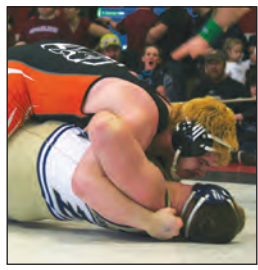




## On the page

Bristol's Rick Ceballos writes a musical memoir that transcribes his songs. See Arts + Leisure.



## Wrestlers win

Addison County touts four state wrestling champions, with more competition to come. See page 1B.



## Witness

A Lincoln journalist writes a first-hand report of ICE's terror campaign. See Pages 8A & 9A.

# ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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## Vergennes, Bristol residents greenlight local option taxes

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI & MARIN HOWELL

ADDISON COUNTY — Voters in Bristol and Vergennes have agreed to establish a local option tax in their respective communities. They join Middlebury, which adopted the levy in 2008, as the second and third Addison County communities to approve one. Bristol residents approved that

proposal by Australian ballot on Town Meeting Day, 418-200. Voters in Vergennes OK'd the move in the same manner, 332-266.

Specifically, Bristol voters agreed to levy the 1% charge on sales, meals, rooms and alcohol in their town, with revenue generated through the tax going toward "capital infrastructure (minimum 40%)," (See Local option tax, Page 10A)

## Most area school budgets OK'd

But Otter Valley and Slate Valley spending plans are defeated

By JOHN FLOWERS

ADDISON COUNTY — Residents of Addison County's largest and smallest school districts approved their fiscal year 2027 public education budgets on Tuesday.

But folks in a handful of our southern-most towns will need to return to the polls sometime this spring to get their school spending plans passed after the Otter Valley and Slate Valley spending proposals were defeated.

Residents of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge on Tuesday approved — by a 1,603 to 636 tally — a fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District PreK-12 spending plan of \$53 million, representing a 3.58% increase in per-pupil education spending.

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, or CLA.

Also on Tuesday, ACSD residents voted 1,618 to 486 to formally close Ripton Elementary School. The district will now convey the school building and property to the town of Ripton, which on Monday voted to receive the property and spend \$70,000 for its maintenance during FY27. (See School budgets, Page 7A)

## Brown & Boyce win seats in shire town

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — American Flatbread owner Danielle Boyce and incumbent Dan Brown won three-year terms in a three-person race for two seats on the Middlebury selectboard on Tuesday.

Brown, a two-term incumbent, topped the field with 777 votes, with Boyce finishing a close second with 736 tallies to grab the second seat. Boyce will succeed four-term incumbent Brian Carpenter, who chose not to seek reelection this year.

Peter Jette finished third in Tuesday's selectboard race with 378 votes in what was a very amicable contest between the three candidates.

"I've known (Jette) for around 20 years now... I'm sure he would have been great. But it also feels good to bring some more balance to the board," said Boyce, an East Middlebury resident who among other things wanted to bring more gender balance to the shire town's top elected board. Boyce joins

(See Middlebury, Page 10A)



## Exercising democracy

SCHOOL GYMS AND town halls were busy these past few days hosting annual town meetings. Shown, clockwise from top left, are Interim Road Foreman Trevor Currier in hi-vis shirt speaking at the Monkton meeting, Fire Chief Chris Pike answering a question in Ripton, Town Clerk Julie Howlett explaining a point in Bridport and Cornwall selectboard Chair Tanya Byker showing hand-written minutes of the 1793 town meeting. Read our town-by-town coverage on Pages 11A-16A.

Photos by Buzz Kuhns and the Independent's Steve James & John S. McCright



## By the way

Get ready for that "special" day of the year when you feel like taking a sledgehammer to your alarm clock or phone. The clocks will "spring" forward by an hour beginning at 2 a.m. this Sunday, March 8. Hopefully anticipatory visions of spring flowers will compensate for your lost hour of sleep.

Bristol's Charlotte Crum, who runs for Champlain Valley Union High School, was recently named "player of the year" by Gatorade based on her cross-country season. Gatorade Player of the Year is

(See By the Way, Page 9A)



## Middlebury residents back big budget hike

9.9% increase spurs lively debate

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury residents at their annual meeting decided a contested race for their selectboard and money items on the warning — including a fiscal year 2027 municipal budget of \$16 million that represents a 9.96% increase compared to the current spending plan.

In what was clearly a collegial three-person contest for two three-year spots on the Middlebury selectboard (see related story on Page 1A), Dan Brown and Danielle Boyce finished on top with 777 and 736

tallies, respectively. Peter Jette finished out of the running with 378 votes.

The highlight of Middlebury's eight-article annual meeting warning on Monday was the proposed FY27 budget, a \$16 million spending plan of which \$10,136,266 will need to be raised through property taxes. That's a \$974,118 (10.6%) increase in the tax

affecting portion of the budget that will require a 9.27-cent (9.97%) increase in the municipal tax rate. The new municipal rate, based on Monday's affirmative budge vote, (See Budget hike, Page 17A)

"Describing this year as challenging is really an understatement."

— Town Manager Mark Pruhenski

## Towns rally behind primary health care bill

By MARIN HOWELL

ADDISON COUNTY — Voters in several local towns sent a clear message to the Vermont Legislature this town meeting season — they want to see action on universal health care for Vermonters.

At issue was H.433, a bill currently sitting in the House Committee on Health Care that aims to implement a publicly-financed health care program for all Vermonters, beginning with universal primary care.

In Addison County, seven town meeting warnings featured 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?" That article was fielded in Bristol,

Cornwall, Middlebury, New Haven, Ripton, Salisbury and Weybridge.

The non-binding resolution was approved by Australian ballot in Middlebury (917-174) and Salisbury (121-43). Voters in the other five towns passed the article from the floor at their annual town meetings.

In a legislative report included in this edition, Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Middlebury, said H.433 likely won't be voted on by the House. Though, she pointed to other efforts to reform the state's primary care system, particularly S.197 in the Senate, which would "create a package of reforms to make primary care more sustainable and accessible for Vermonters," she wrote.

## City councilor heads off to U.S. Army job

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

VERGENNES — Though John Montgomery is now in Europe executing business on behalf of the United States, just a few months ago the Vergennes resident only had to head to the Little City's fire station on Tuesday nights to get to the center of his civic responsibility.

While the 57-year-old's term as a city councilor is up on Tuesday, and his seat around the table at the front of the room will be reserved for a newly elected official come Wednesday, Montgomery would have liked to run again.

But his tenure was effectively cut short by a call from the U.S. Army.

Montgomery hasn't stepped away from civic responsibilities. (See Montgomery, Page 17A)

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# Roads, spending dominate discussion at Monkton town meeting

By MARIN HOWELL

MONKTON — There are some things you're likely to see at town meetings — microphone runners, lengthy discussions over town spending and opportunities to talk with local officials about decisions that impact your community.

Monkton's annual town meeting this past Saturday had all three.

The roughly three-hour-long gathering in the saw voters approve town and highway budget asks, reject a request for funds to repair Piney Woods Road and pose suggestions and questions to the selectboard over aspects of town operations.

"I just want to say this is why we wanted to have this as an article at town meeting," selectboard member Sam Peisch said in the midst of a 40-minute conversation about Piney Woods Road. "This is really important; these are great questions."

## TOWN SPENDING

Over 100 Monkton voters filed into Monkton Central School for Saturday morning's meeting. Residents fielded an amended general fund expenditures request of \$1,007,324.89, an increase of 14.75% over the current year, with around \$867,531 to be raised in

taxes.

That request was substantially lower than the \$1.176 million general fund expenditures proposal printed on Monkton's town meeting warning — a 34% hike over the current year. The selectboard proposed the amendments to general fund expenditures on Saturday and explained the changes.

They noted in a fact sheet distributed to attendees that the town contracted with the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) "to help the town perform the essential activities of the treasurer and delinquent tax collector" following the resignation of former town treasurer and delinquent tax collector Bill Joos.

In addition to helping with those tasks, NEMRC conducted an initial review of Monkton's accounting practices and suggested changes to the town warning to align with best practices. Those suggestions included reducing a general fund

deficit by the sum of Monkton's projected education tax credit, tax stabilization fund, planning and zoning fund, and correcting "a clerical difference that resulted in an unintentional double counting of the Russell Memorial Library and some minor calculation differences between the town budget spreadsheet and NEMRC."

Those changes reduced the general fund deficit from \$243,571.09 to \$74,623.64. Other changes included removing projected delinquent tax revenue from anticipated non-tax revenue, which lowered projected non-tax revenue from \$319,793.68 to \$139,793.68.

"I don't know if this has ever happened before where we've had to recommend an amendment on the floor, but we really want to make sure all of you as taxpayers are voting on accurate numbers," Peisch said.

The amended article ultimately passed by voice vote.

Voters also approved an amended highway fund spending

request of \$1,384,787.56, with \$993,287.56 to be raised by taxes. That's a 7.6% decrease from what was on the warning last year. The amended highway budget reflects a reduction of around \$4,000 in a highway fund surplus to correct a "clerical difference between town budget spreadsheet and the town municipal accounting system (NEMRC)."

During discussion, Stephen Pilcher asked about a "Hot Mix" line item totaling \$621,000. Selectboard member John Dunham explained that \$425,000 worth of paving work was budgeted for last year, but due to scheduling and weather, the town only completed around \$48,000 of work.

"So, there's a substantial remainder," he said. "That left (about \$376,000) of work that we still need to do. You're all aware of the condition of the paved roads; they're deteriorating, we need to keep up with it. So, that's going to carry forward ... We also have this year's work we want to do."

Some residents underscored the importance of working on town roads, particularly as the condition of some roads is complicating emergency response efforts.

"We have to take patients on an ambulance through Monkton quite a bit to get them to a hospital, and if you have back pain or some other kind of traumatic injury, going down a really, really bumpy Silver Street right now is really not a great idea," first responder Mark Boltz-Robinson said. "So, we often end up actually opting to take (Route) 116 instead because it's a much better road. We really do need to actually do the work to repave the roads in Monkton."

## TOWN ROADS

Much of the conversation at Saturday's meeting centered around town roads. Article 7 asked voters to authorize no more than \$150,000 for repairs to Piney Woods Road. The article generated a lot of discussion, with residents expressing both support for and concerns over the project.

Piney Woods Road was severely damaged in a July 2024 storm and has been closed since. The road was previously repaired after storm damage in 2019 and 2023.

Selectboard members explained that the repairs and improvements to the road currently being eyed would cost \$1.2 million, with Federal Emergency Management Agency funds paying for 75% of the project and the state supporting another 12.5%. Monkton's 12.5% share would consist of the \$150,000 voters fielded on Saturday.



MONKTON RESIDENT MARK Rickner rises to address the selectboard during his town's annual meeting this past Saturday. The gathering attracted over 100 Monkton voters and generated lively discussion on issues like town spending and work on Monkton's roads.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

Several residents asked whether improvements would change the character of the road and actually be able to withstand future storms.

"Having been there for 35 years and watching it blow out three or four times over that period of time, I would almost like to know how much money has the town had to spend over the past 20 years to keep that road open," asked Mark Rickner, who lives on Piney Woods Road. "Because if we're going to be doing this every 10 years, we may as well just put a budget in to keep Piney Woods Road open."

Peisch shared details of the project, noting it would include installing three box culverts, upsizing cross culverts, and ditching higher up on the road.

"We can't guarantee that it wouldn't damage the road (in the future), but this would give us the best chance to both allow that road to be open," he said. "And that we'd do everything we possibly can to preserve the rural character of that road within the constraints that are provided to us from the federal government and from the state."

Multiple voters spoke in favor of repairing the road, including Piney Woods Road resident Julie Pelland.

"I've seen many people use that road to get to Parks Hurlburt Road or the other direction," she said. "I'm supporting it being open

because I think it does help people get from one place to the other."

Voters ultimately rejected Article 7 by paper ballot, 64-54. Town officials noted the article was non-binding, as the selectboard has the authority to make decisions about town roads. Still, selectboard members said hearing residents' input on the matter was why they decided to put it on the warning.

"I actually look forward to the selectboard coming back and giving us more details on Piney Woods Road and keeping us all informed," Rickner said after the vote. "I know it's not an easy decision, and I hope you're able to keep the character so it's not the only major thoroughway in our town."

At Saturday's meeting, Monkton voters also approved \$22,349 in appropriations for 28 social service agencies and OK'd a sum not to exceed \$311,930 for the purchase of a John Deere road grader.

Voters approved a proposal to "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." That article passed by division of the house, 60-43.

Monkton's town meeting can be viewed on NEAT TV at tinyurl.com/monkrontownmeeting.



FORMER MONKTON SELECTBOARD member Stephen Pilcher speaks to town officials at Monkton's annual town meeting this past Saturday. Pilcher was among many voters to offer questions and suggestions to the Monkton selectboard during the gathering.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

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## Career center budget passes, despite ballot glitch

By JOHN FLOWERS

SALISBURY — Addison County voters turned out at the polls on Tuesday to resoundingly endorse a fiscal year 2027 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget request of \$6,271,915, though residents of one of the towns served by the PHCC apparently didn't get to vote on the spending plan.

Salisbury residents didn't receive the PHCC budget ballot to fill out on Tuesday, and thus their input wasn't reflected in the 3,901 to 1,732 result that election officials released to the media Wednesday morning. That vote total was by a wide enough margin that any vote total from Salisbury would not affect the outcome. Just over 160

Salisbury residents cast ballots on various Town Meeting issues via Australian ballot.

Election workers hadn't confirmed the reason for the Salisbury ballot glitch as the *Independent* went to press Wednesday afternoon.

"We know they got the ballot; it never made it to the actual polling places," PHCC Superintendent Nicole MacTavish said Wednesday morning.

The Salisbury town offices were closed Wednesday, so Town Clerk Allen Hathaway was unavailable. But the *Independent* reached Salisbury Selectman Pat Dunn, who said, "We never got (the ballots). That's all I know. I talked to Allen, and he said, 'I never got them.'"

Apparently, no one voting in Salisbury noticed the PHCC ballot omission while fielding the other municipal and school ballots.

The PHCC delivers Career and Technical Education to students in the Addison County Central, Addison Northwest and Mount Abraham Union School Districts. Ballots from each member town are delivered to a central tabulating location where they are comingled and counted.

The *Independent* will follow up on this story for its next edition.

Assuming Tuesday's vote passes state scrutiny, it continues a lengthy string of budget wins for the PHCC.

The FY27 budget of \$6,271,915 (See PHCC, Page 3A)

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# Mt. Abe eyes stadium lighting

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — The Mount Abraham Union High School community has been raising funds for a project that could see permanent stadium lighting installed at the Bristol school's athletic field this spring.

The "Flip the Switch" campaign seeks to raise \$70,000 for the stadium lighting and an upgraded sound system. As of Tuesday, over \$58,000 had been raised toward the effort.

"This has truly been a community-driven effort, and we are incredibly grateful for the support shown by our families, alumni, local businesses, and residents," Mt. Abe Athletic Director & Activities Coordinator Devin Wendel said, noting the campaign is set to end on March 8. "We are optimistic about finishing strong!"

While Mt. Abe doesn't currently have stadium lighting, the school and broader community got a taste of it back in 2016-2019. Wendel noted in those years the school rented temporary lights for some home football games.

"Those evenings drew record attendance and created a tremendous sense of school pride and community energy," he recalled. "However, the rented lighting systems were eventually discontinued as an option due to visibility and safety concerns as per our state associations recommendations."

The "Flip the Switch" effort seeks to build off those experiences.

"This project is truly centered around creating a fun, safe, permanent, high-quality solution that prioritizes student experience while also strengthening community engagement," Wendel said. "Our focus is on providing accessible, exciting, and well-managed events that will bring people together."

Along with the stadium lighting, Wendel noted the project will include partnering with Rutland's Atomic Professional Audio to redesign the audio system at Mt. Abe's main stadium venue.

"The project includes installing permanently mounted speakers that will be installed on the light poles to provide balanced sound coverage across the entire competition area including the jumping/throwing pits for Track & Field that surround the main stadium field area," he explained. "The system will feature wireless capabilities, allowing announcements from both the press box or from the field as needed to help us better showcase anthem singers, or special announcements to be made from the field."

He said the sound system upgrades will help improve safety, communication and overall spectator experience.

"Our goal is to provide clear and intelligible announcements for athletes, coaches, officials, and fans, while also allowing us to better showcase student recognitions, senior nights, and community celebrations," he said. "We want student-athletes to be excited when they come out to their favorite warmup song, be inspired by our anthem singers, and overall, ensure everyone has a great experience when coming to this field, regardless of what color jersey they are wearing, or who they are rooting for."

The project is aimed at supporting several sports teams at Mt. Abe: football, field hockey, girls' soccer, boys' soccer, boys' lacrosse, girls' lacrosse, and track and field.

"Permanent lighting and improved sound will expand scheduling flexibility, support multiple interscholastic programs, and create more opportunities for families and community members to attend events," Wendel said. "It also supports local businesses by increasing evening attendance in town."

Funds for the project have been raised through an online campaign that had generated \$38,867 as of Tuesday. Wendel said the effort has also received \$19,200 in checks, as well as commitments from several area businesses and community members planning to support the project with direct contributions.

"Once all of the donations are fully processed, we anticipate being much closer to our goal," he said.

If all goes to plan, the lighting and sound systems could be installed and operational at Mt. Abe by the end of April or early May. Wendel said since the school's Athletic & Activities Department committed to raising funds for the project, it was able to work collaboratively with district administrators to move the project along.

"Completing the project this spring will allow our student-athletes and community to immediately benefit from this upgraded venue, building excitement for our upcoming fall sports season, where the venue will see the most use, spread among more teams in the fall," he said.

He noted the project has been around a decade in the making.

"Prior to my time as the AD at Mt. Abraham, I worked for both U-32 and Montpelier High School, two venues that had a permanent lighting solution. When I returned to Mt. Abraham in 2016, in partnership with key stakeholders at the time, immediately created a long-range planning document that focuses on big-ticket items that we felt could have an impact on our students and community," Wendel said. "I drew upon my past experiences with athletic facilities, coupled with what our coaching staff wanted to see change at Mt. Abraham as we looked ahead at the future together."

"Lights on the Football Game Field With a New Sound System" was one of the first things added to the list, he said, though that goal was moved to the "10 years from now" category due to the scope of the project and potential financial implications.

Wendel said it's exciting to see what started as a conversation 10 years ago becoming a reality.

"We are incredibly proud of and thankful for how our student-athletes, coaches, and community members have rallied around this effort," he said. "Exciting times in Eagle Nation!"



## Blood Moon

THE LUNAR ECLIPSE was visible in the early morning hours of March 3 in a Middlebury backyard. Called a "Blood Moon" because of the deep coppery color, this celestial sight will not be visible again in North America until 2028.

Photo by Jan Jaferian

## If education is the answer, stop undermining it

In his January State of the State address, Gov. Phil Scott pinned Vermont's hopes and dreams on the education system. It was encouraging, perhaps even inspiring, to hear Gov. Scott acknowledge that education can be solely responsible for achieving his vision for Vermont. Previously, this recognition was lacking as the education community was buffeted by political rhetoric that pointed a finger at schools for Vermont's high property taxes, which contribute to its lack of affordability.

It appeared at the time that Gov. Scott had finally realized that providing all Vermont students with equitable learning opportunities is more complex work than many would like to believe. We looked forward to a thoughtful dialogue about what it would take to transform our education system. Sadly, it didn't take long for our elected leaders and the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) to resort to gamesmanship to ostensibly further a political agenda.

Last week, the AOE released the most recent batch of test scores, which are usually released in the fall so that schools can actually use the results in their budget and program planning cycles.

Why the late release? Could it

be an attempt to influence voter confidence in their local schools before Town Meeting Day and encourage Vermonters to vote "no" on budgets, as Gov. Scott has indicated that he will do? Or was the agency just not able to provide the field with the information they needed to make decisions promptly?

While school districts acknowledge the need for significant improvement in test scores and continue to work tirelessly to make that happen, our state leaders conspicuously avoid taking responsibility for

creating and perpetuating a system that is inefficient, unwieldy and wildly out of touch with the realities of operating schools in Vermont.

The educational community has work to do to ensure that all of our students have the requisite skills and knowledge to be successful — the data is clear that we need to do better. However, this work has been done in isolation for years, not only without meaningful leadership from the state, but often with state leadership distancing

### Opinion

This commentary is by Chris Young, president of the Vermont Principals Association Rebecca Fillion, past-president of the VPA, and Holly Russell-Vroegop, the president-elect of the VPA.

(See Young, Page 10A)

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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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## PHCC

(Continued from Page 2B)

represents a 9.95% increase compared to this year and a new tuition rate of \$38,894, an 11% (\$3,974) increase compared to this year.

Career center officials have linked a majority of the budget increases to negotiated salary increases under existing collective bargaining agreements, an anticipated 7.3% increase in health insurance premiums, the need to replace the roof and upgrade the HVAC system at the career center's North Campus building, and \$783,102 in debt service — largely associated with an \$8.1 million bond that voters OK'd back in 2022 to finance significant renovations to the PHCC's Charles Avenue and North Campus buildings in Middlebury.

"We are feeling grateful for the support of Career and Technical Education in Addison County," MacTavish said.

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

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## Editorials

## No plan in Iran follows Trump's policy of chaos

Just 10 days ago Trump delivered what many historians called the most pointless State of the Union address in the nation's history, devoid of policy or direction but full of self-congratulations and past grievances. Four days later, U.S. warplanes were bombing Iran without consultation with Congress, without a UN Security Council resolution, without an explanation to the public and without planning for the day after.

It follows Trump's haphazard policy of chaos that is at least partially devised to keep American voters from focusing on his failures, while he incessantly promotes his delusional strongman image.

It works for some MAGA supporters who have accepted his role as supreme leader, turned off any pretense of critical thinking, and support him as the cult figure he wants to be. (Timothy Snyder writes a good explanation of Trump's cult-like appeal in [The Transitive Strongman](#).)

For everyone else, there's reality.

Today's reality is Trump got America in a war with no legitimate objective, no exit strategy and no plan to achieve long-lasting gain. By his own admission, Trump said in a news interview this week that his worst-case scenario "would be we do this and somebody takes over who's as bad as the previous person. Right? That could happen."

When asked what his best-case scenario was, he didn't have an answer. He admitted his second and third options to run the county were already gone. "Most of the people we had in mind are dead," Trump said in an NBC interview. "Now we have another group. They may be dead also, based on reports. So, I guess you have a third wave coming. Pretty soon we're not going to know anybody."

The lack of planning by Trump and his team is staggering, as were the ever-changing reasons for launching the attack. First it was regime-change, then it was to prevent any attack on America's interest because Israel was going to launch its campaign and Trump figured we'd might as well join in. Then it was to kill Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei before he killed Trump (as Trump alleged he was trying to do).

What do we know for certain? Not a lot because Trump's actions are so mercurial, but we do know Trump's egomania rules the day and whatever makes him look good and feel powerful will be high priority.

As American citizens, the difficulty is trying to focus on the reasons his actions either do or do not favor the nation's best interests and keep those issues and reasons catalogued without being overwhelmed.

It seems forever ago, for instance, that the illegal and barbaric actions of ICE and CBP agents in Minneapolis sparked national outrage and concern for our democracy. But it was just a month ago that Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old nurse, was murdered by ICE agents who shot him 10 times in the back at close range while he was pinned down by other agents. The week before Renee Good, a mother and poet, was shot in the face while in her car by an ICE agent at point blank range. Many others were brutalized and detained.

Trump is running from those scenes of national outrage as fast as he can, hoping to bury them in the fog of continued wreckage.

Don't let him. It's the duty of American voters to hold Trump accountable for putting policies in place that violate individual rights and has turned law enforcement officers against its own citizens.

Ditto the Epstein files. As evidence gets closer to tagging Trump as a knowing friend and perhaps participant, Trump seeks distractions — even if it means bombing Iran. American voters should keep the issue at the forefront and determine Trump's, and others, proximity to those crimes.

But that's the tip of the iceberg. In the past year Trump's policies have destroyed much of the progress on creating a vibrant renewable energy economy President Biden instituted. Health care benefits have been slashed, putting millions of middle-class Americans in grave danger or financial ruin. Vaccines to protect children against measles and other deadly diseases are being discontinued by wrong-headed policies in the face of scientific evidence proving their worth. And on and on.

So, too, with Trump's illegal war with Iran. A bipartisan Congress must take back its authority to declare war. [Here's](#) columnist David French, who fought in Iraq in 2007-08, on why the constitutional framework is so important to follow:

"The fundamental goal of the 1787 Constitution was to establish a republican form of government — and that meant disentangling the traditional powers of the monarch and placing them in different branches of government.

"When it came to military affairs, the Constitution separated the power to declare war from the power to command the military. The short way of describing the structure is that America should go to war only at Congress' direction, but when it does, its armies are commanded by the president.

"Perhaps the most important aspect of this constitutional structure is that it creates a presumption of peace. Our nation cannot go to war until its leaders persuade a majority of Congress that war is in our national interest... To make the case to Congress, a president doesn't just outline the reasons for war; he also outlines the objectives of the conflict. This provides an opportunity to investigate the weaknesses of the case for the conflict, along with the possibility of success and the risks of failure..."

"Now, many millions of Americans are bewildered by events. There is no national consensus around the decision to deploy Americans into harm's way. There isn't even a Republican consensus. There's only a personal consensus, the personal consensus of a mercurial man so detached from reality that he actually reposted on Truth Social an article with the headline 'Iran Tried to Interfere in 2020, 2024 Elections to Stop Trump, and Now Faces Renewed War With U.S....'"

"In 1848, at the close of the Mexican-American War, a first-term member of Congress named Abraham Lincoln wrote: 'Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This, our convention understood to be the most oppressive of all kingly oppressions and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.'"

"Those words were true then, and they're true now. No matter what he thinks, Trump is not a king. But by taking America to war all on his own, he is acting like one."

Angelo Lynn

## Must reads:

There's a lot to read in today's *Addison Independent*, but let me highlight two pieces in particular: Lincoln resident Lisa Cochran's 40-hour witness in Minneapolis on Pages 8A and 9A provides a moving and poignant lesson for Vermonters; and Vermont Principal Association President Chris Young's op-ed, starting on Page 3A, points out that recent political grandstanding on education, referring to Gov. Scott, hinders work in our schools.

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## Pen in hand

ALTHOUGH HE SURELY closely read his town report when it came in the mail, this man at Tuesday's Bridport town meeting revisits a finer point in the document while someone is talking at the front of the hall.

Independent photo/Steve James

## Vermont weaves fiber arts revival

During the Vietnam War, my first husband, Ken Mayberger, was a conscientious objector. For his service, he raised money for a Land Rover and drove it from New Hampshire to New York City. From there, he and the car boarded a ship that traveled through the Panama Canal to a jungle hospital outside Pucallpa, Peru, where he was to volunteer. Suddenly, he was dwelling amidst indigenous people in a way few foreigners had. While living among the Shipibo and Conibo tribes, he stayed in a grass-roof hut built many feet above the ground where everyone slept in hammocks.

Ken found traditional practices fascinating. In the early 60s, the U.S. was shifting to industrialization. The goal was to build new machines to make life easier. It had become unfashionable to do things by hand. Ken watched native women in their backstrap looms, weaving. They would put some strings around a tree and sit on the ground, wrapping the other ends of the strings around their backs. A board like a comb lifted first half the strings, and then the other half and they threw a shuttle full of yarn across with each change. They made all their clothing and material in this way.

When Ken got back to college in New Hampshire, he decided that he wanted to preserve traditional ways like weaving. He started teaching himself how to weave and visited many woolen mills still active in New Hampshire and Vermont. He tried weaving with a simple loom but got frustrated by the lack of pattern

options. At mills around New England, he learned that a Jacquard loom offered flexibility to create unique patterns. When he learned about that option, he decided to research and build a Jacquard loom for his major project. Using maple and mahogany, he built a frame six feet wide and got a Jacquard head from a factory, where the practice of using a Jacquard was phasing out. He placed the head on top of the frame and hooked it up.

The Jacquard loom is often considered the first computer. If you know how dot matrix works, this is the same. The Jacquard head provided unlimited patterns depending on the holes that he punched into cardboard cards. Each string could be programmed to come up individually, without a repeat pattern. Handlooms at that time were usually two or four harnesses with pedals to lift them, which meant there were only two or four sets of changes. The new patterns were not limited by harnesses threaded by yarns of the warp. Each string moved independently.

Middlebury College Museum of Art had a talk recently about a new purchase of a damask "napkin" from Netherlands. The table-sized piece was made by lifting various strings which created the pattern. It reminded me of Ken and his weaving. When I mentioned Ken's work from 60 years ago to the speaker Justin Squizzero, who directs the Newbury Weaving

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

## Ways of Seeing

By Sas Carey



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

## Woods walking a Lenten option

This year for Lent, my wife Deborah . . . has *not* been fasting.

At least not from any one thing in particular. Instead, she has decided this Lent to take a walk in the woods every day.

For those unfamiliar with Lent, it is a 40-day period before Easter intended to remember the 40 days Jesus fasted in the wilderness at the start of his public ministry. For many, Lent is therefore a time of fasting: of giving up something good as a spiritual practice, partly in memory of what Jesus gave up. But fasting is also for some a way of remembering what many people in the world lack not by choice but because of their circumstances: food, clean water, a roof over their head, a job. Fasting from material possessions can also be a way of loosening the hold that possessions, comforts or consumer mentality have over us especially in an affluent society. Lent can also be a time of confession.

In some Christian traditions, Lenten fasts involves giving up meat, dairy products and olive oil. Others may give up sugar. Lent begins on a day known as Ash Wednesday from the tradition of having ashes placed on one's forehead, with ashes being a sign of both repentance and mortality. The practice of giving up fats and oils is what led to the tradition of *Mardi Gras* — or in English, "Fat Tuesday": the big feasting day right before Ash Wednesday when you rid your house of fats, presumably by consuming them.

## Clippings

By Matt Dickerson



taking on positive spiritual practices during Lent rather than giving things up — or, perhaps more specifically, giving something up only as a means of making more room in our lives for taking on something new and good. Which is why, I think, Deborah decided on her daily walks in the woods as a Lenten practice this year. Although she interprets "walking in the woods" broadly to including tromping around in snowshoes, or on cross-country skis, as well as in her winter boots — as long as she's in the woods, it counts — she has been very faithful at following through.

(See *Clippings*, Page 5A)

Letters  
to the Editor

## Immunity issue needs debate

If a politician wants my vote, this will be *my* question.

How come none of you want to work on what I view as the single biggest, most pressing political problem with this country?

What is that, you ask?

Why, it's Sovereign Immunity.

From what I understand about Sovereign Immunity; it is that hospitals, doctors, nurses and cops can literally kill you and me, and our loved ones cannot sue them for wrongful death, *without their permission!*

Read that again, yea?

It seems to me that politicians must surely know this, although maybe my expectations are too high, because if they don't see it this way, they either don't have good English comprehension, or they just don't have any courage to tackle the REAL problem.

So, why would I vote for them?

Additionally, it seems to me that the current administration has *not* dared to send ICE to *any* of the four states who have ratified their laws to prevent said killing, maiming and destruction by the powers that be.

Coincidence?

I think not.

I hope and pray that my post wakes some folks up to the *real* danger we are facing right now. It's got nothing to do with all these small wildfires that folks are stamping out, and *everything* to do with the consistent and determined undermining of our most basic and profound right to receive recompense from The Pros from Dover, when they harm our personhood.

I fully intend to take my intentions and agenda on the road, in order to stamp out this ghastly and all-consuming corruption. So, yes, along with all the *real* gods, I am making that my rallying cry for the *rest* of my life, however long that is.

My rallying cry: "Stop Sovereign Immunity, Right Now, ask me how!"

Mona Richardson  
Middlebury

## It's time for a regime change

Regime Change Now!

At 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C.

Bruce Acciavatti  
Salisbury

## Families need paid leave

Having a great home and job and a healthy family you can love and be with is the American Dream. But without universal paid leave in Vermont, many workers are forced to make the terrible choice of deciding which part of this dream they might have to give up. I'm one of them.

With elderly parents, I was forced to make numerous hard decisions quickly when my dad suddenly died of a heart attack at the same time my mom was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer.

Already reeling from the loss of my dad, I had to quickly figure out how to care for my mom, but I had recently just moved away. I had a full-time job that I loved but it was also mentally and physically exhausting. While they had given me some bereavement time for my Dad, when I asked for a leave of absence to help care for my mom, my employer said no.

With no existing help for my mom's care and treatment, the choice was made for me — leave my job, which also meant I had to give up my dream rental in the mountains and move myself and three pets into my mom's unfinished basement.

I spent six months caring for my mom, three months of which was without a job. The whole thing was just crazy. I think we've all heard stories of people who are in situations like that and we never think it will be us, but I think about the flip side now. It can happen to anyone.

I was shocked that my employer didn't allow me to take the leave

(See *Bridges* letter, Page 5A)

# Hardy updates Senate action

## Education, health care, libraries receive attention

Happy Town Meeting Week! The Legislature is on recess this week so we can attend town meetings, talk with constituents, and take a mid-session breather. I'm happy to sleep in my own bed and be out in the community having great conversations with folks.



**Legislative Review**

by Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Addison County

I try to attend as many town meetings as possible each year, but can't make it to all 25 of them. On Saturday I went to four town meetings — Starksboro, Monkton, Salisbury and the tail-

end of Ferrisburgh. On Monday evening, I planned to go to town meetings in Bristol, Ripton, Weybridge and Middlebury. On Tuesday, I hoped to make it to Hancock, Huntington, Bridport and Whiting. In addition, on Wednesday 3/4 at the Hub in Rochester, I would be meeting with folks at an event hosted by the Stockbridge and Rochester Parent Teacher Organizations to talk about Act 73 and Vermont's education funding system. Finally, on Friday 3/6 at 9 a.m. at the Orwell Free Library, I will be attending a "Coffee and Conversation" event organized in partnership with Slate Valley Unified USD and the Orwell Free Library. Come hear updates from the legislative session and learn more about Act 73 and the education system.

Education. A big focus this session was supposed to have been implementing Act 73, the major education reform law passed last session. A *Seven Days* article, "Vermont's School Enrollment is Dropping at an Alarming Rate," features the Mount Abe School District as an example of why action is needed. So far, however, there isn't a clear path forward.

The education committees are working on competing maps for re-organizing school districts. You can see both the proposed House Education Committee map and the proposed Senate Education Committee map, although neither has been approved by the committees yet. Generally, I don't believe that top-down, forced mergers will be successful or save money. Recall that the Redistricting Task Force charged with proposing at least two maps did not ultimately back a map, but did recommend creating regional educational service agencies and strategic district mergers.

Meanwhile, the House Ways & Means Committee has been working with the Tax Department on implementing the tax changes in Act 73, many of which are outlined in this report on property tax classifications and this report on regional assessment districts. The Senate Finance Committee, which I'm a member of, has been debating bills that would reduce school costs or limit education expenditures and/or

raise revenues to offset/lower property taxes. I'm cautiously optimistic that we can arrive at a compromise that will do both.

The Joint Fiscal Office has finalized a contract to produce a report on the forthcoming foundation formula, due in December for consideration next session.

Finally, school boards have been working hard to propose responsible budgets that would meet student needs and limit property tax increases. Collectively, they have reduced total end of Ferrisburgh. On Monday evening, I planned to go to town meetings in Bristol, Ripton, Weybridge and Middlebury. On Tuesday, I hoped to make it to Hancock, Huntington, Bridport and Whiting. In addition, on Wednesday 3/4 at the Hub in Rochester, I would be meeting with folks at an event hosted by the Stockbridge and Rochester Parent Teacher Organizations to talk about Act 73 and Vermont's education funding system. Finally, on Friday 3/6 at 9 a.m. at the Orwell Free Library, I will be attending a "Coffee and Conversation" event organized in partnership with Slate Valley Unified USD and the Orwell Free Library. Come hear updates from the legislative session and learn more about Act 73 and the education system.

Health Care. Our work last year to reduce health care costs has had a measurable impact, slowing the growth in health insurance rates. Unfortunately, many people did not benefit from these decreases due to the elimination of federal health insurance subsidies in the Republican tax bill passed by Congress last summer. However, Act 55 which limits the amount hospitals can charge for outpatient prescription drug administration, combined with the limits put on hospital budgets by the Green Mountain Care Board, reduced school health insurance costs by \$25 million, and had similar impacts on other health insurance policies.

This session there is a big focus on primary care. The Senate is working on S.197, which would create a package of reforms to make primary care more sustainable and accessible for Vermonters. I know that many town meeting ballots will include a resolution related to universal primary care and a House bill about universal primary care, H.433. The House won't likely vote on that bill, so S.197 will probably be the primary care bill that passes and could include some provisions that could move Vermont closer to universal primary care.

Finally, last week the Senate approved H.545 which would create a Vermont process for recommending immunizations, temporarily moving away from the federal process, which has been co-opted by political actors who do not follow sound medical and scientific evidence about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. We want to ensure that Vermonters are protected from both deadly diseases and inaccurate & misleading medical information.

Accountability for County Officials. Last week, the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs released the results

of an internal investigation of Addison County State's Attorney Eva Vekos, which outlined "significant failures" in the way she has been conducting her work as the county's top prosecutor since 2023. You can read stories about the report from both the *Addison Independent* and *Vermont Public*. The Addison County Legislative delegation has twice called for her to step down, and this report further confirms our concerns with her work on behalf of our constituents.

Also last week, the Senate passed a bill that establishes a pilot program to expand the funding and duties of county sheriffs, despite years of significant issues with multiple sheriffs across the state. I tried to amend the bill to strengthen existing oversight of sheriffs before the pilot could go into effect, but my efforts were blocked by several senators, including Sen. Steven Heffernan who ultimately killed my amendment.

In 2022, former Addison County Sheriff Peter Newton was charged with sexual assault and recently the Windsor County sheriff was charged with sexual misconduct. Over the past five years, sheriffs in Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Franklin, Orange, and Windsor counties have been charged with serious crimes or involved in significant scandals. It is astounding that legislators would vote to expand the work of sheriffs before completing significant statutory and constitutional reforms to improve accountability, oversight and the ability to expediently remove them from office for misconduct.

Other Bills of Note. There are quite a few bills on the move, so I can't cover them all, but want to highlight three of my bills that passed recently. I sponsored, S.23, a bill to protect election integrity by requiring disclosure of deceptive political ads that use AI to manipulate images, sound or video. It finally passed and was delivered to the Governor for his signature last week. Also last week, the Senate Agriculture Committee approved the House's work on S.60, a bill that would create a Farm Security Fund to help farmers & loggers recover from natural disasters. The bill, which I worked on with a coalition of farming groups led by NOFA-VT, must pass on the Senate floor before it goes to the Governor for his signature.

Finally, my latest bill to improve support for public libraries in Vermont, S.232, passed in the Senate Education Committee last week. The bill would create a Vermont Library Day every October, and expand support for libraries by making them explicitly eligible for current grants and other state and local programs. I will advocate to strengthen the bill as it moves through the process. Yay Libraries!

That's all for now. Thank you for reading and take care.

# Ways

(Continued from Page 4A)  
School in Vermont, he was very interested. "What ever happened to the Jacquard head? Those are more rare than hens' teeth." He wondered where the wall hangings Ken made are now. It felt very similar to us trying to patch pieces together about the past.

When I got home, I called Ken in Albuquerque and asked about the Jacquard head. "It dissolved into the Universe," he said. I wondered if he still had some wall hangings. Yes. He says he will communicate with Justin.

The '60s saw a revival of handcrafts in Vermont, as reported



**IN THIS 1965 photo, Ken Mayberger works on the Jacquard loom he built to pursue his interest in preserving traditional arts. Turns out that complex hand-weaving was part of the 1960s revival of handcrafts.**

in *Vermont Life* in Issue XXII, Winter 1967. Judging from the large audience attending the Middlebury College lecture, there must be a new revival of fiber arts today, too.

*Sas Carey spent the winter knitting, swimming, and listening to books. Maybe the spring and summer will be more active. See her work at [www.nomadiccare.org](http://www.nomadiccare.org) and [www.lifeenergyheal.com](http://www.lifeenergyheal.com).*

# Bridges letter

(Continued from Page 4A)  
I needed to try to help my mom. They were equally shocked when I quit. The trade-off was hard, but it was more valuable to be present for my mom. I didn't want to be worrying about work all the time and not give her the care and attention she needed.

But I would do it all again a million times over because I never got to have that time with my dad. I wanted to be with my mom. I wanted to help my mom. I couldn't have lived with the guilt of not helping all I could. But losing my job, paycheck and home was hard. Though I didn't have the best place to live when I gave those up — an

unfinished basement — I was grateful because Mom and I had some wonderful talks and laughs during that time. Others don't even have that choice.

I met my future husband in the middle of this crisis and we finally thought we had a good solution on the horizon, buying a house together and moving Mom in. Unfortunately, she died the day before that was going to be realized.

This journey shouldn't be so hard for Vermont workers. Health care crisis's are hard enough to get through. But trying to manage care for yourself or a loved one in a health emergency is compounded

many times over when you don't have the financial resources or time necessary to ensure the best possible outcome.

Vermont needs universal paid leave that will provide workers wages and peace of mind in times of health crisis. Already thirteen states including our neighbors New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine have passed such legislation. We know from their experience that paid leave builds a strong workforce, supports healthy families, and fights poverty. It's time Vermont's leadership made this a priority here.

**Emily Bridges Cornwall**

# Clippings

(Continued from Page 4A)  
Of course, the older we get the more we are aware of our finiteness, and the fact that we can't ever really add something to our schedule without giving something up to make space for it. "What do you think you've given up to make space for your daily time among the trees?" I asked her, on one of those afternoons when I was able to join her on her walk.

She pondered it for a moment, weighed a couple possibilities, and then said more definitively, "Time on the computer."

We continued walking. "Has it

benefited you?" I asked. Several minutes passed. A sign in and of itself, perhaps, that walking in the woods has a way of slowing us down, making us comfortable with the quiet, and helping us think more deeply rather than simply talking to hear ourselves talk. "I hear bird songs, and see the world without the filters of walls and screens," she said. "It reminds me of the goodness and beauty of the world."

When she said that, I thought she meant only window screens, since we often complain about how those metal meshes hinder our views, or

at least our ability to get bird photos through the window. But then she came back to computer screens, too. Following up on her earlier comment about what she'd given up to walk in the woods, she mentioned the unrelenting international news cycle — the things we constantly see on our computer screens, and the way the world is presented to us. Walking in the woods is not a way of burying one's head in the sand and ignoring the problems of the world, but rather a way of giving new perspective on what is really important, and what is worth the effort to protect.

## 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:**  
**Combatting 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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## ADDISON COUNTY

## Obituaries

## James 'Jim' Higgins, 84, formerly of Lincoln

BURLINGTON — Jim Higgins, a consummate outdoorsman but wheelchair-confined for the past four years, passed away Feb. 16, 2026, at the McClure Miller Respite House with his life partner, Joan Irving at his side. He was 84. Born in Danbury, Conn., Jim moved to Vermont as a young social worker to be closer to wilderness adventuring. He was physically big and had an imposing presence. Even with his face dripping blood from blackfly bites, he was at his happiest in a canoe on running or still water. Or heading out on skis on a late winter afternoon when his friends were already basking in the warmth of the wood stove. "Wish me luck!" he'd say with a wry smile.

One of Jim's favorite adventures was as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1964-1965, teaching English and math at the Government Technical Training School in Ilorin, Western Nigeria. He travelled widely in Africa while based at GTTS. Upon his return to the U.S., he continued adventure travel there with his sister Moira, a Pan Am stewardess with flying privileges. Listening to and engaging with his African students and friends prepared Jim for endeavors that became the core of his life: fighting for social and environmental justice.

In 1969 Jim earned an M.A. in Linguistics from Northwestern University in Chicago and later an M.A. in Social Work from the University of Connecticut. Specializing in psychiatric social work, he began his career just as state psychiatric hospitals were deinstitutionalizing. Jim and his brother-in-law to be, Joe Kailukaitis, saw first-hand in Connecticut the challenges of integrating former patients into their communities. Jim soon moved to Vermont, worked at the Vermont State Hospital, then



JAMES "JIM" HIGGINS

Lamoille County Mental Health, and finally at the Counseling Service of Addison County, where he was a mainstay for 22 years. Clients and colleagues alike were fond of Jim, not only because he went all out for them in hard times, but also because he was gentle and respectful with a fine ironic sense of humor. In 1990 Jim was named Social Worker of the Year in Vermont.

He had deep convictions about human rights, especially Indigenous rights, and about protecting wild land. An ardent writer of letters to the editor of newspapers throughout Vermont and beyond, he also campaigned unsuccessfully as a Democrat for state representative for Underhill. In the 1980s and 1990s, from his rural home near Lincoln, Jim organized and demonstrated with southern and northern friends — Cree, Inuit and Innu — to save the great rivers of northern Quebec and Labrador from being dammed for hydroelectric development. He was particularly concerned about the subsequent loss of land, burial grounds and displacement of Native people. When the northern

Cree were fighting Hydro-Québec's planned phase-two project to dam the Great Whale River, Jim spearheaded the Vermont Coalition to Save James Bay. He remained a committed environmentalist throughout his life.

After retiring, Jim moved to the Adirondacks. He and Joan Irving, a Canadian whom he'd met several years earlier at the Montreal Jazz Festival, had purchased a house overlooking Lake Champlain. Together, they explored the Adirondacks, on water and on snow, and spent time with friends and family across their two countries. But a bad car accident, followed by a fall down the stairs in their old farmhouse, necessitated Jim's eventual return to Vermont.

Jim is mourned by Joan Irving and her son Kyle Irving-Moroz and grand-child Oscar, all of Montréal; sister Moira and her husband Joe Kailukaitis of Greenville, Texas; by his nieces Jocelyn and Andrea and their families; and by his many friends in Burlington and Montréal. He is predeceased by his father, James Joseph Higgins, born in South Boston; mother Coletta (Massoth), born in Piqua, Kansas; and brother Thomas, who died young from injuries of a motorcycle accident.

Joan and David Boedy, Jim's longtime paddling buddy, are grateful to the staff of Green Mountain Nursing Home. Jim's caregivers there treated him with admirable kindness and respect.

An in-person gathering to share stories about Jim's life and passions is scheduled for March 21, 1 p.m., in the neighborhood pool house adjacent to 401 Brand Farm Drive, South Burlington, Vt. Those unable to attend in person may contact davidboedy3@gmail.com to request a WhatsApp invitation. ♦

## Anthony 'Tony' Joseph Neri, 85, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Anthony "Tony" Joseph Neri passed away peacefully in his sleep Feb. 24, 2026. He was born June 29, 1940, lived a life defined by rhythm, whether it was behind a drum kit or at the helm of a business. Raised on Pemberwick Road in Byram, Conn., with his beloved sister Angie, Tony was the cherished son of Mary Giunta Neri and Anthony Paul Neri, whose steady love grounded his quiet strength.

## From big stages to barn floors

A natural percussionist, Tony's talent caught fire early. Before finishing high school, he was signed by the William Morris Agency, eventually touring with Robby and the Troubadours. But when the band split in Chicago, his father staged a legendary "intermission," sending Tony to New Haven, Vt., to learn the art of milking cows.

Tony brought the rock-and-roll lifestyle to the farm, wiring the cow barn with a high-decibel sound system. To the surprise of local farmers — but perhaps not Tony — the cows loved the beat; milk production doubled — plus Tony's milk was said to have the highest butterfat content in Addison County.

## A life composed with love

Vermont offered more than just agriculture; it gave him the love of his life, Nancy Foote. The two fell for each other with a quiet certainty, building a world centered on their two sons, Anthony Abram (1966) and Paul David (1969). Family summers on Lake Dunmore became the backdrop for a lifetime of humor, determination, and lakeside memories — especially during the 4th of July, when Tony would host his epic BBQs and a grand display of fireworks for hundreds of friends and family to enjoy.

## The Middlebury mover and shaker

Tony's entrepreneurial spark was ignited at a local bar called The Alibi. Noticing a perpetually empty cigarette machine, Tony didn't just complain — he launched



ANTHONY "TONY" JOSEPH NERI

Middlebury Vending two days later.

By the 1970s, his hustle had expanded from pool tables to a restaurant empire. He became the face of Middlebury hospitality, owning and operating: Tony's Pizza, Mamma Neri's, Paisano's restaurant, Angela's restaurant, MV Catering, and more recently, The A&W and Greg's Market.

Tony transformed the local dining scene with the same energy he brought to his drums — with passion, a bit of flair, and a whole lot of heart. He leaves behind a legacy of hospitality and a family who will always march — and dance — to his beat.

## Love of community

Tony was a proud member of the Middlebury Lion's Club. His work there deepened his love for Middlebury and beyond. He was a founding member of the Middlebury Development Corporation, which sparked industry and jobs for the local community. He was very proud of his support for Porter Hospital, Lake Dunmore Fern Lake Association, and many other local nonprofits. This work led him to the Miss Vermont Pageant and then on to become an Executive Director of the Miss America Pageant.

## The fair, the fish, and the legacy

Beginning in 1972, the Neri family's calendar revolved around one high-octane week — Addison County Fair & Field Days. It was a

true family production — slinging Tony's Pizza and Mamma's Meatballs, running the arcade, and serving up his legendary Hot Italian Sausage. Those long, flour-dusted days forged the family's identity in hard work and laughter.

When the season was a success, the reward was just as classic — a break from the Vermont chill for the magic of Disney and the quiet backwaters of Marco Island, where Tony traded the restaurant kitchen for a fishing rod.

## A life well-lived

Tony's journey took him from the neon pulse of the music world to the mist of a Vermont morning; from a chance meeting with Nancy to a lifelong, unbreakable bond. He was a man of ingenious pivots and deep devotions.

Tony is predeceased by his parents, Mary "Mama" (Giunta) and Anthony P "Papa" Neri; and his sister, Angela Neri. Tony is survived by his devoted wife, Nancy (Foote) Neri; his eldest son Anthony and wife Karen; his son Paul and wife Janice; his cherished grandson, Anthony Paul Neri and his mother Elizabeth Spitzer; and dear cousin, Terry Lacava, with a wide circle of friends who were like family in every way that mattered.

From the drum to the kitchen, Tony lived life at full volume. His passion, his hospitality, and his heart will be remembered with a smile by everyone. Tony lived with an unmistakable cadence. His life was a beautiful composition of family, food, and film-worthy stories. He may have stepped off the stage, but his rhythm will play on in the hearts of everyone he knew and loved. And the beat goes on.

A funeral service will be held Friday, March 6, at 10 a.m., at Saint Mary's Church of Middlebury, 326 College Street, Middlebury. A reception will follow, from noon to 4 p.m. at the American Legion, 49 Wilson Road, Middlebury. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Middlebury Regional EMS. ♦

## Shirley June (Palmer) Wisell, 90, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Shirley June (Palmer) Wisell, 90, of Middlebury, Vt., passed away peacefully Feb. 26, 2026, at Porter Hospital after a brief illness. She was born June 28, 1935, to Chester and Alma Mae Palmer.

Shirley grew up in East Middlebury, Vt., and attended Middlebury High School, graduating in 1952.

She married Leo James "Jim" Wisell Nov. 20, 1955. Together they had three boys — Michael, John and Gary.

She was an accomplished seamstress. She could also crochet anything. In fact, she even crocheted Christmas Trees. Her



SHIRLEY JUNE (PALMER) WISELL

nephew, Steven Thulin of Erie, Pa., marvels every year on social media about his beloved Aunt Shirley and the crocheted Christmas tree she made for him. The trees even had lights.

When her children were in high school, she took a job as a dispatcher for the veterinarian Alan Marston in Weybridge. She became very close with the Marstons

during her 20-year employment with them. She often took trips to their vacation home in Maine. She stayed in touch with them over the years after Dr. Marston retired.

She had a great love for East Middlebury, where she grew up. She chronicled the changes that took place there and she loved to regale people with her fondest childhood memories of events that occurred there.

She is survived by her three sons, Michael and his wife Ira of Cleburne, Texas; Jay and his wife Patty of Venture, Calif.; and Gary and his wife Eva of Ripton, Vt.; and her nephew Steven Thulin and his partner Alan of Erie, Pa., who she always thought of as her fourth son.

Shirley was devoted to her family. She was loving and kind to all. She will be greatly missed.

There will be no service, but there will be a celebration of her life at the American Legion Hall in Middlebury on a date to be determined and announced at another time. ♦

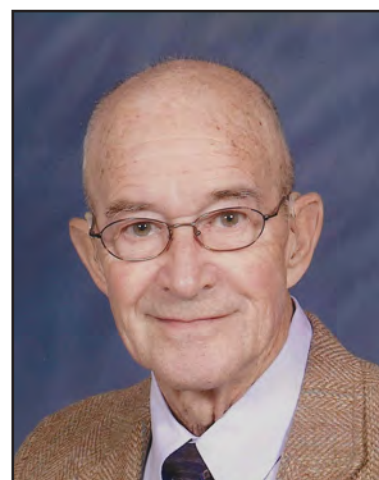
## Joseph W. Devall, 92, of Bristol

BRISTOL — The night sky was just a little bit dimmer on Monday, Feb. 23, 2026, following the passing of Joseph W. Devall, 92, whose kindness and generosity were well-known throughout Addison County.

Joe was born in Effingham, Ill., May 11, 1933, the youngest of three siblings. He grew up hunting and fishing with family, working odd jobs, and playing lots of sports. Joe was a four-letter athlete at Effingham High School as a member of the football, basketball, track, and baseball varsity teams. He was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame, an achievement of which he was very proud.

Joe attended the University of Illinois on a ROTC scholarship, majoring in physical education. He and his high school sweetheart, Yvonna Luttrell, married during their senior year of college. Following graduation, Joe and Yvonna were stationed to the USAEUR Engineering School in Murnau, Germany, for two years. Joe loved telling the story about when he finished basic training at Fort Belvoir and the new officers were in a large room finding out where they would be assigned.

When the meeting was over, an old Master Sergeant stood up and asked who got assigned to the Engineering School. Joe raised his hand and the man pulled him aside and told him he was "one lucky SOB" because it was the best posting in Europe. There were about two dozen officers running the school, and they enjoyed happy hours every evening at the Officers' Club and plenty of time



JOSEPH W. DEVALL

to travel around Europe.

Upon their return to the U.S., Joe and Yvonna started a family, eventually moving to the Philadelphia area. Joe enrolled at UPenn's Wharton School, which facilitated the start of a lengthy and successful career in the insurance industry at INA and Balis, rising from underwriter to Chief Administrative Officer. During this time, he enjoyed skiing, camping, fishing, and playing tennis with friends and family.

Following Yvonna's death in 1987, Joe was lucky enough to find a second love in Jeannette Diette. Joe retired from Balis in 1993 and moved to Bristol, Vt., after accepting the role as President and CEO of Co-Op Insurance in Middlebury. Joe and Jeannette spent many happy years in Bristol, where he quickly assimilated to the Vermont lifestyle and loved being so close to the farm he had bought a few years prior. Upon

Joe's retirement from the Co-Op in 2000, he and Jeannette enjoyed traveling around the globe, from Costa Rica to New Zealand to Europe. He was also Board member at Porter Hospital and was invested in seeing Addison County thrive. Joe gave his time and money to building the skate park and ice rink in Bristol, he was active in the Federated Church, he donated food that he harvested at his farm to the food bank, and he supported many causes throughout the community.

Joe cherished breakfast with his Old Farts gang and he boasted about working out at the fitness center several days a week, even into his 90th year. In May 2023, a 90th birthday celebration was held in Joe's honor and when a Walgreen's employee asked why so many people in town were dressed up, a customer responded "Well, don't you know, it's Joe Devall's birthday party!"

## He will be missed.

Joe is survived by his wife, Jeannette; his daughter Cindy; his son Josh; and his grandchildren Lauren, Mark, and Amy. He is also survived by Jeannette's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild. Joe was pre-deceased by his late wife Yvonna and his daughter Jana.

Services will be held at the Bristol Federated Church March 23, at 10 a.m., with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Make-a-Wish Vermont (<https://www.vtny/our-chapter>) or the Bristol Federated Church (<https://www.bristolfederated.com>). ♦

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## Betty Jean Atkins, 81, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — Betty Jean Atkins, born Betty Jean Curavoo, age 81, passed away at Porter Hospital Feb. 26, surrounded by the love of her family. She was born on May 10, 1944, in Hinesburg, Vt.

Betty graduated from Bristol High School and later married the love of her life, Robert Floyd Atkins of Lincoln, Vt. They shared 42 wonderful years of marriage filled with hard work, laughter, and devotion. Together they moved to Atkins Road in Lincoln to help care for Robert's mother and support the family farm. They later became caretakers of the beautiful Mountain Meadow Farm in Lincoln, where Betty proudly cared for the many animals, including peacocks, swans, and both large and miniature horses.

One of Betty's greatest joys was spending time with her granddaughters when they were young. She loved driving them around the farm in her truck, letting them pet the animals and help with feeding. In later years, one of her proudest accomplishments was being able to purchase the very farm she had once helped care for.

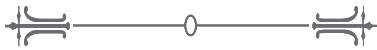
To know Betty was to know her spunk and sass. She was a



BETTY JEAN ATKINS

hard worker who faced life with strength and determination, despite the physical challenges she carried after having polio as a child. She will be remembered for her humor, quick wit, and sometimes wry comments. When once asked by her future daughter-in-law if her son Mark was named after Mark in the Bible, she quickly replied, "Heck no, he's named after the TV show The Rifleman's son!"

Her laughter, resilience, and loving spirit will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.



## Jeffrey Todd Howarth, 54, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Jeffrey Todd Howarth passed away at Porter Hospital in Middlebury, Vt., Feb. 25, 2026, after bravely fighting a rare, aggressive form of cancer. He was 54 years old. Jeff was a devoted professor, father, husband, and community leader and he will be dearly missed by many.

Jeff was born Aug. 18, 1971, in Princeton, N.J., to Bonnie and William Howarth. His taste for adventure was nurtured at a young age traveling alongside his father, a distinguished professor at Princeton University who was frequently on assignment for National Geographic. Attending U.C. Santa Cruz for undergraduate studies gave focus to his passion for conservation, the wilderness, and the importance of balancing the needs of humans with the needs of native plants and animals. While at U.C. Santa Cruz, he met lifelong friends and fellow adventurers whose antics and stories sustained him throughout. In those formative years, he solo hiked a long stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail and traveled the American West working for Idaho Fish and Game in the Targhee National Forest; the Institute for Wildlife Studies on California's San Clemente and San Miguel Island; and The Nature Conservancy in the Gearhart Bog Preserve in Oregon.

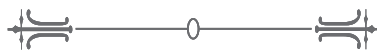
After graduating, he worked for the Santa Cruz Island Reserve from 1994-2000. It was on Santa Cruz Island that Jeff developed his deep and abiding affinity for foxes of all kinds. Photos of the Santa Cruz island foxes that he researched, and worked to protect, could be seen for years to come in the lectures



JEFFREY TODD HOWARTH

Jeff gave to Middlebury College students. His field work and talents led him to U.C. Santa Barbara's School of Geography, where he earned his master's and Ph.D.

Jeff joined the Middlebury College Geography Department in 2007. During his time as a professor, he taught hundreds of students to see the world differently, and to communicate the world to others through maps. His courses spanned GIS, remote sensing, cartography, and conservation planning — waitlists were always long. As a teacher he was innovative at every turn, pioneering the flipped classroom and problem-based techniques for geospatial learning, creating challenging material for each class, and developing a trove of open-source material to make it easier for students everywhere to learn to think spatially. He was nationally recognized as a leading expert in geospatial pedagogy, and locally revered by many cohorts of Middlebury geographers. He was



## Paul Darling, 84, of Lincoln

LINCOLN — Paul Darling, 84, passed away peacefully Feb. 28, 2026, in his sleep at home.

He was born in Groton, Vt., Dec. 26, 1941. He worked a few years at the bobbin mill in Lincoln. He worked many years at Simmonds Precision until his retirement Aug. 16, 2002.

He was predeceased by his parents, Calvin and Laura Darling.

He is survived by his sister, Sandra Rhodes; his loving wife of 62 years, Barbara; their children, Paula (Kevin) Charbonneau of Tennessee and Tina Patterson; grandson Steven Patterson and his father David Patterson; and many nieces and nephews.

He enjoyed being with family and loved playing cards and

board games. He loved going to the family camp on Otter Creek, fishing and taking the boat out. He enjoyed making many things out of wood and taking apart junk with his grandson by his side.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 25, at Lincoln United Church with a burial following at Maple Cemetery in Lincoln and a reception at Burnham Hall. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to Lincoln United Church, 23 Quaker Street, Lincoln, VT 05443. To send online condolences to his family please visit [www.brownmccayfunralhomes.com](http://www.brownmccayfunralhomes.com).

The family would like to say a special thank you to the Addison Home Health community for their care and compassion over the past several years, and to Melanie and John for always letting her give you a hard time with a smile.

Betty was predeceased by her beloved husband, Robert; her parents, Fredrick and Gladys (Duprey); and her brothers Sonny, Alfred, Wayne, and Larry.

She leaves behind her cherished son, Mark, and his wife, Stephanie Atkins of Lincoln; the two loves of her life, her granddaughters Alexis Bell and her husband Jake of Litchfield, Maine, and Brooke Smith and her husband Brian of Waltham, Vt.; her remaining brothers and sisters Fred, Barry, Kay Ann, and Susie; as well as close friends whom she loved like sisters, Patty Short, Kathy Taylor and Lise Lathrop.

Family and friends are invited to an open house celebration of Betty's life at Burnham Hall in Lincoln, Vt., on Saturday, March 14, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be a slideshow, refreshments, and time to share stories. Please come to laugh, cry, and remember her together. ◊

deeply loved by his students for his combination of easy-going manner, exacting standards, wry humor, and generosity with his time and attention.

Jeff's high standards were not just reserved for his students. He led by example, demanding the highest standard of performance from himself. "Good enough" was never enough for Jeff. He was passionate about cartography and excelled in creating singular maps that revealed how people, animals and plants use and move over landscapes. He supported students, colleagues, and multiple communities of practice with his work and guidance, including the North American and International Cartographic Information Societies, the towns of Middlebury and Cornwall, the Middlebury Area Land Trust, the Middlebury College Lands Committee, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, among many others. His legacy continues to expand through his students who have gone on to work at outlets like the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, National Park Service, NASA, the World Resources Institute, and *Scientific American*.

Jeff was a thoughtful and deeply loving father to Aldo and Isabel and partner to Jessica Chatfield. He loved coaching Aldo's soccer team, doing puzzles and Legos with his kids, and spending time in the great outdoors with his family. He will be deeply and profoundly missed.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to MALT (Middlebury Area Land Trust) (<https://www.maltvt.org/>). A memorial service will be held in the spring. ◊



PAUL DARLING

## School budgets

(Continued from Page 1A)

Meanwhile, a committee will plan for municipal uses for the building.

There were four seats up for grabs on the 13-member ACSD board — two from Middlebury, one from Salisbury and one from Bridport. Incumbent Jason Chance ran unopposed for reelection to his Middlebury seat, and candidate Robyn Stattel had no competition for a Bridport seat vacated by longtime board member Suzanne Buck.

Salisbury's James Clark ran a successful write-in campaign to clinch the Salisbury seat, which had no takers at the candidates' filing deadline. Clark secured 87 write-in tallies to secure the post, being vacated by Ellie Romp.

No one garnered enough write-in votes to capture the Middlebury seat vacated by incumbent Tricia Allen. The ACSD board will need to appoint a Middlebury resident to serve in that seat until next March, when the balance of the three-year term will be up for grabs.

In the Vergennes area, Addison Northwest School District voters approved an FY27 budget of \$28,314,179 by a 1,013 to 750 margin. The budget reflects a 2.39% increase compared to this year. Residents in the ANWSD-member towns of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham also authorized — by a vote of 1,166 to 595 — the transfer of \$102,838 in FY25 fund balance to the ANWSD Capital Improvement Fund.

"We are grateful to our community members for taking the time to vote and for the trust you place in our schools. Your support makes it possible for our staff to focus on what matters most —

servicing the students and families of Addison Northwest," district Superintendent Sheila Soule said in a post-vote message to district residents.

Bristol-area residents endorsed the proposed FY27 Mount Abraham Union School District budget of \$37,862,780 — an 8.51%, (\$2,968,337) increase compared to this year. Folks from Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro voted 1,060 to 749 in favor of the PreK-12 public education spending plan.

Lincoln voters at their annual school meeting on Saturday endorsed an FY27 education budget of \$5,407,140, an increase of 4.4% compared to this year.

An article asking whether the Lincoln School District should adopt its budget by Australian ballot beginning in FY28 was postponed indefinitely, according to Town Clerk Sally Ober.

Deborah Lubar ran unopposed for a three-year seat on the Lincoln School Board and school board member Peg Sutlive was uncontested for another two-year term.

Not all budgets passed muster with voters, however.

Brandon voters joined their peers in Leicester, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford to defeat — by a vote of 868 to 700 — the proposed FY27 Otter Valley Unified Union budget. The \$28,841,999 spending plan represented an increase of \$818,286, or 2.92%.

"Obviously, we are disappointed. We felt we had put together a responsible budget that met the needs of our students and that our community could afford. The board will determine next steps at

our next meeting," OVUU school board chair Laurie L Bertrand told the *Independent*.

Orwell, Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton and West Haven residents on Tuesday collectively defeated, by a vote of 1,125 to 952, a proposed FY27 Slate Valley Unified School District (SVUSD) budget of \$32,509,789. The proposed spending plan was up 2.8% (\$886,800) compared to this year.

Currently, the SVUSD's education spending per pupil of \$11,565 is 11th-lowest in the state and substantially lower than the statewide average of \$13,947 per pupil, according to information supplied by the district.

District Superintendent Brooke Olsen-Farrell shared the vote results with district stakeholders through a post on the SVUSD website.

"Although this was not the result we had hoped for, our commitment to our students and staff remains steady. We are now focused on identifying a responsible path forward. One that reflects community input while continuing to support high-quality teaching and learning within the constraints of state and federal policies and legislation," she wrote. "The board will meet in the coming weeks to review options, gather feedback, and determine next steps. We encourage community members to attend, ask questions, and stay engaged. Clear communication and collaborative problem-solving will be critical as we move forward together."

Editor's note: Marin Howell, Sophia Keshmiri and Angelo Lynn contributed to this story.

## VSU releases honors list

RANDOLPH CENTER — Vermont State University has announced the students who earned placement on the president's list for the Fall 2025 semester.

This highest academic honor recognizes fulltime students who achieved a 4.0 semester grade point average. Locals on the list are:

Henry Bart, Roni O'Brien and Luca Polli of Brandon.

Jordan Bertrand and Payton Thurston of Whiting.

Solstice Binder, Lori Brown and Quinn Doria of Middlebury.

Wendy Chase, Madison Gile, Phoebe Mason and Taylor Wood of Bristol.

Kenyon Connors of Cornwall. Chanyiah Coyle of Ferrisburgh. Jack Eickenberg and Adam Palmer of Starksboro.

Gwen Gill and Samantha Hallock of Ferrisburgh.

Ryleigh Laporte of Leicester.

Hannah Lawrence, Noah Letendre, Jade Sutton and Eyon Tembreull of Vergennes.

Jeffrey Perez Pedraza of Addison.

Caleb Russell and Chris Wood of New Haven.

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The *Independent* will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing. For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the *Independent* offers a free notice of passing up to 100 words, subject to editing by our news department. Photos (optional) with either paid obituaries or free notices cost \$10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to [obits@addisonindependent.com](mailto:obits@addisonindependent.com).

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

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40-Hour Witness:

# Reflections on ‘freedom of movement,’ or lack thereof, from Minneapolis

By LISA COCHRAN

A week after Alex Pretti was killed, I joined a dear friend in Minneapolis. She grew up in the Twin Cities and we went to visit her family and offer what felt like a meager token of support as they continued living day-to-day in a besieged city.

We also went as witnesses. To document for posterity what we saw, and to carry back home to Vermont what could be scenes from our near future. If ICE is a virus spreading city to city, then the people of Minneapolis—who were recently nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize—are the first responders, administering to the suffering with the grace and grit we all must be ready to muster soon.

In the neighborhoods we visited in South Minneapolis—Powderhorn and Whittier, Corcoran and Central—the care of the community was evident everywhere. And so was the occupation. Nearly every house had a message staked in the yard or taped to the window: ICE OUT OF MPLS, GO HOME, NO SECRET POLICE. Homemade signs marked the locations of kidnappings.



There was a pervasive sense of urgency cloaking the community, undamped by the fresh snow that fell the day we arrived and blanketed the memorials. In the face of Trump’s undocumented paramilitary force—which roves lawlessly, running red lights in their oversized SUVs, their identities always obscured behind tinted windows and face masks—there was a grave call to protect the city block by block, neighbor by neighbor, to counter the goons not with weapons but with sheer good will.

At the site of Renee Good’s killing, someone carefully moved through the island of flowers and signs, wiping the fresh snow off each tribute with his mitten. Someone else shoveled slush away from the curb to open passage for circumambulating visitors. Someone else tended a fire. And still someone else—a young man of Hispanic descent, not insignificantly—handed out fresh cups of coffee, brewed on a portable gas burner.

“The resistance to ICE is driven by neighbors looking out for neighbors more than by affinity groups or any specific left-wing ideological project,” Robin Kaiser-Schatzlein wrote. Up against such clear opposition, pulling together

reflected the shared conclusion that no one else was coming to protect them. All over, we saw the sign: “WE KEEP US SAFE.”

We got the sense from my friend’s brother and sister-in-law—who live not far from George Floyd Square, which is not far from Renee Good’s memorial, which is not far from Alex Pretti’s—that it was all-hands-on deck, all the time. Everyone is doing something in addition to their day jobs to resist the occupation.

Meeting up with a couple of my friends in the city required planning around not only their work schedules, but also their food delivery shifts to families sheltering in place, and school watch shifts, in which trained observers survey nearby blocks during drop-off and pick-up, ready to alert school officials if they see a suspected ICE vehicle. Meanwhile, my friend’s partner drives kids

from two families to and from school every day so the parents can avoid exposure. Meanwhile, other neighbors are repurposing their local bus stop into a mini clothing donation center—winter coats and snow pants neatly arranged on hangers across the length of the shelter, bins of clothes below, available to any passersby in need.

### PROTECTING THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

30,000 Minnesotans have now been trained as constitutional observers. With a 15-to-1 ratio over ICE, these everyday heroes are “actively responding to a case every six minutes across the state of Minnesota” explains Edwin Torres Desantiago, who leads trainings for the Immigrant Defense Network. “They are the ones keeping watch,” he reiterated. “They’re the ones that are making sure our constitution is upheld, and when those rights get violated, we work with legal partners to bring a remedy through the court system.” Some of these observers are on foot, and some are moving about the city in cars, plugged into their hyperlocal signal chats with a dispatcher directing “commuters” to certain coordinates to check for suspected ICE and call in car models and license plates.

“I can’t believe I have to do this,” one observer reflected. “I can’t believe I have to respond to an abduction in progress. I can’t believe I have to patrol school pick-up. I can’t believe I had to learn the difference between an Expedition and an Escape... I don’t want to do this! I have to do this!”

My friend’s brother told us ICE has recently attempted to evade detection with vegan bumper stickers and rip-away temporary license plates. Once a vehicle becomes “confirmed ICE”—either by license plate or a visual on the masked, armed agents—then commuters honk their horns and any pedestrians or observers who happen to be out on the block flock to the vehicle and start blowing their whistles.

Everyone has a whistle. “If the Minnesota resistance has an overarching ideology,” Adam Serwer wrote recently, “you could call it ‘neighborism’—a commitment to protecting the people around you, no matter who they are or where they came from.”

On our second day, we drove through a neighborhood where barricades had been constructed (especially near schools, it seemed) to slow down traffic and give observers the chance to track ICE vehicles. This, apparently, was a new tactic. The barriers were crude—cobbled together with whatever was on hand: wooden pallets, living room chairs, a grocery cart, an elegantly-drawn sign indicating the new round-about traffic pattern.

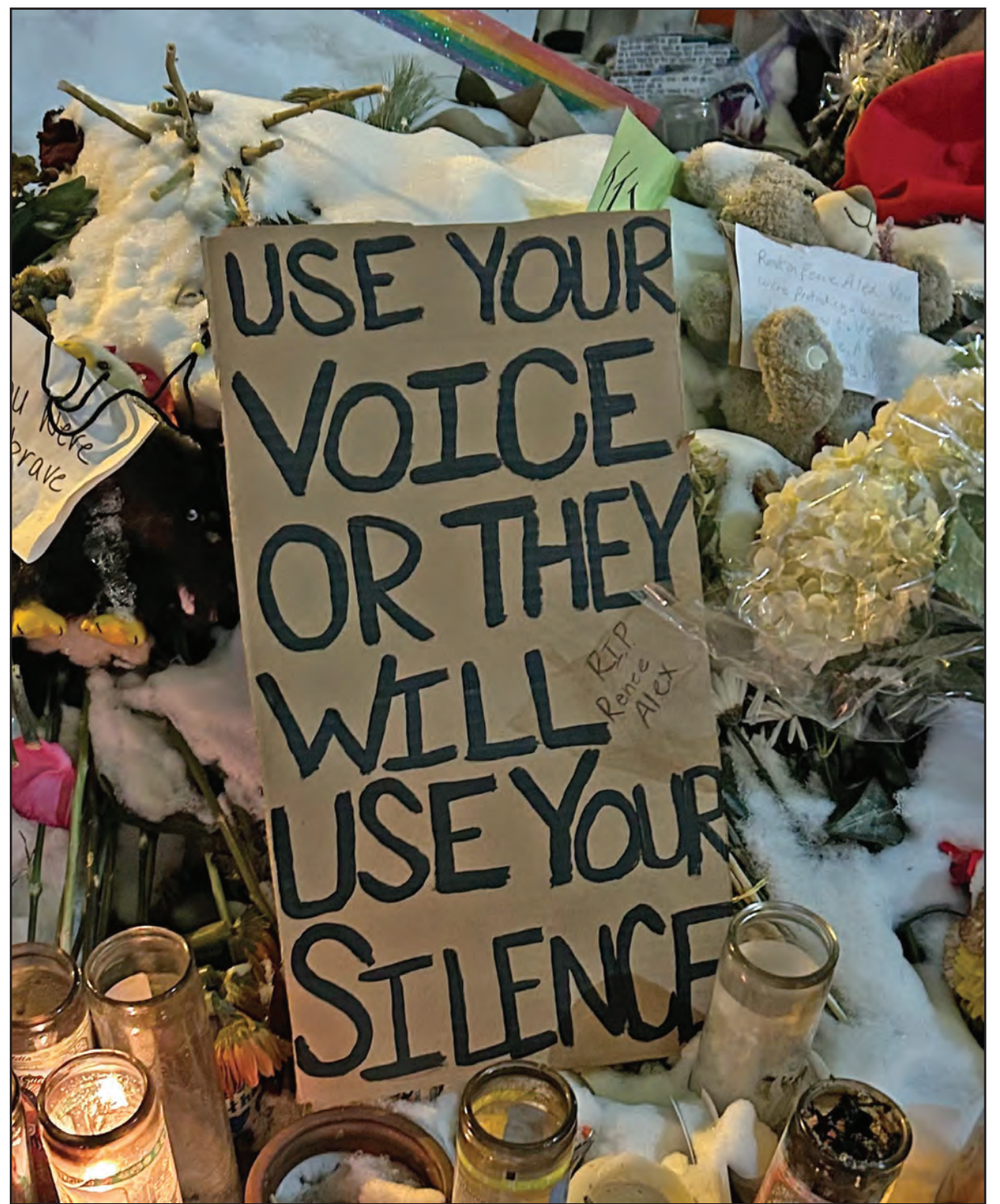
More than anything else we’d seen up to that point, these barricades caught my breath in a “holy shit” kind of way. In part because rerouting traffic was, I assumed, crossing a line into murky legal territory. But more than that, because it was a clear display of people taking matters into their own hands.

As Charles Homans recently observed, “the tools state governors have to formally resist the imposition of federal power in real time are extraordinarily limited. What Minnesota and every other state did have, though, was plenty of personal electronics.” And yet this act of piling shit in the street was beyond what Homans described as the “giant eyeball” the city had become. In placing objects in front of ICE’s path, I intuitively understood, neighbors were also placing their bodies.

The gatherings at the blockades had the flavor of turf pride, a high-stakes block party: this is our block, damn it. And yet there were volunteer medics on hand and observers posted as guards with scarves wrapped around their heads and faces, evoking what could be recognized instead as participants of a revolution.

### MOMENTS OF COMBUSTIBILITY

Homans observed that ICE had, for some time, “been actors in a kind of theater of power.” But what became clear to the journalist once he witnessed it all from the ground was that “the agents had no capacity to maintain order or much apparent interest in doing so. Their presence was a vector of chaos, and controlling it was not



SIGNS AND SYMBOLS were erected throughout Minneapolis to remind residents of the resiliency needed to stop ICE and CBP officers from silencing their constitutional right of speech.

in their job description.”

When we came across the blockades on Monday, they were so new there was not yet police presence on site, or law enforcement pressure to dismantle them. There was no higher authority monitoring these encounters. Instead, there was a feeling of lawlessness in these neighborhoods with checkpoints and safe houses—but not on the part of the residents. The law, it seemed, could be broken right before us and no one would be there to hold the federal perpetrators accountable, or, for that matter, to protect us.

And this was certainly true when we found ourselves behind an ICE SUV, approaching one of the blockades. The vehicle had just ripped through a red light. Instead of slowing down at the round-about, it sped up toward the group of 5 or 8 observers standing amidst their household items. ICE took a right at high speed, almost hitting an observer. Nearly simultaneously, another observer picked up a metal folding chair and swung it at the car, smashing it over the back window as ICE fled.

Even in the blur of these seconds, I was aware I was witnessing exactly what Homans had described as the “latent combustibility of these encounters.” The flash point

would further ignite for us when, moments later, ICE spun around to return to the barricade, only to encounter our vehicle behind them, slowing their progress.

The agents who approached our car were relatively sedate as they spoke to my friend’s brother behind the wheel, threatening arrest. Sitting through the encounter in the back seat, ICE standing right there through my open window, not unlike Renee Good’s open window, I found myself frozen. At the bifurcating fork of the fight/flight/freeze response, I froze—with my hands up.

Afterward, I couldn’t be sure if it had been one agent or three, one minute or five. If running the red light had happened before the blockade or after, if the agent outside my open window had in his holster pepper spray or a gun.

While sitting there, waiting for the combustion to burn hotter or burn out, I was experiencing a tightening on my freedom of movement. A constitutional right, that as a white woman I normally take for granted, had vanished.

And then we were let go, allowed to leave, to drive away from the blockade into the bright sun of the day, toward lunch and a warm home. Would four non-white

people have been granted this movement?

### ON ACCOUNT OF SKIN COLOR

The night before I left home, I talked to my younger brother on the phone, who is adopted from Peru. Since infancy, he’s been a U.S. citizen, growing up in Vermont in our very white family in our very white town. Now, he told me, he’s making decisions based on the likelihood of encountering ICE. Contemplating a trip to visit our older brother in Australia this coming spring, he decided not to leave the country for fear of not being let back in. Last weekend, he thought twice before driving to Denver to see a concert.

He lives in a small Colorado town that hasn’t been targeted per se, but is full of immigrant families. Going to work at his landscaping job, he doesn’t fear being rounded up with the rest of his crew, many of whom are undocumented—though he acknowledges this possibility and carries a photo of his passport. Instead, he’s afraid of his own flammability. If his coworkers were taken in front of him, he doesn’t trust he could remain calm. His suspicion of all law enforcement runs deep, he says. And now he’s aware that his own volatility, however justified, carries a sharpened risk.

In the *Atlantic* article “Welcome to the American Winter,” Robert F. Worth describes talking to someone whose neighbor was hiding their “adopted brown kid” (See *Reflections*, Page 9A)

*“I can’t believe I have to do this. I can’t believe I have to respond to an abduction in progress. I can’t believe I have to patrol school pick-up ... I don’t want to do this! I have to do this!”*

— citizen observer in Minneapolis

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A STREET MEMORIAL for Renee Good, a mother shot and killed at close range in her car by an ICE officer, has become a monument of resistance for Minneapolis residents.

## Reflections

(Continued from Page 8A)  
 in the basement. “This kind of thing no longer sounds weird in Minneapolis,” Worth noted. “Many people are hiding indoors—so many that, in a city with a substantial minority population, I hardly saw any Black or Latino faces on the street.”

This is a time when the constitutional right of freedom of movement is being stripped away on account of skin color, when what is purported to be an immigration crackdown feels more like ethnic cleansing, when people with brown skin are hiding in their homes. And this is a time when white bodies can still move relatively safely about the world. I chose to go to Minneapolis, and I chose to leave, and both of these movements were founded on privilege. As a visitor, I could jet in and jet out of a city-sized zone of risk, like some sort of perverse adrenalin junky.

But here in the city, the resident observers and commuters, like Alex Pretti and Renee Good, are choosing every day to put their bodies in ICE’s path. Imagining the lengths I’d go to guard the stretch of road where my daughters attend school—the elementary on one side, the preschool on the other—I could taste the desperation to protect one’s neighborhood, I could shake with righteous indignation. How dare anyone keep these children from learning in peace, from walking home in safety?

This indignation could spill over; flash points were likely if not inevitable. But Minnesotans were taking what felt like calculated risk. Prompting the piling of this wood, the blowing of these whistles, the beeping of these horns, was a sense of responsibility to let neighbors know to hide, or businesses to lock their doors, or schools to keep the kids inside until the coast was clear.

Within the courage of these bodies to turn toward danger lived a refusal to remain frozen, to remain blind.

“Watchfulness is the most dangerous form of resistance,” Fintan O’Toole wrote recently, “because it obstructs the Trump regime’s project of habituation... it has been obvious since the start of Trump’s second term that he is trying to make the sight of armed and masked men with virtually unlimited powers one to which Americans are accustomed... The hope is that most Americans can be schooled to go about their mundane preoccupations even while they are being visibly occupied.”

Every day, more Minnesotans pour peacefully into the streets for protests and strikes. They’re showing up in droves for constitutional observer trainings. By the thousands, they’re singing to ICE, inviting them to defect. People who have never protested before have been driven to action by what they deem intolerable. They consider themselves not protesters so much as humanists or protectors, many of them “late-comers,” as Worth put it, who used to consider protests pointless but now can’t stomach their own silence.

While moving about Minneapolis’s neighborhoods, and certainly while attempting to put this experience into writing, I’ve asked myself about the value of being a 40-hour witness. I’m mindful of the risk of telling someone else’s story and not getting it right, making an errant assumption, misrepresenting. The title of O’Toole’s article is “The

Crime of Witness,” and I realize this might be its own kind of crime. **THE CERTAINTY IT’S COMING HERE**

And yet I’ve also been overcome lately by that foreboding feeling that descended just before the pandemic—like what is taking shape is too big and unsparing for any of us to understand. The only certainty is that it’s coming. And while it will, in its cruelty, wreak havoc discriminately, it will no doubt touch us all.

In visiting Minneapolis, I wasn’t quite sure if I was there to pay honor, or to bring some of that honor back home with me—share what these first responders have learned about this federal virus, what they have built on the foundation of the American Indian Movement, on Black Lives Matter, on what the recovery community in Minnesota calls “Mecca” for its vast support system—aka mutual aid—for people overcoming addiction.

Our first day in the city, we’d had lunch with my friend’s 95-year-old grandmother. She told us exactly what she’d do if she saw an ICE agent. She’d look him right in the eye and ask him earnestly: “What would your mother say?”

She would appeal to his humanity.

I never looked him in the eye. Like the rest of me, my gaze had frozen up. I was only aware of his looming presence, a foot away. No doubt he saw me there in the backseat: a white lady. He took in the outside of me, the external contours of another body, assessed my skin and age, saw me without seeing me.

I didn’t see him either.

On our last night in the city, we walked to the Alex Pretti memorial to attend a gathering organized by Brass Solidarity—“part of the soundtrack of resistance in Minneapolis” since George Floyd’s murder. With a few hundred others, we encircled the site where Pretti sheltered a woman from pepper spray, where he tried to help her up, where he was shot 10 times in the back for his crime of caring.

We sang to the steady pulsing of drums and peals of trumpet:

♪♪♪ *O-o-h child, things are going to get easier; o-o-h child, things’ll get brighter.*

*Some day, yeah, we’ll walk in the rays of a beautiful sun*

*Some day, when the world is much brighter* ♪♪♪

We sang “Stand By Me,” overlaid with “The people united will never be defeated.”

In the swell of this music was a fleeting sense that the world we long for was actually right there before us, that we are a part of it already. I would not describe myself as a hopeful person, but surrounded by those vibrations, I was carried by the melody into what felt like hope.

But like so much of what I experienced in Minneapolis, there was a distinct contrast between this life force and the people hiding in fear, people grieving a loved one already taken, people imprisoned in detention centers thousands of miles away from their home. If my adopted brother were here visiting with me, would he be out on the streets with us? Perhaps not. And I don’t think I would want him to be. If the combustible material of fierce protection were to ignite here on the street, he would certainly be

among the first hauled away.

On the plane back to Burlington, I looked out my window at the familiar backbone of the Green Mountains. I saw the two peaks and long spine between them, sheltering the valleys below. My partner and girls were tucked into those folds of frozen forest and streams—I could almost pinpoint our house. Beneath us, Lake Champlain appeared, vast and frozen. The wind had pushed the snow into hieroglyphics across the ice—a mesmerizing, indecipherable language beckoning us home, into a future we could not predict but could perhaps prepare for together.

Since returning home, tears have been a frequent visitor. It’s hard to decipher if they are for what I just left behind, or for what could be coming. And like the honor I paid and the honor I brought back to share, perhaps there is no real difference.

*Editor’s note: Lisa Cochran is a Lincoln resident who writes the Substack Brave Little Voices, where a longer version of this first appeared.*

## By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Crum as Vermont’s best high school girls’ cross-country athlete. You can find full details about Crum’s achievements at [tinyurl.com/4cah5yh](http://tinyurl.com/4cah5yh).

St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church of Middlebury is putting out a “last call” for grant proposals from 501C3 nonprofit organizations, with priority given to programs that help at-risk populations and meet basic needs for food, housing, healthcare and safety. Priority will also be given to groups that help those dealing with social isolation and that foster inclusive communities. For more than 75 years, the people of St. Stephen’s have joined together to offer their annual Peasant Market on the Middlebury town green, with the proceeds of that event seeding its yearly grant offerings. Complete details of the grant opportunities and an application form is available at [ststephensmid.org](http://ststephensmid.org). The deadline for submission is March 16.

The 5-Town Friends of the Arts (5-TFA) is now accepting grant applications for its Spring round of community grants. The community grants program helps fund activities and events in the fine arts, performing arts, history and other cultural experiences to enrich the lives of people living in Monkton, New Haven, Bristol, Lincoln and Starksboro. The goal of 5-TFA is to expose children and teens to arts and culture. Preference will be given to projects that meet that goal. Previous recipients have been libraries in the five towns, schools seeking funding for special events or artists in residence, theater programs and other community groups with great ideas in need

of funding. Applications are due on or before March 31, 2026. Please submit all applications via the online form found at [5townfriendsofthearts.org/grants](http://5townfriendsofthearts.org/grants). Questions: email [FiveTownFOA@gmail.com](mailto:FiveTownFOA@gmail.com).

The nonprofit, Middlebury-based Helping Overcome Poverty’s Effects (HOPE) needs warm sleeping bags, wool socks and “heat therapy patches” for homeless folks who are living outdoors. If you have these items and would like to donate them, please drop them off at HOPE’s office at 282 Boardman St. between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, or at HOPE’s resale store between 10 a.m. and noon on Saturdays. If dropping off at the store, please specify they’re for HOPE’s homeless services.

Charter House is Addison County’s low barrier homeless shelter for individuals and is putting together a strategic plan to help guide its work during the next several years. Community input is a critical component of that vision. If you live, work, or spend time in Addison County, you’re invited to take a few minutes to share your

perspective through a short online survey you can find at [tinyurl.com/5a662y27](http://tinyurl.com/5a662y27). The survey takes around seven minutes to complete and includes questions about your connection to Addison County, awareness and perceptions of Charter House, community perspectives on homelessness and housing, and ideas and hopes for the future.

The Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is warning the public of more scam text messages that falsely claim the recipient has an unpaid traffic ticket and is at risk of driver’s license suspension and other penalties. The DMV did not send these messages and does not send any text or email messages demanding immediate payment. The DMV communicates with customers via the mail and in other ways that are easily recognizable as valid and official because they contain accurate and detailed personally identifiable information. If you receive an unexpected message about fines or payments, don’t click on links, don’t provide personal information and don’t make payments.

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# Middlebury

(Continued from Page 1A)  
Isabel Goggarty and Megan James as the triumvirate of women on the seven-member panel.

Boyce was able to network with some Middlebury voters at American Flatbread, a popular restaurant in the Marble Works complex.

"I'm humbled," Boyce said of the support she received from Middlebury voters. "I wasn't sure what to expect."

During a pre-election interview with the *Independent*, Boyce said she believed the board could benefit from her perspective as a small business owner, a vantage point that's allowed her to hear

residents' concerns and hopes for the town.

Brown, with his spouse, Michele, formerly owned and operated the Swift House Inn and Jessica's Restaurant. He currently serves on the Middlebury Infrastructure Committee and the Downtown Improvement District Commission. Brown has served his community in many other ways, as well, including on the Ilsley 100 Project Team that played a key role in shaping the now-unfolding \$17 million expansion- and renovation of Middlebury's public library at 75 Main St.

While well-liked and established

on the board, Brown took nothing for granted this election cycle. He spent several hours outside the polls on Tuesday, making himself available to constituents who might have questions about his background and priorities for the community.

"I knew the other two candidates were really good candidates too," Brown said.

With the dust now settled, Brown pledged to serve as a mentor to Boyce and other recent arrivals to the selectboard. He noted four of the board's seven members are in their first terms on the panel.

"The senior (members) need

to get Danielle up to speed as soon as possible," he said, emphasizing some of the weighty issues on the board's plate. They include seemingly perennial budget challenges (see related Middlebury town meeting story), the need to better understand and organize the town's financial reserve accounts, a scheduled uptick in planning and design for Middlebury's \$49.5 million wastewater treatment plant makeover, and a burgeoning effort to site and develop an additional municipal water source for the community.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

# Young

(Continued from Page 3A)  
themselves from the real work of providing equitable opportunities for all students.

And while there are numerous examples of this, let's focus on the state testing program itself to illustrate the point.

From 2005 until 2013, Vermont used the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP) to measure student achievement. By 2015, the Smarter

Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) had been adopted and was in place until 2023. In the spring of that year, the state switched programs again to Cognia, which is now in its fourth year. That is three completely different assessments in just over 10 years. By contrast, Massachusetts has been using its comprehensive system (MCAS) for over 30 years, which provides it with the consistency necessary to accurately monitor student learning over time.

This is not a luxury that Vermont educators have been afforded.

Each of these changes to the assessment system requires retraining school staff, which takes away from teaching and learning time, and interrupts the school calendar for multiple days each year so that the state can get a snapshot of student performance. For those who are in businesses that face some level of regulation, consider how much time and effort it would take you to adjust to a new assessment every three years.

For schools, we rely on accurate information gathered over time to make informed decisions about where to allocate resources and which program changes need to be made. Given the changes to the

system and regular delays in seeing the results, how can schools be expected to use this information productively, especially when the first time we hear of them is in the media, decrying the state of our schools?

In 2012, Vermont replaced the Department of Education Commissioner with an Agency of Education (AOE) Secretary, who is a political appointee of the governor. Since Gov. Scott took

office in 2017, three secretaries have led the AOE — Rebecca Holcombe (through 2018), Dan French (2018 to 2023) and Zoie Saunders (since 2023). Three leaders in nine years for the agency that the governor suggested in his State of the State address has the responsibility to transform Vermont? Given the importance of the work, those of us in the field would certainly hope for more consistent leadership rather than being blamed for Vermont's economic woes.

A world-class education system requires world-class leadership, a world-class vision, and a world-class work ethic to get it done. Without these pillars, the world-class dream will remain a dream, while our students and schools continue to do excellent work despite — instead of alongside — our state agency and elected officials.

At the end of the day, we are privileged to work with amazing staff and students in communities that support public education. All we ask of our state leaders at this point is, please, don't make our already difficult jobs more difficult by using sound bites and partial information to further a political agenda.

*A world-class education system requires world-class leadership, a world-class vision, and a world-class work ethic to get it done. Without these pillars, the world-class dream will remain a dream...*

# Local option tax

(Continued from Page 1A)  
climate resilience & emergency preparedness (minimum 20%), and economic development (minimum 20%)."

Before approving the local option tax, or LOT, at the polls, Bristol residents had a chance to discuss the proposal at their annual town meeting this past Monday. Residents asked about various aspects of the tax, such as how much of it would be generated by local residents and how often the revenue earned would be reported to community members.

Bristol resident Dave Sharpe said he'd like to see the selectboard come back next year with information on how proceeds raised through the tax could help reduce the property taxes of those living in the police district (primarily the village).

"Although I live in the town outside of the police district, I recognize that almost all of this LOT money is going to be generated within the police district, and it's the residents of the police district that have been asking for a number of years for

help to fund the police in their district, and I'm sympathetic with that request," he said.

It's estimated that an LOT on sales, meals, alcohol and rooms would generate \$250,000 each year for the town of Bristol, based on 2024 data. Town officials on Monday noted how the LOT would allow the town to expand its tax base, with revenue also available to help better position the town to apply for grants.

"While it might seem small in what we're actually able to collect annually, it will fit the need for certain grant matches that will allow us to do and produce far beyond what our financial capabilities are," Town Administrator Gregory Faust said.

Vergennes will begin taxing 1% on the same purchases, including those made online, as in Bristol. Little City officials say the generated funds, 75% of which go to the municipality and 25% of which are given to the state, could be as much as \$200,000.

City officials intend to use the money 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," and that residents will have opportunities to give input on how the funds are allocated.

The money is expected to be generated primarily on the backs of non-Vergennes residents, according to a handout distributed at the city's annual meeting on Monday, March 2. About 19% of sales come from out-of-state visitors. A significant proportion comes from other Addison County towns, a point Meghan Olsen, of Olsen's Ice Cream on Main Street, pointed out on Monday night.

"The initial information that was sent out about, you know, who is spending money in Vergennes, because it was like, 'Oh, most people, you know, most of this money is going to come from residents that are outside Vergennes,' which is true," she said.

"But as a local businesses, we consider people from Ferrisburgh and Addison, they, to us, are local people. And if you look at it, look at the pie chart, it really is people from the greater Vergennes area,"


who will front the bill, she pointed out. It shows 63% of people who shop and dine in Vergennes are from Addison County. That figure includes purchases made by Vergennes residents.

"I just wanted to make sure that people know ... it's like our local customers. So I just want to make sure people understand that. So when local businesses have to raise their prices ... it really will affect everyone in the area."

Of the roughly 250 municipalities in Vermont, under half had implemented local option taxes prior to Town Meeting Day.

But Bristol and Vergennes were far from the only Vermont communities to consider local option taxes this Town Meeting Day. Twenty others were considering the same or similar measures. Other towns that adopted the same or similar measure included Bolton, Fair Haven, Mendon, Morristown, Pittsfield, Pomfret, Swanton, Westmore and West Windsor, according to *VTdigger*.

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# Town Meeting Results

## Addison

ADDISON — On Town Meeting Day, Addison voters passed on two newcomers for an open two-year selectboard seat, and re-elected incumbent Roger Waterman.

Waterman earned 194 votes, while his opponents, Michael Hollis and Mason West, collected 147 and 22, respectively.

Also, Chris Carella won the two-way race for an open three-year seat, defeating Daniel P. Rossignol, 189-176.

Voters also OK'd all articles as warned by Australian ballot.

That includes the town's \$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 former passed 257-105, and the latter 272-91.

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.

Voters also overwhelmingly said yes to several appropriations for social service agencies, totaling \$62,656. The Bixby Library will receive the largest portion of that sum (\$30,162), Town Line First Response will get the second-most (\$10,000) and the Open Door Clinic the third-most (\$2,500).

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

The only appropriation that did not win by more than 160 votes was the \$1,500 for Addison County Restorative Justice; though it still passed, 238-132.

## Brandon

BRANDON — Residents in Brandon gathered at the Town Hall, Monday, March 2, for an informational meeting, then the next day voted by Australian ballot for all of the items listed in the warning.

Voters approved the town budget, by more than a 2-1 margin, 528-251. The \$3,504,165 budget for municipal expenses, was comprised of \$562,012 raised in no-tax revenue and \$2,942,153 to be raised in property taxes.

That represents 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%, according to Town Manager Seth Hopkins.

In preliminary public hearings about the budget in late January, Hopkins said voters were more than pleased with one resident exclaiming the budget was "magnificent."

All articles Nos. 3-14, which will add additional expenses to the budget and property taxes, passed by wide margins, including:

- \$25,000 to Brandon American Legion Post No. 55.
- \$82,580 to the Brandon Area Rescue Squad.
- \$92,000 to the Brandon Community 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.

Voters also re-elected Brian Coolidge to 3-year term on selectboard and Cecil Reniche-Smith and Jeff Haylon to 1-year terms on the selectboard.

Town Clerk and Treasurer Susan Gage was re-elected to 3-year terms in both positions.

All candidates were unopposed. Interestingly, in the race for Trustee of Public Funds there were three write-in candidates for the two positions. Devon Fuller edged out Claire Astone for the 2-year term as Trustee of Public Funds by write-in, and Tracy Wyman was elected to the 1-year term. Faith Daya was on the ballot for a three-year trustee position and was



BRISTOL SELECTBOARD MEMBERS John "Peeker" Heffernan, left, Jessica Teets and Michelle Perlee listen to remarks from the audience during their town's annual meeting in Holley Hall on Monday.

Photo by Brenda Ellis

elected without opposition.

The positions are required by law to administer a fund left by Shirley Farr in her will that exceeds \$900,000. The fund was intended by Farr to be used for sanitation/wastewater and other public health considerations.

According to Hopkins, per Vermont law, when a town holds funds in trust for any purpose, it must elect three trustees to oversee the funds and make distributions in accordance with the terms of the bequest.

At Monday night's meeting, Brandon voters overwhelmingly supported a measure to establish an advisory budget committee and voted to have the selectboard appoint those members rather than have them be elected.

Brandon voters joined their peers in Leicester, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford to defeat the Otter Valley Unified Union budget by a vote of 868 against to 700 in favor. The district school board warned a FY27 spending plan of \$28,841,999, which was an increase of \$818,286, or 2.92%. The spending was \$14,257 per pupil — up about \$5.5% from this year.

## Bridport

BRIDPORT — Bridport residents at their town meeting this week endorsed all the items on its town meeting agenda, including the purchase — for up to \$140,000 — of a new backhoe and associated equipment, using fund balance from the community's Department of Public Works budget.

Dusty Huestis prevailed in a write-in campaign for constable and all the other open positions didn't garner enough write-ins for a win.

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

Also OK'd by Bridport voters:

- A combined fiscal year 2027 general fund/highway budget of \$1,869,126, which is up 5.8% from the \$1,765,090 residents approved for the current year.
- 22 separate funding 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.

Bridport residents on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story with results on Page 1A.

## Bristol

BRISTOL — Bristol voters on Town Meeting Day agreed to establish a local option tax in

their community, approving the proposal by Australian ballot, 418-200.

Town officials have noted that proceeds raised through the 1% levy on sales, meals, rooms and alcohol for the town of Bristol would be used for "for Capital Infrastructure (minimum 40%), Climate Resilience & Emergency Preparedness (minimum 20%), and Economic Development (minimum 20%)."

Also on Town Meeting Day, voters re-elected incumbents Michelle Perlee (three-year term) and Jessica Teets (two-year term) to the town's selectboard. Both ran unopposed.

Mike Dash was 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) OK'd a proposed fiscal year 2027 police spending plan of around \$701,116 — an increase of 1.88%, or \$12,947, from the current year. Voters approved the spending proposal, 251-109.

Bristol voters on March 3 also fielded a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year and a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate school budgets story on Page 1A.

Bristol voters gathered in



FIBER ARTS CRAFTING is a hallmark of town meeting season. Here, Bridport resident Cindy Myrick continues that tradition by crocheting leg warmers at her town's annual meeting on Tuesday.

Independent photo/Steve James

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).

Also at the meeting, Bristol voters joined residents in several other local communities in passing 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.

## Cornwall

CORNWALL — Cornwall residents at their town meeting elected Barbara Greenwood in a contested race for the selectboard and passed every item on their warning with little debate.

Greenwood bested Shawn Fetterolf, 116-87, in the race for a two-year term on the selectboard. All other elections were uncontested. Incumbent Selectman Brian Kemp ran unopposed for another three-year term on the panel.

Passing by resounding voice votes at Cornwall's annual meeting were:

• The proposed fiscal year 2027 general fund budget of \$617,359, and the highway budget of \$611,298.

• \$5,000 for the Cornwall Free Public Library to pay its FY27 expenses.

• \$81,200 to help the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department to pay its FY27 expenses.

• Permission for the delinquent tax collector to become an appointed, rather than elected position.

• A combined total of \$35,245 in FY27 requests from a variety of Addison County nonprofits that serve Cornwall residents.

• Anon-binding resolution stating "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 on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District spending plan of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. See school district election results in a separate story on Page 1A.

## Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Attendees of Ferrisburgh's annual town meeting on Saturday, Feb. 28 approved a \$2,862,039.92 municipal budget for fiscal year 2027. The roughly 90 people who attended also said yes to several appropriations for

local social service agencies that morning.

The budget figure is \$31,887.92 higher, or just over 1%, than the \$2,830,154 voters approved last year during their annual meeting.

The FY27 plan calls for taxes to fund \$2,360,639.92, 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 sum voters set aside for 28 area social service agencies totals \$36,895.

Of those 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 will receive between \$150-\$2,500.

Of the roughly 2,400 people registered to vote in Ferrisburgh, 533 cast ballots on Town Meeting day.

Incumbent James Benoit and newcomer Liz Markowski were elected in two uncontested races for selectboard. Benoit will continue his decade-plus tenure on the selectboard with a three-year term and Markowski will begin hers with a two-year stint.

They will join Chris Campbell, Rick Ebel and Walter Reed, who have one, two and one years left on their terms, respectively.

The only article voters rejected was a measure to put the management of the town's property information in the hands of an assessor in lieu of the office of the Town Lister, which officials proposed eliminating. It failed 283-244.

The three lister positions are also elected seats.

## Goshen

GOSHEN — Residents of Goshen OK'd an official municipal budget, put off a decision on a big loan from municipal account and got a new selectboard member this week.

Incumbent selectboard member Timmi Moffi did not run for re-election. There were no candidates on the Australian ballot on Town Meeting Day, but Jasmine Hoffman won a write-in campaign for the three-year seat on the board.

Other winners in Tuesday voting were Michael Medeiros, one-year as moderator; Kathy Mathis, three years as Trustee of Public Funds; and Ken Brown, three years as Cemetery Commissioner.

Goshen citizens at Monday evenings in-person town meeting came willing to vote on taking \$120,000 from the Municipal Forest Account and let the town use it as a loan to aid in the Town Hall renovation project and to be paid back over 10 years. Selectboard members had expected to give some guidance on how contractor bids came in and if they would need the full amount, but without any bids in hand, the meeting decided to put off a decision for the time being. Selectmen said they might also see if there was state grant money available later this month, as well.

At the meeting, folks did vote to eliminate the office of lister, and instead hire a professionally qualified assessor.

The selectboard also asked for, and was granted, authority to pay \$3,000 to hire Addison County Sheriff's Department deputies to carry out four hours a month of speed enforcement.

The big ticket items were \$653,316 for general municipal expenses and \$285,700 for highway expenses. They passed.

Also on Tuesday, Goshen residents voted on the budget for the Otter Valley Unified Union School District, which was defeated. See details in a story on school budgets on Page 1A.

## Granville

GRANVILLE — Residents of Granville at their Tuesday evening town meeting pretty quickly OK'd their town spending plan — a \$478,648 bottom line, which represented a hike of \$58,128, or 13.8%, over last year — but spent (See Granville, Page 12A)



# Town Meeting Results

(Granville continued from Page 11A)

an hour talking about the future of the town fire department, before tabling that article.

"It was a long meeting," said Town Clerk Cheryl Sargeant on Wednesday morning.

In the town report, the selectboard had said it had received concerns over the viability of the Granville Volunteer Fire Department, and the board wanted to ask citizens if it was time to "take a different approach to ensure our town has continued, reliable access to reliable emergency and fire service."

After those at the meeting chewed it over for an hour and no positive steps came up, residents decided to let the next selectboard take up the issue.

And the next selectboard will be different. Incumbent Ken Beattie decided he wouldn't run for re-election, and board chair Kelli Eckroth had resigned effective March 4. The battle to replace them at town meeting resulted in paper ballots being cast in both elections. In the race to fill out the remaining two years on Eckroth's seat, Jared Rouleau prevailed with 24 votes, Kevin Bagley got 7 votes, and Cheryl Sargeant got 6.

In the election to fill the three-year seat, Robert Readie was the winner with 26 votes; Bagley garnered 10 votes in this election.

Both of the new selectboard members are relative newcomers — Rouleau has been in town for about two years, and Readie close to five, the town clerk said.

Another long discussion was had over funding for the town constable. Town Constable Mark Belisle, who has been on the job for 30 years, was re-elected. Then a faction of the meeting discussed taking away all the funding for the constable and instead paying the county sheriff or state police to



**ANNE COLLINS SPEAKS** during Cornwall's annual town meeting on Saturday morning. That day, voters passed a fiscal year 2027 general fund budget of \$617,359 and highway budget of \$611,298 by voice vote.

Independent photo/Steve James



**GAIL ISENBERG SPEAKS** during Cornwall's annual town meeting on Saturday morning. That day, voters OK'd an appropriation of \$5,000 for the Cornwall Free Public Library.

Independent photo/Steve James

enforce the laws in Granville. That debate did not lead to any changes.

One thing that did lead to a change was an article asking if the town would discontinue the elective office of auditor, and instead hire out the job to professionals. The town ended the elected position.

That change sparked the only discussion on the budget. It was noted that the budget does not need \$300 for auditor training if there wasn't an auditor. So the budget was amended downward by \$300 and it passed by voice vote.

## Hancock

HANCOCK — "Nothing too crazy," was how town clerk Wendy Stender described Hancock's Tuesday morning town meeting. The budget passed with only

a slight change, there were no contests for elective office and the 30 or so people at the gathering got an update on the effort to build new housing in the village.

The change to the budget came while residents discussed how much law enforcement they wanted to pay for. Stender said that the general sense was that folks wanted officials to be around to crack down on speeding and other bad driving in Hancock. Plus the recent murder in town hung like a dark cloud over the discussion.

The selectboard had put \$1 for sheriff's department coverage in the proposed budget as a place to start the discussion. Ultimately, it was decided to add almost \$15,000 to the town spending plan to pay for about 20 hours a week of coverage by sheriff's deputies.

That put the budget for municipal and road expenses a little under \$542,000, and it passed. Selectboard Chair Scott Gillette was re-elected to the board by voice vote at town meeting in the morning, and at the board meeting in the evening he was re-elected chair.

Also on Tuesday morning, Brian Pine of White and Burke talked with townspeople about the effort to build out some housing in Taylor Meadow in the village behind the town clerk's office. White and Burke is carrying out a feasibility study for such a development. Stender pointed out that there is not a lot of places that Hancock can grow its population.

"So much of our town is protected forest," she said.

Town officials urged residents to get involved and take part in the feasibility study. Go to the town website, hancockvt.org, or stop in at the town clerk's office to provide your input.

## Leicester

LEICESTER — A short 20-minute informational meeting that previewed the Leicester town budget and a few other issues was held Monday evening in the town office this year as the Meeting

House was unavailable. About 20 people huddled into the space for the meeting that featured few questions but ample praise for the town's road crew and Green Up effort. Last year residents voted to make the in-person annual meeting informational only, with all votes to be done via Australian ballot the following day.

In Tuesday voting, Leicester residents approved the town budget 132-35. The \$830,200 spending plan represents an increase of just less than \$5,000, or 1%, from the current fiscal year.

Specifically, voters approved spending \$359,335 for general town expenses, with the amount to be raised by taxes \$346,556, while \$470,865 was allocated to spending on roads with \$350,957 to be raised in taxes.

Together, the amount to be raised in taxes would be \$57,113 more than last year.

Two other money items on the warning were also approved in separate votes. Leicester residents OK'd an additional \$1,000 for the Charter House Coalition to run its emergency shelter by a vote of 109-48; and voted 89-68 in favor of spending an additional \$20,000 to add 25 hours of sheriff's department patrols for traffic enforcement.

Leicester residents also easily re-elected a handful of elected positions, including two seats on the selectboard for a two-year and a three-year term held by John Rouse and Diane Randall, respectively. Both were unopposed.

Voters also almost unanimously re-elected Julie Delphia to three-year terms as town clerk and town treasurer, who was also unopposed.

Others elected to town posts, all unopposed, were: Richard Reed to a one-year term as moderator; Dianne Harvey to a one-year term as delinquent tax collector; and Lyndsay Davignon to a three-year term as auditor.

Leicester voters joined 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 district school budget was defeated 868-700. See the results in a wrap-

up of all area school district voting on Page 1A.

## Lincoln

LINCOLN — Lincoln voters saw some changes to their annual town and school district meetings this year.

Those gatherings were held at Burnham Hall this past Saturday, with the Lincoln School District holding its annual meeting during a recess of the town gathering that morning. The town has previously held the annual gatherings on the Monday evening prior to Town Meeting Day.

"Our hall was a little fuller than usual, with the highest vote count being 163, compared to the usual 75-120," Lincoln Town Clerk Sally Ober reported.

Another change to the meetings this year: Lincoln voters used a new electronic voting method to weigh in on articles from the floor. Ober explained that residents were each issued a clicker and when voting, could press a "Yes" or "No" button to cast their vote.

"We had no technical glitches and nobody in the audience raised their hand with a question or concern about these devices," she said. "We were all quite surprised at how well it went."

Ober noted the town rented the technology and has around 30 days to decide whether to put its rental fees toward purchase of the voting system.

"That will be something the selectboard will decide," she said.

At their town meeting this past Saturday, Lincoln voters approved \$711,988 in general fund spending, an increase of 1.91% over the current year. That article passed by clicker vote, 101-5, according to draft meeting minutes.

Residents OK'd a highway fund spending request of \$1,132,948, with \$1,015,301 to be raised in taxes. That's a decrease of 2.15% over the current year. Voters passed the article by clicker vote, 103-4.

An article asking whether the town should adopt its general fund budget by Australian ballot beginning in 2027 failed by clicker vote, 71-33. Voters also rejected an article asking if the town should adopt its highway fund budget by Australian ballot beginning in 2027. That article failed by clicker vote, 64-38.

Article 8 asked 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?" Voters defeated the article by clicker vote, 62-37.

Residents at the meeting also approved 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 OK'd a \$5,407,140 spending plan for fiscal year 2027, an increase of 4.4% over the current year. Ober reported that an article asking whether the district should adopt its budget by Australian ballot beginning in FY28 was postponed indefinitely.

At the polls on Tuesday, voters re-elected incumbent Tim McGowan (three-year term) to the town's selectboard in an uncontested race. Lori Atkins was the only candidate running for a two-year seat on the board.

Deborah Lubar ran unopposed for a three-year seat on the Lincoln School Board and school board member Peg Sutlive was uncontested for another two-year term.

## Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury residents at their March 2 annual meeting approved, by voice vote, a proposed fiscal year 2027 budget of \$15,998,045 — a roughly 9.9% (See Middlebury, Page 13A)



**JOHN PADUA TAKES** the microphone and says his piece during Monkton's annual town meeting on Saturday morning.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

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# Town Meeting Results

(Middlebury continued  
from Page 12A)

increase — and then, on March 3, decided a contested race for two spots in the town selectboard.

A more thorough wrap can be found on Page 1A, but here are the key takeaways from Middlebury Town Meeting Day 2026:

- Dan Brown and Danielle Boyce won three-year terms on the selectboard with 777 and 736 tallies, respectively. Candidate Peter Jette finished out of the running with 378 votes.

- Participants at Monday's annual gathering agreed by a unanimous voice to allow the selectboard to offset \$350,000 of debt in the Ilsley Library renovation project using local option tax (LOT) surplus money.

- By a tally of 978-108, approved a \$1.5 million bond to replace the water main at Foote Street & Route 7 south. The bond will affect water rates, as opposed to property taxes.

- By a 917-174 tally, OK'd a resolution asking the state Legislature to discuss, and act on, House Bill H.433, which would introduce universal access to primary health care for all Vermonters.

Middlebury residents on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story in this edition for those results.

## Monkton

MONKTON — Over 100 Monkton residents filed into Monkton Central School for their town's annual meeting this past Saturday.

At that meeting, voters fielded an amended general fund expenditures



AT THEIR TOWN meeting at the MUHS auditorium on Monday evening, citizens show their approval for some activity on stage. Voters approved a pretty big increase in town spending for the coming fiscal year.

Independent photo/Steve James

request of \$1,007,324.89, an increase of 14.75% over the current year, with around \$867,531 to be raised in taxes (see related story in this issue). The amended ask passed by voice vote.

Voters also approved:

- An amended highway fund spending request of \$1,384,787.56, with \$993,287.56 to be raised by taxes. That's a 7.6% decrease from what was on the warning last year.

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

- A sum not to exceed \$311,930 for the purchase of a John Deere road grader.

Article 7 asked voters to authorize no more than \$150,000 for repairs to Piney Woods Road. The article generated a lot of discussion, with residents expressing both support for and concerns over the project. Voters ultimately rejected the request by

paper ballot, 64-54. Town officials noted the article was non-binding, as the selectboard has the authority to make decisions about town roads.

Voters on Saturday also approved a proposal to "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." The reasoning was to save money — almost \$10,000 — as a small percentage of voters typically attend the meeting. That article passed by division of the house, 60-43.

At the polls on Tuesday, Monkton voters re-elected selectboard incumbents Sam Peisch (two-year term) and Walter Crandall (three-year term). Both were unopposed.

Monkton's Town Meeting Day ballot didn't feature any spots

on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board. 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 also fielded a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year and a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition with those results.

## New Haven

NEW HAVEN — New Haven residents at their town's annual meeting this past Monday agreed to pay for recycling through their property taxes for the Saturday

morning drop-off in town, regardless of whether they use that service.

That article on the town meeting warning noted that, "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." Voters approved the article from the floor.

Residents at the town meeting also weighed in on a couple of other questions from the floor under Article 5: "To transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business, which may legally come before this meeting."

The first question asked if the town should appropriate \$1,500 to the Bristol 4th of July Committee to help fund its annual Independence Day celebration and parade. Voters approved the request.

New Haven voters also joined residents in several other local communities in passing a non-binding resolution asking whether they 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.

At the polls on Tuesday, New Haven voters re-elected selectboard incumbents John R. Roleau (two-year term) and Marie Jewett (three-year term). Both ran unopposed.

Kathi J. Apgar was also unopposed in seeking another three-year term on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board.

In other Town Meeting Day voting, New Haven residents approved:

- Around \$844,952 in general fund expenses, down \$30,620.89 from what was OK'd last year. 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 was included in the general fund budget proposal and detailed in the town report.

Voters also agreed to adopt the amended Town Plan submitted by the New Haven Planning Commission to the town's selectboard on Jan. 6.

New Haven voters on March 3 also fielded a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year and a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition with those results.

## Orwell

ORWELL — There were no big surprises at Orwell's town meeting on Tuesday, though there were surely a few people casually wondering where Mike Audet was — last year he wrapped more than four decades as moderator for Orwell Town Meeting, and Glen Cousineau wielded the gavel this year.

Cousineau was re-elected as moderator for the coming year. Other incumbent town officials also won re-election, including Mike Christian and Les Wood, who earned seats on the selectboard for three years and two years, respectively. Bryan S. Young is back as town treasurer.

The new face (though not terribly new to those paying attention to town business) was Anna Golan, the assistant town clerk was elected to a one-year term as town clerk.

(See Orwell, Page 14A)

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# Town Meeting Results



**RETIRED MIDDLEBURY UNION High School Latin teacher Marge Drexler keeps her hand and her mind active during the Cornwall town meeting on Saturday.**

Independent photo/Steve James

*(Orwell continued from Page 13A)*

The two big money items on the town meeting warning passed. The town budget of \$1,877,297 got a thumbs up, as did the sewer budget of \$110,691.

Town spending is a decrease of \$223,612 from what was approved last year; but \$1,162,961 will be raised in taxes, up \$166,488 from the current year. The sewer spending, which will be raised by

user and dumping fees, was down \$1,400 from last year.

Voters on Tuesday also OK'd appropriating \$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.

Orwell voters also cast ballots on the Slate Valley Union School District budget, which was defeated by residents of the six towns in the district. See full story on school budgets on Page 1A.

## Panton

**PANTON** — In Australian ballot vote, Panton residents approved all articles as warned on Town Meeting Day. In total, 138 ballots were cast.

Those included 109 votes in favor and 26 opposed on a budget proposal less than \$1,000 higher than the one passed last year. The spending plan calls for less money to be raised by taxes than what was planned to be collected in FY26.

The FY27 budget came in at \$1,120,912.46, a little higher than the \$1,119,954 voters approved for FY26. It calls for \$948,188 to be raised by taxes, which is down \$7,710 from the \$955,898 requested for FY26.

“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 previously.

Voters also approved additional requests for \$10,000 for the Highway Capital Equipment Fund and \$2,000 for the Reappraisal Fund, both paid for by property taxes. Those expenses were not included in the proposed budgets. The article passed 112-22.

Another added cost, also to be paid for with taxes, is \$11,201 requested by 17 local non-profit and charitable organizations. The Adams-Kent Cemetery Association would receive the



**RESIDENT MOLLY WITTERS listens thoughtfully during Monday night's Ripton town meeting in the mountain town's Community House. When the time came, she gave her input.**

Independent photo John S. McCright

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 lines will receive between \$50-\$800. The funding passed by a vote of 114-23.

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

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

Zach Weaver, who has been on the selectboard since 2016, is set to serve another two-year term. He earned 122 votes. And Robert T. DeGraaf, who began his tenure on Panton's selectboard in 2025, snagged an open three-year seat. He garnered 122 votes as well.

## Ripton

**RIPTON** — Brooke Wilcox topped Milo Tudor, 131-25, in the Town Meeting Day race for a three-year term on the selectboard, succeeding incumbent Laurie Cox, who decided not to seek reelection after 40 years of service.

Residents also passed by resounding voice votes all the business on their annual warning, including:

- A proposal for Ripton to reacquire its elementary school building and property from the Addison Central School District, which included a \$70,000 appropriation to maintain and operate the school for the year. Tuesday's positive vote by ACSD voters to formally close Ripton Elementary has paved the way for that property transfer. The town is establishing a committee to sort out the logistics of bringing the elementary school property back into the fold and deciding how it can be used. Ripton officials have said the school building could host the town offices, a municipal library, a community center & gym, with enough space left over to attract a tenant to help offset future annual operating costs.

• A proposed fiscal year '27 town/highway budget of \$878,682, which was 1% higher than the previous year.

• \$47,100 for the Ripton Volunteer Fire Department.

• \$6,000 for the Ripton Cemetery Commission.

• A series of modest appropriations — ranging from \$300 to \$1,901 — for various Addison County nonprofits that serve Ripton residents.

• 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.

• An extension of an agreement allowing the Vermont Elks Association's Silver Towers Camp to be taxed at 33% of its assessed value.

Aside from the selectboard race, there were no other contested elections.

Ripton residents on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story in this edition for those results.

## Salisbury

**SALISBURY** — Salisbury residents on Town Meeting Day passed all the items on their warning, including an appropriation to eradicate mosquitoes and a universal healthcare-related resolution.

Residents voted 119-48 in favor of spending \$17,588 for the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District to apply mosquito adulticide in select areas of town in 2026. This is a reversal of recent years in which the town opted not to be a part of the OCVICD program.

They voted 121-43 in support of a non-binding resolution that asked 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

*(See Salisbury, Page 15A)*



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**Office Hours:** Mon – Fri, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

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For your convenience, there is a secure payment box located in front of the Town Office.





# Town Meeting Results

(Salisbury continued from Page 14A)

substance use treatment as a first step in phasing in universal healthcare for all Vermont residents.

In other Australian ballot voting on Tuesday, Salisbury residents endorsed:

- The proposed FY27 general fund budget of \$435,350 by a 149-17 tally, and the FY27 highway budget of \$620,640 by a 143-22 margin. Those budgets reflected increases of 8.5% and 15%, respectively.

- By a vote of 155-8, allowed the selectboard to apply any general budget surplus from the current fiscal year (that exceeds \$30,000) to help lower FY27 property taxes.

- By a vote of 130-28, agreed to give the town authority to rescind money allocated to the local Energy Program and apply it to the Buildings & Grounds fund.

- By wide margins, a combined total of \$109,975 in requests from Addison County nonprofits that serve Salisbury residents.

There were no contested municipal elections in Salisbury this year. Sue Mackey was elected to a three-year term on the selectboard, Allen Hathaway returns for another year as town clerk, and John Nuceder returns for another year as town moderator.

Salisbury residents on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story in this edition for those results.

## Shoreham

SHOREHAM — Mirroring a trend throughout the county, Shoreham residents at their town meeting approved all the articles



MONKTON'S MIKE BUSHEY addresses his fellow residents during his local town meeting in the Monkton Central School gym this past Saturday.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

on their warning, including an array of financial requests.

On Monday, those present at Shoreham's annual gathering passed, by voice votes, a proposed fiscal year 2027 highway budget of \$1,110,500, and its general fund budget of \$483,997, reflecting increases of 3.4% and 2.3% respectively. Voters also approved setting 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 Tuesday, March 3, Shoreham residents went to the polls to approve a combined \$23,869 in funding requests from 19 Addison County nonprofits that serve Shoreham residents.

There were no contested elections on the Shoreham ballot this year. Rebecca Kerr and Mark

Spitzner were elected for one-year terms on the town selectboard, while Peter Lynch sailed to a three-year term on the board.

Shoreham residents on Tuesday also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story in this edition for those results.

## Starksboro

STARКСBORO — Starksboro voters on Town Meeting Day re-elected selectboard incumbent

Koran Cousino in a two-person race for a two-year seat on the town's selectboard. Cousino received 249 votes and challenger David Rousseau earned 71 tallies.

That was the only contested race on Starksboro's March 3 ballot.

Selectboard member Carin H. McCarthy was re-elected to the board for a three-year term, and incumbent Tony Porter won the two years remaining on a three-year term on the board.

Kristen Toy was also re-elected for a three-year term on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board.

Also at the polls on Tuesday, Starksboro voters fielded a \$37,862,780 MAUSD spending plan for the 2026-2027 school year and a Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY27 budget of \$6,271,916 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Starksboro held its annual town meeting at Robinson Elementary School this past Saturday, with 128 voters in attendance. At that meeting voters OK'd:

- \$1,371,119 in town spending, an increase of \$155,200, or just over 11%, 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.

Voters also approved Article 14, which asked voters to appropriate a total of \$109,357 for 37 local nonprofits serving Starksboro residents.

Article 11 asked 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 by the Town's voters) to withdraw from MAUSD as provided in 16 V.S.A. §724." That article also passed.

MAUSD has been exploring a handful of educational delivery models as part of an effort to reduce costs while continuing to offer quality programming. Two 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.

Residents also passed Article 12, which asked 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." That means voters will weigh in on proposed amendments to the Town Plan or zoning bylaws, rather than have those be approved by the selectboard.

## Vergennes

VERGENNES — Little City residents ousted incumbent alderman James Dragon in a four-way contest for three, two-year terms on the city council.

Vergennes residents re-elected incumbents Richard "Dickie" Austin and Jill Murray-Killon, and sent former Mayor Michael H. Daniels to the councilors table. Austin got 403 votes, Daniels got 388, Murray-Killon got 341 and Dragon got 251.

Residents also approved all articles as warned during Town (See Vergennes, Page 16A)



CORNWALL TOWN MEETING drew a nice crowd of citizens who debated and decided issues ranging from the proposed fiscal year 2027 general and highway budgets to a resolution in support of instituting universal access to primary healthcare in Vermont. Here we see longtime resident Roth "T" Tall make a point during the gathering. Independent photo/Steve James



RIPTON RESIDENTS PASSED several major initiatives — including reacquiring their former elementary school — during their town meeting on Monday.

Independent photo John S. McCright

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# Town Meeting Results

(Vergennes continued from Page 15A)

Meeting Day. Those decisions included a go-ahead on introducing a local option tax to Vergennes and \$48,164 for area social service agencies.

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.

Though there were other money questions for voters to ponder, including the introduction of the local option tax (LOT), which was approved 332-266.

This additional 1% tax on sales, meals, alcohol and rooms will be levied with 75% of the generated funds going to the city and the remaining 25% going to the state.

City officials intend to 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 also approved the creation of a reserve fund for the LOT money.

Voters also approved several routine allocations to social service agencies. Among the 18 included are 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 will receive \$5,000 each, the most of any single organization listed.

The other 11 organizations will get between \$750-\$4,000.

As far as elected officials go, Daniels isn't the only former city official rejoining the ranks. Mel Hawley, who served as Vergennes's city manager before Ron Redmond, ran unopposed for a one-year alderman term. He garnered 403 votes, though several write-in candidates received 119.

## Waltham

WALTHAM — In addition to approving all articles as warned, Waltham residents also re-elected selectboard member Rhonda Williams and Moderator Don Ross by voice vote during the annual town meeting on Monday night.

Roughly 33 people opted to say their piece from folding chairs in the Waltham Town Hall on March 2, with others joining via zoom.

Unlike other municipalities, residents make all decisions from the floor during their annual meeting, rather than by Australian



A SOMEWHAT DIVERSE crowd of around 200 assembled in the Middlebury Union High School auditorium on Monday evening for the shire town's annual meeting. The item of most import seemed to be the \$16 million municipal spending plan, which the assembled residents approved.

Independent photo/Steve James

ballot on Town Meeting Day. The only matter they cast ballots for on March 3 was the ANWSD budget.

Williams and Ross were the only candidates nominated for their newly won posts. Other races for cemetery commissioner, first and second constable, grand juror and town agent were also uncontested.

There is an open auditor position.

Waltham residents approved 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 town plans to collect \$402,266 to cover costs across the three funds. That amount is up from \$296,167 in fiscal year 2026.

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

"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 said ahead of the annual town meeting.

"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."

Voters also approved a \$10,692 expenditure to support Vergennes's Bixby Library.

Waltham residents earmarked \$4,849 in funds for 18 social service agencies. Addison County Home Health and Hospice will receive the largest sum (\$579). Age Well, Addison County Parent Child Center, the American Legion Post and the Atria Collective will each get \$500. The bus service Tri-Valley Transit was awarded \$320.

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

## Weybrige

WEYBRIDGE — In a contested selectboard race, incumbent Kelly Flynn on Town Meeting Day was elected to a two-year term on the Weybrige board, outpolling Chris Bagley, 137-86. Incumbent Charlie Jordan was uncontested for a three-year term on the board.

All other municipal elections in Weybrige were uncontested.

Residents also passed all financial requests on their warning, including:

- A proposed fiscal year 2027 highway budget of \$678,349, and a general fund of \$261,402, reflecting hikes of 9.6% and 23.9% respectively.

- 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.

- \$30,000 for the Weybrige Volunteer Fire Department.

- \$15,000.00 to continue the town's volunteer recycling program for FY27.

- \$26,767.00 to continue a partnership with the town of Middlebury through which Weybrige residents get full access to Ilsley Library services. Weybrige doesn't operate a local public library.

- \$70,000 to seed a new "unanticipated expense reserve fund."

Voters rejected a resolution that would have encouraged 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."

Weybrige residents on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary

School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story in this edition for those results.

## Whiting

WHITING — Town meetings in Whiting are long and contentious in some years; but this year was not. On Tuesday evening, residents met for an hour and a quarter and OK'd town spending and elected the expected slate of municipal office holders.

The town spending plan of \$526,590, up almost \$15,000 from the current year, was approved. That level of spending will require the town to seek \$345,395 in property taxes in the coming year — about \$29,297 more than was levied in taxes this year.

Nine town officials were up for election. Incumbent selectboard member Steve Quenneville was returned to office for three years. Incumbent lister Stacey Freeguard was returned to that job for three years, but a vacant lister seat drew no takers.

People must like Town Clerk and Treasurer Heather Bouchard; she was returned to those two positions for three years apiece.

Other incumbents winning reelection were:

- Suzanne Denis, auditor for three years.

- Rani Fallon for collector of delinquent taxes for one year.

- Peg Allen and Tammy Wilbur for Library Trustee (three years each).

Also on Tuesday, Whiting residents voted on the budget for the Otter Valley Unified Union School District, which was defeated. See details in a story on school budgets on Page 1A.



CORNWALL RESIDENTS, OBVIOUSLY a patriotic lot, held hands over hearts and recited the Pledge of Allegiance at Saturday's town meeting at the elementary school.

Independent photo/Steve James

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# Budget hike

(Continued from Page 1A)  
is expected to be \$1.0226 per \$100 in property value, up from the current rate of 92.99 cents.

A penny on Middlebury's tax rate raises around \$100,000.

"Describing this year as challenging is really an understatement," Middlebury Town Manager Mark Pruhenski told the crowd of around 200 who had assembled in the Middlebury Union High School auditorium.

Pruhenski explained the budget increase could be traced to several factors, including inflation and the need to catch up on deferred municipal infrastructure projects. He also pointed to specific FY27 budget drivers that include increases of \$171,161 for public safety, \$224,363 for public works, \$871,606 for fixed charges like debt service and employee benefits, \$77,888 for technology (IT) upgrades, and \$103,042 for town libraries. That libraries figure doesn't include the town's first debt-service payment on the \$17 million Ilsley Library renovation and expansion project that's quickly taking shape at 75 Main St.

Participants at Monday's town meeting, in a separate article, agreed by a unanimous voice vote to allow the selectboard to offset \$350,000 in Ilsley Library project debt using local option tax (LOT) surplus money. Middlebury almost 20 years ago adopted a 1% LOT on sales, rooms, meals and alcohol purchases to help underwrite the Cross Street Bridge project. The LOT has been raising considerably more than is needed for debt service and maintenance on the bridge project, which has allowed the town to apply surplus to local capital projects.

Town officials placed the annual Cross Street Bridge debt at \$802,919. Middlebury College has agreed to pay \$600,000 of that debt annually, leaving \$202,919 to be covered by the LOT. The LOT



BRIAN CARPENTER

is raising more than \$1.4 million annually.

Middlebury is applying a total of \$1.5 million in LOT surplus to stabilize the FY27 budget, money that would otherwise need to be raised by taxes (or pared through reduced services).

The Local Option Tax fund is expected to have a balance of \$1,858,133 at the end of June, according to Pruhenski.

Officials were also asked about the status of a gift in lieu of taxes (GILT) that Middlebury College has been paying to the town annually since 2004 in recognition of the municipal services it receives as an educational institution. As previously reported by the Independent, the latest town-gown agreement expired in 2024. Both parties continue to negotiate a new 10-year pact, though college officials have stated they'd like to ease up on the annual payments as it tries to balance its own budget and in recognition of the financial support it has given in recent years to the municipal building, recreation center and Ilsley library. Middlebury College paid the town around \$340,000 in GILT this

fiscal year. That amount has been reduced by \$101,747 for FY27, according to Pruhenski.

"We're still in the process of negotiating an agreement and we hope to have that negotiated and signed very soon," Pruhenski said.

Resident Mark Mooney suggested the college — through its fundraising brochure and other outreach — could encourage its alums and parents to donate to a "municipal infrastructure fund."

Town meeting attendees asked plenty of questions about the budget, some of them related to spending priorities and possible savings.

Resident Janet Smith expressed concern with the budget increase and asked officials, "Do you see another 10% increase coming next year?"

Pruhenski responded: "It's very hard to say at this point, but I do see a couple of challenging years ahead."

Meanwhile, he said the town will focus on minimizing new expenses while trying to grow the town's grand list. He noted 70 of a potential 250 new housing units within the Stonecrop Meadows development will soon become part of the grand list. Middlebury is also looking to attract new businesses to its industrial park.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Resident Dave Silberman asked town officials whether the community might be paying for more public safety than it needs. He pointed to a \$123,000 increase in FY27 personnel/overtime for the police department and posed, "are we increasing our taxes by too much and are we growing the police department by more than our needs? We are a pretty safe community, and some of that is because we have a good police force and some of that is because we're a fairly wealthy community, overall."

Silberman specifically cited the



MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD VICE CHAIR Andy Hooper, flanked by fellow board members Isabel Gogarty and Dan Brown, drinks in contributions from residents on the floor of Monday's town meeting.

Independent photo/Steve James

PD's "Project Good Morning" program, through which the department makes periodic calls to elderly and frail shut-ins to make sure they're OK.

While saying he thought Project Good Morning was an important program, he suggested the PD could save money by farming the welfare checks to local nonprofits that could do the job for less. Silberman said he was prepared to amend the budget to reduce the police budget.

Middlebury PD Chief Jason Covey explained that the public safety budget increase was largely a product of increases in fixed costs (such as wages and benefits). The department last year responded to the most calls it's fielded since 2019, he noted. Covey added the Project Good Morning checks are being done by dispatchers and in between their daily interactions with officers in the field.

"(The program) costs no additional money. It's done with existing staff on staff hours," Covey said. "If we can save one person... before they die, it's worth every bit of effort."

Silberman elected not to offer a budget amendment, and those

present endorsed the FY27 spending plan by a resounding voice vote.

Monday's meeting also saw tributes paid to town officials past and present.

The 2026 annual report was dedicated to Middlebury selectboard Chair Brian Carpenter, who chose not to seek reelection this year after 12 years on the panel. He previously served nine years on the Middlebury Infrastructure Committee.

Carpenter, the owner of Champlain Valley Equipment and a retired Vermont Air National Guard Brigadier General, is stepping down to spend more time with family and his expanding business interests.

"His advice and recommendations were always of value to us," selectboard member Dan Brown said of his colleague. "He's been very generous to his community with his time and support... Thank you for your dedication and your service to our town."

Carpenter earned a standing ovation from those assembled at the annual meeting.

Also honored were the late,

longtime Middlebury selectboard Chair John Tenny, and residents Kyle Lussier and Jen Barnes, winners of the 2025 Robert E. Collins Award for their contributions to Middlebury Parks & Recreation programs.

Middlebury residents went to the polls on Tuesday, March 3, to support:

- By a tally of 978-108, a \$1.5 million bond to replace the water main at Foote Street & Route 7 South. The bond will affect water rates, as opposed to property taxes.

- By a 917-174 tally, a resolution asking the state Legislature to discuss, and act on, House Bill H.433, which would introduce universal access to primary health care for all Vermonters.

Middlebury residents on Tuesday, March 3, also cast ballots on a proposed fiscal year 2027 Addison Central School District budget of \$53 million, a proposed FY27 Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) budget of \$6,271,915; a referendum seeking formal closure of Ripton Elementary School; and a series of uncontested elections for the ACSD board. Please see separate story on Page 1A.

# Montgomery

(Continued from Page 1A)

He was just summoned to fulfill them in a different way. The Army reservist learned in November that he'd be deployed to southern Germany for a non-combat, teaching role early in 2026. He arrived in early February.

For up to the next year, Montgomery's students will be foreign soldiers, and their course material will be leadership skills, which he's been teaching for the Vermont Army National Guard since 2021.

Montgomery first joined the army when he was 19 years old. The only other time he's been deployed was in his early 20s, when he served as a mechanic on the air crew during Operation Desert Storm. Most recently Montgomery has used his technical skills as a fleet technician at Tri Valley Transit, the local bus company where he plans to return after being abroad.

Montgomery first added the Vergennes City Council to the mix in December 2023, filling a seat that was left vacant that fall when former councilor Emily Rossier

stepped down. Just shy of three months after Montgomery filled Rossier's seat, he ran unopposed for his current term.

Just a little over two years after Montgomery first got a taste for what it's like to be a member of Vergennes's highest municipal body, he headed to Texas to start two weeks of training before assuming his role in Germany.

Though his council term isn't up until Tuesday, the last meeting he was able to attend was in December, due to the time-consuming demands of the Texas training, and the time-zone difference between Vermont and Germany.

Mayor Chris Bearor wished him well at the Jan. 13 city council meeting.

"Being active duty, I'm not going to push him to resign," Bearor said. "I know staff is gonna miss him and I wish him well."

And Montgomery's fellow city councilors feel he was a "practical and grounded voice."

"He understood that many of the residents he represented are busy, hardworking people who



JOHN MONTGOMERY

do not always have the time to follow the details of municipal government. He took seriously his responsibility to look out for those residents and to ensure that council decisions reflected their interests and everyday realities," reads a statement issued on

behalf of the city council. "We are grateful for John's service to Vergennes and now for his service abroad."

During an *Independent* interview in early February, Montgomery was almost done with his Texas training and days from heading to Germany.

"I actually feel pretty good," he said at the time. "I don't miss the snow. I'll tell you that much. I'm in good spirits. I'm quite well motivated."

He described what he is teaching as "the very basics of how to be a soldier."

"When you are given an order to a mission to carry out, you're training troops that are going to be doing that actual mission. They actually, you know, make it happen," he explained. "What happens if, say, one soldier's taken out of the fight, then ... the next person down takes over and continues the mission. So, you're

teaching these people how to plan.

"... It may sound silly to some people, but it really isn't, because there's a lot of people in various militaries in the world that don't get the training that we do here in the United States ... the people I'll be getting are pretty good already. We're just going to make them better."

Though Montgomery wasn't missing the thick of Vermont weather in early February, he was nostalgic about the insights into his home city that being an elected official provided.

"If there's one thing I really got to appreciate being on city council was just the people of Vergennes themselves," he said. "I got to meet a lot of them. I got to talk to a lot of them. There's a lot of good people there."

Being a public servant was a good experience for Montgomery. "You kind of learn a lot about the community you live in, how

it works, you know the problems it faces, then you're part of hopefully trying to fix some of it."

"And did I accomplish everything that I set off to do? No. And will I ever have a chance to? We'll see," he said.

It's maybe a little early to be counting the days until he is back in Vergennes with his wife, Allison. After nearly 40 years serving in the military, Montgomery can foresee the end of that public service.

"When I'm all finished with this tour, I'll be looking at retiring from all this military stuff," he told the *Independent*. "Because there's somebody back home that would really like to have me back full time, and that's Mrs. Montgomery herself."

When he's back in Vergennes, Montgomery hasn't taken running for another term off the table.

"It's not easy, but I'm glad I did it," he said of being a city councilor. "It was a good experience, and we'll see what happens moving forward."

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## Tiger girls' hockey headed for playoffs

**By SOPHIA KESHMIRI**  
MIDDLEBURY — The Tiger girls' hockey team will head to Swanton on Friday for a second shot at Missisquoi and to kick off their 2026 Division II playoff bid. No. 5 Middlebury Union High School will play No. 4 Thunderbirds at 6 p.m.

When the two teams played at the end of January, the game concluded 4-2 in favor of Missisquoi.

About a week before their post-season debut, the Tigers dropped their final game of the season, 8-0, to BFA St. Albans, the No. 1 seed in Division I. That game brought the Tigers' final regular season record to 9-10.

"As far as the playoffs go, we're feeling pretty good about our game right now," Coach PJ Lalonde said. "Despite losing our last 3 games, those games were against the top 3 teams in Division I. We were quite proud of how hard our girls worked and felt that they played some really decent hockey given the level of the competition. We think those games were great preparation for the playoff road ahead and that if we show up with our A game this group can win any game!"

Among D-II teams, the Tigers are 6-3. In the regular season, other than Missisquoi, MUHS fell to No. 1 U-32 and No. 3 Burr and Burton.

The Tigers were the runner-up in the D-II post-season last year. They lost 2-0 to Hartford in the title game.



**TIGER SOPHOMORE MILES** Goetz tries to turn an opponent during the state wrestling championships at CVU on Saturday. He placed third in the 120-pound weight class.

Photo by Jesse Raymond



**COMMODORE SENIOR PAYTON** Lavoie (right) controls Tiger junior Parker Carl in a 175-pound semifinal at Saturday's state meet. Lavoie pinned Carl and prevailed in the weight class, winning his second state title. Carl took fourth.

Photo by Jesse Raymond

## Four local wrestlers claim Vermont titles

**By SOPHIA KESHMIRI**  
HINESBURG — After this weekend, all three Addison County high school wrestling teams can boast team top 10 finishes and individual state championships.

In Saturday's state wrestling meet at Champlain Valley Union High School, Middlebury Union High School took third place

(134.5 points), Vergennes, fourth (123.5) and Mount Abraham got eighth (85.5).

Otter Valley in Brandon slipped in at fifth place (121.6 points).

Spaulding overtook Mt. Anthony for first place, a historic dethroning of the 36-year state champion-title holders. The victors scored 236 points, and the runners-up 195.

Individual crowns were also bestowed on two VUHS wrestlers, one from Mt. Abe and one from

MUHS.

Middlebury's Tucker Wright captured the 215-pound title, marking the junior's second first-place finish in the tournament. As a sophomore, he was the 175-pound champion.

Wright and three other Tiger wrestlers — senior Steven Lackard, junior Wyatt Kennett and sophomore Miles Goetz — will compete at the New England tournament in Providence, R.I.,

this coming weekend. Over 250 teams, including those from Mt. Abe, Vergennes and Otter Valley are expected to compete.

Like Wright, VUHS senior captain Payton Lavoie touts back-to-back titles. After winning Saturday's 175-pound title, Lavoie is now one of just three Commodore wrestlers to have claimed two. He was the 2025 190-pound champion.

"Payton has a calm demeanor that combined with his veteran mat awareness and athleticism we expect him to place top eight at (New England championship meet)," Coach Travis Scribner said. "He really has put together a resume that supports this by going toe to toe with several all NE wrestlers and losing just four times all season."

Junior Stephen Kittredge was the Commodore's other title-winner prevailing in the 132-pound weight class, after placing second at 126 last year.

"After a back and forth season with Anthony Szabo from Fair Haven, the final match was no exception and an overtime nail biter," Scribner said of this Kittredge's finals match, which ended with a score of 7-4. "Steve secured the OT sudden death take down to bring home his first state title."

In addition to Lavoie and Kittredge, VUHS is sending two other wrestlers to New England's next weekend.

Mt. Abe will also be represented by four wrestlers at the regional tournament. Those include Eagle junior Isayah Isham, who on Saturday earned the state

(See Wrestling, Page 3B)

## Boys' basketball teams prep for the post-season

**By SOPHIA KESHMIRI**  
ADDISON COUNTY — All three local high school boys' hoops teams closed their seasons last week and faced their first playoff tests on Wednesday, after deadline for this edition.

Mt. Abe and MUHS kicked off bids for the Division II title, and VUHS started down the trail to the D-III crown.

**COMMODORES**  
In what was their second to last game of the regular season, the VUHS boys defeated Enosburg for a second time on Thursday, Feb. 26. This most recent meeting with their fellow D-III competitor ended 60-45.

In a game played in Vergennes, the Commodores led at the end of the first quarter, 8-6, but entered halftime down by five points, 24-19.

After halftime the Commodores turned up the offensive and defensive energy. The home team outscored the Hornets, 18-4, in the third quarter, and in the fourth put up 21 points to the visitors' 12.

Senior **Ryker Mosehauer's** 15 points were the most of any Commodore. Senior **Ryan Wright** and junior **Jude Bragg** each scored 12 points.

Then on Saturday, Mosehauer again led his team in points in their final game of the regular season. He put up 16 in the Commodores' 71-52 win against D-II Otter Valley in Brandon. Wright had 15 points.

The Commodores only allowed the Otters, 6-14 this season, one point in the first quarter, while they were able to find the basket for 21. The Otters came back in the second with 16 points, to VUHS's 12, though it wasn't enough to close the broad gap the Commodores had created.

The third and fourth periods were essentially even in scoring. VUHS had 24 points to Otter Valley's 23 in the third. In the final eight minutes they outscored the Otters 14-12.

The Commodores ended the regular season 13-6, and took the fifth seed in the DIII playoff bracket, earning a home game for their 2026 postseason debut. VUHS was due to play No. 12 Bellows Falls at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4 — its first game against the Terriers this season.

Otter Valley earned the No. 10 seed in Division II and was scheduled to play at Middlebury on Wednesday.

**THE EAGLES**  
For the second time this season the Eagles handed DII Milton a loss. The Thursday, Feb. 26, game in Bristol ended 58-41.

Mt. Abe had almost 10 points on the Yellowjackets by the end of the first quarter. The home team put up another 12 points in the second

(See Boys' hoop, Page 2B)

## Score BOARD

### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball	
2/27 MUHS vs Fair Haven	46-31
2/28 VUHS vs Bellows Falls	44-38
3/4 MUHS vs Lamolille (DII Semi)	Late
Boys' Basketball	
2/26 VUHS vs Enosburg	60-45
2/26 Mt Abe vs Milton	58-41
2/26 Winooski vs MUHS	62-49
2/28 VUHS vs OV	71-52
3/4 Bellows Falls at VUHS	Late
3/4 Mt. Abe at U-32	Late
3/4 Otter Valley at MUHS	Late
Boys' Hockey	
2/25 MUHS vs Milton	3-2
2/28 MUHS vs Burlington	1-0
3/4 Brattleboro at MUHS	Late
Girls' Hockey	
2/28 St Albans vs MUHS	8-0
COLLEGE SPORTS	
Men's Hockey	
2/28 Midd vs Wesleyan	3-2
Women's Hockey	
2/28 Midd vs Trinity	1-0
Baseball	
2/28 Midd vs Colby-Sawyer	11-0
2/28 Midd vs Colby-Sawyer	8-5
Women's Lacrosse	
2/28 Midd vs Bowdoin	11-6
3/4 Midd at Skidmore	Late
Men's Lacrosse	
2/28 Bowdoin College vs Midd	12-9
3/4 RPI at Midd	Late

## Schedule

### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Basketball	
3/5 VUHS vs Hazen (D3 Semi)	5:30 PM
3/7 D-II Finals in Barre	3:45 PM
3/7 D-III Finals in Barre	7:30 PM
Boys' Basketball	
3/6&7 D-II State Quarterfinals	TBD
3/7 D-III Quarterfinals	TBD
3/11 D-II Semifinals in Barre	TBD
3/12 D-III Semifinals in Barre	TBD
3/14 D-II Finals in Barre	3:45 PM
3/14 D-III Finals in Barre	7:30 PM
3/13&14 State Finals	TBD
Boys' Hockey	
3/7 TBD at Stowe (Quarter)	4:15 PM
3/10&11 Semifinals	TBD
3/15 Finals at UVM	7 PM
Girls' Hockey	
3/6 MUHS at Missisquoi	6 PM
3/10 Semifinals	TBD
3/15 D-II Finals at UVM	5 PM
Wrestling	
3/7&8 MUHS et. al.	@ New England

(See Schedule, Page 4B)

## MUHS and VUHS girls' hoop Barre-bound

**By SOPHIA KESHMIRI**  
ADDISON COUNTY — The girls' basketball teams from Middlebury and Vergennes union high schools were both Barre-bound this week after upset quarterfinal wins on Friday and Saturday.

The Tigers and Commodores both defeated higher seeded teams to earn their spots in the semifinals, and both will have to overcome the number-one seed in their divisions (Division II for MUHS and Division III for VUHS) to make it to Saturday's state finals.

**MIDDLEBURY**  
The No. 5 Tigers topped No. 4 Fair Haven, 46-31, on Feb. 27. The Friday night win not only knocked the Slaters out of the tournament, but also dashed any hope of a third straight D-II title. "We were feeling really good. They were super positive," Coach Eric Carter said. "Everybody was happy on the bus ride home. We stopped at McDonald's and spent a lot of money." Friday night was the second

time this season MUHS made the trek to Fair Haven. The January game was one of just five the young Tigers dropped. That first meeting ended 39-34 in favor of the Slaters.

MUHS freshman **Ava Wood** tied a Fair Haven player for the game high 14 points. This is also the most points the Tiger has in a game, Carter said, noting that she's been fighting injuries all season and is now the strongest she's been all season.

Sophomore co-captain **Louisa Orten** had 10 and junior co-captain **Isabel Quinn** had 9. "That was a big program win," Carter said. "They're an excellent team," he said of Fair Haven.

On Monday afternoon the Tigers were running drills in the MUHS gym in preparation for No. 1 Lamolille. The teams were due to play at the Barre Auditorium on Wednesday, after deadline for this edition. The Lancers are undefeated this season.

When asked how the team is feeling ahead of the game, Carter

said, "We're relaxed."

"We're the major underdog." And of taking on the number-one seed: "We got nothing to lose. They've got everything."

The Wednesday game marked the Tigers' second semifinal bid in two years. Before the 2024-2025 season, the team hadn't had a reason to drive to Barre since 2011.

"We're back to back years into the final four, and almost all the same faces," Carter said of the young team of two seniors, three juniors, six sophomores and four freshman.

"We're pretty happy, we put in one more win this year than we did last year. We surprised ourselves, getting back to the final four over Fair Haven."

**VERGENNES**  
Meanwhile, on Feb. 28, the No. 5 Commodores traveled to Bellows Falls, where they overcame the No. 4 home team, 44-38. The two D-III teams had yet to meet this season.

"We made some big baskets when we needed them," VUHS

## Tiger boys' hockey finishes regular season with nailbiters

**By SOPHIA KESHMIRI**  
MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School boys' hockey team concluded the regular season with two close wins, then started their post-season efforts with a game on Wednesday evening.

First, the Tigers seized a second chance at home against Milton, who they lost to in January, 4-0. But last week, on Feb. 25, MUHS prevailed with a 3-2 victory.

"We played a really strong first two periods, with a lot of opportunities, but the Milton goalie played really well," Tiger Coach Jordan Stearns said. "We came out a little slow in the third, giving Milton some life and momentum, but ultimately were able to battle and compete to score the game winner just one minute before the end of the game."

After the scoreless first period, sophomore Case Pitner got the Tigers on the board with a goal

seven minutes into the second. He was assisted by fellow sophomore Evan Northrup.

Five minutes later senior co-captain Joe Sullivan put another one past the Milton goalie, off an assist from senior Ethan Mulcahy.

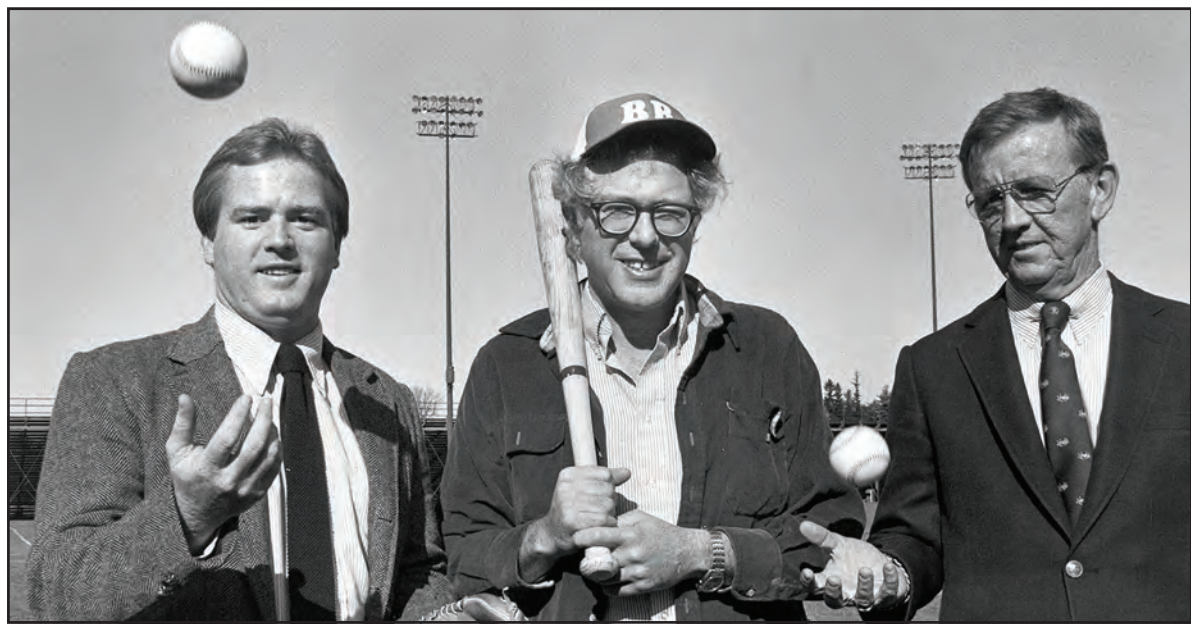
The Tigers were up by two goals going into the final period, but the Yellowjackets managed to put two goals in the back of the Middlebury net tie the game with about four minutes to go.

Junior co-captain Gabriel Quesnel soon dashed the notion of overtime. He scored with just 60 seconds left.

The Tigers outshot the Yellowjackets 29-23. Senior goalie TJ Baron had 21 saves for MUHS.

On Saturday, Feb. 28, the Tigers overcame D-I Burlington for a second time this season. After 29 shots, 45 minutes of play and 1:21 of overtime, a 30th

(See Nailbiters, Page 4B)



**MAYOR BERNIE SANDERS** brought professional baseball to Burlington in 1984 when the Cincinnati Reds Major League organization located its AA team here and named them the Vermont Reds. Here Bernie is pictured with local businessman and ardent supporter Tom Racine (right) and Vermont Reds general manager in '84, Peter Sinagra (left).

Photo by Rob Swanson, Vermont Vanguard



**BERNIE PRACTICES HIS sky hook** in a Burlington park in this undated photo from the 1980s. Bernie was a mean pickup hoop player, described as a "strong ball handler, solid outside game, and always, a complete, transforming intensity."

Photo by Burlington Free Press

# 'Bernie always wanted the ball'

It was cold! You could see the breath of the players on the field. The fans, over 4,000 of us, were bundled up against the early April chill.

April 13, 1984, Opening Night: the Vermont Reds, Cincinnati's Double A farm team, taking on the New Britain Red Sox, Boston's AA club, in the eight team Eastern League.

The mood was festive. Mayor Bernie Sanders had done it! He had brought professional baseball to Burlington. Fittingly, he had thrown out the ceremonial first pitch.

In the third inning, the lights went out for nearly an hour. We didn't care. It was a party! Baseball in Burlington, in venerable Centennial Field (constructed in 1904) on the UVM campus, has never left since that great night. The Reds departed for Chattanooga after four years, four great years — the Reds won the Eastern League Championship three times and came in second a fourth.

The Vermont Mariners camped out for one year in Burlington before leaving for Canton, Ohio, and a new stadium there. I saw 19-year-old Ken Griffey Jr. that summer, who played in 17 games.

I often would see Bernie there at Centennial in the days of the Reds and Expos. I have a vivid image of him, sitting behind home plate in the grandstand, reading the newspaper before the game, in a rumpled sport coat, or in a shirt untucked in the back. He clearly was in a happy place.

Baseball is in Bernie's blood. He could not help but love the game. He was born in 1941 in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn and grew up when New York year after year had three of the best teams in Major League Baseball: the Giants, the Dodgers, and the dreaded Yankees.

Bernie has often waxed emotional about his ties to the Brooklyn Dodgers. "When I was a kid," he told a group of fans (on a YouTube video), "I grew up in Brooklyn and everyone there was a fervent Dodgers fan. So that's where my real emotional ties were, with Jackie Robinson, Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, Preacher Roe, and all those guys. That was my first baseball love."

Bernie saw early how a ball team could bind together a community and how devastating

it can be when that bond is ripped asunder. He was 16 when the Dodgers abandoned their steadfast followers after the 1957 season for the golden opportunities in California.

Bernie has been asked if that experience influenced his political views. "The idea that a team could be moved someplace was beyond my comprehension," he has responded. "It was like if they would move the Brooklyn Bridge to California. How can you move the Brooklyn Bridge to California?"

On occasion, Bernie has told this "joke" from "the old neighborhood": "The three worst people in modern history were Hitler, Stalin, and (Dodger owner) Walter O'Malley . . . and not necessarily in that order!"

"Did it have an impact? It actually did . . . but," he adds quickly, "it wasn't the *only* thing."

Bernie is on my mind as I work my way through "Bernie for Burlington," the compelling new biography written by Burlingtonian Dan Chiasson.

As a young man, Bernie was a natural and accomplished athlete, absorbed particularly with playing basketball on Brooklyn's outdoor hardcourts. Chiasson describes him as "always a great pickup player," who was cut nonetheless from the varsity team at James Madison High School (the enrollment at Madison was about 5,000 students and its basketball team was one of the "top-ranked teams in the city").

His brother, Larry, claimed Bernie was "a tremendous player."

In high school, Bernie channeled his energies into track and cross-country where he became a "star athlete," according to a teammate, and captain of both teams, one of the top high school runners in the city in 1959. His best time in the mile was 4:37, an outstanding time for a high school runner in that era. Chiasson confirmed Bernie's basketball chops. "I had seen his game on the pickup courts in Burlington," he writes in "Bernie for Burlington": "strong ball handler, solid outside game, and, always, a complete, transforming intensity."

I like imagining Bernie in Burlington in the chaotic 1970s, in his 30s, finding his footing in counterculture Vermont,

playing pickup hoop, a physically taxing enterprise, at once both competitive and collaborative with its own ethos: no ref, call your own fouls and leave your cares and woes at the door.

In 2016, in an article in *The Guardian*, sportswriter Les Carpenter explored Bernie's



**Sports (Mostly) KARL LINDHOLM**

pickup games in the "late '70s" in Burlington. Bernie was one of 12-15 men who enjoyed a weekly run in the gym behind St. Anthony's Catholic Church at the corner of Flynn and Pine. Carpenter interviewed Bernie's mates who provided a glimpse of his game:

"He was crafty."

"From mid-range, 10-15 feet, he could kill you."

"He liked to be in charge."

"He could be argumentative."

They all commented on his jump shot (a "jump" shot "though he didn't leave his feet when he shot it"). One of those players, Clem Nilan, said in the *Guardian* piece, "He moved without the ball very well and got open . . . and he hit that shot almost every time."

Former Vermont legislator David Sharpe of Bristol played with Bernie in those games (at 79, he is still playing once a week with an over-50 cohort in Essex). He affirmed in a conversation this week, "Bernie always wanted the ball. He loves the game of basketball."

I am pleased that I live in the same state as Bernie, glad for the attention he brings us. I feel a kinship to Bernie in our mutual attachment to pickup hoop. I played as long as I physically could (and my son Peter, who occasionally pinch-hits for me in this space, has inherited the impulse).

There's this other thing too: Bernie and I share a contempt for the pinstriped Evil Empire. In a YouTube video I happened on, Bernie, the old Brooklyn Dodgers fan, was asked his preference — "Red Sox or Yankees?"

Bernie answered without hesitation: "Red Sox."

*Karl Lindholm, Ph.D., is the Emeritus Dean of Advising and Assistant Professor of American Studies (retired) at Middlebury College. Email him at lindholm@middlebury.edu.*

## Boys' hoop

(Continued from Page 1B) quarter, while allowing Milton a measly five. That eight minutes ended 28-12, Eagles.

Senior **Charlie Germon** scored 14 points and classmate **Will Gustin** had 8.

The home victory wasn't just a sweet way to enter the playoffs. It also evened the Eagles' regular season record to 10-10.

The Eagles had a chance to

tip that back to a winning record with their first playoff game on Wednesday, when No. 9 Mt. Abe was set to face No. 8 U-32 at 7 p.m. in East Montpelier.

The teams last played on Dec. 18, with U-32 coming out on top, 83-61.

### MIGHTY TIGERS

The D-II Tigers closed the regular season 11-9 after dropping their final game and second match to

D-III Winooski this past Thursday, Feb. 26. After 32 minutes of play on Tiger turf, the score was 62-49.

The 15-4 Winooski team was hot on three's in the third quarter, draining six in that eight minutes, and then in free throws in the final quarter, shooting 15 for 20 from the line, Tiger Coach Chris Altemose reported.

Though the Tigers lost, senior **Cooke Riney** scored the game high 23 points. MUHS senior **Jonathan Kafumbe** had 12.

MUHS' regular season performance was good for the No. 7 seed and a home game against No. 10 Otter Valley on Wednesday evening. The Tigers previously defeated the Otters in a close 59-55 match in early January.



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| <b>BRANDON:</b><br>Brandon Discount Beverage<br>Champlain Farms<br>Hannaford<br>Jiffy Mart<br>Junction Store & Deli<br>Morningside Bakery<br>Union Street Grocery<br>Walgreen's | <b>EAST MIDDLEBURY:</b><br>Goodro Lumber<br>Jiffy Mart<br>Maplefields   | <b>NEW HAVEN:</b><br>Village Green Market   | <b>SHOREHAM:</b><br>Shoreham Service Center   |
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**Tuesday, March 10:**  
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating  
3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

**Thursday, March 12:**  
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3:00 - 4:45 PM Stick & Puck

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COMMODORE SOPHOMORE ADDIE Smith wrestles an opponent during the state wrestling championships on Saturday. She took fourth at 113 pounds.

Photo by Jesse Raymond

## Wrestling

(Continued from Page 1B)  
150-pound title. He won the final on a pin. This wasn't Isham's first time on the podium — he took third place in the 138-pound weight class last year.

Coach Alex Petersen said all of his wrestlers should be proud of their states performance.

"The state tournament is always such a fun and exciting event to be a part of. Each wrestler always seems to put their best foot forward and this year was no exception," he said.

"It was such a joy to see these kids compete the way they did."

Here's how other local wrestlers from each school did.

**MUHS**  
• Senior Steven Lackard, second at 285 pounds.

• Junior Wyatt Kennett, second at 190.

• Sophomore Miles Goetz, third at 120.

• Junior Parker Carl, fourth at 175, and also achieved his 100th win during the tournament. Three

other Middlebury wrestlers hit the milestone earlier this season.

• Junior Jason Sperry, fifth at 157.

• Junior Sawyer Malzac went 2-2 (144 pounds).

• Junior Colton Murray went 2-2 (150 pounds).

**VUHS**  
• Sophomore Addie Smith, the sole girl on the podium this past weekend, fourth at 113 pounds. She will compete in the girls' division at New Englands, and Scribner said he expects her to place.

• Dubbed the team's "freshman sensation" by Scriber, Adrien Provencher, fourth at 126 pounds.

• Sophomore Jackson Scribner, fourth at 144 pounds, and will compete at New Englands.

• Junior Izaak Wolniewicz, fourth at 285 pounds.

**MOUNTABE**  
• Junior Mason Atkins, second at 157 and will compete at New Englands.

• Junior Lincoln Painter, fourth at 165 pounds.

• Freshman Forest Turner went 2-2 (120 pounds).

• Sophomore Bradley LeVangie went 1-2 (132 pounds).

• Junior Baxter Montgomery went 0-2 (138 pounds).

• Junior Abraham Camara went 1-2 (175 pounds).

• Junior Hailey Isham will compete at New Englands.

**OTTER VALLEY**  
• Junior Blake Allen, second at 165 pounds, and qualified for New Englands.

• Freshman Caleb Woodward, third at 113 pounds, and qualified for New Englands.

• Senior Drake Felkl, third at 215 pounds, and qualified for New Englands.

• Freshman Brady Babcock, fourth at 106 pounds.

• Freshman Landon Wilcox, fourth at 132 pounds.

• Junior Keegan Reid, fourth at 190 pounds.

• Junior Max Potter, sixth at 175 pounds.



THE VUHS COMMODORES came home from CVU with plenty to brag about after the state championships on Saturday. Payton Lavoie and Stephen Kittredge earned titles. From left, Addie Smith (4th at 113 pounds), Izaak Wolniewicz (4th at 285), Adrien Provencher (4th at 126), Jackson Scribner (4th at 144), Kittredge and Lavoie.

Photo courtesy of Travis Scribner



SENIOR TIGER STEVEN Lackard pins Joseph Gershon of Essex in the 285-pound semifinal match on Saturday. Lackard finished the day at second for the 285-pound weight class.

Photo by Jesse Raymond

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# Girls' basketball

(Continued from Page 1B)  
Coach Bill Waller said. "But this win was more about our defense and (Ava Francis's) career game."

The senior point guard put up 19 points and snagged 14 rebounds, both career highs, and assisted her teammates six times. "We had a number of players contributing offensively, but Ava's huge statistical night was indicative of her play," Waller said.

He commended the defensive effort of junior **Georgia Krause** and senior **Faith McAllister**.

"Bellows Falls can really get to the basket on drives but Georgia Krause and Faith McAllister stood their ground in the paint and either blocked shots or forced them into unmakeable shots," he said.

Krause blocked nine times, and pulled down as many rebounds. She also had six points.

Waller also applauded co-captain **Ashtin Stearns's** defense on Bellows Falls's star player, Abby Nystrom.

Though the senior passed a significant offensive threshold earlier in the season, breaking 1,000 points, and scored eight points and had four assists in the playoff game, Waller previously

told the *Independent* Stearns is just as dedicated on defense.

"Nystrom had 13 points but had to work extremely hard for those," Waller said. "Ashtin and her teammates forced her into tough shots all game."

Freshman **Ayla Kittredge** wasn't far behind Stearns in stats, with seven points, eight rebounds and four assists.

It was a team effort up until the final minutes. "Ava, Ayla and Georgia all had key baskets down the stretch and (senior co-captain **Amelia Giroux**) had some big rebounds in the fourth."

Giroux had eight the entire game.

"It was a good effort by everyone," Waller said.

The victory propels the Commodores further than their playoff run last year, which ended with the quarterfinal loss to Oxbow. The last time VUHS made a final was in 2020, when they lost to Lake Region.

If they want a shot at the title, in Barre on Saturday, the 17-4 Commodores will have to get past a team they haven't faced this season — No. 1 seed Hazen. Tip off with the 18-2 team from Hardwick is at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 5.

# Panther hockey teams make NESCAC semis

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — Both Middlebury College hockey teams clinched spots in the NESCAC semis after close quarterfinal wins over the weekend.

The No. 1 seeded women's team retains home ice advantage for the Saturday semifinal against No. 4 Colby, and the No. 4 seed Panther men's team is headed to Clinton, N.Y., to take on the No. 2 seed team from Bowdoin.

The perennially contending women's team defeated the No. 8 seeded Trinity College 1-0 on Saturday, Feb. 28, to get to the semis. The Panthers held onto a one-goal lead scored by senior Avery McNerny just over halfway through the first period.

She was assisted by first-year Trinity Walsh and junior Liv Fernandez.

Shots were close, with the Panthers sending the puck at the Bantam goalie 28 times, and Panther goalie Sophia Will saving all 23 Trinity sent her way.

On this coming Saturday the Panthers take on Colby, who they played most recently in a pair of games in February. Both teams were nationally ranked as of March 1, with Middlebury standing at eighth in Division III and Colby at 10th.

A week before NESCAC kicked off last weekend, the Panthers beat the Mules 3-2, but dropped the second, and their final game of the regular season, the next day, 1-3.

Last year, the Middlebury women's team dropped the championship NESCAC game to Amherst, 1-0. That team is seeded No. 2 this tournament, and is ranked sixth across D-III women's hockey teams. Amherst takes on the No. 3 seeded and seventh nationally ranked Williams at Chip Kenyon Arena at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The NESCAC title game is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sunday in the same venue.

In the last decade, the women's hockey team has made the NESCAC championship game nine times, and won that title five times, most recently in 2024.

On the men's side, a victory in the Saturday semifinal would mean the program's first trip to a NESCAC championship since 2012. The last time the Panthers came out victorious was in 2010 against their upcoming opponent, Bowdoin.

The Panthers, ranked 16th nationally, beat the No. 5 seed, Wesleyan, 3-2 to get to the semifinal game on Saturday.

Three first-year players secured the quarterfinal home victory last week in the last two minutes of regular play, and a second overtime period.

The Panthers fell by one goal in the second period and got down by another about halfway through the third.

Middlebury pulled their goalie and put an extra skater on the ice with about four-and-a-half minutes left in the game, a strategy that proved fruitful. First-year Luc Malkhassian got the Panthers on the board for the first time with just under two minutes left in the game. He was assisted by sophomore Edward Moskowitz and first-year Caden Morgan.

About 40 seconds later first-year Landon Brownlee tied it up off an assist from first-years John Halverson and Tyler Wishart.

No goals were added in the first overtime. Wishart finished the game about halfway through the

second set of overtime minutes. He was assisted by Brownlee and junior Revy Mack.

The upcoming meeting with Bowdoin in Clinton will be the Panthers' third this season. Middlebury dropped their season opener to the Polar Bears 4-0 in November, but beat them 3-2 in January.

The Panthers have found success on Hamilton's rink before. The Panthers closed the regular season upsetting the No. 2 nationally ranked and No. 1 NESCAC seed Hamilton on their home ice at the end of February. The Panthers won that game 3-2 in overtime.

Last year, the men's hockey team made it to the semifinal round, but was eliminated by Hamilton in a 3-2 overtime loss.

## This weekend's NESCAC Hockey schedule

- Middlebury College women play Colby on Saturday at 1 p.m. in Middlebury
- Amherst and Williams women's hockey teams play on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. in Middlebury
- The winner of each game plays in the NESCAC championship game on Sunday at 2 p.m. in Middlebury
- Middlebury College men's hockey team plays Bowdoin at Hamilton College on Saturday at 4:30 p.m.
- The winner of that game and the other semifinal game play at Hamilton on Sunday at 2 p.m.

# Schedule

(Continued from Page 1B)

**COLLEGE HOCKEY**

**Men's Hockey**

3/7 Midd vs Bowd. at Hamilton... 4:30 PM (NESCAC Semifinal)

3/8 NESCAC Final at Hamilton..... 2 PM

**Women's Hockey**

3/7 Colby at Midd..... 1 PM (NESCAC Semifinal)

3/7 Wms vs Amhst at Midd..... 4:30 PM (NESCAC Semifinal)

3/8 NESCAC Final at Midd..... 2 PM

**Baseball**

3/7 Midd at Emory ..... 12 PM

3/7 Midd at Emory..... 3 PM

3/8 Midd at Emory.....10:30 AM

3/11 Keene State at Midd..... 3 PM

3/12 Norwich at Midd ..... 3 PM

**Softball**

3/7 Platts. at .....10 AM

3/7 Platts. vs Clarkson @ Midd.12:30 PM

3/14 SLU at Midd ..... 1 PM

3/14 SLU at Midd ..... 3 PM

**Women's Lacrosse**

3/7 Midd at Conn College..... 12 PM

3/8 SLU at Midd ..... 12 PM

3/14 Trinity at Midd.....11AM

**Men's Lacrosse**

3/7 Conn College at Midd..... 1 PM

3/14 Midd at Trinity..... 1 PM

# Nailbiters

(Continued from Page 1B)  
MUHS shot finally lifted the home team above their opponent.

Middlebury prevailed, 1-0. Junior Jase Kozak scored the winning goal, after getting the puck from junior Tyler Munson, who got it from Sullivan.

"Burlington played a great game defensively keeping us to the outside and limiting our high quality scoring chances," Stearns said. "We did a good job of remaining composed and sticking to the game plan and not getting out of structure."

Senior goalie Baron saved 16 shots. "TJ made a couple key saves to keep us in the game, and Burlington off the scoreboard," Stearns noted.

That victory leaves the Tigers with a record of 13-6-1 entering their first playoff game on Wednesday night, when No. 5 seed MUHS will face No. 12 seed Brattleboro at Memorial Sports Center at 6 p.m. Their first meeting ended in a 7-1 victory for MUHS.

"It was great to end the regular

season with a win and carry some momentum into playoffs," Stearns said.

Of the 20 games MUHS has played this season, 12 have been against fellow D-II teams. Their record among that group is 8-3-1. In addition to falling once to Milton, the Tigers lost their first game of the season to North Country and tied Missisquoi. They defeated all three teams later in the season.

The only other D-II team the Tigers have lost to is Stowe, who they have not seen since early February. They would meet again if MUHS prevails against Brattleboro.

"Brattleboro will be a very similar opponent to Burlington as they do a good job of limiting high quality scoring chances from high danger areas," Stearns said. "We will need to work to get to the middle of the ice, and be ready to defend quick transitions from them. They have a couple of really good players, and are well coached."

"It is going to take a team effort to get past Brattleboro on Wednesday."

# Mt. Abraham releases honor roll

BRISTOL — Mount Abraham Union High School has released its honor roll for the first semester of the 2025-2026 academic year. Students named to the roll include:

**GRADE 9 ACADEMIC**

**Highest Honors:** Ella Bee Apuzzo-Kidder, Emily Badger, Sawyer Behounek, Mae Cannon, Mathilda Carrico, Levi Clark, Niall Connell, Sadie Fogg, Del Guilmette, Noella Harris, Chloe LaMarche, Natalie Layn, Cordelia Park, Elena Placencia, Pippa Quinet, Rose Roberts, Una Steele, Gabriella Szczecinski, Finnley Vincelette, Emily Wells, Norah Wisell, Sarah Zelonis.

**Honors:** Yasmin Artis, Abigail Brown, Ellis Carrico, Ila Corrigan, Lucille Eberhardy, Magnolia Jackson, Scarlet Jackson, Rhiannon McLeod, Jordan Ryersbach, Lila Smith, Matthew Steele, Milo Stoddard, Sydney Tierney, Pakornwat Tiger Uttamang.

**GRADE 10 ACADEMIC**

**Highest Honors:** Hayden Bouvier, Peyton Chamberlain, Jillian Cousino, Sydney Cousino, Pax Gundersen, Tanner Heffernan, Carter Smith, Abigail Sykes, Ethan Tanych, Kaylie Thompson, Bryn White, William Zaikowski.

**Honors:** Abigail

Barnes, Carina Brightman, Charlotte Desilets, Noah Germon, Luke Goodfellow, Samantha Guilbeault, Camille Hamilton, Willa Kaeck, Madison King, Gwen LaPerle, Kai Ludka, Margaret Park, Eliza Ruble, Olivia Sawyer, Julian Schuler, Jaret Sturtevant, Mazin Swepston, Ada Thomas, Edda Twyman.

**Honors:** Waydon Cherington, Eleanor Hurlburt, Quinn Kirshenbaum, Elsa Masefield, Anika Morton, Eloise Newman, Keller Obarski, Morgan Rochon, Callie Rule, Payton Shepard, Otto Siegfried, Sophie Underwood.

**Honors:** Saebryn Carter, Margaret Collins, Nicholas Conley, Tinsae Deas, Andrew Doherty-Konczal, Adrianna Earle, Mason Forand, Sam Gallivan, Bradley LeVangie, John Meshna, Spencer Sears, Beckett Stilwell, Penny Verner, Sawyer Visco Lyons, Chase Wright.

**GRADE 11 ACADEMIC**

**Highest Honors:** Hayden Bouvier, Peyton Chamberlain, Jillian Cousino, Sydney Cousino, Pax Gundersen, Tanner Heffernan, Carter Smith, Abigail Sykes, Ethan Tanych, Kaylie Thompson, Bryn White, William Zaikowski.

**High Honors:** Mason Atkins, Kayleigh Austin, Brooke Barnard, Kestrel Edwards, Ada Fisher, Kassi Garrow, Sadie German, Jaran Griffin, Jackson Jennings, Stefan Johnson, Henry Orvis, Sadie Shepard, Natalie Smith, Leah Tierney.

**Honors:** Henry Allred, Madison Bartlett, Rowan Clark, Aubrey Coffey, Rachel Cousino, Wyatt Giroux, Ezaias Herben, Hailey Isham, Bowen Lutz, Gemma Lyles, Baxter Montgomery, Isobela Osborne, and Truman Sawyer.

**GRADE 12 ACADEMIC**

**Highest High Honors:** Lila Brightman, Jamie Chasse, Evan Corrigan, James Graziadei, Paige Guilbeault, Zealand Jackson, Morgan Larocque, Charlie Prouty, Harper Young.

**Honors:** Wyatt Bannister, Madelyn Brochu, Genevieve Forand, Charlie Germon, Louisa Guilmette, Maverick Livingston, Skylar MacDonald, Jacob Mikkelsen, Wyatt Moyer, Isla Underwood, Addison Wright, June Yates-Rusch.

**Honors:** Riley Abbott, Jack Anderson, Bailey Antos-Ketcham, William Gustin, Maris LaPerle, Rhett Lathrop, Molly Mangini, Sofia Power, Sierra Roberts, Brooklyn Ryersbach, Joseph Sullivan.



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Executive Director, Elderly Services  
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Email your Letter to the Editor to: [news@addisonindependent.com](mailto:news@addisonindependent.com)



**mar 5 THURSDAY**  
**Isley Classic Film Club watches "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" in Middlebury.** Thursday, March 5, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

**mar 6 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.

**mar 7 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.

**Rabies vaccination in Lincoln.** Saturday, March 7, 9-10 a.m. Lincoln Town Office. Bring proof of your pet's prior rabies vaccination, if they have had one. Please leave your pet in your vehicle until you have checked in with the vet.

**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 pastornewhavenchurchvt@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 artfulsoulventures@gmail.com.

**Crafters 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.

**Viva El Sabor! Grand Re-Launch & Celebration of the Americas in Vergennes.** Saturday, March 7, 5:30 p.m., 10 Green Street Wine Bar. Celebrate the grand re-launch of Viva El Sabor, a women's catering collective, with a special evening of food, dancing and community connection. The Viva El Sabor team will be on-site 5:30-7:30 p.m. selling delicious samples of authentic Mexican food.

**mar 8 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 ungrounded 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.

**mar 10 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



**LEGO Love**  
**GO SEE THE fabulous creations this Saturday, March 7, in the 8th Annual LEGO Contest at Bixby Library in Vergennes. Brothers Asher and Owen Clevenstine of Panton know how to LEGO — here they are with their winning entry in the 2024 contest; it's named "A bad day to be on the oil rig."**

Photo courtesy of Bixby Library

with other makers and artists for an enjoyable evening. Contact Julie at juliek1121@gmail.com with questions.

**mar 12 THURSDAY**  
**"Mean Girls the Musical" in Vergennes.** Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m., Vergennes Union High School. Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to miss this high-energy show that offers humor, fast-paced music, and mature themes. The Vergennes Union Middle/High School musical production is a spectacle to behold, and it always pleases. Purchase tickets at the door or online at www.CUR8.com.

**mar 13 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.

**"Mean Girls the Musical" in Vergennes.** Friday, March 13, 7 p.m., Vergennes Union High School. Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to miss this high-energy show that offers humor, fast-paced music, and mature themes. More details in March 12 listing.

**mar 14 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 wjcostrjr@comcast.net.

**"Mean Girls the Musical" in Vergennes.** Saturday, March 14, 3 p.m., Vergennes Union High School. Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to miss this high-energy show that offers humor, fast-paced music, and mature themes. Purchase tickets at the door or online at www.CUR8.com.

**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.

**Pi Day in Shoreham.** Saturday, March 14, 5-7 p.m., Shoreham Congregational Church, 28 School St. Celebrate Pi Day and the arrival of spring. Sample various types of pie at \$4 a slice, enjoy complimentary tea, coffee, cocoa and water, and enter the raffle to win a pie a month for six months. The winner will receive one pie that evening and one pie per month for the next five months, with dates and varieties arranged with the baker. Raffle tickets are \$5 each or three for \$10. The winner will be drawn that evening, you don't need to be present to win.

**"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.

**King Pede card party in Ferrisburgh.** Saturday, March 14, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall

and Community Center, 3279 Route 7. The Ferrisburgh Grange hosts a King Pede card party and sandwich supper. King Pede is a longstanding Ferrisburgh tradition that requires tactics and strategic thinking.

**Live music by Hot Neon Magic in Middlebury.** Saturday, March 14, 7-10 p.m., American Legion Post 14, 49 Wilson Rd. Dust off your leg warmers, tease up that hair and come dance the night away to 80s pop hits from the MTV era. Open to the public. Admission by donation.

**mar 15 SUNDAY**  
**Vermont Chocolate Festival in Middlebury.** Sunday, March 15, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. The First annual Vermont Chocolate Festival celebrates fine and craft chocolate with tastings, live demos, s'mores, games, raffles and more. Presented by Adagio Chocolates. \$30 general admission; \$50 generous admission; \$100 VIP; \$20 students; free for children 12 and under. Admission includes access to all demos and presentations and one chocolate tasting. Family pass discount and tasting add-ons available. Tickets at townhalltheater.org.

**My Dentist's Son in Ferrisburgh.** Sunday, March 15, 3-4:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall 3279 Route 7. This is a space to share tales of magic and miracle and to find meaning in stories that don't seem to fit. All are welcome to share or simply listen. For more information and to RSVP, visit www.mydentistsson.com.

**Choral Evensong in Middlebury.** Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m., St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on the Green. The Choir of St. Stephen's will sing music of the Renaissance at Choral Evensong, including Adrian Batten's Fourth Evening Service and G.P. da Palestrina's famous motet, Sicut Cervus. 2025-26 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Palestrina, whose use of dissonance and polyphony is still studied by aspiring professional musicians.

**mar 17 TUESDAY**  
**Rokeyby Museum virtual book group.** Tuesday, March 17, 6-7 p.m., online. Discussion of "The Zorg: A Tale of Greed and Murder that Inspired the Abolition of Slavery" by Siddharth Kara, examining the doomed 1780 voyage of the ship Zorg and its role in the early fight against slavery. Free. More info at rokeybymuseum.org.

**Pops 2026: Jazz Through the Ages in Bristol.** Tuesday, March 17, 6 p.m., Mount Abraham Union High School, 220 Airport Drive. Join the Mount Abraham musicians for their annual Pops Concert featuring jazz music from across the decades. Special guests Swingin' Seven will perform alongside student musicians. Doors open at 6 p.m., the middle school concert begins at 6:30 p.m., and the high school concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission by donation at the door.

**St. Patrick's Day New Moon Circle in New Haven.** Tuesday, March 17, 6:30 p.m., New Haven Congregational Church, 91 Town Hill Road. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a New Moon Circle exploring the story of St. Patrick. Bring a journal and pen, and a snack to share if desired. Free. More info at pastornewhavenchurchvt@gmail.com, 802-282-6944.

**mar 18 WEDNESDAY**  
**Native plant gardening in Brandon.** Wednesday, March 18, 6 p.m., Brandon Free Public Library. This free public event will explore the joys of gardening with native plants. Guests will leave feeling empowered with knowledge and resources to start their native plant gardening journey in 2026. Talk will be given by Devon Snyder from Sedge & Soil.

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**MIDDLEBURY LIONS CLUB CASH CALENDAR WINNERS**  
**January & February 2026**

Randy Fleming, Steve Aruzza, Pat Vaillancourt, Hadley Financial Group, Eric Mortensen, Mabelle St. Pierre, Kyle Koskinen, Matt Cutts, Martha Bowdish, Leslie Armstrong, Heather Plude, John Fallon, Kelli-Jo Cloutier, David Cobb, Matt Candon, Betty Davis, Jill Fraga (Real Estate Company of Vermont), Chelsea Bashaw, Lawrence Volkert, Max Hirdler, Jonas Larocque, Thomas Blair, Glen Williams, Carol Jane Broughton, Courtney Laberge, Donald Keeler, Henry Stowe, Jenne Morton, Karen Lyons, Matt Kardas, Lanphar Construction, Cindy Atkins, Connie Connors, Claire Groby, Mark Jacobson, Paul Bougor, Chad & Krista Scarborough, Tim Allen, Logal Seaburg, Peg Cobb, Steve Butterfield, Leia Broughton, Jenny & Devlin Harding, Rob & Evelyn Martell, Lynn Wolfe, David Kerr, Carolyn VanVleck, Jonathan Dinub, Debbie Goodrich, Liam Curtis, Jim Hadeka, Bill Kernan, Sherry Bristol, Tom Howard, Charlie Smith, Ronald G. Payne, Gary Starr, James Lawrence, Holly Noordsy

**Check winning amounts at MiddleburyLions.org!**

Win this Woody Jackson Original to benefit the Addison County Parent Child Center

Scan to purchase tickets

Tickets 10/each, 10 for \$75  
 Drawing and party at Notte, Thursday, March 12, 6pm

**MIDDLEBURY ANIMAL HOSPITAL**

**RABIES VACCINATION CLINICS**

Tuesday, March 10: 5-7pm  
 Saturday, March 14: 10am-12pm **\$25**

Please bring proof of prior rabies vaccination.  
 Pets should be on a leash or placed in a carrier.

**139 Washington Street Ext., Middlebury**

**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

Sponsored by Animal Hospital of Hinesburg, Bristol Animal Hospital and Valleywide Veterinary Services  
 Please bring cash - cards and checks will not be accepted.

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# Ferrisburgh

Have a news tip?  
Email Sally Kerschner at [smwkersch@comcast.net](mailto:smwkersch@comcast.net)

## NEWS

**FERRISBURGH** — The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum is accepting registrations for summer camps and expeditions. Day camps are available for children ages 7-14 and there are openings for the teen expeditions and kayak building. These camps offer rowing, fishing, history and archeology, boat building and many more experiences for children and youth. Some of the camps are already filling up so visit [www.lcmm.org](http://www.lcmm.org) to register.

My Dentist's Son will host another of its ongoing gatherings at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall on Sunday, March 15, from 3- 4:30 p.m. This is a space to share tales of magic and miracle and to find meaning in stories that don't seem to fit. For more information, visit [www.mydentistsson.com](http://www.mydentistsson.com).

Sunday, March 29, is a free admission day at Rokeby Museum, when the exhibits and grounds will be open for touring. At 3 p.m., join Meg Mott, PhD, for a program titled "A Dramatic Constitution." In this presentation, Mott considers how the Constitution both forces and frames our disagreements and describes how, in the first two centuries of our country, citizens regularly debated public matters, drawing on the Constitution as a shared authority.

"Mean Girls the Musical" is coming to Vergennes! Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to miss this high-energy show that offers humor, fast-paced music, and mature themes. The Vergennes Union Middle/High School musical production will be held on March 12 and March 13 at 7 p.m. and on March 14 at 3 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at the door or at buy online at [www.CUR8.com](http://www.CUR8.com).

The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum continues to offer its Winter Traveling Book Club. Between January and April, the museum will discuss a book relevant to the Addison County historical institution that is hosting the book event. Dive into American history with a book selected by Lake Champlain Maritime

Museum, cozy up to a welcoming novel at the Bixby, contemplate social justice at the Rokeby, and learn about new Vermonters at the Sheldon. Each discussion will take place from 1-2 p.m. on the last Saturday of each month as a hybrid meeting — come in person for tea and snacks or stay involved online via Zoom. Readers can join all of the meetings or just one. More information and a Zoom link are available with free registration: [www.lcmm.org/event/traveling-book-club-013125](http://www.lcmm.org/event/traveling-book-club-013125). The itinerary for this spring is as follows: March 28 — Bixby Memorial Free Library, "What You are Looking for is in the Library" by Michiko Aoyama; April 25 — Henry Sheldon Museum, "Deep North: Stories of Somali Resettlement in Vermont" edited by Brad Kessler.

This spring, Bixby Library will kick off a hands-on series designed to demonstrate how to bring native plants into outdoor spaces. Native plants boost biodiversity, support pollinators and birds, and reduce maintenance, fertilizer use, and runoff. Learn why native plants matter, how to assess and prepare your site, choose the right plants, convert your lawn step-by-step, and maintain long-term success. Participate in one session or attend all three in order to follow the growing season.

Presenters will be Lisa Sausville of the Vergennes organization Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife, and Ashley Robinson of the Vermont Landscape and Nursery Association for Biodiversity Builders.

The first session, called "Understanding Your Site," is Saturday, March 21, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The second session is Saturday, June 27, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., "Creating and Implementing Your Plan." Then on Saturday, Sept. 26, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. is "Taking Stock and Determining What's Next." For more information email to Ashley at [arobinsonld@gmail.com](mailto:arobinsonld@gmail.com) Registration link: [tinyurl.com/BuillyBioAtBixby](http://tinyurl.com/BuillyBioAtBixby).

Plans are underway to continue

the transformation of the Ferrisburgh Town Center with the installation of a public art sculpture on the Town Green. This display will honor our town's rich farming heritage by incorporating reclaimed harrows discs donated by members of the community. This effort complements other Town Center projects such as 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."

As part of this work, the Friends of Ferrisburgh have begun 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 by incorporating reclaimed disc harrows into a public art display.

Once practical tools for turning soil, harrows 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.

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 also encouraged to support the project by purchasing an engraved harrow disc. This purchase can 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. For full project details visit [visitferrisburghvt.com/stack-the-harrows](http://visitferrisburghvt.com/stack-the-harrows) or email [friendsofferrisburgh@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofferrisburgh@gmail.com).

The Ferrisburgh Grange "King Pede" card parties are scheduled for the Saturdays of March 14 and March 28. These get-togethers are

## In Midd lecture

# Historian grapples with America

**MIDDLEBURY** — Beverly Gage, the John Lewis Gaddis Professor of History at Yale University and recipient of a Pulitzer Prize, will deliver this year's Charles S. Grant Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. in McCordell Bicentennial Hall 216 on the campus of Middlebury College. The topic of her lecture is "This Land is Your Land: Grappling with the American Past on the 250th Anniversary of the Nation's Founding."

For her lecture, Professor Gage will be drawing on her forthcoming book from Simon and Schuster, "This Land is Your Land: A Road Trip through U.S. History."

Professor Gage won a Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize for her book "G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century." She is also the author of "The Day Wall Street Exploded: A



BEVERLY GAGE

Story of America in its First Age of Terror," which examined the history of terrorism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on the 1920 Wall Street bombing.

Her writings have been featured in numerous journals and magazines, including *The New Yorker*, *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

At Yale she has been recognized for her teaching, and from 2017 to 2021 she served as director of Yale's Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy.

The Grant lectureship is named in honor of Charles S. Grant, who was a gifted teacher and leading scholar of early American history in Middlebury's History Department prior to his untimely death in 1961. Shortly thereafter, his college colleagues and friends in the community raised funds to establish a lectureship in his honor. Over the past sixty years, the Grant Fund has brought many distinguished historians to Middlebury.

This lecture is free and open to the public.

# Lincoln

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

## NEWS

**LINCOLN** — Approximately 160 registered voters gathered at Burnham Hall for Lincoln's first Saturday Town Meeting. It was marked by respectful, productive discussion with residents engaging in a thoughtful exchange of ideas. The use of electronic clickers streamlined the voting process, reducing the time typically required for administrative tasks and manual ballot counting. All proposed school, town, and highway budgets, along with several specific money articles, were approved. Articles proposing to use Australian Ballots for town and school for future budget and money items were defeated.

Bristol Animal Hospital will be

offering a rabies vaccination clinic for dogs or cats on Saturday, March 7, from 9 to 10 a.m. at the Lincoln Town Office. Bring proof of your pet's prior rabies vaccination, if they have had one. Please leave your pet in your vehicle until you have checked in with the vet.

The town clerk will be there to help you register your dog at the same time. Cash or check payments only. All dog licenses are due to be renewed by Wednesday, April 1.

FROM THE TOWN: All required materials and inspections for the Lincoln Transfer Station have been completed. The draft full certification is now posted on the Vermont Agency of

Natural Resources Environmental Notice Bulletin website located at [dec.vermont.gov/permits/environmental-notice-bulletin](http://dec.vermont.gov/permits/environmental-notice-bulletin) and is open for a 30-day public comment period through March 19.

Any comments received during that time will be reviewed and addressed before final certification is issued. If all goes as anticipated, the transfer station should resume accepting bagged household trash beginning Saturday, April 4. Thank you for your patience and continued support as we work through this process!

Until next time...Start Where You Are. Use What You Have. Do What You Can.

held at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center and will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a sandwich supper and then on to an evening of fun and games. King Pede requires tactics and skill so come prepared to use your strategic thinking in

this longstanding Ferrisburgh tradition.

Note: We are always interested in including a variety of Ferrisburgh-related event announcements in this column, so if you have events that would be of interest, contact

Sally Kerschner at [smwkersch@comcast.net](mailto:smwkersch@comcast.net). You are also able to access these columns and other information about Ferrisburgh news and events by viewing the Ferrisburgh Town Website at [www.ferrisburghvt.org](http://www.ferrisburghvt.org).

# STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

## Otter Valley Union High School

### Jacob Warrell

Otter Valley Union High School is proud to recognize Jacob Warrell as its latest Student of the Week. Jacob lives in Pittsford with his mom, dad and two cats.

Jacob is frequently on the honor roll and principal's lists, served as the varsity baseball captain his junior year, and won the Clarkson Achievement Award for his academic achievements and leadership. He enjoys the social aspect of school, as well as playing school sports. His favorite class is welding with Mr. Karpak. He's especially excited about a smoker he is building with a friend in welding class. Science teacher Ms. Keith is Jacob's favorite because she's knowledgeable in her subject area and teaches based on the learning styles of her students.

Outside of school, Jacob is a ticket agent at Killington Resort, helping guests with any issues they might be having and answering any questions. His hobbies include weightlifting, playing baseball and video games.

His advice to other students is to explore all the opportunities available at Otter Valley, "Go try new things that you have never tried before because you never know if you might end up liking them." Taking his advice to heart, Jacob's in the crochet club this semester and is really enjoying it.

Jacob plans on attending Clarkson University to study Global Supply Chain Management and play baseball. We wish him all the best!



Jacob Warrell  
OVUHS

## Mount Abraham Union High School

### James Graziadei

Mt. Abraham is proud to recognize James Graziadei as our Student of the Week. James lives in Lincoln with his mother, Elizabeth and brother, Joe.

James has achieved highest honors each semester of his high school career. His favorite classes are currently Money Matters and AP English Language and Composition. He enjoys spending time with his friends and being pushed to learn new things every day at school. James shares that his favorite teacher is Ms. Thompson, stating that "her empathy allows for a more productive learning environment, and she always has a smile on her face."

Beyond academics, James has been a member of the Mt. Abe Varsity soccer team since 9th grade. He has served as the captain for the past two years. He earned Lake Division Player of the Year and a spot on the Vermont All-State First Team. Outside of school, James enjoys playing soccer, spending time at the gym and downhill skiing. He also works part-time at the Bobcat Cafe as a dishwasher and food runner.

Reflecting on his school experience, James states, "The most important lesson and experience I have had while at school is to find a balance between academics and hobbies. This balance has inspired me to work harder in school, while also allowing me to explore unique opportunities outside of it. I would like to tell underclassmen that it's OK to take a few days in the school year to skip class and ski, and I would advise you to make a fun experience for yourself in and out of the classroom."

Looking ahead, James plans on taking a post-graduate year at a prep school and then attending college. We wish James all the best with his future endeavors!



James Graziadei  
MAUHS

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

**Congratulations, James and Jacob**

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**Cheers to the Students of the Week!**

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**Congratulations, James and Jacob**

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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 [vermontalanonlateen.org](http://vermontalanonlateen.org) for links and list of other meetings in the region. If you'd like to speak to an Al-Anon member, call our answering service (866-972-5266) and an Al-Anon member will call you back.

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

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

**Public Meetings**

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

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

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

**Services**

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

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

**Services**

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**DIGITAL ACCESS** View obituaries, calendar listings and classifieds online at [addisonindependent.com](http://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**

**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.

**Help Wanted**

**Help Wanted**

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](mailto:owner@swifthouseinn.com). Learn more about us at [swifthouseinn.com](http://swifthouseinn.com)

**FARM WORK** Looking for full/part time person willing to work flexible hours. Job requires ability to operate farm tractors, do light mechanic work, and multitask. \$18-20 an hour depending on experience. Call Jason at 802-373-6281

**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-bls](http://bit.ly/lca-bls). Applications due March 31, 2026. \$18/hr.

**Help Wanted**

**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

**Help Wanted**

**For Rent**

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/apal/d/forest-dale-bedroom-updated-stone-home/7889936398.htm> or call 802 377 9394

**Help Wanted**

**For Rent**

**COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE** - 2000 sq ft to 7000 sq ft - Tall ceilings, loading docks, plenty of parking. Middlebury - 802-558-6092

**Help Wanted**

**For Rent**

**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.

**Help Wanted**

Delivering your paper takes a dedicated crew...

...and the Addy Indy's is one of the best!



We're hiring substitute drivers to help our team sort and deliver the weekly paper each Thursday. \$15-\$20/hr, 3-9 hour shifts

Must be willing to wake up early, lift 50lbs and carry a valid drivers license.

Call or email Sean to apply: [frontdesk@addisonindependent.com](mailto:frontdesk@addisonindependent.com) or 802-388-4944, ext 104.

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<https://elderlyservices.org/job-opportunities/>



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**Opportunities**

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**Learn how you can make a difference!**

To learn more, please visit [www.volunteersinvt.org](http://www.volunteersinvt.org) or contact us at 802-468-7056

**AmeriCorps Seniors**

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ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Addison Independent **CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM**

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**RATES**

DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

- 25¢ per word • minimum \$2.50 per ad
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<input type="checkbox"/> Card of Thanks	<input type="checkbox"/> Help Wanted	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycles
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<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
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# Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

### For Rent

**MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING** available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.

### For Rent

**VERGENNES WILLOW APARTMENTS** Is currently taking waitlist applications for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. No smoking/no pets. Income limits apply. Rent rate based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191. www.SummitPMG.com.

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### For Rent

**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.

### Att. Farmers

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

## TOWN OF STARKSBORO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING

Scott and Rebekah Depinto submitted application 26-DRB-02CU for retroactive Conditional Use Review of a previously constructed seasonal camp located on their 30.4+/- acre Parcel 10664 at 206 Conway Road. The camp is located in the FC district. The Conditional Use Hearing on this application will be held per Sec 425 of the Starksboro Land Use and Development Regulations.

The Starksboro DRB will conduct this hearing on Thursday, **March 26, 2026, at 6:30p.m.** at the Starksboro Town Office with remote access (info below). The application is available to review by request at the Starksboro zoning office, and in the meeting packet on the town website: [starksborovt.org/agendas-and-minutes](http://starksborovt.org/agendas-and-minutes). Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464(a)(1)(C), participation in this local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

Virtual Meeting Link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89617415124>  
Meeting ID: 896 1741 5124  
Or by Phone: +13052241968

## TOWN OF SALISBURY PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Salisbury Development Review Board (DRB) will hold Public Hearings in the Town Office (25 Schoolhouse Road) at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, to consider the following:

### Application 2026-01

An application from property Owner/Applicant, Mason West, in connection with a proposed amendment to DRB Decision #2023-12, issued November 7, 2023, and under Permit #22-20-SD, issued December 7, 2023. The decision and permit sited above was issued for a 6-lot subdivision with conditions. The subdivision sited above was further amended under DRB application #2025-06 approved October 27, 2025. The current application, submitted by Mason West, requests further subdivision of Parcel ID #0753012, Lot #2, to create one 2.36-acre lot and one 2.07-acre lot from a 4.42-acre lot, located on Lake Dunmore Road. This property is zoned in the Low-Density Residential District, (LDR), and requires DRB Review under §3.2 of the Salisbury Unified Development Regulations.

This application is pursuant to §2.4.3, §6.1.1-§6.1.5, & §6.5.1-§6.5.3 of the Salisbury Unified Development Regulations and is classified as a Major Subdivision.

### Application 2026-02

An application from property Owner/Applicant, Jared West, in connection with a proposed 2-Lot subdivision (total 3 lots) of Parcel ID #0705040, located on Upper Plains Road in Salisbury, Vermont. The existing lot contains 22.20 acres and the proposed subdivision will create Lot #1, 7.40 acres, Lot #2, 7.40 acres, and Lot #3, 7.40 acres. This property is located in the Low-Density Residential District, (LDR), which requires DRB review under §3.2 of the Salisbury Unified Development Regulations.

This application is pursuant to §2.4.3, §6.3.1-§6.3.4, §6.5.1, & §6.5.4 of the Salisbury Unified Development Regulations and is classified as a Minor Subdivision.

Participation (either oral or written) is a prerequisite to an interested person's right to take any subsequent appeal from the DRB's decision. See 24 V.S.A. §4465(b) and §4471.

These hearings will be conducted with in-person and remote access. Those wishing to participate remotely must obtain the necessary remote access codes. Access codes (for online or phone) are available by contacting the Salisbury Town Clerk during regular business hours prior to 3:00 PM on March 24, 2026. The Salisbury Town Office is open on Tuesdays from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Application materials are available for inspection in the Town Office during regular business hours.

Anna Scheck  
DRB Clerk

## PROPOSED STATE RULES

By law, public notice of proposed rules must be given by publication in newspapers of record. The purpose of these notices is to give the public a chance to respond to the proposals. The public notices for administrative rules are now also available online at <https://secure.vermont.gov/SOS/rules/>. The law requires an agency to hold a public hearing on a proposed rule, if requested to do so in writing by 25 persons or an association having at least 25 members.

To make special arrangements for individuals with disabilities or special needs please call or write the contact person listed below as soon as possible.

To obtain further information concerning any scheduled hearing(s), obtain copies of proposed rule(s) or submit comments regarding proposed rule(s), please call or write the contact person listed below. You may also submit comments in writing to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, State House, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 (802-828-2231).

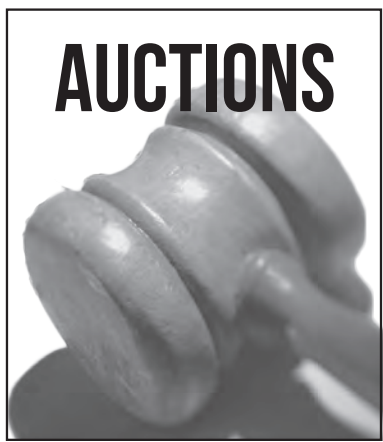
### Proposed Amendments to the Vermont CO2 Budget Trading Program Rule.

**Vermont Proposed Rule: 26P003**

**AGENCY:** Agency of Natural Resources  
**CONCISE SUMMARY:** The proposed rule amends the Vermont CO2 Budget Trading Program Rule which implements the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in Vermont. The amendments reflect revisions to the RGGI Model Rule agreed to by participating states (CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, and VT) during the most recent program review. Most notably, the proposed amendments reduce the regional carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions cap in 2027 to 69.8 million tons of CO2 from 75.7 million tons under the previous rule. Then, from 2034 through 2037, the cap will decline by 2.4 million tons of CO2 annually. The proposed amendments also revise the existing Cost Containment Reserve (CCR) to ensure availability of RGGI allowances to meet grid reliability needs and mitigate cost volatility; increase the minimum reserve price, the lowest price at which allowances may be sold at auction; eliminate the use of offset allowances; and include other miscellaneous updates.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Brian Woods, Agency of Natural Resources, 1 National Life Dr., Davis 2, Montpelier, VT 05620 Tel: 802-272-4496 E-Mail: [brian.woods@vermont.gov](mailto:brian.woods@vermont.gov) URL: <https://dec.vermont.gov/air-quality/laws-and-regulations/recently-adopted-and-proposed-regulations>.

**FOR COPIES:** Rachel Stevens, Agency of Natural Resources, 1 National Life Dr., Davis 3, Montpelier, VT 05620 Tel: 802-636-7236 E-Mail: [rachel.stevens@vermont.gov](mailto:rachel.stevens@vermont.gov).



## AUCTIONS

### MARKET REPORT ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

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Please check back next week!

## TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Middlebury Development Review Board will hold a public hearing(s) at the Middlebury Municipal Offices, Large Conference Room, 77 Main Street, Middlebury, VT on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, beginning at 7:00 p.m. to consider the following application(s). The hearing will be available to participants via a Zoom video link. The Zoom link will be provided on the meeting agenda posted on the Town's website.

- Application ((file #2026-008167.000 -PUD (amend)) is a request by W.E. Aubuchon Co. for an amended PUD review of their proposal to construct a 14'x60' greenhouse structures and improvements to vehicle access/parking on an existing +/- 5.9 acre parcel which contains an existing retail hardware store and shipping facility located at 859 Route 7 South. The property is identified as parcel #008167.000 in the Protected Highway District.

The applications will be heard in the order listed. Plans and additional information may be viewed at the Planning and Zoning Office in the Town Offices or by calling 388-8100, Ext 226. Participation in this public hearing is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal as an "interested person(s)". Interested persons wishing to participate in this hearing may do so by contacting J.R. Christ at 388-8100, Ext 226 or email to [jrchrist@townofmiddlebury.org](mailto:jrchrist@townofmiddlebury.org).

J.R. Christ  
DRB Coordinator, ZA

Email your Public Notices to [legals@addisonindependent.com](mailto:legals@addisonindependent.com) and Jenna makes sure it gets in the paper

## TOWN OF BRISTOL WEST STREET SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT SCOPING STUDY RECOMMENDED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Monday, March 23, 2026

Selectboard meeting starts at 6:00pm

In-person at Holley Hall or via Zoom:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83091801793?pwd=u3kGskjVrWOGOKRj1eF2XbaGgXlqri.1> Meeting ID: 830 9180 1793 Passcode: 683634  
Phone In: 1-646-558-8656

The Town of Bristol and VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.) invite all residents, business owners, and interested parties to join for Recommended Preferred Alternative for the West Street Sidewalk Improvement Scoping Study. The presentation will be part of the Selectboard's regular meeting agenda. The meeting begins at 6:00pm with this presentation following preliminary agenda items.

For more information, contact Municipal Project Manager AZ Larsen at [zoning@bristolvt.org](mailto:zoning@bristolvt.org), (802) 453-3648 or Evan Haugh, VHB, at [ehaugh@vhb.com](mailto:ehaugh@vhb.com).

## TOWN OF FERRISBURGH PLANNING COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Ferrisburgh Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 18 at 6:45 pm to hear public comment on proposed changes to the Land Use Regulations, pursuant to 24 VSA 4441. This is a hybrid meeting, held in-person at the Ferrisburgh Town Offices, 3279 Route 7, and remotely using the Zoom link below.

### SUMMARY

The proposed changes bring our regulations in line with state statutes, state regulations, and our Town Plan. Changes include:

- Article 2. Definitions:** Minor edits, and the addition of two new definitions
- Article 3. Zoning Districts and Zoning Map:** Adds reference to the Town Plan
- Article 4. Zoning Districts:**
  - a) **Zoning District Boundary Line Changes:** NONE
  - b) **Mixed Use District:** Eliminate the Industrial and the Highway Mixed Use Districts, and combine them into one District called Mixed Use to allow increased flexibility in land uses
  - c) **Shoreland District-** Will be re-named Lake Champlain District; All land uses Conditional
  - d) **Conservation District:** Change to Conditional Uses only
  - e) **Dimensional Standards:** Eliminate "Primary Uses" language
- Article 4. Lot Coverage:** Proposal to increase lot coverage, and decrease some setbacks in RR-2, Mixed Use, and Town Center Districts.
- Section 5.30 Outdoor Lighting:** Updated language
- Article 9. Subdivision:** Update to State Statutes
- Section 10.4 Exemptions:** Minor changes
- Article 12. Flood Hazard and River Corridor Regulation:** Updated to State template

A copy of the Draft Land Use Regulations can be found on the Town Website or in paper format at the Town Offices.

Town of Ferrisburgh is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.  
Topic: Land Use Regulations Meeting  
Time: Mar 18, 2026 06:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86278442293?pwd=YUHRxJoAtNxeJSPINVCov4RC2zvVR.1> Meeting ID: 862 7844 2293  
Passcode: 05456

## Police say two drivers had taken drugs

### Vt. State Police Log

ADDISON COUNTY — Vermont State Police stopped two different Vermont men in Addison County this past week and cited them for driving under the influence of drugs.

In the first case, a trooper observed a motor vehicle violation on Plank Road near Route 7 in Waltham on Feb. 26 shortly before 4:30 p.m. Police took driver Parker N. Bent, 23, of Hinesburg into custody, cited him for DUI-drugs and took him to the Vergennes Police Department for processing.

In the second instance, seeing a motor vehicle violation on Route 7 near Atkins Farm Road in Ferrisburgh on March 2 shortly before midnight, a trooper pulled over a vehicle driven by Larry A. Swan, 35, of Starksboro. While speaking to Swan, police observed indicators of impairment and cited Swan for DUI-drugs.

Vergennes police were helpful in both arrests.

In another recent serious case, state police cited a Salisbury man for sexual assault. The case started back on Dec. 17, when detectives with the Vermont State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigations began an investigation into a reported sexual assault. They determined that Maxx Rheume, 27, of Salisbury had committed the offense of sexual assault by having nonconsensual sexual contact with a juvenile.

On Feb. 23, Rheume

turned himself in to the New Haven barracks and was issued a citation to answer the sexual assault charge at the Addison County Superior Court, Criminal Division, on March 30.

In a separate incident, troopers were notified of a domestic incident in Shoreham on Feb. 25 at around 2:30 a.m. Police allege that Morgan Delorme, 29, of Salisbury had committed the offense of second-degree aggravated domestic assault, unlawful mischief, and being a person prohibited from possessing firearms. Around 6:30 p.m. that evening, police located Delorme's vehicle, stopped it and took him into custody without incident. They cited Delorme for those charges and released him with conditions.

In other recent activity, state police dealt with three crashes.

On Feb. 24 at around 9:22 a.m., troopers were dispatched to a two-vehicle crash on Routes 17 and 22A in Addison. Police report that Jose Giral Lopez, 45, of South Burlington was driving eastbound on Route 17 when he failed to yield the right of way to approaching traffic on Route 22A, resulting in the front end of a Jeep driven by Robert Jackman, 45, of Bridport striking the driver's side of Lopez's

pickup at approximately 35 mph. No injuries were reported because of the crash; police issued traffic tickets.

Then on Feb. 27 shortly before 8:30 p.m. troopers responded to the intersection of Route 7 and Trail 17 in New Haven for a report of a snowmobile versus truck crash. State police determined that Timothy Cousino, 46, of Bristol was driving an Arctic Cat westbound on Trail 17, while Gary Boutin, 46, of East Middlebury was driving a Ford F-350 pickup truck northbound on Route 7. Apparently, police say, Cousino failed to stop at the trail end to cross Route 7, and struck the side of Boutin's truck.

Cousino was transported to University of Vermont Medical Center for suspected moderate injuries. Boutin was uninjured.

Criminal charges and traffic tickets are pending.

Finally, on Feb. 28 at a quarter to 9 a.m. state police responded to a two-vehicle crash on Route 116 South at Route 17 East in Bristol. Police report that Tina Robinson, 49, of Castleton was driving a Subaru Forrester when she failed to stop at the posted four-way stop and plowed into the driver's side of another vehicle crossing the intersection, which was heavily damaged. Robinson sustained minor injuries and was taken to Porter Hospital. Police issued her a ticket for failing to yield and not wearing a seat belt.

## Co-op grant will help heat up the Brandon Museum

BRANDON — Co-operative Insurance Companies recently award a community grant to the Brandon Museum at the Stephen A Douglas Museum and Community Center Inc. for assistance with heating infrastructure.

The Brandon Museum received the \$1,500 grant from Pamela Douglass, director and Co-operative Insurance Companies, and will use it for expenses incurred for the replacement of the museum's oil tank and related repairs.

"We think the museum is a great asset to the community through the museum, the programs it provides, and is essential as Brandon's visitors' center," said Douglass, who has been a resident of Brandon for more than 30 years. "We're proud to support their efforts."

"Although we are a small organization with limited revenue, we work to serve our community with history programs and events, but we also maintain a 200 year old historic building," said Jennie Masterson, Brandon Museum president. "This grant is important because it has helped with the critical upkeep of a Brandon historic site."

"Groups like the Brandon Museum-Stephen A Douglas Birthplace and Community Center Inc. are meeting needs in the same communities that Co-op serves," said Mark Roberts, Co-op's Vice President of Marketing, Underwriting, and Member Services. "We think it's important to do our part as neighbors to help them out, and this grant program is one more way we can do that."

## Public Notices Index

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

- Addison (2)
- Addison County Clerk (1)
- Bristol (3)
- Ferrisburgh (1)
- Middlebury (3)
- Monkton (2)
- Salisbury (1)
- Starksboro (1)
- State of Vermont (1)

*This draft Selectboard meeting agenda is subject to change.*

## TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM 116 – LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM TOWN OFFICES – 77 MAIN STREET TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026 - 7:00 P.M.

Also available via Zoom:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84358013307>  
By Phone: +1 (312) 626-6799 (not toll-free)  
Webinar ID: 843 5801 3307

For those wishing to watch but not participate: Selectboard meetings are livestreamed to MCTV's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MCTVvermont> and also broadcast live on Comcast Channel 1071

### AGENDA

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>7:00pm</b> | 1. Call to Order  |
| <b>7:05pm</b> | 2. Board Organization: Elected Members Sworn in by Town Clerk/ Election of Chair & Vice Chair |
| <b>7:10pm</b> | 3. *Approval of Agenda  |
|               | 4. *Approval of Consent Agenda  |
|               | 4a. *Approval of the Minutes of the February 24, 2026 Selectboard Meeting                     |
|               | 4b. *Acceptance of Selectboard Subcommittee Meeting Minutes (if any)                          |
|               | 4c. *Approval of Applications - Renewal of State Licenses/Permits (if any)                    |
|               | 4d. *Approval of Check Warrants   |
|               | 4e. Consent Agenda Placeholder  |
|               | 4f. **Town Manager's Report   |
| <b>7:10pm</b> | 5. **Citizen Comments   |
| <b>7:15pm</b> | 6. *Selectboard Organization Matters  |
| <b>7:30pm</b> | 7. **Discussion of Annual Selectboard Retreat Meeting Plans                                   |
|               | 8. Agenda Placeholder   |
| <b>7:40pm</b> | 9. **Selectboard Member Concerns  |
|               | 10. Executive Session - Not Anticipated   |
|               | 11. Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session  |
| <b>7:50pm</b> | 12. *Adjourn  |
- \*Possible Decision \*\*Discussion

**ADDISON COUNTY  
School Briefs**

**CCV names their fall dean's list**

MONTPELIER—The following students at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) were named to the fall 2025 dean's list. This honor recognizes full-time students with a grade point average between 3.5 and 3.99.

CCV is Vermont's second-largest college, serving more than 10,000 students each year. With 12 locations, including in Middlebury, and extensive online learning options, our students don't have to travel far from their communities to access our degree and certificate programs, workforce, secondary and continuing education opportunities, and academic and veterans support services.

- Addison: Jessa Ellis
- Bristol: Madelyn Brochu
- Cornwall: Lia Calzini and Cooper Cannon
- Ferrisburgh: Nathalie Fassett
- Lincoln: Mason Frazier
- Middlebury: Ireland Hanley
- North Ferrisburgh: Anthony Dicoivitsky
- Ripton: Aurora Ljosa
- Vergennes: Cailie Ballard, Noelle Bright and Rachel Leete

The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its fall 2025 dean's list. Among them are **Ila Collette of North Ferrisburgh, Nikolai Luksch of Middlebury and Ella Tucker of Middlebury.**

To be included on the dean's list, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-time students qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

Students named to the dean's list represent nearly all of Rhode Island's cities and towns, all six New England states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

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.

The following local residents have been named to the 2025 fall semester dean's list at Simmons University in Boston: **Avery Vant of Salisbury and Bee Eckels of Vergennes.**

To qualify for dean's list status, undergraduate students must obtain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, based on 12 or more credit hours of work in classes using the letter grade system.

**FULL PASSPORT SERVICE**

The Addison County Clerk located in the **Frank Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury** is available to accept passport applications and provide passport photos.

**REGULAR HOURS**  
Monday - 8:30am to 4:00pm  
Tuesday - 9:00am to 12:30pm  
Wednesday - **Closed**  
Thursday - 12:30pm to 4:00pm  
Friday - 9:00am to 12:30pm

**APPOINTMENTS REQUIRED**  
For appointment, go to [www.addisoncountyclerkvt.com](http://www.addisoncountyclerkvt.com) or call 802-388-1966.

**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](mailto: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

**Vergennes Police Log**

VERGENNES — The Vergennes Police Department conducted 33 traffic stops last week, including one that resulted in an excessive speed citation.

In the latter instance, a Burlington teenager was documented driving 64 mph in a 30 mph speed limit zone in the Little City.

On Feb. 27 an officer stopped Matthew Riley, 19, for speeding on West Main Street. He was taken into custody and transported to the Vergennes Police Department for processing. A Vergennes police report states Riley was issued a citation to appear in Addison County Superior Court, on April 6.

Also last week, Vergennes police conducted five directed patrols, one foot patrol and a commercial vehicle inspection; took fingerprints six times; and facilitated two ride-alongs.

In other recent activity, the city police:

- On Feb. 23 received a request from a Vergennes resident that a trespass notice be issued to an individual they feel is threatening them. The notice was issued.
- On Feb. 23 issued another trespass notice at the request of a resident.
- On Feb. 24 took a report from a Vergennes resident about an issue with their neighbor. Police say this is an ongoing issue that has been

unfounded. Various resources are working with the complainant to resolve them with assistance.

- On Feb. 24 received an agency assistance call.
- On Feb. 24 were investigating a two-vehicle traffic crash. There were no injuries and only minor damage as a result.
- On Feb. 24 gave information to a Vergennes resident on how to submit a HIPAA complaint to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- On Feb. 25 assisted an individual at the police department who was experiencing what appeared to be a mental health issue.
- On Feb. 26 conducted a drugged driving evaluation for Vermont State Police as a result of a motor vehicle stop where the

driver was suspected to be under the influence of drugs.

- On Feb. 27 contacted the dog warden about a stray dog found at Maplefields.
- On Feb. 28 assisted state police in contacting a male involved in an incident that occurred in Hinesburg who was experiencing a mental health crisis. Vergennes officers made contact with the male and resources were offered, which he declined.
- On March 1 were notified of a theft from Kinney Drugs that was under investigation as of Monday. Police were attempting to identify the suspect.
- On March 1 took a report from a resident about concerning behavior from an acquaintance who appears to be experiencing a mental health crisis.

**TOWN OF MONKTON MUNICIPAL AUDIT SERVICES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFPs Due By: March 20, 2026**

Notice is hereby given that proposals and qualifications are being solicited by the Town of Monkton to obtain "MUNICIPAL AUDIT SERVICES". Individuals responding to this Request for Proposal (RFP) should have a knowledgeable background in municipal and governmental accounting and have extensive experience in providing auditing services for municipalities in Vermont.

Copies of this RFP package are available: (1) at the Monkton Town Hall, 92 Monkton Ridge, North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473 during regular business hours; (2) on the Town of Monkton's website at [monktonvt.com](http://monktonvt.com) or (3) by emailing the Town Administrator at [townadministrator@monktonvt.com](mailto:townadministrator@monktonvt.com).

**TOWN OF BRISTOL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS BRISTOL TOWN PLAN UPDATE**

The Town of Bristol is seeking a comprehensive update to the existing Town Plan. The desired outcome of this project is to create a draft plan for consideration by the Planning Commission. This process will involve updates to statistical and plan map data, and compliance with Vermont State Planning Act. Bristol is seeking qualified planning consultants to coordinate an effective public outreach strategy that will inform plan elements and provide the Bristol Planning Commission with recommendations and new perspectives in approaching the Town Plan update.

Funding for this project has been awarded by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.

A detailed scope of work can be found on Bristol's website at: <https://bristolvt.org/> Please direct questions to AZ Larsen, Planning & Zoning Administrator at [zoning@bristolvt.org](mailto:zoning@bristolvt.org) or (802) 453 3648.

Final Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 pm, Friday, March 30, 2026. Please submit proposals to [zoning@bristolvt.org](mailto:zoning@bristolvt.org).

**TOWN OF BRISTOL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Bristol Development Review Board will hold the following hearings on March 24, 2026, beginning at 7:00 P.M. The hearings will be held in person at the Town Office, located at 1 South Street. The hearings will also be available via Zoom and login information is below.

**Permit #26-1000:** Jack Alexander of Briggs Hill Road (Parcel #070125.1) is requesting an appeal of the Zoning Administrator decision regarding subdivision application #25-405, subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations SECTION 360.

**Permit #25-402:** Russell and Nicole Hibbard of Kilbourn Lane (Parcel #060129-1) are requesting final plat review for a 3-lot subdivision subject to the Bristol Unified Development Regulations SECTION 930.

Copies of the zoning permit applications and decisions are available for review at the Bristol Zoning Office during regular business hours.

Remote Access: via Zoom  
[https://zoom.us/](https://zoom.us/j/85786761083) • Meeting ID: 857 8676 1083 • Passcode: 805823  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87551027651?pwd=mJnqnmMaORm2lufotvEE-BidxObjJLJl.1> Phone In: +1 646 931 3860

**TOWN OF ADDISON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TOWN HALL REPAIRS**

The Town of Addison, in Addison County, Vermont, is seeking the services of a qualified contractor to complete repairs to the Addison Town Hall. The selected contractor must be insured and will be expected to (1) demonstrate the ability to complete the needed roofing, chimney, bell tower, and window repairs, (2) have experience in related work. A detailed scope of work can be found on the Town of Addison's website at [www.addisonvt.gov](http://www.addisonvt.gov) on the Town Hall Building Committee page, or at the town clerk's office. There are two separate RFPs: 1) stabilization and repairs to the Bell Tower and associated roof work, 2) repair of historic windows and installation of storm windows.

A Pre-Bid meeting will be held at 1PM on April 1, 2026, for prospective bidders to access areas in the planned scope.

Bids will be accepted until 5:00 pm, April 30, 2026, by email to [townclerk@addisonvt.gov](mailto:townclerk@addisonvt.gov) with "Town Hall Repair RFP" in the subject line, or by mail to the Town of Addison, 65 VT RT 17W, Addison, Vermont 05491. Questions? Contact Town Clerk Cheri Waterman at (802) 759-2020.

The Town of Addison is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, gender or familial status.

**TOWN OF ADDISON DRB PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Town of Addison Development Review Board will convene a public hearing on Monday, March 23, 2026 at 6:00PM at the former Addison Central School located at VT Route 22A and VT Route 17 West, Addison, VT.

1. Application (#26-03) Lisa Preston, Dillon Preston & Hanna LaFrance requesting to gain approval to subdivide the property located at 4 Walton Lane, Addison, VT.
2. Application (#26-04) Brad Stefanic requesting approval to subdivide the property located at 3936 Lake Street, Addison, VT into two parcels.

The applications are available for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office during normal office hours. Interested parties who wish to appeal or to be heard must attend the hearing or may be represented by an agent or an attorney. Communications relating to the application may be filed in writing with the Board either before or during the hearings.

N.B.: Participation in a hearing is necessary to establish status as an "interested party" and the right to appeal a decision rendered in that hearing, according to the provisions of 24 V.S.A. 117 S.S.4464 (a) (1) (C), 4465(b) and 4471 (a). Participation consists of offering through oral or written testimony, evidence or a statement of concern directly related to the subject of the hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alden Harwood, Chair  
Starr Phillips, Board Secretary  
Daniel Rossignol, Zoning Administrator

**ADDY INDY WEBSITE**  
[addisonindependent.com](http://addisonindependent.com)

**STATE OF VERMONT**

**SUPERIOR COURT ADDISON UNIT**

SAILFISH SERVICING, LLC  
PLAINTIFF

VS.

RONALD DRAGON AND OCCUPANTS RESIDING AT 66 MURRAY LANE, RIPTON, VT 05766  
DEFENDANT(S)

**CIVIL DIVISION DOCKET NO: 25-CV-01628**

**NOTICE OF SALE**

In accordance with the Judgment and Decree of Foreclosure by Judicial Sale filed on August 18, 2025, in the above captioned action brought to foreclose that certain mortgage given by Ronald Dragon to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Primelending, a Plainscapital Company, dated December 4, 2013, and recorded in Book 47, at Page 41, of the Town of Ripton Land Records, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder by Assignment of Mortgage recorded in Book 56, at Page 178, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on April 15, 2026 at 01:00 PM at 66 Murray Lane, Ripton, VT 05766 all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,

To Wit:

A parcel of land containing 1.21 acres, more or less, with residence and other improvements thereon, known and designated as 66 Murray Lane in Ripton, Vermont, and being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to the herein Ronald M. Dragon by Limited Warranty Deed of Federal National Mortgage Association dated December 3, 2013, and recorded December 9, 2013 in Book 47, at Page 37 in the Ripton Land Records, and described as follows:

Being all and the same lands and premises acquired by Federal National Mortgage Association by virtue of a Confirmation Order issued by the Vermont Superior Court, Civil Division, Addison Unit, in the cause entitled: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. v. Audrey Bryant, Administrator of the Estate of William J. Murray, et al., Docket No. 91-5-11 Ancv, which Order was dated April 8, 2013 and recorded in Book 46 at Page 248 of the Town of Ripton Land Records; and being further described as follows:

"Being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to William J. Murray and Helen P. Murray by Warranty Deed of Rodney E. Goodro and Elizabeth A. Goodro dated June 7, 1968 and recorded June 10, 1968 in Volume 17 at Page 83 of the Ripton Land Records.

Being a portion of the same lands conveyed to the herein Grantors by Administrator's Deed in the Estate of Claudia E. Smith, dated November 19, 1966, recorded in Book 16 at Page 480 of the Ripton Land Records, the portion herein conveyed being more particularly described as follows:

Begin at a point marked by an iron pipe two hundred twenty (220) feet, more or less, easterly of the easterly edge of Maiden Lane, said point being the northeasterly corner of lands now or formerly of the late Claudia E. Smith and being the northwesterly corner of the lands herein conveyed;

Thence go southerly three hundred twenty (320) feet, more or less, along the easterly line of said Smith to a point marked by an iron pipe, being the southwesterly corner of the lands herein conveyed;

Thence go easterly one hundred sixty-seven (167) feet, more or less, along the northerly line of lands now or formerly of one Billings to a point marked by an iron pipe, being the southeasterly corner of the lands herein conveyed;

Thence go northerly three hundred ten (310) feet, more or less, along the northerly line of lands now or formerly of one Billings to a point marked by an iron pipe, being the southeasterly corner of the lands herein conveyed;

Thence go westerly one hundred sixty-seven (167) feet, more or less, in a line parallel to the northerly line of said Billings, to the point of beginning.

Together with a right of way twenty (20) feet in width, to be used in common with the remaining lands of the herein Grantors, for the purposes of ingress and egress and installation of utility lines, said right of way to begin at the easterly edge of Maiden Lane and follow the southerly line of the lands of the Grantors to the northeasterly corner of the lands herein conveyed.

Said lands herein conveyed shall be subject to the following restrictions, which shall be in the nature of covenants running with the land herein conveyed, but shall not be interpreted to apply to the remaining lands of the herein Grantors:

1. Said lands shall be used only for residential purposes.
2. Said lands shall not be further sub-divided."

Reference is made to the following quitclaim deeds in reference to the easterly boundary line of the above described parcel:

1. Quitclaim Deed dated July 14, 1980 from Rodney E. Goodro and Elizabeth A. Goodro to William J. Murray and Helen P. Murray, as recorded in Book 22, Page 52 of the Ripton Land Records; and
2. Quitclaim Deed dated July 14, 1980 from William J. Murray and Helen P. Murray to Rodney E. Goodro and Elizabeth A. Goodro, as recorded at Book 22, Page 55 of the Ripton Land Records

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication

The public sale may be adjourned one or more times for a total time not exceeding 30 days, without further court order, and without publication or service of a new notice of sale, by announcement of the new sale date to those present at each adjournment or by posting notice of the adjournment in a conspicuous place at the location of the sale.

Terms of Sale: \$10,000.00 to be paid in cash or by certified check by the purchaser at the time of sale, with the balance due at closing. The sale is subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

The Mortgagor is entitled to redeem the premises at any time prior to the sale by paying the full amount due under the mortgage, including the costs and expenses of the sale.

Other terms to be announced at sale.

Sailfish Servicing, LLC  
Bozena Wysocki, Esq.  
BROCK & SCOTT, PLLC  
23 Messenger Street  
2nd Floor  
Plainville, MA 02762  
[VT\\_Noticesofhearing@brockandscott.com](mailto:VT_Noticesofhearing@brockandscott.com)

## Guilmette receives Good Citizen Award

CORNWALL — Each year the Ethan and Mary Baker Allen Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presents a Good Citizen Award to an outstanding senior from Mount Abraham Union High School in Bristol. On Feb. 12, DAR members welcomed Louisa Guilmette and her mother, Nan, to the Samson Memorial in Cornwall to celebrate Lou's selection as the 2026 award winner.

The honor is competitive. Faculty members nominate three seniors. The senior class then votes to elect their Good Citizen. Guilmette, who lives in Monkton with her family, is known and respected for her thirst for knowledge, warmth, leadership, perseverance and teamwork. Her outstanding essay discussed the qualities needed by a good citizen to renew and strengthen democracy. Guilmette expresses love of country and respect for the views and beliefs of others as key to reinforcing the fabric of



WITH INSIGHT AND wit, Louisa Guilmette shares her essay with DAR members at the Samson Memorial in Cornwall last month. Her mother, Nan, listens alongside Louisa.

Photo by Carolyn Bausch

democratic society.

She writes: "In my opinion, the characteristics of a good American citizen are love for one's country and respect for others who have different views and beliefs from yourself ... A democratic government is a government that hears all voices. Not just one side or the other ... Coexisting in a country with people who are

different from you has always and will always be part of the thread of America. But if we strive to respect and listen others, democracy will be strengthened and compromises will be made ... I believe our country will change, as it always has, for the better."

The award is intended to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship and recognizes a student who possesses to an outstanding degree the attributes of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism, defined as love for and devotion to one's country. Lou leads by example and lives her devotion in a variety of ways — selflessly serving others who need a helping hand, mentoring youth at her church in Vergennes, supporting her athletic teams by mastering diverse skills that enable her to play a variety of positions as needed, radiating an aura of inclusiveness that puts her peers at ease and allows open discussion and exchange of ideas.

Guilmette was admitted early decision to Northeastern University in Boston, where she intends to pursue a BA in Biochemistry. She wants to become a pharmaceutical chemist who will create drugs to combat disease.

She is a second-generation DAR Good Citizen. Her mother, Nan, received the award in 1994. Congratulations to Lou and her family.

## Woman cited for DUI after stop

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police cited Brittney Brooks, 32, of Bristol for driving under the influence of drugs, following a traffic stop on Route 7 South on Feb. 27. Police said Brooks submitted to an evidentiary blood sample, the results of which are pending.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Helped a sibling contact their local brother on Feb. 23.
- On Feb. 23, arrested Cy Barretts, 30, of Middlebury on an active arrest warrant out of Massachusetts.
- Responded to a report of an unruly customer at a Court Street business on Feb. 24. Police said the customer had left upon their arrival.
- Gave a ride home to a New Haven resident who had missed their bus ride during the evening of Feb. 24.
- Investigated a harassment complaint in the Creek Road area on Feb. 24.
- Served a no-trespass order on a person who wasn't welcome at a Court Street business on Feb. 24.
- Got help for a local elderly person who was experiencing

## Middlebury Police Log

"disturbing and violent delusions and paranoia" on Feb. 24.

- Responded, with Middlebury Regional EMS, to the Elm Street area where a drunken person needed medical help on Feb. 25.
- Responded to the Residence at Otter Creek upon the passing of 89-year-old William Mraz on March 25. Police said Mraz died from natural causes.
- Served a no-stalking order on a person in the Court Street area on Feb. 25.
- Received a report of an alleged drunken driver on College Street during the evening of Feb. 26.
- Served a no-trespass order on a person who wasn't welcome at a North Pleasant Street address on Feb. 26.
- Received a report about a man allegedly walking in the middle of East Main Street during the evening of Feb. 26.
- Served a no-trespass order on a person not wanted on Middlebury College campus on Feb. 27.

• Launched an investigation of an alleged animal cruelty situation at a Route 7 North property on Feb. 27.

- Checked on the welfare of a woman seen walking on Route 7 South during the afternoon of Feb. 27.
- Investigated a report of a man passed out in a vehicle parked behind Hannaford Supermarket on Feb. 28.
- Helped a driver who had struck a deer on Exchange Street during the early evening of Feb. 28.
- Arrested Joshua Santos, 33, of Middlebury for the alleged violation of an abuse-prevention order on March 1.
- Responded to an attempted shoplifting incident at Shaw's Supermarket on March 1.
- Spoke with a parent involved in a local child custody dispute on March 1.
- Helped a woman who was experiencing a mental health crisis at the Residence at Otter Creek on March 1.
- Gave a ride home to a Porter Medical Center patient who had been discharged at around 1:15 a.m. on March 1.

## Man arrested on three warrants

BRISTOL — Bristol police on Feb. 19 arrested Joshua Emmons, 40, of Starksboro on three warrants. According to police, Emmons had failed to appear for previously scheduled criminal court hearings — one in Addison County and two in Chittenden County.

Between Feb. 15 and 21, Bristol police completed 24 foot patrols and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School seven times, at Bristol Elementary School seven times and at local businesses six times.

Police also processed eight fingerprint requests, conducted four sex offender registry checks and responded to one 911 hang-up call that was dialed accidentally.

In other recent activity, Bristol

## Bristol

Police Log

police:

- On Feb. 16 assisted Bristol Rescue on West Street.
- On Feb. 16 told a local business that a lock on its front door wasn't working properly.
- On Feb. 16 received a report of a lost dog that had gone missing on East Street. Police said the dog was found.
- On Feb. 16 helped someone with accessing mental health services.
- On Feb. 18 responded to a loose dog on Liberty Street. Police identified the owner,

returned the dog and issued a verbal warning for dog at large.

- On Feb. 18 received a report of a juvenile problem on Pleasant Street in Bristol.
- On Feb. 18 received a report of a motor vehicle passing a school bus with its red lights activated on Airport Drive.
- On Feb. 18 assisted Vermont State Police on Monkton Road.
- On Feb. 19 police and Bristol's community resource specialist helped Mount Abraham Union Middle/High School with a truancy concern.
- On Feb. 19 received a report of a noise similar to gun shots or fireworks on North Street. Police did not identify the source of the noise.

### Reader Comments

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

A Bridport subscriber writes:

*"Love it! Thank you."*

Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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# ARTS & LEISURE

The Addison Independent

March 5, 2026

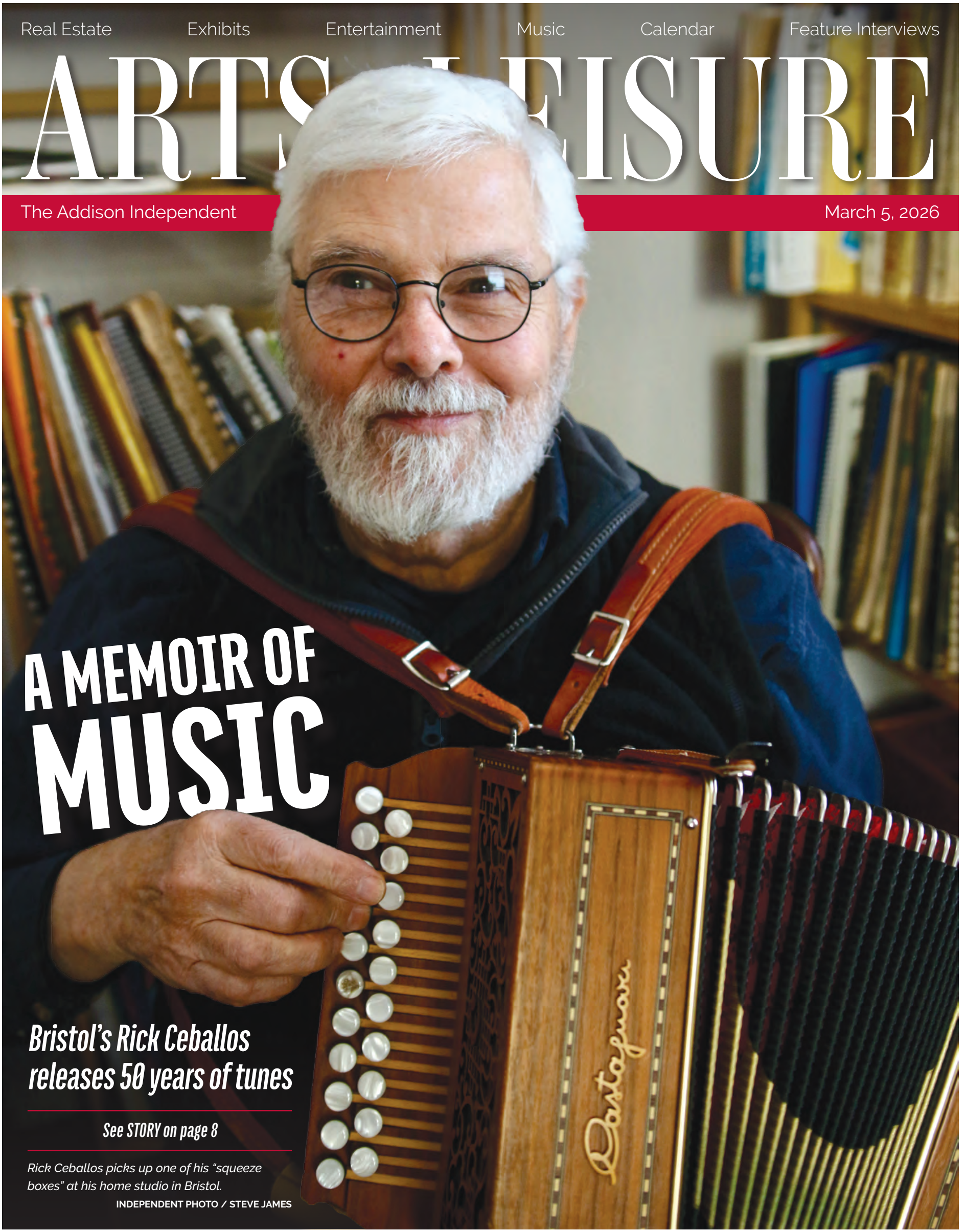
## A MEMOIR OF MUSIC

*Bristol's Rick Ceballos  
releases 50 years of tunes*

See *STORY* on page 8

*Rick Ceballos picks up one of his "squeeze  
boxes" at his home studio in Bristol.*

INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES



# 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](http://WWW.TOWNHALLTHEATER.ORG)  
OR 802-382-9222



# FILM REVIEW

## Bob Mackie on Film

### More than a parade of glitter and feathers

The new documentary film, "Bob Mackie: Naked Illusion," is a glitter-drenched joyride through the career of the man who believed that subtlety is overrated and feathers are a basic human right.



By **JAY CRAVEN**

If you've ever gasped at Cher in a sheer, beaded, gravity-defying "how is that even legal?" gown — that's Mackie. If you've seen Diana Ross sweep across a stage like a sequined empress — Mackie again. If Elton John ever looks to you like a rhinestone comet — you know who to thank. Bob Mackie doesn't just dress stars — he amplifies them.

"Bob Mackie: Naked Illusion" explores the psychology of transformation — how clothing can become armor, mischief, satire, or liberation. Still active and imaginative at 87, Mackie emerged from the golden age of television variety shows, designing for The Carol Burnett Show, where comedy and couture collided weekly. His sensibility — witty, theatrical, unapologetically glamorous — helped define American pop spectacle during the 1970s and beyond. Mackie understood that glamour can be satire, that exaggeration can be power, and that camp, done right, is a form of rebellion.

"Naked Illusion" is a love letter to theatrical audacity. To bare midriffs and beaded bodysuits. To capes with the aerodynamic properties of small aircraft. To the radical idea that being "too much" is exactly enough.

For audiences who enjoy film, fashion, music, or the art of reinvention, this documentary is both a backstage pass and a cultural time capsule. It celebrates a designer who understood that glamour, done right, is never superficial.

In an age of safe styling and algorithm-approved minimalism, Bob Mackie reminds us that fashion can still strut, wink, and blow a kiss to the back row.

Come for the sequins. Stay for the audacity.

"Naked Illusion" premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and will screen as part of the Middlebury New Filmmakers Select Series. Showtime will be at 7 p.m., on Wednesday, March 11, at the Marquis Theater in Middlebury. The screening will be followed by a Zoom conversation with the film's director, Matthew Miele. Tickets are available at [middleburymarquis.com](http://middleburymarquis.com).

# All the Rivers rises to the Flynn on March 11

MUSIC ENSEMBLE CELEBRATES IMMIGRANT VOICES IN VERMONT

**A**ll the Rivers is a global ensemble featuring over 20 international musicians from 10 countries who now call Vermont home. The vibrant group will headline the Flynn Main Stage in Burlington on March 11 for an uplifting benefit concert in support of immigrant communities across the state.

Founded in 2024 by musical director and activist Avi Salloway (Billy Wylder / Bombino), All the Rivers emerged in response to increasing political, environmental and social pressures facing immigrant communities worldwide. Singing in six languages and weaving musical traditions from around the globe, the group draws audiences into a powerful experience of story and connection — amplifying immigrant voices while celebrating the cultural richness Vermont’s newest communities bring to the state.

The performance on March 11 will feature the Burlington-based Congolese Choir; West African percussionists; Steeve Valcourt and Nadine Niles of Haiti’s Lakou Mizik; Colombian singer-songwriter Cintia Lovo; balafon master Ousmane Camara of Guinea; and violinist Ernesto Villalobos of Veracruz, Mexico, in collaboration with Salloway and his bandmates.

Weybridge resident Emily Landenberger serves as the Marketing & Communications Director for All the Rivers and is inspired to “show up.”

“I’ve lived in Addison County for more than 20 years, and I’ve never felt more clearly how important it is that we show up for one another,” she said. “Right now, many of our immigrant neighbors are navigating fear, uncertainty, and political hostility. Showing up for All the Rivers at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts on March 11 is one concrete, joyful, and powerful way we can stand alongside them.”

Proceeds from the event will help meet immediate needs while building bridges between communities, direct service organizations, and artists whose leadership and cultural contributions strengthen Vermont’s social fabric and foster long-term change. Looking ahead, All the Rivers will expand its impact with a debut studio album, a documentary film, and performances and workshops across Vermont and the Northeast.

“If we believe Addison County is a place of welcome, then this is a moment to live that belief,” Landenberger added. “Come listen. Come celebrate. Come be in the room. Let’s make it unmistakably clear that we value the creativity, resilience and cultural brilliance our immigrant neighbors bring to Vermont — and that they are not alone.”

For more info visit [alltherivers.org](http://alltherivers.org). For tickets to the March 11 show at the Flynn Theater in Burlington, visit [flynnvt.org/Events/2026/3/ALL-THE-RIVERS](http://flynnvt.org/Events/2026/3/ALL-THE-RIVERS). Want a local connection? Reach out to Emily at [emily@alltherivers.org](mailto:emily@alltherivers.org).

“COME LISTEN. COME CELEBRATE. COME BE IN THE ROOM. **LET’S MAKE IT UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR THAT WE VALUE THE CREATIVITY, RESILIENCE AND CULTURAL BRILLIANCE OUR IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORS BRING TO VERMONT.**”

– Emily Landenberger



This vibrant group will headline the Flynn Main Stage in Burlington on March 11 for an uplifting benefit concert in support of immigrant communities across the state.

PHOTO / LUKE AWTRY

**SEE A VIDEO Online!**  
ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM



**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**



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See the full 2025-2026 season:  
[go.middlebury.edu/pas](http://go.middlebury.edu/pas)



# ART ON EXHIBIT

## Two British greats Turner vs. Constable take the screen

Step inside Tate Britain's groundbreaking exhibition comparing Britain's greatest rival painters — J.M.W. Turner's blazing emotional landscapes versus John Constable's pastoral realism.

How?

Come to Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on Wednesday, March 11, at 11 a.m., to see the monthly art exhibition film screening. This Great Art Wednesdays series runs from October to May.

This coming Wednesday, celebrate the 250th anniversary of Turner and Constable's births, with a new documentary that explores their intertwined lives and legacies alongside the groundbreaking Tate exhibition.

Born within a year of each other, both Turner and Constable used landscape painting to reflect the changing world around them. Discover unexpected sides to both artists with intimate views of sketchbooks and personal items and insights from leading experts.

Turner's blazing sunsets and sublime scenes from his travels and Constable's idealized depictions of beloved places from home whipped the public of



Compare J.M.W. Turner and John Constable classic works during Great Art Wednesday's screening of these two British painters on exhibit at the Tate.

the time into a frenzy of enthusiasm. Constable represents the very best of the old school of realism and pastoral nostalgia; Turner, an exciting new way of depicting emotion and dreamlike impressions. Critics compared their starkly different styles to a clash of "fire and water."

Tickets are \$15, with general seating. Arrive early for best seat selection (doors open 30 minutes before showtime).

Questions? Email tickets@townhalltheater.org, or call 802-382-9222. Box office hours are Monday-Friday, from 12-5 p.m.

## New juried show features paper

Paper — something this newspaper is just a little bit familiar with — is the theme of a new exhibit at Edgewater Gallery at the Falls (1 Mill St in Middlebury). The juried show, "The Work of Paper," features 30 artworks, selected from over 200 entries nation-wide, and is on view now through March 28. There will be a Juried Award Reception on Saturday, March 7, from 3-5 p.m.

### ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

Paper is one of the most familiar and flexible artistic materials. It can be drawn on, folded, cut, layered, printed, woven, or cast, among many other things. It carries the weight of both idea and labor, holding marks, textures and traces of process. This exhibition looks at paper not just as a surface, but as something that does work: it holds, supports, conceals, absorbs, resists and transforms.

Artists were invited to submit work that explores what paper can do and

what paper can mean. The exhibit includes handmade paper, collage, drawing, printmaking, artists' books, sculpture, pulp work, and mixed-media experiments where paper plays a vital role.

Selections were made by juror Danny Volk.

### FEATURED ARTISTS

- Alyssa Oxley
- Diane Sophrin
- Marcie Scudder
- Patricia LeBon Herb
- Tamara Sullivan
- Imi Hwangbo
- Ania Gilmore
- Irene Cole
- Marcia Vogler
- Susan White
- Hasso Ewing
- Dona Mara
- Judy Bush
- Ruby Silvius
- Chip Haggerty
- Carole McNamee
- Peter Anderson
- Wendy Davis
- Dianne Shullenberger
- Chris Perry
- Julie Dunigan
- Cristina Hajosy
- Cathy Osman
- Kathy Schwartz
- Lian Brehm

See PAPER on page 15



**JESSICA'S**  
AT  
SWIFT HOUSE INN

## 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

## Lecture & Lunch

### FREE LECTURE ON AFRICAN ART EXHIBIT

Assistant Professor Marguerite Lenius will discuss the current exhibition "Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury," on Friday, March 6, from 12:30-1:15 p.m., at the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury. Participants of the fall 2025 seminar "Exhibiting African Art: History, Theory, Praxis" contributed to the exhibition design and content to challenge imposed boundaries which have long influenced global views of Africa. Free and open to the public. Following the lecture, a lunch will be served in the lower lobby of MAC.



# ART ON EXHIBIT

## BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD

7 Center St, Brandon.

For more info visit [brandonartistsguild.org](http://brandonartistsguild.org) or call 802-247-4956.

**"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.

## EDGEWATER AT THE FALLS

1 Mill Street, Middlebury.

For more info visit [edgewatergallery.com](http://edgewatergallery.com), call 802-458-0098 or email [info@edgewatergallery-vt.com](mailto:info@edgewatergallery-vt.com).

**"The Work of Paper,"** featuring 30 artworks, selected from over 200 entries nation-wide, juried and curated by Danny Volk. Artists were invited to submit work that explores what paper can do and what paper can mean. There will be a Juried Award Reception on Saturday, March 7, from 3-5 p.m. On view through March 28.

## JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant Street, Middlebury

Visit [townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery](http://townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery) or call 802-382-9222 for more info.

**"Wild Encounters."** McKenna Dickerson and Matthew Dickerson (daughter-in-law and father-in-law) will share images of encounters with the natural world, especially in the wilder places of our public lands: national parks, national forests, and state parks. 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](http://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](http://middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions)

**"Angels & Ghosts"** features evocative oil paintings from artist Damian Stamer's acclaimed "Collaboration Series," that emerge from an artistic partnership between human creativity and artificial intelligence. This exhibit was curated by Dexter Wimberly, and offers a unique meditation on how

See EXHIBITS on page 15

Get your exhibit listed.

EMAIL ELSIE: [elsie@addisonindependent.com](mailto:elsie@addisonindependent.com)



**ARIES:** March 21/April 20. A collaboration brings out your best side, Aries. Someone else's strengths may complement your drive right now. You'll get a lot of things done this week.

**TAURUS:** April 21/May 21. Your patience pays off in a relationship, Taurus. A long-term goal you share with a partner starts to move into the planning stages this week. Enjoy the excitement ahead.

**GEMINI:** May 22/June 21. Gemini, joyful news arrives via a friend in the next few days. Celebrate the successes of others, as your own turn for good news is right around the corner.

**CANCER:** June 22/July 22. This week you may have the opportunity to find beauty in small things, Cancer. A simple walk or a quiet meal with a loved one can bring about peace and insight.

**LEO:** July 23/Aug. 23. You are the life of the party right now, Leo. Your warmth draws people to you, making this a great time for networking. A job offer may come from your efforts.

**VIRGO:** Aug. 24/Sept. 22. An act of kindness you performed recently may come back to you in surprising ways, Virgo. The universe will reward your generous spirit. You may continue to pay it forward.

**LIBRA:** Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Figure out the perfect middle ground between work responsibilities and fun this week, Libra. If you delegate some of your tasks, you may free up time for personal enjoyment.

**SCORPIO:** Oct. 24/Nov. 22. Scorpio, optimism is your guiding light this week. Your "can-do" attitude may inspire others who cross your path in the days to come. Lots will get done in little time.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Deep conversations may lead to a breakthrough, Sagittarius. You might start to understand someone else or a situation on a whole new level.

**CAPRICORN:** Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Capricorn, financial stability is something you should carefully consider this week. A smart decision you made in the past may not be the best way to continue forward.

**AQUARIUS:** Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Aquarius, you may feel a strong draw toward community or giving back this week. Helping out a neighbor will bring you satisfaction, or you can volunteer.

**PISCES:** Feb. 19/March 20. It's important to trust your intuition, Pisces. This is leading you toward a very happy coincidence by the end of the week. Someone special becomes involved.

## FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

**MARCH 6** — Gabriel Garcia Marquez, novelist, Nobel Laureate (d)  
**MARCH 7** — Maurice Ravel, composer (d)

**MARCH 8** — Cyd Charisse, dancer (d)  
**MARCH 9** — Juliette Binoche, actor (62)  
**MARCH 10** — Bad Bunny, musician (32)  
**MARCH 11** — Terrence Howard, actor (57)  
**MARCH 12** — Tammy Duckworth, U.S. Senator (58)

# CALENDAR

## March 5-15

## 2026

### 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.

#### "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO SOUND: WAYS OF KNOWING" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, March 5, 7-9 p.m., Axinn Center Room 229. In this immersive sonic experience you'll hear the vibrations of the Golden Gate Bridge, footsteps of ants, recordings made a century ago, silence turned into music and much more. Performance followed by a Q&A with co-producers Chris Hoff and Sam Harnett. Free. To reserve your free ticket go online to [tinyurl.com/SoundatMC](http://tinyurl.com/SoundatMC).

#### "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](http://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](http://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. Complimentary light refreshments. Free. More info at [brandonartistsguild.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

#### GARNET ROGERS IN LINCOLN.

Saturday, March 7, 7:30 p.m., Burnham Hall. With his smooth, dark baritone, his incredible range, and thoughtful, dramatic phrasing, Garnet Rogers is widely considered by fans and critics alike to be one of the finest singers anywhere. Tickets for

this Burnham Presents Series concert are on a sliding scale: \$20-\$30. For more info email [burnhampresents@gmail.com](mailto:burnhampresents@gmail.com) or visit [burnhampresents.org](http://burnhampresents.org).

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://midfilmfest.org).

*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](http://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, March 5

4 a.m. Democracy Now  
5 a.m. Press Conferences  
8 a.m. Congregational Service  
12 p.m. Selectboard  
10 p.m. Eckankar  
11 p.m. Democracy Now

#### Friday, March 6

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, March 7

4 a.m. Democracy Now  
5 a.m. Press Conferences  
8 a.m. All Things LGBTQ  
10 a.m. Selectboard  
4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service

5:30 p.m. Eckankar

6 p.m. Energy Week  
7 p.m. Catholic Mass  
8 p.m. Public Affairs

#### Sunday, March 8

5 a.m. Press Conferences  
9 a.m. Catholic Mass  
9:30 a.m. Press Conferences  
11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service  
4 p.m. Congregational Service  
6:30 p.m. Eckankar  
7 p.m. Catholic Mass  
11 p.m. Democracy Now

#### Monday, March 9

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  
11 p.m. Democracy Now

#### Tuesday, March 10

4 a.m. Democracy Now  
9:30 a.m. Eckankar

10 a.m. Selectboard

4 p.m. Congregational Church  
5:30 p.m. All Things LGBTQ  
7 p.m. Selectboard LIVE  
11 p.m. Democracy Now

#### Wednesday, March 11

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  
9:30 p.m. Eckankar  
11 p.m. Democracy Now

#### Channel 1091

#### Thursday, March 5

5 a.m. Tai Chi  
5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
7 a.m. Yoga for Kids  
7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s  
3:30 p.m. Cooking in Harmony  
4 p.m. High School Sports

#### Friday, March 6

4 a.m. Gardens, Science and Nature  
6 a.m. Tai Chi  
6:30 a.m. Yoga  
7:30 a.m. School Board Meetings  
2 p.m. Ethan Allen Homestead  
4 p.m. High School Sports

#### Saturday, March 7

5 a.m. Tai Chi  
6 a.m. Chair Yoga & Yoga  
7:30 a.m. AAUW Talk  
9 a.m. School Board Meeting/s  
3 p.m. High School Sports  
8 p.m. AAUW Talk

#### Sunday, March 8

5:30 a.m. Tai Chi  
6 a.m. Yoga  
7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s  
2 p.m. High School Sports

#### Monday, March 9

5:30 a.m. Tai Chi  
6 a.m. Chair Yoga

7 a.m. State Board of Education  
8 a.m. Authors and Poets  
3 p.m. High School Sports  
6:30 p.m. ACSD Board Meeting LIVE

#### Tuesday, March 10

5:30 a.m. Tai Chi  
6 a.m. Yoga  
8 a.m. School Board Meeting/s  
1 p.m. State Board of Education  
3 p.m. High School Sports  
7 p.m. Music from around the State

#### Wednesday, March 11

5 a.m. Tai Chi  
5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
7 a.m. State Board of Education  
9 a.m. School Board Meeting/s  
3 p.m. High School Sports  
9 p.m. Authors and Poets

## Top Pick

### Korean Drumming

Mondays in March, from 7-8 p.m., learn to play the traditional Korean percussion genre samulnori. At these drop-in classes, participants will start by learning technique and basic rhythms and progress to more complex rhythms and sequences. Free, open to the public, and no experience needed. This class is geared towards adults, and will be held at The Bunker (FIC 121) 203 Freeman Way in Middlebury. More info at [go.middlebury.edu/samulnori](http://go.middlebury.edu/samulnori).

**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

**"MEAN GIRLS THE MUSICAL" IN VERGENNES.** Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m., Vergennes Union High School. Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to miss this high-energy show that offers humor, fast-paced music, and mature themes. The Vergennes Union Middle/High School musical production is a spectacle to behold, and it always pleases. Purchase tickets at the door or online at [CUR8.com](http://CUR8.com).

**"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](http://addisonarts.org).

### FRIDAY, MARCH 13

**"MEAN GIRLS THE MUSICAL" IN VERGENNES.** Friday, March 13, 7 p.m., Vergennes Union High School. Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to

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**"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](http://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](mailto:cwbeckwith@yahoo.com) or visit [gmcbreadloaf.org](http://gmcbreadloaf.org).

**"MEAN GIRLS THE MUSICAL" IN VERGENNES.** Saturday, March 14, 3 p.m., Vergennes Union High School. Whether you're a "Mathlete" or a "Plastic," you won't want to miss this high-energy show that offers humor, fast-paced music, and mature themes. Purchase tickets at the door or online at [CUR8.com](http://CUR8.com).

**"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](http://townhalltheater.org). Free to attend with registration — donations are welcome and all proceeds will go to Migrant Justice.

**LIVE MUSIC BY HOT NEON MAGIC IN MIDDLEBURY.** Saturday, March 14, 7-10 p.m., Middlebury American Legion Post 14, 49 Wilson Rd. Dust off your leg warmers, tease up that hair and come dance the night away to '80s pop hits from the MTV era. Open to the public. Admission by donation.

**"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Saturday, March 14, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 12 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**SONGS AND ARIAS AT MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.** Saturday, March 14, 7:30 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center,

72 Porter Field Road. Music Department vocal students present a lively evening of songs and arias.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 15

**VERMONT CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, March 15, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. The First annual Vermont Chocolate Festival celebrates fine and craft chocolate with tastings, live demos, s'mores, games, raffles and more. Presented by Adagio Chocolates. \$30 general admission; \$50 generous admission; \$100 VIP; \$20 students; free for children 12 and under. Admission includes access to all demos and presentations and one chocolate tasting. Family pass discount and tasting add-ons available. Tickets at [townhalltheater.org](http://townhalltheater.org).

**"A ROOM IN THE CASTLE" IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, March 15, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. See March 12 listing. Tickets \$39 generous/\$33 standard/\$28 budget/\$15 student. More info at [addisonarts.org](http://addisonarts.org).

**MY DENTIST'S SON IN FERRISBURGH.** Sunday, March 15, 3-4:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall 3279 Route 7. This is a space to share tales of magic and miracle and to find meaning in stories that don't seem to fit. All are welcome to share or simply listen. For more information and to RSVP, visit [mydentistsson.com](http://mydentistsson.com).

**CHORAL EVENSING IN MIDDLEBURY.** Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m., St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on the Green. The Choir of St. Stephen's will sing music of the Renaissance at Choral Evensong, including Adrian Batten's Fourth Evening Service and G.P. da Palestrina's famous motet, Sicut Cervus. 2025-26 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Palestrina, whose use of dissonance and polyphony is still studied by aspiring professional musicians.

See more

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# A Shadow On the Wall

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Addison Repertory Theatre

Presented by  
The Shelburne Players

This show  
contains mature  
themes and potentially  
sensitive content

tickets: [www.shelburneplayers.com](http://www.shelburneplayers.com)



7 pm shows  
March 13, 14, 20, 21

2 pm shows  
March 15 & 21

5420 Shelburne Road

# Bristol musician publishes 50 years of folk music

**R**

By **ELSIE LYNN PARINI**

ick Ceballos didn't set out to write a memoir, but after compiling 43 of his favorite tunes that he's written since the early '70s — well, that's exactly what he's done.

"The Rising Steam" is a self-published, delightfully homemade collection of jigs, reels, waltzes and other folk tunes that this Bristol musician has written over the past 50 years for

banjo or button accordion. Each tune in the tune book is captioned (many even with photos) that immediately transports the reader to a moment of Ceballos's life.

"After the Storm," for example, shows a picture of Ceballos's backyard garden snuggled by snow. The caption reads: "I wrote this tune on a Sunday morning in the silent aftermath of a winter storm."

"Everything was so calm and peaceful, and all the sound was muffled because of all the snow," Ceballos said during an interview at his home studio in January, just before he picked up a banjo to play. "This tune came from that feeling."

The pages of his newly published book take us through Ceballos's life as a musician, from high-energy bluegrass he learned in Maine as a young man, to the contra dance revival, to jigs — that Ceballos found "fairly easy to play (on the banjo)

— maybe because I never had a preconceived notion about their difficulty."

"Maple Tree Jig" was the first tune and the first jig that Ceballos ever wrote in the early '70s in Maine. The track's image shows a bearded, flannel-wearing crew with young Ceballos front and center playing the banjo.

Rick Ceballos, now 77, attended college in Maine and that's where he first met Dave Livingston — an early mentor of traditional music. Life brought him

back to his family's cut-flower business in his Pennsylvania hometown during the '80s, and then to Bristol 10 years later where he's resided ever since.

Ceballos worked as the technical services manager at Gardener's Supply for many years, had his own cut-flower business out of his Bristol backyard and started his own housecleaning business.

**"THE KEY FOR ME COMES FROM LISTENING...A TUNE GETS IN YOUR HEAD AND IT COMES OUT OF YOUR FINGERS."**

— Rick Ceballos

"You name it, I've done it," Ceballos said, acknowledging that music has never really paid the bills.

Except for that two-year stint he did as the artistic director of the Champlain Valley Folk Festival around 2010.

"I've always loved music," Ceballos said. "I grew up listening to doo-wop and soul... When I was about 10 or 12 years old I started lessons in guitar."

When living in Maine after college he played with a group who needed a banjo, so he "picked it up."

"Chris Prickett gave me my first banjo," Ceballos recalled. "I fell into it, and I loved it."

Ceballos went from blues and folk, to bluegrass, to old-timey tunes. "It felt like we kept going backwards," he said with a soft chuckle. "The way we were going, soon we were going to be sitting around the fire beating sticks."

For Ceballos writing came as soon as he began playing.

"The key for me comes from listening," he said. "Then a tune gets in your head and it comes out of your fingers."

Enter Lausanne Allen, a folk musician from Starksboro, who met Ceballos back in the early '90s at music gatherings at his house in Bristol.

"I transcribe the material that comes my way," Allen said matter-of-factly during a conversation this week. "I have been transcribing Rick's tunes in my notebooks since we met."

Fast forward nearly 35 years, and the musical friendship between Ceballos and Allen has become something rare and special.

"Bands always change and evolve over the years but our musical friendships remained constant," said Allen when considering her longtime connection with Ceballos. "We are each other's irreplaceable memories. It's an abiding friendship. There's a real musical, mutual acceptance; you accept all of who they are — you don't polish the edges. We're not trying to shape each other; we just share together. And we continue to stretch and grow as we incorporate new materials."

With Allen's transcription skills, the pair would often look back at her notebooks to recall a tune they had nearly forgotten.

"I suggested he make a tune book many times," Allen said, adding it wasn't until about six or seven years ago that he started considering it more seriously.

Ceballos suffered a stroke around that time, which muted his performance schedule.

Allen visited her friend weekly during Ceballos's recovery and would "mine his tunes"; Ceballos



Together Rick Ceballos, Alice Leeds and Lausanne Allen helped to create and publish a book of Ceballos's original tunes.

COURTESY PHOTO



Rick Ceballos's music room in his home studio in Bristol is neatly stacked with all sorts of banjos, accordians and other folk instruments. INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES



Rick Ceballos picks up a special banjo to play at his home in Bristol decades after he originally wrote "Maple Tree Jig" in the 1970s while living in Maine and playing with the Maine Country Dance Orchestra.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES



Maine Country Dance Orchestra, early 70s. That's me front & center.

25

would play and Allen would take dictation, transcribing the music. "So many of the tunes surprised me," Allen said. "That's when I realized how many songs he's written... We're all here just for a short while, this is Rick's mark."

Though "The Rising Steam" is just a sampling of Ceballos's musical repertoire, it gathers an impressive catalogue of friends, bands, mentors, significant moments and family that have shaped Ceballos.

Take another example: Eight years ago, Ceballos and his wife Alice Leeds visited Cuba — the first time Ceballos had been back for more than 61 years.

"My father is Cuban," he said. "My dad was Ricky Ricardo."

Wait, so does that mean...

"No, my mom was not like Lucy."

Still loveable though, to be sure.

When Ceballos visited Cuba, he got to meet his cousin, and made a connection with a Cuban instrument called the tres. Ceballos wrote "Rumpicabeza," which means "head scratcher," after that visit.

Looking back on 50 years of music and memory, what stands out?

The two CDs Ceballos made with David Gusakov

and Matt Witten (DaddyLongLegs) were highlights, said Ceballos, reaching down to pet Buster the cat, who also likes to hang out in the music room.

"I didn't want to do a long-drawn-out session," Ceballos remembered, "It's always better when it's fresh and more spontaneous."

The bandmates worked at Michael Chorney's Lincon studio to record. "It was a good, relaxed experience," Ceballos said.

As far as gigs go, both Allen and Ceballos remember their regular weekly gig at Ri Rá Irish Pub in Burlington, where they played with Pat McKenzie for something like five years. And more recently, Ceballos cited the first concert that kicked off the annual musical library tour series (now in its third season) when DaddyLongLegs played at Bristol's Lawrence Memorial Library.

A quick side note: Ukulele Clare and Rebecca Padula will be playing at Russell Memorial Library in Monkton on March

20, as part of this year's Winter Into Spring Musical Library Tour in the Five Town area. The concert is free and starts at 7:30 p.m.

In addition to Ceballos's own music, he has had a major role in promoting other musicians' music, too; like the monthly Cabin Fever Series that took

place at Bristol's Walk Over Gallery, and now the annual library tours.

"I do promotion as much as I play music," Ceballos clarified. "It's been such an enriching thing for me, because I've got to work and meet so many incredible musicians."

Don't be fooled, the show ain't over.

A memoir has an annoyingly conclusive vibe, but Ceballos has every intention to keep promoting and playing music.

Good!

"As I've gotten older, and have been listening and writing more, I really love the atmospheric music these days," Ceballos explained. "I so appreciate the spaces between the notes — it gives them so much more meaning."

*Editor's Note: Get your copy of "The Rising Steam: Original Tunes by Rick Ceballos" by emailing him directly at aec@gmavt.net, or at Recycled Reading in downtown Bristol. There will also be a few copies at the Bristol library.*

**"WE ARE EACH OTHER'S IRREPLACEABLE MEMORIES. IT'S AN ABIDING FRIENDSHIP... YOU DON'T POLISH THE EDGES. WE'RE NOT TRYING TO SHAPE EACH OTHER; WE JUST SHARE TOGETHER."**

— Lausanne Allen

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# PUZZLES

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## ACROSS

- 1. Unit of dry measure
- 5. One who defies authority
- 8. Social media giant
- 12. Render holy
- 14. "Much \_\_ about nothing"
- 15. Computer manufacturer
- 16. Creed
- 18. Immoral act
- 19. Mountain pass
- 20. Winged nut
- 21. Don't know when yet
- 22. Elected officials
- 23. Corrupt tendencies
- 26. Popular adult beverage
- 30. Made a mistake
- 31. Morally correct
- 32. Type of whale
- 33. Portable conical

- tent
- 34. Native people of the Congo
- 39. More (Spanish)
- 42. Classroom implements
- 44. Cognizant of
- 46. One who tells
- 47. Free from bondage
- 49. Thick piece of something
- 50. Containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms
- 51. Removed from the record
- 56. Legendary singer
- 57. Broke up the earth
- 58. Hunting expedition
- 59. Contributes
- 60. Unit of work or energy
- 61. Wreckage on the

- sea bed
- 62. Affirmative! (slang)
- 63. Witness
- 64. Scrape (Archaic)

## DOWN

- 1. "\_\_ and flows"
- 2. Humble request for help
- 3. A position of leadership
- 4. Continent
- 5. Adherent of a particular religion
- 6. Things that can be eaten
- 7. Self-governing Netherlands territory
- 8. Long-tailed crow
- 9. Repeated
- 10. Bluish greens
- 11. Humanities
- 13. Someone who serves in the armed

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## Sudoku

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Puzzles come in three grades: easy, medium and difficult.

Level: Medium

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 13.

- forces
- 17. Labor (Spanish)
- 24. Zero
- 25. Shared by involving three parties
- 26. Queens ballplayer
- 27. Consumed
- 28. Rest here please
- 29. Men's fashion accessory
- 35. American time

- 36. Sound unit
- 37. They \_\_
- 38. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 40. Places to play video games
- 41. A sudden attack of illness
- 42. When you hope to arrive
- 43. Charges

- 44. Actress Seyfried
- 45. A tributary of the Ohio River
- 47. Omit when speaking
- 48. Armored fish
- 49. Remain
- 52. From a distance
- 53. Adventure story
- 54. Geological times
- 55. Eat dinner

# Stay Sharp

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## Spotlight @ Sparrow Chris Nathan

mixed media

Plein air ink reflections on home, place, and moments easily missed.

On view thru March



# Pet of the Week



Originally from Tennessee, Lulu found her forever home after being adopted in Connecticut, and she's been spreading joy in Middlebury ever since.

A few things to know about our girl: she's an enthusiastic face-licker (consider yourself warned if you get too close!), a devoted chicken connoisseur, and very stylish, as pic #2 clearly attests. She also loves meeting new furry friends and is always up for a play date.

Dislikes? Kibble (chicken or nothing, thank you very much) and tooth-brushing time, a frequent battle of wills.

Her name means "an outstanding example of a particular type of person or thing," and we couldn't agree more. If you'd like to say hello, you can usually spot her strolling down College Street with her daddy around noon. She'd love to meet you!



Submitted by Germán Reyes of Middlebury.

**Pet of the WEEK**

Send us a picture of your pet!

news@addisonindependent.com

Psst... It's free!

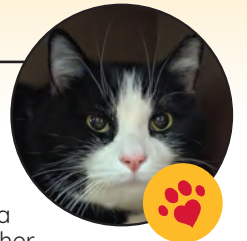
## Pets In Need

### HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

#### Tattiana

**Tattiana** is a sweet girl who very much wants to be loved but is still working on her confidence. She loves shoulder scratches and physical affection! With her quiet demeanor, she will wait for you to approach her first. We're hoping a family will meet her and fall in love with her despite her initial hesitation to introduce herself.



#### Ralphie



I'm **Ralphie**, and I am what you call a "loaf rabbit". I enjoy lounging, observing, and being near the people I trust. I'm not a constant attention-seeking, snuggly bunny, and that's okay. (most bunnies aren't!). I show my affection in quieter ways: coming out to check on you, sharing space, accepting gentle petting when I choose- trusting you more and more each day. These moments mean a lot to me. I do best in a calm environment, with lots of space to lounge about with people who understand that not every rabbit is an Instagram cuddle bun!

#### Cicada



**Cicada** is a handsome, happy boy with a lot of love to give! He gets excited easily and can be a bit jumpy for greetings, but is working hard on his "sit" cue. He's lived with other dogs and seems to enjoy the company of a canine friend. He is house-trained and crate-trained. When not outside to play, he loves cardboard box enrichment and puzzle toys. Cicada can live with older children and teenagers. He has no exposure to cats.

#### Pumba & Nala



**Pumba and Nala** are a brother/sister duo looking for a home together. They were surrendered when their owner lost their housing. Nala is a lot more outgoing than Pumba, but Nala dotes on her brother, and they often cuddle and sleep side by side. Pumba is a shy and gentle boy. If you sit by him, he will cuddle right up into your lap, lie his head on your arm, and refuse to leave! He takes a lot of comfort in Nala. If you're looking for a low-energy, darling pair of cuddle bugs, these are the kitties for you.



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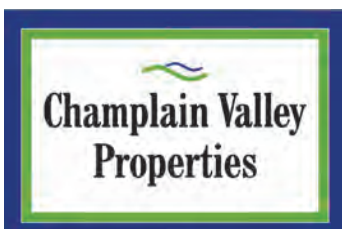


# THE HOME

A LOOK AT LOCAL PROPERTIES FOR SALE

## Must see multi-unit property in Bristol

Located just below the village is this solid duplex that's ready for a new owner. The building has had many upgrades including a new roof and new hot water heater in 2020. Side B has been recently redone and new mini-splits added on both sides. There is parking for at least two cars for each unit. The first unit has a kitchen/living combination with one bedroom and bathroom upstairs. The second unit has an additional bedroom. This would make an excellent investment opportunity, or an affordable owner-occupied property, live in one side and rent the other.



*This week's property is managed by Champlain Valley Properties.  
More info at [champlainvalleyproperty.net](http://champlainvalleyproperty.net).*



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## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

March 5, 2026

E	P	H	A		R	E	B		M	E	T	A	
B	L	E	S	S	A	D	O		A	C	E	R	
B	E	L	I	E	F	S	I	N	G	H	A	T	
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7	6	5	1	4	2	3	9	8
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5	8	1	3	6	9	2	7	4
6	7	4	2	8	1	5	3	9
4	5	7	8	1	6	9	2	3
1	2	8	7	9	3	4	6	5
3	9	6	4	2	5	8	1	7

# ASK A MASTER GARDENER

## LATE WINTER PRUNING



Deborah Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener who volunteers as a garden columnist and participates in Bennington County Extension Master Gardener Chapter activities.

**J**ust because there's snow on the ground doesn't mean there's nothing to do in the garden until spring. Late winter is often the best time to prune many deciduous trees and shrubs while they're still dormant.

By **DEBORAH J. BENOIT**

Pruning during dormancy poses less stress on trees and shrubs than when they're actively growing. The absence of foliage allows unobstructed observation of their structure. It's



Late winter is a great time to prune most shrubs and trees. Look for limbs that cross or rub others and remove.

PHOTO / DEBRA HELEBA

easier to identify damage and crossing limbs and to assess their overall health.

Look for broken, damaged, crossed, or diseased branches to be removed. Check for limbs that meet the trunk at a narrow (less than 45 degree) angle. They're more likely to be weak and susceptible to breaking. Consider whether branches should be thinned, making foliage less dense and allowing more light in and better air circulation

to help minimize foliar diseases. Once you've determined what needs to be done for the plant's health, consider whether pruning might improve or maintain shape or height.

While many trees and shrubs benefit from late winter pruning, some don't. Avoid late winter pruning of plants that bloom in early spring, such as lilacs (*Syringa*), azaleas (*Rhododendron*) and forsythia (*Forsythia*), or you'll see far fewer flowers this year. They set buds soon after flowering and are best pruned right after their flowers fade.

If you grow hydrangeas, before pruning confirm that the variety you grow blooms on new wood — such as *Hydrangea arborescens* (smooth hydrangea) and *Hydrangea paniculata* (panicked hydrangea). On the other hand, *Hydrangea macrophylla* (big leaf hydrangea) and *Hydrangea quercifolia* (oakleaf hydrangea) bloom on old wood and shouldn't be pruned in late winter.

You'll need some basic tools. Bypass-style hand pruners are useful for trimming small branches. Loppers come in various sizes and can handle branches up to two inches in diameter. A pruning saw works best for larger branches.

Be sure your tools are clean and sharp. You're more likely to be injured by a dull blade, and it's

more difficult to make a clean cut. A dirty blade could spread disease (even in winter).

Take the time to assess the shrub or tree and decide on an end result before you make that first cut. Prune judiciously. You can always remove additional pieces, but it's impossible to undo a careless or excessive cut.

Select a branch and locate a bud to identify a node near where you want to make the cut. Prune just above the node (bud), cutting downward at a 45-degree angle. This helps avoid moisture accumulation that could encourage disease.

If removing an entire branch, cut outside the branch collar (the area of raised bark where the branch emerges), but don't leave a large stub.

Disinfect pruning tools between cuts. This is particularly important when removing diseased parts. Don't compost diseased prunings. To avoid stressing the plant, don't remove more than one-third of a shrub or tree.


If you're still wondering why you should prune in late winter, consider this: it gets you outdoors and doesn't involve shoveling. Better yet, it gets you back into the garden, and isn't that what we're all dreaming of in the waning days of winter?

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## EXHIBITS

*continued from page 5*

might navigate our relationship with AI. On view Jan. 20-April 19.

### “Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury”

highlights how unequal, and at times violent, encounters among Africa, Europe and the United States have long configured Art History’s understandings of African art, and how our interests and epistemologies infuse, shape and distort our representations of Africa in the museum. On view Jan. 20-April. 19.

### PHOTOPPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury  
For more info visit [photoplacegallery.com](http://photoplacegallery.com).

“On the Street.” Celebrate the opening of “On the Street,” a fine art photography exhibition exploring the unscripted rhythm

of everyday life through powerful street photography. Featuring work by photographers from around the world. Exhibition on view Feb. 6-28. Free.

“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](http://sparrowartsupply.com)

“Spotlight on Chris Nathan.” This exhibit features mixed media by Chris Nathan. Plein air ink reflections on home, place and moments easily missed. On view through the month of March.



## PAPER

*continued from page 4*

Sally Chapman  
Tabbatha Henry  
Dorsey Hogg

### ABOUT THE JUROR

This exhibition is in collaboration with the Curator for Southern Vermont Art Center (SVAC), Danny Volk,

who is the acting curator and juror for “The Work of Paper.” Volk has coordinated two exhibitions highlighting the use of paper in fine art at the SVAC, with Edgewater’s group show as a complementary feature. “On Paper” and “Paper Transformed,” at the SVAC, take place in Manchester simultaneously this season.

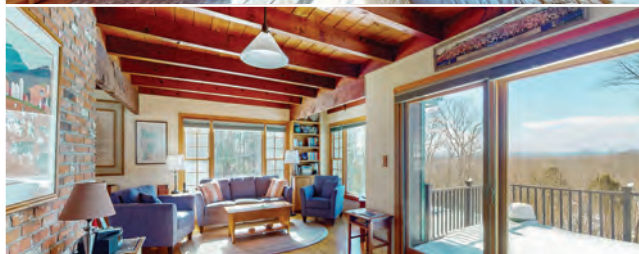
For more information about “The Work of Paper,” call the gallery at 802-458-0098 or email [info@edgewatergallery-vt.com](mailto:info@edgewatergallery-vt.com).



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*~ Sarah Peluso, Listing Agent*



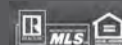
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Sat Mar 14 6:30pm  
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Jackson Gallery Presents  
**MUHS Student Art Exhibition**  
Reception Fri Mar 20  
5:00-6:30pm  
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THT Presents  
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