



Ice redux

Four Lincoln friends return to an ice-cutting competition 50 years later. See Arts + Leisure.



Payback

MUHS boys' hoop beats Mt. Abe, avenging a January loss in Bristol. See story on Page 1B.



Pay cut

Local farmers and orchardists wonder how new rules will hit their workers. See Page 7B.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Shelters rally for homeless during cold

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Persistent snowfall and frigid temperatures during this particularly harsh Vermont winter are putting a strain on the county's two emergency shelters as they try to protect the local homeless population from at-times perilous outdoor conditions.

Both the John Graham shelter

in Vergennes and Middlebury's Charter House Coalition (CHC) emergency shelter have been consistently full this winter, with waiting lists at both locations. The John Graham Housing & Services (JGHS) shelter at 69 N. Main St. in Vergennes offers eight rooms for homeless families, while the CHC shelter at 27 North Pleasant St. in Middlebury maintains 26

beds for houseless individuals.

While the CHC shelter is limited to 26 guest beds, it has permission from the state of Vermont to open an "overflow" space to accommodate a handful of additional individuals when nighttime temperatures go well below freezing.

Sadly, a tiny nuisance has — until recently — created a

significant problem at the CHC shelter. The discovery of bed bugs in a few areas of the facility in December forced shelter officials to temporarily suspend overflow services during a two-month eradication process that recently concluded.

"It immobilized us," CHC Executive Director Heidi Lacey (See Homeless, Page 10A)

Bristol to weigh local option tax March 3

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Bristol voters on Town Meeting Day will be asked whether to establish a local option tax in their community, a move Bristol officials have said would allow the town to expand its tax base and support initiatives like economic development and capital projects.

A local option tax, or LOT, offers municipalities a way to generate additional revenue by levying a 1% charge on meals, sales, rooms and/or alcoholic beverages. Towns across Vermont have implemented local option taxes, including Middlebury and Brandon. Vergennes voters will also field a local option tax proposal this March.

During a local option tax presentation at the Bristol selectboard's Feb. 9 meeting, selectboard member Ian Albinson noted contributors to the LOT would include visitors and attendees at Bristol events like the Fourth of July and annual Pocock Rocks festival and street fair.

"Our idea and what we want the

voters to support is to allow Bristol to have this so we can claim some of that money from people coming into Bristol and spending time here and spending money," Albinson explained.

It is estimated that a LOT on sales, meals, alcohol and rooms would generate \$250,000 each year for (See Bristol option tax, Page 16A)



NANCY FOSTER NEXT month will retire after an almost half-century as an Addison County real estate broker. She's sold a lot of homes and seen a lot of changes during her career. Independent photo/John Flowers

Foster closing books on real estate career

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Nancy Foster has hung "sold" signs on countless area homes during her storied career as a Middlebury-based Realtor.

At the end of this March she'll be able to put a sign on her own lawn; one that reads "retired."

Foster, 79, will cap her almost

50-year career on March 31— fittingly, the day her broker's license expires.

"I've always loved my job. And when you're working for yourself, you can decide when you want to retire," she said during a recent interview at Champlain Valley Properties, where her days as owner and (See Foster, Page 9A)



Doing something

A COUPLE OF the estimated 45 rallygoers on the Bristol Green on Monday pass on Presidents Day messages for appreciative passersby and for our national leaders. The event was organized by Bristol Area Indivisible, whose members' voices will be raised again in upcoming events. Find out more on Page 13A.

Photo by Jim Mendell

Midd Kid's Olympic run a first for Trinidad & Tobago

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

A winter break ski-trip is a favorite among college students.

A trip to Italy to be one of the first alpine competitors to represent a small island nation in the Caribbean? That's unusual.

But it's just how Middlebury College sophomore Nikhil Alleyne spent his February recess and the first days of spring



ALLEYNE

semester classes.

While his peers collected syllabi and started on homework, the 21-year-old this past Saturday made history as the first Olympic alpine skier to compete for Trinidad and Tobago.

"My only hope for me competing is that I could inspire more people from different cultures to maybe try ski racing," he told the Independent (See Alleyne, Page 14A)



By the way

Renovation and expansion of Middlebury's Ilsley Library at 75 Main St. is progressing steadily in anticipation of a summer reopening. According to Ilsley Executive Director Dana Hart, a major focus right now is the installation of the HVAC system and ductwork. Large sections of ductwork are now in place throughout the building, and in areas where it will remain (See By the way, Page 14A)

Into the woods

Leicester couple deep into stewardship of Vermont forestland

By MARIN HOWELL

LEICESTER — Leicester residents Mark and Catie Raishart spend a lot of time in the woods.

Forests are central to their professions — Catie as the education and communication coordinator for southern Vermont at the Vermont Woodlands Association and Mark as county forester for parts of Addison and Rutland counties.

Together, the pair also manages a working forest at their small farm and homestead, Foxglove Farm. Woodland stewardship is something the Raisharts have been recognized for in the past, as well as a focus on educational events offered by the pair at Foxglove.

For the Raisharts, the forest is more than a physical place — it's

a means of connection to the land and people around us.

"I always tell people if you imagine a bike wheel, and the center is the woods and then we're all on the outside, there's so many different things that bring us a love to that center piece," Catie said. "Whether it's sugaring or skiing or that your grandfather took you out into the woods and you have fond memories of it; it's such a collection point for humanity to have a shared experience."

Catie noted she's had a lifelong love of the woods, and she's recently taken that passion and the experiences gained at Foxglove Farm into her role at the Vermont Woodlands Association.

"Part of what the woods (at Foxglove) inspired in me that I try to take to that job is making woods



MARK AND CATIE Raishart together run Foxglove Farm, a small farm and homestead in Leicester. Their work with forests extends beyond management of the wooded acres at their property, as Mark serves as county forester for parts of Addison and Rutland counties and Catie as the education and communication coordinator for southern Vermont at the Vermont Woodlands Association. Independent photo/Marin Howell

language accessible to a wide audience of people," she said.

Education and communication are also key parts of Mark's work as county forester, a position he's served in since 2024. He's one of several county foresters around the state and covers a region made up of southern Addison County

and northern Rutland County.

In his role, Mark does outreach around forest management and encourages landowners to manage their forests in a way that's sustainable and ecological, "but also in a way that can keep it productive and be contributing to (See Forest, Page 16A)

Middlebury is primed for a sweet event

1st chocolate festival slated for mid-March

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The town of Middlebury has already earned its status as a hub for movie magic, courtesy of the annual Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival (MNFF).

A local entrepreneur is now hoping to further sweeten the shire town's reputation.

Hanna Loeffler, managing partner of Middlebury's Adagio Chocolates, is busy stirring and tempering what she hopes will be a delicious inaugural Vermont Chocolate Festival designed to draw scads of cocoa cravers and cognoscenti to the new wing of the historic Town Hall Theater on March 14-15.

Loeffler said the festival idea sprang from a series of conversations Adagio officials began having last spring with Better Middlebury Partnership co-directors Kathryn Torres and Kelly Flynn, about how the downtown might create some buzz and commerce during off-peak times of year — such as "mud season." (See Middlebury, Page 10A)

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Federal funds released for broadband buildout

Maple Broadband among Vermont service providers to receive funding

MIDDLEBURY — Maple Broadband, the community-governed internet service provider based in Middlebury, last week got the final OK on a federal grant that will fully fund its buildout of high-speed internet throughout 20 Addison County towns.

The announcement came following the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's approval of Vermont's Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) plan on Feb. 9, which will bring \$100 million to hook up high-speed internet all over the Green Mountain State. Gov. Scott and Vermont's Congressional delegation hailed the arrival of the funds, which they said will reach 99% of Vermonters.

Maple Broadband's share of this federal allocation is \$9.27 million, according to Executive Director Ellie de Villiers.

"The really important thing is that we believe it's sufficient to finish this generational infrastructure investment," she told the *Independent*. "We are one day closer to universal broadband."

When Maple Broadband received its first construction grant from the Vermont Community Broadband Board in 2022, there were close to 6,000 on-grid addresses within the district that did not have access to internet speeds of 25/3 Mbps or greater. In 2024, the federal definition of broadband increased to 100/20 Mbps or greater, a standard that only fiber-optic and

coaxial cable connections can reliably meet. The BEAD grant provides funding to reach this higher standard, and includes the costs of installing underground conduits for buried installations.

"We have come a long way since Maple Broadband was formed in late 2020," said Maple Broadband Chair Steve Huffaker. "We have almost 250 miles of active service in Addison County and hundreds of customers. And there are fewer people 'freezing' in our video meetings! But there remain portions of our district that we haven't had the funds to build yet, so we're excited to have secured the funding to finish the job."

Maple Broadband submitted its BEAD application in partnership with Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). The grant will fund construction to remaining unserved addresses across the district, including areas where WCVT provides service. Towns receiving the most new construction under this grant include Starksboro and Lincoln, served by WCVT, and Middlebury, Ripton, New Haven, and Ferrisburgh, served by Maple Broadband.

This investment will help WCVT reach the remaining addresses in its service area with fiber-optic internet.

"Expanding our fiber network so that every customer has access to fast, reliable broadband remains a top priority. Our partnership with Maple Broadband has driven major progress, and this new

grant funding will help us finish the remaining buildout and move closer to delivering 100% fiber optic service across our territory," said Roger Nishi, general manager at WCVT.

One of the conditions of Maple Broadband's existing construction grant funding is to ensure that all on-grid addresses within the district have access to broadband service. "This BEAD award positions Maple Broadband for future success by enabling us to fulfill our universal service obligations without taking on interest-bearing debt," said de Villiers. "Since we were announced as provisional BEAD awardees in August 2025, we have been working on engineering design and planning while Vermont awaited federal approval. We are excited to begin construction as soon as possible."

BEAD-funded construction is expected to commence later this year, after Maple Broadband receives its grant agreement and has received the necessary authorizations to begin construction.

NEW PROGRAMS

This funding news comes only two weeks after Maple Broadband launched its Affordable Drop Program (ADP) and Local Equitable Access Fund (LEAF). Those are two new programs that lower the cost of getting connected to high-speed fiber internet for residents across its service area. Together, these programs support households that face financial

barriers to getting, or staying, connected to reliable broadband.

As a community-owned and locally governed provider, Maple Broadband is governed by residents of its 20 member towns, who make decisions in the public interest rather than to maximize profit. Officials said this local governance structure enables Maple Broadband to design affordability programs that respond directly to needs and priorities of Addison County residents.

LEAF funds a \$30 monthly service discount and waives the \$149.95 installation fee for qualifying households. It is financed directly by Maple Broadband.

de Villiers said Maple Broadband already has five LEAF recipients and more in the pipeline.

The Affordable Drop Program covers the costs of installing underground conduits for buried installations, and other costs not covered by Maple Broadband's standard installation fee. This program is funded by a grant received from the Vermont Community Broadband Board. Under the terms of this grant, all work must be complete by fall of 2026.

Residents, community partners, and local officials interested in learning more about these affordability programs, service availability, or Maple Broadband's buildout plans can visit maplebroadband.net or contact Maple Broadband directly.



VERMONT AFGHAN ALLIANCE last week announced the appointment of Ellen Yount of Starksboro as its new executive director, effective March 4.

Starksboro woman to head Vt. Afghan Alliance

Ellen Yount to take the helm March 4

By EMMA GREEN
VTDigger.org

A former international development expert will take over as the Vermont Afghan Alliance's new executive director, the organization announced on Feb. 9.

Ellen Yount of Starksboro will succeed Molly Gray, who announced last month that she will run for lieutenant governor.

"We are excited to welcome her as our new leader, and she is eager to continue the Alliance's growth — supporting Afghan refugees in Vermont and demonstrating the economic and cultural benefits Afghans bring to our state," Jim Gelber, president of the Vermont Afghan Alliance's board of directors, said in a press release.

Yount's experience includes time working at the U.S. Agency for International Development, and at Management Systems International, a Tetra Tech company, which consults on international development projects.

"Clearly, it is a very critical time for Afghan refugees here in Vermont and across the United States," Yount said in an interview,

emphasizing the challenges that changes to federal funding and the escalation of ICE activity pose for the Vermont Afghan Alliance.

"I am proud to be part of a community of Vermonters who have opened their hearts and homes to families who have faced hardship and upheaval," Yount said in a press release.

Prior to Gray's leadership of the Vermont Afghan Alliance, she was lieutenant governor from 2021 to 2023. She then became the first executive director of the alliance. Under Gray's leadership, it has expanded from a small, local program into a statewide organization that aims to serve about 650 Afghan community members living in Vermont.

"Molly has been the guiding light of the Alliance during a period of extraordinary growth," Gelber said in the press release. "She helped build this organization from the ground up — transforming it from a small, volunteer effort into a trusted statewide nonprofit serving hundreds of Afghan families."

Yount will start her new position March 4.

OVUU board considers its procedures

School directors talk with lawmakers about making education affordable

By J.T. PRICE

BRANDON — At the invitation of the Otter Valley Union Unified school board, three members of the state legislator opened the Feb. 17 meeting with a discussion of relevant state policy and legislative action. The meeting included State Sen. Terry Williams, R-Rutland; State Sen. Dave Weeks, R-Rutland; and State Rep. Peter Conlon, D-Addison-2.

Present in person, for a second week in a row, to show support for those advocating

that the Caverly school program remain in place was State Rep. Alicia Malay, R-Rutland-8. Accompanying Malay were over 15 members of the community, including several faces who spoke in favor of maintaining the Caverly preschool program at the last meeting.

The three area state representatives addressed the following topics via Zoom:

HEALTHCARE

OVUU Chair Laurie Bertrand asked what was being done at the state level, which she said carried the potential for lowering school budgets. Rep. Conlon stated that Vermont's "demographics make reduced health care costs difficult. We are an 'overhospitalized' and aging state. The problem is probably not solvable without national changes."

Sen. Weeks suggested that, as a national issue, health care could be paired with immigration policy—meaning, a way to bring skilled workers to the country and the state—but that this is not a priority "at the national level."

"Health care costs in Vermont are three-times those of New Hampshire," he said, reflecting the relative age distribution of the respective states' populations, with Vermont skewed much older.

Sen. Williams said that he has personally spoken with Governor Phil Scott regarding potential fixes to health care, and that the Green Mountain Care Board is doing what it can to bring down costs in the state.

CAREER ED CENTERS

Rep. Conlon said that the Secretary of Education is working now on a CTE (Career Technical Education) bill that would promote the creation of new CTE centers. Equitable statewide funding remains a goal to counteract the relative disparity in costs depending on the county or township in question.

"CTE is critical to the future of the state," Sen. Weeks said, citing the potential for common scheduling between public schools, which would allow students to more easily move between CTE centers and regular classes.

STATE VS. LOCAL CONTROL

Rep. Conlon observed the paradoxical snag whereby Vermonters have advocated for local control rather than forced school mergers, only to come back to state reps with statements to the effect of "Don't stick us with hard choices: You make 'em!"

Sen. Williams remarked on declining student populations and the challenge of drawing up a five-year plan in such an environment.

The subject drew comments from the OVUU board. Board member Mullin commented, "Act 73 is putting us in an awful position because it marks out nothing of substance."

"Montpelier is in the way," said Board member Kevin Thornton. "The sword of Damocles is over

our heads."

THE VERMONT ECONOMY

Sen. Williams acknowledged that state budgets being decided in a timely manner would help clarify matters for school boards across the state. The fundamental problem Vermont faces, as he sees it, is a stagnant economy.

Chair Bertrand summarized priorities as follows: "1. Jobs, 2. Infrastructure, and 3. Housing." With respect to infrastructure, she said, "We have half an interstate on Route 4, but what about the other half?"

OVU clerk Amber Lee spoke to her view as a private citizen that consolidation is inevitable and the question facing the OVUU board is "How do we position ourselves to be a player in the game?" There is a race, she feels, to be the first school to renovate facilities.

RNESU Superintendent René Sanchez thanked the three representatives and said he is "happy you guys are working on inputs to a strong education system, even without knowing what we're going to get at the end of it." The statewide graduation rate, he added, is going down, and Vermont students are falling behind on literacy.

OV student board representative Braeden Waldie shared his view that "the majority of my peers like the state, but there are not as many jobs here as in the rest of the country."

Rep. Conlon thanked the Otter Valley board for "a frank and

(See OVUU, Page 3A)



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ExperienceMiddlebury.com

Local man pleads not guilty in Hancock shooting death

HANCOCK — A local man who turned himself into police on Tuesday later that day pleaded not guilty in the killing of a Rochester man in Hancock on Feb. 8.

Tanner Leary, 22, of Hancock, was arraigned on one count of second-degree murder in Addison Superior Court, criminal division. The charge is being prosecuted by the Vermont Attorney General's Office following a Vermont State Police investigation into the fatal shooting of 45-year-old Howard Doyle a week ago Sunday.

Leary pleaded not guilty at

his arraignment Tuesday at Middlebury's Frank Mahady Courthouse. Judge Alison Arms set Leary's bail at \$100,000 along with pre-trial conditions of release requiring that he be accompanied by a responsible adult, agree to a 24-hour curfew at his residence, not possess any firearms or dangerous weapons, and not have contact with the victim's family.

Vermont State Police Det. Sergeant Joshua Lewis outlined his investigation of the case in an

(See Murder, Page 3A)



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Feb 18 - Feb 24

OVUU

(Continued from Page 2A)
 direct conversation” and the trio signed off.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Following the discussion with the state legislators, the board entered an hour-long executive session during which the OVUU board spoke with legal counsel regarding potential challenges to a violation of the Open Meetings law brought by advocates of keeping the Whiting School in place. In this session and in previous discussions, the board apparently remained satisfied that no open meeting violations had occurred and did not note any motions or formal board actions that were taken during the executive session, after which the floor was turned over to community members for public comment.

During those comments, several residents expressed concern about the notification process for important decisions, and how that negatively impacts public trust.

“The board works for the community,” said Jean Kaufman, who questioned why a simple majority was not enough to sustain the Caverly pre-school program. At the previous meeting, the board voted 6-4 in favor of keeping the program, but Bertrand ruled the vote failed because it did not meet the threshold of a majority of all the board’s 13 members. When asked about what constitutes a majority vote in a follow-up phone call, Supt. Renee Sanchez reaffirmed that over a year ago the board’s legal counsel had instructed the school boards in that district to consider a majority be based on the number of board members elected. Robert’s Rules of Order, on the other hand, states that a majority is based on a simple majority of those members present of any board that constitutes a quorum.

Caverly parent Jennifer Brittenham cited survey findings presented during the last meeting by Supt. Sanchez with respect to declining feelings of safety and belonging at Otter Valley Middle and High Schools. It is at a program like Caverly, Brittenham said, that students learn adults

can be trusted, and that they, as children, are valued and have a place of belonging.

While Bertrand stated she does not believe the Open Meeting law was violated at any time during the discussion over the closing of the Whiting School or merging the Caverly program, the OVUU board nevertheless moved to “cure,” or reaffirm, the board’s prior votes — including the votes to move the Caverly and Whiting programs, and subsequent failed efforts to rescind the Caverly move — with the motion passing by a 9-2 margin, with members Mullin and Kevin White objecting.

In the upcoming March elections for OVUU board seats, only one potentially new voice is officially running to be seated.

Following the meeting, Chair Bertrand told *the Independent* she believes the board has done “the right thing” regarding the Whiting and Caverly consolidations, citing “safety” and “programmatic” concerns. She mentioned the location of Caverly, in the woods where anybody has access to the trails, as a potential problem. That, however, flies in the face of other community members who say the Caverly location is safer because of its proximity to the adjacent police station and away from Route 7 traffic.

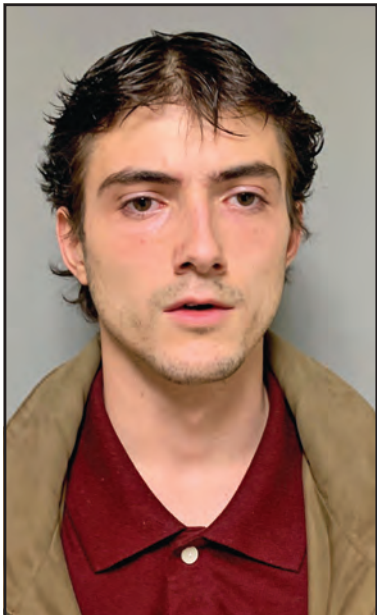
By “programmatic” concerns, Rep. Malay speculated in conversation with community members at Tuesday’s meeting, that Bertrand meant state pressure to consolidate the most possible students at one location.

In an email to the *Independent*, Malay elaborated on her point: “Caverly is right behind our (Pittsford’s) town office which houses our police department. Any programs stated, such as music and art, are already provided to three-and four-year-olds at Caverly as part of their day. Bertrand has been quoted early in budget talks as saying closing the preschools (Caverly and Whiting) and moving them to the elementary schools would look good to the state as far as proactive consolidation. The middle school model being pushed by her is also supposed to make Otter Valley less likely to be closed in the future.”

Murder

(Continued from Page 2A)

affidavit filed at the courthouse. Lewis wrote that Leary had been in a dispute with Doyle for some time because Leary didn’t want his 17-year-old sister to date Doyle’s 23-year-old son. According to Lewis, Leary told him that Doyle had come to Leary’s mobile home on Bettis Road in Hancock on Friday, Feb. 6, and Leary ended up hitting Doyle in the face. Doyle told Leary he would get back at him, according to the affidavit.



TANNER LEARY

After some messaging on Facebook, Leary heard cars revving their engines in his neighborhood over the next two days, and he assumed they were Doyle and his family, which frightened him, according to Lewis’s affidavit.

On the morning of Feb. 8, Leary was outside his home chopping wood at around 10 a.m., when he said Doyle showed up and carried a can of fuel toward the mobile

home threatening to burn it down, according to court documents. Leary is alleged to have shot Doyle as many as seven times with a Smith and Wesson M&P Shield 9mm pistol, according to the affidavit.

Troopers were called to Bettis Road around 10:30 a.m. and found Doyle shot to death and a fuel jug near the crime scene.

State police said their initial investigation indicated this incident arose from a dispute involving individuals who knew one another. The investigation was conducted by members

of the Vermont State Police Major Crime Unit, Bureau of Criminal Investigations, Crime Scene Search Team, Field Force Division and Victim Services Unit.

Police said that Tanner turned himself in Tuesday morning at the state police barracks in New Haven, where he was taken into custody and processed.

ADDISON COUNTY

School News

The University of Hartford is pleased to announce that **Olivia Depatie of Brandon** has been named to the University of Hartford’s dean’s list for the spring 2025 semester.

The dean’s list recognizes students achieving superior academic standing. The

requirement, with some exceptions, is a grade point average of at least 3.0 and no grade below C.

Northern Michigan University has announced its dean’s list for the Fall 2025 semester. **Anya Raley of Salisbury** was among the students to qualify with a grade point average of 3.50-3.99.



Winter pattern

AFTER A COUPLE rounds of generous snowfalls, the branches of this Middlebury crabapple tree were nicely outlined in white stuff this week.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

Agri-Mark fined for Middlebury discharge violations

MIDDLEBURY — The Agency of Natural Resources’s Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on Feb. 12 announced it had fined Agri-Mark Inc. \$60,000 for what it described as “multiple violations of its pretreatment discharge permit at its dairy and whey processing facility off Exchange Street in Middlebury.

Agri-Mark officials, in a same-day corporate statement responding to the fine, said the company has “worked constructively with our regulatory partners at the Agency of Natural Resources to address wastewater compliance challenges at our Middlebury, Vermont, facility.”

The DEC, through a press release, alleged that Agri-Mark since July 1, 2022, has violated 15 conditions of its discharge permit, “including numerous exceedances of Biological Oxygen Demand and pH (phosphorous) effluent limits, unpermitted discharges of high-strength waste to the municipal treatment system, and multiple monitoring and reporting violations. Several of these instances resulted in impacts to the (Middlebury) municipal wastewater treatment facility. Agri-Mark also failed to maintain the facility in good working order and did not employ an adequate number of staff.”

To resolve the violations, Agri-Mark has agreed to hire a qualified consultant to evaluate the facility and its waste management procedures, develop a compliance and operations plan for the regulator to review and approval, and ensure adequate staffing. They also agreed to a fine of \$60,000 for the violations. This agreement was incorporated into a final judicial order of the Vermont Superior Court, Environmental Division.

In its statement, Agri-Mark

officials state the following:

“We recognize the importance of this matter to our neighbors, our employees, and the broader community, and we sincerely appreciate their understanding as we worked toward a lasting solution. The cooperative initiated a significant investment in upgraded wastewater processing technology,

including the engineering, acquisition and installation of additional treatment capacity to provide more robust and reliable performance. This equipment was installed in late 2024 and fully commissioned in early 2025. The facility has been operating in full compliance with its discharge permit requirements since then, and

we are actively working towards completing all requirements and timelines outlined in the AOD.

“Protecting the environment is something we take seriously. We remain committed to operating responsibly, upholding environmental stewardship, and maintaining the trust of our community and regulators.”

Elderly Services, Inc.

Spring 2026 Community Education Series

April 22:
Advanced Care Planning
 Find out more about how the Vermont Advance Directive process works, get free forms and informational brochures and ask your questions about how to get started with your advance directive including: Having advance care planning conversations with your loved ones and clinicians. Available tools to plan for your healthcare (advance directives, DNR/COLST, disease-specific addendums). How to use advance directives to make a plan for serious illness or end-of-life circumstances.
Presented by: Taylor Murray, Vermont Ethics Network Advance Care Planning Program Manager
Wednesday, April 22, 4:00-5:30 PM
 Elderly Services, 112 Exchange Street, Middlebury

April 29:
Combating Fraud in the Digital Age
 Learn how to protect yourself from the growing threats of fraud targeting older adults. This session will cover current computer, telephone, and mail scams, including impersonation fraud, check fraud, phishing and more. Learn how to recognize common fraud tactics and discover practical steps to safeguard your personal information, bank accounts, and businesses. We’ll provide easy to understand tips on protecting yourself from identity theft, securing your digital banking, and avoiding falling victim to fraudsters.
Presented by: Erin Small, M&T Bank
Wednesday, April 29, 4:00-5:30 PM
 Elderly Services, 112 Exchange Street, Middlebury

May 6:
“You Are Not Alone”
 Caring for an aging loved one with memory loss: signs, symptoms and strategies
Presented by: Eileen Lawson, Geriatric Social Worker, Elderly Services, Center for Positive Aging
Wednesday, May 6, 4:00-5:30 PM
 Elderly Services, 112 Exchange Street, Middlebury

May 13:
Alzheimer’s and Dementia: Signs and Symptoms
 Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of Alzheimer’s or other dementia. Alzheimer’s is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are 10 warning signs and symptoms. Come to this program to learn more about how to identify and respond to these warning signs.
Presented by: Jordan Cotton, Vermont Chapter/ Alzheimer’s Association
Wednesday, May 13, 4:00-5:30 PM
 Elderly Services, 112 Exchange Street, Middlebury

May 20:
Driving and Aging - Challenges and Strategies
 What happens if you or a loved one can no longer drive? Join us for an informative session on the challenges older drivers face in Vermont. Learn about the Yellow Dot Program, a statewide initiative that gives first responders quick access to important medical information during a crash or emergency. Discover helpful tips on staying independent, safe, and mobile behind the wheel. We’ll also cover how to approach the difficult conversation about driving retirement and start planning for the future.
Presented by: Julia Sarrasin and Emily Fredette, Vermont Department of Health
Wednesday, May 20, 4:00-5:30 PM
 Elderly Services, 112 Exchange Street, Middlebury

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Editorials

Jesse Jackson: 'A true giant'

Jesse Jackson, 84, died Tuesday at his home in Chicago. His life's work changed the country in fundamental ways, laying the bedrock for a broader acceptance of African Americans in all walks of life.

Though controversy seemed to always surround him while working with Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Council during the mid-1960s and later after King's assassination on April 4, 1968, he would successfully form the Rainbow PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) Coalition in 1971, and years later establish the National Rainbow Coalition, a platform for his presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988.

A student of theology, he used the cadence of gospel rhetoric in stirring speeches throughout his career to great effect.

"My constituency," he proclaimed at the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, "is the desperate, the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected and the despised. They are restless and seek relief."

In 1988, Jackson ran a strong campaign picking up seven million votes in primaries, even though Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis was the eventual nominee. Even so he continued to campaign hard as a vice-presidential choice. According to a *New York Times* obituary, Jackson's convention speech that year in Atlanta "electrified" those at the convention, recalling his own story of "overcoming poverty and abandonment with the aspirations of those represented by his Rainbow Coalition, coming back again and again to the search for 'common ground' and to all those forgotten corners of American life. 'Call you outcast, low down, you can't make it, you're nothing, you're from nobody, subclass, underclass, when you see Jesse Jackson, when my name goes in nomination, your name goes in nomination. I was born in the slum, but the slum was not born in me. And it wasn't born in you, and you can make it.'"

He ended the speech repeating the refrain "Keep hope alive!" four times, a speech, *The Times* wrote, that was "immediately hailed as an American political classic."

"With his gospel of seeking common ground," *the Times* wrote, "and his demands for respect for those seldom accorded it, Mr. Jackson... enunciated a progressive vision that defined the soul of the Democratic Party, if not necessarily its policies, in the last decades of the 20th century. It was a vision, animated by the civil rights era, in which an inclusive coalition of people of color and others who had been at the periphery of American life would now move to the forefront and transform it."

Much of Jackson's work, along with others, laid the groundwork for the election of President Barack Obama in 2008. In praising Jackson's "lifetime of service," Obama called him a "true giant," adding that "We stood on his shoulders."

Vermont's Sen. Bernie Sanders hailed Jackson as "one of the very most significant political leaders in this country in the last 100 years. Jesse's contribution to modern history is not just bringing us together; it is bringing us together around a progressive agenda."

The contrast to today's politics, in which white supremacists are ascendant in the Republican Party and an overtly racist president extols the virtues of policies that denigrate Americans who are not part of his increasingly narrow base, is too stark to ignore and a commentary of its own.

It's also reason to join the fight today against such a limiting vision of American greatness, strength and vitality.

Jackson often spoke of the power of unity and of bringing the American people together to overcome the nation's biggest problems. In his 1998 convention speech, Jackson told a story of his grandmother, too poor to afford a blanket in Greenville, South Carolina to keep the family warm, taking pieces of old cloth, "only patches, barely good enough to wipe off your shoes with" and sewing them into a quilt, calling it "a thing of beauty and power and culture."

"Be as wise as my grandma," Jackson implored Democrats with a theme that is as relevant today. "Pull the patches together, bound by a common thread. When we form a great quilt of unity and common ground, we'll have the power to bring about health care and housing and jobs and education and hope to our nation. We, the people, can win."

Angelo Lynn

Vote 'yes' on Bristol's LOT

As Town Meeting Day approaches, Bristol residents are considering whether to approve a local options tax, which would levy a 1% charge on meals, sales, rooms and alcoholic beverages. The LOT is expected to raise \$250,000 per year.

Bristol residents will benefit by voting yes. Here's why:

- First, a local option tax spreads the tax burden among visitors from distant places, as well as residents in neighboring towns who visit Bristol to shop. It makes sense to spread that tax burden as widely as possible.
- Second, other towns that are a center of commerce — like Middlebury, Brandon, Burlington — already have local option taxes, so shoppers are unlikely to avoid shopping in Bristol because of the slightly higher tax on goods. The tax is also exempted on items of necessity, like clothing, groceries, prescription drugs and residential heating fuels.
- Third, and most importantly, a LOT can help Bristol residents afford improvements to the town that property taxes alone can't accommodate. Because Vermonters are already stretched with high property taxes, it's difficult enough for town selectboards to recommend higher taxes to fix roads or other capital improvements, let alone tackle other crucial items like climate resilience, emergency preparedness and economic development. And because Trump's "big ugly bill" has cut federal support of municipal infrastructure, climate resiliency and has politicized FEMA, it's increasingly important for towns of Bristol's size to be prepared to shoulder more of the burden themselves when the need, or disaster, arises.

• Lastly, Bristol has smartly dedicated the LOT funds into four buckets: a minimum of 40% going to capital infrastructure, a minimum of 20% to economic development and a minimum of 20% to climate resilience and emergency preparedness, with 20% in a flexible account to go where it's most needed. That self-discipline helps prevent spending on items some residents might consider frivolous.

There is, in fact, little downside to approving a local options tax. That "little" isn't nothing — locals will pay a slightly higher cost of goods purchased — but it's money that would likely need to be raised one way or the other. Might as well share that burden with those in the regional neighborhood.

Angelo Lynn



Performance space

A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED lift, seen at the right of this photo, will soon connect the Vergennes Opera House dressing room with the main stage. It's expected to make its debut on March 28, at the conclusion of the VOH's All Access Project renovations. See more photos on Page 15A.

Independent photo/Steve James

Step up for your community

Did you ever get an invitation that would change your life? Forty years ago, while taking a walk, I was stopped by a long-time Ripton resident. He asked, "Would you be interested in running for the Selectboard?" Apparently all three current members would be departing the board, leaving three open seats. I didn't answer immediately, but said I would consider it. And I did: I considered it and decided to do it.

Indeed, this really was a sort of invitation. Not for some party or one-time event, but to enter the community in an entirely new way. We had lived in town almost eight years, long enough to know some people, to have attended Town Meetings, and even get my name written in to serve on the Library Board of Trustees. (That's the sort of thing that can happen when you speak up on an issue in a small town.) My knowledge of the Selectboard was limited to their presence at those Town Meetings, so I attended one of their sessions to check it out. It seemed like it could be interesting, so I took out the petition for the seat with a single year remaining on its term. That would give me a chance to decide whether I would stay with it.

Forty years later, here I am. I announced three years ago that this would be my last term. Starting out, back in 1986, I felt like I could do this to be a part of my community, to help my community. I felt like a participating member. At some point, I found myself feeling like a "town mother." Perhaps during these last few years I might better say town grandmother. So many changes have happened during those 40 years: A computer! The internet! Floods and FEMA (and perhaps the demise of FEMA). We planned, built, and opened a new school for the growing population of

children, and have overseen the closing of that school as our demographics flipped. Almost everything has become more complex and more expensive, but the roads have kept improving, we have built or re-built bridges, and managed more than one iteration to make our town buildings more energy efficient as well as functional.

People organized town potlucks 40 years ago, and they still do. Events like the Ripton Coffee House were born and lasted some decades. The Ripton Ridge Run began in the late '90s. The small, cinder block building that had been the Town Office when I joined this government was left behind when we moved over to the building that once housed the elementary school, and now, again, we may be moving those offices to the building that more recently housed our school.

That's a lot of local history, and every town has some. Likewise, every town and community needs people to accept the invitation — or just step up on their own — to become a contributing part of that community. Sometimes it's difficult to get people to take on all the efforts involved in turning a town into a true community. Sure, we have our jobs, our kids, our gardens, and the real time stealer: our phones. I get it. Some people have online communities, but that is a different sort of entity. We can get immersed in the basic activities of keeping our home and family functioning. We forget that we need to be a part of our community — to take part in our community. How else do we have those roads to drive on, those suppers to connect us, the very people who will come if our house is on fire or we fall off a ladder? Who will plan for

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

Ways of Seeing

By Laurie Cox



State Senate off to a busy start

The weather seems to be warming up, maybe, and work is definitely heating up in the Statehouse. We've voted on Supreme Court nominees, passed resolutions and started to pass bills on the Senate floor. Read on for information about my votes on the Supreme Court nominees; work on housing and land use, including a new Addison County regional plan proposal; legislation to protect Vermonters from federal actions and resolutions expressing solidarity with Minnesota; plug-in solar power, and more.

VT SUPREME COURT NOMINEES

Over the past few weeks, I heard from many people expressing concerns about the candidates nominated by the governor to fill two vacant seats on the Vermont Supreme Court (VSC), Christina Nolan and Michael Drescher, both former United States Attorneys for Vermont under the Trump Administration. The Senate must confirm VSC nominees before they can be sworn in to serve. Initially I had significant reservations about both candidates and spent a great deal of time reviewing their files and interviewing them and their references. In the end, I voted to confirm Christina Nolan, but voted against the nomination of Michael Drescher, who served as

the federal government's attorney in the cases related to the detainment of Mohsen Mahdawi and Rümeyssa Öztürk. Nolan's nomination was approved on a strong bi-partisan vote, but Drescher's nomination was a tie vote that required the lieutenant governor to cast the deciding vote to approve his nomination. You can read more about the votes in the Senate Journal. Please also read the remarks I made on the Senate floor about the candidates to get a fuller picture of the reasoning for my votes. It's disappointing that during this time when so many Vermonters are concerned about the safety and rights of immigrants and all members of our communities, that the governor and lieutenant governor would advance this nominee.

SUPPORTING MINNESOTA AND PROTECTIONS FROM ICE

While ICE and other federal law enforcement is apparently (somewhat) withdrawing from Minneapolis now, it's been heartbreaking and scary to watch the events in Minnesota over the past couple months. The federal government has been terrorizing residents, sending families into hiding, and even killing people on the streets for exercising

(See *Sen. Hardy*, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

ICE shouldn't commit crimes

Regarding the opinion piece from Sen. Heffernan regarding his vote on SR21 (*Addison Independent*, Feb. 12, Page 5A), I am in agreement with the senator on his concerns about bringing justice to victims of violent crime by immigrants. His mention of these victims, parallel to his mention of Good and Pretti, also creates the parallel between the violent gangs that perpetuate these crimes, and the ICE and DHS officers who killed Good and Pretti.

DHS statistics report that less than 14% of those currently incarcerated for immigration violations have convictions for violent crimes. That means 86% are incarcerated only for being in the U.S. illegally. These are people like Hussein Nor Hussein, the cab driver who has lived in Vermont since 2013; or Steve Tendo, employed by the UVM health network. What danger are they to us?

Or the Hmong gentleman, arrested in his home and brought out into sub-zero weather in his slippers, wrapped in a blanket. Or the five-year-old in his bunny hat.

We expect criminals to commit crimes; we do not expect the authorities, employed to protect us, to commit crimes.

Thomas Learmonth
Monkton

'All lives matter' is no defense

In this moment of crisis, when federal agents are killing protesters in the streets, when the U.S. military is killing suspected drug traffickers on the open ocean, and when detained immigrants are held in mass detention centers without meaningful access to legal representation, it is not possible to be neutral. In this context, I was alarmed by Senator Heffernan's explanation for why he refused to sign on to the Vermont Senate's condemnation of ICE's conduct in Minneapolis.

First, his claim to be defending due process is at odds with the purpose of the resolution itself, which is to reaffirm due process in the face of a federal administration that has increasingly abandoned the rule of law.

Second, he falls back on familiar MAGA talking points about "all lives matter," while ignoring the fact that people are far more likely to be killed by an ICE agent than by an undocumented immigrant. He also implies that those of us who believe laws should be enforced with constitutional limits, human dignity and real oversight are somehow opposed to law enforcement altogether.

I applaud the elected officials who were willing to stand up to the actions of the federal government by issuing this condemnation, and I would remind readers that Senator Heffernan is up for reelection this fall. We need representatives who will do what they can to be on the right side of history and to defend our democracy.

Mike Roy
Middlebury

Voters will recall senator's vote

I read the Feb. 12 legislative report from Sen. Steven Heffernan headlined, "Senator explains SR21 vote."

Steven Heffernan just lost the next election by trying to justify his no vote on Resolution SR21, claiming to honor the principle of "due process." What "due process" were Renee Good and Alex Pretti accorded? Then he shamed himself by comparing these two citizens, who were killed by our government while performing their constitutionally-protected right of free speech, with crimes committed on citizens by violent criminals.

We know what side you are on, Steven, you don't need to intellectualize your dissent.

Richard Winslow
Cornwall

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Letters to the Editor

Vermont's municipal leaders making waves in DC

In just under a week, a letter urging stronger Democratic Party opposition to actions by the Trump Administration gathered 105 signatures from Town Democratic Party Chairs across Vermont, and is heading to Washington, D.C. The letter urges Democratic National Committee (DNC) and national legislative leaders to “strongly oppose the direction that the Trump Administration is taking our country. We need bold leadership and active messaging to galvanize our supporters and push back against growing authoritarianism.”

Given extra urgency after the actions of masked and armed federal agents (ICE) in Minnesota, the letter continues, “Consider this letter a wake-up call — a siren. Our country is sliding into an accelerating cycle of violence and instability that disregards our Constitution, our Bill of Rights and international law. At this moment, incrementalism and caution are not virtues; they just contribute to the problems.”

This letter started in the small rural Addison County town of Whiting, when one of its members brought the idea, and a first draft,

to a Whiting Democratic Town Committee meeting in January. A group of three town chairs (Carolyn Schmidt from Whiting, Lise Anderson from Cornwall and Alexis Dubief from Essex) revised the original letter, and sent it out to all 155 Vermont Democratic Town Chairs looking for signatories.

The ensuing response and discussion exceeded the organizers’ expectations. For example, “The Pomfret Town Democratic Committee proudly supports this effort. Thank you for preparing this clear and powerful message.” From Calais: “Everything you say makes a lot of sense, I support all of those efforts. It has been nice, actually, to read all the enthusiastic responses from around the state.”

And from Cabot: “While a few towns have recommended — and I would, too — stronger language, the vast majority seem satisfied with the letter as it stands, and such near-consensus is rare among Democrats.” When the Caledonia County Chair found out about the letter and wanted to sign on, this generated interest from other county chairs, resulting in their decision to create their own letter to take to

the party hierarchy.

This large newly connected group (105 Town Chairs, 68% of the state total), is now planning a Zoom meeting, open to all signatories, to discuss next steps. Lachlan Francis, the chair of the Vermont Democratic Party, has promised that he and others at the state level will do their best to convey the message to their counterparts in other states, as well as to the Democratic National Committee.

Carolyn Schmidt notes, “I’ve always liked the idea of the Democratic Party being a ‘big tent’ — being inclusive of diverse people and viewpoints, and putting in the work to understand each other, respect differences, and find common ground. The town chairs are doing this, and I hope this model will spread to other states. It really is democracy in action.”

Alexis Dubief comments, “I’m proud to be in the company of these wonderful people united against the Trump agenda.”

For more information, reach out to me at carolynschmidt@hushmail.com or 802-623-8075.

Carolyn Schmidt
Whiting Town
Democratic Chair

Sen. Hardy

(Continued from Page 4A)

After the killing of Alex Pretti, I made a statement on the floor of the Senate expressing my solidarity with Minnesota, which you can read here. Last week, the Senate passed a resolution, S.R. 21, which calls for the immediate suspension of the federal government actions in Minnesota, affirms our support of individual constitutional rights, and opposes funding for ICE until there have been comprehensive reforms. You can read the full resolution here, and see the results of the roll call vote here. If you’re looking for ways to support the people of Minnesota, check out this website Stand with Minnesota.

This week, in an effort to protect Vermonters from similar actions here, the Senate passed two important bills to protect residents from federal actions in Vermont. Bill S.208 requires all law enforcement officers to identify themselves and prohibits them from wearing face coverings except in certain specific safety circumstances, and S.209 prohibits civil arrests in sensitive locations, including health care facilities, educational institutions, social service establishments, childcare centers, and polling places. The “supremacy clause” in the U.S. Constitution requires that federal law supersedes state law and states cannot legislate federal actions, so these bills have been carefully crafted to ensure they apply evenly to state and federal law enforcement. They also have strong bipartisan support. Two other bills, providing additional protections for schools and legal support for those detained by ICE, are still in the works. Thank you to the many people who have reached out to me expressing their support for these bills!

LAND USE AND HOUSING

Over the past six years, the Legislature has made large investments in housing and passed major land use reforms to

make housing easier to develop in Vermont. While there is still a huge need, there has been good progress. After the passage of 2024 Act 181, Vermont communities began a major remapping of land use areas, led by regional planning commissions who were tasked with creating land use maps that would essentially divide the state into three tiers of land types — Tier 1 for development (downtowns and dense areas), Tier 3 for wildlife protection (high elevation and fragile ecosystems), and Tier 2 for everything else (farm land, rural areas). Maps for these areas were required to be updated and presented for approval to the new Land Use Review Board (LURB). Read more about this process in recent articles in VT Digger and Vermont Public.

Check out the Addison County Regional Planning Commission updated regional plan and review their proposed land use map. On Tuesday there was to be a public hearing and LURB site visit to discuss the map and plan.

In large part, this land use planning is designed to better plan and develop much-needed housing. The Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) that the Legislature passed last year to support the infrastructure development necessary for housing launched in late January; I know several local towns are planning to take advantage of this program. In addition, the Homes for All Initiative is holding workshops for small-scale developers, including one in Middlebury on April 22. If you’re a potential housing developer, be sure to register now for this opportunity to learn how to develop much-needed housing in our communities. Homes for All is also working on creating a catalog of standard home designs to save cost and time on housing projects. The Senate Natural Resources Committee, where I serve, is also making updates to Act 181 to make sure it’s all still working as

intended, so more to come as our work continues.

PORTABLE SOLAR

Early this session, the Senate unanimously passed a bill, S.202, that would allow small plug-in, portable solar panels to be used in Vermont without going through a lengthy permitting process. These small solar panels, less than 1.2 KW, are already popular in Europe, but are not easy to find in the United States (yet). If (when!) S.202 becomes law, Vermont could become the second state, behind Utah, to permit these handy devices. Because of their size and relatively low cost, allowing portable solar devices would open up solar energy for renters, folks with modest incomes, and people whose housing situation does not allow for full solar panels, making renewable energy accessible to more people. If you want to learn more about portable solar, also known as balcony solar, listen to this episode of the podcast “Volts” called “What’s the Deal with Balcony Solar.” It provides a great overview of what we hope will be available in Vermont very soon!

IN THE NEWS

Finally, congratulations to Starksboro native Ryan Cochran-Siegle on his Olympic success and I’m excited for Leicester’s Hannah Sessions’s announcement that she’s running for Senate (more to come on that soon)! That’s it for now. Thanks for reading and take care.

Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A)

children’s education, where best to have new housing, or see to it that someone opens the recycling shed? Who counts the votes, figures out how to get solar panels on a town building, and facilitates our continued move to a sustainable future?

To me, community is people coming together to help each other, to find a common way forward. As I look back, I can’t imagine how I

would feel about my community if I had not answered that “call.” Being part of a community is a bit like being part of an extended family: it wraps around you as you wrap around it. It protects and supports you as you do likewise for the others it encompasses. I am thankful for these 40 years that I have served, but also have no interest in “retiring” from being an active, contributing member. Getting involved and being involved is not a chore. It is

an opportunity. There are so many possible ways to take part. Reply “Yes” to your next RSVP! You don’t need a 40-year commitment, but stepping up, stepping in, will be worth it.

Laurie Cox is a retired school counselor and longtime Ripton Selectboard member. Besides occasional writing she pursues art, gardening, hiking with her dog, and is always striving to build stronger communities.

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ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Christopher John Connor, 75, of Bridport

BRIDPORT — Christopher John Connor, 75, of Bridport, Vt., passed away peacefully Feb. 7, 2026, from natural causes after a long illness. Born Jan. 1, 1951, in Providence, R.I., Christopher — known simply as Chris to most and Chrissy to his doting siblings — lived a life filled with humor, hard work, generosity and a genuine appreciation for nature and the simple joys that make life rich.

Chris was the son of the late Leo Sr. and Barbara Connor. He is survived by his sons, Kelley and Kirk Connor; his siblings Leo Jr. “Jerry” Connor, William “Billy” Connor, Paul Connor, Barbara “Bobbie” Caldwell, Linda Heitkamp, Elizabeth “Beth” Connor, Mary Pratt, Caroline Martone, Peter Connor and Jonathan Connor; his five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Leo and Barbara and brothers Michael “Mikey” and Joseph Connor, who no doubt welcomed him home with open arms.

Raised in a large Irish Catholic family, Chris grew up with 11 brothers and sisters, forming bonds that carried throughout their lives. Chris moved with the family to a beautiful farm in Bridport when he was still a young boy. Chris thrived on the farm with its many wooded areas and pastures, perfect for spending his days in nature with the birds and animals that he cherished so much.

A proud graduate of Middlebury Union High School, Chris married his high school sweetheart, Kathy Cooke, whom he married in November 1968. While the marriage ended in divorce after more than 30 years, the love that brought them together in marriage brought them back together later in life as close friends and mutual supporters.

Chris was never one to sit still for long. He took on many roles over the course of his life, from self-appointed foreman at Connor Homes to gourmet



CHRISTOPHER JOHN CONNOR

chef at the Blue Hen, where his cooking and unique customer service style became something of local legend. As a successful dairy farmer for over 25 years, he honored the rhythm of the land and the animals that sustained his livelihood. Later in life, he earned both his real estate license and his commercial driver’s license, driving delivery trucks for Connor Homes.

He also learned how to ski with his younger brothers, Peter and Jon at the age of 37 and while no one ever accused Chris of being a swimmer, he did buy a pool and learned how to not drown when he was in his 40s, saying he needed to be able to save his grandchildren and his dog if they ever fell in the pool. At the age of 52, Chris decided to go skydiving with his sons, a decision he regretted all the way to the ground, but further proof that he never stopped learning or exploring new paths.

Athletic, competitive and always ready to laugh, Chris found joy in sports. He was an accomplished bowler, a hilarious golfer, and a Hall-of-Fame-worthy right fielder on the Morgan Hill Farms softball team, where he played with his brothers and sons over the course of three decades and earned the nickname “Buzzard.” For Chris, sports were never just about winning — they were about camaraderie, laughter

and the joy of spending time with family and friends and of course... winning!

Chris had a natural wit and a sharp tongue that could bring levity to any situation. Known for his creative use of profanity, perfectly timed one-liners, and storytelling skills, Chris never had a boring conversation with anyone he met. Beneath his humor was a deep well of kindness — his sometimes colorful language and gruff tone could not hide his tender heart. He was well known for incredible acts of service for family and friends in their darkest hours, and was always ready to share a pot of coffee, whether with family, friends, salesmen and even the occasional bill collector.

He loved nature and knew it intimately — able to name nearly every bird, tree, or wild animal on sight. His days were best spent outdoors or with friends, golfing, bowling, hunting, strumming his guitar, watching the Red Sox and Patriots, or sipping coffee at the Mobil Station while teasing the cashiers who’d long since grown fond of his playful flirting.

Those lucky enough to have known Chris will remember him most for his warmth, his laughter, and his gentle heart. He leaves behind a legacy of humor, hard work, and love that will live on through his family and friends forever.

A memorial reception/wake will be held for Chris at Sanderson Funeral Home, 117 South Main Street in Middlebury, Vt., on Sunday, Feb. 22, from 2 to 4 p.m.

A funeral service will be held on Monday, Feb. 23, at noon in St Bernadette’s Catholic Church in Bridport, Vt., immediately followed by a memorial luncheon at the Masonic Hall across the road at 52 Crown Point Road from 1 to 3 p.m.

In lieu of flowers the family has set up a go fund me page to establish a burial site, memorial path and wildlife sanctuary on the family farm to honor his memory and love of nature at <https://gofund.me/0f00976a6>. ◊

Robert John Naylor II, 73, of Salisbury

SALISBURY — Robert John Naylor II, age 73, passed away peacefully Feb. 8, 2026, at Porter Hospital in Middlebury, surrounded by the love of his family.

Rob was born May 15, 1952, in Middlebury, Vt., to Robert and Alta Naylor. He was raised in Brandon, where he built lifelong friendships and graduated from Otter Valley Union High School, class of 1970. He continued his education briefly at the University of Vermont and later at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

On Feb. 19, 1983, he married the love of his life, Christina Bulken Naylor in Brandon. Together they created a life centered around family, laughter, music and gathering others close. He is survived by his devoted wife, Christina; his son, Rick Naylor; his daughter, Lexi Naylor Shinder and her husband, Jake Shinder; his cherished grandchildren, Noa Lily and Jacob Robert; and his sister, Leslie Kelly. Also, many in-laws, nieces, and nephews. Being “Dad” and “Boppa” was one of his greatest joys.

In 1978, alongside Peter Breen, Rob co-founded Naylor & Breen Builders in Brandon. What began as a shared vision grew into a respected and thriving business, with Rob later serving as President and CEO. He led with integrity, optimism, and an unwavering commitment to quality. To Rob, business was never just about buildings. It was about people, relationships, and strengthening the community he loved.

Rob lived life fully and with enthusiasm. A talented musician, he



ROBERT JOHN NAYLOR II

played guitar, piano, and trumpet, and loved to sing around a firepit, often bringing music, energy, and humor into any room. In his younger years, he was a scratch golfer and remained passionate about the game throughout his life. He was a lifelong member of Neshobe Golf Club, a course the Naylor family helped develop. Rob was instrumental in expanding it to 18 holes, as well as Rutland Country Club, where he proudly won The Pierce in 1983, and Bradenton Country Club in Florida.

He treasured time spent at the lake with family and friends, teaching water sports with patience and pride, and hiking to the summit of Moosalamoo. His legendary Fourth of July fireworks show became an annual tradition that lit up both the sky and the hearts of everyone watching.

He was known for his positivity,

drive, and generosity. Rob worked hard, dreamed big, and was always the first to step up when someone needed help. His philanthropic spirit touched many organizations and countless lives. Just this month, Rob and Chris were honored with the Northern New England Chapter Outstanding Philanthropic Award, a fitting recognition of the generosity and commitment that defined his life.

For six years, Rob faced Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) with courage, dignity, and remarkable grace. Even in the face of challenge, his strength and steady presence remained an inspiration to those around him.

Rob’s life was one of love, leadership, music, laughter and community. His legacy lives on in the family he adored, the company he built, the traditions he created, and the many lives he impacted.

His life was a celebration, and a celebration in his honor will take place on his birthday, May 15, at The Mountain Top in Chittenden, Vt., with the time to be announced. A private graveside committal service and burial will be held in the family lot at Pine Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made in his memory to CurePSP, www.PSP.org, the Otter Valley Activities Association, OVAA, 2997 Franklin St., Brandon, VT 05733 or Addison Home Health, www.ACHHH.org.

Well done, Robbie. We’ve got it from here.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon. ◊

L. Lee Mather, 65, formerly of Vergennes and Whiting

KEENE, N.H. — Lauri Lee Mather (née Potter) passed away Feb. 2, 2026, at her home in Keene, N.H. Her death was attributed to cardiac causes.

Born in May 1960 to Muriel (Clough) Emmons and David Potter, Lee spent her childhood in Vergennes, Vt. She enjoyed visiting the Potter family camp in Roxbury, Vt., and cherished the time spent with her grandmother and great-grandmother there.

After graduating from Vergennes Union High School in 1978, Lee earned a B.A. in Elementary Education at the University of Maine at Farmington, where she developed a lasting passion for special education. In September 1986, she married Timothy Mather, and together they raised four children: Arielle, Joshua, Jessica, and Yanna.



L. LEE MATHER

Lee was a stay-at-home mother during her children’s early years and later navigated significant health concerns, including Multiple

Sclerosis. Despite these challenges, she remained actively involved in her church community and found meaning in helping others. She enjoyed baking for her loved ones, watching for hummingbirds, and always found space for another book.

Lee is survived by her husband, Tim; her four children; her two grandsons, Ethan and Arlo; her “granddog” Roxie; her father; and her two half-siblings. She was preceded in death by her beloved mother, Muriel Emmons, in October 2018.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, April 18, at Sturtevant Chapel, in Keene, N.H. (1-2 p.m. visitation hour; 2-3 p.m. service). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Feeding Tiny Tummies in Keene, N.H. ◊

Llewellyn ‘Welly’ K. Cobden, 57, of Hinesburg

HINESBURG — Llewellyn “Welly” K. Cobden, 57, of Hinesburg, Vt., beloved husband, father, son, brother and friend, passed away unexpectedly, seemingly at the pinnacle of health Oct. 13, 2025. Welly was born on Oct. 29, 1967, to Geoff and Peggy Cobden in New Haven, Vt.

Welly was a kind, soft spoken soul, with a huge heart, a wonderful laugh, and a brilliant smile. His twinkling eyes held love and humor for those around him. Welly shared a curiosity for the world surrounding us, which fueled his sense of adventure and love of life.

Music was a profound part of Welly’s life from a young age — from guitar and singer in a rock and roll band to a classically trained French horn player to trumpet and saxophone in jazz ensembles. Welly pursued his love of music and technology at the University of Vermont and then at the University of Washington. His love of the local live music scene was deep and unyielding, frequently enjoying the incredible depth of talent in our area.

Welly spent 27 years at NRG



LLEWELLYN “WELLY” K. COBDEN

Systems in Hinesburg, Vt., because he cared deeply about growing renewable energy globally. Over the last twelve years he became their foremost expert in LIDAR (light detection and ranging) wind measurement. He was fascinated by a technology that could shoot photons into the air and then create meaningful information from a few reflected back. He loved both working the hardware and working

with customers and travelled the world extensively doing training and repairs. His co-workers described him as brilliant, clever and always low key, focused on work and directly honest.

Perhaps the most important lessons we can all learn from Welly are the importance of setting boundaries around work, prioritizing family, and living a life of joy and fun. Every day held laughter, love and adventures, from mountain bike rides and hikes to river dips and motorcycle trips. The joy and wonder were found in equal measure in our own backyard as it was traveling the world.

Welly loved great food and was a wonderful and creative cook. Any tribute would be remiss without a mention of his love of beer and a good martini.

Welly’s greatest pride was his children for their unwavering kindness; their curiosity for the world around them; and their courage in facing life during our challenging times.

He is survived by his wife, Christa Shute; his children, Bronwen Cobden and Olive Cobden and their mother Heather Rhodes; his father, Geoff Cobden; his mother, Peggy Cobden; and his brother Dylan Cobden, wife Joanna and their children Carter, Chloe, Camden, Austin and Nolan. He was predeceased by stepmother, Nancy Cobden.

We appreciate the efforts, responsiveness, and kindness of the Richmond Rescue EMT and ambulance services as well as UVM Medical Center emergency and surgical teams.

A celebration of life and a dedication ceremony is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 18, at NRG Systems in Hinesburg, Vt. For updates on the event and to share with the family your stories, photos, memories and thoughts please visit www.awrfh.com. ◊

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HARE AND THE DOG

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Priscilla Baker celebration of life

MIDDLEBURY — Please join us to celebrate Priscilla Baker’s life on Saturday, April 25, at 1 p.m.

at the Congregational Church in Middlebury, Vt. Baker died Feb. 5, 2026.

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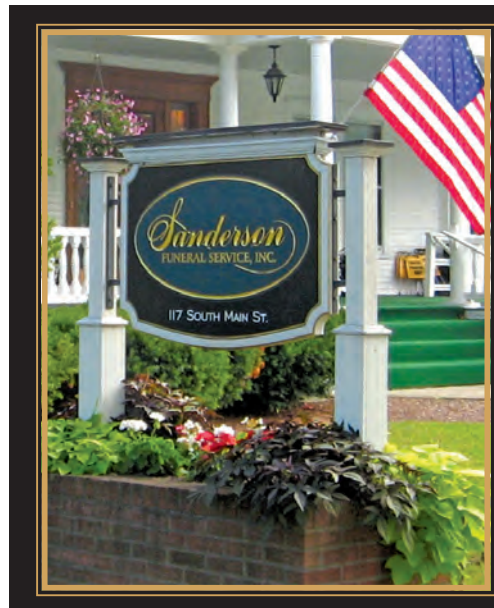
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Edward Scott Galvin, 59, of Salisbury

SALISBURY — Edward Scott Galvin, passed away Feb. 11, 2026, at the age of 59 in Salisbury, Vt.

Sanderson Funeral Home is handling the arrangements. No services will be held at this time.



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A Celebration of Life, for those left behind, helps those family members and friends with closure. Even though your loved one says “I just want to be cremated – no funeral,” they forget the Celebration of Life service is not for them, but for the ones left behind. A service is a healthy way to say good-bye.

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Letters to the Editor

Trump is treating illegal immigrants like Obama did

I'd like to take you on a trip down memory lane.

When President Bill Clinton was giving his State of the Union Address he proclaimed that we could not allow illegal immigrant to infiltrate our country. It would cause economic devastation on the United States of America. It would destroy us.

In comes Barack Obama. Himself, Hillary, Schumer, Bernie, all said on national television that if you were in this country illegally you would be deported. So they did, using the same tactics with ICE that is happening now. No protests, no violence, no problems. Obama deported 920,000 illegal immigrants in his 2 term period.

In 2015 Bernie Sanders did a national televised CPAC broadcast and said we cannot allow illegal immigrants to overrun our country. It would cause economic failure, health care fraud, inflation, national debt.

In 2017 Bernie fought to keep an illegal immigrant in our state, in our county of Addison, cause

gosh he was trying to have a better life. Boo-hoo, aren't we American citizens hoping for the same thing. He is defying the laws of the constitution. Still, an illegal, getting free health care, SNAP, and can get a hunting license in our state and shoot deer.

Now Bernie is supporting a communist socialist in New York City. I thought he was supposed to be supporting the state of Vermont. He has obviously turned to communist socialist himself. Is that what we really want for our state? I think it's time for Bernie to go. He's not supporting American values.

Then in comes Joe Biden. Opens the borders. Floods the country with 15 million illegal immigrants, causing the conditions that Clinton, Obama, Sanders said would happen. Now look at the mess this country is in. Illegal immigrants, criminals of murder, rape, fraud.

President Trump is doing the same thing that Obama was doing. But because he is a Republican with common sense

you folks are in an uproar. What's the difference?

The fraud in this country caused by illegal immigrants is really what you should be in an uproar about. Caused by your present democratic leaders. I think the fraud in this state should be investigated. I'm sure there is plenty of it. Aren't you tired of being ripped off by illegals. I am.

You should start watching Newsmax, Salem news channel, One America Now, The First. These news stations give the real truth unlike NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN.

I know a lot of you are suffering from T.D.S. (Trump Derangement Syndrome). I would suggest calling your mental health hotline to try and help you.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Terry Blair
East Middlebury

Editor's note: We publish this letter to the editor not because we think every word of it is true, but to let a member of our community have a voice, even if we take issue with much of what he says.

There has never been a better time to read, while we still can, Plato's allegory of the cave.

Richard Hawley
Ripton

A new, unwanted incursion into my life from AI

A few months ago, I noted that the first entry in my Google searches were now headed by the words "AI Overview." If I read the entry through, it answered my inquiry with the same authoritative, supremely confident tone as my chatbot. Sometimes the explanation or fact I was looking for was satisfactory and corroborated by other scrollable Google posts.

As I have discovered in repeated probes into my chatbot's veracity, AI can be extravagantly false in its response to requests for historical and cultural information. I was not personally inconvenienced by the insertion of "AI overview" in my Google searches, but I wondered why and how Google found AI any more reliable than I have.

Then, on Jan. 20, my Gmail letters began arriving headed with an "AI summary" of what my correspondent's letter said. When I answered the email, my "sent" mail included a similar AI summary of what I had said. The summaries were in general on point, but frequently clunky and occasionally way off, about the same degree of way off as might be composed by some stranger unknown to me assigned by the state to read all my emails and summarize them for me.

These unasked-for summaries are startling, and they are an affront. I summarize everything I read. That is what reading is, what readers do; to read is to summarize. The effect of reading the AI summary of what I have just read is the equivalent of someone telling me, "No, THIS is what you just read." If I read the AI summary before I read the email, which seems to be Gmail's intention, since the summary precedes the emails on the screen, the effect is being told, "Your expectations aside, THIS is what your friend (or your editor or your tax accountant) means to say."

I have so far been able to ignore the AI summary and go directly to what my email says, though not without a little mental flare of hatred directed at Google and AI out in cyberspace. My real concern, and it is mounting, is for those who might find the summaries helpful or come to rely on them: the kind of person who is willing to acknowledge "Oh, THAT is what my friend feels about our dinner together" or to agree "So THAT's what I wrote to my friend about our dinner together." For such persons (please, don't exist!), their lives as

readers are over, because they have delegated their ability to integrate and summarize printed matter to AI. The next step in that personal devolution of intelligence will be to lose confidence in composing an un-summarized email and thus the motivation to write one. In time, there will be fewer emails, then none, due to the loss of the ability to read at all.

Still troubled by this, I sat down this morning to write an email to my friend and publisher Roger, and before I inscribed a single word, a blue tinted box opened up at the bottom of my screen asking if I needed help writing the email, and if I did, I should press the backslash key on my keyboard. I did not want help. I hadn't even thought of wanting help. But angrily curious, I depressed the backslash key and read an invitation to share what kind of email I had in mind and the kinds of things I'd like to say in it — prompts I am sure are familiar the students the world over who would like AI to write their assigned essays and job applications and birthday thank you notes.

There are now pundits everywhere, in and out of academia, pleading with students and their teachers to avert their attention from anything generated by AI, so that they might return to the business of understanding and using language on their own, a business requiring millions of neurons to fire as gradually, and sometimes with great effort, understanding, intelligence and mastery are achieved. Few of those neurons fire when one clicks a link.

But back to the affront. Who ASKED for the imposition of these "AI summaries" of my correspondence or for the offer to compose my correspondence for me? Like, I hope, millions of my contemporaries, I need no further assistance in dumbing me down. I need no further enticements of ease and speed in order to win my compliance in giving up the work required to imagine, weigh options, deliberate, and decide.

It is past time to acknowledge that, at least until now, the acres of machines churning away at current and proposed AI data centers are not directing the incursions into my email and access to online information; people are doing this. We need to know who they are and to confront them about their motives in accelerating our collective compliance and dependence on them.

Trump's EPA doesn't value life

So you still think this administration cares about you?

In a recent interview, *New York Times* reporter and member of its climate team David Gelles spoke about how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), founded by Republican President Richard Nixon, has abandoned its historical role as defender of public health, clean air and clean water and is instead embracing a posture that is entirely designed to support industry in being free to do whatever it wants.

Gelles related that for the past 30 years the EPA's mathematical models for determining the

effects of its environmental policies have used \$11.7 million as the value of a statistical human life. Then last month they recalculated the math by which they attribute value to a human life in their models and determined that the value of a human life is ZERO! Human lives will no longer have worth when determining the effects of EPA's environmental policies!

This is how much this administration values *your* life, the life of your children, and the lives of your descendants to come.

Mary Saudade
Addison

New York DMV takes a heavy handed approach

Whenever I receive a letter that begins with, "You qualify for," it usually is some sort of scam. To my surprise, a few days ago I received a letter from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles stating that I qualified for a Driver Record Assessment and the statement enclosed required a sum of \$300 to be paid to the New York DMV.

Let me back up a moment, in November 2025, I was driving across the Crown Point Bridge heading west. As I neared the end of the 30 MPH zone, I began to accelerate toward the 55 MPH

zone, roughly 100 feet from the end of the bridge. I was pulled over and given a ticket for travelling 51 MPH in a 30 MPH zone. Okay, my mistake. I paid the ticket and thought nothing more about it until I received the Driving Record Assessment Statement, previously discussed.

Let me tell you, this letter emerged from its envelope like an ICE agent on border control, no explanation, just belligerent threats that if the sum was not paid by a certain date, my New York State driver's license would be suspended.

Senator's vote against ICE condemnation perplexing

On Feb. 6 the State Senate voted on a tri-partisan resolution to express how the Vermont Senate "unequivocally condemns the extrajudicial killings of Renée Good and Alex Pretti as grave violations of human dignity, civil liberties, and the constitutional protections owed to all persons."

Sen. Steven Heffernan was one of only a small handful who voted against defending our rights and holding ICE accountable. He is standing with the Trump administration and ICE. This is the letter I have sent to Sen. Heffernan:

I was appalled to hear that you voted against defending our rights and holding ICE accountable. All you have to do

is look around Addison County and see the numbers of people protesting the actions of ICE, helping their neighbors, calling their representatives. Indeed, some of your constituents chose to be arrested in order to protest ICE in Vermont. The actions of ICE are immoral. They run concentration camps and are trying to build more, they arrest people without due process, they have murdered multiple people across the country, they are occupying Minnesota. What will you do when they come for us in Vermont? Do you care about our dairy industry, which survives due to the work of our neighbors who are willing to work hard for long hours? All of the great spiritual traditions teach us some version of caring for the

I was initially shocked by the "violence" and then really pissed off. I immediately replied that I refused to pay the sum requested, that the license number listed was not my license number and that I didn't have a New York State driver's license for them to suspend.

What has happened to us? How did our interactions with each other and institutions go from a friendly Andy Griffith approach to a heavy-handed Rambo stance?

I miss Andy Griffith and I know you do too.

Randall Ross
New Haven

vulnerable. Jesus said to love your neighbor. I hope that if you belong to a Christian church, you will at least listen to the words of Jesus.

I have a very difficult time understanding how you can possibly stand with the immoral and corrupt Trump regime and ICE, although of course, it is your constitutional right to do so. It is my constitutional right to let you know that your views do not represent me or our community. It is also my right to use my power to make sure that you are not elected again to public office if you can't even vote to protect and defend the people you are supposed to represent and who have spoken very clearly.

Theresa Gleason
Middlebury

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Rosie's
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ORWELL:
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Fresh air

CHILDREN ENGAGED IN a youth cross-country skiing program at Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton early this month converge on a little hillock on the edge of the big field, looking for a chance to enjoy a short downhill.

Photo submitted by Derrick Cram

Letters to the Editor

Officials might let Trump steal an election this time

In mid-December 2020 Donald Trump considered seizing voting machines in his attempt to overturn Biden's win in the Presidential election. Soon after Phil Waldron, a retired Army colonel and defense consultant; Michael Flynn, former National Security Adviser to Trump; and Sidney Powell, a former Trump campaign lawyer, drafted executive orders authorizing the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to seize voting machines. The orders were based on unfounded fraud and conspiracy claims. On the evening of Dec. 18 Powell, Flynn, and others met with Trump to discuss the orders.

At that meeting, Pat Cipollone, Chief White House Counsel to Trump, and Patrick Philbin, Deputy White House Counsel to the president, vehemently opposed the orders, arguing there was no legal authority for such an action and warned it would create a Constitutional crisis. They prevailed.

Fast forward to March 2025. The Trump Administration and lawmakers begin efforts to cast doubts on the integrity of the 2026 midterms or skew the results in favor of Republican candidates. Everything from rewriting election rules and gerrymandering to demanding that states turn over their voting registration lists, threatening election officials and their families with violence, and proposing nationwide photo identification requirements.

In mid-January 2026 Trump suggests the U.S. "shouldn't even have" the 2026 midterm elections. On Jan. 28, the FBI

and Tulsi Gabbard, Director of National Intelligence (DNI), visit the Fulton County election office in Georgia to execute a search warrant to seize 2020 ballots and other materials. Gabbard's presence was unusual! The DNI doesn't typically participate in domestic law enforcement. However, Gabbard would be involved if there was suspicion that our elections were, or might be in the future, illegally influenced by foreign actors. Such suspicion would be the basis for the federal government's wresting control over elections from the states, including the counting of ballots.

In December 2020 Cipollone and Philbin won the day. No executive order to seize voting machines was ever issued. It is unclear what legal advice Trump is receiving now from his Chief White House Counsel or Deputy Chief Counsel regarding the conduct of the midterm elections. Going along, to get along?

In December 2020 following the firing of Mark Esper, Trump appointed Christopher Miller as Acting U.S. Secretary of Defense. Miller was a proposed player in the seizure of voting machines but was never asked to participate. It is unlikely that the JAG officers responsible for advising our military commanders would have counseled Miller that such seizure was legal. Now Pete Hegseth is our Secretary of Defense, and the JAGS have been fired. Hegseth has proven he will order our military to do whatever Trump wishes, legal or otherwise.

Notwithstanding Hegseth's

enthusiastic support, Trump understands that asking our military to intervene in the midterms risks the possibility they might refuse. But Trump doesn't need the military.

In December 2020 Chad Wolf was Acting Secretary of Homeland Security. Like Christopher Miller, Wolf never publicly took a position on the seizure of voting machines. Now Kristi Noem, Trump sycophant, is our Secretary of Homeland Security. Noem commands a private army of ICE and Border Patrol agents that outnumber the armies of hundreds of countries. Unlike members of the military, ICE and Border Patrol are not constrained by the Posse Comitatus Act, federal statutes, or the Constitution limiting military involvement in domestic law enforcement. Noem has essentially claimed that anything they do, including murder, is legal.

In December 2025, William Barr was Attorney General. He refused to go along with Trump's claim of election fraud calling it BS. Now we have Pam Bondi who in her recent testimony to the House Judiciary Committee demonstrated that she is clearly a Trump cultist! Bondi is joined by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, FBI Director Kash Patel and others who will avidly do everything in their power to ensure that the 2026 midterms go their way or don't occur at all. That's the end game at present. If they succeed, democracy in America will be over. It's our responsibility to stop that from occurring.

**Ron Rubin
Middlebury**

Health care isn't like buying a car

As a resident of Vergennes who values evidence-based science in our public policy, I am writing to express my clinical concern regarding our representation in Montpelier. With measles detected in Washington County wastewater on Feb. 3 and an active case confirmed on Feb. 12, the time for rhetoric has passed. The time for reality has arrived.

The biological facts of measles are unforgiving. According to the CDC, it is so contagious that 9 out of 10 unprotected people near an infected person will catch it. Because the virus is airborne, it can linger in a room for up to two hours after an infected person has left. Washington County is a 50-mile drive from our doorsteps, which is a distance many of us travel daily for work or leisure. To prevent community transmission, we must maintain a herd immunity threshold of 95%. Current state data shows that 94% of Vermont kindergartners are immunized, leaving the community on a knife's edge.

At this critical moment, we need leaders who bolster our safety net. Yet, on Feb. 3, which was the very day the virus was detected in our region's wastewater, Representative Rob North (R-Addison-3) chose to attend a rally for "Vermont Stands Up." This organization officially testified to the House on Jan. 13 that standard health recommendations are "coercive" and "abusive."

This ideology was reflected in Rep. North's vote on Jan. 23. He was one of only nine House members to oppose H.545, which is a bill to protect pediatricians and ensure insurance coverage for vaccines. In his official explanation in the House Journal, he compared life-saving medical care to buying a used car off a lot. He stated: "It's the same consumer protection that we all enjoy when buying a vehicle that's sold as is, where we're thus clearly notified that we have no legal recourse if the car fails the next day."

**Carson Harder-Hyde
Vergennes**

Vote showed lack of leadership

State Senator Steve Heffernan's defense of his vote on SR21 shows his fundamental misunderstanding of our current moment.

Attempting to redirect public outrage from the killings of Good and Pretti to cherry-picked cases of individuals killed by undocumented persons is a lazy act of whataboutism that is perhaps good enough for Fox News but I feel that most people in the County are not convinced by this argument.

First, it's well understood that undocumented persons commit murders at a lower rate than the native-born population, and this has been borne out in every serious study including studies done by right-leaning think tanks such as the Cato institute. The myth of the violence-prone illegal alien simply has no evidence to back it up.

Second, the victims of violence at the hands of the undocumented do in fact have access to due process. These victims have public investigations, and civil and criminal courts at their disposal.

The killings of Good and Pretti are in a different class because the perpetrators are our own government, funded by our tax dollars. And, if the Trump administration could have their way, there would be zero investigations, no due process, and no justice in these

cases. They've said as much, many times. This undermining of individual rights comes right from the top, and therefore has grave implications for all citizens in all states, which is why these cases are causing outcry here in Vermont.

Perhaps... just perhaps, if state and local leadership join forces, and backed by rising public outrage, all demand this due process with one voice and work through the courts, Minnesotans together will eventually manage to drag some measure of justice out of this obviously unwilling administration.

The closing of his argument is more deflection. Yes, it would be wonderful if we had a functioning immigration system. But we don't. We are still bound, as Vermonters, to treat our neighbors with decency and fairness and to stand up for them.

Mr. Heffernan is not correct in portraying the issue as a judgement on events happening in other states. The effects are being felt here and now by people in our midst, who are powering our rural economy. Rather than take a stand in their defense, he'd rather redirect public anger towards people who are already living in fear. This is not neighborly and not leadership.

**Erik Andrus
Ferrisburgh**

Some of us know fact from fiction

George Will says we must assume everything the President says is a lie! Maybe I should assume everything Mr. Will says is a lie!

I am aware, Mr. Lynn, you obviously hate President Trump, which is your prerogative. We live in a country where people have the freedom of thought and speech.

The President had a colossal mess to clean up after President Biden opened our borders letting in approximately 25 million people, which included murders, rapists, drug dealers etc. Venezuela and Colombia emptied their prisons and even helped the inmates get to our borders. Crime became at an all-time high. Maybe you forgot about the women who enjoyed jogging who were attacked, the nursing student who they said fought to survive when the attacker bashed her head in with a rock, the young girl going

to the store to do an errand for her mom, raped and thrown in a river to drown, the mother of 5, etc., not newsworthy!

Russian ships constantly off the Coast of Greenland and this goes back to the 1950s. There was and still is an army and Air Force base in Greenland. Trump has made Greenland a part of the U.S.

I appreciate the President's efforts to protect us from Russia, China and Iran — countries that would love to destroy the United States of America, "Land of the Free and home of the Brave."

We can still enjoy the right to have different opinions in this country and vote accordingly — no one is holding a gun to our heads — yet.

**Karlene Callahan
Middlebury**

P.S. When will you learn fact from fiction??

Service to town should be honored

Please consider Danielle Boyce for Middlebury selectboard. She brings valued representation from East Middlebury, gender balance, and a keen awareness of town concerns from several important perspectives, including as a Middlebury Union Middle School parent and Middlebury restaurant business owner throughout the downtown construction project, then COVID and, more recently, the formation of a trauma-informed encampment policy.

We are fortunate to have her running for one of the two seats on our seven seat selectboard along with devoted incumbent Dan Brown and newcomer to local elected office Peter Jette, who I look forward to knowing better beyond our times crossing paths

on bike and foot in our common neighborhood. It is healthy to have choice. Meet them at Town Meeting on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at MUHS or at the polls March 3 on Middlebury Recreation Center open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Remember early voting opened Feb. 11 and closes Feb. 26 at Town Clerk's office.

I hope all three of our candidates remain involved, even if not elected, they can have a voice in selectboard meetings and town committee involvement.

I urge everyone to look for opportunities to serve that are posted in March at Welcome To Town of Middlebury, Vt. and on our town list serve. Consider them, and a future selectboard seat.

**Laura Asermily
Middlebury**

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Foster

(Continued from Page 1A)
head broker are winding down.
For Foster, retirement came into focus last year. While her mind and energy remained the envy of any 50-year-old, her legs were beginning to remind her she was knocking on 80. Being a Realtor often keeps you on your feet for long stretches, showing homes and walking property lines to establish boundary points.

“Walking 20 to 100 acres of land just wasn’t comfortable for me anymore,” she said. “And the terrain is rarely easy to walk. When I realized that was becoming increasingly difficult for me to do, I decided it was time.”

Foster, a graduate of Middlebury Union High School and the University of Vermont, is married to Bob Foster, a driving force behind the Foster Brothers Farm and Vermont Natural Ag Products. As the couple raised three daughters, Nancy — as a young stay-at-home mom — was looking to re-enter the workforce in a way that would allow her to remain active in her children’s daily activities.

Enter the late Bill Beck (1929-2017), then a former winter Olympian and Middlebury businessman. Beck’s daughter and the Fosters’ eldest daughter were friends. It was 1978, and Beck was launching his own real estate firm. He extended Nancy a job offer, with a quip.

“He said, ‘Nancy, wouldn’t you like to go back to speaking with adults instead of children?’ I thought, ‘Maybe it is about time,’” she recalled.

Foster agreed to become an agent at Beck’s then-fledgling firm, with a goal of earning her broker’s license before 1980, when Beck would be out of town for multiple weeks heading up ski patrol service at the Lake Placid Olympics. Foster worked the mandatory two years as a salesperson before making the grade as a broker, which enabled her to head up Beck’s office while he was gone.

One of her first sales was a condominium in what was Middlebury’s first condo development, Otterside Court. Foster explained that 45 years ago, condos were a new, unglamorous housing option. That’s since changed; condos are now a hot commodity in a state with a major housing shortage, she noted.

She recalled one of her former friends and customers, the late Gladys Murdoch, telling her, “Nancy, if you can sell a condo, you can sell anything.”

Around 15 years later, ironically, Nancy found Gladys a condo in Middlebury East when she needed to downsize from a big house.

Foster has had a knack of finding the right property for the right person, whether it be a ranch, mansion, farmhouse or a piece of land on which to build.

“For me, the ones that stand out the most tend to be the ones sold to first-time homebuyers. You have to work really hard to help people get into their first home. The bigger, fancier houses are always sold to people who have bought homes before, who know what they’re doing and usually aren’t struggling to get their downpayment,” she said.

“There’s a process,” she said of finalizing a home sale.

“For the past 15-20 years, the bulk of my business has been repeat customers or referrals. I’ve sold houses to children of some of the people I’ve sold houses to.”

— Nancy Foster

And Foster has got the process down to a T. Her kind face, gentle demeanor and keen knowledge of the county’s real estate market have earned her many repeat clients. She’s sold some Addison County properties four times and has facilitated multiple housing transactions for several families — both as buyers and sellers.

“For the past 15-20 years, the bulk of my business has been repeat customers or referrals,” Foster said. “I’ve sold houses to children of some of the people I’ve sold houses to.”

She specifically cited a couple she helped transition from a modest Gorham Lane ranch to a farmhouse outside Middlebury Village. When the couple’s kids had grown, Foster sold their farmhouse after they’d built a smaller home on Lake Champlain. After the husband died, Foster helped the widow buy a condo in Middlebury.

“She’s now close to everything,” Foster said of her client.

MARKET CHANGES

During her heyday, Foster sold 70 homes in a year. Now, she said a “good year” is around 25 sales. Nancy doesn’t have to put her nose to the grindstone anymore, and the available housing stock in the county and throughout the state has dwindled and increased substantially in price since the pandemic.

“It’s been staggering,” she said.

During the late 1970s, a family could buy a “fairly nice” ranch home in Middlebury for \$80,000-\$100,000, according to Foster. That same ranch will cost you more than \$400,000 today, she said.

Inflation, construction costs and low supply have all been factors in the price surge, she explained.

While Foster doesn’t see home prices coming down anytime soon, she’s pleased to see they’re starting to stabilize.

She’s seen a lot in the real estate world during her many years with Bill Beck, RE/MAX Middlebury and Champlain Valley Properties. That includes technological advances that have aided her profession.

Back in the day, realtors and lawyers had to visit town clerk’s offices to view and copy various real estate records.

“One of the first things you do for home sellers is a market analysis. You had to go to every town clerk’s office to see what similar properties had sold for. You couldn’t go ‘online’; there was no online to be had,” she said.

Now realtors can find all that information through a few taps on a computer keyboard — which seemed far out of reach when Foster first started.

“I was excited just to have an IBM electronic typewriter,” she said with a chuckle.

Having online access to real estate records has saved time and mileage for brokers — as has the advent of digital photography, drones and virtual home showings.

In the old days, Nancy had a charge account at a local store for photo development. And she took a hefty surplus of photos to make sure she got some good ones. A digital camera now allows her to immediately check the quality of her photos and renders moot the development process.

VIRTUAL TOURS

Have a prospective home buyer in California?

No problem. A realtor can show them a property virtually through Facetime, to see if it meets their initial expectations.

Some realtors are big on virtual tours, which folks can take any time by clicking on a website link. Foster isn’t a big fan; she said in-person or Facetime tours allow the client to zero in on concerns — or highlights — of a home that might otherwise escape a standard virtual tour.

What will Foster miss most?

“The people,” she said emphatically, pointing to past and present colleagues, as well as buyers and sellers. “I genuinely like looking at housing and land, but I will miss people the most.”

She’s proud to be selling Champlain Valley Properties to her daughter Heather Foster-Provencher. The staff includes five other licensed brokers and two administrative assistants.

“I’m leaving it in great hands,” Foster said.

What will she do next to fill some of her time?

Amping up her volunteerism tops the list along with more walking. She’s involved with the Middlebury Rotary Club, the Addison County Home Health & Hospice board and the Congregational Church of Middlebury.

She’ll also look to spend more time with her husband Bob, who’ll also be turning 80 in May. But it looks like she’ll have to pick her spots.

“He’ll never retire,” she said of his work ethic and devotion to farming.

Disagreements happen, but we must remain civil

Hello My Fellow Vermonters,
I want to take a moment to address concerns raised about a recent email exchange I had with a constituent.

Over the past few weeks, this individual and I corresponded about several issues. In some instances, we disagreed on how I voted. In others, we found common ground. That back-and-forth is one of the aspects I value most about serving you — open dialogue, honest disagreement, and respectful conversation.

After my editorial in last week’s paper, I received a response from this constituent that felt deeply personal and discouraging. In a moment of irritation, following what had been a cordial and ongoing exchange, I sent a reply in frustration.

That response was not meant to dismiss anyone’s concerns or avoid discussion. It was, candidly, a human reaction rooted in exasperation. After multiple thoughtful exchanges, I had hoped we were building toward continued dialogue — not

toward questioning my character or fitness to serve.

Throughout my time serving Addison County, some constituents have told me plainly, “I don’t know if I can vote for you.” That is their right, and I respect it completely. What is imperative, however, is that disagreement among Vermonters does not devolve into personal attacks.

I want my constituents to know that every vote I cast, every response I write, and every editorial I submit comes from my convictions and my sincere belief about what is best for our community and our state. You may disagree with those beliefs — and that is absolutely your right — but they are grounded in principle, not party labels.

Case in point: this past week, I voted to ban ICE agents from wearing masks and to prohibit warrantless civil arrests in sensitive locations such as schools and health care facilities. These votes represent significant departures from the national Republican agenda — because I

do not allow partisan politics to guide my decisions. My votes are guided by what I believe is right for Vermont.

I will always strive to respond to my constituents with respect. In this instance, my brief reply reflected a moment of frustration at what felt like a shift from policy disagreement to personal degradation. Sometimes, when faced with something unexpectedly harsh, a person reacts imperfectly.

As Gov. Scott has frequently and rightly said, we as a society must do better — myself included.

We do not have to share the same views to share respect for one another. What concerns me most is not disagreement; it is the erosion of civility. Too often today, we reduce one another to labels. We assume motives. We forget that behind every email, every social media post, and every opinion is a human being.

I remain committed to open dialogue, to listening, and to serving every constituent — whether we agree or not — with respect and integrity.

We can disagree strongly and still treat one another with dignity. That is not weakness. That is Vermont.



Legislative Review
by Rep. Steven Heffernan R-Bristol

Letters to the Editor

Know what your bank does with your money

It’s a frigid, snowy Tuesday afternoon, and I’m standing on a narrowly shoveled sidewalk near Citizens Bank in Middlebury. I’m with just a few other community members, holding up signs, trying to get the attention of passersby. Why?

Citizens Bank has long financed private prison and detention facilities. Citizens is a lender to companies like CoreCivic and GEO Group, which have caused widespread, documented harm to people in their facilities. There have been years of allegations of forced labor, healthcare neglect, and other abuses. Now, almost 90% of immigrants held in detention are in privately run facilities, according to an analysis by the data gathering and research group Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. The

two largest private immigration detention facility operators are CoreCivic and The GEO Group.

The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress have proposed a seismic increase in detention capacity, which will benefit CoreCivic and GEO Group enormously.

There are about seven Citizens Bank branches or offices in Vermont, including the one based in Middlebury. As other lenders have cut ties to CoreCivic and GEO Group, Citizens Bank has continued financing private prisons and the mass detention, deportation, and surveillance of immigrants. When depositing your money, consider a local or community bank that has pledged not to lend to CoreCivic and GEO.

It’s infuriating to think about how the ICE detention system

has grown larger and more abusive than ever. The Trump administration is rushing to detain ever-greater numbers of immigrants as part of its mass deportation push. Standing on a snowy sidewalk in front of this bank is perhaps one significant way to hopefully raise awareness around the issue of the funding of private prisons for immigrant detention.

If you would like to become more involved in raising awareness about how Citizens Bank enables our unjust system of private prisons and detention centers, you can contact Indivisible Middlebury at: indivisiblemiddlebury@gmail.com with “Citizens Bank” in the subject line.

Michele Fay Ripton

Letters to the editor

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

Because we believe that accountability makes for responsible debate, we will print signed letters only.

Be sure to include an address and telephone number, too, so we can call to clear up any questions.

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

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WRITERS FOR RECOVERY

Chocolate

(Continued from Page 1A)

In addition to knowing chocolate inside-out, Loeffler has experience creating a buzz for special events. She was associate producer of MNFF for 2023-2024, under festival founder Lloyd Komesar.

“We have a clear understanding that Middlebury knows how to do (a festival) already,” she said.

And a chocolate festival was right in Adagio’s and Loeffler’s wheelhouse. Adagio Chocolates, downstairs at 52 Main St., is an importer and retailer “specializing in thoughtfully curated global fine and craft chocolate,” according to the company’s website.

The idea, Loeffler explained, was to create a community event that would catalyze experiences and conversations around a product that a lot of people love, but that doesn’t have a marquee event in the Green Mountain State. Bristol has a nifty “Chocolate Walk” each December, but that event employs chocolate treats as part of a downtown business showcase, rather than as a deep dive into the sweet stuff.

“Vermont has an incredible food culture,” Loeffler said. “But there’s a distinct gap in chocolate festivals in northern New England. We’ve seen the success of wine, craft beer and cheese communities here in Vermont. This festival is about doing the same for chocolate — supporting small makers, celebrating global craftsmanship, and creating a welcoming space where people can explore and learn together.”

Indeed, some states host multiple chocolate festivals each year, and some of them huge — like Northwest Chocolate Festival in Seattle. The Vermont Chocolate Festival will be considerably smaller, intentionally. A smaller event lends itself to a less hectic atmosphere that can lead to new friendships, discovery of new products and knowledge about all the processes and ingredients that go into good chocolate.

Adagio has reached out to some of its vendors/makers asking if they’d like to be part of the first chocolate festival. Among those invited: Neil Philip of Foster Chocolate in Danby. Philip is



HANNA LOEFFLER, MANAGING partner at Middlebury’s Adagio Chocolates, is busy organizing an inaugural Vermont Chocolate Festival in the shire town’s Town Hall Theater, March 14-15.
Independent photo/John Flowers

earning a regional reputation for his cocoa bean-to-bar confections.

The folks from Bristol-based Farmhouse Chocolates are also expected to be at the festival, and Loeffler is in conversation with additional vendors and makers.

Here are some of the chocolate festival highlights at this point:

- Screening of the documentary film “Peace by Chocolate” on Saturday, March 14, at 7 p.m. in the THT’s Anderson Studio, preceded by a small chocolate tasting at 6:30 p.m. “Peace by Chocolate” follows the path of a Syrian refugee who, after the bombing of his father’s chocolate factory, struggles to settle into his new Canadian small-town life (in Halifax), caught between following his dream to become a doctor and preserving his family’s chocolate-making legacy.

The film screening will be free, though a donation is suggested.

The festival formally opens on Sunday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Live demonstrations from chocolatiers and bean-to-bar makers.

- Multiple guided chocolate tastings and educational presentations.

- Opportunities to connect directly with the people who make the chocolate.

- A makers’ breakfast for industry professionals and VIP ticket holders.

- S’mores making in the THT’s Maloney Plaza.

- Interactive chocolate games.
- Raffles featuring premium chocolate prizes.

General admission to the Sunday festival program will be \$30 and will also entitle the ticket holder to one tasting. Once inside, attendees can pay for additional tastings. There’s a VIP ticket option for \$100 that covers all tastings and festival offerings, as well as admission to the makers breakfast. Tickets can be purchased online at tinyurl.com/4p8ahh2m.

Loeffler is hoping the first festival will lead to an annual offering that could gradually expand to meet Addison County’s critical mass of chocolate enthusiasm. Like MNFF, she believes the rising tide of chocolate could lift many local business ships, providing a nice, slow-season boost for Middlebury-area lodgers, shops, restaurants and wine/spirits makers who might want to get in on the act by suggesting adult-beverage/chocolate pairings.

“The first year, there are a lot of unknowns,” Loeffler explained. “There’s a lot of, ‘Let’s try this and see what happens.’”

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

Nonprofits split \$97K in grants

The Walter Cerf Community Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation recently awarded \$97,000 in grants to 25 organizations in its 2025 competitive grants round, with recipients including organizations that support youth and families, education, historic preservation, arts, health and community enrichment in Addison County and statewide.

The largest grant, for \$10,000, went to the town of Whiting to support the restoration of its town hall.

The Walter Cerf Community Fund makes grants to address charitable needs in the state of Vermont, with the majority of funds given to organizations serving Addison County and

Brandon. Priority areas of the fund include the arts, education, historic preservation, and social services, reflecting the pattern of giving established by Walter Cerf over many years.

Born in Leipzig, Germany in 1907, the late Walter Cerf spent most of his youth in Berlin. He relocated to the United States in 1937 as a refugee of Nazi Germany. After becoming a U.S. citizen, he served in military intelligence and developed a deep appreciation for the preservation of art, culture, and local history. In 1947, he began a 25-year career as a Professor of Philosophy at Brooklyn College, eventually retiring to his summer home in Leicester, Vt., in 1972. During the last 20 years of his

life, Cerf made gifts exceeding \$10 million to more than 100 different organizations in Vermont. Upon his death in 2001, a permanent endowment, the Walter Cerf Community Fund, was established at the Vermont Community Foundation. The fund makes grants annually in Cerf’s name and will continue the generosity of a man who cared deeply about the vitality of communities in Addison County, northern Rutland County and beyond. Visit vermontcerf.org/cerf to learn more.

These latest grant awards build upon an additional \$53,500 distributed in first-year payments to the fund’s multiyear cohort, bringing the total grantmaking for 2025 to \$150,500.

Here’s the full list of grant winners:

- Camp Thorpe, \$2,500
- City of Vergennes Recreation Department, \$5,000
- Eddy Farm School for Horse and Rider Corporation, \$2,500
- Ethan and Mary Baker Allen Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter, \$2,500
- Fort Ticonderoga Association, \$3,000
- Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History, \$5,000
- Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, \$5,000
- Lund Family Center, \$2,500
- Middlebury Area Land Trust, \$3,500
- Middlebury Community Chorus, \$2,500
- Middlebury Community Music Center, \$2,500
- Red Clover Children’s Center, \$2,500
- Rutland Area Art Association Chaffee Art Center, \$2,500
- SolarFest, \$2,500
- The Vermont Granite Museum of Barre, \$5,000
- Town Hall Theater, \$5,000
- Town of Salisbur/Salisbury Free Public Library, \$5,000
- Town of Starksboro, \$5,000
- Town of Sudbury, \$5,000
- Town of Whiting, \$10,000
- Turning Point of Addison County, \$2,500
- Vergennes Opera House, \$5,000
- Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, \$2,000
- Vermont Historical Society, \$5,000
- Vermont Humanities Council, \$3,500
- Addison Central Teens, \$5,000
- Addison County Community Action Group, \$5,000
- Addison County Community Trust, \$5,000
- Addison County Home Health and Hospice, \$5,000
- Addison County Readers, \$4,000
- Open Door Clinic, \$5,000
- Elderly Services, \$5,000
- John Graham Shelter, \$5,000
- Middlebury Studio School, \$3,500
- Opera Company of Middlebury, \$3,500
- Preservation Trust of Vermont, \$5,000
- Shelburne Museum, \$2,500

Homeless

(Continued from Page 1A)

Bed bugs are small, flat, wingless insects that feed on the blood of humans and animals — typically at night while their hosts sleep. They typically “hitchhike” on luggage, clothing, or used furniture. They don’t fly but move quickly on surfaces.

Charter House officials elected to take the safest, most comprehensive approach: To shut down areas of the building where the bugs had been found and commission a professional, long-term cleaning.

Through vigilance and quick action, shelter staff were able to isolate the portion of the facility where the bugs were originally identified and managed to keep the common areas and the entire second floor free of infestation through the treatment process.

At the same time, CHC and JGHS leaders — along with members of the Addison County Homeless Outreach Team — took steps to identify houseless folks and “figure out how to transition people living outside to safe shelter, given that we do not have an extreme weather shelter in Addison County,” JGHS Executive Director Susan Whittemore said.

Team members scoured the area connecting with homeless persons who had been sleeping in vehicles, sheds, tents and other makeshift housing, to make sure they had warm accommodations during potentially lethal cold snaps.

Team members scoured the area connecting with homeless persons who had been sleeping in vehicles, sheds, tents and other makeshift housing, to make sure they had warm accommodations during potentially lethal cold snaps.

“Everyone was taken care of,” Lacey said.

Addison County saw an average temperature of 16.8 degrees in January, around 2 degrees lower than January 2025, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information. Early February was colder still, with consistent sub-zero wind chill readings.

Whittemore and Lacey said the county’s family of nonprofit agencies have also worked nimbly together to serve those needing emergency placements. Lacey recalled a specific incident a month ago, triggered by a call from Porter Hospital, which was readying to discharge a homeless patient. And it was very cold outside, with no extreme-cold weather shelter available.

“It required us to do something on the fly,” Lacey said. “The silver lining here has been the partnerships (with other organizations).”

So CHC coordinated with the Tri-Valley Transit (busing), the United Way of Addison County (funding), Middlebury police and the Middlebury Inn, which that evening was able to offer four vacancies due to several cancellations. This ensured the patient — and others — had a safe place to go for the night if they had run out of other options. “Our (JGHS) staff was instructed, if/when they received a call from someone in Addison County needing to come in from the outside, to call the Charter House hotline and were given the number. Heidi stayed on call during this time to help get them placed at the Inn and help with securing transportation, if needed,” Whittemore recounted.

The biggest barrier during the cold snap, according to Whittemore, was how to get homeless persons to either the Middlebury Inn or an out-of-county shelter.

“The Vermont Agency of

Transportation (with support from the Agency of Human Services) was able to put into place an on-call program with staff drivers through the cold days/nights,” Whittemore said.

Middlebury police, the organization Helping Overcome Poverty’s Effects, Turning Point Center, the Counseling Service of Addison County, Gather and the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society have also pitched in, Lacey noted, to the extent that the community partners were able to get seven people short-term shelter during January’s first cold snap.

Meanwhile, CHC leaders and contractors tackled the bed bug problem and established protocols to make sure the pests don’t return. All guests at the shelter must agree to protocols that require:

- All personal belongings to be cold treated for a minimum of 72 hours. All but essential items and clothing must be packed in totes, labeled and placed outside in a designated area.

- Items that can’t be cold-treated must be wiped down with rubbing alcohol and inspected by staff before they can be kept. Computers and TVs may remain if wiped; all other electronics must fit in a clear tote provided by the shelter

- Limits on personal belongings kept in cot spaces during cold treatment. Guests may keep only one clear bag for clean clothes, one black bag for dirty clothes and one small, clear tote for essential hard-surface items, such as bathroom items, small electronics, journal/pen, hard-surface keepsakes, pictures, and small, individually wrapped snacks.


- Regularly scheduled laundering of bed linens, with off-site personal laundry visits provided.

All clothing — clean or dirty — must remain bagged, and bags must be tied closed.

Guests are also expected to help clean the shelter. Each guest is assigned one house chore, to be completed twice daily. Guests are also required to sweep cot spaces daily, with mopping regularly assigned.

In other recent CHC news, the shelter recently won a \$25,000 grant through the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, which will help the Charter House cover the expenses of supplies for 24/7 staffing.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



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For submission guidelines and additional details, visit www.henrysheldonmuseum.org.

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Vt. food assistance threatened

By THEO WELLS-SPACKMAN
VTDigger.org

New federal work requirements limiting eligibility for the nation's largest food assistance program will take effect for many in Vermont on March 1.

Roughly 3,000 people could lose benefits on that day, according to Ivy Enoch, director of policy and advocacy at Hunger Free Vermont, a food security nonprofit. About half of them are people experiencing homelessness, she added, citing data from the Vermont Department for Children & Families.

"This is a crucial moment," Enoch said in an interview earlier this month.

The main "work rule" limiting eligibility for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, expanded last year in a number of respects — including raising its upper age threshold and eliminating exemptions for potentially vulnerable groups. The shift comes as part of a raft of changes to the program in last July's tax bill, which congressional Republicans said would help combat wasteful spending on such services.

SNAP, called 3SquaresVT in Vermont, serves roughly 65,000 people statewide. Data on rates of employment vary widely, with

the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimating that about 30% of Vermont recipients were members of working families, and the Food Research and Action Center reporting that between 2019 and 2023, an average of 72% of SNAP households included a member who was working.

Adults up to age 64 (increased from 54 in this rule's previous language) will now have to prove they are working, volunteering or training the requisite 80 hours per month to receive food stamps. This requirement will also be newly imposed on unhoused people, and with less widespread effects on veterans and former foster care charges.

"If you are experiencing homelessness, it is extremely difficult to report information," Enoch said. "We are deeply concerned."

The work exemption for households with children was narrowed — only guardians with children under 14, rather than 18, will now qualify. Other exemptions — like pregnancy — remain unchanged.

The state of Vermont used its

discretion to delay this change to eligibility requirements, and other rules governing SNAP have deferred the new policy's full impact until March, Enoch said.

According to Enoch, many people who might otherwise

see benefits dry up in March may be eligible for another, broader exception: the "personal barrier" rule. In certain cases, someone can be deemed unable to work because of other circumstances in their life, like a lack of access to transportation. But to qualify, a physician or other service provider has to submit the request form on behalf of their client.

"This is not a work requirement," Enoch said of the new expansions to the work rule. "This is a paperwork requirement."

Julia Burgess, 35, enrolled in 3SquaresVT last year amid a professional transition that made it hard to cover the cost of groceries. The administrative burden of staying in the program has been "exhausting," she said — the paperwork and long phone conversations have sometimes made it difficult to do her job as a private therapist.

"This is not a work requirement. This is a paperwork requirement."

— Ivy Enoch, Hunger Free Vermont



A CLIENT VISITS the Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects food shelf in Middlebury this past fall.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

In fact, she's been without benefits for several months while she works out how to report a new level of income. She's been grateful for the help she's received from a caseworker at Vermont Foodbank, who has assisted with the trickier parts of the paperwork.

"Without supports like that, more and more Vermonters are gonna go hungry," Burgess said. "These

programs are almost designed to keep people out."

Organizations like the Foodbank and the state's community action agencies have been reaching out to clients wherever possible to warn them of the incoming changes and assist them however possible, Enoch said.

One central ask from food assistance advocates to legislators

this session has been increased funding for "benefit assisters," a set of new staff positions at various service organizations dedicated to helping people navigate the increasingly complex paperwork for SNAP and Medicaid.

"We need to make sure that (the) message is actually being received by the folks who need it," Enoch said.

Balint: State may be in Trump's crosshairs

By DAVID GOODMAN
VTDigger.org

When Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., traveled to Minneapolis on a Congressional oversight mission several weeks ago, she saw a city under siege. Some 3,000 masked federal agents dispatched by President Donald Trump were roaming the city, snatching people from their homes and streets, often without warrants or explanation.

Balint fears Vermont could be next.

"This is not a law enforcement effort, this is about power and control and submission," Balint said of what she observed in Minneapolis. She said the killing of American citizens Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis "just absolutely shook me to my core, not just because of the violence and the loss of life, but also immediately the lying about these two people" by the Trump Administration.

"This is about the president punishing states and municipalities that he does not feel like give him enough fealty," Balint said. "Any state that did not vote for Donald Trump in the last election or in the 2020 election, they're in the crosshairs. And we must assume that at some point this president will try to make an example of us, and we can't be caught flat footed."

On Wednesday, Balint got into a shouting match with Attorney General Pam Bondi at a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee, where she is vice ranking member. Balint demanded to know whether the Justice Department had investigated ties between top Trump Administration officials and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

"Shame on you," Bondi responded, prompting Balint to retort, "This is pathetic." Bondi went on to accuse Balint of refusing to vote against an antisemitic bill.

"Do you want to go there, are you serious?" Balint shouted across the room. "Talking about antisemitism to a woman who lost her grandfather in the Holocaust, really?" Balint then stormed out of the hearing.

Balint told

The Vermont Conversation that Trump's retribution can take many forms. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem "also oversees FEMA, and the president is using FEMA right now to pick winners and losers. And the winners are Republican states, and the losers are so-called democratic states."

Just this week, FEMA denied disaster aid to Vermont for 2025 flooding in the Northeast Kingdom.

Balint said she assumes Trump will go after Vermont. She and U.S. Senators Peter Welch, D-Vt. and Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., held a meeting last week with Gov. Phil

Scott "to have a very fulsome conversation with the governor about 'how do we prepare.'"

Balint discussed her continuing effort to defend against relentless Republican attacks on LGBTQ people.

"Americans understand that this is a scapegoating that is meant as a distraction away from their financial troubles, which are real," she said.

The Trump Administration is "targeting queer and trans people, black and brown Americans, the immigrant community. You're doing this because you can't deliver on the things that you promised."

Balint added, "You're hoping that we will be so consumed with anger and rage at other people that we won't have our anger directed at you, the people who are responsible for passing these horrible budgets that did so much damage to us."

Note: The Vermont Conversation with David Goodman is a VTDigger podcast that features in-depth interviews on local and national issues.

"This is about the president punishing states and municipalities that he does not feel like give him enough fealty."

— Rep. Becca Balint



LAKE CHAMPLAIN FROZE fully for the first in seven years and was declared closed last week. People were spotted walking on the frozen lake near downtown Burlington on Sunday, Feb. 15.

Photo by Auditi Guha/VTDigger

Lake Champlain fully freezes

For the first time in 7 years lake officially iced over and closed

By AUDITI GUHA
VTDigger.org

Frigid temperatures have caused Lake Champlain to fully freeze for the first time since March 2019. Last Friday the National Weather Service declared the lake officially iced over and closed.

Aerial photography and high-resolution satellite imagery were used to determine full ice coverage for the first time in seven years, with the exception of very small gaps, according to Seth Kutikoff, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Burlington.

The data comes from polar orbiting satellites passing in a north to south swath and recording images on clear days to show approximate ice coverage on the lake, he said.

Despite the freeze, the NWS cautions people against walking on the frozen lake.

"Even if it's ice covered, some

of that ice could still be very thin," Kutikoff said.

The NWS has records of ice-related drownings and accidents on Lake Champlain from prior years.

"That database is a good reminder for folks that no ice is truly safe," he said, particularly on warmer days in the spring "when it'll be enticing to go on the lake, especially on some of the deeper broad water."

In decades past, the lake used to freeze over almost every year, according to NWS data, but the freeze is less frequent partly due to warmer weather and climate change.

In 2019, the lake was closed on March 8. In previous years, the lake froze over on Feb. 16, 2015; Feb. 12, 2014; and March 2, 2007. The earliest recorded date of the lake freezing was Feb. 9, 1816, according to NWS data.

On Sunday afternoon, several

people were spotted walking across the snow-covered, frozen lake in downtown Burlington, all the way to the breakwater and the lighthouse. Many of them accessed it from the bike path and from behind the ECHO museum, where the Spirit of Ethan Allen III was surrounded by ice.

Mike Shea, owner of Burlington's flagship cruise ship, is not particularly worried by the freeze as the business is closed for the season until May 3. He said the vessel can sustain the freeze.

"We have a strong steel hull with a framework. It doesn't affect us at all," he said.

He's seen the lake freeze in the past and expects it will pass quickly.

"The weather is going to warm up, and there'll be a soft breeze and rain, and, all of a sudden, the ice starts moving out," he said. "It starts moving rather quickly when it warms up."

Phantoms of the North: Great Gray Owls

BY CATHERINE WESSEL

The great gray owl (*Strix nebulosa*) is a northern raptor that only occasionally graces our northeastern states. Also called the phantom of the north, these owls have large facial discs with alternating areas of light and dark gray, creating a concentric ring pattern around their yellow eyes. Beneath their face is a white "bowtie." Despite this dapper feature, the owl's luminous eyes, impressive size, and large talons give it a fierce appearance.

Great gray owls are the largest owls — from head to tail feathers — in the world, with females averaging around 28 inches long and males around 26 inches long. Their wingspan can reach over 5 feet. Despite their stature, these

owls weigh only about 2.5 pounds on average — less than both great horned and snowy owls. Great gray owls' hulking appearance is a trick of dense plumage which helps them endure cold winters farther north.

This circumboreal species lives in northern forests in Canada and the United States, as well as in Russia, Mongolia, and the Scandinavian countries. Great grays breed in dense conifer forests and hunt in open meadows and snow-covered bogs. Their large facial discs help focus and funnel sound (much like cupping a hand over your ear), while the asymmetrical placement of their ears allows them to precisely locate the sound's origin. With this highly sensitive hearing, they can track the movement of rodents tunneling beneath snow.

Great gray owls hunt both by flying low over open fields and by sitting and listening in low branches or on road signs, before "snow plunging" — bursting through the top layer of snow to catch rodents in the subnivean zone.

Great grays can plunge through nearly 18 inches of snow, at times requiring the strength to break through a top crust that can support the weight of a 175-pound person. This feat doesn't just require physical strength, but also a recalibration of where the prey actually is; the snowpack refracts sound, creating what researchers call an "acoustic mirage." A 2022 study published on this phenomenon in *Proceedings of*

the *Royal Society B* found that the sound of scurrying rodent feet can be displaced up to 5 degrees from the actual location of the prey. The least distortion occurs directly above the source of the sound, which is why great grays tend to hover in place low to the ground before striking.

Their preferred diet consists of voles and lemmings. When these small mammals undergo population crashes, generally every 3 to 5 years, great grays may venture south en masse in search of food. One of the most notable irruption years was in the winter of 1978, when 154 owls were documented in New England and New York.

When great grays do grace our northeastern woods, they usually

head back north in February and March. Males begin calling for mates in January and February.

Great grays don't build nests, instead using tree cavities or nests abandoned by other raptors. Because of these nesting preferences, coupled with their size, great grays tend to thrive in forests with large diameter living and dead trees. In April, a female will lay two to five eggs — depending on the availability of prey — and owlets hatch a month later. Both parents hunt to support the young, though males do most of it during incubation and when the owlets are young. Black bears and great horned owls will sometimes prey on young great gray owls, but adults have no natural predators in North America. (In Europe, the Eurasian eagle-owl is the only known predator of adult great gray owls.) Adult deaths are often

the result of vehicle collisions or of consuming prey that has been poisoned by rodenticides.

I have yet to see this graceful giant, and due to its elusive nature, I may never get to. For me, part of the magic is simply knowing that this phantom of the north visits our winter woods from time to time. Maybe one winter, without realizing it, I'll pass beneath a great gray owl perched on a branch above me, its watchful eyes and powerful ears noticing everything before it takes to the air on silent wings.

Catherine Wessel is the assistant editor at Northern Woodlands. 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.

The Outside Story



U.S. REP. BECCA BALINT, D-Vermont, speaks during a press conference at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Tuesday, Jan. 27.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Weybridge buildings restoration

Preliminary plans are complete

WEYBRIDGE — Town officials in Weybridge are updating residents on efforts to restore important municipal structures.

Guided by responses to community surveys on how best to use federal COVID funds awarded to our town under the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), in December 2024 the selectboard retained the services of Vermont Integrated Architecture (VIA) to determine whether it was possible to restore our historic Old Town Hall and Cotton Free Library for community gathering spaces, a much-needed updated town clerk's office, and long-term usefulness and relevance.

Over these past year, VIA and its consultants performed an updated structural analysis of both buildings as well as a civil engineering site assessment. Their findings confirmed that both buildings are in decent condition despite some needed repairs and could be refurbished for the current and future needs of the town. Additionally, the

The designs will also be on display during coffee hour at 6 p.m. before town meeting at the elementary school on Monday March 2.

civil engineer determined that there is sufficient space on the current town hall property for a septic system for both buildings. Meanwhile, two well-attended community meetings and comment cards provided meaningful and thoughtful feedback from Weybridge residents.

With all the above information, VIA created two conceptual design options to restore and repurpose the town buildings.

Members of the Weybridge Town Buildings Working Group invited people to view them on our town website at townofweybridge.org/villagebuildings.

The designs will also be on display during coffee hour at 6 p.m. before town meeting at the elementary school on Monday March 2.

"We hope you understand that these are conceptual designs only; any decision to pursue them further would involve future community interest and involvement," the Town Buildings Working Group

said in a recent letter to residents. "We should note that early in the process, VIA proposed an option which included housing on privately-owned land directly across from the town buildings. It was simply an idea and was not pursued further."

Working Group members are Kelly Flynn, Dan Dapolito, Gwen Nagy-Benson, Bill Roper and Bill Mayers.

They acknowledged a lot of unknowns, such as available grant funding for such a project and the fate of the school building. And they said this feasibility study is a valuable tool to help Weybridge understand the current condition of its town assets as well as provide guidance if citizens ever decide to explore this project in the future.

"There is no further planned work on these town buildings unless further community interest is expressed to the selectboard," they concluded the letter.

The selectboard welcomes feedback: Kelly Flynn at kflynn@townofweybridge.org or Bill Mayers at wmayers@townofweybridge.org.

Editor's note: This story was provided by Kelly Flynn.

Vermont State Police Log

ADDISON COUNTY — Vermont State Police are looking for drivers that left the scenes of crashes in two separate incidents that occurred within two hours of each other on the morning of Wednesday, Feb. 11.

In the first incident, which took place just before 6:30 a.m., troopers responded to a two-vehicle crash in the vicinity of Route 116 and Cobble Road in Bristol.

Police report that Andrew Robinson, 24, of Castleton was driving a 2012 GMC Sierra southbound on Route 116 when a northbound vehicle ran Robinson off the road, causing his car to crash. The northbound car fled.

No injuries were reported, but the GMC was reported to be a total loss.

Then about two hours later, state police were called to another two-vehicle crash in which one vehicle fled the scene. This collision was on Route 30 near Cider Mill Road in Cornwall. Officers report that a Flatbed wrecker driven by an unidentified person was driving northbound, along with a 2013 Subaru Legacy driven by Samantha Lafave, 37, of Sudbury. The driver of the flatbed lost control and the vehicle struck the driver's side of Lafave's Subaru. The flatbed then fled the scene.

No injuries were reported here

either, and Lafave's car sustained contact damage.

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

The only local report of state police activity in the past week came on Saturday, Feb. 14, when, at 8:13 a.m., troopers received a report of a one-car crash in Ripton near Route 125 and College Cross Road. Police cited Jeremiah Bindrum, 53, of Rochester with driving under the influence.

Police help resident after scam

VERGENNES — On Feb. 12 a Vergennes resident reported being scammed by purchasing \$4,500 in gift cards. They provided the gift card numbers to the requester.

Vergennes police gave the resident information on reporting the scam to the Attorney General's Office and the Federal Trade Commission.

Last week, Vergennes police conducted 12 traffic stops, seven directed patrols, a Vehicle Identification Number verification and took fingerprints once.

In other recent activity, the city police:

- On Feb. 9 responded to a report of people harming themselves. During the investigation, police determined the two people had a verbal and physical fight. As a result, each feared the other was going to leave, which led both to harm themselves. VARS evaluated both people, who were voluntarily taken to the hospital to be treated for the injuries. As of Tuesday, the police were still investigating the incident.

- On Feb. 9 received a call from the Vergennes Union Middle School about three sixth-graders who had left and would not return. School staff followed the students to New Haven Road, where officers made contact. They learned the students left because they were all being bullied and felt that the school was not taking any action to help them. Two of the students were picked up by their parents, and the other was taken back to the VUMS. Staff advised they have developed a plan for the future.

- On Feb. 9 spoke with students about safety and a police officer's job.

- On Feb. 9 provided a courtesy ride home to a male who had walked to a convenience store from his apartment. After arriving at the store, his leg was bothering him and he was unable to walk home. He declined rescue and only asked to get home to not be on his

Vergennes Police Log

feet any longer.

- On Feb. 10 responded to a domestic disturbance. The investigation revealed there was no physical altercation. Parties were calmed and separated. Police provided information on obtaining a relief from abuse order.

- On Feb. 10 responded to the call for a suspicious female in front of the credit union. Police determined there was nothing suspicious.

- On Feb. 10 observed a vehicle at Falls Park after hours. While speaking with the driver, police noted a strong odor of burnt marijuana coming from the vehicle. The driver admitted he had just smoked. Officers told the man to be picked up, or to walk home. He decided to walk.

- On Feb. 11 spoke to students interested in a law enforcement career at Norwich University.

- On Feb. 11 requested an individual to move along that was making people uncomfortable on Green Street.

- On Feb. 11 responded to Vergennes Union High School for a report of a fight between two students, which put the school in lockdown. On arrival both students were separated. One student was referred to the Addison County Restorative Justice Program for disorderly conduct.

- On Feb. 11 received a report of assaultive aggressive behavior between students at VUMS. Police determined no crime was committed.

- On Feb. 12 took a 911 hang-up call at VUHS. There was no emergency.

- On Feb. 12 got a report about an ongoing dispute between two apartment residents. Officers provided recommendations for

how to proceed.

- On Feb. 12 assisted VARS with a juvenile who consumed a medication many times the prescribed dosage. Rescue transported the girl to UVM Medical Center for treatment.

- On Feb. 12 responded to Champlain Farms for the report of a suspicious male on his knees in the snow on the side of the building. The male left the scene in a vehicle and was not located.

- On Feb. 12 logged a report of a person whose dog was aggressive with patrons inside a local business. The person was asked to leave with their dog, but was confrontational about leaving. The business was seeking assistance in having a trespass notice issued, but later told Vergennes police that an agreement was made with the person's family member and that they no longer wanted a trespass notice issued.

- On Feb. 13 performed traffic control until a disabled tractor-trailer unit on Main Street near South Water Street was removed by a towing company.

- On Feb. 13 received a report of a caregiver who made a fraudulent withdrawal from an ATM at Kinney Drugs. Police cited Jennifer Swan, 20, of Bristol for financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult, identity theft and petit larceny.

- On Feb. 14 were dispatched to a residence where a person was experiencing a mental health crisis. The person declined evaluation.

- On Feb. 15 received the report of a domestic dispute in a vehicle in the area of South Maple Street. When police talked to the parties they determined that mental health issues and drug use were factors in the behavior. Officers found no evidence of domestic assault. The male party was transported to the UVM Medical Center for a mental health evaluation.

- On Feb. 15 assisted a parent with two young children who were being unruly. The children calmed down when the officer arrived.

Lincoln

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

NEWS

LINCOLN — In partnership with the Lincoln Conservation Commission, the Lincoln Library will host the second event in its speaker series on Thursday, Feb. 26, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Guest speakers Alex Smith and Trey Martin will lead the discussion

on "What is Act 59, Why Does it Matter, and How Can Vermonters Get Involved?"

Act 59, also known as the 30x30 initiative, sets a statewide goal to conserve 30% of Vermont's land by 2030 and 50% by 2050. The act focuses on climate resilience

and biodiversity protection. Alex Smith, a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for the 30x30 initiative, will talk about how this can be affected by conservation commissions and landowners in particular and why and how the hunting and angling communities should be involved.

Co-presenter Trey Martin, who is leading the Technical Advisory Committee for Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, will provide background on what 30x30 is and why it's relevant to all of us.

The presentation will conclude with a community discussion on what these conservation targets mean for Lincoln, focusing on how individuals and the town can engage with the state's evolving conservation plan.

Burnham Presents welcomes renowned Canadian singer-songwriter Garnet Rogers to the Burnham Hall stage on Saturday, March 7, from 7:30 to 10 p.m. Rogers began his career as a teenager touring alongside his brother, the late folk icon Stan Rogers. The duo became one of North America's most influential folk acts.

Rogers is known for his soulful baritone and songs that find heroism in everyday life. His performances are a blend of poignant storytelling and quick-witted humor, taking audiences on an emotional journey.

Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 general admission, \$25 generous admission and \$30 generous+. Kids 12 and under are \$10 and youth on laps are free.

PLEASE NOTE: The library will be closed on Saturday, Feb. 28, to allow staff and patrons to attend Town Meeting at Burnham Hall.

Until next time...Give Every Day The Chance To Become The Most Beautiful Of Your Life.

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Please re-elect

Dan Brown
To the Middlebury Selectboard

"I look forward to continuing the important work we are doing on the Middlebury Selectboard. Thank you for your continued confidence in me."
- Dan

Vote on or before March 3, 2026

Paid for by Dan Brown for Selectboard

Leicester

Have a news tip?
Call the Addison Independent at 388-4944.

NEWS

LEICESTER — Town Clerk Julie Delphia reminds residents that dogs are required to be registered by April 1. A valid rabies vaccine certificate is needed. To facilitate the process, a rabies clinic will be held on Tuesday, March 17, at the Town Office. The 5:30-6:30 p.m. slot is reserved for dogs and 6:30 to 7 p.m. is for cats. To avoid possible penalties or fines, get your animal registered.

As our thoughts turn to town meeting, and having received

the OVUDD Annual Report, Superintendent Sanchez will be at the Recycling/Trash pickup at the Four Corners, to chat with folks, on this Saturday, Feb. 21, from 10:30-12 noon. The annual OVUDD meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 6:30 p.m., in the auditorium at OV. Of particular interest to taxpayers will be the discussion, under Other Business, as to whether taxpayers will authorize the school board to explore a middle school model/expansion, with a multi-million dollar price tag. Given that 85% of one's tax bill is for education costs, residents should plan to attend the meeting to learn more and voice their opinions.

The Leicester Meeting House will not be available for the Town Meeting Informational Meeting, to be held on Monday evening, March 2, at 7 p.m. The Informational Meeting will be held

at the Town Office. A reminder that no voting from the floor will occur at the Informational Meeting. Last year voters approved a measure to move all money items to Australian ballot. Polls will be open from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, at the Town Office.

The selectboard is seeking three or more individuals with an interest in energy-related matters to serve on an advisory Energy Committee. It is hoped the Energy Committee would select from their membership, a person to act as Energy Coordinator. The Energy Coordinator would collaborate with Addison County Regional Planning Commission personnel and other agencies to support the implementation of the Town Energy Plan and engage the community in education and conservation initiatives. Contact Selectboard Chair Diane Benware at 802-247-3786 if interested.

South Champlain grants available

MIDDLEBURY — Grants are now available to support projects focused on education and research concerning the cultural and ecological history and heritage of Southern Lake Champlain through the South Lake Champlain Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation.

The fund supports projects located on the southern portion of Lake Champlain (the area of Lake Champlain south of Crown Point in both Vermont and New York),

with a preference for projects directly on the lake or in close proximity. School-based projects are encouraged.

The fund also aims to support projects that involve experts and others living in the southern Lake Champlain region. Matching funds are encouraged but not required.

Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. on March 24. Please visit vermontcf.org/slcf for more information or to apply.



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HEART HUNT

February Fun
Around Town

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ExperienceMiddlebury.com



Rally sets the bar high for U.S. presidents

BRISTOL — An estimated 45 residents of Bristol and neighboring towns gathered at the Bristol Green on Presidents Day — Monday, Feb 16, — to honor Presidents Washington and Lincoln for whom the holiday was established. Many of the signs being held showed pictures of Washington saying, “No Kings,” pictures of Lincoln saying, “We the People,” and other phrases

such as “America was built by immigrants,” “Honest Abe,” and “Liberty and Justice for all.”

Anne Wallace, one of the Bristol Area Indivisible organizers, was pleased with the event.

“We are outraged as to where the current president and his supporters are taking our country,” Wallace said. “Today was an opportunity to honor leaders of our country who held ideals about a democracy that would be of, by, and for all people.”

Fortunately, it was a beautiful day and the rally received a lot of supportive honks from the cars driving by.

Other Bristol Area Indivisible organizers distributed information that explained the group’s mission and their priorities for the next few months. These include curtailing ICE activities in Vermont, the No Kings Day protest on March 28, and working in New Hampshire and Maine to help the Democrats take back Congress in the mid-

term elections as the surest way to preserve our democracy for the future.

Editor’s note: This story was provided by Sarah Stott.



Photos by Jim Mendell



Drive safely and help your Neighbors!

Join Addison County Alignment & Repair for our 2nd Annual **Free brakes for food** promotion

Donate: 12 non-perishable food items

Receive: a Free Brake Inspection and Diagnosis

If you need brakes, we provide **FREE premium brake pads** and **\$50 off labor to install the pads with the purchase of rotors**. If you need pads and rotors for both front and rear brakes, we ask that you donate 12 additional food items for HOPE. Thank you!

No other discounts may be combined with this offer. We do not pad slap.

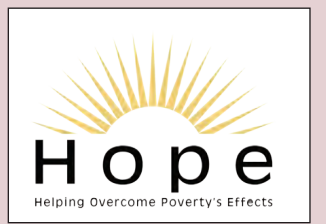


Owners Steve and Lisa Dupoise

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Dates: Feb. 9 - March 20, 2026

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VGS

Alleyne

(Continued from Page 1A)
 ahead of competing.
 Alleyne wasn't alone in the endeavor. He was accompanied on the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic team by fellow liberal arts student Emma Gatcliffe, who attends St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y. Like Alleyne, she skied in the slalom and giant slalom. The pair are two of just seven athletes representing the nation of about 1.4 million at the Milan Cortina Olympics. By comparison, the U.S. sent 232 athletes, Switzerland sent 175 and Sweden 110.

Long before Alleyne, who grew up in Tahoe, Calif., but has dual citizenship thanks to his Trinidadian father, was shooting down mountains at breakneck speeds, he was toddling on skis as a 2-year-old.
 Eight years later, he locked into the sport.
 "The holidays were always in Trinidad, until I started skiing more seriously ... maybe when I was 10, we stopped going as much, but up until 10, we'd always go almost every year," he recalled.

Through his teens, Alleyne was training to compete at the World Cup or college levels.

"But I kind of didn't really make quite that level," he said. "But being the only skier from Trinidad ... it's been an opportunity for me to ski (at the Olympics)."

Unlike Gatcliffe, an SLU junior, Alleyne doesn't ski on the Division I varsity team at Middlebury. A confluence of factors kept him from those slopes. Among other things, Alleyne had surgery last April to repair a repeatedly dislocating shoulder.

"With my injuries I wasn't able to make it," he said.

But it wasn't enough to stop an Olympic bid.

"I thought I could keep skiing and do one more year and then be able to ski in the Olympics. And luckily, I was able to qualify in both the events I was trying for this year. I guess originally, I wasn't thinking that I would ski in the Olympics,



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE SOPHOMORE Nikhil Alleyne, who grew up in California, competed for Trinidad and Tobago in two downhill ski races at the Milan Cortina Olympics this week.

Photo courtesy of TeamTTO

just because I would have to ski for an extra year, and I'd rather just go to college."

When Alleyne was about 17 years old he changed his affiliation at the suggestion of a coach from Sugar Bowl Academy, the California ski school he attended.

"Just it would open up opportunities to ski in more international events like the Olympics ... and he's the one who first said that I could ski in the Olympics."

Initially, the competitor in Alleyne wasn't sold.

"I was not really convinced, just because I'd rather ski at an event that I could be competitive in, like to try to win or try to make a good result," he said.

It was the emotional strings that are attached to competing at the Olympics that got him to the top of the mountain in Italy this past Valentine's Day.

"My parents were super excited ... and like my whole family,

they're pretty excited. So I guess it's more for the Trinidadian community, because we have a pretty big family on our Trinidad side, and a lot of them still live in Trinidad and they were all pretty excited, and I'm doing more for them than for me," he said.

Competing was also a unique opportunity to represent Trinidad and Tobago in a sphere in which it normally has no presence.

"My dad is from Trinidad, and he picked up skiing later," Alleyne said. "So I thought it would be — I think there are not as many athletes that ski race, that have that kind of background like me. So I thought I was unique in that way, and it could be special to represent."

OLYMPIC COMPETITION

Alleyne's competitive side was also satisfied.

"Now I kind of understand that the Olympics are a little different ... so much of the field are not there to win, it's kind of a race for

the top 30, like World Cup athletes, to try to get results, and for the rest of them, they're just trying to, I think, show that they can be pretty competitive in a sport like ski racing."

And so over winter break, Alleyne participated in the opening ceremony, and then about a week later, on Feb. 14, competed in the giant slalom. He placed 52nd out of 69 athletes. Twelve others did not finish or were disqualified. Alleyne was 22.72 seconds off the first place finisher, Brazilian skier Lucas Pinheiro Braathen.

Two days later, Alleyne competed in his second event, the slalom, but was disqualified. Dozens of athletes, like Alleyne did not finish the race.

On Tuesday Alleyne was headed back to Vermont to catch up on classes and fall into the spring semester routine with his peers.

He doesn't see another Olympics in his future. And he sees the event as likely his last competitive race.
 "If I want to go race for fun, maybe I could go do a race for fun. And a lot of people, when they stop skiing, they just completely stop, and it's actually pretty easy to just go for a race, because you have all your equipment and stuff," he said.

His attitude was similar to that of competing at the Olympics.

"So why not?" he said. "It would stop being my main focus. But I still enjoy being part of the sport."

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)
 exposed, it has been painted white to create a clean, modern aesthetic that complements the new interior design. At the same time, drywall installation is transforming the interior spaces and making the building feel more complete each day. The atrium ceiling has now been fully insulated with a spray foam. This space will soon receive a large skylight, bringing in abundant natural light and illuminating the masonry of the facade of the historic building, Hart said. March will see installation of exterior siding, along with drywall taping and finishing. April will bring a lot of priming and painting, along with flooring installation and paving of the upper parking lot. The "mini Ilsley" continues to function at 30 Main St. pending completion of the 75 Main St. project.

Speaking of the Ilsley, Middlebury Union High School students are being asked to vote in a naming contest for a new youth gathering space at the expanded library. Members of the MUHS Teen Advisory Group have brainstormed a short list of great name options, and now it's the student body's turn to decide. This survey is your chance to weigh in, and help shape the future of your library.

The Charter House Coalition (CHC) in Middlebury has written a donation wish list of items to help the nonprofit better serve guests at its 27 North Pleasant St. shelter, as well as homeless individuals who are choosing to brave the winter outdoors. The current list includes pillows, blankets/comforters, twin bed sheets/pillowcases, sleeping bags, toiletries (both full-size and travel-size), boots, hand and foot warmers, warm socks, hats and gloves. CHC is also in need of seed propagation mats to help its greenhouse and summer garden projects this spring. You can drop these items off at the shelter at any time. If you have questions about donations or are interested in volunteering with CHC, please email info@chcvt.org or volunteer@chcvt.org.

Organizers of the Cornwall Outdoor Recreation Area, called CORA, are looking for Cornwall residents who can help grow

perennial and annual flowering plants at the site to make the area more beautiful for its anticipated opening this summer and beyond. The 2-acre CORA site, located just south of the town's Bingham Memorial School on School Street, will boast pollinator gardens, an ADA-compliant walking path, pickleball and tennis courts, and other amenities. Meanwhile, CORA planners are offering two flower planting workshops that you can sign up to attend: "Winter Seed Sowing" on Sunday, Feb. 22, from 1-3 p.m.; and "Indoor Seed Sowing," on Sunday March 29, from 1-3 p.m. Both will take place at the Bingham Memorial School. All materials will be supplied, but you must register by email to Andrea at alands4cornwall@gmail.com.

In recent reporting on the infusion of federal funds, we missed an important one. The town of Granville got a \$487,500 earmark for a Fire Department Building Upgrade. The money will be used to expand and upgrade the Granville Fire Department building on Route 100, bringing water, septic, and meeting and training space to the building, which currently operates without potable water at its facility.

The Starksboro Wood Bank is a program of the New Community Project (NCP). It helps anyone in need facing a cold emergency by providing a small delivery of firewood or other fuel sources to individuals and families. The emergency delivery is provided to help people stay warm while they work to secure a longer-term solution. If you or someone you know is in need of short-term emergency heating assistance, please call Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects (HOPE) at 802-388-3608 and ask for the Starksboro Wood Bank. This is the fastest and preferred way to request a delivery. While on the phone, staff at HOPE can provide information and assistance with signing up for longer-term fuel assistance. NCP's Wood Bank is made possible by donations from area foundations, businesses and, most importantly, local community members. If you're able to donate processed wood or make a financial donation of any amount, please call NCP at 802-349-2462 or email antosketchamncp@pm.me.

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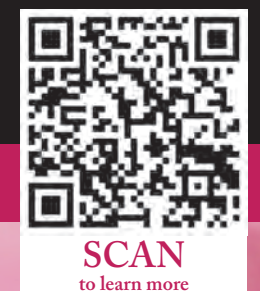
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Progressing nicely

VERGENNES OPERA HOUSE stakeholders on Feb. 12 proudly led Preservation Trust of Vermont members on a tour of the 129-year-old performance hall, which is undergoing substantial renovations that are expected to wrap up next month. Pictured, clockwise from above, are the group of Preservation Trust dignitaries on the steps of the Opera House (also city hall) entryway; Friends of the Opera House President Gerianne Smart and Mike Louer of Naylor & Breen Builders stand in front of the opera house's new, north-side elevator, which will improve accessibility to the performance space; examples of fundraiser bricks that will help underwrite the project; and visitors stand in front of the opera house stage, which is protected by plastic sheeting during the All Access Project renovations.

Independent photos/Steve James





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Bristol option tax

(Continued from Page 1A)
 the town of Bristol, based on 2024 data. Albinson's presentation noted that items like clothing, groceries, prescription drugs and residential heating fuels are exempt from the tax.

"(\$250,000) is a very good chunk of money," Albinson said. "This is something where we really want to use this and leverage this, as a lot of towns are doing, to be able to help with what we need to do in Bristol."

Town officials have identified a few priorities that a LOT could support — capital infrastructure, economic development and climate resilience and emergency preparedness.

The ballot question voters will field on March 3 details how much of the revenue generated would go toward each of those priorities, with a minimum of 40% going toward capital infrastructure, a minimum of 20% for economic development and at least 20% supporting climate resilience and emergency preparedness.

"That gives us 20% flexibility to be able to move funds or use more funds in one of those other buckets," Albinson said.

The Feb. 9 presentation highlighted ways the funds could be used in each of those areas, such as by supporting infrastructure projects like road resurfacing or municipal facility repairs.

As for climate resilience and emergency preparedness, town officials highlighted how a LOT could help the town position itself to respond to damaging weather events and other climate impacts.

Residents will weigh in on the local option tax question by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3.

"Bristol has had multiple (Federal Emergency Management Agency) situations and incidents, and we've always been served very well by FEMA, but obviously changes are happening both at the local and federal level in terms of that," Albinson said.

Residents will weigh in on the local option tax question by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3. Voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Holley Hall.

If approved by voters on Town Meeting Day, the LOT could be implemented as early as July 1, and the town could see its first revenue payment in October of this year. Albinson noted voters have the ability to repeal the local option tax or make changes in the future.

"We can change any of this, obviously, the voters can do that. They have control over that at a town meeting or a special meeting if there are concerns, but from what we've seen with other towns, it seems like a very positive thing," he said.

More details on what a LOT could look like for Bristol are available at bristolvt.org/lot.

Forest

(Continued from Page 1A)
 the forest products economy over the long term."

His work also includes administering the Use Value Appraisal, or "Current Use," program in the region he serves. The program enables eligible forest or agricultural land to be taxed at its undeveloped "use" value rather than on its marketplace value, with forest land properties following an approved management plan.

Mark helps process and review plans, as well as conducts inspections and visits to provide guidance and ensure landowners are following their plan.

He noted that in addition to those site visits, he'll sometimes get calls from landowners with questions about managing forestland and offer guidance. Such conversations can focus on various elements of forest management, such as erosion mitigation, invasive species, carbon sequestration and storage, and climate resiliency.

"It depends a lot on the site and what the landowner's objectives are, but also what the land use history is of that particular site and what the forest conditions are currently," Mark explained.

As they help landowners navigate management of their properties, there are some shifts Mark and other county foresters have had to navigate themselves over the years, such as severe weather events becoming more frequent due to climate change.

"That means that any work that we do, access infrastructure in the forest needs to be built in a way that can be more resilient and resistant to some of those events," Mark said.

Other changes include shifts in the markets for forest products, availability of people to do forest management work and shortened harvest seasons due to shifts in the weather.

"When we think about that ability to get into the woods and do work, it makes it harder to advise landowners to do things within a certain timeframe if we don't know when that is going to be," Mark said.

AT FOXGLOVE FARM

In addition to working with landowners through their jobs, Mark and Catie also manage around 70 forested acres on their own land in Leicester. Mark noted Foxglove has fostered the pair's relationship to the land and their professional roles.

"In a lot of ways, it's what's guided my own education and experience in the world of forestry," he said.

At Foxglove, the Raisharts tap trees for their bird-friendly maple syrup, grow flowers, create handmade gifts and welcome travelers to a log cabin on the property.

"We really try to enhance biodiversity and have as many different tree species as we can on the property," Mark said. "Not necessarily by importing trees, we



TWO DOZEN PEOPLE listen to Mark Raishart talk about forest management at an educational event at Foxglove Farm in Leicester last month.

Submitted photo

try to encourage what's growing here naturally."

Mark noted that according to the deed for the property, the site was largely open pasture in 1909. By 1962, it was almost completely forested.

"This is a relatively very young forest, and it's a forest that was influenced by probably decades, if not more, of land clearing and erosion and overgrazing and generally poor land use that occurred through the 1800s," Mark said.

He said many of the forests he sees in the region are similar; immature and recovering from some historic land uses.

"By doing (some management strategies) in really nuanced and targeted ways, we can enhance some of the benefits that we really want to get out of forests without really compromising the ecosystem integrity at all," Mark said.

He pointed to how a forest made up of both younger and older trees can promote diversity in available wildlife habitats.

"The amount of structure overall gets much more diverse, so the number of different animals that benefit from that structure becomes greater," he said.

Patch cuts — cutting a smaller area of forest — is a practice often aimed at enhancing wildlife habitat.

"Not immediately after because there's nothing there, but within the first couple of years or five to 10 years, you'll notice this sort of buzz of energy, and it's usually birds and insects," Mark said. "Those things are really taking advantage of the shift in structure and the increase in food that's available in a place like that."

Patch cuts in forest management was the focus of an educational event that drew 26 people to Foxglove last month. It's one of around a dozen workshops the pair has hosted in recent years.

"We've been offering various educational programs here just because we both have a background in education, and we have this resource, so we love opening up our space to the community and sharing what we know and also who we know," Catie said.

Mark noted the pair has relied on collaborations with public and nonprofit organizations over the years.

"Organizations like Vermont Coverts, the Vermont Tree Farm Program, Vermont Woodlands Association, Audubon Vermont and others have supported us with hosting events and have provided valuable learning opportunities to us for many years," Mark told the *Independent*. "Statewide, these organizations are really important partners in encouraging other Vermonters to practice and value stewardship that promotes a range of ecological and economic benefits."

The Raisharts acknowledged the important role landowners play when it comes to the state's forestland. According to the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, over 80% of Vermont's forests are privately-owned.

"Every landowner has the ability to make decisions that impact the entire forestland in the state," Catie said.

Mark said it's essential to collectively support that resource, one that Vermonters rely on and benefit from, and that connects us to one another.

"One of the things that always makes me almost feel a little emotional is thinking about on any given day when I'm boiling sap, all the other people in the state that are also boiling sap, doing the same thing, and all the people before us that have also done that same thing," he said, adding a similar collective experience unfolds when he visits landowners.

"We have these little pockets on the land where we have traditions or an emotional connection to, and it's really special to share that with people," Mark continued. "We all have our favorite space in the forest, and I think that's really meaningful."

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In girls' hoop, VUHS, MUHS earn victories

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — Local girls' basketball teams had mixed results in the past week as they neared the close of the season and playoffs.

The Middlebury Union High School team grabbed a win ahead of a break and the squad from Vergennes Union High School lost a game and won a game. Both teams were 14-4 ahead of Wednesday games played after deadline.

During what was a packed week for Mount Abraham, the Eagles dropped a few games.

TIGERS

The Tigers overcame Enosburg, 42-25, on Feb. 11, which was gratifying to MUHS Coach Eric Carter.

"Enosburg is always a tough opponent," he said. "Our girls showed up focused ... not easy when so many fight getting bus sick on that ride to Enosburg."

There were other problems once the game actually started. Right before half, sophomore Louisa Orten, who is normally a high scorer for MUHS, sprained her ankle. She rested for the second part of the game.

Without a lead scorer, "the team stepped up," Carter said, noting "big minutes from Ava Wood, Willow Heyward, Emma Quinn, Lillian Paquette, Sophie Simpson and Isabel Quinn led them home."

(See *Girls' hoop*, Page 3B)



TIGER SENIOR COOKE Riney boxes out an Eagle defender during a game in Middlebury on Tuesday. Riney scored 17 points, and MUHS won the game, 84-55.

Independent photo/Steve James

MUHS boys' hoop tops Mt. Abe

Tigers prevail in rematch with strong shooting and defense

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' basketball team knew they showed the Mount Abraham team a good first quarter.

The Tigers who were sitting on the bench hopped up when the buzzer sounded at the end of the first eight minutes of play, swarming the five teammates who came from the court, meeting each other with high fives, bumps and shouts of encouragement.

MUHS outscored Mt. Abe, 24-4, in the first quarter, and ended the game on top, 84-55.

It was a rematch from the teams' first meeting on Jan. 23, when the Tigers lost, 59-51, in Bristol.

"When we played over there, last time, I thought that they outworked us and were more physical and more aggressive, and it was a good learning experience for us," MUHS Coach Chris Altomose said. "It's something

that we've been working on since that game."

Back in January, Mt. Abe outscored MUHS, 30-9, in the middle of the game. The Tigers came back in the fourth with 23 points to the Eagles' 10, but it wasn't enough to close the 21-point deficit.

"We've been really raising the bar in practice," Altomose said. "It's not always fun, but when it shows up together on the court in a game like this, then that's when



TIGER SENIOR JONATHAN Kafumbe blocks an Eagle attempt during a game in Middlebury on Tuesday. He scored 9 points, as MUHS defeated Mt. Abe, 84-55.

Independent photo/Steve James

it's fun.

"And I hope they recognize that the hard work pays off."

The game wasn't just a satisfying victory — it also

evened the team's record 8-8.

"It's very exciting," Altomose said. "We started out 0 and five ... against a really tough schedule,"

(See *Tigers*, Page 4B)

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball	
2/11 MUHS vs Enosburg	42-25
2/11 Richford vs VUHS	55-29
2/13 Colchester vs Mt Abe	65-24
2/14 Enosburg vs Mt Abe	39-28
2/15 VUHS vs Mt Christian	44-32
2/16 OV vs Mt Abe	31-25
2/18 Mt Abe at Enosburg	Late
2/18 Fairfax at VUHS	Late
2/18 MUHS at Winooski	Late
Boys' Basketball	
2/11 MUHS vs Missisquoi	87-49
2/11 Winooski vs Mt Abe	52-50
2/17 VUHS vs Missisquoi	86-33
2/17 Mt Abe at MUHS	84-55
Boys' Hockey	
2/14 MUHS vs Hartford	4-0
2/18 Missisquoi at MUHS	Late
Girls' Hockey	
2/11 MUHS vs Hartford	2-1
2/14 Essex vs MUHS	6-1
COLLEGE SPORTS	
Men's Hockey	
2/14 Williams vs Midd	2-1
Women's Hockey	
2/13 Midd vs Williams	5-1
2/14 Williams at Midd	0-0
(Williams Wins Shootout, 1-0)	
Women's Basketball	
2/13 Amherst vs Midd	49-33
2/14 Midd at Hamilton	64-45
Men's Basketball	
2/13 Amherst vs Midd	79-64
2/14 Hamilton vs Midd	73-60

SCHEDULE

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball	
2/20 Milton at MUHS	7 PM
2/20 Twinfield at VUHS	7 PM
2/21 Mt Abe at Winooski	2:30 PM
Boys' Basketball	
2/19 MUHS at Milton	7 PM
2/19 Enosburg at Mt Abe	7 PM
2/21 VUHS at MUHS	12:30 PM
2/23 Enosburg at MUHS	7 PM
2/23 VUHS at Mt Abe	7 PM
2/26 Enosburg at VUHS	7 PM
2/26 Milton at Mt Abe	7 PM
2/26 Winooski at MUHS	7 PM
2/28 VUHS at OV	12:30 PM
Boys' Hockey	
2/21 St. J at MUHS	7 PM
2/25 Milton at MUHS	7 PM
2/28 MUHS at Burlington	4:50 PM
Girls' Hockey	
2/21 Sealakers at MUHS	5 PM
2/28 St Albans at MUHS	7 PM
Wrestling	
2/27&28	State Meet at CVU

(See *Schedule*, Page 3B)



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE SENIOR Evan Flaks dribbles the ball past an Amherst defender during the Panthers' Friday game in Middlebury. The home team lost, 79-64. Flaks wrapped up his career on Saturday vs. Hamilton

Independent photo/Steve James

Panther men's basketball season ends

Back-to-back losses close run on a disappointing note

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College men's basketball team closed its season over the weekend with back-to-back home losses to NESCAC rivals Amherst and

Hamilton. Those games brought the Panthers' season record to 8-16 overall, but just 1-9 in the league.

The Panther men did not make the NESCAC playoffs.

On Friday, Feb. 13, Middlebury fell to visiting Amherst, 79-64. The Mammoths outscored Middlebury, 33-26, in the first half, and, 46-38, in the second.

Junior Ian Murray scored the most points of any Panther (14) and three Panthers scored nine each: senior Edward Witherington, sophomore Sawyer Ramey and first-year Dominick Ducree.

The next day, Middlebury lost, 73-60, to Hamilton, who ended their season at 6-18. Hamilton led at halftime on Saturday, 34-22. The Panthers kept with the Continentals in the second half, only falling one point behind in scoring. But it wasn't enough to come away with a win.

Ducree led the Panthers with 13 points; seniors Evan Flaks and Oliver Urena had 9 points apiece.



FIRST-YEAR PANTHER DOMINICK Ducree looks to drive the lane against Amherst on Friday. Ducree scored nine points during that game.

Independent photo/Steve James

Tiger dancers warm up for states

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School dance team on Saturday got second place in pom during what was their third meet of the season.

The Winter Heat meet in South Burlington on Feb. 14 was the Tigers' final showing ahead of the state competition in Vergennes this coming Saturday. The team, which captains senior Madelyn Brochu and junior Jordyn Rushton

previously said is hopeful for a title this year, will perform pom and hip hop routines.

On Valentine's Day though, team and host South Burlington took first place in pom. Those standings were a repeat from when teams gathered at MUHS at the end of January, and at the state competition last year.

MUHS did overcome South Burlington in pom during what was the Tigers' first meet of the season on Jan. 17.

Local gymnasts excel

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — Local high school gymnasts Alexia Williams, Isabella Audy and Ruby Murphy were frontrunners for Middlebury Union High School during a three-team meet at Burr & Burton Academy on Saturday, Feb. 14.

That day the Tigers took second place, and their 106.2 points was less than two shy of the host team's 108.1.

Both teams handily defeated South Burlington, which scored 30.10 points.

Tiger freshman Ruby Murphy has been consistently hitting the top six, not far behind upperclassmen Williams and Audy. During this most recent

meet, Murphy was right in the mix with both of them.

Murphy took sixth in beam (7.8 points), sixth in all around (27.5) and she tied Williams for fifth in bars (6.1 points).

In addition to that tie with her teammate, Williams, a senior, took fifth in vault (7.8 points), fifth in beam (7.9 points) and fifth in all around (28.7 points).

Audy, a junior who attends VUHS but trains and competes with MUHS, took sixth in vault (7.7 points) and sixth in floor (7.2 points).

The meet was the team's last ahead of the state competition on Saturday, Jan. 21, at St. Johnsbury Academy.

Tiger girls' hockey splits pair

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School girls' hockey team added a win and a loss to their record last week.

The team came back from a first period deficit to beat Hartford 2-1 on Wednesday, Feb. 11, handing the fellow Division II team just one of its four losses this season.

And unless the two teams meet during the playoffs, the Hurricanes won't get a second shot at the Tigers — last week's game in Hartford was the two teams' only meeting this season.

Though MUHS came out on top, they fell back by a goal about 10 minutes into the first period.

No more scoring came until about nine minutes into the second, when senior co-captains Lia Calzini and Quinn Doria found each other on the ice. Calzini assisted Doria for the tying goal.

The Tigers had the final say with

about five minutes left in the game. Calzini hit junior Kate Kozak for the winning goal at 9:44.

MUHS didn't have the same success on Saturday, Feb. 14, against defending Division I state champion Essex. MUHS fell 6-1. The Tigers went down 3-0 after the first period.

The Tigers' sole goal came at 2:40 in, with Calzini earning the tally assisted by Doria.

The Hornets put another three in the back of the net during the third period. That team was 9-7-1 as of Monday.

Tiger goalie Heaven Ross had 22 saves. The Tigers were outshot 28-18.

MUHS is 9-8 as they gear up for a second shot at combined Burlington/Colchester team this Saturday, Feb. 21, at 5 p.m. at Memorial Sports Center. They lost 8-0 to the 9-5-2 Sealakers early in

(See *Girls' hockey*, Page 2B)

Winter Adventures in Québec's Eastern Townships, Part 2

We arrived at the northern end of Lac d'Argent near the center of Eastman Village in the early afternoon—my brother Ted, sister-in-law Susie, and wife Deborah. Trusting our online navigation, we found the trailhead easily. And though the small parking lot was full, there was plenty of parking along the adjacent gravel road.

To be honest, I wasn't quite sure what to expect in terms of trail conditions or the surrounding landscape. The Eastman Village Trails, which are free and open to the public, are part of a longer converted rail trail corridor stretching across multiple towns, used extensively for biking in the summer. The section where we started, if we continued far enough, connects all the way north and east around Mount Orford, and back south through the village of Orford to the bigger town of Magog on the north end of Lake Memphremagog. More importantly, it is maintained in the winter for cross-country skiing,

which is what brought us there. As it turned out, it is quite beautifully maintained. The grooming was fantastic with two parallel sets of tracks allowing Deborah and I to frequently ski side-by-side when we weren't passing (or being passed by) other skiers. And, as was the case the day before in the national park on the other side of the mountain, we had a deep snowpack of natural powder without a hint of ice or bare ground.

The first kilometer or so brought us through the woods along the edge of a residential area, with one crossing of a snow-covered driveway or road. After that, however, we saw nothing but trees and the occasional other skiers. That was until we crossed over a low ridge and started down the back side. Then views of Mount Orford opened up in front of us, topped with a slow clinging cloud

and illuminated in afternoon light. Since we were following an old rail trail, none of the grades were especially steep. Between the relatively level trails and the well-groomed snow we could really get our rhythm going when we wanted — something not always possible on hillier trails we often ski in Vermont. Not that we were particularly ambitious. Much of the time, we enjoyed a leisurely pace, a beautiful landscape, and conversation among the four of us.

The day on the Eastman trails was the second of our three-day adventure — drawn to Québec's Cantons-de-l'Est (or Eastern

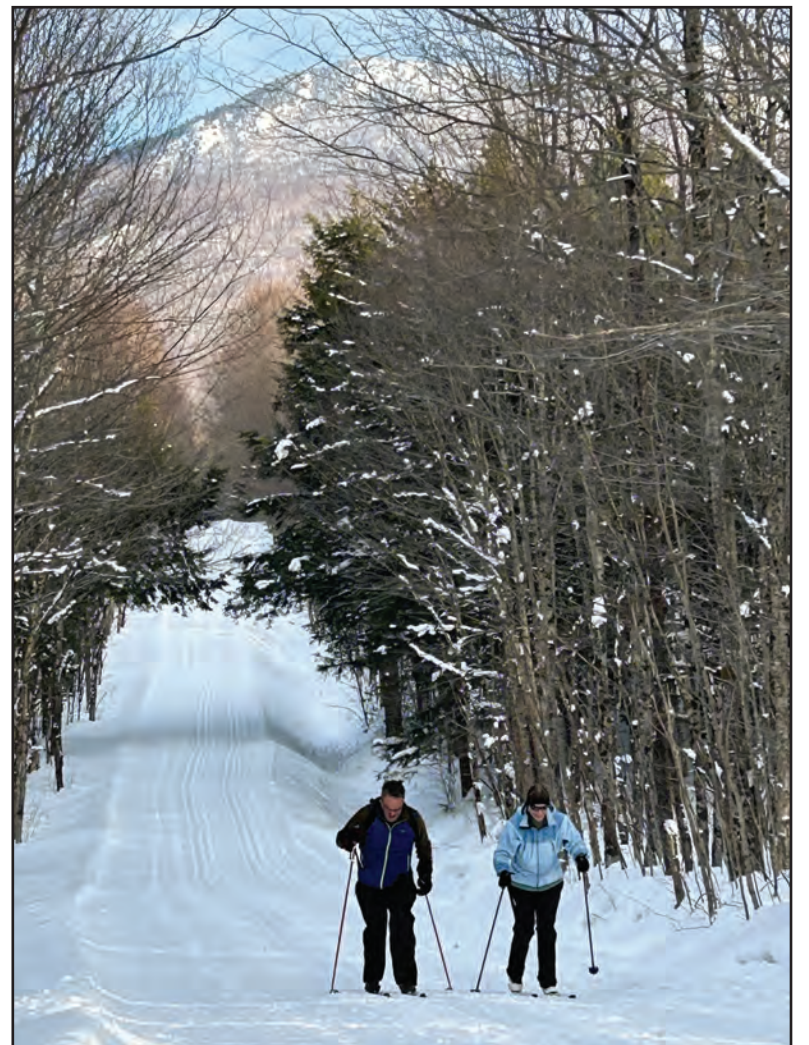
Townships) by the Nordic skiing as well as the Québécois culture and cuisine. Since Ted and I both brought work with us, we had spent the morning of our mini-vacation in our respective hotel rooms on laptops, which would have been quite depressing had it not been for a very abundant and tasty breakfast including crepes and smoked salmon at our hotel (the Estrimont in Orford) followed by a lunch visit to *Dora Boulangerie Artisanale*, a little artisanal bakery between Orford and Eastman famous for their beignets, where multiple glass display cases of pastries and desserts stalled our trip for several minutes.

Because, of course, to experience Québécois culture, we had to eat the food — a sacrificial commitment to my outdoor writing that I continued into the evening, though it meant I would return to Vermont with a noticeably tighter belt. That night, after we showered and changed at our respective hotels, we met and dined down in Magog at *Les Enfants Terribles*, a restaurant whose suggestive name I will let readers translate on their own. I really felt like I was in Québec when (not noticing that the restaurant had its own private parking right next to the door) we

parked a couple blocks away at Point Merry Park on the shore of Memphremagog. Though it well was after dark, we could hear hockey pucks banging against the boards and the sounds of skates on cold ice at the park's outdoor hockey rink. We also felt like we were in Québec when, once again, we found the hospitality very inviting. At every brasserie, musée, boulangerie or fromagerie we visited, we found ourselves treated warmly. (We had a long and fun conversation with our server.) And the food was delicious, too. And not just the *poutine* and *pouding chômeur* — though if you visit Québec you have to have some — but the grilled trout, cod fish and chips, and steak frites. And while the culture is quite distinct and worth enjoying, Vermonters will find some similar values, including a real pride in their locally sourced foods. Québec is famous for its local cheeses, and everywhere we ate the staff would tell us which of the famous local farms the various cheeses came from.

On our third and final day, instead of another morning of skiing, we drove east to the bigger town of Sherbrooke and visited the *Musée Des Beaux-Arts* to experience and enjoy the Québécois culture beyond just the food (good as that was). When I first entered the temporary exhibit on the first floor, I admit I was a little skeptical. *Ultra Nan* is a whimsical and anonymous character appearing in a large collection of drawings — autobiographical in the sense that the character is himself an artist, self-aware of self-depiction. He has been described as a matchstick: a rectangular body, stick figure arms, and a circular face. And yet, as Deborah noted after seeing just a quarter of the exhibit that fills most of the first floor, the art captured a full range of human emotion in profoundly creative and moving ways, even as it raised interesting questions about what it means to be an artist or to make art.

It also continued to



QUEBEC'S EASTMAN VILLAGE Trails, built on a converted rail trail, are free and open to the public, and are nevertheless well-groomed and maintained.

Photo by Matthew Dickerson



THE DORA BOULANGERIE Artisanale, a little artisanal bakery, is famous for its beignets and features multiple glass display cases of pastries and desserts that beguile visitors with Québécois cuisine.

Photo by Matthew Dickerson

communicate an appreciation for the natural world, and the value of time just being outdoors and enjoying the beauty. Many of the works included fluorescent paint and were displayed in a low light setting. Visitors to the exhibit are given an ultraviolet light (black light) source, which, when shined on the paintings, stimulates the fluorescent paint, which returns it as visible light revealing aspects of the paintings not initially visible. The artist used these to hint at what we might perceive as spiritual or invisible realities, emotions or memories. Many of the works were immersive 3D displays. I could have spent many hours there and recommend driving the three hours to Sherbrooke just for that

exhibit. And, yes, we wrapped up the visit with more food, walking several blocks along the river from the museum to the Vintage 5080 Restaurant-Bar classic dinner, where we met co-proprietor Marie-Claude, who spoke proudly of her grandmother's recipes that she still used for her artisan burgers and creative diner fare, including her favorite specialty: a breaded and fried mac-and-cheese patty with bacon and a variety of cheeses — all local, of course. Although I couldn't handle both the mac-and-cheese and poutine (my belt already having tightened), I did note that the onion rings and fries (served in Québec with flavored mayonnaise) were both delicious.



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LOCAL SPORTS



Steve James



Sophia Keshmiri



Matthew Dickerson



Karl Lindholm

WE'VE GOT IT COVERED!

Girls' hockey

(Continued from Page 1B)

the season. On Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. the Tigers close the regular season with another home game, this time against the 2025 Division I runners-up from BFA St. Albans, who MUHS has yet to see this season. The Comets were 13-1-2 as of Monday.

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Boys' hockey defeats Hartford

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
MIDDLEBURY — Playing a light schedule in the past week, the Middlebury Union High School boys' hockey team made the most of the one game it played.
 On Saturday, the visiting Tigers handed fellow Division II team Hartford a 4-0 loss. It was the second time this season MUHS has come out on top against the Hurricanes. Back in December, MUHS beat Hartford, 2-1.
 Though this past Saturday's game was scoreless at the end of the first period, it wasn't for lack of effort.
 "We came out strong, finishing the first period with 14 shots and only giving up one to Hartford,"

Coach Jordan Stearns said. "However we couldn't find the back of the net," he added, commending the Hartford goalie's performance.
 The Hurricanes were able to fend off the Tigers until there were about 10 minutes left in the second period. MUHS junior Case Pitner found junior Gabriel Quesnel, who got the puck to senior Adrien Malhotra for a goal.
 That trio came back in the third for another goal with about eight minutes left. This time Pitner got the primary assist, and Quesnel got the secondary.
 Junior Tyler Munson got a third Tiger goal with just under three minutes left during a powerplay. He was assisted by Pitner, who

got the puck from junior Asa Root Pratt.
 With just 12 seconds left, senior Joe Sullivan put one more in the back of the net while the Tigers were down a man due to a penalty.
 MUHS outshot Hartford 34-12. Senior goalie TJ Baron had 12 saves for Middlebury.
 The Tigers were 9-6-1 as they got ready for a home game on Wednesday against Division-II foe Missisquoi, who they tied in January, 4-4. That game was played after deadline for this edition.
 Then on Saturday at 7 p.m. the Tigers host St. Johnsbury, a Division I team, on home ice. MUHS beat the Hilltoppers, 5-1, in early January.

Girls' hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)
 Isabel Quinn, junior co-captain, and Heywood, a sophomore, put up 12 points each. Wood, a freshman, scored 7.
 "Tough week ahead with Winooski and Milton ... It will take team efforts to get good results in both of those games," Carter said.
 In a Wednesday game played after deadline, the Tigers headed to Winooski to take on the Spartans, who MUHS previously beat, 52-28, in January. Up next, MUHS plays a home game against Milton on Friday, Feb. 20, at 7 p.m. The rematch with the Yellowjackets, who defeated the Tigers, 49-44, at the end of January, is Middlebury's last game of the regular season.
COMMODORES
 The Commodores took a rare loss last week, falling, 55-29, to Richford. The Feb. 11 game, which is only Vergennes' fourth loss this season, was VUHS's second shot at the Richford. The local hoopsters previously lost, 44-35, in January. The only other team VUHS has lost to so far this season is MUHS, who they fell to twice.
 During the second bout against Richford, VUHS senior co-captain Ashtin Stearns scored 9 points; junior Georgia Krause put up eight, and snagged seven rebounds.
 The Commodores came back on Sunday, Feb. 15, to defeat Mid Vermont Christian School, 44-32. Ninth-grader Ayla Kittredge put up 16 points. Stearns scored 13 points and snagged 9 rebounds. Senior Ava Francis assisted her teammates 7 times.
 The game was tight each quarter, with Vergennes outscoring their opponent 11-9 in the first, but falling 10-7 and 9-7 in the second and third, respectively. During the fourth though, the Commodores dominated with 19 points, and held Mid Vermont Christian to just 4.
 VUHS played a rematch against Fairfax on Wednesday after deadline. The Commodores beat that team, 44-23, in January.
 VUHS plays their final game of the regular season at home this

Friday, Feb. 20, at 7 p.m. against Twinfield, who they previously beat, 80-32, in Plainfield.
EAGLES
 The Mount Abraham girls' basketball team fell in back-to-back home games on Feb. 13 and 14.
 On Friday night, they lost, 65-24, to Colchester. Sophomore Olivia Sawyer scored 8 points, making her the Eagles' high scorer. The two teams previously played in January in Colchester, and the outcome was the same. The score was 36-18.
 Then this past Saturday, host MountAbe lost, 39-28, to Enosburg. Senior co-captain Brooklyn Ryersbach put up 11 points, which tied her and a Hornet as the game's high scorers.
 During Monday's game in Brandon, Otter Valley prevailed over the Eagles, 31-25. Sawyer put up another 6 points in that game, as did senior co-captain Gen Forand and sophomore Edda Twyman. Forand also totaled 9 steals, and Twyman had 8 rebounds.
 The Eagles played Enosburg again, this time away, on Wednesday, Feb. 18, after deadline.
 Mt. Abe plays their final game of the regular season on Saturday in Winooski at 12:30 p.m. Mt. Abe lost to the Spartans, 52-40, in January.

MUHS, VUHS boys' hoop celebrate victories

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
ADDISON COUNTY — Boys' basketball teams from Middlebury and Vergennes union high schools came out on top last week. Mt. Abe fell twice, once to the Tigers.
MUHS:
 On Feb. 11 the Tigers beat Missisquoi 87-49 — Middlebury's second victory over Missisquoi.
 "It was a nice team effort," Coach Chris Altemose said. "I was happy with the way that we started the game."
 Senior **Cooke Riney** scored the game high 37 points, and snagged 14 rebounds. Junior **Colin Chicoine** put up 19, had two rebounds and two assists. And junior **Ryan Brouillard** assisted his teammates nine times, and scored 7 points of his own.
 Other contributors were juniors **Taylor Altemose** (9 points, four rebounds and four assists), **Tim Laframboise** (8 points and eight rebounds), and **Landon Hunt** (5 points and two assists).
 Then on Tuesday, the Tigers beat Mt. Abe, 84-25, in Middlebury (see story on Page 1B).
 Next the Tigers head to Milton on Thursday for a 7 p.m. game. At the end of January MUHS beat the Yellowjackets by 20 points.
VUHS:
 The Commodores on Tuesday, Feb. 17, beat Missisquoi Valley for a second time this season, this time at home by a margin of


86-33. Back in January they won 83-51.
 VUHS outscored Missisquoi in every quarter except the second — the Commodores put up 9 points to Missisquoi's 15.
 But the Vergennes team dominated in every other quarter, going 24-9 in the first, 32-3 in the third, and 21-6 in the fourth.
 Senior **Ryker Mosehauer** put up 22 points, junior **Cohen Howell** scored 15 and senior **Logan Thibault** had 11. Junior **Quinn LeBeau** snagged 8 rebounds.
 VUHS, which is 10-5, has a second shot at MUHS on Saturday, Feb. 21, at 12:30 p.m. in Middlebury. The Tigers won a January meetup by a sliver, 62-60.
Mt. Abe:
 On Wednesday, Feb. 11, the Eagles dropped a nailbiter to Winooski, who they beat by two points in January at home. On Feb. 11 it was Winooski's turn to win a close game, 52-50.
 The Eagles trailed by at least 6 points at the end of each of first three quarters, but the game came down to the last few minutes of the fourth.
 Within the last minute-and-a-half of the game brothers **Charlie** and **Noah Germon** made five of five free throw attempts between the two of them. Those points tied the game and got the Eagles the lead.
 "Charlie has been shooting 77% from the line and Noah is

around 64%, but both have been really good at late in the game free throws," Coach Martin Clark said.
 First **Noah Germon**, a sophomore, hit two free throws for the tie, 47-47, with just over a minute left. Then with 46 seconds to go **Charlie Germon**, a senior, was fouled while shooting from behind the arc, earning him three shots from the line, all of which he sank. That put the Eagles ahead by three points.
 Shortly after, Winooski tied it up, 50-50, with a three-pointer. The game came down to the last 2.3 seconds, with two made Spartans foul shots that dashed the hopes of victory for Mt. Abe.
 In addition to sinking those critical foul shots in the fourth quarter, **Charlie Germon** was the game's high scorer with 19 points.
 Junior **Jaran Griffin** had nine, and sophomore **Waydon Cherington** had 8, six of which came on three pointers late in the fourth quarter.
 The Eagles face Enosburg for a second time this season on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m. in Bristol. Mt. Abe previously edged the Hornets in a one point game in January.

Schedule

(Continued from Page 1B)

Gymnastics	
2/21State Meet @ St. Johnsbury
Dance	
2/21	State Comp. at VUHS5:30 PM
Nordic:	
2/19	statesRikert Outdoor Center
2/24	states ...Craftsbury Outdoor Center
COLLEGE SPORTS	
Men's Hockey	
2/20	Midd at Amherst7 PM
2/21	Midd at Hamilton3 PM
Women's Hockey	
2/20	Colby at Midd7 PM
2/21	Colby at Midd3 PM



Upcoming Events

Friday, February 20:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Monday February 23:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating


Tuesday, February 24:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Thursday, February 26:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Friday, February 27:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Tuesday, March 3:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Thursday, March 5:
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating



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JUNIOR TIGER TAYLOR Altomose dribbles past Eagle sophomore Noah Germon during a rematch in Middlebury on Tuesday night. Altomose had 20 points to help MUHS beat Mt. Abe, 84-55.

Independent photo/Steve James

Tigers

(Continued from Page 1B)
so to stay the course and keep plugging away and kind of get caught up. And we have a tough stretch. We got five games, including this one, in 10 days.

“And so this was a real good spark for us.”

His Tigers came out with fire. Mt. Abe might have gotten on the scoreboard first — but the Eagles led only one more time for the rest of the quarter.

At the start of the game, senior co-captain Cooper Cook got the Eagles two points on a jump shot from the foul line to make it 2-0. He had four total by the end of the game.

Riney, who put up 12 of his 17 points in the first quarter, followed up with a basket after fighting through defenders under the hoop, tying the game, 2-2. About a minute later he got the ball while posted up, and was fouled while going up for another. The senior co-captain hit both of his free throws, bringing the score to 4-2.

Mount Abe senior co-captain Noah Germon tied it up for the Eagles, for the last time of the game, with two made free throws. He was Mt. Abe’s high scorer with 14 points.

The Eagles didn’t score again for the remaining six minutes of the quarter.

The Tigers’ spree began with another Riney basket, with 5:57 on the clock. He pulled down an offensive rebound and put the ball back up for his sixth point.

On their next offensive turn, junior Ryan Brouillard drove the lane for a layup, bumping MUHS to 8 points.

With 4:21 left junior Taylor Altomose lofted the ball to a posted-up Riney for another deuce.

Defensively, the team was on point too.

Before getting on the board again, senior Jonathan Kafumbe and junior Colin Chicoine had big defensive plays.

Kafumbe got a hand on the ball on an Eagles offensive run, knocked it away and one of his teammates recovered it.

About 10 seconds later, Chicoine blocked an Eagle’s layup as he was going up, much to the crowd of MUHS fans’ enjoyment.

In the last three and a half minutes, the team managed another interception before finding the hoop again. Riney got a pass off the fastbreak under the basket, and went up for another two points, making it 12-4, Tigers.

Chicoine followed up with a three, bringing the Tigers to 15 and prompting a Mt. Abe timeout. Chicoine scored a game-high 21 points by the end of the night.

When the teams got back on the court, Kafumbe was dribbling down the court on the fastbreak, and slipped a short pass parallel to junior Landon Hunt under the basket, who made the two. Hunt scored another two in the third quarter, to bring his game total to four.

Kafumbe then put up a reverse layup, bringing it to 19-4.

“He brought real good energy and good intensity,” Coach Altomose said of Kafumbe, who had 9 more points and continued to show up on defense.

With about a minute left, junior Taylor Altomose hit his first of five three pointers of the game. He scored a trey in each quarter, except in the third — when got two. In the fourth, he also made three free throws after being fouled on another attempt, and before hitting his final three of the game.

With just five seconds to go in the first, Riney closed by grabbing his own rebound and putting up another two points to make it 24-4.

The Eagles kept scoring even at 16 points with the Tigers in the second quarter, but that was the closest they came to dominating the game. MUHS put up more points than Mt. Abe in the third

and fourth.

“Middlebury wanted it more than we did, and they shot very well, especially in the first half. You know, we didn’t match. We didn’t match the effort,” said Mt. Abe Coach Martin Clark.

“The boys played hard, don’t get me wrong. We, you know, we have to be able to shoot under that pressure.”

Mt. Abe had shots teasing them the whole game. With about five minutes left in the third quarter, an Eagle shot rolled around the rim and out, and just a few seconds after that the same thing happened with a three-point attempt.

Defending Riney, who towers by at least a head over most of the court, proved a challenge, Clark said.

“We don’t have an answer for a big guy. We had to try to double, and he shot a lot better when he got the ball inside this time than he did up (in Bristol).”

Clark was pleased that his team, which was 9-8 after the game, didn’t quit.

“We kept fighting. We didn’t lay down, just hard when they’re making three-pointers and we’re working hard and get two points,” he said. “I think if we keep playing that pace of basketball, we’ll be fine.”

For Clark, it was as simple as MUHS played a great game.

“They had a fantastic effort,” he said. “That’s all there is to it.”

Here’s who else scored for MUHS:

- Sophomore Daniel Power, 5 points.
- Junior Timmy Laframboise, 5.

Here’s who else scored for Mt. Abe:

- Sophomore Noah Germon, 12 points.
- Sophomore Dustin Abbott, 11.
- Sophomore Waydon Cherington, 9.
- Sophomore Kai Ludka, 2.
- Senior William Gustin, 2.
- Junior Jaran Griffin, 1.

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EAGLE SOPHOMORE WAYDON Cherington dribbles while up against Tiger junior Colin Chicoine during a Tuesday game in Middlebury. Chicoine scored the game high 21 points, and MUHS beat Mt.. Abe 84-55.

Independent photo/Steve James

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feb 19 THURSDAY

Isley Classic Film Club watches "Nothing Sacred" in Middlebury. Thursday, Feb. 19, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

"Mapping Wildlife Connectivity" in Salisbury. Thursday, Feb. 19, 7 p.m., Salisbury Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Jed Murdoch of the University of Vermont will discuss efforts to create safe passage for wildlife. Part of the Salisbury Conservation Commission winter series. Free.

feb 20 FRIDAY

VFW fish fry in Middlebury. Friday, Feb. 20, 5-7 p.m., Addison County VFW Post 7823, 530 Exchange St. Haddock or butterfly shrimp served with baked potato or French fries, coleslaw and dessert. Open to the public. Eat in or take out; takeout starting at 5 p.m. Proceeds benefit veterans programs. \$16 per person. More info at 802-388-9468.

Weybridge Fire Department spaghetti supper in Weybridge. Friday, Feb. 20, 5-7 p.m., Weybridge Elementary School, 210 Quaker Village Rd. Community spaghetti supper to benefit the Weybridge Volunteer Fire Department. \$15 adults, \$5 children ages 5-12.

Interfaith Vigil for Peace, Justice, Compassion in Middlebury. Friday, Feb. 20, 5:30-6 p.m., Town Hall Theater Plaza, 72-76 Merchants Row. A half-hour interfaith peace vigil with readings, periods of silence for reflection, prayer or meditation and a closing song. Open to people of all wisdom traditions. Organized by members of Middlebury Indivisible in response to national and global crises. Event will be canceled and rescheduled in case of heavy snow or icy conditions. Please dress warmly. Free.

feb 21 SATURDAY

Legislative breakfast in Bristol. Saturday, Feb. 21, 8:30-9:45 a.m., Bristol American Legion, 56 Airport Dr. Community legislative breakfast sponsored by Bridport Grange and Addison County Farm Bureau, moderated by Charlie Roy. All are welcome to attend and ask questions of local legislators and senators. Breakfast available by donation 30 minutes before the discussion. RSVP to Bill at 802-881-8836 or wjscottjr@comcast.net.

Puzzle Race in New Haven. Saturday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m., New Haven Community Library, Town Office side of the building. Team-based puzzle competition: the first team to finish the 500-piece puzzle wins. Teams of up to four people; individuals may register to be placed on a team. Intended for amateur puzzlers; no special aids allowed. Register at nhcl.org. More info at 802-355-4676, librarian@nhcl.org.

Fiber Crafts Collective in East Middlebury. Saturday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m., Sarah Partridge Library, 431 East Main St. Participants work on knitting, crochet, weaving, spinning, sewing, embroidery, felting, macrame and more. All skill levels welcome. Free.

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. Coffee and light refreshments to follow.

Winter Carnival Ice Show: Midnight 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 more. Free admission for children under three, all others \$6. Tickets available at the Mahaney Arts Center Box Office and online at middlebury.edu.

feb 22 SUNDAY

Bingo in Vergennes. Sunday, Feb. 22, 1-3:30 p.m., American Legion Post 14, downstairs. Join the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 14 for a lively afternoon of Public Bingo — open to everyone in the community. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. Bingo packets are \$15 for a sheet of three cards for each regular game. Winner Take All games: \$1 per sheet. 50/50 Raffle. Food available for purchase. Bring a friend, grab a card, and enjoy a fun afternoon of bingo, prizes, and community spirit.

Screening of "5 Broken Cameras" film in Middlebury. Sunday, Feb. 22, 1-4 p.m., Middlebury Marquis Theatre Café, Main Street. "5 Broken Cameras," nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, gives viewers a riveting, ground-level perspective on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the nonviolent resistance movement against the settlements that began in 2005. Q & A/community discussion of Apartheid Free Communities will follow the screening.

Winter Carnival Ice Show: Midnight 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.

Meet Your Neighbors in East Middlebury. Sunday, Feb. 22, 2-4 p.m. Sarah Partridge Community House and Library, East Main St. Enjoy punch and cookies and make new acquaintances in this event sponsored by the East Middlebury Historical Society.

feb 23 MONDAY

Monday Night Bingo in Middlebury. Monday, Feb. 23, doors open at 4:30 p.m., Addison County VFW Post 7823,



Figuring it out together

THE NEW HAVEN Community Library this Saturday will host a team-based puzzle competition: the first team to finish the 500-piece puzzle wins. Bring family or friends and work in groups of no more than four. The fun starts at 10 a.m. If you want more puzzles, head to the Bixby Library in Vergennes on Saturday, Feb. 28, at noon for the Hygge Hangout, this cozy afternoon inspired by hygge, the Danish art of comfort and coziness, will feature warm drinks, puzzles, board games and art in a relaxed, welcoming space.

Independent file photo/Steve James

530 Exchange St. Quickies at 6 p.m., regular bingo at 7 p.m. The kitchen is open 'til 6:30 p.m. Open to the public.

Ecstatic Dance in Addison. Monday, Feb. 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Addison Community Center, 121 Route 17. Freeform ecstatic dance hosted by Marlie Hunt and Suzanne Hunt. Warm-up begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by an opening circle and guided dance wave. Open to all, no experience required.

Cribbage night in Bristol. Monday, Feb. 23, 7-8:15 p.m., Libanus Lodge #47, 2 Elm St. The Bristol Masons host their semimonthly cribbage night. All ages and skill levels welcome. Free.

Middlebury. Sunday, March 1, 5:15 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 30 North Pleasant St. Reception and opening of "Nothing to Hide," a photo-text exhibit exploring the experiences of individuals and families living with mental illness. Exhibit on view through March 31, weekdays 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the church's Hallway Gallery. Free. More info at judyalbright@snet.net or 802-989-7644.

mar 2 MONDAY

African drumming for beginners in Middlebury. Monday, March 2, and weekly on Mondays, 2-3 p.m., 17 Court St. Weekly African drumming class with Shelly introducing West African rhythms. Some drums available or bring your own. Hosted by the Counseling Service of Addison County. Free and open to all. Drop-ins welcome. Parking in back; use the front door opposite the TenneyBrook convenience store. More info at 802-388-3093.

Community Soup & Bread Dinner in Vergennes. Monday, March 2, 5:30-7 p.m., Vergennes Congregational Church, 30 South Water St. Pay-what-you-can community dinner with guest cooks. Proceeds benefit the Rogers & Hazard Relief Society, which supports mutual aid in Ferrisburgh. All are welcome. Cash or check preferred. More info at ariel.bolles@gmail.com or pvvt@yahoo.com.

mar 3 TUESDAY

Town Meeting Day. Don't forget to vote at your local polling place!

Yarn and other crafts in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 3, and weekly on Tuesdays, 3-4:30 p.m., 17 Court St. Weekly craft group with Marie focused on yarn projects and other handcrafts. Bring your own projects to work on in the company of others; skill sharing encouraged. Hosted by the Counseling Service of Addison County. Free and open to all. Drop-ins welcome. Parking in back; use the front door opposite the TenneyBrook convenience store. More info at 802-388-3093.

mar 4 WEDNESDAY

Art and creative writing in Middlebury. Wednesday, March 4, and weekly on Wednesdays, 1:30-3 p.m., 17 Court St. Weekly art and creative writing group. Participants may work on their own creative projects or use prompts and ideas provided. Supplies available or bring your own. Hosted by the Counseling Service of Addison County. Free and open to all. Drop-ins welcome. Parking in back; use the front door opposite the TenneyBrook convenience store. More info at 802-388-3093.

Women & Investing Seminar in Brandon. Wednesday, March 4, 6 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library. Hosted by Kassie Reid, financial planner at Green Hill Financial Partners, this seminar will walk through intentional, actionable steps to help people move forward with clarity and confidence. While this conversation centers around women, it's open to all.

mar 5 THURSDAY

Isley Classic Film Club watches "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" in Middlebury. Thursday, March 5, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

mar 1 SUNDAY

"Teen Mental Health in a Changing World" panel discussion in Middlebury. Sunday, March 1, 4-5:15 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 30 North Pleasant St. Panel discussion on teen mental health moderated by Rev. Elizabeth Gleich, featuring clinicians, educators and a college student discussing current challenges facing today's teens and ways to offer meaningful support. Also, opening reception of photo exhibit "Nothing to Hide" will follow the discussion. Free. More info at judyalbright@snet.net or 802-989-7644.

"Nothing to Hide" opening reception in

RNESU selected for rural career-connected learning program

BRANDON — Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union (RNESU) has been selected by Transcend, a national nonprofit that helps communities reimagine and redesign schools so every young person can thrive in a rapidly changing world, to participate in the Rural Career-Connected Collaborative — a 15-month program that launched in January 2026 to support a national cohort of school communities as they lead the way in innovating towards the next chapter of their career-connected learning models in ways that reflect their community's strengths, aspirations and future trends.

"I am very excited that RNESU is part of the RCCC because it will provide Otter Valley Middle and High School with the benefits of community-wide collaboration that also emphasizes student voice, helping to shape the future and set the tone for how our schools prepare students for college, careers, and life," said Superintendent Rene Sanchez. "The vision, pathways, and mindsets that Transcend is helping to develop will also benefit all elementary and middle school students across the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union by helping us tie together our current work in curriculum, belonging, and future-preparedness."

connected learning approaches, assess current efforts, engage students and community members in shaping the vision, and develop a continuum of experiences to test and scale over time.

Sanchez will serve as the "chief architect" of this work and participate in a six-month Superintendent Fellowship designed to build enabling conditions and align policy, people, and resources for lasting impact.

The cohort represents diverse rural communities and was selected from over 110 interested districts. The participating communities are:

- Bunker Hill Community Unit 8 School District (Illinois)
- Edgecombe County Public Schools (North Carolina)
- Floyd County Schools (Virginia)
- Lyndonville Central School District (New York)
- Montgomery County Schools (North Carolina)
- Northeast Academy for Aerospace & Advanced Technologies (North Carolina)
- Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union (Vermont)
- Sampson County Schools (North Carolina)
- Turner County School District (Georgia)

These districts range in size and demographics but share a commitment to championing economic mobility and strong learning experiences for every young person. Cohort members will participate in in-person convenings, receive dedicated coaching from Transcend, and build stronger partnerships with industry partners, postsecondary institutions, and community stakeholders.

ABOUT TRANSCEND

Transcend is a national nonprofit that helps communities reimagine and redesign schools so every young person can thrive in a rapidly changing world. Across the country, communities recognize that classrooms built for the industrial

(See RNESU, Page 6B)

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THE HANNAFORD CAREER Center Flying Tigers robotics team line up with other members of the Alliance that won a FIRST Tech Challenge in Northfield this past Saturday.

Submitted photos

Flying Tigers make a debut to remember

NORTHFIELD — In an impressive display of engineering prowess and teamwork, the Hannaford Career Center Flying Tigers robotics team made a statement this past Sunday, Feb. 15, at Norwich University. Competing in their first-ever FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) event, the rookie squad defied the odds to become members of the Winning Alliance, bringing home a major victory in their inaugural outing.

While most rookie teams use their first competition as a learning experience, nine members of the Flying Tigers arrived in Northfield ready to compete. Throughout the day, the team navigated intense matches, technical hurdles, and the high-pressure environment of the tournament with the poise of seasoned veterans.

The Flying Tigers didn't just participate — they excelled. Their performance culminated in being selected for the top-seeded alliance, where they played a pivotal role in clinching the overall championship title.

Dan Arensmeyer, the Career Center's instructor in Advanced Manufacturing and Intro to STEM, said the local students showed excellence beyond the scoreboard. While the trophy is a physical testament to their skill, the team's success was built on the core values of FIRST robotics:

- Gracious Professionalism: The Tigers stood out for their willingness to help other teams and maintain a positive, respectful attitude in the heat of competition.
- Collaborative Spirit: With only



MEMBERS OF THE Hannaford Career Center Flying Tigers team work on a robot-building project at the FIRST Tech Challenge at Norwich University this past Saturday.

nine members, every student played a critical role, demonstrating that success in robotics is as much about communication and teamwork as it is about coding.

• Dedication: The months of after-school hours, late-night troubleshooting, and iterative design clearly paid off when the robot hit the field.

"To see a rookie team step onto the floor at Norwich and perform with such precision and heart is truly remarkable," Arensmeyer said. "They represented our school

with excellence and proved that the Flying Tigers are a force to be reckoned with."

This victory marks the beginning of what promises to be an incredible journey for the Flying Tigers, which is known in the competition as Team 31719. The school community is incredibly proud of these innovators for their hard work and for putting our robotics program on the map in such spectacular fashion.

Next up is the Vermont State Championships at UVM on March 7.

Film documents Israeli action in West Bank

MIDDLEBURY — The organization Apartheid Free Communities will host a screening of the film "5 Broken Cameras" in Middlebury this Sunday, Feb. 22. The showing will be 1-4 p.m. at the Middlebury Marquis Theatre Café on Main Street.

"5 Broken Cameras," nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, gives viewers a riveting, ground-level perspective on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank

and the nonviolent resistance movement against the settlements that began in 2005 in the West Bank village of Bil'in.

Emad Burnat is an olive farmer who quickly caught on to the power of the camera as a documenter, witness and protector. He captured seven years in the life of his village, filming demonstrations, arrests and killings, while preserving the personal memories of his son Gabreel growing up amid

the conflict and his wife Soriah holding the household together while imploring Burnat to stop filming.

The five cameras he deploys, all broken while filming confrontations with Israeli soldiers, capture Burnat's transformation to journalist and documentary filmmaker. A brief presentation will precede the film and it will be followed by a Q&A/community discussion of Apartheid Free Communities.

Monkton

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

NEWS

MONKTON — Registrations are now open for parents to sign up their Little Leaguer's to participate in the Monkton Mt. Abe Little League this year. Please sign up using the link below. The link below is used to register for baseball (K-6 Grade) and softball (3-6 Grade).

Website: clubs.bluesombrero.com/mtabell.

Both players and volunteers need to complete registrations. Scholarships available upon request.

Please join us for a Registration Day March 13 at Monkton Central School Gym, 5 to 7 p.m. to meet the coaches and ask any questions! Registrations are due by March 15.

To Register: Go to Register Button, Create an account, Register for the town's team your player resides in (Monkton). There may be some shuffling of players to different teams based on appropriate age/skill, but in general, Majors are 5/6 grade, Minors 3/4 grade, Farm is 1/2 grade, and Tee ball is K/1. Softball is available for 3-6th Graders and

is a mix of all 5 Towns. If you have questions about which team your player should register for please contact Rick Kinsman at Rick.kinsman@gmail.com

Volunteers wanted — This league doesn't run without your help! If you are interested in helping please sign up and Rick will connect with you on our needs.

Weekly events going on at the Russell Memorial Library and Town Hall.

Toddler Storytime with Julie continues every Wednesday at the library from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Your child will enjoy reading, songs and other activities all for fun and learning. Call the library at 802-453-4471 for more information.

Join Eugenie Doyle every Sunday for yoga from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. This free class is for anyone interested in peaceful camaraderie and learning the basics of Ashtanga yoga. Just show up and join in! Contact Eugenie at 802-989-3378 or email edoyle@gmavt.net.

The library has obtained a new batch of large print books. They

are on loan from the State library so check them out soon. There are some great familiar titles and authors in this selection. Stop in during regular library hours to check them out. And stop in to let your child enjoy the new area for them to enjoy reading or playing at the library in the South Wing. There are so many great ideas, activities and surprises at the library! Come see!

Watch for information for joining Laurel Kelly for yoga in March.

Monthly Art Night with Julie McGowan continues on the second Tuesday of the month at the library. March 10 is the next date from 6 to 8 p.m. Bring your tools or whatever you are working on to join in with other makers and artists for an enjoyable evening. Contact Julie at juliek1121@gmail.com with questions.

Join Melanie Cota for the monthly meeting of the Poetry Club on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. in the Community Room of the Town Hall. For more information contact Melanie at cotem@gmail.com.

RNESU

(Continued from Page 5B) age no longer prepare learners for what comes next. Schools must be designed for continuous evolution: relevant, resilient, and ready for the

future. For more than a decade, Transcend has partnered with school and system leaders to build the capacity for bold, lasting change

led by the people who live it every day, working with 600 schools and 160 districts serving 270,000 students in 42 states.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Otter Valley Union High School

Chloe Mol

Chloe Mol is Otter Valley Union High School's latest Student of the Week. She lives in Brandon with her parents, brother and cat, Barley.

While at school, Chloe particularly enjoys musical theater, debate and the opportunity to spend time with friends. Her favorite classes are AP Literature and the Intro to Political Science class that she is currently taking at Community College of Vermont. Chloe loves how supportive the teachers at Otter Valley are, and notes that her debate coach, Mr. Thomas is her favorite; he is always willing to have a philosophical conversation about the ways of life.

Chloe is a member of the National Honor Society and president of the Otter Valley theater council. She played the title character in this year's Walking Stick Theater fall production of "Annie." Last year, she received the Citizen Scholar award from UVM.

Outside of school, Chloe works at Cafe Provence, is a youth organizer at Outright Vermont, and volunteers with HOBY Vermont, a non-profit youth leadership organization.

Her advice to younger students is pretty straightforward: "No matter what people have to say, you cannot allow the opinions and voices of others to drown out your own."

Chloe plans on attending college to foster her love of political science and continue to pursue her passion for advocacy beyond Vermont. She has applied to several schools throughout the Northeast. Everyone at Otter Valley wishes her the very best!



Chloe Mol
OVUHS

Mount Abraham Union High School

Harper Young

Mt. Abraham is proud to recognize Harper Young as our Student of the Week. Harper lives in Starksboro with her parents and three Boston terriers.

Harper has achieved highest honors each semester of her high school career. She has received the Department Award for Academic Excellence in Math and Spanish, has earned the Vermont Seal of Biliteracy and represented Mt. Abe at Green Mountain Girls' State. Harper's favorite classes are AP Calculus BC and Spanish. She appreciates her Spanish teacher, Mr. Shepard, as he is "very kind and dependable, and provides an inclusive and fun learning environment."

Beyond academics, Harper is an active member of the Mt. Abe community. She has played field hockey for 9th, 10th and 12th grade and was the JV team captain during her sophomore year season. She is the co-president of the Neuroscience Club, a member of Eagle Leadership Society, Environmental Action Group, and Scholars Bowl.

Outside of school, Harper keeps herself busy with multiple jobs. She is a prep chef for Common Ground Center and a store clerk at Simon Says. In addition, Harper works at the schools' Expanded Learning Program (ELP) and is a pet sitter. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, hiking and cooking.

Reflecting on her school experience, Harper states, "The biggest lesson I've learned is the importance of finding things that bring you joy and placing yourself in environments that support and value your ideas. When you follow your own individual path, you create space to grow, learn, and succeed in ways that fulfill your goals, regardless of outside expectations."

Looking ahead, Harper plans to attend a four-year university in the Northeast, majoring in Biomedical or Chemical Engineering. We wish Harper all the best with her future endeavors!



Harper Young
MAUHS

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In Vermont

Farmworkers could face declining wages

By AUSTYN GAFFNEY
VtDigger.org

Vermont farmworkers could earn significantly lower wages this year under new federal rules, a shift that could affect more than 100 workers hoping to find jobs in the state this spring.

The farmworker wages fall under a federal program administered by the Department of Labor called H-2A, a temporary visa status for agricultural workers who come to the United States and stay for up to 10 months. The program has been around since the 1950s as a way for farmers to legally hire needed foreign workers.

Under the new rules, which were adopted by the U.S. Labor Department in October, employers will be allowed to lower wages from previous years and also deduct a portion of housing costs from H-2A workers' wages, according to the rule. Farmers could save an annual average of \$2.4 billion over the next decade, or \$5,500 per worker, according to the rule.

Some Vermont farmers who advertised lower wages on their requests for jobs under the program told VTDigger they still planned to pay returning workers as much or more than they made last year, emphasizing their reliance upon H-2A workers, largely from Jamaica, who've returned for years if not decades.

"The morale of the bunkhouse and the morale of the workers is really important, and it would be deflating to see their wage go down," said Barney Hodges, co-owner of Sunrise Orchards in Cornwall. "I think it would have a very negative effect on productivity."

The change comes as Vermont farms finalize hiring decisions that shape who fills essential agricultural jobs and at what cost. Labor advocates warn the change could accelerate a race to the bottom in an already fragile workforce, while state officials argue the flexibility could keep farms afloat. The

outcome has implications beyond the fields, affecting food prices, worker housing stability and the long-term viability of an industry central to Vermont's economy and landscape.

"We expect what we're going to see is an increase in the H-2A workforce and a decrease in everyone's wages, which is obviously bad for everyone involved except the growers themselves," said Antonio De Loera-Brust, communications director for United Farm Workers of America, a farm labor organization that filed a lawsuit against the new rule in November.

The changes impact the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, or the minimum hourly wage employers have to pay H-2A workers to prevent them from inadvertently lowering the pay of U.S. farmworkers — those who are citizens or legal permanent residents. Along with wages, employers must provide a kitchen to cook in and free transportation between their housing and their work site.

Vermont's House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry plans to take testimony from the state Labor Department on the wage change, but it's not clear what the state can do to offset it.

Sen. Joe Major, D-Windsor, vice chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, said in an email that the legislature could look to complementary actions like investments in farmworker housing, access to health care, workforce protections, and programs stabilizing farm income "so that the burden of federal policy changes doesn't fall entirely on workers or farmers," Major said.

Last year, all H-2A jobs paid \$18.83 per hour. This year, the majority of Vermont farms that have posted H-2A jobs by the end of January advertised the lowered starting wage for this year of \$15.96 an hour, sometimes including a housing deduction of \$1.61 an hour. For higher-skilled workers, or those with two or more months of experience, the wage is \$19.23 per

hour, or \$17.42 after the housing deduction. Virtually all H-2A workers require housing.

Vermont farmers advertised 836 H-2A jobs on more than 80 farms in 2025. This spring, at least 112 workers could be affected, according to a count by VTDigger of job listings so far, with many more likely to come.

PAY DAY DILEMMA

At her organic vegetable farm in Jericho, Christa Alexander has hired H-2A workers for eight years and plans to hire four Jamaican workers this season. While her official job listing for Jericho Settlers Farm lists a wage of \$15.96, that wage reflects a lower skill level. Her returning farmworkers will take home a bit more than the \$18.83 they were paid last year. Those workers have "really transformed the labor situation on our farm," Alexander said, because they return with needed skills, and they're available, while many U.S. farmworkers have disappeared, farmers told VTDigger.

Over the last decade, the H-2A program has ballooned nationally, growing 185%, according to the American Farm Bureau, an agricultural advocacy group that supports the new wages. More than 415,000 H-2A positions were requested last year, a new record.

"Growers have been and continue to be under significant financial pressure and this change allows them flexibility in pay so they can pay based on years of experience," said Orwell's Alyson Eastman, deputy secretary for Vermont's Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets. The H-2A wage rule, known as AEW, increased by 32% between 2000 to 2025, Eastman said. She said she believes the change was positive for both workers and employers.

Some farm owners say they worry about pay discrepancies cropping up under the new rule, which would make it harder to ensure fair wages in the state. Hodges, of Sunrise Orchards, said he'd talked to a few other growers via text but that there was no organized effort to get on the same page about how growers planned to handle changed rates.

"It does seem a little strange that the federal government is (See Farmworkers, Page 8B)



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Farmworkers

(Continued from Page 7B)
 giving people an option. It makes it more confusing," Hodges said. He's hired H-2A workers from Jamaica since 1987, and some have been with him for almost 40 years.

Even though times are tough — he faced two weather events, a frost in 2023 and the drought in 2025, that each damaged half his crop — he planned to maintain workers' prior wages. Other farmers who spoke to VT Digger for this story described approaches that varied based on margins, scale and philosophy. Zachary Suddaby, of Suddabee's Honey, for example, said it would feel like an insult to drop the pay for two women from South Africa who work on his farm.

Others worried about the impact this could have nationally if larger operations outside Vermont significantly dropped their wages.

"The cost of production could go way down for larger-scale operations," said John Wagner, of Bear Roots Farm, "whereas in our case we feel a personal responsibility to pay these guys a decent wage."
'WE WERE GOING BROKE'

But not every farmer shares, or can afford, that goal. At Singing Cedars Apiaries, a beekeeping operation in Benson, Deborah Smith said in an email that she planned to pay the \$17.62 rate for returning H-2A workers, including the housing deduction of \$1.61 an hour.

"We were going broke paying the higher rate," Smith said in an email.

"Our employees have been very good workers," she said. "They are like family to us. But this arrangement has to be a good deal for us and a good deal for them. And farming is very marginal."

While the state said H-2A housing faces inspections, the new rule provides the deduction without requiring improved housing standards. In 2024, 4 Corners Farm in Newbury was penalized by the Vermont Department of Labor for unsanitary cooking conditions and fined \$3,457. WhatsApp images included in the complaint show a common space cordoned off by blankets for bedrooms, with at least one person sleeping on what appeared to be a sofa, according to images obtained through an open

records request.

In 2026, 10 farmworkers at 4 Corners could make \$14.42 an hour, \$4.41 an hour less than they made in 2025. The farm did not respond to a request for comment on their job order.

"If the government allowed these deductions, they should also audit and check on housing," said Cesar Escalante, professor of agricultural and applied economics at the University of Georgia. "Only those implementing acceptable housing services should be getting those deductions."

Budget cuts at the Labor Department lowered the agency's capacity to regulate safe housing, Escalante said. The Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan federal watchdog, found in 2024 that 84% of investigations conducted by federal regulators found at least one or more violations of the rules created to protect H-2A workers.

PRICE OF LOWER PAY

Major, the state senator, said a lower rate can put pressure on household income at a time when housing, food and transportation costs remain high in Vermont.

Before these jobs are offered

to foreign applicants, domestic workers have first right of refusal for a farmworker position. But only 182 positions, less than one-half of 1% of all positions, had a domestic applicant last year, according to the farm bureau. The Department of Labor, which administers the H-2A program, bypassed typical rule-making procedures in October, claiming increasing immigration enforcement could lead to a labor shortage.

"That's a concern, especially given how essential these workers are to the viability of our agricultural economy," Major said. But he added that farms operating on thin margins see labor costs as one of their biggest challenges, and for some farms the option to reduce wages could help keep operations afloat.

Rep. David Durfee, D-Shaftsbury and chair of the committee hearing testimony, said it's hard to imagine the actual wages could have gone down so much in a year.

"It's probably a net benefit for employers if they're not paying as much," Durfee said, "but will farmworkers be willing to come and do the work if it's that kind of pay cut?"

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CLASSIFIEDS

Public Meetings

AL-ANON OFFERS HELP and hope to anyone who has been affected by a loved one's drinking. Middlebury hosts an online meeting Sunday night 7:15pm and a face to face one Wednesday at 1:30pm at CVUUS (2 Duane Court Middlebury near the high school) that you can also access by Zoom. Visit vermontalananonlateen.org for links and list of other meetings in the region. If you'd like to speak to an Al-Anon member, call our answering service (866-972-5266) and an Al-Anon member will call you back.

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

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

Public Meetings

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

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

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

Services

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

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

Services

CONSTRUCTION: ADDITIONS, RENOVATIONS new construction, drywall, carpentry, painting, flooring, roofing, pressure washing, driveway sealing. All aspects of construction, also property maintenance. Steven Fifield 802-989-0009.

Services

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Help Wanted

FINISHER/PAINTER

Wooden Hammer is looking for a full-time finisher/painter to join our small team of dedicated craftspeople in our Monkton cabinet shop. If you like to paint, take pride in your work, and are looking for a long-term, stable job in a positive and collaborative workshop environment, we want to hear from you! Preference will be given to those with spray finishing experience but on-the-job training is available for the right candidate.

Email ben@woodenhammer.net with a letter of interest and relevant experience to find out more!

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

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Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted


Elderly Services, Inc.
Project Independence Adult Day Center

Do you appreciate creating homemade meals for a crowd? Are you an active, flexible, team player?

We are hiring cooks, prep cooks and dishwashers to work in a beautiful commercial kitchen to prepare delicious family style meals for older adults. We love the challenge of creating delicious food that fits within dietary guidelines and feeds the soul. We seek candidates who are naturally tactful and compassionate to a dynamic aging population with disabilities, and who are sensitive to individual dietary needs. Our kitchen is open and supportive to staff and participants alike. Did we mention the incredible views at our state of the art facility in Middlebury, VT?

Full / part-time available. NO nights or weekends!
We'll work with you to create a schedule that fits within Mon- Fri 7am-6:30pm. Pay starts at \$18-20/hour depending on experience.

Ask about our newly added benefits!
<https://elderlyservices.org/job-opportunities/>

Town Treasurer

The Town of Monkton is seeking an organized and motivated candidate to serve as it's Town Treasurer. This is a part-time position and offers a competitive salary and a flexible schedule. Monkton residency is not required.


The Town Treasurer is responsible for keeping all of the Town's funds and accounts, provides human resources support, manages employee benefits and payroll, works closely with Auditors and Delinquent Tax Collector and provides support to the Town Clerk, Town Administrator and Selectboard.

An associate's or bachelor's degree in accounting or similarly applicable discipline and at least three years' experience in the area of accounting is preferred. Experience with NEMRC is desirable, but not required. Salary range \$45,000 to \$60,000 commensurate with experience.

A detailed job description is available on the Town of Monkton website.

To apply, please e-mail a cover letter, resume, and three references to selectboard@monktonvt.com or mail to Monkton Selectboard at Town of Monkton, PO Box 12, Monkton, VT 05469

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The Town of Monkton is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, gender, or familial status.



Delinquent Tax Collector

The Town of Monkton is seeking an organized and motivated candidate to serve at its Delinquent Tax Collector. This is a part-time position and offers a competitive salary and a flexible schedule. Monkton residency is not required.

The Delinquent Tax Collector is responsible for ensuring that property taxes owed to the town are paid by all taxpayers in accordance with Vermont state statutes. It is the duty of the Delinquent Tax Collector to notify taxpayers when their taxes are overdue, to make arrangements for late payments, and/or to take formal collection actions, including conducting tax sales of the property when necessary. They must keep accurate records, deliver collected funds to the Treasurer and reports to the Town Auditors.

Salary range: \$4,256 to \$6,000 commensurate with experience.

A detailed job description is available on the Town of Monkton website.

To apply, please e-mail a cover letter, resume, and three references to selectboard@monktonvt.com or mail to Monkton Selectboard at Town of Monkton, PO Box 12, Monkton, VT 05469

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The Town of Monkton is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, gender, or familial status.

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

RSVP is Seeking Handmade Hats, Mittens, & Blankets



We are looking for volunteers to make hats (all sizes), mittens (all sizes), and blankets. We can help provide some materials.

If you would like to volunteer, please call us at 802-468-7056.



We're HIRING!

The Addy Indy is looking to hire an enthusiastic and motivated ASSISTANT EDITOR.

Work will include copy editing, proofreading, managing our events calendar, posting news content on our website, formatting newsletters and managing our social media platforms.

Experience with WordPress and MailChimp preferred, along with a strong commitment to learn new systems and improve our platforms to reach and engage our readers.

If you are a local news enthusiast, have a strong work ethic and are excited to be "in the know" within the local community, this position could be perfect for you!

Expected starting range based on \$20 - \$25/hour commensurate with experience.



Send us your cover letter, resumé and references. We'd love to meet you!

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

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DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

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TOTAL: \$ _____

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

Midd police deal with threats of self-harm

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police responded to a report of a potentially suicidal man sitting on the edge of the Cross Street Bridge during the late afternoon of Feb. 12. Police said the man had left upon their arrival.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Checked on the welfare of a person in the Benedict Lane area who had been threatening self-harm on Feb. 9.
- Received a report on Feb. 9 that a vehicle had been stolen from the Middlebury College campus. Police said the vehicle was later located in New York after having been involved in a crash.
- Investigated a disorderly conduct complaint on Merchants Row on Feb. 9.
- Dealt with juvenile-related complaints in Court Square and at Middlebury Union High School on Feb. 9.
- Responded to a mental health-related issue on Court Street on Feb. 9.
- Responded, with Vergennes police, to a report of a suicidal person at a West Main Street (Vergennes) location on Feb. 9.
- Responded to a reported shoplifting incident at Shaw's Supermarket on Feb. 10.
- Responded to a two-vehicle

Middlebury Police Log

crash — with no injuries — on College Street on Feb. 10.

- Responded to a two-vehicle crash — with no injuries — in Wright Park on Feb. 11.
- Spoke on Feb. 11 with a parent about her daughter having issues with a former friend.
- Mediated a dispute between some Perkins Lane residents on Feb. 12.
- Checked on the welfare of a Valley View resident on Feb. 12 and found everything to be OK.
- Took into protective custody a very intoxicated man following a report of suspicious activity on Boardman Street on Feb. 12.
- Responded to a two-vehicle accident — with no injuries — on South Main Street on Feb. 12.
- Helped a local mom who was searching for her son after reports he had skipped school on Feb. 12.
- Responded to a two-vehicle crash — with no injuries — on Academy Street on Feb. 12.
- Responded to a two-vehicle accident — with no injuries — on South Main Street on Feb. 12.
- Investigated a drunken driving report on Elm Street on Feb. 12. Police said they couldn't establish whether the person had been driving.
- Provided a detail for the MUHS winter ball on Feb. 13.
- Responded to a "juvenile problem" on Court Street on Feb. 13.

- Assisted Porter Hospital officials with a person experiencing a mental health crisis on Feb. 13.
- Were asked to intervene with an unwanted person at the Academy Street bus stop on Feb. 13.
- Investigated a report of a stolen cell phone in the Court Street area on Feb. 13.
- Helped a homeless person find temporary shelter for the night of Feb. 13.
- Checked on the welfare of a man found sleeping in his vehicle off Mill Street on Feb. 13. The man assured the officers he didn't need help.
- Cited Jeanette Marcum, 49, of Middlebury for violation of her conditions of release, on behalf of the Williston Police Department on Feb. 14.

- Intervened in a domestic dispute at a Valley View Drive home on Feb. 14.
- Helped Middlebury firefighters at a Fairview Circle home that had flooded on Feb. 15.
- Assisted Vermont State Police with a case involving a "suspicious" person at a storage unit off Route 7 in New Haven on Feb. 15.
- Assisted in a search for a missing Sudbury man on Feb. 15.
- Loaned the department's K-9 unit to Vermont State Police to search for a missing child in the Basin Harbor Road area of Ferrisburgh on Feb. 16. Police said the child eventually returned home that day.

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

Mary Gill, Clerk
Addison Central School District

Barbara Wilson, Chair
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
or call 802-382-1274 to request a copy.

PUBLIC NOTICE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER Tri-Town Water District, VT0005001

Levels of Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) Above Drinking Water Standards

Our water system recently violated drinking water standards. Although this is not an emergency, customers have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Test results from the four quarters ending with the **Fourth Quarter 2025** shows that our system violated the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for TTHM.

The standard for TTHM is 80 UG/L. The running annual average from the last four quarters of results for TTHM was **85 UG/L**.

What should I do?

The drinking water standard (MCL) is based on lifetime exposure to TTHM which may increase your risk of getting cancer. Continuing to drink the water is a personal decision that you must make for yourself by considering the health risk, cost, and convenience. You may choose to use bottled water or water from an alternate source.

You do not need to boil your water. You can continue to use the water for showering, bathing, washing your food and dishes, brushing your teeth, and other household uses.

If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. Drinking water containing TTHM at this concentration will not lead to any short-term effects such as vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pains.

Haloacetic acids and trihalomethanes are organic chemicals that form when chlorine disinfectant reacts with natural organic matter in the water.

Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer. In animal studies, some total trihalomethanes have been associated with reproductive or developmental effects.

What happened? What is being done?

See attached letter for further explanation

For more information, please contact Darwin Pratt at 802-758-2202 or Chairman, PO Box 85, Bridport VT 05734

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

February 10, 2026

**Tri-Town Water District No. 1
PO Box 85
Bridport, VT 05734**

Dear Customer,

We have completed our most recent water testing and are pleased to report that testing showed our Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) levels were within the state and federal drinking water standards. However, Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) exceeded the allowable limit during this quarter. While these two measurements are related, it is important to understand that they are separate water quality indicators and can behave differently in the distribution system.

Both HAA5 and TTHMs are byproducts formed when chlorine, which is used to disinfect drinking water, reacts with naturally occurring organic matter in the source water. Although they are created through similar processes, they are chemically different compounds and respond differently to factors such as water temperature, water age, and how long water remains in the system before reaching customers. As a result, it is possible—and not uncommon—for one to meet standards while the other does not during the same monitoring period.

This is not an emergency, and your water is safe to use. If there were an immediate health concern, we would notify you right away. The levels we found are just above the limit set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over a one-year average. You don't need to take any action. You can continue to use and drink your water as usual. If you have specific health concerns, you may wish to speak with your doctor.

We understand the confusion between the two testing might bring, along with the continued frustration of failed tests. We take water quality very seriously and are committed to keeping your drinking water safe and reliable. We are not the only water provider drawing from Lake Champlain facing these test results. The District is in the beginning stages of a water filter rehab and is working hard to ensure future testing results meet all required standards.

If you have any questions, please call us at 802-758-2202.

Thank you for your understanding and for being our valued customer.

Sincerely,
Darwin Pratt, Chairman

TOWN OF LINCOLN WARNING ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The legal voters of the Town of Lincoln and the Lincoln School District are hereby warned and notified to meet at Burnham Hall on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. to discuss and transact business, and on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at Burnham Hall, the polls to open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for voting by Australian ballot.

Agenda for Meeting at Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd, Lincoln on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Article 1 To elect all town officers as required by law, by Australian ballot, voting to be held at Burnham Hall, polls to be open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

Offices for Election on Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Office	Term Length
Selectboard	3 years
Selectboard	2 years
Town Clerk	1 year
First Constable	1 year
Second Constable	1 year
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year
Town Meeting Moderator	1 year
Lincoln Library Trustee	3 years (2 positions)
School Meeting Moderator	1 year
Lincoln School Director	3 years
Lincoln School Director	2 years

Article 2 To act upon the reports of the Town Officers and the Lincoln School District Officers.

Article 3 Shall the Town authorize the payment of real property taxes to the Town Treasurer, in two equal installments, with the due dates being Wednesday, October 7, 2026 and Wednesday, March 10, 2027, per 32 V.S.A. 4871?

RECESS TOWN MEETING & OPEN LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING ADJOURN LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING & RE-OPEN TOWN MEETING

Article 4 Shall the voters authorize a total General Fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$711,988 of which \$562,165 shall be raised by taxes, \$139,534 by non-tax revenues and \$10,289 by surplus revenue?

Article 5 Shall the voters authorize a total Highway Fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$1,132,948 of which \$1,015,301 shall be raised by taxes and \$172,792 by non-tax revenues to cover the expenses and an FY25 deficit of \$55,145?

Article 6 Shall the Town of Lincoln adopt its General Fund Budget by Australian ballot beginning in 2027? [17 V.S.A § 2680(c)(1)]

Article 7 Shall the Town of Lincoln adopt its Highway Fund Budget by Australian ballot beginning in 2027? [17 V.S.A § 2680(c)(1)]

Article 8 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to authorize a transfer for further

restoration and improvement of existing Class 2 asphalt surface town highways, to be deposited in the paving reserve fund by Australian ballot beginning in 2027? [17 V.S.A § 2680(c)(1)]

Article 9 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$5,500 to help support the Lincoln Cooperative Preschool?

Article 10 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$44,000 in support of the Lincoln Library?

Article 11 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$4,000 to help support Lincoln Sports, Inc.?

Article 12 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$56,000 to the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Company?

Article 13 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$13,230 to Bristol Rescue?

Article 14 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to the Lincoln Cemetery Association?

Article 15 Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to approve the following agency requests?

\$ 300	Addison Allies Network
\$ 500	Addison County Economic Development Corporation
\$1,250	Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Inc
\$1,300	Addison County Parent/Child Center
\$ 600	Addison County Readers
\$ 200	Addison County Restorative Justice Services
\$400	Addison County River Watch
\$ 1,100	Age Well (formerly CVAAA)
\$1,250	Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe)
\$2,500	Bristol Recreation Department
\$ 1,000	Charter House Coalition
\$ 750	Comm. Health Svcs of Addison Cty - Open Door Clinic
\$1,600	Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc.
\$ 700	Elderly Services, Inc
\$ 800	Have-A-Heart Food Shelf
\$2,000	HOPE (ACCAG)
\$ 250	Homeward Bound
\$1,000	John W Graham Emergency Shelter
\$490	Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
\$1,170	Tri-Valley Transit (formerly ACTR)
\$1,000	Turning Point Center of Addison County
\$ 500	Vermont Adult Learning
\$20,660.00	Total

Article 16 To transact any other legal and proper business when met.

Dated this 20th day of January 2026. **Town of Lincoln Selectboard**

Public Notices can be found on Pages 12B, 13B and 14B.

STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT DOCKET NO.: 25-PR-06696 IN RE ESTATE OF: PATRICIA MORRIS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Patricia Morris, late of Ferrisburgh, 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: 02/11/26

Graham MacHarg
30 Scarff Ave., Burlington, VT 05401
802-578-9252
gmacharg@gmail.com

Publication: Addison Independent
Publication Date: 2/19/26
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division
Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

CITY OF VERGENNES WARNING ANNUAL CITY MEETING MARCH 2, 2026

The qualified voters of the City of Vergennes are hereby warned and notified that the Annual City Meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2026, commencing at 7:30 p.m. at the Vergennes Union High School Auditorium located at 50 Monkton Road. The meeting can be accessed via Zoom using the following information:

- Join by Computer: <https://zoom.us/j/561577976>
- Join by Phone: Dial: 1 (312) 626-6799
- Meeting ID: 561 577 976
- Meeting Password: 1234

The Annual City Vote will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at the Saint Peter's Parish Hall located at 85 S. Maple Street. The polls will open at 9:00 a.m. and will close at 7:00 p.m. The following Articles will be included on the ballot:

Article [1] To elect by Australian ballot: One Alderman for respective one-year term; Three Aldermen for respective two-year term; one Lister for a three-year term, one Lister for a one-year term; one Auditor for a three-year term, one Auditor for a two-year term and one Auditor for a one-year term; one Grand Juror for a one-year term; one Addison Northwest School District Board for a three-year term; two Commissioner's to the Vergennes-Panton Water District Board of Water Commissioner's for a three-year term and one Commissioner to the Vergennes-Panton Water District Board of Water Commissioner's for a two-year term.

Article [2] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall real estate presently owned by Vergennes Area Rescue Squad, Inc. and located at 106 Panton Road, be exempted from property taxation for a period up to five years, first applicable to the Grand List of 2026, as provided in Title 32, Vermont State Statutes Annotated?

Article [3] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the real estate presently owned by Vergennes Masonic Association Inc. and located at 54 School Street, be exempted from property taxation for a period up to five years, first applicable to the Grand List of 2026, as provided in Title 32, Vermont State Statutes Annotated?

Article [4] Shall the voters of the City of Vergennes approve a one-percent (1%) local option tax on (i) sales, (ii) meals and alcoholic beverages, and (iii) rooms, purchased within the City of Vergennes, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138, with all proceeds, after the State's retained portion, to be used for municipal, non-education operational and capital expenditures, including municipal infrastructure, as identified by the City Council, for the benefit of the taxpayers of Vergennes?

Article [5] Shall the voters of the City of Vergennes establish a Local Option Tax Reserve Fund pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 2804, for the deposit and use of the City's share of local option tax revenues.

Article [6] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$5,000 to Addison County Home Health & Hospice, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [7] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$2,000 to the Addison County Humane Society, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [8] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$3,074 to Addison County Parent/Child Center, said sum to come from City funds?

Article [9] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$750 to Addison County Readers, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [10] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$1,500 to Addison County Restorative Justice Services, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [11] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$5000 to Age Well, Inc., formerly known as CVAA, said sum to come from City funds?

Article [12] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$2,500 to Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc., said sums to come from City funds?

Article [13] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$2,000 to Elderly Service, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [14] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$4,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Addison County, VT Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [15] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$3,000 to HOPE, said sum to come from City funds?

Article [16] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$4,000 to John Graham Housing and Services, Inc. said sum to come from City funds?

Article [17] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$3500 to Open Door Clinic, said sum to come from City funds?

Article [18] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$1,000 to Otter Creek Child Center, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [19] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$950 to RSVP of Addison County, said sum to come from City funds?

Article [20] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$3,000 to Turning Point Center of Addison County, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [21] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$2,000 to Vergennes Area Seniors Association, Inc., said sum to come from City funds?

Article [22] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$890 to Vermont Adult Learning, said sum to come from City funds?

Article [23] To vote by Australian ballot on the following: Shall the City appropriate \$4,000 to Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe), said sum to come from City funds?

Article [24] To transact any other non-binding business that may come before the meeting.

Ballot boxes will remain open from nine o'clock in the forenoon until seven o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at the Saint Peter's Parish Hall on S. Maple Street for voting by Australian ballot on Articles 1 through XXIV. The legal voters of the City of Vergennes are further notified that voter qualification, registration and absentee voting shall be as provided in Chapters 43 and 51 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Approved by City Council on January 27, 2026

**TOWN OF LINCOLN
PUBLIC NOTICE**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026, beginning at 6:30 pm at the Town Office
62 Quaker Street, Lincoln, Vermont and virtually using Zoom

The Lincoln Development Review Board will hold public hearings for:

1. Subdivision Application #26-006 as requested by Matt Atkins for his property located at 3287 Downingsville Road in Lincoln, Vermont. Parcel ID# 03-01-01-02.001. Description: Subdividing a 10.5 Acre parcel into a 5-acre and 5.5-acre parcel.
2. Conditional Use Application #26-007 as requested by Stojak Construction LLC for Katie and Kyle Clark for their property at 432 Orchard Road in Lincoln, Vermont. Parcel ID#17-07-01-63.100. Description: Building a new structure (24'x36') with an in-ground pool.

Participation in local proceedings is a prerequisite to the right to take part in any subsequent appeals. Please call the Zoning Administrator at (802) 453-2980 to arrange a time to view complete applications

The Zoom link will be included in the agenda which can be found on the Town's website the week prior to the hearing: <https://lincolnvermont.org>

PROPOSED STATE RULES

By law, public notice of proposed rules must be given by publication in newspapers of record. The purpose of these notices is to give the public a chance to respond to the proposals. The public notices for administrative rules are now also available online at <https://secure.vermont.gov/SOS/rules/>. The law requires an agency to hold a public hearing on a proposed rule, if requested to do so in writing by 25 persons or an association having at least 25 members.

To make special arrangements for individuals with disabilities or special needs please call or write the contact person listed below as soon as possible.

To obtain further information concerning any scheduled hearing(s), obtain copies of proposed rule(s) or submit comments regarding proposed rule(s), please call or write the contact person listed below. You may also submit comments in writing to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, State House, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 (802-828-2231).

**Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Regulations
Vermont Proposed Rule: 26P002**

AGENCY: Agency of Natural Resources

CONCISE SUMMARY: Vermont has maintained the Hazardous Waste Management Regulations since 1980. The Regulations are being revised to better align with federal regulations and guidance regarding the management and disposal of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) bulk product waste, and to reduce the regulatory burden pertaining to the disposal of such waste in Vermont by introducing a new conditional exemption. The revisions also include a change to the management of state-listed cleanup debris generated as a result of an emergency response and cleanup actions; the revision will allow such wastes to be immediately transported from the outdoor locations where the wastes are generated to secure, indoor transfer facilities where the waste will be permitted to be temporarily stored as it undergoes waste characterization.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Anna Bourakovskiy, Agency of Natural Resources, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 3, Montpelier VT 05620-3521 Tel: 802-477-2981 E-Mail: anna.bourakovskiy@vermont.gov URL: <https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/hazardous-waste>

FOR COPIES: Matthew Chapman, Agency of Natural Resources, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 3, Montpelier VT 05620-3521 Tel: 802-249-4393 E-Mail: matt.chapman@vermont.gov

**WARNING
ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026, AT 10:00 A.M.
BURNHAM HALL, 52 EAST RIVER RD., LINCOLN, VT**

Article 1: To elect a Clerk, who shall assume the office immediately and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of a successor.

Article 2: To elect a Treasurer, who shall assume the office immediately and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of a successor.

Article 3: Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District accept the report of the School District Board of Directors?

Article 4: Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District approve the following annual stipends for district officers?
• Moderator: \$50
• Clerk: \$500
• Treasurer: \$500
• School District Board chair: \$750
• Each School District Board member (other than chair): \$500

Article 5: Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District authorize the School District Board of Directors to borrow money by the issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for fiscal year 2026, per 16 V.S.A. §562(9)?

Article 6: (School Budget): Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District approve the School District Board of Directors to expend \$5,407,140.12, which is the amount the Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year (FY2027)? The Lincoln School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$13,709.58, which is 1.89% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.

Article 7: Shall the Lincoln School District adopt its budget by Australian ballot, beginning with the FY2028 budget?

Article 8: To elect Lincoln School District Officers and Directors as follows, for the indicated term, by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3, 2026:
1 - School Meeting Moderator (1 year) 1 - School Director (3 years)
1 - School Director (2 years)

Article 9: To transact any other legal business coming before said meeting.

Dated this 24th Day of January, 2026
Lincoln School District Board of Directors

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

The following tax rate information is provided in accordance with the provisions of the Town of Middlebury's Charter. Tax rates are per \$100 of assessed property value.

MUNICIPAL TAX RATE

	FY26	FY27 ESTIMATED
General Fund	\$9.197	\$1.0212
Article 3: Cross Street Bridge Reserve Fund Transfer	(\$0.258)	(\$0.346)
Voted Exemptions (Veterans)	\$0.160	\$0.160
Fire Equipment Fund	\$0.200	\$0.200
Total Municipal	\$9.299	\$1.0226
Amount to be Raised¹	\$9,162,148	\$10,136,266
Grand List²	\$9,946,997	\$10,126,202

EDUCATION TAX RATE

	FY26	FY27 ESTIMATED
Residential Education Tax Rate ³	\$1.6412	\$1.6500
Non-Residential Education Tax Rate ³	\$1.7355	\$1.7900

¹FY27 tax rates are estimated. The final tax rate and resulting tax bills will be affected by the budget and other decision items voted at Town & School Annual Meetings. The total municipal tax rate estimate and the amount to be raised reflect the approval of the transfer of funds from the Cross Street Bridge Reserve Fund under Article 3 of the Annual Town Meeting Warning.

²Property tax rates are applied per \$100 of property valuation; therefore, the FY27 estimated full and fair cash value of taxable real property, \$1,012,620,200, is divided by \$100 to determine the Town's Grand List, \$10,126,202.

³Education Tax Rates provided Addison Central School District Business Office

Public Notices

can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 12B, 13B and 14B.

**STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT
PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT
DOCKET NO.: 26-PR-00202
IN RE ESTATE OF: TIMOTHY LEE JAQUA
NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

To the Creditors of: Timothy Lee Jaqua, late of Lincoln, 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: 02/13/26
Co'Relous Bryant
83 Creamery St., Lincoln, VT 05443
850-295-5379
corelous@gmail.com

Publication: Addison Independent
Publication Date: 2/19/26
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division
Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

**ACT 250 NOTICE
MINOR APPLICATION #9A0388
10 V.S.A. §§ 6000 – 6111**

Riverflow Community, Inc., has filed application #9A0388, deemed complete on February 2, 2026, for a project generally described as a variety of improvements in support of an expansion of the existing Riverflow residential care community upon an existing, improved ±29.57-acre residential parcel in order to accommodate up to fifty (50) total community members and staff. Specifically, the Project includes: (1) conversion of an existing 8-bedroom single-family residence into 9 bedrooms; (2) construction of four new residential dwellings (Homes #2, 3, 4, and 5); (3) construction of three one-bedroom tiny houses; (4) construction of an office building; (5) construction of a new barn (Barn #1); (6) on-site drilled wells and wastewater disposal systems; (7) stormwater infrastructure; and (8) new and improved access drives with parking areas and emergency turnarounds. The project is located at 57 Cedar Lane in Monkton, Vermont. The application may be viewed on the Land Use Review Board's Act 250 Database (<https://anrweb.vt.gov/ANR/Act250/default.aspx>) by entering project number "9A0388."

No hearing will be held, and a permit may be issued unless, on or before March 11, 2026, a party notifies the District 9 Commission in writing of an issue requiring a hearing, or the Commission sets the matter for a hearing on its own motion. Any person as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1) may request a hearing. Any hearing request must be in writing, must state the criteria or sub-criteria at issue, why a hearing is required, and what additional evidence will be presented at the hearing. Any hearing request by an adjoining property owner or other person eligible for party status under 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1)(E) must include a petition for party status under the Act 250 Rules. To request party status and a hearing, fill out the Party Status Petition Form on the Board's website: <https://act250.vermont.gov/documents/party-status-petition-form>, and email it to the District 9 Office at: Act250.Essex@vermont.gov. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law may not be prepared unless the Commission holds a public hearing.

For more information contact the District Coordinator listed below.

Josh Donabedian
District 9 Coordinator
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Joshua.Donabedian@vermont.gov

STATE OF VERMONT

**SUPERIOR COURT
ADDISON UNIT**

PRIMELENDING, A PLAINSCAPITAL COMPANY
PLAINTIFF

VS.

KATHERINE W. HOPE, FIDUCIARY FOR THE ESTATE OF ELLWYN LEO POQUETTE, JR. AND OCCUPANTS
RESIDING AT 72 VIRGIN AVENUE, HANCOCK, VT 05748
DEFENDANT(S)

**CIVIL DIVISION
DOCKET NO: 25-CV-01692**

NOTICE OF SALE

In accordance with the Judgment and Decree of Foreclosure by Judicial Sale filed on October 27, 2025, in the above captioned action brought to foreclose that certain mortgage given by Ellwyn Leo Poquette, Jr. and Judith A. Poquette to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for PrimeLending, a PlainsCapital Company, dated August 31, 2018, and recorded in Book 36, at Page 434, of the Town of Hancock Land Records, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder by Assignment of Mortgage recorded in Book 39, at Page 382, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on **March 11, 2026 at 11:00 AM at 72 Virgin Avenue, Hancock, VT 05748** all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,

To Wit:

Being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Ellwyn Leo Poquette, Jr. and Judith A. Poquette by Trustee's Deed of Perry Family Revocable Living Trust u/a dated December 10, 1997, dated August 31, 2018 and recorded September 4, 2018 in Book 36, at Page 432 of the Town of Hancock Land Records and further described therein.

Being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Stanley M. Perry and Lesleigh J. Perry, Trustees of the Perry Family Revocable Living Trust, by Quit Claim Deed of Stanley M. Perry and Lesleigh J. Perry, husband and wife, dated December 10, 1997 and recorded July 6, 1998 in Book 22 at Page 483 of the Town of Hancock Land Records and more particularly described as follows:

Parcel One

Being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Stanley M. Perry and Lesleigh J. Perry, husband and wife by Warranty Deed of Blair-Vermont Plywood Company, a Vermont corporation with its principal place of business at Troy, in the County of Orleans and State of Vermont, dated September 17, 1952 and recorded on September 20, 1952 in Book 15, Page 194 of the Hancock Land Records and more particularly described as follows:

Being a portion of the lands and premises conveyed to Blair Veneer Company by deed of Vermont Plywood, Inc. dated July 1, 1950 and recorded in Hancock Land Records in Book 15 at Page 165 bounded and described as follows:

Being Lots 11, 11A and 13 as shown on a plan of lots entitled "Blair-Vermont Plywood Subdivision Hancock, Vermont, showing redivision of lots as of August 12, 1952 by R.S. Welch," a copy of which said plan is on file in the office of the Town Clerk of Hancock. Reference is hereby had to said plan for a more particular description of said lands and premises.

Together with an undivided one-tenth interest in common with others in and to the sewer system which now serves the houses now located on said "Blair-Vermont Plywood Subdivision" provided, however, that no representation concerning the fitness of said sewer is made by Grantor and, provided further, that this conveyance shall create no responsibility or obligation on the part of Blair-Vermont Plywood Company or its successors to maintain or repair said sewer. The sewers and sewer system on the premises are reserved and excepted from this conveyance except for the portions thereof hereby conveyed.

Reference is hereby made to the above mentioned deeds and their records and to all former deeds and their records for a more complete description of the property conveyed herein.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

The public sale may be adjourned one or more times for a total time not exceeding 30 days, without further court order, and without publication or service of a new notice of sale, by announcement of the new sale date to those present at each adjournment or by posting notice of the adjournment in a conspicuous place at the location of the sale.

Terms of Sale: \$10,000.00 to be paid in cash or by certified check by the purchaser at the time of sale, with the balance due at closing. The sale is subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

The Mortgagor is entitled to redeem the premises at any time prior to the sale by paying the full amount due under the mortgage, including the costs and expenses of the sale.

Other terms to be announced at sale.

PrimeLending, a PlainsCapital Company
Bozena Wysocki, Esq.
BROCK & SCOTT, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762
VT_Noticesofhearing@brockandscott.com

Bristol Police Log

BRISTOL — Bristol police have responded to a couple of mental health-related situations in recent weeks.

On Jan. 29 police responded to an incident described as "an individual acting disorderly on West Street." Upon arriving on the scene, police determined the incident was caused by a mental health issue and provided the individual with cold weather resources, as well as contact information for additional resources.

On Feb. 5 Bristol police responded to a person yelling on Main Street. Police located a homeless person experiencing a mental health crisis and helped the person with transportation. Police said mental health assistance was declined.

Between Jan. 25 and Feb. 7 Bristol police completed 42 foot patrols, conducted two traffic stops, and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School 14 times, at Bristol Elementary School 14 times and at local businesses 11 times.

Police also processed 18 fingerprint requests, verified one

vehicle identification number and conducted one welfare check.

In other recent activity, Bristol police:

- On Jan. 26 received a report of a sex offense on Mountain Street. An investigation is ongoing.

- On Jan. 28 received a hat found at the intersection of Stoney Hill and Lovers Lane that was brought to the police department.

- On Jan. 29 logged a report of the fraudulent use of a debit card on West Street, and an investigation is ongoing.

- On Jan. 30 Bristol's community resource specialist helped a homeless person with supplies and getting further resources from other agencies.

- On Jan. 31 responded to a noise complaint on Main Street.

- On Jan. 31 received a dog found loose on West Street. The animal's family was located and picked up the dog from the police department.

- On Jan. 31 completed a foot patrol during events at Mount Abe.

- On Feb. 1 began investigation a report of a theft on Main Street.

- On Feb. 2 assisted Vermont State Police on Route 116 South.

- On Feb. 4 assisted the Rutland County State's Attorney's Office in serving court paperwork.

- On Feb. 4 received a report of a suspicious vehicle on Stoney Hill Road.

- On Feb. 5 Bristol's community resource specialist assisted someone in getting paperwork.

- On Feb. 6 received a report of threatening voicemails.

- On Feb. 7 assisted the Colchester Police Department on South Street.

AUCTIONS



**MARKET REPORT
ADDISON COUNTY
COMMISSION SALES**
RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT

BEEF	\$
Iroquois	8.80
Nop B	9.60
Blue S	1.50
J. Alle	2.50
Sunde	4.00
Vorse	4.00
P. Liv	2.00

Please check
back next
week!

CALV	\$
Bame	0.00
Elysia	0.50
White	4.00
J. Will	5.00
Sunde	7.60
Wilco	9.00

Total Beef - 155 Total Calves - 212

We value our faithful customers.
Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs.
call 1-802-388-2661

**NOTICE OF SELF-STORAGE
LIEN SALE**

116 SELF STORAGE, BRISTOL, VT

Notice is hereby given that the contents of the self-storage unit listed below will be sold at public auction by sealed bid at the 116 Self Storage facility. This sale is being held to collect unpaid storage unit occupancy fees, charges and expenses of the sale.

The entire contents of the self-storage unit listed below will be sold, with the proceeds to be distributed to 116 Self Storage for all accrued occupancy fees (rent charges), attorney's fees, sale expenses in relation to the unit and its sale. Any proceeds beyond the foregoing shall be returned to the unit holder.

Contents of the unit may be viewed on 3/4/2026 commencing at 10 a.m. Sealed bids are to be submitted on the entire contents of the self-storage unit. Bids will be opened one-quarter of an hour after the unit has been viewed on 3/4/2026. The highest bidder on the storage unit must remove the entire contents within 48 hours after notification of their successful bid. Purchase must be made in cash and paid in advance of the removal of the contents of the unit. A \$50.00 cash deposit shall be made and will be refunded if the unit is broom cleaned. 116 Self Storage reserves the right to accept or reject bids.

Unit #78 - B. St. Onge

ARTS + LEISURE

The Addison Independent

February 19, 2026



Lincolmites compete in ice cutting after 50 years



Lincoln friends Steve Halnon, Jeremy Perfect, Roger Rood, and Mike Lathrop competed in an ice cutting festival in Brookfield, Vt., last month. This team represented Addison County in the same festival 50 years ago.

PHOTOS / STEVE HARRIS AND SUBMITTED

Ten thousand years ago, Vermont was covered with an ice sheet nearly two miles deep. While many of us currently enjoying this year's winter might suggest that it sounds like February of 2026, over 10,000 feet of solid water represents an inconceivable quantity of cocktail refrigerant. At the tail end of the most recent Ice Age, a period of global warming made its appearance forcing the glaciers to gradually revert to their warmer cousin, water, as the millennia slipped away. Meltwater began to exert pressure on the ice dam between Deer Leap and South Mountain until one morning long ago, the dam broke and in a matter of four short days, 600 vertical feet of what is now referred to as Lake Vermont rushed out into the Champlain Valley. These surging waters created Addison County's gravel pits where the earth materials

By **STEVE HARRIS**

of prehistoric lake bottom came to rest exactly where Act 250 testimony now suggests they should remain undisturbed. What seems like an endless protracted regulatory struggle of our current experience is proof positive that ice has been a prevalent shaper of our current landscapes and has forever been a prominent player in Vermont's destiny

EXPORTED ICE

Before it became famous as the primary cause of broken bones amongst the elderly, ice was once a valuable commodity. Vermonters have always been known for turning anything

commonly available into a buck, so for a century and a half, many farms supplemented their short summers by grooming ponds and lakes into ice that could be monetized. Every lakeside town in New England used to boast at least one icehouse including the namesake restaurant on Burlington's Lake Champlain. Local brokers continued to clear, cut, harvest and store natural ice well into the Great Depression of the 1930's. Metal-lined ice boxes, manufactured in Burlington by The Baldwin Refrigerator Company employed over 250 men and reached annual production levels of 40,000 units. Each sale helped maintain the retail value of Vermont's wintertime export by consuming over 5,000 pounds per year to stay cool. Ice from this region was collected at the railhead in Burlington, then transported to warehouses in New York and Boston. From there it would serve

**"WE ARE ALL TALK AND NO ACTION,
ALL STOPS AND NO TRACTION."**

— Motto of Steve, Jeremy, Roger and Mike

See **ROOST** on page 2

Lunar New Year celebrations kick off in Middlebury on Feb. 28

Addison County BIPOC+, in partnership with Town Hall Theater, proudly presents the third annual Lunar New Year Celebration, on Saturday, Feb. 28, a center-wide festival filled with performances, artmaking, cultural demonstrations and family-friendly activities for all ages. Last year's event drew hundreds of community members, and this year promises to be even more vibrant.

Lunar New Year — celebrated widely across East and Southeast Asia and throughout the diaspora — is a joyful time of reunion, reflection and renewal. Town Hall Theater will come alive with music, movement, storytelling and art making from 11a.m.-4 p.m., throughout Town Hall Theater's expanded regional performing arts center. A variety of delicious, traditional Lunar New Year food will be available to purchase.

THE 2026 SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

11 a.m.-12 p.m.

- Taiji Quan Demonstration – Main Stage
- Arts & Crafts with May Poduschnick – Byers Studio
- Family Storytime with Miss Tricia – Center for Learning & Engagement

11:30 a.m.

- Mahjong Demonstration – Center for Learning & Engagement

11 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.

- Calligraphy & Vendor Table with Yinglei Zhang – Jackson Gallery

12:15-2:15 p.m.

Rothrock Mainstage Performances featuring:

- Samulnori Drumming
- Lion Dance
- Additional guest performers!

2:15-4 p.m.

- K-Pop Demon Hunters Screening & Singalong – Main Stage

"Lunar New Year has been an important part of our identities and that of our communities," co-organizers Natasha Chang and HaQuyen Pham said. "We were thrilled to bring that celebration to our Addison County friends and neighbors last year and look forward to inviting even more people to join us again in 2026."

"Town Hall Theater is dedicated to showcasing a diversity of voices and traditions," said Lisa Mitchell, THT's Executive & Artistic Director. "We are delighted to partner once again with Addison County BIPOC+ for this joyful, community-centered celebration."

Free admission but bring money for food that will be available for purchase. For tickets townhalltheater.org or call 802-382-9222.



the local demand or be shipped to the Caribbean or as far away as India.

HARVESTING THE CROP IN BROOKFIELD

(Population 1,244)

Ice production resembled agriculture. Attentive brokers encouraged their crop for optimal harvest and best price by keeping the exposed surface free of snow. Sought-after blocks were uniform in size and shaped for easy stacking and transparent enough to allow for reading a newspaper through a foot of it. Sawdust, a readily available by-product of the lumber industry, was used to keep stockpiled blocks from fusing together when stored in double-walled ice houses. Modest-sized lakes were preferred sources, offering still water and available farm labor to remove snow and harvest ice when conditions were right. Brookfield, Vt., with its iconic floating bridge over Sunset Lake, is renowned for its annual Ice Harvesting Festival. Established in 1974, that event highlighted traditional crafts and featured living exhibits like Fred Union and Tom Covey, who earned \$0.25 per hour for their ice-cutting skills in the 1920s.

THE ICE HARVEST FESTIVAL: 2026

This year's festival was held on the traditional last day of January with limited attendance due to cold temperatures and a persistent north breeze. Organizers Jon Binhammer and his son acted as the masters of ceremonies and performed the reenactment and teaching moments under clear skies. Jon has become the steward of historical tools and ice skates unearthed from local attics and barns all over the village. They took the visitors through the whole process — grid scribing, sawing, breaking and retrieving slabs. Willing volunteers

Continued on next page



Happy Lunar New Year! Come celebrate at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on Feb. 28 with festivities beginning at 11 a.m.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

MANMADE ICE

Ever since human beings have had to throw away spoiled food, or eaten it and accepted the consequences, inventors have tinkered with mechanical refrigeration. In 1841, the first ice machine was invented by Dr. John Gorrie on Florida's gulf coast. He was looking for ways to create cooling baths for his desperately feverish patients. Nonetheless, the proposed transportation of perishable seafood by rail and the increasing desire for cooler indoor environments in subtropical regions soon demonstrated a broader market demand. The use of relocated winter ice for domestic refrigeration had been the standard for domestic food preservation for 150 years, until the first electric refrigerator was manufactured in 1913. The widespread adoption of the Frigidaire was years away, but the end of Vermont's ice as an exported commodity was a forgone conclusion. It remained a valuable export for another 20 years, but demand was, well, melting away. The Baldwin family closed the factory and sold the real estate while the accounts were still in the black in 1933. Their 360-foot-long factory building was repurposed into apartments and remains fully occupied as Jackson Terrace on Pine Street today.

tried their luck with the saw, tongs and derrick. Mid-morning featured an energetic prize quiz and ended at noon with a “Made in Vermont” fashion competition. The simultaneous festivities ashore included an ice sculpting demonstration, a Brookfield Historical Society show-and-tell table (with “ice-out” raffle tickets) and generous servings of hot cocoa, brownies and chili provided by the proprietor of the newly renovated Green Trails Inn right across the street.

THE DELEGATION FROM LINCOLN (Population, 1,323)

Five Lincolnites traveled for two hours to attend the festival. Three were past winners of the now-retired cutting contest (amateur participants kept losing tools to the lake bottom) held on the same date in 1976, exactly 50 years prior. Relying upon nicknames in use for many decades, yours truly (Hairbag), served as the designated driver for Jeremy Perfect (Maya or Burger), Mike Lathrop (Hecter), Roger Rood (Kudd), and Steve Halnon (Stev or Stabber). This happy group of “50-year veterans” was looking forward to reliving one of their youthful larks. I am lucky to count them as friends, though I only joined their fan club after moving to Vermont permanently in 1984. Two of them were born in Addison County, while Kudd’s family moved here in his infancy and Jeremy’s arrived when he was 15. They all attended Bristol High School when it occupied a small three-story wood building which still stands on the Town Green. Before the age of academic consolidation got under way, this close-knit village venue fostered these lifelong friendships, and their bond remains strong and productive, overcoming the isolation that so often accompanies adult milestones like military service, careers,



Ice cutting underway in Brookfield, Vt.

PHOTO / STEVE HARRIS

marriage, raising children and settling down. A few of their contributions to Lincoln folklore include:

Forming the core members of the Pocock Entertainment Committee, a currently dormant group of multi-generational humorists and commentators famous for their elaborate and hilarious float entries in the Bristol 4th of July parade. From 1973 until the COVID pandemic ended their first 50-year run, they regularly won first or second place awards for their rolling creations. Planning started every April 1 (well... duh!), with float construction taking place in Jeremy’s shop yard behind a tractor shed built in the 1980s to keep their work hidden until the parade.

Forming, then disbanding a motorcycle gang, touring as the “Horse Marines” with the motto, “We are all talk and no action, all stops and no traction.”

Building their own homes and dedicating much of their working lives to Vermont’s self-employed construction scene.

Making music, with Kudd a fixture in the local legendary party band for hire, “The Blue Flames.” Mike now performs with Kudd in the most recent iteration, “Short Notice.” Jeremy sings in an acapella trio called “Cut, Split and Delivered.” They have one stadium appearance to their credit (God Bless America during the 7th inning stretch at Fenway Park) but have no ambition to push beyond the joy of singing together and putting in an occasional local appearance.

Jamming at impromptu porch gatherings, where new acoustic twists on old standards are performed just for the joy of hearing home-built music drift across a Vermont landscape.

Mike had the best zingers during four hours of truck time going to and from Brookfield, when he said, “As I get older, I keep getting clearer images and sharper details of things that never happened.” And, in responding to Jeremy’s suggestion that age improves discernment,



The Feb. 8, 1976, edition of the “Vermont” recounted the first year Steve Halnon, Jeremy Perfect, Roger Rood, and Mike Lathrop competed in the ice cutting competition in Brookfield.

READ THE FULL 1976 ARTICLE ONLINE.

added, “You know, you are a lot smarter than I ever thought you were.” By the time we got back to Lincoln, my sides were aching from laughing with them as they alternately amused and abused each other.

ONE MORE AWARD FROM BROOKFIELD

Stev brought home first prize in this year’s Buy Local Contest by wearing seven separate pieces of apparel manufactured within the state. He was swaddled in layers of Vermont Flannel and finished with two layers of Johnson Woolen Mills hunter’s outerwear, topped off with a hand-knit wool cap with ear flap dread locks. Jeremy congratulated Jon on awarding the first-place jug of maple syrup to Stev, since the winner was also “Made in Vermont, and wearing his birthday suit underneath his clothing.” It felt to me like the perfectly appropriate Vermont award to an enduring ring of pals made on a frozen lake under a frigid, sunny sky in a remote Green Mountain village with a big heart.

— 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.



Steve Halnon won this year’s Buy Local Contest by wearing seven separate pieces of apparel manufactured in the state... including his birthday suit.

PHOTO / STEVE HARRIS

UPCOMING MUSIC

More Tunes

Free concert in Middlebury explores musical connections across Caledonia

This Friday, Feb. 20, go see a free concert in the Olin C. Robison Concert Hall at the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury that highlights traditional music. The program "Caledonian Connections" will begin at 7:30 p.m. Open to all.

Timothy Cummings, Middlebury College Affiliate Artist in pipes and whistles, will be joined by Jeremiah McLane (accordion), and McKinley James (cello), for a performance of acoustic music that explores musical connections across the region of Caledonian orogeny, spanning Appalachia, New England, Québec and the Canadian Maritimes, Greenland, Ireland, Scotland, England, and even Denmark and Norway. Middlebury College students and Jeffrey Buettner will also perform.



Josh Clevestine will perform at Rockers Pizzeria in Vergennes, on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 6-8 p.m. Free and open to all.

Folk musician wraps up 'Off-Stage' concert series in Vergennes, Feb. 28

The Friends of the Vergennes Opera House are gearing up to get back on their stage (after several months of construction for the All Access Project). But first, Josh Clevestine will perform the final "Off Stage" concert on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 6-8 p.m., at Rockers Pizzeria. This Adirondack folk musician is reminiscent of the great Johnny Cash, with his cross-picking guitar, deep voice, and honest

lyrics. Free and open to all.

The VOH Off Stage series kicked off last October using surprising and wonderful spaces around Vergennes while the main stage was closed for renovations. Artists performed at area restaurants, Bixby Library, Vergennes Grand Senior Living, and two churches.

Coming in March, the All Access Project is slated to be complete, and the main stage will reopen with Gina Coleman & the Misty Blue Band Roadhouse Revival Gospel Blues Show on Saturday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.

For more information and updates, visit VergennesOperaHouse.org.



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AT
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- February 11: Loire Valley Libations
- February 18: Farrell Takeover - Kermit Lynch Classics
- February 25: California Dreaming

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ART ON EXHIBIT

ART ON MAIN

25 Main Street, Bristol

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Katie Roberts presents a collection of landscape and wildlife paintings created with water-soluble oils. Her work highlights the beauty and vulnerability of the natural world, emphasizing themes of conservation, preservation, and our connection to the land and the animals that inhabit it. On view through February.

BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD

7 Center St, Brandon. For more info visit

brandonartistsguild.org or call 802-247-4956.

"Student Art Show" features young artists chosen by art educators from Lothrop, Otter Creek Academy, Barstow, Neshobe and Otter Valley Middle and High School. On view Feb. 3-28.

JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant Street, Middlebury

Visit 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. Free and open to all. On view Feb. 3-March 14

JOHNSON EXHIBITION GALLERY

78 Chateau Road, Middlebury

For hours and info visit middlebury.edu/events

"Cultural Fabrics; The Kimono Through Literary, Cross-Cultural, and Practical Lenses." This multidisciplinary exhibit explores the kimono in dialogue with Japanese literature, Western aesthetics, fashion, and fiber crafts. On view Feb. 9-March 19. Free and open to all.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury

For more info visit middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions

"Angels & Ghosts" features evocative oil paintings from artist Damian Stamer's acclaimed "Collaboration Series," that emerge from an artistic partnership between human creativity and artificial intelligence. This exhibit was curated by Dexter Wimberly, and offers a unique meditation on how we might navigate our relationship with AI. On view Jan. 20-April 19.

"Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury" highlights how unequal, and at times violent, encounters among Africa, Europe and the United States have long configured Art History's understandings of African art, and how our interests and epistemologies infuse, shape and distort our

See EXHIBITS on page 13

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. Unleash your inner architect, Aries. Your focus is laser sharp this week. Use this incredible mental clarity to map out a long-term goal that can lead to professional success.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Taurus, you might uncover a previously unnoticed talent or find a fantastic, easy way to increase your income stream. Your instincts about finances are particularly sharp.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. Explore creative possibilities, Gemini. You can use a new hobby right now that keeps you occupied. Look at trends that are popular right now and try one of those.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. This week brings soothing energy, allowing you to find deep comfort and resolution with any lingering personal matters. A moment of quiet reflection will bring a profound realization about your path forward.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Your social connections are bringing incredible joy and opportunity, Leo. A friend or colleague has valuable information that can directly benefit your goals.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. All eyes are on your professional achievements, and recognition is due, Virgo. Expect positive feedback, a nod from an important figure or a chance to take on more responsibility.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. This week ignites your desire for learning and adventure, Libra. If you've been putting off a trip or a new course of study, the time to commit is now.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. Complex issues feel manageable this week, Scorpio. You have the emotional intelligence to navigate and resolve long-standing challenges in shared resources or relationships.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Sagittarius, your one-on-one relationships, both personal and professional, are reaching a new peak of understanding and support. A shared goal with a key person becomes much clearer.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. You feel a vibrant surge of energy and vitality this week, Capricorn. It's an ideal time to commit to a new health routine or simply enjoy the ease and flow of your daily tasks.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/ Feb. 18. Dive into what sets your soul on fire, Aquarius. Your creative imagination is running wild, delivering innovative solutions and exciting ideas for self-expression.



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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEB. 20 — Trevor Noah, comedian (42)
FEB. 21 — Nina Simone, musician (d)
FEB. 22 — Rachel Dratch, comedian (60)
FEB. 23 — Josh Gad, actor (45)
FEB. 24 — Winslow Homer, artist (d)
FEB. 25 — George Harrison, musician (d)
FEB. 26 — Erykah Badu, singer (55)

CALENDAR

Feb. 19-March 17

2026

THURSDAY, FEB. 19

ILSLEY CLASSIC FILM CLUB WATCHES "NOTHING SACRED" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, Feb. 19, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

SHIBORI & INDIGO DYE DEMONSTRATION IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, Feb. 19, 2:30 p.m., Makerspace, Johnson Memorial Building, Middlebury College, 78 Chateau Road. A hands-on demonstration exploring traditional shibori resist-dye techniques using indigo. Learn about shibori and make your own dyed piece. Part of "Cultural Fabrics: The Kimono Through Literary, Cross-Cultural, and Practical Lenses," an exhibit on view at Middlebury College's Johnson Gallery.

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 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.

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.

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.

BLACK PATRIOTS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN CORNWALL. Saturday, Feb. 21, 1 p.m., Cornwall DAR Chapter House, 2706 Route 30. Caroline Tasse, genealogist and reg-istrar 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: MIDNIGHT 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.

"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.

SUNDAY, FEB. 22

WINTER CARNIVAL ICE SHOW: MIDNIGHT 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.

SCREENING OF "5 BROKEN CAMERAS" FILM IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Feb. 22, 1-4 p.m., Middlebury Marquis Theatre Café, Main Street. "5 Broken Cameras," nominated for an Academy

Award for Best Documentary Feature, gives viewers a riveting, ground-level perspective on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the nonviolent resistance movement against the settlements that began in 2005. Filmed preceded with a brief presentation and followed by a Q & A/ community discussion of Apartheid Free Communities.

"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.

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.

TUESDAY, FEB. 24

"THE ARTIST'S WAY" READING AND PRACTICE GROUP IN VERGENNES. Tuesday, Feb. 24, 6 p.m., 3 Squares Cafe, 141 Main St. See Feb. 17 listing.

Continued on next page

MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091		MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION: P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753		Please see the MCTV website, www.middleburycommunitytv.org , for changes in the schedule; MCTV events, classes and news; and to view many programs online. Submit listings to the above address, or call 802-388-3062.	
Channel 1071 Through the Night: VT Media Exchange, Bulletin Board Thursday, February 19 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Job Talk 6 a.m. CHMS Health Care Story Slam 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 2:30 p.m. Under the Dome 7:30 p.m. American Civics Snapshots 8 p.m. Female Founder's - Women's Health 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10 p.m. Democracy Now Friday, February 20 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Health Care Story Slam 6:15 a.m. Press Conferences 7:30 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 3 p.m. Energy Week 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 10 p.m. Democracy Now Saturday, February 21	4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Job Talk 6 a.m. Women's Health 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. Under the Dome Sunday, February 22 5 a.m. VT State Archivist Talk 9 a.m. Catholic Mass 9:30 a.m. Press Conferences 11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 1 p.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Congregational Service 6:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. VT State Archivist Talk 11 p.m. Democracy Now Monday, February 23 4:30 a.m. Democracy Now 5:30 a.m. Eckankar 6 a.m. Press Conferences 10 a.m. Selectboard	12:30 p.m. State House, Public Affairs 10 p.m. Democracy Now 11 p.m. All Things LGBTQ Tuesday, February 24 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 Wednesday, February 25 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 12:30 p.m. Public Affairs 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Democracy Now Channel 1091 Thursday, February 19	5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7:30 a.m. Sundog Poetry AMP Night 9:15 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 3 p.m. All Brains Belong 4 p.m. High School Sports 9 p.m. AAUW Talk Friday, February 20 5 a.m. AAUW Talk 6:30 a.m. Tai Chi 7:30 a.m. Yoga 8:30 a.m. Gardens, Science and Nature 10 a.m. Sundog Poetry AMP Night 12 p.m. School Board Meetings Saturday, February 21 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga & Yoga 9 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 12 p.m. Hannaford Career Center 3 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. All Brains Belong Sunday, February 22 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga	7:30 a.m. Hannaford Career Center 10:30 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting 2 p.m. High School Sports Monday, February 23 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 8 a.m. Brattleboro Literary Fest. 9:30 a.m. Authors and Poets 4 p.m. High School Sports 6:30 p.m. ACSD Board Tuesday, February 24 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. Music from around VT 4 p.m. High School Sports 8 p.m. School Board Meeting/s Wednesday, February 25 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 4 p.m. High School Sports 9 p.m. Authors and Poets	

Top Pick

THE WINTER CARNIVAL ICE SHOW "MIDNIGHT MAGIC" IS GOING TO BE SPECTACULAR ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY!

GET YOUR TICKETS (6 BUCKS) AND COME SUPPORT SKATERS FROM MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE, UVM, LOCAL YOUTH AND MORE. MORE AT MIDDLEBURY.EDU.



by James McBride. Part of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Winter Traveling Book Club. Free with registration. More info at lcmm.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.

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.

KIMONO DRESSING DEMONSTRATION IN MIDDLEBURY.

Wednesday, Feb. 25, 5:30 p.m., Johnson Memorial Building, Middlebury College, 78 Chateau Road. See how a kimono and its components are layered, tied and worn for different occasions. Part of "Cultural Fabrics: The Kimono Through Literary, Cross-Cultural, and Practical Lenses," an exhibit on view at Middlebury College's Johnson Gallery.

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.

SATURDAY, FEB. 28

FREE MUSEUM DAY AT ROKEBY MUSEUM IN FERRISBURGH. Saturday Feb. 28, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Rokeby Museum, 4334 Route 7. Rokeby Museum will be open and free to the public. Visit the main exhibit, "Seeking Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Legacy of an Abolitionist Family," and explore the museum grounds. More info at rokeby.org.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, Feb. 28, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Town Hall Theater and Addison County BIPOC+ present the third annual Lunar New Year Celebration, a family-friendly festival featuring performances, artmaking, cultural demonstrations, storytime and hands-on activities throughout the theater. Music, dance, drumming and a film screening are planned, with traditional Lunar New Year food available for purchase. Free and open to all. More info at townhalltheater.org and addisonarts.org.

WINTER TRAVELING BOOK CLUB IN FERRISBURGH.

Saturday, Feb. 28, 1-2 p.m., Rokeby Museum, 4334 Route 7. Meet at the Rokeby Museum or join online to discuss "Heaven and Earth Grocery Store"

JOSH CLEVENSTINE IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Feb. 28, 6-8 p.m., Rockers Pizzeria, 191 Main St. Adirondack folk musician and recording artist Josh Clevenstine performs original music inspired by classic Americana, with cross-picking guitar, honest lyrics and a warm, resonant vocal style. Part of the Vergennes Opera House's "Off Stage" series. Free. More info at vergennessoperahouse.org.

IRISH MUSIC NIGHT WITH RAMBLETREE IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7-9 p.m., Two Brothers Tavern, 86 Main St. A high-energy mix of classic Irish tunes, sea shanties, world music, rock, funk, reggae and original material. Free.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

"NOTHING TO HIDE" OPENING RECEPTION IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, March 1, 5:15 p.m., Congregational Church of Middlebury, 30 North Pleasant St. Reception and opening of "Nothing to Hide," a photo-text exhibit exploring the experiences of individuals and families living with mental illness. Exhibit on view through March 31, weekdays 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the church's Hallway Gallery. Free. More info at judyalbright@snet.net or 802-989-7644.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

IRISH MUSIC NIGHT WITH RAMBLETREE IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, March 3, 7-9 p.m., Two Brothers Tavern, 86 Main St. A high-energy mix of classic Irish tunes, sea shanties, world music, rock, funk, reggae and original material. Free.

"THE ARTIST'S WAY" READING AND PRACTICE GROUP IN VERGENNES.

Tuesday, March 3, 6 p.m., 3 Squares Cafe, 141 Main St. Weekly study and discussion group working through Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way," a 12-week method of creative unblocking and self-discovery. Open to first-time readers and returning participants in a supportive, non-hierarchical setting. Coffee, tea, and pastries available for purchase. Free.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

DOUG ANDERSON'S "THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL" COURSE IN MIDDLEBURY PART 2. Wednesday, March 4, 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 highlights of Hollywood musicals from the 1970s to today. Part of a four-session spring course on the movie musical. \$30 single class; course passes available. More info at addisonarts.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

ILSLEY CLASSIC FILM CLUB WATCHES "SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARVES" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 5, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 5, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Middlebury Acting Company presents a reimagining of the women in Shakespeare's "Hamlet." It focuses on their emotional journeys and struggles for agency in the Danish court, exploring themes of power, class and female relationships. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 6, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 5 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

"TIME/LIFE/BEAUTY" DANCE IN MIDDLEBURY.

Friday, March 6, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Rd. "time/life/beauty" by Michael Sakamoto and Paul D. Miller (DJ Spooky) explores cultural, social and ecological themes and fuses Butoh dance theater, hip-hop, new music and multimedia. \$30 general admission. \$20 Middlebury ID holders/PASS members, \$10 youth under 21, \$5 Middlebury students. Open to the public. Tickets at go.middlebury.edu/tickets.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 7, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 5 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

"TIME/LIFE/BEAUTY" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 7, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theatre, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Rd. See March 6 listing.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, March 8, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 5 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

"THE ARTIST'S WAY" READING AND PRACTICE GROUP IN VERGENNES. Tuesday, March 10, 6 p.m., 3 Squares Cafe, 141 Main St. See March 3 listing. Free.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

"TURNER AND CONSTABLE" SCREENING IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, March 11, 11 a.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Documentary exploring the lives, legacy and contrasting artistic visions of rival British painters J.M.W. Turner and John Constable. Part of the Great Art Wednesday film series. Tickets \$15. More info at addisonarts.org.

"BOB MACKIE: NAKED ILLUSION" FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, March 11, 7 p.m., Marquis

COMMUNITY DANCE EVENTS



SCAN
FOR THE FULL
SCHEDULE

Upcoming dance classes explore movement, free and open to all

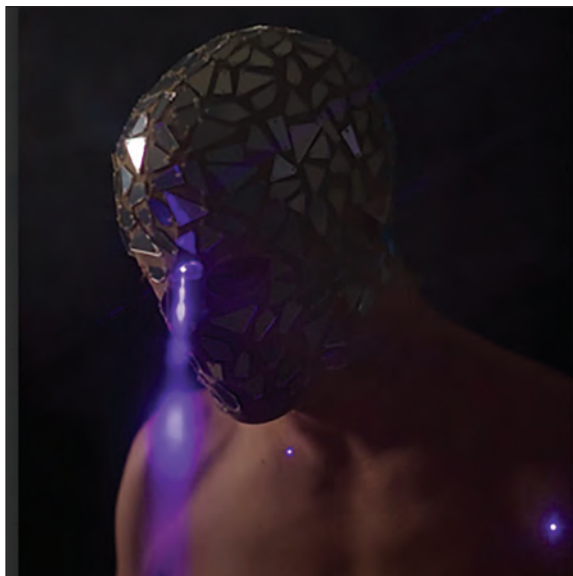
Two dance classes are coming up for those who like to explore movement with experts. These regular Movement Matters classes are free and open to the public.

Master Class with Jimmy Joyner, Feb. 25

On Wednesday, Feb. 25, Jimmy Joyner will hold a class at the Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theater, from 4:30-6 p.m. This is less of a class and more of a facilitated time to ask ourselves "what else?" We will mobilize the body and generate heat so that we may move through new versions of ourselves. Through prompts, games and material we can move collectively and have dance do what it needs to do for us.

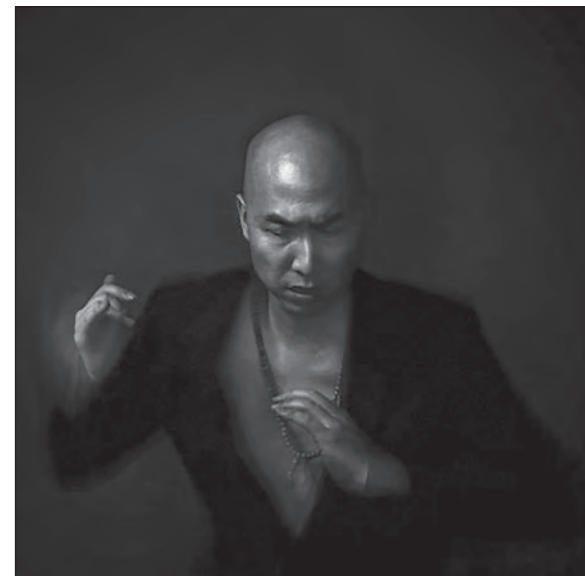
Body/Mind/Funk/Time with Michael Sakamoto, March 4

On Wednesday, March 4, Michael Sakamoto will hold a class at the Mahaney Arts Center Dance Theater, from 4:30-6 p.m. This session is billed as "a movement primer."



JIMMY JOYNER

Butoh and American street dance each grew out of conditions of socio-economic crisis in the post-World War II era in Japan and the U.S. With elements inspired by both movement



MICHAEL SAKAMOTO

practices, Sakamoto will lead exercises to demonstrate a unique blend of intercultural and self-reflexive performance embodiment.

Move your body in this African dance class

Get a rich taste of African culture through powerful, vigorous, high-energy movement during the regular West African Dance and Drum Class that will be held Wednesday, Feb. 25 and March 4, from 4:30-5:50 p.m.

Let the beat of the drum move your body. Participants will learn songs, rhythms, dances and culture as the group embarks on a journey of dances from the African diaspora.

Class is accompanied by live musicians to help participants understand the communication between the music and the dance. Free and open to all. The classes will be held in Wilson Hall, McCullough Student Center, at 14 Old Chapel Road in Middlebury.



Rethink African art with Art Club on Feb. 26

Learn more about African art during an Art Club get-together on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 3:30 p.m. The group (open to all with an RSVP email to Don Burns at ddbstx1@gmail.com by Monday, Feb. 23) will look at the current exhibit "Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art" at the Middlebury College Museum of Art.

Middlebury College students, Greta Costello and Jude Kuykendall — who contributed to the design of the exhibition — will be there too. Conversations will cover issues of repatriation; art vs artifact; and displacement of intent/original use in the context of a museum setting.

Learn more about the exhibit at middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions/2025/beyond-boundaries-rethinking-african-art-at-middlebury.

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PUZZLES

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ACROSS

- 1. Cut quickly
- 5. A way to state clearly
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Expansive
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Experimented with
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Acquisitive
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Kalahari Desert

lake

- 38. Unidentified flying object
- 39. People 65 and over
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Daughter of Acrisius
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Government agents
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. Treeless plains
- 55. One's sense of self-importance
- 56. Consumer advocate
- 60. Type of lounge
- 61. Body part
- 62. Can be persuaded

- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Arab ruler title
- 67. Unhappy
- 68. Gradually went away
- 69. Able to think clearly

DOWN

- 1. Brushed
- 2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
- 3. Heroes
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. Some don't want to share theirs
- 6. Free-swimming invertebrate
- 7. Litigates
- 8. Outer

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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

- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Uneasy feelings
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Pages can be dog- --
- 18. Ukrainian city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Month
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Group of chemicals
- 30. Rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Southwestern Russia city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Angry
- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They --
- 45. Women
- 47. Be filled with love for
- 48. Thick-soled sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Protein
- 54. "Gunga Din" script writer
- 57. Art __, around 1920
- 58. __ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to rest

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 15.



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ASK A MASTER GARDENER

GROW GOURMET MUSHROOMS AT HOME



Andrea Knepper is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from Bolton.

Growing mushrooms at home doesn't require special equipment or prior experience. You can grow fresh mushrooms with an at-home mushroom growing kit. Mushroom growing kits require minimal space and time, making it possible to grow your own food year-round, even during the cold Vermont winter months.

By **ANDREA KNEPPER**

Mushroom kits are widely available and designed specifically for home use. They include a prepared growing block and instructions, which is all you need to easily grow mushrooms at home. Because mushrooms are fungi, they do not need soil and sunlight to produce a harvest. Common varieties such as oyster, shiitake and lion's

mane all grow well indoors and can be ready to harvest in as little as two to three weeks.

Check your local garden supply store for mushroom growing kits or look online. When shopping, you can look for a kit that has the features you desire, including: certified organic, suitable for beginners with step-by-step instructions, variety, price, etc. Oyster mushrooms are considered the most reliable variety for first-time growers. They grow very quickly and are tolerant of a range of common household conditions, including the drier air often found in homes heated by wood stoves. Shiitake and lion's mane kits are also good choices for beginners, but can take longer to mature.

Most kits come with a block of growing

material, usually a mix of sawdust and grain, wrapped in plastic. This block is called the substrate and serves as the food source for the mushrooms. The substrate is inoculated with mushroom spawn. The spawn grows into a web of white fibers called mycelium. The mycelium gradually takes over the substrate, turning it white and preparing it to produce mushrooms.

Getting started with your mushroom growing kit is straightforward. Kits include detailed instructions, but the process is generally the same across different brands. You will cut the plastic packaging according to the instructions and soak the growing block in water. Mushrooms need a lot of moisture, so you will water the growing block every day.

Within one to two weeks, you will notice small clusters of mushrooms beginning to emerge. This is called pinning. These baby mushrooms grow quickly, sometimes doubling in size every day. Continue watering your mushrooms until they have reached maturity. The instructions in your kit will tell you what to look for, such as the size and shape of the cap, to know when your mushrooms are ready to harvest.

A mushroom growing kit can sometimes yield more than one harvest. After you harvest your first crop, you can attempt a second flush. To do this, let your growing block rest for about a week in a cool, dry place. Repeat the instructions included with your kit: soak the growing block again and water as directed. In most cases, subsequent batches of mushrooms will take longer to grow and have a smaller yield.

When your kit is done producing, add the substrate to your compost pile or directly to your garden beds. The mycelium has already broken down the growing material, so it is ready to enhance your compost or garden soil.

Growing mushrooms at home is a fun, easy, and rewarding way to continue harvesting fresh produce throughout the year. Whether you are looking to add flavor to your home-cooked meals or want to try a new gardening experience, a mushroom kit is an excellent investment.



The result of an at-home mushroom kit is to harvest delicious, gourmet mushrooms to enjoy.

Pets of the Week



Hi, I'm Freddie Fahrenheit!

My parents say I am the sweetest, happiest, goofiest little dude. My favorite things are my parents, more toys than we can count anymore, and giggle times. I also love throwing myself on my back, flopping around, making silly corgi noises that sound like a child's laugh.

Winter is my favorite season. I love to stuff my face up to my eyebrows in snow to follow a smell, or I also bound like a bunny through the snow until I almost disappear in it. I was named after a legendary rock icon, and bring just as much joy and weirdness as my namesake.

Submitted by Nakeeya Murray of Bristol.



This is our Rosa, in Middlebury. She turns 6 years old this month. She was named for Rosa Parks. We also sometimes call her, due to her bountiful size, the Jane Russell of cats.

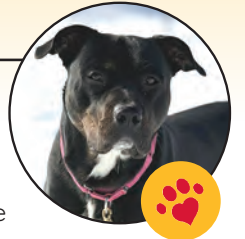
Submitted by Jon M. Sweeney of Middlebury.

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Cicada



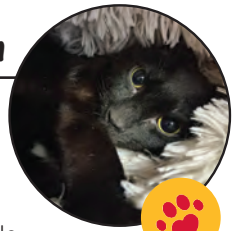
Cicada is a handsome, happy boy with a lot of love to give! He gets excited easily and can be a bit jumpy for greetings, but is working hard on his "sit" cue. He's lived with other dogs and seems to enjoy the company of a canine friend. He is house-trained and crate-trained. When not outside to play, he loves cardboard box enrichment and puzzle toys. Cicada can live with older children and teenagers. He has no exposure to cats.

Monarch



Monarch is an energetic little girl who loves to interact through play! She's looking for an active home where she can get a lot of exercise, both physical and mental. She has lived with other dogs and loves playing with them. Monarch is crate-trained and has previously lived with children. We're unsure about cats.

Pearson



Pearson was left behind when his family moved away. Thankfully, he was found and brought to safety. We're not sure what this boy's life was like prior to that. While he is sweet and good-natured, he may need to take a little time to build up trust with his new family. We're hoping his purrrrrfect person who can accept his shy nature will walk through our doors!

Rizzoli



Rizzoli is not only handsome but also extremely charming. He is one cool cat! He's outgoing, curious, affectionate and ready for his new family! He arrived as a stray, so we are still learning about him, but it didn't take long to realize what a gem he is. Slow and structured introductions would be recommended to other animals in a home.

Squirrel



Little **Squirrel** arrived as a stray. She has the cutest little squeaky meow when she is trying to get your attention and is overall just so endearing. She has gained confidence in interacting with staff and volunteers, but her new family should still be aware that she may be quite shy when settling into a new home. We don't know about her history with cats and dogs, so a slow and structured introduction would be recommended.

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*This week's property is managed by IPJ Real Estate.
More info at midvermontrealestate.com.*



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EXHIBITS

continued from page 5

representations of Africa in the museum. On view Jan. 20-April 19.

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury

For more info visit 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.

SPARROW ART SUPPLY

44 Main St., Middlebury

For more info visit sparrowartsupply.com

"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.



NEW LISTING



SALISBURY | 1185 Upper Plains Rd | MLS #5076389
4 BR | 3 BA | 3095 SF | 2.07 ACRES | \$595,000

Modern, open concept, with loads of light. Finished walkout basement with 1000 SF accessory living space offers options. Heated and attached two-car garage and a fantastic wraparound deck.



NEW LISTING



ADDISON | 4708 VT RTE 22A | MLS #5076416
3 BD | 2 BA | 2116 SF | 2.30 ACRES | \$415,000

Fantastic views of the Adirondacks—watch the sunset from your living room. Addtn'l living area in the walkout lower level. Multiple decks, attached garage, plus a 20 X 16 barn/shed.



NEW LISTING



MIDDLEBURY | 681 Weybridge St | MLS #5076494
3 BD | 4 BA | 1696 SF | 0.30 ACRES | \$549,000

Fantastic in-town location. New windows and heating system, plus an addition, in 2017 (allowing for one-level living). Heat pumps provide cooling in the warmer months. One car detached garage.



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Learn about Black Patriots in the American Revolution in Cornwall

Celebrate Black History Month at DAR Chapter House and learn about Black Patriots in the American Revolution on Saturday, Feb. 21, from 1-2:30 p.m.

Caroline Tasey will discuss primary source documentation and historical recovery of Black Revolutionary War veterans, with a focus on four individuals who settled in Vermont following the American Revolution. Tasey is a trained genealogist and registrar for the Green Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Cornwall Free Library and the Ethan and Mary Baker Allen Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. It will be held in the historic Cornwall DAR Chapter House, with coffee and light refreshments to follow. Free and open to all.



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CALENDAR

continued from page 7

Theatre & Cafe, 65 Main St. Portrait of legendary celebrity costume designer Bob Mackie, whose bold and iconic designs helped define show business style. The film features appearances by Mackie clients and collaborators including Cher, Carol Burnett and Elton John. A Zoom Q&A with director Matthew Miele is planned. Middlebury New Filmmaker Festival Selects series. Advance tickets \$14 at miffilmfest.org.

LE CONSORT IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center, Olin C. Robison Concert Hall, Middlebury College, 72 Porter Field Rd. The world-class baroque chamber ensemble returns for a free concert exploring the trio sonata, the most popular chamber music form of the Baroque era. The program features works

by Bach and Telemann alongside lesser-known Baroque composers. Free.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 12, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Middlebury Acting Company presents a reimagining of the women in Shakespeare's "Hamlet." It focuses on their emotional journeys and struggles for agency in the Danish court, exploring themes of power, class and female relationships. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 13, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 12 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 14, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-

76 Merchants Row. See March 12 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, March 15, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 12 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at addisonarts.org.

CHORAL EVENSING IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m., St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on the Green. The Choir of St. Stephen's will sing music of the Renaissance at Choral Evensong, including Adrian Batten's Fourth Evening Service and G.P. da Palestrina's famous motet, Sicut Cervus. 2025-26 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Palestrina, whose use of dissonance and polyphony is still studied by aspiring professional musicians.

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

"THE ARTIST'S WAY" READING AND PRACTICE GROUP IN VERGENNES. Tuesday, March 17, 6 p.m., 3 Squares Cafe, 141 Main St. Weekly study and discussion group working through Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way," a 12-week method of creative unblocking and self-discovery. Open to first-time readers and returning participants in a supportive, non-hierarchical setting. Coffee, tea, and pastries available for purchase. Free.

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Info & photos: Taconicsend.com

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2	1	3	6	7	9	8	5	4
4	6	5	1	9	7	2	8	3
9	2	7	8	6	3	4	1	5
3	8	1	2	5	4	6	7	9

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\$269,900

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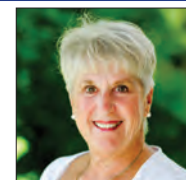


196 Lafayette Road, Bristol
\$375,000

MLS# 5045440



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**Congratulations to our Valentine's
Day Contest Winners!**



Every reason I believe in love.
— **Saddie Moulton**



The night we met, I just knew. I texted my family, "I just met the love of my life, and he loves me back." Nearly 14 years of marriage later, that feeling hasn't changed. I love you, Mat!!
— **Blair Heagerty**



Me and my platonic soulmate.
— **Bea Hooper & India Danyow**

Winners were randomly selected and assigned a prize package from our sponsors:



Package 1

- \$100 Gift Certificate to Café Provence
- Toad Hall Flowers Gift Package
- Chocolate Gift Box from Adagio Chocolates



Package 2

- One-Night Stay at Bristol Suites
- \$25 Middlebury Floral Gift Certificate
- Caramel Gift Box from Farmhouse Chocolates



Package 3

- Marquis Theatre Gift Package
- \$25 Cole's Flowers Gift Certificate
- Chocolate Gift Box from Middlebury Sweets