



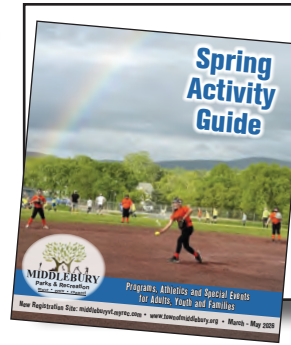
Hamlet's girl

Ophelia finds a way out of a dark, dangerous, power-mad world in a new play. See Arts + Leisure.



Title time

Local athletes bring titles to Addison County as state tournaments kick off. See page 1B.



Spring move

Look for programs, athletics and special events in Middlebury's Spring Activity Guide inside.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Bristol buildings ready for renovations

Holley Hall, library closing in March

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Bristol officials are gearing up for months-long projects at two municipal buildings: Holley Hall and the Lawrence Memorial Library.

Both spaces will close to the public throughout the projects, which are expected to begin the week of March 9. The library is expected to reopen in early May

and work at Holley Hall is slated to wrap up by the end of September.

“Both of Bristol’s projects are in alignment with energy resilience, and will improve upon heating, and cooling systems as well as structural renovations that support efficient energy consumption with increased capacity use,” Town Administrator Greg Faust told the *Independent*.

Energy-related work at Holley Hall will include building envelope improvements and heating and cooling system upgrades. The project is expected to cost \$450,000 and will be supported in part by a Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Implementation Grant the town received. Faust noted funds from the town’s Capital Building Reserves will also help finance the project.

Along with tackling energy

efficiency upgrades, Faust said the town will also explore additional funding to “support and enhance access to modern audio and visual components for Holley Hall.”

The Bristol Recreation Department will relocate its office to the Thomas Building at 27 Main St. while the project is in progress. The recreation department’s office is typically located in the upstairs of Holley Hall. Recreation Director

(See Bristol, Page 19A)



LONGTIME RIPTON SELECTBOARD member Laurie Cox is retiring from the board after 40 years of service to her community. She helped bring the town into the 21st century while looking after residents' best interests.

Independent photo John Flowers

Cox bids farewell to Ripton selectboard after four decades

By JOHN FLOWERS

RIPTON — Laurie Cox harkened back to 1986, the year in which she first ran for a Ripton selectboard facing 100% turnover.

None of the three incumbents at the time were seeking reelection, either because they’d had enough or were moving out of town.

It would seem like a nightmare scenario in this day and age, to lose a selectboard’s entire institutional memory with nary an incumbent to

help newbies negotiate the learning curve.

Unless you’re Laurie Cox, Bill Ford and Ron Wimett. They were all young, working parents and weren’t intimidated by the prospect of having to learn while governing.

“I thought, ‘Why not?’” Cox said during a recent interview at the Ripton town offices on Route 125, a virtual stone’s throw away from a cranky Middlebury River

(See Cox, Page 20A)

Vt. report card cites Shoreham, others in county needing help

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Shoreham Elementary School has been flagged as one of a dozen Vermont public schools in line to receive “Comprehensive Support and Improvement” assistance from the state of Vermont due to declining student performance.

At issue is the 2024-2025 Vermont State Report Card, released by the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) earlier this month. It highlights issues at Shoreham Elementary, as well as a couple other local schools and Addison County school districts.

The report card is designed to show how Vermont students are

(See Shoreham school, Page 20A)



Near the edge

THE SNOW FLIES as edges of Reagan Harrison’s skis cut into the slopes at the Snowbowl during Middlebury College’s Winter Carnival races on Saturday. Harrison, a first year at the college, earned fifth place in the slalom. See more photos on Page 2B.

Independent photo/Angelo Lynn

Report: Vekos had ‘significant failures’

Investigators castigate top prosecutor

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Addison County State’s Attorney Eva Vekos has “demonstrated significant failures in her ethical and legal obligations and in her professional and personal judgment” and has “failed to prevent injustice by her inaction or literal failure to be present and available as the leader of the SA’s office” during her more than three-year tenure as the county’s chief prosecutor.

That’s according to an independent investigation of her comportment commissioned by the Vermont Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs (DSAS).

Those were among the conclusions drawn by attorneys Kristina R. Brines and Kerin E. Stackpole of Burlington law firm Paul Frank + Collins, who interviewed 12 individuals connected to the Addison

(See Vekos, Page 15A)



By the way

Here’s a raffle where you could win a great piece of art and help young Addison County families. Local artist Woody Jackson — renowned for his delightful depictions of cows — has created a wonderful watercolor painting that’s being raffled by the Addison County Parent Child Center. The Middlebury-based nonprofit serves young children and their parents with a variety

(See By the way, Page 19A)

Mount Abe closet offers free clothes for students

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Mount Abraham Union Middle/High School students now have a space to pick up free clothing items at school.

Addison Wright, a senior at Mt. Abe, recently established a Community Closet at the Bristol school. Students can take clothing items from the closet when needed. Wright also plans to host a “pop-up” closet in the school lobby every other week where students can pick out items during their lunch break.

Along with offering a resource, Wright said her goal for the closet is to connect with the Mt. Abe community.

“I’ve noticed a lot of disconnect between high school and middle school, between different socioeconomic groups, between just friend groups in general, and I wanted something that was going to really bring everybody together,”

(See Closet, Page 19A)



Skating circle

THESE YOUNG SKATERS may be dressed for bedtime, but they are certainly working hard at their ice skating routine during Sunday’s Winter Carnival Ice Show “MidNight Magic.” The annual extravaganza on ice featured local youths and well-practiced skaters from Middlebury College and UVM. See more photos on Page 16A.

Independent photo/Steve James

Journalist reflects on years covering climate

Shares stories from India to Vermont

By MARIN HOWELL

LINCOLN — Lincoln resident Jonathan Mingle has witnessed various changes over the more than 15 years he’s spent as a climate reporter, from shifts in the frequency of extreme weather events and the public interest in reporting on climate change.

What hasn’t changed is the subject at the heart of his work — a warming planet that is only becoming more critical to pay attention to, even as the federal



JONATHAN MINGLE

government and some larger companies pull back on efforts to address the climate crisis.

“In this moment there’s a risk that people will just go along with this, what’s been called ‘climate hushing,’ and herd behavior, ‘Well, I guess we’re not talking about that anymore,’” Mingle said during a recent interview. “I would say at this moment it’s more important than ever that people talk about climate change — how it’s affecting their

communities and their lives and their utility bills.”

Mingle’s work as a climate reporter has its roots in northern India, where he spent a portion of his 20s in the first decade of this century working seasonally as a teacher.

“My time in India I think really impressed upon me how climate change was rapidly transforming peoples’ lives and livelihoods in other parts of the world,” he recalled.

He brought that experience back to the U.S. and into his time studying energy and resources while in graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley. Mingle thought he’d go on to work in policy, but

while in grad school he took a course with journalist and author Michael Pollan that offered him an opportunity to write about an Indian village relocating due to chronic drought.

“Years later, that piece turned into my first book, and so I kind of left that experience thinking, ‘Oh, maybe I should focus on telling stories instead of building spreadsheets,’” he said.

TELLING STORIES

He’s told many stories in the years since, working largely as a freelancer and often writing about climate change. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Yale Environment 360* and *MIT Technology Review*, among

(See Mingle, Page 18A)

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Boosters seek turf field at MUHS

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — After more than two decades on the job, Middlebury Union High School Activities Director Sean Farrell knows it's best to map out the Tigers' spring home games schedule in pencil rather than pen.

Mother nature, the whims of the adjacent Otter Creek and impervious Addison County clay soils are a potent recipe for postponements when the umbrellas come out.

"There aren't a lot of schools that have a river right next to all their athletic fields. When you see the geese swimming on your lacrosse field, it takes a long time for it to drain out," Farrell explained during a recent Addison Central School District board meeting.

Last spring, wet weather required nine of the 14 MUHS lacrosse home games to be held at Middlebury College — which has multiple turf fields — or at Mount Abraham Union

High School campus, which sits on gravel. Farrell estimated he has had to reschedule 12-24 practices and/or games each spring due to flooding on one or more of the school's three playing fields.

Since you can't change the weather, Farrell and a dedicated group of local high school sports boosters have joined forces to resurrect the push for installation of artificial turf at MUHS's Doc Collins Field. Advocates have raised almost \$30,000 for a turf feasibility study for the field, with very preliminary estimates indicating a potential \$2 million to \$2.2 million project — if it were to be greenlighted by the ACSD board and funding were to come together.

Supporters earlier this month made a preliminary pitch to district officials, calling for 97,000 square feet of synthetic turf field, divided into a main playing field and a connected 20,000-square-foot practice field. The field could be used for football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, baseball and softball.

Farrell, flanked by Court Boulanger and Jamie Northup of Friends of Middlebury Lacrosse, harkened back to 2011 — when the Friends of Middlebury Football paid a company around \$1,500 to look at the feasibility of such a turf field. The project ultimately failed to gain traction — largely due to cost — and the report was shelved.

Advocates acknowledged tight school finances persist, but also emphasized their willingness to fundraise and seek in-kind donations of such things as soil and excavation services to drive down the final price tag.

"It wasn't good timing in 2011, and it's not going to be good timing in 2030," Northup said. "But this is better timing for the individuals who are willing to support (a turf project). We'll fundraise the heck out of it."

Boosters are looking for encouragement from the school board before proceeding with a Doc Collins turf feasibility study that could quickly become outdated if not acted upon. They vowed to check other locations for a turf field if the ACSD board is tepid or noncommittal on the Doc Collins site.

"The high school is ideal the best place for this to happen in the community," Farrell said.

That's because Doc Collins field is right next to MUHS and is already equipped with lighting, parking and other key infrastructure.

MUHS turf field supporters said such a surface has become more common and more needed in the Vermont varsity sports world, in light of a steady spike in wet-weather events and a need for more predictability in events scheduling. Rutland, Burlington, South Burlington, Rice Memorial, Burr & Burton, St. Johnsbury and Champlain Valley union high schools either have, or are planning, turf fields, according to Farrell.

Middlebury College has generously allowed MUHS teams to use its turf fields when they're not being used by college athletic practices and games.

And the college, with a busy athletic schedule serving a student body of more than 2,600 during the spring and fall semesters, understandably has few gaps in its turf field schedule. Farrell recalled a recent rainy spring during which MUHS fields were unplayable and the lacrosse teams had to show up at 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. to grab practice time on college turf.

"That wears on kids after a while," he said of the early practice wakeup call, followed by school, homework and family responsibilities.

"Having our own facility where we could schedule (activities) ourselves and rotate teams in and out, would be helpful," Farrell added. "The goal is to have practice facilities and game facilities for multiple sports."

Boosters are citing equity and access as two big reasons for the turf field push. Those two principles can't be put into practice right now because of weather-dependent fields. According to Farrell and Northup:

• Available grass fields on or near the MUHS campus are playable roughly six months (roughly 800 hours) per year, whereas a turf field

could accommodate players for 10 months — roughly 2,000 hours.

• A turf field would "eliminate gender-based scheduling disadvantages" with the current setup, according to project supporters. Currently, there are 285 students playing in one or more of six MUHS sports, ranging from field hockey to boys' and girls' ultimate frisbee.

ACSD board members listened attentively to the turf field boosters' presentation. While they didn't dismiss the pitch out of hand, they noted these are tough financial times for the ACSD and Vermont public schools in general.

District-member towns on March 3 will cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 PreK-12 budget of around \$53 million. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending.

BOARD WEIGHS IN

The ACSD board also considered putting a multi-million-dollar bond issue to voters this March to catch up on the most pressing deferred maintenance projects at some of the district's eight school buildings. The board tabled that plan in light of financial pressure on taxpayers and uncertainty surrounding potential statewide school closings and consolidations through Vermont's Act 73.

"\$2 million right now is a lot of money," board member Steve Orzech told the turf field advocates.

Board member Ellen Whelan-Wuest said the district is having to weigh a lot of priorities with limited dollars.

"I would have a very hard time supporting that a bond go out for this project over any other (projects) at the high school or middle school, to say nothing of the elementary schools where we have current needs — or very likely, future needs — based on what needs to happen to the footprints of our schools," she said.

Board member Mary Heather Noble agreed.

"We have enormous capital improvement needs that are related to everyday student experiences," she said. "I don't mean to minimize the athletic experience, because that's important as well, but... on the list of priorities, (a turf field) is probably not at the top."

Board member Steve Cash acknowledged resources are tight, but also said he believes certain amenities could make a difference if the state pivots to a system of regional high schools.

"I do think we could see in the future a time where a high school looks more attractive that has a turf field, as far as being an asset," he said. "We're not there yet and it may never come to fruition, but it could be part of the conversation going forward."

Turf field boosters said they'll do more research on the project and possible ways to bring down the price. Superintendent Wendy Baker said on Monday that the ACSD board will invite the boosters back for a follow-up discussion in April or May.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



Still cold

THESE ICICLES REFLECT the thermometer last week, as they plunged down, down, down outside Shoreham's Halfway House restaurant. The business owner, ever the optimist, called this a "sign of warm weather!!!"

Submitted photo

MAUSD eyes logistics, district's future

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — Mount Abraham Unified School District officials are continuing to explore options for the future of educational delivery in the district and last week discussed an evaluation tool that could be used to help consider options and a timeline for making decisions.

The school board has been studying a few education delivery models as part of an effort to reduce costs while continuing to offer quality programming. District officials in October identified three options to explore more in depth:

- Keeping all schools open.
- Operating two elementary schools and a regional middle/high school.
- Operating a regional middle/high school and two elementary schools with grade banding (grouping students in a school building by age rather than geography).

At the school board's Feb. 17 meeting, board members discussed an Education Delivery Option Evaluation Tool. The tool identifies several "domains" to consider — such as academic and student outcomes, community and family impact and equity and access — as well as sources to

collect data from and questions to be answered in each of those areas.

MAUSD Board Chair Erin Jipner mentioned in her Feb. 17 meeting notes that the tool is aimed at helping board members "stay organized and on track for ensuring we have the information we need" as they consider options.

Prior to last week's meeting, Starksboro school board members Herb Olson, Kristen Toy and Brad Johnson sent a letter to fellow board members highlighting concerns with using the evaluation tool to reach a decision and suggestions for how to move forward.

"We encourage the Board to not approve the 'Educational Delivery Option Evaluation Tool.' Rather we believe that further Board deliberation is needed, and that some version of the process described above will better serve the interests of students, our communities, and the District," the letter reads.

Some school board members shared a different perspective at the meeting.

"I think having an evaluation tool with or without weights is helpful for us as a board to be able to talk about how each of our three options has positives and negatives and how it might affect our

students and our (community)," School board member Meredith Rossignol said.

After discussion, board members identified some changes to make to the evaluation tool and reviewed questions included in the Starksboro representatives' letter with an eye for whether those questions were reflected in the tool.

School board members ultimately voted down a motion to adopt the evaluation tool and will review a revised version of the tool at a future meeting.

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

The board also discussed a tentative timeline for making decisions about the education delivery models its exploring. That timeline called for gathering more information and perspectives in March, including through feasibility study from architecture and interior design firm TruexCullins and input from district staff and students.

This spring would see selection of an option to move forward with and continued community engagement and discussions around logistics of the option selected. Deciding on how to move forward this spring would allow

(See MAUSD, Page 3A)

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Brandon Town Meeting Preview

Editor's note: Seth Hopkins, Brandon's town manager, submitted this preview of what Brandon residents will consider at Town Meeting.

Voters in Brandon will weigh in on a town spending plan that forecasts a one-half of one percent (0.53%) increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

The operating expenses of the town are forecast to rise 2.94%, but through some forecast non-tax revenue increases in the departments, and the selectboard's decision to decline to request a capital appropriation article this year, most of the spending increase is absorbed. One point on the town's budget is \$35,000.

A significant cost driver in the FY27 budget is, in concert with many municipalities and school districts, the rising cost of employee health insurance. Likewise, as the per-ton cost of road salt increased this winter (FY26) well above what was budgeted, and supply chain issues have shorted Brandon and other towns on their contracted quantities, the budget anticipates further price pressure there for next winter.

COST SAVINGS

Three notable cost savings helped the selectboard balance the budget and deliver a plan with an increase well below what many area communities are considering.

The greatest impact was to remove the \$60,000 payment for the "Swifty" culvert construction

and historic stone arch bridge repair bond from the operating budget. Recognizing the robust funding stream provided over the past decade by local option tax (adopted in 2015) revenue, which Brandon voters restricted to capital projects, the selectboard directed paying the bond from local option proceeds rather than from the property tax.

The second savings to taxpayers will be the dropping off of last year's \$50,000 capital funding article, which the selectboard chose not to request for FY27.

A third savings resulted from investments in technology facilitating the cut of a part-time position in the assessor's office.

POLICE BUDGET BOOSTED

The recommended budget does propose the highest-ever spending for policing in Brandon at \$986,505. Early in 2025, the town lost several officers to other cities and towns. The selectboard responded with a significant unilateral increase to the salary schedule and other modifications to the contract to facilitate rebuilding the department.

The Brandon Police currently consist of a Chief and a Lieutenant both with decades of experience in Vermont; two additional full-time officers, and the town has extended a conditional offer of employment to a candidate who comes to Brandon Level 3 Vermont certified. A part-time position remains funded but not

filled.

Public safety is further provided through a traffic enforcement contract with the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, and with the as-needed response of the Vermont State Police.

The selectboard held a Pre-Town Meeting on January 31 to introduce the budget and discuss with voters ahead of the early-voting period. The slides from the meeting are on a "Town Meeting 2026" page at www.brandonvermont.gov.

ELECTIONS

The current selectboard members are running unopposed for re-election: Brian Coolidge for a three-year term, and Cecil Reniche-Smith and Jeff Haylon for two one-year seats. Other selectboard members in three-year terms are Ralph Ethier and chair of the board Doug Bailey.

The Town Meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall, 1 Conant Square. The FY27 budget presentation will be repeated, and two articles will be voted from the floor concerning whether to establish a formal advisory budget committee, and if so, how to staff it.

Australian ballot voting on town officers, the budget proposal, and a dozen requests for appropriations from social service agencies will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the American Legion, 550 Franklin Street, Brandon on Tuesday, March 3.

OVUU board reverses Caverly closure

By J.T. PRICE

BRANDON — As a snow storm descended on the area, the Otter Valley Union Unified School board scheduled a surprise special session on Friday, Feb. 20 with one purpose: to declare, following a revised understanding of the appropriate procedures for board votes, that the Caverly preschool program would remain in place for next school year.

The decisive stroke in the emotionally charged matter, which has seen crowds of people attend the past two board meetings, was likely dealt by Pittsford resident Jeanne Kaufman who raised the question of how a Feb. 3 vote in which a 6-4 vote in favor of keeping the Caverly program in place had not proven sufficient to reverse a Jan. 6 vote to merge the program with one at Lothrop Elementary.

Both RNESU Supt. René Sanchez and OVUU Chair Laurie Bertrand had been operating under the belief that for such a vote to pass a majority of the 13-seat board—or seven votes—had to voice support for a given motion, regardless of how many members were in attendance.

That belief was informed by prior counsel from the board's legal advisor which pertained only to specific types of votes, and not to Vermont Education Law (Title 16) which follows Roberts Rules of Order whereby only a majority of school board members present is necessary to pass a motion.

Before the board went into executive session with legal counsel on Friday, defenders of the Caverly program gave voice to their concerns once more, including Kaufman and current Caverly parent Jennifer Brittenham.

"We deserve clear communication and honest explanation. Non-transparent communications create the perception of predetermined outcomes [which heightens] anxiety for staff and is painful for families," Brittenham said. "Trust is not restored by legal language, but by visible good faith engagement and open dialogue. How you conduct decisions matters, not just what you decide. Giving clear warnings and full transparency are not threats to good decisions, it is proof of them."

In her Feb. 14 email to the

OVUU board, Kaufman wrote, "If proper notice was given for reconsideration, it seems a simple majority of those present would have been sufficient. In addition, the OVUU Articles of Agreement require a two-thirds vote only in very specific circumstances, such as certain school closures. I would appreciate clarification as to what specific authority the Board relied on to require seven votes in this situation."

Friday's executive session lasted for about 40 minutes, and once the open meeting resumed, the board's statement was short and to the point.

"The board learned on Wednesday that it was under the mistaken belief that a quorum of the board was not only required in order to hold a meeting, but also to take action on motions," read Bertrand, explaining that a simple majority of any quorum was sufficient to pass a

motion. "Based on this, the action taken at the Board's February 3rd meeting, the Motion to Reinstate the preschool program to the Caverly location passed by a vote of 6-4."

She then wished all attendees a safe drive home through the snow.

In a letter released the following morning, the OVUU board further stated that they examined every vote that might have been affected, and found the Caverly motion was the only one close enough for the outcome to change.

The OVUU administration will be tasked with addressing the \$13,000 budget deficit that will result from reversing the Caverly move.

"I am both thrilled and relieved regarding the outcome of Friday's meeting," Rep. Alice Malay, Rutland-8, commented to *the Independent*. "This was a testament to what positive changes can be made when the community comes together and gets directly involved in a local issue. Jeanne Kaufman did a lot of research into Robert's Rules, and that piece specifically appears to be what

changed the course."

"This was a group effort by some very passionate and capable family members," said Kaufman in her own comment to *the Independent*. While striking a note of caution in consideration of the fact that the OVUU board has left the door open to revisiting the question of the Caverly school program's location next year, she added, "I hope this moment serves as an opportunity for the board to reset, rebuild trust, and engage the community more directly before pursuing major changes in the future."

For her part, when the original motion to move the program was raised at the Jan. 6th meeting by board members Gabe McGuigan and Paul Lathrop (the latter of whom immediately resigned his seat afterwards), Bertrand had appeared surprised and voiced her reluctance to proceed so quickly.

As for last Friday's meeting, Bertrand was straightforward about the board's action.

"Once we realized we needed to make a change, we called the meeting as soon as possible," she said. "We wanted to make sure as many people could join as possible so that we could rectify the error in public as soon as it could be warned."

"Once we realized we needed to make a change, we called the meeting as soon as possible... to rectify the error in public as soon as it could be warned."

— Laurie Bertrand, OVUU board chair

MAUSD

(Continued from Page 2A)

district officials to host community information sessions in the fall around the option selected and prepare for a vote in November if necessary, particularly if the option selected includes proposed school closures.

Some school board members acknowledged that timeline would require a lot to take place in March and that some elements of it may need to be moved around.

"The timeline is tight and

flexible-ish," Jipner summed up.

BEEMAN CONCERNS

School board members also acknowledged concerns raised by a community member regarding Beeman Elementary School in New Haven. School board member Kathi Apgar, who represents New Haven, noted those concerns included students not being able to have outdoor recess due to lack of staff, students' basic educational needs not being met as staff are working to meet the

social emotional learning needs of other students in the building, and a general sense of students' feeling unsafe.

Apgar noted she's heard similar concerns raised by other community members.

"The discussion really is, 'What do we need to do to help direct (Superintendent Patrick Reen) to do so that these kinds of letters aren't coming and parents aren't feeling like that's where they're at,'" Jipner said.

ADDISON COUNTY

School Briefs

The following local residents were named to the dean's list at Saint Michael's College for the Fall 2025 semester: **Phoebe A. Hussey of Ripton; Audrey J. Scribner of Vergennes; Torrey C. Hanna of Vergennes; Madeline**

M. DeGraaf of Vergennes; and Raia E. Bryant of Vergennes. Students who complete at least 12 credits of classes and achieve a grade point average of at least 3.5 in a particular semester are cited on the list for that semester.

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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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WE'LL SEE YA AT TOWN MEETING!



HARE AND THE DOG

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Editorial

The sad state of the union

By now, American voters know President Trump's speeches are more performative than based in reality. His MAGA supporters like the show — the exaggerations of accomplishments, nasty put downs of opponents, vicious attacks on anyone not a white male, total fabrications of facts and a vile dislike of laws that restrict his dictatorial rule. Americans who prefer a fact-based reality supported by a law-based society view the president's speech and actions as debasing America's core values.

With Tuesday's State of the Union speech, nothing changed. MAGA supporters reveled in Trump's absurd claims that the nation is doing better than ever and held in high esteem throughout the world. Or that he's secured "\$18 trillion in foreign investment," food prices were "plummeting" and drug costs were down "300%, 400%, 500%, 600%" — despite the fact that foreign investment is decreasing, China is ascendant globally, health care was far more affordable under Biden, and that drug reductions of even 100% would mean the medicine would be free, and more than that would mean drug companies would be paying customers to take the drugs. Obviously, that's not true, but what's another lie when hyperbole is Trump's brand. And if the MAGA crowd is going to buy it without thinking, might as well make whatever he's selling sound spectacular!

It's Trump's signature stagecraft. "Step right up, ladies and gents, the snake oil I'm selling will heal all your ailments and make you think we're living in America's golden age!"

For those not fooled by his scam, here's a counter-narrative based on economic facts. First, Trump did not inherit a sour economy, on the contrary it was booming and performed better than Trump has his first year. Here are the comparative numbers:

Gross Domestic Product annual growth was 2.9% in 2023 and 2.8% in 2024, but dropped to 1.4% in 2025 during Trump's first year.

Concerning numbers of people employed, it's true 2025 saw the most Americans employed (as the nation's population expands), but the same was true each of Biden's years in office. The relevant statistic to know is average monthly gain in employment, which was 251,000 each month of 2023, 186,000 in 2024, but dropped to just 15,000 per month during 2025. Unemployment has risen for the past three years, from 3.6% in 2023, to 4% in 2024, to 4.4% in 2025.

Contrary to what Trump's says, inflation has gone up slightly under Trump's first year, from 2.9% during Biden's last year in 2024 to 3.0% in 2025. It was 3.4% in 2023, down significantly from the hyperinflation of 2021-2022 when Biden was digging out of the horrendous economy he inherited from Trump at the onset of the COVID pandemic. When Trump left office in 2020, he left Biden with an inflation rate of 9% and an unemployment rate that peaked at 14.8% in April 2020 and was still 6.4% when Biden took office.

Those concerned about the national debt should be truly alarmed by Trump's total mismanagement of the economy. The national debt under President Biden in 2023 was \$33.1 trillion, rising slightly to \$35.4 trillion in 2024. The debt climbed to \$37.6 trillion in 2025, but with Trump's tax cuts going into effect this year the projected national debt will almost double to \$64 trillion by 2028 — a damning GOP legacy.

For those who think the stock market has done well under Trump, think again. Under Biden's last two years in office, the S&P gained 24.23% in 2023 and 23.31% in 2024. In 2025, the S&P gained just 16.39% and based on the first two months of this year (and current forecasts) it's poised to fall further in 2026.

And forget Trump's baloney about tariff revenue replacing the income tax. Ain't gonna happen. Tariff revenues, even at Trump's highest estimates, would generate less than 4% of the federal government's revenue compared to almost 50% from income taxes. Trump is just blowing hot air to make his tariff scheme sound plausible — if only voters wouldn't look at the facts and if only the Supreme Court hadn't declared his actions unconstitutional.

What Trump didn't talk about were the things most affecting American voters: the high cost of energy, the skyrocketing costs of health care insurance due to Trump's decision to defund the Affordable Care Act's premium subsidies passed under Biden; and the high costs of housing. On the contrary, he dismissed the idea that "affordability" was an issue he had to deal with because he had "already solved it." LOL.

Nor did he mention the Epstein files and the scandals that has created for him, not to mention recent revelations that Trump's Department of so-called Justice, had excluded files involving Trump — something that has long been suspected, since the Trump DOJ had the opportunity to manipulate the files for almost a year before releasing them to the public.

On the world stage, he said nothing about ending Russia's war against Ukraine (which he promised to end on Day 1, but has since only made worse with his withdrawal of the strong support President Biden had given Ukraine); made no mention of the nation's biggest rival, China; ignored the impacts of AI; nor uttered any plans for war with Iran, even as he threatens an attack.

Nor did he dwell on ICE's disastrous deportation campaign, particularly in Minnesota where two Americans, Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, were murdered by masked ICE paramilitary forces in unprovoked attacks that were caught on video and shared throughout the world. That any American thinks the country is held in high esteem by our allies or others in the world is drinking far too much rightwing Kool-Aid.

And while Trump offered almost no new policies to alleviate the hardships Americans are facing, he did boast he had "ended DEI," as if the purposely misconstrued effort to create an equal playing field between men and women and people of color was an evil to fight against.

Increasingly, however, the 60% of Americans who disapprove of Trump are growing stronger. As political commentator Jay Strain writes in today's blog, Americans "see policies enacted in the name of 'security' that have cost lives and separated families. They see aggressive immigration enforcement that... erodes due process and human rights. They see the powerful and well-connected enriched while working families struggle. They see oversight weakened, career civil servants pushed aside, and institutions once considered independent drawn into partisan battles. They worry about the normalization of executive overreach, the politicization of the Department of Justice, and rhetoric that undermines democratic norms."

In short, the political tide is turning. A recent Marist poll found that 6-in-10 Americans believe America is worse off now than a year ago. And yet MAGA supporters and too many Republicans in Congress either believe the propaganda or they're too afraid to contradict their dear leader with facts. And that's the real sad state of the union under Tump.

Angelo Lynn



Swallowed in the grandeur

AFTER THE HEARTY snowfall at the end of last week, a cross-country skier makes his way along the Catamount Trail on Saturday threading a path among the towering trees and drifts of the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area in Goshen.

Photo by Gregor Clark

Banyan tree aids grief process

This winter we lost our beloved dog, Boomer, to cancer. Boomer was a rescue dog, born in Tennessee and originally named Kansas. He was re-named Boomer by his foster family in upstate New York and we figured two names before the age of 1 was enough and so we kept it.

I can't imagine the shock of leaving a kennel in the South and landing on a goat farm in Vermont. The smells! The open space! When Boomer arrived he spent the first night under our kitchen table, where he remained for a few days. When he decided to emerge he attached himself firmly to my side and basically didn't leave for 13 years. He was always a little nervous, but the most easy, loyal and loving dog imaginable. When I did barn chores early, he was there; if I was sick, he was there. On the rare occasions that we traveled somewhere he would see our bags and plant himself by the door, not wanting to be "forgotten." He is woven into our kids' childhoods, in nearly every memory. It was inspiring to watch a shy dog come out of his shell; a reminder that emotional wounds can heal with time and care.

Losing him was inevitable but nonetheless incredibly painful. Now a month later I can recall Boomer with fondness and love and not just with heartache. This is partly due to some reading I did on the Buddhist concept of reincarnation. (The fact that my husband knew to slip this book under the tree for me for Christmas, just two weeks before we lost

Boomer, is a sign of what an intuitive gift giver he is.) I am by no means an expert, but the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh in the book "Reincarnation" have opened my mind and heart to the concept of continuation rather than birth and death.

Hanh says, "There is nothing that leaves something and enters something else — continuation is constantly taking place."

The Asian Banyan tree exemplifies this concept. The Banyan produces aerial roots that grow downwards from its branches and take root, eventually growing to the point of being a second, third, fourth tree and so on. They are all a continuation of the same tree, not separate. Hanh says, "suppose part of the first tree rots, and the tree is cut at the trunk. When the first tree is cut, we consider it to be dead, no longer existing. But the other six trees have grown, and the first tree continues to exist in these new forms. We might think there is death, but there really isn't. There is only continuation."

The same is true with a Bamboo grove, where each individual stem is connected to a vast root network. Although each bamboo shoot is not the same, they all grow from the same source and if one cannot grow in one place, it will grow in another.

In our own bodies, cells are dying and being born all the time. The saying "you can't jump in the same river twice" implies that nothing is static, there is

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

Ways of Seeing

By Hannah Sessions



Olympics reminds us of our ties

The Winter Olympics just concluded, and like many Americans, I found myself glued to the television. I loved cheering for Team USA. I was obsessed with Olympic hockey, and it was thrilling to see the stars and stripes on both the men's and women's sides capture gold. Overall, it was an outstanding Olympics for the United States, with one of the largest medal totals in our history. There is something uniquely unifying about watching athletes represent our country on the world stage.

This also happens to be the first time since 2008 that I've been able to watch the Olympic Games from my home country. When you live overseas — especially when many of your neighbors, colleagues and friends are locals — you quickly become the unofficial representative of everything American. You may be asked impolitely who you voted for in the last election. You might find yourself explaining American culture, from your thoughts on LeBron James to questions about gun laws. Whether you like it or not, you become "the American" in the room.

When the United States is winning gold medals, that role can be fun. When the topic turns to war, trade disputes or tariffs, it becomes more complicated. Living abroad makes one thing abundantly clear: we cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the planet. Our foreign policy decisions and economic choices do not exist in a vacuum. They affect real people in real countries — and those decisions often trigger powerful reactions that come back and impact us here at home.



From the Amazon to Addison: Conservation stories that connect us
By Kevin Fox

when we become disinterested in the world, we easily can find ourselves deep into the third period and down by two goals.

In a positive sense, the Olympics in Milan and Cortina reminded me how deeply interconnected we already are. Even here in Vermont, that global connection was on full display. Winter athletes with Vermont ties brought home seven medals for Team USA this year — a remarkable contribution from our small state to a worldwide event. It was a powerful reminder that what happens on the global stage is never as distant as it may seem.

The Olympics represent, in many ways, an optimal version of our global community. Nations compete

(See *Kevin Fox*, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

Back Boyce in Middlebury race

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse Danielle Boyce for Middlebury selectboard. As the owner of a beloved local restaurant, Danielle has been an integral member of our community for many years. At American Flatbread, Danielle has been a supportive employer and an important community resource for many local organizations and causes — both through the restaurant's "Benefit Bake" program that raises funds for non-profit groups and a space for a range of events that make Flatbread one of our town's most vibrant gathering places.

In addition, she's created a key market for local farm products, connecting diners to the amazing food produced and grown in Addison County. Her experience as a businesswoman who leads a socially-responsible and community-oriented business in Middlebury will be invaluable to the board.

As an East Middlebury resident, Danielle will ensure that an important region of our town has an advocate and a seat at the table for issues that impact an oft-forgotten part of Middlebury. Further, as the mother of a school-age daughter, Danielle will help ensure the board does not forget the needs of younger families in our town.

Finally, for decades the Middlebury selectboard has had an "old boys club" vibe that truly must be eliminated. Adding Danielle to the board would bring the total number of women to three out of seven, not quite equality (yet), but getting closer. I hope you will join me in voting for Danielle Boyce for Middlebury selectboard on Town Meeting Day — Tuesday, March 3. Thank you.

Ruth Hardy
East Middlebury

Vote for Flynn in Weybridge

Weybridge selectboard has a seat in contention. The current member, Kelly Flynn, is being challenged by Chris Bagley.

Selectboard work involves the important and often mundane tasks essential to effective town management. I've known Kelly for a number of years in different capacities, and here's why I'm voting for her:

First and foremost, Kelly Flynn is a team player. She listens thoughtfully, researches information, considers options and their outcomes, and she collaborates diplomatically with her selectboard colleagues. These are the kinds of team skills Weybridge needs on our S selectboard now and in the future.

In her time on the selectboard, Kelly has drafted and presented for selectboard adoption the dog ordinance, the personnel policy, and the town clerk job description.

The selectboard determined a need for assistance with the town's accounting. Kelly drafted and advertised a job description, and then participated in the hiring process of the recently retained financial consultant firm.

Kelly was a member of the Board of Civil Authority during the town reappraisal.

In distributing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, Kelly worked to secure two solar electric speed signs. For the town's benefit, she researched how to carry over remaining ARPA funds after the deadline for future stormwater issues.

ARPA funds were also used to assess Weybridge historic assets — our town hall and the Cotton Free Library. Her work included grant writing, seeking a contractor/architect to create options that addressed community wishes, running two community meetings about the assessment and options, and composing a final report.

Some people think that the activity related to the town hall and Cotton Free Library assessment is going to obligate

(See *Wadsworth letter*, Page 5A)

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Letters to the Editor

Sen. Heffernan's reasoning for 'No' vote was flawed

I don't know where to start to respond to Sen. Steven Heffernan's justification for voting against SR21 (*Addison Independent*, Feb. 12). I will start with his statement that his action "...was grounded in a core principle: judgement must follow facts, and facts require due process." Facts are a necessary part of due process, but SR21 is not about due process.

Due process, mandated by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, requires the government to follow fair, established legal procedures (notice, hearing, impartial tribunal) before depriving any person of life, liberty, or property. SR21 does not deprive any person of life, liberty or property. It is a resolution, not even law, and it certainly isn't about a person, it is about the Federal government's policy of allowing ICE agents to deprive individuals, be they citizens, immigrants who are documented, or undocumented individuals, of their liberty and life without due process.

Here are some facts. Video after video shows that Renee Good was not trying to run over the ICE agent. He put himself in front of a vehicle. She was trying to leave the area. Video shows her car's wheels were turned to drive to the right of the agent. He put his left hand on the hood of her vehicle, his body was away from any danger of being run over, he pulled his gun and shot her several times. He left the scene (an officer-involved shooting and he leaves the scene). Alex Pretti was helping a woman who was pushed to the ground by an ICE agent, he was pepper sprayed, wrestled to the ground by multiple

agents, a gun was found, removed from his person by an ICE agent as an officer yelled, "Gun," and was shot many times as he laid prone on the ground, at that point unarmed (by the way, he never un-holstered his legally, Second Amendment gun during this whole incident).

Steven Heffernan's comments about this was "...and many believe law enforcement failed in those situations. That concern deserves discussion." Really? What discussion is needed to find the facts here?

Steven then wants to know where the sustained outrage and compassion was for three people killed by individuals who entered the U.S. illegally. It is important to note that two individuals have been arrested and indicted for the 2024 killing of Jocelyn Nungaray. That trial has not yet been held. These two men are innocent until proven guilty, yet Steven's principle of due process that guided his "No" vote was not at issue when he wrote that she, and the other two people he listed, were killed by illegal immigrants, and therefore he has already found these two individuals guilty. The killers of the other two people Steven mentioned have been found guilty and have been sentenced to life in prison for their crimes.

My major point here is that Steven does not seem to realize there is a major difference between the actions of government agents and the inaction of our government to arrest the ICE agents and the actions of random individuals who commit terrible

acts. Although with his rhetoric he tries to group these individuals by noting that they are all illegal immigrants. (A side note here, I hate the term illegal immigrant, they are undocumented. If you got a speeding ticket because you were speeding, you broke the law, are you a criminal? Technically, yes, but you are not identified as a criminal. Words have meaning. The many people who enter our country for asylum or for a better life and did so without going through the proper channels are undocumented immigrants, not illegal).

Finally, yes, our immigration policy is messed up, and both parties are responsible for it. But the invasion of our cities, whose citizens did not vote for Trump, with masked agents in unmarked cars, not showing identification under the false guise that identifying themselves would put the agents at risk (how?) is illegal and unconstitutional. This action isn't because of our messed up immigration's policy, this is a political scare tactic by the Trump administration.

There have been letters about comparing what our current administration is doing to what happened in Germany with the rise of the Third Reich. They are well written and I support their comparisons. It bothers me greatly, Steven, that you voted "No" on SR21, but also the reasoning you used to support your vote concerns me. I hope you can hear and understand the concerns of so many of your constituents.

Peter Ryersbach
Bristol

Thoughtful work behind proposed school budget

In 2025, the Addison Central School District Board continued to work with Superintendent Baker and her team to operationalize our three foundational goals from the five-year Strategic Plan. Deliberately rooted in equity, they focus on students' access to high-quality learning opportunities, sense of belonging, and academic success. To support the successful implementation of the plan, we have worked to align our board policies, practices, and decision-making, including our Community Engagement and Vision policy, to help us partner well with our communities, and our District's school assignment policy, which will provide caregivers with more flexibility regarding their child's assigned elementary school.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and thoughtful discussions that made this equity-based budget a reality, thanks to the efforts of the District and building leaders, staff, and community members. I also want to acknowledge two particularly challenging decisions:

1) Supporting the

Superintendent's recommendation to place Ripton students into Salisbury Community School for the 2025-26 school year to ensure the integrity of their educational program. After additional input from district administration and the Ripton community, the Board decided to invoke Article 14 of the District Charter to place the decision of whether or not to close the Ripton Elementary School building before the ACSD voters. This vote is now presented to ACSD voters on Town Meeting on March 3rd.

2) Voting to move Shoreham students to Bridport Central School, beginning in the 2026-27 school year. This decision was informed by student outcome data across our elementary schools and input from District administrators, building principals, and staff on the strongest approaches for improving student outcomes. A joint Bridport and Shoreham community working group formed in the spring to explore a K-5 single-grade configuration model; feedback from this group and members of both the Bridport and

Shoreham communities helped guide the Board's decision.

The FY27 budget presented to the Board was developed with transparency and equity-based budgeting principles at the forefront, while continuing to support the Board's strategic priorities. Knowing that healthcare and wage increases would again drive costs up, the Board directed the Superintendent to cap education spending increases at 3%. The Board agrees that the proposed budget provides an equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs and goals of every ACSD student.

It is with confidence and genuine commitment to our ACSD community that we present the FY27 budget to you for your support. Further information on the FY27 spending plan can be found at our ACSD website under the ACSD Budget Development tab www.acsdvt.org/district-link/budget-development.

Respectfully,

Barbara Wilson
ACSD Board Chair
Shoreham

Wadsworth letter

(Continued from Page 4A)
the town to raise taxes. There is no such obligation.

Some people think that the activity related to the town hall and Cotton Free Library is going to lead to a housing development across the street from those buildings. There is no such plan, and if there were, it would have to go through the Planning Commission in Weybridge first.

And the Planning Commission has had no such application. What's more, the draft proposal depicted in the architect's report would not be allowed under current zoning regulations.

So, let's keep Kelly Flynn on the selectboard. Weybridge needs her style of collaboration and her capacity to research, present and plan effectively.

Join me in voting for Kelly

Flynn on Tuesday, March 3. Please vote!

Christina Wadsworth
Weybridge

Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A)
constant change and flow, birth and death.

One winter afternoon when I was still missing my dog while steeped in reincarnation thoughts, I happened upon the most beautiful baby I've seen in some time. If you haven't stared into the wide-eyed, wonder-filled face of an infant recently, I really recommend it. As I passed a few moments in the ski lodge playing games with this infant I didn't know, I felt the same love well up in me that I felt for my dog; I felt the presence of another trunk of the Banyan tree, another bamboo stem from the universal source of Love. What a miracle this baby is! What a miracle life is, all around us.

If my dog isn't here to soak up a portion of the love of the universe, the love still exists. It is up to each of us to be receptive to it, to allow it to pass through us, and to reflect it back. Small communities know this love very well; when tragedy strikes we step up to support each other and in this way we tap into our Banyan tree trunks and our bamboo roots for each other.

I still miss my dog, but now I am so thankful to have had the time with him, to have happened upon the everchanging, flowing river at the same time and to have been changed by the love I felt for him — love that continues to exist. Perhaps the final and lasting gift Boomer gave me has been the perspective on reincarnation as continuation.

Factors driving education spending are complex

We are elected school board members writing to sound a dire alarm about proposals under consideration by the Vermont Legislature that would fundamentally reshape public education in our state. We write as individuals, not on behalf of our boards.

As legislators work to cut costs and improve educational outcomes, we have become increasingly concerned by the unfunded mandates and magical thinking undergirding many leading proposals. These plans are gaining momentum under the banner of "emergency," yet show little concern for the real conditions facing our school systems. Building a viable and healthy educational system requires careful short-term planning and a credible long-term vision — one that acknowledges the real pain and costs these decisions impose on communities. Right now, both are missing.

To understand why Vermont's school districts are stuck, several essential truths must be brought back to the center of this conversation.

In 2003, Vermont instituted an excess spending threshold intended to prevent wealthier districts from pulling too far ahead of others. Districts exceeding this per-pupil threshold face steep, escalating double taxation—a financial cliff no district can afford to fall off. How per-pupil spending is calculated is notoriously complex, but at its core, a district's operating budget is divided by its weighted student enrollment. That means districts are judged primarily on two variables: how large their operating budget is, and how many students they serve.

While districts control some spending, many of the largest cost drivers are entirely outside local control: double-digit annual increases in health care costs negotiated at the state level, changing student needs, enrollment fluctuations, and new legislative mandates layered on year after year. Any one of these can destabilize a budget.

Then came the 2008–2009 recession. Vermont suspended state funding for school construction—and unlike many other states, never resumed it. For fifteen years, local districts have carried all financial risk for maintaining school buildings with no meaningful state

partnership. When a district seeks voter approval for a bond to repair buildings, all debt service folds directly into the operating budget, counting fully toward per-pupil spending for the life of the bond. The state imposed a hard spending ceiling, withdrew from construction funding, and now penalizes districts for trying to maintain their buildings within that ceiling.

The results are predictable and shameful. Buildings deteriorate while districts delay essential repairs. New construction, which could make thoughtful consolidation possible, is financially out of reach. And even as consolidation is demanded more loudly, districts are denied any realistic ability to plan for consolidated futures by building or expanding facilities that could actually serve students well.

For example, the Addison Central School District has already consolidated four elementary schools into two—painful decisions that have done virtually nothing to address the underlying costs of maintaining our remaining buildings. Through a comprehensive capital improvement planning process, the ACSD board has identified the needs of our existing facilities. Today, ACSD students are educated in buildings that heat to 90 degrees due to poor HVAC, with asbestos under gymnasium floors, roofs in need of major repair, and security upgrades that must be made to keep students safe. Bringing just three Middlebury schools up to acceptable standards would cost many tens of millions of dollars—not including additional work that might be required to accommodate future consolidations.

As board members, we scrutinize every budget line, trying to provide students and staff with what they need while avoiding the excess spending cliff. It is an increasingly impossible balance. The policies currently in place—and those now proposed—actively punish districts for attempting to maintain safe, functional schools. We are increasingly forced to choose only the most basic infrastructure improvements, leaving no capacity for other necessary repairs or future consolidation planning. And we have no help from Montpelier.

This is the trap. Districts are told to consolidate. We do. Districts are told to maintain safe buildings. We try. Districts are told to control

spending—while the state offloads costs and penalizes us for addressing them.

Act 73 is legislation written under pressure to achieve massive systemic improvements but informed by thin evidence and little understanding of what Vermont's schools and districts actually grapple with and need. Repealing the bill is a sound idea—one that may not gain political traction in Montpelier but deserves serious consideration. Short of repeal, proposals around spending caps and consolidation must become far more reflective of the complex realities facing our schools and budgets.

We do not pretend to have easy answers, and we respect the seriousness of the Legislature's work. But any system that includes a per-pupil cap must remove unavoidable costs from those calculations. At minimum, the state must immediately decouple debt service and health care costs from per-pupil spending. Districts cannot be penalized for fixing roofs, replacing boilers, or keeping children safe. And the Legislature and Governor must move beyond vague assurances and make concrete plans now for when and how state funding for school construction will resume.

Without these changes, districts across our state will remain stuck: blamed for costs we cannot control, penalized for acting responsibly, and unable to build a future that actually serves Vermont's students.

Jason Chance, Ron Makleff, Jamie McCallum, Jess Venable-Novak, Ellen Whelan-Wuest and Barb Wilson, Addison Central School District; David Conery, Champlain Valley School District; Robert Dabrowski, Steven Rosenberg, Andrew Schroth, J.B. Weir and Corey Hackett, Harwood Union Unified School District; Jim Murphy, Montpelier, Roxbury Public Schools; Elizabeth Burrows, Davis McGraw and Nancy J. Pedrick, Mount Ascutney School District; Dan Morris and Sarah Path, Paine Mountain School District

Kevin Fox

(Continued from Page 4A)
fiercely, but they also gather and celebrate together, peacefully. Flags proudly wave, national anthems of the victorious play, and yet for two weeks the world shares a common joyful bond. It's easy to feel pride when our athletes stand atop the podium. But perhaps the deeper lesson is that every country in that stadium matters. Every nation has talent, ambition and value. No matter the colors of the Lycra ski suit, we are all fellow members of the human race at the end of the day.

We cheer for the red, white and blue — and we should. But the Games also remind us that we are part of something larger than ourselves. Whether in sports, economics or foreign policy, we, Vermonters and Americans, are woven into a massive global community. The world is watching us, just as we are watching

it. And our actions — like our athletes — create waves far beyond our borders. As these waves circle the globe, touching every nation, may they return to us to lap ever so gently upon our shores.

Kevin Fox is executive director of the Middlebury Area Land Trust.

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With a degree in Psychology from Bates College, Ron Monroe spent most of his 44-year career teaching American and English literature and film at the Kingswood Oxford School in Connecticut. Recently retired, he lives in Middlebury.

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Obituaries

Robert Fuller, 79, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — Robert Fuller passed on to his next adventure Feb. 16, 2026. He wanted to write his own obituary, just as he wanted to attend to so many details at the end of his life. Here is what he wrote from his heart:

"My primary objective in writing this obituary is just to say how lucky I was to receive the gift of this long life journey and how lucky to have had my amazing and wonderful family and friends. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I was born June 8, 1946, into a loving farm family at 333 Fuller St. in Ludlow, Mass., in a 150-year-old farmhouse. My early life revolved around life on a small dairy farm with all its joys of discovery. My life was typically carefree until I was old enough to help my father with delivering duties. The family business involved collecting, pasteurizing, and bottling milk and then delivering it door to door. I started to learn what kind of effort and commitment was required to maintain a successful business.

In 1968 I took my first steps toward my lifelong culinary journey. I worked at The Quick and Tasty Restaurant in Ormond Beach Fla., as a cook for six months. It was a classic 60s-style roadside restaurant, with the slogan "you'll be glad you stopped."

I attended the Culinary Institute Of America and graduated in 1971. I wanted to travel so I moved to Jackson Hole, Wyo., for a year, cooking at the Cattle Baron Restaurant on the square. I downhill skied and learned to cross country ski in the mountains on 10 feet of snow. In the summer I learned rock climbing skills in the Grand Teton and successfully climbed Baxter's Pinnacle.

In 1972 I traveled to Laguna Beach, Calif., and worked as a baker at the Cottage Restaurant on the coast highway. I learned to make pottery at the Laguna Beach School of Art, became a vegetarian, let my hair grow, wore earth shoes and became very tan.

Returning home to Ludlow in 1974, I worked at a small French restaurant called Picot's Place. It was the only time I worked with a French trained chef, Jean-Jaques Gage. I also set up my own Jutetown Pottery Shop in Ludlow and had some success making pottery and giving lessons.

In 1976 I moved to Vermont, which became my heart's forever home. I became the chef at Mister Up's Restaurant in Middlebury for six years. I bought 25 acres of land north of town and built my own house. The views of the Adirondacks to the west just north of town reminded me of the Grand Tetons.

In 1982 I bought Pauline's Kitchen in South Burlington with my first wife. I owned and operated Pauline's successfully for 26 years, selling it in 2012. From 1986 until 1991, I operated



ROBERT FULLER

The Dejá Vu Cafe on Pearl St. In 1997 I bought Leunig's Bistro in downtown Burlington and ran it successfully until I retired in 2013. Along the way I built the Bobcat Cafe and Brewery in downtown Bristol, Vt., in 2002. I was also a partner/mentor in three other restaurants in Bristol, Cubber's Pizza, The Bristol Bakery and Snap's Restaurant.

The very best part of my life began on "Some Enchanted Evening" Dec. 5, 1992, in Lincoln, Vt., when I met the love of my life, Alison Parker. When I met her I found out what a really good life looks like. While we both worked hard in our chosen professions, we had many wonderful experiences and adventures far exceeding my grandest expectations. It was really good right from the beginning, and it just kept getting better and better as the years added up. We traveled and adventured all over the world by bike, foot, planes, trains, and automobiles. We camped throughout the USA in our Roadtrek campervan "Stella," and then in "Dorothy," the bells and whistles model. We spent many summers at our beloved Sunnyside Cottage on the shores of Lake Champlain...we lived the Dream...

Marrying Ali was by far the best decision I ever made, it just doesn't get any better than that. She has proven herself over the years to be an absolute saint, and I feel so lucky to have had her as a part of my life. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

During the last year of my life, I completed and self-published my memoir, "A Horse Drawn Sickle Bar Cutter - Finding My Road to Felicity." It is carried in local bookstores where you can find it if you are interested in learning more about my adventures."

Beyond what Robert had to say for himself, there is so much more...

Robert was a seeker. In his mind, there was nothing he could not learn, nowhere he could not go, nothing he could not do.

As a lifelong artist, he tried in big and small ways to improve and beautify the world around him. He made birch hooks and railings and racks. He reused old slate to hand paint signs for family members' birthdays and others to hang around the neighborhood with such sayings as "Love Is All There Is" and "Kindness is Magic - Be Kind Every Day." He made stunning wedding cakes for friends and family, benches, birdhouses, kayaks, rowing boats, pottery, bread, and handmade collared shirts. Up until just a few weeks before his death, he was working to improve his sculptural welding skills and make a new art project out of old materials he had saved up from one of his past lives. The list goes on and on.

Robert was a lover of nature, outdoorsman, and boater. He taught himself mushroom foraging, which he and Alison

enjoyed by foot and bike, sharing the harvest with restaurants and many friends. He maintained the Emily Proctor Section of the Long Trail for years. He and friend Peter formed the "Long Point Rowing Club" and set out in their wherries across the calm flat waters of Lake Champlain most summer mornings before the wind picked up. Canoe and kayak adventures were many, from the Grand Canyon to the Adirondacks, and not always without incident by a long shot!

Robert was an adventurer and a traveler. He traveled the world alone, with Alison, and in groups of motorcycle enthusiasts or healthcare volunteers or bike trekkers or ski junkies or food lovers. He could make friends with anyone. On his solo motorcycle camping trips, he would walk into a visitor center every day and make friends with whomever worked there, taking pictures and learning a new life story. He loved talking to people, as anyone who knew him could tell you. He loved hearing stories and relating his own, making connections.

Robert was generous with his time, his energy, his skills, and his resources as well as with his praise. He always found a way to help others, whether it was building a bridge for a ski trail over a gully, sharpening kitchen knives for friends, or carrying cement blocks up a trail to build a primary school in a small village in Honduras. The list is endless. He mentored many. You know who you are.

No account of Robert's life would be complete without talking about his passion for motorcycles and people who ride them. It was a lifelong passion actually, but was not really reawakened until his retirement. He said he had to have something to retire to, and vintage motorcycles was that something. He cultivated friends in the world of motorcycles, acquired many, and worked on them with the help of his many friends at Classic Bike Experience, a group of like-minded enthusiasts that still meets every week.

Classic "Robertisms" that are worth repeating one last time are: "Aren't we lucky?"; "Mother Nature did the heavy lifting"; "My predominant feeling is one of gratitude"; and most importantly and most repeated: "Enjoy the ride!"

Robert cared deeply about his family and was a pillar of love, guidance and wisdom for his stepchildren, nieces and grandchildren. Besides his wife Alison, Robert will be missed by many other beloved family members, including his sister Karen Farnsworth, stepchildren Noah, Molly, and Oakley, nieces Emily and Ivy, and "grandchildren" Asher, Caleb, Winston, Pascale, Harlowe and Hendric, as well as by an extended network of relations and friends.

Sincere thanks go to the amazing Drs. Laura Weylman and Paul Unger, who shepherded him through the years of ups and downs with his cancer diagnosis and much more. Also, to the amazing staff at their offices, Porter Hospital, and UVM Medical Center.

If you are moved to make a donation in Robert's memory, think of Addison County Home Health and Hospice, where hospice nurse Wayne and other professional caregivers counseled and guided him through his last days, or to COTS in Burlington, or to another organization that offers assistance to people to find a secure place to call home. ♦

Kathleen Mary Foley, 69, of Castleton

CASTLETON — Kathleen Mary Foley of Castleton, Vt., passed away peacefully Feb. 17, 2026, at Rutland Regional Medical Center with family by her side.

She was born in Rutland July 28, 1956, to Mary (Mallory) and Paul Foley and went on to be a passionate educator. She graduated from Castleton State College in 1978 and taught first grade at Fair Haven Grade School for 34 years. There she worked alongside many special colleagues who remained lifelong friends. Her fondness for children and devotion to educating young minds made a difference in hundreds of lives.

Kathy loved to travel and had a wonderful group of fun-loving women to explore with. Adventures took her to Italy, Ireland, Turkey, England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Scotland, and numerous trips throughout the United States. But in her own words, "I do love experiencing different cultures and locations, but



KATHLEEN MARY FOLEY

I also love returning to the 802!" She spent many days exploring Vermont and kayaking on Lake Bomoseen and enjoyed her time with friends on various golf courses. She took great pleasure in her raspberry bushes and shared in abundance each year.

She was a long-time volunteer at the Castleton Community Center,

the Red Cross Blood Drives and a guest reader for children at local libraries and day care centers.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father. She is survived by three sisters; Susan Tillyer (Michael), Diana Ladd (Allen, deceased) and Judy Hurley (John); and a brother, Michael Foley (Jane); nephews Jeff Ladd (Dallas), Shawn Foley and Paul Tillyer (Breanne); nieces Jolee Ladd (Alejandra) and Alexandra Foley-Bowen (Jacob); and great nieces and nephews Hunter, Orion, Osten, Dillon, Calvin, Charlotte, Griffith, and Asa.

Kathy lived her life as a kind and caring person. Donations in her memory can be made to the Castleton Community Center, 2108 Main St., Castleton, VT 05735.

A gathering of friends and family will be held in early June at the Crystal Beach Pavilion in Castleton.

Arrangements under the direction of Mallory Funeral Home. ♦

John D. Bowker, 95, formerly of Middlebury

SUN CITY CENTER, Fla. — John D. Bowker, 95, of Sun City Center FL, formerly of Princeton Junction, N.J., and Middlebury, Vt., passed away peacefully Feb. 15, 2026. He was born in Middlebury, Vt., Nov. 18, 1930, at Porter Hospital.

He is preceded in death by his parents, John and Doris Bowker. He is survived by his loving wife of 72 years, Linda; their children, Wendy Lodge, John S Bowker (Joanne) and Denise Bowker; six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

John was the retired director of frequency management at the RCA Corporation, and was recognized in the 2024 Who's Who top executives for dedication, achievements and leadership in television broadcasting. With over 75 years of experience in the broadcasting industry, John made significant contributions to the development of color television. John's journey in broadcasting started at age 12 listening to radio stations across the country while recovering from an illness. This passion led him to build a radio station in Middlebury, Vt., while completing his undergraduate work



JOHN D. BOWKER

at Middlebury College. After being hired by RCA in 1953, he was part of the pioneering team tasked with developing color television.

John's mantra in his extracurricular activities was to only participate in organizations where you think you can make a positive difference. Throughout his career, his free time was spent building radio stations at other institutions, such as Tennessee State University and West Windsor-Plainsboro High School (South); he was active in the Trenton New Jersey Urban League and Recording for the Blind. He

also had a Big Band radio show on the local community college station in New Jersey.

Following his retirement March 31, 1986, John and Linda traveled to all 48 contiguous states in their beloved "Roo" motorhome. After settling in Sun City Center, Fla., John and Linda continued to make a difference in their community, becoming active members in the volunteer emergency squad where they worked as dispatchers for over 20 years. John was very active in the SCC History Society, and authored and co-authored two books on the history of Sun City Center. In recognition of all the volunteer hours he gave to the community, The Sun City Center Community Association named Jan. 22, 2012 "John Bowker Day" with a special reception.

The one constant in John's life starting at age 16, was the presence of Linda. They met at his birthday party, dated through high school and college and were married Aug. 17, 1953, in the Congregational Church in Middlebury. For nearly 80 years, they were never more than an arm's length from each other, greeting each other with a kiss every day they were married. ♦

Betty Anne Norris, 94, of Monkton

MONKTON — On Feb. 18, 2026, Betty Anne Norris was called home to be with the Lord. She passed away peacefully at Greg and Denise's home in Starksboro. Her parents were Hervey and Olive (Brown) Hanson. Betty was born at home in Starksboro, Vt., number six of eight children. The three youngest girls were known as the "Three Little Hanson Girls." Betty lived a long and fulfilling life to 94 years young.

When Betty was 12 years old, she was surprised and honored when her Sunday School Teacher told Betty it was time for Betty to teach Sunday School. Betty graduated from Bristol High School. Later she married the love of her life, Vernice Norris and they farmed on the Norris farm and raised five children: Janet, Gregory, Roger, Brian and Sharon. Unfortunately, Roger passed away at the age of twelve from a farming accident.

Betty passionately loved Jesus and her family. She also loved her nieces and nephews, and the women in-laws called themselves the outlaws. Betty dropped everything for anyone in need. Betty found time to serve as the Monkton auditor, worked at the polls and the bank. Her youth groups were fortunate when she planned and supervised two trips to Washington, D.C. Betty enjoyed reading, sewing, crocheting, making cakes, dog sitting and even sat for a bird. Betty was also a justice of the peace and presided over many weddings.

Betty attended the Friends Methodist Church in Monkton, Vt. She called them all her "Church



BETTY ANNE NORRIS

Family." She participated in many activities and especially enjoyed singing in the choir. She also attended the Starksboro Church. Because of her faith, Betty often said, "Forgive and forget, that's how I was raised."

Betty worked at and later attended Project Independence Elderly Services where she enjoyed talking with participants, walking and the music.

Betty leaves behind her loved and cherished sisters Lois (John) Burbank and Flora Norris of Bristol, Vt.

Betty leaves behind her daughter Janet Norris Crossman (Jim) and Janet's daughters Heather (Jason), Kirsten and Linnea (Dominic); great-grandchildren Morgan, Brody, Brooke, Madison, Harper, Sydney, Ellie and Olivia (Avery) and their son, great-great-grandson Elias.

Betty leaves behind her son Gregory (Denise) and his children Craig (Jennifer) Alicia and Jared (Joanne); Denise's children, Jennifer (Brad) and Jonathan; and great-grandchildren Kalob, Alexis, Tyler,

Aurora, Scott, Austin, Camden, Trinity, Fayth, Lilly, Pyper, Mayvis, Evander, Gladys, Wynifred, and Harrison.

Betty leaves her son Brian (Elizabeth) and Brian's children Adam (Kayla), Taylor, and Chastity (Dan); and great-grandchildren Karson, Addy, Weston, Kaydence (Raymond) and Riley.

Betty leaves her daughter Sharon Norris Weld (Mike) and Sharon's children, Taryn (Michael) and Jenna (Jeremy); Mike's children Valarie (Bob) and Jamason (Katelyn); and great-grandchildren Leah (Clay), Hailey, Carleigh, Cooper, Kace, Kenzie, Hayden, Addison, Deacon and Kami.

Betty also leaves her very special cat Snowball.

Betty was pre-deceased by her parents, husband Vernice Norris, and their son Roger Norris; and siblings Ada, Laura, Winfred, Edwin and Clifford.

Special thanks to Dr. Kate Lamancuso and the staff at Mountain Health, Bristol, Vt. and Home Health Hospice. Betty's family is truly blessed and appreciate the love and care provided by Samie Mierop and the White Family.

Visiting hours will be held on Friday, Feb. 27, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Brown-McClay Funeral Home in Bristol. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28, at Bristol Baptist Church. In lieu of flowers, Attn. Pricilla Pierce, Monkton Friends Church, 77 Monkton Ridge Rd, Bristol, VT 05443. Funeral zoom link tinyurl.com/Betty-Norris meeting ID 8650832974 and Passcode is Church. To send online condolences to her family please visit www.brownmcclayfuneralhomes.com. ♦

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

Obituaries

Beverley Bromley Vaughan, 88, of Shelburne

SHELburnE — Beverley Bromley Vaughan passed away Dec. 27, 2025, in Shelburne, Vt., after a brave battle with cancer. She was 88 years old. Beverley devoted her life to her family and a lifetime of volunteering that spanned over 60 years.

Beverley was born Oct. 27, 1937, in Gladwyne, Pa., and grew up the middle child of three sisters. She remembered her early life as “the war years” (World War II). During that time, her father was overseas and she was raised mostly by her mother, living simply and growing their own food with chickens and a big garden. Just like her mother, she attended The Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Pa., and graduated from high school at Westover School in Middlebury, Conn. Although many of her peers married right after high school, Beverley went on to get a four-year college degree from Sweet Briar College in Virginia, where she studied history and was captain of her field hockey and lacrosse teams.

Following graduation, Beverley lived for a year in Florence, Italy, where she became fluent in Italian and developed a deep love of the country, its art and its history.

In 1964, she married C. Wheaton Vaughan Jr. By 1966, she gave birth to their only daughter, Cynthia



BEVERLEY BROMLEY VAUGHAN

(Cinny) Vaughan Lawrence. In the late 1960s, they lived outside of Minneapolis, Minn., and Beverley had fond memories from that time. An avid tennis player, with a hard, flat ball that always went in, she made many friends. In winter, there were activities like cross country skiing and outdoor parties in the snow, and it was a time of youthful new adventures for her.

Wheaton and Beverley moved back to Pennsylvania in the early 1970s with their daughter, Cinny, and then moved on to Connecticut in 1974. For the next 40 years, they remained in Green’s Farms,

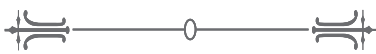
Conn., where Beverley was very active in the Sasqua Garden Club of Fairfield, serving on the board and as president. She was also a teaching volunteer for the Mill River Watershed Association educating elementary students about the importance of preserving and protecting local waterways. Cinny delights in remembering a science class trip where her mother was their teacher for the day! In a related interest, Beverley served on the board of the Aspetuck Land Trust in Westport, Conn., for fifteen years.

Beverley continued to volunteer throughout her life and, in her later years, served on the board and as co-chair for the Antiques Department of the Fairfield Women’s Exchange in Southport, Conn., an organization whose proceeds go to support local women and children.

To Beverley, giving was how she experienced love. And, more than anything, she loved her family. We loved her right back and will miss her very much, but her genuinely kind heart will always be within us.

Beverley is survived by her daughter, Cynthia (Cinny) Vaughan Lawrence, and her grandchildren, Erin Reilly Lawrence and Thomas (Tommy) Endicott Lawrence.

A memorial service will be held later this year. ◊



Lisa Marie Bryant, 61, of Rutland

RUTLAND — Lisa Marie Bryant, age 61, of Rutland, passed away peacefully, Feb. 23, 2026, at Mountain View Center, following a brief illness.

Lisa was born in Waltham, Mass., July 19, 1964, to Pauline (Barrett) and David Bryant. She grew up in Massachusetts and moved to Brandon, in 1997.

Lisa lived life as a kind and caring person. She enjoyed her family, television programs, children, animals, *People Magazine*, and food.

She was preceded in death by her mother, father and sister, Lois Bryant. She is survived by her cousin and guardian, Debbie Cousino; stepmother, Diane Bryant, stepsister Laurie Pelkey, and stepbrothers; Steve, Jeff and Kyle Flood; several aunts, uncles and cousins; and her loving friend and care giver, Cecile LeBlanc.

A graveside service will take place later in the Spring.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon. ◊



LISA MARIE BRYANT

Letters to the Editor

What it means to be an Apartheid-free community

Apartheid (“apartness” in Afrikaans) is a system of government that supports racial segregation in all aspects of life — political, social and economic. In South Africa, non-whites were discriminated against. There are other examples of apartheid in many countries around the world. In particular, Palestinians are subject to an apartheid system under the current Israeli government. Palestinians have to pass through multiple checkpoints to get to their jobs, to travel between villages, to access medical care, to buy groceries. Not only do they have to pass through the checkpoints, but also they are not allowed to drive on certain roads. Some of their roads are blocked by boulders forcing them to drive cross country to get to the town where they receive medical care, buy groceries, etc.

I’m Jewish, and I attended Hebrew school for years culminating in my Bas Mitzvah. Judaism is my religion, not my politics. My politics oppose any kind of oppression, and should not be confused with antisemitism in the case of Israel/Palestine. This is why I support a petition to declare Weybridge an Apartheid-Free Community. Since 2022, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has formed a coalition of communities that

have taken the pledge to keep their communities Apartheid-Free. As of Jan. 15, there are 1,034 signers of this pledge. A list of signatories can be found at <https://apartheid-free.org/signatories/>. Among the municipalities that have taken the pledge are the following Vermont towns: Brattleboro, Newfane, Plainfield, Thetford and Winooski.

Imagine if you live in Weybridge and rely on Middlebury for jobs, medical care, groceries, and social engagements. Imagine if the town of Middlebury decided that Weybridge is a community of people who are inferior to them, people who don’t deserve the same rights. Now, imagine the border of Weybridge and Middlebury flanked by barbed wire fences and checkpoints with armed guards allowing or denying access to Middlebury, regardless of the reason for travel from Weybridge to Middlebury. Instead of a 15-minute drive to a medical appointment, it might take an hour or more to reach your destination.

In the West Bank, the drive from Ramallah to Hebron/Al Khalil should take approximately one hour. Instead, with roadblocks and checkpoints, it took our adult child, a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) based in Ramallah, four

hours. What if they had a medical emergency? Witnesses have filmed ambulances blocked from transporting injured people to a hospital.

Many real-life incidents of oppression witnessed by ISM and other international observers include the demolition of Palestinian homes, sheep stolen, water sources sabotaged, olive trees denuded by illegal settler’s sheep. The situation in the West Bank is dire, as are the living conditions in Gaza. Yet, there is no recourse for the Palestinian people. An American volunteer with ISM in the West Bank, Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, was murdered in September 2024, and no one has been brought to justice.

Aysenur was simply standing in an olive grove chatting with another volunteer when she was shot in the head. It’s important to keep this in mind now that ICE can murder people without being brought to justice. Do we have to suffer here in order to support people who have been living with so much injustice for so many years? I invite my fellow Weybridge citizens to show our solidarity and support for Palestinians by declaring ourselves an Apartheid-Free Community.

Margie Bekoff
Weybridge

Keep Kelly Flynn on the Weybridge selectboard

As fellow members of the Weybridge Selectboard, we are writing to endorse Kelly Flynn, our Vice Chair, and recommend that our neighbors elect her to serve another term. Kelly has been a pleasure to work with during her two terms on the Selectboard.

She has frequently taken the lead to investigate issues that have come before our board, and tapped into relevant resources allowing us to make more educated and thoughtful

decisions.

Kelly does not serve as our town’s lawyer, though it has been invaluable to have someone with her legal background and measured approach as part of our board. Her willingness to do research and draft informed policies for our board’s consideration has enabled us to address issues brought to the board by residents or needed to update town operations. She has also facilitated community-wide listening sessions, helped

coordinate our ARPA funding, and heard appeals from residents as a result of our town-wide reappraisal.

We, personally, feel fortunate to work alongside Kelly, and are grateful for the many contributions she has made and seeks to continue to make on behalf of our town. We strongly encourage Weybridge residents to reelect her to the Selectboard on Tuesday, March 3.

Bill Mayers & Stacey Rainey
Weybridge



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Letters to the Editor

Foreign-born people are not responsible for higher crime rates

Here is a letter that I sent to Sen. Heffernan in response to his explanation for voting No on Resolution SR21 a Resolution relating to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Operation Metro Surge.

Senator Heffernan, Thank you for explaining your reasons for voting No on Resolution SR21 a Resolution relating to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Operation Metro Surge. I would like to address something that you stated in your letter to the public. In the fifth paragraph, you compare the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good, who were killed by Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agents, to the killings of three individuals (Jocelyn Nungaray, Rachel Morin, and Laken Riley) and you state "... all killed by individuals who entered this country illegally."

By your statement, you feed into the myth that illegal immigrants are increasing crime and violence in our country. Blaming immigrants, both legal and illegal, for job loss, declining living conditions, and increased crime has been a problem in our country for many years. Whether it be African Americans, Chinese, Hispanics, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Muslim, or other minority immigrant populations.

What is lost in this exercise of blaming others, whether in the current environment or past history, are facts. I would like to point to three studies that show that the divisive position you support is incorrect.

A National Institute of Justice study dated Sept. 12, 2024, found that "undocumented immigrants are arrested at less than half the rate of native-born U.S. citizens for violent and drug crimes and

a quarter the rate of native-born citizens for property crimes." (This study is posted at docs.house.gov)

• Ruben G. Rumbaut, Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of California, Irvine, published a paper — "Undocumented Immigration and Rates of Crime and Imprisonment: Popular Myths and Empirical Realities." A few of the conclusions from the paper are

1) "Moreover, data from the census and a wide range of other empirical studies show that for every ethnic group without exception, incarceration rates among young men are lowest for immigrants, even those who are the least educated. This holds true especially for the Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans who make up the bulk of the undocumented population. These patterns have been observed consistently over the last three decennial censuses, a period that spans the current era of mass immigration, and recall similar national-level findings reported by three major government commissions during the first three decades of the 20th century, as did another U.S. commission in the 1990s." and

2) "The problem of crime and incarceration in the United States is not 'caused' or even aggravated by immigrants, regardless of their legal status. But the uncritical and evidence-optional assumption that the opposite is true persists among policymakers, the media, and the general public, thereby impoverishing a genuine understanding of complex phenomena — a situation that undermines the development of evidence-based, reasoned public responses to both crime and immigration." This was presented to the Police Foundation National

Conference on "The Role of Local Police: Striking a Balance Between Immigration Enforcement and Civil Liberties." You can find this at the National Policing Institute website.

• Ty Miller, Department of Sociology, Purdue University, and Michael Light, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, published a paper — "Does Undocumented Immigration Increase Violent Crime?" The following is from the Discussion section of the paper:

"In reference to public policy, at the most basic level, our study calls into question one of the primary justifications for the immigration enforcement build-up. Debates about the proper role of undocumented immigrants in U.S. society will no doubt continue,

but they should do so in light of the available evidence. For this reason, any set of immigration policies moving forward should be crafted with the empirical understanding that undocumented immigration does not seem to have increased violent crime."

The perception that the foreign-born, especially "illegal aliens," are responsible for higher crime rates is deeply rooted in American public opinion and is sustained by media anecdote and popular myth — (Ruben G. Rumbaut, 2008). Your statement shows that you adhere to this misperception, and you have added your voice to this misperception.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Mark Nelson
Ripton

Senate candidate values fairness

Values of fairness, opportunity education and inclusion must soar forward. The voices of the people and their perspectives must be heard. We should incorporate all the peoples' narratives into our America as our founding leaders initiated. Success for all brings comfort and tranquility. We must respect our traditions while moving into a futuristic society. Understanding our social, ecological and spiritual context promotes superior decision making.

Respect our environment, our National and State Parks provide our clean air, relaxation, education, exercise, community engagement and fun. Education alters our identity and perception that allows for moderation. Communication, collaboration and compliance with hard work are the foundation of success. Our vision should be creative while preserving

our constitution. We must consistently defend our freedoms and the power of knowledge is the tool. Imposing fiscal management so that our economic structure is equal and fair. The Convention of States is demanding to hold the government accountable as Article 5 is written. Vermont needs more practical, sustainable jobs with proper and appropriate pay. No more volunteering for women. We still have in our modern society discrepancies in gender related employment.

Joe Biden believed it would be an economical endeavor to open the borders of the United States allowing immigration. The result today is that we now do not have enough housing, and not enough jobs. Did our guests in the United States bring money with them? Did they become legal citizens? Are they volunteering? It is possible I suppose that the Construction profession would flourish under this concept mostly male dominated industry. Our employment statistics were high prior to opening the United States borders and now they are higher. Recent research provided the following statistics; in 1999 a median home was valued at \$165,000 in 2025 the same median home was valued at \$419,000. Now let's talk income, our income has increased from \$70,000 to \$84,000, a 5 percent increase. Indicating that an annual income of \$121,400 is required to be able afford this home. Quite the discrepancy, and we are supposed to respect the intelligence of the decision making of our President of the United States. I would like our Democrats to justify this intelligent maneuver and explain how this action improved the quality of life. We need pragmatic leadership in our government. Vote for Lesley Bienvenue as the Senator for Addison County in our 2026 General Election. Please visit my Facebook page for additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Lesley J. Bienvenue
Leicester



On fire

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH School Dance Team members show off a little attitude during their routine at the state championship meet in Vergennes this past Saturday. The judges must have appreciated it, the Tigers won the hip hop category. See a story and more photos on Page 1B.

Independent photo/Steve James

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The Addison County Solid Waste Management District is hosting our **REPAIR FAIR!**

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Where: American Legion Post 27
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Cost: FREE!

Come get your favorite items fixed, learn repair skills, and enjoy refreshments with your neighbors in Addison County!

For more information go to

AddisonCountyRecycles.org/Repair-Fair



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Town Meeting Preview

Log on to: addisonindependent.com Tuesday night, we will update the site with town meeting results.

Addison

ADDISON — Voters in Addison will decide the races for two contested selectboard seats on Town Meeting Day.

They'll head to the Addison Community Center gymnasium on March 3 between 7 a.m.-7 p.m. to cast a vote for Michael Hollis, incumbent Roger Waterman or Mason West for a two-year term, and either Chris Carella or Daniel P. Rossignol for a three-year term.

That day voters will also consider the town's proposed \$746,236 general fund budget (\$605,202 to be raised by taxes) and proposed \$1,077,572 highway fund budget (\$987,322 to be raised by taxes).

The proposed highway fund is up about 5% from the \$1,024,005 voters approved last year.

Though the general fund budget proposal is down about 5.4% from last year, the sum of that money to be raised by taxes is up from the \$248,451.33 that was planned to be collected during FY26. American Rescue Plan Act money padded the general fund last year.

Additionally, voters are being asked to weigh in on several appropriations for social service agencies, totaling \$62,656 to be distributed among them. If the article is approved, the Bixby Library would be given the largest portion of that sum (\$30,162), Town Line First Response would receive the second-most (\$10,000) and the Open Door Clinic the third-largest (\$2,500).

The other 18 other organizations included would receive between \$250-\$1,644.

On March 3 voters will also review the \$28,314,179 Addison Northwest School District budget.

The tax rate won't be concrete until a state budget is passed and state aid is known, according to the school board chair. Still, the school board has outlined illustrative tax estimates if the spending plan is passed as warned. For Addison residents, a \$1.9995 education property tax is predicted, up from \$1.8916 per \$100 of assessed property value. This would increase property taxes \$110 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

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

Addison's annual informational meeting is scheduled for March 2, at 7 p.m. in the Addison Community Center gymnasium.

Brandon

BRANDON — Residents in Brandon will gather at Brandon Town Hall, 1 Conant Square, on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. Voting for most items on the warning happens the next day, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., at the American Legion on Franklin Street.

At Monday's meeting, members of the selectboard will explain their recommended budget for fiscal year 2027. On Monday night Brandonites will also vote on whether to establish an Advisory

Budget Committee, and whether that committee should be appointed by the selectboard or elected.

On Town Meeting Day balloting at the Legion, three incumbents will be running to keep their seats on the selectboard: Brian Coolidge for three years plus Cecil Reniche-Smith and Jeff Haylon for the two 1-year seats.

The incumbent town clerk and town treasurer, Susan Gage, is running unopposed to be returned to those positions for three years.

On the money questions, the selectboard asked for approval to spend \$3,504,165 for municipal expenses, with \$562,012 to be in no-tax revenue and \$2,942,153 to be raise in property taxes. That would represent a spending increase of \$100,200, or 2.9%, and a hike in taxes of \$65,508, or 2.3%. That hike in taxes, however, has been offset by forecasts for additional department revenue and in a reduction in capital spending, making the increase in taxes to one-half of one percent, or 0.53%.

In 12 other money questions, residents will vote on additional property taxes that would send:

- \$25,000 to Brandon American Legion Post #55.
- \$82,580 to the Brandon Area Rescue Squad.
- \$92,000 to the public library.
- \$15,500 to the senior center.
- \$10,200 for VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region.
- \$7,000 to Fourth of July.
- and amounts of \$5,000 or less to six more organizations.

Brandon voters will join their peers in Leicester, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. The board warned a FY27 spending plan of \$28,841,999, which is an increase of \$818,286, or 2.92%. The spending is \$14,257 per pupil in education spending — up about 5.5% from this year.

Brandon will also be voting on an OVUU school director position for a three-year term, plus three at-large school board seats — two with a three-year term, and one to serve one year of a now-vacant three-year term.

Bridport

BRIDPORT — Residents of Bridport at their town meeting will be asked to endorse the purchase of a new backhoe and take actions to reduce — and expand the recruitment area — for some municipal positions that have been hard to fill.

The town selectboard is asking for the OK to spend up to \$140,000 on the new backhoe and associated equipment; all of that sum would be covered by fund balance money from the Bridport Department of Public Works budget.

Article 26 on the Town Meeting Day ballot seeks voter permission to abolish the position of second constable, while article 28 would allow a non-resident of the town to be elected — or appointed by the selectboard — to one of the town's three auditor positions. That out-of-town auditor would still have to



AUDIENCE MEMBERS AT the 2025 Monkton town meeting listen to Barbara Crandall's question, but were town officials listening?

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

be a state resident.

Residents will be asked to approve a fiscal year 2027 general fund/highway budget of \$1,869,126, up 5.8% from the \$1,765,090 residents approved for the current year.

There are no contested municipal elections on this year's Bridport ballot. Incumbent Selectman Tim Howlett and Bob Sunderland are running unopposed for terms of three and two years, respectively.

The ballot also includes 22 separate finding requests from area nonprofit agencies that serve Bridport residents, as well as requests to exempt both the Bridport Grange and Bridport Historical Society from taxation for another five years.

Voters will also field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of around \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a

total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district's current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the Vermont Department of Taxes — compare towns' property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the ACSD spending plan would result in an education property tax rate of \$1.17 per \$100 of assessed property value in Bridport, which would be up 8 cents (8%) compared to this year's rate of \$1.09.

Two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

There's a referendum on the March 3 ballot asking residents of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge if they'd like to officially close Ripton Elementary. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat and one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, Middlebury incumbent Jason Chance and Bridport's Robyn Stattel (a new candidate) are unopposed for board seats. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement project, negotiated wages, and health insurance increases.

The polls will be open at the Bridport Masonic/Community Hall from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3. The business meeting will begin at the same location at 10:30 a.m.

Bristol

BRISTOL — In addition to weighing in on school district budgets and electing town officials, Bristol residents on Town Meeting Day will also vote on whether to establish a local option tax in their community.

Article 3 on Bristol's town meeting warning asks if voters should approve the 1% levy on sales, meals, rooms and alcohol for the town of Bristol, with proceeds raised through the tax designated "for Capital Infrastructure (minimum 40%), Climate Resilience & Emergency Preparedness (minimum 20%), and Economic Development (minimum 20%)."

Voters will field that question by Australian ballot on March 3, and more information on the proposal can be found at www.bristolvt.org/lot.

Also on the March 3 ballot, Bristol selectboard incumbents Michelle Perlee (three-year term) and Jessica Teets (two-year term) are running unopposed to keep their seats.

Mike Dash is the sole candidate for a three-year term on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board. Dash currently serves as vice chair on the school board.

At the polls, Bristol residents living in the police district (primarily the village) will consider a proposed fiscal year 2027 police spending plan of around \$701,116 — an increase of 1.88%, or \$12,947, from the current year.

Bristol voters on Town Meeting Day will also be asked to approve a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year. The proposal reflects an increase of a rise of 8.51%, or \$2,968,337, over the current year.

District officials estimate that the proposed budget, if approved, would translate to a 1.93-cent decrease in Bristol's FY27 school tax rate after the CLA is applied for those who pay education taxes based on the value of their home. Residents who pay based on their income are expected to see a decrease of 12.1% based on the median household income for the

area (\$88,478).

Bristol residents will also field a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students, an ask that represents a 9.95% increase compared to this year.

Voting by Australian ballot to elect town and school officers and approve the police and school district budgets will take place on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Holley Hall.

Bristol will hold its annual in-person town meeting on Monday, March 2, at 6 p.m. in Holley Hall.

At that meeting, residents will be asked from the floor to OK:

- A General Fund Operating Budget of around \$1,407,887, with about \$1,215,907 to be raised by taxes. That amount includes appropriations for the town's capital building and maintenance, capital sidewalk, capital technology, cemetery reserve, conservation reserve and reappraisal funds.

- A Public Works Department Operating Budget of around \$1,404,341, with about \$1,289,341 to be raised by taxes. That figure includes capital appropriations for the capital equipment, capital paving and capital road funds.

- An Arts, Parks, and Recreation Department Budget of \$381,317.72, with \$237,517.72 to be raised in taxes. That includes capital appropriations for the capital recreation equipment and facilities and skatepark project funds.

- A Fire Department Budget of \$505,073, all of which would be raised by taxes. That includes capital appropriations for the capital fire equipment and the capital fire vehicle funds.

- A total of around \$435,726 in appropriations for civic organizations, including the Lawrence Memorial Library (\$265,275).

Altogether, the proposed town budget for FY27 reflects an increase of around \$324,373 in total spending and an increase of about \$324,323 (9.65%) in the amount supported by taxes.

Bristol is one of several local towns that will vote on a non-binding resolution asking whether voters should "call upon the General Assembly to discuss, take testimony, and vote on H.433 during the 2026 session?" H.433 is a bill in the Vermont Legislature that aims to implement a publicly financed health care program for all Vermonters, beginning with universal primary care. Voters will weigh in on the resolution on the floor at the Bristol town meeting.

Cornwall

CONWALL — Cornwall residents on Town Meeting Day will decide a two-person race for a two-year term on their selectboard, and they'll also field a resolution urging the Legislature to act on an effort to institute universal access to primary care in Vermont.

Incumbent Shawn Fetterolf and challenger Barbara Greenwood are vying for the two-year term on the selectboard.

There are no other contested races on the Cornwall ballot this year. Incumbent Brian Kemp is unopposed for another three-year term on the panel.

The proposed health care resolution asks the following: "Shall the voters of Cornwall call upon the General Assembly to discuss, take testimony, and vote on H.433 during the 2026 session? H.433 is an Act Relating to Incremental Implementation of Green Mountain Care that would establish publicly financed universal primary care, mental health services and substance use treatment as a first step in phasing in universal healthcare for all Vermont residents."

Cornwall residents will be asked to adopt a fiscal year 2027 general fund budget of \$617,359, up 12.6% from last the current \$548,081 spending plan.

The proposed FY27 highway budget comes in at \$611,298, up 18.6% from the current \$515,050 spending plan. Departments statewide have been hit hard by inflation and road salt shortages during this cold, snowy winter.

Other articles on Cornwall's (See Cornwall, Page 10A)



AT THE 2025 Ferrisburgh town meeting, Marsha Hoffman draws a connection to what she's talking about.

Independent file photo/Steve James



Town Meeting Preview

Log on to: addisonindependent.com Tuesday night, we will update the site with town meeting results.

(Cornwall continued from Page 9A)

2026 town meeting warning seek:

- \$5,000 for the Cornwall Free Public Library for FY27.
- \$81,200 to help the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department for FY27.
- Permission for the delinquent tax collector to become an appointed, rather than elected position.
- A total of \$35,245 in FY27 requests from a variety of Addison County nonprofits that serve Cornwall residents.

Voters will also field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district's current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the Vermont Department of Taxes — compare towns' property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the ACSD spending plan would result in an education property tax rate of \$1.06 per \$100 in property in Cornwall, based on the district's latest projections. That would be down 95 cents from this year's rate of \$2.02.

It should be noted that two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

There's a referendum on the March 3 ballot asking ACSD residents if they'd like to officially close Ripton Elementary. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat and one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, incumbent Jason Chance and new candidate Robyn Stattel are unopposed for the Middlebury and Bridport seats, respectively. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement project, negotiated wages, and health insurances increases.

Cornwall's annual meeting will be held at the Bingham Memorial School on Saturday, Feb. 28, at 10 a.m. Australian ballot voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, at the Cornwall Town Hall.

Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Voters have two days of decisions to make in Ferrisburgh in the coming week.

First, residents will congregate in the Ferrisburgh Town Hall at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28, to make spending decisions on the town budget and nonprofits from the floor.

Then four days later they will head back to the town hall to cast ballots for elected officials, an article to eliminate a municipal position and the Addison Northwest School District Fiscal Year 27 spending plan, which is warned at \$28,314,179, slightly higher than the approved spending last year.

On Tuesday, March 3, polling at the town hall opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 7 p.m.



LINCOLN RESIDENT CHRISTIE Sumner casts a paper ballot during her town's 2025 meeting. Independent file photo/Marin Howell

Like ANSWD's, the town's budget proposal is also up from last year.

It came in at \$2,862,039.92, \$31,886.92 higher than the \$2,830,154 voters approved last year on Town Meeting Day. The plan calls for \$2,360,639.92 to be generated through taxes, up \$13,686, or around a half a percent, from the \$2,346,954 that officials planned to collect over the course of FY26.

The key contributor to that rise is increasing costs in the highway department, which is experiencing higher material prices and gearing up for one-time infrastructure projects such as a new culvert at Old Hollow Road and paving aprons on Monkton Road, Avery Road and South Middlebrook Bridge, Town Clerk Jessica James has said.

Costs associated with software updates and public safety are also

playing a part.

In addition to the roughly \$3 million spending plan, voters will consider allocating \$36,895 to numerous social service agencies including Atria Collective, Homeward Bound and the Commodore Club, just to name a few.

Of the 28 organizations slated to receive a sum, Tri-Valley Transit, Turning Point Center of Addison County and Addison County Home Health & Hospice have the biggest requests, with \$3,517, \$3,000 and \$2,983, respectively. The other 25 organizations are asking for between \$150-\$2,500.

The choice will be easy when it comes to elected officials — there are no contested races.

Incumbent James Benoit is running for the open three-year selectboard seat and Liz Markowski is running for the available two-year post on the decision-making body.

Residents will also consider putting management of the town's property information in the hands of an assessor in lieu of the office of the Town Lister, which a warning article proposes eliminating.

The three lister positions are also elected seats.

"If this passes it would mean that the listers would all end their term by Town Meeting 2027," James explained.

"We already have an assessor that is hired by the selectboard based on the recommendation of the listers. Many towns are moving toward assessors because modern property assessment requires more specialized training than the traditional part-time lister role. Starting Jan. 1, 2026, state law (32 V.S.A. § 4052) will require all elected listers to become certified within one year of their election, and this is tricky with the very part-time role these volunteers serve."

Ahead of voting on the ANWSD budget, the district will hold its Annual Meeting and Public Information Hearing on this budget on Monday, March 2, at 6 p.m. at the Vergennes Union High School library.

The \$28,314,179 the board estimates is needed to operate Vergennes Union high and elementary schools, and Ferrisburgh Central School, in the upcoming fiscal year is up \$661,179 from the \$27,653,000 spending plan that voters in Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham approved on Town Meeting Day last year. That figure passed by a 62-38% margin.

Higher spending on student support services makes up for \$445,962 of the \$660,000 increase, according to a school board presentation. Student support services include attendance, counseling, nursing and health, SLP services, OT/PT services, intervention, curriculum, the office of learning, and professional

development.

The proposed budget pays for four positions that were previously grant funded, which board chair Mark Koenig said is driving that roughly \$450,000 increase.

Though the tax rate won't be concrete until a state budget is passed and state aid for education is known, the school board has outlined an illustrative tax estimate based on the spending plan. In Ferrisburgh, that tax rate stands at \$2.0942 per \$100 of assessed property value, up from \$2.0139, which represents an increase of about 8 cents or less than 4%. It would increase property taxes about \$80 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

Goshen

GOSHEN — Residents of Goshen will gather in Town Hall for a Cookie Social at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 2, followed by the annual town meeting at 7 p.m. Town spending will likely be the hottest topic for discussion, but townspeople have several other important issues to decide Monday evening.

The selectboard is asking for \$653,316 to spend on general municipal expenses, which represents an increase of \$34,356, or about 5.5%, from last year. As was the case last year, that figure includes a \$334,057 Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grant that will pay most or all of the renovation costs for town buildings, so the effect on taxpayers will be less than the top number suggests.

Item 7 on the town meeting warning asks to tap \$120,000 from the Municipal Forest Account as a loan to aid in the Town Hall renovation project and to be paid back over 10 years. Officials expect to give some guidance on whether they will need the full \$120,000 or not based on contractors' bids that have come in since the warning went out.

Residents will also vote on \$285,700 to defray the highway expenses. The road budget also includes some substantial grants.

"We've worked to control costs while ensuring our road foreman has the resources needed to maintain our 17.49 miles of town roads," selectboard members said in the town report.

Like many other Vermont towns have done in recent years, Goshen voters will be asked to eliminate the office of Lister and replace it with a professionally qualified assessor. The selectboard is also asking for authority to pay \$3,000 to hire Addison County Sheriff's Department deputies to carry out four hours a month of speed enforcement.

Then, on Tuesday in Australian ballot voting, Goshen will also fill a few municipal offices on Town

Meeting Day. The highest profile one is for a three-year seat on the selectboard. Timmi Moffi currently holds that position.

Also on Tuesday, Goshen voters will join their peers in Leicester, Whiting, Brandon, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. The board warned a FY27 spending plan of \$28,841,999, which is an increase of \$818,286, or 2.92%. The spending is \$14,257 per pupil in education spending — up about \$5.5% from this year.

Goshen will also be voting on three at-large seats on the OVUU school board — two with a three-year term, and one to serve one year of a now-vacant three-year term.

Granville

GRANVILLE — Residents of Granville will assemble in the town hall for one of the latest community gatherings on Town Meeting Day.

As usual, the annual meeting will begin at 6 p.m. at the historic Route 100 office building.

One of the most important items up for discussion will be town spending, with a warned town budget of \$478,948, which is a hike of \$58,128, or 13.8%, over last year.

According to the proposed budget in the town report, the culprit for the steep rise is not municipal spending, which is going up just 2.9% to \$229,240. But highway spending is budgeted to jump 26.8% to \$249,708. Increased gasoline and sand prices account for almost half of that increase. A \$35,000 increase in the cost of trucking for summer road maintenance is the other big driver.

The selectboard said in its report that it has received concerns over the viability of the Granville Volunteer Fire Department. Those concerns have centered around low number of volunteers, incomplete or untimely financial reports, and roadworthiness of firefighting vehicles.

"The selectboard believes it is time to take a different approach to ensure our town has continued, reliable access to reliable emergency and fire service."

To begin the discussion on the fire service, people at town meeting will discuss a warned question asking shall the town return management of the fire department — both financially and operationally — to the town.

In December the town was awarded a Congressional earmark of \$488,000 to fund the renovation of the Granville Fire Department building, and improve its water and wastewater systems. That can't hurt.

Tuesday's meeting may include a little discussion on the ongoing renovation of the town hall.

Town Constable Mark Belisle, who has been on the job for 30 years, reports that in the past year the new radar has been paid off and he has upgraded his taser to newer model for the same cost as the old one.

Elections to eight town offices will be held. Two seat on the selectboard will be up election: a three-year seat currently held by Ken Beattie, and the final two years of a seat that will end in 2028.

Hancock

HANCOCK — Residents of the White River Valley town of Hancock will hold their town meeting next week at the usual time and place: Tuesday, 10 a.m., in the town hall. Only registered voters may cast ballots or participate in floor voting.

Eight elected officers will be up for a vote. One selectboard seat is up for election — a three-year term currently held by board chair Scott Gillette.

As in most years, perhaps the highest-profile item on the warning is the proposed town spending of \$541,923 — that's for municipal and road expenses. Compared to the \$443,265 approved last year, that represents an increase

(See Hancock, Page 11A)

Please re-elect

Dan Brown

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- Dan

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Town Meeting Preview

Log on to: addisonindependent.com Tuesday night, we will update the site with town meeting results.

(Hancock continued from Page 10A)

of \$98,658, or 22%. Looking at the budget in the town report, it appears there are a lot of small increases to things like electricity and telephone for the town office (up \$1,250), accessor's contract (up \$1,000) the summer mowing (up \$300). And there are a few bigger jumps for things like winter road maintenance (up \$15,000), principal and interest on the Shamp Culvert loan (\$28,000) and Tucker Brook paving (\$46,000).

Separate from the municipal budget, residents will decide if they should appropriate a total of \$7,319 to eight social service agencies and programs. The two largest are \$2,716 for the Quinn Town Senior Center and \$1,500 for Hancock Town Pride to stage events and activities that foster community spirit, beauty and involvement.

Citizens will be invited to discuss how much the town should spend on law enforcement — specifically, with an eye toward hiring the Addison County Sheriff's Department to patrol in town. A contract with the ACSD was discontinued in 2024 because revenue from traffic tickets failed to match the cost of deputies' patrols. The selectboard met with Sheriff Michael Elmore, who presented three possible tiers of coverage, which will be up for discussion at town meeting.

Leicester

LEICESTER — The annual town meeting for Leicester traditionally convenes in the Meeting House, but the venue is unavailable this year and so it will be held on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. in the town offices. There will be no voting of consequence as residents last year voted to make the in-person annual gathering an information-only meeting; voting will take place on Tuesday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., also in the town office.

In Tuesday voting, Leicester residents will decide a town spending of \$830,200, which represents an increase of just less than \$5,000, or 1%, from the spending approved for the current fiscal year.

Specifically, the selectboard is asking for approval to spend \$359,335 for general town expenses, with the amount to be raised by taxes \$346,556, and to spend \$470,865 on roads with \$350,957 to be raised in taxes. So the amount to be raised in taxes would be \$57,113 more than the tax amount OK'd last year.

Two other money items are on the warning: \$1,000 for the Charter House Coalition to run its emergency shelter, and \$20,000 to add 25 hours of sheriff's department patrols for traffic enforcement.

In addition to voting on the town budget, residents on Tuesday will cast ballots on a handful of elected positions, the most prominent being two seats on the selectboard for a two-year and a three-year term; those seats are currently held by John Rouse and Diane Randall. Julie Delphia's positions of town clerk and town treasurer will also be up for election, as well as the moderator, auditor, and delinquent tax collector.

Leicester voters will join their peers in Brandon, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. The board warned a FY27 spending plan of \$28,841,999, which is an increase of \$818,286, or 2.92%. The spending is \$14,257 per pupil in education spending — up about \$5.5% from this year.

Leicester will also be voting on an OVUU school director position for a three-year term, plus three at-large school board seats — two with a three-year term, and one to serve one year of a now-vacant three-year term.

Lincoln

LINCOLN — The annual town and school district meetings in Lincoln will see some changes this year.

Both of those gatherings will take place on Saturday, Feb. 28, at 10 a.m. at Burnham Hall, with the Lincoln School District holding its annual meeting during a recess of



HANCOCK TOWN MODERATOR Scott Gillette explains a procedure during the 2025 town meeting in the White River Valley town.

Independent file photo/Steve James

the town gathering that morning. Lincoln has previously held the annual gatherings on the Monday evening prior to Town Meeting Day.

Also new at this year's meetings, Lincoln voters will use a new electronic voting method to weigh in on articles from the floor. Town Clerk Sally Ober has noted the system consists of clickers that will be distributed to voters at the annual gathering. When voting on an article, residents would click "yes" or "no," with results appearing on a screen. Instructions for using the clickers are included in the Town Report.

During the town meeting, Lincoln voters will be asked to approve \$711,988 in general fund spending, an increase of 1.91% over the current year. If approved, the amount supported by taxes would be \$562,165.

Proposed highway fund spending would decrease by 2.15%, to \$1,132,948, with \$1,015,301 to be raised in taxes.

Residents will again be asked whether the town should adopt its general fund and highway fund budgets by Australian ballot beginning in 2027. Those questions are Articles 6 and 7 on the warning, respectively.

Article 8 asks if the town should "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?"

Other articles on the Town Meeting Day warning ask voters to approve 28 voted appropriations to local organizations totaling \$153,390, including \$44,000 for the Lincoln Library and \$56,000 for the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Company.

During the Lincoln School District's annual meeting, voters will be asked to OK a \$5,407,140 spending plan for fiscal year 2027, an increase of 4.4% over the current year.

District officials currently estimate that, if approved, that spending plan would translate to a 7.7% increase in Lincoln's homestead tax rate, to \$1.1326 per \$100 of assessed property value.

School officials noted around two-thirds of Vermonters qualify for a credit on their homestead property taxes based on their income.

"Overall, depending on individual circumstances with respect to changes in income and property value, we estimate an increase in net tax (after the credit is applied) between 2.5% and 3.5% for incomes below \$90,000 and an increase between 3.5% and 5.5% for incomes above \$90,000," school officials stated in the town report.

Voting by Australian ballot to elect town and school officers will take place on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Burnham Hall.

On the March 3 ballot, Deborah Lubar is running unopposed for a three-year seat on the Lincoln School Board previously held by Rob Backlund, who announced he would not seek re-election.

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

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

Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury residents at their March 2 annual meeting will decide a proposed fiscal year 2027 budget of \$15,998,045 — a roughly 9.9% increase — and then, on March 3, will go to the polls to decide a three-person race for two seats on their selectboard.

If the FY27 budget is approved by voters, Middlebury's municipal tax rate would increase by 9.27 cents (just shy of 10%), to \$1.0226 per \$100 in property value. That's substantially higher than recent annual increases in the tax rate, but an improvement to the 10.9-cent hike the board was evaluating at the earlier stages of the budgeting process.

Roughly 4 cents of the proposed 9.27-cent municipal rate hike relates to mandated debt service on the voter-approved Ilesley Library expansion and renovation project that's now in full swing at 75 Main St. Contracted employee wage increases and surging health care premiums are also among the town's fixed costs. Find detailed info on the FY27 budget at tinyurl.com/mttxwsha.

com/mttxwsha.

The contested selectboard race features Dannielle Boyce, incumbent Dan Brown and Peter Jette, who are vying for two available three-year terms. Longtime selectboard Chair Brian Carpenter has decided not to seek reelection.

In addition to fielding the proposed FY27 municipal budget, business at Middlebury's annual meeting on Monday evening will include:

- A request to allow the selectboard to apply \$350,000 from the town's local option tax surplus to offset some of the property tax impacts of the Ilesley Library project.

- A proposal that the town collect FY27 property taxes in two equal installments, due to the treasurer's office on Nov. 16, 2026, and March 15, 2027.

Then, during March 3 Australian ballot voting, residents will decide:

- A \$1.5 million bond issue to complete the final stage of a three-phased, 11-year effort to replace an almost 10,000-foot-long stretch of aging water main adjacent to Foote Street, between Route 7 and Quarry Road. The town is applying for \$1.5 million through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to support the project with a low-interest loan, which would soften the impact on municipal water rates.

- A non-binding resolution urging the state Legislature to discuss and vote on bill H.433, which would launch "Green Mountain Care," a publicly financed health care program for all Vermont residents that would initially offer universal access to primary care.

- School budgets and elections.

Voters will weigh in on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district's current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by the state — compare towns' property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the ACSD spending plan would result in a Middlebury education property tax rate of \$1.67 per \$100 in property, based on the district's latest projections. That would be up 2 cents (1%) compared to this year's rate of \$1.65.

It should be noted that two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

There's a referendum on the March 3 ballot asking residents of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge if they'd like to officially close Ripton Elementary. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat and one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, Middlebury incumbent Jason Chance and new candidate Robyn Stattel of Bridport are unopposed on the ballot. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement project, negotiated wages, and health insurance increases.

Aside from the selectboard race, there are no other contested elections on Middlebury's Town Meeting Day ballot.

Middlebury's March 2 annual meeting will be held in the Middlebury Union High School auditorium, beginning at 7 p.m. Australian ballot voting will be held the next day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the town's recreation facility at 154 Creek Road.

Monkton

MONKTON — Monkton voters will gather for their annual town meeting on Saturday, Feb. 28, at 10 a.m. in the Monkton Central School.

At that meeting, residents will be asked to OK a total of around \$1,176,272 in general fund expenditures, with \$856,478.66 to be raised by taxes. That total expenditures amount figures to be an increase of about \$298,481 compared to what residents approved last year and includes a general fund deficit of \$243,571.09.

Other spending requests on the Monkton town meeting warning include:

- \$1,380,533.64 for highway fund expenditures, with \$989,033 to be raised in taxes. That expenditures figure is about \$117,673 less than what voters approved last march.

- A total of \$22,349 in appropriations for 28 social service agencies, an increase of \$1,500 from last year.

Monkton residents at their town meeting will also be asked to approve a sum not to exceed \$311,930 for the purchase of a John Deere Road Grader.

Article 7 on the warning asks whether voters should authorize no more than \$150,000 for repairs to Piney Woods Road, with \$60,723.92 to be raised in taxes.

Voters will also be asked if the town should "provide notice of the availability of the annual report by post card, mailed to all registered voters at least 30 days before the annual meeting instead of mailing or otherwise distributing the report to the voters of the town."

Voting by Australian ballot to elect town officers and approve career center and school district budgets will take place on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Monkton Town Offices.

On the March 3 ballot, Monkton selectboard incumbents Sam Peisch (two-year term) and Walter Crandall (three-year term) are both running unopposed for reelection.

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

Monkton voters on Town Meeting Day will also be asked to approve a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year. The proposal reflects an increase of a rise of 8.51%, or \$2,968,337, over the current year.

District officials estimate that the proposed budget — if approved — would translate to a 7.25-cent increase in Monkton's FY27 tax rate, after the Common Level of Appraisal is applied, for those who pay education taxes based on the value of their home. Residents who pay based on their income are expected to see a decrease of 12.1% based on the median household income for the area (\$88,478).

Monkton residents will also field a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students, an ask that represents a 9.95% increase compared to this year.

New Haven

NEW HAVEN — New Haven will hold its 264th annual town meeting on this coming Monday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

At that meeting, voters will be asked if New Haven taxpayers should, "pay for recycling through their property taxes for the Saturday morning drop off in town, whether you use the service or not? The garbage and recycling service will continue but prices will likely increase for those who use the in-town drop off located behind the town offices."

The town report notes that New Haven officials received two petitions to be fielded under Article 5 on the town meeting warning: "To transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business, which may legally come before this meeting." The first asks if the town

(See New Haven, Page 12A)



DURING LAST YEAR'S New Haven town meeting several residents seem to be actively following proceedings as laid out in the town report.

Independent file photo/John S. McCright



Town Meeting Preview

Log on to: addisonindependent.com Tuesday night, we will update the site with town meeting results.

(New Haven continued from Page 11A)

should appropriate \$1,500 to the Bristol 4th of July Committee to help fund its annual Independence Day celebration and parade.

New Haven voters will also join several other local towns in fielding a non-binding resolution asking whether voters should “call upon the General Assembly to discuss, take testimony, and vote on H.433 during the 2026 session?” H.433 is a bill in the Vermont Legislature that aims to implement a publicly financed health care program for all Vermonters, beginning with universal primary care.

Both questions will be fielded from the floor at New Haven’s town meeting.

Voting by Australian ballot to elect town and school officers and approve town and school district budgets will take place on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Town Hall.

There aren’t any contested races for school board and selectboard seats on the March 3 ballot in New Haven.

Selectboard incumbents John R. Roleau (two-year term) and Marie Jewett (three-year term) are running unopposed.

Kathi J. Apgar is seeking another three-year term on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board and faces no challengers.

When considering the proposed spending included on New Haven’s March 3 ballot, it’s worth noting the town budgets follow a January-December calendar year, while the MAUSD budgets use a July-June fiscal year. Thus, school-related charges and payments show up in different New Haven fiscal years.

Town officials have previously explained that voters will see a large surplus in the general fund, a large portion of which is made up of school taxes that are collected in one year and paid in the next. As a result, Article 8 of the New Haven town meeting warning includes both a \$709,000 “school payment” due and a \$767,702 “2025 surplus.”

With that in mind, voters are asked to approve:

- Around \$844,952 in general fund expenses, down \$30,620.89 from what was OK’d last year. If approved, about \$572,864 would be raised by taxes.

- A proposed road fund budget of around \$1,591,323, up \$17,860.61 from what was approved last year, with \$910,902.05 to be raised by taxes.

- A proposed library fund budget of \$81,779, with \$30,424 to be raised in taxes.

- \$4,900 in voted appropriations for local organizations, spanning Articles 11 through 14. An additional \$27,808.25 in appropriations for 19 other organizations is included in the general fund budget proposal and detailed in the town report.

Article 10 on New Haven’s town meeting warning asks if voters should “adopt the Amended Town Plan submitted by the New Haven Planning Commission to the New Haven Selectboard on Jan. 6, 2026?” Residents will field that question by Australian ballot.

New Haven voters on Town Meeting Day will also be asked to OK a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year. The proposal reflects an increase of 8.51%, or \$2,968,337, over the current year.

District officials estimate that the proposed budget, if approved, would translate to a 3.41-cent increase in New Haven’s FY27 tax rate after the CLA is applied for those who pay education taxes based on the value of their home. Residents who pay based on their income are expected to see a decrease of 12.1% based on the median household income for the area (\$88,478).

New Haven residents will also field a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students, an ask that represents a 9.95% increase compared to this year.

Orwell

ORWELL — Orwell voters will gather for their annual town meeting on Tuesday, March 3, at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall.

At that meeting, voters will be asked from the floor to approve



HELENE CRONIN, LEFT, and Mike Roy each get a turn holding the microphone and getting their say during discussion at the 2025 Middlebury town meeting in the MUHS auditorium.



Independent file photos/Steve James

a proposed town budget of \$1,877,297, a decrease of \$223,612 from what was approved last year. If approved, \$1,162,961 would be raised in taxes, up \$166,488 from the current year.

Article 4 on the warning asks voters to appropriate \$27,700 for several town projects, including:

- \$16,500 for the operating expenses of the Ethan M. and Eliza T. Wright Memorial Library building.

- \$4,000 for the Orwell Historical Society.

- \$1,750 for the Orwell Youth Recreation Program.

Article 9 asks voters to accept a proposed sewer budget of \$110,691, which would be supported by user rents and dumping fees. That’s \$1,385 less than what was approved last year.

Voters will also be asked to OK a total of \$13,620 in appropriations for local social services.

Voting by Australian ballot to elect town and school officers and approve the proposed school budget will take place on Tuesday, March 3, at the Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

There are no contested races on Orwell’s March 3 ballot. Incumbents Mike Christian (three-year term) and Les Wood (two-year term) are running unopposed to keep their seats on the town’s selectboard.

Anna Golann, who is assistant clerk, is the sole candidate for a one-year term as town clerk, and Bryan S. Young is unopposed in a bid for one-year as town treasurer.

On Town Meeting Day, Orwell residents will join other voters in the Slate Valley Unified Union School District in electing candidates at-large to serve on the district’s school board.

There are nine seats on the ballot for spots representing the towns of Orwell, Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton and West Haven on the board. No one is running for the Orwell seat.

Voters will also be asked to OK a proposed fiscal year 2027 SVUSD budget of \$32,509,789. That’s a 2.8% increase (\$886,800) compared to the current year and a 3.48% rise in the cost per student.

District officials estimate that, if approved, the spending plan would translate to a 5.34% increase in Orwell’s FY27 homestead tax rate, to \$0.9818 per \$100 of assessed property value.

Panton

PANTON — Panton residents have cause to celebrate this Town Meeting Day; the sum of tax money the town wants to collect is lower than what was called for in Fiscal Year 2026.

Officials predict \$1,120,912.46 will be needed to run the town this coming fiscal year, less than \$1,000 higher than the \$1,119,954 voters earmarked for FY26.

But the FY27 spending plan calls for \$948,188 to be raised by taxes, which is down \$7,710 from the \$955,898 requested for FY26.

Though there is no set tax rate yet, Town Clerk Kyle Rowe predicts it could be \$535 per \$100K of assessed property value, down from \$536.

“Major changes affecting the budget this year was a change in

benefits for employees, an increase in non-tax revenue, a reduction in some outside professional services, a reduction in debt service, and a continuing commitment to judiciously fund Reserve Funds,” said Panton Town Clerk Kyle Rowe.

Officials are asking voters to earmark \$10,000 for the Highway Capital Equipment Fund and \$2,000 for the Reappraisal Fund. That money would be raised by property taxes, and is not included in the proposed budget figure.

Another added cost, also to be paid for with taxes if approved, is \$11,201 requested by 17 local non-profit and charitable organizations. The Adams-Kent Cemetery Association would receive the highest sum (\$2,500), the Turning Point Center the second-highest (\$1,000) and Elderly Services Inc. the third-highest (\$850).

The 14 other organizations with a line are asking for between \$50-\$800, if the article is approved by voters.

Funding for the year-old Commodore Club, which the Vergennes Recreation Department formed in spring 2025 to fill the gap in services left by the defunct Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vergennes, is tackled in two separate warned articles. The first asks voters to re-appropriate \$1,000 meant for the former Boys and Girls Club last year to go to its replacement, and the second asks voters to approve an additional \$1,500 in town funds for the fledgling organization.

According to Rowe, even with all these added appropriations, the sum of money to be raised by taxes still comes under what the FY26 plan called for.

In addition to these financial decisions, Panton residents will cast votes for elected officials, though there are no contested races this year.

Zach Weaver, who has been on the selectboard since 2016, will clinch another two-year term. And Robert T. DeGraaf, who began his tenure on Panton’s selectboard in 2025, is running unopposed for the open three-year seat.

Voters will also weigh in on the Addison Northwest School District’s FY27 budget, which is proposed at \$28,314,179, slightly

higher than the spending approved last year by residents of Panton, Addison, Ferrisburgh, Vergennes and Waltham.

The tax rate won’t be concrete until a state budget is passed and state aid is known. Still, district officials outlined illustrative tax estimates if the spending plan is passed as warned. For Panton residents that figure is \$1.2691 per \$100 of assessed property value, up from \$1.1922, which represents an increase of less than 8 cents or about 6.5%. It would increase property taxes about \$80 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

The ANWSD Annual Meeting on this budget is scheduled for Monday, March 2 at 6 p.m. at the VUHS library.

Panton’s annual informational meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. in the Panton Town Hall.

Voting on the municipal and school budgets, elected officials, and other warning articles will take place at the town hall the next day, Town Meeting Day, from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Ripton

RIPTON — Ripton residents at their annual meeting on Monday, March 2, will vote on a fiscal year 2027 town/highway budget of \$878,682, a \$70,000 appropriation to maintain and operate the Ripton Elementary School building for municipal purposes, and a nonbinding resolution that would urge the state Legislature to support universal access to primary health care.

As previously reported by the *Independent*, Ripton this year could potentially reacquire its former elementary school from the Addison Central School District. There’s a referendum on the March 3 ballot asking residents of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge if they’d like to officially close Ripton Elementary. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Ripton officials have said the school building could host the

town offices, a municipal library, a community center and gym, with enough space left over to attract a tenant to help offset future annual operating costs.

The proposed FY27 town/highway budget of \$878,682 is only slightly higher than the current year’s spending plan of \$869,487.

Ripton residents will field a non-binding resolution urging the state Legislature to discuss and vote on bill H.433, which would launch “Green Mountain Care,” a publicly financed health care program that would initially offer universal access to primary care.

In other town meeting business, Ripton residents will be asked to:

- Appropriate \$47,100 for the Ripton Volunteer Fire Department.
- Appropriate \$6,000 for the Ripton Cemetery Commission.

- Continue an agreement through which the Vermont Elks Association’s Silver Towers Camp property is assessed at 33% of its value.

Residents Milo Tudor and Brooke Wilcox are vying for a three-year term on the town selectboard. Incumbent Laurie Cox has opted to not seek reelection after 40 years of service (see story on Page 1A).

There are no other contested elections on the ballot this year.

Voters will also field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district’s current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the state — compare towns’ property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the

ACSD spending plan would result in an education property tax rate of \$1.15 per \$100 in property in Ripton, based on the district’s latest projections. That would be down 76 cents (40%) compared to this year’s rate of \$1.91

Two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat and one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, Middlebury incumbent Jason Chance and Bridport newcomer Robyn Stattel are unopposed on the ballot for two seats. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement project, negotiated wages, and health insurances increases.

Ripton’s annual meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at the Ripton Community House at 1283 Route 125. Australian ballot voting will take place the next day at the same location, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Salisbury

SALISBURY — Salisbury residents on Town Meeting Day will field their fiscal year 2027 town and highway budgets, a mosquito-control funding request and a petitioned resolution urging state lawmakers to pass healthcare reform legislation.

The proposed FY27 general fund request comes in at \$435,350, which is an 8.5% increase compared to this year’s budget of \$401,174.

The highway budget request comes in at \$620,640, a 15% bump compared to the \$537,370 spending plan OK’d by voters for the current year.

Article 9 will ask voters if they want to appropriate \$17,588 for the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District to apply mosquito adulticide in select areas of town in 2026.

Article 11 is a non-binding resolution that, if passed, would ask the General Assembly to “discuss, take testimony, and vote on H.433 during this legislative session.” H.433 would establish publicly financed universal primary care, mental health services and substance use treatment as a first step in phasing in universal healthcare for all Vermont residents.

Other articles on the warning seek:

- Permission for the selectboard to apply any general budget surplus from the current fiscal year (that exceeds \$30,000) to help lower FY27 property taxes.

- A total of \$109,975 for an assortment of Addison County nonprofits that serve Salisbury residents.

- Authority for the town to rescind money allocated to the local Energy Program and apply it to the Buildings & Grounds fund.

Salisbury voters will also weigh in on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district’s current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the state — compare towns’

(See Salisbury, Page 13A)



KRIS ANDREWS HOLDS the floor during the 2025 Salisbury town meeting while others, including husband Jim, listen to her words of wisdom.

Independent file photo/Steve James



Town Meeting Preview

Log on to: addisonindependent.com Tuesday night, we will update the site with town meeting results.

(Salisbury continued from Page 12A)

property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the ACSD spending plan would result in an education property tax rate of \$1.30 per \$100 in property in Salisbury, based on the district's latest projections. This would represent a 10 cents (9%) increase compared to the current rate.

Two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

There's a referendum on the March 3 ballot asking ACSD residents if they'd like to officially close Ripton Elementary School. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat and one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, Middlebury incumbent Jason Chance and Bridport newcomer Robyn Stattel are on the ballot. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement project, negotiated wages, and health insurances increases.

Salisbury residents will decide all their Town Meeting Day business by Australian ballot, on Tuesday, March 3, between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the Salisbury town office. Residents will get a chance to become better informed about their town meeting warning at their annual gathering, set for Saturday, Feb. 28, at 3 p.m., at the Salisbury Community School.

Shoreham

SHOREHAM — Shoreham voters at their annual gathering on Monday, March 2, will field fiscal year 2027 general fund and highway spending proposals, and then go to the polls on March 3 to consider a variety of social service agency requests, local elections and school-related referenda.

The proposed FY27 highway spending proposal comes in at \$1,110,500, a 3.4% increase compared to this year.

The FY27 general fund ask is for \$483,997, a 2.3% hike compared to this year. Voters at the annual meeting on Monday evening will also be asked to authorize the payment of real and personal property taxes on or before Tuesday, Nov. 10, while imposing a late penalty charge of 8%, plus interest, on delinquent taxes.

On March 3, voters will decide a combined \$23,869 in funding requests from 19 Addison County nonprofits that serve Shoreham residents.

There are no contested elections on the Shoreham ballot this year. Rebecca Kerr and Mark Spitzner are unopposed for one-year terms on the town selectboard. Peter Lynch has clear sailing for a three-year term on the board.

Shoreham voters will also field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in



NICOLE HAMER SEES the lighter side of an exchange at the 2025 Salisbury town meeting at Salisbury Community School.
Independent file photo/Steve James

Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. If approved, the budget would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district's current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the Vermont Department of Taxes — compare towns' property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the ACSD spending plan would result in an education property tax rate of \$1.19 per \$100 in assessed property value in Shoreham, based on the district's latest projections. That would be up 9 cents (9%) compared to this year's rate of \$1.10.

It should be noted that two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

There's a referendum on the March 3 ballot asking ACSD residents if they'd like to officially close Ripton Elementary. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat and one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, incumbent Jason Chance of Middlebury and new candidate Robyn Stattel of Bridport are unopposed for seats. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that

delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement project, negotiated wages, and health insurances increases.

Shoreham's annual meeting will begin at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 2, in the Shoreham Elementary School auditorium at 130 School Road. Australian ballot voting will take place the next day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the Shoreham Town Office at 297 Main St.

Starksboro

STARSBORO — Starksboro voters on Town Meeting Day will decide a two-person race for a two-year seat on the Starksboro selectboard. David Rousseau and incumbent Koran Cousino are running for that spot on the board.

There aren't any other contested

by the Town's voters) to withdraw from MAUSD as provided in 16 V.S.A. §724." MAUSD has been exploring a handful of educational delivery models as part of an effort to reduce costs while continuing to offer quality programming. A couple of the options being evaluated could lead to a vote on whether to close a couple of the district's elementary schools, potentially including Robinson Elementary.

Article 12 asks if voters should "vote at a special or regular meeting to adopt proposed amendments to the Town Plan or zoning bylaws by Australian Ballot in lieu of the selectboard."

On Town Meeting Day, Starksboro residents will also be asked to approve a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year. The proposal reflects an increase of 8.51%, or \$2,968,337, over the current year.

District officials estimate the proposed budget, if approved, would translate to a 14.42-cent increase in Starksboro's FY27 tax rate after the CLA is applied for those who pay education taxes based on the value of their home. Residents who pay based on their income are expected to see a decrease of 12.1% based on the median household income for the area (\$88,478).

Starksboro residents will also field a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students, an ask that represents a 9.95% increase compared to this year.

Article 14 asks voters to appropriate a total of \$109,357 for 37 local nonprofits serving Starksboro residents.

Also on the town meeting warning: Article 11 asks if, "In light of actions taken by the Board of the Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD) potentially to close Robinson Elementary School, shall the voters of the Town of Starksboro authorize the community to determine and then inform voters of the steps required (which would include a future vote

• \$1,371,119 in town spending, an increase of \$155,200 from what was proposed last year, with \$1,071,257 to be raised by taxes.

• \$73,781 for the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund, an increase of \$6,092.

• \$134,095 for the Road Equipment Reserve Fund, up \$7,590.

• The use of \$35,000 from the Unassigned General Fund Balance for repairs and maintenance of town buildings.

• \$64,115.58 for the Starksboro Public Library.

• \$1,500 for the Bristol 4th of July Committee to support its annual Independence Day celebration and parade.

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• \$64,115.58 for the Starksboro Public Library.

They'll then head to Saint Peter's Parish Hall on Tuesday, March 3, between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., to cast ballots on a number of measures, including the introduction of a local option tax, nonprofit spending and elected officials.

A "yes" or "no" on the \$28,314,179 FY27 Addison Northwest School District spending proposal is also on tap for March 3 voting. ANWSU will host its annual meeting and public information hearing on the school budget on Monday evening at 6 p.m. at the VUHS library.

Unlike in other Addison County municipalities, voters won't be tasked with weighing in on city spending. That responsibility falls to the city council, which will set the FY27 budget for Vergennes in June.

There's still plenty on tap for city residents to consider, including a local option tax (LOT).

If voters approve the measure, a 1% tax on sales, meals, alcohol and rooms would be levied with 70% of the generated funds going to the

city and the remaining 30% going to the state.

City officials would use the revenue stream, which they predict could add roughly \$200,000 a year to Vergennes coffers, on "municipal, non-education operational and capital expenditures, including municipal infrastructure, as identified by the city council, for the benefit of the taxpayers of Vergennes."

Residents will also be asked to create a reserve fund for the LOT money.

As in other years, voters are being asked to allocate funding amongst 18 area service agencies, including the Addison County Humane Society (\$2,000), the Counseling Service of Addison County (\$2,500) and the Atria Collective (\$4,000).

Addison County Home Health & Hospice and Age Well are asking for \$5,000 each, the most of any single organization listed.

The other 11 organizations would get between \$750-\$4,000 if approved by voters.

If voters approve all the appropriations, the total sum Vergennes would remit to area nonprofits is \$48,164.

Voters had no qualms with signing off on essentially equivalent nonprofit spending in 2025.

The only difference this year is there's no line item for the defunct Boys & Girls Club, though city officials have said they'll include \$5,000 in the city's FY27 budget for the town-run Commodore Club. Recreation and Programming Director Martha DeGraaf formed the fledgling organization after the Boys & Girls Club ceased operations last spring.

The sole contest for an elected position is for the two-year alderman race. The four candidates competing for three seats are incumbents Dickie Austin, Jill Murray-Killon and James Dragon, former mayor Michael H. Daniels.

Mel Hawley, the former city manager, is running unopposed for a one-year alderman term.

The \$28,314,179 Addison Northwest School District FY27 budget that voters will review came in slightly higher than the spending approved last year by residents of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham.

The tax rate won't be set in stone until a state budget is passed and state aid is known. School officials outlined possible tax estimates if the spending plan is passed as warned. For Vergennes residents, that figure is \$1.1653 per \$100 of assessed property value, up from \$1.1046, which represents an increase of about 6 cents, or 5.5%. It would increase property taxes about \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

WALTHAM — Voters in the town of about 450 will head to the Waltham Town Hall on March 2 at 6 p.m. to discuss and vote on funding for social service agencies (See Waltham, Page 14A)

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Vergennes

VERGENNES — Little City residents will gather at Vergennes Union High School Auditorium on Monday, March 2, at 7:30 p.m., for their annual meeting; people can also attend virtually via zoom at: zoom.us/j/561577976.

They'll then head to Saint Peter's Parish Hall on Tuesday, March 3, between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., to cast ballots on a number of measures, including the introduction of a local option tax, nonprofit spending and elected officials.

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SELECTMAN JIM LENO explains a point of local government during a discussion at Hancock's 2025 town meeting.
Independent file photo/Steve James

2026

Call for Art

Henry Sheldon Museum's 2026 Artists in the House Exhibition & Fundraiser

Artists are invited to submit work exploring the themes of time or design, inspired by the Museum's upcoming exhibitions, *Timekeeping* and *Uncovering Wallpaper*.

This annual exhibition is a fundraising event, and all submitted art must be available for sale. Proceeds from each sale will be split evenly, with 50% benefitting the artist and 50% supporting the Museum.

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

Submissions are due by March 6, 2026

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(802) 388-2117 www.henrysheldonmuseum.org

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Town Meeting Preview

Log on to: addisonindependent.com Tuesday night, we will update the site with town meeting results.

(Waltham continued from Page 13A)

to nominations for elected officials. Unlike in other towns, residents will make all of these decisions from the floor that night, rather than by Australian ballot the next day.

Waltham residents will consider spending plans for three areas:

- General fund spending of \$180,960, up about 4.4% from \$173,281 last year.
- Highway fund spending of \$135,100, up almost 17% from \$115,645 last year.
- Capital funding of \$114,000, up 293% from \$29,000 last year.

The total amount of money proposed to be raised by taxes to cover these three funds is \$402,266, up from \$296,167 in fiscal year 2026.

The \$85,000 increase in capital funding is all for the highway capital reserve fund, according to Selectboard Chair Rhonda Williams.

“Due to changes in state funding for town highways, the selectboard is proposing an increase of \$85,000 to our highway capital reserve fund. If approved, this additional sum will allow the town to save in reserve the monies that we will need to take on needed, substantial paving and culvert projects that are part of our capital planning process,” she explained.

“That sum will be voted on in Article 8 separate from our base proposed budget. In addition to that change, the base highway budget projects an increase of 16.8% to our highway budget to cover the increased cost of salt, sand and other annual highway maintenance expenses.”

The town is also proposing a \$10,692 expenditure to support Vergennes’s Bixby Library.

If approved, 18 social service agencies are slated to receive \$4,849 in support from the town. Addison County Home Health and Hospice has the largest request (\$579). Age Well, Addison County Parent Child Center, the American Legion Post and the Atria Collective will each get \$500 if the current plan is approved by voters. The bus service Tri-Valley Transit could get \$320.

The other 12 organizations could receive between \$50-\$300.

Williams is the only selectboard member whose term is up. She said in an email to the *Independent* that she is hoping to be nominated and reelected.

The only decision on tap for Waltham residents during voting on March 3 is the proposed Addison Northwest School District budget.

Officials say they will need \$28,314,179 to operate in the fiscal year beginning July 1, up from the \$27,653,000 in ANWSD spending plan that voters in Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham approved on Town Meeting Day last year.

The tax rate won’t be concrete until a state budget is passed and state aid is known, according to the school board chair. Still, the school board has outlined illustrative tax estimates if the spending plan is passed as warned. This would mean a Waltham homestead tax rate of \$1.2016 per \$100 of assessed

property value, up about 5% from \$1.1436. This would increase property taxes \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

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

School budget voting for Waltham residents will be Tuesday in the town hall, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

Weybrige

WEYBRIDGE — Weybrige voters will have a busy 2026 town meeting, during which they’ll be asked to pass fiscal year 2027 town and highway budgets, establish and seed a new “unanticipated expense reserve fund,” decide a contested race for a spot in their selectboard, and field two separate resolutions related to health care reform and Israel’s military conduct in Gaza.

The contested selectboard race, for a two-year term, pits challenger Chris Bagley against incumbent Kelly Flynn. Incumbent Charlie Jordan has no competition for a three-year term on the board. All other municipal elections in Weybrige this March are uncontested.

The selectboard is proposing an FY27 highway budget of \$678,349, which is a 9.6% increase compared to this year’s \$618,748 spending plan.

Weybrige’s FY26 general fund ask comes in at \$261,402, up 23.9% from the current’s year’s \$210,882 spending plan.

Residents will field a non-binding resolution urging the state Legislature to discuss and vote on bill H.433, which would launch “Green Mountain Care,” a publicly financed health care program for all Vermont residents that would initially offer universal access to primary care.

They’ll also decide a resolution that would encourage Weybrige’s elected leaders “to end all current and future town business, investments and contracts with companies as long as such companies engage in business that sustains Israel’s apartheid, genocide, and illegal occupation of Palestine.”

Other articles on Weybrige’s town meeting warning seek:

- \$30,000 for the Weybrige Volunteer Fire Department.
- \$15,000 to continue the town’s volunteer recycling program for another year.
- \$26,767 to continue a partnership with the town of Middlebury through which Weybrige residents get full access to Ilesley Library services. Weybrige doesn’t operate a local public library.
- \$70,000 to seed a new “unanticipated expense reserve fund,” if residents elect to establish such a fund.

Weybrige voters will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, to provide PreK-12 public education for children in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybrige. If approved, the budget



MONKTON SELECTMAN JOE Szarejko handles a question while fellow board member Walter Crandall listens with the audience during the 2025 town meeting in Monkton Central School.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

would result in a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending, for a total of \$15,638 per child.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.15% bump (3 cents) in the district’s current education property tax rate of \$1.62 per \$100 in property value. But the actual education tax rates in the seven ACSD-member towns will vary, based largely on their common level of appraisal (CLA). CLAs — as determined by town-by-town analyses of their real estate sales by the Vermont Department of Taxes — compare towns’ property tax assessments to fair market value. If approved, the ACSD spending plan would result in an education property tax rate of \$1.11 per \$100 in property in Weybrige, based on the district’s latest projections. That would be down around 66 cents compared to this year’s rate of \$1.77.

It should be noted that two-thirds of Vermonters pay at least a portion of their school taxes based on income.

There’s a referendum on the

March 3 ballot asking ACSD residents if they’d like to officially close Ripton Elementary. If that referendum passes, it paves the way for Ripton to reacquire the property.

Voters will be asked to fill four seats on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. There are no takers for the Salisbury seat or for one of the Middlebury seats. Meanwhile, incumbent Jason Chance of Middlebury and new candidate Robyn Stattel of Bridport are unopposed. All ACSD candidates run at-large in the seven-town district.

County residents will field a proposed fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915, representing a 9.95% increase compared to the current spending plan that delivers Career and Technical Education to students interested in the trades. The increase is largely associated with debt service on a major Career Center improvement

project, negotiated wages, and health insurances increases.

Weybrige’s annual meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at Weybrige Elementary School. Australian ballot voting will take place on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the town clerk’s office.

Whiting

WHITING — Residents of Whiting who gather for the annual town meeting next Tuesday evening will consider a town spending plan that proposes a 2.8% increase in expenditures, but the amount of tax dollars needed to support the bigger budget would increase by almost 9.3%.

The selectboard has warned a town spending plan of \$529,590, which represents an increase of \$14,297 over the current year. That would require the town to seek \$345,395 in property taxes in the

coming year. That compares to \$316,098 in taxes OK’d last year, or a hike of \$29,297.

Town Clerk Heather Bouchard told the *Independent* that prices of everything are going up, and the selectboard tried to keep the increase in check — particularly, she said, with school taxes likely to surge.

Town spending is discussed and voted on from the floor of town meeting.

Nine town officials will be up for election, when residents gather at 7:15 p.m. in the town hall on March 3. Whiting nominates and votes on town offices from the floor of town meeting. The open seats in question are: three-year term on the selectboard (Steve Quenneville, incumbent); three-year term for town clerk and town treasurer (that’s two job and incumbent Heather Bouchard said she is interested in keeping those positions); three-year term for lister (Stacey Freeguard, incumbent); one-year term for lister (vacant); three-year-term for auditor (Suzanne Denis incumbent); collect of delinquent taxes for one year (Rani Fallon incumbent); and two three-year seats on the library board (incumbents are Peg Allen and Tammy Wilbury).

Whiting voters will join their peers in Leicester, Brandon, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. The board warned a FY27 spending plan of \$28,841,999, which is an increase of \$818,286, or 2.92%. The budget reflects \$14,257 in per-pupil education spending — up about \$5.5% from this year.

Brandon will also be voting on an OVUU school director position for a three-year term, plus three at-large school board seats — two with a three-year term, and one to serve one year of a now-vacant three-year term.

Whiting will also be voting on an OVUU school director position to serve out the last year on a three-year term that opened up, plus three at-large school board seats — two with a three-year term, and one to serve one year of a now-vacant three-year term.



MIDDLEBURY’S 2025 TOWN meeting drew many engaged residents including Walter Deverell, who gives his undivided attention to a speaker.

Independent file photo/Steve James

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Dan Rossignol for Addison Selectboard

Hi, I am Dan Rossignol, and I am running for Addison Selectboard. My experience as the current town Zoning Administrator has helped me to understand the town’s needs and barriers that need addressing. My science and research experience, including a stint in agricultural products (DuPont), helped me learn about the difficult issues and pressures facing farming in this country.

I am a board member and fierce advocate of the Hannaford Career Center. Why am I so devoted to a technical school? My entire life, I have been doing construction and woodworking in my spare time. My grandfather was a developer, and I helped build custom homes before I was old enough to drive. I have completely renovated every house my family has lived in, and thus I value the trades. Vermont needs the trades, and having a high-wage career in a state that needs their services is one way to get our kids to stay and be part of the workforce in Vermont.

Addison deserves leaders who will get the facts and openly discuss all issues raised by the taxpayers of this town. I am willing and able to listen and take the time to dig to the bottom of issues, get all the opinions, and derive answers that we can all live with.

I would like you to vote for me next month, and look forward to representing you at our town’s selectboard.

Talk to me,
Dan | dan.rossignol@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor

There are no political atheists in foxholes

There are times in history when we are all called upon to pick a side. 250 years ago Thomas Paine in "The American Crisis" described "Sunshine Patriots," those who supported the revolution only when the outcome seemed favorable to the fledgling nation or didn't require taking a stand, but who abandoned the cause when the outcome seemed in doubt. I consider the sunshine patriots of the past to be today's political atheists. Principles of ethics, constitutional rule of law, freedom and justice for all are uncompromising American principles; those who abandon these values are the political atheists and sunshine patriots of our current American crisis.

I resigned from my career in the federal government when I could no longer identify the oath I took in my work. It has been a huge sacrifice for my family and has placed us in great financial peril. I've since expanded my skill set in the cause of democracy by founding a non-profit to bring civics education to adults. And, while I fully understand that was not as clear a choice for others, everyone should have by now found their own ways to stand up. I'm not shaming anyone who could not make the sacrifices I have, but I'm asking all of us to find leaders and abandon the followers who parade as leaders.

Today, we are in another American crisis, and the outcome is once again in doubt. Will we abandon democracy and constitutional law out of fear or our own personal comfort? Shall we declare that we are unaware,

unaffected, or unable to rise when presented with the destruction of our ethical, moral, and legal foundations?

Not only that, but will we forgive and reward those who should have long ago stood up for us? Every leader should have long ago realized what was happening and spoken out, leading us into action. We have been in this foxhole with danger falling all around us for far too long. Keeping your head down and focusing on peripheral issues is long past excusable. It demonstrates a lack of courage, a lack of moral principles, and a lack of wisdom which should be disqualifying for future leadership. If you waited until now to strongly stand up for those in your community who have been threatened or persecuted you have forfeited any claim you have to continued leadership.

These have not been normal times for more than a decade. As Pastor Chuck Baldwin of the Liberty Fellowship in Montana stated: "By supporting him, lauding him, defending him, excusing him, they are party to his criminality. If in the scripture, hate and lust in the heart makes one a spiritual murderer and adulterer, what does heartfelt endorsement, justification, and assistance to a man who makes murder and adultery look like a Sunday school picnic, by comparison, mean spiritually?"

In normal times looking at the complete record or platform of a leader is reasonable, but these are not normal times. Foundational issues are being challenged. Liberty, freedom, community, and the rule of law are foundational;

any party which has looked the other way when these American values are degraded in communal chats or by legislative inaction should not be allowed to lead us on any other issue. American values should be the single issue to which everyone gives full-throated support. And in spite of the disinformation rampant in some media, the lies are so evident that there is not a reasonable excuse to have been silent before now.

"I haven't seen it, I am focused on other issues, that's not my job" aren't reasonable or rational answers, and none of us should accept these excuses.

As we head into the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence I ask each of you find an action to reclaim "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". However, if our leaders are only following the whims of public opinion, these are actions of the sunshine patriots who have disqualified themselves. Let us come together and with one voice declare that this crisis demands greater wisdom and clearer vision.

Silence or weak responses are disqualifying. There should be no more room in our foxholes for political atheism. If leaders are not willing to strongly support American values as their political guiding light, then they are political atheists. If they are following the false political gospels of wealth or compromised civil rights over our principles of constitutional democracy and the rule of law, they must be rejected.

Michael Kane
Vergennes



Winter sports

COMPETITORS IN THE first day of the Nordic skiing state championship meet at Rikert Outdoor Center in Rippon this past Thursday seem somehow less significant under the timeless grandeur of Breadloaf Mountain looming over the course.

Independent photo/
Angelo Lynn

Our leaders need to take action to save us

To our national representatives:

1) The National Guard is not here to be sent to fight in other countries. It is to be used only to defend and help out here in the U.S.

2) We need to limit age and terms in the White House, in Congress and in the Supreme Court. There are too many people in Congress who comfortably get re-elected term after term. There are too many people who are over 70 in D.C. (I am over 70) Seventy needs to be the cut-off age ... a person can be elected in at age 70 for one term. Our Congress is filled with ancient faces, when

there are new faces out there ready to jump in.

3) The Supreme Court is a disaster! It is too party-oriented. The judges need to be above that.

4) Please don't just pontificate about the dismal state of our current government. Our president needs to be impeached, as he is obviously getting dementia, which is very dangerous in his position. Had he run against Biden in the last election, I wouldn't have voted at all, as they were/ are both obviously becoming muddle-headed and for a country as big and powerful as ours is, this is a danger.

I vote Independent with Democratic leanings, though I do agree with some Republican ideals. Our country is in very sad shape. This has happened before, I'm sure, but we have not been headed up by a nouveau riche, buffoon of a man who wasn't interested in being president the first time he ran and now seems to consider the country his playground that boosts up his narcissism. Our country has become both a joke and a horror story! Please do something — don't just yap on about it!

Carolyn Van Vleck
Brandon

Vote for Dan Brown, he gets the work done

Dan Brown is not flashy. He is not glamorous. He is not attention-seeking. But Dan has been faithfully serving the people of Middlebury on our selectboard in the most solid, steadfast, and consistent way.

Dan does his homework. He prepares carefully for meetings. He asks the tough questions. He goes

above and beyond. As the long-time owner of the Swift House Inn, Dan has the perspective of the needs of our local economy. I've had the privilege of working with Dan on the Ilsley 100 Project Team for four years and have seen his thoughtful and deliberate style lead to positive solutions for complex problems.

Dan is not the kind of guy to toot his own horn. But believe me, he is just the sort of person we need to do the fundamental work to help move Middlebury forward. Please join me in voting for Dan Brown for Selectboard on March 3.

Joe McVeigh
Middlebury

Vekos

(Continued from Page 1A) County SA's office. The DSAS commissioned the report after receiving what it called "a variety of complaints about the conduct of Addison County SA Eva Vekos."

Complaints ranged from alleged condescending and temper-laden treatment of her employees to her decision to ban two crime victim advocates from her office after they'd filed complaints against her with the Professional Responsibility Board for allegedly disclosing juvenile information in open court.

Brines and Stackpole interview sessions spanned from June 3 to Oct. 13 of last year. The names of the interviewees are redacted in the report, and Vekos declined their request for an interview.

In addition to their one-on-one interviews, Brines and Stackpole poured through written complaints from employees of the Addison County State's Attorney's Office and partner agencies, as well as extensive investigative reporting done on Vekos's job performance by the Addison Independent and VTDigger.

The report was filed with the DSAS on Jan. 16. It only became public this week following a written request from Addison County's legislative delegation.

The 10-page Brines/Stackpole investigation details several allegations and findings, including:

- Vekos has been the subject of "numerous resignations of staff and attorneys in the Addison County SA's office, multiple complaints to the Vermont Professional Responsibility Board and extensive coverage in the media regarding (her) conduct towards crime victims and more generally."

- Vekos "is variously described by witnesses as an angry person; someone who has no ability to control her temper; and someone who does not want to learn. Multiple witnesses reported that rather than engaging in conversation with co-workers, she will 'snap' at others and not give them the opportunity to respond, sometimes walking away immediately. She is sharp in her communications and makes demands rather than asking."

- Among interviewees were former SA office workers who left because of the "office environment and/or the poor quality of legal work being performed. Others expressed concern about Vekos's adherence to the rules of professional conduct, deciding to leave in part because of ethical

concerns.

"In some situations, Vekos has reacted to news of planned resignation with crying, screaming or throwing items in the office."

- "We received numerous reports that SA Vekos's communications with staff and other departments that provided support to crime victims were confrontational. Numerous witnesses described her communication style as rude, combative and/or completely incomprehensible. She was prone to angry outbursts, which most staff tried to avoid by limiting their contact with her directly."

- "Several witnesses indicated that SA Vekos, who had done defense-side work as a private practitioner, had a viewpoint on cases that tended to favor outcomes that were more lenient on defendants than supportive of victims. While this could not be quantified, it was articulated by numerous witnesses as a concern."

- "The main themes about the atmosphere of the office are that the SA is rarely present or available; and when she is, she is abusive to staff, victims and victim advocates."

- "Vekos has refused to work with the external victim advocates on her criminal cases. Staff has attempted to institute systems to ensure that victims are getting statutory notices, but SA Vekos has not been interested in engaging in that process. She then got upset with staff for sending out letters without her authorization, after Vekos had simply told staff to 'use common sense.' In connection with the statutory notices, SA Vekos has insisted that the SA's office only communicate with victims' attorneys, but not creating any system or process for those victims without counsel."

- The SA's office has "delayed action or failed to act in some cases where there are repeat offenses. In one case, partners had followed up about a matter that had gone to SA's office for review without success; they eventually had to close the case. Law enforcement then received a call from the medical center noting that the same victim had been again assaulted by the same perpetrator. In June 2023, there was a sexual assault of a child by an offender who lived in the home with the child. There was then inaction until August 2023, when SA Vekos informed the court that there was no action needed."

- During a meeting in late summer of 2023, Vekos "called a victim of sexual assault a 'drug-

addicted prostitute.' She stated that she did not think that the victim was traumatized by the sexual assault. Others at the meeting pointed out that the comments were offensive and that they should not be making decisions about other people's trauma, and SA Vekos stormed out."

- Investigators referred to another case, one involving a "particularly egregious sexual assault involving multiple defendants." Vekos sought to resolve the case with a two-year deferred sentence. "The judge refused to approve multiple plea agreements because they were not sufficient. Vekos was worried about the severe and lasting consequences for the defendant. In the same case, she called the victim's mother irrational and stated that if the victims 'are half as strong as their mothers, they will be fine.' About a victim in another case, SA Vekos said, 'She doesn't seem like a wallflower to me.'"

Prior to the start of the Brines/Stackpole investigation, Vekos had been facing a drunken driving charge. She had been arrested by Vermont State Police on Jan. 26, 2024, for suspicion of driving under the influence after she had showed up to inspect the scene of a suspicious death at a home at 748 Swinton Road in Bridport.

Vekos on December 16, 2025, was sentenced to six months of probation (deferred) in Vermont Superior Court, Chittenden Criminal Division, after entering a plea of no contest to one misdemeanor count of driving under the influence.

In summarizing their report, Stackpole and Brines wrote, "(Vekos) has, quite literally, created an environment hostile to collaborative effort and diligence, and she has failed to prevent injustice by her inaction or literal failure to be present and available as the leader of the state's attorney's office. Her recent criminal conviction has only further negatively impacted her professional reputation and will likely be used as a tool to undermine her effectiveness as a prosecutor."

In recent months the Vermont Attorney General's Office has been enlisted to prosecute several cases that Vekos's office has been unable to field.


So where does the report go from here and what repercussions might it have for Vekos?

The DSAS's Executive Committee and its executive director, Timothy Lueders-Dumont, have "jointly referred the matter — and the report

itself — to the Vermont Professional Responsibility Board (in accordance with ethical obligations)," Lueders-Dumont stated in an email exchange.

The Professional Responsibility Board — which is part of the Vermont judiciary — hasn't set a deadline for disclosing the results of its investigation of

complaints against Vekos. The seven-member board oversees the state's Professional Responsibility Program and, among other things, (See Failures, Page 18A)



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MiddNight Magic

FIGURE SKATERS FROM near and far took to the ice at Chip Kenyon Arena this past Saturday and Sunday for the 2026 Ice Show, presented by Middlebury College and the Middlebury Figure Skating Club as part of the college's annual Winter Carnival. Among those to dazzle the audience on Sunday were, clockwise from top left; Ryan Parker; Middlebury College student Jeannie Paguaga; student Esteban Catano Molina; Casey Clark; student Avery Pu; MFSC alum Mattisen Austin; youth skaters as fireflies; MUHS seniors Avery Hohenschau and Oprea Littlefield; Paisley Dwy; Parker Sosa; Solomon Bristol and MFSC junior advanced group member Matilda Boyce.

Independent photos/Steve James



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Spotlight on Vergennes

Vergennes Police Log

VERGENNES — Last Friday evening the Vergennes Police Department was called to help four large vehicles navigate the evening snowstorm.

On Feb. 20, police first took a report of a tractor-trailer stuck on Main Street by the bridge. The call was ultimately cancelled because it made it up the hill.

Then police provided emergency blue lights and traffic control for a tractor-trailer that was stuck in the roadway due to excessive amounts of snow on the road. The big rig was towed.

Next they assisted a tractor-trailer that was stuck on Green Street because of quickly deteriorating road conditions. A citizen stopped to help the driver.

In a fourth event, police again

provided emergency blue lights and traffic control for a coach bus that was stuck in the road because of excessive amounts of snow. It was towed.

Also last week, Vergennes police conducted 17 traffic stops and five directed patrols, took fingerprints six times and enforced the winter parking ban once.

In other recent activity, city police:

- On Feb. 17 took a report of a retail theft at Kinney Drugs.

- On Feb. 18 responded to a motor vehicle versus pedestrian crash. The person hit suffered minor injuries, and refused to be taken to the hospital. Police issued the driver a civil ticket for not yielding to a pedestrian in the crosswalk.

- On Feb. 19 checked the welfare of a Vergennes resident at the request

of a family member who lives out of state. Police spoke to the person and another family member who lives nearby. Everything seemed OK.

- On Feb. 19 facilitated a safe driving class for offenders.

- On Feb. 19 issued a notice of trespass to a person on behalf of Maplefields.

- On Feb. 20 took a report from a resident that her ex-spouse was trying to get medication for their child from the school while not having any parental rights or responsibility. This is an ongoing issue between ex-spouses in a contentious divorce.

- On Feb. 20 received a report from somebody about unwanted contact by a neighbor. Police determined there was no criminal activity.

Letters to the Editor

Voting for school budget show interest in our future

On Town Meeting Day, voters in the Addison Northwest School District will be asked to pass a budget that is fiscally responsible and reflects a deep dedication to our students. This year's proposed budget meets both of these needs.

Our FY27 budget proposal is \$28.3 million. This represents a very modest 2.39% increase over the current year expenditures and a 3.26% increase in per-pupil spending. This budget enables us to continue providing outstanding academic programs, educational supports for students, and athletics and co-curricular opportunities that our communities appreciate. The board has worked hard to demonstrate responsible use of our available resources, including applying one-time surplus funds toward easing the pressure of taxes.

Approximately 800 students attend the Ferrisburgh Central School, the Vergennes Union Elementary School, and the Vergennes Union Middle and High Schools. Our children receive far more than just an education at these schools. They receive social/emotional supports, career and technical education tracks, and extracurricular opportunities designed to ensure their success.

Cost increases in student support services are one of the primary factors contributing to budget changes this year. Supports for special education, mental health, and interventions are not an option, though. They are core services

required by state and federal guidelines that provide the best opportunity for all children to thrive. It is also essential to keep in mind that local school budgets are just a part of the property tax puzzle. Considerations such as the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) and state education funding policies impact how much Vermonters pay in taxes. Even when districts keep spending growth low, taxes can continue to climb based on decisions made outside the control of the school board.

This year's budget is being decided during a time of intense statewide conversations regarding the direction of education in Vermont. Through Act 73, state leaders are discussing significant reforms to district governance, funding models, and instructional delivery. These conversations are a response to the very real challenges facing public education: falling enrollment, rising costs, and the need to plan for long-term sustainability. During times of uncertainty and transition, it is important to ensure stable, high quality local schools. Our students can't hit pause while the details are hashed out across the state; they need strong schools today. They need proven programs, committed staff, and the supports they require to learn and grow.

The budget that the ANWSD board developed takes all of these issues into account. Since August, we have considered our

responsibilities. We asked hard questions. We looked at where we spend money. We tried to find a balance between our finances and our responsibility to our students. In the end, we respectfully present our voters with a budget that is both frugal and responsible while keeping the education of our students in mind.

Strong schools are good for all of us. They educate our students so they can make a difference in the world. They keep our property values high. They make our towns livable places to raise our children. They represent our shared values and our belief in the future.

Voting in favor of this budget is one way we can show our students that we are here for them and want what is best for them. It is our way of supporting our schools in this time of statewide transition. But above all, it is our way of making a wise financial decision that will benefit our schools as well as our communities.

I urge all voters in Addison, Ferrisburgh, Pantton, Vergennes and Waltham to examine the material, ask questions, and be part of this process. And then, most importantly, I ask for your support in approving this budget. Together, we can ensure that we do right by our kids.

Sincerely,
Mark Koenig
 Addison Northwest School
 District Board Chair
 Vergennes

Sculpture in the works for Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Plans are underway to breathe new life into the Ferrisburgh town center with the installation of a public art sculpture on the town green honoring the community's rich farming heritage while incorporating reclaimed disc harrows donated by members of the community.

For many years, the town green has been an underutilized community space. Ongoing efforts to revitalize the Village Center are aiming to change that. The restoration of the historic Union Meeting Hall, the formation of the Town Center Committee, funding secured for sidewalks and a crosswalk, and Ferrisburgh's designation as a "Village Center" have all helped to advance these revitalization efforts.

To further support the work in the town center, the Friends of Ferrisburgh began efforts to design and install an art sculpture on the town green. With support from a \$4,000 Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure Design Grant in 2024, the organization partnered with local artists to gather community feedback to shape the final concept. The resulting design celebrates Ferrisburgh's deep agricultural roots.

According to artist Elliott Katz, "Ferrisburgh is a strong agricultural community and its unique landscape defines its sense of place. This public sculpture draws from that setting by using reclaimed disc harrows. Once practical tools for turning soil, they now serve as reminders of the people who tilled the land by hand and depended on it for their livelihood while honoring the generations of labor, resilience, and care for the landscape that continues to shape the town."

Visible from both Route 7 and Middlebrook Road, the piece is intended to catch the attention of passersby and invite them to pause, explore, and connect with the community.

"We see this sculpture as a way to further activate and strengthen the town center," Katz added.



AN ARTIST'S RENDERING shows how a proposed piece of artwork will reflect Ferrisburgh's agricultural heritage.

Earlier in the year, the Friends of Ferrisburgh launched their "Stack the Harrows" fundraising campaign. As the organization prepares to apply for additional grant funding in early spring, community members are invited to support the project in a meaningful and lasting way. According to Friends of Ferrisburgh Board members Ashley LaFlam and Lindsey Brown, "Donors have the option to not only support art and community, but to also forever be part of this amazing project by purchasing an engraved harrow disc."

Donors may purchase an engraved harrow disc to honor or memorialize a person, place, business or cause with all proceeds supporting the fabrication and installation of the art sculpture in the near future.

"We are so excited to be a part of such a unique project," said LaFlam. "It will not only raise awareness of revitalization efforts in the town center, but also help put Ferrisburgh on the map."

For full project details, visit visitferrisburghvt.com and explore the "Stack the Harrows" page or email friendsofferrisburgh@gmail.com.



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Mingle

(Continued from Page 1A)
other publications. Mingle was a Middlebury College Fellow in Environmental Journalism in 2011.

When it's come to finding what to write about over the years, Mingle said he's just "followed (his) nose."

"I just default to chasing stories that I find not only interesting but underreported or underdiscussed," he explained.

He noted the two books he's written have centered around such stories. Mingle's 2015 book, "Fire and Ice," highlights the same Indian village he wrote about while in grad school. The book tells of how that village navigated the impacts of chronic drought, as well as explores black carbon and soot more broadly.

In his second book, "Gaslight," Mingle follows communities in the mountains of Virginia throughout their years-long fight to oppose the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which would have constructed a 600-mile natural gas pipeline from West Virginia to North Carolina.

"They're both focused on climate pollutants that, it seemed to me at the time when I began those reporting journeys, weren't getting enough attention and discussion," Mingle said of his books.

Other stories have focused on topics varying from changes in Vermont's forests and forest products industry to the U.S. biogas industry to the implementation of bans on natural gas in new construction.

As a climate reporter, Mingle acknowledges that part of the challenge of his work is to avoid being inundated by the "immensity of climate change as a subject."

"As a storyteller, I have an advantage in that any story, whether it's a 1,000-word piece or a 90,000-word book, it's not going to work unless you ground it in the lives of particular people and communities," he said. "You have to particularize these big, sweeping planetary forces and changes that are implied by the phrase 'climate change.'"

Such climate-related stories used to be harder to pitch to editors, Mingle said, though it's become easier to do so over the years with an audience interested in reporting on climate change.

"In the course of my career reporting on this issue, I have seen a steady increase in interest and appetite and feedback from readers that, 'Yeah, we care about this, we want more stories about this,'" he said. "But at the same time, there's also some fluctuation that inevitably tracks with how our

"At this moment it's more important than ever that people talk about climate change — how it's affecting their communities and their lives and their utility bills."

— Jonathan Mingle

top media outlets and influential people are choosing to highlight this or not, whether it's the *New York Times* editorial board or whoever is in the White House."

CHANGES WITNESSED
Mingle reflected on some of the other changes he's seen in the work of climate journalism over the years, including improvements in incorporating climate

reporting into other subject areas and in deciding how climate-related stories are reported.

"The problem for a reporter is if you just call a spade a spade, if you just put the facts on the table,

a lot of people are nervous about looking like they're biased, and so they'll bend over backwards to then go ask someone at the American Petroleum Institute for a comment," Mingle said. "And we should ask them for a comment, but that doesn't mean you should soft-pedal or back away from the facts of the case... I've seen climate journalism get better at just sticking to the facts and not being so afraid of pushback from people who are invested in the status quo."

"I've seen climate journalism get better at just sticking to the facts and not being so afraid of pushback from people who are invested in the status quo."

— Jonathan Mingle

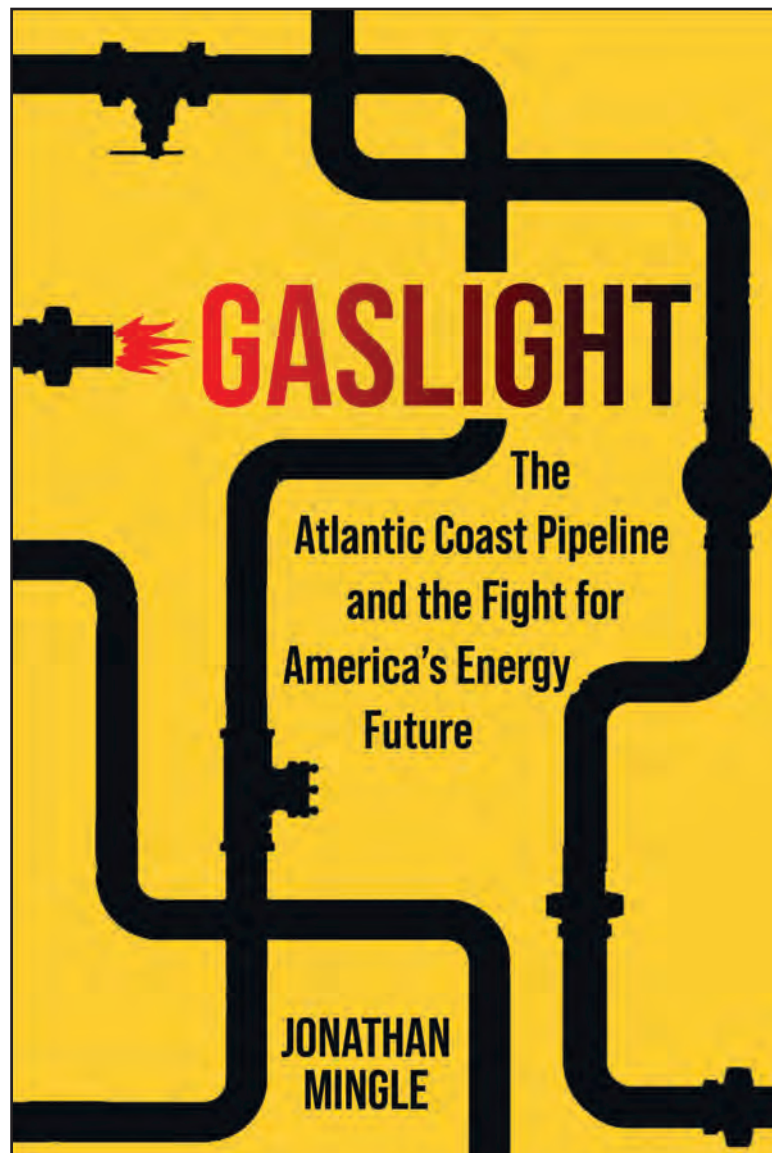
Community members got a chance to hear more about Mingle's work during a recent talk at the Lincoln Library on "Flood Tales: A Climate Reporter's Notebook." The event in part highlighted how climate impacts like flooding hitting places like Vermont.

"The speed with which we are changing the atmosphere and, by extension, the risk to our communities here in Vermont and in other parts of the world, I don't think it's generally understood just how fast we're changing these systems we've come to take for granted," Mingle said.

Mingle shared with attendees stories of floods from Vermont to India and what he's learned from speaking with experts. He noted that when covering climate change impacts like flooding, it's important to highlight an alternative way forward.

"People want to engage with this stuff, and they want to do it in a way that helps them understand what they can do alongside their neighbors about it," he said.

That's something Mingle said he hopes to convey through his work, both the collective impact of climate change and the opportunity for collective action



AS A JOURNALIST, Jonathan Mingle looks to highlight stories that are underreported or underdiscussed. Such was the focus of his second book "Gaslight," which follows communities in the mountains of Virginia throughout their years-long fight to oppose the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Submitted photo

in addressing it.

"I think the great overlooked climate solution is solidarity, at every scale," he said. "Whether it's the scale of a village like Lincoln, or Kumik in north India... or at a bigger scale; the degree to which we recognize our shared vulnerability but also our shared agency, the power you can tap into once you understand that your neighbors' fortunes are

"I left that experience thinking, 'Oh, maybe I should focus on telling stories instead of building spreadsheets.'"

— Jonathan Mingle

wrapped up with your own."

"Climate change is very revealing once you start to dig into it, just the extent to which our fates are intertwined here," he continued. "That is another meta subject that I feel is underdiscussed, and as a freelancer I have

the freedom to shine my little flashlight on stories that I think surface that truism about our situation."

Failures

(Continued from Page 15A)
helps "resolve disciplinary complaints against attorneys through fair and prompt dispute resolution procedures," according to its website.

Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Middlebury, has been keeping track of complaints against Vekos and has joined the county legislative delegation's two calls for the state's attorney to resign. The delegation, in its second resignation request made this past December, also called on the Professional Responsibility Board to take action.

"That hasn't happened," Hardy said. "It's concerning to me that (the board) hasn't acted."

Hardy in 2024 championed legislation that would have triggered an amendment to the Vermont Constitution that would have paved the way for easier removal of elected county officials. That legislation didn't pass. Right now, a long arduous impeachment process must unfold for removal of prosecutors, sheriffs and other elected county officials. Impeachment proceedings must begin in the Vermont House.

"Because the allegations against (Vekos) is a collection of a bunch of things — instead of one damning thing — it does make (the prospect of impeachment) a little harder," Hardy said, though she added, "I think... this internal investigation report, which puts it all in one place and is from a neutral investigator, is helpful."

Hardy believes the DSAS report also "really highlights why she's not doing the job a state's attorney should be doing. And I'm especially concerned with the way she handles victims, and her inability to appropriately and legally include them in the plea bargain process and the prosecution process."

Vekos did not respond to an email invitation for input into this article.

Her four-year post will be on the ballot this November.

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Lincoln, VT Homeowner Recommends Bristol Electronics



Phase I - 2014

For a long time I had been thinking of going solar, but had not pursued it until I talked with a neighbor who just had hers installed. I contracted with her installer and soon had panels on the roof that supplied all of my household electricity, with some extra capacity to supply an on-demand electric water heater I soon put in. I loved not hearing the propane boiler firing up in the summer to keep domestic water hot for the shower I'd be taking 16 hours later. Thrilled with the installation and not having an electric bill. I even splurged and bought my first ever noisy window A/C.

Phase II - 2016

While my primary heat source has been a woodstove and later a pellet stove, the propane boiler served as my backup. On a December road trip to PEI, I discovered the 25+ year old propane boiler died on me. I'm lucky to have had a monitoring system to notice this and awesome neighbors to feed pellets until I got back. Rather than buy another fossil fuel burning device, I decided to have heat pumps installed. At the time Bristol Electronics didn't install those, but they were very competitive as I shopped around for additional solar capacity. So in February 2016 they were on the roof installing panels that would provide enough electricity year round to supply my heating needs. And, since the heat pump also cools the house quietly on the hottest days, I sold the window unit. Maybe I'm just getting older, but there seems to be more and more of those hot days.

Phase III - 2019

Since I commute from So. Lincoln to Burlington, I've always felt guilty about all of the CO2 I've been emitting to get to work. I still have 7-10 years before I can even think about retiring, so I decided to make the investment and buy an electric car. And part of that investment was to buy the additional solar capacity to power it. I didn't think twice about having Bristol Electronics do it. My roof was running out of space, and since it has a low pitch, snow coverage was an issue for the last two years. This time I worked with Chris, Stephen, Dave and Trevor to have a ground mount installed that will be easy to clear the snow off of. They did amazing work, despite weather issues, and were actually able to make some long overdue landscaping improvements during the process. I couldn't be happier with my experience with this team!

~ Paul Webb, Lincoln, VT



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FREE SITE EVALUATIONS

Bristol

(Continued from Page 1A)

Meridith McFarland said the department will remain available to the public during current office hours (Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) in the Thomas Building.

She noted the department expects minimal disruption to its programming.

"We will have to put our Dance and Tai Chi classes on hold until the Hall reopens in September," McFarland said. "Our summer theater camp will be relocated to Howden Hall with access to a 20x30 pole tent. We run our River and (mountain bike) camps out of the Hub Teen Center, so there is no impact on the Hall."

"Any changes to schedules or locations will be communicated well in advance to participants and the community," she continued.

"Day-to-day operations may look a bit different behind the scenes, but providing consistent services to residents will remain a priority throughout the renovation period."

The department has been preparing for the transition.

"We've secured a 40' x 8' storage container to safely store tables, chairs, equipment, and supplies currently housed in Holley Hall," McFarland said. "We've also been taking inventory, downsizing where appropriate, and organizing materials so everything is protected and easy to access during construction. In addition, we've been discussing running an electrical chase for future sound and video applications."

McFarland pointed to some of the benefits the project is expected to bring to Holley Hall.

"For example, we will finally be able to host programs during the summer months — something we

couldn't do previously, as interior temperatures could reach a stifling 87 degrees," she explained. "The renovated Hall will also serve as a reliable, climate-controlled space for emergency cooling and heating during environmental events, further strengthening its role as an essential community resource."

Overall, she said the department views the renovations as "a positive, long-term investment in Bristol's recreational and community infrastructure."

"While construction naturally brings some short-term challenges, we're focused on flexibility, clear communication, and creative problem-solving to ensure the community continues to have access to quality recreation opportunities throughout the transition," she said.

The town has worked with Middlebury's Vermont Integrated Architecture to design the Holley Hall and library renovation projects. Faust noted New Haven's Silver Maple Construction will tackle deconstruction, carpentry and mechanical system design and installation work for both projects.

AT THE LIBRARY

Work at the Lawrence Memorial Library is set to include a new heating and cooling system (HVAC), insulation upgrades, repairs to the building's exterior and the creation of a quiet space for community members to work, study and have telehealth appointments.

The project is expected to cost \$535,000 and will largely be supported by a grant Bristol secured through the U.S. Department of Treasury Capital Project Fund back in 2024.

Library staff detailed in a recent update how the project will impact

operations. They noted the building will pause in-person service after March 10, with an anticipated reopening at the beginning of May while exterior work continues at the library.

Prior to March 10, library staff will be checking items out with an extension for patrons to enjoy materials while the building is closed.

"Bring back any materials you do not want to keep over the closure by dropping them off during regular hours or placing items in our book drop at our back entrance by March 10th," library staff wrote, adding that patrons are asked not to return materials to the building once the library is closed.

They noted community members can set up a HomeCard account, enabling access to participating libraries in the nearby towns of New Haven, Starksboro, Lincoln, Monkton, Middlebury and Vergennes. Residents can also access eBooks and audiobooks for free by setting up a Libby account.

Library staff said they're working to continue offering story times and book club while the building is closed, and community members can keep an eye out for updates on Front Porch Forum and the library's newsletter and social media.

"While we know this is a short on-ramp to closure, we want to assure everyone, this is temporary," library staff wrote. "The Library (will) be open again for service, along with exciting updates, as soon as possible. We can't wait to enjoy our improved space together as a community."

Faust noted the library project is expected to be completed by June 1.

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)

of programs to get them off to a good start. Raffle tickets are \$10 each, or 10 for \$75, and all proceeds benefit ACPC. The winner will be drawn at a community celebration at Notte in Middlebury on Thursday, March 12, at 6 p.m. You don't need to be present to win. There will also be door prizes for attendees. You can purchase your raffle tickets at tinyurl.com/bdcwb298.

After a successful 2025 CommuniTEA Fundraiser that netted \$1,300 for downtown Vergennes gardens, organizers are back for 2026 with another such event — set for Sunday, March 29, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Little City's Gather Vermont — aimed at raising money to upgrade the City Hall entrance gardens. Your \$65 CommuniTEA ticket covers a donation to the Vergennes Partnership's flower fund, an afternoon tea service with delicious products provided by local sponsors, a chance to win beautiful prizes, and a special gift bag containing multiple handcrafted items for all guests. Seating is limited to only 30 guests. This year's CommuniTEA funds will be used entirely to enhance the eastern entrance into downtown, with the specific focus

here on a complete overhaul of the two long-neglected garden beds in front of city hall. The project will include removing several years of accumulated mulch, installing drip lines, planting a mix of low-maintenance perennials, potentially adding retention borders, and planting annuals for immediate impact. To purchase CommuniTEA tickets and for more information, go to vergennesdowntown.org/communittea. You can also purchase them in person at Gather Vermont at 135 Main St., Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bristol's Lawrence Memorial Library at 40 North St. is girding for some much-needed repairs and upgrades, and that will mean a temporary interruption of library services. The building will close to the public for Silver Maple Construction to complete all interior work. The library's last day of in-person service will be March 10, with a reopening (and a start of exterior work) expected at the start of May. In anticipation of the March 10 closure, interlibrary loan requests were paused on Feb. 25. Bring back any materials you don't want to keep during the closure by dropping them off during regular hours or placing them in the library's book drop at the

back entrance by March 10. Once the library is closed, don't return materials to the facility as staff won't be able to readily access the building to tend to them. Get more details about the construction project at lawrencelibraryvt.org.

Vermont's revenue collections for the month of January reveal the state's General, Transportation and Education Fund receipts were a combined \$378.85 million, which were \$330,000 (0.09%) below the state's \$379.17 million target for January, as forecasted by the Emergency Board. Total General Fund revenues for January were \$274 million, which were \$1.41 million (0.5%) below the \$275.44 million monthly cash flow target. Transportation Fund revenues were \$22.8 million, which was \$500,000 (2.1%) below target. And the January Education Fund revenues of \$82 million were \$1.56 million, or 1.9%, above their January cash flow target of \$80.46 million. Vermont Secretary of Administration Sarah Clark said, "Actual revenues to the Education Fund remain ahead of their forecasted target. General Fund and Transportation Fund revenues are behind their January targets for the year-to-date, but in each case, the shortfall represents less than half of a percentage point from the expected cumulative total."



Dancer in training

SIX-YEAR-OLD LEILA SMITS of Shoreham has pom-poms ready to cheer for the Tigers hip-hop dance team at the state championship at VUHS on Saturday. Behind her is Ada Gallagher, 7, of Killington, who was ready with a bouquet for her friend Madelyn Brochu, one of the MUHS dancers. Independent photo/Steve James

Closet

(Continued from Page 1A)

Wright explained. "I really feel like it is moving in that direction, which is really awesome."

She said the idea for the closet was inspired by the annual Prom Swap at Mt. Abe, organized by the Environmental Action Group that Wright is a member of. Through the event, community members can donate gently-used clothing and later peruse donated formal wear for free.

"I was thinking, 'Hey, you know, it might be a good idea to have this be a full-time thing instead of just this one event that happens,'" Wright recalled.

Wright discussed the idea with Principal Shannon Warden and began collecting clothing donations. She received additional support from the facilities team and an educator at the school in finding a space for

the closet. The Community Closet is located in a classroom, where Wright noted students can access items when a need arises by connecting with the classroom teacher.

Additionally, Wright will bring items from the closet out to the school lobby for "thrifting times" every other week. Those pop-ups take place during students' lunch break and are open to all members of the school community.

"What I didn't want the project to be was directly targeted toward just people in need because I don't think that that is necessarily the most positive message," Wright said.

"I didn't want it to be embarrassing for people to come or have people feel badly about just them being there. The most successful times are when it's completely open in the lobby for both high school and middle school

and everyone can come through." Wright has already hosted a pop-up closet and said students' feedback has been positive.

"It's kind of going exactly in the direction that I wanted it to go in," she said.

Wright accepts donations of gently used clothing items that are wearable for ages 13-18 and free from rips, stains and other damage.

"Currently, I'm only bringing out the more winter items like sweatshirts, sweatpants, jeans, etc.," she said, noting that warmer weather apparel will come out for pop-ups in the spring.

Wright said she'll continue operating the Community Closet throughout the school year, with a rising freshman at Mt. Abe planning to take over the effort in the fall.

So far, she noted the initiative is off to a good start.

"It was nice to see everyone be able to come together and shop at the same time and have a mutual thing that everybody was happy to be doing and connecting about," Wright said.

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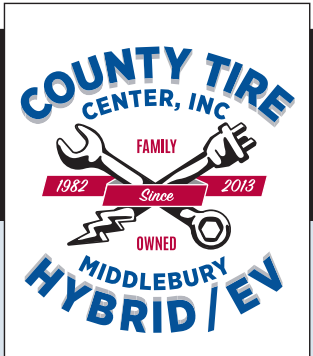
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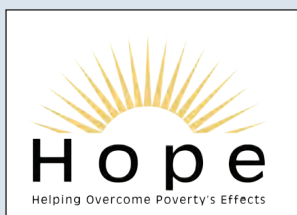
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Cox

(Continued from Page 1A)
 that's put the board in flood-crisis mode several times during her tenure.

"We joked we'd all serve 25 years and then leave all at once," Cox said with a smile.

The trio would certainly achieve longevity. Ford would step down after 23 years. Wimett, the longtime owner of the Ripton General Store, passed away suddenly in 2021 after 35 years on the selectboard.

Forty years after being sworn in, Cox is the last remaining member of the "class of '86." She's Ripton's longest serving selectboard member.

But that will end this coming March 3. Cox isn't seeking another term, saying it's time for new blood on a selectboard that's been getting a gradual transfusion.

"Giles Hoyler and Bill Hunsinger are capable people," she said of her two current, younger colleagues. "When I realized three years ago that it was going to be 40 years for me coming up, I thought it would be a good time for someone else to come along."

Residents Milo Tudor and Brooke Wilcox are vying for the three-year term Cox is vacating.

The winner will have immense shoes to fill.

Cox, a Middlebury College grad, has accumulated a civic resume that's almost as expansive as the hilly, picturesque woodlands that dominate the landscape of the town she's helped lead all these years.

Ripton has accomplished much during Cox's selectboard tenure, including striking a more lucrative gift-in-lieu-of-taxes (GILT) agreement with Middlebury College; moving the town offices across Route 125 into what was the former one-room Ripton Elementary School; helping the town office enter the computer era; shepherding the town through a staggering 11 floods that qualified for federal resources to help rebuild roads and bridges; and planning construction of a new municipal fire station and sand/salt shed.

Cox has also played a role in protecting the small community from actions she believed would detract from its vitality and quality of life. She objected to two federal attempts to close the Ripton Post Office and embraced the town's effort to keep its elementary school open in the face of declining enrollment and possible closure by the Addison Central School District. The fate of Ripton's school will be decided by

ACSD voters on March 3. If voters agree to formally close the school, Ripton will be able to reacquire that property from the ACSD.

And guess who's already volunteered to be on a committee that will help the town decide how to use the school property if it's indeed conveyed to the town?

Laurie Cox, of course. She'll be doing it for future generations of Ripton families. Her and her husband Mac's two sons both attended Ripton Elementary.

"They got a really good education there, and they weren't the only ones," Laurie said. "I was really concerned — and I still am but am more hopeful — that losing the school would pretty much gut the community. We're hoping we can fill that gap. It's hard to know how (not having an elementary school) impacts who wants to move to a community — particularly one that's a bit more isolated here in the mountains."

Cox has never had a problem filling the hours in a day — even following her retirement several years ago as a longtime elementary school guidance counselor with the then-Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union.

Prior to joining the selectboard, Cox had served as a Ripton Library Trustee from 1979-1984. She then served on a committee that during the mid-1980s helped plan for a new elementary school building at 753 Lincoln Road. She served as a trustee of Ripton's Spirit in Nature Interfaith Path sanctuary, the Friends of Ripton Students board, supported the Middlebury-area Save Our Schools group, and is active with the Ripton Social Committee. She and her husband — who settled in Ripton in 1978 — hosted Cornfest, an annual community party from 1994-2024, and last year hosted "Andersfest 2025" in support of a local family.

Cox has also been an active volunteer with her church, Habitat for Humanity of Addison County, sings with Maiden

Vermont, and she writes a regular "Ways of Seeing" column for the *Independent*.

She stressed she couldn't have done all she's been able to do without a supportive family, her selectboard colleagues and a small, hardworking municipal staff headed by Ripton Town Clerk/Town Administrator Alison Joseph Dickinson. The selectboard created the administrative role to allow them to focus more on policy. Dickinson's varied duties include researching and following up on grant applications.

"Quite frankly, nobody in their right mind would have stayed on this board for 40 years if we didn't have someone doing (administrative chores), and Alison is stellar," Cox stressed.

While seated in her familiar chair in the Ripton town office, Cox took a moment to reflect on the hundreds of selectboard meetings she's attended on behalf of the community's 745 residents. The board has always met on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, and Cox — who's chaired the panel since 2009 — never took the responsibility lightly.

"I'm big on stability and seeing things through," she said.

Being so invested in the community has allowed her to meet, and get to know, many of her fellow townspeople. She forged enduring friendships with a lot of those folks, and in particular the town officials with whom she's served.

"You sit with somebody twice a month for a few hours, along with a few other meetings tossed into the mix over all that time, and you get a camaraderie that's there," Cox said.

It's a board that's worked hard and successfully for its residents through the years. A prime example was the GILT agreement with the college. Cox explained that when she, Ford and Wimett joined the board, they became aware of a prevailing town-gown GILT that



DURING LAURIE COX'S tenure on the board, Ripton has struck a more lucrative gift-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement with Middlebury College, moved the town offices across Route 125 into what was the former one-room Ripton Elementary School, and shepherded the town through a staggering 11 floods.

Independent photo John Flowers

had originally been forged in around 1961 and was paying the town very little in recognition of the tax-exempt status of a considerable chunk of the institution's Ripton real estate. Ripton is home to the college's Bread Loaf campus, among other assets.

Cox said she and her colleagues looked to modernize the agreement, hired a lawyer, and held meetings with college brass.

"We were a different group of people than they had dealt with before," Cox said. "We started negotiating on another level."

When all was said and done, the two parties came up with a 10-year GILT pact that's been renewed several times, most recently last year. That agreement will see the institution pay the municipality more than \$218,000 during each of the next 10 years.

Cox and other Ripton officials have also spent a lot of time during the past decade marshalling resources to rebuild Ripton infrastructure following flood events that have roiled the Middlebury River that runs abreast of Route 125. Cox continues to believe that resurrecting the so-called Old Town Road — as an emergency vehicle alternative from Ripton

to Middlebury — would be a logical move.

"You have to make decisions, or the river will make them for you," she warned.

Ever the organized person, Cox marks up her calendar so she can remember her commitments. She reflexively marked off the second and fourth Mondays of this March as "selectboard meeting" days, then did a double-take.

"That's not me," she said while correcting the calendar.

But she'll still make occasional appearances — this time as a constituent.

She departs the board with no regrets.

"For the most part, it's something I've really enjoyed doing," she said.

Cox also credited her board work with helping her become more extroverted.

"I was not initially someone who felt comfortable going up to someone at town meeting and saying, 'Hi, I'm Laurie, who are you?'" she said. "At some point that changed. When I go to town meeting and see someone I haven't met yet, I talk to them. It's allowed me to put myself out there a bit."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Shoreham school

(Continued from Page 1A)
 measuring up in such categories as math, literacy and science to flag — and remediate — deficiencies in schools. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 calls on schools to ensure that all children have equal access to a high-quality education, while also placing a premium on reducing achievement gaps.

Among other things, ESSA requires states to adopt rigorous academic standards, while developing "accountability systems that incorporate multiple measures of school performance, including academic achievement, graduation rates, progress of English learners, and at least one indicator of school quality or student success," according to the AOE.

Schools identified as not making the grade are allocated additional funds and resources — primarily through the federal Title 1 program — to get student learning back on track.

In the latest Vermont State Report Card, Shoreham Elementary was identified as one of 12 schools with "both low overall performance in 2024-2025 and declining performance relative to 2023-2024," according to the document. Evaluators made that finding in large part based on Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) scores logged by Shoreham students.

Shoreham students' recent struggles are concerning news — but not a revelation — to Addison Central School District officials who've kept track of the VTCAPS scores and are taking steps to boost student achievement. To that end, the ACSD board last fall decided to merge the Shoreham and Bridport K-5 student bodies at Bridport Central School beginning this fall. The merger will allow single-grade instruction for the combined student body; whereas multi-age groupings would otherwise have been needed if both schools had operated K-5 programming.

"We're an open book, in terms

of how we do things," ACSD Superintendent Wendy Baker said in reaction to the report card findings. "We've worked hard and made some tough decisions to (bring) all the supports we can think of to be available to students who we'd like to see make accelerated progress next year. But there are always things we might not be thinking of or decisions we might want to consider. A partnership with the state will allow us to do that."

Baker added it remains to be seen what the promised "comprehensive support and improvement assistance" from the state will be, in terms of financing and/or professional reinforcements. She does however expect the state support will last for three years.

"We'll have conversations (with the AOE) this spring," she said.

You can find your school's Vermont State Report Card performance rating at tinyurl.com/8p3zy8v3.

Supervisory unions and supervisory districts also receive an overall performance rating based on applicable indicators, determined by the grade levels the district operates and the presence or absence of English learners. Also, publicly funded students enrolled in independent schools are required to participate in state assessments and their results are reported with the sending SU/SD. The change in the rating from the prior year is then calculated by the AOE.

According to the report card rating system, the Addison Northwest School District is "approaching" state standards, up from a "declining" rating three years ago; the Addison Central SD and Mount Abraham Unified SD are both rated "approaching," up from "not improving"; Otter Valley Unified Union School District is rated as "approaching," up from "declining"; and the Lincoln SD is rated as "meeting" state standards, up from "improving."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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TIGER SENIOR MARY Harrington, left, skis across the open field at the Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton on Thursday on her way to winning the Division-2 girls' 5K races on Thursday. Middlebury Union High School sophomore Jorgen Pirrung shows the drive that enabled him to earn Division-II titles in freestyle and classic Nordic ski races in the past week. Here he is racing at Rikert on Feb. 19, when he won by 11 seconds; on Tuesday in Craftsbury he extended his victory margin to 20 seconds.

Independent photos/Angelo Lynn

Tiger skiers win state skiing competitions

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
ADDISON COUNTY — Local high school skiers accumulated 10 top-10 finishes over the course of the two-day state Nordic skiing competition. Middlebury Union High School sophomore Jorgen Pirrung was the most prominent among them — he won individual titles in both the Division II freestyle and classic competitions. He wasn't the only local titlist. MUHS senior Mary Harrington

took the top spot in freestyle race at Ripton's Rikert Outdoor Center on Feb. 19 and second place in classic cross-country discipline at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center on Tuesday, Feb. 24. The Tigers' four four-person relays were also successful. The girls took third in the freestyle and fourth in the classic. The boys earned fourth in freestyle and second in classic. "Our experienced skiers really performed well and our newer

skiers rose admirably to two very challenging days of skiing with impressive results both days," Coach Laura McIntosh said. "As coaches, we are very proud of all of them." This past Thursday at Rikert, Harrington and Pirrung beat out 54 and 67 skiers, respectively, to be the fastest skaters on the 5K course. Harrington finished the three-climb course in 15:00.8, about 36 seconds ahead of the second

place finisher from Woodstock. Pirrung's time of 13:10.9 the 2nd place finisher, from Montpelier. "It's fun having states at our home course, on this beautiful day," said Harrington, who took second place to another MUHS skier in the event last year. "I've skied at Rikert my whole life." While Pirrung, who took seventh in freestyle as a freshman, is only halfway through his high school skiing career, Harrington (See Nordic, Page 3B)

MUHS, VUHS girls head to quarterfinals



By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
ADDISON COUNTY — The girls' basketball teams from Middlebury and Vergennes union high schools won their first playoff games on Tuesday night, earning spots in the Division II and Division III quarterfinals, respectively. The Tigers' victory, though, ended the season for the team from Mount Abraham Union High School, which suffered its third loss of the season to Middlebury. Here's how local teams did this past week:
MUHS
 Before their Feb. 24 home playoff game, the Tigers won and dropped home games on Feb. 18 and 20. MUHS beat Winooski in the

first game, 44-23. Sophomore Sophie Simpson scored the Tigers' high scorer (11 points). Sophomore co-captain Louisa Orten had 10, sophomore Lillian Paquette had 7, sophomore Willow Heywood had 7 and junior co-captain Isabel Quinn had 6. The Tigers then fell to Milton a second time this season. The score on Feb. 20 was 47-38. Orten scored 24 points and Quinn had 8. No. 5-seeded MUHS looked good on Tuesday when they hosted the No. 12 Eagles. Orten put up another 13 points against Mt. Abe. (See Girls' hoop, Page 4B)

Tiger boys' hoop ending regular season on a high

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
ADDISON COUNTY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' basketball team has won three games in the past week, earning the Tigers a five-game winning streak and 11-8 record, with the playoffs beginning next week. The Vergennes boys won a game over a local rival and dropped another game. The squad from Mount Abraham dropped two. **MUHS**
 The Tigers on Feb. 19 defeated Milton for a second time this season. MUHS won on the road, 64-53. Three days later they trampled VUHS, 63-41, in Middlebury on Feb. 21. The victor was the same at their earlier meeting in Vergennes, except the Tigers only topped the Commodores by the margin of a single basket. Tiger senior co-captain Cooke Riney scored

28 points, junior Colin Chicoine scored 19 and junior co-captain Taylor Altemose scored 10. For the Commodores, senior Ryker Mosehauer scored 9 points. The Tigers continued the tear at home on Feb. 23 against Enosburg, who they beat 53-42. MUHS defeated that team in January, too. The Tigers are due to play their last regular season game on Thursday, Feb. 26 at home against Winooski. The Tigers fell in an earlier match with that team, 58-50. After that, playoffs start March 3 and 4. **VUHS**
 The Commodores overcame Mt. Abe 57-48 on Feb. 23. VUHS previously beat the Eagles in January, 78-54. In the February matchup, (See Boys' hoop, Page 4B)

Dancers claim hip hop title

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
VERGENNES — Performing to a Missy Elliot tune, Middlebury Union High School dancers hip-hopped their way to first place in that category during the state championships on Saturday. It's the Tigers first state win since 2012. "I'm incredibly proud of this team," Coach Ashley Grant said in an email. "It's an honor and such a heartwarming feeling to share this win with our amazing community of supporters, and to bring this title back HOME." The team's routine to Elliot's 2005 hit "Lose Control," was good to swipe first place from Mount Mansfield Union High School, which last year claimed the hip hop title, leaving the Tigers as runner-up in 2025. Lamoille took

third this past Saturday, and South Burlington took fourth. In addition to this year's hip-hop victory, the Tigers repeated their 2025 second-place finish in pom in the competition at Vergennes Union High School gym on Saturday. In the pom category, the Tigers danced to a mix including Sean Kingston's "Fire Burning," Dua Lipa's "Levitating," and Rihanna's "Don't Stop the Music." Grant said the Tigers gave "a fantastic performance to be proud of." South Burlington was the pom champion for a 10th year in a row. The Tigers have been vying with South Burlington for top spots in the two disciplines all season. In the third dance discipline, (See Hip Hop, Page 4B)



TIGER DANCE TEAM captains Jordyn Rushton (left) and Madelyn Brochu (right) hop over their teammates as part of MUHS's hip hop routine at the state championships at Vergennes Union High School. The Tigers performance was good for first place.

Independent photo/Steve James

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS	
Girls' Basketball	
2/18 Enosburg vs Mt Abe	47-37
2/18 VUHS vs Fairfax	72-30
2/18 MUHS vs Winooski	44-23
2/21 Milton vs MUHS	47-38
2/20 Twinfield at VUHS	Cancelled
2/21 Mt Abe vs Winooski	26-15
2/24 MUHS vs Mt. Abe	41-23
2/24 VUHS vs Fairfax	60-27
Boys' Basketball	
2/19 MUHS vs Milton	64-53
2/19 Enosburg vs Mt Abe	47-38
2/21 MUHS vs VUHS	63-41
2/23 MUHS vs Enosburg	53-42
2/23 VUHS vs Mt Abe	57-48
Boys' Hockey	
2/18 MUHS vs Missisquoi	7-3
2/21 MUHS vs St. J.	7-2
2/25 Milton at MUHS	Late
Girls' Hockey	
2/21 Sealakers vs MUHS	3-1
COLLEGE SPORTS	
Men's Hockey	
2/20 Amherst vs Midd	3-0
2/21 Midd vs Hamilton	2-1
Women's Hockey	
2/20 Midd vs Colby	3-2
2/21 Colby vs Midd	3-1



MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH School boys' hockey tests the St. Johnsbury goalie during a game at Memorial Sports Center on Saturday night. MUHS won 7-2, bringing their record to 11-6-1.

Independent photo/Steve James

MUHS boys' hockey hits streak with goals aplenty

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI
MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' hockey team hit a three-game winning streak on home ice with a 7-2 win against St. Johnsbury this past Saturday. That Feb. 21 match was one of the Tigers' last ahead of playoffs, which will begin next week. Senior Joe Sullivan said the MUHS team is feeling "pretty good" ahead of the ultimate competition this season. "In my four years of playing, this is the best I've felt going into playoffs," he said, attributing this confidence to the team's connection this season. "I've been playing with all these guys since I was, I don't know, nine years old. So we have a really good connection, and it just makes it so much easier to play well." Saturday's victory followed MUHS wins over Brattleboro (7-1

on Feb. 4), Hartford (4-0 on Feb. 14) and Missisquoi (7-3 on Feb. 18). Co-captain Sullivan kicked off scoring for the Tigers just three minutes into Saturday's game at Memorial Sports Center. He skated behind the Hilltoppers net, and from the left of the goal chipped the puck into the right side netting. Sophomore Case Pitner followed up six minutes later with a second tally. After receiving a pass in the center of the Tigers' offensive third from junior co-captain Gabriel Quesnel, Pitner skated a little further up the ice and placed a long range shot past the St. Johnsbury goalie. MUHS led, 2-0, going into the second period. The Tigers put away two more goals in the second 15 minutes of play before the Hilltoppers could get on the board. (See Streak, Page 4B)

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS	
Girls' Basketball	
2/27 MUHS at Fair Haven	7 p.m.
2/28 VUHS at TBD	2 p.m.
3/4 DII Semifinals in Barre	TBD
3/5 DIII Semifinals in Barre	TBD
3/7 DII Finals in Barre	3:45 PM
3/7 DIII Finals in Barre	7:30 PM
Boys' Basketball	
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
3/3&4 Playdowns	TBD
3/6&7 State Quarterfinals	TBD
3/9-11 State Semifinals	TBD
3/13&14 State Finals	TBD
Boys' Hockey	
2/28 MUHS at Burlington	4:50 PM
3/3&4	Playdowns
Girls' Hockey	
2/28 St Albans at MUHS	7 PM
3/3&4	Playdowns

(See Schedule, Page 4B)

Panther women's hockey nabs top NESCAC seed

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury College women's hockey team clinched the top seed in the NESCAC playoffs on Friday night with a hard fought 3-2 win over Colby.

"I'm feeling great," goalie Sophia Will said after the game. The senior played all 60 minutes, and had 28 saves.

"The team came out, we competed. We got down early, and then we put one away, and then we put another one away, and then we tied, but then we came back in the third and we scored, and then we locked in on (defense), and it was just a great team win."

Middlebury was 15-3-4 headed into the game, and Colby was 15-5-1.

It wasn't long before the Mules got on the board Friday night.

Just two minutes and 50 seconds in Colby scored off a shot attempt that rebounded off a Panther defender.

That goal jolted the host team awake. After the Panthers fended off the Mules during an early power play just a minute after the opening score, first year Jocelyn Means tied it up with her first Panther goal with 12:39 left in the period.

Means found herself with the puck right in middle of the Mules offensive third, after getting the

puck from junior Kate Flynn, who got it from senior Avery McNerny. McNerny had three assists that night, and so far this season has 20. Means blasted the puck into the upper right corner of the net from long-range.

Seven minutes later the Panthers took the lead after capitalizing just seconds into a powerplay. After the puck bounced around near the Mules goal from junior Olivia McManus to McNerny, McNerny got it back out to first year Trinity Walsh, who from the right of the net got a shot off from mid-range and it went into the net.

A second powerplay followed right after the first ended, but the Panthers weren't able to widen the lead.

The Panthers finished the period with 10 shots to the Mules' eight.

Despite taking their game-high 15 shots to Colby's 11 in the second period, Middlebury only kept a one-goal lead for the majority of it and let one in by the end.

The Panthers came out with speed and energy and opened up several opportunities early on.

Four Panthers on the ice killed another penalty 11:06 in, but five minutes later and back to full strength let one through.

Though Middlebury had outshot the Mules 11-5 just over 16 minutes, with just under four minutes to go in the second period Colby tied it, 2-2, after just their sixth on-frame shot of the period.

With less than 20 seconds to go, the Panthers found themselves scrambling in front of the Colby net with a mass of players trying to either nudge the puck in or keep it out for 5-10 seconds. Nothing came of it, sending the two teams into the third period tied.

The Mules outshot the Panthers 11-9 in the final frame. With 12:05 remaining, the Panthers got lucky when a Colby shot ricocheted off of the post.

Will had 11 of her 28 saves in the final 20 minutes.

With about eight and a half minutes to go, the Panthers broke out of their defensive third and charged into Colby's in a 4-on-3

attack.

A mass of players ended up scrambling in front of the net for the puck, before a Panther was able to pull it out of the fray and get a short-range shot off from the left of the net.

Amid the bobbling that followed, sophomore Olivia Gordon got the puck to McNerny, who got the puck to Flynn for a goal right in front of the net. Middlebury led, 3-2.

With about seven minutes to go, the Panthers found themselves needing to kill another penalty.

About a minute into the Colby powerplay, Will saved a powerful shot with her pad.

Ten seconds later, the Panthers bench erupted in cheers as the four players on the ice were able to get the puck away from the net and chip away at some time on the penalty minutes.

The Panthers almost had to play down by a second player after another foul was called with about six minutes left in the game, but right after Colby was called for a penalty. For about 19 more seconds the Panthers played down a player, and then were back to 4-on-4 with five minutes left.

With about a minute and a half on the clock, both teams back to full strength, Colby pulled their goalie to get some extra strength on offense. With 35 seconds left Colby called a timeout to try to put together a last-ditch effort for overtime. Immediately after, Middlebury called a time-out themselves.

The Panthers knew they had gotten the win about two seconds before the buzzer went off, having sent the puck down the ice and out of their defensive zone.

"(I'm) just excited to see how far we can go, and again, just taking it one game at a time," Will said after the game.

Coach Bill Mandigo said Will plays a big role as far as defense goes, especially since three of the five defenders are first-years.

"Having her back there helps a lot," he said.

After the game, Mandigo said he (See NESCAC, Page 4B)



PANTHER HOCKEY PLAYERS watch as the puck soars past Colby's goalie during Friday night's game at Chip Kenyon Arena. Middlebury won, 3-2, in an exciting game.

Independent photo/Steve James



PANTHER GOALIE SOPHIA Will pulls in the puck depriving visiting Colby a much-needed goal on Friday night. Middlebury won that game, 3-2, but the Mules won a rematch on Saturday, 3-1.

Independent photo/Steve James

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Middlebury Winter Carnival 2026

THE MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE skiing teams excelled on their home turf this past weekend, grabbing top-three finishes in five of the eight disciplines to claim runner-up honors in the EISA Championships. Dartmouth earned its fourth carnival victory of the year, scoring 982.5 points, followed by the Panthers with 808.5 points. UVM was third with 776. Nordic events were contested at the Rikert Outdoor Center and Alpine races at the Snowbowl.

Above, Panther first year Reagan Harrison glides through Saturday's slalom, earning fifth place in a tie with fellow first year Sophia Palmquist and a New Hampshire skier. In Friday's giant slalom Middlebury sophomore Kjersti Moritz pulled out all the stops and won.

Right, Middlebury senior Mason Wheeler finished fourth in Friday's 7.5 km individual start with a time of 21:18.7. He led the Panthers to second place as a team. In Saturday's 20 km race, Wheeler earned 10th place in 50:50.1; the squad as fifth as a whole.

Independent photos/Angelo Lynn



Nordic

(Continued from Page 1B) is moving up to the collegiate level next winter. She was recruited to ski on the University of Vermont Division I cross country ski team.

The D-II individual winners weren't the only local skiers to find success at Rikert on Thursday. June Yates-Rusch, a Mount Abraham Union High School senior who trains and attends races with MUHS, got eighth with a time of 17:12.9. Vergennes racer Ellie Eckles was 28th.

The other finishers for the MUHS girls' team were sophomore Meredith Carr-Perlow in 26th, freshman Avery Thompson, 27, sophomore Sadie Jette, 37, and freshman Penny Lickun, 48.

After Pirrung, the Tiger boys' finishers were junior Nate Cook-Yoder in 24th, senior Kaden Hammond, 27, and junior Graeham Zieger, 52.

The Tiger relay teams both finished in the top five on Thursday. Carr-Perlow, Jette, Thompson and Harrington took third place in the DII girls' relay in 34:14.1.

Cook-Yoder, Zieger, Hammond and Pirrung competed in the

freestyle relay and placed fourth with a time of 28:37.2.

The winner of the girls' relay was a quartet from Woodstock, followed by Montpelier in second. And the boys' relay winner was Stowe, followed by Peoples Academy and Montpelier.

OLYMPIAN 'AT' RIKERT

Former Ripton resident Pennie Rand served as announcer for the Riker festivities on Thursday. Rand secured an audio address from Vermonter Ben Ogden, who won two silver medals at the Olympics in Milan Cortina this month.

Ogden wished all the Vermont high school skiers good luck in the state meet races and urged them to also have fun.

Rand played the recording across the public address system multiple times to the delight of spectators and athletes alike.

Then on Tuesday, the skiers headed to the Craftsbury Outdoor Center to compete in classic. Pirrung, who placed eighth in the race last year, said this is the style he favors.

"It's like what I grew up on," he said. "It's what I've always been

better at."

He proved how much better in the Tuesday 5K in Craftsbury.

Pirrung beat 59 other racers with his 14:53.9 time, about 20 seconds ahead of the runner-up from People's Academy.

In her race, Harrington finished second, as she did last year, in the 53-person girls' field. Her time of 16:49.5 was about 20 seconds behind the winner from U-32.

Mount Abe's Yates-Rusch had another top-10 finish. Her 18:28.5 time was good for sixth.

Other finishers in Tuesday's classic race were:

Girls: Carr-Perlow, 21st (21:06.4); Eckels, 22nd (21:30.9); Thompson, 33rd (23:38.8); Jette, 42nd (25:25.7); and Lickun, 44th (26:41.0).

Boys: sophomore Gabe Perchemlides, 18th (17:20.7); Cook-Yoder, 30th (18:44.1); Hammond, 33rd (19:05.1); and Zieger, 42nd (20:29.5).

The Tiger quartet of Cook-Yoder, Hammond, Perchemlides and Pirrung finished their second place relay in 29:19.6. Springfield took first (28:12.4) and People's was third (29:34.0).

The girls' relay of Carr-Perlow, Jette, Thompson, and Harrington finished fourth in 37:11.7. Woodstock took first (32:41.6), Montpelier was second (33:36.7) and People's took third (36:45.9).

"The relay is one of my favorite parts of the race," McIntosh said. "As it was abundantly clear that each skier was skiing for more than themselves, they were finding extra grit and speed to benefit their whole team."

Local skiers aren't quite done with their season yet.

Pirrung and Harrington are bound for the U.S. Junior National Championships as members of the New England team in Cable, Wis., starting March 9.

The pair, plus Perchemlides and Yates-Rusch are also headed to the Eastern High School Championships at Gore Mountain in New York from March 6-8.

Perchemlides, Carr-Perlow and Thompson will be members of the Vermont State U16 team, which competes at the Eastern U16 Championships in Oak Hill, N.H. That competition is March 13-15.



MT. ABE NORDIC skier June Yates-Rusch gets some momentum from a downhill portion of the freestyle course at the Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton during the state competition on Feb. 19. She placed eighth in for Division II, and took sixth in the classic cross country ski competition on Tuesday in Craftsbury.

Independent photo/Angelo Lynn



MUHS NORDIC SKIER Kaden Hammond starts his leg of the boys Division II freestyle relay as teammate Graeham Zieger finishes his leg on Feb. 19 at the Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton. A Tiger foursome earned fourth.

Independent photo/Angelo Lynn



LOCAL GYMNASTS GET ready to compete at the state meet in St. Johnsbury on Saturday, Feb. 21. MUHS placed seventh.

Submitted photo

Local gymnasts compete at state meet

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ST. JOHNSBURY — The Middlebury Union High School gymnastics team closed its season on Saturday, Feb. 21, with the state meet in St. Johnsbury.

"Overall, all the kids did amazing," Coach Natalia Little said. Her gymnasts were just nine out of 65 who showed off their handsprings, flips and leaps that day.

The MUHS team is primarily comprised of students who only compete during the high school season, whereas some other Vermont squads are flush with athletes on year-round club teams.

Considering this level of competition at states, Little said each year her team goes into the meet with this goal: to keep their seed, or move up a spot.

Her gymnasts achieved the latter.

The team was seeded eighth out of nine teams, and finished the day in seventh, which Little said was a big team accomplishment. The Tiger gymnasts accumulated

101.025 points.

The host team, St. Johnsbury, took the title with 145.875. Essex was the runner-up with 140.100 points. Brattleboro was third with 134.975.

Isabella Audy, a junior who attends Vergennes Union High School but trains and competes with MUHS, placed 25th in all around (27.75), 26th on vault (7.50), 29th on bars (5.55), 22nd on beam (7.85) and 34th on floor (6.85).

Here's how Tiger gymnasts finished:

- Senior Alexis Williams: 30th in all around (26.475), 32nd on vault (6.8), 27th on bars (5.65), 31st on beam (7.2) and 35th on floor (6.825).

- Freshman Ruby Murphy: 36th in all around (24.85), 35th on vault (6.35), 31st on bars (5.3), 43rd on beam (6.4), 36th on floor (6.8).

- Junior Nataly Johnson: 35th on vault (6.35), 30th on bars (5.35) and 29th on beam (7.3).

- Freshman Helen Quayle: 38th on vault (6.1), 41st on bars (3.95),


and 44th on floor (5.5).

- Senior Emily Johnson: 37th on vault (6.2), 42nd on bars (3.8) and 45th on floor (5.3).

- Sophomore Leah Warner: 39th on vault (5.7) and 34th on beam (6.95).

- Senior Mady Richard: 37th on beam (5.75, PR) and 37th on floor (6.7).

- Junior Lila Hescocock: 37th on bars (4.75) and 41st on floor (6.1).



Upcoming Events

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
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

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

Tuesday, March 10:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Thursday, March 12:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating



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NESCAC

(Continued from Page 2B)
 was happy for his players.
 “Pretty happy for the kids that they pull out a win, and they worked hard ... pretty young group, but they’ve been pretty resilient throughout the year, and they’ve grown and learned, and they’re fun group to coach,” he said.
 This team’s experience level has advised his coaching this season.
 “When you play good teams, there are NCAA ramifications, so you gotta show up ... You’re just trying to focus on what’s right in front of them not the big picture,”

he said.
 That was his mindset when asked about playoffs.
 “We’re gonna worry about tomorrow ... we don’t even know who we’re gonna play.”
 The Panthers and Mules played a second game on Saturday in Kenyon Arena, but the Panthers lost, 3-1.
 The two teams could meet again in the NESCAC playoffs. But first, the Panthers must get past Trinity, who took the eighth and lowest seed. The bracket was set on Sunday.

The Panthers beat Trinity 6-2 and 4-1 in back-to-back games in Connecticut this month. Middlebury is 16-4-4, and Trinity is 7-14-3. The game starts at 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 28.
 Before the Panther women take the ice on Saturday, the men’s hockey team, seeded fourth, will play a NESCAC quarterfinal game against Wesleyan, who are 9-15-0, in Kenyon Arena at 1 p.m. The Middlebury men, who finished the season 13-8-3, lost to that team 2-4 in Connecticut last month, but beat them 5-2 in February on home ice.



TIGER SENIOR JOE Sullivan scores the game opener against St. Johnsbury on Saturday night. The Tigers won 7-2, bringing their record to 11-6-1.

Independent photo/Steve James

Streak

(Continued from Page 1B)
 Within the first minute, sophomore Evan Northrup got a pass from Pitner, turned with the puck toward the goal, and slipped it between the St. Johnsbury goalie’s legs.
 The Hilltoppers got a breakaway chance a couple of minutes later, but a Tiger defender was able to get in between him and the net, and senior goalie TJ Baron saved the shot.
 Shortly after, a Hilltopper followed up with a powerful shot that Baron deflected.
 Two minutes after that attempt, Tiger senior Jaxson Heffernan got the puck from junior Jase Kozak and shot for a goal with about

10-and-a-half minutes remaining. Tigers led, 4-0.
 The rest of the period was scoreless until just over three minutes left, when St. Johnsbury got on the board for the first time, making it 4-1.
 The team got a second goal quickly in the third and final period.
 About a minute and a half into the period Baron deflected the puck after a St. J player skated right up to the net.
 But shortly after, a Hilltopper slipped in a mid-range shot off a pass across the net, bringing the score to 4-2.
 “It was nice to answer after that second goal; 4-2, little scary,” said Coach Jordan Stearns.
 “To come back and score three is a great way to respond.”
 Seconds after the Hilltoppers got their second goal, Quesnel hit a mid-range shot from the left of the net that hit the crossbar and then the post, and just barely crossed the line. He was assisted by Pitner.
 Already with a 5-2 cushion, senior Ethan Mulcahy scored a

sixth Tigers goal off an assist from senior co-captain Sutton Rubright.
 Mulcahy scored again with just 16 seconds left in the game, slipping in a backhand shot at close range.
 The 7-2 win brought the Tigers record to 11-6-1.
 After the game, Sullivan said the team has recently found some scoring stride.
 “I think it’s getting goals, significantly more goals over the past couple, like four games especially, I think, last game we also scored seven goals,” he said.
 The Tigers have one more game on Saturday, Feb. 28, against D-I Burlington, who MUHS beat 5-2 in January, before the playoffs kick off next week.
 “We’re feeling pretty good,” Stearns said.
 “I think if we can keep this rolling, win our last two, we’ll be in really good shape. I think we’ll finish somewhere in the middle of the seeding, but I think we’re going to be a sneaky good team in that regard.”

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TIGER DANCE CO-CAPTAIN Jordyn Rushton’s hair flies as she dances during MUHS’s hip hop routine at the state championships at Vergennes Union High School. The Tigers’ performance was good for first.

Independent photo/Steve James

Hip Hop

(Continued from Page 1B)
 Jazz, Mt. Mansfield prevailed, followed by Lamoille and BFA St. Albans.

Members of the Tiger dance team who took part in Saturday’s hip hop routine were senior Madelyn Brochu; junior Jordyn Rushton; sophomores Ellie Conklin, Coralyn Conrad, Harper Hendy, Akirah Lalumiere and Ava Whelan; and ninth-grader Grace Mical. For the Pom performance, those eight were joined by juniors Kayla Haugan and Isobela Osborne, as well as sophomore Bea Deering.

The dancers weren’t just contending with fierce competition.
 “We had a pretty rough start to the season due to the flu and other illness essentially wiping out the team and setting us back a couple of crucial weeks,” Grant said.
 “When we finally got back on our feet as a team, the dancers dug in when it mattered most.”

Next, the Tigers take their routine on the road to Massachusetts on March 14 for



TIGER CO-CAPTAIN MADELYN Brochu is held up by her dance teammates during the state championships at Vergennes Union High School on Saturday. MUHS won the hip hop category.

Independent photo/Steve James

Girls’ hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)
 The Tigers won, 41-23. Quinn had 12 and Heywood had 9.

For the Eagles, Gen Forand scored 7 points.

MUHS takes on No. 4 Fair Haven, who had a first-round bye, in the quarterfinals on Friday, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m. in Fair Haven. The Tigers, who finished the regular season 15-5, lost to Fair Haven by a hair (39-34) in January.

The winner of that game will play in the D-II semifinal in Barre on March 4.

VUHS
 The Commodores finished the regular season on Feb. 18 with

a 72-30 home win over Fairfax, who they also beat in January. This win brought VUHS to 15-4 for the regular season. Senior co-captain Ashtin Stearns had the game high 18 points. Freshman Ayla Kittredge had 13, and junior Georgia Krause had 11.

The No. 5 seed Commodores played No. 12 Fairfax again in their first post-season game, defeating the Bullets, 60-27, on Tuesday. Stearns put up 21 points, Krause had 12 points and Kittredge had 11. VUHS heads to the quarterfinals on Saturday, Feb. 28, against the winner of a Wednesday night game of Bellows Falls vs. Winooski.

Saturday’s game will be played at 2 p.m., though the location is not set.

Mt. Abe
 Before ending the season with the playoff loss to MUHS, Mt. Abe lost a game and won one.
 On Feb. 18 the Eagles fell, 47-37, to Enosburg. Forand had the game-high 24 points. Mt. Abe lost to that team four days earlier on Valentine’s Day, 39-28.

The Eagles won their final game of the regular season, 26-15, over Winooski on Feb. 21. Senior co-captain Brooklyn Ryersbach had the high 11 points. Mt. Abe had fallen to Winooski earlier in the season.

Boys’ hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)
 Commodore junior **Cohen Howell** had the game-high 14 points. Mosehauer had 13, as did junior **Quinn LeBeau**.

Senior **Ryan Wright** put up 10 points.
 For the Eagles, senior **JaeQuin Tomasi** scored 13 points, junior **Jaran Griffin** had 12 and sophomore co-captain **Waydon Cherington** had 10.

VUHS has a home game against Enosburg on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. The Commodores previously beat that team, 50-28.

On Saturday, Feb. 28, they play at Otter Valley at 12:30 p.m. That is the 11-6 Commodores’ final game before playoffs begin next week.

Mt. Abe
 The Eagles fell to Enosburg, 47-28, on Feb. 19. Mt. Abe beat that team, 45-44, earlier in the season.

In the most recent game, sophomore **Noah Germon** had 11 points and senior co-captain **Charlie Germon** had 9.

The Eagles, who were 9-10 after their most recent game, host Milton on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. In their last meeting, Mt. Abe came out on top, 62-38.
 Playoff pairings will be announced on Monday.

2026 Area RABIES CLINICS

Clinics are open to all residents of any town. Dogs and cats only. For the safety of all, dogs should be leashed and cats in carriers. Please bring paper proof of previous rabies vaccination(s). \$20 per vaccine.
CASH only – exact change appreciated.

Lincoln Town Hall	Sat., March 7, 9:00 - 10:00 AM
Bridport Fire House	Sat., March 7, 10:00 AM - 12 Noon
Monkton Fire Station	Tues., March 10, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Leicester Town Office*	Tues., March 17, 5:00 - 7:00 PM
	Preferred: Dogs 5:00-6:30 Cats 6:30-7:00
(*Brandon, Goshen, and Salisbury) Town Clerks will also be on site for dog registrations.	
Orwell Town Office	Fri. March 27, 5:00 - 7:00 PM

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Schedule
 (Continued from Page 1B)

Wrestling
 2/27 & 28.....State Meet at CVU

COLLEGE SPORTS

Men’s Hockey
 2/28 Wesleyan at Midd..... 1 PM
 3/7 NESCAC Semifinal.....TBD
 3/8 NESCAC Final..... 2 PM

Women’s Hockey
 2/28 Trinity College at Midd..... 4:30 PM
 3/7 NESCAC Semifinal.....TBD
 3/8 NESCAC Final..... 2 PM

Baseball
 2/28 Colby-Sawyer at Midd..... 12 PM
 2/28 Colby-Sawyer at Midd..... 2:30 PM
 3/7 Midd at Emory University..... 12 PM
 3/7 Midd at Emory University..... 3 PM

Softball
 3/7 Platts. at Midd..... 10 am
 3/7 Platts. vs Clarkson at Midd 12:30 PM

Women’s Lacrosse
 2/28 Bowdoin at Midd..... 12 PM
 3/3 Midd at Skidmore..... 4:30 PM
 3/7 Midd at Conn College..... 12 PM

Men’s Lacrosse
 2/28 Midd at Bowdoin College..... 1 PM
 3/4 RPI at Midd..... 3 PM
 3/7 Conn College at Midd..... 1 PM



Monkton gears up for Town Meeting Day

MONKTON — The 2025 Town Report is in the mail. If you have not yet received one, you should soon.

Town Meeting is Saturday, Feb. 28, starting at 10 a.m. at the Monkton Central School. Join in on deciding the 2026 policies for the town, including finances for each department and social service donations, etc. Have a say in what goes on in your town. The warning remains to be on the back pages of your Town Report to give you the opportunity to be informed before attending the meeting. Please bring your Town Report with you to the meeting.

Because of Town Meeting, the monthly Poetry Club meeting has been changed to Saturday, March 7, at 10:30 a.m. in the Town Hall Community Room. Members should have received an email about the change. Anyone interested is always welcome. Contact Melanie Cote at cotem@ymail.com with questions.

Even though Town Meeting

Monkton

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

NEWS

is Saturday, polls will be open the usual first Tuesday of March, which falls on March 3 this year. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Town Hall for you to vote for town officers and school budgets for 2026.

Don't forget the weekly events at the library, including Toddler Storytime and Sunday Yoga with Eugenie Doyle. Monthly events include the Poetry Club, Weekend Morning Yoga and the Arts Club. Check with the Library at 802-453-4471 for info and more activities. Library hours remain on Tuesday and Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Bristol police investigate crash

BRISTOL — Bristol police on Feb. 11 investigated a parking lot crash on Mountain Street.

Between Feb. 8 and 14 Bristol police completed 26 foot patrols, conducted two traffic stops and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School seven times, at Bristol Elementary School seven times and at local businesses seven times. Police also processed eight fingerprint requests.

In other recent activity, Bristol police:

Bristol

Police Log

- On Feb. 8 assisted Bristol Rescue Squad on East Street.

- On Feb. 9 Bristol's community resource specialist helped someone with a late accident report.

- On Feb. 10 served court orders on someone on West Street.

- On Feb. 11 issued a parking violation for a vehicle parked in a marked fire lane on Airport Drive.

- On Feb. 14 responded to a dog roaming around on North Street.

- On Feb. 14 responded to a noise complaint on Main Street.

FRIDAY

Cards and boardgames with Steve and Lee in Middlebury. Friday, Feb. 27, and weekly on Fridays, 3-4:45 p.m., 17 Court St. Enjoy some afternoon cards or games. Hosted by the Community Bridges Project and Counseling Service of Addison County. Drop-ins welcome. Parking in back; use the front door facing the TenneyBrook convenience store. For questions, call Zylpha at 802-388-3093.

Annual Med47 Indoor Yard Sale in New Haven. Friday, Feb. 27, 2-7 p.m., New Haven Town Hall, 78 North St. A favorite winter treasure hunt with tables of well-sorted items, all clean and in good working order, from craft supplies to tools and more. Item donations accepted until the event if clean and working. Proceeds benefit the Brendan P. Cousino Med47 Foundation, which provides support and scholarships for firefighters, EMTs and their families. More info at 802-233-8334, med47foundation@gmail.com or the Med47 Facebook page.

All you can eat Friday fish fry in Bristol. Friday, Feb. 27, 5-7 p.m. St. Ambrose Parish Hall at the corner of School & West streets. Meal includes fried or baked haddock, french fries, coleslaw, fresh baked dinner roll, beverage & dessert. Adults-\$17, children 9 & under \$9, immediate family of five-\$50.

SATURDAY

Annual Med47 Indoor Yard Sale in New Haven. Saturday Feb. 28, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., New Haven Town Hall, 78 North St. See Feb. 27 listing.

Morning Community Yoga in Monkton. Saturday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m., Monkton Town Hall Community Room, 280 Monkton Ridge Rd. Slow-flow gentle yoga with Monkton resident and longtime yoga teacher Laurel Kelly. This donation-based class will support the Russell Memorial Library. Bring a yoga mat; blocks and straps will be provided. For more information, contact Laurel Kelly at laurelkelly.lk@gmail.com or 860-748-2806.

Poetry Club in Monkton. Saturday, Feb. 28, 10:30-11:45 a.m., Community Room, Monkton Town Hall. Join Melanie Cota for the monthly meeting of the Poetry Club. For more information contact Melanie at cotem@gmail.com.

Hygge Hangout in Vergennes. Saturday, Feb. 28, noon, Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Cozy afternoon inspired by hygge, the Danish art of comfort and coziness. Enjoy warm drinks, puzzles, board games and art in a relaxed, welcoming space. All ages welcome.

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" by James McBride. Part of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Winter Traveling Book Club. Free with registration. More info at lcmm.org.

King Pede card party in Ferrisburgh. Saturday, Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center, 3279 Route 7. The Ferrisburgh Grange hosts a King Pede card party beginning with a sandwich supper, followed by an evening of cards and games.

Cabin Fever Dance in Middlebury. Saturday, Feb. 28, 7-10:30 p.m., Middlebury VFW, Exchange St. Cabin Fever Dance featuring music by DJ Amanda Rock. Includes a 50/50 raffle and cash bar. Hosted by the Champlain Valley Association of Insurance Professionals. \$15 nonrefundable prepay before Feb. 23 or \$20 at the door. More info and prepay via Venmo @CabinfeverCVAIP.

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 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.

MONDAY

African Drumming for Beginners with Shelly in Middlebury. Monday, March 2, and weekly on Mondays, 2-3 p.m., 17 Court St. Learn West African drum rhythms. Some drums available or bring your own. Leave feeling energized! Hosted by the Counseling Service of Addison County, free and open to anyone. Drop-ins are welcome. Parking in back; use the front door opposite the TenneyBrook convenience store. For questions, call Zylpha 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.

Undercover Quilt Guild in Bristol. Monday, March 2, 6 p.m., Bristol American Legion, 56 Airport Dr. Undercover Quilters and Crafters meet on the first Monday of each month to share quilting, sewing, knitting and other fiber arts, along with friendship and community. All are welcome. Bring a show-and-tell item if you have one. For more information, contact stacie.ayotte@yahoo.com.

TUESDAY

Town Meeting Day. Don't forget to vote at your local polling place!
Working with Yarn and Other Crafts



Getting crafty

READY TO FINISH up the quilting, knitting or sewing projects you've been working on forever? Looking to connect with other crafters? Head to the Undercover Quilt Guild meeting at the Bristol American Legion at 6 p.m. on Monday to talk all things fiber arts, make progress on projects, and see what others are working on. And if you need more craft time, the Counseling Service of Addison County is hosting weekly drop-in craft sessions on Tuesdays in Middlebury at 3 p.m.

with Marie in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 3, and weekly on Tuesdays, 3-4:30 p.m., 17 Court St. Bring your own projects to work on in the company of others. Hosted by the Counseling Service of Addison County, free and open to anyone. Drop-ins are welcome. Parking in back; use the front door opposite the TenneyBrook convenience store. For questions, call Zylpha at 802-388-3093.

WEDNESDAY

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.

THURSDAY

Ilsley 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

FRIDAY

Cards and boardgames with Steve and Lee in Middlebury. Friday, March 6, and weekly on Fridays, 3-4:45 p.m., 17 Court St. Enjoy some afternoon cards or games. Hosted by the Community Bridges Project and Counseling Service of Addison County. Drop-ins welcome. Parking in back; use the front door facing the TenneyBrook convenience store. For questions, call Zylpha at 802-388-3093.

SATURDAY

March Madness Crafters Market in Middlebury. Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m., Middlebury VFW, 530 Exchange St. Shop work by local crafters and enjoy live music by Antara Gatch and Chris Cheney. Raffle to support local musicians. Hosted by the Middlebury Farmers market. Free. More info at middleburyfarmersmarket.org.

Winter Seed Sowing Workshop in New Haven. Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m., New Haven Congregational Church, 91 Town Hill Road. Plant seeds from around the church and grow them into seedlings ready for your garden using clean gallon milk jugs or plastic greens containers. Participants may bring their own containers or use those provided. More info at pastormewhavenchurchvt@gmail.com, 802-282-6944.

8th Annual LEGO Contest in Vergennes. Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m., Bixby Memorial Free Library, 258 Main St. Public viewing day for the annual LEGO Contest hosted by the Bixby Library and Vergennes Parks and Recreation. Winners announced during the event. LEGO creations may be dropped off March 4-5. Free. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

Fiber Crafts Collective in East Middlebury. Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m., Sarah Partridge Library, 431 East Main St. A welcoming fiber crafts gathering focused on creativity, shared learning and community connection. Participants work on knitting, crochet, weaving, spinning, sewing, embroidery, felting, macrame and more. All skill levels welcome. Free. More info at artfulsouventures@gmail.com.

Crafternoon in Brandon. Saturday, March 7, 1-3 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library, 4 Franklin St. A monthly crafting afternoon for all ages. Bring your own project or create something using library supplies. A different craft will be featured each month. Free.

SUNDAY

Charity fundraising breakfast in Bristol. Sunday, March 8, 7:30-10 a.m., or until sold out, Masons' Libanus Lodge, corner of North and Elm streets. The Bristol Masons host a monthly breakfast with proceeds benefiting a person or group in need in

the Five Town Area. Menu includes homemade corned beef hash, eggs, bacon, sausage, home fries, pancakes, blueberry pancakes, French toast with Vermont maple syrup and Cabot butter, juices, homemade apple bread pudding, coffee by Vermont Coffee Company and Maple Meadows Farm eggs. \$9 adults, \$5 children under 12.

The Pig Race in Goshen. Sunday, March 8, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Blueberry Hill Outdoor Center, 1288 Goshen-Ripton Rd. Revival of the classic Nordic ski Pig Race, founded in the 1970s, featuring self-timed courses of approximately 7.5- and 12-kilometers, a kids' race, optional jumps, obstacles and ungroomed trails. Kids' race starts at 11 a.m.; adult race at 11:30 a.m. Costumes encouraged. Race entry includes a post-race meal with fire-roasted pig, plus mac and cheese and vegetarian options. Meal-only tickets available. BYOB. Day-of registration begins at 10 a.m. Rain or shine. Prices range from \$15 for the kids race to \$45 for adult long course with meal. More info at blueberryhilltrails.com.

Introduction to maple sugaring in Leicester. Sunday, March 8, 1-3 p.m., Foxglove Farm, 777 Delorm Rd. Learn how maple syrup is made at this hands-on workshop from MALT, country forester Mark Raishart and Vermont Woodlands Association representative Catherine Raishart. Participants will learn to identify maple trees, set taps, collect sap and understand the basics of syrup making. Twenty free sugaring starter kits will be available, one per family while supplies last, thanks to Bread Loaf View Farm. Free. More info at maltvt.org.

TUESDAY

Garden Club Talk: "Pots with Pizzazz!" in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 10, 1 p.m., The Residence at Otter Creek, 350 Lodge Road. The Middlebury Garden Club presents a talk on container gardening by gardener, designer and author Jana Milbocke. Get new ideas for planning and creating dynamic container gardens. Free and open to the public.

Monthly Art Night in Monkton. Tuesday, March 10, 6-8 p.m. Russell Memorial Library, Monkton Ridge. Julie McGowan hosts on the second Tuesday of the month at the library. 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.

FRIDAY

Monkton Mount Abe Little League Registration Day in Monkton. Friday, March 13, 5-7 p.m., Monkton Central School Gym. Meet the coaches and ask any questions. For kids in kindergarten through 6th grade. For more info contact Rick Kinsman at rick.kinsman@gmail.com.

All you can eat Friday fish fry in Bristol. Friday, March 13, 5-7 p.m. St. Ambrose Parish Hall at the corner of School & West streets. Meal includes fried or baked haddock, french fries, coleslaw, fresh baked dinner roll, beverage & dessert. Adults-\$17, children 9 & under \$9, immediate family of five-\$50.

SATURDAY

Legislative breakfast in Weybridge. Saturday, March 14, 8:30-9:45 a.m., Weybridge Congregational Church, 2790 Weybridge Rd. 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.

Takeout corned beef and cabbage supper in Vergennes. Saturday, March 14, 5-6 p.m., Vergennes United Methodist Church, Main Street across from the opera house. The menu is corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions, roll and dessert. \$12. Order by Thursday, March 12. Call 802-877-3150. Pick up at the side door of the church on East Street.

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ADDISON COUNTY
INDEPENDENT

'Moon Over Buffalo'

Play about actors was fun, insightful

By J.T. PRICE

MIDDLEBURY — Last weekend, the Middlebury Community Players performed a spirited rendition of Ken Ludwig's "Moon Over Buffalo," the 1995 hit farce whose politics feel firmly of the era in which the story is set: midcentury USA. And yet, the play, whose original Broadway

Theater Review

cast featured television megastar and comic whiz Carol Burnett, is not without contemporary resonances for our own screen-aided era. Much in the spirit of British playwright Michael Frayn's raucous play-within-a-play "Noises Off" if the main characters were spins on the two leads of Edward Albee's notorious and anything-but-funny "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?," the mile-a-minute "Moon Over Buffalo" concerns an all-in-the-family acting troupe led by two aging blowhards, George and Charlotte. The couple are respectively played at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater to great antic effect by Carl Engvall of Bristol and Suzanna Miller of North Ferrisburgh. (In a serious note, Engvall dedicated his performance in the program notes

to his late brother Bert.) "He's a walking ham," said Charlotte of George, and "It's like watching Eleanor Roosevelt play Peter Pan," said George of Charlotte. This dichotomy may be fair indication that Ludwig's script gives most of the more biting jabs to the guys.

One exception? "You are right where you belong. In the pit," said Bettina Matthias playing George's old theater-hand mother, Ethel, after her son succeeds at falling off the stage.

With a pater- and materfamilias so addicted to holding the spotlight, daughter Roz, played by Olivia Olson of Hinesburg, has sought "a normal life" outside it, but is, naturally, sucked right back into the fray by the wild course of events, which includes numerous infidelities and the rumored visit of midcentury Hollywood deity Frank Capra. Like Guffman in Christopher Guest's beloved mockumentary "Waiting for Guffman" (made the year after "Moon Over Buffalo" is rumored to be coming to see the play-within-the-play.

Flung back into theatrical life, Olson-as-Roz pulled off a game

rendition of Katherine Hepburn-esque patter. Vermont newcomer Lilia Cohen shone in the small, fairly thankless part of Eileen, the troupe's junior actress whom George has impregnated through what the script characterizes as "boys-will-be-boys" faithlessness. The action subsequently reveals that George promised Eileen a leading role if she would sleep with him. Perhaps Harvey Weinstein watched this play when it debuted and laughed too.

That probably sounds like a fairly harsh judgment, and it does seem unmerited to condemn the accurate representation of a bygone era's politics through the lens of our own (the 1950s represented during what was then Bill Clinton's presidency). And yet that, of course, is inevitably what happens when an old play sees new light. We'll never each of us be perfect scholars, immune to our feelings, will we?

And so it is a good thing, too, that "Moon Over Buffalo" moves fast, featuring, as does the 1982 farce "Noises Off," what was no doubt a technically challenging sequence for the MCP players. During this passage the set's four doors open and close for various entrances and exits in tight succession to delirious effect.

Miller, in particular, won over the audience on Saturday night, although there really is nothing negative to say about any of the performances. Everyone was well-cast and appeared to be having fun with the antics, including Raphael Desautels as Roz's weatherman, would-be fiancé whose identity is hilariously mistaken by her wayward parents (once as Frank Capra, and once as Eileen's rumored-to-be vengeful Marine brother). Actor Benjamin Houchen as Roz's sensitive former boyfriend turned stage manager/circus handler was wonderful. Leigh Guptill, an MCP veteran, rounded out the cast as Charlotte's talent agent paramour.

Much fun is had, too, at the city of Buffalo's expense. It takes a special breed of tough to



MEMBERS OF THE Middlebury Public Works Department check out the dry hydrant that was installed in the Frog Hollow section of Middlebury to give firefighters access to an abundant water supply in case of a blaze.

Submitted photo

Frog Hollow dry hydrant is one firefighting protection

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Fire Department recently announced that it completed the installation of a dry hydrant at Frog Hollow this past fall. The installation is part of a comprehensive program to improve fire protection in the rural portions of Middlebury and to provide a supplemental water source in the event of a fire in town.

The fire department is installing dry hydrants and other Rural Fire Protection (RFP) systems to improve the availability and accessibility of water for firefighting purposes. The Vermont RFP Task Force

through the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) provided assistance to the local fire department in developing a plan to improve water supply in Middlebury.

The Vermont Legislature approved appropriations to assist communities in installing dry hydrants to improve fire protection in the rural area of Vermont. The Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force, with the assistance of the VACD, administers the grant program.

Dry hydrants and other RFP systems are a preferred method

of providing water for firefighting in areas where there are no water mains. A dry hydrant consists of a 6- to 8-inch pipe with a fitting to which a pump/tanker truck can attach. The pipe connects to a water source (pond or stream) that can supply at least 60,000 gallons under drought conditions.

The Middlebury Fire Department collaborated with the Middlebury Department of Public Works on the installation of this dry hydrant. This is but one example of the service your public works and fire departments provide in preparation for the next alarm.



BENJAMIN HOUCHEN, LEFT, plays Paul and Carl Engvall plays George Hay in the MCP production of "Moon Over Buffalo," which wrapped up a successful run at Town Hall Theater on Sunday.

embrace such self-deprecation: "Like Scranton, but without the charm" and "If it wasn't named for an animal it would have nothing going for it" being just two of the pointed quips in that regard which the Middlebury audience enjoyed to the tune of some keen laughter.

"I wanted to be a movie star," said Miller's Charlotte toward the end of the performance. "We almost made it. After all these years."

"Perhaps we aren't meant to be movie stars," Engvall's George answered. "Isn't it nice to know our limitations?"

A beat. "No!" shouted Charlotte.

The bravura climax of "Moon" features the comical conceit of an entire cast's maddened efforts to get their intoxicated star ready to step out on stage with the bigwig kingmaker said to be coming

calling. There's something almost prescient about the script with respect to reality television, which was itself a nascent medium in the mid-'90s, whereby the real drama is (supposedly, even if reality TV, too, has scripts) not in what is written down but what goes on in the hearts of those who strive to dominate a camera eye, by hook or by crook.

Fortunately, reality TV did not prove a Pandora's Box for America, and the comedy of it all has remained right inside the television — or else, the screenwriters in the sky for the 2016-era onward must be scripting our national life with a really vicious sense of irony?

At the height of "Moon Over Buffalo's" farce, Charlotte calls out from center-stage, "They think we're all insane up here." Then adds a moment later, "Everybody knows!"

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Vergennes Union High School

Calvin Almeida

Calvin Almeida is Vergennes Union High School's latest Student of the Week.

He lives in Addison with his mom and dad; sisters, Ava and Laci; their two Labs, Mavis and Sunny; and 20 beef cows. Agriculture plays a big role in Calvin's life. Forestry through the Hannaford Career Center is his favorite class. Now in his second year of the program, Calvin says teacher Aaron Townshend has helped him grow tremendously as both a student and future professional.

Calvin is a member of the National Technical Honor Society and has previously been recognized as Student of the Semester. He has also been deeply involved in FFA throughout high school and currently serves as President of the Vergennes FFA chapter. Through FFA, he has competed at multiple state and national conventions and has helped co-plan fundraisers, celebrations and the chapter's annual Ag Day.

Outside of school, Calvin works as a farmhand at Kayhart Brothers Dairy in West Addison, where he does a little bit of everything and truly enjoys the work. In his spare time, he cares for his own beef cows, spends time with friends and his girlfriend, and enjoys driving around Addison County.

His advice to other students: "If anyone offers help in any way that benefits you and your learning, take it. Advocate for yourself and what you think you need to help you achieve your goals."

After graduating in June, Calvin plans to work full-time at Kayhart Brothers Dairy. He's grateful for the opportunities he's had and excited to begin this next chapter.



Calvin Almeida
VUHS

Middlebury Union High School

Berkeley Graham-Gurland

Middlebury Union High School is proud to recognize senior Berkeley Graham-Gurland as its Student of the Week. Berkeley, the son of Amy Graham and Suzanne Gurland, lives in Middlebury and has one sister, who is currently a junior at Dartmouth College.

When asked what he enjoys most about school, Berkeley shared, "I like learning as a whole." He enjoys all of his courses, with a particular passion for math. He credits Mr. Comar as an influential teacher, noting that he currently has him for Calculus and previously had him for another math course. Throughout high school, Berkeley has consistently earned honor roll or high honors recognition and has received nominations from the Math and Science departments. He also has a special interest in game design.

Berkeley is actively involved in school activities, participating in cross country, ultimate frisbee, and Scholars' Bowl. In addition, he is musically inclined, taking DP Music and playing the flute. He plans to look for a job this summer as well.

In his free time, Berkeley enjoys reading and playing video games.

Reflecting on his high school experience, Berkeley shared that navigating social situations while having autism has been challenging. Over time, however, he has become much more social and involved in activities than he once imagined possible. "I have grown a lot since 9th grade," he said. He noted that taking the first step can be the hardest part for someone with autism or social anxiety, but that it has become easier with time as his confidence has grown. For students enrolled in the DP program, Berkeley offers this advice: "Treat it like a marathon—however, you can't walk, because it will catch up to you."

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



Berkeley Graham-Gurland
MUHS

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

Congratulations, Berkeley and Calvin!

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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.

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

Public Meetings

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.

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.

Help Wanted

Public Meetings

THE TURNING POINT CENTER of Addison County is open for in-person services, Monday through Friday, 10am-4pm,

Help Wanted

Public Meetings

79 Court St, Middlebury. We are available by phone 24/7 at 802-388-4249.

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Elderly Services, Inc.
Project Independence Adult Day Center

Do you love cooking for a crowd?

Elderly Services is hiring people to prepare delicious family style meals for older adults in a beautiful commercial kitchen.

Full / part-time available. NO nights or weekends!

Starts at \$18-20/hour depending on experience.

<https://elderlyservices.org/job-opportunities/>



Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Crop Manager

UVM Food Systems Research Institute
Work location: Charlotte, VT

The position of Crop Manager is located at the co-managed University of Vermont (UVM) and USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Northeast Crop and Livestock Research Station (NECLRS) at Nordic Farm located in Charlotte, VT. NECLRS operates on 400 acres of leased land within a larger privately-owned farm. Research explores diverse subject matter spanning the food and farming systems of Vermont, including perennial forages, annual row crops and cereals, and pastures. This position conducts farming operations in support of feeding beef cows, calves, and finish steers, and to manage crop in support of research on grain and forage production. **The position requires skill in operating and maintaining heavy farm equipment, precisely following safety and research protocols, communication with colleagues and scientists, and detail-oriented record keeping.**

The Crop Manager independently plans and carries out assignments in close communication with the ARS Research Agronomist, USDA Agronomy Technician, and other research partners.

This is a full-time, non-exempt, union-represented position with full benefits.

Deadline: Open until filled, with priority given to applications submitted by the end of February

How to Apply: Visit [University of Vermont Employment Opportunities | Crop Manager to apply or https://www.uvmjobs.com/postings/85333](http://www.uvmjobs.com/postings/85333)



Public Meetings

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

Public Meetings

DELIVERING YOUR PAPER TAKES A DEDICATED CREW... AND THE ADDY INDY'S HAS STEPPED UP IN A BIG WAY!



Thanks Sean, Dennis and Joe for going the extra mile to deliver subscriber copies directly to most local post offices.

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Want to join this crew? The Addy Indy is looking for substitute drivers.

CALL OR EMAIL SEAN TO APPLY: FRONTDESK@ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM OR 802-388-4944, EXT 104.

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

COMMUNITY DRIVER VOLUNTEERS



Do you have a skill you think would be interesting for teens?

The Middlebury Teen Center is looking for people willing to share their interests, be it fishing, photography, cooking, or resume writing.

Email lindsey@teencentervt.org to learn more.



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 digital media platforms.

Experience with MailChimp preferred, also a commitment to learn new systems and 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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Addison Independent CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM

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

DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

RATES

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- 50¢ internet listing per issue • minimum 2 insertions

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

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|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notices | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> Att. Farmers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Card of Thanks | <input type="checkbox"/> Help Wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personals | <input type="checkbox"/> For Sale | <input type="checkbox"/> Cars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Meetings** | <input type="checkbox"/> Trucks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free** | <input type="checkbox"/> For Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> SUVs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost 'N Found** | <input type="checkbox"/> Want to Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage Sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Heat | <input type="checkbox"/> Boats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn & Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Wanted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Rentals |

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of runs: _____
Spotlight Charge: \$ _____
Internet Listing: \$ _____
TOTAL: \$ _____

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

Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

Services

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

CONSTRUCTION: ADDITIONS, RENOVATIONS new construction, drywall, carpentry, painting, flooring, roofing, pressure washing, driveway sealing. All aspects of construction, also property maintenance. Steven Fifield 802-989-0009.

MELISSA'S QUALITY CLEANING SERVICES. Residential and commercial. Fully insured. Great rates. Reliable and thorough cleaning. 802-345-6257.

Free

DIGITAL ACCESS View obituaries, calendar listings and classifieds online at addisonindependent.com. Don't miss out on events, garage sales, or opportunities - check out our free digital listings. Looking to read more? Become a subscriber!

TWO BED FRAMES Two twin size bed frames with mattresses, good and clean. Come pick them up. Ray at 802-453-7850 in Leicester

Help Wanted

LEWIS CREEK ASSOCIATION Lewis Creek Association is hiring a temporary (summer, part-time) boat launch steward & knotweed removal technician. Find more information at bit.ly/lca-bis. Applications due March 31, 2026. \$18/hr.

Help Wanted

ALWAYS HIRING?

Keep your business in front of local job seekers with a discounted year-round help wanted ad.

A 52-week display ad campaign starts at just \$50/week!

advertising@addisonindependent.com

Help Wanted

EVENING FRONT DESK/CONCIERGE. Swift House Inn - Middlebury, Vermont. We're hiring a front desk professional to anchor our evening shift. This position plays a pivotal role: greeting arriving guests, fielding questions, supporting restaurant reservations, and ensuring the property is secure and guest-ready for the next day. If you thrive on creating memorable experiences and want to grow in the hospitality industry, this is for you. Swift House Inn has 20 guest rooms across three historic buildings, and is home to Jessica's at Swift House Inn, one of Vermont's most celebrated fine dining restaurants. Responsibilities: Welcome and check in arriving guests with warmth and professionalism. Answer phones, manage room and restaurant reservations. Provide local recommendations and concierge-style service. Troubleshoot guest concerns and offer proactive solutions. Liaise with Jessica's restaurant team for smooth communication. Keep common areas tidy, cozy, and well-presented. Follow nightly checklists and procedures. Lock up buildings and hand off to the overnight security team. You Are... Deeply interested in the hotel and lodging industry. A natural host who loves creating great guest experiences in Addison County. Communicative, warm, and gracious under pressure. Obsessed with details and good systems. Reliable, punctual, and self-directed. Shift & Compensation. Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Schedule: Part-time, includes some weekends and holidays. Pay: \$20-\$22 Hourly, commensurate with experience, bonuses and tips. Apply Today. Email your resume and a short note to owner@swifthouseinn.com. Learn more about us at swifthouseinn.com

BRANDON ESTATE 5 Bedrooms 3 bath \$4800 Furnished See Craigslist at <https://vermont.craigslist.org/apar/d/forest-dale-bedroom-updated-stone-home/7889936398.htm> or call 802 377 9394

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE - 2000 sq ft to 7000 sq ft - Tall ceilings, loading docks, plenty of parking. Middlebury - 802-558-6092

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

MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.

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

Wood Heat

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

Att. Farmers

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

For Rent

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

BRANDON ESTATE 5 Bedrooms 3 bath \$4800 Furnished See Craigslist at <https://vermont.craigslist.org/apar/d/forest-dale-bedroom-updated-stone-home/7889936398.htm> or call 802 377 9394

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

Att. Farmers

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

AUCTIONS

MARKET REPORT
ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES
RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT

Please check back next week!

	\$
BEEF	
Iroquois	3.80
Nop B	9.60
Blue S	1.50
J. Alle	2.50
Sunde	4.00
Vorse	4.00
P. Liv	2.00
CALV	\$
Barne	0.00
Elysia	0.50
White	4.00
J. Will	5.00
Sunde	7.60
Wilcor	9.00

Total Beef - 155 Total Calves - 212
We value our faithful customers.
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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FATHER DALEY ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 7:30 pm +/- in the KofC Council room at St. Mary's Church Hall to conduct the following business:
1) Election of trustees/officers
2) Treasurer's report
3) Budget/donations 2026-27
4) Address other proper business

Sheriff's Dept. finds driver that didn't pay fee

ADDISON COUNTY — Deputies with the Addison County Sheriff's Department on Feb. 9 logged a report from the trash transfer station that a customer had driven away before paying all that was owed. Authorities tracked down the person, and the full amount was paid.
Between Feb. 8 and 21, the sheriff's department completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 105 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations, attempted to serve 25 pieces of civil process around the county and provided three car seat inspections.
In other recent activity, Sheriff Michael Elmore and his deputies:
• On Feb. 9 helped a driver change

Sheriff's Log
a tire on Route 7 in Ferrisburgh.
• On Feb. 9 followed up on a truancy issue from Vergennes Union High School.
• On Feb. 9 checked on a person that was walking down Monkton Road after it was reported to a deputy that they may be in distress. Deputies talked to the person and they were given a courtesy ride back to their residence.
• On Feb. 10 a deputy attended a Special Olympics event at the

Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton.
• On Feb. 11 met with school officials in Vergennes about a few ongoing truancy cases.
• On Feb. 11 provided assistance for a person who had locked their keys in the car in Middlebury.
• On Feb. 12 followed up on three truancy cases from VUHS.
• On Feb. 12 escorted an oversized load from the New York border at Fair Haven to the New Hampshire border.
• On Feb. 12 assisted Middlebury police with a call for a person experiencing a mental health crisis and subsequently transported that person to the hospital.
• On Feb. 13 Sheriff Elmore met with other sheriffs from around the state for the monthly sheriff's association meeting in Montpelier.
• On Feb. 17 transported an intoxicated person to Grace House in Rutland at the request of Middlebury police.
• On Feb. 18 assisted with a vehicle off the road on Hollow Road in Monkton.
• On Feb. 18 assisted Vermont State Police with a call on West Street in Cornwall.
• On Feb. 19 provided a transport for a person in Department for Children and Families custody.
• On Feb. 20 a deputy taught a mental health class at the police academy in Pittsford.
• On Feb. 20 twice took intoxicated people to Rutland's Grace House at the request of Middlebury police.
• On Feb. 21 provided traffic control for a funeral in Shoreham.
• On Feb. 21 provided traffic control for an event at the Snowbowl in Hancock.
• On Feb. 21 provided traffic control for an event at Middlebury College.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR A&E SERVICES FOR WILLOW APARTMENTS

Naylor & Breen, on behalf of Addison Housing Works and Evernorth, two non-profit corporations dedicated to providing perpetually affordable housing to low-income Vermont residents, is seeking proposals for Architectural and Engineering services for the unit-by-unit rehabilitation of its Willow Apartments project located at 10 Walker Ave., Vergennes VT 05491. Coordination with MEP and FP engineering consultants will be required as part of the architectural team's services. Minority-owned, women-owned, Section 3 businesses and locally-owned businesses are encouraged to apply.
The project includes 16 units contained in 3 buildings with a mix of one- and two-bedroom units. The broad scope of work for this project will be determined on a case-by-case, unit-by-unit basis, as each unit varies in existing conditions and required improvements. Each unit will be individually assessed to identify specific needs, followed by the development of a detailed, unit-specific scope of work. In general, the scope of work will include the following: grading, grubbing, demolition, concrete, metals, new insulation, new windows/doors, new siding, new flooring, painting, specialties, casework, new appliances, and MEP work.
Overall work shall include both interior and exterior improvements as identified during the assessment phase and the estimated construction cost is \$2,000,000. Funding commitments will likely take 12-18 months. Once funding is secured, we anticipate a construction start in June 2027.
Architectural and Engineering firms interested in this project may obtain an RFP by contacting Naylor & Breen directly. They will provide the necessary documents and any additional information required to submit a proposal. Please note that all proposals must be submitted by March 12, 2026, at 5PM.

TOWN OF PANTON WARNING ANNUAL MEETING

INFORMATIONAL MEETING MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026
VOTING TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026

The legal voters of the Town of Panton are hereby notified and warned to meet on **Monday, March 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.** to discuss and transact business and to vote on **Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at the Panton Town Hall, second floor.** The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for voting by Australian ballot.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Articles 1-16 are for discussion only on Monday night. VOTE TO BE TAKEN BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT ON TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026, BETWEEN 7:00 A.M. AND 7:00 P.M. AT PANTON TOWN HALL, SECOND FLOOR:

- ARTICLE 1: To hear the reports of the Town Officers.
ARTICLE 2: To elect the following officers by Australian Ballot:
Moderator (1 year term)
Selectboard Member (3-year term)
Selectboard Member (2-Year term)
Constable (1-year term)
Dog Warden (1-year term)
Vergennes-Panton Water District Representative (3-year term)
ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027) General Fund Operating Budget in the amount of \$1,120,912.46 of which \$948,188 shall be raised by taxes and \$172,724.81 by non-tax revenue, excluding any other amounts authorized by the voters?
NOTE: Total expenditures will be increased by any separate articles voted independently.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters appropriate the following sums which shall be raised by taxes, to be placed in the Town Reserve Fund accounts as noted:

Highway Capital Equipment Fund	\$10,000
Reappraisal Fund	\$2,000
Total	\$12,000

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters appropriate \$11,201 of Town Funds to the following organizations in the amounts listed?

Organization	Amount	Organization	Amount
Adams-Kent Cemetery Association	\$2,500.00	Green Up Vermont	\$50.00
Addison County Court Diversion	\$210.00	Homeward Bound	\$500.00
Addison County Home Health Hospice	\$800.00	HOPE	\$500.00
Addison County Parent Child Center	\$800.00	John Graham Shelter	\$450.00
Addison County Readers	\$250.00	Open Door Clinic	\$500.00
Agewell (CV Agency on Aging)	\$650.00	RSVP	\$350.00
Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe)	\$600.00	Tri-Valley Transit	\$691.00
Counseling Service of Addison	\$500.00	Turning Point Center	\$1000.00
Elderly Services	\$850.00		

- ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters re-appropriate the \$1000 designated for the Boys and Girls Club, approved for Fiscal Year 2026, to the Vergennes Commodore Club?
ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters appropriate \$1,500 of Town Funds to the Vergennes Commodore Club for Fiscal Year 2027?
ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Reappraisal Reserve Fund:
"The Reappraisal Reserve Fund shall be used to offset expenses related to Townwide Reappraisals"
ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters approve the following definition and re-naming for the Digitization/IT Fund:
"The Digitization/IT Fund shall become the Digitization Fund, and shall be used to offset the cost of digitizing Town records, and when depleted, retired."
ARTICLE 10: Shall the voters approve the following change to the Tire Reserve Fund:
"The Tire Reserve Fund shall be retired, with all remaining funds re-allocated to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund."
ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Emergency Reserve Fund:
"The Emergency Reserve Fund shall be used to offset expenses from non-recurring, unanticipated catastrophic events and issues outside the control of the Town. This fund is not intended to cover normal budgetary expenditures, overruns or unanticipated revenue shortfalls. The target shall be 15% of the Total Operating Budget to be raised by taxes (excluding appropriations to community organizations, special revenue and reserve funds) for the year the proposed budget is presented."

- ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters approve the following definition and name change for the Town Building Maintenance Fund:
"The Town Building Maintenance Fund shall be re-named the Town Building Improvement Reserve Fund and shall be used for renovations, and upgrades to any Town Building including major repairs that extend the useful life of the building, such as roof replacements, HVAC system overhauls, or structural enhancements. This fund shall not be used for routine upkeep or minor repairs that are part of the regular/annual Town Building Maintenance budget."
ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters re-allocate \$90,000 from the Town Building Maintenance Fund to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund?
ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Highway Capital Equipment Fund:
"The Highway Capital Equipment Reserve Fund shall be used to purchase, or offset the purchase, or perform major repairs to extend the useful life, of capital equipment. For the purposes of this fund, capital equipment shall mean items with a replacement cost exceeding \$5,000 and a useful life of more than 3 years."
ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Highway Capital Project Fund:
"The Highway Capital Project Fund shall be used for the planning, design, construction, and major rehabilitation of long-term highway infrastructure, including road expansions, bridges, and safety enhancements. The purpose of this fund is for planned projects and does not include Paving or Re-paving."
ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters approve the transfer of all but \$50,000 from the Highway Capital Project Fund to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund?
ARTICLE 17: To transact any other non-binding business.

Dated at Panton, County of Addison, and State of Vermont, this 27th day of January 2026.
Zachary Weaver, Selectboard Chair
Teresa Boucher, Selectboard Vice-Chair
Robert T. DeGraaf, Selectboard Member
Kirsten De La Cruz, Selectboard Member
Reece Jaring, Selectboard Member
Attest: Kyle Rowe, Town Clerk & Trea

Public Notices Index

Public Notices for the following can be found on **Pages 10B, 11B and 12B.**

116 Self Storage (1)	Knights of Columbus (1)
Addison (1)	Middlebury (2)
Addison Central School District (1)	Middlebury Cemetery Association
Addison County Regional Planning Commission (2)	Monkton (1)
Addison Northwest School District (1)	Panton (1)
Ferrisburgh (1)	Vergennes (2)

TOWN OF ADDISON PUBLIC NOTICE

The Addison Planning Commission meeting will be held on Monday, March 16, 2026 at the Addison Community Center at 6:30 PM.

Agenda

- Open the meeting.
- Roll call given.
- Public Comment time allowed. (beginning & end if deemed necessary.)
- Review the status of the Town Plan as presented & make plans for the Public Hearing.
- Approve the meeting minutes for February 16, 2026.
- Approve the meeting minutes for the "Special Meeting" of February 23, 2026.
- Discuss any remaining miscellaneous Planning Commission business or concerns. * If needed, allow additional public comment time before adjourning.

Michael Hollis, Chair
Starr Phillips, Secretary
Addison Planning Commission

MIDDLEBURY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION PUBLIC NOTICE

The annual meeting of the Middlebury Cemetery Association will be held at the offices of Langrock, Sperry & Wool, 111 S. Pleasant St., Middlebury, VT on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 5pm.

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY PROPERTY TAX BILLS MARCH INSTALLMENTS ARE DUE IN THE FINANCE OFFICE ON OR BEFORE: MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026 (SINCE THE 15TH IS A SUNDAY)

Finance Office:
388-8100 ext. 203, 204 or 208
accountclerk@townofmiddlebury.org

Office Hours:
Mon - Fri, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Please allow extra time if you are mailing your payment, postmarks are not accepted as timely payment.


For your convenience there is a secure payment box located in front of the Town Office.

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

CONTACT GOV. SCOTT

Governor
Phil Scott
1-800-649-6825
(Vt. only)
802-828-3333



109 State Street, Pavillion
Montpelier, Vermont 05609-0101
www.vermont.gov/governor

Man arrested on DUI no. 4 warrant; stolen car recovered

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police arrested Dylan T. Harris, 34, of Middlebury on an outstanding warrant for driving under the influence (fourth offense), following an investigation at a downtown store on Feb. 18. Police said they also recovered a stolen car they said Harris had in his possession.

Middlebury Police Log

- In other action last week, Middlebury police:
 - Assisted a man found walking on Route 7 South on Feb. 16.
 - Investigated a possible trespassing complaint involving snowmobilers on property off Case Street on Feb. 16.
 - Assisted Burlington police with a missing person investigation on Feb. 17.
 - Responded to a child custody disagreement at a Court Street home on Feb. 17.
 - Responded to a report of a drunken guest at the Swift House Inn on Feb. 17. Police said Addison County Sheriff's Department officials took the person to Rutland to receive detox services.
 - Responded to a shoplifting complaint at Hannaford Supermarket on Feb. 17.
 - Investigated a "juvenile issue" at Middlebury Union High School on Feb. 17.
 - Responded to a report of debris in High Street on Feb. 18.
 - Investigated a "juvenile issue" at Mary Hogan Elementary School on Feb. 18.
 - Assisted a Court Street resident who had received threatening messages on Feb. 19.
 - Returned, to their guardian, a runaway juvenile who had been found in downtown Middlebury on Feb. 19.
 - Served a no-trespass order on a man who had been arguing with a Hannaford Supermarket employee on Feb. 19.
 - Responded to Route 125 on Feb. 20 on a report of a bus being

struck.

- Conducted traffic control while workers freed a tractor-trailer truck stuck at the intersection of Main and Seymour streets on Feb. 20.
- Responded to a report of a suicidal man in the North Pleasant Street area who on Feb. 20 said he was going to jump off a bridge.
- Responded to a report of a man who had passed out in the roadway on Halladay Road during the afternoon of Feb. 20. Police said they took the man to receive detox services in Rutland.
- Assisted a local resident on Feb. 20 who said their banking information has been compromised.
- Assisted Middlebury Regional EMS on a medical call to a Seymour Street address on Feb. 20.
- Resolved a parking complaint on College Street on Feb. 21.
- At the request of a North Pleasant Street homeowner, checked to ensure their appliances were turned off after the resident had been taken to the hospital on Feb. 21.
- Responded to a Jackson Lane residence on Feb. 21 on a report of a child who was having difficulty breathing. Police said the child was taken to Porter Hospital.
- Enforced Middlebury's overnight winter parking ban downtown on Feb. 21.
- Assisted with a medical call on the town green on Feb. 22.
- Cited Karen Vasquez, 23, of Middlebury for domestic assault, following an investigation in the Benedict Lane area on Feb. 22.
- Helped a local woman who was experiencing a mental health crisis on Feb. 22.

Public Notices

can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 10B, 11B and 12B.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FERRISBURGH PLANNING COMMISSION FERRISBURGH TOWN PLAN UPDATE

The Ferrisburgh Planning Commission will hold an in-person public hearing on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall, 3279 Route 7, Ferrisburgh, Vermont, with a virtual option. This hearing is held pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 4441. This notice is issued pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 4444(b). At this meeting, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) will also conduct a consultation with the municipality regarding its planning efforts. ACRPC's Local Government Committee shall review Ferrisburgh's Town Plan to determine whether the Plan:

- (1) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302;
- (2) is compatible with its regional plan;
- (3) is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region;
- (4) contains all the elements included in 24 V.S.A. §4382;

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of a Town Plan is to provide sufficient up to date data and information, policies and recommendations, to guide orderly development within the Town.

Summary of Amendments:

The 2025-2033 Plan includes updated maps and new maps with data from the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and from Addison County Regional Planning (ACRPC).

Maps include:

Planning Areas; Water Resources/Watershed; Wetlands and River Corridors; Significant Habitat and Forest Blocks; Primary and Statewide Soils; Conserved and Public Lands; Population Density; Transportation; Community Facilities; Transportation Safety Concerns; Present and Future Trails; Septic Suitability, Wells and Private Water Lines; Flood Hazard Areas.

A new section has been added on Flood Resilience.

Policies and Recommended Actions have been updated in all sections of the Plan based on public input, and State Statute. Copies of the Ferrisburgh Town Plan can be viewed at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission Office located at 14 Seminary Street in Middlebury, or on Ferrisburgh's website: <https://www.ferrisburghvt.org>

Zoom Meeting Information:

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87245791695?pwd=OgUtbSg47k8MdlIwVSlbS3Zch9z2.1>

Meeting ID: 872 4579 1695

Passcode: 484019

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,87245791695#,,,,*484019# US (Chicago)
+16465588656,,87245791695#,,,,*484019# US (New York)

Join instructions:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/87245791695/invitations?signature=6ISZofO1s3zq7vwY84NMybulm0u31jnM2h1Qs49R8>

For more information, please contact:

Katie Raycroft-Meyer, Community Planner, Addison County Regional Planning Commission, (802) 989-4134 or (802) 388-3141 kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org or Jean Richardson, Clerk of the Planning Commission, jeanrichardson43@comcast.net

TOWN of MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT WARNING

Annual Town Meeting March 2 and March 3, 2026

The legal voters of the Town of Middlebury, in the County of Addison, the State of Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Middlebury Union High School Auditorium at 73 Charles Avenue in Middlebury on Monday, March 2, 2026 at 7:00PM to act on Articles 1 through 5, and to discuss Articles 6 through 8, and on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 from 7:00AM through 7:00PM at the Recreation Center, 154 Creek Road in Middlebury, to vote by Australian ballot on Articles 6 through 8 as provided by the Middlebury Town Charter.

With respect to Article 6 & 7, the legal voters of the Town of Middlebury are further notified that an informational meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2026 at 7:30pm at the Middlebury Union High School Auditorium for the purpose of reviewing the proposals for issuing bonds for: 1) Foote Street waterline replacement.

Article 1 To act upon the reports of the Town Officers.

Article 2 Shall the voters of the Town of Middlebury vote to adopt the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027) in the amount of \$15,998,046 with a portion thereof in the amount of \$10,136,266 to be raised by property taxes.

Article 3 Shall the voters of the Town of Middlebury vote, pursuant to 24 VSA §2804(a), to authorize the Selectboard to apply up to \$350,000 from the Cross Street Bridge Reserve Fund for the purpose of funding the Ilsley Library Project.

Article 4 Shall the voters of the Town of Middlebury vote to collect taxes on real property for fiscal year 2026/2027 in TWO equal installments due in the Treasurer's Office on the 16th day of November 2026 and the 15th day of March 2027? (\$1,500,000)

Article 5 To transact other business proper to be done.

[For voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 3 2025, polls open from 7:00AM to 7:00PM]

Article 6 Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Middlebury in an amount not to exceed One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000), subject to reduction from available alternate sources of funding, be issued for the purpose of the replacement of the existing six-inch cast iron water main adjacent to Foote St. between US Route 7 and Lower Foote Street with a new 12-inch polyethylene-wrapped ductile iron main., the estimated cost of such improvements being One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000)

Article 7 Shall the voters of Middlebury call upon the General Assembly to discuss, take testimony, and vote on H.433 during the 2026 session? H.433 is an Act Relating to Incremental Implementation of Green Mountain Care that would establish publicly financed universal primary care, mental health services, and substance use treatment as a first step in phasing in universal health care for all Vermont residents.

Article 8 To elect officers as required by the Middlebury Town Charter.

The legal voters of the Town of Middlebury 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.

Dated at Middlebury, Vermont this 27th day of January 2026.

Brian R. Carpenter, Chair
Andy Hooper, Vice Chair
Dan Brown
Fred Dunnington

Isabel Gogarty
Megan James
Farhad Khan

MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD

WARNING

TOWN OF FERRISBURGH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FEBRUARY 28, 2026

The legal voters of the Town of Ferrisburgh are hereby warned and notified to meet in person at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall, in said town, on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. to transact the following business from the floor. NOTE: Polls for Australian ballot voting will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2025, at the Town Hall. In order to vote, you must attend the meeting in person.

ARTICLE 1: To hear reports of the Town Officers.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters of the town vote to collect taxes in four (4) installments with the installment dates to be September 1, December 1, March 1, and June 1 with each installment to be received in the town office before 4:00 p.m. on the due date?

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters of the town approve total general fund expenditures of \$2,862,039.92 of which \$2,360,639.92 shall be raised by taxes and \$501,400.00 by non-tax revenue for the 2026-2027 Selectboard Budget, excluding any other amounts authorized by the voters? NOTE: Total expenditures will be increased by any separate articles voted independently.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters appropriate a total of \$36,895 to the following social service agencies, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 2691?

Addison County Home Health & Hospice, Inc.	2,983	John Graham Housing and Services	825
Addison County Parent/Child Center	1,600	Lewis Creek Association	500
Addison County Readers, Inc.	600	North Ferrisburgh Cemetery Association	2,500
Addison County Restorative Justice Services	1,500	Open Door Clinic	1,200
Addison County River Watch Collaborative	500	Otter Creek Natural Resources Conservation District	275
Age Well	1,100	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	210
Commodore Club	1,500	Rokeby Museum	1,000
Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc.	1,650	Tri-Valley Transit	3,517
Elderly Services, Inc.	1,100	Union Cemetery	2,400
Friends of the Vergennes Opera House	500	Vermont Adult Learning	785
Gage Cemetery Association	2,500	Vermont Center for Independent Living	250
Green Up Vermont	150	Atria Collective	1,250
Homeward Bound	1,000	Turning Point Center of Addison County	3,000
HOPE	2,000	TOTAL	\$36,895

ARTICLE 5: To transact any other business proper to come before said meeting at this time.

At the close of the above business, the meeting shall be recessed until March 3, 2026, at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall to vote by Australian ballot on the following matters, to wit:

BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

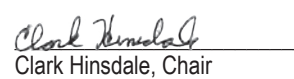
ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters authorize the elimination of the office of Town Lister in accordance with 17 V.S.A. §2651c(b)(1) and replace it with a professionally qualified assessor who shall have the same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for listers or the board of listers under the provisions of Title 32?

ARTICLE 7: To elect Town Officers.

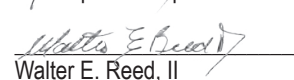
Moderator – 1 Year Term
Auditor – 3 Year Term
Selectboard – 2 Year Term
Selectboard – 3 Year Term
Lister – 3 Year Term
First Constable – 1 Year Term
Unified School Director – 3 Year Term
Rogers & Hazard Fund Trustee – 2 Year Term

Polls open from 7 a.m. To 7 p.m.

Dated at Ferrisburgh, Vermont, this 20th day of January 2026.


Clark Hinsdale, Chair


Christopher Campbell


Walter E. Reed, II

Received for record this 20th day of January 2026.


Jessica James, Town Clerk

Town of Ferrisburgh is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Topic: Ferrisburgh Annual Town Meeting 2026

Time: Feb 28, 2026 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86366263317?pwd=xqRd2GHPoZTUx7hkpSDaCybpNH0zRx.1>

Meeting ID: 863 6626 3317

Passcode: 517915

This meeting will be recorded.

Voting is restricted to in-person Ferrisburgh Registered Voters for this meeting and not via Zoom.

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)

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 Mortgagee 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

ADDY INDY AG PAGES

The Third Thursday of Every Month. Give us a call to place your ad, 802-388-4944

Public Notices can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT on Pages 10B, 11B and 12B.

**STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT
 PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT
 DOCKET NO.: 26-PR-00031
 IN RE ESTATE OF: PETER HALLOCK**

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Peter Hallock, 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 Brian Gebo
 c/o Anthony R. Duprey, Esq., 11 Main Street,
 Suite B110F, Vergennes, VT 05491
 802-870-6563
 anthony@dupreylaw.com

Publication: Addison Independent
 Publication Date: 2/26/26
 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 RSVF 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 I 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

Waltham man cited for domestic assault

ADDISON COUNTY — Vermont State Police say that a Waltham man assaulted someone in his household this past Sunday evening. Troopers from the Vermont State Police New Haven barracks were called to a reported citizen dispute at a South Middlebrook Road home in Waltham on Feb. 22 at a quarter to 8 p.m. Police investigated and said they found that David Ouellette, 60, of Waltham caused bodily

injury to a household member and damaged that person's property without having any right to do so. Officers took Ouellette to the barracks, cited him for domestic assault, violation of conditions of release, unlawful mischief and simple assault, and lodged him at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility with bail set at \$2,500.

In other recent local activity, state police dealt with two motor vehicle crashes.

In the first, on Feb. 20 at around 3 p.m. a trooper responded to a one-car crash at the intersection of Lake Road and Middle Road in Bridport. Police report that Savannah Brown, 27, of Bridport was driving a 2020 Toyota Corolla westbound on Middle Road and attempted to turn left onto Lake Street while traveling too fast for the snow-covered road conditions. The Corolla left the southbound lane of Lake

Street and struck a tree. Brown was not injured but the car sustained front-end damage.

The second crash occurred on a snow-covered road in Orwell the next day.

On Feb. 21 shortly before 8 a.m. troopers responded to the crash of a tractor-trailer on Route 22A south of Mutton Square Road. Police report that 56-year-old Kenny Barros of Schenectady, N.Y., was driving a 2025 Volvo tractor-trailer southbound when the big rig left the road and struck a tree. Barros was taken to Porter Hospital for neck pain.

This incident caused intermittent road closures for approximately four hours.

Troopers were assisted on scene by DMV Enforcement, Benson Fire Department, Orwell Fire Department, and Middlebury Regional EMS.

Authorities issued Barros a traffic ticket.

**TOWN OF MONKTON
 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**

The Monkton Development Review Board will hold the following hearing on Monday, March 23, 2026, beginning at 7:30 PM. The hearing will be held in person at the Town Office, located at 92 Monkton Ridge. The hearing will also be available via Zoom and login information is below.

Kevin & Bonnie Brennan, 115 Owl's Mountain Road, Monkton, PID (5.101.153007) 2-lot subdivision.
 Appeal of Guillemette Decision, property address 35 Twin Maple Road by Michael Casey.

An electronic copy of the application can be obtained by emailing zoning@monktonvt.com. A hard copy of the application is available at Town Hall by appointment. Please call 802-453-3800 to make an appointment.

Remote Access: Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/8024533800>
 Meeting ID: 802 453 3800 * Passcode: 1762
 Phone In: 1-646-558-856 * Meeting ID: 802 453 3800 * Passcode: 1762

**CITY OF VERGENNES
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the Development Review Board will hold a Public Hearing on March 16, 2026, at 7 pm as the first order of new business, for the following purpose:

To consider Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Review for Application #2026-05 by Sienna Apartments, LLC to create one (1) additional Dwelling Unit within the maintenance building to be constructed on the Property located at 0 Armory Lane. Reviews will consider Article VII, Article VIII, Article X, and Article XVI Section 1605. This Parcel is subject to two (2) previously Issued Permits: #2024-21 Issued October 2, 2024, and #2024-38 Issued December 31, 2024.

Please note that the hearing will be held as a "hybrid meeting", with participation either in person, by ZOOM, or by phone. The in-person meeting will be held in the One Credit Union Conference Room located at 48 Green Street Vergennes, Vermont.

**Meetings are accessible via Zoom:
 Meeting ID: 666 140 8733**

**Join by phone: Dial 1 (929) 205-6099; For participants joining by phone:
 To raise your hand during the meeting, press *9.
 To mute/unmute during the meeting, press *6**

**If you experience any difficulty in accessing this meeting, contact the
 City of Vergennes Zoning Administrator at 802-989-6315.**

Persons seeking eligibility to Appeal must establish status as an Interested Person as defined in Article VI Section 603 of the City of Vergennes Zoning and Subdivision Regulations AND participate in the Public Hearing either in person or in writing in order to take any subsequent Appeal. The City of Vergennes is an "on the record" Appeal municipality with regard to Appeals to the Environmental Court from Development Review Board Decisions. This means that the Environmental Court shall only consider Testimony and Evidence provided during Public Hearings on the Application. Interested Persons should therefore ensure that their participation in the Public Hearing is complete and represents the totality of their Testimony and Evidence.

A copy of the application is available for public review at City Hall or by contacting David Austin at zoning@vergenes.org.

February 17, 2026
 David Austin
 Zoning Administrator

**ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT
 WARNING
 ANNUAL MEETING
 MARCH 2, 2026**

The legal voters of the Addison Northwest School District, consisting of the towns of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes, and Waltham, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Vergennes Union Middle & High School in Vergennes, VT on Monday, March 2, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. to learn about the 2026-27 budget and transact any of the following business.

Article 1: To elect the following officers: a) Moderator b) Clerk c) Treasurer

Article 2: To authorize stipends to be paid district officers including the directors, clerk and treasurer.
 Board Chair: \$1,750
 Board Member: \$1,250
 Moderator: \$150
 Clerk: \$500
 Treasurer: \$5,500

Article 3: To authorize the Board of Directors, under 16 VSA 562 (9), to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year.

Article 4: To elect a community representative to serve on the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center District Board of Directors for a term of three (3) years.

Article 5: To authorize the Board of Directors to distribute the annual report by electronic means.

Article 6: To hear and act upon the reports of the Addison Northwest School District Officers.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2026.

John Stroup, District Clerk Mark Koenig, Chair of Board of Directors

**ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT
 WARNING
 MARCH 3, 2026**

The legal voters of the Addison Northwest School District, consisting of the towns of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes, and Waltham, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the following polling places on March 3, 2026 to vote by Australian ballot on the following articles of business:

Municipality	Polling Hours	Location
Addison	7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Addison Community Center
Ferrisburgh	7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Ferrisburgh Town Hall
Panton	7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Panton Town Hall
Vergennes	9:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	St. Peter's Parish Hall
Waltham	10:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.	Waltham Town Hall

Article 7: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$28,314,179.03 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,647 per pupil This projected spending per pupil is 3.26% higher than spending for the current year.

Article 8: Shall the voters of the Addison Northwest School District authorize the assignment of \$102,838.70 pursuant to the provisions of 24 VSA §2804, from the fiscal year 2025 fund balance to the ANWSD Capital Improvement Fund, established by the electorate on March 7, 2017?

Dated this 21st day of January, 2026.

John Stroup, District Clerk Mark Koenig, Chair of Board of Directors
 Addison Northwest School District Addison Northwest School District

**WARNING
 ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
 SPECIAL MEETING – MARCH 3, 2026**

Member Districts are Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge

The legal voters of the Addison Central School District are hereby warned to meet at the following polling places on March 3, 2026 to vote by Australian Ballot on the following article(s) of business:

TOWN	LOCATION	POLLING HOURS
Bridport	Bridport Community/Masonic Hall	7:00 AM-7:00 PM
Cornwall	Cornwall Town Hall	7:00 AM-7:00 PM
Middlebury	Middlebury Recreation Center/Gym, 154 Creek Road	7:00 AM-7:00 PM
Ripton	Ripton Community House	8:00 AM-7:00 PM
Salisbury	Salisbury Town Office	8:00 AM-7:00 PM
Shoreham	Shoreham Town Office	7:00 AM-7:00 PM
Weybridge	Weybridge Town Clerk's Office	7:00 AM-7:00 PM

ARTICLE 1: Shall the voters of the Addison Central School District approve the school board to expend \$52,999,495.00 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

The Addison Central School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$15,638.00, which is 3.58% higher than the per pupil education spending for the current year.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters of Addison Central School District vote to close Ripton Elementary School?

ARTICLE 3: To elect four (4) school directors from the nominees to serve on the Addison Central School District Board for the following terms:

Two (2) who are residents of Middlebury for a three-year term.

One (1) who is a resident of Bridport for a three-year term

One (1) who is a resident of Salisbury for a three-year term.

Ballots shall be commingled and counted at Middlebury Recreation Center by representatives of the Boards of Civil Authority of the member town school districts under the supervision of the District Clerk of Addison Central School District.

Mary Gill, Clerk Barbara Wilson, Chair
 Addison Central School District Addison Central School District

ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM

**ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL
 PLANNING COMMISSION
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
 PUBLIC COMMENT AND ADOPTION OF THE ADDISON
 COUNTY REGIONAL PLAN**

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) will hold two hybrid public hearings on the draft 2026- 2034 Addison County Regional Plan. The first meeting shall be held on April 8, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.; the second shall be held on June 10, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

In person meetings will be hosted at the ACRPC Office, 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury VT 05753. To attend via Microsoft Teams / Virtual Platform:

**Meeting ID: 2373177940624
 Passcode: DR6X4dP7
 Dial in by phone +1 347-991-8960, enter Pin ID: 367383384#**

These hearings are being held pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4348. This notice is provided pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4444. Per Vermont Statute, ACRPC seeks general comments and specific comments with respect to the extent to which the plan is consistent with the goals established in 24 VSA Section § 4302.

The Addison County Regional Plan examines the economic, social, and environmental factors that shape and support growth and development in the Addison County Region. It serves as a guide for decision-makers, a vision for the region's future, and an action plan to address key regional issues. The Plan also will also be used as regulatory review criteria in Act 250 and Section 248 proceedings. All areas within the jurisdiction of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission are affected.

In addition, the draft Regional Plan incorporates revisions required by state legislation enacted in 2024, including the following elements:

- A Regional Future Land Use Map identifying newly designated future land use areas.
- A Map of Areas Eligible for the State Designation Program, which can provide tax credits and other incentives to support revitalization and development.
- A Map of Areas Subject to Tier 1A and Tier 1B Act 250 Jurisdiction.
- Municipal Housing Targets, specifying the number of new housing units needed by 2030 and 2050, as determined by the State's Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

ACRPC proposes the following Chapters of its Plan. It also proposes to adopt the entire Plan. Accordingly, all Chapters of the Plan will be subject to discussion at the public hearing. Chapters include:

**INTRODUCTION
 CHAPTER 1: Natural Resources
 CHAPTER 2: Energy
 CHAPTER 3: Transportation
 CHAPTER 4: Community Infrastructure
 CHAPTER 5: Population and Housing
 CHAPTER 6: Economic Development
 CHAPTER 7: Flood Resilience
 CHAPTER 8: Future Land Use & Substantial Regional Impact
 CHAPTER 9: Compatibility
 CHAPTER 10: Equity, Benefits, and Burdens
 ASSOCIATED APPENDICES and GLOSSARY**

Copies of the proposed plan are available from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission, 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury Vermont 05753, or online at www.acrpc.org. For further information, please contact Adam Lougee at (802) 388-3141 or alougee@acrpc.org.

ARTS + ISSUE

The Addison Independent

February 6, 2026



Laura Roald, Jena Necrason and Mads Middleton rehearse a scene in Middlebury Acting Company's "A Room in the Castle," which will open at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on March 5.

PHOTO / DAVID DEVINE

Hamlet's women take on tyranny in 'A Room in the Castle'

Mere months ago Taylor Swift made it into a hit song, so clearly "The Fate of Ophelia" is on our minds:

Whether you're a die-hard devotee of the Bard or you've never read a single play or seen a single performance, you know the story: Shakespeare's Ophelia (Hamlet's spurned girlfriend in Shakespeare's eponymous play)

goes mad, plunges into a river and drowns (oh, yeah . . . after Hamlet skewers her father with a rapier, crying "How now, a rat! Dead for a ducat, dead!")

But what if she didn't have to die? Is there, for Ophelia, a way out of the dark, dangerous, loveless, paranoid, power-mad, corrupt and violent world of Shakespeare's "Hamlet?" Could she be liberated?

Playwright Lauren Gunderson tackles this question in Middlebury Acting Company's season opener, "A Room in the Castle."

"I WAS THRILLED TO READ THIS PLAY THAT CENTERS **THE WOMEN OF 'HAMLET'** AND UNLOCKS THE **SILENCE** THAT HAS SHROUDED THESE CHARACTERS AND GIVES THEM VOICE AND AGENCY."

— Margo Whitcomb

Shortly after the play premiered in a 2025 co-production of the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company and Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Vermont-based theatre director Margo Whitcomb snagged a copy of the script from Gunderson's agent and pitched it to MACo.

"I really loved the script and was very exhilarated by it," Whitcomb said. "Particularly the women's rebellion that is much needed today as well."

"A Room in the Castle" has only three

characters: Shakespeare's Gertrude and Ophelia; and a character unique to Gunderson's play, Anna, Ophelia's servant/companion.

"Something like 85% of the lines in 'Hamlet' are spoken by men," said Whitcomb. "All of whom are conspiring, plotting, spying, manipulating, fighting, preparing for war, terrorizing, and using women as pawns in their power plays. I was thrilled to read this play that centers the women of 'Hamlet' and unlocks the silence that has shrouded these characters and gives them voice and agency. That's the serious side. The fun side is that they drink lots of wine and let loose and really discover a sisterhood. And within that, they begin to think outside the box about how they can escape this tyranny."

MACo audiences are no stranger to Gunderson's work. In 2019, MACo performed her "Ada and the Engine," a play about early 19th Century mathematician and visionary Ada Lovelace, who wrote the world's first

See CASTLE on page 16

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE



HOW DOES A WOMAN SURVIVE THE COURT OF DENMARK? HOW DOES ANYONE?

Based on the women of Hamlet, by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Margo Whitcomb

Featuring Mads Middleton,
Jena Necrason & Laura Roald

TICKETS & INFORMATION AT
WWW.TOWNHALLTHEATER.ORG
OR 802-382-9222



ART ON EXHIBIT

Cut. Paste. Transform. in Middlebury

New photo-collage exhibit opens at PhotoPlace on March 6

Join PhotoPlace Gallery in downtown Middlebury for "Cut. Paste. Transform.," a dynamic exhibition exploring the art of photo-based collage. Juror Francine Weiss, Ph.D has selected works that reflect over a century of photographic reinvention through cutting, layering and reassembling images — spanning analog, digital and hybrid approaches. These artists push the boundaries of photography, transforming materials and meaning to examine identity, history, culture and visual storytelling in compelling new ways. An opening reception will be held on Friday, March 6, from 4-7 p.m. Free mead tastings provided by Golden Rule Mead of Middlebury. The exhibition will be on view March 6-28.

For more info visit photoplacegallery.com/online-juried-shows/cut-paste-transform/detail.



Carol Eisenberg "Still Lifes Unbound 10" is on view at PhotoPlace in Middlebury through March 28.

Get your exhibit listed.

EMAIL ELSIE: elsie@addisonindependent.com





Brandon Artist Guild opens "Cabin Fever Creations" on March 6 for a two-month exhibit at the Brandon gallery.

Cabin Fever inspires Brandon Artists Guild creators in new exhibit

The Brandon Artists Guild "Cabin Fever Creations" exhibition is a unique gallery collection arriving Friday, March 6, with a reception from 5-7 p.m., at the 7 Center Street gallery in Brandon. See what BAG member artists have poured their talents into during the months of cold and bluster, and how the deep and long dark freeze of our Vermont winter inspired their creativity and imaginative work.

Brandon Artists Guild members have been in their studios hammering, firing, throwing, brushing, clicking, carving, pressing and pasting their way toward spring, and the anticipation of warmer and longer days. It's time to come out of hibernation and see for yourself as we wait for the first daffodils and steaming sugar shacks.

This two-month exhibit showcases new work and sometimes new mediums from BAG member artists. The gallery will be adorned with contemplations of winter, meditations on spring, and all things new and renewed. As always, our walls are hung with curated original artworks by more than 35 Vermont artists and artisans. There will be light refreshments at the March 6 opening.

For more info visit brandonartistsguild.org or call 802-247-4956.



MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES



TIME/LIFE/BEAUTY

DANCE THEATRE WORK BY MICHAEL SAKAMOTO AND DJ SPOOKY
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 6 & 7 • 7:30 PM • \$30/20/10/5



LE CONSORT

WORLD-CLASS BAROQUE QUARTET
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 • 7:30 PM • FREE



GOITSE

AWARD-WINNING CELTIC QUINTET
TUESDAY, MARCH 17 • 7:30 PM • \$30/20/10/5

802-443-MIDD (6433)

See the full schedule of events:
go.middlebury.edu/events



LOOK UP

ASTRONOMY LESSONS WITH
KEN COREY

Ken Corey, Ph.D., is a retired professor and science teacher, and conducted research for NASA in the field of Astrobiology. He now resides in Vergennes. Look for his column on the last Thursday of the month in Arts+Leisure!



Katherine G. Johnson Computational Research Facility at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in 2017.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NASA

Katherine Johnson: NASA's Super Human Computer

Imagine the following: Graduating with a degree in mathematics from West Virginia State College at the age of 18. Later, while working for NASA, making hand calculations of orbital trajectories on a primitive calculator for the first U.S. orbital flight by John Glenn as a check on the calculations done by a computer. Before the historic 1962 flight, John Glenn asked engineers to "get the girl" to run the numbers. "If she says they're good, then I'm good." That woman was Katherine Johnson, a brilliant mathematician who applied her extraordinary gift to make complex and precise calculations for NASA during the early days of the U.S. space program from Mercury to Apollo.

KATHERINE JOHNSON (1918 – 2020)

It was clear that Johnson was a gifted child with insatiable curiosity and a love for mathematics. Her intelligence was immense. Johnson's IQ was estimated to be 160, placing

her in the same league as Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking. Her genius became more public when she began high school at the age of 10 and then college at 15.

In 1937, with W.W. Schieffelin Claytor as mentor, she breezed through the Math curriculum at West Virginia State College graduating summa cum laude, highest honors. As the third African American to earn a PhD. in mathematics, Claytor was well-equipped to inspire and guide Johnson along her path. Johnson's first job after graduating from college was teaching in an all-Black public school.

In 1939, after her brief teaching stint, Johnson was the only woman of three Black students selected to enter West Virginia State College, where the President of the college was quietly trying to integrate West Virginia colleges. She matriculated into graduate school, but had to discontinue after one semester in order to focus on family life, which included a husband and three children. Her career would have to be delayed.

It was not until 1953 that she landed a job at the Langley lab of the National

Advisory Committee for Aeronautics' (NACA) which then became NASA in 1958 under President Eisenhower. At the time, cost saving goals were often met by hiring women to be human computers, a phrase that actually dates back to the 18th century when mathematicians were hired to perform tedious calculations needed for astronomical, logarithmic and trigonometric tables. Johnson and other Black women, most notably Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson, were stationed at Langley, hired to analyze flight test data in an all-Black computing section at NACA. Johnson quickly broke the racial and gender barriers when she began attending and participating in flight research briefings with an all-male team.

The year 1957 was pivotal for the U.S. during the cold war with the Russians, particularly after the launch of the Russian satellite Sputnik, which signaled the beginning of the space race. Just following that mission, Johnson submitted some of the math for a document "Notes on Space Technology," published in 1958.

In the movie "Hidden Figures," based upon *See LOOK UP on page 10*

Ilsley Library's Classic Film Club

Winter/Spring 2026 Session

At the Marquis Theatre!

Join fellow community film lovers to watch this session's films at the Marquis Theatre, followed by a short discussion of the film. What a great opportunity to treat yourself to a delicious southwestern lunch before or even during the film. As always, the popcorn is on us!

This session our theme is "The 1930's in Color." Will run February - April.

All movies will begin at 1:00 pm

		
March 5 @ 1:00 PM SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS	March 19 @ 1:00 PM THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD	April 2 @ 1:00 PM THE WIZARD OF OZ

FREE ADMISSION courtesy of Ilsley Public Library.
Marquis is open for lunch beginning at 11:30am.




middleburymarquis.com



WINE WEDNESDAYS AT JESSICA'S

Join Sommelier Ella Donnelly-Wright for themed wine tastings every Wednesday through May. Drop by between 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Complimentary nibbles included. Deep discounts on featured wines.

- March 4: Special Guest Sommelier Monte Harhour
- March 11: More Than Malbec - Southern Hemisphere
- March 18: Paso Robles - Tales of Ella's Travels
- March 25: Battle of the Bordeaux

25 STEWART LN., MIDDLEBURY, VT SWIFTHOUSEINN.COM @SWIFTHOUSEINN

See LOOK UP on page 15

ART ON EXHIBIT

ART ON MAIN

25 Main Street, Bristol

Call 802-453-4032, email aom@gmavt.net or visit artonmainvt.com for more info.

Katie Roberts presents a collection of landscape and wildlife paintings created with water-soluble oils. Her work highlights the beauty and vulnerability of the natural world, emphasizing themes of conservation, preservation, and our connection to the land and the animals that inhabit it. On view 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.

"Cabin Fever Creations" features the work BAG member artists have created during the months of cold and bluster. A reception will be held on Friday, March 6, from 5-7 p.m., to celebrate the opening of this two-month exhibit. On view through April.

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"
See EXHIBITS on page 13

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. Aries, your natural charisma is at an all-time high right now. A bold idea you've been sitting on finally gets the green light. Put your plan into action this week.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. A conversation with a loved one could bring you two closer together than ever before, Libra. In fact, harmony will be a major player in all of your relationships right now.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Comfort and luxury find you this week, Taurus. Expect a heartwarming moment in your personal or professional life that restores your sense of peace and well-being.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. Your social circle may expand this week in the best way possible, Gemini. A new connection brings a refreshing perspective to a creative project. Now you'll work out the details.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Recognition is coming your way, Cancer. Your hard work hasn't gone unnoticed. A small win will feel like a major victory, helping to inspire you to keep going.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Leo, adventure is calling you this week. Whether you take a trip or get involved in a new book, your mind is expanding and your imagination is soaring.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. A solution to an unsolved puzzle finally clicks into place, Virgo. You will feel a deep sense of relief and clarity. Don't take on too much more right now, and ride this high that you are feeling.

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260 Court Street, Middlebury, Vt. 05753 (802)388-3559

OPEN: M-F 10-5 and Saturday 9:30-4

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. You are a magnet for productivity this week, Scorpio. You will breeze through your list of things to do with plenty of time left over for self-care.

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. Your foundation this week feels rock solid, Capricorn. A family matter is resolved with grace, leaving you feeling supported and loved. You will share good fortune with others.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. This is the perfect week to share your vision with the world, Aquarius. Your communication skills are sharp. People will come around to your way of thinking.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Abundance is flowing toward you, Pisces. Keep your eyes open for a surprise gift or a sudden increase in the tools you need to get things done.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEB. 27 — Charlayne Hunter-Gault, journalist (84)

FEB. 28 — Linus Pauling, scientist (d)

MARCH 1 — Ralph Ellison, novelist (d)

MARCH 2 — Dr. Suess, children's book author (d)

MARCH 3 — Doc Watson, musician (d)

MARCH 4 — Catherine O'Hara, actor (d)

MARCH 5 — Penn Jillette, magician (71)

CALENDAR

Feb. 27-March 14

2026

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" by James McBride. Part of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Winter Traveling Book Club. Free with registration. More info at lcm.org.

JOSH CLEVENSTINE IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Feb. 28, 6-8 p.m., Rockers Pizzeria, 191 Main St. Adirondack folk musician and recording artist Josh Clevens 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 vergennesoperahouse.org.

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

HAMLET COMMUNITY READ-ALoud IN CORNWALL. Tuesday, March 3, 6:30 p.m., The Meeting House at Cornwall Congregational Church, 2598 Route 30. Middlebury Acting Company and Vermont Book Shop host a community read-aloud of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" in advance of the acting company's production of "A Room in the Castle." Free. More info at townhalltheater.org.

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

"CUT. PASTE. TRANSFORM." OPENING RECEPTION IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 6, 4-7 p.m., PhotoPlace Gallery, 3 Park St. Celebrate the opening of a dynamic exhibition exploring identity, history and culture through photo-based collage. Free mead tastings provided by Golden Rule Mead of Middlebury. Exhibition on view March 6-28. More info at photoplacegallery.com.

"CABIN FEVER CREATIONS" OPENING RECEPTION IN BRANDON. Friday, March 6, 5-7 p.m., Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St. Come out of hibernation for the opening reception of "Cabin Fever Creations," an exhibit featuring work created by guild members during the long winter months.

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 26 4 a.m. Democracy Now 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Selectboard 8 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Eckankar 11 p.m. Democracy Now Friday, February 27 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Energy Week 7:30 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 10 p.m. Democracy Now Saturday, February 28 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Selectboard 8 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 10 a.m. Selectboard	4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 5:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Selectboard Sunday, March 1 5 a.m. Selectboard 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 11 p.m. Democracy Now Monday, March 2 TOWN MEETING Tonight 4:30 a.m. Democracy Now 5:30 a.m. Eckankar 6 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 10 a.m. Selectboard 5 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 7 p.m. Middlebury Town Meeting - LIVE 11 p.m. Democracy Now	Tuesday, March 3 *Recording of Town Meeting if available 4 a.m. Democracy Now 9:30 a.m. Eckankar 10 a.m. *Selectboard 4 p.m. Congregational Service 5:30 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 7 p.m. *Selectboard 11 p.m. Democracy Now Wednesday, March 4 4 a.m. Democracy Now 5 a.m. Press Conferences 7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass 10 a.m. *Selectboard 7 p.m. *Selectboard 10 p.m. Eckankar 11 p.m. Democracy Now Channel 1091 Thursday, February 26 5:00 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga	7 a.m. Yoga for Kids 7:30 a.m. AAUW Talk 9 a.m. ACSD Board Annual Mtg 12 p.m. Hannaford Career Ctr Mtg 3 p.m. High School Sports Friday, February 27 5 a.m. Gardens, Science and Nature 6:30 a.m. Tai Chi 7 a.m. Yoga 8 a.m. AAUW Talk 10 a.m. School Board Meetings 3 p.m. High School Sports Saturday, February 28 5 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga & Yoga 9 a.m. Hannaford Career Center 12 p.m. ACSD Board Meeting 3 p.m. High School Sports Sunday, March 1 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 7:30 a.m. ACSD Board Meeting	10:30 a.m. Hannaford Career Center 2 p.m. High School Sports Monday, March 2 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 8 a.m. Authors and Poets 3 p.m. High School Sports Tuesday, March 3 5:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Yoga 8 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 3 p.m. High School Sports 7 p.m. Music from around VT Wednesday, March 4 5 a.m. Tai Chi 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 7 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 3 p.m. High School Sports 9 p.m. Authors and Poets

Complimentary light refreshments. Free. More info at brandonartistsguild.org or 802-247-4956.

"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

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN BRISTOL. Sunday, March 8, time TBD, Watershed Center, 4783 Plank Rd. Explore the Watershed paths at an easy pace, covering roughly four miles with some small ups and downs. The group may also explore the Monkton Town Forest. Beginners are encouraged to join. For more information, contact Ellen Cronan at 908-595-2926 or visit gmcbreadloaf.org.

"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

LUNCHTIME CONCERT SERIES IN VERGENNES. Tuesday, March 10, 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 6 Park St. Enjoy music by Kathryn Blume, an award-winning performer who's working on a music video and her first album (by day, Blume is a therapist at the Hinesburg Counseling Collective). Free and open to all.

"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 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 midfilmfest.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

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE AT SNAKE MOUNTAIN IN WEYBRIDGE. Saturday, March 14, time TBD. Hike Snake Mountain from the east trail on the Weybridge side. Moderate six-mile hike with 1,075 feet of elevation gain: take the loop that goes to the summit with a beautiful view of the Adirondacks, then hike the east loop around by the beaver ponds. For more information, contact Cary Beckwith at cwbeckwith@yahoo.com or visit gmcbreadloaf.org.

"PEACE BY CHOCOLATE" FILM SCREENING AND CHOCOLATE TASTING IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 14, 6:30 p.m. Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. The Vermont Chocolate Festival opens with a special chocolate tasting and a screening of the documentary film "Peace by Chocolate," which follows a Syrian family as they work to rebuild their chocolate business in Nova Scotia. Tickets at townhalltheater.org. Free to attend with registration — donations are welcome and all proceeds will go to Migrant Justice.

See more

CALENDAR LISTINGS

Online!

ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM

The World According to Sound: Ways of Knowing comes to Middlebury College Thursday, March 5

Surrounded by an octophonic ring of powerful loudspeakers, you will have the opportunity to sit in the dark for 70 minutes, wear an eye mask, and be taken on a sonic trip.

What is this? Welcome to "The World According to Sound: Ways of Knowing" an immersive sonic experience that will come to Axinn Center (Room 229) at Starr Library, on the Middlebury College campus for a free show on Thursday, March 5, from 7-9 p.m. Open to the public, too.

You'll hear the vibrations of the Golden Gate Bridge, footsteps of ants, recordings made a century ago, and silence turned into music. You'll be transported to 1930s Berlin, up to the ionosphere, under a sand dune, and into the middle of a choir singing in a church built in the 6th Century.

You'll hear ideas, essays, books, theories, and contemporary research all translated into soundscapes that challenge you to rethink the world through your ears instead of your eyes... and ultimately to reconnect with what makes academic inquiry so meaningful.

The performance will be followed by a Q&A with co-producers Chris Hoff and Sam Harnett.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Chris Hoff and Sam Harnett are co-producers of "Ways of Knowing," a podcast series made in partnership with academic institutions like Johns Hopkins, University of Chicago, and The University of Washington. They have published academic papers; spent a semester at Cornell University as practitioners-in-residence; and performed their octophonic audio compositions at more than 75 universities, theaters, and art spaces. They previously worked in public radio, where their reporting won two Edward R. Murrow Awards for excellence in sound design and was featured regularly on All Things Considered, Morning Edition, The World, Science Friday, and other nationally-syndicated radio programs. They currently have 22 events planned for the spring tour of this show, and are in talks to bring it farther and wider in the fall.

For more info visit theworldaccordingtosound.org/live-show.



SAM HARNETT



CHRIS HOFF

PHOTOS / GUNDI VIGFUSSON



Thank you

Two years ago we launched the ADDY ALL-STAR program as a simple idea with a big goal — to give readers and supporters a direct way to support *The Addison Independent* and the local journalism that keeps Addison County informed and connected.

Thanks to nearly 300 generous individuals, more than 858 donations have poured in, totaling more than \$65,000 in support of your community newspaper. That's a powerful show of belief in local news — and in the role it plays in daily life across the county's 23 towns.

Your support helps fuel reporting that shows up week after week: the big stories and the small ones, the town meetings and school updates, the celebrations and the challenges. ADDY ALL-STAR funds also help us offer subscription discounts, ensuring that cost is not a barrier and that everyone in our community can access the paper.

Like many local newsrooms, *The Addison*

Independent relies on a balanced model to remain strong: reader subscriptions and newsstand sales; advertising and marketing revenue; and donations through the ADDY ALL-STAR program and our newly formed Addison Independent Trust (a qualified nonprofit). Together, they create the stability that allows trusted, quality journalism to thrive.

As we look ahead to our third year of ADDY ALL-STARS, we're energized and grateful. We encourage you to continue your donations and tell your friends and neighbors to become ADDY ALL-STARS, too.

So here's our heartfelt thanks to every ADDY ALL-STAR.

Thanks for helping us shine, week after week!

— *The Addy Indy Crew*



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LOOK UP

continued from page 4

the nonfiction book by Margot Lee Shetterly, Johnson is depicted looking up a formula for a modified Euler's method to find solutions to very complex, non-linear

equations. She responded to a room full of male engineers and administrators citing the method developed and published by the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler in 1768 as a way to find numerical solutions to nonlinear functions (e.g. polynomials). Check out this inspiring scene. Euler's method uses small steps along a curve, calculating slopes of tangent lines along the curve at each step to estimate solutions to ordinary differential equations. Some of the calculations involved hundreds of repetitive steps to "zero" in on a solution (iteration) using the previous result to calculate the next step (see links below).

Being curious about some of the math Johnson used, I looked up a couple of her original manuscripts and as I suspected, some of it was in the stratosphere. However, many of her calculations were about orbital mechanics and can be explained in a descriptive way. Those that pertained to flights of satellites and astronauts are described here.

Shape of orbit — when the engines are turned off, shapes such as parabolic, elliptical, and circular are calculated using analytical geometry and are mission dependent. Alan Shepherd's Mercury capsule was a sub-orbital flight lasting 12 minutes and John Glenn's Mercury was orbital, so they have different geometries.

Orbital velocity — velocity required to achieve stable orbits which involved application of Newton's second law of motion (Force equals mass times acceleration) and gravitational

equations.

Azimuth angle — where to aim and insert spacecraft into correct trajectories.

Trajectory — path followed after liftoff through atmosphere into space.

For further technical details and math visit [youtube.com/watch?v=78BdxTJ5spY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78BdxTJ5spY) and <https://modelinginbiology.github.io/Videos/Katherine-Johnson-And-Eulers-Method> to see a short video about one of her manuscripts and one about Euler's method.

Johnson provided valuable trajectory analysis for Alan Shepard's May 1961 suborbital mission, "Freedom 7," America's first human spaceflight, and John Glenn's first American orbital mission in the Mercury capsule he named "Friendship 7." Both were highly significant and recognized achievements. However, Johnson considered her greatest contribution to space technology to have been working on the calculations that synched the lunar module with the command and service module for the historic Apollo 11 lunar landing, the mission that put the first human footprints on the moon. Other significant achievements by Johnson included work she did with space shuttle missions and Landsat (Earth Resources Technology Satellite). Johnson retired after 33 years at Langley and said of her job: "I loved going to work every single day."

Johnson's remarkable career with NASA resulted in numerous awards for her achievements, including Mathematician of the Year in 1997, numerous NASA awards during her tenure, honorary doctorates and a posthumous induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame. At the age of 97 (2015), Barack Obama awarded her the highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In recognition of a great career of achievements, NASA dedicated a new building in her name at Langley in Virginia, the Katherine G. Johnson Mathematical Computational Facility (see picture). Completed in 2016, the facility recognized her key contributions to the early days of manned spaceflights.

Johnson served as a great role model for young women and people of color entering white, male-dominated fields. A common focus in elementary school education over the last couple decades has been STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs to encourage young minds to make links between theory and practice. Johnson's career epitomized making those links. Her career is also an inspiration to all for reaching high, often against the odds. While few people have the genius of Johnson, most do have gifts that can be shared; and sometimes they may be hidden from view.

SKY WATCH EVENTS

Feb. 28: Planetary Alignment: after evening twilight observe a rare line-up of Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Mercury.

March 2: View a conjunction of the brightest star Regulus in Leo as it gets less than 2 degrees from the waxing gibbous moon.

March 3: Total Lunar Eclipse. The partial eclipse begins at about 4:50 a.m. Watch as the earth's shadow completely covers the Moon at 6:33 a.m. The moon sets during the final partial phases.

March 8: Daylight Savings Time! Spring ahead on your clocks.

March 10: The red supergiant star Antares in Scorpius is less than 1.5 degrees to the lower right of the near last quarter moon. Look in the southern sky before dawn.

March 18: New Moon, check out the Milky Way and deep sky objects

March 20: Happy Equinox! Spring in the northern hemisphere begins at 10:46 a.m. Equal day and night globally when the sphere of illumination passes through each pole.

March 20: View the dazzling planet Venus about 8 degrees to the upper right of the very thin crescent moon in the western sky at dusk.

March 22: Watch the Pleiades star cluster close to the waxing crescent moon as they set in the west-northwest.

March 25: Look west in the evening sky to observe the first-quarter moon a few degrees and lower right of brilliant Jupiter. Gemini's bright stars Castor and Pollux in the winter hexagon shine above them.

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Pet of the Week



Say hello to Stella!

Stella is a 10-year-old German Shepherd dog. She likes to chew on Chuck-it balls, and carry around large branches. She also enjoys running around outside, and occasionally chasing chickens around the yard.

Submitted by Elissa Eckhardt of Cornwall.

Pet of the WEEK

Send us a picture of your pet!
news@addisonindependent.com

What is Pet of the Week?

Here at the Addy Indy we LOVE our pets. We also love publishing here at the local newspaper. So... put them together and you get PET OF THE WEEK, where we publish the news of how fabulous your pets are for FREE!

All you have to do, dear reader with opposable thumb, is send a picture to our news team with a short description of your best buds.

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND
 Addison County's Humane Society

Billie



Billie is super affectionate and craves human companionship. He is very playful and chatty. We are hoping he can find a home that can give him all the love he deserves and all the playtime he desires! We don't have history as to how he is with other cats and dogs, so a slow and structured introduction would be recommended.

Jeremy



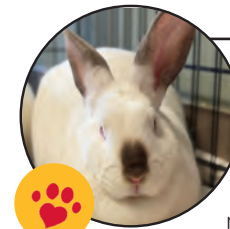
Meet **Jeremy**! This handsome boy came to us as a stray. After being initially quite shy, he has warmed up to staff and is ready to find his forever home. He is healthy but FIV+, so he would need to live an indoor-only life. If you're looking for a hunky orange cat, we would love the chance to introduce you to Jeremy!

Sunshine



Sunshine arrived with multiple other cats, but the shelter setting made her very nervous. She has been in a loving foster home where she has been building her confidence and slowly coming out of her shell. Sunshine needs a home that can continue to let her come along at her own pace. It's a very rewarding and heartwarming experience to help bring a shy cat out of their shell.

Smudge & Pinky



This mother/daughter bonded pair is looking for a home together. **Smudge's** story began outdoors, where she was found abandoned, pregnant, and alone. She raised seven babies and has spent her life adapting, nurturing, and quietly enduring change. Through it all, Smudge has remained gentle and observant. She greets you with calm curiosity, happily takes veggies from your hands, and completely strrrreetches out- a beautiful sign of security and ease. She and her daughter **Pinky** groom each other often and can be found cuddled side by side. Pinky is a sensitive, bright-eyed girl and since moving into a larger space, her personality has begun to shine! She approaches to investigate you, eagerly waits for tossed veggies, and has even started taking goodies by hand from people she knows she can trust. And by dawn? Pinky turns into a party girl! She loves to rearrange her hidey houses, zooms, and shows off her joyful binkies.



Homeward Bound
 Addison County's Humane Society



Want to learn more?

Call or check our website.
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PUZZLES

Sponsored by **SPARROW ART SUPPLY**

ACROSS

1. What travelers must do
5. Calendar month
8. Hopefully quickly
12. Once more
14. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
15. "Cheers" actress Perlman
16. Astronomy unit
18. Savings vehicle
19. Get your ducks in this
20. Right away
21. Popular sports league
22. Containers
23. Entireties
26. One who wassails
30. Turned-up position
31. Extreme modesty
32. Writing utensil

33. Rewards (archaic)
34. Ancient capital
39. S. American wood sorrel
42. General discomfort
44. Philippine island
46. A witty saying
47. One who summarizes
49. Covered in
50. Mimic
51. Henry was a notable one
56. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
57. Retired NFLer Newton
58. Playground equipment
59. Concept
60. Satisfaction
61. Fishing net
62. Hammer end

63. A father's male child
 64. Japanese drink
- ## DOWN
1. Off-Broadway figure
 2. Gelatinous substance
 3. Concern
 4. "Lick It Up" rockers
 5. Serbian river
 6. Part of a hat
 7. Bowl-shaped drinking vessel
 8. Semitic language
 9. Utter a shrill cry
 10. Long times
 11. Animal parts
 13. Causing annoyance
 17. Amorous talker
 24. Attempt
 25. Harmonic effects

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11			
12				13					14			15			
16					17				18			19			
20									21			22			
				23		24				25					
26	27	28	29						30						
31									32						
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	47							48							
49							50			51		52	53	54	55
56							57			58					
59							60				61				
62							63					64			

						3		5
3								6
			1		6	2	4	
			2		1			8
		7						
	1		8	9				
6	9				2	7		8
2							5	3
				4				

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

26. Cost per mile people
27. They __ (archaic)
28. Bitterly regret
29. Not even
35. A way to drop
36. Title of respect
37. World leader
38. Georgia rockers
40. National capital
41. Great Plains
42. Duck-sized dinosaur genus
43. Architectural recesses
44. Member of U.S. Navy
45. Mountainous
47. Kite bird
48. Sweetheart
49. Popular snack made of potato
52. 70s songsters The Bee __
53. SE China port __-men
54. Something to fill up
55. League of Legends character

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MARCH 2026

AT A GLANCE

All Month	SPOTLIGHT @ SPARROW WITH CHRIS NATHAN Visit the shop to view Chris's work in the gallery!
WED 11	VIRTUAL SHOW & TELL NIGHT Join Sparrow Artist Collective for a virtual critique where you can share your art, ask questions, and connect with other artists!
TUES 24	COLLECTIVE ART HANGOUT Join Sparrow Artist Collective for an evening of relaxed art-making!

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EXHIBITS

continued from page 5

Middlebury” highlights how unequal, and at times violent, encounters among Africa, Europe and the United States have long configured Art History’s understandings of African art, and how our interests and epistemologies infuse, shape and distort our representations of Africa in the museum. On view Jan. 20-April. 19.

PHOTOPACE 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.

“Cut. Paste. Transform..” a dynamic exhibition exploring the art of photo-

based collage. Juror Francine Weiss, Ph.D has selected works that reflect over a century of photographic reinvention through cutting, layering and reassembling images — spanning analog, digital and hybrid approaches. An opening reception will be held on Friday, March 6, from 4-7 p.m. Free mead tastings provided by Golden Rule Mead of Middlebury. The exhibition will be on view March 6-28.

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.

“Spotlight on Chris Nathan” opens in March.



BRANDON | 1330 & 1340 GROVE STREET
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3323 Finished Area | 2.04 ac | \$449,000

Well-located mixed-use investment property along the Route 7 corridor, just minutes from downtown Brandon. Commercial space currently operates as a successful yoga/pilates studio (with specialized heating for hot yoga). Residential components include a 2-bdrm, 2-bath apartment in the main building, and a one-bedroom studio apartment over the detached 2-bay heated garage. Opportunity awaits!



“Brandon is a very cool town with a really nice vibe. From the arts scene to live music, it’s a pretty happening place! This property sits just north of the town and with the yoga studio space and two residential living areas it is versatile and should be a safe bet for an investor or an end user!”
 ~ Amey Ryan, Listing Agent



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Butoh choreographer Michael Sakamoto (left) and Paul D. Miller, aka DJ Spooky, (right) to present the Vermont premiere of "time/life/beauty," on March 6-7 at the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury.

Butoh meets hip-hop in *time/life/beauty*

The Middlebury Performing Arts Series will soon host what promises to be one of the most fascinating and exciting performances of the season: "*time/life/beauty*" by Michael Sakamoto and Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky.) Fusing butoh dance theater, hip-hop mixology, new music, and multimedia, "*time/life/beauty*" is inspired by the legacy of Oscar-winning composer, musician, and environmental and anti-war activist Ryuichi Sakamoto. This performance will make its Vermont premiere on Friday and Saturday, March 6 and 7, at the Mahaney Arts Center (MAC) in Middlebury.

For this event, Sakamoto and Miller transform Ryuichi's art and ideas into three original pieces: "*Gods and Monsters*," a kaleidoscope of sound, movement, imagery, and spoken word; "*asymm*," an intimate semi-autobiographical dance theater work; and "*Beautiful Blue Sky*," a collaboration with hip-hop, folk, and contemporary dancer Mohammed Smahneh (aka Barges). The show is inspired by butoh and hip-hop's roots in social resistance, Ryuichi's intercultural and activist worldview, and the search for meaning in everyday life.

"For me, it's very much about creating a cultural dialogue that I feel is necessary

right now," Michael Sakamoto said in a report by **Newcity Stage**. "How do we improve our ability to speak with one another as societies, individuals, culture bearers, who are always going to have things to share and differences and disagreements? All the work I'm creating these days is trying to model the way to share with difference."

Sakamoto will visit Middlebury in advance of the premiere to take part in educational activities. He will meet and rehearse with student dancers who will eventually participate in the shows. He'll also offer a free, public workshop entitled "*Body/Mind/Funk/Time*" as part of the Dance Department's "Movement Matters" series on Wednesday, March 4, at 4:30 p.m.

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 practices, Sakamoto will lead exercises to demonstrate a unique blend of intercultural and self-reflexive performance embodiment.

For tickets, further information, or assistance with accessibility services, call 802-443-MIDD (6433) or visit middlebury.edu/arts.

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This affordable 3 Bedroom, 1.5 Bath East Middlebury village home with a charming vibe, nice layout, good bones, and many newer systems it is ready for you to bring your vision and make the mostly cosmetic updates that would bring out its full potential. Some new flooring and repair of cat damage needed.
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- *Pond site
- *Trout stream



Panoramic view in beautiful Brandon, Vermont

This property is 250 +/- acres of undeveloped land. Located on Cobb Hill Road in Brandon VT. \$1,300,000.

This unique property is located at the far northern end of the Taconic Mountain Range in Brandon, Vermont. Views from the top include the Taconic, Green and Adirondack Mountain Ranges, as well as the Champlain Valley and Vermont Valley. The timber on this property is primarily a mix of high value hardwood species, dominated by sugar maple and northern red oak. Located at the end of a dead end road, this parcel offers great privacy.

Info & photos: Taconicsend.com

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CASTLE

continued from page 1

computer program. Gunderson is one of the most produced contemporary playwrights in the USA, and MACo is ahead of the pack in producing "Room,"

this being just the third production nationwide.

The action takes place in two worlds. There's the bedroom of teenage Ophelia, complete with stuffed animals and fairy lights. And there's the world of "Hamlet," which reoccurs as a kind of shadowy, looming force, threatening to suck the characters into its dark void like doomed airline passengers in a disaster movie

The worlds overlap — but with a difference...

While Shakespeare's Ophelia sings — most notably in her famous "Mad Scene" — Gunderson's Ophelia is a poet/singer/songwriter whose creations open and close the play.

For Madison Middleton — the actor/musician/Middlebury College alum who plays Ophelia — getting to write the songs, as well as perform them, offered a unique pathway to explore her character.

"The first thing we get is this song," Middleton said, "and I love that that's how Lauren wrote it because we're immediately put into this world of longing, of grappling with huge complexity, not just political complexity of the king dying



Margo Whitcomb is the director for Middlebury Acting Company's "A Room in the Castle," which will open at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on March 5.

PHOTO / DAVID DEVINE

The Details

WHAT: A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

Produced by Middlebury Acting Company

WHEN: March 5-8, and March 12-15, at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury. Shows on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday shows at 2 p.m.

CAST: Directed by Margo Whitcomb, with Jena Necrason as Gertrude, Madison Middleton as Ophelia, and Laura Roald as Anna.

VIDEO: Check out a video preview of the production by Sophie Pope McCright at addisonindependent.com.

and a regime change, but also, my love is not treating me the way I want to, and my God, isn't that a human experience?"

"Ophelia's a teenager," Middleton continued. "And I think her music is a way to channel all of these intense feelings and a sense of yearning. It also tells me that this person is having to invent her own ways of survival."

And Gunderson's Ophelia behaves like a teenager. A lot of humor in the play comes from her blurted out questions to Gertrude: "Do you like sex?" and "Your second husband killed your first. Did you help?"

The definitive answer to this last question has tantalized actors and directors since Hamlet first asked "To be or not to be?" around 1600. Every Gertrude must decide for herself, because Shakespeare doesn't tell us. After a lot of wine, Gunderson's Gertrude spills the beans and confesses what she knows and doesn't know and why she's done what she's done.

"I love it because I feel like it's ultimately about her being a mother and that's the connection for me," said Jena Necrason, who plays Gertrude. "All of the choices are about how to keep Hamlet safe."

At the same time, Necrason explains, Gunderson's Gertrude is very much the smartest person in every room and a savvy political player. Yet she's constrained herself within the supporting role of "Obey. Agree. Assist." She's also rejected female friendship in any form. The play presents her, too, with a choice to live differently.

"She sees herself in Ophelia," said Necrason, "and just has this sudden depth of understanding of how crushingly unjust the patriarchy is."

A key plot-twister in this differently imagined

Elsinore is Gunderson's Anna, played by Laura Roald.

"Anna brings an advocate for Ophelia, a person who is ride-or-die on Ophelia's side," said Roald. "And that is the significant pivot from what we see in the text of 'Hamlet,' where her father is using her as a pawn and she's being kicked around like a soccer ball by all these people."

Asked what impact having that kind of confidante and mother figure has on Ophelia's story, Roald said: "The difference is you don't go crazy — because it's not just you saying these things; you're not living in an echo chamber."

Anna's story also raises questions about not just gender and power, but power and class — with answers that are often surprising. Seemingly the most powerless of the three characters, Anna keeps the plot twisting with her resourcefulness.

"I am a woman most people ignore," Anna says, in one of the best lines in the play. "I can do WAY more than anyone realizes."

Each of the characters, said Roald, has unexpected reserves of power with which to navigate the dangerous world in which they find themselves.

"Ophelia has the power of youth; the power of a future, of potential. Gertrude has the power of experience, and status, but more than that, she has the power of a player. She understands the game. She knows the rules. Anna has the power to leave. Honestly, it's a terrible situation, and the only thing keeping her there is her love of Ophelia. There are other places where a woman can go and wash dishes and look after children."

Though Gunderson's play is in part a response to characters created over 400 years ago, it's really — Whitcomb and her multi-talented cast reiterated — a play about now.

"In this moment, when everything seems to be pushing us to go backwards," said Necrason, "envisioning three women who were living then, figuring out how to get out of it and be free. It takes ingenuity. It takes smarts and bravery and love, you know?"

Writer Gaen Murphree holds an MFA in Theatre Directing from the University of Washington School of Drama, and has worked at such theatres as the Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the American Conservatory Theater, and the Seattle Opera. She is currently writing a play about Francis of Assisi and serves on the Middlebury Energy Committee and is co-chair of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont's Zero Emissions Task Force.

Spring Activity Guide



Programs, Athletics and Special Events
for Adults, Youth and Families

New Registration Site: middleburyvt.myrec.com • www.townofmiddlebury.org • March - May 2026

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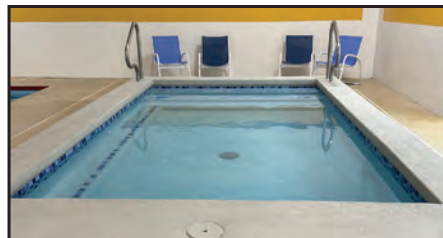
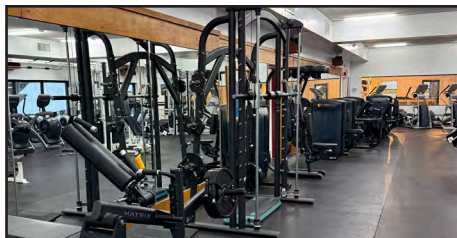
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General Information

Mission Statement

The Middlebury Parks & Recreation Department (MPR) shall provide lands, facilities, and services for community members of all ages and all income levels. It shall provide programs for both sport and leisure. The department shall serve as instructor, facilitator, and partner in efforts to promote and improve quality of life for participants. MPR will work with an involved public and business community to provide a healthy and aesthetically pleasing environment with opportunities for cultural growth.

The department should be flexible enough to meet the changing needs and tastes of the community, while finding creative ways to deliver recreation programs and facilities that are affordable to the residents of Middlebury.

Contact Us

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Physical Address: 154 Creek Road, Middlebury, VT 05753

Mailing Address: 77 Main Street, Middlebury, VT 05753

Other Contact Info

Phone: 802-458-8014/15

Website: townofmiddlebury.org Go to Departments and select Parks and Recreation

Registration Site: middleburyvt.myrec.com

Facebook: Town of Middlebury Parks and Recreation

Staff of Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department

Scott Bourne – Director of Parks and Recreation
802-458-8015
sbourne@townofmiddlebury.org

Amber Hunt – Program Coordinator
802-458-8014
ahunt@townofmiddlebury.org

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Programs may be cancelled in the event of severe weather or power outages.

MPR encourages you to do the following if you have any questions:

Call: MPR Offices, 802-458-8015

Check: Facebook - Town of Middlebury Parks & Recreation

ADVERTISING

The Addison Independent prints and distributes this publication four times per year.

We welcome your advertisement for a business, program or event in our publication for a fee; please contact us for more specific information: advertising@addisonindependent.com or 802-388-4944.

RESERVATIONS- Facilities and Sports Fields

Middlebury Parks & Recreation Department requests that all groups planning to use our facilities or fields please notify us in advance by making a reservation. Anyone wishing to make a reservation must complete a facility request on our website, middleburyvt.myrec.com. Facility Use Requests are considered on a first-come, first-served basis, depending on availability. Please be advised that reservations are not complete until approved by Scott or Amber. Rental fees may apply. For additional information regarding availability, rates, and reservations, contact Amber Hunt at ahunt@townofmiddlebury.org or (802) 458-8014





NON-RESIDENT POLICY

Non-Residents of Middlebury are allowed to register for all Parks and Recreation programs. Non-Residents will be charged an additional fee of 15% for each program registered for. A Non-Resident is defined as someone who does not live in Middlebury or pay property taxes to the Town of Middlebury.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Middlebury Parks and Recreation is pleased to be able to offer scholarships to participate in all our programs via The Dustin Hunt Scholarship Program. The scholarship guidelines are based on the free and reduced lunch guidelines within the schools. If you would like to apply for a scholarship or more information, please contact our office.

ACCESSIBILITY

Individuals with or without disabilities may register for all programs offered by MPR provided program safety can be met. The Department provides reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. Contact MPR offices in advance of the program start date to discuss accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

REFUND POLICY

If you need to cancel your registration before the second session of the program, we will refund you a pro-rated registration fee, minus a 10% processing fee. After the second class has been attended, eligibility for a refund is void.

Please be aware that refund requests may take up to 10 days to process.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate. We reserve the right to add, withdraw, or revise programs or events as needed. For more updated information, please visit our website often.

GYM CLOSURE DATES

The gym will be closed on Friday, February 27th at 4:30pm and open back up on Wednesday, March 4th at 3:00pm, for the Statewide Town Meetings.



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Questions? info@addisonunitedvt.com

IN MEMORIAM

Our community mourned the passing of Rick Marshall this past October, and his absence continues to be deeply felt. Over the years, Rick and I became good friends, bonded by our shared love of playing hockey and a deep appreciation for music.

Through his work at the Memorial Sports Center, Rick collaborated many times with the Middlebury Parks & Recreation Department in service to our community. He cared deeply about youth hockey and the role it played in shaping young people's lives. In his many roles—as Manager of the Sports Center, hockey referee, and President of MAHA—he brought intelligence, steady leadership, and unwavering dedication. His contributions to the Memorial Sports Center and to Middlebury have left a lasting and meaningful mark.

Rick was a respected colleague, and I know our community will continue to honor his life through the many contributions he made and the countless lives he touched.

**With gratitude and respect,
Scott Bourne, on behalf of the Middlebury Parks & Recreation Department, past and present.**



LACROSSE IS BACK!

Registration is now open for Middlebury Youth Lacrosse Club's 2026 season

Girls and boys grades 3-8 throughout Addison County

New & returning players learn the sport of lacrosse from experienced coaches in a fun, supportive environment



Sign up at www.middlax.com

Middlebury Parks and Recreation has the privilege of honoring not just one outstanding volunteer, but two, brother and sister, whose lives reflect the very spirit of community, service, and dedication that the Collins Award represents.

Kyle Lussier and Jen Barnes both grew up here in Middlebury, shaped by this community and, in turn, giving back to it in extraordinary ways.

Kyle grew up playing just about every sport imaginable, football, basketball, baseball, and golf, and from an early age, understood that sports are about more than wins and losses. As a teenager, he began giving back by umpiring Little League games and refereeing flag football, planting the seeds for a lifelong commitment to youth athletics.

That commitment has only deepened over the years. Kyle has coached at every level of high school boys' basketball, Freshman, JV, and Varsity while also dedicating countless hours to Rec Department programs including Little Tigers, Introduction to Sports, flag football, rookie baseball, and second-grade soccer. He continues to referee flag football and serves as a board member of the Middlebury Basketball Association.

Kyle lives in East Middlebury with his wife, Lianne, and their three children, Charlie, Henry, and Lennon, who are already growing up surrounded by the same values of teamwork, generosity, and community service that Kyle embodies.

Jen's story runs beautifully parallel. Born and raised in Middlebury, she grew up playing field hockey, lacrosse, and basketball through the Rec Department, but basketball quickly became her sport. She was a member of the 2004 Division I Girls

Robert E. Collins Award



Having difficulty sticking to your New Year's Resolutions? Let TaeKwonDo KICKS help!



Whether you resolved to get healthier in body or mind, spend more time with family, be more social, or make more time for yourself; we can help.

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"The KICKS program has not only provided a positive, welcoming, family experience for both the student and parents, but has also reinforced many life values for our son. It has shown him how hard work, patience, focus, respect, and determination combine with instructor and peer support and encouragement can translate to all facets of his life. We love the KICKS family!" - Myers Family

Classes in Middlebury on Mondays and Fridays and classes available in Orwell, Hinesburg and Vergennes. Call Master Kellie Thomas at 802-377-0476 to schedule a free introductory class or email tkdkicks101@yahoo.com for more information.



Join the Middlebury Area Little League!

Building a love for baseball and softball kids ages 4-12

Registration open through 3/14/26

Please visit the website to learn about four league levels, timing and opportunities to get involved as a volunteer, coach or supporter.

www.Middleburyarealittleleague.com



Basketball Championship team, a milestone that reflects both her talent and dedication.

Today, Jen lives in Cornwall with her husband, Mark, and their three children, Celia, Avalee, and Maddux, who are all enthusiastic participants in Rec Department programs. Like Kyle, Jen has turned her love of sports into service. She began coaching Little Tigers basketball five years ago and continues to do so, while also coaching 3/4 girls' rec basketball and the 5/6 girls Mini Metro team. She serves on the board of the Middlebury Basketball Association and gives her time year-round coaching basketball, rookie baseball, minors softball, and soccer, and supporting the Introduction to Sports program.

Together, Kyle and Jen represent something truly special: a family legacy of volunteerism rooted in gratitude for the programs that shaped them and a genuine desire to give the same opportunities to the next generation. Whether on the court, the field, or behind the scenes, their impact is felt by hundreds of young athletes and families across our community.

When they're not volunteering, both families spend their "free" time outdoors hiking, swimming, fishing, and golfing still modeling the joy of active, connected lives.

Kyle and Jen remind us that strong communities are built by people who show up again and again not for recognition, but because they care. It is our great honor to recognize them tonight with the Collins Award for Outstanding Volunteerism and Dedication.

Congratulations, Kyle and Jen.

Robert E. Collins Award



Make Music This Spring!

We have offerings for all ages this season. Join us for summer camps, early childhood classes, group classes, and private lessons in a variety of instruments such as the flute, drums, violin, piano, trumpet, and more!

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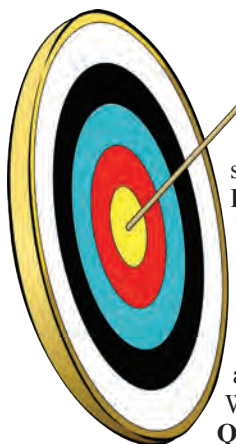
AIM FOR ARCHERY: ARCHERY CLASS 101

Instructor: Melinda Laben-Hardt
Age of Students: 8 to 99
Level: Beginning to Intermediate
Dates: Thursdays, May 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th
Time: 4:30pm to 5:30 pm
Full Session: 4 consecutive weekly classes.
of Students per Class: Minimum 8 students, maximum 14 students
Price per Student: \$100 dollars for full session

Type of Bow: Recurve
Location of Range: Yet to be determined
Equipment Provided by Instructor: Recurve bows, arrows w/field tips, targets
Course Content: Range safety, range set-up, basic equipment setup and use, and the basic steps of shooting and scoring.

Program Breakdown:
 Week 1- Introduction of equipment and range, rules and safety guidelines, basic form.
 Week 2- Review of safety rules, stance and form work, game
 Week 3- Practice shooting, individual tips and assessments, game
 Week 4- Practice shooting, balloon shoot

Qualifications:
 Melinda Hardt has been instructing Archery classes for youth since 2007. She has taught Archery programs all over the country, from California to Maine. She is a Certified Level 2 Archery Instructor through USA Archery.



**Girls on the Run
Participant Registration
now open for Spring 2026!**

Register to Coach!
Learn more



Learn more at
gotrvt.org/programs

Register your participant
today





PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN: INTRODUCTION TO SPORTS

Instructors: Staff from Middlebury Parks and Recreation, as well as area coaches
Who: Children ages 4-6
Location: Middlebury Recreation Gym
Schedule: Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30 pm April 28th -June 2nd (6 weeks)
Cost: \$65 Residents, \$81.25 Non-Residents
Description: The Middlebury Parks and Recreation department is pleased to offer this program aimed to pique young children’s interest in a variety of sports. Each week, we will focus on the basic skills of a new sport while keeping the environment fun and engaging. Sports covered will be included, but not limited to, basketball, soccer, gymnastics, tennis, and volleyball. During our last session, kids will enjoy a fun day playing all the games they have learned, topped off with a party and a special award for each child.
For More Information: Please email ahunt@townofmiddlebury.org or call 802-458-8014





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KINDERGARTEN-2ND GRADE PANTHER LACROSSE CLINIC

Instructors: Kate Livesay (klivesay@middlebury.edu), Head Women's Lacrosse Coach, and Olivia Seymour (oseymour@middlebury.edu), Assistant Women's Lacrosse Coach, and members of the Middlebury College Men's and Women's lacrosse teams.

Who: Children in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade

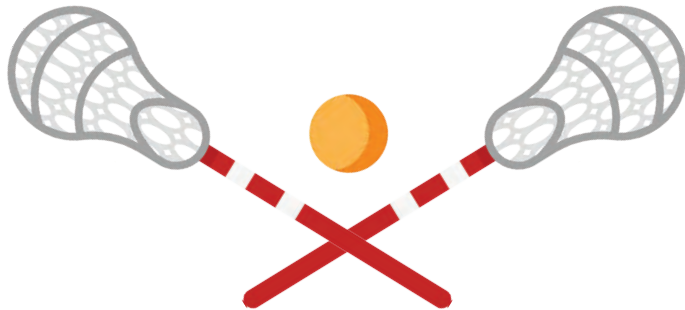
Schedule: All practices will be from 3:15-4:15 pm, Mondays, March 30th, April 6th, April 13th & April 27th

Location: Middlebury College Kohn Field Turf

Cost: \$50 Residents, \$60 Non-Residents

Description: Varsity lacrosse players and coaches will teach players basic skills such as shooting, passing, and defense during this weekly one-hour session. The program will run for 4 weeks.

Equipment: If your child has a stick, please have them bring it with them. All other equipment will be provided.



CAMP KOOKAMUNGA DAY CAMP

Ages: Kids going into grades 1-6

Fee: Field Trip Weeks - \$329 Resident & \$411.25 Non-Resident
Non-Field Trip Weeks - \$299 Resident & \$373.75 Non-Resident

Important Camp Fee Update

Due to rising operational costs, camp fees have increased slightly this year. The Non-Resident Fee has been adjusted from 15% to 25%, reflecting the rapidly growing number of non-resident participants in our programs. These changes help us continue providing a safe, welcoming, and high-quality camp experience. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Registration will open March 4th @ 9:00am

NEW this year: Please email Amber at ahunt@townofmiddlebury.org to register your child(ren)

PLEASE NOTE: FIELD TRIPS ARE NOT JUST ON FRIDAYS!
If your child is signed up for additional lessons or camps at the Rec. Park while attending Camp Kookamunga, counselors will happily walk your child to and from those lessons/camps (This also includes swim team and swim lessons)

Week 1: June 15-19 - Blast Off to Summer

No field trip this week

This week, we will tie-dye our Camp K shirts that will be worn on all field trips. We will also use Mentos and Coca-Cola to create an explosion, as well as conduct other science experiments. We will play a bunch of games that will help us get to know one another.

Continued on Page 10



Continued from Page 9

Week 2: June 22-26 - Need for Speed

Field Trip - The Fun Spot in Lake George, NY

We will head to The Fun Spot for go-karting, roller skating, laser tag, mini golf, and more. This week we will have lots of relays, races, and competitions.

Week 3: June 29-July 3 - Sports Mania

Field Trip - Get Air

During Sport Mania Week, we will have a variety of sports throughout the day and play team-building games.

Week 4: July 6-10 - Make a Splash

No field trip this week

This week, we will play all sorts of water games, be in the water, and have waterslides at camp. If you like water, this is the place to be.

Week 5: July 13-17 - Sliding Through Summer

Field Trip - Bromley Mountain Adventure Park in Peru, VT

Campers will enjoy slides, climbing walls, mini golf, and much more. In addition to our field trip, this week's camp will also have soccer-related tournaments each day.

Week 6: July 20-24 - Staycation

Field Trip - Marquis Theatre

This week, we will focus on local activities that make Middlebury great. We will walk to the Marquis Theatre, where we can relax and watch a movie. During this Staycation, we will also walk around the TAM and explore Middlebury. We will do scavenger hunts and more Middlebury activities.

Week 7: July 27-31 - Rolling into a Fun

Field Trip - Spare Time

We will play lots of sports this week, lots of arts and crafts, swim, spend time with friends, and end a fun-filled week with a trip to Spare Time for some bowling, laser tag, and arcade fun.

Week 8: August 3-7 - Fun in the Sun

No field trip this week

Fun in the Sun Week brings all the best parts of summer together in one cheerful, high-energy theme. Campers will enjoy sunny outdoor activities, water play, creative projects, and classic summertime games that celebrate warm weather and big smiles.

Week 9: August 10-14 - Summer Sendoff Week

No field trip this week

Campers can slow down the end of summer with all our favorite activities, including dodgeball, friendship bracelets, and so much more. We will have daily theme days. A fun-filled last week of camp before getting ready to head off to school.



Tiger Tennis for Teens is Back!

Free 6 Week Program for Beginner/Intermediate, Middle & High School Players

April 7th - May 21st, Tuesdays and Thursdays,
3:30-5 pm at Middlebury Indoor Tennis

Limited Space & Pre-Registration Required

Sponsored by Addison Community Athletics Foundation

For more information contact@middleburytennis.com



MIDDLEBURY INDOOR TENNIS

360 Boardman Street, Middlebury, VT
(802) 388-3733
middleburytennis.com



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2026 Spring Gymnastics

Instructor: Terri Phelps 802-236-1315 terriphelps@ymail.com
 Registration will open Wednesday March 11th, 2025 @ 5:30pm

****Classes March 25th, 2026, to June 2nd, 2026****
NO CLASSES April 18th-25th, May 5th or May 25th

Students will work to improve strength, flexibility, and coordination, as well as skill development in a safe and fun environment. Instruction will be included on uneven bars, beam, floor exercise, and vault. Class will be in the gymnasium at the Rec. Center



Preschool (Ages 3-4)

01. Friday	8:30-9:30am	\$171 (\$213.75)
02. Friday	9:30-10:30am	\$171 (\$213.75)
03. Saturday	9:00-10:00am	\$152 (\$190)
04. Saturday	10:00-11:00am	\$152 (\$190)

Young Beginner (ages 4-5)

05. Saturday	11:00-12:00pm	\$152 (\$190)
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Beginner (Ages 5-7)

06. Saturday	12:30-1:30pm	\$144 (\$180)
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Beg/Adv Beginner

07. Tuesday	3:15-4:15pm	\$144 (\$180)
08. Wednesday	3:15-4:15pm	\$162 (\$202.50)
09. Saturday	1:30-2:30pm	\$144 (\$180)

Intermediate/Advanced (Please NOTE: LONGER CLASSES)

10. Tuesday	4:15-5:30pm	\$176 (\$220)
11. Wednesday	4:15-5:30pm	\$198 (\$247.50)
12. Saturday	2:30-3:45pm	\$176 (\$220)

GYMNASTICS AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM Ages: 6-10

The program includes a 1-hour class, games/activities, and free time.

Please bring a snack as well.

13. Monday	3:15-5:15pm	\$256 (\$320)
14. Thursday	3:15-5:15pm	\$288 (\$360)

GYMNASTICS APRIL BREAK CAMP

Monday, April 20- Thursday, April 23

(PLEASE BRING A SNACK)

Grades K-2nd	9:00am-12:00pm	Res: \$180 (\$225)
Grades 2nd-5th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Res: \$180 (\$225)

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DROP-IN PROGRAMS

Adult Co-ed 30+ Basketball: Wednesdays starting March 13th, 7:00-9:00pm at Middlebury Rec. Center Gym. For more information, please contact KC Bullock at 802-989-0374

Adult Co-Ed Volleyball: Mondays from 6:45-9:00pm at Middlebury Rec Center Gym.

Advanced beginner and above volleyball. Players aim for good ball handling skills, trying for bump, set, spike on most plays. Teams are formed each week depending on who attends to keep the skill levels balanced on both sides and fun for all. For more information, please contact Sue Richardson at suerichardson@gmavt.net or 802-557-2724. We use the GroupMe app to do weekly headcounts and communicate time changes and cancellations. \$4.00 per drop-in or buy a \$20 punch card for 7 visits. Note: No Adult Co-Ed Volleyball during the Spring Volleyball League (3/18-5/8).

Pickleball: Monday through Thursday, 6:30-10am. Fridays, 7:00-10am. All abilities welcome. 3 courts available. \$4.00 per drop-in or buy a \$20 punch card for 7 visits.

2 seasonal courts are available at 77 Mary Hogan Drive.

Tot Time Gym Hours

Sponsored by Junebug

Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10am-12pm, open to all kids ages 5 and below. **Thanks to generous support from Junebug, Tot Time will be free to all for the 2025/26 school year.**



Yoga with Vanessa Dunleavy

Fridays, 11:00am-12:00pm in the Middlebury Rec Center Multipurpose Room. Come revitalize your body and relax your mind with yoga asanas and breath work. With a focus on alignment and awareness, we will work on strength, balance, and flexibility, all while honoring our body's intuition and individual needs. Learn more about Vanessa at www.vanessadunleavy.com. Drop-ins welcome, \$15 per class.

Questions? Email dunleavy.vanessa@gmail.com. Classes begin April 4th. Note: There will be no class on May 22nd.

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the TEEN CENTER

The Teen Center, located at 77 Mary Hogan Drive (aka the Warming Hut), is open every school day from 3-6 pm for afterschool drop-in, 1pm-6pm on early release days. If school is open, we are too!

Teens in 7th - 12th grade can stop by to grab a snack, chat with friends, and decompress. We also offer rotating programming, including sewing, arts & crafts, D&D, cooking, field trips, and peer support. All programs are at no cost to families, though donations are welcome. No need to pre-register for drop-in, just show up!



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Keewaydin Temagami

Lake Temagami, Ontario
Summer camp for girls & boys 10-18



KEEC

Lake Dunmore, Vermont
Environmental Education
Center for middle school groups

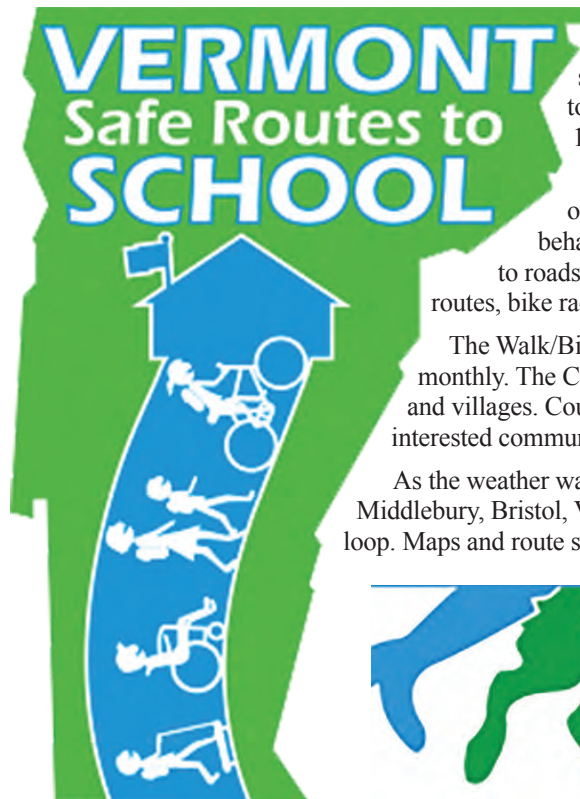
Since 1893, Keewaydin has provided unique opportunities for youth to develop self-confidence, character, and leadership while living simply in wilderness settings. Keewaydin Dunmore and Songadeewin, in beautiful central Vermont, provide a mixture of in-camp activities with robust canoeing and hiking programs. Keewaydin Temagami is a dedicated traditional canoe tripping camp in the wilds of northern Ontario, Canada. Keewaydin Environmental Education Center offers immersive 5-day visits focused on experiential learning in outdoor classrooms, enhancing group dynamics, and building community for middle school groups, with sessions available in spring or fall.



Keewaydin.org



WALKING AND BIKING UPDATES 2026



Get ready for the Middlebury Bike Swap. Frog Hollow Bikes and Middlebury Safe Routes host this annual event in Cannon Park. If you have a bike that's not being used, but still in decent shape, this is a chance to pass it on to another cyclist. It's also your chance to find a great deal on a 'new-to-you' bike. Save the date: Saturday, May 2nd, from 9am to 12pm.

Middlebury Safe Routes hosts "Walk and Roll to School Day" on the first Wednesday of each month at Mary Hogan School. They also monitor traffic patterns and student travel behavior, plan activities to teach bike skills and rules of the road, and recommend improvements to roads, parking lots, drop-offs, sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic lights, signage, bus routes, bike routes, bike racks, and more. Contact Erik Remsen at erik.remsen@gmail.com to help or offer input.

The Walk/Bike Council of Addison County is a county-wide, citizen-led advisory group that meets bi-monthly. The Council seeks to build momentum and capacity for safer walking and biking in our towns and villages. Council members work with state and regional agencies, municipal staff, schools, and other interested community partners. Anyone interested should visit www.walkbikeaddison.org.

As the weather warms, why not check out the Triangle Bike Loop? It's a bike route that connects the towns of Middlebury, Bristol, Vergennes, and New Haven. Pedal one segment of it, or take a day and complete the whole loop. Maps and route sheets can be found on the Walk/Bike Council website.



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SELF DEFENSE AIKI JITSU ADULTS PROGRAM

Instructor: Sensei Bruce Andrews

Ages: 14 and up

Cost: \$50.00

Schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Maximum Class Size: 12

Aiki Jitsu is a dynamic, self-defense oriented martial art encompassing strikes, throws, joint locks, and ground fighting. It focuses on using leverage and body mechanics to allow a smaller person to defeat a larger, stronger attacker. No experience needed (but welcome if you have some!) Come ready to learn and enjoy a challenging and dynamic workout!

Students are encouraged to purchase their own Judo Gi with white belt before class (Available at awma.com, amazon.com, or sporting goods stores). Note that a karate, taekwondo, or jujitsu gi will be unlikely to stand up to the strain of throwing techniques. Students without a gi will not be able to participate in throwing techniques. Questions? Contact Sensei Andrews at 860-488-0429 or study.jujitsu@gmail.com.



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District Transfer Station

1223 Rte 7 South Middlebury, VT

HOURS: Monday-Friday 7 AM to 3 PM, Saturday 8 AM to 1 PM

NO RESIDENTIAL TRASH OR RECYCLING

HazWaste Center:

HOURS: Monday-Friday: 8 AM to 2 PM, Saturday 8 AM to 1 PM

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- Construction & Demolition Debris
- Electronic Waste • Food Waste
- Fluorescent Light Bulbs • Furniture & Mattresses • Hazardous Waste • Leaf & Yard Waste • Maple Sap
- Tubing • Natural Wood Waste
- Plastic Bags & Film
- Scrap Metal • Tires..... and more!

District Residential Drop-Off

100 Kings Way (off Campground Rd.) New Haven, VT

HOURS: Fridays, 8 AM to Noon

NO LARGE LOADS OR SPECIAL WASTES

Accepted Items:

- Food Waste
- Leaf & Yard Waste
- Household Trash
- Blue Bin Recycling

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THURSDAY	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
FRIDAY	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
SATURDAY	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM



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HOURS

SUNDAY	CLOSED
MONDAY	CLOSED
TUESDAY	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
WEDNESDAY	CLOSED
THURSDAY	2:00 PM - 6:00 PM
FRIDAY	CLOSED
SATURDAY	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

2026 Activity Guide Release Dates

Summer - April 23rd

Fall - August 27th

Winter - November 5th





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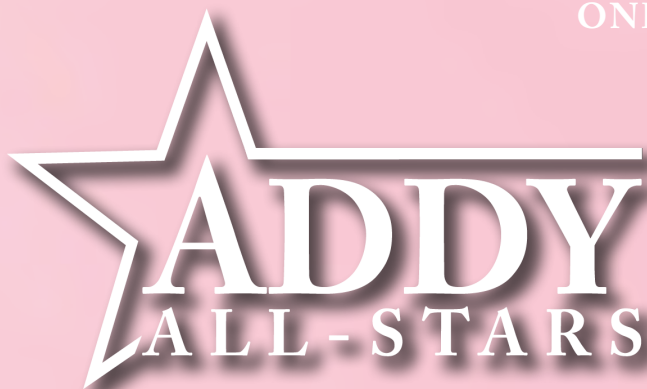
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