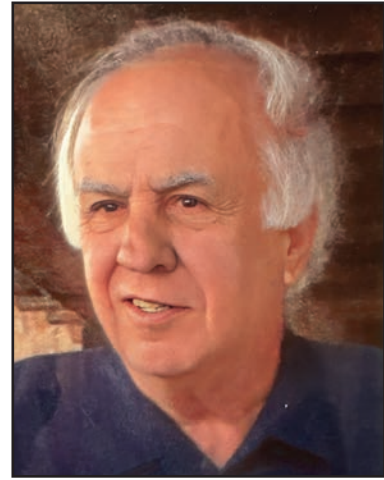
**Obituaries are on pages 6A, 7A, 8A and 9A**

## Arthur Henry Smith, 85, of Tucson, Ariz.

TUCSON, Ariz. — Arthur Henry Smith, 85, of Tucson, Ariz., died peacefully Jan. 16, 2026, with his children by his side.

Arthur was born July 27, 1940, in New York City and raised in Scarsdale, N.Y., one of four brothers. Arthur spent his summers as a youth in a family home in Athens, Vt., raising chickens and learning about farming. He attended Scarsdale High School (Class of 1958) before graduating from undergrad at Cornell University. He went on to receive his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Arizona in the late 1960s.

During his time in Arizona, Arthur was an original member and co-founder of Rancho Linda Vista in Oracle, Ariz., an artists' community in the desert outside of Tucson. In the 1970s, he taught in the Economics Department at the University of Vermont



**ARTHUR HENRY SMITH**

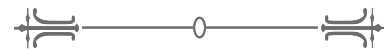
before ultimately finding his true professional calling.

Arthur became widely known as a pioneering auctioneer and antiques dealer beginning in the 1980s. He was responsible for a number of notable auctions, including one

featuring early antique photographs known as Bemis daguerreotypes, and earned a reputation for his sharp eye, deep knowledge, and unmistakable presence. His quick wit and auctioneer's cadence were legendary to those who knew him and to those who encountered him professionally. Arthur also co-founded the Swift House Inn in Middlebury, Vt., in 1985. A lifelong lover of humor, wit, and satire, Arthur was a writer of many essays, op-eds, and the book "The Search for Merch: Tales of Antique Picking."

Arthur is survived by his brother, Richard Liebmann-Smith (83); two children, Ben (50) and Elizabeth (48); and by three grandchildren, Ty (10), Jackson (8), and Wilder (8).

He will be remembered for his originality, intellectual curiosity, generosity of spirit, and unconventional view of the world.◇



## William 'Bill' John Norton Sr., 83, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — William "Bill" John Norton Sr. passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family Jan. 24, 2026. He was born Oct. 22, 1942, to parents Reuben Norton of Bristol, Vt., and Alta Butterfield of Lincoln, Vt.

He graduated from Bristol High School in 1960 and went on to attend Champlain College in Burlington, Vt., graduating in 1963. Bill met the love of his life, Linda Goodyear of Lincoln, Vt., and was married June 18, 1962. Shortly after marrying, they raised their three children. He then went on to have a long and successful career working in Montpelier in the Auditors Office as an auditor and chief auditor from 1963-1998. Then he moved over to the Vermont Treasurer's Office as the Director of Audit Compliance, where he worked from 1998 to when he retired in 2004, after 41 years of service.

He also was a long-time member, trustee, deacon and treasurer of United Church of Lincoln from 1979 to 2017. Bill and Linda were also founding members of Lincoln's Weathervane United Inc. in 1983 and served on the board of directors and served as the treasurer. He also served on the Lincoln Fire Department from 1970 as their business manager and — you guessed it — the treasurer. As if he wasn't busy enough, he also served as Lincoln's Auditor from 1966-1978, a selectman from 1978-1981 and was a member of the Mt. Abraham Union High



**WILLIAM "BILL" JOHN NORTON SR.**

School Director and Treasurer in 1967 and the Director of New England States Municipal Finance Officers Association from 1976-1977.

During his life Bill devoted himself to many projects — not just the "honey do" lists that Linda would frequently make for him. He could frequently be found putting up his winter supply of wood, playing his weekly cribbage games, brook fishing with his grandkids, making maple syrup and maple cream with his son and grandsons and attending the many sporting events of his grandchildren. He also was a long-time fan of the UCONN Women's Basketball team and would be highly invested in watching the NCAA Women's Basketball.

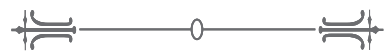
Bill is survived by his brother Wayman Norton; his children,

William "Chuck" and Kim, Charles "Chip," and Vaneasa (Norton) and Dan Stearns; his grandchildren, Alyssa Spafford (m. Steven), Lydia Euber (m. Jordan), Nicholas Norton, Ross Norton, Joseph Norton (m. Kristine), Dana Norton, Erik Norton, and William Norton; his great-grandchildren, Hugh Spafford, Eleanor Norton, George Norton, Megyn, Jacquelyn, Madison, and Bianca Spafford, Camille Euber, Oliver Provencher, and Henry Malloy; his great-great-grandchild Adeline Chadburn; his many sisters and brothers-in-law; Bruce and Roberta Goodyear, Gilbert Goodyear, Lorraine and Robert Patterson, Lenore and Russell Gates, Lisa Goodyear-Prescott and Reed Prescott; as well as a multitude of nieces and nephews and cousins.

Bill is predeceased by his loving wife, Linda Norton (Goodyear); his parents, Reuben Norton and Alta Norton (Butterfield); his brother Charles Norton; and his father- and mother-in-law Paul Goodyear and Wanda (Thompson) Goodyear.

A service will be held on Sunday Feb. 8, at United Church of Lincoln at 2 p.m., with a reception to follow at Burnham Hall. A private family burial service will be held at a later date.

The family would like to thank Addison County Home Health and Hospice for their spectacular care and help getting him home. In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to United Church of Lincoln.◇



## Timothy Lee Jaqua, 70, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — Timothy Lee Jaqua of Lincoln, age 70, passed away on Christmas Day, 2025, with the comfort of church members at Porter's ARCH suite in Middlebury. He was born Nov. 5, 1955, in Napoleon, Ohio, to Roger and Carolyn (Sauber) Jaqua. He was third oldest of five sons who lived on a 40-acre farm near Liberty Center, Ohio.

Tim was a serious student during his school years and was a reader of both pop culture as well as classics of the past. Since the age of seven, he became quite interested in music, especially the piano. He was a local talent during his teen years and played piano or organ at many school events, Sunday church services and weddings. His keyboard talents would serve him all his life. During earlier years at home, Tim never lacked the company of friends, and his home phone received many calls asking for him. He also was fond of his past music teachers and kept in touch with them for many years.



**TIMOTHY LEE JAQUA**

Tim attended high school at Norwood-Norfolk Central School when the family moved to Massena, N.Y. After high school, Tim went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Kent State University. During summer breaks, Tim would always work at various nursing homes back in Ohio, which helped with his medical training, tuition costs and spending money.

After graduating from Kent

State, Tim would soon go on to a position at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. During those years he attended many Broadway shows, traveled the world and gained broad medical experience at his hospital job, including emergency room nurse and post-graduate coursework.

The city lifestyle lost its appeal after several years and Timothy decided to move to Vermont. He worked in various nursing positions and enjoyed sharing his music. Tim would find new fellowship and become a member of the United Church of Lincoln and in time became its pianist and organist. This partnership lasted over 25 years.

Timothy is survived by three brothers, Philip, Paul and Thomas, all of northwest Ohio, and one uncle, Jack Jaqua of South Carolina. He was predeceased by his parents and his brother Mark.

A memorial service will be held at the United Church of Lincoln on Sunday, Feb. 15 at 2 p.m., with a reception to follow.◇

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## Jennie M. Brinkman, 80, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Jennie M. Brinkman, a resident of Vermont and Cornwall for most of her life, died at home early morning, Feb. 1, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. She was born Sept. 13, 1945, in San Severo, Italy, the daughter of Stanley Carlton and Anna Maria (Patrizio) Johnson.

Jennie graduated from Middlebury Union High School in 1963. At the age of 17, she began her career as a secretary under the tutelage of Helen Dukette at Middlebury College's Secretarial Department in Old Chapel. She married Michael George Brinkman of Vergennes, Vt., July 24, 1965. Together they raised two daughters. Working side by side, they owned and operated Edgewood Orchard in Cornwall from 1977-1985. She shared her husband's love of working with the land.

Jennie enjoyed participating and working for her Cornwell community over the years, serving as a member and president of Friends of the Cornwall School, school board director/chairman of Anna Stowell Sunderland Bingham Memorial School, justice of the peace and town treasurer, as well as serving on various committees for town projects. She was also a member of the South Cornwall Cemeteries Association. Jennie served as secretary/treasurer for many years. Jennie also served as a board member/secretary for



JENNIE M. BRINKMAN

Hospice Volunteer Services in Middlebury, Vt.

She was a lifelong and active parishioner of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic church in Middlebury, serving over the years as a lector, parish hospital/Helen Porter Nursing Home visitor, religious education teacher, Bishop's Fund solicitor, Liturgy Committee member/chairman, Parish Council Member and a member/vice regent of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas - Court Assumption 2009.

She is survived by her husband, Michael G. Brinkman; daughters, Stephanie Ann Brinkman (John Gallagher) of Waterbury Center, Vt., and Christine Marie Brinkman (Peter Laframboise) of Cornwall, Vt.; two dearly beloved

granddaughters, Fallon Jane Gallagher of Ridgewood, N.Y. and Riley Ann Gallagher of Monte Vista, Colo.; step-granddaughter Emily of Cornwall, Vt.; brothers Gary L. Johnson (JoAnn) of Newport, Vt. and Salvatore (Sylvester) Guy Johnson of Port Charlotte, Fla.; sisters Elizabeth Quesnel of Cornwall, Vt., Martha Quesnel Robertson (David) of Summerville, S.C., Linda Maxham (Tom) of Virginia Beach, Va., and her baby sister Maria Murray (Doug) of Salisbury, Vt.; and many nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her father, mother, brothers-in-law Thomas Quesnel and Allen Quesnel, and two nephews, Mathew John Quesnel and Douglas John Murray III.

Jennie will be remembered for her smile, compassion and love of life. She was always willing to lend a helping hand to everyone.

Memorial contributions may be made to Elderly Services, Inc., 112 Exchange St, Middlebury, Vt., 05753.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Middlebury in the spring, date to be determined. Graveside Committal services and burial will follow at Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Galvin Road in Cornwall.

Funeral arrangements made by Sanderson Funeral Home in Middlebury. ◊

## Cassandra Reyes Richard, 70, of Vergennes

VERGENNES — Cassandra Reyes Richard journeyed peacefully into the Great Beyond, concluding a long and courageous relationship with ovarian cancer.

Born in East Hampton, N.Y., Cas carried with her a bright curiosity about the world. After graduating from Saint Michael's College with a degree in Philosophy, she later earned a master's degree in Theology, reflecting lifelong love of learning and faith. Vermont became her true home, and it was there, while slicing deli meat at the All American Hero, that she met the love of her life, Dave. Together they built a sweet, steady life rooted in simple joys and steadfast companionship.

Cas served her community with warmth and dedication, first as the Director of Religious Education at Saint Peter's Catholic Church, then as a beloved presence behind the desk at One Credit Union, where she spent countless hours laughing with her "favorite ladies." She



CASSANDRA REYES RICHARD

cherished any excuse to leave the house — folk group practice and book club with her friends, "the Holy Remnants."

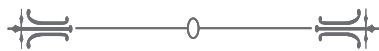
Her greatest pride was her family. Cas never missed a swim meet, musical, or band concert — timing races, working concession stands, and cheering with unwavering

enthusiasm.

In retirement, she embraced slow living: growing and cooking delicious food, tending her garden, and befriending every bird that visited her yard. She found deep peace outdoors, whether trekking with the "Adirondack Ambulators" or gliding across quiet waters in her kayak — always ending adventures with wine, cheese, and laughter.

Cas lives on in the memory of her devoted and handsome husband of 50 years, David; her children Rebecca (Seth Clark,) and Nathan; and her two cherubic grandchildren, Jacob and Naomi, who brought her endless delight. She is predeceased by her parents, Anthony Reyes, Johanna Reyes; brother Mark Anthony Reyes of East Hampton, N.Y.; and Mildred Ozalis of Sag Harbor, N.Y.

A memorial service will be held later this spring — her favorite season, when the world returns to color and new life begins. ◊



## Jett Rheume, 21, of Salisbury

SALISBURY — Though Jett reached out for a lifeline, the world couldn't hold him tightly enough, and he took his own life after a long and weary battle with Mental health.

Jett Steven Edward Rheume, born June 16, 2004, will forever leave a void in the hearts of the many who loved him. A son, brother, uncle, and friend, he is survived by his parents, Stacey and Ricky Rheume; and his biological father, Dana Drown. Jett was the fifth of 10 children, a position that placed him right in the middle of a vibrant, bustling family. He was a protective and loving brother to his 9 siblings: Chelsea "Sissy" (Gabe) Hatch, Talon (Gabe) Drown, Maxx, his Irish twin Tate, Yankee, Avalon, Rowan, and Elsa and Nala Rheume. He was a doting uncle to Buckley "Buckshot" and Raelynn "Stingray," Adalyn and



JETT RHEUME

Emersyn. He was loved by many grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Jett attended Woodsville High School in Haverhill N.H., and graduated from MUHS in Middlebury Vt. An avid fisherman,

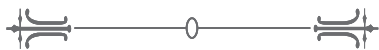
he found peace in the patience of the catch and the beauty of the outdoors. If Jett wasn't with his family, you might have caught him walking the 2.5 miles with his Kayak to Lake Dunmore.

A portion of Jett's ashes will be released into Lake Dunmore, returning him to the places where he felt most at peace with a fishing pole in his hand.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to Salisbury Fish Culture Station — through Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department in Jett's memory

He is preceded in death by his papa, Randy Comes; his uncle, Josh Gallagar; and his loyal dog, Boe.

The family welcomes anyone to attend the celebration of life at the Middlebury American Legion Feb. 16, from 5-8 p.m. ◊



## Kory Stewart Wright, 42, of Bristol

BRISTOL — With great sadness we want to let you know of the passing of our beloved son, nephew, brother, cousin and friend.

Kory Stewart Wright, 42, of Bristol, Vt., passed away in the early morning hours of Jan. 31, 2026.

He graduated from Mount Abraham Union High School, class of 2002. He was employed by Pool World of Burlington for the last five years and prior to that at Bimbo Bakery in Williston.

He was an avid gamer, movie buff and hobbyist. He also enjoyed target shooting with his father. He loved Aunt Alice's homemade crescent rolls. Also canned corn — IYKYK.

Kory will be remembered for his sense of humor, his big kind heart, love of animals and devotion to family.

He is survived by his parents, Raymond and Mary Wright of Bristol; his aunt Kathy (David) LaFleche of Cornwall; uncle Danny (Debbie) Grace of Bristol; his brother, Christopher Grace; sisters, Jennifer Cooper, Amy Wright and their families; a very special cousin, Jaime Sheldon; a close nephew, Chance Sheldon-Shea; as well as several nieces



KORY STEWART WRIGHT

and nephews. He was predeceased by his grandparents, Lloyd "Gus" Bouvier and Margaret "Maggie" aka Card shark Bouvier who he enjoyed playing Rummy with; and most recently his Uncle Herbert Wright (Jan. 21, 2026), the beloved family dog, Leila (Jan. 27, 2026) and his stepgrandfather, Roy Rivers (Jan. 30, 2026).

Calling hours will be Friday, Feb. 20, from 5-8 p.m. at Brown McClay Funeral home in Bristol.

In lieu of flowers please consider donating to the GoFundMe or to an animal rescue/shelter of your choice, in his name. ◊

### ADDISON COUNTY

## School News

RANDOLPH CENTER — Vermont State University is proud to announce the students who earned placement on the dean's list for the Fall 2025 semester, including **Bridget Audet** of Cornwall, **Raluca Cristea** of Brandon, **Mahaila Gossein** of Salisbury and **Devon Kibbey** of Sudbury.

To qualify for this academic honor, students must maintain full-time status and achieve a 3.5 or greater semester grade point average.

TROY, N.Y. — **Lizzie Mikkelsen** of Lincoln, Vt., has been named to the Fall 2025 president's list at Hudson Valley Community College.

Mikkelsen is studying in the Mortuary Science academic program at the college.

The college's president's list recognizes students each fall and spring term who earn a term GPA between 3.5 and 4.0 and receive no grades of D, F, I or Z, or their remedial equivalents.



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ADDISON COUNTY

# Obituaries

## Wayne Steele Darling, 79, of Monkton

MONKTON — Wayne Steele Darling, born Oct. 2, 1946, in Nampa, Idaho, died at home in Vermont Friday, Jan. 23, 2026, at age 79.

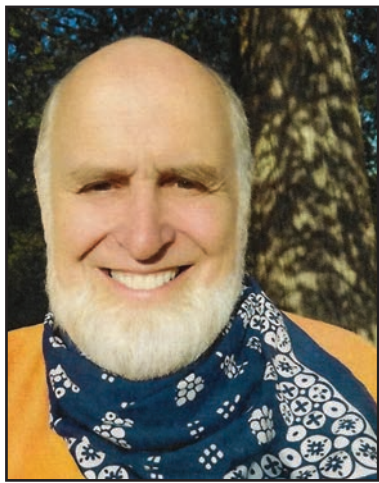
Wayne grew up in Idaho and graduated from Borah High School in Boise, Class of 1965. He was predeceased by his parents, Elden West Darling and Maurine Steele Darling, and by his older brother, Richard West Darling.

For many years, Wayne navigated complex health challenges with remarkable determination, resilience, and his special brand of good humor, sometimes sprinkled with absurd hilarity that surprises you into laughing even in heavy moments. He faced each day with optimism and an abiding ability to find the good in people and circumstances.

He died at home with his wife, Peggy, by his side. They were married on April 26, 1969, and shared a life filled with steadfast love, grounded in warm partnership, mutual respect, and quiet joy, with unwavering devotion and enduring care. Wayne was surrounded by the things he loved, including rustic furniture and functional art he crafted by hand. He was Peggy's best friend and the love of her life.

Wayne was a devoted father to their two children, Heather Darling-Corte and her husband Israel Corte of New York City, and Benjamin Darling and his wife Melanie Ivanoff of Nashville, Tenn. He was a proud and loving grandfather to Milo Corte, Lucia Corte, and Eleanor Darling.

He is survived by his sisters and their families: Christine (Joel) Cook of Vermont; Diane (Scott) Atkinson of Idaho; and Debra Gibbs of Texas. He is also survived by the children of his late brother Richard and their families — Kim (Rick) Johnson and Blake (Amanda) Darling,



WAYNE STEELE DARLING

both of Utah — as well as a host of Wayne and Peggy's extended family — nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Wayne held a deep spiritual connection to the natural world. As a student, he worked summers as a woodsman and logger in the Rocky Mountains, experiences that shaped his lifelong reverence for the outdoors. He shared this love with his family through cross-country camping trips to National and State Parks and through years of bicycling, downhill skiing, and cross-country skiing. He found everyday delight in observing wildlife — birds, deer, bears, bobcats, and more — around his home on a dirt road at the edge of Monkton Town Forest, where he lived for the past 54 years.

Athletics were central to Wayne's life from an early age. He attended Columbia University, where he earned a degree in Political Science in 1969, captained the wrestling team, and completed Naval ROTC with an honorable discharge. Before moving to Vermont in 1972, he taught history and politics and coached wrestling and football at St. Paul's School in Garden City, N.Y. Throughout his life, Wayne remained an active participant

and dedicated spectator of many sports. During Heather and Ben's school years, he spent eight seasons timing races for the Addison Otters Swim Team. Even during illness, he remained committed to physical fitness, often creating his own pre-operative training routines to "get in shape" before surgeries.

Wayne also had a lifelong gift for language. His early involvement in debate fostered a clarity and eloquence that stayed with him. He was a gifted storyteller and a thoughtful writer, expressing care and connection through letters, poems and personal notes. He recently shared his family story in a collaborative memoir, *Yes, We Are Darlings*, written with his surviving siblings.

Professionally, Wayne brought calm judgment, communication skills, and keen observation to his work. He spent over 25 years at Middlebury College in Public Safety and Security, including service at the college's art museum. Earlier in his career, he managed service teams at Toyota and Volkswagen dealerships in Burlington.

A celebration of Wayne's life will be held at a later date in both Idaho and Vermont.

Memorial donations may be made in Wayne's honor to: Sandy Hook Promise, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, and Monkton Town Forest Committee.

Heartfelt thanks are extended to Bristol Rescue Squad, the physicians and caregivers at the University of Vermont Medical Center, Porter Hospital, and Mount Sinai Hospital Transplant Team in New York City.

"Call me by the old familiar name. Speak of me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference into your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow."

—Henry Scott-Holland ◊

## James Barnett Hodges Jr., 90, of Cornwall

CORNWALL — James Barnett Hodges Jr., was known to everyone as Barney, to his siblings as "Reds", and to his farm crew as "the Colonel". He passed away Jan. 28, 2026, peacefully at his home with his loving wife Dee and son Barney III, by his side. He loved farming and growing apples, singing, and being with family. He had a sly wit, and a special knack for opening his heart to everyone as he loved meeting people from all walks of life.

Born on June 1, 1935, in Lynchburg, Va., Barney was one of five children born to Frances (Long) Hodges and James Barnett Hodges of Forest, Va. Siblings include the late Bill and Tom Hodges, and his two living siblings are Harriette Andrews of Davis, Calif., and Perry Hodges of Bloomington, Ind. Barney grew up on a farm, known as Elk Hill, in Forest, Va., where his father raised sheep, cattle, peaches, and apples.

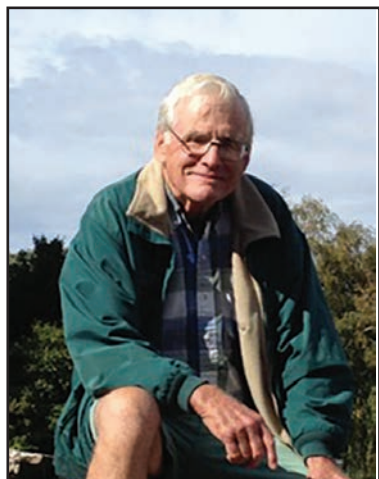
As a boy, Barney listened to singers like John Charles Thomas, Jussi Bjorling, Al Jolson, and Ezio Pinza on his father's records. When he was very young, his parents could find "Reds" under the piano listening closely to friends and family singing with love and laughter.

Barney graduated from Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Va., and Cornell University, where he was a member of the a cappella singing group, Cayuga's Waiters. After graduating from the College of Agriculture at Cornell in 1957, Barney worked for his father on the farm in Virginia, while at the same time getting his feet wet in community theater in Lynchburg.

In 1961 he moved to New York City to study voice and acting and enrolled in the American Musical Theater Academy. There he studied under the direction of well-known acting teacher Sanford Meisner in 1962.

During his time at acting school, Barney met his future wife, Dee Manning. She fell in love with this unique and hay-seedy mix of a man, artist and farmer, and they were married in 1963.

Barney went on to pursue the theater in New York. One of his



JAMES BARNETT HODGES JR.

prominent roles was the part of "Jim Crow" in a musical play entitled *Jericho Jim Crow* (1964), written by Langston Hughes, and co-directed by Alvin Ailey and William Hairston. While working with Ailey and Hairston, Barney enjoyed being part of the incredible cast of gospel singers, dancers, and actors. He found friendship with cast members and became part of a prominent theatrical work that celebrates the endurance of the human spirit during the civil rights movement.

In 1970, Barney moved with Dee and their three children to Middlebury, Vt., to start a farm, raise a family, and continue acting through community theater. He managed Allan Jackson's Orchards in Shoreham, and Cornwall Orchards, owned by Bob Norinsberg, and joined the Middlebury Community Players, a lively group of talented local playwrights, musicians, and singers. Barney also became an active participant of the St Stephen's Church Choir, and the Middlebury College Community Chorus.

In 1974, Barney and Dee bought a dairy farm in Cornwall, Vt., with partners Dave and Eunice Van Vleck. The land, with its east facing slopes and loamy soils, was perfect for Barney's vision of a large scale, highly efficient, wholesale apple orchard, and with that the four of them started Sunrise Orchards. The next year, the foursome began converting the dairy farm to apple orchard. Barney was able to put into practice what he gleaned from his

education at Cornell and experience as a horticulturalist/manager. Within the next decade, Sunrise Orchards became one of the more successful high-density plantings of semi-dwarf trees, that later, when mature, was one of the highest yielding, most efficient wholesale orchards in the northeast.

In 2008, Barney transferred ownership to his son, Barney, and his wife Christiana. Sunrise Orchards has become a mainstay of apple production in Vermont and the wider Northeast region.

Barney's love for music stayed with him always. He also loved tennis, and watching his children and grandchildren in cross-country ski meets.

We will remember Barney and his beautiful singing voice as one of a kind: an unforgettable sound that echoes across the Green Mountains and beyond.

Barney is survived by his wife, Dee; daughter Georgia and her husband Doug Jacuzzi, and their children, Lola and Cielo; daughter Kate and her husband Ted Springer; son Barney and his wife Christiana and their children, Sophie, Sam and Malia.

A celebration of Barney's life will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Middlebury, Vt., on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at 10 a.m. — apple blossom time — Barney's favorite time of year. A reception for continued remembrance will follow at the farm, Sunrise Orchards, in Cornwall. All are welcome to attend.

The family would like to thank Eastview At Middlebury, St Stephen's Church, Addison County Home Health and Hospice, and Project Independence, for all their love and support.

We welcome the sharing of memories and photos online at Barney's Memorial Page.

In Lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Middlebury Community Players at [middleburycommunityplayers.org](http://middleburycommunityplayers.org) and to For The Love Of Dogs Vermont [fortheLoveofDogsVermont.com](http://fortheLoveofDogsVermont.com).

Barney's Memorial Page can be viewed at [www.mykeeper.com/JamesHodges1/](http://www.mykeeper.com/JamesHodges1/). ◊

## Richard Adolph Martineit, 81, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Richard Adolph Martineit, 81, of Middlebury, Vt., passed Jan. 14, 2026, at UVM Medical Center after a period of declining health. He was born Sept. 19, 1944, in Clinton, Mass., to Adolph and Gertrude Martineit.

Richard is survived by his wife, Barbara, the love of his life for the past 55 years; two sons, Richard and Robert, both of Middlebury, Vt.; his sister Denise Gray (and husband, Jerry) of Clinton, Mass.; as well as several nieces, nephews and cousins. He is pre-deceased by his parents, and sisters Erica Rockel (and husband, Bob) and Edna Amrhein.

Richard graduated from Clinton High School in 1962. He attended Lowell Technological Institute (UMass/Lowell), graduating in



RICHARD ADOLPH MARTINEIT

1967 with a Bachelor in Science degree in Nuclear Science. After graduation, Richard began a 30-year career in the nuclear power industry

including working at Bechtel, retiring from Halliburton in 1997.

Richard enjoyed several sports, but Golf was his passion. Richard was also an avid coin collector, having garnered awards on his deep and varied collections. A few of his finds landed him in articles in *Numismatic News*. In his later years, he converted over to stamps as going directly to auctions became more difficult.

Following Richard's wishes, no memorial service will be held. Burial will be at a later date. To honor Richard's memory consider a gift to Homeward Bound of Middlebury, Vermont ([www.homewardboundanimals.org](http://www.homewardboundanimals.org)) or the American Diabetes Association ([diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)); and remember to always enjoy your golf games, no matter the score! ◊

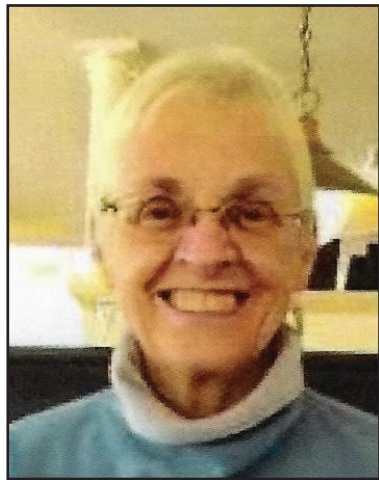
## Sarah H. Adams, 85, of South Starksboro

SOUTH STARKSBORO — Sarah was born in Corning, N.Y., to Lacy Mercereau and Jean Richardson Hungerford April 9, 1940. She attended the local Corning schools; graduated from Wheaton College in Norton, Mass., in 1962; studied at Bank Street College of Education in New York City; and then began her teaching career.

After moving to Vermont in 1967, Sarah taught elementary school at C.P. Smith School in the Old North End of Burlington and later at Robinson Elementary School in Starksboro, Vt. She was known for her patience and her ability to meet students where they were. Putting on school plays each year brought great joy to all.

After retiring from Robinson, Sarah, an avid gardener, worked part-time at Gardener's supply for twelve years.

In 1982, Sarah married Mark A. Adams. In her younger years, she loved downhill skiing and cross-



SARAH H. ADAMS

country skiing and, throughout her life, growing vegetables and flowers in their gardens. She appreciated the outdoors and spent many hours walking around the property with her cats and dogs.

Sarah also taught aerobics in Bristol and Middlebury and later taught Tai Chi in South Starksboro.

She was an avid Patriots fan and a prolific reader who took great pleasure in her book groups in South Starksboro and Starksboro village.

Sarah lived a life rooted in learning, movement and attention to the world around her. She valued independence and kindness. She will be remembered for her steadiness, curiosity and the quiet joy she found in everyday life.

She is survived by her husband, Mark A. Adams. Sarah is also survived by her sister, Susan Bair, and three nieces, Cindy Hulecki, Ellen Quirk, and Toby Bernabei, and their children.

Plans for a remembrance will be shared at a later time.

A special thanks to Addison County Home Health & Hospice for providing excellent care and kindness to Sarah.

Those wishing to honor Sarah's memory are invited to do so in a way that reflects her love of cats and dogs, learning, gardening or time outdoors. ◊

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\$10 cover (nobody will be turned away and kids are free)  
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**Obituaries are on pages 6A, 7A, 8A and 9A**

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

either paid obituaries or free notices cost \$10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to [obits@addisonindependent.com](mailto:obits@addisonindependent.com).

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

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If we buy the electric car that we have been thinking about, we will have Bristol Electronics return and add to our system, and cover the cost of the added electricity. Solar has been a good investment for us.

John & Beverly Teer - Monkton, VT



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[BristolElectronicsVT.com](http://BristolElectronicsVT.com)  
FREE SITE EVALUATIONS

## George R. Morgan III, 67, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — George R. Morgan III, 67, of Lincoln, Vt., passed away peacefully at home Jan. 31, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. Born April 20, 1958, in Lincoln, George remained deeply rooted in the community that shaped his life.

A graduate of Mount Abraham Union High School, George pursued a career in the trades and earned his Master Plumbing and Heating License. His dedication to his craft and unwavering professionalism earned him the respect of colleagues and clients alike throughout his career.

George is survived by his beloved wife, Patricia Morgan; his mother, Hannah Atkins Clark; his brother, Peter Morgan; and his sister, Sherry Morgan. He leaves behind three children: Jessica (Robert) Howard, Carrie (Tim McGettrick) Morgan, and George (Courtney) R. Morgan



GEORGE R. MORGAN III

IV. He also embraced his role as a stepfather to Julie (Jim) Shuler, Eric Gowen, and Jamie Gowen.

He was a proud grandfather to Shane, Sydney, and Luke Adkins;

Ryan, Megan, Liam, and McKenna McGettrick; and George and Judson Morgan. George was predeceased by his father, George Morgan Jr.

A proud Mason affiliated with the Shriners organization, George found fulfillment through service and fellowship. Known for his generosity and compassion, he was always ready to lend a helping hand when needed.

A memorial service will be held Feb. 21, at 11 a.m., at Lincoln United Church, 23 Quaker Street. A private family burial will follow at a later date.

The family extends heartfelt thanks to Project Independence for their support during George's final year and to Addison Home Health and Hospice for their compassionate care in his last month. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Project Independence. ☐

## Ripton readies to reacquire school

By JOHN FLOWERS

RIPTON — Future control of the Ripton Elementary School property, largely inactive since being shuttered to K-5 instruction last June, will be decided by voters in the seven Addison Central School District towns on March 3.

That's when residents in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge will be asked to affirm ACSD's official closure plan for the Ripton Elementary building. If a majority of the voters of those seven towns endorse that plan, it would set the stage for the town of Ripton to reclaim the building at 753 Lincoln Road and the 15 acres that go with it.

Does Ripton want the building and property back after having conveyed it to ACSD 10 years ago as part of school governance consolidation?

Most signs point to "yes."

In fact, Ripton's March 2 annual town meeting warning includes an article asking voters for \$70,000 to cover an initial year's use and maintenance of the elementary school building provided the district-wide March 3 Australian ballot vote on the closure plan passes. The \$70,000 figure is based on the local selectboard's research of what ACSD now spends annually to run the building.

While Ripton doesn't have enough young children right now to make Ripton Elementary a viable K-5 school, townspeople have plenty of other ideas on how to use the 11,900-square-foot building — including as new town offices, a municipal library, a community center & gym, with enough space left over to attract a tenant to help offset annual operating costs.

"Everything is not going to happen all at once," longtime Ripton Selectperson Laurie Cox cautioned of the potential Ripton Elementary transformation.

Cox this year will wrap up a storied, 40-year career on the Ripton selectboard, but she's agreed to serve on a local committee that will help the town imagine, and

implement, a new set of uses for the building and property.

"If we're not going to have the school here to help solidify our community in the ways schools can, it's important to have a building that can be used for a lot of community activities beyond things like potluck (meals) that happen just once in a while," she said.

Ripton had been home to at least one local school for more than two centuries — until last spring, when the ACSD board made the difficult decision to close Ripton Elementary due to declining enrollment.

Ripton's approximately 25 current K-5 students now attend neighboring Salisbury Community School.

As the present owner of the Ripton Elementary School building, ACSD is responsible for its upkeep and maintenance. The district could sell the property to a private buyer if ACSD voters were to approve the closure plan on March 3 and Ripton residents decided they *didn't* want the property.

Cox believes town enthusiasm about potentially owning Ripton Elementary again has surged in recent years. A big reason: The current town office building off Route 125 in the village is undersized, deteriorating, and located near the flood-prone Middlebury River.

"It's easy to say, 'Move the town offices there'; the only thing that would have to absolutely happen for that is to build a vault (for town records)," she said. "It would give us a good spot for our town offices for many, many years to come — with no threat from flooding."

Creating a Ripton public library within the old school building would also be a fairly easy lift, officials said. The structure

already includes a school library, which Cox believes could be supplemented with donated books for folks of all ages. Ripton used to have a small library in the upstairs of its current municipal building, but that amenity faded decades ago, according to Cox.

For folks looking to recreate, the school building is equipped with a small gym that could continue to serve Riptonites, officials noted.

"It could be used by people who just want to go and shoot hoops, or people who want to bring their toddlers for play and socialization," Cox said.

Ideas are good, but Cox also acknowledged the need to carefully plan things out — including when the building could be open for sporadic and regular events that the community might request.

To get the planning conversation going, Cox has reached out to the Addison County Economic Development Corp. for advice on recruiting a potential tenant. And she noted some Ripton residents have asked whether some of the Ripton Elementary land could be earmarked for affordable/workforce housing. The nonprofit Addison Housing Works is being brought into that discussion, as well.

Having a \$70,000 budget for the first year of the town's (latest) ownership of the building would allow Ripton to intensify community dialogue over its use and begin using it as a community asset, Cox reasoned. Future annual costs of maintaining and operating the structure (minus potential tenant revenues) could be built into future town budgets, she said.

For a look at Ripton's complete March 2 town meeting warning, go to [tinyurl.com/mpfz6sbs](http://tinyurl.com/mpfz6sbs).

John Flowers is at [johnf@addisonindependent.com](mailto:johnf@addisonindependent.com).

## Vt. high schoolers can get free associate degree

MONTEPELIER — Vermont high school juniors can now apply to earn a free, fast-tracked associate degree through the Free Degree Promise pathway at the Community College of Vermont (CCV). The Free Degree Promise builds on the state's Early College program to give students the chance to complete a free associate degree of their choosing just, one year after high school graduation.

Aidan Hall attended Early College at CCV and continued with the Free Degree Promise the year after he graduated from Proctor High School, earning his associate degree and a certificate in cybersecurity and networking by age 19. He then transferred to a four-year degree program as a junior with no student debt.

"CCV prepared me to step into my junior year," said Hall, who is looking forward to returning home to the Rutland area to work as a network engineer or in IT systems administration after he completes his bachelor's degree.

"It gave me confidence to know I could do well. I've been doing great in classes because I was normalized to routines and college-level work that I would have been thrown into if I went (to a bachelor's program) straight off the bat. It was a great way to get prepared — and because of the Free Degree Promise, getting that preparedness wasn't a risk."

The hundreds of students like Aidan who have pursued the Free Degree Promise pathway are graduating at twice the rate and in half the time as their community college peers nationally. These are students like Abbie Violette from Barre Town, who is pursuing her bachelor's in nursing; Jada Unruh from Vernon, who is studying behavioral health; and Donovan Arnold from Richford, who is now working toward his bachelor's in accounting.

The state's Early College program supports eligible high school seniors

to take a full year of college courses tuition-free while completing their high school diploma. Students who successfully complete Early College at CCV can continue full-time enrollment to earn their associate degree through the Free Degree Promise before entering the workforce or transferring their credits to a bachelor's degree program.

The Free Degree Promise is available to current 10th-, 11th- and 12th-graders in Vermont. Since its launch in 2022, CCV has seen triple the number of low-income students accessing Early College and persisting toward associate degrees.

"The Free Degree Promise is making it possible for young Vermonters to earn fast-tracked, debt-free degrees that open doors to a lifetime of opportunity," said CCV President Joyce Judy. "While Vermont has New England's lowest rate of students continuing to college after high school at 40%, students who participate in Early College continue at 80%. CCV's goal is to make postsecondary education accessible for all Vermonters, and pathways like the Free Degree Promise do just that."

In its first three years, partners say the Free Degree Promise is reaching more low-income, first-generation and students of color. Building on the success of state programs like Early College and 802Opportunity, the Promise also offers enhanced advising and stipends for expenses like transportation and textbooks.

"It's a bright spot. When young people have accelerated pathways to debt-free degrees of their choosing, it's a gamechanger," said Carolyn Weir, executive director of the J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation, the funder behind the Promise. "This pathway could be a great option for students looking to explore their interests in order to graduate with a plan, students ready to get a head start on college,

and self-motivated students who are ready for a change."

Ruby Hall of Burlington — no relation to Aidan Hall — chose the Early College and Free Degree Promise pathway because they had completed their high school graduation requirements as a junior and were otherwise looking at graduating high school early.

"I don't know what I would have done after that," said Hall. "I didn't really want to go into a massive amount of debt when I didn't even know what I wanted to study. It's really nice that this program didn't cost money for me to explore my interests, which is huge."

After two years of debt-free coursework in CCV's STEM studies program, Ruby says, "I decided recently that I'd like to focus on environmental science in sustainable city planning and design."

Visit [ccv.edu/freedegree](http://ccv.edu/freedegree) to learn more and apply. Students and families are also invited to attend a virtual info session on March 10; register here at [tinyurl.com/FreeDegreeInfo](http://tinyurl.com/FreeDegreeInfo).

Editor's note: This story was provided by Katie Keszezy of CCV.

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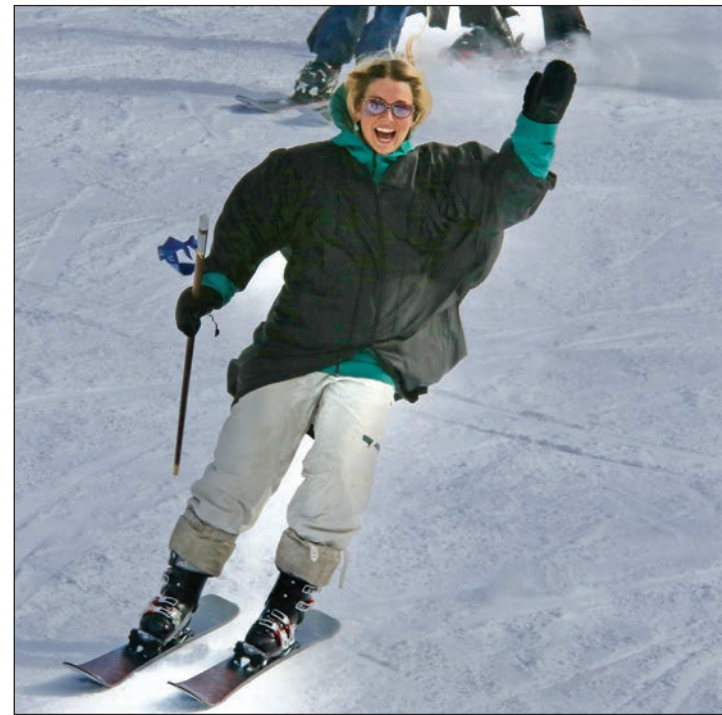
**Here they come!**

Middlebury College honored members of the class of 2025.5 for completing their undergraduate studies at the Feb Celebration on Saturday, which started with a traditional conferring of degrees ceremony at Virtue Fieldhouse and ended with the storied "Ski-down" at the Middlebury Snowbowl. Many of 163 grads added skis and poles to accent their caps and gowns, took the Sheehan Lift to the top of the Bowl and slalommed down in all their splendor.

The snow was particularly special to some, like Sanmyukta Shinde (above) of India and Nee Syengo of Kenya.

Some are practically locals, like (far right) Eliane Odefey Waterbury and Zoe Sipe, whose family is from Richmond; others truly ARE local, like 2021 MUHS grad Tom Nevins (below Odefey and Sipe). The departing editor of *The Campus* newspaper, Madeleine Kaptein (bottom right, strawberry blonde), took the lift with her pals. This was the first graduation for new Middlebury College President Ian Baucom (bottom left), who seemed to enjoy the celebration, despite the single-digit temps.

Independent photos/Steve James



# ANWSD

(Continued from Page 1A) will face the test of voters in the five-town area on March 3.

Higher spending on student support services makes up for \$445,962 of the \$661,179 increase, according to a school board presentation. Student support services includes attendance, counseling, nursing and health, SLP services, OT/PT services, intervention, curriculum, the office of learning, and professional development.

“The main reason for the increase was the need to move four positions from grant funded to the general fund,” Koenig explained. “We decided to retain those positions because, while the original funding source ended, the student need did not.”

The tax rate won't be concrete until a state budget is passed and state aid is known, Koenig said. Still, the school board has outlined illustrative tax estimates if the spending plan is passed as warned:

- Addison – education property tax would be \$1,9995, up from \$1,8916, which would increase property taxes \$110 per \$100,000 assessed value
  - Ferrisburgh - \$2,0942, up from \$2,0139, which would increase property taxes \$80 per \$100,000 of assessed value
  - Panton - \$1,2691, up from \$1,1922, which would increase property taxes \$80 per \$100,000 of assessed value
  - Vergennes - \$1,1653, up from \$1,1436, which would increase property taxes \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed value
  - Waltham - \$1,2016, up from \$1,1436, which would increase property taxes \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed value
- About two-thirds of Vermonters get a slight decrease in their education property taxes because they pay based on their income, not strictly their property value.
- “We started discussing it in June 2025 and have had some aspect of

the budget on every agenda since that time meaning we have devoted a significant amount of time discussing what resources our district needs in order to best educate our kids” Koenig said.

“At the same time, we have been highly cognizant of the financial impact the budget will likely have on our community at large.”

The ANWSD Annual Meeting and Public Information Hearing on this budget is scheduled for March 2 at 6 p.m. at the VUHS library.

Voting for residents of each town will take place at:

- Addison, 7 a.m., Addison Community Center.
  - Ferrisburgh, 7 a.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall.
  - Panton, 7 a.m., Panton Town Hall.
  - Vergennes, 9 a.m., St. Peter's Parish Hall.
  - Waltham, 10 a.m., Waltham Town Hall.
- Polls close everywhere at 7 p.m.

# Bundling Up: Soil Microbes in Winter

By MAGGIE WENG

Like any good animal, we sense the change of seasons through a hundred subtle clues. Leaves change and shed, becoming crispy piles underfoot. Geese cross the bright sky. Other signs of winter are harder to define: the morning chill deepens its bite, the afternoon light becomes pale. Although we may be aware that other creatures are preparing for the cold, building their nutritious stockpiles and cozy dens, few of us think about the ground beneath our feet. Yet here as well a whole world is getting ready for winter.

A handful of soil contains an invisible ecosystem as complex as the forest above ground. Its citizens are microbes, mostly single-celled organisms. Microbes exist across all three domains of life: Eukarya, Archaea and Bacteria. Although they are often associated with dirtiness and disease, most microbes are indifferent to humans and thrive in every kind of natural environment. In forests they are guardians of soil health, responsible for breaking down dead matter and recycling nutrients.

Forests store about one-third of our carbon emissions thanks in no small part to microbes, which help draw down carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and fix it in stable forms. But like most creatures, microbes are vulnerable to icy temperatures.

How do they survive the harsh New England winters?

Many rely on a thick coat of snow to stay warm. It may seem counterintuitive, but snowpack actually helps insulate the ground beneath it, preventing the soil from freezing solid. Sheltered from the elements, microbes can continue the important work of decomposition, breaking down fallen leaves and recycling nutrients that will soon be needed by growing plants in the spring.

But despite recent snowfall, snow here doesn't come like it



used to; in the Northeast, warming temperatures have accelerated three times faster in winter than in spring and summer. To better understand how declining snowpack impacts

forest soils, researchers at Dartmouth have set up an ongoing experiment called DeFROST that melts snowpack in experimental plots. By comparing their measurements to plots of undisturbed forest, they found that removing snowpack allowed moisture in the ground to freeze, filling up the pore space and blocking the movement of oxygen and other gases. In other words, the soil couldn't breathe.

These changes altered the way microbes lived their lives as well. “(We found) a shift away from decomposition and nutrient recycling towards low-oxygen processes that could lead to the destabilization of stored carbon,” said Joanna Ridgeway, a PhD student at Dartmouth and the lead author of the study.

The lack of oxygen meant that microbes got their energy from processes that didn't require it, producing potent greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide. Longer term, Ridgeway worries that continued winter warming could decrease the ability of forests to store carbon by creating less nutrient-rich soils and increasing emissions.

“I feel like it's my job to bear witness to the end of winter,” said

Dr. Caitlin Hicks Pries, whose lab runs DeFROST. “We're losing winter really fast, and we don't even know what exactly is being lost. That's what we hope this project can help us figure out.”

She pointed out the loss of winter snow also affects the rest of the year. Typically, winter microbial activity leads to a surplus of just the right nutrients during the growing season. If these processes are slowed or altered, plants will take longer to put out fresh growth, dragging stick season into mud season and leading to increased uncertainty about when to plant crops.

When snow *does* come to the Upper Valley, its dazzling surface makes the day after the storm a celebration. As a kid, I would sometimes lie on it — not to make snow angels or go sledding, but just to feel the way it cupped my body like memory foam. I would stay there until the snow started melting into my hat, sharing the silence with the hemlocks that tucked their roots in the hardworking dirt. I was warm in my winter coat and, though I didn't yet know about them, the microbes were, too: safe, protected, bundled up.

Maggie Weng is a writer and scientist currently working as a NASA postdoctoral fellow. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. *The Outside Story* is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.

# Bristol candidates

(Continued from Page 1A) term on the town's selectboard, and voters in Lincoln will elect new faces to serve on the Lincoln School Board and selectboard. Elsewhere in the 5-town area, it is largely incumbents running unopposed to keep their seats.

Those running in the March 3 elections are:

**STARKSBORO**  
Two people are seeking a two-year seat on the Starksboro selectboard: David Rousseau and incumbent Koran Cousino.

Selectboard member Carin H. McCarthy is running unopposed for a three-year term, and incumbent Tony Porter is unopposed in a race for the two years remaining on a three-year term on the board.

As for Starksboro's one school board position on the March 3 ballot, current Mount Abraham Unified School District Board member

Kristen Toy is running unopposed for the three-year seat.

**LINCOLN**  
Deborah Lubar is running unopposed for a three-year seat on the Lincoln School Board and selectboard. Elsewhere in the 5-town area, it is largely incumbents running unopposed to keep their seats.

School board member Peg Sutlive is running unopposed for another two-year term.

As for the Lincoln selectboard seats on the ballot, incumbent Tim McGowan (three-year term) won't face any challengers in a bid for re-election. Lori Atkins is the only candidate running for a two-year seat.

**BRISTOL**  
Bristol selectboard incumbents Michelle Perlee (three-year term) and Jessica Teets (two-year term) are running unopposed to keep their spots on the board.

Mike Dash is the lone candidate for a three-year term on the MAUSD Board. Dash currently serves as vice chair.

**MONKTON**  
Monkton selectboard incumbents Sam Peisch (two-year term) and Walter Crandall (three-year term) are both running unopposed for reelection.

Monkton's Town Meeting Day ballot won't feature any spots on the MAUSD Board this year. Monkton Town Clerk Sharon Gomez noted voters elected a candidate for a longer term last year and will be back on schedule after this year.

**NEW HAVEN**  
In New Haven, selectboard incumbents John R. Roleau (two-year term) and Marie Jewett (three-year term) are running unopposed.

Kathi J. Apgar is seeking another three-year term on the MAUSD Board and faces no challengers.

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# Caverly pre-school program loses by one vote

By J.T. PRICE

BRANDON — Following what Otter Valley Unified Union School Board member Barbara Ebling called extraordinary public turnout in favor of keeping the Caverly pre-school program at its present location in Pittsford, the board nevertheless failed by a single vote to muster the support necessary to preserve the program as is.

The board vote was six in favor and four opposed.

One seat on the board, held formerly by Paul Lathrop, is currently vacant, and one board member (Garret Hewes) did not make the meeting; a two-thirds majority (seven out of the 10 members present) is necessary for any motion to pass.

Some 30-plus community members showed up in person to speak out against merging the Caverly pre-school program with the Lothrop Elementary, also in Pittsford.

Ahead of the discussion, State Rep. Alicia Malay, R-Rutland-8, presented 380 supporting signatures from the Pittsford community as well as a letter of unanimous support for keeping the program in place from Pittsford's selectboard.

Said Ebling, via Zoom, shortly before the board's vote, "It is rare for an hour plus of public comment during my time on the board. We are sure sounding like a bunch of bureaucrats. I don't want to be a heartless person who doesn't listen to my constituents."

In a previous vote on Jan. 6, the

OVUU board voted 8-2 with three abstentions, to move the dozen students at Caverly Preschool (ages 3-4) to Lothrop Elementary. Under the plan, the one-room Caverly facility — built about 40 years ago — would be repurposed as an outdoor education center for all ages, while Lothrop would become a pre-K through sixth grade school. That Jan. 6 vote, however, was thought by some to be improperly warned, so the board decided to hold a revised vote, which was eventually set for Feb. 3.

*"It is rare for an hour plus of public comment during my time on the board. We are sure sounding like a bunch of bureaucrats. I don't want to be a heartless person who doesn't listen to my constituents."*

— Barbara Ebling, OVUU board member

At Tuesday's meeting, not a single community member present spoke in support of the move. Neither did anyone voice support for the move via Zoom, or in a letter signed with a name.

Numerous anonymous letters in support of the move to merge with the Lathrop Elementary School, which featured similar language about "hard decisions" and being "brave" enough to stand by a prior vote, were read aloud by OVUU Board Chair Laurie Bertrand.

Given that certain of the anonymous letters featured attacks on board members, as well as citizens on the side of keeping Caverly as is, Bertrand had sought not to read every letter aloud, but ultimately did so at the behest of the public in attendance, who may not have expected the number of letters favoring the move.

Still, the number against the move, both signed and unsigned, outnumbered those in support.

The hour-plus of public

comment featured passionate testimonies in favor of preserving the Caverly program, and rebuttals previously offered in defense of the move.

Joanne Pye, who launched the Caverly School, speculated that she was the eldest person present at the meeting. She cited the current building's well-tailored qualities for the program's young charges, as well as access to trails and the adjoining 45 acres "for exploration and fun." The program has received "generational community support," she said, and stands as a statewide success story with its nature-based curriculum.

"Specials," Pye observed in an even-handed tone, such as access to the library and additional art and music instruction as suggested by Lothrop School principal Stacey Farrington at a previous meeting, are nothing the Caverly program does not already provide.

Further, the sight of a playground they would not be permitted to use as pre-K students and walking hallways and navigating adult-size stairs among kids as old as 12, would pose, in her estimation, unnecessary stress for the Caverly kids.

A later comment by Caverly parent Jennifer Brittenham observed that pre-K students have little use for checking out library books, and that allowing as much would pose a danger to the condition of said books.

On a more serious note, Brittenham questioned the format of the OVUU meetings wherein public comment is permitted only at the outset and not during, or after, discussion of the matter at hand.

Multiple voices in attendance noted that Arch Street, the road which pre-K students would have to cross to access nature areas near Lothrop School, is dangerous

with drivers going faster than they should.

The former facilities director for the Lothrop School, Eric Pearson, stood up from a wheelchair in a red checked flannel and balanced on a cane to make his remarks.

"You don't have to stand," Bertrand said to him.

"I want to," he answered, before casting aspersions on how little the move would save financially, then compared what the board was undertaking to how big corporations treat "grandpa in the nursing home" when one location closes and residents are moved to an unknown and unfamiliar location.

According to school officials, merging the Caverly program with Lothrop with save about \$13,000, out of a proposed budget of \$28.8 million.

Mike Carter, a member of the Pittsford fire department and a current Caverly parent, recounted growing up through the Caverly, Lothrop, and Otter Valley Union schools, making a point to thank

a teacher at each school by name. Addressing the board, he said, "You are entrusted with these roles because the community believes you will listen."

Melanie Clerihew who worked formerly as the kindergarten teacher at Lothrop, stated that the students who arrived in her classroom from Caverly were a socially cohesive group who would often say, for the first four or five months of the school year, "I want to go back to Caverly."

Shortly before the board's vote, Pye, the Caverly program's founder, was permitted to speak again by Bertrand, in an exception to the board's rules. "Why fix what isn't broken?" Pye said.

In response, board member Gabe McGuigan (who, along with Natalie Steen, Lesley Bienvenue, and Kevin Thornton cast the four nay votes), said, "(Wherever the kids end up) will be in compliance. There is no right answer, only wrong answers," to which Bertrand responded, "There isn't a wrong answer. Neither space is bad for kids."

Steen then said, "I cannot make

decisions based on emotions. (Instead) I make decisions based on pragmatism."

She further stated there were benefits to the move, but did not specify what those benefits were.

"Let's not forget the 12 anonymous letters," McGuigan said, referring, it seemed, to the letters supporting the move.

Neither Bienvenue nor Thornton spoke to why they cast votes for the move beyond what is on the record from prior meetings.

Following the vote, most every community member filed immediately out of the meeting, with one voice loudly stating, "Disappointing."

As Chair, Bertrand commented to the *Addison Independent* that all pre-K programs under the board's supervision are wonderful. "Caverly will still be wonderful because it's about the people and the connections we make with our kids that matter most," she said.

In the parking lot, in the cold, State Rep. Malay, Pye and a coterie of others conferred on next steps with an eye towards Town Meeting Day elections.

## Letters to the Editor

### Minnesotans show us how to save Democracy

Minnesotans are showing us how to resist the mad-dog tyranny that Trump, Miller, Noem, and their cohorts have unleashed in Minneapolis and across America. Minnesotans are not fearless. They see people dragged from their cars, places of work, their homes, and disappeared. They know people have been murdered. But they take to the streets anyway in freezing temperatures, confronting ICE and Border Patrol agents, protecting their neighbors because it's the right thing to do. They are persevering, undaunted and resilient. They show us that honoring diversity is one of our nation's great strengths.

On January 23, Minnesotans upped the ante. Labor unions, faith groups, students, and community organizations coordinated work stoppages calling for an end to ICE operations. Thousands participated urging major local businesses to publicly oppose ICE; hundreds closed in solidarity. Seven days later, a national

shutdown took place. The clarion call resounded throughout our nation: "No work, no school, no shopping." On March 28, Indivisible and other organizations intend to mobilize nine million people to do the same.

Across our country a groundswell opposing Trump and ICE is fast emerging. Community infrastructure is being built to support people too afraid to go to work, to school, or shopping. It takes several forms, delivering food, providing legal services, conducting benefit events and collecting donations to help people pay for rent, utilities, and groceries.

Activists bolster one another. Community-led groups train people how to observe and document ICE activity. Hundreds show up, whistles around their necks, phones in their hands, monitoring and documenting ICE transgressions and protecting one another. Participants use social platforms to give guidance about safe meeting points and logistics. Public statements from lawmakers, community groups, athletes, sports teams and entertainers emphasize caring for one another and building long-term solidarity rooted in neighborhood networks that foster positive morale and emotional support.

Minnesotans and people around the country are beacons of light. Opposition grows; resistance is ongoing. Meanwhile, the Trump regime is failing. Trump's promises of an improved economy, protecting health care, weeding out government corruption, ending endless wars, preventing the weaponization of justice, and deporting the worst of the worst to preserve law, order, and safety are

bankrupt.


But these beacons of light reveal something else. The idealogues who feed Trump's penchant for power and wealth, people like Vice President Vance, Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, and OMB Director Russell Vought, among others, realize that Trump, his administration, and their policies are grossly unpopular. They understand the 2026 midterms may be the end of their demagoguery and the beginning of accountability for gutting our norms and institutions. And so, they are even more determined to usurp our democracy; more desperate and ruthless. They do not care if people march and protest, as long as it doesn't stop business as usual. They don't care about civil or human rights, the Constitution, obeying court orders, arresting journalists, or if people resign, refusing to conduct the administration's dictates. They don't care about killing people. If it looks like they may be held to account, then there's the Insurrection Act or declaring martial law as a last resort.

Not unlike Trump's step by step efforts to overthrow the 2020 Presidential election culminating in the Jan. 6 insurrection and given that invoking the Insurrection Act or declaring martial law are last resorts, their ploy is to undermine the 2026 midterm elections. Trump has already lobbied states to change voting maps giving Republicans an unfair advantage in elections. He's floated the idea of banning mail-in voting nationwide and cancelling the midterms saying that regular elections might not be needed. The FBI's specialized election security task force is disbanded, staffing and funding have been cut at Cybersecurity and the Infrastructure Security Agency, both of which are key to protecting election integrity. The DOJ is demanding that states turn over voter rolls so they may be purged of those who would likely vote for Democrats.

The FBI's search and seizure of 2020 ballots, voting records, and tabulator tapes at the Fulton County, Georgia elections warehouse and overseen by Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard, has caused suspicion. The DNI does not normally oversee domestic law enforcement actions like an FBI raid. Some analysts worry the stage is being set to treat election systems as matters of national security versus local governance thereby enabling aggressive federal involvement in election administration and/or enforcement. If investigators claim they're looking for "vulnerabilities" in vote tabulation or election infrastructure, they might push to seize voting machines as Trump wanted in 2020.

I think over the next year and beyond we need to be mentally and actually prepared to disrupt business as usual to save our democracy, perhaps for prolonged periods of time, and to accept the sacrifices that such activism requires.

Ron Rubin Middlebury




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**MAC FOREHAND OF Winhall** executes a trick in a World Cup freestyle ski finals in Colorado in 2022. Photo by Hugh Carey/Associated Press

# Cochran-Siegle

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 alum, son of Olympic gold medalist Barbara Ann Cochran, and grandson of the notoriously chair-lift-free Cochran's Ski Area founders Mickey and Ginny Cochran, made the six-man U.S. Olympic team, and will be competing in the downhill, the Super G and the team combined events.

The 33-year-old's silver medal finish during the 2022 winter games was not only Cochran's best at the competition, but also team USA's best in alpine skiing.

"The goal is definitely to be back on the podium, honestly, focusing a little bit more on downhill. I feel like I've had more consistency and stronger results on the downhill side since the last Olympics," he said.

Though the super-G is where Cochran-Siegle found success in the last Olympics, the Burlington resident sees downhill as his ticket to a top three spot.

His best showings have been in that event this World Cup season and in the couple years leading up to it, he said. As of Jan. 24 he was ranked 12th in downhill according to the FIS World Cup standings. In the downhill at the 2022 Olympics he placed 14th, and the 2018 PyeongChang, South Korea, games he was 23rd.

"Downhill is really fun. There's a certain element that's quite frightening with it — like there is a lot — with the fastest speeds," he said. "You're on the limit."

He said he could see a medal in the team-combined event, which includes a downhill run — his top discipline. Cochran-Siegle didn't compete in that race during the 2022 Olympics, but in 2018 he and his partner placed 36th.

Though Cochran-Siegle feels best about his chances in the downhill, he's not counting himself out of the super-G either, in which he is ranked 16th as of the Jan. 23 FIS World Cup standings.

"I really do enjoy Super G but



**RYLAN COCHRAN-SIEGLE**, A proud member of the American ski team, is Olympic-bound for a third time, after winning a silver medal in the 2022 competition.

Contributed/US Ski and Snowboard



I feel like I've had a disconnect between just the way the courses are, the snow, the unpredictability," Cochran-Siegle explained.

But those uncertain conditions could also play to his favor, he noted. "The unpredictability of it could go my way."

The Olympics, hosted in Milan and Cortina, Italy, get underway on Friday, Feb. 6.

Cochran-Siegle's first chance at another Olympic medal is on Saturday, Feb. 7, when he competes as the top-ranked American in the Alpine Downhill race. It will take place at Bormio's Stelvio Ski Centre, which features a 1,023-meter vertical drop and a maximum gradient of 63 percent.

He then competes in the men's Team Combined Downhill on Monday, Feb. 9, and the Super-G on Wednesday, Feb. 11.

This third Olympic bid strikes

differently, Cochran-Siegle said. In 2018 it wasn't just his Olympic debut — it was also his first time skiing or traveling to Asia.

Eight years later, the games are nothing new to the veteran skier, who has been part of the national squad since 2011 has extensive experience racing in Italy. Even Bormio is a familiar place for him where he's traveled to compete for 10 years.

"So having a pretty familiar, like a good familiarity with the downhill track, there's less unknown, and more, just really trying to ramp up to the games, to just be skiing the best, as best as I can as possible," he said.

While he is about to take one of the biggest world stages, amid a pool of the best skiers at some of the most beautiful facilities, his icy-slope, rope tow, rickety chair-lift roots in the Green Mountain State are top of mind.

"I have a strong connection to Vermont," he said.

"It's definitely a part of me. And the reason, like a big reason, as to why I've been able to make it this far is just that kind of Vermont culture and pride and who we are."

# Vt. athletes heading to Olympic games

By KEVIN O'CONNOR, VTDigger

Ask Julia Kern about her upcoming trip to Italy and she'll talk up the appetizers and savory scenery. Then comes the main course — the one where she'll compete alongside more than a dozen other athletes with Vermont ties at the 2026 Winter Olympics.

Like a majority of the state's qualifying skiers for Alpine, biathlon, cross-country and freestyle events, Kern has attended the games before. But this time, the 28-year-old member of Stratton's SMS T2 elite Nordic training team will be able to partake of the host country more easily than in the past.

"The last one was in lockdown during COVID," Kern recently told VTDigger about her 2022 Olympic debut in Beijing, China. "All of us agree that wasn't a normal experience."

## ALPINE SKIING

Alpine skiing will offer Vermonters the best chance to see a familiar face ascend a podium at the games Feb. 6-22 in the Italian competition centers of Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo:

- Mikaela Shiffrin, a 30-year-old graduate of Burke Mountain Academy, is aiming for a comeback after winning slalom gold in Sochi, Russia, in 2014 and giant slalom gold and alpine combined silver in Pyeongchang, South Korea, in 2018, only to fail to medal in 2022 and fall during the 2024 Killington World Cup.

Shiffrin has told the press she won't compete in all six Olympic races like she did four years ago, but instead will focus on her current strongpoints: going down and around the gates in the slalom, giant slalom and team combined events.

- Ryan Cochran-Siegle, 33, of Starksboro — whose mother, Barbara Ann Cochran of Richmond's Cochran's Ski Area, won slalom gold in 1972 — is returning to his third Olympics after scoring silver in the super-G (super giant slalom) in 2022 (see story on Page 1A).

- Paula Moltzan, 31, a former University of Vermont NCAA champion, will be competing in her second Olympics, having just purchased her first house in Waitsfield.

- Nina O'Brien, 28, a graduate of Burke Mountain Academy, will return to the games after scoring the sixth-fastest time in the first round of the 2022 giant slalom, only to crash and break her leg in



**PAULA MOLTZAN OF Waitsfield** celebrates after a World Cup slalom race in Austria this Jan. 13. Photo by Giovanni Auletta/Associated Press

the second run.

- And Mary Bocoock, a 22-year-old Dartmouth College graduate, will be making her Olympic debut as the daughter of a member of the Sullivan family of skiers from the Mount Snow region.

## CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

In cross-country skiing, Kern will be joined by four other athletes with state connections:

- Jessie Diggins, a 34-year-old SMS T2 team member, is seeking to add to her medal count — she won U.S. Nordic's first-ever gold in 2018 and a silver and bronze in 2022 — before wrapping up her racing career this March.

Diggins is expected to compete in all six Olympic cross-country events, which will require her to ski as little as 7.5 kilometers in one race and as many as 50 in another.

- Ben Ogden, a 25-year-old University of Vermont graduate, will be representing his Bennington County hometown of Landgrove, population 177, for his second games. He's expected to focus on his sport's shorter sprint races.

- Jack Young, 23, of Jay, will ski as part of Craftsbury's Green Racing Project.

- And Lauren Jortberg, a 28-year-old Dartmouth College graduate, will participate as a member of the Mansfield Nordic Pro Team.

## BIATHLON

Biathlon — a sport mixing skiing and shooting — will see the most Vermont representation, with four of the team's eight racers connected to the state, including three who belong to its Army National Guard.

- Deedra Irwin, a 33-year-old guard staff sergeant from Jericho, placed seventh in the 15-kilometer

race during her first Olympics in 2022 — the best-ever finish for an American in an individual biathlon event.

- Sean Doherty, a 30-year-old guard member, will be attending his fourth Olympics.

Two biathlon teammates will be making their Olympic debuts:

- Margie Freed, a 28-year-old University of Vermont graduate, is a member of Craftsbury's Green Racing Project.

- And Maxime Germain, 24, is a guard aviation operations specialist.

(Biathlon alternates are Jake Brown, 33, of Craftsbury's Green Racing Project and Chloe Levins, a 27-year-old Rutlander on the Mansfield Nordic Pro Team.

## FREESTYLE SKIING

- Mac Forehand, a 24-year-old Stratton Mountain School graduate from Winhall, is set to offer acrobatic tricks, flips, and spins in his second Olympics.

- And Olivia Giaccio, 25, will hit the moguls course, having grown up skiing at Killington.

## SNOWBOARDING

- Hanna Percy, 18, boasts grandparents who live and a father who grew up in Stowe.

- And Jessica "Jess" Perlmutter, 16, is a sophomore at Killington Mountain School.

After the COVID-confined 2022 games, many Vermont athletes are planning to travel to Italy with family and friends. Kern is ready to show them her top speed.

"Then I'll make sure to slow down," she said, "to appreciate and share this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

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ELI BUNT OF Middlebury, left, Lyxi Cunningham of Waterbury and River Miles-Rowe of North Ferrisburgh are the team at the Lake Champlain Waldorf School who are building an experiment that NASA will put into space this spring.

## Students building space experiment for NASA

SHELBURNE — Two Addison County youngsters were the three-member team of Lake Champlain Waldorf School students who were recently selected by NASA to perform a science experiment in space.

On Jan. 20, NASA announced 60 winning teams for its fifth TechRise Student Challenge, wherein students from across the country submitted experiment proposals to be carried into the stratosphere by either a suborbital-spaceship operated by Virgin Galactic of Tustin, Calif., or a high-altitude balloon operated by World View Enterprises of Tucson, Ariz.

Waldorf School senior Eli Bunt of Middlebury, seventh-grader River Miles-Rowe of North Ferrisburgh and junior Lyxi Cunningham of Waterbury

comprised one of the winning teams. Now, those students will work together throughout the semester to turn their proposed experiment into reality ahead of the NASA-sponsored World View flight test in summer 2026.

Lake Champlain Waldorf School is a Pre-K-12 independent school in Shelburne.

"Our team designed an experiment that pairs methane and carbon dioxide sensors with aerial cameras mounted on a high-altitude balloon to capture emissions data that we can map to locations with urban and agricultural landscapes, comparing emissions over both forms of developed land," said Waldorf science teacher Isabel Linhares describing the winning proposal.

Each winning team will receive \$1,500 to build their experiments,

a starter kit, including a flight box in which to build their experiment, an assigned spot to test their experiment on a NASA-sponsored flight, and technical support during the experiment build phase (through May) from Future Engineers advisors, who will help students learn the skills they need to turn their experiment idea into a reality.

Flying a payload on a suborbital vehicle exposes it to the conditions of space, allowing researchers — including these TechRise students — to collect the data they need to validate their hypotheses and advance their research. The flight test with World View will provide approximately 4-8 hours of flight time at 70,000 to 95,000 feet with exposure to Earth's upper atmosphere, radiation and perspective views of Earth.

## Man sentenced for unlawful firearms possession

BURLINGTON — The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Vermont stated that

on Jan. 27, 2026, Christopher Rantanen, 40, of Brandon, was sentenced by Chief United States

District Judge Christina Reiss to a term of 35 months' imprisonment to be followed by a 3-year term of supervised release. Rantanen previously pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

According to court records, in September 2024, Rantanen was involved in a single car accident on U.S. Route 7 in Pittsford. Rantanen denied any drug or alcohol use to responding law enforcement. While an officer wrote Rantanen tickets for numerous traffic infractions related to the crash, fire department officials on the scene alerted law enforcement that Rantanen was slumped over on a nearby bench. Thereafter, officers again asked Rantanen about his drug use, and Rantanen again denied any drug use that day. While waiting for a tow truck to arrive, law enforcement observed drug paraphernalia in plain view inside and around Rantanen's car. Law enforcement obtained a search warrant for Rantanen's car, and located inside the vehicle two handguns (including a privately manufactured firearm), ammunition, fentanyl, cocaine, and assorted drug paraphernalia.

A few weeks later, in November 2024, law enforcement encountered Rantanen and another person in a car in Rutland when responding to a drug-related complaint. Once Rantanen and the other person were out of the car, law enforcement observed a Glock pistol in the area near where Rantanen had been seated. A search of this car revealed approximately 13 grams of fentanyl and approximately 19 grams of crack cocaine in the area around where Rantanen was seated.

First Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan A. Ophardt commended the collaborative investigatory efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Pittsford Police Department.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Arra. Rantanen was represented by Lisa Shelkrot, Esq.

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## Winter Love Song ... for Tillie

I want to hear birds sing this morning  
drum faint against the soft snow.

In the dark dawn the paw on the door  
hearing what we couldn't, while we  
still unroused from whatever dream  
would take us into the day.

We didn't know we would mourn today.  
a heart beating slowly away  
till only the earth could hear,  
muffled in the snow the silence  
of a great passing.

We didn't know we would mourn today,

sudden, like falling in love  
how you just do when  
in the moments before you didn't.  
The arrival that comes soft, the  
tremor,  
sounds you can't quite form into  
words  
that on impact leave syllables  
floundering.

Mourning and loving  
struggling in the same heart,  
the effort to beat, opening and  
closing,  
How the hours wait. Stalled  
in anticipation,  
in the human reluctance  
to lose.

We didn't know we would mourn today.

The bitter cold keeps  
the snow piled at the door,  
soft and rolling over the yard

covering yesterdays' paw prints.  
— Linda Shere, Middlebury

## Café Provence Valentine Dinner Menu

Friday February 13th, and  
Saturday February 14th 5pm-9pm  
\$89/person (plus tax & gratuity)

### Soup

New England Clam Chowder  
Roasted Red Bell Pepper Cream Soup

### Appetizer

Caesar Salad with Smoked Salmon in a Cheese Cup  
Fried Oysters with Lemon Pepper Aioli  
Escargot in Red Bliss Potato Cup with Garlic Butter  
& Swiss Cheese  
Caramelized Anjou Pear with Gorgonzola & Cranberry Chutney

### Main Course

Boston Strip Steak, Garlic Mashed Potatoes,  
Black Peppercorn Sauce  
Double Lamb Chops, Barley Risotto wrapped in Filo,  
Dijon Mustard Sauce  
Chicken Niçoise with Angel Hair Pasta  
Maine Lobster on Red Beet Risotto (+\$15 surcharge)  
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Photo Caption: \_\_\_\_\_  
Where in Addison County do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

Don't forget  
the photo!

## Local youth honored at the Statehouse for their community leadership

MONTPELIER — In a Jan. 12 ceremony in the House Chamber of the State House in Montpelier, Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas celebrated youth leadership in Vermont. She singled out an Addison County teen who won the John Lewis Youth Leadership Award, and two other Addison County youths who were finalists for leadership honors.

The two winners of the 2025 John Lewis Youth Leadership Award were **Rafaela Botti** of Orwell and **Binti Aweis** of Winooski. In addition to the winners, seven finalists were named, including **Ellie Cady** of Middlebury.

Also in the ceremony, Copeland Hanzas inaugurated Vermont's first

*"I'm thrilled to honor these two exceptional young people who have already made a huge difference in their communities. When I consider what these young leaders have already accomplished, it's amazing to think that they're really just getting started!"*

— Secretary Copeland Hanzas

Kid Governor, Roslyn Fortin of Highgate Elementary, and her six-member cabinet of fifth-graders from across the state. One of those cabinet members was **Lincoln Ratta** of Lincoln Community School.

Kid Governor is a free program that empowers fifth-graders to change the world by using an authentic election to teach important lessons about state government, voting, and the power of civic participation.

The John Lewis Youth Leadership Award, organized by the National Association of Secretaries of State, honors the legacy of Congressman Lewis and is given to young people under age 25 who have demonstrated leadership



**LINCOLN RATTA, A fifth-grader at Lincoln Community School, stands with Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas in the Vermont Statehouse last month, when he was inducted as member of the Kid Governor's cabinet.**

abilities, have a passion for social justice, and are motivated to improve the quality of life in their community.

Botti is a high school junior homeschooling in Orwell. Aweis, who graduated from Winooski High School, now attends Community College of Vermont.

"I'm thrilled to honor these two exceptional young people who have already made a huge difference in their communities," Secretary Copeland Hanzas said. "When I consider what these young leaders have already accomplished, it's amazing to think that they're really just getting started!"

Botti has brought her passion for social justice, civic engagement, and youth empowerment to numerous leadership roles throughout her community. A dedicated organizer in Middlebury, Botti has built a strong record of collaboration with local and statewide justice initiatives; she has previously worked with Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe) and Education Justice Coalition, and continues to serve with MiddPride, Outright Vermont, and the Vermont State Youth Council, where she uplifts youth voices and advances equity-centered policy.

In 2025, Botti organized a Summer Social Justice Camp, providing youth with accessible, action-

oriented education on community leadership and social justice. The radio show she established on Middlebury College's WRMC 91.1 station — "FREAKuency of Change" — plays protest anthems and alternative tracks from the past five decades while spotlighting local and regional events and organizations.

In collaboration with Vermont Afterschool and Middlebury's Teen Center, she founded the Middlebury Youth Council (MYC), which organizes and funds youth-led changemaking initiatives. She founded the Vermont chapter of Vote 16 U.S.A., leading the statewide campaign to extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds. As an Ilsley Public Library intern, Botti launched a "Book Buddies" program that paired middle/high school students with preschool and kindergarten children to foster reading skills and literacy.

One nominator described her as having a "can-do attitude far beyond her young age... she talks the talk and walks the walk." Another summarized: "Rafaela works tirelessly to create a community that is welcoming and just for all."

"As a transplant to the state of Vermont, having moved here the summer before the start of high school, I am eternally grateful for the opportunities provided to me and for the vast community that I have found here," Botti said.

"Doing this work has helped me find my voice and understand the power young people hold when trusted and supported to lead. Receiving the John Lewis Youth Leadership Award is an incredible honor, made even more meaningful by the adults who are truly committed to uplifting youth and making real space for us to lead. Their belief in young

## Charleston to run for lieutenant governor

By **SHAUN ROBINSON** [VTdigger.org](http://VTdigger.org)

Esther Charleston, the former Democratic nominee for governor of Vermont and onetime member of the Middlebury selectboard, launched a bid for the state's second-highest office on last week.

Charleston is the third Democrat to join this year's race for lieutenant governor. Molly Gray, who held the office from 2021 to 2023, announced her bid just after New Year's. Ryan McLaren, a former top aide to U.S. Sen. Peter Welch, launched his campaign two weeks ago.

All three candidates will face off in a primary election in August. Republican John Rodgers, the current lieutenant governor, has said he plans to run again, and so far no one else has indicated that they will seek the GOP nomination.

Charleston challenged Republican Gov. Phil Scott in 2024. She was the first Black woman to win a major party nomination for Vermont governor, and only the second Black woman to ever get a major

party backing for governor in the country.

Scott defeated her overwhelmingly, winning 72% of the vote to Charleston's 21%. Neither of the two Democrats who challenged Scott before Charleston garnered more than 30% of the general election vote, either.

In a campaign press release, Charleston highlighted her leadership on the Vermont Commission on Women, a state body she chairs that advises the Legislature and the governor's administration on issues impacting women and girls. Charleston also owns and manages a consulting firm.

"I've spent my entire career bridging the gap between communities," she said in the release. "Far too many people are feeling unheard, unseen, and left out by our current leadership, so I'm running to give everyone a seat at the table."

Charleston said her campaign would focus on making sure Vermonters can access a good education, lowering the cost of living and giving people "economic freedom."



**ADDISON COUNTY STATE Sen. Ruth Hardy congratulates Orwell's Rafaela Botti in the Vermont Statehouse last month after Botti was honored with a national youth leadership award.**



**ORWELL HIGH SCHOOLER Rafaela Botti stands with Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas, who had just presented the Addison County teen with the John Lewis Youth Leadership Award for her passion to improve the local quality of life.**

people has shaped my journey, and I am grateful to be a part of a community that chooses courage, collaboration, and justice every day. Vermont is a place that values and emphasizes the importance of social justice work, as well as John Lewis's legacy."

Secretary Copeland Hanzas also stressed that her office received

many incredible nominations for this year's award. "Especially as the new legislative session begins and we think about how we can all work together to make Vermont a better place," she said. "I think it's a great chance to highlight these incredible young people who are out there helping to lead the way in this work."



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# Bernie Sanders

(Continued from Page 1A)  
Sanders said.

At the same time, the outlook is becoming bleaker for younger generations who are finding it hard to afford housing, health care and groceries. And they face a labor market that could be decimated by artificial intelligence and robotics, according to Sanders.

“Our kids ... may have a lower standard of living than their parents,” he said.

- A “corrupt” political system, shaped by the 2010 Citizens United decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, which allows “billionaires to put as much money as they want into political campaigns,” according to Sanders. “Billionaires are able to buy elections, which explains why you have some of the

*“We know people in the billionaire class are doing phenomenally well; they have never done better. And (meanwhile), 60% of people are living paycheck to paycheck.”*

— Sen. Bernie Sanders

representation that you do.”

He said Musk alone was able to invest \$290 million into Trump’s 2024 campaign.

Meanwhile, he noted an ongoing decline in the number of state and local media outlets, while a “handful of wealthy people control our media.”

- A health care crisis. Sanders



**MORE THAN 200** people jammed into the Mount Abraham Union High School cafeteria on Saturday to break bread and hear U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders comment on issues ranging from federal budget priorities to ICE activities in Minnesota. Sanders was unable to be at Saturday’s luncheon in person due to an extended budget debate in Washington, D.C., but he weighed in via speakerphone.

said 85 million Americans are either uninsured or underinsured. The “One Big Beautiful Bill,”

which contains Trump’s tax and spending policies and was signed into law last July, included \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, according to Sanders.

“Whether you’re conservative or progressive, I think you understand it’s a broken system, it’s dysfunctional and cruel,” he said. “We don’t have enough doctors, we don’t have enough nurses, mental health counselors and pharmacists.”

- A housing crisis, which has been particularly acute in Vermont.

“We spent \$1 trillion a year on the military, but we don’t have enough low-income or affordable housing. (Some) people in Vermont and around the country pay 50% of their incomes in rent,” he said.

- A progression of criminal investigations launched by the Trump administration against some of his political opponents and media members. Those targeted, according to protectdemocracy.org, have included U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Az.; Gov. Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey of Minnesota; Jerome Powell, chair of the Federal Reserve; former National Security Advisor John Bolton; former FBI Director James Comey; U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif.; and former CIA Director John O. Brennan.

- The deployment of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to find and deport undocumented immigrants, with particular verve in blue states — and especially in Minnesota. The Department of Homeland Security has sent more than 3,000 ICE agents to the Twin Cities area of Minnesota for operations. ICE agents there last month killed two U.S. citizens, which — along with the large ICE presence — has prompted massive demonstrations.

Sanders on Saturday said recent ICE activities promoted him to vote “no” on the federal budget bill on Jan. 30.

“The overwhelming majority of the American people are justifiably outraged by ICE murdering United States citizens in cold blood, terrorizing communities throughout the country and rounding up little kids and throwing them in detention centers,” Sanders said through a statement after casting his vote. “That is not what happens in a democracy. That is what takes place in authoritarian regimes.”

Trump’s One Big Beautiful



**NINE MEMBERS** of the Bobolinks, a Middlebury College a capella singing group, performed at the Sen. Bernie Sanders luncheon at Mount Abe on Saturday.

Independent photo/John Flowers

Bill granted ICE a \$75 million increase over four years to pursue his campaign promise of rounding up and deporting undocumented immigrants. The budget increase, according to Sanders, hasn’t led to more effective customs, immigration and enforcement tactics; rather, it has created a “domestic army the likes we’ve never seen in America,” according to Sanders.

“I promised the people of Vermont that I would not support another penny for ICE unless there were fundamental reforms to how that agency operates, and tonight I kept my word,” he added of his budget vote.

If there’s a silver lining to the tumult in Minnesota, it’s that it’s spurred public outcry and spurred

*“The overwhelming majority of the American people are justifiably outraged by ICE murdering United States citizens in cold blood, terrorizing communities throughout the country and rounding up little kids and throwing them in detention centers.”*

— Sen. Bernie Sanders

a growing, bipartisan rebuke among lawmakers, according to Sanders.

“Trump and his friends now understand that they’re on the defensive,” he said. “The American people... don’t want to see cities in America under (federal) occupation. We’re beginning to see more and more Republicans who have the courage to stand up to Trump, and that’s a good thing. But there’s an enormous amount of work to be done.”

- Abandonment of several federal green-energy programs in the battle against climate change.

“We are trying to stop Trumpism; I think we’re seeing some modest success, but we have a long way to go,” Sanders said.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

## Bernie responds to the public

Sen. Bernie Sanders engaged in a brief Q&A session with folks during Saturday’s event at Mount Abraham Union High School in Bristol. Here are some quotes from his responses:

- “The most serious problem in this country is the addiction to greed. These guys want more and more.”

- “We are living ... in extraordinarily difficult and frightening times.”

- “I believe the vast majority of American people don’t believe in Trumpism. There’s a strong sector — maybe 30% of America — that would walk over the cliff with Mr. Trump. But there are many people who strongly dislike where he’s going ... and many others who have serious doubts about the future of this country under Trump.”

- “We have to have courage to fight back and be smart. I think we’re going to win this thing. In these tough times, we can be tough.”

— Sen. Bernie Sanders

- On an attendee’s concern about fair mid-term elections, in the wake of Trump’s assertion that the GOP should “nationalize” voting in the U.S.: “Your fears are not unjustified. But there are many people here in Washington and elsewhere working overtime to make sure that doesn’t happen.

“If the election were held today, I think Republicans would lose the House, and

possibly the Senate.”

- “We’ve got to reinvigorate democracy and respect each other’s opinions.”

- “The Democratic Party has been much too corporate, has taken too much money from wealthy special interests, and has not presented an agenda to the American people that makes sense to them.

“All over the country, people want the Democrats to be bolder.”

- On the Trump administration’s aggressive pursuit of deportations: “What breaks my heart ... is that you have a president of the U.S. and some of his allies who are demonizing people

who are undocumented. We have seen that movie play out in Europe; we’ve seen it play out all over the world. When you start calling people from Somalia ‘garbage,’ when you talk about how Mexicans in this country are ‘rapists and murderers,’ what you’re doing is saying there’s a group of people who are not fully human. And when somebody is not ‘fully human,’ history will tell us what happens to those people ... We need to protect the undocumented and create a path towards citizenship, getting a work visa. A majority of the American people don’t believe we should be rounding up millions of people and throwing them in detention centers and out of the country.”

— John Flowers

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# How Donald Trump reshaped Vermont in just 1 year

## What's different in immigration, health care and social services, education, the economy, politics and climate policy

By VTDIGGER STAFF

Vermont troops shipped to the Caribbean. Tariffs on our northern neighbors. Disappearing federal departments. Hundreds of millions of dollars at risk.

Donald Trump has made an impact on almost every aspect of life in Vermont since he took office for a second time. January marked one year since the president was sworn in again, and he declared the start of "a thrilling new era" in his inaugural address.

From immigration to health care, the economy to social services and education to climate, VTDigger reporters have closely followed Trump's time back in office and the defining ways it has affected the Green Mountain State.

One year in, we look back on what's changed — and look ahead to the changes still to come.

### POLITICS

The politics of the past year have been marked by seemingly unending clashes between state leaders and the Trump administration. Some of those fights have been over the administration's demands for state resources and data that have little, if any, historical precedent. Others came as the administration has clawed back or cut funding Vermont has long relied on for key programs.

The extent to which state leaders have pushed back against the Trump administration's actions, or not, has been a major source of debate within state politics — particularly focused on Republican Gov. Phil Scott.

Last month, the White House ordered members of the Vermont Air National Guard to the Caribbean as part of Operation Southern Spear, the U.S. military campaign that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife. Scott has not explicitly condemned the operation — as Vermont's Democratic and independent members of Congress have — though he said Trump should have consulted federal lawmakers beforehand.

Even though Scott commands the state's National Guard, Trump did not need the governor's permission to order Vermont soldiers to or near Venezuela. The White House did, however, ask Scott to deploy the guard in at least two other instances last year, and both times, Scott said no. One was for guard members to do clerical work for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in St. Albans; another was part of Trump's effort to crack down on crime in Washington, D.C.

Scott did comply with a different Trump administration request last July, though, when he handed over sensitive personal data on tens of thousands of nutritional benefit recipients. That drew sharp criticism from Democratic leaders, who continue to cite it as an example of how the governor is not taking a strong enough stand against federal overreach. Scott has

countered repeatedly that he does not want to make Vermont a bigger target for Trump's retribution.

In September, the Trump administration asked Vermont's Democratic Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas to provide personal details, including parts of Social Security numbers, on all of the state's registered voters in what it called an effort to combat voter fraud. Copeland Hanzas denied the request; the administration is now suing the state to get the data it wants.

Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark's office is defending the state in that case. Clark, who's also a Democrat, has filed more than 40 lawsuits against the Trump administration alongside other states over the past year, according to her office. Those challenges have been on a wide range of topics, from cuts by the billionaire and former Trump adviser Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to attempts to restrict access to health care for transgender youth.

"I have been dismayed by the waste of time and resources necessitated by President Trump's repeated violations of the Constitution and federal law," Clark said in a statement.

Trump has also politicized federal resources in ways that are creating deep uncertainty for state leaders. In October, the president rejected Vermont's request for federal disaster aid to help pay for damage caused by the 2025 flooding in the Northeast Kingdom. He denied Vermont's ask at the same time he rejected similar asks from other Democratic-leaning states but approved asks from Republican-leaning ones. Vermont is now in the process of appealing Trump's denial.

Democratic leaders in the state Legislature, whose 2026 session started this month, also say they're concerned about the possibility of political strings being attached to federal funding for existing

programs, if that money isn't slashed entirely. The extent to which legislators balance a need to fill federal cuts with near-term affordability concerns in the state, such as a double-digit projected average property tax increase, has already been driving debate in the Statehouse.

Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., was in Montpelier last week and told Vermont's Senate Appropriations Committee that federal support would only continue to be unpredictable. "There's an immense amount of arbitrary actions that come out of nowhere — for no reason," Welch said.

"What you do know is that you can't count on anything."

### IMMIGRATION

In one year, President Trump's promised crackdown on immigration increased surveillance and detention, choked funding to organizations that support refugees, denied due process to people detained and continues to wreak havoc and fear on immigrant communities statewide.

In the first few months, Trump targeted student activists and academics who were temporarily detained in Vermont like Palestinian student Mohsen Mahdawi and Turkish student Rümeyza Öztürk. The administration revoked the visa of a Middlebury College international student, leaving them at risk for deportation.

Vermont's most diverse school district — the first in the state to pass a sanctuary school policy last year — was rocked in July when Winoski Superintendent Wilmer Chavarria, a U.S. citizen, was detained and interrogated by federal authorities in Texas. The school district then rallied for the rapid release of a second-grade student who was allegedly detained, with his mother, by federal immigration agents over Thanksgiving break.

The administration even attacked refugee communities, attempting to suspend funding for refugee resettlement and revoke the legal status of refugees. Refugee organizations weathered increasing cuts and freezes, while Afghans in Vermont — who lost



**LIKE OTHER ADDISON County businesses that import goods from overseas, John Wetzel in August was stretched to balance President Trump's ever-changing tariff rates with the need to be consistent with customers and tea growers.**

Independent file photo/John S. McCright

temporary protected status in 2021 — continued to support their community, including an Afghan trucker detained at the border who was released in December.

As detentions ratcheted up, Vermont prisons saw an increase in federal and state detainees. In September, the state signed a new agreement with U.S. immigration authorities to allow them to continue using state prisons for federal detentions.

Activism against federal immigration policy grew. The Vermont Asylum Assistance Project started an "ICE tracker" and pointed to a serious lack of immigration attorneys for timely legal aid as cases surged.

Activists last year also prevented three ICE detainees from being flown out of Vermont, sounded alarm over detainee transfers through the Burlington airport in August and continue to protest federal immigration operation by targeting facilities that host federal digital surveillance and a national tip line in Williston. As state lawmakers try to restrict immigration arrests at courthouses and unmask ICE agents, Williston became likely the first community in Vermont to pass a resolution condemning ICE's surveillance and enforcement actions.

### HEALTH CARE

Trump — combined with his supporters in Congress — has also brought seismic changes to the way Vermonters access and afford health care over the past year.

Trump's appointment of the vaccine-skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Kennedy's subsequent overhaul of a federal vaccine approval panel, have yielded some of the most direct changes when it comes to how Vermonters get shots. As that panel's recommendations have departed from the science that Vermont's Department of Health follows, the state has sought more independence on public health through regional collaboration, an effort to purchase vaccines without the federal government and through issuing independent guidance.

Perhaps most consequential is Congress's July 1 passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, though

many of its impacts are still to come.

Broadly, that law is expected to undercut millions of Medicaid dollars the state receives from the feds — Vermont is positioned to lose \$211 million from this change by 2032. The law's work requirements and more frequent eligibility checks are expected to cause a loss of Medicaid coverage for tens of thousands of Vermonters, while also preventing many noncitizens from accessing health insurance.

But, that law also included a kind of consolation prize for rural states worried about such drastic loss of Medicaid funding, in the form of a five-year Rural Health Transformation Grant program. In December, Vermont received word that it would be awarded \$195 million this year for its rural health work. Now, the clock is ticking for Vermont to use those funds.

Though not a direct initiative of Trump himself, Congress's decision not to renew the expiring enhanced premium tax credits at the end of 2025 has brought one of the most profound changes to the affordability of health care for thousands of Vermonters who buy their health insurance from the Affordable Care Act Marketplace. Vermont has seen those premiums double and lost nearly \$72 million in collective subsidies.

### TARIFFS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Vermont economists and business owners have expressed concern over federal impacts on the state's economy last year, as tariffs took effect and commercial relationships with Canada declined. Lawmakers have said changes from last July's federal budget bill could mean both a decrease in federal cashflow through the state and tax changes with the potential to reduce revenue and exacerbate Vermont's wealth inequality.

The One Big Beautiful Bill has reshaped Vermont's approach to food insecurity, with new rules reducing or removing benefits for thousands of people statewide, and placing a greater financial burden on state resources. The budget law expanded work requirements for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, removed utility deductions for some families and eliminated education and outreach funding for organizations across the state, causing layoffs and program closures.

The Trump administration also set new restrictions for noncitizens receiving food aid, affecting at least 140 households of refugees, asylum seekers and other legal residents. Several groups — including Special Immigrant Visa holders who were employed by the U.S. military in Afghanistan — were incorrectly removed from the program in Vermont as state officials sought clarity from federal leadership.

In November, the longest government shutdown in U.S. history saw food aid to the state frozen as the White House and lawmakers were deadlocked in Washington, D.C., leading Vermont legislators to approve a \$6.5 million stopgap measure to help keep hunger at bay. A painful week passed before those funds could be distributed.

At the same time, several Vermont Head Start programs narrowly avoided shutting down before funding resumed.

### EDUCATION

"A culture of uncertainty." That's how Toren Ballard, the Vermont Agency of Education's director of policy and communication, described the vibes in Vermont's education system through the chaotic first year of Trump's second term.

Like other state education departments nationwide, threats of federal funding cuts over the summer threw Vermont's Agency of Education into turmoil.

In July, the U.S. Department of Education announced it was withholding \$26 million in federal grant funding to Vermont's public schools, part of a broader freeze of more than \$6 billion nationwide for after-school and summer programs and English language instruction.

School districts were left in limbo. Six federal grant programs were affected, including Title IIA and Title IIIA grants, which respectively fund professional development for teachers and staff, and support services for English language learners.

The freeze was eventually lifted, and funding to the state Agency of Education and to Vermont's school districts was fully restored. But the turmoil has contributed to a sense of unease in Vermont's public education system.

"It really does contribute to this kind of larger culture of uncertainty, even if those decisions do get eventually reversed," Ballard said.

Chances are that anxiety will not abate any time soon. Trump in March signed an executive order to begin dismantling the U.S. Department of Education. Through his first year back in office, he has gutted the department, reducing its workforce by nearly 50 percent.

At Vermont's Agency of Education, officials are keeping that uncertainty in mind as they work through an agency-wide reorganization. Some organizational changes at the agency are being made in part to prevent — or at least prepare for — further disruptions to key programs and to protect the agency personnel, Ballard said.

"In addition to these structural changes, the Agency has also been proactive and responsible about carrying forward a percentage of our federal funds each year, which will further insulate the Agency in the event of future disruptions at the federal level," he wrote in an email.

### CLIMATE AND ENERGY

Vermont might be small, but when it comes to attempts to dismantle climate policies under President Donald Trump, the Green Mountain State has had a front row seat. In May, the federal government sued Vermont over its first-of-its-kind Climate Superfund Act, which seeks to make major carbon polluters pay for 30 years of emissions. In the nearly 10 months since, the state and its supporters have sent a flurry of filings to the courts, while the U.S. Department of Justice has asked the courts to declare the law "unconstitutional" and "unenforceable."

Then in August, the state lost more than \$62 million in federal funding for an expansive solar program and joined other states in suing the Trump administration.

Unprecedented federal cuts to climate and clean energy programs and offices seems to have seeped into the state's own approach to climate and energy policy over the last year. Facing a tight state budget and a federal campaign to shunt climate science and reinvest in fossil fuels, Vermont lawmakers appear to have relegated climate and energy policy to the nosebleed seats.

During the last legislative session, big policies needed to lower state emissions were scrapped, including the controversial clean heat standard and plans to join a regional cap-and-invest program. Gov. Phil Scott has advocated for using the 2026 session to undo state requirements for 100% renewable energy for most utilities by 2030. He wants to lower that percentage, extend the timeline and make up the difference with "clean" energy like nuclear power, which generates zero emissions but relies on uranium, a non-renewable resource.

The state's climate progress also faced pushback from dark money groups and expensive litigation. Vermont has likely failed to reduce carbon pollution to legally binding levels set out in the 2020 Global Warming Solutions Act. While a judge dismissed a lawsuit from a conservation group in July, more citizen suits could follow.

Extreme weather continued to impact the state, including a July flood and a prolonged drought that cost farmers an estimated \$15.9 million. While the state tries to scrape together funds to help them recover, a proposed Farm Security Fund fell victim to federal scapegoating when lawmakers replaced the word "climate" with "weather" this session.

Justin Marsh, political director for Vermont Conservation Voters, an environmental advocacy group, said the change was "a signal of climate denial."



**SIGN-HOLDING SUPPORTERS of Pantón's Juan De La Cruz showed up in force at the St. Albans ICE headquarters in September to urge federal authorities to allow the Mexican national to remain in the U.S.**

Photo courtesy of Helena Van Voorst

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# Kimono exhibit

(Continued from Page 1A)  
students and other contributors. In addition to showing beautiful garments, parts of the exhibit explore the kimono through its connection to Japanese literature and Western aesthetics.

"It's been a joy to get to share something that is both kind of wearable art and also a dying skill and a dying set of industries with people," said Shannon Palmer, associate director of admissions at the college and one of the organizers of the exhibit. "This is a lot more than just, 'This is what people wear.' It's a conversation about heritage and art preservation."

Along with Palmer, the exhibit has been organized by Summer Jack, visiting assistant professor of theatre; Otilia Milutin, assistant professor of Japanese Studies; and HaQuyen Pham, assistant director of digital marketing.

The idea behind the exhibit began forming last year when the college's historic clothing collection received a kimono donation along with other items. Jack, who oversees the clothing collection, began brainstorming with Milutin about opportunities to tie the pieces to her studies as part of an exhibit.

That led the pair to collaborate with Palmer and Pham, both of whom brought extensive knowledge on different aspects of the kimono to the project. Jack noted the group has received additional support and pieces for the exhibit from other collaborators.

"It's been a lot of really serendipitous things that came together and really benefit the exhibit and the idea of spreading this information to the students," Jack said.

## INSIDE THE EXHIBIT

Focuses of the exhibit reflect the organizers' areas of expertise. Milutin has put together "The Kimono in Literature," a section of the exhibit that highlights the Heian period — from 794-1185, often called the golden age of classical Japanese culture — and "The Tale of Genji," an 11th century novel by Murasaki Shikibu.

"I'm highlighting a quotation from 'The Tale of Genji' in which one can clearly see the importance ... of garments as cultural indicators of status, of rank, of refinement, of education, with a lot of social implications in their use," Milutin said.

The section also draws from 1920s in Japan, a period that Milutin noted saw significant Western influence, though youth remained interested in the kimono. A quotation from the novel "Naomi" by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō is included in this part of the exhibit. "Both texts highlight the importance of, one, clearly the kimono, the other, of garments in general in Japanese literature and culture," Milutin explained.

The exhibit features some pieces from the college's historic

clothing collection, as well as items acquired for the display. Jack has worked on "The Kimono in the West," a part of the exhibit that highlights how Western fashion has been influenced by the kimono and Japanese traditions. For example, the exhibit includes a 1920s dress made out of kimono fabric and pieces made for the Western market.

"It's a great way for all of us to learn more about the culture and to share that with our students,"

*"It's been a joy to get to share something that is both kind of wearable art and also a dying skill and a dying set of industries with people. This is a lot more than just, 'This is what people wear.' It's a conversation about heritage and art preservation."*

— Shannon Palmer

Jack said. "I think that's one of the biggest ideas behind this whole exhibit is to show that cross-cultural excitement; for me, it's one of the things I've learned the most from this exhibit."

Milutin noted another highlight of the exhibit is an uchikake, an outer robe traditionally worn by brides in Japan. Surrounding the uchikake in the exhibit are four other styles of the kimono, ranging from "informal to highly formal," Milutin said.

Other aspects of the exhibit center around

"The Kimono in Everyday Life" and "Crafting Kimono: しまり (Shibori) Dyeing."

"The word 'shibori' kind of is an encompassing term for the art of essentially manipulating fabric; binding it, tying, twisting, pleating, folding and then dyeing, so that it is a resist dye process," Pham explained. "So, wherever you fold, it resists the dye, and so you create all these intricate patterns as a result."

Pham noted the oldest examples of the art form in Japan are from the 8th century.

"Shibori is used on banners, in clothing, it has been used in religious ceremonies, for royalty in terms of drapes and banners," she said.

The exhibit also points to present day Nagoya, a part of Japan where shibori craftsmanship has been prevalent for centuries.

"There's specific towns where this was an industry that drove the economy," Pham said. "There's some people, 15 generations of family have been doing this specific piece, whether that's a specific dye, whether that's a technique of binding cloth, whether it is making the cloth or making the finished products."

Milutin noted the section will include an interactive station where visitors can get a close look at and feel different fabrics.

## COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Pham will lead a "Shibori & Indigo Dye Demonstration" on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 2:30 p.m. in the Makerspace in the Johnson Building, not far from the exhibition space. At that event, community members can learn more about shibori techniques, and some will have the opportunity to make their own piece.

"I think that's one of the goals of the exhibit, is to show these things on a technical level," Jack said.



A NEW EXHIBIT in Middlebury College's Johnson Gallery centers around the kimono and its ties to different aspects of Japanese culture and Western aesthetics. The "Cultural Fabrics: The Kimono Through Literary, Cross-Cultural, and Practical Lenses" exhibit features several examples of the kimono, including the two pictured here.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

Later this month, Palmer will offer a "Kimono Dressing Demonstration," showing how "a kimono and its components are layered, tied and worn for different occasions." That event is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 5:30 p.m. in the Johnson Building.

Palmer has lots of experience with the kimono, including having worked in a formal kimono rental shop in Japan.

"(I'm) very excited to be able to show everyone the things that go into the creation of the finished product because there's a lot of cultural meaning that goes into how you choose what goes together and the season that you're wearing this in, and all of these other things," Palmer said.

Organizers credited those who've helped pull the exhibit together, a team that includes collaborators Mihai Lazar, Colin Boyd and Douglas Brooks. The exhibit is located in the same space as the Japanese teahouse constructed by 12 Middlebury College students during a J-term course led by Brooks last month.

Middlebury College freshman Josephine Coan is one of several student collaborators who've contributed to the exhibit.

"I incidentally wrote a paper on the Japanese kosode (an earlier form of the kimono) for Professor Jack's class, not knowing she was planning an exhibit on the same thing for J-term," Coan told the *Independent*. "I have had a lot of fun and have learned so many new things from this experience, so I'm glad my interests randomly aligned with hers!"

Coan assisted Jack with research on the intersection of Western and Japanese fashion in history, as well as helped dress the kimono mannequins and write labels for pieces in the exhibit.

"My favorite part about helping with this exhibit was researching some of the real historical garments, including a silk men's dressing gown that is part of the East Meets West area," Coan said. "I enjoyed searching for where the robe was originally sold, what year

it was from, and finding out what the small Japanese characters on it meant. I also learned a substantial amount about Japanese motifs and their symbolism while interpreting the garments."

Jack noted students have also worked with Boyd in the Johnson Gallery to design the layout and texts on the walls of the exhibit.

"It's very fun to have students be able to be involved in these things," she said.

Organizers are hoping to eventually develop the focus of the exhibit into a course at the college, one that would offer students an opportunity to travel to Japan and put together their own exhibit as part of the class.

"It's a long, long process, but this is a first step," Milutin said.

The exhibit is free, open to the public and will run until March 19. For more details visit [middlebury.edu/cultural-fabrics](http://middlebury.edu/cultural-fabrics).

# Middlebury

(Continued from Page 1A)  
agreed to advance the almost \$16 million budget to voters after making a few adjustments to the bottom line, while also dipping into revenue to soften the property tax impacts of the spending plan.

Board members agreed to increase, by \$50,000, the amount of local option tax surplus that it will apply to the FY27 spending plan. Middlebury in 2008 adopted a local option tax of 1% on rooms, meals, sales and alcohol to help pay off debt on the \$16 million Cross Street Bridge project. The tax has been generating substantially more each year than is needed for debt service and maintenance of the span, thus creating reserves that the town has been applying to various capital improvement projects that would otherwise have to be bankrolled exclusively by taxpayers.

Plans now call for Middlebury to transfer \$350,000 in local option tax surplus to the FY27 budget, according to Town Manager Mark Pruhenski.

The town also recently learned it'll be able to count on a \$238,000 "gift in lieu of taxes (GILT)" from Middlebury College for FY27, which is \$38,000 more than the selectboard had anticipated. The *Independent* reported last month that the college is seeking to at least temporarily pare down the annual GILT, as part of its strategy to balance its own ledgers and in recognition of several community projects it's helping to underwrite,

including the Middlebury town office building and recreation facility, the Cross Street Bridge, Ilsley Library, Otter Creek Child Center expansion project and Town Hall Theater addition.

On the expenditure side, the selectboard on Jan. 27 agreed to honor a \$15,000 earmark for the Middlebury skatepark project (money that had been cut in an earlier version of the budget draft), and OK a \$1,500 increase for the Charter House Coalition, which — among other good deeds — runs Middlebury's emergency shelter at 27 North Pleasant St.

If the FY27 budget is approved by voters, Middlebury's municipal tax rate would increase by 9.27 cents, to \$1.0226 per \$100 in property value. That's substantially higher than recent annual increase in the tax rate, but an improvement on the 10.9-cent hike the board was evaluating just three weeks ago.

Roughly 4 cents of the proposed 9.27-cent municipal rate hike relates to mandated debt service on the voter-approved Ilsley Library expansion and renovation project. Contracted employee wage increases and surging health care premiums are also among the town's fixed costs.

One cent on Middlebury's municipal tax rate raises roughly \$100,000.

You can find detailed info on the FY27 budget at [tinyurl.com/mttxwsha](http://tinyurl.com/mttxwsha).

John Flowers is at [johnf@addisonindependent.com](mailto:johnf@addisonindependent.com).

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# Selectboard

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 Sadly, only two candidates (incumbent Jason Chance of Middlebury and new candidate Robyn Stattel of Bridport) have emerged for a total of four vacancies that will be on the ballot. The *Independent* will take a closer look at the ACSD election next week.

Meanwhile, here are some details about Middlebury selectboard candidates Danielle Boyce and Dan Brown.

Boyce and her husband, Stephen, moved to Vermont in 1999, ultimately uprooting from Vergennes five years ago to settle in East Middlebury. The couple has a daughter, Matilda, who's now a sixth-grader at Middlebury Union Middle School.

Boyce's early career years were spent working at restaurants before taking a job at Four Seasons Garden Center in Williston. By the time she left that job 20 years ago, she was a senior manager responsible for around 100 employees.

But Boyce wanted something closer to home that included an opportunity for advancement. She found that at American Flatbread, seeing her initial managerial role as a logical steppingstone to opening a restaurant of her own.

Little did she know at the time that American Flatbread would become her restaurant venture.

"At least three people approached me to (partner) to buy it," Boyce recalled of the conversation 15 years ago. "I thought, 'Well, maybe I'm supposed to buy this place.' So, we did."

*"I learned there currently isn't representation (on the board) for East Middlebury, and I think that's important. I also think more gender balance is a good thing."*

— Danielle Boyce

She learned a lot about restaurant management and ownership amid challenges that included the COVID pandemic, the downtown rail tunnel project and running a tight ship amid thin profit margins.

While running a restaurant can be a heavy lift, Boyce has found time for family and volunteerism. She previously served on the Hospice Volunteer Services board and in January noted an opportunity to run for the Middlebury selectboard.

"I learned there currently isn't representation (on the board) for East Middlebury, and I think that's important," Boyce said. "I also think more gender balance is a good thing."

The seven-person selectboard currently has two female members — Isabel Gogarty and Megan James.

Boyce has gotten a taste of past selectboard meetings, particularly

while helping to represent business community concerns during the pandemic and while the town was dealing with a large population of homeless folks downtown in 2024.

"I learned a lot from those (selectboard) meetings," Boyce said, adding that experience and her business skills could help the board "cut through the muck" of thorny issues.

Middlebury residents share some of those thorny issues with her while they're dining at American Flatbread. Lately, she's been hearing support for a proposed Middlebury skatepark at the recreation park near Mary Hogan Elementary.

"When you look at what we have available here for teens and pre-teens, I think there's an easy case to be made for the value of having something like that," she said.

Brown, who with his wife, Michele, formerly owned and operated the Swift House Inn and Jessica's Restaurant, is rounding out his sixth year on the selectboard. He currently serves on the town's Infrastructure Committee and the Downtown Improvement District Commission. Brown has served his community in many other ways, as well, including on the Ilsley 100 Project Team that played a key

role in shaping the now-unfolding expansion and renovation of Middlebury's public library at 75 Main St.

He is a member of the Congregational Church of Middlebury's board of trustees and helped disburse donated funds to local restaurants and farms that were ailing during the COVID pandemic.

Brown has had a very eventful and challenging six years on the selectboard, marked by the pandemic, the downtown rail tunnel project, the Ilsley project, and the spike in homelessness.

Brown's original plan was to serve two three-year terms. But he's now hoping to extend his stay three, in large part to partially compensate for the imminent departure of Carpenter, who's stepping down this March after 12 years.

Carpenter is leaving to spend more time with family and to focus more intently on his business interests.

Come March, four of the board's seven members will have fewer than three years of experience, Brown noted.

"It's hard to replace the leadership and the respect that

Brian has brought as chair," he said. "I think me leaving and taking my experience away at this time wouldn't be good."

The quality of Middlebury's town staff is also influencing Brown's re-election bid.

"It's always been a great group of people to work with," he said. And there will be no shortage of issues to command the board attention during the next three years, according to Brown.

"I want to follow through on some big-ticket items, and one of them is the library," he said. "I want to be on the selectboard when we open that library. I think it's going to be a game changer for the downtown."

Beyond that, Brown believes the board will busy itself with budget challenges, finding ways to increase the town's housing stock, boosting the grand list, effectively using local option tax surplus money, pursuing \$50 million in voter-approved upgrades to the municipal wastewater treatment plant, and looking into Tax Increment Financing (known as TIF) as a tool to bankroll improvements for local streets, sidewalks and stormwater management.

"There's a lot of issues, and there will be new leadership on the selectboard," Brown said. "We have to set a tone this year to start addressing these issues, or we'll be in trouble."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

# By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)  
**Penguin Plunge is a jump into the cold waters of Lake Champlain and as a team, the NHS has a goal of raising \$1,750. If you're able to contribute, any amount would make a difference. You can find the Vergennes NHS donation site at [tinyurl.com/mrhfw9hy](http://tinyurl.com/mrhfw9hy).**

If you live in Lincoln, your transfer station at 1111 Downingsville Road won't be accepting household trash for another one- to two months, while permitting and contract issues are being resolved. That was the update issued earlier this week by Town Administrator Trish Waugh. Meanwhile, the transfer station will continue to accept recycling and metal disposal. But Lincolniters will have to continue to use alternative options for household trash, such as the Bristol Town Garage (Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon) or the New Haven drop-off (Fridays 8 a.m. to noon) until the local transfer station is again greenlighted to receive trash. Check out the Lincoln town website or attend a regular selectboard meeting for updates.

**Porter Medical Center (PMC) needs you. Please volunteer in support of staff, patients and families. If you are looking to engage in your community, PMC will find a volunteer opportunity that matches your interests. From greeters to crafters, there are many ways you can be part of Porter's volunteer team. If interested, please send email to [PMC-Volunteers@portermedical.org](mailto:PMC-Volunteers@portermedical.org), or call Kelly Walters at 802-382-3444.**

Do you have environmental or conservation concerns in Addison County? Do you want to help direct how federal money is spent, and what the conservation district prioritizes? The Otter Creek Natural Resource Conservation District is looking for your opinions about environmental concerns and what you think the organization should prioritize in its application for federal funding. Share your ideas by taking the district's online survey at [tinyurl.com/yj3mrvnu](http://tinyurl.com/yj3mrvnu).

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on Feb. 9 will begin accepting grant proposals from 501(c)3 organizations that help people in Addison County. Priority will be given to programs or projects that help at-risk populations meet basic needs for food, housing, healthcare, and safety, as well as those that curb social isolation and celebrate inclusive communities. Grants may be requested in amounts from \$500 to \$10,000. Grant funding is made possible through the success of the annual St. Stephen's Peasant Market. St. Stephen's distributes proceeds of Peasant Market to support programs and projects that help people in need, and also funds services and aid to local agencies, allows free access to church meeting spaces for non-profit agencies, and offers hospitality directly to the community through participation in local events such as the Car Show, Middlebury PRIDE and Spooktacular. Complete details are available with the grant application, which is available exclusively online at [ststephensmidd.org](http://ststephensmidd.org). The deadline for submissions is noon on March 16. Questions may be directed to Vanessa Almony at [ststephens.vt.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:ststephens.vt.outreach@gmail.com).

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# SPORTS

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- Classifieds
- Police Logs



TIGERS DANCERS SPREAD out during their hip hop routine in the MUHS gym on Saturday, when they hosted five other Vermont teams in their second competition of the season.

Independent photo/Steve James

## Tigers boogie their way to two second place finishes

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School dance team boogied their way to two second place finishes in hip hop and pom during a home meet on Saturday.

In their second meet this year,

the Tigers in both disciplines only barely fell to the squad from South Burlington; MUHS previously beat out SB for first in pom during the Tigers' 2026 debut in Lamoille on Jan. 17.

On Jan. 31, MUHS defeated four teams in hip hop and three teams in

pom, scoring six and five points, respectively. South Burlington downed the Tigers by one point in each category, with five and four points (in Dance competitions the low score wins). Lamoille earned third place in hip hop with eight points, and Burr and Burton was

third in pom with 10 points.

Three teams also competed in Jazz. Mount Mansfield earned the victory (three points), Lamoille took second (six points) and BFA St. Albans took third (nine points).

Coach Ashley Grant was upbeat (See Dance, Page 3B)

## Three local wrestlers claim titles out-of-state

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

Local high school wrestlers amassed three first place victories during recent out-of-state meets.

Middlebury Union High School sophomore Miles Goetz snagged the 120-pound title at the Capital City Classic in Concord, N.H.,

on Saturday. The Tigers were 10th overall out of 39 teams from across New England and New York that attended what Coach Ethan Raymond said is one of the largest New England tournaments.

Mt. Abe juniors Isayah Isham (See Wrestling, Page 2B)

## VUHS boys' basketball wins again

Tigers and Eagles celebrate successes too

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

In recent high school boys' basketball action, the Commodores and Tigers each added three wins to their records, and Mt. Abe added two, only falling to Vergennes.

VERGENNES UNION

The Commodores played three blowout games in the past week. They beat Crown Point, 88-28, on Jan. 29; Mt. Abe, 78-54, on Saturday, Jan. 31; and Enosburg, 50-28, on Tuesday, Feb. 3.

In the first game of that triad, junior **Cohen Howell** led Vergennes with 17 points, the game high. Seniors **Logan Thibault** and **Ryan Wright** scored 12 and 10, respectively.

Senior **Theo Elzinga** brought down nine rebounds, the most of any player on the court.

It was the only scheduled meeting of the two teams this season.

VUHS didn't pull away from Mt. Abe quite as much during the Saturday game. However, they still finished with a 24-point cushion.

The Commodores had a strong first quarter on their home court, outscoring the Eagles, 27-9. They did the same in the second and third quarters, but by just three and five points. In the final quarter, Mt. Abe put up 16 points to Vergennes's 14.

Wright scored 15 points, and Elzinga trailed by just one point with 14. Both had nine rebounds. Senior **Ryker Mosehauer** tossed in 13 points.

Mt. Abe junior **Jaran Griffin** had a game-high 18 points. Senior **Charlie Germon** put up 14 for the (See Boys' basketball, Page 2B)

## Score BOARD

### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

#### Girls' Basketball

1/28 VUHS vs Danville.....	68-41
1/30 Milton vs Mt Abe.....	41-26..
1/30 VUHS vs Blue Mt.....	79-27
1/30 MUHS vs Missisquoi.....	66-29
2/2 MUHS vs Spaulding.....	47-34
2/2 VUHS vs Stowe.....	71-20
2/4 MUHS at Mt Abe.....	Late

#### Boys' Basketball

1/28 MUHS vs Milton.....	58-38
1/28 Mt Abe at Enosburg.....	45-44
1/29 VUHS vs Crown Point.....	88-28
1/31 VUHS vs Mt Abe.....	78-54..
1/31 MUHS vs Enosburg.....	62-54
2/3 Winooski vs MUHS.....	58-50
2/3 Mt Abe vs Milton.....	62-38
2/3 VUHS vs Enosburg.....	50-28

#### Boys' Hockey

1/28 MUHS vs Burlington.....	5-3
1/31 MUHS vs N Country.....	4-3
2/4 Brattleboro at MUHS.....	Late

#### Girls' Hockey

1/28 N Country vs MUHS.....	4-3
1/31 MUHS vs CVU.....	5-1
2/4 MUHS at Rice.....	Late

### COLLEGE SPORTS

#### Men's Hockey

1/30 Midd vs Tufts.....	4-2
1/31 Midd vs Conn College.....	4-0

#### Women's Hockey

2/3 Plattsburgh vs Midd.....	2-1
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#### Women's Basketball

2/1 Bates vs Midd.....	64-57
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#### Men's Basketball

2/1 Bates vs Midd.....	89-71
2/3 Midd vs VTSU Johnson.....	97-76

## Schedule

### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

#### Girls' Basketball

2/7 Colchester at MUHS.....	12:30 PM
2/7 Mt Abe at Missisquoi.....	1 PM
2/7 Winooski at VUHS.....	2:30 PM
2/9 VUHS at Mt Abe.....	7 PM
2/9 BFA St. Albans at MUHS.....	7 PM
2/10 MUHS at Enosburg.....	7 PM
2/11 VUHS at Richford.....	7 PM
2/13 Colchester at Mt Abe.....	7 PM
2/14 Enosburg at Mt Abe.....	12:30 PM

#### Boys' Basketball

2/6 Winooski at VUHS.....	7 PM
2/6 Missisquoi at Mt Abe.....	7 PM
2/9 Mt Abe at Harwood.....	7 PM
2/10 VUHS at Milton.....	7 PM
2/11 MUHS at Missisquoi.....	7 PM
2/11 Mt Abe at Winooski.....	7 PM

#### Boys' Hockey

2/7 MUHS at Stowe.....	6:45 PM
2/14 MUHS at Hartford.....	2 PM

#### Girls' Hockey

2/7 Spaulding at MUHS.....	7 PM
2/11 MUHS at Hartford.....	5:45 PM
2/14 MUHS at Essex.....	3 PM

#### Wrestling

2/7.....Mt Abe at Mt. Anthony Duals
2/7.....VUHS at Plymouth Tournament

(See Schedule, Page 3B)

## MUHS girls' hockey drops two

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School girls' hockey team stomached two losses in the past week. A three-game losing streak has put the Tigers' record at 7-6.

They fell by just one goal to North Country, 4-3, on Wednesday, Jan. 28, in what was a back-and-forth game in Newport.

The Tigers took a one goal lead about two minutes before the end of the first period. Junior Julia Morrissey was assisted by senior co-captain Lia Calzini.

After the break, the Falcons came back with a goal about four-and-a-half minutes into the second.

Calzini, who scored 10

goals between this game and the previous five, answered that call with a goal about three-and-a-half minutes later. She was assisted by junior Ida Blackwell.

The Tigers kept their one-goal lead until about five-and-a-half minutes into the third, when North Country tied it up with a goal. Two more Falcon goals in the final five minutes gave them the lead and a cushion.

Calzini gave her team a chance with a second goal, assisted by Morrissey, at 13:15 of the third period.

But the Tigers weren't able to get the puck in the back of the net again in the remaining 1:45.

Junior goalie Heaven Ross made 28 saves during the game. (See Girls' hockey, Page 3B)

## MUHS boys' hockey takes two

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

The Middlebury Union High School boys' hockey team added two wins to their record recently, bringing their season tally to 7-5-1.

The first was a 5-3 home win against Burlington, who the Tigers will see again at the end of the month.

Between the seventh and ninth minutes of the game the team put the puck in the back of the net three times.

"We had a strong start, scoring three goals all within 2 minutes of each other, which helped set the tone for the rest of the game," Coach Jordan Stearns said.

The first two came off assists from junior Gabriel Quesnel. At 7:14 he got the puck to junior Case Pitner, and then at 7:36 to

senior Adrien Malhotra for goals one and two. Senior Jaxson Heffernan scored the third at 8:25 off an assist from junior Otto Seigfried. Junior Jase Kozak got the secondary assist.

After that spree, the Seahorses scored a goal at 9:43. They took the Tigers' cushion just nine seconds into the second period with a goal, bringing the score to 3-2.

That was it for scoring until about 12 minutes later when Pitner scored a second time, this time off an assist from senior Logan McNulty. Senior Sutton Rubright got the secondary assist.

Going into the final period, the score was 4-2 Tigers. Burlington again shrunk the gap with just under five minutes left (See Boys' hockey, Page 2B)

## VUHS and MUHS girls' win handily

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — Together, the girls' basketball teams from Middlebury and Vergennes union high schools amassed five wins in the last week. The Mount Abe girls came up short. The Eagles hosted the Tigers in a game played after deadline.

VUHS's three wins were by more than 20 point margins, two of those by more than 50. Senior co-captain **Ashtin Stearns** put up 52 points combined in those matches

### COMMODORES

During an away game against Danville on Jan. 28, Stearns scored 19 of her team's 68 points.

The Bears, who VUHS defeated 69-39 in mid-December, got 41 past the Commodore defense this time around.

Stearns also totaled five assists and six steals.

Freshman **Ayla Kittredge** wasn't far behind in scoring, with 17 points. Kittredge also snagged 10 rebounds.

Senior **Ava Francis** had eight points and six assists, senior **Summer Gosliga** had 11 points and junior **Georgia Krause** had 11 rebounds.

Two days later on Friday, Jan. 30, the Commodores crushed Blue Mountain in Vergennes. The score was 79-27, much larger than the 29-point drubbing that VUHS gave (See Girls' hoop, Page 4B)

## Williams and Audy top local gymnast scores

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — Local gymnasts saw continued personal successes in meets against Champlain Valley Union on Jan. 30 and Harwood on Feb. 2.

The best finish across the two meets was Middlebury Union High School senior **Alixis Williams's** second place finish in vault against

CVU (8 points) and against Harwood (8.10 points). She tied for second in the latter. Junior **Isabella Audy**, a Vergennes Union High School student who trains with Middlebury, secured the third place spot on the podium in floor against CVU with 7.6 points.

The pair continue to accumulate podium finishes this season and be

top performers from the area. Tiger freshman **Ruby Murphy** isn't far behind the two upperclassmen as another consistent top-six finisher this season.

The Tigers ultimately lost both meets. For the away competition with CVU, which ended 121.20-92.85 in favor of CVU, Coach (See Gymnastics, Page 2B)



SENIOR GABBY STUART battles Bates center Elsa Daulerio, who was 27 points. The Panthers lost 64-57 to the nationally ranked Bobcats.

Independent photo/Steve James

## Panther women's hoop falls short of win

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College women's basketball team on Sunday afternoon allowed Bates to go on a 10 point run to start the game, fell 16 points behind seven minutes in, and called two timeouts within the first five-and-a-half minutes made.

It was a sour start for the Panthers. And if it was any indication of what was to come, by the end of the game Pepin Gymnasium was going to reflect the frigid temperatures outside more than the sunny skies.

"I think there definitely were some bright spots today, too," Middlebury Coach **KJ Krasco** said, looking at the big picture. "Just our ability to keep fighting and chip away."

The game ended up feeling somewhere in the middle of those two extremes.

Though the Panthers ultimately lost, 64-57, to the nationally ranked Bobcats, who are 18-2 this season, Middlebury players clawed their way out of a nearly 20-point deficit to make it a 4-point game early in the fourth quarter and again at the end.

Key to that comeback were two underclassmen — sophomores **Molly Keaveney** and **Teagan Lind**. Both came off the bench in the first

quarter, but ended up playing 34:20 and 27:30, respectively — the most and fourth-most minutes of anybody on the team.

"I think Teagan and Molly did a great job of bringing in some

offensive spark and energy, even when their shots weren't falling. I thought they took good shots. Some of the sets we ran for both of them, we got the shots we wanted,"

(See Panther women, Page 4B)



SOPHOMORE TEAGAN LIND (left) and junior Catherine Carrafiello reach for a rebound during a home game Sunday. They scored 11 and 6 points respectively, though the Panthers lost 64-57 to the nationally ranked Bates team.

Independent photo/Steve James

## Wrestling

(Continued from Page 1B)

and Maston Atkins took first place in the 144 and 157 weight classes during the Mountie Invitational this past Saturday at Mount Greylock Regional School in northwestern Massachusetts. The team from Bristol took 13th out of 25 teams.

Here's how other local wrestlers did this week:

- MUHS senior Steven Lackard placed second in Concord (285 pounds).
- MUHS junior Tucker Wright placed fourth in Concord (215).
- MUHS junior Parker Carl placed fifth in Concord (175).
- Mt. Abe freshman Forest Turner (120) was 2-0 during a

home dual against Vergennes and Springfield on Jan. 28, and 2-2 during the Mountie Invitational.

• Mt. Abe sophomore Bradley LeVangie (132 and 138) had a win and a loss during the home dual and 3-2 (132) during the Mountie Invitational.

• Mt. Abe junior Kassi Garrow (132 and 138) went 0-2 during the home dual.

• Mt. Abe junior Hailey Isham (144) went 1-1 during the home dual and 1-2 during the Mountie Invitational.

Wrestlers from VUHS had last weekend off. They were due to compete at home against MUHS and Mt. Abe on Wednesday after deadline.

## Gymnastics

(Continued from Page 1B)

Natalia Little said three of her athletes were sick and couldn't make the trek to Hinesburg.

"While not our best meet, our skills have greatly improved, and we will see the result of our efforts very soon," she said.

Here's how local gymnasts did against CVU:

- Vault
- Williams placed 5th (5.5 points) in bars, 4th (8.6 points) on beam, 4th (7.15 points) in floor, and 4th (29.25 points) in all around.
  - Audy tied for 4th (7.8 points) in vault with a CVU gymnast, placed 5th in beam (7.0 points), and 5th (27.20 points) in all around.
  - Murphy placed 6th (7.3 points) in vault, 6th (6.9 points) on beam and 6th (24.30 points) in all around.
  - Junior Lila Hescoock placed

6th (5.3 points, PR) for bars; it was her first time earning a top six spot.


• Hescoock PR'ed in vault (5.8 points).

• Sophomore Leah Warner PR'ed in vault (5.7 points).

At home against Harwood, the Tigers fell, 125.3-110.5. Here's how local gymnasts did in that meet:

- Williams placed 4th (7.85 points) in floor and 6th (28.95) in all around.
- Murphy tied for 5th (7.6 points) in vault with a Harwood gymnast, placed 5th (6.3 points, PR) in bars, placed 6th (7.3 points, PR) in floor and placed 7th (27.90) in all around.
- Sophomore Leah Warner placed 4th (7.9 points, PR) in beam; it was her first top four finish.
- Senior Emily Johnson PR'ed in vault (6.3 points).
- Hescoock PR'ed in vault (6.8 points) and in bars (5.4 points).
- Warner PR'ed in vault (6.8 points).
- Junior Nataly Johnson PR'ed in bars (5.6 points).
- Freshman Willow Mongeon PR'ed in floor (6.0 points).
- Senior Mady Richard PR'ed in floor (7.05 points).

The Tigers' next competition is at Middlebury Union Middle School against St. Johnsbury Academy this Saturday, Feb. 7, at 11 a.m.



**Upcoming Events**

**Thursday, February 5:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

**Friday, February 6:**  
3:00 - 4:45 PM Public Skating


**Tuesday, February 10:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating  
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

**Friday, February 13:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

**Tuesday, February 17:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating  
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

**Friday, February 20:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

**Tuesday, February 24:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating



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## Outbursts and apologies are my trademark

I go to most of the Middlebury College men's home basketball games, and some away games too, and have for many years: over 50 years of games, including those in which I played on the Middlebury team, in that gym, many renovations ago.

I sit with members of my family and friends. It's just about my favorite thing to do, gets me through the Vermont winter.

Near the end of close games, especially conference games, I will often get up from my seat, leave my pals, and pace the hallways above the stands, stopping to observe the action through the windows there.

Other times, I will go over to the far end of the gym, on the south side, and stand in the corner and watch the final minutes of action by myself from a perch in Pepin, high above courtside.

There are those, I think, who find this behavior an affectation — that is, I do it to draw attention to myself as an especially ardent fan, a Middlebury partisan-extraordinaire, unable to sit still, having to move about to calm my nerves.

I would reassure them that this gesture is a learned behavior, learned from hard experience. It is a preventative gesture, done as a kindness to others.

To wit: Rich was new to Middlebury College and the town, and we had enjoyed exchanging pleasantries during the week. So when he came to the Middlebury basketball game on the weekend, he spied me in the stands and sat down next to me.

"Hey Karl, how're you doing," he asked in a friendly manner.

"How the hell do you think I'm doing," I snapped. "We're down six points with three minutes to

play!"

"Scuse me," he mumbled and moved quickly on.

I apologized, later, and he forgave me for my rudeness (I think).

Here's another example: Just last year, in the final moments of a big game, I had taken the precaution of moving to that safe spot, by myself, in the corner of the gym, high up.

Alas, we lost the game ... an agonizing loss.

As I was returning to my family and friends, I saw my hoop friend Steve gesturing to me, apparently wanting to have a conversation about the game.

I was in no mood at that point for an objective dissection of the game, and I kept going right by him. "No, no, no, no, no! Not right now!" I spat out, "I don't want to talk about the game!" and I showed him my back.

Moments later, I saw him coming toward me as I was leaving the gym. He was upset. "You blew me off," he said. "I'm disappointed, Karl. You're better than that!" and he turned to leave.

I managed to get out, "No, I'm not. I'm NOT better than that. That's who I am!"

I went home and apologized by email, and we also made up, over coffee downtown. We're good now.

I have learned over the years that it is useful to me not to sit too close to the action. I choose now to sit fairly high up in the stands.

If I sit lower than that, I am inclined to assist the referees calling the game, as they are prone to make mistakes, sometimes egregious mistakes, always, it seems, benefitting Middlebury's

opponents.

So I would be there, up front, nearby, to provide instruction and correction. I wanted to make sure they could hear me, so I waited till there was a lull in the action and spoke very clearly in a loud voice.

I no longer sit courtside. Like I said — learned behavior.

In my second year as a young dean, I attended a Middlebury-Amherst basketball game in our gym, with maybe 50 or so other fans, the usual sparse crowd back then.

The score was tied as the time wound down in the first half. Amherst took an errant shot as time expired, 0:00 on the clock, only no buzzer went off ending play. The scoreboard operator at the table had forgotten to switch on the "automatic horn."

Amherst took another shot, missed, and then hit a tip-in, before the officials realized time had run out and blew their whistles.

I was not alone in loudly protesting this miscarriage; everyone was screaming "Clock! Clock!" as the Lord Jeffs were rebounding their missed shots.

I was alone, however, in marching down from my seat in the stands to the vicinity of the scorers' table where coaches and officials were huddling. There I figured I could be most helpful.

My contribution to the discussion was to scream, "DON'T COUNT THE HOOP!" and to offer other such protestations, amounting to the same thing. There was no need for discussion, it seemed to me.

As they dithered, I turned my attention to the Amherst coach and

insisted that he should acknowledge the hoop shouldn't count. "C'mon, Coach, you know it was late, don't take the hoop. Do the right thing! Sportsmanship!"

The Amherst coach, only 10-15 feet away from me, looked right at me. I didn't back off. I continued, "Yeah, I'm talking to you, Coach. You know it was late!"

The refs counted the hoop and the teams and officials left the court, and I was left standing there with no clothes on, so to speak. I was embarrassed, humiliated would not be an exaggeration. It was a bad performance.

I immediately went home, sat down and wrote a letter of apology by hand to the Amherst coach, and drove to the post office that night.

A couple days later, I got a letter in the mail, the return address was "Athletics, Amherst College, Amherst, MA." It was from the Amherst coach. Our letters had apparently crossed. Clearly he had asked somebody who that maniac was yelling at him.

He took me to task, asking how a dean could be such a poor model for his students, and so on. It was a difficult letter to read, but he had a point.

I have been better behaved at basketball games ever since then, even close games with Amherst. We lost that game by two points. You can look it up.

I'm pretty good now.

I take these steps to avoid disgrace.

But it can be a struggle.

*Karl Lindholm, Ph.D., is emeritus dean of advising and assistant professor of American Studies (retired) at Middlebury College. He can be contacted at lindholm@middlebury.edu.*

## Boys' hockey

(Continued from Page 1B)

in the game.

But with just 12 seconds left in the game, Kozak scored a fifth goal for the Tigers.

The Tigers outshot the Seahorses 32-22. Senior goalie TJ Baron had 19 saves.

"We did a better job about getting pucks to the middle offensively which created better scoring opportunities," Stearns said. "Defensively, we did a good job of keeping their top players to the outside helping to limit their high-quality chances."

MUHS and Burlington face off again in the city at the end of the month.

The Tigers' second win came on Jan. 31 during an away game against North Country. MUHS edged out the team in a 4-3 victory.

"This was our best game of the season all around," Stearns said. "We played as a team and worked hard for the full 45 minutes of the game, on the offensive and defensive side of the puck."

Junior Asa Root Pratt scored an early goal about two-and-a-half minutes into the first period during a powerplay. He was assisted by Quesnel. Pitner made the secondary assist.

The Tigers upped their lead by another goal in the third minute of the second period. Quesnel

scored unassisted. He got the puck again, this time from Pitner, for another goal four minutes later. The secondary assist came from Rubright.

North Country, who Stearns called a top team in Division 2, finally began chipping away the 3-0 lead 46 seconds later, with their first goal of the game.

They got the score to 3-2 in the 13th minute of the second during a powerplay. That goal ended scoring for the period.

Sophomore Jude Grant got a powerplay goal of his own about seven minutes into the third period, bringing the score to 4-2. He was assisted by senior Ethan Mulcahy, who got the puck from senior Joe Sullivan.

The North Country players put themselves back in a position to tie it up at 9:52 with one final goal, bringing the score to 4-3. The Tigers' defense was able to fend them off for the remaining five minutes of play.

MUHS and North Country were even at 23 shots each. Baron had 20 saves.

The Tigers played a home game against Brattleboro on Wednesday after press deadline. It was the teams' only meeting of the season.

MUHS takes on Stowe on Feb. 7 at 6:45 p.m. on the road for their sole match this season.

## Boys' basketball

(Continued from Page 1B)

Eagles.

The teams meet again at the end of February in Bristol.

The Commodores earned their fourth consecutive win in Enosburg, where they defeated the Hornets, 50-28. VUHS outscored the team in all quarters except the final one.

Commodore junior **Quinn LeBeau** led the offensive effort with 12 points.

VUHS is 8-5 heading into a Friday home game against Winooski, who the Commodores beat in mid-January, 50-40.

**MOUNT ABRAHAM**

Other than the slip against VUHS, Mt. Abe also had a successful week.

The Eagles on Jan. 28 narrowly beat Enosburg by a point for their sixth win of the season. The Eagles scored 45, to the host's 44.

It came down to the wire, with the Eagles still four points behind until 18 seconds left in the game. Sophomore **Waydon Cherington**, who had 12 points total, hit from behind the arc for a three-pointer, which closed the point deficit to one.

During the last 10 seconds of the game, Mt. Abe stole the ball from Enosburg, and then Charlie Germon drove to the hoop and drew a foul. With 3.3 seconds to go, Germon found himself on the line with the chance to win the game. He made both free throws to pull his team

ahead 45-44.

Charlie Germon had 11 points for the game.

The Eagles had another strong showing against Milton on Tuesday, Feb. 3. The ride home would have been celebratory coming off of the 62-38 win.

Charlie Germon scored the game high 17 points. Griffin had 15, and sophomore **Noah Germon** had 10.

That win brought the Eagle record to 7-5, after pulling themselves out of a 1-4 slump earlier in the season.

The team plays next in Bristol on Friday, Feb. 6, at 7 p.m. against Missisquoi, who they beat 72-44 in January.

**MIDDLEBURY UNION**

MUHS evened its record to 7-7 over the past week.

The team beat Milton at home, 58-38, on Jan. 28. Junior **Colin Chicoine** scored 24 points (the game high), senior **Cooke Riney** had 17, and junior **Taylor Altemose** popped in 11.

On Jan. 31, the Tigers beat Enosburg on the road, 62-54. Game stats were not immediately available.

And on this past Tuesday, Feb. 3, the Tiges got the season equalizing win, 58-50, against Winooski on the road. Riney scored 13 points and had 13 rebounds, junior **Ryan Brouillard** pumped in 13 points, Chicoine had 12 and Altemose added 7.



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# Girls' hockey Dance

*(Continued from Page 1B)*  
 The Tigers were outshot 32-21. Then MUHS had a tougher time against Champlain Valley at Memorial Sports Center on Jan. 31. The final score was 5-1, favoring the visitors from Hinesburg.

CVU scored all five of their goals before MUHS got on the board. The Redhawks got two in the first period, one in the second and another two in the third.

Sophomore Beckay Seelley scored the Tigers' only goal just over nine minutes into the third period off an assist from senior co-captain Ireland Hanley. Morrissey got the secondary assist.

CVU had almost twice as many shots as MUHS. The Tigers had 19 to the Redhawks' 36. Ross tallied 31 saves.

Neither the Redhawks nor North Country are on the Tigers' schedule again this season.

MUHS played Rice after deadline on Wednesday. That was their only meeting this season.

MUHS is scheduled to play Spaulding at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7. Then the Tigers hit the road on Wednesday, Feb. 11, to take on Hartford at 5:45 p.m. Middlebury hasn't faced either team this season.

*(Continued from Page 1B)*  
 about the Tigers' hip hop and pom performances on Saturday.

"I couldn't be happier," she said. "This is only our second (meet). Even though we got second, we can only go up from here. They did good, second is good. We're happy with it."

Though the judges' faces were stoic as they concentrated on the 23 varsity and junior varsity routines they were tasked with picking apart, the day's dancers made up for the seriousness at the scoring table with a glowing stage presence.

The Tigers danced both their hip hop and pom routines with eyes and faces full of expression under a thick smear of bright orange eyeshadow.

Ten Tiger dancers performed their hip hop routine to Missy Elliot's "Lose Control."

When the Tigers announced, the dancers sported orange, heart-shaped plastic glasses that matched their football-like jerseys proclaiming "Middlebury Tigers Dance"; but they took off the eyewear for the performance. Still, MUHS Athletic Director Sean Farrell was sure to keep up the style during his team's turn on the floor, wearing a set of the orange spec.

The Tigers' pom performance, featuring 13 dancers, was the grand finale of the day. Their music was a mashup that began with "Fire Burning" by Sean Kingston, followed up with songs including

"Shut Up and Dance" by Walk the Moon and "Please Don't Stop the Music" by Rihanna, just to name a few.

The team's captains, senior Madelyn Brochu and junior Jordyn Rushton, were happy with the squad's performance after what they said was a week of hard work.

"We focused a lot on our hip hop dance. We had a rough week last week with that, so we put a lot of work into that," Brochu said. "And we all kind of collectively feel like that really, really paid off."

Most of the team, which has been a top contender in recent years, has picked up dance during their high school years.

"Some girls have experience, but a majority of our team (are) girls who are, like, 'I heard about this, it sounded cool,'" Brochu said. "You wouldn't know."

The dance team has two more meets — at Burr and Burton this Saturday at 1 p.m. and at BFA St. Albans on Feb. 14 at 1 p.m. — ahead of the state competition in Vergennes on Feb. 21, which is the ultimate goal of the season.

The Tiger team, which is comprised of 13 MUHS students as well as three dancers who are

Mount Abe students (Brochu, Coralyn Conrad and Isobela Osborn), will perform versions of the dances they did on Saturday in the upcoming meets and at states. "They're always evolving," Grant explained.

"We use these as exhibition pieces to get feedback for states, and states is like our big final competition. So we use these to see how we're going to do with states, and then so we could put our best foot forward."

The Tigers dancers are eager to add "2026" to the dance state championship banner hanging in the gym.

"We're really hoping for a state title this year," Brochu said. "It's been a long time."

As in Saturday's meet, Middlebury and South Burlington were vying for top spots during the state competition last year. The Tigers took second in hip hop, with South Burlington finishing third. Mount Mansfield earned the top spot in that category. South Burlington was the only team to overcome MUHS in pom.

"We all have the drive and the grit," Rushton said. "And I think we're all there mentally."



CO-CAPTAIN MADELYN BROCHU hops high during the Tigers' pom performance in the MUHS gym on Saturday. The team took second in the category.

Independent photo/Steve James

# Schedule

*(Continued from Page 1B)*

2/14.....	State Dual Tournament	
<b>Gymnastics</b>		
2/7 St J at MUHS.....	11 AM..	
2/14 MUHS at Burr & Burton.....	4:30 PM	
<b>Dance</b>		
2/7 MUHS at Burr & Burton.....	1 PM	
2/14 MUHS at S Burlington.....	1 PM	
<b>COLLEGE SPORTS</b>		
<b>Men's Hockey</b>		
2/6 Trinity at Midd.....	7 PM	
2/7 Wesleyan at Midd.....	3 PM	
2/14 Williams at Midd.....	2 PM	
<b>Women's Hockey</b>		
2/6 Midd at Trinity.....	7:30 PM	
2/7 Midd at Trinity.....	3 PM	
2/13 Midd at Williams.....	7 PM	
2/14 Williams at Midd.....	7 PM	
<b>Women's Basketball</b>		
2/6 Bowdoin at Midd.....	7 PM	
2/7 Colby at Midd.....	3 PM	
2/13 Midd at Amherst.....	7 PM	
2/14 Midd at Hamilton.....	3 PM	
<b>Men's Basketball</b>		
2/6 Midd at Bowdoin.....	7 PM	
2/7 Midd at Colby.....	3 PM	
2/13 Amherst at Midd.....	7 PM	
2/14 Hamilton at Midd.....	3 PM	

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# Girls' hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)  
Blue Mountain in early January. Stearns again had 19 points, plus four assists and four steals. Francis put up 16 points and had eight assists and six rebounds. Gosliga also had 16 points by the end of the game. Kittredge scored eight points, snagged nine rebounds and had eight assists and six steals. It was another blowout to kick off February's games. VUHS won, 71-20, at Stowe on Monday. The Commodores previously beat the team 69-21 in early January. Stearns and Gosliga scored 14

apiece. Stearns also stole the ball from the Commodores' opponent nine times. Kittredge had 10 points and seven rebounds, Francis had six points, eight assists and six rebounds, Krause had 11 points and eight rebounds and senior Amelia Giroux had eight points and seven assists. The Commodores are 11-3 heading into a home game against Winooski on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 2:30 p.m. **THE TIGERS** Like VUHS, the Tigers delivered a slaughter on Jan. 30. MUHS beat Missisquoi, 66-29, at home. "Missisquoi always comes with such great effort. They beat us in so many other aspects of the game," Coach Eric Carter said. Sophomore co-captain **Louisa**

**Orten** scored the game high 27 points. Freshman **Ava Wood** put up 12 and sophomore **Lillian Paquette** had 11. "Our girls are starting to do the things that don't show up in a stat sheet," Carter added. The 37-point win was far more decisive than the away match in early January, when MUHS beat Missisquoi by just one point, 34-33. The Tigers grabbed another win on Monday, this time by 13 points against Spaulding on the road. The score was 47-34 in the teams' only meetup of the season. Orten was the Tigers' high scorer again, as she has been consistently this season, with 16 points. Her co-captain, junior **Isabel Quinn**, put up nine and Wood also scored nine. The 10-4 Tigers headed to

Bristol on Wednesday night for their second game (played after deadline) of the season against Mt. Abe. MUHS came out on top in that first game in early January, 40-24. Next, MUHS will host Colchester on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 12:30 p.m. The Tigers won a January matchup, 51-36. **MT. ABRAHAM** Mt. Abe fell, 41-26, at Milton on Jan. 30. It was the Eagles' second shot at Milton, who they previously lost to, 45-21. On this past Friday, Eagle senior co-captain **Genevieve Forand** was the high scorer for Mt. Abe, with eight points. Mt. Abe's next game is on Saturday at Missisquoi, who they beat, 35-30, in mid-January.



**FIRST YEAR MARGOT Newman** looks to drive towards the hoop during a home game Sunday. The Panthers lost 64-57 to the nationally ranked team from Bates. Independent photo/Steve James

# Panther women

(Continued from Page 1B)  
Krasco said. Keaveney led in scoring for the Panthers with 13 points. Lind scored 11 of her own and was at the root of big offensive and defensive plays. Though Middlebury's second half revival got the Bobcats sweating, that team's defense stumped the Panthers offense, which didn't break 20 points before the third quarter. And on offense Bates, which is ranked 11th in the country's DIII standings, had a powerhouse in senior Elsa Daulerio, who towered over everybody at 6 foot, 3 inches. She put up 27 points and snagged seven rebounds, both game highs. "Their post player's an All-American and she's 6-3, hard to guard, and like, credit to her," Krasco said. "She made a lot of tough shots." After the Panthers ended the Bobcats' 10-point run with their first two points of the game, which came on two made free throws that rolled off of sophomore Sarah Chenette's fingers, they weren't able to get on the board again until about a minute and a half. Bates scored four more points in that span before Middlebury junior Catherine Carrafiello made it 14-4 with a layup. Bates clapped back with a 3-pointer, bringing the score to 17-4. Shortly after getting into the game, Lind made a decisive steal on defense, and got the ball down to the offensive half on a fastbreak. First year Margot Newman was fouled on the play, and made one of two free throws, narrowing Bates's lead to 12 points with about four minutes left in the quarter. About 20 seconds later, Lind laid in a pass from the top of the three-point line to Chenette, who was fouled on her layup attempt. The Panther score ticked up to seven points after she made both free throws. Bates hit two three-pointers in between that play and Middlebury's next points. With 2:16 left in the quarter, Chenette tried for a layup that didn't fall, grabbed her own rebound and put the ball back up for a second shot that dropped. She was fouled and made her extra basket, upping the Panthers to 10 points, but still trailing 13 behind the Bobcats. A made free throw gave Bates their 24th point of the quarter with 34 seconds left. "I think it took us the first 10 minutes of the game to actually settle in on offense and run the stuff we want to run and feel confident," Krasco said. "But after that, I feel like we played with them for the next three quarters." The second quarter was similar to the first for Middlebury offensively — the team only scored nine points. But the defense was able to hold Bates to 12. Lind hit a three-pointer and Keaveney hit two in that 10 minute span. Those shots boosted the Panthers to 19 points with about three minutes to go. Still, Bates took their biggest lead of the game with 46 seconds left in the second. A Bobcat hit a three, giving the team a 17-point cushion going into halftime. The score was 36-19. The Panthers were finally able to break through their opponents' defense in the third quarter, and scored their game best 22 points. The Bobcats scored 11 points that quarter. Keaveney got the Panther rally started with a layup 40 seconds in. Bates answered with two points of their own, but then Panther senior Calie Messina hit a three, which she followed up with a shot clock buzzer-beating jumper. Her points

brought the score to 26-40 with 6:50 to go. Bates hit two more buckets before Keaveney scored another 3-pointer, bringing the score to 29-42. A layup from Lind and two made free throws from first year Islay Moore made the score 33-43 and closed the gap to 10 points for the first time since the first quarter. With 2:30 left in the third, Carrafiello got the ball to Moore on the right side of the hoop during a fast break. Carrafiello kept running up the court, and got the ball back on a short pass underneath the basket and she scored a layup off of; it was 35-43. Bates scored another layup, but Middlebury followed up with a big defensive play. Lind knocked the ball out of the hands of a dribbling Bates guard, who was able to recover it. Shortly after, Messina got a steal, and scored a layup on the fast break, shrinking Bates's lead back to eight points. The quarter ended with another Carrafiello layup, which she made with seconds left on the shot clock; the score was 47-41. "Our third quarter was a bright spot," Krasco said. "Putting (Sarah Chenette), (Keaveney) into that lineup to start the third quarter, I thought we got some really good offensive looks and were able to chip away at their lead." She also said Carrafiello had worked her way into playing more rotational minutes with Sunday's performance. "Those three players have done a really good job over these last couple of weeks, and I think it's just trying to find consistency from others," Krasco said. "I think that's where — we play different kids, but I think part of it is because we're not necessarily being super consistent right now." The Bobcats went into the fourth quarter with just a six-point cushion, which Lind whittled down to four just over a minute into the quarter. Ball in hand to the left of center of the three-point line, she looked to the lane to consider a drive for a layup. But instead, she set herself up to toss in a three-pointer that dropped. Middlebury and Bates went back and forth the rest of the quarter, and were essentially even in scoring. Bates put up 17 points and Middlebury scored 16. Bates pulled away again by 10 points with about six minutes left in the game. Middlebury got that back down to four points after Lind scored a layup that she was fouled on, and made her extra shot. It was 57-53 with just under three minutes to go. Seconds later, Bates scored two points, making it 59-53. The closest the Panthers came to catching Bates again was seven points. "I think we can play with anyone really," Krasco said. "I believe in this group. I believe in what we're capable of." The Panthers record is 11-9 heading into a possibly tougher game Friday against Bowdoin, ranked sixth nationally. The Polar Bears were 17-1 going into a Tuesday game. Krasco said the Panthers would try to use their Sunday game against Bates to prepare for the 7 p.m. matchup against Bowdoin. "I wouldn't say we're playing the way we want to necessarily play for 40 minutes," Krasco said. "Sports is hard," she added. "There's always gonna be a winner and a loser, right? But not being so, so high when you win and so low when you lose, like, trying to be somewhat consistent, and have that edge to us, I feel like we know who we are."

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## feb 5 THURSDAY

**“Grassland Bird Conservation in Vermont and Beyond” in Salisbury.** Thursday, Feb. 5, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Margaret Fowle of Audubon Vermont will discuss how to preserve Vermont’s grassland bird population amidst a changing climate. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

**“Water Quality in Local Watersheds” in Bristol.** Thursday, Feb. 5, 7-8 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. Join the Lewis Creek Association and the Bristol Conservation Commission for an engaging presentation and discussion exploring the health of Lewis Creek, Bristol’s local waterways and Lake Champlain. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of local watersheds and leave with resources for protecting and improving local water quality.

## feb 6 FRIDAY

**Taco dinner benefit in Lincoln.** Friday, Feb. 6, 5-6:30 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd. Taco dinner to benefit Lincoln Sports. Part of the Hill Country Holiday weekend. Admission by donation. More info at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

**Contra dancing in Lincoln.** Friday, Feb. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd. Community contra dance following the taco dinner. Part of the Hill Country Holiday weekend. All ages welcome. Admission by donation. More info at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

## feb 7 SATURDAY

**February Crafters Market in Middlebury.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., VFW, 530 Exchange St. Monthly crafters market featuring live music by Vermont indie singer-songwriter Melissa D. Free.

**Habitat for Humanity open house in Middlebury.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m.-noon, 35 Gorham Lane. Habitat for Humanity of Addison County invites the community to tour a newly finished home. Free. More info at [addisonhabitat.org](http://addisonhabitat.org).

**Fiber Crafts Collective in East Middlebury.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m., Sarah Partridge Library, 431 East Main St. A welcoming fiber crafts gathering focused on creativity, shared learning and community connection. Participants work on knitting, crochet, weaving, spinning, sewing, embroidery, felting, macrame and more. All skill levels welcome. Free. More info at [artfulsoventures@gmail.com](mailto:artfulsoventures@gmail.com).

**Crafty Morning with Mirjam Brett in Salisbury.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 10:30 a.m., basement of the Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Upcycle your boxes, cans and tins into one-of-a-kind pieces in this maker workshop with artist Mirjam Brett. Easy and fun for beginners. Registration required. Bring your own soup cans, gift boxes, or other containers. Kids 10 and up welcome. Suggested donation \$10.

**Hill Country Holiday parade in Lincoln.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m., beginning at Burnham Hall (52 East River Road) and ending at the Lincoln Library (222 West River Road). Join Lincoln Cooperative Preschool students as they march from Burnham Hall to the library and perform at the store along the way. Parade theme: “Winter Sports.” More info at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

**Soup and sweets lunch in Lincoln.** Saturday, Feb. 7, noon-1:30 p.m., Lincoln Library, 222 West River Rd. Soup and sweets lunch following the Hill Country Holiday parade. More info at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

**“The Black Presence at the Battle of Bennington” in Vergennes.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 1-2 p.m., Bixby Memorial Free Library, 258 Main St. Speakers Bureau talk by Phil Holland exploring the remarkable and often untold story of Sipp Ives, a Black soldier who fought and died alongside the Green Mountain Boys at the Battle of Bennington. Free.

**Crafternoon in Brandon.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 1-3 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. A monthly crafting afternoon for all ages. Bring your own project or create something using library supplies. A different craft will be featured each month. Free.

**Snowshoe Safari: Winter tracking with Vermont Fish and Wildlife in Goshen.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 1-3 p.m., Blueberry Hill Outdoor Center, 1288 Goshen-Ripton Rd. Join Middlebury Area Land Trust and Vermont Fish & Wildlife for a family-friendly winter tracking adventure on the Beaver Dam Loop, a roughly 1.7-mile trail with optional side treks. Participants will snowshoe or hike while learning to identify animal tracks and signs and uncover the stories wildlife leaves behind in the snow. Free. More info at [malvt.org](http://malvt.org).

**Spaghetti dinner in Lincoln.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 5-6:30 p.m., Burnham Hall, downstairs, 52 East River Rd. Spaghetti dinner supporting the Lincoln Cooperative Preschool. Hill Country Holiday weekend. More info at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

**Variety show in Lincoln.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m., Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd. Annual variety show featuring local talent. Hill Country Holiday weekend. Performers may sign up by emailing [nategusakov@gmail.com](mailto:nategusakov@gmail.com). More info at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

## feb 8 SUNDAY

**Charity fundraising breakfast in Bristol.** Sunday, Feb. 8, 7:30-10 a.m. or until sold out, Libanus Lodge #47, 2 Elm St. The Masons Lodge hosts its monthly charity breakfast. Proceeds will be donated to a local person or group in need. Menu: sausage gravy with homemade biscuits, eggs, bacon, sausage, home fries, pancakes, blueberry pancakes, French toast, Vermont maple syrup, assorted juices and apple bread pudding. Coffee from Vermont Coffee Company and eggs from Maple Meadows Farm. \$9 adults, \$5 children under 12.

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

**Revolutionary War re-enactor recruiting event**



## Historical reenactors wanted

**REENACTORS MAKE HISTORY** come alive, and Seth Warner’s Regiment of the Green Mountain Boys is looking for new members to join its ranks. Head to the Marquis Theatre and Cafe this Sunday, Feb. 8, from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., to meet reenactors in full kit, learn about life in the Continental Army and discover what it takes to become a reenactor. The restaurant and bar will be open at 11 a.m., so you can grab a bite, too.

Independent file photo/ John Flowers

with Seth Warner’s Regiment in Middlebury. Sunday, Feb. 8, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Marquis Theatre and Cafe, 65 Main St. Step into history during this Revolutionary War re-enactor recruiting event with Seth Warner’s Regiment of the Green Mountain Boys, marking the 250th anniversary of American independence. Meet re-enactors in full kit, learn about life in the Continental Army, and see winter camp projects and period sewing. Questions welcome; newcomers encouraged. The Marquis restaurant and bar will be open from 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Free. More info at [warnersregiment.org](http://warnersregiment.org).

**Jack jumping race in Lincoln.** Sunday, Feb. 8, 12:45 p.m., Lincoln Sports sledding hill near the fire station (34 Gove Hill Road). Third annual jack jumping race following morning sledding and practice runs. Registration and waiver required by Thursday, Feb. 5. Hill Country Holiday weekend. Register at [lincolnsports.org](http://lincolnsports.org).

## feb 9 MONDAY

**Legislative breakfast in Vergennes.** Monday, Feb. 9, 7:30-8:45 a.m., St. Peter’s Parish Hall, 85 South Maple St. Community legislative breakfast sponsored by Bridport Grange and Addison County Farm Bureau, moderated by Tim Buskey. All are welcome to ask questions of local legislators and senators about the current session. Breakfast available by donation 30 minutes before the discussion. RSVP to Bill at 802-881-8836 or [wjcottjr@comcast.net](mailto:wjcottjr@comcast.net).

**Monday Night Bingo in Middlebury.** Monday, Feb. 9, 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.

**Cribbage night in Bristol.** Monday, Feb. 9, 7-8:15 p.m., Libanus Lodge #47, 2 Elm St. The Bristol Masons host their semi-monthly cribbage night. All ages and skill levels welcome. Free.

## feb 10 TUESDAY

**“Incorporating native plants into your garden” in Middlebury.** Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1 p.m., The Residence at Otter Creek, 350 Lodge Road. The Middlebury Garden Club presents a talk by Sarah Salatin of Full Circle Gardens in Essex on incorporating native, pollinator-friendly plants into home gardens. Free and open to the public.

**Bixby Book Club in Vergennes.** Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6 p.m., Bixby Memorial Free Library, 258 Main St. Discussion of “A Gentleman in Moscow,” Amor Towles’s novel set in 1920s Russia. All readers are welcome, whether finished with the book, partway through, or just curious to join the conversation. New participants encouraged. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk. Free. For more information, contact [martha.sanborn@bixbylibrary.org](mailto:martha.sanborn@bixbylibrary.org).

## feb 11 WEDNESDAY

**Afternoon craft session in Lincoln.** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 3-4:30 p.m., Lincoln Library, 222 West River Rd. An afternoon craft program celebrating hearts and friendships. Materials provided. Free.

**“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](mailto:info@brandonpubliclibrary.org) or calling 802-247-8230.

**Other Loves: Queer Romance Poetry Through the Ages in Bristol.** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 6 p.m., Lawrence Memorial Library, 40 North St. Vermont poets Buffy Aakash and Cindy Ellen Hill explore queer love poetry overlooked by traditional literary canons. Participants are invited to find inspiration in poems from ancient Greece

to 19th-century Addison County and write their own poems celebrating all forms of love.

**Fostering Resilience and Hope in Our Children Today in Middlebury.** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 6 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Panel discussion on challenges facing families and youth today, moderated by Bill McKibben. Panelists include Tal Birdsey, Matt Kimple, Ph.D., Laura Basili, Ph.D., and Wylie Cate, LCSW. Free and open to the public. More info at [northbranchschool.org](http://northbranchschool.org).

## feb 12 THURSDAY

**Lake Champlain virtual archaeology conference.** Thursday, Feb. 12, 1-4 p.m., online. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum hosts its fifth annual virtual archaeology conference, bringing together archaeologists, researchers, historians and museum staff to share new discoveries related to Lake Champlain. Free. Register at [lcm.org](http://lcm.org).

**King Pede card party in Ferrisburgh.** Saturday, Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center, 3279 Route 7. The Ferrisburgh Grange hosts a King Pede card party and sandwich supper. King Pede is a longstanding Ferrisburgh tradition that requires tactics and strategic thinking.

**“Vermont’s Timber Rattlesnakes.”** Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Luke Groff of Vermont Fish & Wildlife discusses the endangered timber rattlesnake — Vermont’s only venomous snake. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

**“Flood Tales: A Climate Reporter’s Notebook” in Lincoln.** Thursday, Feb. 12, 7-8:30 p.m., Lincoln Library, 222 West River Rd. Journalist and Lincoln resident Jonathan Mingle shares insights from 20 years of climate reporting and discusses how floods can fragment and strengthen community bonds. Part of a five-month speaker series on climate change and emergency preparedness presented with the Lincoln Conservation Commission. Free.

## feb 13 FRIDAY

**MALT Meet & Mingle: “Geology of the Tam: so many questions” in East Middlebury.** Friday, Feb. 13, 5:30-7 p.m., Waybury Inn, 457 East Main St. Geologist Will Amidon discusses notable geologic features along the Trail Around Middlebury and answers questions from participants. Free. Food and drinks available for purchase. More info at [malvt.org](http://malvt.org).

**“Sheltering Angel of Belleau Wood” book launch and Valentine’s celebration in Lincoln.** Friday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m., Lincoln Library, 222 West River Rd. Author Louella “Ellie” Bryant launches her novel “Sheltering Angel of Belleau Wood,” the second in the Sheltering Angel series. Copies available for purchase. Stay after the reading for a Valentine’s Day chocolate extravaganza. Free.

## feb 14 SATURDAY

**Willowell Boogie Benefit in Bristol.** Saturday, Feb. 14, 6 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. Dance the night away at Willowell Foundation’s annual Boogie Benefit fundraiser. Family-friendly event features live music by the Almendros, silent auction, food and cash bar. Proceeds support Willowell’s scholarship fund, helping children access to nature-based programming and education. \$10 at the door, free for children 12 and under. More info at [willowell.org](http://willowell.org).

**Valentine dinner, dance and silent auction in Middlebury.** Saturday, Feb. 14, 6 p.m., Middlebury American Legion Post 27, 49 Wilson Road. Celebrate Valentine’s Day with dinner catered by Keith’s Corner, live music by Magnetic Horse, dancing and a silent auction. Proceeds from the silent auction support the American Legion Scholarship Fund, which helps Addison County teens pursue higher education and career training. Tickets \$44; available at the Post 27 Club Bar or online at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com).

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## Lincoln library readies for Valentine’s Day celebrations

LINCOLN — Since 2003, Vermont Humanities has hosted a statewide community read project called Vermont Reads to get students and adults to read the same book and participate in activities that explore the book’s themes. This year, Vermonters are asked to read “The Light Pirate” by Lily Brooks-Dalton and to consider themes of resilience, strength through community and the unstoppable power of the natural world. If you would like to participate, copies are available at the Lincoln Library.

To support this project, the Lincoln Library has partnered with the Lincoln Conservation Commission to present a new five-month speaker series focused on climate change and emergency preparedness. The series begins on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. with a presentation titled “Flood Tales: A Climate Reporter’s Notebook.” Lincoln resident and veteran journalist Jonathan Mingle will share insights from 20 years of climate reporting. His talk will examine how floods can both fragment and strengthen community bonds.

Mingle is an independent journalist whose work has appeared in *The New York Times* and *Slate*. He is also the author of “Fire and Ice” (2015) and “Gaslight” (2024).

History and sweet treats come together on Friday, Feb. 13, as the library hosts a special book launch and Valentine’s Day celebration. Starting at 7 p.m., author Louella “Ellie” Bryant will debut her 12th book, “Sheltering Angel of Belleau Wood.” The novel, the second in the “Sheltering Angel” series, is a 1943 coming-of-age story following Titanic survivor Florence Cumings. Set in New York City, the plot centers on Florence mentoring her granddaughter through a box of real-life letters written by the girl’s father — a soldier in France during the Great War. Copies will be

## Lincoln

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

### NEWS

available for purchase. Stay after the book launch for a Valentine’s Day chocolate extravaganza.

There will be an afternoon craft session at the library on Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Crafters will be making something to celebrate hearts and friendships.

Weathervane United, a not-for-profit that has provided affordable housing for local elders for over 40 years, is currently seeking a new member to join its volunteer board of directors. Founded in 1981 by residents concerned about the ability of elders to stay in Lincoln after leaving their family homes, the organization manages three buildings and 10 apartments in the center of town. The Board is responsible for the hands-on administration, maintenance, and financial health of the properties.

Weathervane is seeking a new board member who will bring enthusiasm, curiosity, and a willingness to roll up their sleeves and continue the work of this unique organization. While all interested community members are encouraged to apply, the Board is particularly interested in individuals with experience in elder care and community resources, non-profit accounting and finance, building systems and maintenance and landlord/tenant law.

Interested candidates should submit a brief introduction and statement of interest to [weathervane453@gmail.com](mailto:weathervane453@gmail.com) by Sunday, Feb. 15.

Until next time...We May Encounter Many Defeats But We Must Not Be Defeated.

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A Middlebury subscriber writes:

“Thank you for the amazing Addison Independent!”

Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

# Around TOWN

## Homeward Bound rabies, microchip clinics planned

MIDDLEBURY — Homeward Bound, Addison County's Humane Society, is pleased to announce the dates of their 2026 Rabies/Microchip Clinics. The clinics are open to both dogs and cats and are offered:

Feb. 8, 9-10 a.m.; March 8, 9-10 a.m.; April 18, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

The clinics are at the shelter, which is located at 236 Boardman St. in Middlebury. Pre-registration is required and can be completed through the shelter's website, [homewardboundanimals.org](http://homewardboundanimals.org). The cost is \$30 for the rabies vaccine and \$30 for a microchip which covers implant and initial registration. If your pet gets both, the cost is \$55.

All animals must be 12 weeks of age or older to receive the rabies vaccine. To receive a 3-year rabies vaccine, pet owners must provide proof of prior vaccination. No physical exams will be performed. This is a drive-thru style vaccine clinic. All dogs are required to be on leash and cats in carriers for this event.

Rabies is a deadly viral disease of the brain that infects mammals. In Vermont, rabies is most commonly found in wild animals, however the state requires that dogs and cats be vaccinated by a veterinarian. The owner of a dog must provide evidence of current rabies vaccination status to obtain the required municipal license by April 1 of each year.

A micro-chip is a very small electronic chip that is inserted under the skin between a pet's shoulder blades which contains all the owner's contact information. Most veterinary offices and shelters can scan for this chip and quickly identify the owner. The entire process takes less than two minutes and is almost painless.

In 2025, 147 stray animals entered the shelter but only 35 were reunited with their families. Homeward Bound urges anyone whose dog or cat is not yet microchipped to take advantage of this low-cost option at the shelter. It is truly the best way to safeguard a pet should they become lost.

## Addison Housing Works receives M&T Charitable Foundation grant

ADDISON COUNTY — Addison Housing Works has received a \$10,000 grant from the M&T Charitable Foundation to support the organization's general operations and ongoing efforts to expand access to safe, stable, and permanently affordable housing in Addison County.

The M&T Charitable Foundation partners with communities to impact equitable change by building relationships rooted in trust and understanding. This grant reflects the foundation's commitment to strengthening communities through investments in housing stability and opportunity.

"Our support of Addison Housing

Works reflects our commitment to helping families and individuals access the stability they need to thrive," said Kathy Schirling, senior regional program officer for Vermont.

Addison Housing Works provides permanently affordable housing and supportive services to individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity across Addison County. The organization owns and manages more than 750 affordable homes and works closely with local partners to ensure residents have the resources they need to succeed.

For more information about Addison Housing Works, visit [www.addisonhousingworks.org](http://www.addisonhousingworks.org).

## Scheu to present Tour de Mont-Blanc adventure

MIDDLEBURY— The Tour de Mont-Blanc has been teasing Ted Scheu for more than 50 years. The children's poet and teacher from Middlebury explored a short stretch of this legendary Alpine trek way back in high school and ever since he has needed to return and finish the job.

Last September, he finally got his chance. As Scheu described it after completing the trek with five friends, "It was more spectacular even than my sky-high expectations. Definitely a top-five life adventure."

Starting in Chamonix, France, the TMB, as it is informally known, takes hikers over high mountain passes and down sweeping valleys as it circles the massif, or mountain range, around Mont-Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe. The TMB is 110 miles long and it's usually completed in 10 days of fairly rigorous hiking. Along the way, wildflowers proudly bloom, marmots shyly hide, snowflakes sometimes fly, knees complain, trekkers bond, cowbells sing and eyes pop at the breathtaking Alpine vistas. Stops are made each night in teeny mountain towns or in mountain refuges to allow trekkers



**TED SCHEU WILL share photos and reflections on his Tour de Mont-Blanc trek during a presentation on Sunday, Feb. 15, at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society in Middlebury.**

Courtesy photo

time to refuel and recharge.

Scheu will share photos and impressions of his Tour de Mont-Blanc adventure at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, at 2 Duane Court in Middlebury, on Sunday, Feb. 15, at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free and

walk-ins are welcome. Doors open at 6:15 p.m.

This Taylor Series event is sponsored by the Green Mountain Club's Bread Loaf Section. Donations are optional when you register at GMC's Ticket Tailor page at [tickettailor.com/events/](http://tickettailor.com/events/)

[greenmountainclub/2004112](http://greenmountainclub/2004112).

Accessible parking is available at 2 Duane Court. Nearby parking is at Middlebury Union High School. Find more information about the Bread Loaf Section and its activities on their website at [www.gmcbreadloaf.org](http://www.gmcbreadloaf.org).

## Ferrisburgh

Have a news tip?  
Email Sally Kerschner at [smwkersch@comcast.net](mailto:smwkersch@comcast.net)

### NEWS

FERRISBURGH — We are fortunate that Rokeby Museum is again offering its series of Winter Book Discussions. These events are being held monthly, January through March, at no charge and use a virtual format. Registration in advance is required and the participants will receive the virtual link at that time. Attendance at all three discussions is not required to register.

The second of these discussions will be on Tuesday, Feb. 17. "The Message" by Ta-Nehisi Coates explores the need to untangle ourselves from the destructive myths that shape our world and the liberating power of confronting difficult truths. March 17th's book discussion will be "The Zorg: A Tale of Greed and Murder that Inspired the Abolition of Slavery," by

Siddharth Kara. This book covers the series of events that doomed the 1781 journey of the ship, *Zorg*, and created the first undeniable argument against slavery. Visit [rokeby.com](http://rokeby.com) for more information on all these book discussions.

Rokeby will be open on selected weekend days this winter for free admission to visit the museum and their main exhibit, "Seeking Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Legacy of an Abolitionist Family." The February date is Saturday the 28th, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free.

The Ferrisburgh Grange King Pedo card parties are scheduled for two Saturdays, Feb. 14 and 28. These get-togethers are held at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center and will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a sandwich supper

and then on to an evening of fun and games. King Pedo requires tactics and skill so come prepared to use your strategic thinking in this longstanding Ferrisburgh tradition.

The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum is offering a Winter Traveling Book Club. Between January and April, the museum will discuss a book relevant to the Addison County historical institution that is hosting the book event. Dive into American history with a book selected by Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, cozy up to a welcoming novel at the Bixby, contemplate social justice at the Rokeby, and learn about new Vermonters at the Sheldon Museum. Each discussion will take place from 1-2 p.m. on the last Saturday of each month as a hybrid meeting — come in person

for tea and snacks or stay involved online via Zoom. Readers can join all of the meetings or just one. More information and a Zoom link are available with free registration: [lcmmm.org/event/traveling-book-club-013125](http://lcmmm.org/event/traveling-book-club-013125).

The Jan. 31 book was "Benedict Arnold's Navy" by James Nelson. The itinerary for the rest of the winter is as follows: Feb. 28—Rokeby Museum, "Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride; March 28—Bixby Memorial Free Library, "What You are Looking for is in the Library" by Michiko Aoyama; April 25 — Henry Sheldon Museum, "Deep North: Stories of Somali Resettlement in Vermont" edited by Brad Kessler.

The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum is hosting its fifth annual (See Ferrisburgh, Page 11B)

# STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

## Otter Valley Union High School

### Sienna-Marie Torres

This week's Otter Valley Union High School Student of the Week is Sienna-Marie Torres. She lives in Brandon with her mom, step-dad, brother and pets.

Sienna-Marie is an active member of the debate team, where she works on speeches and serves as co-council for the women's team. Her dedication has paid off, she was recognized with the first Jefferson Award at Otter Valley.

Academically, Sienna-Marie likes to stay busy and challenge herself. Despite being an English Language Learner (ELL), she pushes herself in rigorous classes such as AP History, Practical Chemistry, and Independent Art. One of her favorite teachers is Mrs. Bixby, whom she describes as creating a classroom that feels safe and welcoming and always being willing to help students, even in subjects outside her own.

Outside of school, Sienna-Marie works at Brandon House of Pizza, and when she's not on the job or studying, she enjoys baking and painting, often channeling her creativity into art projects and murals.

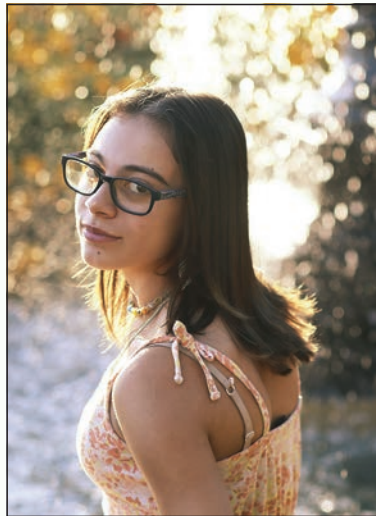
Looking ahead, Sienna-Marie plans to attend college and is currently finalizing her decision. Her top acceptances so far include the University of Southern Maine, UMass Dartmouth, Merrimack College, and Washington & Jefferson. She is interested in pursuing a Criminal Justice major while continuing to paint murals in her free time.

Reflecting on her experience, Sienna-Marie shares an important lesson she's learned:

"Invisible issues don't get fixed until you ask. I spent years as an unrecognized ELL student and finally brought it to attention, and now have the help I need to do better in English classes."

Her advice to other students? "Ask for the help you need. Not everyone is going to notice your struggles if you don't make them known."

The Otter Valley community says Congratulations to Sienna-Marie!



Sienna-Marie Torres  
OVUHS

## Mount Abraham Union High School

### Riley Abbott

Mt. Abraham is proud to recognize Riley Abbott as our Student of the Week. Riley lives in Bristol with her parents, brother and dog.

Throughout her high school career, Riley has consistently achieved highest or high honors. She has received Outstanding Student of the Semester for the Hannaford Career Center her junior and senior years and was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society this year. Riley enjoys building connections with her peers and teachers at school. She has been enrolled in the Human Services program at the Hannaford Career Center for two years and identifies this as her favorite class. Riley credits Mrs. Decker with helping her get through her high school career. She highlights Mrs. Decker's ability to support her students, always being available to them and assisting with difficult class or life situations as key reasons she is one of her favorite teachers. Riley also shares her appreciation for her advisor, Mr. Russell, stating that "he has an incredible understanding of his students and is always willing to help them by providing support." She cherishes his humor and how he has made advisory memorable.

Outside of school, Riley is employed at the Starksboro Preschool. She loves her work with the young children. In addition, she enjoys hanging out with her friends and family, walking, line dancing and listening to music.

Reflecting on her school experience, Riley shares, "Even though school can be challenging in many different ways, remember to do your best and work as hard as you can. I'd recommend focusing on your learning and yourself and skip the drama that goes on throughout your experience in school even if it's tricky! Always remember, you can do this!"

Looking ahead, Riley plans to attend the Community College of Vermont while continuing her work at the Starksboro Preschool. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors!



Riley Abbott  
MAUHS

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and Riley

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and Riley

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

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## Help Wanted

**DRIVERS** Part-time summer drivers needed to work at Keewaydin's girls and boys summer camps on Lake Dunmore in Salisbury, Vt. Job involves driving 15-passenger vans with canoe trailers, taking groups of kids to beautiful areas throughout northern New England and southern Quebec for their canoeing and backpacking trips. Bonus given to drivers with CDL/school bus endorsement. Please contact as soon as possible: Daria Carden at 802-352-4770 or [daria@keewaydin.org](mailto:daria@keewaydin.org).



**More Help Wanted ads can be found on Page 9B.**

## Help Wanted

**EVENING FRONT DESK/CONCIERGE.** Swift House Inn - Middlebury, Vermont. We're hiring a front desk professional to anchor our evening shift. This position plays a pivotal role: greeting arriving guests, fielding questions, supporting restaurant reservations, and ensuring the property is secure and guest-ready for the next day. If you thrive on creating memorable experiences and want to grow in the hospitality industry, this is for you. Swift House Inn has 20 guest rooms across three historic buildings, and is home to Jessica's at Swift House Inn, one of Vermont's most celebrated fine dining restaurants. Responsibilities: Welcome and check in arriving guests with warmth and professionalism. Answer phones, manage room and restaurant reservations. Provide local recommendations and concierge-style service. Troubleshoot guest concerns and offer proactive solutions. Liaise with Jessica's restaurant team for smooth communication. Keep common areas tidy, cozy, and well-presented. Follow nightly checklists and procedures. Lock up buildings and hand off to the overnight security team. You Are... Deeply interested in the hotel and lodging industry. A natural host who loves creating great guest experiences in Addison County. Communicative, warm, and gracious under pressure. Obsessed with details and good systems. Reliable, punctual, and self-directed. Shift & Compensation: Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Schedule: Part-time, includes some weekends and holidays. Pay: \$20-\$22 Hourly, commensurate with experience, bonuses and tips. Apply Today. Email your resume and a short note to owner@swifthouseinn.com. Learn more about us at [swifthouseinn.com](http://swifthouseinn.com)

**MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING** available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.

**MIDDLEBURY:** Senior woman who enjoys exercise, gardening, choir singing, seeking housemate to share conversation. \$600/month, all included. Private bath. 802-863-5625 or [HomeShareVermont.org](http://HomeShareVermont.org) for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

**NEW HAVEN:** Senior woman who enjoys TV, Christmas music, and mysteries, seeking housemate to provide overnight presence, light help around the house. The rent is negotiable. Familiarity with memory loss is a plus but not a must. 802-863-5625 or [HomeShareVermont.org](http://HomeShareVermont.org) for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

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

**VERGENNES WILLOW APARTMENTS** is currently taking waitlist applications for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. No smoking/no pets. Income limits apply- Rent rate based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191. www.SummitPMG.com.

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

**ATT. FARMERS** 1ST CUT, 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.

**BRANDON ESTATE** 5 Bedrooms 3 bath \$4800 Furnished See Craigslist at <https://vermont.craigslist.org/apa/d/forest-dale-bedroom-updated-stone-home/7889936398.htm> or call 802 377 9394

## For Rent

**BRIDPORT:** Share beautiful views of Lake Champlain with senior man interested in farming and rural life. Help with few meals/week and upkeep of the home in exchange for reduced rent of \$200/month. 802-863-5625 or [HomeShareVermont.org](http://HomeShareVermont.org) for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

**COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE** - 2000 sq ft to 7000 sq ft - Tall ceilings, loading docks, plenty of parking. Middlebury - 802-558-6092

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

**MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING** available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.

**MIDDLEBURY:** Senior woman who enjoys exercise, gardening, choir singing, seeking housemate to share conversation. \$600/month, all included. Private bath. 802-863-5625 or [HomeShareVermont.org](http://HomeShareVermont.org) for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

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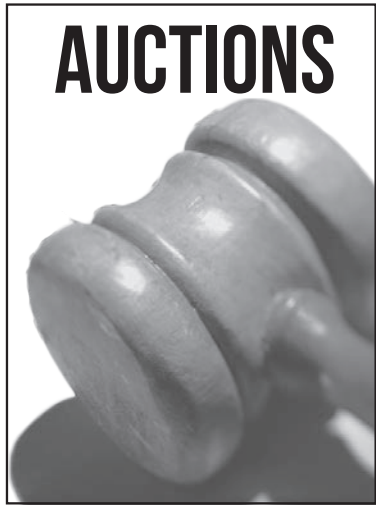
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1ST CUT, SMALL square, \$3.25. 2nd cut small square, \$4.25. 802-377-5455.



## MARKET REPORT ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT  
Sales for 1/29/26 & 2/2/26

	BEEF	LBS.	/LB	COST \$
Four Hills	1895	1.73		\$3278.35
Westminster	1205	1.70		\$2048.50
Monument	1865	1.65		\$3077.25
Nop Bros	1875	1.65		\$3093.75
Goodrich	1825	1.65		\$3011.25
Rowell Farm	1690	1.60		\$2704.00
J. Fifield	1665	1.50		\$2497.50

	CALVES	LBS.	/LB	COST \$
Savello Farm				\$1674.00
L. Compagna				\$1616.00
Barnes Bros				\$1604.80
Conants				\$1575.00
Sunderland				\$1562.20
Doton Farm				\$1449.60

**Total Beef - 111 Total Calves - 189**  
We value our faithful customers.  
**Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs.**  
call 1-802-388-2661

**TOWN OF STARKSBORO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING**  
Bradley Boss and Crystal Kelly submitted a major subdivision application (26-DRB-02SD) for Preliminary Plan Review of a Two-Lot Subdivision located on a 153.2 +/- acre parcel (10431) at 793 VT Route 116, Starksboro. The proposed subdivision is in the ASRR/FC Districts. The hearing on the application will be held per Sec. 426 of the Starksboro Land Use and Development Regulations (SLUDR).  
The Starksboro Development Review Board will conduct the hearing on February 26, 2026, starting at 6:30p.m. at the Starksboro Town Office with remote access (info below). The full application is available to review by request of the Starksboro zoning office, and on the website at <https://www.starksborovt.org/agendas-and-minutes>  
Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464(a)(1)(C) participation in this local proceeding is prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.  
Town of Starksboro is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89617415124>  
Meeting ID: 896 1741 5124  
Or by Phone: +13052241968

**HEARING NOTICE TOWN OF ORWELL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**  
The Orwell Development Review Board will meet in person on Wednesday, February 18th, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Orwell Town Clerk's Office located at 436 Main Street, Orwell, VT.  
By Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88129886127> or phone 1-646-558-8656  
Use meeting ID: #881 2988 6127 to conduct the following business:  
1. Permit #9-54-25: Horace Carpenter for a Waiver for lot frontage and side setbacks located at 283 North Orwell Road, Orwell, VT.  
Information pertaining to this matter may be viewed M, T, Th & F 9:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:30 at the Orwell Town Clerk's Office located at 436 Main Street, Orwell, VT.  
Daniel Redondo, Chair  
Orwell Development Review Board

**TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM 116 - LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM TOWN OFFICES - 77 MAIN STREET TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026 - 7:00 P.M.**  
**Also available via Zoom:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87089350847>  
By Phone: +1 (305) 224-1968 (not toll-free)  
Webinar ID: 870 8935 0847  
For those wishing to watch but not participate: Selectboard meetings are livestreamed to MCTV's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MCTVVermont> and also broadcast live on Comcast Channel 1071

- \*\*\*\*\*  
**This draft Selectboard meeting agenda is subject to change.**  
**TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM 116 - LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM TOWN OFFICES - 77 MAIN STREET TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026 - 7:00 P.M.**  
**Also available via Zoom:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87089350847>  
By Phone: +1 (305) 224-1968 (not toll-free)  
Webinar ID: 870 8935 0847  
For those wishing to watch but not participate: Selectboard meetings are livestreamed to MCTV's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MCTVVermont> and also broadcast live on Comcast Channel 1071
- AGENDA**
- 7:00pm 1. Call to Order
  - 2. \*Approval of Agenda
  - 3. \*Approval of Consent Agenda
  - 3a. \*Approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 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. \*Follow-Up/Approval: Town Policy - Disposal of Town Property
  - 3f. Consent Agenda Placeholder
  - 3g. \*\*Town Manager's Report
  - 7:05pm 4. \*\*Citizen Comments
  - 7:10pm 5. \*\*Public Health & Safety Committee - Selectboard Update
  - 7:20pm 6. \*\*FY2027 Budget Recap/Overview
  - 7:30pm 7. \*Proposed Solar Project - Scheduling Public Hearing & Site Visit
  - 7:40pm 8. \*Determining Next Selectboard Meeting Date/Time - ACSD Annual Meeting
  - 7:50pm 9. \*\*Energy Committee - Selectboard Update
  - 8:00pm 10. \*\*Update from Town Manager - First Year Overview
  - 11. Agenda Placeholder
  - 8:10pm 12. \*\*Board Member Concerns
  - 13. Executive Session - Not Anticipated
  - 14. Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session
  - 8:15 pm 15. \*Adjourn
- \*Possible Decision \*\*Discussion

**TOWN OF STARKSBORO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING**  
Kevin Harper and Julie Herr submitted a minor subdivision application (26-DRB-01SD) for Final Plan Review of a Two-Lot Subdivision located on a 198 +/- acre parcel (10340) at 579 Frank Orvis Road, Starksboro. The proposed subdivision is in the LDRC/FC Districts. The hearing on the application will be held per Sec. 426 of the Starksboro Land Use and Development Regulations (SLUDR).  
The Starksboro Development Review Board will conduct the hearing on March 12, 2026, starting at 6:30p.m. at the Starksboro Town Office with remote access (info below). The full application is available to review by request of the Starksboro zoning office, and on the website at <https://www.starksborovt.org/agendas-and-minutes>.  
Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464(a)(1)(C) participation in this local proceeding is prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.  
Town of Starksboro is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89617415124>  
Meeting ID: 896 1741 5124  
Or by Phone: +13052241

## Public Notices Index

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

- Act 250 (1)
- Addison County Clerk (1)
- ACSD (1)
- ANWSD (2)
- Brandon (1)
- EBI Consulting (1)
- Hannaford Career Center (1)
- Hinesburg (1)
- Middlebury (1)
- Monkton (1)
- One Credit Union (1)
- Orwell (2)
- Starksboro (2)

## 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](http://www.addisoncountyclerkvt.com) or call 802-388-1966.

## Vergennes police assist tipped over garbage truck

**VERGENNES** — Last week the Vergennes Police Department responded to Hopkins Road, Vergennes Police Department Sheriff's Department process a person in an impaired driving case.  
• On Jan. 29 noticed where a garbage truck had slid into a ditch and rolled onto its side. Nobody was injured in the Jan. 26 incident.  
Last week, Vergennes police also conducted 14 traffic stops, nine directed patrols, and took fingerprints eight times.  
In other recent activity, the city police:  
• On Jan. 26 took a report of a possible violation of conditions of release. Police were investigating as of Monday.  
• On Jan. 26 assisted a resident with their 7-year-old child who was said to be "out of control." Officers defused the situation and provided information to the parent.  
• On Jan. 27 investigated a minor crash on Green Street.  
• On Jan. 27 towed two vehicles that were in violation of the overnight winter parking ban.  
• On Jan. 28 notified a Vergennes resident that their family member had died.  
• On Jan. 28 helped the Addison

## Vergennes Police Log

Police also processed four fingerprint requests and assisted Mount Abe with two truancy concerns.  
In other recent activity, Bristol police:  
• On Jan. 20 dealt with a parking problem on Park Place.  
• On Jan. 20 assisted the Campton Police Department with a case.  
• On Jan. 22 responded to a parking problem on Church Street.  
• On Jan. 23 dealt with a parking problem on West Street.

## Bristol Police Log

**BRISTOL** — Bristol police have dealt with a couple of motor vehicle crashes in recent weeks.  
On Jan. 18 police responded to a motor vehicle crash on West Street.  
Police on Jan. 21 received a late report of a crash.  
Between Jan. 18 and 24 Bristol police completed 16 foot patrols, conducted six traffic stops and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School seven times, at Bristol Elementary School seven times and at local businesses seven times.

## Vermont State Police Log

**ADDISON COUNTY** — This past Friday, Jan. 30, Vermont State Police received a late report of an assault that occurred on Lincoln Road near the intersection with Route 116 in Bristol. During the course of the investigation, troopers said they learned that Scott E. Mullins, 30, of Lincoln had engaged in violent, tumultuous and threatening behavior and caused another to be in fear of imminent serious bodily injury. They cited Mullins for simple assault and disorderly conduct.  
The investigation also led troopers to cite Whitney L. Gorton, 58, of Lincoln, for negligent driving.

## TOWN OF MONKTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

The Monkton Development Review Board will hold the following hearing on Monday, February 23, 2026, beginning at 7:30 PM. The hearing will be held in person at the Town Office, located at 92 Monkton Ridge. The hearing will also be available via Zoom and login information is below.  
a. Preliminary Review (continued) 24-902: 5-lot Planned Unit Development, Jeremy Broderick, 4863 Silver Street, PID 13.101.038.001  
An electronic copy of the application can be obtained by emailing [zoning@monktonvt.com](mailto:zoning@monktonvt.com). A hard copy of the application is available at Town Hall by appointment. Please call 802-453-3800 to make an appointment.  
Remote Access: Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/MeetingID>: 802 453 3800 \* Passcode: 1762  
Phone In: 1-646-558-856 \* Meeting ID: 802 453 3800 \* Passcode: 1762

## ANNUAL MEETING WARNING

**Patricia A. Hannaford Regional Technical School District Annual Meeting & Public Hearing, February 19, 2026 Special Meeting for Australian Ballot, March 3, 2026**  
**MEMBER TOWNS:** Addison, Bridport, Bristol, Cornwall, Ferrisburgh, Middlebury, Monkton, New Haven, Panton, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham, Starksboro, Vergennes, Waltham, and Weybridge  
The legal voters of the Patricia A. Hannaford Regional Technical School District are hereby warned to meet at the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center, 51 Charles Ave., Middlebury, Vermont, in said District on February 19, 2026, at 4:00 P.M., to transact and vote on the following business:  
**ARTICLE 1:** To elect the following officers: a) Moderator, b) Treasurer, c) Clerk.  
**ARTICLE 2:** To hear and act upon the reports of the Treasurer and Auditors of the District.  
**ARTICLE 3:** To determine if the voters of said District will vote to authorize its Board of Directors to borrow money, pending receipt of payment from member districts, by the issuance of its notes or orders payable not later than one year from date, for the purpose of paying the sum approved by the voters.  
**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the voters of said District will vote to authorize its Board of Directors to allocate its FY 25 fund balance as follows: One Hundred and Twenty-Eight Thousand Dollars (\$128,000) of the school district's fund balance as revenue for the 2026-2027 operating budget.  
**ARTICLE 5:** To do any other business proper to come before said meeting.  
A Public Information Hearing will take place immediately following Article 5, to discuss Article 6 (Proposed Budget). The meeting will be recessed until March 3, 2026, on which date member district voters are further warned to vote on Article 6 listed below by Australian ballot at their respective polling places.  
**ARTICLE 6:** Shall the voters of the Patricia A. Hannaford Regional Technical School District approve the school board to expend **\$6,271,916**, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? This budget represents a **9.95%** increase over expenses for the current year. It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending at the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center to be **\$38,894** per full-time equivalent student on a 6-semester trailing average. This projected spending per full-time equivalent student is **11.38%** higher than the current year's spending.  
Dated this 15th day of January, 2026, at Middlebury, Vermont.  
Kim Famham, Board Chair  
PAHRTSD

# Ferrisburgh

(Continued from Page 6B)  
Archeology Conference, held virtually on Thursday, Feb. 12, 1–4 p.m. Each year, archaeologists, researchers and historians come together with LCMM staff to share new research, developments, and discoveries from their work in Lake Champlain in a special online summit that is free for all to attend. To register visit [www.lcmm.org](http://www.lcmm.org).

Calling all LEGO enthusiasts! Join the Bixby for the 8th Annual LEGO Contest, hosted by the Bixby Library and Vergennes Parks and Recreation. Creators of all ages are invited to participate — prizes will be awarded to the top-scoring builds in each age group! Saturday, Feb. 14, is the registration deadline. On Wednesday, March 4, to Thursday, March 5, contestants can drop off their LEGO creations from 10 a.m.–7 p.m. at the Bixby Library. On Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., there will be a public viewing of the entries and winners will be announced. To enter the contest and learn more, head to [bixbylibrary.org/event/lego2026](http://bixbylibrary.org/event/lego2026).

On Saturday, Feb. 7, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m., the Bixby will host a presentation by Phil Holland, who will discuss the little known story

of Sipp Ives, a black soldier who fought and died at the Battle of Bennington alongside the Green Mountain Boys. Holland is a noted researcher and author who has published on Robert Frost and also the Battle of Bennington.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 6 p.m., the Bixby Library will host a discussion about “A Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles, a richly imagined novel about grace, resilience and finding meaning in unexpected circumstances. Set in 1922, the story follows Count Alexander Rostov, who is sentenced to house arrest in Moscow’s grand Metropol Hotel. Confined to a small attic room while decades of Russian history unfold just beyond the hotel’s doors, the Count navigates his new reality with intelligence, charm, and quiet resolve. All readers are welcome, whether you’ve finished the book, are partway through, or just curious to join the conversation! New participants are always encouraged to attend. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk or email [martha.sanborn@bixbylibrary.org](mailto:martha.sanborn@bixbylibrary.org).

There will be a series of three Soup and Bread Community Dinners held at the Vergennes

Congregational Church, South Water Street, on the Mondays of Feb. 2, March 2, and April 6, at 5:30–7 p.m. Attendees are asked to donate via cash or check to support our communities. Monday, March 2’s dinner will benefit the Rogers and Hazard assistance program for Ferrisburgh residents. The donations on April 6 will go to the Missions Program of the Vergennes Congregational Church. For more information, email to [ariel.bolles@gmail.com](mailto:ariel.bolles@gmail.com).

Don’t forget that March will soon be here and that means Town Meeting! This is a critical aspect of our town governance dating back to colonial times, so all are encouraged to attend both the school budget informational meetings and the Town Meeting — and also don’t forget to vote! The public is invited to the Addison Northwest Supervisory District informational meeting about the school budget that will be held

on Monday, March 2, 5–6 p.m. at the Vergennes Union High/Middle School library. Ferrisburgh Town Meeting is on Saturday, Feb. 28, at 10 a.m. at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center on Route 7.

In-person voting is on Tuesday, March 3, also at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall. The polls will be open from 7 a.m.–7 p.m. Absentee ballots can be requested from the town clerk’s office. For more information on all these events, call the Town Clerk’s office at 802.877.3429 or visit [www.ferrisburghvt.org](http://www.ferrisburghvt.org).

*Note: We are always interested in including a variety of Ferrisburgh-related event announcements in this column, so if you have events that would be of interest, contact Sally Kerschner at [smwkersch@comcast.net](mailto:smwkersch@comcast.net). You are also able to access these columns and other information about Ferrisburgh news and events by viewing the Ferrisburgh Town website at [www.ferrisburghvt.org](http://www.ferrisburghvt.org).*

## NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF TOWN OF ORWELL ORDINANCE REGULATING ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATVs)

The Select Board of the Town of Orwell does hereby ordain:  
Pursuant to the provisions of 19 V.S.A. Chapter 3, §§ 303, 34; 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59, §§ 2291 (1), (4); and 23 V.S.A. § 3510, and other such general enactments as may be material thereto, on January 27, 2026, the Select Board adopted the Town of Orwell (the “Town”) Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) (the “Ordinance”). This Ordinance regulates the operation of all-terrain vehicles in the Town, including on town highways and public rights-of-way.

Adopted this 27 day of January 2026.  
TOWN OF ORWELL  
/s/ Andrea Treadway  
Andrea Treadway, Select Board Chair and Duly Authorized Agent

The Town of Orwell Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) shall become effective on March 28, 2026 unless a petition signed by not less than 5% of the qualified voters of the Town requesting a town meeting vote on the question of disapproving the Ordinance is filed with the Town Clerk on or before March 12, 2026. The full text of the Ordinance may be viewed at the Town Clerk’s office and on the Town’s website at: [www.townoforwellvt.org](http://www.townoforwellvt.org).

For more information, contact:  
Elizabeth Walker, Orwell Town Clerk, 436 Main Street, P.O. Box 32, Orwell, VT 05760, (802) 948-2032, [townclerk@townoforwellvt.org](mailto:townclerk@townoforwellvt.org).

## STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT DOCKET NO.: 26-PR-00406 IN RE ESTATE OF: LESLIE H. SARGENT, JR.

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Leslie J. Sargent, Jr., late of Waltham, Vermont. I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**

Dated: 01/29/26 Randy G. Sargent  
632 Rocky Dale Road, Bristol, VT 05443  
(802) 989-0815  
[sargentwelding@gmavt.net](mailto:sargentwelding@gmavt.net)

Publication: Addison Independent  
Publication Date: 2/5/26  
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division  
Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

## TOWN OF BRANDON NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING for Brandon Development Review Board (DRB)

On Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 7:00 PM, the Brandon DRB will hold in-person and via Zoom remote conferencing, Public Hearings to review the following applications:

Application # 02262026-A from Kenneth Mohan (Landowner/Applicant) for an ACT 250 review of Sections 6.7 & 10 for a proposed subdivision of land at 1489 Town Farm Road (Parcel # 0082-1553A).

Application #02262026-B from Otter Valley Union Unified School District (Landowner/Applicant) for an Act 250 review of Sections 6.7 & 10 for construction of stormwater management facilities at 2997 Franklin Street (Tax ID # 10-2-48)

This Meeting & Hearing will be conducted remotely by Zoom audio & visual programs; and access instructions are posted on Town website, Town and Post Offices.

Interested Parties are to be registered and present testimony (Town Hall Meeting room at 1 Conant Square), or have submitted written testimony to the Town, by 7:00 pm of the Hearing date or they may forfeit their right to appeal any decision of the DRB to VT Superior Court (Environmental Division).

## ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT WARNING ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 2, 2026

The legal voters of the Addison Northwest School District, consisting of the towns of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes, and Waltham, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Vergennes Union Middle & High School in Vergennes, VT on Monday, March 2, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. to learn about the 2026-27 budget and transact any of the following business.

**Article 1:** To elect the following officers: a) Moderator b) Clerk c) Treasurer

**Article 2:** To authorize stipends to be paid district officers including the directors, clerk and treasurer.

Board Chair: \$1,750  
Board Member: \$1,250  
Moderator: \$150  
Clerk: \$500  
Treasurer: \$5,500

**Article 3:** To authorize the Board of Directors, under 16 VSA 562 (9), to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year.

**Article 4:** To elect a community representative to serve on the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center District Board of Directors for a term of three (3) years.

**Article 5:** To authorize the Board of Directors to distribute the annual report by electronic means.

**Article 6:** To hear and act upon the reports of the Addison Northwest School District Officers.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2026.

John Stroup, District Clerk Mark Koenig, Chair of Board of Directors

## ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT WARNING MARCH 3, 2026

The legal voters of the Addison Northwest School District, consisting of the towns of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes, and Waltham, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the following polling places on March 3, 2026 to vote by Australian ballot on the following articles of business:

Municipality	Polling Hours	Location
Addison	7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Addison Community Center
Ferrisburgh	7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Ferrisburgh Town Hall
Panton	7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Panton Town Hall
Vergennes	9:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	St. Peter’s Parish Hall
Waltham	10:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Waltham Town Hall

**Article 7:** Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$28,314,179.03 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,647 per pupil This projected spending per pupil is 3.26% higher than spending for the current year.

**Article 8:** Shall the voters of the Addison Northwest School District authorize the assignment of \$102,838.70 pursuant to the provisions of 24 VSA §2804, from the fiscal year 2025 fund balance to the ANWSD Capital Improvement Fund, established by the electorate on March 7, 2017?

Dated this 21st day of January, 2026.

John Stroup, District Clerk Mark Koenig, Chair of Board of Directors  
Addison Northwest School District Addison Northwest School District

## Public Notices can be found in this ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 10B and 11B.

### ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WARNING PUBLIC INFORMATION HEARING

Member Towns are Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

The legal voters of the Addison Central School District are hereby notified of the Public Information Hearing on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 7:00 PM at the Middlebury Union High School to discuss Australian Ballot Articles warned for vote on Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

Virtual connection details may be found on the ACSD Website: [www.acsdvt.org](http://www.acsdvt.org)

Mary Gill, Clerk Barbara Wilson, Chair  
Addison Central School District Addison Central School District

The Addison Central School District Annual Report and FY27 Budget Book will be available in the following manner:  
[www.acsdvt.org/district-link/budget-development](http://www.acsdvt.org/district-link/budget-development)  
or call 802-382-1274 to request a copy.

### ACT 250 NOTICE MINOR APPLICATION #9A0387 10 V.S.A. §§ 6000 - 6111

Francis Clark has filed application #9A0387, deemed complete on January 30, 2026, for a project generally described as “as-built” construction of a ±1,920 square-foot single-family residence upon ±2.07-acre Lot 4 within the 5-lot “Upper Plains Road” residential subdivision created in violation of Act 250 by Gregory West. The project is located at 1185 Upper Plains Rd in Salisbury, Vermont. The application may be viewed on the Land Use Review Board’s Act 250 Database (<https://anweb.vt.gov/ANR/Act250/default.aspx>) by entering project number “9A0387.”

No hearing will be held, and a permit may be issued unless, on or before February 25, 2026, a party notifies the District 9 Commission in writing of an issue requiring a hearing, or the Commission sets the matter for a hearing on its own motion. Any person as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1) may request a hearing. Any hearing request must be in writing, must state the criteria or sub-criteria at issue, why a hearing is required, and what additional evidence will be presented at the hearing. Any hearing request by an adjoining property owner or other person eligible for party status under 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1)(E) must include a petition for party status under the Act 250 Rules. To request party status and a hearing, fill out the Party Status Petition Form on the Board’s website: <https://act250.vermont.gov/documents/party-status-petition-form>, and email it to the District 9 Office at: [Act250.Essex@vermont.gov](mailto:Act250.Essex@vermont.gov). Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law may not be prepared unless the Commission holds a public hearing.

For more information contact the District Coordinator listed below.

Josh Donabedian  
District 9 Coordinator  
111 West Street  
Essex Junction, VT 05452  
[Joshua.Donabedian@vermont.gov](mailto:Joshua.Donabedian@vermont.gov)

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON APPLICATION FOR ONE CREDIT UNION TO EXPAND ITS FIELD OF MEMBERSHIP

One Credit Union, 380 River Street, Springfield, Vermont, has filed an application with the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation to amend its field of membership to include those who live, work, worship volunteer or attend school in any county in the State of Vermont, in the State of New Hampshire, Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, Worcester, Middlesex, Suffolk, Essex, and Norfolk counties in the State of Massachusetts, Oxford, Androscoggin, Cumberland, and York counties in the State of Maine, and St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, Albany, and Rensselaer counties in the State of New York, together with members of their immediate families and organizations composed primarily of the same people.

The Commissioner directs that public hearings on the application be held at 2:00 pm at the following One Credit Union location:

- February 12, 2026 at 380 River Street, Springfield, Vermont

This location is wheelchair accessible. If you require any special accommodation due to handicapping condition, please furnish advance notice to Kelley Reed at (802) 828-0526. Any interested parties may attend any of the public hearings and present evidence or offer oral or written testimony with respect to the proposed expansion to One Credit Union’s field of membership.

Additionally, any person may submit written comments on the proposed application. Written comments on the application must be sent to:

Vermont Department of Financial Regulation  
Attn: Kelley Reed  
89 Main Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3101

All written comments must be received by the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation on or before February 26, 2026.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Celco Partnership and its controlled affiliates doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to build a 70.0-foot Monopole Communications Tower (Ref. EBI #260059384PR). Anticipated lighting application is a medium intensity dual red/white strobes. The Site location is 1117 Schoolhouse Road, Vergennes, Addison, Vermont 05491 44 11 57.6 73 20 56.2. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Antenna Structure Registration (ASR, Form 854) filing number is A1359213.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS – Interested persons may review the application ([www.fcc.gov/asr/](http://www.fcc.gov/asr/) applications) by entering the filing number. Environmental concerns may be raised by filing a Request for Environmental Review ([www.fcc.gov/asr/environmentalrequest](http://www.fcc.gov/asr/environmentalrequest)) and online filings are strongly encouraged. The mailing address to file a paper copy is: FCC Requests for Environmental Review, Attn: Ramon Williams, 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554.

### ANWSD BOARD

#### MEETING NOTICES FOR FEBRUARY 2026

Monday, Feb 2	4:30 PM	<b>Negotiations Committee Meeting</b> ANWSD Central Office
Thursday, Feb 5	4:30 PM	<b>Negotiations Mtg. with ANTA*</b> VUMHS Library
Monday, Feb 9	4:50 PM	<b>Policy Committee Mtg.</b> VUMHS Library
	6:00 PM	<b>ANWSD Board Meeting</b> VUMHS Library
Wednesday, Feb 11	4:00 PM	<b>Negotiations Mtg. with ANSSA**</b> VUES Library
Monday, Feb 16	4:00 PM	<b>Facilities Committee Mtg.</b> VUMHS Library
	4:50 PM	<b>Finance Committee Mtg.</b> VUMHS Library
	6:00 PM	<b>ANWSD Board Mtg.</b> VUMHS Library
Wednesday, Feb 18	5:30 PM	<b>Community Engagement Committee Mtg.</b> Virtual only
Thursday, Feb 19	4:30 PM	<b>Negotiations Mtg. with ANTA</b> VUMHS Library

\* ANTA - Addison Northwest Teachers Association  
\*\* ANSSA - Addison Northwest Support Staff Association

### ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS Town of Hinesburg Hinesburg, Vermont

#### Beecher Hill Road Bridge No. 23 and No. 28 Replacements General Notice

Town of Hinesburg (Owner) is requesting Bids for the construction of the following Project:

#### Beecher Hill Road Bridge No. 23 and No. 28 Replacements

Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at the **Hinesburg Town Hall located at 10632 Route 116, Hinesburg, VT 05461 until Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 3:00 P.M.** At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project includes the following Work:

**The project consists of the replacement of two failed Bridges in Hinesburg, VT. Bridge #23 consists of replacing a failed concrete slab bridge with a span of 11-feet with a 55 foot long by 20-foot wide by an 8-foot-high pre-cast concrete box culvert. Bridge #28, is a failed CMP that was washed out during a flooding event. New structure is 111’ long x 18’ wide x 8’ high. It will be precast concrete with baffles and wing walls.**

The Issuing Office for the Bidding Documents is: **Otter Creek Engineering, Inc. located at 404 East Main Street, East Middlebury, VT 05740.** Prospective Bidders may examine the Bidding Documents at the Issuing Office on Mondays through Fridays between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call the Issuing Office to make an appointment. Bidders may obtain copies of the Bidding Documents from the Issuing Office as described below. Bidding Documents also may be examined at **Otter Creek Engineering, Inc., 110 Merchants Row, 4th Floor, Suite 15**, by appointment only; contact the Issuing Office to schedule a viewing. Electronic copies of the Bidding Documents may be obtained from the issuing office by paying \$100.00. Printed copies of the Bidding Documents may be obtained from the Issuing Office upon request by paying \$150 for each set by mail. Make checks for Bidding Documents payable to “Otter Creek Engineering, Inc.” mailing address: P.O. Box 712, East Middlebury, VT 05740.

Bidding Documents may be purchased from the Issuing Office during the hours indicated above. The date that the Bidding Documents are transmitted by the Issuing Office will be considered the Bidder’s date of receipt of the Bidding Documents. Partial sets of Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing Office. *Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including Addenda if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for issuing Addenda if any, to parties obtaining Bidding Documents from sources other than the Issuing Office.*

#### Pre-bid Conference

A pre-bid conference for the Project will be held on **Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. at the Hinesburg Town Hall located at 10632 Route 116, Hinesburg, VT 05461.** Site visit to follow. Attendance at the pre-bid conference is encouraged but not required.

#### Instructions to Bidders

For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.

#### This Advertisement is issued by:

Owner: Town of Hinesburg  
By: Todd Odit  
Title: Town Manager  
Date: January 26, 2026



**Tigers roar**

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH School sophomore Harper Hendy leads her Tiger Dance teammates during their performance in the Pom discipline at a meet in the MUHS gym this past Saturday. Tiger Dance earned second place in the competition. See the full story on Page 1B.

Photo by Alayna LaFlam

**Police say Bridport man drove drunk**

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police cited Eric M. Sumner, 20, of Bridport for suspicion of driving under the influence, following a stop on Seymour Street on Jan. 28 just before 7:30 p.m. Police said they took an evidentiary blood sample from Sumner as part of their investigation.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Received a complaint about a drunken man at the Maplefields store on Route 7 South on Jan. 26. Police said the man had left upon their arrival.
- Assisted Middlebury Regional EMS with a medical call to a Jackson Lane home on Jan. 26.
- Spoke with a local resident about a potential stalking situation on Jan. 26.
- Helped a driver whose vehicle had broken down on Quarry Road on Jan. 26.
- Checked on a vehicle that had slid off Buttolph Drive on Jan. 27.
- Checked on Jan. 27 on a bonfire that someone had set in an area near East Main Street and North Branch Road.
- Assisted Vermont Department for Children & Families officials on a visit to a Lindale Circle home on Jan. 27.
- Responded to a reported dispute between some Weybridge Street neighbors on Jan. 28.
- Searched in vain in the Case Street area on Jan. 28 for a woman wanted for what police said were “several outstanding warrants” for her arrest.
- Collected a donation of stuffed animals for children on Jan. 28.
- Returned, to its owner, a found debit card on Jan. 28.
- Helped MREMS with a medical

**Middlebury Police Log**

call in the North Pleasant Street area on Jan. 28.

- Investigated a report of harassing behavior at a Washington Street business on Jan. 29.
- Helped break up a verbal dispute between the parties involved in a minor traffic accident on College Street on Jan. 29.
- Investigated a report of a person walking in the middle of East Main Street on Jan. 29.
- Mediated a dispute between some parties arguing over personal items at a John Graham Court residence on Jan. 29.
- Cited Ronald A. Stetson Jr., 45, of Vergennes for driving with a suspended license, following a traffic stop on North Pleasant Street on Jan. 29.
- Gave a courtesy ride to a person who was stranded at the Porter Medical Center campus at around 11:20 p.m. on Jan. 29.
- Helped a man whose vehicle had broken down off Court Street on Jan. 30.
- Helped MREMS with a medical call in the Halladay Road area on Jan. 30.
- Investigated a verbal dispute between two men in the Court Street area on Jan. 30.
- Enforced the town’s overnight winter parking ban downtown on Jan. 30.
- Checked on the welfare of a person in the Court Square area on Jan. 31.
- Assisted a John Graham Court

resident who had complained of receiving harassing phone calls on Jan. 31.

- Assisted a homeless man who said he had been unable to access aid from the Charter House Emergency Shelter or through Vermont 211 on Jan. 31. Police said they provided the man — who they said has been struggling with mental health issues — with food, water and “insulating gear.”
- Spoke with a resident who said they’d had a concerning encounter on Court Street on Jan. 31 with a person who had apparently been experiencing mental health issues.
- Responded to a reported domestic disturbance in the South Village Green neighborhood on Jan. 31.
- Responded to a report of a vehicle that had veered off the road near the intersection of Route 7 and Three Mile Bridge Road on Jan. 31.
- Received a report about a man who had allegedly been pouring whiskey into a travel mug in his truck while parked off Foote Street on Jan. 31.
- Searched for a local juvenile reported missing on Feb. 1. Police said the youth ultimately returned home.
- Assisted a man who was halving a mental health crisis in the Court Street area on Feb. 1.
- Helped Vermont Department for Children & Families officials facilitate a child visitation session on Feb. 1.
- Received a reported of an impaired driver who had potentially been involved in a vehicle crash on Porter Hospital campus on Feb. 1.
- Responded to a complaint about a person yelling in the Seymour Street area on Feb. 1.

**Sheriff’s Log**

ADDISON COUNTY — A deputy in the Addison County Sheriff’s Department checked on a person who had been reported to be walking on Route 22A in Orwell for an extended period. The deputy took the person to the hospital to be evaluated due to the cold and then dropped them off at a

bus stop after they were discharged from the hospital. Between Jan. 25 and 31, the sheriff’s department completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 56 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations and attempted to serve 18 pieces of civil process around the county.

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

- On Jan. 26 checked on a vehicle parked in the road on Monkton Road in Monkton.
- On Jan. 26 assisted state police with a welfare check in New Haven.
- On Jan. 26 checked on a dog

that had been reported to have been left out in the cold in Weybridge.

- On Jan. 27 provided a courtesy ride to a person in Addison whose vehicle wouldn’t start and needed to go to Pratt’s for some food.
- On Jan. 28 assisted with vehicles that slid off the road in Middlebury, Salisbury and Whiting.
- On Jan. 28 cited Skyler Martell, 23, of Bristol for driving under the influence after she was pulled

over for speeding on Route 22A in Addison.

- On Jan. 29 stood by to keep the peace while someone moved out due to a relief from abuse order.
- On Jan. 29 checked the welfare of a person in Shoreham and found no issues.
- On Jan. 30 checked on a person sleeping in their vehicle at the Lewis Creek Access in Ferrisburgh.
- On Jan. 30 dealt with a neighbor dispute on North Orwell

Road in Orwell.

- On Jan. 30 assisted with traffic control for a tractor-trailer that had broken down on 22A and was blocking a lane in Orwell.
- On Jan. 30 checked on a call about gunshots off Route 125 in Addison. No issues were discovered.
- On Jan. 30 checked on a complaint for trash being dumped on Shellhouse Mountain Road in Ferrisburgh.



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# ARTS + LEISURE

The Addison Independent

February 5, 2026

## New novel digs into the deeper MADAME CURIE

I've heard that journalists who try their hand at writing a novel decide that fiction is so much easier than nonfiction because they can just make things up. Conversely, pity the poor fiction writer who has to make up everything; some, I'm sure, wish they could fall back on facts and stories that are verifiable. After all, truth is stranger than fiction, right?

By **JOHN S. MCCRIGHT**

Now Weybridge writer Devon Jersild comes along and decides she will take the most difficult parts of both worlds and creates a novel of historical fiction, "Luminous Bodies." The story — yes, "story," as in a tale well-told but not necessarily the exact, provable history — of Marie Curie, world-renown chemist and two-time Nobel Prize winner. It will be officially published this month and the subject of a book launch at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater next Thursday, Feb. 12.

Now, Curie was a famous person, even in her own time; why does some of her story have to be made up?

The story that Jersild tells goes well beyond her subject's birth and death dates, names of



• "WASN'T IT  
NATURAL THAT I  
BURNED WITH  
HUMILIATION,  
KNOWING THAT HE  
• WAS SLEEPING WITH  
THE WOMAN WHO HAD ATTACKED ME  
IN THE STREET." — "Luminous Bodies"



Join Weybridge author Devon Jersild for the launch of her debut novel, "Luminous Bodies," on Feb. 12, at 6:30 p.m., in the Town Hall Theater's Anderson Studio in Middlebury. Free and open to all with registration.

OLIVER PARINI PHOTOGRAPHY

family members and colleagues, and signature accomplishments. "Luminous Bodies" is primarily concerned with Madame Curie's interior life — what she was thinking, what people around her were thinking, why they were thinking and feeling that way. She really gets inside Marie's head, and the heads of her friends and lover.

The author, writing in the first person as Marie Curie, shows the "feverish math" that raced through the great scientist's mind during a sleepless night. Her mother had died at 42, but Marie was 44 so she should have been dead two years ago. But she had been 10 years old when her mother died and Marie's own daughter was six, so maybe she had four

more years to live. That line of thought is likely not historical fact, but it shows the character's state of mind in a perfectly relatable way.

It's no surprise that Jersild can tackle the task of looking into and understanding the minds of people. A writer, yes, but she has also had a career as a psychotherapist. She has a knack for balancing the multiple competing thoughts in a character's head. Here is Marie trying to unpack her own feelings about an on-again, off-again lover.

"Wasn't it natural that I burned with humiliation, knowing that he was sleeping with the woman

See *LUMINOUS* on page 3

# FILM REVIEW & SCREENING

## Ask E. Jean: Listening to a voice America tried not to hear

For decades, E. Jean Carroll occupied a singular place in American culture: a fearless, funny, sharp-tongued advice columnist who invited readers into candid conversations about sex, power and survival. She was best known for her wit. What she was not known for — until recently — was how hard she had worked to keep that wit intact in a world that repeatedly tested it.

In "Ask E. Jean," filmmaker Ivy Meeropol offers a documentary that is neither a traditional biographical portrait nor a courtroom chronicle, but something subtler and more powerful: an act of sustained listening. The film centers on Carroll's



By **JAY CRAVEN**

long-running advice column as a window into her inner life, her readers' confessions, and the evolving cultural terrain around gender, violence and belief.

Meeropol resists sensationalism. Rather than constructing the film around the headlines Carroll generated during her lawsuit against Donald Trump, in recent years, she builds the picture from the intimate architecture of correspondence — letters, questions, voices seeking counsel. In doing so, "Ask E. Jean" reframes Carroll not only as a public figure, but as a conduit: a woman who absorbed other people's secrets while quietly managing her own.

The result is a documentary that feels unusually

humane. Carroll emerges as funny, guarded, defiant and deeply thoughtful — someone who understands that humor can be armor, and that advice, at its best, is a form of solidarity. Meeropol's camera stays close, patient and unflashy, allowing Carroll's intelligence and contradictions to remain intact.

What gives the film its emotional gravity is not just Carroll's story, but the chorus of voices around her — particularly women navigating experiences of assault, coercion, and disbelief. The film situates these voices within a longer American tradition of silencing and minimization, while also charting how that tradition is being challenged, letter by letter, testimony by testimony.

"Ask E. Jean" is not an argument shouted from the barricades. It is something rarer: a conversation sustained over time, conducted with clarity and moral steadiness. In an era saturated with outrage, the film insists on attention instead — on the radical act of taking women seriously when they speak.

Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival will screen "Ask E. Jean" at 7 p.m., on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at the Marquis Theater in downtown Middlebury. A Zoom Q&A with Sundance award-winning writer, cinematographer and the film's editor Ferne Pearlstein will take place after the screening. Tickets (\$14-\$16) are available at the door or online at [middleburymarquis.com](http://middleburymarquis.com).

## Jersild talks about what's behind 'Luminous Bodies'

**D**evon Jersild's sumptuous novel, "Luminous Bodies," traces Marie Curie's eventful life as a renowned scientist and beyond, from her youth in Poland to the battlefields of World War I, her marriage, her years as a widow, and her relationship with fellow scientist Paul Langevin — a scandal that led to her rejection by both society and, for a while, the scientific community. Curie's resilience among these pressures is inspiring. Middlebury College senior Daisy Kulina had this conversation with Jersild about her new book.

By **DAISY KULINA**

### DK: What sparked your interest in Curie's life, and what did the research process look like?

DJ: I got the idea for this novel just as I was headed to graduate school in psychology, 25 years ago. I was reading a biography about Karen Horney, an early feminist psychoanalyst who challenged some of Freud's drive theories. It was just so beautifully written by Susan Quinn that I turned immediately to another book of hers, a life of Marie Curie, and I kind of fell in love with her.

At that time I had the idea that women who were ambitious and accomplished must have thicker skin than I do. Now I know that isn't true! Very few people have thick skin. One of Marie Curie's friends said that she would walk through fire for the people she loved. She struggled with intense sensitivity, and she was vulnerable to depression. And in various ways she was brutalized by the world from the time she was a child in Russian-occupied Poland.

I wanted to know about her inner world — I wanted to create her inner world in a novel, to explore her pain and her resilience, and how she pushed forward, growing and healing, while bearing the wounds throughout her life.

The idea stuck in my head, but I didn't have the time or space in my life to write this novel until about 10 years ago.

### DK: What did you discover about her resilience?

DJ: There's a scene in the novel — a flashback to her childhood — where she's called on by her teacher to stand up and answer the questions of a Russian school inspector. If she blows it, her teacher could end up in Siberia, because he's secretly been teaching Polish history to these high school girls, when even *speaking* Polish is forbidden. When the inspector leaves, the teacher asks Marie to come to the front of the class, and he shakes her hand. It's a moment of comradeship. Girls mattered in Poland, in Russian-occupied Poland; they were part of the resistance. Curie learned to believe in the value of her own mind and her own work. And when she stood up to authority, she had the backing of her parents and other adults.

See *JERSILD* on page 14



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# LUMINOUS

continued from page 1

who had attacked me in the street. Night after night, images of their naked bodies roiled through my mind. He knew this. But was he concerned?

He answered with cool detachment, while I carried the weight of his weakness.”

For someone who hasn't read the book, that reference to “the woman who attacked me in the street” should be a clue that, while there is a good dose of psychology in this novel, it is also full of plot. Things happen — interesting and important things — to the characters as they move through their lives. And the psychological insights made me as a reader alternately cheer for and boo Marie, and Paul and Hertha and almost all of the characters.

Jersild shows how her career trying to understand the human mind coupled with an obvious talent for observation melds perfectly in passages about children. In one Marie is watching her daughter play piano and recalls herself as a girl watching her mother play and feel moved by her mother's emotion. “In my

own small body a hum of longing would grow so intense that my frame couldn't bear it, and I would run from the room and cry. ‘What is it Manusa?’ my mother would say. I didn't know how to answer.”

This book must have taken a true ton of research. I can imagine Jersild flipping through the newspapers of the early 20th century reading the contemporaneous stories about her genuine heroine. But she obviously brings a lifetime of reading, listening and hoovering up of facts that she deftly slips into flow of the story, like the theft of the Mona Lisa from the Louver and the mysterious Tunguska explosion — I think each of these appeared as simply a clause that added texture without distracting from the narrative.

I don't know if Jersild's psychotherapy training developed her ear for metaphor and simile, but it appears again and again to help the reader put the characters' actions and feelings in perspective. For instance, Marie postulates that if there is a fixed allotment of joy in each person's life, then her allocation must have been locked up out of reach like grain in a silo. “Now, suddenly, the hinged door opened and the golden wheat came blowing through — it

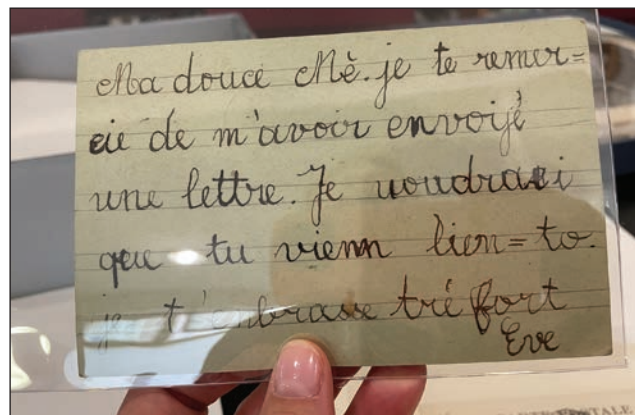
was boundless, it deranged me, it was jubilant and rich.”

And she handles the real science in Marie Curie's story deftly, thanks in part to consultation with Middlebury College professors.

Reading “Luminous Bodies,” I loved how the author manipulated my emotions — I liked someone and wished the best for them; then I had reservations; then they grew and I like them again; then I wasn't so sure. Eventually, understanding the growth of the characters — their moral, emotional and psychological growth — I was brought to understand in the final pages why this novel is called “Luminous Bodies.”

*The public is invited to join the Vermont Book Shop for an evening with Weybridge author and psychologist Devon Jersild to celebrate the launch of her debut novel, “Luminous Bodies,” on Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall Theater.*

*It is free with registration, which can be done online at [townhalltheater.org](http://townhalltheater.org), by calling 802-382-9222 or visiting the box office from Monday-Friday from 12-5 p.m. Cash bar opens at 7:30 p.m.*



Devon Jersild holds a postcard from Marie Curie's daughter to her mother.



Devon Jersild went to France in the fall of 2022, to visit Marie Curie's house in Sceaux (just outside Paris) and do research for her debut novel “Luminous Bodies.”

SUBMITTED PHOTOS





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# Hollywood Musical class continues

**P**art history class, part film festival, Town Hall Theater's Director in Residence Doug Anderson will take participants through the glorious history of the Hollywood musical. The four-part class will be held Wednesdays beginning Feb. 11 through March 4, at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury, at 7 p.m. Each session will begin with Anderson lecturing about the studios, the directors and the stars who defined each era, followed by one of the key films of those years.

Part 1 of this popular course explored films from 1930-1950, looking at the developments in technology and taste that shaped the movie musical's Golden Age. (If you missed Part 1, don't worry; Anderson will begin Part 2 with a recap of important early films and ideas.)

Part 2 will pick up where Part 1 left off. In the 1950s, the old studio system began to crumble, and as the country entered the turbulent 1960s the movie musical found itself searching for new directions and new audiences. Once again, Anderson will open each class with a lecture putting each film into its historical context, followed by a showing of the film on the big screen.

"This course is part history class, part film festival, and all of it is immensely entertaining," Anderson said.



The first of four classes about the Hollywood Musical will kick off on Feb. 11, at Town Hall Theater.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

## COURSE LINE-UP:

**Feb. 11 — "A Star Is Born"** (1954 – Judy Garland, James Mason) (Rothrock Mainstage)

**Feb. 18 — "Funny Girl"** (1968 – Barbra Streisand) (Anderson Studio)

**Feb. 25 — "Cabaret"** (1972 – Liza Minelli, Joel Gray) (Rothrock Mainstage)

**March 4 — Highlights from the 1970's to today** (Anderson Studio)

Pricing varies from \$30-\$150 and includes live and streaming options. Register for this class via [townhalltheater.org](http://townhalltheater.org) or purchase at the THT box office from Monday-Friday from 12-5 p.m., or via phone at 802-382-9222.

## Great Art Wednesdays:

### Goya: Visions of Flesh and Blood

Step inside the National Gallery's landmark exhibition exploring Goya, Spain's celebrated artist who transformed portraiture and became the father of modern art.

How?

Show up at the Anderson Studio (Town Hall Theater) in Middlebury on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 11 a.m. or 2:30 p.m., for Great Art Wednesday — a monthly art exhibition film series that runs through May.

Heir to Velázquez, a hero to Picasso, discover Spain's celebrated artist with this cinematic tour de force based on the National Gallery's must-see exhibition "Goya: The Portraits."

Francisco Goya was not only a brilliant observer of everyday life and Spain's troubled past, he is a gifted portrait painter and social commentator par excellence. Goya takes the genre of portraiture to new heights and his genius is reappraised in a much-anticipated landmark exhibition at The National Gallery, London.

Tickets: \$15. General seating. Doors open 30 minutes before showtime. For questions or tickets email [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org) or call 802-382-9222.

## Simple Sage tells 18th century truths

The Cutting Edge brings "Simple Sage" by Vermont playwright Kate Youngdahl-Stauss to the Anderson Studio at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on Sunday, Feb. 15, at 4 p.m.

This play is based on the curious true story of a house in Granville, Vt., built in the 18th century that still stands today. In the 19th century the house was occupied by the Lamb sisters, two of whom married John Deere. Then, in the 1930's, legend has it that several lesbian farmers came to Granville and rescued the house and land after the collapse of the lumber industry. Tales of Vermont women during these two eras, facing the parallel themes of social restraint and the degradation of the natural landscape, are woven together in the play, revealing a potential message for our own time.

Kate Youngdahl-Stauss will be at the performance and will participate in the talk-back after the performance.

All Tickets: \$15. Doors open 30 minutes before showtime. For more info or tickets email [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org) or call 802-382-9222. The THT box office is open Monday to Friday 12-5 p.m.



*WINE WEDNESDAYS AT JESSICA'S*

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.

February 4: Piedmont, the Gem of Italy  
 February 11: Loire Valley Libations  
 February 18: Farrell Takeover - Kermit Lynch Classics  
 February 25: California Dreaming

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# ART ON EXHIBIT

# Cosmic Forecast



"Ode to the Skillet" is one of the gouache paintings by Jill Brooks on view at Sparrow Art Supply in Middlebury this month.

## BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD

7 Center St, Brandon. For more info visit [brandonartistsguild.org](http://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.

## JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant Street, Middlebury  
Visit [townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery](http://townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery) or call 802-382-9222 for more info.

**"Wild Encounters."** McKenna Dickerson and Matthew Dickerson (daughter-in-law and father-in-law) will share images of encounters with the natural world, especially in the wilder places of our public lands: national parks, national forests, and state parks. An opening reception will be held on Friday, Feb. 6, from 5-7 p.m. Free and open to all. On view Feb. 3-March 14

## MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury  
For more info visit [middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions](http://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

See EXHIBITS on page 13

**ARIES:** March 21/April 20. A spark of excitement brightens your week, Aries. You may rediscover enthusiasm for a goal you set aside. Take one confident step and watch momentum gather.

**LIBRA:** Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Balance returns in a way that feels refreshing, Libra. Your relationships flow smoothly, and you'll find harmony even in busy moments. An inspiring experience may uplift you.

**TAURUS:** April 21/May 21. This week brings steady comfort and satisfying progress, Taurus. Something you've been nurturing starts to show real signs of growth. You're building something meaningful.

**GEMINI:** May 22/June 21. Your mind is in full brilliance mode, Gemini. New insights, clever connections and energizing conversations fill your days. A fun invitation or unexpected message may lift your spirits.

**CANCER:** June 22/July 22. Your emotional intuition is your superpower this week, Cancer. You may find a simple solution to a situation that once felt complex. Supportive people drift into your orbit.

**LEO:** July 23/Aug. 23. Leo, your confidence is glowing, and others notice. This week favors bold creativity and joyful self-expression. A moment of recognition or praise may remind you of your natural leadership.

**VIRGO:** Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Organization comes naturally, and your clarity is on point, Virgo. You'll wrap up tasks with surprising ease. A shift in priorities may free up space for something you genuinely enjoy.

**SCORPIO:** Oct. 24/Nov. 22. Determination meets opportunity this week, Scorpio. You're sharper, more focused and ready to move forward with confidence.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Optimism fuels everything you touch, Sagittarius. You may stumble upon a new interest, adventure or opportunity that fills you with excitement.

**CAPRICORN:** Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Your efforts align perfectly with your goals, Capricorn. This week rewards patience and consistency. You may receive encouragement from someone who truly understands you.

**AQUARIUS:** Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Fresh ideas flow effortlessly, Aquarius. This is a strong week for innovation, problem-solving and collaboration. A new perspective may lead to a resolution.

**PISCES:** Feb. 19/March 20. A creative wave washes over you, Pisces. Inspiration feels effortless, and small moments carry extra meaning. A heartwarming interaction or sweet surprise brightens your week.

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**QUILTERS' CORNER**  
MIDDLEBURY SEW-N-VAC  
**SUPER SALE**  
-Extra 10% off Semi-Annual Clearance Sale (already 25-75% off)  
-20% off regularly priced fabric  
-Deep discounts on floor model machines (prices too low to advertise!)  
**One Day ONLY**  
Sunday 2/8  
11-3pm  
260 Court Street, Middlebury, Vt. 05753 (802)388-3559  
**OPEN: M-F 10-5 and Saturday 9:30-4**

## FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

**FEB. 6** — Tom Brokaw, news anchor (86)  
**FEB. 7** — Charles Dickens, writer (d)  
**FEB. 8** — Kate Chopin, writer (d)  
**FEB. 9** — Alice Walker, writer (d)  
**FEB. 10** — Bertolt Brecht, playwright (d)  
**FEB. 11** — Kelly Slater, surfer (54)  
**FEB. 12** — Charles Darwin, naturalist (d)

# CALENDAR

Feb. 6 – 27

2026

## FRIDAY, FEB. 6

**"ON THE STREET" PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT OPENING RECEPTION IN MIDDLEBURY.** Friday, Feb. 6, 4-7 p.m., PhotoPlace Gallery, 3 Park St. Celebrate the opening of "On the Street," a fine art photography exhibition exploring the unscripted rhythm of everyday life through powerful street photography. Featuring work by photographers from around the world. Exhibition on view Feb. 6-28. Free.

**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](http://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](mailto:kencorey53@gmail.com) to register. More info at [gmcbreadloaf.org](http://gmcbreadloaf.org).

**BOW THAYER AND KRISHNA GUTHRIE BAND.** Saturday, Feb. 7, 6-8:30 p.m., American Flatbread, Marble Works, Middlebury. Kicks off the Cure Your Cabin Fever Series.

**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](http://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](http://addisonarts.org).

## WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11

**"GOYA: VISIONS OF FLESH AND BLOOD" FILM SCREENING IN MIDDLEBURY.** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Part of the Great Art Wednesday film series, this documentary takes viewers inside the National Gallery's landmark exhibition on Francisco Goya, Spain's celebrated artist and a father of modern art. Tickets \$15 at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**"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](mailto:info@brandonpubliclibrary.org) or calling 802-247-8230.

DOUG ANDERSON'S "THE

**HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL" COURSE IN MIDDLEBURY, PART 2.** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Rothrock Mainstage, 72-76 Merchants Row. Town Hall Theater founder and resident director Doug Anderson leads a lecture and screening exploring the evolution of Hollywood musicals, followed by a showing of "A Star Is Born" starring Judy Garland and James Mason. Part of a four-session spring course on the movie musical. \$30 single class; course passes available. More info at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**"ASK E. JEAN" FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION IN MIDDLEBURY.** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Marquis Theatre & Cafe, 65 Main St. "Ask E. Jean" is a new documentary exploring the life and career of E. Jean Carroll, from her early days as Miss Cheerleader USA to her work as the first female editor at Esquire, Playboy and Outside. A Q&A with Sundance award-winning writer, cinematographer and editor Ferne Pearlstein is planned. Middlebury New Filmmaker Festival Selects series. Advance tickets \$14 at [midfilmfest.org](http://midfilmfest.org).

## 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

**"ANGELS & GHOSTS" ARTIST TALK IN MIDDLEBURY.** Friday, Feb. 13, 12:45-2 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury College. Lecture and lunch with guest artist Damian Stamer, who will discuss his "Angels & Ghosts" series and his distinctive process combining traditional oil painting with AI-generated imagery. Free and open to the public.

**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.

*Continued on next page.*

MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091		MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION: P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753	Please see the MCTV website, <a href="http://www.middleburycommunitytv.org">www.middleburycommunitytv.org</a> , 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.	
<b>Channel 1071</b> Through the Night: VT Media Exchange, Bulletin Board <b>Thursday, February 5</b> 4 a.m. Democracy Now 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 2:30 p.m. VT State House 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10 p.m. Democracy Now <b>Friday, February 6</b> 4 a.m. Democracy Now 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 <b>Saturday, February 7</b> 4 a.m. Democracy Now 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. VT State House <b>Sunday, February 8</b> 5 a.m. Public Affairs 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 <b>Monday, February 9</b> 4:30 a.m. Democracy Now 5:30 a.m. Eckankar 6 a.m. Press Conferences 10 a.m. Selectboard 12:30 p.m. Public Affairs 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. All Things LGBTQ <b>Tuesday, February 10</b> 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 4 p.m. Congregational Service 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. Energy Week <b>Wednesday, February 11</b> 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 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now <b>Channel 1091</b> <b>Thursday, February 5</b> 6 a.m. Tai Chi 6:30 a.m. Yoga 8 a.m. Authors & Poets 12 p.m. ACSD Board Meeting 4 p.m. High School Sports	7:30 p.m. Small but Mighty 8:30 p.m. State Board of Education <b>Friday, February 6</b> 5:00 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7:30 a.m. Science and Nature Programs 9 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 3 p.m. Small but Mighty 4 p.m. High School Sports <b>Saturday, February 7</b> 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga & Yoga 8 a.m. Science and Nature Programs 9 a.m. VT Book Shop Book Talk 12 p.m. ACSD Board Meeting 4 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. Coyotes ABA Basketball <b>Sunday, February 8</b> 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7:30 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 11 a.m. Science and Nature Programs 2 p.m. High School Sports	6 p.m. State Board of Education <b>Monday, February 9</b> 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:30 a.m. State Board of Education 4 p.m. High School Sports 6:30 p.m. ACSD Board 10:30 p.m. Authors & Poets <b>Tuesday, February 10</b> 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. State Board of Education 4 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. School Board Meeting/s <b>Wednesday, February 11</b> 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Science and Nature Programs 12 p.m. School Board Meeting/s 4 p.m. High School Sports 6:30 p.m. State Board of Education

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://burnhampresents.org). More info at 802-349-3364.

**"GRUNGE UNPLUGGED VALENTINE'S DAY CONCERT IN MIDDLEBURY.** Saturday, Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Clint Bierman and Vermont all-star musicians present an acoustic concert recreating classic MTV Unplugged-style performances from grunge-era artists including Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, Stone Temple Pilots and more. Candlelit cabaret table seating available. Tickets \$25-\$50 at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

## SUNDAY, FEB. 15

### "SIMPLE SAGE" STAGED READING IN MIDDLEBURY.

Sunday, Feb. 15, 4 p.m., Anderson Studio at Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Middlebury Acting Company presents a staged reading of the play "Simple Sage," a new work by Vermont playwright Kate Youngdahl-Stauss that tells the story of an 18th-century Granville house and the women who shaped its history. Refreshments and a discussion with Youngdahl-Stauss will follow the reading. \$15. Tickets at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB TAYLOR SERIES TALK WITH TED SCHEU IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, Feb. 15, 6:30 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Ted Scheu will show pictures and share his experience completing the Tour de Mont Blanc this past fall. More info at [gmcbreadloaf.org](http://gmcbreadloaf.org).

## TUESDAY, FEB. 17

**ROKEBY MUSEUM VIRTUAL BOOK GROUP.** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6-7 p.m., online on Zoom. Discussion of "The Message" by Ta-Nehisi Coates, exploring the urgent need to untangle ourselves from destructive myths and embrace the liberating power of difficult truths. Free. More info at [rokebymuseum.org](http://rokebymuseum.org).

## WEDNESDAY, FEB. 18

**DOUG ANDERSON'S "THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL" PART 2 COURSE IN MIDDLEBURY.** Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72-76 Merchants Row. Town Hall Theater founder and resident director Doug Anderson leads a lecture and screening exploring the evolution of Hollywood musicals, followed by a showing of "Funny Girl" starring Barbra Streisand. Part of a four-session spring course on the movie musical. \$30 single class; course passes available. More info at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**WHAT ABOUT WEDNESDAYS?** Lily Talmers and Sam Weber house concert in Weybridge. Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m., 3345 Quaker Village Road. House concert featuring singer-songwriters Lily

Talmers and Sam Weber, each performing a one-hour set. Intimate listening-room performance with limited seating; doors open at 7 p.m. Second-floor venue with stairs only. \$25 suggested donation. Refreshments provided, BYOB and a pair of indoor shoes. Reservations required: contact Don at 802-557-7589 or [don@valleystage.net](mailto:don@valleystage.net).

## THURSDAY, FEB. 19

**FIGURE DRAWING IN BRANDON.** Thursday, Feb. 19, 7-9 p.m., Aleshire Gallery, 29 Union St. Monthly facilitated figure drawing session featuring an experienced live art model and a range of short and long poses. Open to artists of all experience levels as a focused, non-instructional working session. Artists should bring their own materials. No photography permitted. Attendance limited to 10 participants. \$20 per participant. More info at [qbird8@gmail.com](mailto:qbird8@gmail.com) or 802-222-5673.

**"MOON OVER BUFFALO" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Thursday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. The Middlebury Community Players present "Moon Over Buffalo," a fast-paced farce that follows two fading stage stars whose lives unravel when a Hollywood director arrives to see their matinee. Opening night pricing \$15/\$25/\$35, tickets at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

## FRIDAY, FEB. 20

**"LOOMS, LINEN, AND LUXURY: THE ART OF WEAVING DAMASK" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Friday, Feb. 20, 12:30-2 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center 125, 72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury College. Lunchtime talk on the history and craft of damask weaving. Learn about the Middlebury College Museum of Art's recent acquisition of a 17th-century damask linen napkin. Free and open to the public.

**"MOON OVER BUFFALO" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Friday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Feb. 19 listing. Tickets \$20/\$25/\$35 at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

## SATURDAY, FEB. 21

**ARTIST RESIDENCY WORKSHOP IN MIDDLEBURY.** Saturday,

Feb. 21, 1 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Learn how to secure artist residencies in this free workshop led by Middlebury College professor and six-time residency recipient Matthew Dickerson. Participants will discuss tips for the residency application process and work on crafting a purpose statement. More information at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**BLACK PATRIOTS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN CORNWALL.** Saturday, Feb. 21, 1 p.m., Cornwall DAR Chapter House, 2706 Route 30. Caroline Tassey, genealogist and registrar for the Green Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, discusses primary source documentation and historical recovery of Black Revolutionary War veterans, focusing on four individuals who settled in Vermont after the war. Co-sponsored by the Cornwall Free Library and the Ethan and Mary Baker Allen Chapter of the DAR.

**WINTER CARNIVAL ICE SHOW: MIDDNIGHT MAGIC IN MIDDLEBURY.** Saturday, Feb. 21, 7 p.m., Kenyon Arena, Middlebury College, 219 S. Main St. Annual Winter Carnival ice show featuring skaters from Middlebury College, the town of Middlebury, UVM and beyond. Open to the public. Free admission for children under three, all others require a \$6 ticket. Tickets available at the Mahaney Arts Center Box Office and online at [middlebury.edu](http://middlebury.edu).

**"MOON OVER BUFFALO" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Saturday, Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Feb. 19 listing. Tickets \$20/\$25/\$35 at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

## SUNDAY, FEB. 22

**WINTER CARNIVAL ICE SHOW: MIDDNIGHT MAGIC IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, Feb. 22, 1:30 p.m., Kenyon Arena, Middlebury College, 219 S. Main St. Annual Winter Carnival ice show featuring skaters from Middlebury College, the town of Middlebury, UVM and more. Free admission for children under three, all others \$6. Tickets available at the Mahaney Arts Center Box Office and online at [middlebury.edu](http://middlebury.edu).

**"MOON OVER BUFFALO" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See Feb. 19 listing. Tickets \$20/\$25/\$35 at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**HEATHER PIERSON DUO IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, Feb. 22, 4 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72-76 Merchants Row. Pianist and singer-songwriter Heather Pierson and bassist Shawn Nadeau perform joy-infused New Orleans jazz, blues and folk. Part of the PM Sunday Folk Series curated by Valley Stage Productions. \$25 advance/\$28 day of show; \$15 students. More info at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

## WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25

**MOVEMENT MATTERS MASTER CLASS WITH JIMMY JOYNER IN MIDDLEBURY.** Wednesday, Feb. 25, 4:30-6 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Road. Explore movement through prompts, games and collective improvisation and discovering new versions of the self through dance. Free. More info at [middlebury.edu](http://middlebury.edu).

**DOUG ANDERSON'S "THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL" COURSE IN MIDDLEBURY PART 2.** Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Town Hall Theater founder and resident director Doug Anderson leads a lecture and screening exploring the evolution of Hollywood musicals, followed by a showing of "Cabaret" starring Liza Minnelli and Joel Gray. Part of a four-session spring course on the movie musical. \$30 single class; course passes available. More info at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

## FRIDAY, FEB. 27

**LOCALS NIGHT AT LINCOLN PEAK VINEYARD IN NEW HAVEN.** Friday, Feb. 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Lincoln Peak Vineyard, 142 River Road. Enjoy a cozy, intimate show in the Lincoln Peak tasting room. Music by Steve Audy. More info at [lincolnpeakvineyard.com](http://lincolnpeakvineyard.com).

See more

**CALENDAR LISTINGS**

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# BEN & JENNIFER ALLRED

## Motivational Card Tricks

**B**en Allred entered my life in the spring of 2000, when I was employed by a design/build company in Middlebury. He was an outstanding result of efforts to lure the talent we needed onto our growing payroll. The University of Utah in Salt Lake City was turning out computer literate architecture school graduates; skills we needed to service the growing demands of

By **STEVE HARRIS**

our clientele. Ben accepted employment as a full-time Architectural Designer. He arrived here with his wife Jennifer and two toddlers in their orbit. They relocated, believing the job was only temporary and that after gaining some experience, they would likely return to Utah. By 2005, however, these young parents concluded they had found their home on Mountain Street in Bristol (population 3,782). The youngest of their four children is now a junior at Mount Abraham Union High School.

On the job, Ben's quiet, steady and helpful demeanor caught my attention immediately. I soon saw in his rendering style something quite stily persuasive. Ben could take rudimentary and fragmentary descriptions of a complicated design and convert them into photo-realistic color renderings that our prospective clients could quickly adopt as their own. Far more than a simple illusion, his graphic instincts speak in a casual vernacular to even a passing viewer. Ben has become a licensed architect in the years since, but his interpretations of imagined environments now also encourage audiences to "suspend their disbelief" at Mount Abe's auditorium.

Ben's wife Jennifer is fluent in yet another language, music. She was raised by a pianist/teacher mother and an opera-singing father in a home constantly filled with melody. She now has a full slate of her own piano and voice students in Bristol and is passing along her genetic predisposition to musical literacy. The demand for her services is common knowledge locally, so her students strive to please and pay close attention to the advice she gives and the practice she recommends. Slots open as her students graduate and



Jennifer and Ben Allred have become stars in the Five-Town drama scene.

PHOTOS / BUZZ KUHNS

move on, and those openings are frequently replaced by younger siblings. Her authority is a steady, motivating attribute, the prominent feature of a caring and accomplished soul.

She and Ben met and became good friends at Woods Cross High School in Bountiful, Utah (population 47,000). Jen went on to study music at Weber State University while Ben completed his Architecture education. Somewhat inevitably, they married in 1993.

When Jen was pregnant with their third child in 2001, she volunteered



her talents to the team sport of mounting musical shows at MAUHS. Ben joined the crew as a set designer in 2016, and by the time "Newsies" hit the stage in 2018, they had been assigned titles of co-directors. Eight full-blown fall musical productions have followed, with shows growing increasingly more complex and sophisticated. Now each of them contributes 25 hours

every week during the three months of run-up rehearsals and preparations. These hours must be carefully carved out of their day jobs as architect, piano teacher, parents and more.

### **A PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, A TEAM CAN MAKE A MIRACLE**

The Allreds have not made the commitment to Mount Abe's drama effort by themselves. Community volunteer support has increased, since every group of up to 100 student participants is accompanied by family members who can also volunteer as support staff. Last November's staging of "Anastasia" involved five costume makers, a

choreographer, eight set builders, a sound and lighting crew of four, a pit orchestra of 14 musicians, a backstage crew of 12, a promotional team of six and a CPA to track and record all expenditures. Many in this group have been involved for years, contributing directly to more professional shows. A dedicated team of fundraisers and home bakers also have helped raise the intimidating pile of cash needed for musical theatre expenses.

The notable feature of this school sponsored program is that it is almost entirely self-sustaining financially. Let that sink in for a moment. Every other element of public education is funded solely by tax money that is extracted from the property-owning citizenry of the Mount Abraham Unified School District. The Musical Theatre program is supported by the infrastructure of (arguably) the most commodious auditorium in the county, and seed money is loaned to the group against the ultimate income from ticket sales. However, it is the sweat equity of the organizers and volunteers that drums up the vast majority of the funding that allows near-financial invisibility. Now there's a "card trick!"

When I asked about the scheduling of rehearsal times and preparation efforts, Jennifer opened her laptop computer and introduced me to multiple day-for-day projections of what needs to be achieved by when. Objectives include targeted achievements, percentage complete references and individual responsibilities for all hands. Rehearsals are scheduled after dinnertime to make sure potential talent is not made to choose between dramatics and after-

See *ROOST* on page 9



school sports. Set building is scheduled for Saturdays to make it possible for the fully employed to lend their experienced labor. Ben directs these sessions and contributes sketches, scale models of finished sets, lists of required

materials and distributes work assignments to his skilled technical crew. Warehoused items from previous shows must be located and repurposed if possible. This responsibility becomes increasingly difficult over time as artifacts, equipment and materials tend to multiply and get stored in basements and barns all over town, as well as a few Conex steel containers behind the school.

### CYCLICAL, SELF-FULFILLING DRAMATIC SCHEDULING:

Most of us are already aware of a fall (November) and spring (March) musical on the school calendar but there is much more that absorbs the Allreds' attention. The full performance cycle for the Mount Abe stage includes a Middle School musical presented in May (two shows) and a Primary School musical in July (one show). The four productions provide an interactive carousel of creative effort. The fall musical accepts any student wishing to perform on stage or assist behind the curtain. The spring musical is for the more senior members of the student community, and in January of 2026, a total of 30 roles were cast from a field of 50 that auditioned. Combined with summer camps all over the Five-Town area, the Allreds provide an ever-ascending series of dramatic challenges for any student that wants to explore life on the stage right through high school. Additionally, they dedicate all their free time year-round to both the challenges and satisfactions of teaching and mentoring emerging talent.

### “BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE...”

The rewards of creating “theater kids” include

membership in an intensely social team to create something memorable for cast, crew and audience. Jen maintains that as youth isolation becomes more common and mental health struggles increase, participating in theatrical programs provides immersive experience in building trust, dependence and reliability. While digital connections and distractions are replacing human interactions, performing arts revive them in unavoidable and fundamental ways for everybody involved. With the fall (November) musical that embraces every student who expresses interest, over 18% of the 600 students at MAUHS are on stage one way or another, in or behind the scenes, depending on each other to present the best product possible. A great percentage of those not participating choose to join the audience in vociferously cheering on their classmates.

Mount Abe has acquired a deserved reputation for offering an excellent opportunity to study and perform the dramatic arts. Any student that lives within the district is also invited to participate, and the longer the program thrives, the larger the number of supportive parents and residents grows. Ben and Jen are beginning to see the children of some of the earliest participants reappearing as the next generation of actors. The Five-Town community has become the beneficiary of a familiar theatrical standard performed at a level far beyond what similar sized villages ever get to experience locally. The audience members see positive snapshots of the village children as they grow up — and the Allreds get to take another breath before launching into the next round of the hardest work they have ever grown to love. My wife Judith and I now attend regularly, and I always put a fresh handkerchief in my lap when they dim the house lights. I know that somewhere during the show, I will have to blot tears of appreciation, awe and gratitude off my cheeks!



*In the years since we worked on the same payroll, I have periodically turned to Ben for his help. Above is one of his most recent examples — a Farmstead Display Building. Proposed to the Board of Directors of the Addison County Fair and Field Days. Its impact was predictably immediate. Once they could see the rendering, the project went from long-discussed to immediately approved. The “Antique House” is scheduled to be built this spring for its debut at Field Days in August 2026. The evocative power of Ben’s graphic language inspired his phrase “card trick” but, in my not-so-humble opinion, it’s not that simple. While anyone can pick up design skills, only a select group have left their unmistakable mark on the pictures they’ve created. Ben Allred has a gift that he is reluctant to admit, but his work is powerfully unique.*

### FOR EXTRA EXPOSURE...

If you want to know more about the 2026 musical schedule, the upcoming spring show dates are announced (“Once Upon A One More Time”) on the MAUSD website. Just Google “Mount Abraham Musical Theatre” and you will find more detailed information about donations, volunteering and a 24-minute documentary about last year’s “Anything Goes” by Cal Hopwood. The documentary is very professionally made and is well worth your time if you wish to enhance your appreciation for the next show you choose to see in person. Just make sure to get your tickets as soon as they go on sale...they sell out quickly!

-sbh

*Steve and Judith Harris reside in Lincoln where their recently built cabin is the world headquarters of their consulting business. They will not be camping in the relative comfort of the southeast this winter but will instead remain at home while Judith attends to their clients and Steve attempts to create monthly episodes of “Ruminations from the Roost”. Steve promises a travelogue, without the travel. Each episode will present a profile of a local “community fixture”, folks that Steve has selected, based on criteria that remain unclear even to the author. Furthermore, these sketches will offer examples of the many ways he finds to cherish and be grateful for his life in Addison County.*



*“Anything Goes”  
cast performs on an  
elaborate ship-set.*

# UPCOMING MUSIC

## Middlebury musician presents a love note to grunge

This Valentine's Day, Clint Bierman presents "Grunge Unplugged" alongside Vermont All-Star Musicians Matt LaRocca, Josh Panda, Peter Day, Jeff Valone, Stefan Arnarson and other special guests. This acoustic concert, underscored by piano and cello, recreates the classic unplugged MTV-style episodes of Grunge-era artists, such as Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, Stone Temple Pilots, Temple of the Dog, Smashing Pumpkins, and others.

Presented in Town Hall Theater's Rothrock mainstage theater, with candlelit cabaret table seating available, this concert is the debut of Grunge Unplugged concerts expected to travel to other performing arts venues.

"This feels like my music," Bierman said. "It's so deep in me that I'm really excited to pay homage to the era of grunge. It's so much a part of who I am musically and who I am as a person, because it's the music of my childhood."

Bierman is a multi-instrumentalist, songwriter,

producer, band leader, and educator who has made a serious mark on the Vermont music scene. He has been performing professionally for more than 20 years and founded The Grift with Jeff Vallone in 1999. Since then, he has recorded 10 original albums with Grift members past and present.

Bierman co-wrote a musical in 2014 ("My Post-Traumatic Cruise Ship Cabaret" — with The Grift and Dana Yeaton). He co-wrote a song on the "Shrek 2" soundtrack ("I'm On My Way" with Rich Price). Bierman also co-owns Lion-Tone Studio, a professional recording studio in Middlebury. Bierman plays in countless other bands including Neon Ramblers, Honeywell, Clint Bierman & The Necessary Means, Hug Your Farmer All Star Band, and many more.

Tickets are \$25/regular, \$35/table seating, \$50/generous, and are available at [townhalltheater.org](http://townhalltheater.org) or call 802-382-9222 or visit the box office from Monday-Friday from 12-5 p.m. Cash bar opens at 6:30 p.m., and the show begins at 7:30 p.m.

## More Tunes

### MET Live in HD isn't really live this month

THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF KAVALIER AND CLAY SCREENS DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND

This Saturday, Feb. 7, see the MET Live in HD's presentation of "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay," an exhilarating operatic adaptation of Michael Chabon's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel by the same name. To be held in the Anderson Studio at Town Hall Theater, Middlebury. The screening is not live this time, but was recorded earlier in the season.

This performance follows two Jewish cousins who unlock a new avenue of resistance against tyranny through the world of superheroes during World War II.

A pre-show talk will be given by Larry Hamberlin, Middlebury College Professor Emeritus of Music, at 12:15 p.m. The screening will begin at 1 p.m. (3 hours with one intermission.)

Tickets: \$10 - \$24 and are available through the Town Hall Theater's website [townhalltheater.org](http://townhalltheater.org), by emailing [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org) or calling 802-382-9222.

## Isidore String Quartet makes waves across the chamber music world

The Isidore String Quartet is back at the MAC! After energizing a packed Robison Hall during their Middlebury debut last season, the spectacular Isidore String Quartet returns to the Mahaney Arts Center on Friday, Feb. 13, to perform the world premiere of composer/pianist Billy Childs' Quartet No. 4, "American Mosaic." This work was co-commissioned for the Quartet by Middlebury Performing Arts Series through its partnership with the consortium Music Accord.

"The overarching theme of the composition is an examination of the troubled paradigm of race relations in America," Billy Childs said. "The title of the piece is representative of my belief that America, at its best, can be a mosaic of races and cultures—a combination of diverse ethnicities working together to form an inclusive, unified, and complete nation."

The program will also include Johannes Brahms' "Geistliches Lied (Sacred Song)," Op. 30; selected J.S. Bach Chorales arranged by quartet violist Devin Moore; and Dvorák's



The Isidore String Quartet will perform at the Mahaney Arts Center on Friday, Feb. 13.

PHOTO / JIYANG CHEN

String Quartet No. 13 in G major, Op. 106, B192. Professor Emeritus of Music Larry Hamberlin will offer a free pre-concert lecture about the evening's music at 6:15 p.m.

### PERFORMANCE DETAILS

The Isidore String Quartet will perform at the Mahaney Arts Center's Olin C. Robison Concert Hall on Friday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 for the general public, \$20 for Middlebury

faculty/staff and alumni, \$10 for youth, and \$5 for Middlebury College students; information about free and discounted ticket programs is available at [go.middlebury.edu/boxoffice](http://go.middlebury.edu/boxoffice). The free pre-concert lecture by Larry Hamberlin will start at 6:15 p.m., in MAC 125.

For tickets, further information, or assistance with accessibility services, call 802-443-MIDD (6433) or go to [middlebury.edu/arts](http://middlebury.edu/arts).

# Pet of the Week



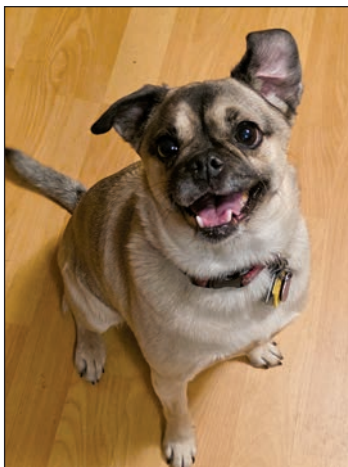
Hi, my name is Julie

I am a Pug/Dachshund/Chinese Crested mix.

My person passed unexpectedly and the twins had to move away. I miss them. But my gramma found me my new Mom and Uncle to live with. After three days fostering, my Uncle said I can live with them forever.

Even though I am six years old, I am learning many new things as my new Mom is taking me to Fetch the Leash in Burlington for doggie school. I just completed the AKC Canine Good Citizen test. I am not always a good listener, but I love treats so

that helps. My Mom dresses me in different coats and things. She loved my Grannie costume, though I didn't care for the wig, I let her get a picture of me.



I love smelling all the smells on my walks with my dachshund nose, but when I sleep, the Chinese Crested in me likes to sleep up high on the back of the couch. And my Pug face is irresistible. My other favorite place is to be the 16-pound dog anchor sitting on Mom's lap or my Uncle's. I love snuggles and belly rubs. They didn't know they needed me but now can't see how they lived without me. I have them wrapped around my little paws!

Submitted by Robin Hewitt of Bristol.

**Pet of the WEEK** Send us a picture of your pet!  
[news@addisonindependent.com](mailto:news@addisonindependent.com)

Psst... It's free!

## Pets In Need HOMEWARD BOUND Addison County's Humane Society

### Hoodoo



Hoodoo is shy and is looking for an understanding person who will let him warm up on his own timeline. He is currently residing in a foster home because he was so fearful and withdrawn in the shelter setting. Once Hoodoo realizes that he has nothing to be afraid of, he opens up and is an affectionate and friendly cat, so don't let his quiet demeanor chase away your interest!

### Abileen



Hi! I'm Abileen, but you can call me Abby! I'm a 7-year-old, 64-pound girl with a happy smile. I've been at the shelter for quite some time now and I'm ready for the next adventure! If you're looking for a smart pup, you will be amazed at what I can do. I am an excellent puzzle toy solver and will find ways to play fetch by myself in the yard. I've previously lived with children but need to be in a pet-free home. I'm unsure around other dogs and need my distance. Balls are my favorite thing in the world and being near my people. I'm crate-trained and housebroken. A fenced-in yard is preferred. When I'm not playing with balls, I love to snuggle up with my person on the couch for a good snooze. And don't mind me when I'm trying to get comfy underneath the covers at night. My snoring will lullaby you to sleep!

### Bentley



Bentley wants to be a country boy! Too many cars and crowded streets are more than he can handle, so 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 an only pet.

**Homeward Bound**  
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# PUZZLES

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## ACROSS

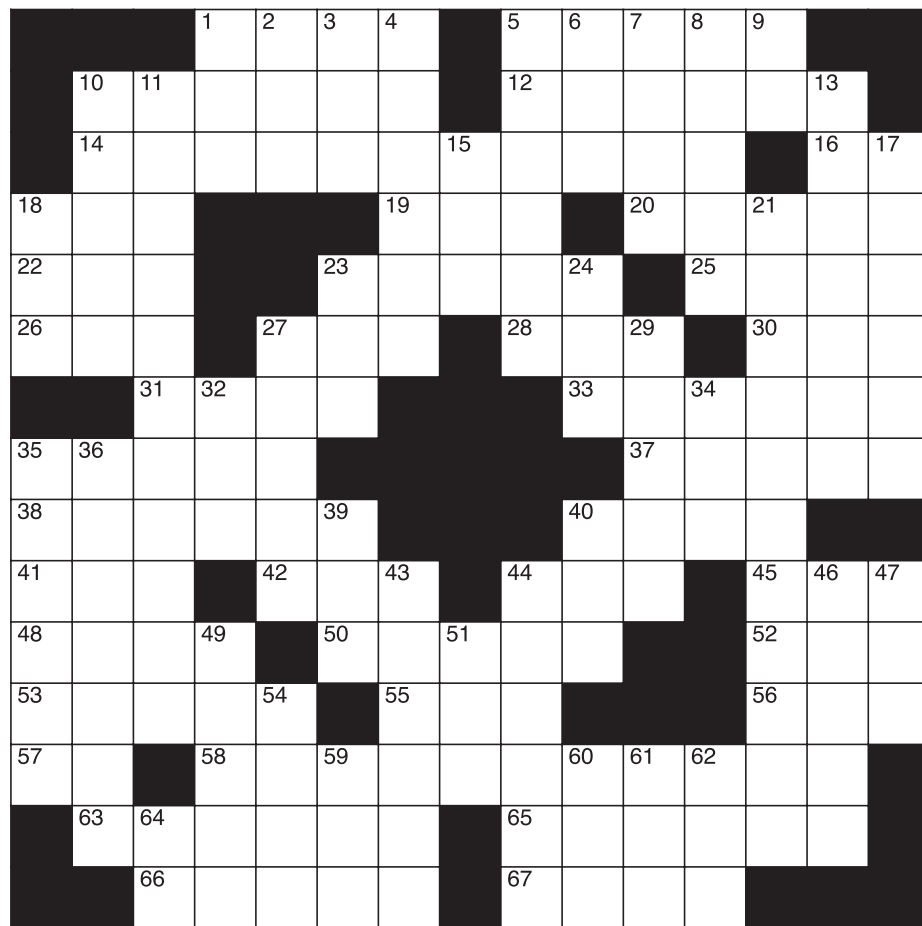
- 1. Native American group of N. California
- 5. Geological times (Brit. sp.)
- 10. Tool to remove
- 12. Rods
- 14. One who renews
- 16. They precede C
- 18. Chatter incessantly
- 19. \_\_ King Cole, musician
- 20. Insect parts
- 22. One from Utah
- 23. The world of the dead
- 25. Singer Redding
- 26. NBA legend Nelson
- 27. Indicates wrongly
- 28. Unhappy
- 30. Anger
- 31. Dark brown

- 33. Some are in kitchens
- 35. Made a mistake
- 37. Damp
- 38. Type of fuel
- 40. Actor Damon
- 41. What thespians do
- 42. One's mother
- 44. Disallow
- 45. Swiss river
- 48. A banana has one
- 50. Philippines lake and volcano are two
- 52. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 53. Agave
- 55. Journalist Tarbell
- 56. One-time tech giant
- 57. Indicates upon
- 58. Intestinal bacteria
- 63. Loose sheaths around the spinal cord

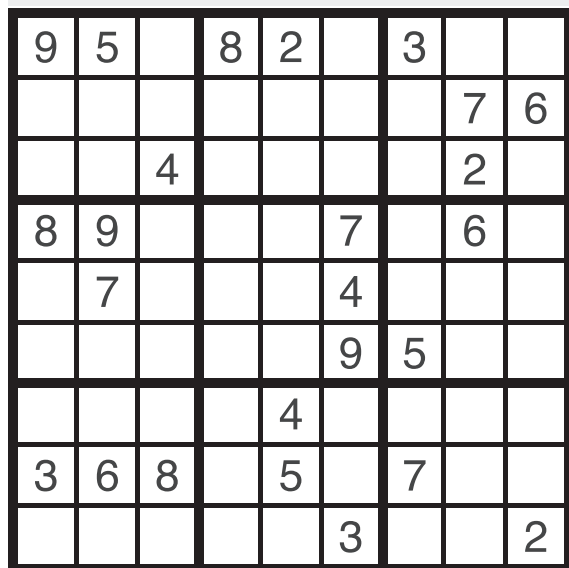
- 65. It goes with nook
- 66. A fashion
- 67. Very eager to hear or see

## DOWN

- 1. Witch
- 2. Utilize
- 3. Writing utensil
- 4. Where rockers go to work
- 5. Subsides
- 6. Consume
- 7. Greek mythological figures
- 8. California mountain town
- 9. Tin
- 10. Muse of lyric and love poetry
- 11. Animates anew
- 13. Humorous criticisms



- 15. Cool!
- 17. Worst
- 18. Wet dirt
- 21. Designed to be useful
- 23. Hebrew unit of liquid capacity
- 24. High schoolers' test
- 27. Computer device
- 29. Indian territory \_\_ and Diu
- 32. A place to sleep
- 34. AI tool
- 35. Pass or go by
- 36. Indicates a purchase
- 39. A digital tape recording of sound
- 40. More (Spanish)
- 43. Disfigured
- 44. White (Spanish)
- 46. Church building
- 47. Georgia rockers
- 49. Type of surgery
- 51. Much \_\_ about nothing
- 54. Make by braiding
- 59. Local area network
- 60. Unit of work or energy
- 61. Member of indigenous people of Thailand
- 62. Liquefied natural gas
- 64. Distance to top



## 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

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## EXHIBITS

*continued from page 5*

and epistemologies infuse, shape and distort our representations of Africa in the museum. On view Jan. 20-April. 19.

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For more info visit [photoplacegallery.com](http://photoplacegallery.com).

**"On the Street."** Celebrate the opening of "On the Street," a fine art photography exhibition exploring the unscripted rhythm of everyday life through powerful street photography. Featuring work by photographers from around the world. Exhibition on view Feb. 6-28. Free. An opening reception will be held Friday, Feb. 6, 4-7 p.m.

### SPARROW ART SUPPLY

44 Main St., Middlebury

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**"Spotlight on Jill Brooks."** Jill is a self-taught artist and illustrator based in Brandon. Working in gouache, watercolor and colored pencil, her paintings celebrate the quiet poetry of everyday life. This collection centers on familiar household objects and small rituals, exploring how ordinary spaces hold memory, comfort, and meaning. Jill invites viewers to find awe in the ordinary and reflect on what it means to feel safe, supported, and at home. On view through the month of February.



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# JERSILD

continued from page 2

**DK:** In crafting this novel, how did you determine when to lean into the biographical facts of Curie's life versus your own fictional endeavors?

DJ: At first I thought I would fictionalize more of it, but I started to feel an allegiance

to Marie Curie, almost as if she was going to read it, her family was going to read it. I couldn't shake that off. I did make certain changes, but for the most part I decided that whenever I ran into some inconvenient part of her story, I would try to incorporate it, to have it be something that made the novel richer, more complex.

But this is primarily a novel of Curie's inner life, and her relationships, and I had to imagine all of that. Of course I read her letters, and they helped me to create her voice.

**DK:** I really like this centering on women's experiences that you bring to this story. I was also looking into your first book, a non-fiction work called "Happy Hours." I wonder how your experience in writing your first book versus this one compares under that woman-focused lens.

DJ: "Happy Hours" is about women in recovery from alcoholism — addiction and recovery are so different for women and men. I interviewed women in recovery, and just listening to their stories was, again, powerful for me, compelling. Come to think of it, my dissertation in grad school was also about women's

*Continued on next page*

## EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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 1-800-669-9777.



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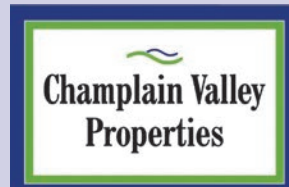
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stories. I interviewed daughters of powerful women — women like Marie Curie's daughters — whose mothers had broken into male-dominated professions and even shaped them on their own terms. I guess I'm interested in women who imagine their way forward through adversity!

**DK: You paint Curie as an exceptionally introspective character. I was wondering how your work as a psychologist informed this perspective that you bring to Curie's life. Do you think she was really like that?**

DJ: I don't think she was as introspective as I portray her. That's just being truthful. This is definitely *my* version of Marie Curie. My voice joined with hers.

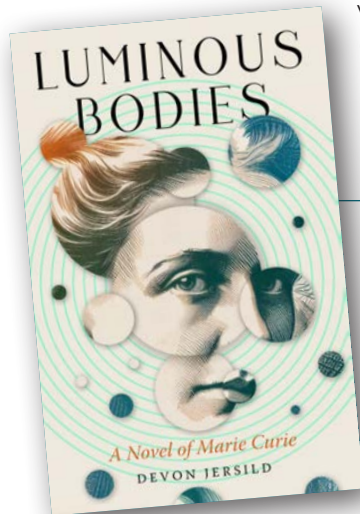
**DK: As a follow-up on that, I was wondering if you see yourself in Curie?**

DJ: Ha! I definitely have areas where I identify with her. Like her, I have a strong obsessive side. Like her, I was a passionate and sensitive child, who loved to learn and to read. I wasn't as young as Marie Curie when she lost her mother — she was only 10 — but I identify with that loss. And then she married a man who was older than her and established as a scientist. My husband is 10 years older — he was already established as a writer when we met. I had ambitions as a writer, but in my case, I knew I needed to differentiate a bit — another reason I went to grad school in psychology instead of writing this novel way back then. Curie stayed in the same field as her husband, of course.

**DK: Throughout the book, Curie struggles between the masculinist discourse around science versus this kind of more feminized discourse of emotion and social relations. I like your description of Curie's scientific**

**approach to motherhood, where she's, for example, concerned with how much milk her baby is getting, and she kind of wishes to measure it and analyze the nutrients. That was a really cool crossover of these two discourses that she seems to be struggling between. I was wondering what you made of this kind of feminized versus masculinized binary, and do you think it's changed at all since Curie's time?**

DJ: Most women who work in traditionally male occupations have stories about what it's like. Women scientists have experiences having their research overlooked or attributed to a man. Or their advisors steal their work. These are sadly still common stories.



**“I'M INTERESTED IN WOMEN WHO IMAGINE THEIR WAY FORWARD THROUGH ADVERSITY!”**

— Devon Jersild

**DK: Towards the end of the book, Curie worries about how her actions have affected other people. She's still focused on Paul and her daughters and even her husband's legacy right to the end, prioritizing others more than herself. What do you make of this?**

DJ: One thing that hasn't changed much is the experience women have of being the glue of the family, holding things together for everyone — Marie Curie wasn't immune to that. And remember, at her lowest point, around the time she takes refuge in England with the scientist Hertha Ayrton, she was at the brink of despair. She was sick, and she suffered guilt and shame — she partly blamed herself for how horribly she'd been treated by the press and even other scientists. She had to learn to deal with that shame, not to let it drag her down, and not attack herself. She had to remember how to carry on. In

the novel, Hertha Ayrton helps her with this.

**DK: I really appreciated the feminist turn the book took, as kind of Curie finds herself surrounded by a circle of other strong women. I really liked this development, and then she's with Hertha Ayrton, Miss Beattie, Miss Sharp, and her own daughters. And for me, this kind of read as a focus on female solidarity. Was that your intention here?**

DJ: I guess it was. Healing is so mysterious. These women you mention, these suffragettes, really did rally around Marie Curie when she was visiting Ayrton, and Curie must have heard about their own brutal treatment — during a protest Ayrton was knocked down by a policeman who proceeded to stomp on her breasts. Ayrton's research articles were rejected for publication as a punishment for her activism. These conversations were healing for Curie as I imagine her — being with women who were angry instead of ashamed, and who didn't think they needed to be perfect.

**DK: What do you hope for other young, ambitious women and other readers to get out of your book? Do you have any advice for them in today's world?**

DJ: I think it helps to know the full-bodied story behind iconic women like Marie Curie, so we don't think they have it easy, or their success and achievements are beyond our reach. Curie struggled with misogyny and bitter losses, but she kept moving forward. She believed that all of us in our own way should try to make the world a better place. She was devoted to a cause that was bigger than herself. And that is ultimately what gave her the most strength.

**DK: That's great. What are your next moves after this book? I mean, it probably feels like a weird transition to start something new when you've been focused on Curie for years now.**

DJ: I'd like to follow it up with a quick little book, a short novel that takes me, you know, a year to write instead of 10! But I'm also working on a memoir.

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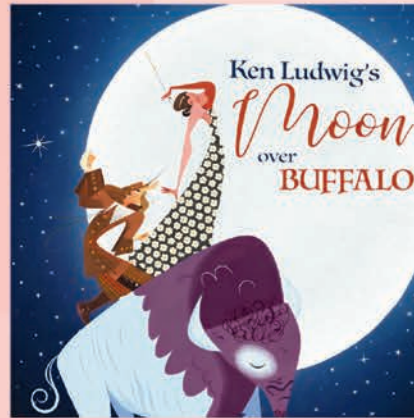
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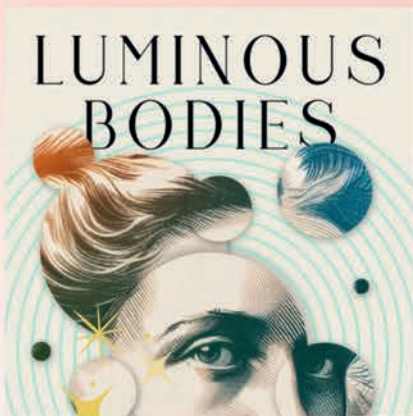
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