



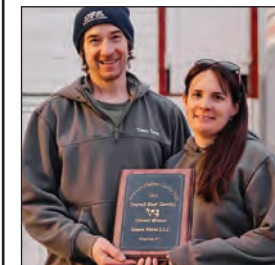
Groove time

Blues singer Gina Coleman will reopen Vergennes Opera House after a long break. Arts + Leisure.



Right stuff

Panther Audrey MacLean tells us how she scaled the heights of the cross country world. See Page 1B.



Best milk

Judges said a Vergennes farm had the highest-quality dairy in Vermont. See Page 6B.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Open space indoors

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS CONFER about placement of a conduit in the second-floor of the Ilsley Library addition going up in downtown Middlebury. After the \$17 million project is completed this summer, this space will house shelves for the library's approximately 45,000 books. Get a further peek inside with more photos on Page 10A.

Independent photo/Steve James

Buried but not forgotten

Vt. Gas pipeline issues resurface

By JOHN FLOWERS

NEW HAVEN — It's been around eight years since the last spade of dirt was shoveled atop of the Addison Natural Gas Project, largely consisting of a 43-mile-long pipeline from Colchester to Middlebury.

Out of sight, out of mind?

Nope.

Vermont Gas Systems (VGS) is back in front of the Vermont Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to address a series of five violations of the certificate of public good

it received in 2013 to proceed with the pipeline, which traverses numerous Addison County properties.

Among those providing testimony to the state regulator have been leaders of the towns of New Haven and Monkton, who have alleged — among other things — that the pipeline has been rising, in some areas above its required minimum four-foot depth. This phenomenon — disputed by VGS — is prompting concerns (See Gas pipeline, Page 8A)

State Rep. Matt Birong won't seek re-election

By JOHN FLOWERS

VERGENNES — Rep. Matthew Birong, D-Vergennes, won't seek another term representing the Addison-3 House district this November.

Birong, who chairs the House Committee on Government Operations & Military Affairs,

said during a recent phone interview that he's found service in the Legislature rewarding, but is now — at age 48 — planning the next phase of his professional and public service life.

"When I was fortunate enough to be elected the first time, I saw (See Birong, Page 19A)

Beeman navigating identity series plans

A few fault drag queen story hour

By MARIN HOWELL

NEW HAVEN — Members of the Beeman Elementary School community are planning a series of learning experiences to help students at the New Haven school further their understanding of what it means to be inclusive, empathetic and respectful of differences.

One aspect of the Understanding Identity series — a Drag Queen Story Hour — has received pushback from a handful of community members, who raised concerns on Front Porch

"Drag queen storytelling events ... teach all children to not fear what they don't understand, to embrace differences, and feel safe to express their own individuality."

— LuAnn Chiola

Forum and at a Mount Abraham Unified School District Board meeting.

Community members, school officials, and a member of the parent-teacher organization (PTO) helping plan the series have underscored that the story hour is age-appropriate and part of broader educational programming intended to help Beeman students feel safe and supported.

"What Drag Queen Story Hour is is not gay people coming in and flaunting sexuality and doing anything inappropriate." (See Beeman, Page 13A)



Chocolate brain trust

"WILLY WONKA," WHO made an appearance at Sunday's Vermont Chocolate Festival in Middlebury's Town Hall Theater, couldn't resist the sweets made by Dawn Wagner of Daily Chocolate of Vergennes. Organizers called the festival a phenomenal success. See more on Page 17A.

Independent photo/Steve James

Education reform hits home stretch in Vermont Legislature

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Lawmakers are heading into the stretch run of the 2026 legislative session with a to-do list that includes major reform of the state's education system, making the state more affordable for young couples, and at least a token stab at health care reform.

Oh, and officials are tackling these and other hefty issues with a lot less money in the state coffers than in recent years, as federal aid for Vermont's most vulnerable residents is on (See Education reform, Page 18A)

VFD building needs pricey reno or rebuild

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

VERGENNES — A six-member committee exploring options to fix the serious structural issues of the Vergennes Fire Station is leaning toward construction of a new station, though they'll only make a recommendation, not a final decision.

(See Vergennes, Page 13A)



By the way

As you might be aware, New Haven has, through the recent "New Haven Comes Together" community engagement program, prioritized organizing a housing taskforce with the goal of expanding housing opportunities in town. An (See By the way, Page 9A)

City's Lost Lantern is finding success

Whiskey bottlers called 'visionaries'

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

VERGENNES — Walking into Lost Lantern Whiskey is like taking a tour of the souvenirs Adam Polonski has collected over the years during road trips to vet whiskey distilleries throughout the country.

There might be a bottle that he approved during a trip down south or out west, or another filled with whiskies blended from multiple distilleries.

In either case, none of the spirits in the Vergennes store got there without Polonski visiting where it was produced in person. That level of attention to detail



ADAM POLONSKI AND Nora Ganley-Roper sniff whiskey they will blend into a libation sold through Lost Lantern, the couple's business in Vergennes. They were recently named "drink visionaries" by Food & Wine magazine.

Photo by Oliver Parini

has paid off. Polonski and his wife, co-founder and co-owner, Nora Ganley-Roper, were recently dubbed "drink visionaries" by Food & Wine magazine. The

self-described pair of "whiskey nerds" were among 12 honorees for the publication's inaugural designation. Those selected "are changing what — and why — we

pour," according to Food & Wine's website.

Ganley-Roper, who grew up in Weybridge, said being (See Lost Lantern, Page 15A)

Addy Indy wins award for best in New England

The Campus earns top collegiate honors

MIDDLEBURY — The Addison County Independent took top honors at the New England Newspaper Press Association's Better Newspaper Competition this past weekend in Portsmouth, N.H., winning first place in General Excellence among large weekly newspapers throughout the six states. The Independent took home 28 awards in all, including second place in General Excellence for advertising.

"It's always exciting and gratifying to be named among the top three individuals in each category, but to be named the best large weekly newspaper in New England is quite an accomplishment," said Independent publisher Angelo (See Addy Indy, Page 2A)

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A NO KINGS sign at the corner of Seymour and Middle Seymour streets in Middlebury announces the March 28 protest event.

Independent photo/Sarah Pope

No Kings Day returns to Middlebury

Protests across the state and country set for March 28

MIDDLEBURY — Millions of Americans will gather around the country on Saturday, March 28, to participate in the third No Kings Day protest. Here in Addison County, the group Middlebury Indivisible has organized a NKD event that is open to the entire community to peacefully come together to stand in opposition to the harm and violence of the Trump administration's authoritarian actions.

In June, nationally over 5 million people attended No Kings events. Over 7 million people attended No Kings events last October. In Vermont, 4% of the state's population showed up for the first No Kings, and 6% of Vermont's population showed up for No Kings 2. Organizers expect Vermont to break another record on March 28.

In Middlebury from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Town Green protesters will gather to sing, march and hear remarks from Associate Pastor Elizabeth Gleich of the Congregational Church of

Middlebury, State Treasurer Mike Picciak, and Third Act co-founder Bill McKibben. Tables with signs and information will have sign-up forms for ways to get involved. Coloring, button making and a community art project are planned.

Heidi Willis, an event organizer from Indivisible Middlebury, explains why this event matters:

"We need to say, loud and clear, that many millions of us in this country are appalled by the lawless wars and violence on our streets, and deeply alarmed by this administration's abandonment of the Constitution, the Rule of Law, and moral principles of honesty, accountability and compassion."

You can find a No Kings rally anywhere you happen to be in the United States at the event map at www.mobilize.us/nokings/ map including events planned in Brandon, Charlotte, Burlington and Montpelier. You can learn about a bus to Montpelier being organized by Bristol Indivisible at their website, www.bristolareaindivisible.org.

While the March 28 rally is the centerpiece of this No Kings protest, it is not the only event.

The day before, on Friday March 27, at 7 p.m., there will be a dramatic reading of an original play "Paul Revere Resists: A Celebration of Patriotic Refusal" at St. Stephen's On the Green in Middlebury.

The following weekend, on Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m. to noon, Middlebury Indivisible will hold a Resistance Cafe at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society meeting house. At the cafe, organizers will provide coffee, tea, baked goods and a host of ways community members can help strengthen our democracy.

A core principle behind all No Kings events is a commitment to nonviolent, lawful action. The organizers ask all participants to work together to ensure community safety.

Editor's note: This story was provided by Mike Roy of Middlebury Indivisible.

Campbell selected as new Ferrisburgh chair

FERRISBURGH — The Ferrisburgh selectboard unanimously elected Christopher Campbell to lead the body during a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday night.

Campbell succeeds former chair Clark Hinsdale, who did not re-run for his selectboard seat this past Town Meeting Day. Hinsdale's exit marked the end of a seven year run on the board,

and three years as its chair. Also on Tuesday, Wally Reed was elected vice chair. Campbell and Reed are both up for reelection next year.

Addy Indy

(Continued from Page 1A)
Lynn. Rounding out the top places in General Excellence this year were *Seven Days* and the *Provincetown (Mass) Independent* in a tie for second, and the *News & Citizen of Morrisville, Vt.*, in third.

Lynn noted *The Independent* is perennially in the top three to five newspapers in New England, placing third last year and first in 2023. Before 2023, the last time the *Independent* had won first in General Excellence was in 2015. The weekly division is divided into two circulation categories based on printed copies: papers below 5,000 circulation, and the larger division of newspapers with 5,000 and above.

THE CAMPUS NAMED BEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER!

Middlebury College's student-run newspaper, *The Campus*, also won first place among college publications and was named the New England College Newspaper of the Year. It was the first year *The Campus* had entered the contest. Former managing editor Madeleine Kaptein and former Business Manager Ting Cui, both of whom graduated from Middlebury in February, and current news editor Rachele Talbert, attended the

two-day conference along with nine who work with the *Addison Independent*.

Overall, the *Addison Independent* earned 9 first place awards, 12 seconds, and 7 thirds. Those awards were:

FIRST PLACE:

General Excellence News and overall; Excellence in Revenue, Collaboration and Partnerships; Contests; Advertiser Campaign (Christy Lynn and Shannon Hart); Best Health Ad (Christy Lynn); Best Ad Designer (Sarah Pope); Best Arts + Leisure Section (Elsie Lynn Parini); Best Sports Columnist (Karl Lindholm); Feature Photo (Steve James).

SECOND PLACE:

General Excellence for Advertising; Local Display Ad (Katy Foote and Sue Leggett); Advertiser Campaign (Christy Lynn and Elsie Lynn Parini); Events (for the Middlebury Maple Run — Christy Lynn, Elsie Lynn Parini and Angelo Lynn); Best Idea for Generating Revenue (staff); Excellence in Revenue, Collaboration and Partnerships (staff, and yes, the *Independent* won first and second in this category); Crime and Courts Reporting (John Flowers); Racial,

Ethnic or Gender Issue coverage (John Flowers); Editorial Writing (Angelo Lynn); General News and Sports Action photos (Steve James); Community Audience Involvement (Tom Morgan and news editor John McCright).

THIRD PLACE:

Advertiser Campaign (Katy Foote and Elsie Lynn Parini); Special Section, advertising supplement for the Middlebury Rec Guide (staff); Crime and Courts Reporting (Andy Kirkaldy); Living Page or Section (Elsie Lynn Parini); Local Election Coverage (staff for Town Meeting coverage); Sports Action Photo (Steve James); Sports Section, Andy Kirkaldy, Steve James and Jessie Raymond (who provided wrestling state tournament photos).

Addison Independent news reporter Sophia Keshmiri, who joined the *Independent* in late December and is now covering sports and the Vergennes region, also won first place for environmental reporting and a second place for a feature story in the Good News category while working for *The Keene (N.H.) Sentinel*. Keshmiri is a 2024 graduate of Middlebury College.



THIS PHOTO BY Addison Independent photographer Steve James was named best feature photo by the New England Newspaper and Press Association. It shows the Career Center's Flying Tigers Drone Club members Eben Smith, Raphael Mitchell and Alden Sherry, and ran in print June 6, 2025.

Independent photo/Steve James

Lincoln launches superintendent search

By MARIN HOWELL
LINCOLN — The Lincoln School District is diving into its search for a new superintendent.

Current Superintendent Amy Cole previously announced she will step down from her role at the end of the school year to take on a new position at Merrimack College in Massachusetts.

At the Lincoln School Board's March 10 meeting, Board Chair Jeanne Albert noted a 12-member search committee has been formed with two school board members, Lincoln Community School staff, parents and community members. That group gathered for its first meeting on March 13, and Albert

told the *Independent* she expects the committee will meet nearly every week until mid-late April.

She said the goal is for the search committee to identify finalists by early next month. A job posting for the superintendent role notes that applications received by March 16 will receive full consideration. The posting outlines several qualifications sought in a leader for the supervisory district, which it states is comprised of 210 PreK-12 students, 84 of whom attend the Lincoln Community School.

"Supervisory services are located in a central office that shares building space with the community school," the job description reads.

"Thereby, the Superintendent has a unique opportunity to engage regularly with students, school staff, families, and supportive local community members."

Albert outlined the opportunities community members will have to take part in the superintendent search as it unfolds.

"Along with having parents and other community members on the committee, the process for reviewing finalists will include opportunities to meet and engage with candidates in person at the Lincoln Community School, and for community members to provide feedback to the committee," she said.

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Opinions on 'Fix Our Forest Act' vary

By GRETA SOLSAA
VtDigger

Vermonters are weighing the impacts of a federal bill — the Fix Our Forest Act — that would dramatically change environmental review processes and bring a big shift in the government's approach to forest management in the state and across the country.

Proponents of the bill, including foresters and loggers, say that this bill will streamline projects in fire-prone areas and protect forests from wildfire and other disasters. Critics of the proposal, including some environmental lawyers and conservationists, say it could defang key environmental oversight laws.

The bill comes after President Donald Trump sent shockwaves through the environmentalist community in Vermont last spring by declaring wildfires a national emergency and issuing executive orders directing a 25% increase in timber production on public lands.

The Fix Our Forest Act passed the U.S. House, and will go before the full U.S. Senate for a vote. U.S. Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., was among the "yes" votes that moved the bill out of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee. This marked a departure from his original position in July, in which he said the act "misses the mark" and criticized it for weakening environmental review laws, possibly ramping up both logging and ecological degradation.

A key feature of the bill would more than triple the acreage cap for projects receiving so-called categorical exclusions, from up to 3,000 acres to 10,000 acres. These are actions taken by the U.S. Forest Service to allow a project to proceed without a full environmental review and multiple public comment periods under the National Environmental Policy Act.

In the Green Mountain National Forest, every current project under review by the Forest Service between January and March of this year is proposed to receive a

categorical exclusion. The Forest Service says projects receiving such categorical exclusions typically are restoration, infrastructure or special use permitting projects, which have narrow scope and inconsequential and predictable effects.

The Fix Our Forest Act "doubles down on this failed deregulatory approach" to forest management, as Congress has created more categorical exclusions and opportunities to waive the National Environmental Policy Act review requirements in the past two decades, environmental groups told the Senate Agricultural Committee.

Vermont-based lawyer Andrew Cliburn says there has "been a real chipping away of NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, really, from both sides."

The debate about how best to manage forests has been going on for decades, pitting those who would let the forest grow undisturbed against the countervailing science that shows forests do better when they are managed.

In February, around 35 environmentalists gathered outside Welch's Burlington office to protest his vote in committee. They demanded that he vote against the act when it reaches the Senate floor.

The bill "is pretending to be a solution while actually just taking away people's ability to comment and opening up the lands to logging," said Katayoun Lam, one of the protesters, who works for 350Vermont, a climate justice advocacy organization.

In response to an email inquiry about the protest, Aaron White, a spokesperson for the senator, wrote that Welch plans to work with colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee to strengthen this bill and protect Vermont forests.

"The Fix Our Forests Act confronts the increased threats of wildfires, which Vermont is not immune to," White wrote in February.

The recent protest follows an

effort last fall by around 150 environmental groups, which signed on to a letter sent to the Senate Agriculture Committee condemning the bill. They argued that it is based on the "flawed assumption that indiscriminate logging across millions of acres of forests would serve to reduce or eliminate wildfire risk and protect communities."

Chad Hanson, California-based research ecologist and director of the John Muir Project, said the data shows that wildfires burn at lower intensities in denser forests. Logging creates hotter, drier and windier conditions, which tend to exacerbate wildfire behaviors and spread wildfires more rapidly toward human communities, he said. His organization has signed on to the environmental groups' letter.

"It's a Trojan Horse logging bill masquerading as a forest health and wildfire management measure," Hanson said. "The science is very clear on this that the only effective way to protect communities from wildfires is to focus entirely on the communities themselves, not backcountry logging."

But a broad coalition of state politicians and environmental, forestry, hunting and wildfire prevention groups, together with energy and water interest groups, favor the legislation, according to letters sent to Senate leaders last fall.

"By pairing proactive land management with community protection, this legislation ensures that our forests, homes and families can thrive alongside fire rather than being consumed by it," said Matt Weiner, founder and CEO at California-based advocacy organization Megafire Action, which signed on to the letter of support.

The bill also limits judicial review opportunities by shortening the timeframe for groups to legally challenge projects to 150 days after the date of publication in the federal register.

Cliburn said the federal register is not checked frequently by the general public, and projects are posted there before a final decision notice. That means aspects of a project's plans could change past the new statute of limitations timeline created by the potential legislation. Cliburn called it both "anti-democratic" and "anti-environment" to curtail the judicial branch's role in reviewing government agencies' projects.

Dana Doran, who heads a Northeast-based logging association, and Jack Bell, co-founder and general manager of forestry and logging company Long View Forest in Hartland, both visited Washington to advocate for the Fix Our Forest Act. They met with legislators from Maine and Vermont, including Welch, Bell said.

Doran said the organization is supportive of the bill because it would expedite timber sales without the threat of litigation. Doran said lawsuits by environmental groups slow down projects, increase cost and make it difficult to plan in the logging business.



Literacy ambassador

ACTOR AND SINGER François Clemmons, who for many years played Officer Clemmons on the PBS television series "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" before serving as Artist in Residence at Middlebury College, reads to local kids in honor of Black History Month. The reading was hosted by the Vermont Literacy Network and the Residence at Otter Creek in Middlebury.

Independent photo/Sarah Harris

Monkton seeks to fill selectboard seat

MONKTON — The Monkton selectboard will look to fill a vacancy next week after former Chair Jessica Demeritt resigned from the board.

Demeritt was elected to the selectboard in March 2025, winning the most votes (301) in a three-person race for the three-year term. Selectboard members at their March 10 meeting announced the vacancy following Demeritt's

resignation.

The town's Notice of Vacancy posting states that selectboard members will appoint someone to fill the seat at the board's March 24 meeting or a meeting after that. The individual appointed would serve in the seat until Town Meeting Day in March 2027, unless a special election is called.

Those interested in the seat can email selectboard@monktonvt.com or reach out to Town Administrator Stan Wilbur at 802-453-3828.

The posting also notes citizens' right to petition for a vote to replace the selectboard's appointee at a special town meeting. To do so, citizens must submit to the town clerk a petition calling for the election that's signed by 5% of the town's legal voters sometime before the next annual town meeting.

Vergennes man pleads not guilty to human trafficking

MIDDLEBURY — A Vergennes man on Wednesday pleaded not guilty in Vermont Superior Court, Addison Criminal Division, to a host of charges — including felony human trafficking.

The Vermont Attorney General's Office — which is prosecuting the case — said 69-year-old Richard Memoli was arraigned on two counts of felony human trafficking,

three counts of felony aggravated sexual assault, one count of felony first-degree aggravated domestic assault, one count of felony cocaine possession, three counts of misdemeanor voyeurism, two counts of misdemeanor prostitution, and one count of misdemeanor simple assault.

The charges brought against Memoli were the result of a criminal

investigation conducted by the Vergennes Police Department.

Superior Court Judge Alison Arms accepted Memoli's plea and ordered him held without bail. Whenever he is released, Arms imposed conditions of release that restrict Memoli's access to the victims and witnesses in the case.



DEMONSTRATORS GATHER OUTSIDE the offices of U.S. Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vermont, in Burlington on Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

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Editorial

Can Vermonters counter ICE's needless brutality?

It's hard not to be outraged by law enforcement's needless and brutal tactics in the March 11 confrontation in South Burlington when ICE officials pursued a Mexican immigrant who they thought was in Vermont illegally. While temperance held throughout much of the day that broke down late afternoon when ICE's tactical force arrived in combat gear with a battering ram to break into the house.

From the moment those ICE units and local law enforcement forced their way through the crowd until the ICE units left the scene over an hour later, state and local law enforcement officers struggled and ultimately failed to ensure public safety. Specifically, ICE agents used flash-bang devices, chemical spray, pepper balls and heavy-handed force to push protestors aside and terrorize people inside the house.

All for what? Embarrassingly, ICE agents misidentified the person they were pursuing, demonstrating again how unprofessional and poorly trained the agents are. They used poor judgement to break into the house terrorizing those inside. To start the crisis, ICE agents provoked the driver of the car to panic (and who wouldn't be scared of ICE agents knowing their lawless track record in Minnesota and other states) and race back to the house, no doubt fearing for their lives.

During the ending confrontation, ICE agents and some local officers injured several protestors, including a woman who tried to adjust the goggles of a hand-cuffed protestor (to help him breathe) as he was being taken away. That kind of brutality, in which a South Burlington police officer grabbed the woman's arm, threw her to the ground and then pinned her to the asphalt curb (during which she got a concussion), is just mind-numbing.

What's clear to almost anyone watching these events in South Burlington, Minnesota or elsewhere across the country, is that ICE agents are not only poorly trained, but they've been told they don't need to care. It's this reckless, callous and un-American approach that typifies the Trump administration.

There is no doubt where the blame lies.

In the aftermath of the ordeal, local police put the onus on ICE.

"When we got involved, this ball was already put in motion by some of their (ICE) poor decision-making and planning," South Burlington Police Chief Bill Breault said in public statements that evening. According to Seven Days, which reconstructed the day's event through excellent reporting by Lucy Tompkins, the chief recalled how he had urged his federal counterparts to reconsider their plan.

"There should have been potentially more thought given to, was taking this person into custody at this moment fully necessary?" he said. "Or could that have been done through other investigative means?"

Nor was Burlington Police Chief Shawn Burke pleased that 10 city officers responded to the scene to help, but got pulled into questionable action, according to the Seven Days report.

"We've got a vast number of neighbors that are living in fear because of these federal immigration efforts," Burke said. "What these things do when they come to town is they pit local police agencies against the communities that we are entrusted to serve."

Vermont's Congressional delegation, the governor and other local officials were also critical. "Based on my conversations with local law enforcement," wrote Chittenden County State's Attorney Sarah George, "and as confirmed by witness accounts, videos, and photographs, ICE chose escalation over professionalism at every turn."

Republican Gov. Phil Scott called ICE's actions "totally unnecessary."

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Two questions arise: What can Vermonters do, and what did we learn?

First, the Vermont House just passed H.849, which creates a legal pathway for people to sue federal agents who violate an individual's constitutional rights. Similar laws in Illinois and California have been passed and, naturally, are being challenged by the Trump administration under the so-called "supremacy clause" which gives federal jurisdiction over state laws in instances of national security.

Democrats overwhelmingly supported the law, while Vermont's Republicans stood in opposition. It passed the House 97-39 and is now in the Senate. Republicans object because they maintain the "supremacy clause" will prevail, so why bother. Such reasoning is worse than lame.

The fact ICE agents can terrorize Americans, damage their property and assault citizens without cause or care is ample reason to fight such injustice. The more states that challenge the Trump administration's misdeeds, the more effective the challenge becomes and the more likely the law will be modified either after the mid-terms or when Trump is disposed.

And if there were a way to enforce civil actions against the inappropriate damage ICE agents cause to homes, vehicles and other property, that might also help stem ICE'S lack of respect for their fellow Americans. Current law allows citizens to sue ICE for excessive damage, but the process is so restrictive that citizens almost never win. That explains why ICE agents are so willing to bash in doors and windows, bash in or shoot through car windows, and shoot innocent citizens — all without concern they might be held responsible.

To that end, citizens everywhere should stand with Democrats in Congress who are refusing to fund the Department of Homeland Security until laws are put in place to hold ICE agents accountable.

More immediately, protestors and agencies who advise immigrants seeking guidance in a crisis might reconsider their tactics.

It's vital to draw a crowd to protect and witness our friends and neighbors. That part of the March 11 confrontation was done well. It's also crucial to have local police and state troopers on the scene to protect Vermonters' rights and safety. But when ICE agents arrive on the scene with a legal judicial warrant, a different approach is needed.

At that point, ICE agents should stand aside giving local and state officers, with the help of protestors, an opportunity to encourage those inside to open the door and cooperate, while bearing witness that any arrests by ICE are done safely and humanely. That includes ensuring no unnecessary force is used, that local officers get full contact information of those arrested by ICE, and assurances they will be provided immediate legal counsel and communication with family and friends.

While injustices will surely continue, such tactics would help diffuse a potential flash point, while doing the most to protect all involved.

Angelo Lynn



Candy lady

MIDDLEBURY SWEETS OWNER Blanca Jenne has been selling delightful delicacies for years in her candy shop in East Middlebury and more recently in the Middlebury Sweets motel on Route 7 South in Middlebury. She brought her fine eye for candy to the First Annual Vermont Chocolate Festival at Town Hall Theater this past weekend.

Independent photo/Steve James

Conjuring aromatic memories

When I was a child, my Romanian immigrant grandparents lived in a walkup apartment in the South Bronx, and I loved everything about it.

I was fascinated with its pull chain toilet and the manual coffee grinder mounted above my head just inside their kitchen with its heavy metal fixings and curved glass hopper. Across from the grinder sat a little table with its several wooden chairs, sturdy and upright, each embossed with fruit clusters where the small of my back leaned. I sat there visiting with Grandma while she prepared dinner. Occasionally she let me grind coffee beans. As a seven-year-old I felt important to be trusted with such a responsible grownup task.

To reach the grinder I had to slide a chair below it. Upon climbing up, I carefully turned the metal crank with its wooden handle, which took some effort, then watched coffee beans sink from the tall glass hopper into the grinding mechanism. Grounds spilled into a wooden drawer which I slid out and delivered to Grandma, breathing in the rich scent.

Meanwhile, she stretched dough across a butcher block table until it was paper thin, then sliced it into sections, spread her farmer's cheese filling into each one and rolled them into tidy bundles that she popped in the oven and baked, filling the apartment with a luscious aroma. I helped set the long dining room table down the hall, which eventually filled with relatives across the generations, and we feasted on my grandmother's cheese blintzes. No meal since has

equaled that one.

After Grandma died, my grandfather moved into the other half of our duplex at the Jersey shore. The kitchen chairs came with him. When I visited, Grandpa served me Nescafé with evaporated milk. While we sipped, he shared stories of his childhood adventures, schooling and family in Rumania. I sat in his fruit cluster chair while he prepared stewed meatballs, a sweet-smelling dish his daughter-in-law introduced to him.

Ways of Seeing

By Alice Leeds



When my grandfather died and we cleared out his apartment, I requested his two remaining kitchen chairs. For several decades, they sat at our kitchen table, but eventually both wilted and retired to the basement. Every time I went down there, I longed for their return. My husband combined their parts into one sound chair, which he perched on in his music room while rehearsing traditional melodies on his banjo. And while he played, comforting aromas drifted from the kitchen, his Cuban beans or a delicious chili we would soon share for dinner.

Eventually, the chair could no longer be repaired, and I had to part with it. Yet its presence is etched in my mind, interwoven with the velvety smell of cheese blintzes, Grandpa's stories of Romania and Rick's banjo tunes.

Which sometimes calls upon me to wonder what our grandchildren will carry forward from the time we share. What will be the moments that stand out in their minds decades after we're gone?

There is power in volunteering

The first week of March marks the annual Peace Corps Week, a time to reflect on one of America's most iconic traditions of service abroad. Since the creation of the Peace Corps in 1961, more than 240,000 Americans have proudly served as volunteers in 144 countries around the world. The idea behind it has always been simple but profound: people helping people.

Last year there was concern that the Peace Corps might fade away amid political and budget pressures. Instead, this small, but mighty agency is growing again. In fact, the Peace Corps has set an ambitious goal of having 8,000 volunteers serving overseas by Sept. 30, 2030, which is a significant expansion from roughly 3,000 volunteers in service in 2025. That catchy recruitment slogan from the 1980-90s has even made its triumphant return, "Peace Corps is still, the toughest job you'll ever love."

Volunteers support communities overseas in sectors like health, education, agriculture and small business development, but the benefits have always flowed in both directions. While Peace Corps volunteers often help communities improve their livelihoods and opportunities, they also return home fundamentally changed — bringing new skills, perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the world back to the United States.

I know this firsthand. From 2002 to 2004, I served as a volunteer in rural Paraguay. I lived and worked in a small farming community and was embedded in a local



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

agricultural cooperative. My Peace Corps work focused on teaching basic business and marketing skills to farming families who were trying to improve their incomes. I also taught English classes and worked with off-grid neighbors to build environmentally sustainable brick cooking stoves that used less firewood and produced less smoke inside homes. Despite all my idealism and hustle, the lessons I learned were inevitably far greater than the ones I taught.

Living for two years in a dusty rural village in a poor developing country meant learning humility, patience and the power of community. Despite their economic struggles, my Paraguayan neighbors welcomed me into their homes, shared what food they had, and patiently taught me their language and customs. The agricultural cooperative where I worked was owned and run by its members — the farmers and their families. Through their shared labor, resources, and vision — and despite their many challenges, they showed me the true value of leaning on your community to advance forward together.

That experience profoundly shaped the rest of my life. It pushed me toward a long career in public service, and it reinforced a belief that ordinary people working together can create extraordinary change.

While volunteer programs like the Peace Corps send Americans overseas, you don't need a passport to experience the power of service. The United

(See Kevin Fox, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

Be honest about nuclear power

In Vermont, Gov. Scott, Lt. Gov. Rodgers, Republican Legislative leadership, and the Commissioner of the Department of Public Service are all on record promoting new nuclear power for Vermont. Phil Scott continues to push for legislation labeling nuclear as clean and seeking to remove the requirement that the General Assembly must approve any new nuclear power plant.

The Trump Administration has been surprisingly clear about its energy policy for the nation. "Drill Baby Drill," regarding fossil fuels. "Beautiful Clean Coal," signaling a revival for coal burning power plants. As for nuclear, Trump is calling for the reduction of "red tape" like environmental and safety testing for proposed Small Modular Nuclear Reactors, all the while attacking renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. Of course, Trump's energy policy labels climate change as a hoax.

Recently it was reported that the state of Vermont has spent \$530 million ratepayer dollars, including accrued interest, to date, cleaning up the Vermont Yankee Nuclear site in Vernon. It has also been reported that, to date, the site has filled 1,462 sets of rail cars with low-level radioactive waste, most of which, have been shipped to a dump in Andrews County, Texas. Down in Andrews many of the locals are not happy about being dumped on by Vermont. What remains at the site in Vernon are 58 giant casks of high-level radioactive waste sitting on the banks of the Connecticut River with nowhere to go. Nuclear is not affordable or clean.

Going backwards is not a good policy path for Vermont. We must demand better from our leaders.

Chris Williams
Hancock

Addison owns hall footprint

Addison Town Meeting Correction.

Point of clarification: The town of Addison does own the land under the town hall.

Roger Waterman
Addison

Clergy agree on ICE's failings

The members of the Middlebury Area Clergy Association, who meet once a month to support each other and share community concerns, come from very different religious traditions and hold different cultural values. Yet we all find ourselves deeply concerned about the recent treatment of immigrants in our country. The hunting down and forcible deportation of immigrants, both documented and undocumented, is antithetical to the teachings that our traditions share about loving the stranger, caring for the oppressed, and protecting the most vulnerable.

In the Hebrew Bible, God commands the Israelites over and over again to "love the sojourner, for you were sojourners/strangers in Egypt" and to "love the sojourner as yourself" (Leviticus 19:33-34). The verse is both a commandment to care about the immigrant and a lesson in empathy — we are instructed to remember a time when we were strangers and to treat other people who are in a similar situation the way that we would have wished to be treated.

In the New Testament, Jesus emphasizes over and over again that in order to love God, we must love our neighbor. He says that whenever we feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, or welcome a stranger, we welcome him (Matthew 25:35).

Likewise, the *Metta Sutta* in Buddhism invites us to care for all beings as a parent protects an only child — cultivating "infinite goodwill above, below, and all around, without limit" — meeting newcomers and neighbors alike with dignity, compassion, courage and nonviolence.

In the Quran we are taught: "Give what is due to relatives, the

(See Clergy letter, Page 5A)

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Protecting public a big priority

Friday was Crossover at the State House, the day when bills must pass out of their original committees in the House and Senate in order to cross over to the other chamber this session. There are some exceptions to crossover, including big money bills like the State Budget, and proposals that don't meet crossover can still make it in as an amendment to another bill. Still, Crossover is a big day for legislators and staff in the Statehouse!



Legislative Review

by Sen. Ruth Hardy,
D-Addison County

On top of the flurry of Crossover, federal violence both abroad and at home hung over our work last week. The president's war against Iran continued into its second week, with Vermont National Guard troops still deployed to the Middle East. These members of Vermont's Air Guard have been away from home since mid-December, first in Puerto Rico and now in Jordan, putting them in harm's way and leaving their families here in constant stress. Vermont officials unfortunately have no ability to call these troops home, but we cannot forget that Vermonters are risking their lives for a war that was never approved by Congress, has no clear goal or plan, and will likely lead to decades of further instability and violence in the region.

On Wednesday, reckless ICE agents in South Burlington sought to detain a man as he was taking his kid to school, causing a car chase and crash on busy Dorset Street during rush hour. Later, ICE agents obtained a federal warrant,

broke into a home, and detained three people, none of whom were the individual they were seeking. Hundreds of peaceful protesters/observers, including three of my Senate colleagues, were on the scene to witness ICE actions and attempt to protect the people in the home. Families, children, neighbors, and peaceful protesters were caught in the middle of a volatile federal immigration enforcement operation.

Vermont State Police and local South Burlington Police were on the scene to maintain public safety, however, serious questions remain about whether their actions complied with Vermont's Fair and Impartial Policing Policy or violated state laws against assisting federal immigration enforcement. Legislative leaders met with the Governor and law enforcement leadership to review what occurred. The Judiciary Committees will hold a joint hearing this week to receive and after-action report and examine the conduct of all law enforcement agencies involved to determine whether Vermont law and civil rights protections were followed. I will share more information as I have it.

Coincidentally, on this past Wednesday, the Senate passed an amendment to the Vermont Constitution – Proposal 4 on Equality of Rights, also known as the Equal Rights Amendment. This amendment to our constitution states “that the people are guaranteed equal protection under the law. The State shall not

deny equal treatment under the law on account of a person's race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin.” This amendment is a long-time-coming for so many of us who have been fighting for equal rights for decades. Given the abuses of the federal government as witnessed on the same day, the amendment is more necessary now than ever. It passed on a vote of 29-0-1, with Senator Heffernan choosing not to be present for the vote. After it passes in the House, Proposal 4 will be up for a vote of the people of Vermont during November's General Election.

On Friday, the Senate passed a very timely S.227, which establishes clear immigration protocols for Vermont schools. The bill helps ensure schools remain safe learning environments by protecting student information and requiring a judicial warrant before immigration enforcement officials can enter nonpublic areas of a school. We also passed S.298, the Vermont Voting Rights Act which protects Vermont voters from discrimination, guards against interfering with voting, prohibits providing false information to voters and intimidation of voters & election workers, and allows for civil actions if there are violations. With threats of federal agents at polling places, this law will be an important tool for protecting free and fair elections in Vermont later this year.

Many more bills passed in time for the crossover deadline, and I will have highlights of them in the coming weeks. For now, stay safe and know that we are striving to protect the safety and rights of all Vermonters.

Clergy letter

(Continued from Page 4A)
needy, and the traveler. That is best for those who seek the countenance of God. It is they who will prosper” (30,38). In this verse the traveler and the needy are treated no differently than family would be, and the attention we give them is considered a path to revealing the face of God.

What we have seen in Immigration and Customs Enforcement's treatment of immigrants during the current administration falls very short of all of these religious commitments. We recognize that when immigrants — friends, family members, co-workers, neighbors and members of our religious communities — are too afraid to go out to work, to buy groceries for their families, to gather in houses of worship, or to exercise their right to free speech — we are not following the dictates of our traditions.

All of our traditions teach, in some form or another, the interconnectedness of all actions and all lives. It is plain to see how interconnected and interdependent we are to the workers in our healthcare, childcare and agricultural systems — to mention just a few — and how people from different cultures enrich our

communities. Many of these people are immigrants, and they form an integral part of our society here in Vermont and in the United States in general.

We recognize how overwhelming and paralyzing this moment feels to so many of us. What power do we have to help? Thankfully there are many ways to help and many organizations to connect to.

One beautiful way to counteract the injustice and overwhelm that many of us are seeing and/or experiencing right now is to do something that resides deep in the DNA of religious traditions: gathering, breaking bread and singing together in community.

We invite all of you, religious or not, to gather together for a shared meal, to learn more about what some of our immigrant neighbors have been experiencing, and to learn and sing shared songs of resilience and solidarity together. Please join us at a potluck dinner on Saturday, March 21, from 5-7 p.m., at the Congregational Church of Middlebury. At times like this that aim to disconnect us, human connection can be a way of finding and reclaiming our power. We look forward to seeing you there.

The Rev. Matthew von Behrens, Chaplain, Porter

Medical Center
Brian Joshin Byrnes, Guiding Teacher, Bread Loaf Mountain Zen Community
The Rev. Caryne Eskridge, Pastor, Weybridge Congregational Church
The Rev. Elizabeth Gleich, Associate Pastor, The Congregational Church of Middlebury, UCC
Rebecca Kneale Gould, Havurah of Addison County
Sarit Katzew, Havurah of Addison County
Zahra Moeini, Associate Muslim Chaplain & Interfaith Advisor, Middlebury College
The Rev. Dr. Andy Nagy-Benson, Senior Pastor, The Congregational Church of Middlebury, UCC
The Rev. Charlie Nichols, Deacon, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Paul V. Olsson, Rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Mark R. Orten, Dean of Spiritual and Religious Life, Middlebury College
Rabbi Danielle Stillman, Rabbi and Associate Chaplain, Middlebury College
Doug Way, Member, Middlebury Quaker Meeting

Letters to the Editor

It's time to power off the screens in our schools

One of the consistent complaints about today's younger generations is the lack of focus and expectation of instant (usually digital) gratification. This lack of focused attention is often cited as a contributing factor to our toxic online spaces, shallow national discourse, the lack of work ethic and many other social ills. Given these concerns, it seems puzzling that we have chosen to prioritize the use of digital devices in our schools when those same devices are a primary driver of our deficits of attention.

It is easy to sympathize with students in this regard. Most people have probably felt the gravitational pull of a smartphone, had their thoughts disrupted by an online notification or opted for a mindless distraction when challenging tasks are at hand. I'm speaking from experience when I say that I simply can't think deeply when I'm sitting in front of a screen.

And yet, despite these personal

experiences and ample scientific evidence of the drawbacks of screens, most school districts in the state have at least one laptop allocated per child, even at the elementary school level. If research indicated that digital products enhanced learning, perhaps such a choice might seem logical, but standardized test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress have tended to decline in states after they integrated educational tech (edtech) into their curriculums.

Even though the evidence for edtech efficacy is scant or nonexistent, some teachers are enthusiastic about these products since they readily facilitate student measurement and provide a guided path towards test proficiency. In an age where testing seems to be our ultimate metric of progress, that is understandable. Unfortunately, this rush towards multiple-choice mastery overlooks the short-term

and societal costs of game-like screen-based learning.

Ideally, instead of spending time and money training teachers and students how to use these edtech products, we could take advantage of our small class sizes (the upside to high costs) to provide holistic, non-digital learning experiences that other states with larger classes are unable to facilitate. At the very least, parents should have the choice to opt out of digital instruction for their children.

There are several efforts in the legislature this year to enact common-sense changes that move the needle on this topic, and your support could help encourage our leaders to get them over the line.

If you support reduced digital classroom instruction, please consider reaching out to your legislators and education administrators. If so inclined, you may sign a letter of support online at www.vt-irl.org/letter-of-support.

Patrick Lawrence
Middlebury

Kevin Fox

(Continued from Page 4A)
States has a long tradition of national volunteer programs that strengthen communities at home. Organizations like AmeriCorps, Teach For America, and Habitat for Humanity offer opportunities for Americans to serve their communities while gaining valuable skills and experience.

Volunteerism is not just about giving, it's also about receiving. People who volunteer often gain new friendships, a stronger sense of purpose, and a deeper connection to their community. And you don't have to travel thousands of miles to make a difference. There are countless opportunities right here in Addison County.

At the Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT), where I serve as

executive director, our conservation and recreation work depends heavily on volunteers. Community volunteers help us maintain recreation trails, remove invasive species from conserved lands, and steward the natural places that make this region so special. AmeriCorps members and interns help implement our conservation programs, while community members serve on our board and advisory committees. Quite simply, we couldn't do our work without them.

And we're far from alone. Many organizations across Addison County rely on volunteers to serve our neighbors and strengthen their communities. Groups like ACORN Network, United Way of Addison County, and Charter House Coalition offer meaningful ways for residents

to give their time and talents. Whether it's mentoring a young person, helping conserve a local trail, serving meals to neighbors in need, or lending professional skills to a nonprofit organization, volunteerism strengthens our social fabric.

Sometimes the most meaningful service opportunities are right here at home. Your local community needs you!

If you're looking for ways to get involved at MALT, visit our website to learn about current volunteer opportunities. Or consider reaching out to one of the many organizations across Addison County that depend on community members willing to lend a hand. By giving your time and talents, you might be surprised by how much you gain in return.

VERMONT Trade Winds Farm

2026 Maple Open House

Saturday, March 21st, 9-5 pm

All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast (9-12pm)
with fresh maple syrup, sausage, homemade home fries and more!
Live Bluegrass music

Saturday March 21st, (11 - 3)

- Free Maple Sap Hot Dogs and Ol' time sap boiling
- Maple sap boiling demonstration in our outdoor evaporator.

Maple Cream Donuts, Maple Walnut bars, Maple Popcorn & Maple Cotton Candy

Maple Creemees Saturday and Sunday

Outdoor Affair, Please Dress Warm!

Blueberry Pancakes

2026 Vermont Maple Syrup is available!
Don't forget to bring your own container to fill up with **Syrup-On-Tap!**

884 Route 74E, Shoreham, VT • 802-897-2448 • vermonttradewinds.com

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

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Elderly Services
Supporting Elders and Families since 1981
112 Exchange St., Middlebury, Vermont
802-388-3983
www.elderlyservices.org

To RSVP or learn more, call Susan Bruce at Elderly Services: 802-388-3983 • www.elderlyservices.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

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

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

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

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

ADDISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Sharon Glaser, 68, of Brandon

BRANDON — Sharon Glaser, 68, passed away at home, surrounded by her family, March 10, 2026, after fighting a long battle with a rare cancer.

Born Nov. 26, 1957, to Bernice and William Simelunas, Sharon was raised in Glen Rock, N.J. She graduated from Mansfield College in Pennsylvania with a degree in Home Economics. After marrying Sam Glaser in 1982, they moved to Montclair, N.J., where they spent 26 years and raised their daughter, Shelby.

Deeply creative, ambitious, and possessing endless energy, her attention to detail made her an exceptional business owner, employee, and friend. She held several professional positions and had her own successful gift basket business, where she never forgot anyone's birthday — ever. She never missed the chance to celebrate those she loved and cherished the many who did the same for her. As a testament to these connections, she had a collection of cards and correspondence spanning decades.

She formed a close-knit group of lifelong friends through involvement at her temple, who continued to support her after she and her husband moved to Vermont in 2007. Affectionately known as "The Jersey Girls," she was unmistakably one of them — accent and all.

Somewhat tentative at first, it didn't take long to blossom in



SHARON GLASER

Vermont. Hired as a Guest Services representative at the Killington ski resort, she was quickly promoted to Guest Services Manager, earning numerous recognitions for dedication and exceptional service. Although she never skied — a surprise to many — she loved her job and threw herself into it wholeheartedly. She thrived on interacting with guests, staff, and management, and seemed to know everything happening on the mountain. Even while quietly battling illness, she showed up each day eager and smiling. "Gotta keep moving," was her daily mantra.

A natural problem solver, she could and did find solutions to any challenge that crossed her path. Even if you hadn't asked, she would enthusiastically declare, "I know

what to do" — and usually did. This quality served her well during the off season, when she and Sam operated an antiques store. She transformed a dilapidated little red barn in Middlebury into The Barn Antiques, a delightful surprise to all who stepped inside for 16 years. A favorite stop for many loyal customers, many came by just to see what new displays she created that week — and often just to visit. Starting from almost nothing, she and Sam saw the shop thrive until it was almost more than they could keep up with. Still, Sharon always looked forward to the next day.

She also took great pride in her home. To say that crafting, organizing, and gardening were among her greatest joys would be an understatement. In her Montclair home, a charming sign once read, "Martha Stewart doesn't live here." In her Brandon home, the sign was no longer necessary — everyone knew Martha Stewart couldn't compete with Sharon's creativity.

Sharon will be remembered as an extraordinary person who lived her life with confidence, determination, and an endless to-do list.

She is survived by her husband, Sam, and her daughter, Shelby of Brandon, Vt.; her mother, Bernice, brother, William and sister, Donna, of Hobe Sound, Fla.

At this time, there are no formal services planned. ♦

Richard Brusco, 79, of Cornwall

CORNWALL — Richard Brusco, a lifelong resident of Cornwall, Vt., passed away March 12, 2026, at the age of 79, on the same DeLong Road where he was born on Aug. 29, 1946. He was the son of Willard and Emily (Messer) Brusco.

A proud son of Vermont, Richard dedicated his life to hard work, the land, and his community. He was a Vietnam War veteran who served with the Vermont National Guard engineering unit, building essential roads in South Vietnam to ensure the safety and mobility of allied forces.

Upon returning home, Richard continued his life of service in his hometown. For over half a century, he served as the dedicated sexton of the Evergreen Cemetery in West Cornwall, succeeding generations of his family in tending to the resting place of many Addison County residents. A master craftsman, Richard took immense pride in his work, digging graves by hand to precise dimensions: exactly 6 feet deep, 4 feet wide,



RICHARD BRUSO

and 8 feet long. He often remarked with quiet dignity that he was honored to be the last person many people saw on this Earth.

Inspired by his childhood proximity to Jud Severy's Every Wind Farm, Richard harbored a lifelong dream of becoming a farmer with a cherished herd of Jersey milkers. While he worked tirelessly to acquire land, tractors,

and equipment, and even built a dairy barn, his dream of running a full-scale dairy farm remained just out of reach — a point of reflection he often shared with friends. Richard loved to regale those around him with stories of his life, passing down his relentless work ethic and his strong opinions on the "right way" to run a farm.

He is survived by his beloved community in Cornwall, numerous friends, and his faithful companions in the fields, and several cousins.

A private graveside committal service with military honors will take place at a later date in Evergreen Cemetery in Cornwall.

A memorial service in celebration of his life will take place, April 9, at 11:30 a.m., at The Whiting Community Church. Rev. Brett Cody, pastor will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department or a local charity supporting Vermont veterans.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon. ♦

James Adams Larrabee, 72, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — James Adams Larrabee died March 17, 2026, after a hemorrhagic stroke. He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He retired from Middlebury College after 37 years of teaching and researching in the Chemistry Department. He was born July 20, 1953, to James and Barbara Larrabee in Dover, N.H.

Jim began his academic journey at Trinity College in Connecticut, where he developed a love of chemistry. He went on to earn his Ph.D. in Chemistry at Princeton University. After Princeton, Jim spent eight years as a research scientist at Exxon Research and Engineering in New Jersey before joining the Chemistry faculty at Middlebury College in 1986. Over the course of his 37-year career he became a central figure in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. He held the William R. Kenan Jr. Chair and Professor of Chemistry from 2005 to 2014 and later the Viola Ward Brinning and Elbert Calhoun Brinning Chair of the Sciences.

Known for his wide range of knowledge, attention to details, and witty humor, Jim had a deep passion for raising future scientists through teaching, researching, and mentoring. Over his career he taught more than nineteen courses spanning every division of chemistry. As an Inorganic Chemist, he taught Environmental, Organic, Biochemistry, Physical, Analytical, as well as Advanced Inorganic chemistry. His non-majors' courses include History of Chemistry, Alchemy, the Elements of Murder, and the Periodic Table.

Jim's research accomplishments were equally significant. He studied how cobalt ions in enzymes contribute to the enzyme functions using a Magnetic Circular



JAMES ADAMS LARRABEE

Dichroism (MCD). His MCD instrument was so unique that researchers from all over the world sought to collaborate with him.

He secured 17 individual external research grants and contributed to major institutional grants supporting scientific research and instrumentation at Middlebury, totaling close to \$4.5 million. For 37 years of his career, he never had a year without an external research grant from the National Science Foundation or the National Institute of Health. He published more than 40 peer-reviewed papers, including the leading journals JACS and Nature. Forty Middlebury undergraduates were co-authors on these publications, and he advised more than 40 senior theses.

Jim also served as associate dean of the faculty from 1998 to 2003 and played a key role in the planning and construction of McCardell Bicentennial Hall, Middlebury's science building, helping design a space that supports teaching and research across the sciences.

Colleagues "love and respect Jim very much not because of his

impressive grants or publications. It's because of his personal attention to everyone else; his work to make others stronger around him; his passion to make Middlebury (college and town) and world a better place."

Jim met Sunhee Choi at Princeton University in their Ph.D. Chemistry lab. They were married on July 13, 1981, in Princeton, N.J., and shared a loving marriage of 44 years. Sunhee also served on the Middlebury Chemistry faculty for 33 years.

Jim loved the outdoors and spending time hiking, fishing, hunting, and canoeing, and working with his hands in the kitchen, garden, and woodshop. He built two cedar-strip canoes, which the family used on canoe camping trips to Saco River in Maine and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. He cherished fishing trips to Lake Ogascanan in Canada with his son, Yuri. They are most proud of the 26-lb lake trout they caught together. Jim also loved to cook and share meals with family, friends, and students; favorites include his chicken wings, venison ragu, and rabbit curry. His Thanksgiving double stuffed turkey is legendary.

Jim is survived by his wife, Sunhee Choi; his daughter, Yuna Larrabee and her spouse Travis Smith; his son, Yuri Larrabee and his spouse Blakely Larrabee; and his five grandchildren, Jackson, Fletcher, Patrick, Delaney, and Sophie.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, colleagues, and the many students whose lives he influenced through his teaching, researching, mentorship and friendship. A celebration of Jim's life will be held at McCardell Bicentennial Hall, Middlebury College, at 11 a.m. Aug. 29. ♦

Emilie A. Rasmussen, 80, formerly of Salisbury

RUTLAND — Emilie A. Rasmussen, born in Teaneck, N.J., April 8, 1945, passed away on March 14, 2026, in the Hospice unit at Rutland Regional Medical Center.

Emilie was the only child of Emilie (née Golly) and Eric Rasmussen, who resided in Saddle River and Spring Lake, N.J. She attended Ramsey High School and graduated from Syracuse University with honors (Phi Beta Kappa) and earned a master's degree in counseling from the University of Toronto.

After graduating from Syracuse University, Emilie worked as a high school science teacher in Chittenango, N.Y. She then followed her calling to become a lay apostolate in the Prince George Diocese of British Columbia, Canada. There, she taught high school science to the native community for ten years



EMILIE A. RASMUSSEN

before returning to New Jersey. Subsequently, she accepted a position at the Weeks School in Vergennes, Vt.

Returning to New Jersey to care for her mother, Emilie connected with the A&P Supermarket

warehouse in Union City, N.J. She began delivering food to the homeless community in Hudson County, N.J.. Eventually, with the support of St. Gabriel's Church in Saddle River, she established a Soup Kitchen at St. Mary's in Elizabeth, N.J.

In 2001, retirement beckoned her back to Vermont, where she continued to be an active presence in her parish of Our Lady of Good Help in Brandon. She also produced numerous booklets that offered reflections on church, the world, and the current climate.

Emilie leaves behind numerous friends and supporters of her many publications.

There will be no calling hours. A celebration of life is scheduled for Saturday, March 21, at 10 a.m., at Aldous Funeral Home in Rutland.

Burial will take place in Saddle River, N.J. in the spring. ♦

OBITUARY Guidelines

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

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A sonnet in honor of a small forest of trees that has been taken down in our neighborhood

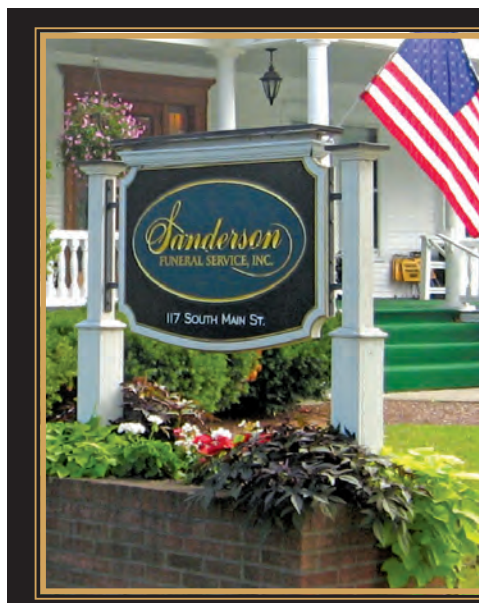
Prayer Before a Passing
The night in all its shades of blue has turned into a violet hue.
No longer the stars; except one about to rise; the morning sun.

No secret trees are our teachers, poets, artists, healers, dreamers. Most loving patient mother earth we take and kill, whilst you give birth.

A forest to be taken down I write with heavy heart, and frown.
A thousand branches reach to sky like opened hands, that wave goodbye.

A light shines through your weary eyes
I hear at times, your late-night cries.

Patricia LeBon Herb
Middlebury



Cremation with a Service

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Letters to the Editor

CSAC official weighs in on 'Drag Queen Storytelling'

I am writing this letter in support of Drag Queen Storytelling at one of our local schools. As the Youth and Family Services Director at the Counseling Services of Addison County (CSAC), I see firsthand how deeply children and adolescents struggle with issues of belonging, identity, and acceptance. Drag queen storytelling events are fun ways to promote reading, imagination, and creativity. More importantly, they teach all children to not fear what they don't understand, to embrace differences, and feel safe to express their own individuality.

Research consistently shows that young people who are questioning and/or struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity face significantly higher risks of depression, bullying and suicide, especially when they lack supportive environments and feel isolated or rejected. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Vermont's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, LGBTQ+

students report far higher rates of persistent sadness, self-harming behaviors and suicidal ideations and attempts compared to their peers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has repeatedly emphasized that supportive environments are crucial to the healthy development of all children. A supportive community that visibly shows acceptance of our vulnerable youth can significantly reduce suicide risks. Even small signals, such as a drag queen storytelling event, can make a meaningful difference in whether a LGBTQ+ young person feels safe, valued, and hopeful, while modeling kindness, confidence, and respect for all of us, no matter our differences.

As a mental health clinician, a parent, and an Addison County community member, I know that connection, empathy, and the knowledge that adults in their community care about their well-being is what protects the

mental health of our youth. What does not protect them is silence and exclusion. Every child deserves to grow up in a community that says: you belong here. When we create spaces where diversity is acknowledged rather than feared, we strengthen not only literacy programs and school culture, but we also strengthen the mental health of the next generation.

For these reasons, I applaud the Mt. Abraham school district for having the courage to expressively show their support for all children and families, and I encourage our community to approach these conversations with compassion and perspective. Supporting programs that promote acceptance and joy is one small but meaningful step toward ensuring that every young person in our community feels seen, valued and safe.

LuAnn Chiola, LICSW
Director of Youth and Family Services, CSAC
New Haven

City police deal with assault on a bus

VERGENNES — Last week a Vermont Translines bus driver made the decision to pull over at the Vergennes police station because they said one passenger assaulted another.

On March 12, police removed Charlene Merritt from the bus.

Merritt, 44, was issued a citation to appear in Addison County Superior Court for disorderly conduct and simple assault. She was also issued a citation to appear in Chittenden County Superior Court as the result of a failure to appear at an earlier hearing there.

Additionally, city police assisted the Addison County Court by delivering three subpoenas — two on March 11, and one on March 12.

Last week Vergennes police conducted 27 traffic stops, seven directed patrols, one Vehicle Identification Number verification, one commercial vehicle inspection and took fingerprints seven times.

In other recent activity, the city police:

- On March 9 issued a trespass notice to a Vergennes resident that was requested by a business owner.

- On March 9 took a report of a theft from a home. As of Monday, police were still investigating the incident.

- On March 9 assisted a Vergennes resident who has mental health issues and frequently reports incidents with their neighbor that are unfounded.

- On March 10 responded to the scene of a single vehicle crash on Main Street. A box truck went into the ditch in front of the Vergennes Animal Hospital; no injuries were

Vergennes Police Log

reported. A tow truck pulled the vehicle back on the road. It was not damaged and continued on. There was damage to some city property, which will require repair.

- On March 10 an officer met with two students who had been involved in a prior case. As a part of their completion of the Balanced and Restorative Justice program, the kids made a formal apology for their actions.

- On March 10 took a report of a vehicle that was hit in the Shaw's parking lot. A case number was provided to the complainant for insurance purposes.

- On March 11 attended a community outreach meeting with a juvenile at Vergennes Union High School.

- On March 11 took a report of a small dog running loose on Monkton Road. Police referred this to the dog warden, who located the dog and returned it to the owner.

- On March 11 helped a resident

who had locked themselves out of their vehicle.

- On March 11 assisted Vermont State Police with an underage drinking party in Pantou; details have been sought from state police.

- On March 13 assisted the Vergennes Fire Department at a structure fire in the city. Firefighters had the fire under control by 3:50 p.m., about 20 minutes after they were dispatched, according to Fire Chief David DiBiase. The fire was isolated to an exterior wall of the residential building, he added.

- On March 15 took a report of two men who met at a restaurant in Middlebury for breakfast. The two met up later in the day until the caller stated the other man began making him very uncomfortable with statements that were made. The caller left the man's residence and called 911. Officers spoke with both parties and the two agreed not to remain friends.

- On March 15 took a report to be on the lookout for a vehicle northbound on Main Street in Vergennes which was brake checking other vehicles and going 15 mph in a 30 mph zone. Police were unable to locate the vehicle.

Dems skirting big state issues

As the Legislature's crossover date passed and more electric buses burst into flames, so are my hopes for solving Vermont's affordability crisis during this legislative session.

Nothing came out of our House Education committee. The one healthcare bill that had promise going into committee, came out watered down and even added things that would adversely impact affordability. And nothing really helpful to reduce energy costs or housing, permitting, and land costs was even seriously considered.

For example, H.602 and S.267, along with other land use, permit reform, and housing bills, are now dead. They were assigned to Environmental committees in the House and Senate. While they sat on the wall, the House Environment Chair spent 2 1/2 months of the committee's

time taking testimony on topics unrelated to the affordability crises. When asked when these bills would be addressed, she answered, "They won't." Vermonters asked for a plan, we delivered a plan, and those in control ignored the plan.

Many laws that helped create our affordability crisis were put into place over the years by overriding Gov. Scott's veto. Parts of Act 181 (land use rules), Act 59 (permanent conservation of 50% of Vermont), the Global Warming Solutions Act, and Affordable Heat Act are just a few examples. None of these extraordinarily costly laws would be in place had we not had a supermajority in both chambers of the Legislature, undermining our constitutional checks-and-balances.

As Gov. Scott stated in his press conference last week, "The issues

I outlined in my veto letter are coming to fruition and they're just as pertinent today as they were then." Julie Moore, Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, clearly states, "The administration and legislature have invested hundreds of millions of dollars into climate change mitigation activities. The gap between the requirements of the Global Warming Solutions Act and where we are is evidence that people really didn't understand the costs of these when enacting them and should have been better understood on the front end."

On a more positive note, I anticipate a Senate bill related to pushing out implementation dates on the negative impacts of Act 181, and the Transportation bill coming out of the House this week, may offer us a glimmer of hope for affordability improvements. Stay tuned.

Significant change needs leadership and more legislators who are serious about addressing this affordability crisis.



Legislative Review
by Rep. Rob North,
R-Ferrisburgh

Trump voters aren't unique in falling for deception

The other night, a group of very talented people were rewarded for their stunning accomplishments. The Academy Awards are given to people who are very, very good at lying. Actors, directors, cinematographers and thousands more all work together to create situations and worlds that con us into thinking they are real. It's art, and justifiably rewarded.

We are creatures who enjoy stories, and we're good at suspending disbelief. This is why it's so easy to con us — internet scams, phone scams, and now AI-slop — most of us have come close to believing one of those, and some of us have indeed been caught. It's embarrassing to discover that something we thought was true wasn't. It's hard to admit we were conned.

And so — let those of us who never believed the promises made by Donald Trump be charitable to people who are discovering that he is, like the winners of Oscars, very, very good at lying. Let's welcome them back to reality, and be on guard ourselves, since we're all so capable of being taken in.

Mary Pratt
New Haven

Time to invoke 25th amendment

What had been a growing concern over Trump and his administration's abuses and illegal power grabs is now an urgent fear and an 'enough is enough' impatient anger. Trump and his cronies must be stopped, removed and held responsible.

It is time to invoke the 25th amendment calling for his removal. His illegal, unconstitutional actions, violations, and behaviors, one could only hope, warrant evoking this amendment. To avoid complicity, your republican

Commander in chief is misfiring

"Bombing is fun... The war will end when I feel it in my [bone spurs]"

A highly personal strategy, confusing both friend and

colleagues must allow the taking back of congressional powers they have abdicated and choose loyalty and allegiance to the country and all its citizens—not just the elite.

Trump is out of control and must be stopped. This is not hyperbole. This is not fake news. This might be felt by some as an inconvenient truth, but it is time for action to protect and preserve our democracy. Do you want three more years of this?

Paula Nath
Middlebury

foe, blurring the line between maturity and senility. Essentially deranged.

U.S. Veteran Alexander Lyall
Middlebury

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KEVIN GRAFFAGNINO

Shoreham lecture to shed light on Vt.'s Ira Allen

SHOREHAM — The Shoreham Historical Society will present a lecture by J. Kevin Graffagnino entitled: Ira Allen and the Green Mountain Frontier. Land speculator, revolutionary, pamphleteer, politician, and empire-builder, Ira Allen was a key figure on the late eighteenth-century Green Mountain frontier.

Based on his new book, "Ira Allen: A Biography," Graffagnino's lively talk evaluates Allen's checkered career and makes the case for including him in our picture of Vermont's formative decades.

This lecture will take place at Platt Memorial Library, in Shoreham on Wednesday, April 1, 7 p.m. A short business meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact jdstevens802@gmail.com.

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Gas pipeline

(Continued from Page 1A)

from some locals for the safety of those traveling and working the land over which the pipeline is buried.

“One of the things we’re all asking for is that prior to the PUC making a determination on this, that an accurate depth-of-cover study be done that tells us today what is the depth of that pipeline,” said New Haven town attorney Cindy Hill.

It was in December of 2013 that the PUC granted VGS a certificate of public good it needed install around 43 miles of 12-inch transmission pipeline and roughly 5 miles of six-inch distribution lines to Vergennes and Middlebury. The project includes three pressure-regulation stations — one in Williston, one on Plank Road in New Haven, and a third just south of the Route 7/Exchange Street intersection in Middlebury.

The project elicited support from some Addison County industries and homeowners looking for cheaper heating fuel. But it also drew opposition from some county residents and environmental activists for its importation of a fracked fossil fuel to the area at a time when the state was making progress with green energy sources.

To get its 2013 certificate of public good, Vermont Gas entered into an agreement with the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. That agreement governs both lands subject to conservation easements and also all agricultural lands, noted attorney James Dumont, who represents Monkton residents Nate and Jane Palmer, who are intervenors in current litigation involving the natural gas pipeline.

The VGS/VHCB/Agency of Agriculture agreement, among other things, required at least 4 feet of cover over the pipeline.

But some Vermonters alleged that VGS didn’t install the pipeline according to its permit. They took their complaints to the Vermont Supreme Court, which identified five violations of the VGS’s certificate that they considered “substantial changes” to the project. The violations included:

- Installing the pipeline using a “sink-in-the-swamp” burial method that hadn’t been discussed or approved in the 2013 certificate.
- Failing to achieve the required 4-foot depth-of-cover standard at 18 locations in the Clay Plains Swamp (a wetland) in New Haven. “Depth of cover” refers to distance between the ground surface and the pipeline.
- Failing to conform to its own

specifications regarding pipeline burial on the trench bottom and installation of trench breakers.

- Failing to comply with the compaction requirements for the pipeline in its construction specifications.
- Failing to ensure that staffing for the project included a Vermont-licensed professional engineer to serve as the responsible charge engineer for the project.

“The Vermont Supreme Court said (to the PUC), ‘You need to go back and have a process by which affected parties can comment and submit evidence regarding whether VGS’s proposed amendments to

“There are currently no areas where the depth of cover needs to be managed to ensure that agricultural activities do not interfere with pipeline safety.”

— Adam Gero, Vermont Gas

their certificate of public good... were sufficient.’ And that’s where we are now,” Hill said. “The current process of the PUC is, effectively, starting with the fact there are these five violations, and the question is, ‘What are we going to do about it?’”

You can see in detail, at tinyurl.com/2f4mcsnp, how VGS is proposing to address the five violations through an amended certificate

of public good. Their proposals include installing “large warning signs” at the end of each right of way of the Clay Plain Swamp, stating, “Warning — Shallow High Pressure Gas Pipeline in this Area; Notify VGS Before Moving Heavy Equipment in this Area”; ensure that any and all future pipeline or related construction projects are overseen by a Vermont-licensed engineer; conduct an independent review of open-cut road crossings after each winter season to see if there are any frost heaves at locations where the pipeline is buried beneath roadways and (repair any damage).

NOT FAR ENOUGH
But New Haven and Monkton officials don’t believe VGS’s remediation pledges go far enough. New Haven Selectman John Roleau conveyed his concerns about the pipeline construction this past December, in prefiled testimony to the PUC. Roleau, who served as the town’s road commissioner from 2018-2024, specifically discussed VGS data related to two of the five pipeline project violations: failure to compact trench fill materials, and lack of a responsible charge engineer.

In pouring through VGS’s quarterly reports, Roleau noted photos of washouts and sinkholes. “It’s my opinion that the pipe trench was not properly compacted and water is following the pipeline, above ground and likely under the ground,” he stated in his sworn testimony. “If it’s not compacted, water will find the easiest way to flow and will find those pockets



MONKTON RESIDENT Nate Palmer found this sink hole near his property off Rotax Road. It has exposed agricultural drainage conduit, and Palmer is concerned Vermont Gas System’s natural gas pipeline might be shifting and spurring more sinkholes that could affect farming and public safety.

Photo courtesy of Nate and Jane Palmer

in the soil and flow into it. As the uncompacted soil in the trench settles, it creates a low spot where water will flow, and will create voids, which is where we get the sinkholes.”

Roleau also provided his take on the potential impact of the rising pipeline on farmers.

“Where the pipeline is rising to less than 4 feet deep, it creates a risk of being hit by farm equipment, including manure injection equipment,” he told the PUC. “As soon as the pipeline is above the frostline, it’s going to start moving — freezing and thawing causes movement, that’s why rocks rise to the surface of a field every year. Once the pipeline is in the frost zone, that rise will accelerate.”

Also providing testimony last December was Christopher Bataille, a New Haven selectman and training coordinator at the Vermont Police Academy. Bataille testified on aspects of the pipeline project related to insufficient burial of the conduit in the Clay Plains Swamp, failure to compact trench fill materials, and the absence of a responsible charge engineer.

Bataille found, among other things, that VGS’s depth-of-cover studies applied to 41 agricultural fields, but not the Clay Plains Swamp. Bataille said his analysis of VGS data indicates the pipeline had “less than 4 feet of cover in 40-plus locations,” and that

“given the shallow depth of cover and apparent rising of the pipeline between 2020 and 2023 in many areas of the pipeline — including in the fields immediately south of the Clay Plain Swamp — it is not unreasonable to believe that the depth of cover in the Clay Plain Swamp is also likely to have decreased.”

New Haven officials also voiced concern about heavy vehicles — driven by farmers and the town’s road crew — potentially damaging a rising pipeline carrying highly combustible natural gas.

“The VGS pipeline being situated at less than 4 feet depth of cover at even one public road right of way is of concern to the town of New Haven, and the fact that the preponderance of available evidence suggests that the pipeline is rising in so many locations would seem to indicate that the River Road in New Haven location which is at less than 4 feet depth of cover is not a lone anomaly,” Bataille said.

His said his research included six years of quarterly VGS patrols of the pipeline infrastructure. The VGS permit requires that the entire pipeline right of way be patrolled on foot, by ATV or by vehicle, with leak surveys done four times per

year, New Haven officials noted.

Those VGS patrol reports, according to Bataille, proved incomplete.

“These reports do not regularly report which segments were walked or which were inspected with ATV for each report. The analysis we wrote up took the conservative approach of only noting as ‘skipped’ those areas where the patrol personnel specifically stated that they skipped an area or could not access it,” Bataille said.

That said, Bataille found that, during six years of monitoring, New Haven Clay Plains Swamp was patrolled “at most” eight out of 22 quarters; Monkton Swamp was patrolled “at most” 14 out of 22 quarters; Geprags Park was patrolled “at most” 15 out of 22 quarters; and that “multiple fields, especially in New Haven on either side of the New Haven Clay Plains Swamp, were skipped in at least third quarter every year.”

VGS, according to Bataille, “negotiated their easements with these landowners knowing that regular patrols of the pipeline would be required, and nevertheless chose not to require that a strip be left unplanted for purposes of inspection, or worked out an

agreement of compensation for crops damaged by inspection, or planned for a reasonable timeframe to patrol in which the observation on foot would not have disturbed young crops while the field was still passable.”

Even with what New Haven officials allege were gaps in VGS patrols, the inspectors “noted a number of washouts and sinkholes occurring along the pipeline corridor, and included photos of these in their reports. These include a washout running down the pipeline south of the Clay Plain Swamp in New Haven in the second quarter of 2024; (and) another washout running along the pipeline between Hunt Road and the Clay Plain Swamp in the fourth quarter of 2024.

So what is the town of New Haven asking for? According to Bataille’s prefiled testimony to the PUC:

- That VGS be required to hire to “an appropriately licensed engineering firm to engage in a detailed “depth of cover” study within the New Haven Clay Plain Swamp and within all public road rights-of-way.
- That VGS reinstall the pipeline to a depth of greater than four feet in agricultural fields, and at a minimum of seven feet in road rights of way, by an “installation method that includes measures

(See Sinkhole, Page 9A)

“The pipeline is not ‘rising’ toward the surface due to buoyancy.”

— Adam Gero, Vermont Gas

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Sinkhole

(Continued from Page 8A)

which are effective at combatting pipeline buoyancy, such as earthscrews or anchors.

• That VGS repeat depth of cover studies in the Clay Plains Swamp and in public road rights-of-way “at a minimum” of every three years for the next 12 years.

VT. GAS REBUTTAL

VGS provided its rebuttal to New Haven’s testimony and exhibits through Adam Gero, the company’s director of operations and construction.

“The concerns that have been expressed by the intervenors’ witnesses... do not raise any valid maintenance, public safety, or pipeline integrity issues. In some cases, their concerns have nothing to do with the five substantial changes in this case at all,” Gero stated in his testimony.

Gero rejected New Haven officials’ interpretation of the pipeline inspection data.

“The pipeline is not ‘rising’ toward the surface due to buoyancy,” Gero stated in his prefiled testimony to the PUC. “Pipeline buoyancy is evaluated and assessed during the design phase of a pipeline project. Design specifications ensure that pipeline installation will not result in buoyancy.”

He added pipeline buoyancy, in general, “is only an issue where the pipeline is located in water or saturated soils where the upward hydrostatic force could exceed the combined weight of the steel pipe, coating, and overlying soil prism.”

Gero said the segment of the pipeline buried in the Clay Plains Swamp “was designed and engineered to prevent buoyancy as the specifications required concrete coating to counteract any potential buoyant effects. This coating adds to the combined overall weight of the pipeline and prevents buoyancy.”

He further asserted that the pipeline was interred and filled bases on conservative “assumptions about soil strength and depth of cover, including values that represent low strength soils with substantially less cover than was actually installed.”

As for the Clay Plains Swamp, Gero said such a wetland “was not intended or designed to accommodate highway traffic.” Timber mats “or an equivalent system” would be needed to accommodate any unlikely crossing of the swamp, he testified.

Gero had this to say about Bataille’s depth-of-cover and VGS’s pipeline inspection protocols:

“We have not observed any concerning surface conditions, washouts, or evidence that surface water flow is a threat to pipeline integrity. Mr. Bataille’s testimony on this issue lacks sufficient context and understanding about the inspection reports and how they are a part of our overall pipeline inspection process.”

Gero said VGS’s inspection of the pipeline terrain doesn’t dovetail with the town of New Haven’s.

“Based on my experience as a pipeline engineer, it is my opinion that a lack of compaction during installation of the pipeline would result in observable surface



NATE PALMER SHOWS a sinkhole near his Rotax Road property in Monkton that he believes might have been triggered by the Addison Natural Gas Project since the pipeline was completed in 2017. Photo courtesy of Nate and Jane Palmer

conditions like slumping and settlement along the path of the pipeline,” he said. “The absence of that phenomenon on the (Addison pipeline) is strong evidence that the pipeline was appropriately compacted to achieve the levels of stability that we are observing along the pipeline right-of-way during regular quarterly inspections.”

Should farmers be concerned about bringing large farm equipment onto fields within the pipeline’s right of way?

Not according to Gero. “VGS has adopted this recommendation and collected depth of cover data in these areas in 2020 and 2023. Following each survey, we have also conducted assessments of the data and, in some cases, further field verification,” he said. “Based on these surveys and the follow-up assessments conducted by our integrity maintenance team, there are currently no areas where the depth of cover needs to be managed to ensure that agricultural activities do not interfere with

pipeline safety.” What about the VGS depth-of-cover data on agricultural fields that New Haven officials used in framing their concerns?

Gero acknowledged that data “reflects the fact that these are dynamic working landscapes where seasonal plowing, tire traffic from agricultural equipment, and natural soil shrink-swell cycles routinely alter surface elevations by several inches. As a result, changes in the depth of cover are expected in these locations.”

But he said that data shows “no discernible trend in one direction or another.”

VGS Director of Public Affairs Dylan Giambattista offered a statement that included: “The Addison natural gas system has provided safe and reliable service to customers since it was put into service almost nine years ago. A small group of folks who have opposed the pipeline since 2012 continue to assert inaccurate claims about our system despite extensive investigation by State regulators and pipeline safety experts whose

review led to a conclusion that ‘the pipeline is safe.’”

REMEDATION TIMELINE

Hill said it could be next year before the PUC issues a decision on any pipeline project remediation VGS might have to perform through an amended certificate of public good. The commission could amend the certificate in a manner that holds the company relatively harmless for the five violations; it could approve amendments that impose new conditions or requirements; or it could request additional hearings.

Meanwhile, folks like Monkton’s Nate and Jane Palmer said they’ll remain on heightened alert. The couple has been opposing the pipeline since it was first pitched. The conduit was originally slated to go under their 80-acre Laughing Tree Farm off Rotax Road, but the Palmers succeeded in getting VGS to bypass their property.

While the pipeline isn’t directly under them, it’s still too close for comfort, according to the Palmers. “Instead of having all the infrastructure on our farm and 75 feet from our bedroom window... it goes around our farm on three sides and is maybe 300 feet at its closest point,” Nate Palmer said.

The Palmers have spotted sinkholes, new water runoff patterns and what they believe

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)

initial review of several state and regional reports suggests there might be between 20 and 40 vacant homes in New Haven. These buildings, according to taskforce members, could present a great opportunity to deliver additional needed housing for the community. As part of its initial focus, the taskforce wants to identify the actual number and location of any vacant homes to see if they can be woven back into New Haven’s active housing supply. If you know of any vacant homes in town, you’re encouraged to email the address — and any other details pertaining to ownership and/or reasons it is vacant — to newhavenhousingvt@gmail.com. This news will be treated confidentially, according to taskforce leaders.

Do you love history? Do you enjoy meeting new people? Are you interested in sharing stories in a beautiful historic setting? Ferrisburgh’s Rokeby Museum is seeking volunteer tour guides for its 2025-2026 season for both House Tours and Educational Tours. Learn the remarkable story of the Robinson family as you help preserve their legacy as part of the nation’s underground railroad by which slaves were shuttled away from bondage. Tours will run May through October. For more information, visit rokeby.org/work-at-rokeby, or call 802-877-3406

The Addison County Solid Waste Management District recently received a grant of \$40,589 from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, resources that will be used to help fund household hazardous waste collection and disposal for the ACSWMD’s 21 member towns. Residents of these towns can bring household hazardous waste such as paints, cleaning products, herbicides, pesticides, automotive products, and many other toxic chemicals to the district’s HazWaste Center at 1223 Route 7 South

might be other evidence that the pipeline is becoming restless. They’re nervous about where the pipeline goes under Rotax Road, which can undulate under freeze-thaw conditions. “Every time a truck or a car goes over that (road)... there’s stress on that pipe,” Jane Palmer said. They’re also concerned about

in Middlebury for safe and proper disposal, at no charge. These wastes are prohibited from disposal as trash, to keep toxic, flammable, corrosive, and reactive materials out of Vermont’s landfills. The district’s HazWaste Center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, please contact Ben Eglash at 802-388-2333, or visit AddisonCountyRecycles.org. Businesses must make an appointment and pay for hazardous waste disposal.

Average gasoline prices in Vermont have risen 24.8 cents per gallon during the past week, averaging \$3.61 right now, according to GasBuddy. Prices in Vermont are 62.8 cents higher than a month ago and stand 51.7 cents higher than a year ago. According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Vermont was priced at \$3.25 early this week, while the most expensive was \$5.19. Meanwhile, the national average price of gasoline has risen 23.2 cents per gallon during the past week, averaging \$3.68 now. The national average is up 80 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 66.1 cents higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy.

Middlebury Community Players will again award \$1,000 scholarships to area college-bound high school seniors graduating in June 2026, or to those who have graduated from high school within the last two years (2024 or 2025). To be eligible for a scholarship, an applicant must have worked with the Middlebury Community Players in some manner during middle and/or high school, either by participating in a production or assisting at an MCP-sponsored event, such as its costume sale. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is Wednesday, April 15. To apply, visit MiddleburyCommunityPlayers.org and click on the link to the application form.

what could happen if the gas-carrying pipeline were to become compromised.

What are the Palmers looking for?

“The pipeline we were promised,” Nate Palmer said. “We have to live next to this thing.”

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



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When: Saturday, March 28th from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Where: American Legion Post 27

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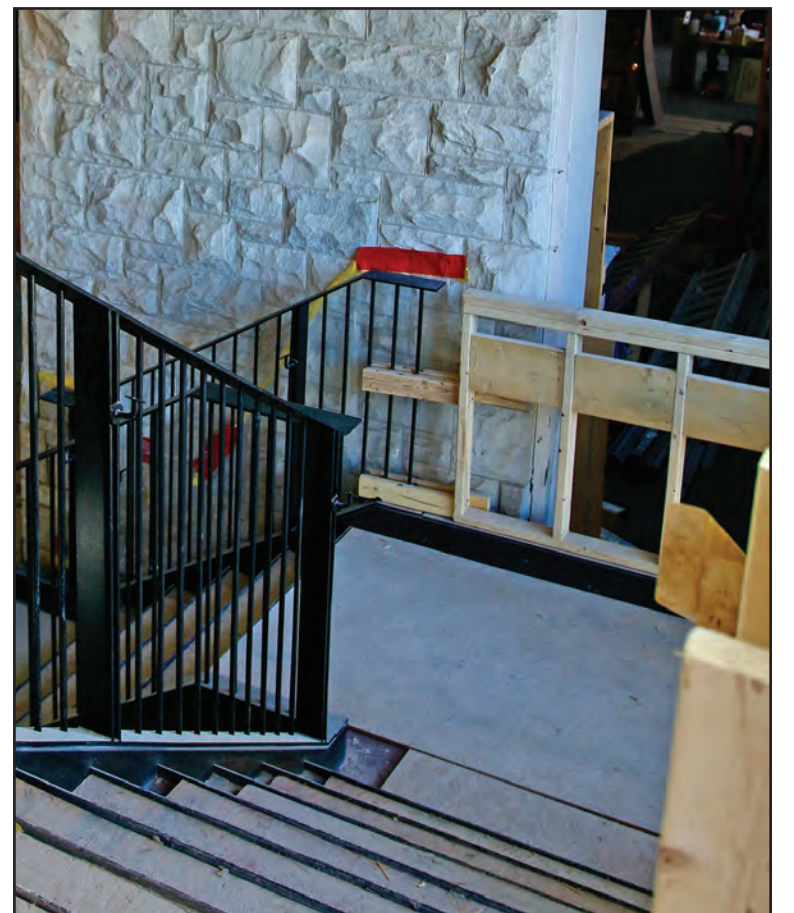
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New chapter unfolding

THE \$17 MILLION transformation of Middlebury's Isley Public Library is in full swing at 75 Main St. The project is expected to wrap late this summer. In the meantime, Isley Director Dana Hart took *Independent* photographer Steve James for a tour this past Friday. Shown here, clockwise from top-left photo: the lobby of the old 1924 library building that will become a reading room accessible from the new building; a view of the second-floor library space, with the "middle-school room" at the rear; roofers work on the 1924 building roof; a glimpse of the front of old 1924 building from the new addition; the staircase leading down from the second floor shows the 1924 building's exposed stone wall; roofers get a rise on their boom lift; a window is installed in the east-facing side of the library; and Hart basks in the glow of the project progress.

Independent photos/Steve James



Kollmann: New Vt. University president appointed

By COREY McDONALD,
VtDigger

Vermont State University's Board of Trustees appointed Sherry Kollmann as the university's new president and system vice chancellor Monday.

Kollmann, currently the chancellor of the New Mexico State University Global Campus, will succeed outgoing President David Bergh, who announced his retirement last year.

Since her 2020 appointment in New Mexico, Kollmann helped grow online enrollment and develop more robust degree and certificate programming, according to a press release. She previously worked in the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and prior to that worked in various roles at Southern New Hampshire University and at New England College.

Elizabeth Mauch, the chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges System, which oversees the Community College of Vermont and Vermont State University, said in a press release that Kollmann "brings to this role a proven record of expanding access to higher education and leading bold advancements that build and strengthen academic programs."

"It is precisely what is required of VTSU at this critical juncture," she said in the release. "Her experience developing new pathways for students of all ages and at all phases of their lives will be essential as VTSU continues to grow and as we deepen collaboration across the entire system" while protecting and enriching the institution's rural campuses.

Kollmann, in an interview



SHERRY KOLLMANN IS the new president of Vermont State University. Courtesy Vermont State University

Monday, said she was drawn to the role after meeting staff and faculty members on the university's campuses.

"Getting to meet the individuals around the various campuses, they have so much grit and determination and such a passion for what Vermont State University is and what it could be," she said.

Kollmann will join the university in its third year of an integrated statewide university system. The Vermont State Colleges System in 2021 merged Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College into a single institution.

But the university, like many higher education institutions in New England, faces enrollment challenges.

The university has bucked longer-term trends in recent semesters. VTSU enrolled more than 1,700 new students in the 2024-25 academic year — a 14% increase from the year prior — while out-of-state enrollment rose by 13%. The university also saw a slight increase in enrollment in the fall 2025 semester compared with the previous fall's enrollment.

But the university has nonetheless tried to address longer-term enrollment declines by aligning the school's programming and physical footprint to match its enrollment.

That includes program consolidation, including in its environmental science program at the Castleton campus, according to the Caledonian Record. University officials also discontinued its associate's degree program for the diesel and automotive mechanic training programs.

Much of the institution's building stock, meanwhile, is not being fully utilized. A facilities master plan completed for the university in 2024 showcases plans to shrink its physical footprint across its five campuses, according to The North Star Monthly.

Kollmann said her goal is to shape the university as a leader in local online classes, and to "create an opportunity for Vermonters and our surrounding states to be able to help those adult learners, who have some level of college but no degree, achieve their baccalaureate degree."

She also wants to pursue more public-private partnerships.

"We need to be able to partner with industry and look at, what are the careers of the future, and how are we supporting students (to) achieve those goals, and make sure that they're leaving our institution with the right information to secure those positions," she said.

Kollmann will officially start in July, following Bergh's planned retirement.

Vt. targeted in federal investigation of Medicaid waste, fraud and abuse

By OLIVIA GIEGER, VtDigger

MONTPELIER — Vermont is the target of the latest federal probe into Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse.

State officials received a March 3 letter from representatives on the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce requesting information on the state's Medicaid program. The committee sent nine other states — almost all of which are Democratic-led, including Maine and Massachusetts — similar requests for information.

The letter cites the federal investigation into Minnesota's Medicaid program surrounding suspected fraud, waste and abuse in how health care providers bill the health coverage program for those with low incomes.

"The Committee is concerned that your state's Medicaid programs may be similarly vulnerable to (fraud, waste and abuse) that harms Medicaid enrollees, legitimate providers, and taxpayers," the letter reads.

Jill Mazza Olson, the Medicaid director for Vermont's Agency of Human Services, said the state was not necessarily expecting this letter to come from the congressional committee, but has had a "heightened awareness" around waste, fraud and abuse in Medicaid surrounding the national attention.

"It's something we take really seriously in Vermont," she said. "We really try to watch the national landscape."

Vermont has long been reliant on federal dollars in the federal-state partnership program. In 2024, the program spent \$2.3 billion, \$1.45 billion of which was drawn from the feds. More than 156,900 Vermonters rely on the program, the letter cites.

In January, the Department of Vermont Health Access, which administers Vermont Medicaid, requested a \$33 million budget adjustment from the federal government to cover this year's Medicaid costs.

Federal dollars, which are matched



JILL MAZZA OLSON, deputy director for health care reform at the Vermont Agency of Human Services, speaks before the Senate Health and Welfare Committee at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026.

VTDigger photo/Glenn Russell

to state spending, are "critical" to Vermont, Olson said.

The congressional letter, signed by the committee's Republican majority leaders, says that Vermont's reliance on Medicaid makes it "high risk" for fraud, waste and abuse.

The authors go on to cite a number of cases of such errors that the state attorney general's Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit has pursued. That included a \$200,000 settlement the Burlington mental health care provider Eden Valley had to pay for submitting more than 150 false records on 50 Medicaid claims.

Another example detailed the felony Medicaid fraud charges the Vermont Attorney General's Office brought against a Lamoille County couple for submitting thousands of dollars worth of false timesheets for caretaking by an unauthorized provider.

"I think I would be concerned about a state that didn't have any cases of fraud. That would suggest to me that they weren't looking," Olson said. "These are examples of cases of fraud that as a state, we have found and identified, and that's the purpose of the systems that we have in place."

The letter's authors write that mental health care and personal care services, which allow Medicaid patients to get support in their own homes or communities, are

particularly susceptible to Medicaid fraud.

They single out Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy for those with autism. At the end of 2025, Vermont Medicaid implemented a controversial change to how it bills for ABA therapy, citing these concerns of fraud, waste and abuse. At the time, the state program expressed a desire to be "proactive" against scrutiny from the federal government that could more deeply jeopardize Medicaid services.

The congressional committee requested the state Agency of Human Services provide it with further information about how Vermont investigates and protects against Medicaid fraud.

In a statement, the agency said it is currently working with the Department of Vermont Health Access on its response to comply with the committee's March 17 deadline.

"Vermont takes program integrity seriously and maintains safeguards to ensure Medicaid resources are used appropriately," the agency's spokesperson, Ted Fisher, wrote in a statement. "Vermont's program integrity teams work closely with the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit to investigate and address suspected fraud."

Burlington man detained by ICE is still in custody

By ALAN J. KEAYS and EMMA GREEN, VtDigger

BURLINGTON — A man detained in last week's armed U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement standoff on Dorset Street in South Burlington will remain in federal custody following a court hearing

Tuesday.

Cristian Humberto Jerez Andrade, 31, has been held since the March 11 raid on a home that triggered an hours-long confrontation, street shutdown and forced entry by federal agents. He was denied release Tuesday in federal court in Burlington as his

immigration case proceeds.

His hearing came a day after U.S. District Court Judge Geoffrey Crawford ordered the release of Jisella Johana Patin Patin, 31, who goes by Johana, one of three people taken into custody in the same operation.

MOVIE SCREENING: THE WISDOM OF TRAUMA

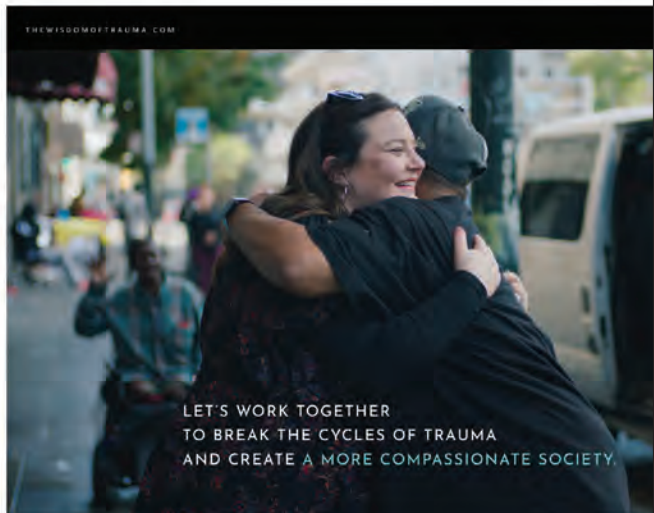
WHEN: **Saturday, March 21, 2-3:30 pm**
followed by a discussion 3:30-4:30 pm

WHERE: **Turning Point Center of Addison County**

This documentary explores the ways that trauma shapes our lives, its connection to anxiety, chronic illness, and substance-use, and **how we might shape a world concerned with healing souls—not fixing behaviors.** This film asks us to be curious about why someone may exhibit certain harmful behaviors rather than lead with judgement and condemnation.

The film will screen starting at 2pm and end roughly around 3:30pm. After the screening, there will be space, lasting about an hour, for a **discussion and reflection** on what we watched together.

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Vergennes

(Continued from Page 1A)

The project, which could also address safety issues related to mold and an inadequate area for the 40 volunteer personnel to decontaminate, is currently expected to cost between \$6 million and \$8 million, based on estimates provided to the city in 2024, according to Chief David DiBiase.

The cost will depend on the route officials eventually take, he cautioned. Those options include renovating the current space, renovating and building a satellite station, constructing a new single-story building, or putting up a new two-story building, from least to most costly.

Committee Vice Chair Kyle Rowe said there are a number of reasons the members favor reconstruction, including that the cost of reconstruction and rehabilitation are comparable. DiBiase also favors a new fire station.

The current 8,500-square-foot station, which is more than 75 years old and was originally the site of a high school, last had a facelift in 1979. That was about 20 years after the Green Street building began housing the fire department.

The floor on which the station's fire trucks park is currently being held up from the basement with a series of metal and wooden posts. Mold in places and lack of a decontamination space also need to be addressed.

DiBiase said more space and parking are also needed.

Addressing these and other inadequacies is what Rowe and the recommendation committee, which began meeting in February, were tasked with thinking through.

Rowe said he hopes he and the five other committee members — Chair Bill Benton, Chris Lapierre, Chris Hutton, Vergennes City Councilor Jill Murray-Killon and Ferrisburgh selectboard member Wally Reed — have a recommendation ready before the fiscal year ends in June, at which point the Vergennes City Council would decide how, or if, to proceed.

"We don't want to rush, while time is of the essence, because the building is structurally deficient," Rowe said when discussing the timing of the eventual recommendation.

"There's a lot of moving parts to that, including the idea of, you know, 'how are we going to accomplish this financially?'" Rowe said.

Though the recommendation committee began discussions last month, the issues with the current station have been on the minds of officials for at least nine years.

In 2017, the city spent about \$60,000 repairing the problem floor, according to DiBiase.

Then in 2023, Vergennes commissioned an engineering study to assess issues with the fire station that showed "the building and site are currently in moderately good condition, but some deficiencies exist and various modifications are required to improve functionality, safety, occupant comfort, and to prevent deterioration. The existing structure is considered to be worth the investment to upgrade and keep in service."

Though committee members have considered these findings, they didn't include costs of addressing what DiBiase said is the biggest problem — the floor.

Since that study was completed, Rowe said, "additional and subsequent estimates weighing re-construction against new construction in fact find the costs to be very close; however the benefit to new construction is a significantly larger, more thought-out building, with room for growth vs. the size limitations that attend with the current facility, all for approximately the same costs as rehabilitating the current building."



LALLY COLUMNS hold up the ceiling in the basement of the Vergennes Fire Station as a temporary fix. A recommendation committee began meeting in February to think through how to address this, and other issues with the building.

Contributed by David DiBiase

Not long after the DuBois & King study, a structural engineer began checking the floor every six months. "And then if we see bigger issues that have kind of progressed within that six-month period, we'll bring him back in between to have them again," DiBiase explained.

Regular attendees of Vergennes City Council meetings in the fire station's basement are well aware of the cluster of poles behind their seats.

"I think it's been a long time coming, and it's finally, unfortunately, gotten to the point ... where it can't be ignored anymore."

— Vergennes Fire Chief David DiBiase

Initially, that corner was occupied by nine lally columns to hold up that basement's ceiling, which is the floor for truck parking. More than 30 have been added in the roughly two years since the first ones.

Altogether, there are about 44 lally columns "that are literally holding up the floor to ensure that we don't have a major collapse of that structure, and trying to slow down the degradation of the slab that's occurring kind of naturally," DiBiase said.

He said this temporary fix has cost roughly \$10,000.

In the year after the DuBois & King study, the city also had a feasibility study and budget options completed by Vermont Integrated Architecture.

More recently, officials surveyed fire department personnel this year regarding the issues at the station. Immediate priorities summarized from the responses include "adequate apparatus bay size and floor load capacity," "proper gear and equipment storage separated from contaminants," and "purpose-built space for training."

One respondent also noted they feel the space is "not usable for a long-term emergency shelter if needed."

DiBiase said in an interview the fire station is considered the emergency shelter for the city.

"So if we needed to set up a shelter, that's the location. It's ... no longer ADA compliant ... there's no bathroom facilities on the first floor for firefighters," he said.

As far as dealing with contaminants, such as carcinogens or bodily fluids, DiBiase explained the issue:

"If you're covered in smoke or carcinogens from a fire ... you got to take your gear off or walk it down through the basement." He said that is the space that needs to be clean for city council meetings and the kitchen.

"Then wash it down there and then drag it back up."

Dealing with the station's problems has been put off for as long as possible, DiBiase said.

"I think the firefighters way is to just make do, right? Like, that's what we do, and many times we don't advocate for the things that we may need to ensure everything goes well," he said.

"We're our own worst enemy sometimes, in that aspect, because we'll just keep making it work. So yes, I think it's been a long time coming, and it's finally, unfortunately, gotten to the point ... where it can't be ignored anymore."

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, at 5 p.m. at the Vergennes Fire Station.

Beeman

(Continued from Page 1A)

Jodi Brown, a member of Beeman's PTO, said at a March 10 MAUSD Board meeting.

"It's a performative event, much like any play," she continued. "It's just a fun, performative way to present educational material. They read books, and the books are about loving yourself, being kind to other people and celebrating our differences."

Brown explained that since the event is sponsored by the PTO, the story hour is not being funded by taxpayer dollars but rather by money raised by the parent-teacher organization. The organization then decides what to put that money toward, with the upcoming program receiving the group's approval for support.

Brown noted the idea for the program was brought to the table because Beeman has LGBTQ+ students who are being bullied.

"They're being harassed, and they're suffering from that," she said, adding that LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk for bullying, depression and suicide. "Part of this was some preventative education and a fun way to present information that I had actually seen before."

She said she'd attended a Drag Queen Story Hour at a library that featured the same people who would be taking part in the event at Beeman.

Local communities have hosted Drag Queen Story Hours. Bristol's Lawrence Memorial Library hosted the Drag Story Hour Vermont Chapter for an event in July 2024. Drag Story Hour is a nonprofit offering "literary and creative programming" with a mission to celebrate "the magic of storytelling through the art of drag where audiences can explore their authentic selves and shine as sparks

of change in their communities." **UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY** Beeman Principal Stephanie Sumner said the idea of Drag Queen Story Hour was first raised at the school last year, and she worked with some parent members of Beeman's PTO throughout the fall to develop the idea into a more global experience.

The goal of the series is to "increase student understanding of what it means to be empathetic, inclusive, and accepting of others in their community."

— Beeman Principal Stephanie Sumner

"The current planning is to have lesson-based components developed in conjunction with our district Social-Emotional Learning team, as well as a series of visiting performances," Sumner told the *Independent*. "Along with DQSH, the planning includes Duncan Tonatiuh (a Mexican-American author), A2VT (musical traditions and cultural stories from East Africa), Sweethearts and Heroes (anti-bullying storytelling), and Changing Perspectives (Awareness of Different Abilities, Perspectives, and Experiences)."

"This plan addresses some of the Transferable Skills learning targets

of our curriculum, such as Knowing Your Identity, Knowing Your Values, Actions and Outcomes, Empathy, Considering Diverse Identities, and Considering Diverse Values," Sumner continued. "It also includes multiple literacy, creative expression, critical thinking, communication, social studies, and cultural literacy skills."

The visiting performances will be spread out over five days and take place during a specific part of the day. Sumner said current planning also includes "mini-lessons, which are typically of our Social-Emotional Learning curriculum but specific to some of the themes such as diversity, inclusion, self-awareness, and knowing one's strengths and goals."

The series is still in the planning process. Parents' ability to attend events included in the series "is a planning piece that is also still being developed, given parent feedback, concerns, and some recent safety concerns," Sumner said.

She said the goal of the series is to "increase student understanding of what it means to be empathetic, inclusive, and accepting of others in their community."

"This focus stems from data that has been collected this year, as well

(See Story hour, Page 15A)



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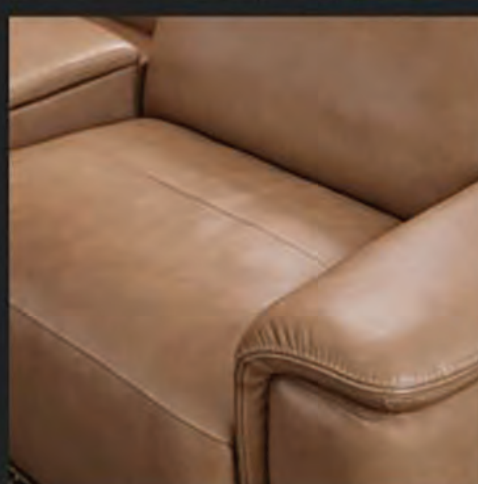
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Lost Lantern

(Continued from Page 1A)

nominated to the first class makes the recognition that much more exciting.

“They could have picked anyone,” she said. “So we’re incredibly honored to be on that list. And it’s a very cool list.”

Lost Lantern, which launched in 2020, is considered an independent bottler, which Ganley-Roper explained, “means that we buy mature casks of whiskey from distilleries all over the United States, and we blend whiskey from multiple places together.”

“This is a model that’s existed in the U.S. ... We’re the first to do American whiskey focused.”

She became immersed in whiskey while working for a premier New York City wine and spirits business doing sales and management, and Polonski as a journalist covering the emerging American whiskey industry. And neither one minds drinking a glass, either.

“We spent years complaining about how this didn’t exist for American whiskey, and so eventually evolved into doing it.”

Polonski said the industry’s youth calls for a model like Lost Lantern. “We saw there was a real need for it in the American whiskey market, because there are more than 2,000 distilleries in the United States now, yeah, and 90% of them have opened in the last 15 years. So it’s a relatively new movement. These are a ton of places that are relatively small, and some of them are making really world class whiskey, but just don’t, either don’t make enough of it to get out widely, or people just don’t know about it yet.”

The pair, which just welcomed baby Owen to their family at the end of January, estimates they’ve worked with about 50 distilleries in the country.

“Most releases that we do are quite limited. They come and go pretty quickly,” Polonski said.

Ganley-Roper’s and Polonski’s business has its roots on the road.

“We left our jobs in New York City in 2018 and traveled around the country for eight months to visit distilleries and make sure that they would sell us whiskey, and then made our way back to Vermont,” Ganley-Roper said.

Polonski said the pair landed in Vermont “because we want to be here.”

“There are very remote places in Scotland that are making whiskey on like remote islands or remote corners of the highlands, and they’re there because that’s where they want to be, where they’ve



NORA GANLEY-ROPER'S TEST blends sit on a counter at Lost Lantern Whiskey. She and her husband, Adam Polonski, run the whiskey blending and bottling business in Vergennes.

Independent photo/Sophia Keshmiri

always been, not because it’s the most efficient place for their business,” he added.

“We’re in Vermont because we want to be, and sell all around the country and hopefully bring some people here too.”

Today, Polonski’s road trips serve for more than a good story, Ganley-Roper explained. “(If) they’re making whiskey that tastes exactly like Kentucky bourbon, probably delicious, but it’s not what we’re really interested in.”

“We also need to understand the climate. So we’ve been in warehouses in like, ten degree weather with wind whipping, but that tells us so much about what to expect from a flavor perspective,” she said.

Part of their model is promoting the distilleries they feature.

“Our job is to talk about how they’re awesome over and over and over again. And so we actually have to believe that they’re people worth highlighting. So it’s a whole combination of vetting beyond just does this whiskey taste good or bad?”

Ganley-Roper thinks being first of its kind, and the national press that’s come along with that, helped Lost Lantern catch *Food & Wine*’s eye.

Her husband added that he thinks

“we bring a unique perspective to the American whiskey industry,” on account of their broad knowledge and acquaintance with American distilleries.

“I’ve visited distilleries in every state in the country,” Polonski said.

“I’ve been to more distilleries than just about anyone, I wouldn’t say, more than anyone in the U.S., but definitely, like top 10 or so people for a number of the distilleries that I’ve been to in the country.”

“That just gives you a unique perspective.”

Story hour

(Continued from Page 13A)

as historical data, that indicates that there are specific identity groups in our school who do not experience a sense of belonging and have been subjected to harm through biased and intolerant language and behaviors,” she said.

At the March 10 MAUSD meeting, six residents shared concerns about the Drag Queen Story Hour event in particular, in most cases saying they felt the event was not appropriate for young students.

A couple of residents suggested the story hour could be held outside of school.

“I think schools need to focus on the basics, and us in our community, and there’s nothing wrong with PTO if they want to sponsor that, have a separate event not at school and invite everybody, and then those people who choose to go could,” Bristol resident Chanin Hill said. “But for those of us that don’t want to expose our kids to that, that’s really how I feel about it.”

Community members at the school board meeting and in recent Front Porch Forum posts have offered information on what Drag Queen Story Hours consist of. Former Bristol selectboard member Darla Senecal noted in an FPF post that in her experience, most concerns about the story hours come from assumptions rather than seeing the events.

“Drag Queen Story Hour is exactly what it sounds like: a fully clothed performer reading children’s literature to children. That’s it. There is nothing sexual, suggestive, or inappropriate about it,” Senecal wrote. “If it had any other name, most people would not think twice. Drag is an art form — costume, character and storytelling — and in this setting it is simply a joyful, creative way to share books with kids.”

LuAnn Chiola, director of Youth and Family Services at the Counseling Service of Addison County, echoed that point in a letter to the editor included in this edition.

“Drag queen storytelling events are fun ways to promote reading, imagination and creativity,” Chiola wrote. “More importantly, they teach all children to not fear what they don’t understand, to embrace differences, and feel safe to express their own individuality.”

SUPPORTING STUDENTS
Sumner shed light on the school’s process for vetting the Drag Queen Story Hour and other program requests. She noted program requests can come from various places, such as teachers or the PTO.

“When staff or parents have an idea to add an experience for our students, we look at connections to our curriculum, what the experience may offer that we currently are not, and spend time researching the resource for validity, effectiveness with their targeted objective, expense and other aspects that may arise,” Sumner said.

Sumner shared how the series of learning experiences being planned fits into efforts to address students’

needs and ensure members of the Beeman community feel supported.

“The reality is that Beeman is full of diversity with many different elements of identity that students see as different from themselves. Exploring identity is an important part of elementary students’ social and emotional development,” she said. “When children are given age-appropriate opportunities to learn about culture, religion, gender, disability and lived experiences, they begin to better understand themselves and others.”

Sumner said such conversations help students “build empathy, respect differences, and recognize that each person’s identity is shaped by many factors.”

“Creating space for this learning in elementary classrooms supports a sense of belonging, strengthens positive relationships, and lays the foundation for inclusive, caring communities where all students feel seen and valued,” she continued. “Student belonging is a critical driver of academic success, fostering engagement, motivation, and increased attendance. When students feel connected, accepted, and valued by peers and educators, they are more likely to participate in class, develop self-confidence, and persist through academic challenges.”

Sumner noted the Understanding Identity series is still in the planning stages and working to incorporate feedback, ideas and concerns from the community.

“Sadly, we have also had to add an element of safety planning due to online and social media posts, which have raised concerns of threats, violence, and boycotts from individuals or groups who do not agree with one specific performance,” she said. “These concerns are evidence that we have a lot of work to do to build acceptance and belonging in our community. We are working with district support and local law enforcement as we navigate this.”

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— Beeman Principal Stephanie Sumner

“This is a model that’s existed in Scotland for over 200 years, but we’re the first bringing it to the U.S. ... We’re the first to do American whiskey focused.”

— co-owner Nora Ganley-Roper

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BRYAN SAWYER STANDS beside his blue ribbon-earning LEGO display at the Bixby Memorial Free Library on Saturday, March 7. There were 42 entries in the LEGO-building contest, sponsored by Bixby and Vergennes Parks and Rec.

Photos courtesy of Bixby Memorial Free Library



AJ BUZEMAN



WESTLEY DUNHAM

At the Bixby

Kids & adults create amazing LEGO displays

VERGENNES — On Saturday, March 7, the Bixby Memorial Free Library and the Vergennes Department of Parks and Recreation showcased the creativity of the community at their 8th Annual LEGO Contest.

With 42 entries across eight age groups, this year's contest brought out impressive designs and imaginative storytelling, including intricate builds of Vergennes Falls, a pirate ship, dreamy castles, and more! The participants amazed both judges and spectators with their originality, presentation, spatial complexity and vibrant use of color.

Judges Martha DeGraaf, Recreation and Programming Coordinator at Vergennes Department of Parks and Recreation; Christine Garrow, executive director at

Vergennes Partnership; and Eliza Spencer, a Bixby Library trustee, carefully evaluated each entry, making the tough decisions to determine this year's winners. Taking home the top prizes in their categories were:

- Pre-K-K: Reed Aftuck
- Grades K - 2nd: winner Westley Dunham, runner-up AJ Buzeman
- Grades 3rd - 5th: winner Lucas Rasper, runner-up Sabel Jimerson-Smith
- Grades 6th - 8th: Corbin Jimerson-Smith
- Teen/Young Adult: Ella Apuzzo-Kidder
- Adult: Bryan Sawyer
- Adult & Child: Theodore, Franklin, Emily & RJ Packard
- Mixed Ages: winners Jude, Hendrix & Franklin Sylvia, runners-up Allyson & Ava Buzeman

The winners from each age group walked away with impressive LEGO kits generously sponsored by A&H Signs and Banners, Debbi Laberge Smith, Dream Vacations Jessica Slater & Associates, GuideWorth Advisors, Jersey Street, McKirryher Woodworks, One Credit Union, Otter Creek Engineering, and TaeKwon Do K.I.C.K.S.

When asked why they loved the LEGO Contest, participants and spectators shared: "so many different ideas!" "you can make almost anything," "the interactive creating" and "the creativity!"

The Annual LEGO Contest continues to provide a platform for children, teens, and adults to flex their creativity and build from their imagination. Until next year, happy building!



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Photos courtesy of Bixby Memorial Free Library

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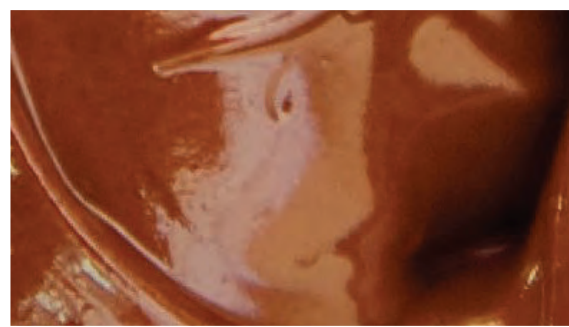
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Festival really satisfies chocolate enthusiasts

By STEVE JAMES

MIDDLEBURY — Chocolate: it's in candy bars, cakes, ice cream, hot cocoa, frosting, brownies and sauces.

Millions of us are chocoholics, and more than 150 of them turned up on Sunday for the inaugural Vermont Chocolate Festival.

"It went phenomenally well," said Hanna Loeffler, organizer of the event held at the Town Hall Theater. "The only complaint we received was that there were too many things to do to choose from!"

Loeffler, who is a managing partner and "chocolate curator" at Adagio Chocolates in Middlebury, said four of the five 30-minute chocolate tastings sold out and all three hour-long demonstrations were standing-room only.

The festival featured some chocolatiers from Addison County — Farmhouse Chocolates of Bristol, Daily Chocolate of Vergennes and Middlebury Sweets, the "candy motel" on

Route 7 South. And even Willy Wonka took time off from his chocolate factory to grace the festival with his presence.

Chocolate producers, who make the seductive nectar from cacao pods shipped from west Africa, Southeast Asia and Central and South America, said although prices have risen after recent droughts and Trump import tariffs, true chocolate lovers are still willing to pay for their obsession.

Loeffler pointed to two highlights:

- Neil Philip of Foster Chocolate in Danby gave a bean-to-bar demonstration, in which he showed how chocolate is made from the fermented, dried bean, through the roasting, grinding, conching, to the tempering process that results in a stunningly beautiful bar.

- Mateo Block of Prophecy Chocolate gave a masterclass on chocolate as a drink, talking about the heritage and history of



Sweetness & light

VERMONT CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL organizer Hanna Loeffler (middle) takes a breather during the Sunday event at Town Hall Theater. Clockwise from her photo, Middlebury College student Adrian Salazar serves hot chocolate during the festival; Maddison Foster and Renee Cohen of Lake Champlain Chocolates display their wares; Mateo Block of Prophecy Chocolate in Morrisville displays Cacao and its cousin Macambo as part of it talk on the heritage of chocolate; Daily Chocolate owner Dawn Wagner and her daughter Ellis Holm peddle some of the good stuff from their Vergennes shop; and Willy Wonka himself makes an appearance at the new wing of Town Hall Theater. Independent photos/Steve James

chocolate and the cultural significance of chocolate throughout history. Mateo wove stories and practical know-how into a fascinating presentation of the depth and breadth of Theobroma Cacao and its

cousins Macambo and Copuazú.

"I didn't see a single bored, dissatisfied or unhappy participant, and I was impressed by how completely dialed in everyone seemed," the festival organizer

said.

Other chocolatiers are already asking Loeffler if they can be at the next festival, if there is a second Vermont Chocolate Festival.

Education reform

(Continued from Page 1A)
the decline.

Those were among the takeaways from this past Saturday's legislative breakfast at the Weybridge Congregational Church, which drew more than 30



"We are trying to find a way to both respect people's strong views for what they have and hold dear, and the reality that many people are finding this state unaffordable to live in."

— Rep. Peter Conlon

districts some independence while coordinating some services like special education under the supervisory union's umbrella.

Conlon and Bongartz are chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees, respectively.

Conlon was on hand Saturday to provide an update on his committee's work.

"(Act 73) was very aspirational when it was passed, and now we're at the point of taking those aspirations and turning them into legislation. It's proving very challenging," he said. "No matter where you live in the state, you have a different situation you want to hold on to. We're getting a lot of testimony and comments from around Vermont, and all of it differs and everyone feels very passionately about this. So we're trying to thread a very careful needle."

He explained the state's K-12 student enrollment has declined by around 40,000 students during the past 30 years to around 80,000 today. At the same time, Vermont's public education system hasn't done enough to recalibrate to serve fewer students and control rising costs, according to Conlon.

He said addressing Vermont's new education landscape will require "major change, and major change is really hard in a state that doesn't like change."

"We are trying to find a way to both respect people's strong views for what they have and hold dear, and the reality that many people are finding this state unaffordable to live in," Conlon said. "Property taxes are one of the major contributors, and education is

largely a driver of property taxes."

This financial pressure is creating disparities in educational quality throughout the state — a situation that the Vermont sought to remedy through Act 60 of 1997. That law — driven by the Brigham v. state Vermont Supreme Court decision — created a statewide property tax to equalize education resources across school districts.

But almost 30 years later, educational inequalities are reappearing.

"We are once again turning into a state of haves and have-nots," Conlon said. "Some communities think they can support education at a high level, other communities feel they can't. Ultimately, it's the kids who get the different experiences. What we are striving for is to give all Vermont students equity in opportunity and equity in education."

He said lawmakers are currently trying to coalesce around a bill calling for "fewer, larger school districts," that would "address our really old school building infrastructure with a philosophy of 'newer and fewer,'" and how that would "bend the cost curve on education," according to Conlon.

MONEY BILLS

The House and Senate Education committees have received a post-crossover extension to advance such a bill.

"The next few weeks are going to be crucial in our committee. It's going to be really challenging, as it has been all along," Conlon said.

State finances will inform that discussion. Rep. Robin Scheu, D-Middlebury, who chairs House Appropriations, reported the state's financial picture is far from rosy. Every bill with a money component goes through Scheu's committee, whether the request is \$100 or \$10 million.

Vermont's budget bill needs to be voted out to House Appropriations by March 20, Scheu noted.

"This is about as awake as

you're going to see me for the next two weeks," she quipped of her looming time commitment.

Scheu said this year represents a significant departure from the past four, when it comes to state finances.

"State economists have been telling us the (revenue) growth is gone, the federal money we got during COVID is gone," she said. "We're also dealing with a different federal environment. In the past, when we've had tough times, the federal government has been there to help us out. The federal government is not in the same place now."

For example, according to AARP-VT, an estimated 30,000 Vermonters will go uninsured as federal Obamacare assistance sunsets. Further, as many as 45,000 low-income Vermonters will lose coverage from Medicaid.

This, in turn, is prompting more Vermonters to seek help from nonprofits, who are also feeling the strain.

"We've had around \$250 million in additional requests over and above the budget. I think I can find \$10 million," Scheu explained of the conundrum.

Meanwhile, the Trump Administration, according to Scheu, has also decimated funding for such things as Department of Housing & Urban Development operations and for federal mediators used to assist school districts with teacher contract negotiations.

"This is the environment in which we're trying to figure out the budget," she lamented.

Not all of the discussion on Saturday was about public

education and finances, however. Agriculture, human rights, and the status of Addison County State's Attorney Eva Vekos were also hot topics.

Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Middlebury, touted the state Senate's passage, on March 11, of a proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Vermont Constitution.

The amendment, among other things, reads, "The State shall not deny equal treatment under the law on account of a person's race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin."

The amendment passed the Senate by a 29-0-1 margin, with Sen. Steve Heffernan, R-Bristol, choosing not to be present for that vote.

Hardy said the amendment has been in the works for "decades" and takes on added urgency amid the Trump Administration's stated opposition to transgender rights and its recent immigration enforcement tactics through ICE.

"This impacts Vermonters and everyone in this room," she said of the amendment, which must still pass the House and would then need to be ratified by voters this November. "When our constitution was written over 250 years ago, (many of us) did not have the right to vote, to own property, and many of us would have been considered property."

Heffernan said he believed the protections sought through the amendment were already

guaranteed at the federal level.

"Do you not have those right rights now and does this constitutional amendment really change that? Don't Vermonters have those rights right now?" he asked Hardy.

She asserted that the state constitution "is the document that expresses our values and that oversees the ability of Vermonters to have their fundamental rights," and that "right now, our federal government is actively working to take away these rights. So we need to make sure that we protect Vermonters."

Heffernan was also asked to respond to recent newspaper/social media posts asking why he hadn't made the rounds to multiple annual town meetings in the Addison County/Rochester/Huntington/Buel's Gore senatorial district.

Heffernan said he had been feeling unwell but had left written reports at the town meeting locations.

He added he believed selective attendance of town meetings would be unfair.

"If I can't make certain ones, why is your town more important than some other town?" he said. "I'm reachable by phone, email and in person, any time you like."

Hardy countered she had attended 10 town meetings, in addition to holding constituent forums in Orwell and Rochester.

Hardy and Heffernan are both seeking reelection this November in a field that thus far also includes declared challengers Leicester Republican Lesley Bienvenue, Salisbury Democrat Hannah Sessions and Orwell Republican Andrea Treadway.

Editor's note: John Flowers is the brother-in-law to Sen. Steve Heffernan.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



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— Rep. Robin Scheu

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Matt Birong

(Continued from Page 1A)
 myself serving four or five terms, and I'm now wrapping up my fourth term," Birong said during a conversation marked by several pauses to choke back tears.

This has been arguably the most politically tumultuous of Birong's four two-year terms.

He drew criticism last year from some of his constituents for being the guest of the Israeli government on a trip to that Middle Eastern country last September. Birong and four other Vermont House members had joined 245 of their legislative counterparts from other states for the expenses-paid trip, dubbed the "Fifty States — One Israel conference in Jerusalem," also attended by several key Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar.

The conflict in Gaza — and, more recently, the U.S. and Israeli war against Iran — have stirred public activism and emotions throughout the U.S., including here in Vermont. More than 75,000 people, largely Palestinians, have been killed since October of 2023, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Israel launched its military operations in Gaza after attacks on its citizens by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023.

"I did not visit Gaza, and I do not pretend that I saw every side," he told the *Independent* through an email about his trip last September. "But I did meet Israelis who are grieving and protesting, and I left with a deeper understanding of how this conflict is unfolding on the ground. That context helps me respond more thoughtfully when these conversations show up here at home."

In addition to the trip, Birong had drawn some constituent criticism for urging Vergennes and Ferrisburgh town officials to exclude from 2025 Town Meeting

Day ballots a referendum on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Birong during the interview declined to revisit these controversies but stressed that issue had no bearing on his decision to pass on reelection.

"That trip occurred in mid-September, and I had told (Vermont House) Speaker (Jill Krowinski) in August of my intent not to run for reelection," Birong said.

"Every day feels like a master's degree level of education. I've enjoyed the opportunity to grow as a person in this building."

— Rep. Matt Birong

He reflected on a still active (until next January) legislative career that has seen him and his committee affect many sectors of state government.

The Government Operations & Military Affairs Committee — on which Birong has served his entire career — considers matters relating to the structure, organization and oversight of state, local, county and regional government, as well as municipal corporations; the administration of public safety; compensation and retirement benefits for public officials and employees; elections and reapportionment; liquor and lottery; military affairs; public records and open meetings; and other similar policies.

"As far as policy committees go, it has arguably the broadest jurisdiction with the largest impacts on Vermont citizens and others that people don't realize. It is a major portfolio that touches a lot of people's lives," Birong said.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Birong and his colleagues have played a role in such issues as ensuring the solvency of state workers' pensions, looking after the interests of Vermont servicepeople, and coordinating disaster relief efforts.

He's proud of what his committee has accomplished during his tenure, including its major role in keeping businesses and farms afloat, and individuals fed, during the COVID pandemic.

"On March 13, 2020, we shut

down state government. That was obviously a lot to navigate," Birong recalled of COVID's arrival in Vermont.

As a former restaurateur (he owned/operated 3 Squares Café in Vergennes), Birong was proud to have played an active role in connecting businesses to federal pandemic-relief programs, such as the Payroll Protection Program.

He gave shout-outs to Vermont's then-Congressional delegation for helping secure and deploy Vermont's federal COVID relief funding. And Birong — with his knowledge of food service and state government — proved an effective liaison.

"I was the one who spoke both languages; I spoke 'government' and the sector, so I was an active conduit for that communication," he said.

But his favorite pandemic contribution was the role he played creating a program that helped rank-and-file Vermonters get food at a time when many were furloughed from work.

"The work I did... to establish the 'Everyone Eats' program, that one stands out," he said.

Another highlight: An omnibus public safety emergency response bill that, according to Birong, "takes the lessons we learned from COVID, the floods and other situations we've had and trying to hone our (rescue/recovery) systems to work better."

He also referenced his work with Major Gen. Gregory C. Knight, who until recently served as leader of the Vermont National Guard. Knight earlier this month passed the torch to his successor, Brigadier Gen. Henry Harder.

"Working with Major Gen. Knight and his team and organization was one of the most meaningful components of my work," said Birong.

The Vermont Guard has been part of a buildup of forces in the Middle East that culminated in a series of U.S./Israeli strikes against Iran that began on Feb. 28.

In addition to his Government Operations & Military Affairs duties, Birong during his tenure has

also co-chaired both the legislative Canvassing Committee and County & Regional Governance Study Committee and has served as clerk of the Joint Public Pension Oversight Committee.

What has Birong enjoyed most during his time in Montpelier?

"This building," he said. "This is the most interesting work environment I've ever experienced, due to the nature of it. It is a bottomless pit of education. How much you want to commit to learning things and immersing yourself, it's all there. Every day feels like a master's degree level of education. I've enjoyed the opportunity to grow as a person in this building."

What's next for Matt Birong?

He's not sure. Yet. "I've got to figure out the next chapter of my life. That's very heavily weighted with this

decision," he said. "What that looks like is still to be determined. I have always enjoyed service to the community. My hope is to still help people. What that looks like, I don't know; life is a path, and I'm just on it."

Eliza Spencer, chair of the Addison County Democratic Committee, expressed gratitude to Birong for his work on behalf of the state and folks in the Addison-3 district towns of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham.

"We thank Mr. Birong for his service and wish him well in his next chapter," she said.

Spencer said Addison County Democrats are "focused on recruiting and supporting strong Democratic candidates for the Addison-3 House race and are committed to winning both House seats in November."

Incumbent Rep. Rob North,

R-Ferrisburgh, was the top vote-getter in the 2024 race for Addison-3's two House seats and is expected to run for reelection.

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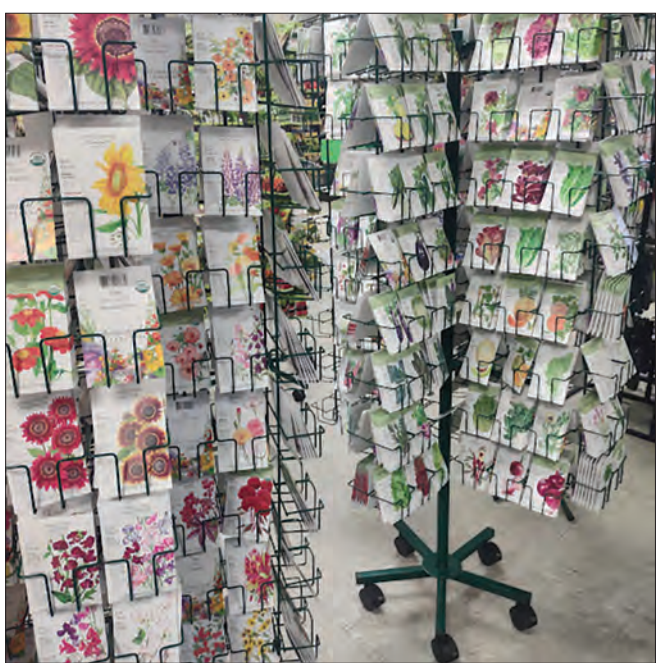
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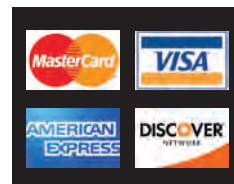


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SPORTS

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MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE CROSS country runner Audrey MacLean pulls away from the competition during the NCAA D-III championship race in South Carolina last fall (above left). The junior won with time to spare, and is up for a major sports award, which will be announced this summer. Right, MacLean poses with her hardware after dominating the NCAA D-III race, winning by more than three-quarters of a minute.

Photos by David Beach

Midd's MacLean puts NCAA title in perspective, credits teammates

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

MIDDLEBURY — It wasn't until early this past October that Audrey MacLean and her cross country coach at Middlebury College, Nicole Wilkerson, broached the elephant in the room. "Audrey came into my office and said something, we (were) talking about some irrelevant things. And then she said, 'I was looking at other times from some big meets,' because that's what happens in early October, 'I was looking at winning times,'" Wilkerson recalled. "And I knew what she was saying."

meaning behind her college athletes' words after decades coaching at Midd, realized MacLean was sizing herself up against the top competition in the country.

"And I put it back on her," Wilkerson said. "Until you can come into my office and say, 'I think I can win nationals,' we're not gonna have this conversation."

MacLean took about a week to absorb her coach's words before giving Wilkerson her assessment. "She has zero ego, and she just very quiet, she's like, 'OK, I think I can win,'" the coach reflected.

About a month and a half later MacLean was flashing a "W" with

her hands as she crossed the course finish line in Spartanburg, S.C., about 48 seconds ahead of anybody else in the roughly 300-runner field. The junior's 20:16.8, 6K run was a personal record, and also marked just the second time a Middlebury women's cross country runner has claimed an NCAA individual title. Her predecessor, Dorcas DenHartog, a Nordic skiing Olympian and highly accomplished athlete, was champion in 1985.

Like MacLean, she claimed that title as a junior, and finished healthily ahead of the runner-up — the gap was 36 seconds.

MacLean, a Molecular Biology

and Biochemistry student who has also had great success in collegiate indoor and outdoor track, ended the season with several other accomplishments and accolades — she was the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (U S T F C C C A) NCAA Division III National Women's Cross Country Athlete of the Year and the Middlebury cross country program's first USTFCCA Division III Cross Country Scholar Athlete of the

Year. This season she was also the NESCAC most outstanding performer and champion, and the Midwest regional champion.

"I had no concept of winning nationals or anything. I just joined the team."

— Audrey MacLean

The list continues — all three years she's been on the team, MacLean has been named an All-American, All-Region and All-NESCAC athlete.

Additionally, MacLean is up for Division III Honda Athlete of the Year, an award bestowed on one of 11 athletes, all from different sports.

MacLean got the cross country nomination, and will be honored along with fellow nominees during a live telecast on CBS Sports in New York City in July. Three Panthers have won in the past.

"This is definitely ... a huge, significant honor, especially as a junior, to be recognized for this," Wilkerson said.

Though MacLean's running resume runs about as long as she does, like many D-III athletes she entered her freshman season primarily with ambitions to simply keep running competitively and find community.

"I didn't even think that I was (See MacLean, Page 2B)

Scoreboard

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

- Boys' Basketball**
3/12 Rand. vs VUHS D3, semi.....63-48
- Boys' Hockey**
3/11 Harwood vs MUHS, semi.....5-0
- Girls' Hockey**
3/11 U32 vs MUHS, semi.....5-3
- COLLEGE SPORTS**
- Baseball**
3/12 Midd vs Keene State.....6-5
3/15 Midd vs VSU Castleton.....7-0
- Women's Lacrosse**
3/14 Midd vs Trinity.....10-4
3/15 Midd vs Franklin & Marshall.....16-2
- Men's Lacrosse**
3/14 Midd vs Trinity.....10-9
3/15 Babson vs Midd.....14-9

Schedule

COLLEGE SPORTS

- Baseball**
(spring break, Winter Haven, Fla.)
3/22 Midd vs Bethel.....9:15 AM
3/22 Midd vs Union College.....2:30 PM
(spring break, Davenport, Fla.)
3/23 Midd vs St. Olaf.....11 AM
3/25 Midd vs SLU.....9:30 AM
3/27 Midd vs Colby.....11 AM
3/27 Midd vs Colby.....2 PM
3/28 Midd vs Colby.....11 AM
- Softball**
(spring break, Clermont, Fla.)
3/22 Midd vs Westminster.....12:15 PM
3/22 Midd vs Union College.....2:30 PM
3/23 Midd vs Kalamazoo.....10 AM
3/23 Midd vs DePauw.....2:30 PM
3/24 Midd vs Lawrence.....10 AM
3/24 Midd vs N. Central (MN)...12:30 PM
3/26 Midd vs Augustana.....10 AM
3/26 Midd vs Carleton.....2:45 PM
3/27 Midd vs Luther College.....10 AM
3/27 Midd vs N. Central (MN)....2:30 PM
- Women's Lacrosse**
3/21 Midd at Bates.....12 PM
3/24 Midd at Univ. Chicago...5:30 PM ET
3/28 Midd at Tufts.....12 PM
3/29 Midd at Babson.....1 PM
- Men's Lacrosse**
3/21 Bates at Midd.....1 PM
3/24 Midd vs Union College.....1 PM
(spring break, Saint Leo, Fla.)
3/28 Tufts at Midd.....2 PM



BILL MANDIGO

Coach Mandigo to retire in June

By Middlebury College Athletic Communications

MIDDLEBURY — Legendary women's ice hockey head coach Bill Mandigo will retire at the conclusion of the 2025-26 academic year, Director of Athletics Erin Quinn announced on Monday. Mandigo is the winningest Division III women's ice hockey coach, capping his career with a 698-185-60 record. Mandigo concludes his 43-year coaching career, including 38 at Middlebury.

"Bill has had an amazing career in so many ways," Quinn said. "The on-ice results speak for themselves with wins and championships that place him at the top of the most successful coaches by those metrics. He has also been a preeminent educator, teaching important life skills and lessons, while enhancing the lives of countless Middlebury student-athletes. He was an outstanding head coach of women's golf, as well as an assistant in both football and baseball. Bill leaves a unique and lasting legacy at Middlebury."

During his tenure, Mandigo led the perennial powerhouse women's ice hockey team to a pair of ACHA Championships

(2000 and 2001) and four NCAA Titles (2004, 2005, 2006, 2022). The program leads the conference with 12 NESCAC Championships, with the last coming in 2024. Mandigo guided the Panthers to the NCAA Semifinals on eight occasions, claiming the title in half of those appearances. In 2022, Middlebury became the first program across all divisions to finish with a perfect 27-0-0 mark, hoisting the trophy in Chip Kenyon Arena.

"It has been a privilege to spend the past 38 years at Middlebury College," Mandigo said. "During that time, I have been fortunate to coach outstanding student-athletes in hockey, football, golf and baseball. I never viewed coaching as a job; rather, I always felt fortunate to work with talented, intelligent people. The relationships formed along the way have been one of the most rewarding parts of my career."

The 2026 NESCAC Coach of the Year, Mandigo has earned the honor on five other occasions, and has been named the AHCA National Coach of the Year four times. He also earned coach of the year accolades from the NEHWA three times and (See Mandigo, Page 2B)

"I never viewed coaching as a job; rather, I always felt fortunate to work with talented, intelligent people."

— Bill Mandigo

Middlebury alum helps earn Para-gold

MILANO CORTINA, Italy — A pair of graduates from Middlebury College and Bowdoin College took two Paralympic gold medals in para cross country skiing events at the Milano Cortina Games in the last week.

Jake Adicoff (Bowdoin '19) and Peter Wolter (Middlebury '22), Adicoff's guide in the visually impaired 1.5K Sprint Classic and 20K Freestyle, claimed the title in both.

At the 2026 Paralympics, cross country skiers competed in either standing, sitting and vision impaired categories.

According to the Milano Cortina Paralympics website, athletes with vision impairment, "compete with a guide, who skis ahead of them, providing directions on the route, pace, and terrain variations."

The Adicoff-Wolter team got started with a first-place win in the 1.5K Sprint Classic on March 10. Shuang Yu and his guide, Jincai Shang, took the silver for the People's Republic of China and Zebastian Modin and his guide, Emil Talsi, took bronze for Sweden.

Then on this past Sunday, March 15, the pair claimed gold again in the 20K Freestyle. The silver went

to Ukrainian skier Oleksandr Kazik and his guide, Serhii Kucheriaviy, and the bronze to French skier Anthony Chalencou and his guide, Florian Michelon.

Altogether, Adicoff is responsible for three of the United States' 13 gold medals, and helped them earn a fourth, during the games, which ended Sunday. The veteran Paralympian also took gold in the 10K Interval Start Classic and in the 4x2.5K Mixed Relay, both with Reid Goble as his guide.

Adicoff's four golds mark his seventh Paralympic medal, and fifth gold Paralympic medal.



A STRONG CONTINGENT of Vergennes fans traveled to the Aud in Barre for Thursday's semi-final tilt against Randolph.

Independent photo/Marin Howell

Three county teams fall in semi-finals

By SOPHIA KESHMIRI

ADDISON COUNTY — Both local high school hockey teams and the last-standing basketball team exited state tournaments in the semifinal rounds late last week.

All three — the Middlebury Union High School boys' and girls' hockey teams and the Vergennes Union High School boys' basketball team — were knocked out by the No. 1 seeds in their respective brackets.

On this past Wednesday night, the MUHS girls' hockey team fell 5-3

in the Division II semifinal to the squad from U-32. That game, played in Northfield at the Kreitzberg Arena, was the Tigers' second time dropping one to the Raiders. The two met in January for a match, which ended with the same score as the March 11 semifinal.

"The game against U-32 went really well, despite the loss," Coach PJ Lalonde said.

"We were missing two of our five seniors due to injury and while it changed the dynamic of our team a

bit, the girls that suited up played a really great game."

Senior Sawyer Witscher and senior co-captain Lia Calzini, one of the team's most prolific scorers, were both unable to play.

The underclassmen took the reins in the semifinal.

The Tigers surprised the Raiders with a goal just 3:50 into the game, scored by Sophomore Nova Bojanowski and assisted by freshman Reese Muzzy.

(See Semifinals, Page 2B)



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE CROSS country runner Audrey MacLean (back row, center) holds up her hardware after dominating the NCAA D-III race in South Carolina last fall. The junior won with time to spare, and is up for a major sports award, which will be announced this summer.

Photo by David Beach

MacLean

(Continued from Page 1B)

going to be fastest on the team coming into Middlebury. I had no concept of winning nationals or anything. I just joined the team," MacLean said.

She started running in middle school as a clever way to get out of going to church on Sundays.

"My dad and sister and I would always go to church, and my mom would always go off running, and I'm just the type of person that cannot sit still," she said.

"My mom would always come back and she would talk about how fun the run was and how pretty it was outside. And I started to get jealous ... so it was my excuse to get out of that and get out of the house with her ... and then I just had so much fun with it, so it sort of sprung off from there."

When it came time to start the college search, MacLean still had running on her mind.

"I knew that I wanted to run in college, because in high school, I loved the community that the cross country team formed," she said. "And I just think that the types of people that run cross country are truly selfless and hard-working and really kind people."

"So ... my main goal was to find another community like that."

For MacLean, running is a miracle pill — she said it helps her find balance in her life, helps her socially, mentally and academically.

Her college search took MacLean to several schools of varying NCAA divisions. But once she hit Midd, she felt she had found her home for the next four years.

"The team...it feels like a family," she said. "When I first met everybody on the team I did an overnight trip, I could immediately feel that, and I decided, this feels right. I want to go here, despite it being the middle of February and super cold."

FROM CALIF. TO VT.

In 2023, MacLean traveled across the country from her hometown of Tiburon, Calif., to start her freshman year in Vermont.

In her first semester of college, MacLean took second place in NESCACs, was named the conference Rookie of the Year, placed second at the regional meet and placed 10th at the NCAA championships, where she was the only freshman to place in the top 10.

That early success was daunting for MacLean going into her sophomore year, Wilkerson said.

"She was a little bit nervous about doing as well as she did her freshman year, and maybe some of her own expectations, like, can she do as well as she did," Wilkerson said.

"And that's totally understandable. And she and I had a couple conversations about like, Audrey 2.0 is stronger than freshman Audrey," a mindset Wilkerson said MacLean embraced.

MacLean's sophomore season was just as fruitful as freshman year. She placed sixth at the NCAA race, took first at NESCAC, was named the NESCAC Most Outstanding Performer and placed

third at the regional meet.

Ahead of the 2025 season, it was Wilkerson who was antsy: "As a coach, you know, it's like a little bit of angst on my part, because, how are we going to improve on that."

"So I try not to think about it in the summer with her training, and again, she's like training hard, like five in the morning, and just seeing how things started to develop in early September."

Wilkerson said the signs were there that MacLean was bound for a winning season.

"I could physically see, like her body was stronger, like I'm watching the workouts, so in my mind and to myself, and probably Bruce Ingersoll, our assistant, too, you know, looking at each other, we're like, we have a top finisher here," she recalled.

"And I don't know if that's first, second or third, but we knew we had a top finisher."

About a month later, MacLean found herself in Wilkerson's office, skirting around the

topic of going for the NCAA title, and then committing to the task.

"As soon as she said that ... we went and focused," Wilkerson said.

The coach and athlete spoke sometimes with the frame of mind "we're going for it," though they didn't verbalize it a lot.

Once MacLean broke the tape at the NCAA title race, she said a wave of emotions hit her. "Disbelief, gratitude, pride, relief," she said.

"So much of it was like gratitude

and pride, definitely a very emotional moment, because in the races, it's so easy to focus solely on the running and keeping up the pace and everything, and you're working super hard, and you're digging into that pain cave, and then you cross the finish line and you can release all of that, and then all of your other emotions sort of come crashing back."

If anything, MacLean's gratitude for her teammates, coaches and others has grown since that moment.

"Most of it is just feeling so grateful for all of the people ... that have contributed towards that success," she said. "Because you can't really obtain that sort of success just on your own as a single person. So much of it, actually, most of it definitely was like my coaches and just being able to train with my teammates every day."

PULLING HER TEAM ALONG

The relationship is symbiotic — as much as MacLean attributes her success to her community, Wilkerson attributes her team's success to MacLean.

"The biggest accomplishment that she did was actually to pull Claire (Palmer) and the other women along with her," Wilkerson said. The Middlebury team placed second at NESCAC's and eighth at the NCAA meet.

Palmer, a freshman runner who like MacLean achieved All-American status in her first year of competing and was also named the NESCAC rookie of the year, trained alongside MacLean.

In addition to MacLean's stellar performance this season, "that was the reason why we were so successful," Wilkerson said. "Without her being a big sister to Claire, we wouldn't be the team that we were."

Gratitude isn't the only feeling MacLean has about the win.

"I also feel proud of the work that I put in, just because I have been ... very laser focused and regimented since I joined the team," she said.

The year-round athlete has a well-deserved break — in early January she left Vermont for Stockholm, Sweden, to study abroad.

As far as next season goes, MacLean said improving on her time is one of her goals.

But even after all the success, there's still some nerves.

"I'm a little bit nervous about taking the track season off with keeping up the training while I am abroad, away from my team and my coaches, just because I have in the past, relied off of them so much and they make up so much of my running success and career," she said.

Though true to her team spirit, she hopes to be able to bring what she learns abroad back to her team.

"I'll be able to learn some lessons about running alone — I'm assuming, I have no idea — and then sort of come back to cross country season as a senior with a new perspective, and maybe that'll add to the team culture a little bit," she said.

"But I think that either way, it's just gonna make it all that much more exciting to be back with the team senior year after not being with them for so long."

Mandigo

(Continued from Page 1B)

twice from the ECAC. Mandigo has coached 46 All-Americans during his tenure, and guided the program past the 20-win plateau 18 times.

In 2008, Mandigo was named the head women's golf coach at Middlebury. During his 15 seasons on the links, he led the Panthers to a pair of NCAA Tournament appearances, in addition to having three individual qualifiers. NESCAC began offering the championship in the sport during the 2015-16 season, and Mandigo guided the program to a top-three placing in each of the years he coached. In 2016, he was named the conference's coach of the year, and in 2019 he led NESCAC Player of the Year Chloe Levins '19.

"I would like to offer a special thank you to Mickey Heinecken for taking a chance on me 38 years ago," Mandigo said. "I am also deeply grateful to the athletic directors who supported and guided me throughout the years — Tom Lawson, Russ Reilly and Erin Quinn. In addition, I want to thank all of the assistant coaches who dedicated their time and effort to

helping build the program into what it is today."

Mandigo, a three-sport athlete, began his coaching career at his alma mater, Wesleyan. He served as the assistant men's ice hockey coach for two seasons following his graduation in 1983. He spent two years as the head coach of boy's hockey at The Hill School and one season as an assistant at Burrillville High School before arriving at Middlebury as the assistant football, women's ice hockey and baseball coach in 1988.

Mandigo's commitment to education has been prevalent throughout his career, teaching math at Wolfboro Camp School (N.H.) for nearly 40 summers.

"I would be remiss if I did not thank my family - especially my wife Jane - for supporting me and allowing me to pursue my passion," said Mandigo. "None of this would have been possible without their encouragement and understanding."

Middlebury will share more information about plans to name a new head coach at a later date. Mandigo's last day will be June 30, 2026.

Semifinals

(Continued from Page 1B)

U-32 tied the game with a goal of their own about five minutes later, and took a one-goal lead with just over two minutes left in the first.

The Raiders put two more in the Tigers' net, making it 4-1, before sophomore Becca Seeley got the score to 4-2 with an unassisted goal with just two minutes left in the second.

The third was scoreless until the Raiders got a fifth goal with just over four minutes left in the game. About a minute and a half later, junior Ida Blackwell got the puck to junior Julia Morrissey for a third Tiger goal. The game ended 5-3.

Junior goalie Heaven Ross had 30 saves.

The Raiders ended up taking second in the tournament.

Overall, Lalonde was pleased with the team's performance this year.

"It was a really solid season, with your typical ups and downs, but the brand of hockey that the girls were playing by the end of the season, against the state's top DI competition was something they should all be proud of," he said.

"It was a really fun group of kids and we believed they had the potential to be in the final game of the season all along."

Looking to next year, the rising team will have the shoes of five seniors to fill.

"Losing those five seniors is definitely going to create a big hole in our roster for next season, but also be an opportunity for some of the younger players to step up into bigger roles. We have several girls who have progressed a ton over the last two seasons, so it's going to be exciting to see them in those roles," he said.

Also on Wednesday night, the D-II MUHS boys' hockey team played Harwood for the first time this year. That semifinal ended 5-0.

"While it wasn't the outcome we had hoped for, I was incredibly proud of the team for playing hard

for the full 45 minutes. Harwood is a really good team with some exceptional players," Tiger Coach Jordan Stearns said.

"Overall, I was also incredibly proud of the season that we had as a team. We improved greatly throughout the season, and were playing our best hockey at the end of the season, as is always the goal." Senior goalie TJ Baron had 23 saves for MUHS that night.

Harwood ended up winning the D-II boys' hockey title.

The next day, Thursday, March 12, Commodore boys' basketball fell 63-48 to Randolph. Going into half, the game played at Barre Auditorium was almost even, with Vergennes trailing by just one point.

Though the teams' entered the third quarter with the score 26-25, in favor of Randolph, the Ghosts then put up 20 points to VUHS's 12 over the course of the next eight minutes. In the fourth, Randolph outscored the Commodores 17-11.

"I was proud of the effort. We played hard for all four quarters," Coach Eric LeBeau said.

"Randolph hit three 3's in the 3rd, and it was like a boxer getting hit with a body blow. It took the wind out of us and we could never recover."

Junior Quinn LeBeau was the Commodores' highest scorer, with 20 points. Senior co-captain Ryker Mosehauer put up 18, and senior co-captain Ryan Wright led in rebounds with 10, eight of them defensive.

Randolph was the runner-up in the D-III championship in Barre over the weekend.

The season was one of "significant growth," for the Commodores LeBeau said, "on the court from all 13 players."

"They worked so hard for each other and enjoyed each other's success. I asked each and every one of them to sacrifice a piece of their game for the benefit of the team. I think going to Barre was a testament to their willingness to make that sacrifice."

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One Brandon man killed, another critically injured in Orwell crash

ADDISON COUNTY — One Brandon man was killed and another was taken to the hospital with serious injuries as the result of a car crash in Orwell late Sunday afternoon.

Twenty-eight-year-old Michael Guess, who was pronounced dead at the scene of the crash, was a passenger in the vehicle driven by Aron G. Therrien, 27.

Vermont State Police got a report of a one-car crash with entrapment and injuries in Orwell on March 15 shortly after 5:30 p.m. The accident was on Old Sawmill Road near the intersection with Vail Road in the southeast corner of Orwell. Troopers found both men still inside and entrapped inside the 2009 Honda Civic, which was pressed up against several trees. Members of the Orwell Fire Department got Guess out of the vehicle. He subsequently succumbed to his injuries and was declared deceased on the scene.

Guess grew up in Brandon and

Vt. State Police Log

was a 2016 graduate of Otter Valley Union High School.

Orwell firefighters along with members of the Orwell First Response were able to extricate Therrien from the vehicle. A 2017 OVUHS grad, Therrien was subsequently life flighted to UVM Medical Center for treatment for life-threatening injuries.

Investigation is ongoing and in the beginning stages, however, police suspect that alcohol and speed were contributing factors to this crash. Police said the gravel road was clear and dry.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact the Vermont State Police New Haven Barracks at 802-388-4919.

While state police were

investigating the Orwell crash, at around a quarter to 8 p.m. troopers spoke with Paxton Taube, 28, of Orwell, and they noticed indicators of impairment. Police learned that Taube had driven a vehicle upon a public highway before arriving at the scene.

Authorities ended up arresting him for suspicion of drunken driving and transported Taube to the New Haven barracks for processing. Taube was cited for driving under the influence, first offense.

Troopers were assisted by Middlebury police.

In the only other recent report from state police, troopers from the New Haven barracks on March 12 at quarter after 9 p.m. were notified of a motor vehicle operating erratically

on Route 116 in Hinesburg and Starksboro. The vehicle ultimately pulled over in Starksboro, and the Hinesburg Fire Department made contact with the operator, later identified as Megan Smith, 57, of Weybridge.

Firefighters disabled the vehicle until troopers arrived on scene.

Smith was transported to the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington for unspecified medical reasons. State police cited Smith for driving with a criminally suspended license and negligent driving.

FULL PASSPORT SERVICE

The Addison County Clerk located in the **Frank Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury** is available to accept passport applications and provide passport photos.

REGULAR HOURS
 Monday - 8:30am to 4:00pm
 Tuesday - 9:00am to 12:30pm
 Wednesday - **Closed**
 Thursday - 12:30pm to 4:00pm
 Friday - 9:00am to 12:30pm

APPOINTMENTS REQUIRED
 For appointment, go to www.addisoncountyclerkvt.com or call 802-388-1966.



Sophia Keshmiri Matthew Dickerson Karl Lindholm

SPORTS

We've Got it Covered!

TOWN OF NEW HAVEN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4464, a public hearing before the Development Review Board of the Town of New Haven will be held at the Town Offices, 78 North Street, New Haven, VT 05472 on Monday, April 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. to consider the following:

1. Application #2026-DRB-04-WV: A Waiver request submitted by the Town of New Haven, per Section 333 of the New Haven Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, to accommodate the proposed fire station on Parcel #254.203 located at 239 East Street in the RA-5 zoning district.
2. Application #2026-DRB-05-CU: A Conditional Use request submitted by Lincoln Peak Vineyard co-owner Nichole Bambacigno to provide seasonal live outdoor music at the vineyard located at 142 River Road on Parcel #788.200, per Section 329 of the New Haven Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

Please note that participation in the local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal. The hearing will be held as a hybrid meeting, either in person at the Town Offices, or by remote:
<https://zoom.us/j/98142119190?pwd=U0pFdDQ2a1ZRZzVCRkN4ZGcyYUJF3dz09>
 Meeting ID: 981 4211 9190
 Passcode: 4jYbTA

An electronic copy of the application may be obtained by emailing: newhavenzoning@gmavt.net; a hard copy is available at the Town Offices during normal business hours, and can also be found on the Town's website at www.newhavenvt.com.

New Haven Zoning Administrator
 (802) 453-3516

Public Notices Index

Public Notices for the following can be found in this **ADDISON INDEPENDENT** on Pages 3B, 11B and 12B.

- Addison County Clerk (1)
- Leicester (1)
- Lincoln (1)
- Middlebury (2)
- Monkton (3)
- New Haven (1)
- Orwell (1)
- Starksboro (1)
- State of Vermont (1)
- Vermont Rail System (1)



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM 116 – LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM TOWN OFFICES – 77 MAIN STREET TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.

Also available via Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83954812980>
 By Phone: +1 (301) 715-8592 (not toll-free)
 Webinar ID: 839 5481 2980

For those wishing to watch but not participate: Selectboard meetings are livestreamed to MCTV's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MCTV Vermont> and also broadcast live on Comcast Channel 1071

AGENDA

- 7:00 1. Call to Order
 - 2. *Approval of Agenda
 - 3. *Approval of Consent Agenda
 - 3a. *Approval of the Minutes of the March 10, 2026 Selectboard Meeting
 - 3b. *Acceptance of Selectboard Subcommittee Meeting Minutes (if any)
 - 3c. *Approval of Applications - Renewal of State Licenses/Permits (if any)
 - 3d. *Approval of Check Warrants
 - 3e. *Town Purchase Policy - Housekeeping Amendment
 - 3f. Consent Agenda Placeholder
 - 3g. **Town Manager's Report
 - 7:05 4. **Citizen Comments
 - 7:10 6. *Conservation Commission - Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions - Grant Application
 - 7:20 7. *Appointment - Diane Mott - Addison County Solid Waste Management District - Alternate
 - 7:25 8. Infrastructure Committee - Updates & Recommendations
 - 8a. *Vehicle Purchase - Support Truck - Fire Department
 - 8b. *Sidewalk Plow Purchase - Public Works Department
 - 8c. **Contract - Aldrich & Elliott - WWTF/Long-Term Control Plan Update
 - 8d. **Other Project Updates
 - 9. Agenda Placeholder
 - 7:50 10. **Selectboard Member Concerns
 - 7:55 11. **Executive Session - Probable Litigation
 - 8:05 12. *Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session
 - 8:10 13. *Adjourn
- *Possible Decision **Discussion

Sheriff's deputy talks with kids

ADDISON COUNTY — An Addison County Sheriff's Department deputy stopped by a daycare in Middlebury on March 10 and spoke to the kids there. Later in the week, on March 13, a deputy spoke during Career Day activities at Otter Valley Union High School in Brandon.

Between March 8 and 14, the sheriff's department completed patrols in multiple towns, stopped 70 vehicles for various motor vehicle violations, attempted to serve 18 pieces of civil process around the county and provided VIN inspections for residents of New Haven and Leicester.

In other recent activity, Sheriff Michael Elmore and his deputies:

- On March 9 unlocked a vehicle in Middlebury for a person that had locked their keys in the car.
- On March 10 received a report of a vehicle that was not being returned by someone who had borrowed it in Weybridge. Deputies found that the vehicle had broken down when it pulled off in a farm field and it was towed and returned to its owner.
- On March 11 assigned extra staff to the courthouse in Middlebury due to a jury draw.
- On March 11 provided a

Sheriff's Log

courtesy ride for a person after their vehicle broke down in Shoreham.

- On March 11 checked on a camper that was parked in the fishing access on Swamp Road in Cornwall, and contacted the owner to have it removed.
- On March 11 assisted with traffic control due to the railroad crossing signals malfunctioning at the junction of Routes 7 and 17 in New Haven.
- On March 12 Sheriff Elmore taught a use of force training to a few of the deputies in Middlebury.
- On March 13 provided a car seat inspection for a family with a new seat in Middlebury.
- On March 13 checked on a Leicester resident at the request of a family member. They were found to be alive and well.
- On March 14 checked on a property in Orwell at the request of the owner.
- On March 10 provided a transport for an intoxicated person in Middlebury to a detox facility.



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CO-OPERATIVE INSURANCE COMPANIES

CO-OP INSURANCE POLICYHOLDERS' ANNUAL MEETING

All current policyholders of the Co-operative Insurance Companies are invited to virtually attend the policyholders' annual meeting. The annual meeting will be held on

Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

To register, please visit <https://www.co-opinsurance.com>. Registration must be received no later than noon on April 3, 2026. Our 2025 Annual Report will be posted on our website by the time of the meeting.



Atria Collective Is Seeking Board Members

If you have time and talent to spare, please consider applying to join Atria Collective's board. We are an organization that works to eliminate domestic and sexual violence in Addison County. We are committed to a shared leadership model and are looking for folks energized by community work.

If you're interested, please submit a letter of interest to Crystal at crystalj@middlebury.edu.

If you have a resume, you are welcome to submit it with your letter.

The deadline to submit is April 10th.

Scan here for more information



community calendar

mar 19 THURSDAY

Isley Classic Film Club watches "The Adventures of Robin Hood" in Middlebury. Thursday, March 19, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

Piano Concert in Brandon. Thursday, March 19, 6 p.m., Brandon Congregational Church. Concert pianist Alan Chiang is returning to the area to share another free concert, which will last around an hour and include works by Bach and Brahms.

Free lecture, "Climate Change in Vermont." Thursday, March 19, 7 p.m. at Mt. Abe Union High School. Learn how climate change is affecting Vermont and discover practical steps that can be taken. Presented by distinguished climate scientist and Vermont State Climatologist Dupigny-Giroux and the Addison County Conservation Commissions.

mar 20 FRIDAY

Spring Equinox Gathering at SpIn in Ripton. Friday, March 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Spirit In Nature Paths, Goshen Road. Follow the lantern-lit path to the Sacred Circle, joining friends and neighbors in the warmth of community around a fire. Pour yourself a cup of tea. Share poetry, words of encouragement, stories, song. Through a reading of the picture book "Safe Crossing" participants will learn how they can support our salamander and frog neighbors. Young or old, of any faith or none at all, all are welcome! Consider bringing a flashlight, and perhaps a poem, a song, or a thought to share.

Luncheon Concert Series in Vergennes. Friday, March 20, 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 6 Park St. Sallie Mack, former co-founder and co-director of the Ripton Community Coffee House, and Rosi Gowdey, storyteller and social change advocate, present an eclectic program of folk, bluegrass ballads and original compositions on guitar and keyboard. Free and open to all.

Coffeeshouse in the Library in Starksboro. Friday, March 20, 7-9 p.m., at the library in the village. Erin Cassels-Brown kicks off springtime and a new music series that highlights Addison County musicians, organized by Johnne Dickason of Starksboro. Some refreshments will be available. Donations welcome. Let's give these local players some love.

mar 21 SATURDAY

Green Mountain Club Hike on Bristol Trail Network. Saturday, March 21, 9 a.m. This is a great mud season hike because the gravel soils in Bristol drain well so the trail is always open. Plan for 2.5-3 hours for the 3.4-mile section around Bristol's historic areas. Elevation gain under 100 feet. Excellent options for snacks/lunch locally. Please register by contacting Porter Knight at knight@gmavt.net or 802-343-3920. More info at gmbreadloaf.org.

Legislative breakfast in Shoreham. Saturday, March 21, 8:30-9:45 a.m., Shoreham Congregational Church, 28 School St. Community legislative breakfast sponsored by Bridport Grange and Addison County Farm Bureau, moderated by Cheryl Connors. 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 wjvscottjr@comcast.net.

Fiber Crafts Collective in East Middlebury. Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m., Sarah Partridge Library, 431 East Main St. A welcoming fiber crafts gathering focused on creativity, shared learning and community connection. Participants work on knitting, crochet, weaving, spinning, sewing, embroidery, felting, macrame and more. All skill levels welcome. Free. More info at artfulsouventures@gmail.com.

"Transformation & Renewal" free writing workshop. Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m., at Orwell Free Library. As we welcome the arrival of spring, we'll use writing as a practice of discovery—an opportunity to listen closely, imagine freely and see our stories anew. Workshop presented by Emily Casey and Karina Jutzi. Find out more: orwellfreelibrary.org.

Biodiversity Builders: Understanding Your Site in Vergennes. Saturday, March 21, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Bixby Library, 258 Main St. First in a series of hands-on workshops demonstrating 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. Presented by Lisa Sausville and Ashley Robinson. For more information email to Ashley at arobinsonid@gmail.com. Registration link: tinyurl.com/BuldyBioAtBixby.

Easter Baskets for Tots in Vergennes. Saturday, March 21, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Bixby Library, 258 Main St. The public is invited to the 2nd Annual Easter Baskets for Tots event. Hop on over to the Bixby Library to help assemble Easter baskets for under-resourced kids, which will be distributed through CVOEO, a local non-profit. All ages are welcome!

Interfaith potluck teach-in. Saturday, March 21, 5-7 p.m., at Congregational Church of Middlebury. We invite all, religious or not, to gather for a shared potluck meal, to learn more about what some of our immigrant neighbors have been experiencing, and to sing shared songs of resilience and solidarity together. At times like this that aim to disconnect us, human connection can be a way of finding and reclaiming our power.

mar 22 SUNDAY

Waffle Breakfast for Mt. Abraham Softball. Sunday, March 22, 7 a.m., the American Legion Post 19 in Bristol. Help the team raise money for their spring training trip. Silent auction and a 50/50 raffle, along with breakfast. \$9 for general public, \$7 for



The soup's on!

INTERFAITH POTLUCK TEACH-IN on March 21 in Middlebury, where people of all faiths are invited to share food, songs, and stories of immigrant experiences.

Photo courtesy of John McCright

seniors and kids.

Public Bingo in Vergennes. Sunday, March 22, 12:30-3:30 p.m., American Legion Post 14, 100 Armory Ln. A lively afternoon of bingo, prizes, and community fun. Bingo packets \$15. Bring your own dauber or borrow one. Cash prizes based on attendance. 50/50 raffle, \$1 per ticket or \$5 for six. Food available for purchase. Everyone welcome. More info at: www.facebook.com/share/1FPAUwaK5c.

Hope & Resistance Community Sing. Sunday, March 22, 2 p.m., First Congregational Church of Cornwall's Meeting House. Learn protest songs and other uplifting music in advance of No Kings Day protests! Join us in community for singing, poetry readings, and speeches. Free event. If you are interested in reading poetry between songs, please fill out this form: theteachinghousevt.org/hope-resistance-community-sing.

down with a clever twist! When a fairy godmother goes rogue and plops copies of "The Feminine Mystique" in the laps of classic heroines, the damsels embark on a quest to rewrite their stories and redefine "happily ever after." The show is described as "colorful PG13 hip hop fantasy" and "a big, modern, musical dance party, with Britney's beating heart at its core." Tickets: \$15 adult/\$12 seniors and children under 12. Purchase online at bit.ly/ncenc.

mar 23 MONDAY

Family cribbage night in Bristol. Monday, Mar. 23, 7-8:15 p.m., Libanus Lodge, corner of North and Elm streets. The Bristol Masons host family-friendly cribbage games for all skill levels.

mar 27 FRIDAY

American Red Cross blood drive in Vergennes. Friday, March 27, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Vergennes Union High School, 50 Monkton Road. Community blood drive hosted by the American Red Cross. Appointments at RedCrossBlood.org or 1-800-RED CROSS.

mar 24 TUESDAY

The Moth in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Listen to true stories or share your own at this open-mic storytelling competition. The evening's theme is "Fumbles and Fouls," inviting five-minute stories about mistakes, missteps and lessons learned. More info at themoth.org and addisonarts.org.

Art presentation for elders in Bristol. Friday, March 27, 10:15-11:30 a.m., Howden Hall, 19 West St. The Bristol Elder Eagles sponsor "The Art of Ruth Asawa" presented by Linda Comany. This is a new over 50s club group organized by Bristol Rec. Department.

All you can eat Friday fish fry in Bristol. Friday, March 27, 5-7 p.m. St. Ambrose Parish Hall at the corner of School & West streets. Meal includes fried or baked haddock, french fries, coleslaw, fresh baked dinner roll, beverage & dessert. Adults-\$17, children 9 & under \$9, immediate family of five-\$50.

mar 25 WEDNESDAY

Free lecture "Listen. From Edison to MP3." Wednesday, March 25, at 6 p.m., Orwell Free Library. Part two of Wolfgang Ziegler's introduction and demonstration of audio technology developed during the past 150 years. This installment highlights the transistor and digitization. Find out more: orwellfreelibrary.org.

Vermont's Draft Conservation Plan public listening session in Monkton. Wednesday, March 25, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Monkton Town Office. This third session will center on "Strengthening Climate Resilience." From recent flood disasters to prolonged droughts, Vermont has experienced a suite of climate driven impacts in the last five years.

Kids Paint & Pizza. Friday, March 27, 6 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall. \$30 per child. Includes pizza dinner, snacks, drinks and materials. Proceeds support Union Meeting Hall rehabilitation efforts. Parents are not expected to stay unless your child needs extra support. Registration required as space is limited. unionmeetinghall.org/programming-and-events

Mount Abraham Spring Musical "Once Upon a One More Time" in Bristol. Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. See March 26 listing.

MUHS Senior Play, "Grease," in Middlebury. Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. Middlebury Union High School presents the classic musical featuring Sandy, Danny and all their friends. Tickets \$13.60 adults/\$11 students at gofan.co/event/5850651?schoolid=VT15095.

mar 26 THURSDAY

First "Herbs and..." workshop in Monkton. Thursday, March 26, 6:30-8 p.m., Monkton Community Room, Town Office. The first workshop is called "Herbs and... Grow your own Medicine." Herbalist Julie Mitchell will open the conversation focused on medicinal plants to invite into your own personal garden. The intention will be addressing how to support yourself, your family and/or your communities health needs. Growing locally and having what you need at hand will be considered. Bring seeds to swap, questions and stories to share. Free to all with donations gratefully accepted. To save your spot or for more information contact: eosbotanicals@gmail.com or Julie Mitchell at 802-349-2544.

mar 28 SATURDAY

No Kings Day 3 road trip in Bristol. Saturday, March 28. Bristol Area Invidisible has chartered a bus to run round-trip from Bristol to Montpelier. Bus leaves 74 Munsill Ave. at 9:30 a.m. sharp. \$15 per person. To reserve a seat email luvskatr@yahoo.com, include the subject line: "Montpelier" and include your cell phone number.

MUHS Senior Play, "Grease," in Middlebury. Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. Middlebury Union High School presents this well-known production in a highlight of the school's performing arts calendar, featuring students in the classic musical. Look for Sandy, Danny and all their friends on stage. Tickets \$13.60 adults/\$11 students at gofan.co/event/5850651?schoolid=VT15095. Repeats Friday and Saturday.

Mount Abraham Spring Musical "Once Upon a One More Time" in Bristol. Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. Powered by the chart-topping hits of Britney Spears, the undisputed Princess of Pop, "Once Upon A One More Time" turns our favorite fairy tales upside

Make a House for the Blue Birds in Salisbury. Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m., Salisbury Library in the basement of the Meeting House, 853 Maple St. Preston Turner will be back to teach his popular bird house workshop. We will be making a nesting house for bluebirds and hoping that spring will soon arrive! All materials provided. Please register at the library.

No Kings Day 3 rally in Middlebury. Saturday, March 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., town green. Join Indivisible Middlebury and let your voice be heard. Our strength comes from community, from showing up for each other and standing together. Come remind strongmen and billionaires what real power looks like: our voices, our solidarity, and all of us standing together. Bring signs. Bring friends. Bring your energy. Optional RSVP at www.mobilize.us/nokings/event/903408.

No Kings Day 3 rally in Brandon. Saturday, March 28, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Central Park, 2 Franklin St. What began in 2025 as a single day of defiance has become a sustained national resistance to tyranny, spreading from small towns to city centers and across every community determined to defend democracy. Optional RSVP: mobilize.us/nokings/event/901905.

Around TOWN

Sign up to be a 2026 salamander escort

SALSBURY — On warm, wet nights from mid-March to mid-April frogs and salamanders move from their wintering sites on high ground to breeding sites in wetlands to mate and lay eggs. Their route to the nearest vernal pool sometimes takes them across a road.

Otter Creek Audubon and the Salisbury Conservation Commission will patrol an amphibian crossing site in Salisbury again this year. Across Vermont, groups of concerned individuals attempt to alter amphibians' lethal odds by moving them off the road during nights of significant movement. At the most

dangerous crossings amphibians may suffer 50 percent mortality, but the crossing we monitor has little traffic. This site retains not only large numbers of amphibians but also remarkable species diversity: four salamander and three frog species. If we happen to get a "Big Night," we'll move more than a thousand amphibians in a two-hour period. The site affords all who participate an opportunity to experience this remarkable natural phenomenon first-hand.

You can witness and help perpetuate this migration if you sign up for the 2026 amphibian email alert. The 2026 window is

from mid-March to Mid-April. You'll receive a confirmation email at about 6 p.m. Movement starts around 8:15 p.m. and can run for several hours. Volunteers may arrive and leave when they wish and are responsible for their own safety and the safety of others in their group. Upon arrival, Jim Andrews and OCAS will provide species identification tips and a reminder of appropriate behavior. With your help we'll record the numbers of each species we move for two hours.

Sign up at ocasvt@gmail.com, even if you were on the list in a previous year.

Lincoln

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

NEWS

LINCOLN — Have you ever wondered about Lincoln's lost ski tow? A new exhibit at the Lincoln Library curated by Lincoln Historical Society President Lucinda Cockrell chronicles the rise and eventual demise of the ski tow on Gove Hill. The collection features vintage gear, 1930s and 1960s news reprints and a moving picture of local skiers featuring the nostalgic "ticking" of a period-accurate projector.

Beyond the exhibit, the Lincoln Historical Society is working to modernize the town's archives with a searchable online database and climate-controlled storage. You can support these preservation efforts by donating cash, checks or redeemable bottles/cans, or by volunteering to help scan and catalog artifacts. Visit their website at lincolnhistory.org to learn more and get involved.

Burnham Presents welcomes Hildaland to the Burnham Hall stage on Saturday, April 4, at 7:30 p.m. Hildaland is composed of mandolinist Ethan Setiawan and fiddler Louise Bichan. The duo blends Setiawan's Appalachian roots with Bichan's Scottish upbringing to create a unique sound that honors old-world folk while embracing modern musicality.

The evening will open with a special set by two rising stars in the Vermont traditional music scene, Eli Glasser and Henry Kervick. Glasser is a pianist and fiddler and member

of the Vermont Youth Orchestra. Kervick is a fiddler with a focus on Scandinavian music. They are both part of the touring ensemble Sugar in the Pan and represent the next generation of the region's vibrant folk community.

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

Until next time... Never Say Never, Because Limits, Like Fears, Are Often Just An Illusion.



AUCTIONS

MARKET REPORT ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

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Sales for 3/12/26 & 3/16/26

BEEF	LBS.	/LB	\$
J. Hutchins	1315	2.00	\$2630.00
Deer Valley	1865	1.80	\$3357.00
Barnes B+W	1625	1.775	\$2884.38
Quarry Rd	1425	1.775	\$2529.38
Four Hills	1550	1.75	\$2712.50
Iroquois Acres	1710	1.725	\$2949.75

CALVES		\$
Forbes		\$1865.00
Barnes B+W		\$1820.00
Elysian Fields		\$1750.00
M+L Quesnel		\$1710.00
Iroquois Acres		\$1653.60

Total Beef - 158 Total Calves - 161

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Monkton

Have a news tip?

Contact Liz Pecor at rascal0406@gmavt.net

NEWS

MONKTON — On Friday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. Ukulele Claire and Rebecca Padua will give a presentation of their music at the Russell Memorial Library. The 5 Town Friends of the Arts is sponsoring this 2026 Winter into Spring Musical Library Tour. Come and enjoy this family friendly acoustical music duo. This event is free but donations are greatly appreciated! You may contact the library at 802-453-4471 if you would like more information or to check on weekly and monthly happenings.

Join Julie Mitchell for a series of workshops offering with the title "Herbs and..." The series will be presented throughout 2026 at the Monkton Community Room. The first is called "Herbs and... Grow your own Medicine," Thursday, March 26, from 6:30-8 p.m. A herbalist, Mitchell will open the conversation focused on medicinal plants to invite into your own personal garden. Intention

will be addressing how to support yourself, your family and/or your communities health needs. Growing locally and having what you need at hand will be considered. Dreaming of the green! Bring seeds to swap, questions and stories to share. Free to all with donations gratefully accepted. To save a space and for more information contact: eosbotanicals@gmail.com or Julie Mitchell at 802-349-2544.

Join Monkton Museum and Historical Society members for a "Catamount Conversation" exploring the past, present, and potential future of catamounts — also known as mountain lions — in the Northeast. Through storytelling, science, and real-world case studies, these talks examine why catamounts disappeared from the region, the role they once played in shaping our forests, and what their return could mean for ecosystems and communities today. The event also introduces the growing

effort to explore the feasibility of restoring this iconic species back to the region. The presentation is by Renee Seacor, Northeast Rewilding Director, Bring Catamounts Home, a project of Wild Earth.

It will be at Russell Memorial Library & the Monkton Conservation Commission, 92 Monkton Ridge Road, Monkton, Friday, March 27, 7 p.m. For questions, call the library at 802-453-4471.

If you are not aware, someone has been taking salt from the Monkton Town Shed. Please be aware that the salt is not available to the public. There is a pile of sand at the beginning of the Recycling/Town Shed driveway. That is the only product that is available to townspeople. Thank you for your cooperation! If you should see any activity at the Town Shed that doesn't appear normal please reach out to them or call the Town Clerk and she can advise you whom to call.

milestones

BIRTHS

- Danielle and Tyler Farnsworth of Vergennes, March 1, a girl, **Leona Lynn Farnsworth**, 9lbs 4.5 oz., at UMV Medical Center in Burlington. Granddaughter of Melissa Labrie, Kurt Labrie and Stephanie Clark-Labrie, Jen Ricker, and Ted and Brenda Farnsworth; niece of Heather Labrie and Jorie Farnsworth.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Otter Valley Union High School

Noelle Seigle

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

Noelle is a member of National Honor Society and has been on the honor roll, or higher, throughout her high school career. She is on the Allstar Cheerleading team, which is going to the World Championship this year. Noelle enjoys meeting new people and making new friends at Otter Valley. Her favorite classes are English and art, and her favorite teacher is Ms. Buxton because she always has her students' best interests in mind. When not at school, Noelle works at Hannaford.

Her advice to other students is to sign up for an internship, noting "It was really helpful while I was figuring out what I wanted to do in college."

After graduation, Noelle plans to attend college for exercise science, then enter a Doctor of Physical Therapy program. She's narrowed down her top choices to Husson University, Coastal Carolina, and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington.

Everyone at Otter Valley wishes Noelle all the best!



Noelle Seigle
OVUHS

Mount Abraham Union High School

Dylan Layn

Mt. Abraham Union High School is proud to recognize Dylan Layn as its latest Student of the Week. Dylan lives on his family farm in Monkton with his parents, sister, several cats and a dog.

Throughout high school, Dylan has been a conscientious student, earning academic honors each year. Dylan demonstrates a particular passion and strength for technical courses, citing Diesel Power Technology at the Hannaford Career Center and Metal Design and Fabrication at Mt. Abe as favorite courses. Teachers describe Dylan as engaged, attentive and self-motivated. They note that he is not afraid to try new things, has a natural gift for mechanics, and is an excellent problem solver who quickly picks up new skills.

Dylan has earned a number of honors for his accomplishments at the Hannaford Career Center. He is a member of the National Technical Honor Society and has been named Diesel Technology Student of the Semester twice. Through SkillsUSA, Dylan won the state competition and went on to place 11th nationally in Georgia, where competitors were assessed on multiple areas of diesel mechanics. He has also placed in FFA competitions, further highlighting his technical knowledge and diverse skillset. Dylan has always been fascinated by how things work, especially engines. He notes that sequences like 1-8-4-3-6-5-7-2 and 1-5-3-6-2-4, the firing order of an 8- and 6-cylinder engine, have always intrigued him and reflect his curiosity about mechanical systems.

Outside of school, Dylan works on his family farm, Layn Farms, and serves his community as a member of the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department. In his spare time, he enjoys fixing things and riding ATVs and snowmobiles.

Reflecting on his time at Mt. Abe, Dylan encourages younger students to connect their interests with their learning. He shared, "Try to make schoolwork and projects relate to things you are interested in."

Looking ahead, Dylan plans to attend a trade school after graduation. We appreciate Dylan's strong work ethic and commitment to his community. We wish him the very best in his future endeavors.



Dylan Layn
MAUSD

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To celebrate your achievements, Full Circle Building & Remodeling is providing each Student of the Week \$25 in local currency (Bristol Bucks, Middlebury Money, Vergennes Green, or Brandon Bucks). Just check in with your school's Student of the Week coordinator to claim your prize!

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

Congratulations, Noelle and Dylan

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TWO MONKTON CENTRAL students taste test the strawberry pancake yogurt parfait as kitchen staff evaluate new national nutrition guidelines.

Students taste test nutrition guidelines

MONKTON/BRISTOL — In the first week of March, Mount Abraham Union Middle/High School and Monkton Central School — both members of the Mount Abraham Unified School District — celebrated National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) by highlighting the importance of starting the day with a healthy meal, New England Dairy reported.



STUDENTS AT MONKTON Central School decide between strawberry pancake yogurt parfait and breakfast grilled cheese.

Child Nutrition staff at Monkton Central and Mount Abe engaged their students in sampling new, lower-sugar, high-protein breakfast options such as Breakfast Grilled Cheese and Strawberry Pancake Yogurt Parfait that follow the new USDA dietary regulations for added sugar. Over 230 students voted for their favorites, which helped school nutrition teams understand which items they enjoyed most.

The taste testing events were designed to:

- Encourage students to try new, nutritious foods
- Gather real-time student input on recipe preference
- Support participation in school breakfast
- Build excitement and ownership around school meals

“Student feedback is one of the most important tools we have,” said Kathy Alexander, MAUSD Food Nutrition Director, who has worked in child nutrition programs for 26 years. “When students share what they enjoy, it helps us build

(See *Students*, Page 7B)

ADDISON COUNTY

Agriculture News

Vergennes farm has the best milk

VERGENNES — Tim and Kristen Essex have been receiving a lot of congratulations this winter after their business, Essex Farm of Vergennes, received the 2025 High Quality Milk Award from the Vermont Dairy Industry Association last month.

Each year, VDIA recognizes the top Vermont farms for their exceptionally high quality and the lowest annual somatic cell count averages.

Tim and Kristen Essex were once again among the best, being selected as the Overall Quality Winner.

Kristen Essex said that earning the overall best quality award “means more than words can say.”

“The early mornings, the late nights, and the constant care that goes into every cow and every detail. Nothing about this life is easy, but it’s honest hard work and we believe deeply in the quality of the milk that leaves this farm, for our family and yours!” she wrote on Instagram.



TIM AND KRISTEN ESSEX proudly display the award that recognizes their farm, the Essex Farm of Vergennes, as the producer of the highest quality of milk in Vermont.

“Grateful for the cows that trust us, the people who support local agriculture, and the chance to help feed families beyond our fields.”

The Agency of Agriculture also

noted that Nop Brothers Farm of Middlebury last month was honored for having the Lowest Somatic Cell Count in the milk that their dairy cows produced.

Ag Agency tallies up Farm to School in new report

VERMONT — The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets this winter released its annual report on the Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Program investments and impacts. The purpose of the Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Program is to help Vermont schools develop farm-to-school programs that will sustain relationships with local farmers and producers, enrich the educational experience of students, improve the health of Vermont children, and enhance

Vermont’s agricultural economy. Since 2007, the agency has awarded 359 farm to school grants, reaching 166 child care programs and over 163 schools and school districts. In Fiscal Year 2025, \$501,382 was awarded across the following grant opportunities:

- Farm to School and Early Childhood Capacity Building Grants
- Farm to School and Early Childhood Capacity Building Coaching and Technical Assistance Program
- Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grants

Childhood Vision Grants

- Northeast Farm to School Institute Implementation Subawards

Two Addison County institutions were awarded large grants. Addison Central School District got a \$20,000 Capacity Building Grant, and Willowell Foundation got a \$24,556 Vision Grant.

Learn more about the Farm to School Program impacts and program updates in the report, which can be found online at tinyurl.com/Farm2SchoolFY25.

Local food makers, add your name to 2025 count

VERMONT — Organizations across New England are invited to Get Counted in the 2025 Local Food Count, a regional effort to measure how much food is sourced locally by schools, hospitals, dining services and other organizations.

The Local Food Count is part of the New England Feeding New England initiative, which aims to strengthen the region’s food system and increase local food sourcing. Data collection is open through April 30, 2026,

and the information gathered will help identify current purchasing patterns and opportunities to expand local procurement.

The goal is to capture the percentage (and corresponding (See *Local food makers*, Page 7B)

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Students

(Continued from Page 6B) menus that support their focus, wellness, and overall school experience. It also emphasizes to students that their opinions are important to us. We want students to have a great experience when they come to breakfast and lunch because it is a critical part of their educational day.”

New England Dairy, a non-profit education organization that serves as a voice of dairy farmers in New England and Eastern New York, recently wrote about the benefits of students eating school breakfast to reach their full potential. Read “Helping All Students Reach Their Potential with School Breakfast” on the organization’s blog, newenglanddairy.com/our-blog.



A MOUNT ABE kitchen staffer explains to students the taste test of the Breakfast Grilled Cheese and Strawberry Pancake Yogurt Parfait that follow the new USDA dietary regulations.



NEW ENGLAND DAIRY highlighted recent taste tests at Monkton Central and Mount Abe where students tried recipes that rely on new USDA nutrition guidelines. Food staff will use feedback from 230 students to design menus.

ADDISON COUNTY

Agriculture News

Local food makers

(Continued from Page 6B) dollar value) of local and regional food and beverage products bought or purchased in 2025 from each state in New England.

“Getting counted is a simple but powerful way for organizations to contribute to regional food resilience,” said Leah Rovner, director of the New England Food System Planners Partnership. “The data we collect together will inform strategies to strengthen our local food economy.”

Participation is open to organizations in Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Maine. All data submitted will be kept confidential and used only in aggregate to show regional trends.

Organizations can complete the survey today and join a growing network committed to supporting New England’s farmers, fishers, and food makers. Resources, including project overviews, past

results, and state-specific data, are available online.

Here’s how they define food that is local to New England:

1. It is a raw agricultural product (for example, eggs, meat, milk, vegetables, maple syrup)

AND
It meets at least two of the following three requirements:

A. The majority of the ingredients are raw agricultural products local to New England.

B. Processed or manufactured in New England.

C. The food manufacturer is headquartered in New England.

How to Get Counted:
• Complete the Local Food County survey online at tinyurl.com/CountLocalFood.

• Visit our website for a complete list of our definitions and to see past results at newenglandfoodsystemplanners.org/local-food-counts.

• Share this opportunity with leadership and peers.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Public Meetings

AL-ANON OFFERS HELP and hope to anyone who has been affected by a loved one's drinking. Middlebury hosts an online meeting Sunday night 7:15pm and a face to face one Wednesday at 1:30pm at CVUUS (2 Duane Court Middlebury near the high school) that you can also access by Zoom. Visit vermontalananonlateen.org for links and list of other meetings in the region. If you'd like to speak to an Al-Anon member, call our answering service (866-972-5266) and an Al-Anon member will call you back.

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

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

Public Meetings

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

Public Meetings

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.

Public Meetings

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

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

SPRING GUTTER CLEANING: call or text Ian @802-349-7871

Services

CONSTRUCTION: ADDITIONS, RENOVATIONS new construction, drywall, carpentry, painting, flooring, roofing, pressure washing, driveway sealing. All aspects of construction, also property maintenance. Steven Fifield 802-989-0009.

MELISSA'S QUALITY CLEANING Services. Residential and commercial. Fully insured. Great rates. Reliable and thorough cleaning. 802-345-6257.

Free

DIGITAL ACCESS View obituaries, calendar listings and classifieds online at addisonindependent.com.

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

PLUMBER Middlebury College. Full-time, \$28.14-\$35.19/hr. Install/maintain plumbing, heating, and electromechanical systems. Requires Master Plumber license, valid DL, and 4+ years exp. Excellent benefits: tuition reimbursement, dental, generous CTO, and retirement match. Background check & physical required. Please call 802-443-5472 or apply at: <https://apply.workable.com/middleburycollege/j/94F974C6DF/>

Help Wanted

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

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Elderly Services, Inc.
Project Independence Adult Day Center

We are Growing!

Elderly Services seeking:

- Activity leader/caregivers
- Drivers
- Kitchen help

Full / part-time available
Starting wage \$18-20/hour

For job descriptions and to apply, visit: elderlyservices.org/job-opportunities/



Help Wanted



Town Treasurer

The Town of Bridport is seeking qualified applicants for Town Treasurer.

Successful candidate must be comfortable working in a busy environment while in direct contact with the public and town personnel. Successful candidate must have excellent communication and customer service skills, experience with Microsoft Office and Quickbooks and be attentive to detail. Ability to organize, prioritize and multi-task is essential.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: preparation and receipt of property taxes, weekly payroll, AP and AR, bank reconciliations, mail processing and serving as clerk of the Department of Public Works. Accounting degree and knowledge of local government finance preferred. Successful candidate may be expected to also become the Town Collector of Delinquent Taxes.

This is a part-time position with an average of 24 office hours per week. Benefits include Holiday pay, paid vacation time starting at one week per year and 30 hours per year paid sick/personal time. Pay dependent on qualifications and experience. Prefer someone who can begin soon after appointment. Any appointment requires Selectboard approval.

To apply, please submit your application with a resume and references by email to bridporttown@gmavt.net or by mail to Town of Bridport, PO Box 27, Bridport, VT 05734. Call 802-758-2483 for more information.

Help Wanted

The Addison County Parent/Child Center is looking for a NURSE to join our team

About the Role
We are looking for a nurse to provide services in homes, schools, community settings, and at our center, with a focus on reproductive, maternal, and infant health.

The Job

- Provide support and education to pregnant or postpartum individuals and groups
- Lead classes and groups on reproductive health, safe sex, consent and healthy relationships
- Partner with medical providers, social services and community organizations to address health disparities
- Communicate effectively, demonstrate cultural humility and work independently in diverse settings
- Work with the Addison County Doula Project

What We Offer

- Meaningful work in a supportive environment
- Competitive salary and generous paid time off
- Comprehensive medical insurance and benefits
- Eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)

Requirements

- Active RN or Certified Nurse Midwife license
- Valid driver's license and reliable vehicle (mileage reimbursed)

Send cover letter, resume/CV, and three references to dbailey@addisoncountypcc.org



Help Wanted



Greenhouse/Nursery Sale Associate

20-30 hrs per week position (Seasonal)

Responsibilities include Care and Sales of Greenhouse and Nursery Plants, Seeds and Bulbs, plus a genuine interest in providing knowledgeable customer service. Extensive Plant knowledge preferred!

Any Cashier experience is a plus.

Qualified Candidate must have a dedicated work ethic and be able to perform physical lifting as required, and work hard in the spring and summer seasons.

Excellent Perks and a Flexible Schedule

Availability to work weekends is a MUST.

Cashier - Customer Service
Part-time and Full-time Positions

Must be able to work until 6pm
Availability to work weekends is a MUST.
Up to 40 hours per week.
Wage commensurate with experience.

All of our positions offer generous, twice a year bonuses and employee discount on all products.

Please stop in to pick up an application or send Resume to:
Middlebury AGWAY Farm & Garden,
Attn: Jennifer Jacobs
338 Exchange St. Middlebury, VT 05753
or by email to info@middleburyagway.com

Middlebury Agway 338 Exchange St. - Middlebury, VT.

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities


Opportunities



Green Mountain Foster Grandparent Program

The Foster Grandparent Program is seeking classroom aides to assist in educational settings throughout Addison County. The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) is a federally funded program that has successfully placed thousands of volunteers in educational settings nationwide. Individuals must be at least 55 and willing to work a minimum of 10 hours per week. Participants receive travel reimbursement, fifty paid vacation/sick days, and a tax-free hourly stipend if they are income eligible.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact **RSVP at 802-468-7056.**

SUMMER CAMP NURSE POSITION

Interested in working at a summer camp on beautiful Lake Dunmore in the Green Mountains of Vermont? Do you enjoy working with kids in a vibrant and warm summer camp community? Consider working as a nurse at Keewaydin Dunmore for Boys or Songadeewin of Keewaydin for Girls! Our summer season runs from June 19 to August 23. This is a great opportunity for experienced nurses or for those just starting a nursing career—especially for those considering a career in pediatric nursing! Three nurses run each Health Center and work with a consulting physician at a local medical practice.

Salary for RN is \$12,000 (tuition free for first child, 75% discount for second child). Room and board is included.

For more information, please contact Daria Carden at daria@keewaydin.org.

Visit our website at www.keewaydin.org.

Addison Independent
CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM

ADDISON INDEPENDENT
58 Maple Street, Middlebury, VT 05753
802-388-4944
addisonindependent.com • email: classifieds@addisonindependent.com

Cash in on our 4-for-3 rates! Pay for 3 issues, get 4th issue free! An ad placed for consecutive issues runs the 4th time for free!

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

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

- Notices
- Card of Thanks
- Personals
- Services
- Free**
- Lost 'N Found**
- Garage Sales
- Lawn & Garden
- Opportunities
- Adoption
- Work Wanted
- Help Wanted
- For Sale
- Public Meetings**
- For Rent
- Want to Rent
- Wood Heat
- Real Estate
- Animals
- Att. Farmers
- Motorcycles
- Cars
- Trucks
- SUVs
- Snowmobiles
- Boats
- Wanted
- Real Estate Wanted
- Vacation Rentals

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

DEADLINE: Monday at 5 p.m.

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

RATES

** no charge for these ads Spotlight with large ✓ \$1

PLEASE PRINT YOUR AD...

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

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

Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Lincoln school district board is seeking a visionary leader to serve as Superintendent of Schools. Preferred candidates will demonstrate a deep understanding of current educational practices that support and advance Lincoln's vision: a world where education empowers all learners, strengthens a sense of belonging, and fosters a connection to community and place.

To Apply:
 Applicants should provide a resume, evidence of licensure, and names and contact information of references. Letters of reference may be required of finalists. References will not be contacted without permission from the candidate.

All materials and any questions should be directed to Linda Loprete (lloprete@lincolnsd.org).

Lincoln SD is an Equal Opportunity Employer with no discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, or sexual orientation.

EVENING FRONT DESK/CONCIERGE. Swift House Inn - Middlebury, Vermont. We're hiring a front desk professional to anchor our evening shift. This position plays a pivotal role: greeting arriving guests, fielding questions, supporting restaurant reservations, and ensuring the property is secure and guest-ready for the next day. If you thrive on creating memorable experiences and want to grow in the hospitality industry, this is for you. Swift House Inn has 20 guest rooms across three historic buildings, and is home to Jessica's at Swift House Inn, one of Vermont's most celebrated fine dining restaurants. Responsibilities: Welcome and check in arriving guests with warmth and professionalism. Answer phones, manage room and restaurant reservations. Provide local recommendations and concierge-style service. Troubleshoot guest concerns and offer proactive solutions. Liaise with Jessica's restaurant team for smooth communication. Keep common areas tidy, cozy, and well-presented. Follow nightly checklists and procedures. Lock up buildings and hand off to the overnight security team. You Are...Deeply interested in the hotel and lodging industry, A natural host who loves creating great guest experiences in Addison County, Communicative, warm, and gracious under pressure, Obsessed with details and good systems, Reliable, punctual, and self-directed. Shift & Compensation. Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Schedule: Part-time, includes some weekends and holidays. Pay: \$20-\$22 Hourly, commensurate with experience, bonuses and tips. Apply Today. Email your resume and a short note to owner@swifthouseinn.com. Learn more about us at swifthouseinn.com

Help Wanted

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

For Rent

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

MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.

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

For Rent

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

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

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE

2000 sq ft to 7000 sq ft - Tall ceilings, loading docks, plenty of parking. Middlebury - 802-558-6092

MIDDLEBURY BRIARWOOD APARTMENTS

is currently taking waitlist applications for 2- br apartments. No smoking/ No pets. Income limits apply- rent based on income- 2 person minimum occupancy. Equal Housing Opportunity. Handicapped accessible. 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191 www.SummitPMG.com.

Wood Heat

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

Att. Farmers

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

Help Wanted

MILL WORKER PAINTER/FINISHER

Addison Residential is seeking to hire a full-time finisher for our busy paint shop. Finisher will be responsible for spraying a variety of projects - cabinetry, siding, trim, etc. along with using a variety of finish products. The ideal candidate will have previous experience with finishing. The job requires repetitive motion and ability to lift-up to 65lbs. The candidate should be able to work independently, as well as be part of a team, and have a keen eye for detail.

Benefits package available.
Pay is based on experience/skill level.
Apply by emailing resume to:
info@addisonresidential.com.

ALWAYS HIRING?

Keep your business in front of local job seekers with a discounted year-round help wanted ad.

A 52-week display ad campaign starts at just \$50/week!

advertising@addisonindependent.com

Public Notices

TOWN OF MONKTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

The Monkton Development Review Board will hold the following hearing on Monday, April 13, 2026, beginning at 7:30 PM. The hearing will be held in person at the Town Office, located at 92 Monkton Ridge. The hearing will also be available via Zoom and login information is below.

a. Appeal - 3A Putty Bed Place, PID 11.105.039000. Two mobile homes on one acre building lot in Zone 5A

An electronic copy of the application can be obtained by emailing zoning@monktonvt.com. A hard copy of the application is available at Town Hall by appointment. Please call 802-453-3800 to make an appointment.

Remote Access: Join Zoom Meeting
 https://zoom.us/j/Meeting ID: 802 453 3800 * Passcode: 1762
 Phone In: 1-646-558-856 * Meeting ID: 802 453 3800 * Passcode: 1762

STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT DOCKET NO.: 26-PR-00323 IN RE ESTATE OF: WENTWORTH COMES, III NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Wentworth Comes, III, late of Hancock, VT. I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**

Dated: 03/11/26
 Brigitte Smith
 PO Box 105
 Hancock, VT 05748
 802-767-4272
 brigittesmith3@gmail.com

Publication: Addison Independent
 Publication Date: 3/19/26
 Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division
 Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY BOARD AND COMMISSION VACANCIES

Each year at this time the Town of Middlebury Select Board makes its annual appointments to volunteer positions required by State Statute, and local and regional boards and commissions. If you are interested in any of the following positions, please submit an Application for Appointment available on the Town's website https://www.townofmiddlebury.org/government/boards_and_commissions/index.php, or by contacting Beth Dow at bdow@townofmiddlebury.org. Please submit Applications for Appointment to the Manager's Office, 77 Main Street, Middlebury, or e-mail to bdow@townofmiddlebury.org, by Wednesday, April 1, 2026. If you would like to find out more about any of these positions, please contact Beth Dow at 388-8100, Ext 202.

- Four-Year Term**
 Conservation Commission
- Three-Year Term**
 Planning Commission
 Design Advisory Committee
 Development Review Board
 Downtown Improvement District Committee (Must own or represent a business in the district.)
 Infrastructure Committee
 Energy Committee
- Two-Year Term**
 Sports Commission
 Town Health Officer
- One-Year Term**
 Addison County Regional Planning Commission Delegates
 Addison County Regional Planning Commission Alternate
 Addison County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee Delegate
 Addison County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee Alternate
 Fence Viewer
 Maple Broadband Communications District Delegate
 Maple Broadband Communications District Delegate Alternate
 Town Agent
 Town Grand Juror
 Town Service Officer
 Tree Warden

VERMONT RAIL SYSTEM
Vermont Railway ♦ Green Mountain Railroad
Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad
Washington County Railroad & WACR Conn River Division
Weed Control Program Newspaper Advertisement

The Vermont Rail System has applied to the Secretary of Agriculture for a permit to apply herbicides to its tracks for control of weed growth in the ballast.

- ♦ Vermont Railway operates between Bennington and Burlington. (In the towns of Burlington, S. Burlington, Shelburne, Charlotte, Ferrisburgh, Vergennes, New Haven, Middlebury, Saisbury, Leicester, Brandon, Pittsford, Rutland Town, Rutland City, Clarendon, Wallingford, Danby, Mt. Tabor, Dorset, Manchester, Sunderland, Arlington, Shaftsbury, Bennington)
- ♦ Green Mountain Railroad operates between Bellows Falls and Rutland City. (In the towns of Rockingham/Bellows Falls, Chester, Cavendish, Ludlow, Mt. Holly, East Wallingford, Shrewsbury, Rutland Town, Rutland City)
- ♦ Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad operates between Rutland and Whitehall NY, and Pittsford Town. (In the towns of Pittsford, Rutland Town, West Rutland, Ira. Castleton, Fair Haven)
- ♦ Washington County Railroad operates between Montpelier and Barre. (In the towns of Montpelier, Barre City, Barre Town, S. Barre, Berlin)
- ♦ WACR Conn River Division operates between White River Junction to Newport Vermont. (In the towns of White River, Hartford, Wilder, Norwich, Thetford, Fairlee, Bradford, Newbury, Wells River, Newport, Coventry, Orleans, Barton, Sutton, West Burke, Lyndonville, St. Johnsbury, Passumpsic, Barnet, Ryegate.)

The tracks in these locations will be treated utilizing "hi-rail" equipped trucks with nozzles aimed downward from fixed booms or swivel booms to spray the roadbed beneath or adjacent to the tracks. Beginning on or near May 1st, 2026, our applicator will be using a mix of Aquaneat, or Roundup Pro Concentrate (Glyphosate), Esplanade 200 SC or Promenade SC (Indaziflam or Flumioxazin) Milestone or Whetstone or Polaris AC Complete (Imazapyr), Escort XP or Patriot or MSM 60 (Metsulfuron Methyl) with Method 240 SL (Aminocyclopyrachlor) with Aquaneat or Roundup Pro Concentrate or Credit 41 Extra (Glyphosate), with Novita MSO, Novita Drift Control. Other areas close to streams and standing water which were not sprayed on the first application, may be spot treated with Aquaneat (Glyphosate), Novita 90 or Novita MSO. Residents abutting Vermont Rail System right-of-way should protect private water supplies or other sensitive areas. It is the responsibility of the resident to notify us of the existence of a private water supply located near our property.

- ♦ Notification from residents along the Vermont Railway, Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad, Green Mountain Railroad, Washington County Conn River Division and the Washington County Railroad Barre to Montpelier, should be made before April 24th, 2026 to: Rick T. Boucher, Chief Engineer M.O.W. ♦ Vermont Railway, Inc. ♦ 118 Post Street Rutland, VT 05701, or by telephone at (802) 775-4356, Monday through Friday between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm.
- ♦ Questions or comments should be addressed to: Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Plant Industry 116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-1732, AGR.PlantIndustry@vermont.gov

**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
 or 802-388-4944, ext 104.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT
 Serving Addison County, Vt. Since 1946

THE INNER GARDEN



Now Hiring - Garden Crew
 Seeking motivated individuals for garden maintenance & installation, including perennial care and planting beds.
 Opportunity for garden design.

Seasonal (Apr. 1-Nov. 15)
 40-50 hrs/week | 4-day work week
 Competitive Compensation
 Projects throughout Addison County
 Experience preferred but will train. Valid driver's license required.

Please send resume to apply for this position.
 Send inquiry to
 joan@theinnergarden.com

Turning Point Center OF ADDISON COUNTY

We're hiring!

Turning Point Center of Addison County is looking for a Development & Community Relations Coordinator to strengthen fundraising, communications, and community partnerships. If you care about supporting recovery services and building a healthy Addison County, please consider applying—or sharing with someone who might be a great fit.

Turning Point Center of Addison County is a recovery community center for neighbors impacted by substance use, offering services like recovery coaching, peer support groups, and connections to local resources.



Scan for Job Info & Application

Keep the news coming!

Subscribe to the Addy Indy online, in print, or on the go!

Call 388-4944

TOWN OF MONKTON INVITATION FOR PAVING BIDS

The Town of Monkton is requesting sealed bids for the placement of hot mix asphalt on approximately 6.4 miles of Town Highways. Contact Trevor Currier, Road Foreman at highway@monktonvt.com with questions and to obtain bid forms. Bids will be received by the Road Foreman or at the Town Office until 12:00 pm on March 24, 2026.

TOWN OF STARKSBORO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD REVISED NOTICE OF HEARING

Alan and Nancy Norris submitted application 26-DRB-01PUD for a Preliminary Plan Review Hearing for a 9-lot Planned Unit Development (PUD) located on a 84.89+/- acre parcel #10815 at 2798 VT Route 17 in the Town of Starksboro. The proposed PUD is in the ASRR, LDRC, and HDRC districts. The Preliminary Plan Review Hearing on this application will be held per Section 427 of the Starksboro Land Use and Development Regulations (SLUDR).

The Starksboro Development Review Board will conduct the hearing on **April 23, 2026**, starting at 6:30p.m. at the Starksboro Town Office with remote access (info below). The full application is available to review by request of the Starksboro zoning office, and on the website at <https://www.starksborovt.org/agendas-and-minutes>

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464(a)(1)(C) participation in this local proceeding is prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

Town of Starksboro is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89617415124>
 Meeting ID: 896 1741 5124
 Or by Phone: +13052241968

Warning Date: March 19, 2026

Turning Point Center OF ADDISON COUNTY

NOW HIRING: RECOVERY COACHES

The Turning Point Center of Addison County is seeking part-time and full-time Recovery Coaches to join our mission-driven team supporting individuals on their recovery journey.

Recovery Coaches provide peer-based, non-clinical support to individuals seeking or sustaining recovery from substance use and related challenges.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide one-on-one peer recovery support
- Assist individuals in setting and achieving recovery-related goals
- Connect participants to community resources and services
- Maintain appropriate documentation and confidentiality
- Uphold TPCAC values of respect, compassion, and inclusion

Qualifications

- Lived experience in recovery (or strong understanding of recovery principles)
- Ability to build trusting, supportive relationships
- Strong communication and listening skills
- Reliability and professionalism
- Recovery Coach Certification (or willingness to obtain; training may be supported)

Are you looking for meaningful, community-based work with a flexible schedule?

APPLY Today or Call 802-388-4249



Public Notices

can be found on Pages 3B, 11B and 12B.

**STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT
PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT
DOCKET NO. 26-PR-00131
IN RE: ESTATE OF PENELOPE J. GRADY**

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Penelope J. Grady, late of Starksboro, Vermont. I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.

Dated: 03/09/26

Eric Shepard
P.O. Box 322
Jericho, VT 05465
802-952-0438
eshewardwork@gmail.com

Publication: Addison Independent

Publication Date: 3/19/26

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division
Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

**TOWN OF LEICESTER
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
LEICESTER DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**

The Leicester Development Review Board will hold a public hearing **Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at the Leicester Town Office at 6:00 p.m.** to consider the following application:

1. **(26-04 DRB)**, Application 26-04 DRB of James A. Greenamyre, 1245 Hooker Road, Leicester, VT, Parcel 212027, for a 2.0 +/- subdivision from Parcel 212021, Justin & Eileen Smith, 1134 Hooker Road, Leicester, VT.

The Smith parcel of 108 +/- acres will be reduced by the 2.0-acre parcel to 106 +/- acres after the subdivision. This is the second subdivision of the Smith parcel within a five (5) year period and therefore requires a hearing before the Leicester Development Review Board.

Applications are available for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office, 44 Schoolhouse Rd., Leicester, VT during regularly scheduled hours.

Participation in this proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

Jeff McDonough
DRB Chairman
March 5, 2026

ATM stolen from Rt. 7 South Maplefields

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police launched an investigation into a March 10 burglary at the Maplefields store on Route 7 South, during which the culprit(s) broke into the building at around

2:45 a.m. and removed an ATM machine.

In other action last week, Middlebury police:

- Responded to a report of an unruly youth at the Addison Central

Teens center on March 9.

• Served a temporary restraining order on a Middlebury resident in the Route 7 North area on March 9.

- Investigated a retail theft from a Macintyre Lane business on March 9.
- Served a no-trespass order on

an unwanted customer at the Champlain Farms store on Court Street on March 9.

• Investigated a report of "suspicious activity" on Exchange Street on March 9.

• Responded to a March 9 report of a drunken man on Route 7.

• Gave a ride home to a Porter Hospital patient who had been discharged at 11:20 p.m. on March 10.

• Quieted a noisy party that had drawn a complaint in the Middle Road South area on March 10.

• Responded to a domestic disturbance at a Velley View home on March 10.

• Investigated a reported assault near the intersection of Seminary Street Extension and Stone Crop Road on March 10.

• Checked on a report of a "suspicious vehicle" on Seminary Street Extension on March 11. Police said the occupant was using the vehicle as shelter.

• Assisted a South Village Green resident who alleged was being harassed by phone on March 11.

• Received a report of a juvenile in possession of tobacco on Middlebury Union High School grounds on March 11.

- Arrested Sequoyah Parchment,

28, of Shelburne on an active in-state arrest warrant near the intersection of Academy and Main streets on March 11.

• Checked on the welfare of an elderly Creek Road resident on March 11.

• Responded, with Middlebury

Regional EMS, to a medical call on Exchange Street on March 13.

• Helped remove an unwelcome person from a Court Street Extension business on March 13.

• Were informed of a theft from an Exchange Street business on March 13.

• Served a no-trespass order on a man following a shoplifting complaint lodged by a Court Street merchant on March 13.

• Searched in vain for a missing New York resident who had been reported as possibly missing in this area on March 13.

• Investigated a report of people camping behind Shaw's Supermarket on March 12.

• Responded to an alleged domestic dispute at a Valley View home on March 12.

• Cited Ross Peters, 58, of Middlebury for driving under the influence, following an investigation on College Street on March 14. Police said they measured Peters's blood-alcohol content at 0.233% and took him to receive detox services in Rutland. The legal BAC for driving is 0.08%.

• Responded to a noise disturbance on Cross Street at around 6:13 p.m. on March 14.

• Helped a driver who had been experiencing a mental health crisis on Main Street on March 14.

• Helped a discharged patient from Porter Hospital find a place to stay during the night of March 14.

• Received a report that a miniature horse was on the loose on School House Hill Road on March 15.

• Helped Vermont State Police at a DUI stop on Route 7 North on March 15.

• Helped a man find his vehicle on College Street on March 15.

• Spoke with a man who believed he was being treated unfairly at his Court Street workplace on March 15.

Police try to stop car speeding, to Lincoln

BRISTOL — Bristol police on March 4 tried to stop a vehicle that was traveling 70 mph in a 40 mph zone on Rockydale Road. Police said that while an officer was attempting to stop the vehicle, its driver turned onto Lincoln Road at a high rate of speed and passed a vehicle unsafely.

The officer ceased their attempt to stop the vehicle due to safety concerns.

Bristol Police Log

Between March 1 and 7, Bristol police completed 24 foot patrols, conducted five traffic stops and checked security at Mount Abraham Union High School seven times, at Bristol Elementary School seven times and at local businesses seven times.

Police also processed 11 fingerprint requests, verified two vehicle identification numbers and responded to 911 hang-up calls that they determined were dialed by young children playing with a phone.

In other recent activity, Bristol police:

• On March 2 helped a local business with service of a notice against trespass.

• On March 2 began investigating a report of a theft from a business on Prince Lane.

• On March 2 police attended Bristol's annual town meeting in Holley Hall.

• On March 2 responded to a report of a suspicious person on Plank Road. The person was gone when police arrived.

• On March 4 received a late report of a juvenile problem on Airport Drive.

• On March 4 responded to an animal problem on West Street.

• On March 5 assisted with a juvenile issue.

• On March 6 assisted the Middlebury Police Department with the service of court paperwork.

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).

**Quarantine #3 - Regulated Introduced Plant Species.
Vermont Proposed Rule: 26P007**

AGENCY: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
CONCISE SUMMARY: This amendment modernizes the existing Noxious Weed Quarantine, which will be renamed the Regulated Introduced Plant Species Quarantine, by establishing a clearer, science-based, and more flexible process for identifying and regulating introduced plant species of concern in Vermont. The amended rule removes the previous static list and replaces it with a responsive, flexible, and meaningful framework grounded in Pest Risk Assessment (PRA) criteria and review by an advisory group of subject-matter and industry experts. The amendment clarifies prohibited activities, updates definitions, adds best management practices (BMPs) and permitting pathways, and strengthens consistency with federal regulations by incorporating federally regulated plant species under 7 CFR § 360.200. The revised structure improves transparency, regulatory clarity, and enforceability, while supporting prevention-focused management that aligns with Vermont's ecological, agricultural, and forestry needs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Emilie Inoue, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901 Tel: 802-505-0217 E-mail: Emilie.Inoue@vermont.gov URL: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/>.

FOR COPIES: Stephanie Smith, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901 Tel: 802-661-8051 E-mail: Stephanie.Smith@vermont.gov.

**TOWN OF ORWELL
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
ATV/UTV ORDINANCE VOTE**

Voters are further notified and warned to meet on Saturday, April 18, 2026, 10:00 AM, at the Orwell Firehouse in Orwell, Vermont, to vote on the sole article of "All the voters of the Town of Orwell disapprove the 'Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)' adopted by the Orwell Selectboard on January 27, 2026?" Copies of the Ordinance are available at the Town Clerk's Office on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM and on the town website at townoforwellvt.org.

**TOWN OF LINCOLN
PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2026, beginning at 6:30 pm at the Town Office
62 Quaker Street, Lincoln, Vermont and virtually using Zoom**

The Lincoln Development Review Board will hold public hearings for:

1. Subdivision Application #25-048 as requested by Ashley Dobbins & Jeff Mayo for property 292 French Settlement Rd, owned by Megan & Roger Allen. Parcel ID# 34-10-02-10.300. Subdivide existing 10-acre lot into 2 five-acre lots.
2. Conditional Use Application #26-020 by Gillian & Russell Comstock for their property at 334 Geary Rd South, Parcel ID# 27-10-01-16.000. Expanding housing on property with tiny homes.
3. Appeal #26-016 as requested by Victor Atkins II for his property at 3629 Downingsville Rd, Parcel ID# 03-01-01-03.100. Appeal denial of Boundary Line Adjustment #26-015, requesting Dimensional Waiver

Participation in local proceedings is a prerequisite to the right to take part in any subsequent appeals. Please call the Zoning Administrator at (802) 453-2980 to arrange a time to view complete applications

The Zoom link will be included in the agenda which can be found on the Town's website the week prior to the hearing: <https://lincolnvermont.org>

**STATE OF VERMONT, SUPERIOR COURT
PROBATE DIVISION, ADDISON UNIT
DOCKET NO.: 26-PR-01051
IN RE ESTATE OF: LAWRENCE B. CLARK**

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Lawrence B. Clark, late of Cornwall, Vermont. I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.

Dated: 03/12/26

Roth W. Tall, Jr.
204 Clark Rd.,
Cornwall, VT 05753
(802) 462-2003
ahmic29@gmail.com

Publication: Addison Independent

Publication Date: 3/19/26

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Addison Unit, Probate Division
Address of Court: 7 Mahady Court, Middlebury, VT 05753

**TOWN OF MONKTON
NOTICE OF VACANCY
March 10, 2026**

In accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 961(a), the Selectboard of the Town of Monkton hereby gives notice of a vacancy on the Selectboard.

The Selectboard, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 963 will make an appointment to fill this vacancy at its meeting on March 24, 2026 at 7:00 pm or at a meeting thereafter until filled. The person appointed will serve until Town Meeting Day (March 2, 2027) unless a special election is called. If you are interested in the position, please indicate your interest by emailing the Selectboard at Selectboard@monktonvt.com or advising the Town Administrator at 802-453-3828.

CITIZENS' RIGHT TO PETITION FOR VOTE: Titles 17 V.S.A. § 2643 and 24 V.S.A. § 963 grant citizens the right to petition for a vote to replace the Selectboard's appointee at a special town meeting. If a special town meeting is called, the newly elected town officer will remain in office for the balance of the unexpired term. If a special town meeting is not called, the Selectboard's appointee will remain in office until the next annual town meeting.

To exercise this right, citizens must present a petition calling for an election for this office signed by five percent of the legal voters of the Town to the Town Clerk prior to the next annual Town Meeting. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION pertaining to this notice and its contents may be obtained by contacting Stan Wilbur at townadministrator@monktonvt.com.

Dated this 10th day of March, 2026

Sam Peisch /s/
Selectboard Chair

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

ARTS & LEISURE

The Addison Independent

March 19, 2026



GINA COLEMAN BRINGS THE GROOVE BACK

Vergennes Opera House reopens with the blues on March 28

Gina Coleman & the Misty Blues Band will get the Vergennes Opera House back in the groove after almost a year of construction with a Roadhouse Revival show on Saturday, March 28. The final phases of the theater's All Access Project will wrap up this summer.

PHOTO BY RICK PAULINE

Get ready to celebrate in the Little City on March 28, when the Vergennes Opera House will reopen the main stage with a powerhouse show. Gina Coleman & the Misty Blues Band will bring the energy back to the stage that's been quiet — well, except for the construction noise — for the past year.

By **ELSIE LYNN PARINI**

The theater closed in May of 2025 to accommodate the installation of a new elevator tower affixed to the southwest side of the building; and a new, easier walkway from the street. On the inside of the theater (which dates back to 1897) improvements include a discreet lift from the auditorium level to both the stage and dressing room, which will now include an ADA

restroom. AKA the All Access Project.

Fundraising kicked off in late 2021 and has tallied upwards of \$1.8 million of the estimated \$2.2 million budget.

"We knew we needed a group that would get us back into the groove after being closed for so many months due to the construction, and Gina & the Misty Blues Band were at the top of the list," said Gerianne Smart, president of the Friends of the Vergennes Opera House, the all-volunteer group that manages the theater. "This will be an inspiring performance that will warm up the old bones of the historic theater and the hearts of everyone in attendance."

Bringing in Coleman and her band is a sure-fire way to heat that stage back up!

"I was vetted to be a gospel singer," Coleman said, remembering her early years as a 20-something performing in her hometown Williamstown, Mass. "I'd sing on the scaffolding, at the top of the theater, traversing back and forth singing gospel."

It was during the 1999 production of Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" when Coleman remembered Ruben Santiago-Hudson (who starred as Walter Lee Younger in the acclaimed 1999 revival at the Williamstown Theatre Festival) giving her a piece of lasting advice.

"At the end of the run, Ruben Santiago-Hudson came to me and said, 'You need to stop

See BLUES on page 3

NYC actors bring compelling and timely play to Middlebury

A play with “how not to blow up the planet” in the title must be good... right?! Well, see for yourself March 27-29 at Town Hall Theater’s Anderson Studio in Middlebury, where Ground UP Productions and THT will present “Treaty: A Play About How Not to Blow Up the Planet.” This production is compelling and urgently timely work of documentary theater by acclaimed British playwright Chris Thorpe.

At a moment when global tensions are rising, nuclear arsenals are expanding, and the Doomsday Clock remains perilously close to midnight, *Treaty* asks a disarmingly simple question: how do ordinary people begin to dismantle the most dangerous weapons on earth? Blending storytelling, journalism, and live conversation, the play explores the human side of global nuclear negotiations and the growing international movement behind the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

After a chance encounter with a disarmament expert, Thorpe immersed himself in the world of nuclear policy and the everyday individuals working toward the extraordinary goal of complete nuclear disarmament. Drawing on conversations with activists, diplomats, and organizations deeply involved in these negotiations — including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize — *Treaty* invites audiences into a nuanced



Town Hall Theater and Ground UP Productions will present “Treaty: A Play About How Not to Blow Up the Planet” on March 27-29 in Middlebury.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

examination of power, responsibility, and the real possibility of change.

The production features Seth Sheldon, General Counsel and United Nations Liaison for ICAN, whose firsthand experience helping advance the treaty — and contributing to ICAN’s Nobel Peace Prize-winning efforts — brings immediacy and authority to the performance. Directed by Kate Middleton, who resides in Addison County when she is

not in Manhattan, the production features a professional cast of New York City actors.

More than a play, *Treaty* is an invitation to civic dialogue. It challenges audiences to consider how conversations about nuclear weapons can move from international conference rooms into our own communities and lives. At a time when many feel powerless in the face

See TREATY on page 4

Five-minute stories share the best (or worst) *Fumbles and Fouls*

The nationally recognized, award-winning storytelling series The Moth is coming to Middlebury’s Town Hall Theater (THT) on Tuesday, March 24, at 7 p.m. Listen to true stories or share your own at this open-mic storytelling competition. The event will be recorded, with select stories potentially broadcast by The Moth Radio Hour on National Public Radio. The Moth at THT is part of a biannual series raising the voices of local storytellers.

The StorySlam topic is “Fumbles and Fouls.” Prepare a five-minute story about the moment you dropped the ball. Oops, I did it again or did I do thaaaat? Tryouts, rehearsals, interviews, or dates. The highest of stakes or the lowest of lows. The failures you’ve learned from or the wrongs you won’t admit. The times you let your team down or compared yourself to the GOAT on the court. Shoot your shot!



Participants from last year’s Moth performance celebrate together at the end of the live-storytelling show. This year’s event will be held Tuesday, March 24, at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

When: Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m.
Where: Town Hall Theater, Middlebury

Stories must be summarized in five minutes, and have a clear beginning, middle, and end. For tips and tricks on Moth storytelling, visit themoth.org.

Need some courage to tell your story? The THT bar will be open before the show and during intermission — and The Moth events at Town Hall Theater have featured a consistently supportive crowd.

Seating is not guaranteed and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Be sure to arrive at least 10 minutes before the show. Tickets are \$18 and may be purchased in advance at themoth.org/events/fumbles-and-fouls-burlington-2026.

BLUES*continued from page 1*

what you're doing," Coleman recalled, with a dramatic pause... "Your voice is perfect for the blues!"

He gave Goleman "Men Are Like Street

Cars-Women Blues Singers 1928-1969," which was a two-CD compilation of 46 tracks featuring pioneering female blues artists.

And the rest is history.

Since the fall of 1999, Coleman has had her band and they've been playin' the blues ever since.

"Historically, I'm an African American," Coleman self-described. "Historically [blues music] has ancestral ties to me."

Then her tone switched to something a little more personal:

"My grandmother was a singer," she went on, "but I never got to hear her sing. By the time she was raising me, she was tapped out... I did have the opportunity for her to see me and my band perform — and she was very proud."

Gina Coleman & the Misty Blues Band has performed extensively throughout New England and toured the continental U.S., Canada and recently completed a tour in the UK. Coleman cited the Cavern Club in Liverpool, the 100 Club in London, the Orpheum Theater in Memphis and, of course, the Vergennes Opera House as top favorite venues.

Coleman was first introduced to the Vergennes Opera House audience in 2021 when she appeared as a guest vocalist in the final performance of Bob Stannard and Those Dangerous Bluesmen. She was invited back in March of 2022 to perform the "Queens of the Blues" show with the Misty Blues Band. That show sold out. Coleman and the band were invited back to perform in November of 2024 when their original songs wowed the crowd — another packed house.

This time, Coleman's fourth visit and the full band's third, the audience will be enjoying a very special presentation of their Roadhouse Revival Gospel Blues Review, a non-secular celebration of tent revival classics.

"Vergennes Opera House has this great vibe in it," Coleman said. "And the people! The people make that venue for me. It is an overly effusive group of people who come out to see us, who have a really deep appreciation for the blues. I'm always eager to come back."

What is it about the blues that has stuck to



Gina Coleman will play for the fourth time at the Vergennes Opera House on Saturday, March 28, with her blues band. This is the first show the Vergennes theater will host since its All Access renovation project.

PHOTO BY CHIS GIFFITHS

Coleman for the past 27 years?

"It's storytelling at the core," she said. "It's kind of life-sustaining for me. It's a way for me to express some of the harder things I'm grappling with in our collective lives. To me it's like my safe haven. It allows me to vent in a socially appropriate way."

Gina Coleman & the Misty Blues Band is known for their exceptional original and traditional blues music and songs with hints of jazz, soul, funk and tent revival gospel. They have recorded with Eric Gales, Charles Neville and Joe Louis Walker, and opened for contemporary blues artists like Tab Benoit, James Montgomery, John Primer, Roomful of Blues, Albert Cummings and Michael Powers. The band recently earned an Independent Blues Music Award nomination for the best contemporary blues song. The band's original recordings have wide radio airplay in the U.S. and UK.

To celebrate their 25th year playing together, the band released their 15th album and followed it up with two more releases. Two of the releases ("Outside the Lines" and "Misty Blues") were up for Grammy nominations in seven categories.

The full band features Gina Coleman, lead vocalist; Bill Patriquin, bass and vocals; Rob Tatten, drums, trumpet and vocals; Aaron Dean on saxophone; and Seth Fleischmann, guitar and vocals.

"We put out as much as we get from the audience, and the Vergennes Opera House has never been short on giving us everything

— so we will throw the kitchen sink at them," Coleman said laughing. "If you like a good energy, seasoned musicians having a good time; then this is the place to be. We're thrilled to be back and we're going to put on a heck of a show."

Doors for the March 28 show will open at 6:30 p.m., with a cash bar. The Helen Hummel Trio will open at 7 p.m., followed by Gina Coleman & the Misty Blues Band. Tickets are \$20 online at VergennesOperaHouse.org or at the door.

All proceeds from ticket sales go to the final push for funds to fully complete the All Access Project and the final phase of the new courtyard, which will be completed this summer.

FULL ACCESS

There will be a temporary ADA walkway to the new elevator tower for the remainder of the 2025-2026 season which ends on May 1. In the middle of May, the courtyard portion of the All Access Project will begin — creating the new courtyard with all the brick pavers, gardens and lighting. That will mean that ground access from Main Street to the elevator tower will not be possible during that time. The goal is to have the courtyard completed by the summer when there will be a proper ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 18, when LC Jazz will give a free community concert and dance at 7:30 p.m. And the final show of the 2025-2026 VOH season will be The Kruger Brothers on Friday, May 1, at 7:30 p.m. Get tickets and learn more on the VOH website.

Opera Vermont's Artistic Director receives national honor

Brandon's own Joshua Collier, founder and Artistic Director of Opera Vermont, has been selected as a 2026 Creative Community Fellow by National Arts Strategies (NAS) as part of Creative Community Fellows: New England.

Creative Community Fellowship is a personalized, cohort-based learning experience designed to empower, support and connect visionary cultural leaders who are using arts and culture to drive transformative change throughout the region. Fellows enter the program with in-progress arts and culture projects that create social or physical change, and over the course of the program they engage in online gatherings and in-person retreats focused on skill-building, leadership development and collaboration.

"Opera Vermont strives to make opera welcoming, accessible and deeply connected to community life across our beautiful state," Collier said. "I'm elated to be recognized by National Arts Strategies for the work that we have been doing at Opera Vermont, and I am delighted to join this cohort of exceptional cultural leader peers who are doing bold, people-centered, important work across New England. I'm beyond grateful to NAS for this opportunity and look forward to bringing new tools, relationships, and even more invigoration to my work at Opera Vermont."



Vermont Opera Artistic Director Joshua Collier was selected as a 2026 National Arts Strategies Creative Community Fellow.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Opera Vermont's mission is to make opera accessible to all Vermonters - especially our beautiful rural and small-town communities - through high-quality performances, educational programming, and partnerships across multiple venues. Collier's selection from a wide pool of applicants recognizes both his artistic leadership and Opera Vermont's commitment to building community through collaboration, education, and innovative performance experiences.

Learn more operavermont.com.

TREATY

continued from page 2

face of global crises, Treaty offers a rare combination of clear-eyed realism and genuine hope — reminding us that transformative change has often begun with small groups of committed individuals

willing to imagine a different future.

ABOUT GROUND UP PRODUCTIONS

Ground UP Productions, a 23-year-old nonprofit Off-Broadway theatre company based in Manhattan's West Village, is dedicated to creating honest, intimate theatre through new works — character-driven stories with heart that aim to inspire change in our world. Since 2005, the company has produced nearly 30 works, including 11 new plays, six of which have been published by Samuel French, Dramatists Play Service, and Broadway Play Publishing. Known for its Annual New Works Festival, Ground UP gathers award-winning playwrights and Broadway performers each February to workshop some of the most exciting new writing emerging from New York City. Treaty was discovered and workshopped during the company's 2024 New Works Festival and recently was awarded a two-week residency at The Foundry in West Stockbridge, Mass., in May 2025.

Ground UP's productions have received numerous reviews, including raves from *The New York Times*, and have been repeatedly nominated for New York Innovative Theatre (NYIT) Awards in categories such as Best Set Design, Costume Design, Original Music, and Best New Musical.

Performances take place Friday, March 27, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 28, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 29, at 2 p.m. Ticket prices are: Generous \$39; Standard \$33; Budget \$28; Student \$20. Tickets may be purchased at townhalltheater.org or by calling the THT Box Office at 802-382-9222.

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



Kate Middleton (director) and Josh Evans (performer) are collaborating with Ground UP Productions on "Treaty: A Play About How to NOT Blow Up the Planet" by Chris Thorpe. The show will come to Middlebury's Town Hall Theater beginning Friday, March 27.

COURTESY PHOTOS

ART ON EXHIBIT

BRANDON ARTISTS GUILD

7 Center St, Brandon.

For more info visit 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. On view through April.

EDGEWATER AT THE FALLS

1 Mill Street, Middlebury.

For more info visit edgewatergallery.com, call 802-458-0098 or email 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. On view through March 28.

EDGEWATER ON THE GREEN

6 Merchants Row, Middlebury

For more info visit edgewatergallery.com, call 802-989-7419 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com.

"From the Collection" highlights a group of artists, including Max Ginsberg, James Blair, TJ Cunningham, Liz Gribbin and Tracy Burtz, offering visitors an opportunity to view works by some of Edgewater's foundational artists who have helped shape the gallery over the years. On view March 21-May 16.

JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant Street, Middlebury

Visit townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery or call 802-382-9222 for more info.

"MUHS Student Art," features final DP Art Exhibitions by Spencer Copeland and Sawyer Cash Witscher, alongside a diverse collection of student artwork. Through a range of media and approaches, the works on view highlight the dedication, critical thinking, and creativity of Middlebury Union High School students. The community is invited to celebrate these emerging artists and experience the powerful ideas and personal narratives expressed through their art with a reception on Friday, March 20, from 5-6:30 p.m. On view March 18-27.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury

For more info visit middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions

"Angels & Ghosts" features evocative oil paintings from artist Damian Stamer's acclaimed "Collaboration Series," that emerge from an artistic partnership between human creativity and artificial intelligence. This exhibit was curated by Dexter Wimberly, and offers a unique meditation on how we might navigate our relationship with AI. On view Jan. 20-April 19.

"Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Art at Middlebury" highlights how unequal, and at times

See EXHIBITS on page 15

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. A project you have been working on for some time finally reaches a successful conclusion, Aries. Enjoy the benefits that comes from it and take a well-earned bow.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Taurus, sensory delights might fill your week. Good food, music and company are your rewards. Enjoy everything and savor each moment.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. A long-awaited response brings a smile to your face, Gemini. It is just the news you were hoping for, and maybe even better than you expected. Now you can move forward with confidence.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Cancer, when you meet a new group of people in the days to come, you might feel a profound sense of belonging. Your heart will be full and you'll be encouraged to socialize more.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Leo, the spotlight may find you this week. Enjoy the praise that is bestowed on you. You have earned it through your consistent effort. Someone with influence may come into your circle.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Clarity about your life's direction brings a sense of calm, Virgo. While you once were floundering, now you know exactly where you are going and the steps necessary to get there.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Libra, your social life may be buzzing right now. It will prove to be a week of laughter, reunions and shared memories if this social energy manifests fully.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. A personal mystery that has been bugging you may be solved this week, Scorpio. The truth might bring you freedom and a sense of empowerment. It also will free up your mind.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. You don't have to travel too far from home to satisfy your wanderlust, Sagittarius. A weekend getaway or midweek escape might be all that's needed to bring refreshment.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. This week you likely will meet a professional or personal milestone that you've been working toward for some time, Capricorn. Celebrate the steady climb you have made.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Authenticity is the key to driving more people into your social circle, Aquarius. It also will attract new opportunities. Don't be afraid to be "you."

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Pisces, this week you will settle a debt of some kind, freeing you up for new opportunities. It will leave you feeling lighter and ready for any new chapters ahead.



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MARCH 20 — Spike Lee, filmmaker (69)
MARCH 21 — Gary Oldman, actor (68)
MARCH 22 — Keegan-Michael Key, actor (55)
MARCH 23 — Keri Russell, actor (50)
MARCH 24 — Jessica Chastain, actor (49)

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 25 — Aretha Franklin, singer (d)
MARCH 26 — Diana Ross, singer (82)

CALENDAR

March 19-April 3

2026

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

ILSLEY CLASSIC FILM CLUB WATCHES "THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Thursday, March 19, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

PIANO CONCERT IN BRANDON.

Thursday, March 19, 6 p.m., Brandon Congregational Church. Concert pianist Alan Chiang is returning to the area to share another free concert, which will last around an hour and include works by Bach and Brahms.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20

LUNCHTIME CONCERT SERIES IN VERGENNES.

Friday, March 20, 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 6 Park St. Sallie Mack, former co-founder and co-director of the Ripton Community Coffee House, and Rosi Gowdey, storyteller and social change advocate, present an eclectic program of folk, bluegrass ballads and original compositions on guitar and keyboard. Free and open to all.

COFFEEHOUSE IN THE LIBRARY IN STARKSBORO.

Friday, March 20, 7-9 p.m., at the library in the village. Erin Cassels-Brown kicks off springtime and a new music series that highlights Addison County musicians, organized by Johnne Dickason of Starksboro. Some refreshments will be available. Donations welcome. Let's give these local players some love.

ZACH NUGENT'S DEAD SET IN MIDDLEBURY.

Friday, March 20, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Zach Nugent's Dead Set brings the music of the Grateful Dead to life with note-for-note precision and high-energy improvisation, featuring selections from across the band's expansive catalog. Tickets \$25 standard/\$35 generous. More info at addisonarts.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE ON BRISTOL TRAIL NETWORK.

Saturday, March 21. This is a great mud season hike because the gravel soils in Bristol drain well so the trail is always open. The 3-mile loop around the village offers a scenic mix of history and geography and takes 2.5-3 hours. The elevation gain is under 100 feet, but there are some steep sections and uneven terrain. Bring microspikes and poles. Excellent options for snacks/

lunch in Bristol before or afterward. Meet at 9 a.m. Register by contacting Porter Knight at knight@gmavt.net or 802-343-3920. More info at gmcbreadloaf.org.

"TRANSFORMATION & RENEWAL" FREE WRITING WORKSHOP.

Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m., at Orwell Free Library. As we welcome the arrival of spring, we'll use writing as a practice of discovery — an opportunity to listen closely, imagine freely and see our stories anew. Workshop presented by Emily Casey and Karina Jutzi. Find out more: orwellfreelibrary.org

BIODIVERSITY BUILDERS: UNDERSTANDING YOUR SITE IN VERGENNES.

Saturday, March 21, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Bixby Library, Main Street. First in a series of hands-on workshops demonstrating 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. Presented by Lisa Sausville and Ashley Robinson. For more information email to Ashley at arobinsonld@gmail.com. Registration link: tinyurl.com/BuildyBioAtBixby.

com/BuildyBioAtBixby.

THE MET: LIVE IN HD: "TRISTAN UND ISOLDE" IN MIDDLEBURY.

Saturday, March 21, noon, Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. The Met Opera's live broadcast of Wagner's transcendent meditation on love and death. \$24 adults/\$10 students. More info at addisonarts.org.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

HOPE & RESISTANCE COMMUNITY SING.

Sunday, March 22, 2 p.m., First Congregational Church of Cornwall's Meeting House. Learn protest songs and other uplifting music in advance of No Kings Day protests! Join us in community for singing, poetry readings, and speeches. Free event. If you are interested in reading poetry between songs, please fill out this form: themeetinghousevt.org/hope-resistance-community-sing.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

"THE ARTIST'S WAY"

READING AND PRACTICE GROUP IN VERGENNES.

Tuesday, March 24, 6 p.m., 3 Squares Cafe, 141 Main St. Weekly study and discussion group working through Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way," a 12-week method of creative unblocking and self-discovery. Open to first-time and returning participants

in a supportive, non-hierarchical setting. Coffee, tea, and pastries available for purchase. Free.

THE MOTH IN MIDDLEBURY.

Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 72-76 Merchants Row. Listen to true stories or share your own at this open-mic storytelling competition. The evening's theme is "Fumbles and Fouls," inviting five-minute stories about mistakes, missteps and lessons learned. More info at themoth.org and addisonarts.org.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

FREE LECTURE, "LISTEN: FROM EDISON TO MP3" IN ORWELL.

Wednesday, March 25 at 6 p.m., Orwell Free Library. Part two of Wolfgang Ziegler's introduction and demonstration of audio technology developed during the past 150 years. This installment highlights the transistor and digitization. Find out more: orwellfreelibrary.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

MOUNT ABRAHAM SPRING MUSICAL "ONCE UPON A ONE MORE TIME" IN BRISTOL.

Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. Powered by the chart-topping hits of Britney Spears, the undisputed Princess of Pop, "Once Upon

Continued on next page.

MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091		MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION: P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753	Please see the MCTV website, www.middleburycommunitytv.org , for changes in the schedule; MCTV events, classes and news; and to view many programs online. Submit listings to the above address, or call 802-388-3062.	
Channel 1071	4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service	9:30 a.m. Eckankar	4 p.m. High School Sports	Monday, March 23
Through the Night: VT Media Exchange, Bulletin Board	5:30 p.m. Eckankar	10 a.m. Selectboard	Friday, March 20	5:30 a.m. Tai Chi
Thursday, March 19	6 p.m. Energy Week	4 p.m. Congregational Service	4 a.m. Gardens & Nature	6 a.m. Chair Yoga
4 a.m. Democracy Now	7 p.m. Catholic Mass	5:30 p.m. All Things LGBTQ	6 a.m. Tai Chi	7 a.m. School Board Meeting/s
5 a.m. Press Conferences	8 p.m. Public Affairs	7 p.m. Selectboard LIVE	6:30 a.m. Yoga	12 p.m. Brattleboro Literary Festival
8 a.m. Congregational Service	Sunday, March 22	11 p.m. Democracy Now	7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s	3 p.m. High School Sports
12 p.m. Selectboard	9 a.m. Catholic Mass	Wednesday, March 25	2 p.m. Authors and Poets	6:30 p.m. School Board Meetings
10 p.m. Eckankar	9:30 a.m. Press Conferences	4 a.m. Democracy Now	4 p.m. High School Sports	Tuesday, March 24
11 p.m. Democracy Now	11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service	5 a.m. Press Conferences	Saturday, March 21	5:30 a.m. Tai Chi
Friday, March 20	4 p.m. Congregational Service	7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service	5 a.m. Tai Chi	6 a.m. Yoga
4 a.m. Democracy Now	6:30 p.m. Eckankar	9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass	5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga & Yoga	8 a.m. School Board Meeting/s
5 a.m. Energy Week	7 p.m. Catholic Mass	10 a.m. Selectboard	7:30 a.m. Gardens & Nature	3 p.m. High School Sports
7:30 a.m. Congregational Service	11 p.m. Democracy Now	7 p.m. Selectboard	9 a.m. School Board Meeting/s	8 p.m. All Brains Belong VT
12 p.m. Selectboard	Monday, March 23	9:30 p.m. Eckankar	3 p.m. High School Sports	9 p.m. Music from around VT
4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service	4:30 a.m. Democracy Now	11 p.m. Democracy Now	8 p.m. Authors and Poets	Wednesday, March 25
10 p.m. Democracy Now	5:30 a.m. Eckankar	Channel 1091	Sunday, March 22	5 a.m. Tai Chi
Saturday, March 21	6 a.m. All Things LGBTQ	Thursday, March 19	5:30 a.m. Tai Chi	5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
4 a.m. Democracy Now	10 a.m. Selectboard	5 a.m. Tai Chi	6 a.m. Chair Yoga	7 a.m. Authors and Poets
5 a.m. Press Conferences	5 p.m. All Things LGBTQ	5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga	7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s	9 a.m. School Board Meeting/s
8 a.m. All Things LGBTQ	11 p.m. Democracy Now	7 a.m. Yoga for Kids	1 p.m. All Brains Belong VT	3 p.m. High School Sports
10 a.m. Selectboard	Tuesday, March 24	7:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s	3 p.m. High School Sports	8 p.m. Festival On The Green
	4 a.m. Democracy Now		8 p.m. Brattleboro Literary Festival	

Top Pick

Transcend love and death with Wagner's 'Tristan und Isolde'

Opera Company of Middlebury and Town Hall Theater will present *The Met: Live in HD — "Tristan und Isolde"* on Saturday, March 21, at noon at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury.

The broadcast features the Metropolitan Opera's long-anticipated production of Richard Wagner's transcendent meditation on love and death, starring dramatic soprano Lise Davidsen as the Irish princess Isolde. Heroic tenor Michael Spyres appears opposite Davidsen as Tristan.

Mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova reprises her role as Brangäne, joined by bass-baritone Tomasz Konieczny as Kurwenal and bass-baritone Ryan



Speedo Green, who makes his role debut as King Marke.

Tickets are \$24 for adults and \$10 for students. For tickets or more information, visit townhalltheater.org or contact the box office at tickets@townhalltheater.org or 802-382-9222. Box office hours are Monday through Friday from noon-5 p.m.

A One More Time" turns our favorite fairy tales upside down with a clever twist! When a fairy godmother goes rogue and plops copies of "The Feminine Mystique" in the laps of classic heroines, the damsels embark on a quest to rewrite their stories and redefine "happily ever after." The show is described as "colorful PG13 hip hop fantasy" and "a big, modern, musical dance party, with Britney's beating heart at its core." Tickets: \$15 adult/\$12 seniors and children under 12. Purchase online at bit.ly/oncenc.

MUHS SENIOR PLAY, "GREASE," IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. Middlebury Union High School presents this well-known production in a highlight of the school's performing arts calendar, featuring students in the classic musical. Look for Sandy, Danny and all their friends on stage. Tickets \$13.60 adults/\$11 students at gofan.co/event/5850651?schoolid=VT15095 Repeats Friday and Saturday.

FRIDAY, MARCH 27

LOCALS NIGHT AT LINCOLN PEAK VINEYARD IN NEW HAVEN. Friday, March 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Lincoln Peak Vineyard, 142 River Road. Enjoy a cozy, intimate show in the Lincoln Peak tasting room. Music by the Chrissi Romano Band. More info at

lincolnpeakvineyard.com.

MOUNT ABRAHAM SPRING MUSICAL "ONCE UPON A ONE MORE TIME" IN BRISTOL. Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. See March 26 listing.

MUHS SENIOR PLAY, "GREASE," IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., high school auditorium. Middlebury Union High School presents the classic musical featuring Sandy, Danny and all their friends. Tickets \$13.60 adults/\$11 students at gofan.co/event/5850651?schoolid=VT15095.

VERMONT MANDOLIN TRIO IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater. Bluegrass, jazz and roots and more, played on three mandolins. Tickets \$25 standard/\$40 generous. More info at addisonarts.org.

"TREATY" PLAY IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72 Merchants Row. The production, subtitled "A Play About How Not to Blow Up the Planet," is a compelling and urgently timely work of documentary theater by acclaimed British playwright Chris Thorpe. The play asks a disarmingly simple question: How do ordinary people begin to dismantle the most dangerous weapons on earth? It blends storytelling, journalism

and live conversation to explore the human side of global nuclear negotiations. Ticket, whose prices range from \$39 (generous) to \$20 (student), can be purchased at townhalltheater.org or by calling the THT Box Office at 802-382-9222. Continues March 28 & 29.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE AT SHELburne FARMS IN SHELburne. Saturday, March 28, time TBD. Hike the Farm Trail from the Welcome Center at Shelburne Farms and enjoy great views from Lone Tree Hill and the waterfront. Easy-to-moderate hike of about five miles and 300-400 feet of elevation change. Contact Ken Corey at 802-349-3733 or kencorey53@gmail.com to register. More information at gmcbreadloaf.org.

WINTER TRAVELING BOOK CLUB IN VERGENNES. Saturday, March 28, 1-2 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Meet at the Bixby Library or join online to discuss "What You Are Looking For Is in the Library" by Michiko Aoyama. Part of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Winter Traveling Book Club. Free with registration. More info at lcmmm.org.

MUHS SENIOR PLAY, "GREASE," IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 27, 2 p.m., high school auditorium.

Middlebury Union High School presents the classic musical featuring Sandy, Danny and all their friends. Tickets \$13.60 adults/\$11 students at gofan.co/event/5850651?schoolid=VT15095.

MOUNT ABRAHAM SPRING MUSICAL "ONCE UPON A ONE MORE TIME" IN BRISTOL. Saturday, March 28, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., high school auditorium. See March 26 listing.

"TREATY" PLAY IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 28, 2 and 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72 Merchants Row. See more about this "Play About How Not to Blow Up the Planet" on March 27.

CHAMPLAIN PHILHARMONIC SPRING CONCERT IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 28, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. The diverse selection of works includes "Fanfare" by Vermont composer Erik Nielsen, Gwyneth Walker's "Let America Be America Again," select movements from Lee Johnson's symphonic tribute to the Grateful Dead and Antonin Dvořák's beloved Symphony No. 9. Tickets \$5-\$15. Info: app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=317027.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

ROKEBY MUSEUM FREE ADMISSION DAY IN FERRISBURGH. Sunday, March 29, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., 4334 Route 7. The exhibits and grounds will be open for touring. At 3 p.m., join Meg Mott for a program titled "A Dramatic Constitution," where she considers how the U.S. 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. More info at rokeby.org.

"TREATY" PLAY IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, March 29, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, Anderson Studio, 72 Merchants Row. See more about this "Play About How Not to Blow Up the Planet" on March 27.

TUESDAY, MARCH 31

"THE ARTIST'S WAY" READING AND PRACTICE

GROUP IN VERGENNES. Tuesday, March 31, 6 p.m., 3 Squares Cafe, 141 Main St. Weekly study and discussion group working through Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way," a 12-week method of creative unblocking and self-discovery. Open to first-time readers and returning participants in a supportive, non-hierarchical setting. Coffee, tea, and pastries available for purchase. Free.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB SNOWSHOE IN RIPTON. Thursday, April 2, time TBD. Snowshoe five to six miles on the Long Trail with difficult climbs of approximately 1,000 feet in search of good snow. Destination dependent on snow totals. For more information, contact Ellen Cronan at 908-595-2926 or visit gmcbreadloaf.org.

ILSLEY CLASSIC FILM CLUB WATCHES "THE WIZARD OF OZ" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, April 2, 1 p.m., Marquis Theater, Main St. The club this spring watches four films with the theme "The 1930s in Color!" Join fellow community film lovers to see the films at the theater, followed by a short discussion of the film. Popcorn is on us.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

"POWERSUITS" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, April 3, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater. POWERSUITS is a bold, laugh-out-loud performance created and performed by Middlebury College professors Michele Biancosino and Lida Winfield. This sharply comic duet uses exaggerated costumes, movements and gestures to critique normative gender roles, depicting stereotypes of authority and beauty as absurd. Part dance, part theatre, and a lot of fun — expect belly laughs alongside pointed commentary on capitalist grind culture. The evening begins at 6:30 with an '80s and '90s dance-mix cocktail hour and cash bar, with the performance starting at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15-\$25-\$40. Info: addisonarts.org/event/powersuits.

See more

CALENDAR LISTINGS

Online!

ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM

UPCOMING MUSIC

Vermont Mandolin Trio features Monkton and Ripton musicians with a sound all their own

The Vermont Mandolin Trio, comprised of Grammy-nominated Matt Flinner, Jamie Masefield and Will Patton, will join Town Hall Theater's Wintertide Music Series on Friday, March 27, with a sound that will be entirely new to most listeners. The three mandolinists, who will be accompanied by bass player Pat Melvin, have developed a style that falls somewhere on the intersection of bluegrass, roots and jazz, making for a unique genre of upbeat and often improvisational music.

Masefield, Patton and Flinner come from different musical backgrounds, each of which can be heard in what has become their shared sound. Masefield's origin is in traditional New Orleans jazz. Between 1996 and 2006, Masefield toured the country with his group, the Jazz Mandolin Project. Today, mandolin is oftentimes more associated with bluegrass and Appalachia but of course it's a key component of jazz as well and Masefield reminds his audience of this with his lively and captivating jazz sound. Besides touring his music, Masefield is also a dry-stone mason living in Monkton, and his projects can be seen all around the northeast.

Patton started on the piano as a child but took up strings in his teenage years, quickly playing for a range of genres: folk, bluegrass, jazz. He graduated from Middlebury College having found a deep connection to the green mountains. Despite this love for Vermont, Patton has traveled far during his music career, gaining influence from time spent in Brazil, the Caribbean and Paris. He has collaborated many times with Parisian guitarist Ninine Garcia winning this dynamic duo critical acclaim both at home and abroad.

Grammy-nominated Flinner has been playing banjo and mandolin from the start and dedicated himself to Bluegrass from a young age. Living in Ripton, Flinner has spent the last several decades of his life touring with the Matt Flinner Trio and the Modern Mandolin quartet. He also writes musical compositions, some of which have been performed by the Ying Quartet and the Nashville Chamber Orchestra.

Tickets are \$25-\$40 and available at townhalltheater.org or by calling 802-382-9222 or visiting the Town Hall Theater box office Monday through noon-5 p.m.

Vermont Mandolin Trio will perform at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on Friday, March 27.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



More Tunes



Ukulele Clare and Rebecca will play at the Russell Memorial Library in Monkton, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. Part of the annual Winter Into Spring Musical Library Tour. Free and open to all.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Winter into Spring Musical Library Tour brings Ukulele Clare and Rebecca Padula to Monkton

The third annual Winter Into Spring Musical Library Tour keeps going this month with **Ukulele Clare and Rebecca Padula** at the Russell Memorial Library, in Monkton, on March 20, at 7:30 p.m. The series is presented by the 5 Town friends of the Arts along with the 5 Town libraries.

This entertaining duo draws deeply from the American Songbook and originals, featuring old and new favorites from jazz, country, folk, and blues. Rebecca backs her smoldering alto with guitar and ukulele. Ukulele Clare is a ukulele shenanigan instigator who brings a lighthearted style to the stage with her ukulele, banjo, and harmonica.

Sara Grey and Kieron Means will perform in April and Helen Hummel will play in May. The venues for this series are the libraries in each of the five towns (Lincoln, Starksboro, Monkton, New Haven and Bristol). All shows start at 7:30 p.m. and are free with donations welcome.

READ MORE



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PUZZLES

Sponsored by **SPARROW ART SUPPLY**

ACROSS

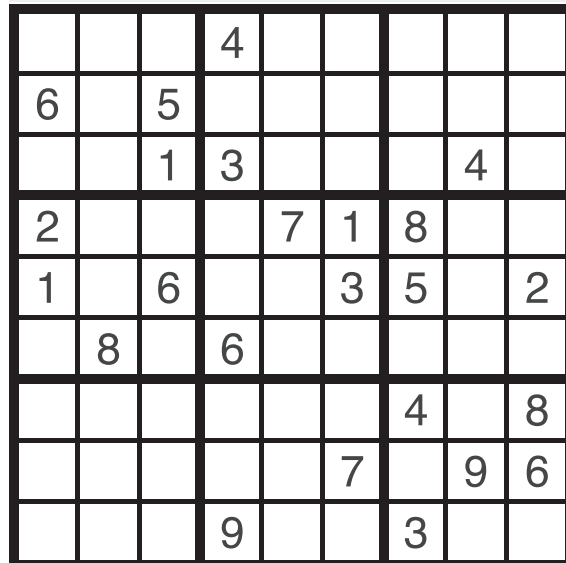
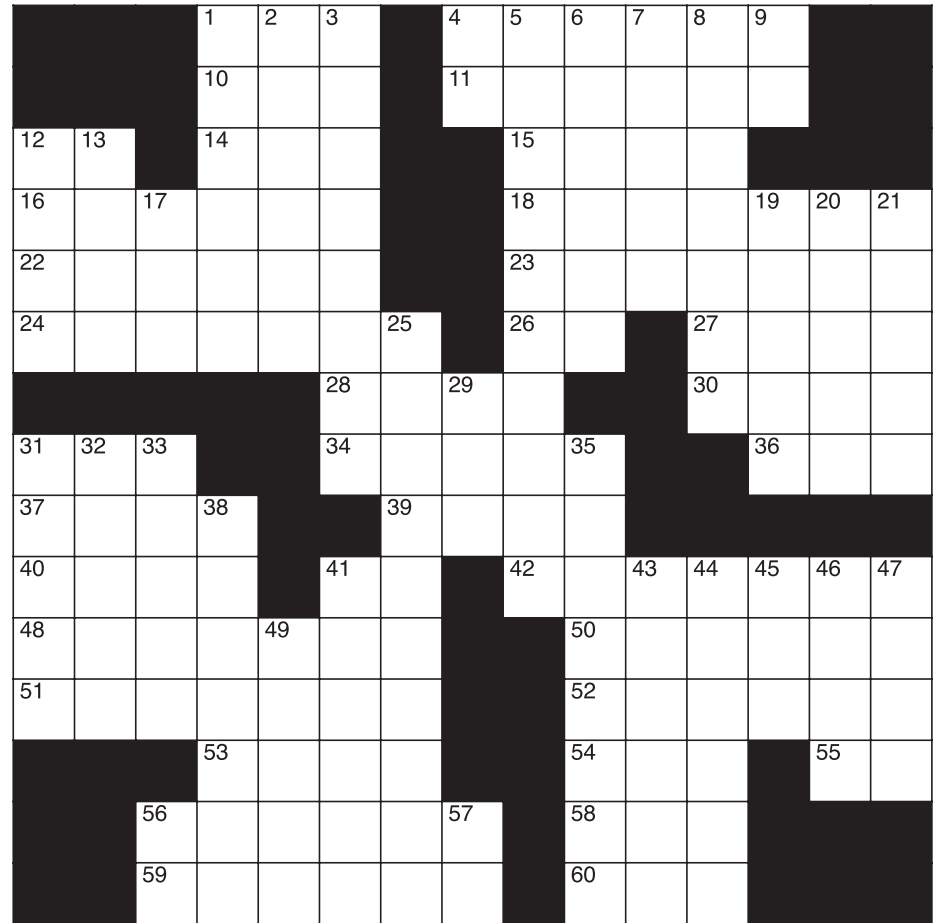
- 1. Inclined to do
- 4. Sketches
- 10. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- 11. Atomic #58
- 12. Dorm official
- 14. Small Eurasian deer
- 15. Southern constellation
- 16. Workers' groups
- 18. Former
- 22. Excellent
- 23. Romance language related to Spanish
- 24. Reference
- 26. Equally
- 27. Dirty towels
- 28. A cargo (abbr.)

- 30. Ammunition
- 31. You get one in summer
- 34. Slang for trucks with trailers
- 36. Swiss river
- 37. Exchange rate
- 39. British School deer
- 40. College teacher
- 41. Foreign Service
- 42. Horse gear
- 48. Cost to fly
- 50. A salt or ester of boric acid
- 51. Mocking
- 52. One who bird-watches
- 53. Concluding passage
- 54. A major division of geological time

- 55. Sodium
- 56. A way to produce
- 58. Soak
- 59. Laughed loudly and harshly
- 60. Affirmative

DOWN

- 1. Moth species phalonia __
- 2. Quantum of energy
- 3. Break the law
- 4. Location of White House
- 5. Official cancellation of a decision
- 6. Where rockers work



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.

- 7. Cut of beef: __ mignon
- 8. Nocturnal burrowing reptile
- 9. Atomic #62
- 12. Genus of evergreen subshrubs
- 13. Flowering plant of the legume family
- 17. Inches per minute (abbr.)
- 19. Tropical fruit
- 20. Hot fluid beneath the earth's crust
- 21. James __, painter
- 25. Popular dessert
- 29. Payment (abbr.)
- 31. Cuisine style
- 32. Genus of true flies
- 33. City in western France
- 35. Arrogance
- 38. One holding a position of command
- 41. Weekday
- 43. An evening party
- 44. Print errors
- 45. Not good
- 46. Egyptian Sun god
- 47. East German town
- 49. Olfactory property
- 56. Atomic #37
- 57. "Pollock" actor Harris

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Sparrow Plein Air Festival

Join us for a weekend of outdoor painting and community in Middlebury!

JUNE 12-14, 2026

Early bird registration now open!



ASK A MASTER GARDENER

KEYS TO SAFE, SUSTAINABLE GARDENING



Debra Heleba of Lincoln, is the statewide outreach and education program manager for UVM Extension Community Horticulture program and leads Extension Master Gardener and Vermont Master Composter programs.

Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, is a holistic approach that gardeners can use to reduce pesticides when managing insects, diseases and weeds.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines IPM as “a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health and environmental risks.” For gardeners, this means using multiple strategies to either avoid pests or keep their numbers below damaging levels. IPM also recognizes the need for some tolerance. Because they are living things that adapt, it is rarely possible (or advisable) to eliminate pests entirely.

Here are some ways gardeners can incorporate IPM practices into the garden. You may already be using some.

IPM begins with proper site selection and soil health. The goal is to give plants the best conditions for optimal growth and development. A healthy plant will be more

resilient to insect pests and diseases. Choose the right plant for the right location and select plants that are suited to Vermont’s growing conditions. Also consider disease-resistant varieties to avoid common diseases like powdery mildew.

Make sure your soil nutrients are in the optimal range for plant needs. A soil test can help determine this. Visit: go.uvm.edu/soiltest for soil testing information.

Become a plant sleuth. Before taking action, it is important to determine what pests (and beneficials) are present. Knowing what pests look like at each stage of their development can help determine when your management strategies will be most effective.

Regularly monitor plants, especially the undersides of leaves, for signs of pests or damage. Early identification can often help prevent the need for chemicals later. You can practice sleuthing, also called scouting, for both indoor and outdoor plants. A hand lens can help, as can monitoring tools like insect

traps. For example, yellow sticky traps can be used to detect fungus gnats in houseplants.

If you plan to garden every year, consider keeping a journal that details when and where pests are spotted. Over time, these notes can help you predict recurring pest problems.

Once pests are detected (or anticipated), gardeners have many tools to choose from. These include hand-picking eggs and young caterpillars of pests. Gardeners can use floating row covers to exclude pests from the garden. Space plants and prune them to allow for plenty of air flow and sun to dry leaves to minimize disease problems. Timing your annual plantings to avoid peak pest pressure can also be effective.

Some pests can be managed by trapping them, while some diseases can be managed with timely pruning of infected parts.

Gardeners can also encourage beneficial insects or “good” bugs like lady beetles that feed on pests. Installing plants that provide habitat can support these natural predators. Allowing small pest populations to exist can actually help maintain the natural predators that keep the pests in check. Accepting minor cosmetic damage can save time, reduce pesticide use, and support a healthier garden ecosystem.

Pesticides should only be considered as the very last resort. Always read and follow the product label to avoid harm to the plant, beneficial organisms, and yourself. When selecting these products, compare active ingredients and choose the least toxic option. Soaps, oils, clays, microbials, and repellents are all examples of pesticides that tend to be less-toxic choices.

IPM recognizes that pests are a natural part of garden ecosystems. By combining prevention, monitoring, and thoughtful intervention, gardeners can protect their plants while supporting healthier landscapes for people, pollinators, and the planet.

Contact the UVM Extension Master Gardener Helpline at: go.uvm.edu/gardenhelpline if you need ideas about IPM strategies to implement in your lawn or gardens.



Integrated Pest Management (IPM) can be implemented with both indoor and outdoor plants at any scale.

PHOTO BY DEBRA HELEBA

Pets of the Week



Hello Tillie & Roo!

Tillie (10 years old) and Roo (1 on March 22) are avid snugglers! They are both golden doodles — that means they have soft coats and warm hearts. They also love to “swim” in the snow, and lately do a little birdwatching.

Submitted by Susan Oliveira of Ferrisburgh.



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Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Gracie

Sweet **Gracie** has been through a lot lately. Her owner passed away and she has spent a lot of time alone since then. Since arriving at the shelter, she has been very docile and shy. We're determined to shower her with love and affection and give her all the patience she needs for her to start to feel safe and confident again. We are looking for a home that can do that for her as well; we know she'll be worth it.



Orca



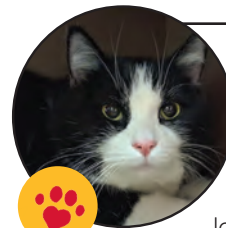
Orca was living the outdoor life when she got scooped up in a TNR event (hence the ear tip). The medical staff found her to be super friendly and the decision was made to keep her and try to find her a loving home. She may end up wanting to be an indoor/outdoor cat, but the hope is that she can find a safe and loving family who will be willing to keep her indoor-only if that's what would make her happiest. Orca can be a high-energy and curious girl once she is in a home, so we are looking for a family who can appreciate that about her.

Sunshine



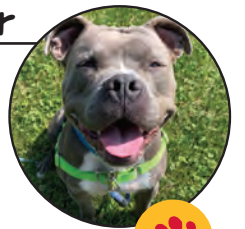
Sunshine arrived with multiple other cats, but the shelter setting made her very nervous. She spent a couple of months in a loving foster home where she built her confidence, and we are happy to share that she did extremely well. She let her foster mom shower her with affection and grew from an extremely shy cat to a lovely companion. Sunshine needs a home that can be understanding of how shy and nervous she can be at first. It's a very rewarding and heartwarming experience to help bring a shy cat out of their shell.

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, but 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.

Thor



My name is **Thor** and my agenda in life is very simple: love, love, love. Every person I meet is my new best friend, and I make sure they know it with my biggest, happiest smile and a whole lot of butt wiggles. I might look like a big tough guy at first glance, but the truth is... I'm actually the biggest baby. I'm a professional snuggle bug and take my cuddling very seriously. Pajama snuggles? Even better if we have matching ones for funsies. When it's bedtime, I'll happily crawl under the covers with you and stay curled up all night long. I'm such a heavy sleeper that once I'm cozy, I'm out like a light- right there beside you, keeping you warm.

Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



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\$2,000,000

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A LOOK AT LOCAL PROPERTIES FOR SALE

Clean, bright and luxurious home with a view

A Cornwall property that invites you to stay a while. Clean, light, bright and luxurious around every corner, with numerous updates and renovations. There will be nothing to do but move in and live life to its fullest. Two wood-burning fireplaces and a wood stove invite cozy afternoons while watching the snow fall across the Lemon Fair and Adirondacks backdrop. A stone patio, screened porch, and deck offer outside spaces for al fresco dining as the sun sets. A wine cellar is quick to help you entertain. Renovations include a new kitchen, an added room over the garage, an added bath, upgrades to three of the four others, new fixtures, a new water treatment system, a new standing-seam metal roof, and the list goes on... Consider the architectural plans provided for one of two of the charming red barns if you need extra space to entertain—or fit these outbuildings into your existing dreams. With over 16 acres, the possibilities are expansive. This is a property you'll be proud to come home to.



*This week's property is managed by IPJ Real Estate.
More info at middvermontrealestate.com.*



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Open House

Sunday, March 22nd
1:00-3:00 PM



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I love this bank. When you call an actual person answers the phone and is always helpful. They hold our mortgage, and most of our personal accounts. Having been a customer at bigger banks... we really appreciate the contrast and [NBM]'s more personal style. —Andrew M.

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PUZZLE

SOLUTIONS

March 19, 2026

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5	8	7	6	2	9	1	3	4
7	1	9	2	3	6	4	5	8
4	5	3	1	8	7	2	9	6
8	6	2	9	5	4	3	1	7

Stay Sharp

Exercise your mind.
With the Addy Indy puzzles every Thursday!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

NEXT DOOR

Maple, beer, chili... what else do you need?

ANNUAL MAPLE BEER AND CHILI INVITATIONAL RETURNS TO WAITSFIELD DURING MAPLE OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

As an ode to the changing of seasons in Vermont, Lawson's Finest Liquids holds its annual Maple Beer and Chili Invitational on the Saturday of Vermont Maple Open House Weekend. That's Saturday, March 21 this year, by the way.

A who's who of breweries from the Northeast and eastern seaboard will gather at the Waitsfield brewery from noon-3 p.m., to celebrate all things maple in the form of a beer fest and heated chili competition. The rules are simple. Every brewery brings a beer, and a chili made with that beer as well as a

required addition of maple syrup.

The crowd, as well as a panel of expert judges, will determine the winner of this year's Golden Ladle, Silver Spoon and Bronze Bean.

Stick around after the invitational ends for an incredible post-event show from Vermont's '90s rock band — Lazer Dad — starting at 4 p.m. in the taproom.

Tickets are \$40, and available at the brewery's website.



Stay Local

MAPLE OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND SATURDAY, MARCH 21 & SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026

Maple Open House Weekend is an opportunity for maple lovers to visit Vermont sugarhouses to experience the magic of maple. These events, located across the state, are free and open to the public. Here in Addison County, there are many locations open to visitors including the four listed on the Vermont Maple website (vermontmaple.org):

Bread Loaf View Farm, Cornwall

Champlain Orchards, Shoreham

Red Rock Valley Maple Farm, Starksboro

Sunset Sugar Shack, Orwell



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EXHIBITS

continued from page 5

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.

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury

For more info visit photoplacegallery.com.

"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. The exhibition will be on view March 6-28.

SPARROW ART SUPPLY

44 Main St., Middlebury

For more info visit 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.



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NEW LISTING



BRANDON | 25 Union St. Unit 2 | MLS #5079368
2 BD | 2 BA | 1770 SF | townhouse | \$365,000

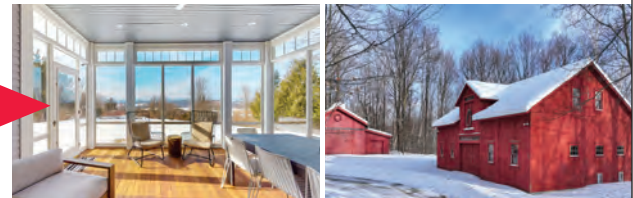
Fully remodeled in 2023 and all on one level! An open layout leaves the kitchen, dining, and living area ready to entertain. Butcher block counters, stainless appliances and an island make meal prep enjoyable. Minisplits in the primary suite and living area help keep you comfortable. An electric fireplace and built-in bookcases in the hall add charm and ambiance. A spacious laundry room and attached one-car garage provide convenience, too!

NEW LISTING



CORNWALL | 860 West St | MLS #5078520
3 BD | 5 BA | 3186 SF | 16.37 ACRES | \$2,000,000

A luxurious, charming and inviting Cornwall property, completely updated and refinished inside and out. Fantastic flow throughout, much focused on majestic views of the Champlain Valley, Lemon Fair, and Adirondack sunsets. Two well-maintained barns ready for your vision (or use the architectural plans provided to finish the larger to an entertainment space!). The improvements are evident across this very special property ready for its next owners to enjoy every minute.



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First Place
The Addison Independent
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Excellence in Revenue Collaboration & Partnerships, Staff
Advertiser Campaign, Christy Lynn & Shannon Hart
Best Health Ad, Christy Lynn
Best Ad Designer, Sarah Pope
Contests, Staff

News

Arts+Leisure Section, Elsie Lynn Parini
Sports Columnist, Karl Lindholm
Feature Photo, Steve James



Second Place
Advertising
General Excellence

Advertising

Local Display Ad, Katy Foote & Sue Leggett
Advertiser Campaign, Christy Lynn & Elsie Lynn Parini
Events, Christy Lynn, Elsie Lynn Parini & Angelo Lynn
Best Idea for Generating Revenue, Staff
Excellence in Revenue Collaboration and Partnerships, Staff

News

Crime and Courts Reporting, John Flowers
Racial, Ethnic or Gender Issue Coverage, John Flowers
Editorial Writing, Angelo Lynn
General News Photo, Steve James
Sports Action Photo, Steve James
Community Audience Involvement, Tom Morgan



Congratulations to *The Middlebury Campus* on being named the New England College Newspaper of the Year. We're so glad to have been there with you!

Third Place

Advertising

Advertiser Campaign, Katy Foote & Elsie Lynn Parini
Special Section, Advertising Supplement, Staff

News

Crime and Courts Reporting, Andy Kirkaldy
Living Page or Section, A+L, Elsie Lynn Parini
Local Election Coverage, Staff
Sports Action Photo, Steve James
Sports Section, Andy Kirkaldy, Steve James & Jessie Raymond



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