

Celebrating **17 years** of publication — and counting!

# The Commons

**FREE**

— thanks to hundreds of readers who chip in because **they believe that a community thrives when everyone has access to news.** If you appreciate this community resource and can afford to chip in, please join us now! [donate.commonnews.org](http://donate.commonnews.org)

Brattleboro, Vermont • Wednesday, August 9, 2023 • Vol. XVIII, No. 32 • Issue No. 726

[commonnews.org](http://commonnews.org)

**YOUR AWARD-WINNING, INDEPENDENT, NONPROFIT SOURCE OF NEWS AND VIEWS**

## Brattleboro takes a step to improve community safety

### By month's end, a working group hopes to hire a new consultant

By Virginia Ray  
*The Commons*

BRATTLEBORO—This summer, Selectboard members have chosen the start of a path forward for the Community Safety Review that will come to fruition in about a year.

In July, the board voted unanimously to adopt one of four options that had been put forth.

The chosen plan includes hiring an independent consultant and incorporating at least one study session around at least two public forums to help review

policy issues.

It also extended the timeline from February to June 2024 as “a goal, not a requirement” so as to allow adjustment and ensure full community involvement.

The plan also includes a close look at the Community Safety Review (CSR) report commissioned by former Town Manager Peter Elwell in 2021.

Current Town Manager John Potter said the group working on the safety project will start on Aug. 9 to look at hiring a consultant.

■ SEE PUBLIC SAFETY, A5

## New food project goes the extra mile

### Last Mile Food Project delivers meals — and hope — to elders with transportation barriers in the West River Valley

By Ellen Pratt  
*The Commons*

TOWNSHEND—Thanks to a six-month, \$5,000 grant from the United Way of Windham County, 25 people, mostly elders, have been receiving weekly deliveries of easy-to-prepare meals and groceries.

These participants in the Last Mile Food Project also receive monthly deliveries of fresh vegetables from the Vermont Foodbank's VeggieVanGo program. Additionally, a local resident, Winnie Dolan, prepares homemade meals for monthly delivery.

Those receiving the free groceries and meals live in the West River Valley, which includes Jamaica, Townshend, Brookline, Newfane, and surrounding areas.

The Last Mile Food Project is the brainchild of the West River Valley Mutual Aid (WRVMA), one of the longest-running mutual aid programs in Vermont.

The WRVMA was founded early in the pandemic as a group of neighbors helping neighbors in this rural, underserved corner of Windham County.

The group established a delivery network for food access programs like Everyone Eats, where restaurants were paid to provide meals to anyone affected by the pandemic who needed a meal, and Veggie Van Go, a Vermont Foodbank program providing fresh produce and staples once a month.

The food project uses this

network to continue to connect people with food resources.

According to Juliette Carr, project co-founder and member of WRVMA's steering committee, the project was created last spring.

WRVMA was designed to soften the landing for people who qualified for benefits under the pandemic state of emergency but who no longer do now that the state and federal governments have declared the emergency has ended — a concept known as a “benefits cliff.”

■ SEE LAST MILE FOOD PROJECT, A6

## MUSIC at a SACRED TIME, in a SACRED SPACE

*Hallowell singers mark 20 years of choral music that celebrates death as a part of life and helps ease families and their loved ones through the process of saying goodbye*

By Robert F. Smith  
*The Commons*

BRATTLEBORO—Hallowell is a local group of singers who volunteer to sing at the bed-sides of people facing the end of their lives.

Formed after a small group sang for a

dying friend in 2003, Hallowell now includes dozens of singers and is publicly celebrating its 20-year anniversary on Saturday, Aug. 26, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., at the Kiwanis Shelter in Living Memorial Park.

A one-of-a-kind chorus when it started, Hallowell has been instrumental in inspiring and training hundreds of similar

groups throughout the United States and around the globe.

Kathy Leo, one of the group's founders, remembers well how the idea to form the group came about.

Leo was a regular volunteer at Brattleboro Area Hospice, which encouraged several people who had sung

■ SEE HALLOWELL TURNS 20, A2



The Hallowell singers — a group of volunteers who sing for the dying — celebrate their 20th anniversary this year. In these photos from The Commons archives, the group sings at a public memorial ceremony in 2011. Top: Thomas Jamison. Center left: Karolina Oleksiw and Terry Sylvester. Center right: Larrimore Crockett and Burt Tepper. Bottom: Helen Anglos and Robin Davis.

JEFF POTTER COMMONS FILE PHOTOS

## From river's depths, a vestige of Bellows Falls history emerges

*Lowered water levels due to dam repairs offer glimpse of stone piers used during the fabled log drives on the Connecticut River*

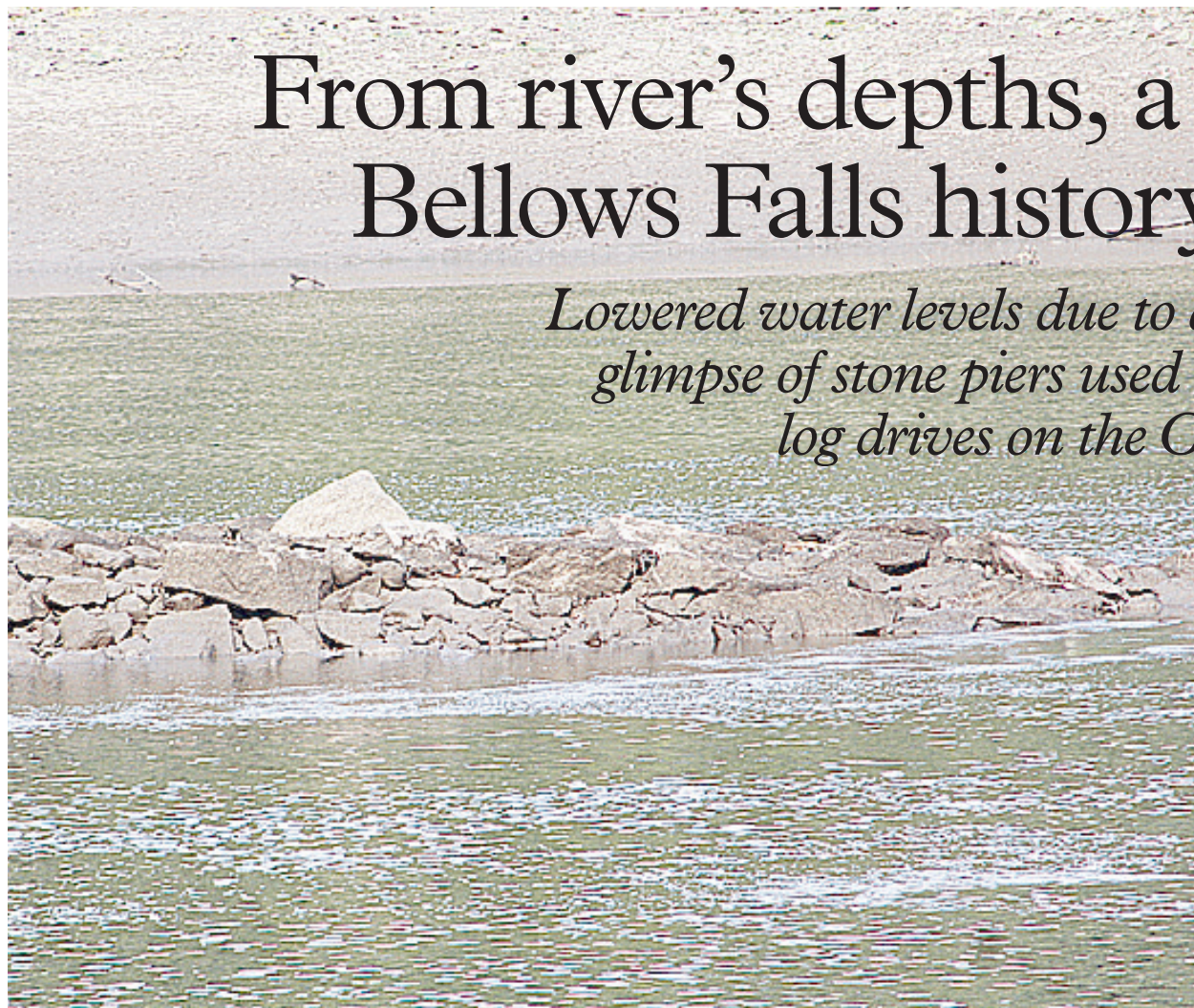
By Robert F. Smith  
*The Commons*

BELLOWS FALLS—During the first week of August, Great River Hydro, which owns the hydro-power dam on the Connecticut River between Bellows Falls and North Walpole, New Hampshire, began a draw-down of the river upstream of the dam in order to repair one of the dam's spillways, damaged during the July 10-11 flood.

The low water revealed what is left of the series of more than a dozen stone piers on the bottom of the main river channel, upriver from the dam.

The piers, which when in use were quite a bit higher, were a surprise historic reminder of the important role the Connecticut River and the small river towns of Bellows Falls and North Walpole played in what were the oldest and longest river log drives in the history of the

■ SEE PIERS, A3



ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

The remains of a stone pier, used to corral logs during the massive drives on the Connecticut River between the 1860s and 1915, are seen at Herrick's Cove after water levels on the river were dropped last week for repairs to the Bellows Falls dam.

**PAID ADVERTISING • To place your ad, call 888-511-5150 or email [ads@commonnews.org](mailto:ads@commonnews.org)**

**DRYER VENT CLEANING**  
Installation & Repair  
603-762-3433  
[durlingcleaning.com](http://durlingcleaning.com)

**Tuxedo & Suit Rentals**  
For weddings, proms & more  
Vermont Artisan Designs  
106 Main St. Brattleboro  
802-257-7044

**SUMMER SALE!**  
THE SHOE TREE  
Main St. Brattleboro  
802-254-8515

Arts Alive presents  
**Elevate the Arts Fest**  
A FREE EVENT  
August 13th,  
Noon - 4pm  
Downtown Keene, NH

**Health & Wellness Professionals!**  
Locate your business in the newly renovated building on the Townshend Common!  
802-365-7839

**Awesome Coral & Tusk pillows available**  
Gallery in the Woods  
145 Main St. Brattleboro  
802-257-4777  
[galleryinthewoods.com](http://galleryinthewoods.com)

Bonnyvale Environmental Ctr. is hiring an **OFFICE MANAGER**  
For more information, go to our website [www.BEEC.org](http://www.BEEC.org)

**VT STATE INSPECTIONS**  
No appt. needed  
Monday-Thursday  
Closed Noon-1  
**GOVIN SERVICES**  
802-257-1800  
500 Guilford Street

PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301  
PERMIT NO. 24

**VERMONT INDEPENDENT MEDIA**  
P.O. Box 1212, Brattleboro, VT 05302  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Become a member and receive The Commons in the mail.  
Your membership supports our journalism and lets us make this newspaper available for all, in print and online.  
Join today at <http://donate.commonnews.org>.



## The Commons

A publication of  
Vermont Independent Media

139 Main St. (Hooker-Dunham Bldg.)  
#601A — Newsroom  
#604 — Business and Advertising  
P.O. Box 1212, Brattleboro, VT 05302  
888-511-5150 • fax 802-246-1319  
commonsnews.org  
Office hours by appointment

Jeff Potter  
Editor-in-Chief

Kate O'Connor  
Executive Director

### EDITORIAL

#### NEWSROOM

Randolph T. Holhut, *News Editor*  
Elizabeth Julia Stoumen,  
*Calendar and Proofreading*  
Heather Taylor, *Copy Editor*

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Virginia Ray, Joyce Marcel,  
Olga Peters, Fran Lynggaard Hansen,  
Robert Smith, Annie Landenberger,  
Dot Grover-Read, Victoria Chertok,  
Deborah Lee Luskin, Elayne Clift,  
Kevin O'Connor, Alyssa Grosso,  
Thelma O'Brien

#### EDITORIAL VOLUNTEERS

Lee Stookey, Karen Cribari,  
Connie Evans, Kim Noble,  
Janet Wallstein, Elizabeth Trousdell,  
Wendy S. Collins, *Proofreaders*  
Taryn Heon, *Editorial Assistant/Voices*  
David Shaw, *Photographer*

### OPERATIONS

#### CREATIVE MARKETING SERVICES

Amanda Harwood,  
*Marketing and Office Manager*  
Lori Pinsonault, Nancy Gauthier,  
*Advertising Sales*

#### INTERNS AND APPRENTICES

Chloe Rogers • Landmark College  
Kenny Pepper • Landmark College

#### DISTRIBUTION STAFF

Grace Hedderman, Dan Lydon,  
Bill Wilmot

#### OPERATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Lucinda McGovern, Jon King,  
Philip Coolbeth, Spoon Agave,  
Karen Axelrod, Karina Huber,  
*Distributors*  
Alison Bundy, *Membership*

#### STAFF OFFSPRING

Owen Harwood, Olivia Harwood

#### CONSULTANTS

Agatha, Caslon, Ely, Ghivashel,  
Rocky, Valentino

Deadline for the August 16 issue  
August 11



vermont  
independent  
media

### VIM'S MISSION

Recognizing that a vigorous exchange of ideas and information allows democracy to function and is the lifeblood of a community, Vermont Independent Media:

- creates a forum for community participation,
- promotes local independent journalism,
- fosters civic engagement by building media skills through publication of *The Commons* and commonsnews.org, and through the Media Mentoring Project.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Heather Ahrenholz, Barry Aleshnick, Lynn Barrett, Michael Bosworth, Michelle Fehsee, Randolph T. Holhut (ex officio), Phayvanh Luexhamhan, Jeff Potter (ex officio), Stuart Strothman

### ABOUT THIS NEWSPAPER

*The Commons* is a nonprofit community newspaper published since 2006 by Vermont Independent Media, Inc., a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code.

The newspaper is free, but it is supported by readers like you through tax-deductible donations, through advertising support, and through support of charitable foundations.

The paper is published weekly, with the exceptions of the weeks of July 4 and Dec. 25.

### SUBMITTING NEWS AND TIPS

We welcome story ideas and news tips. Please contact the newsroom at [news@commonsnews.org](mailto:news@commonsnews.org) or at (802) 246-6397.

### VOICES

*The Commons* presents a broad range of essays, memoirs, and other subjective material in Voices, our editorial and commentary section. We want the paper to provide an unpredictable variety of food for thought from all points on the political spectrum.

We especially invite responses to material that appears in the paper.

We do not publish unsigned or anonymous letters, and we only very rarely withhold names for other pieces. When space is an issue, our priority is to run contributions that have not yet appeared in other publications.

Please check with the editor before writing essays or other original submissions of substance. Email: [voices@commonsnews.org](mailto:voices@commonsnews.org).

Editorials represent the collective voice of *The Commons* and are written by the editors or by members of the Vermont Independent Media Board of Directors.

The views expressed in our Voices section are those of individual contributors. Bylined commentaries by members of the Vermont Independent Media board of directors represent their individual opinions; as an organization, we are committed to providing a forum for the entire community. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Vermont Independent Media is legally prohibited from endorsing political candidates.

### ADVERTISING

Your advertising directly supports a better newspaper. The open display advertising rate is \$16.50 per column inch, and *The Commons* offers discounts. To place your ad, contact [lori@commonsnews.org](mailto:lori@commonsnews.org) or [nancy@commonsnews.org](mailto:nancy@commonsnews.org).

Advertising files can be saved as PDF (press-ready setting), EPS (with fonts converted to outlines), or as TIFF (600 pixels per inch), or printed as black-and-white hard copy.

We can design your ad, and you should not hesitate to ask us to do so. We love helping our clients.

### DISTRIBUTION

*The Commons* distributes 7,800 copies per issue to 250 drops in almost every Windham County town, as well as in neighboring towns in Windsor County (Vt.), Cheshire County (N.H.) and Franklin County (Mass.). Please get in touch ([circulation@commonsnews.org](mailto:circulation@commonsnews.org)) if you would like us to consider adding your business.

Without our volunteers, this newspaper would exist only in our imaginations.

Special thanks to:

Simi and Mark Berman,  
Diana Bingham,  
Jim Maxwell, Rob Bertsche,  
Barbara Evans,  
Cameron Cobane, Shannon Ward, and  
Hooker-Dunham Theater & Gallery;  
Clay Turnbull and NEC;  
Brendan Emmett Quigley  
and Joon Pakhik  
In memoriam:  
Alan O. Dann, Judy Gorman,  
Mia Gannon



Current and former members of *Hallowell*, from left: Kathy Leo, Kathy Michel, Annie Guion, Susan Barduhn, Helen Anglos, Calvin Farwell, Tom Jamison, and Burt Tepfer.

## Hallowell turns 20

FROM SECTION FRONT

together in various other groups and choirs to sing for Dinah Breunig, who also was a well-known local singer.

"We worked with Dinah during her last eight or nine months," Leo said. At the end, with the urging of their pastor, the choir came in from the Guilford Church and joined them.

"We sang for her two times, and it was an incredible experience," she said.

For the final sing, approximately 50 singers gathered at Breunig's tiny house in Putney, and Leo remembers that "she was in absolute bliss."

Breunig's husband Fred said his wife was "happy as a clam" during the initial sing. She had stopped communicating by the time of the second sing, but through the "magic of music, I could see that she was singing along in a very quiet way."

Leo said that Peter Amidon, another *Hallowell* founder, told the singers to go in quietly, sing a song or two, and quietly leave. But Breunig's reaction to the singing, as she was held in the arms of her partner, was a combination of "love, joy, spirit, and heartbreaking grief" as the patient mouthed the words of the songs along with the choir.

As Leo explained, the group left that bedside knowing that whatever had just occurred was something special for all involved — and they wanted to do more of it.

"What we experienced as we sang with and for Dinah, with each other in joy and grief," Leo said, "was what *Hallowell* was to become, though we couldn't have known it at the moment."

### From one sing, a choir emerges

Leo and other interested singers discussed whether they should offer the same experience to other people who were facing their deaths.

Several singers expressed interest in being part of the choir. Mary Cay Brass and Peter Amidon volunteered to become music directors for the group. Susan Parris, the executive director of Brattleboro Area Hospice, strongly encouraged the idea, and Hospice has provided training and support for the singers ever since.

The group is named after "Hallowell," one of the songs in its repertoire that was written by a group member after the death of his good friend from *Hallowell*, Maine.

"The name 'Hallowell' sounds close to 'hallowed,' which means sacred or reverent. The name suits us and the song speaks to

how we feel about the mystery and beauty of death," the singers write on their website ([hallowell-singers.org](http://hallowell-singers.org)).

Many of the first participants were already members of local singing groups like the River Singers and the Threshold Choir. "We had a singing community already," said Amidon, who with his wife, Mary Alice, continues to be involved with *Hallowell*.

Because many of the singers had already performed together in community groups or in choirs, there was an already-existing repertoire from which the group's songs were pulled.

The singers were familiar with songs like "What a Wonderful World" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and they continued to discover new songs that worked in this new milieu and to add them to the repertoire.

*Hallowell* presents the songs a cappella in four-part harmony.

### The sacred space of dying

The Amidons said that the *Hallowell* experience has been for them the deepest and most meaningful musical experience of the last 20 years.

"Often the family will cry," Peter Amidon said. "We're giving them an opportunity to cry and grieve. For me, I like life so much, and I don't want to die. Now I've seen dozens of deaths."

He observed that "there is some kind of joy around death."

"We've seen people ready to die and the family ready to have that," Amidon said. "It's a quiet room filled with energy. It becomes kind of timeless."

Fred Breunig said his experience of the singing for his wife's death made him realize that it was "a way for the patient to say goodbye as well." He became a member of *Hallowell* and has participated in hundreds of sings since then.

"The idea is that at the very end of someone's life, we try hard to bring a soothing song, soothing tones, to that experience for them," Leo said.

The creators of *Hallowell* realized very quickly that there was much more to providing this service than just organizing a group of singers and developing a repertoire.

"You are entering the sacred space of death and dying," Leo said. "You are entering someone's life and home. How do you prepare people to do this very specific kind of singing?"

While singing for the dying is as old as humanity itself, the group discovered that there were no current models for how to implement the practice in modern,

real-life circumstances.

"We had to figure it out," Leo said.

A key part of that was learning from the people the group sang for.

"They were our greatest teachers," she said.

Peter Amidon spoke of how much Leo has taught him and other members about how to handle the service, and he referred to her "incredible instincts" in knowing how to proceed in those emotional circumstances.

Breunig agreed that it is "such a sacred time, to be able to be in that space is really important. I'm very grateful for that experience."

He realized that his wife, though seeming unable to communicate in her final days, showed that the "sense of hearing is the last sense to go when someone is dying."

"It's important to realize that the person in the bed can hear," Breunig said. "They can hear anything that's being said. You have to be loving in the way you speak."

He said his wife passed while he and his daughter were laughing and talking with each other, sitting on the bed with her.

Though she seemed unconscious, "she took that time to say goodbye," Breunig said. "She knew from hearing us that we were going to be OK."

### Creating the model for others

Leo noted that it's moving to think about singing for the dying, and when people hear about the concept, it's very stirring for them. People are very concerned with how to deal with death and dying and make it an easier transition, she observed.

In developing a practice for its own members, *Hallowell* has become the model for many, many similar groups around the world. Its singers have developed and taught numerous workshops on the practice and, in 2016, Leo published her book *On the Breath of Song: The Practice of Bedside Singing for the Dying*.

"I loved writing it, and I'm grateful to have it to offer to people," she said.

These basic guidelines for singers have been brought to others offering this service in many countries and languages. *Hallowell* was the first bedside singing group on the East Coast, and the group's friend, choirmaster Kate Munger, brought it to the West Coast.

Starting in the Northeast, *Hallowell* taught numerous workshops to help similar groups. Singers came from around the

*We've seen people ready to die and the family ready to have that. It's a quiet room filled with energy.*

*It becomes kind of timeless.*

—Peter Amidon

country for three-day workshops in Brattleboro. *Hallowell* has released two CDs of their songs.

"We've met and shared a lot with people," Leo said. "It's one of those things that comes into the world and becomes a shared idea that people are very ready for."

*Hallowell*'s work has had a profound impact across the nation and in Europe.

Today, there are hundreds of similar groups, including dozens around New England. In 2006, Camilla Rockwell made a film, *Holding Our Own: Embracing the End of Life*, which featured the *Hallowell* singers and visual artist Deidre Scherer of Newfane. The Noyana Singers in Burlington developed out of that documentary.

"It has become a movement," Leo said. "We definitely influenced it and were available to help it along."

### Reading the room

Part of what *Hallowell* has learned and teaches others about this ancient practice is to do it at a very high, professional level, Leo said.

"We learned to be totally, fully present with that person," she said. "We're holders of the space, witnesses of a sacred event. We have to understand what would best serve both the dying person and their family."

Inside the room with the dying person is the most sacred time to *Hallowell*'s members. The leader of the group has to constantly read the room, asking what is needed at that moment. Sometimes the group hums quietly instead of singing.

Family dynamics are a big part of the process. The emotions involved in such a significant event are incredibly powerful, and it can lead to an epiphany between the dying and their family or friends.

Not all family members in such situations have good family relationships. Leo said the singers have had to learn how to listen "so deeply to respond to people. We've really learned to be really good listeners because of this practice."

The situation of watching a family member dying can lead to many an emotional breakthrough, but not always.

"Reconciliation doesn't just happen," Leo said, "and sometimes it doesn't happen at all."

The singing may at times simply involve surrounding the family with harmonious sound.

"Music affects us in ways that we don't understand," Leo said — and it can have amazing results.

### 'No politics in grief'

Over the years, *Hallowell* has created a learning arc for the practice. They first find out as much about the person and the family as they can. What is important to them?

The group remains intentionally nonjudgmental, Leo said. "You learn to honor other people's choices even if they are the opposite of what you believe."

"Grief is universal," she explained. "There's no politics in grief, no religion. So we ask, 'How can we serve that?' and sing to it."

"No one gets away without grief in their life," Leo said. "It is such a wonderful gift to be able to serve that."

Peter Amidon spoke of the dynamic that has developed among those who have been doing this work together for two decades.

"It draws a pretty caring and interesting group of people," he said. "You have to be centered and learn to leave your ego behind

and be as small as possible."

Mary Alice Amidon referred to it as having a "great sense of trust in each other, being as open and responsive as we can."

To that end, all the singers go through the training. Approximately 40 singers are involved in *Hallowell*, and they go out in groups of four or five. A singing and spiritual leader guides the group in how they set up a sing. Some members have been deeply trained in this practice, and the group relies heavily on them.

Sometimes a person may have passed before even one sing can be arranged, and at other times members may do several sings with one person. One man dying of Lou Gehrig's disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) heard the *Hallowell* singers 15 times over the course of a year.

It is not unusual to do two to four sings for a family, enough time together that the family often becomes very comfortable with, and comforted by, the services.

### 'The emotion hits after'

After a sing, the singers always have a closing circle together, to care for themselves and for one another.

The circle might result in silence. It might provoke tears, singing, or sharing of feelings. Emotions held in check during the singing service may need to be expressed.

"If there are tears, that's the time," said Mary Alice Amidon. "The emotion hits after. It's such an honor to be there, invited by the family. We prepare ourselves before we go in. It's not a performance, it's a service, but we need a high level of musicianship."

"We always feel deeply satisfied with the experience," Peter Amidon added.

The group also realizes that the experience is not for everyone. *Hallowell* member Ellen Crockett wrote that she has been closely involved for the past several weeks in the end of life of a close family member. This relative is someone who adamantly does not want any of "those lugubrious hospice songs" sung in her vicinity.

"But this situation reminds me of *Hallowell*'s greatest gift to my own life: learning to accept death as a part of life, and to be comfortable in its surroundings," Crockett said.

"This learning has served me well already in several situations when close friends have been near death, and I could help others around them to be more at ease in a new and scary place," she added.

Crockett, like all of the *Hallowell* members who spoke to *The Commons*, said the experience for her has been full of joys, deeply moving moments, uplifts, and revelations.

"It has clearly been one of the greatest gifts of my past 20 years," she said.

Leo said that it was important for the singers to let only "love and compassion" come through their songs and to give as much clarity to the service as possible.

Also, she said, it is critical to never underestimate the level of perceptions that the person on the deathbed has, and how much of the experience they are connecting with.

"I feel that it works," Leo said. "There have been so many gifts from this."

For more information, visit [hallowell-singers.org](http://hallowell-singers.org).

## PELLET SALE PRE-PAY PROGRAM

TAKE DELIVERY NOW OR SCHEDULE BY 9/30/23.

40lb Bags: **\$334.99** /ton\*

20lb Bags: **\$374.99** /ton\*

Hurry, limited quantities available!  
Save on Warm Front wood pellets from Sandri.

- Made here in the Northeast
- Delivered right to your property!

\*Delivery fees apply. Call for details.



[sandri.com](http://sandri.com)

(800) 628-1900







This historic photo shows logs in the Connecticut River in Bellows Falls. The piers were used to anchor the chains and cables that created large, individual corrals in the river for lumberjacks to organize the logs.

## Piers

United States.

Four of the piers were clearly visible in a line a few hundred yards upstream near the Joy Wah Restaurant, and another was revealed a few miles north at Herricks Cove, near where the Williams River enters the Connecticut.

By the afternoon of Thursday, Aug. 4, the spillway was repaired and water levels were on the rise and, by Friday morning, the river and the dam had returned to normal.

But the day before, water levels behind the dam reached the lowest levels in living memory. The workers repairing the dam, and the once-in-a-lifetime views of the riverbed, drew nearly as much public interest as did the July floodwaters as onlookers got to see evidence of a bygone era.

### A half century of log drives

By the end of the Civil War, the two greatest forested regions of the United States were the Pacific Northwest and Northern New England. These two regions were the main sources for the growing nation's insatiable demand for lumber.

These forests provided the wood needed for framing lumber, pulp for paper making, and hardwoods for furniture making, cabinetmaking, and interior millwork.

Three months every spring, from the late 1860s to 1915, the Connecticut River was the main route by which millions of board feet of timber, harvested in the Northern forests throughout the winter months, would be brought to the lumber and paper mills hundreds of miles south in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

The river drive brought in hundreds of loggers from around New England and Canada. Many of them had worked through the winter logging in the Northern forests, then signed on as drivers to work the river run in the spring.

The drive itself was a spectacle in all the river communities it passed through.

As described by the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* in 1914, "Thousands of logs, logs big and logs little, logs pushing, jamming, drifting, plunging — covering a whole stream as with a great floor — this is the season's lumber drive on its way down the Connecticut."

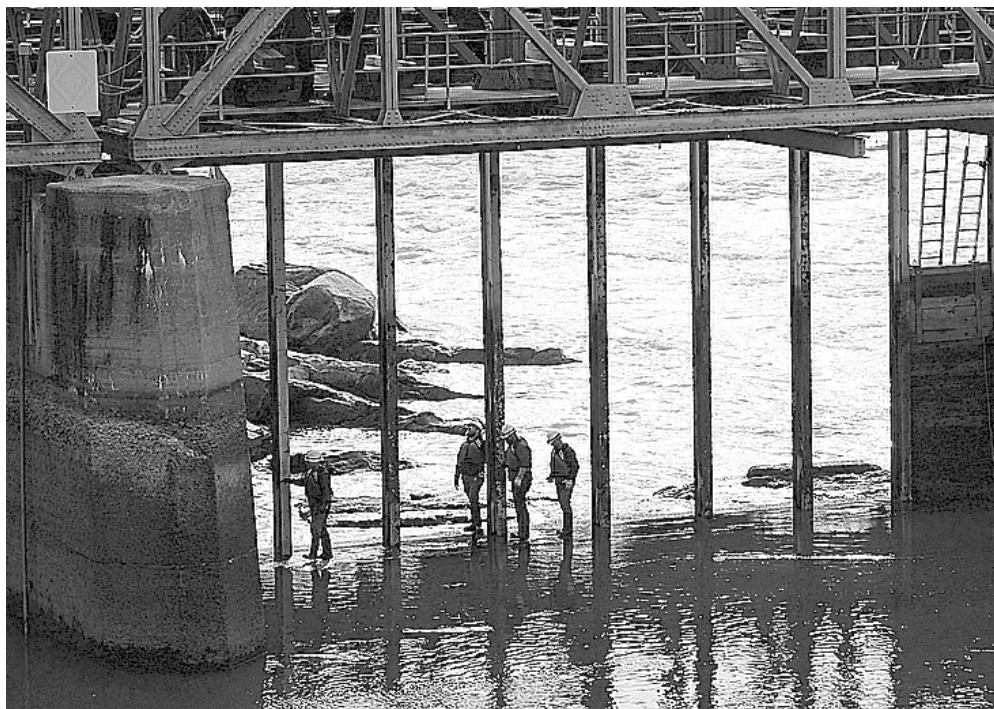
The writer clarified that metaphor: "It is a floor of pitfalls, uneven and treacherous, now yielding and now gripping as in a vice the men who walk upon it. Yet there they go, those lumberjacks, jumping from one log to another, harpooning them with their long pronged sticks, called 'peevies' or 'campdogs,' breaking up jams, driving the big fellows in the way that they should go — and all as nimbly and easily as you please."

People would come by the hundreds to watch the drivers and logs pass through their towns, and schools would be closed so the children could see it.

"At Bellows Falls they can only stand patiently and watch the logs as they drift slowly towards the dam, so slowly that their motion is almost imperceptible — and as they are caught in the sudden rush of the falls, plunge in a perpendicular over the dam and swirl away into the rapids beneath."

It was difficult and exciting work, and many of the drivers came back year after year. Stories of their exploits took on mythical proportions, and there is no doubt a fair amount of exaggeration in them.

But there also can be no doubt that this was also incredibly dangerous work. It was newsworthy when no lives would be lost during a given year's drive.



Workers began repairs to the Bellows Falls dam last week.

Lumberjacks would stand watch over the process. "Suddenly a great log will drive over the dam and send its head into the river's bed with a thud, sway for an instant, and stop, firmly caught between two rocks," the *Reformer* reported. "Others come swiftly from behind. The jammed log halts their course. Logs pile upon logs. In ten minutes a monstrous structure, as of some wrecked ship, is thrown up in the river bed."

If the impact of a new log ramming the pileup was not enough to dislodge the lumber, the lumbermen would need to take more drastic measures, starting with "explosive jelly" and, for more stubborn cases and as a last resort, dynamite.

The lumber companies made the 1914 drive the largest ever, with 500 men and dozens of horses moving 65 million feet of timber down the river.

By the time the first logs reached Bellows Falls, the far end of the drive was still 80 miles upriver in Barnet, just south of St. Johnsbury.

### The Bellows Falls choke point

The canal and 52-foot waterfalls at Bellows Falls created a choke point for the log drive. While a substantial number of logs would be moved down the falls to points farther south, this would have to be the final destination on the river for many of them.

In that 1865–1915 period, Bellows Falls was home to numerous lumber and paper mills along the river and below the canal, which by that time was used solely to power the mills.

The village was also a major rail center, with a large rail yard on The Island, the land between the canal and the river. Rail lines ran directly from the rail yard into some of the mills.

In North Walpole, a huge lumberyard sat along the bank of the Connecticut River below what is referred to as "Piss Pot Harbor," where a small stream enters the main river. A large brick building, still standing on the bank of the river at the end of Pine Street, served as the stable for the lumberyard horses.

That brings us around to the piers, briefly seen for just a few hours on the river bottom.

The piers are what is left of a large system used to help separate and hold the logs as they arrived on that portion of the river. The piers were used to anchor the chains and cables that created large, individual corrals in the river for the logs, depending on how they would be used.

The logs could be separated and grouped together in chain corrals, depending on their intended use as pulp for

papermaking, soft and hardwoods for dimensional framing lumber, or boards for a variety of uses.

### The rough and tumble drivers

The piers serve as a reminder that, as the main river drive destination, Bellows Falls and North Walpole were the villages where at times hundreds of rivermen would arrive at the end of the drive looking for an opportunity to unwind.

The taverns and brothels of the two villages were the main objects of the drivers looking to relax and have a good time after months of round-the-clock labor under hazardous conditions.

It is reported that North Walpole alone had as many as 18 licensed saloons for the end of one drive. There might also be what were termed "pleasure boats" conveniently located on the river itself.

Public drunkenness and fights were common, and one old account speaks of the rivermen enjoying live music and dancing in the Bellows Falls Square through an entire night.

Vermont writers Bill Gove and Robert E. (Bob) Pike have written extensively about the log drives, and they were around early enough to be able to interview some of the surviving drivers. They offer some sobering insight into the lives of the mythic rivermen.

### End of an era

While admired for their skill and bravery, the fact that many of these loggers lived for months of the year either in the north woods or on the river meant that a good number of them never had families. Many were also illiterate.

The *Reformer* reported in 1914 that the lumberjacks, earning \$3 to \$5 per day (\$91 to \$152 in today's dollars), would "toil on from dawn to sunset and on through the darkness of the night, always watchful, quick and wary."

When interviewed in their later years, they were often impoverished and in nursing homes, suffering from the ravages of years of hard labor, exposure to cold, and serious injuries.

The last great river drive was in 1915, and the last log drive ever on the Connecticut was a small one in 1947.

A number of forces that contributed to the river drives being consigned to history are apparent from reading the news coverage of the era.

In 1913, a complex array of corporate changes began affecting the timber harvest and its delivery to points south. One report mentioned the possibility of "attempts to regulate the log drive." Another report called proposed federal tariff legislation that would affect the pulp and

paper industry as "disastrous." And the annual log drive was disruptive in the extreme to anyone who would normally use the river, including local manufacturers, who were expected to shut down their operations.

In 1915, the *Reformer*, quoting the *Boston Transcript*, published an account of one tense negotiation.

"Once, they say in Bellows Falls, a mill owner showed fight and announced that he would keep his plant running till an important order of paper was completed. 'I'll give you 12 hours to shut down,' said the boss of the drive. 'If you haven't quit by that time, I'll blow up the dam.' The mill owner stopped his wheels, but not his curses."

But in one huge change, the *Reformer* reported that most of the large trees had been depleted from Vermont. The big logs were being replaced by what the newspaper derisively called "the four-foot stuff."

"A lot of Green Mountains will have lost their greenness," the newspaper wrote in 1915. "Forestry in the United States is not yet practiced as a science by the big commercial companies."

Another 1915 article elaborated: "The International Paper company has been receiving its four-foot stuff from the White River. It has thousands of acres of land near this river, and much of it has been cut over. The contracts given the Connecticut Valley Lumber company for 1917, 1918 and 1919 probably mean that the paper company intends to conserve its timberlands for a period."

The anonymous writer editorialized that the hills and mountains from which the large timber had been harvested for so many decades "are pretty well denuded of lumber now and the big sticks this year do not compare in size with the lumber which has gone through here in other years."

"The timberlands have been cut into and now it will be necessary for them to grow again before they will yield their millions of feet yearly. The big corporations have learned the lesson that perpetual greed in denuding the mountains and hills of their timber is not a paying proposition and have begun to conserve their forestland."

The article concludes: "The passing of the Connecticut [River] drives indicates that conservation along the Connecticut valley and along the waters which feed this mighty stream has begun."

And thus ended the tradition of the annual log drive — until a brief glimpse of the clues left behind so many years later.

*Additional reporting by Jeff Potter.*

## Planning Commission invites comments on Draft 2023 Town Plan

PUTNEY—The Planning Commission will present and receive comments in person and virtually on its Draft 2023 Town Plan on Thursday, Aug. 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Putney Friends Meeting House, 17 Bellows Falls Rd.

The Draft 2023 Putney Town Plan covers the entire Town of Putney. Drafted with community input, it addresses State municipal planning goals as well as the aspirations and priorities of Putney community members. The eight-year plan includes eight topical chapters, each with recommended objectives, policies, and actions, summarized in an integrated implementation plan of the proposed actions.

The chapters include: Chapter 1: Vision and Strategic Priorities

Chapter 2: Natural Resources and Land Use

Chapter 3: Housing

Chapter 4: Energy

Chapter 5: Economic Development

Chapter 6: Community Facilities and Services

Chapter 7: Transportation

Chapter 8: Resilience

Chapter 9: Implementation Plan

The 62-page Draft 2023 Putney Town Plan can be viewed and downloaded at [putneyvt.org](http://putneyvt.org). Printed copies are available for review at Putney Town Hall, the Putney Library, the Putney General Store, the Putney Diner, Putney Cares, and Next Stage Arts Project.

For accessibility, the meeting will be held physically and electronically. The Putney Friends Meeting House is wheelchair accessible. The Zoom link for remote meeting access is [bit.ly/726-putney](https://bit.ly/726-putney) or call toll free at 929-436-2866. The meeting ID is 857 3536 6899, and the passcode is 075169.

To enable post-meeting viewing, a link to the meeting recording will be posted to [putneyvt.org](http://putneyvt.org).

The planning commission also welcomes written comments on the Draft 2023 Town Plan, but these must be received by Tuesday, Aug. 29, at [putneyplanning@gmail.com](mailto:putneyplanning@gmail.com); by U.S. Mail at P.O. Box 233, Putney, VT 05346 — Attn. Planning Commission Clerk; or hand delivered to Town Hall, 127 Main St.

HELP WANTED

ads@commonsnews.org • 888-511-5150

**The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association**, a land-trust in Windham County that stewards 2700 acres of land and 25 miles of trails along the Windmill Hill Ridge, is hiring a part-time **Administrative Coordinator**. Coordinator will support the Board of Directors and the organization's activities and projects. The position will primarily be an administrative role with room to expand, with the expectation that roles and responsibilities will evolve as needed.

**For full job description, important info, and how to apply, visit [windmillhillpinnacle.org](http://windmillhillpinnacle.org).**

Apply by August 7.

**NOW HIRING IN VERNON, VT!**

*Do you love cooking, working as part of a team, and providing exceptional customer service?*

*If you answer is YES, we want to learn more about you!*

**Join our residential dining team as a full-time Dietary Aide / Server.**

Apply at: [www.glendalediningservices.com/careers](http://www.glendalediningservices.com/careers), or call 603-437-0200 x 106.

**Full Time Class A CDL Driver**

Monday through Friday.

Minimum of 3 years experience in a similar field preferred. Log loader experience preferred but not required. Must be 21 and have a clean MVR.

Competitive benefits package includes: Health Insurance, Dental Insurance, Life Insurance, Short Term Disability, 401(k)

**Please forward resume and cover letter to: [Cersosimo Lumber Company, Inc.](mailto:CersosimoLumberCompany, Inc.)**

1103 Vernon Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301  
[employment@cersosimo.com](mailto:employment@cersosimo.com)

**Do you value your weekends off? Half day on Friday? Join our team in Brattleboro!**

Actively looking to fill:

Production – Lumber handlers & Machine operators  
Maintenance – facility & sawmill  
Mechanics - equipment

Competitive benefits package including health, dental, 401k.

**Applications available at:**  
1103 Vernon Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802-254-4508 • [www.cersosimolumber.com](http://www.cersosimolumber.com)  
Or email resume to: [employment@cersosimo.com](mailto:employment@cersosimo.com)

**Childcare Lead Teacher**

Non-profit, early care and education program is seeking a full-time teacher with a strong work ethic to join our team in a family style, mixed age group setting serving children ages 6wks to 5yrs.

Qualified candidates must be energetic, enthusiastic, and flexible, with a sense of humor, a love for children and a strong knowledge of child development. Duties to include: create a safe and nurturing environment that meets the individual needs of children, lesson planning, observation and assessment of children's play, written and verbal communication with families and most importantly getting down to the children's level. Candidates must have experience working in an early care and education program as well as a CDA or equivalent qualifications. This is a full time benefited position.

Please email resumes and cover letters to [childcare@putneyschool.org](mailto:childcare@putneyschool.org).



## MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

## College news

• **Jem Cohen** of Brattleboro, a member of the Class of 2024 who is majoring in economics and business in the liberal arts, and **Hana Kusumi** of South Londonderry, a member of the Class of 2023 who majored in government and philosophy, were both named to the Dean's List for the spring 2023 semester at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York.

## Transitions

• The Southern Vermont Board of Realtors (SVBR) recently appointed **Jacki Murano** as its new president. As broker/owner of the Southern Vermont Realty Group, Murano has worked in the real estate sector for more than 18 years and earned a reputation as a highly skilled and dedicated professional. She specializes in resort and second home property sales at the Mount Snow Resort, Hermitage Club, and in the surrounding towns of Windham and Bennington counties. She holds a Realtors Resort and Second Home Property Specialist Certification from the National Association of Realtors and was named the SVBR Realtor of the Year in 2022.

## Obituaries



• **Ben Abel, 84**, of Brattleboro. Died July 27, 2023. Born on Jan. 31, 1939 in Auburn, New York, the son of Robert and Agnes Abel, Ben spent his early years in the Buffalo, New York area and then moved with his family to Brattleboro in 1976. A proud veteran, Ben served in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at

Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Ben was always ready with a joke and considered by many to be the life of the party at family events, often pulling practical jokes. Ben was also known to put others before himself regardless of who they were. He loved sports and bestowed that passion to many family members along with his great sense of humor. Ben leaves a sister, Virginia Marohn; former wife Diane Abel, son Scott Abel and wife Robin, daughter Karen Abel and partner Pat Jones, daughter Debra Abel, and grandchildren Brendon Abel and wife Mikaela, and Shannon Abel. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: The family will have a private ceremony to celebrate Ben's life.

• **Katherine "Kathi" Armour, 74**, died on July 8, 2023. She was born in Brattleboro to the late Charles Raymond Armour Sr. and Shirley Rosella Armour on July 4, 1949. Kathi was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa society. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, Charles Raymond Armour Jr., who died in 2014. Kathi is survived by her brother, Richard Armour, of Lake Worth, Florida; her niece, Jessica Armour and her husband, Dechazo Harris; great-nieces Adrienne, Janisa, Alani, and Akayla; great-nephews Demetrius and Jordan; great-grandnieces Mani and Giovanna; and nephews Eric Armour and his wife, Meaghan, and Richard Armour. A special thanks to Paula West and Tabitha Cain for being great friends and for her team of doctors and cancer team. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Online condolences may be expressed by visiting [johnmoakey.com](http://johnmoakey.com).

• **Dallas A. (Hill) "Sandy" Bertram, 81**, of Brattleboro, formerly of Newfane. Died July 14, 2023 in Brattleboro. Sandy, as she was known to all, was born in Lewiston, Maine on June 9, 1942, the daughter of David Hill and Dallas (Ames) Darling. She grew up in Maine, but later moved to Massachusetts and attended Saugus schools, where she met Donald M. Bertram. Sandy married Don on October 29, 1961, in Saugus. Don predeceased Sandy on May 18, 2022. Sandy was a loving mother, homemaker, and renowned cook. You seldom saw her without an apron. Sandy also enjoyed knitting and spending time with her family. She and Don moved to Newfane in 1991 where they lived until moving in with

their oldest son in Townshend and, eventually, to Pine Heights in Brattleboro in 2019. Sandy was also predeceased by both her parents and brother-in-law James Bertram. She is survived by her children D. Scott/Joni (Green); Donna Copeland; and David/Lindsey (Ellinger). Sandy is also survived by her brother Bruce Crowell, cousin Tim Small, in-laws Robert/Marina Bertram, Laurel/Steve Bissonnette, Melvin/Paula Bertram, and Julie Bertram, grandchildren Holly Bertram, Heather/Nathan Moeller, Sean/Caroline Copeland, Alexandra Copeland, Lucy, McKinley and Tobias Bertram, as well as great-grandchildren Nathan and Lorelei Moeller and Vincent Copeland. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service was held Aug. 6 at the Oakwood Cemetery in Townshend. Those wishing to share their memories or stories are invited to send correspondence to Scott Bertram, 6 Cottage Lane, Townshend, VT 05353. Donations to NewBrook Fire & Rescue, P.O. Box 77, Newfane, VT 05345.



• **Navab (Arthur) Clarence Bigelow** was born in Randolph Center on July 29, 1958.

He died at the age of 65 in Lima, Peru, climbing Alpacayo Peak, doing what he loved. Son of the late Arthur and Christine Bigelow, he is survived by his siblings Doris Graves, Cynthia Batten, and Tim Bigelow; his children Ian Bigelow, Sativa Ananda Bigelow, Eddie Jablonski, and Leif Bigelow; and two grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He was also predeceased by a sister, Mary Henderson. He will be fondly remembered by Sue Courtney Taylor and Christa Porter. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service will be held on Saturday, Sept. 2, from 1 to 5 p.m., at the Old Town Hall, 93 Stone Rd., Brookfield.



• **Stephen Mitchell Giroux Sr., 66**, of Brattleboro. Died unexpectedly on July 28, 2023 at Albany Medical Center.

When he was born on Aug. 24, 1956 in Bennington to Beverly (Weatherhead) and Victor Giroux, it must have been with a song in his head, as music was what fed Steve's soul. If you didn't know it by his collection of music, guitars, concert tees and ticket stubs, you would have known it by his "Skynyrd" license plate. If it was music that fed his soul, it was sports that fueled Steve's mind. When he was a kid, it was the Dallas Cowboys games that were shown on television, so they became his team. But football was a side note to his pure passion for baseball, and above all, his devotion to the Red Sox. He started reading the *Boston Herald* as a young child, poring over the sports section every single day, becoming an encyclopedia of statistics, of stories of games and players, of teams and titles. If you didn't know it by his collection of sports memorabilia and t-shirts, you would have seen it on his jacket, his hat, a bumper sticker, or even a baseball stowed away in his lunch bag! If it was music that fed his soul, and sports that fueled his mind, it was his love for

his family that filled his heart. It was his brother Victor who was his oldest and dearest friend, with that bond that only brothers can really understand. His sister Diane, and a special aunt, Bonnie, were dear to his heart. It was in the home and hearts of his "Granny and Phillip" where he found care and comfort, love and support, deep into adulthood. His greatest joys of all were his children. As a young man, it was his first marriage, to Judy (née Jenna), that brought him the thrill of becoming a father — first Carrie, then Stephen Jr., then Dustin. If you didn't know it by his collection of photos everywhere, or the mementos of their childhoods, you would have heard it in his voice — his pride when he talked about his children. Later, it was his marriage, on Aug. 22, 1992, to his beloved Mary Jane (née Renaud), that added his stepdaughters, Amy and Anne. With the birth of his first granddaughter, Daisy, Stephen became Pèpè — a role he treasured. With each grandchild thereafter — Olivia, Lily, Cole, Isaiah, Conner, and Nolan — his pride never stopped growing. So many things brought Steve joy, but he also worked hard to battle mental illness. At times, no matter how hard he fought, it would rob him of the ability to fully engage in and enjoy life, ultimately stealing Steve from the people who loved him. But he was not his illness. The real Steve, during times of health, the man who could experience authentic happiness and lightness of being, is the Steve we choose to remember. Steve was an athlete in high school, graduating from Leland & Gray in 1975. He went on to work as a machine operator at several businesses in the area. Steve was thoughtful and gentle and would do anything for anyone whom he had the capacity to help. He was sympathetic and supportive. Steve was kind. He will be missed. He is missed already. Stephen Giroux is survived by his wife of 32 years, Mary Jane Giroux of Brattleboro; his mother, Beverly Warren of Dummellon, Florida; his daughter Carrie McCauley and her husband Jason and sons Conner and Nolan of York, Pennsylvania; his son Stephen Giroux Jr. and his girlfriend Ellie of Brattleboro; and his daughters Daisy of Burlington and Lily of Brattleboro; his son Dustin Giroux of Guilford and his partner Anna and son Isaiah; his stepdaughter Amy Nelson of Putney and her husband Thomas and daughter Olivia and son Cole; his stepdaughter Anne Murphy of Putney, his brother Victor Giroux of Guilford and his wife Nancy and their children — Kenneth (who is already with Steve) and Melissa Mullarkey of Colchester; his sister Diane French and her partner Mike of Canaan, New Hampshire; his aunt Bonnie West of Jamaica and her children West Dale West of Townshend and Dana West of Jamaica. Steve remained close with the Jenna family, including Judy Plante of Westminster, his former in-laws, Roberta Jenna and the late William Jenna Sr. of Guilford, Katrina Wilson and Cathy Shaw of Brattleboro, and Tammy Derosa of South Carolina, as well as his former daughter-in-law, Renee Kennedy. Additionally, he leaves behind cousins, grand-nieces and nephews and a host of friends. He was predeceased by his father, his stepfather Wallace Warren, his surrogate parents (grandparents) Mildred "Granny" and Phillip

Smith, and his nephew Kenneth Giroux. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of his life was held Aug. 6 at the VFW in Brattleboro. Burial was private. Donations to the charity of one's choice. The family asks that if you or someone you know is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, to call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, or reach out to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services National Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357) for general information and to locate treatment services in your area. Above all, do not be afraid to talk about it. To share a memory or offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).

• **Brittany Leigh Olliver (Shirley Mae Bristol), 86**, of Brattleboro. Died July 29, 2023, in the company of loved ones, at Pine Heights Nursing Home.

Brittany was born in Brattleboro on August 26, 1936, the daughter of Everett and Elizabeth (Pratt) Bristol, and was one of 17 children. Brittany attended Brattleboro public schools and was a graduate of Brattleboro Union High School, Class of 1954. Brittany married George Leclair, also from Brattleboro, in Nov. of 1957. Brittany and George went on to have three children, Mark (Danny) Leclair, Todd Leclair and Lori Leclair. Brittany and George were to divorce some years later. Brittany became a telephone operator for New England Telephone/AT&T in Brattleboro. Brittany later relocated to the Bangor, Maine area, where she continued her career as a telephone operator. Brittany retired from AT&T following many fruitful years of service with the company. She was a member of the Telephone Pioneers of America. Brittany loved the ocean, especially Wells and York Beach, Maine, where she would later reside for several years before returning to Brattleboro. Brittany was even cast as an extra in a Stephen King film, *The Graveyard Shift*, while she lived in Maine, which she was very proud of doing. Brittany loved to country line dance and listen to country music. Brittany also loved to play Bingo and take trips

to the casinos. Most importantly, Brittany cherished time spent with her family. Brittany was predeceased by a son, Mark (Danny) Leclair; brothers Donald, Edwin, Eugene (Gene), George, Robert (Bobby), and Merlin, and sisters Barbara Harris, Virginia (Ginger) Gordon, Marguerite (Esther) Lamb, and Marjorie Bristol, who died in childhood. Brittany is survived by a son, Todd Leclair of West Brattleboro; a daughter, Lori Leclair of Proctorville; brothers Verne of Brattleboro, Neil of Concord, New Hampshire, Charles and Dean, both of Guilford, and Stuart of Lyman, Maine; a sister: Betty Wellman of Brookline, six grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of her life was conducted on Aug. 6 at the Fraternal Order of the Eagles in Brattleboro. She was laid to rest in Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery. Donations to Kurn Hattin Homes for Children, 708 Kurn Hattin Rd., Westminster, VT 05158 or by calling them directly at 802-722-3336. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).



• **Gerrit van Oene, 70**, of Vernon. Died peacefully, with his family by his side, on July 25, 2023 after a lengthy bat-

tle with cancer. He was born in Solenber, Germany, on Sept. 5, 1952, the son of Gerrit and Marianne van Oene. His sense of humor was evident even to the very end when he was able to tell a joke to one of the Bayada nurses. Through his life, he was in construction and worked for his father making scissors for various companies, including Revlon. He is survived by his wife, Patricia van Oene, his former wife Karen and their children Mikal and Jan. He is also survived by his nephew Michael and his great nephews Cory, Tanner, and Caleb. He was predeceased by his parents and his brother, Dirk, and his niece Cristina. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Per Gerrit's request, there will be no services. Donation to Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).

## PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Brattleboro  
Request for Proposals  
Emergency Medical Services  
EMS

The Town of Brattleboro, VT is seeking proposals from EMS providers for an EMS ambulance service contract to provide the Town of Brattleboro residents and visitors with comprehensive, high quality, emergency medical services (EMS, including full 911 emergency care and transport). Proposals will be considered from single firms or joint ventures. The response deadline is by 4:00pm on August 29, 2023.

Interested EMS providers are may obtain an RFP packet by contacting Patrick Moreland at [pmoreland@brattleboro.org](mailto:pmoreland@brattleboro.org), or visit [www.brattleboro.org/emsproject](http://www.brattleboro.org/emsproject).

In loving memory of  
Billy Fitzpatrick

Son, husband, father, brother, uncle, and friend. Always on our minds, forever in our hearts. Thank you to our friends and community for all of your continued love and support.

6-18-80 to 8-9-23

## Credit union donates to region's nonprofits

BRATTLEBORO—On Aug. 2, 802 Credit Union commemorated 802 Day in Vermont. This unique celebration, held on the 2nd of August, or 8/02, pays homage to Vermont's sole area code.

"802 Day presents an opportunity for us to honor Vermont as a whole through acts of kindness, thoughtful initiatives, and heartfelt donations to our nonprofit partners," said Sean Gammon, president and CEO at 802 Credit Union, in a news release. "The strong bonds we have formed, the meaningful relationships we've built, and the enduring commitments to our community fill us with pride. Days like 802 Day provide opportunities for our staff to come together and celebrate these connections with one another and our members."

802 Day was initially created as a way to remind all Vermonters to care for each other with random acts of kindness. In the spirit of giving back, the staff at 802 Credit Union selected nine charities to support in the towns with 802 branches, each receiving \$802. Recipients in Windham and Windsor counties included:

- Bellows Falls: Parks Place Community Resource Center, which helps with housing, food, employment, mental health, and more.

- Brattleboro: Windham County Humane Society, an animal protection organization.

- Putney: Putney Food Shelf, which helps those facing food insecurity.

- Springfield: Springfield Humane Society, an animal protection organization.

- Townshend: The Dylan Landers Memorial Scholarship, honoring a member of Leland & Gray Union High School's Class of 2024 who died in a motor vehicle crash in 2021.

- Windsor: Lucy McKenzie Animal Shelter, which is one of the nation's oldest no-kill animal shelters.

For more information about 802 Credit Union, visit [802cu.com](http://802cu.com).

802 Credit Union is a \$400 million-plus financial institution with nine locations currently serving more than 36,000 members. Members are part of a cooperative, meaning they share ownership in the Credit Union and elect a volunteer board of directors. 802 Credit Union provides membership to anyone who lives, works, or worships in Vermont as well as Grafton, Sullivan, and Cheshire counties in New Hampshire. For more information about 802 Credit Union visit [802cu.com](http://802cu.com).

## BELLOWS FALLS

## Little Free Library offers free books

BELLOWS FALLS—Visitors to Greater Rockingham Area Services (GRAS) can now pick up a book to pass the time while they wait for an appointment, thanks to a Little Free Library recently installed in the lobby by the Bellows Falls Woman's Club.

The books are free for the taking in the take-one, leave-one philosophy of Little Free Library, a nonprofit whose mission is to promote reading by making books accessible to all. The Bellows Falls library is one of 150,000 in 120 countries that have shared 300 million books.

Books for all ages are available at the GRAS site, and readers

are encouraged to add their own copies of books they have read and liked.

The library at GRAS was designed and painted by Saxtons River artist Anne Manner-McLarty with a nature theme featuring glittery fireflies flitting among birch trees.

The BFWC was organized in 1901 and became a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1913. Its motto is "Concern, Courage, Commitment — A Better World for All." More information can be found at [bellowsfallswomensclub.weebly.com](http://bellowsfallswomensclub.weebly.com) or on its Facebook page.

**Aqua-Aid Systems**  
WATER CONDITIONING & FILTRATION

**Solving hard water, iron, blue staining, radon and arsenic problems in the Windham County area since 1984.**

- Water Conditioning
- Free On-Site Water Analysis & Estimate
- Iron and Manganese Removal
- Radon & Arsenic Removal
- Systems Maintenance
- Home Supplies Delivery

**Worried About Your Water?**

**We Service All Makes And Models Locally Owned & Operated Since 1984**

**Hellenbrand**  
What's In Your Water?™

ON SITE, NO CHARGE, TESTING AND ESTIMATES

**800-252-8484**

**PETS AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION**

916 West River Rd, Brattleboro, VT  
802-254-2232 • [wchs4pets.org](http://wchs4pets.org)

**WINDHAM COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY**

Make a friend for life.

**Hi, my name is Wynonna!** I came in with my Pal Ashley. We don't need to be adopted together but I would really like to. I am very nervous at first, but once I get to know you I will be your best friend. I am very dog selective. I may be able to live with a dog savvy cat. If you have kids they should be respectful.

**Hi, my name is Tom!** I am a very sweet and loving boy looking for a place call home. I have had access to the great outdoors and would be a great indoor/outdoor kitty. I don't have a tail and may have some incontinence because of it. I would do well in a home without dogs, but may be ok with a home with another cat with a slow intro.

**Hi, my name is Pawlina!** I am a nice mix between independent and outgoing. I would do best in a home without any other cats. I haven't had any experiences with dogs, so intros should be gradual. I love being pet and will be in your lap at not time. If I sound like the girl for you please come in and meet with me.

Ad graciously sponsored by:  
**GUILFORD SOUND**  
gulfordsound.com  
802-254-4511  
info@gulfordsound.com

**GUILFORD SOUND**  
A recording store in the heart of Southern Vermont



# Serving up tasty images

Food photographer Clare Barboza serves clients around the world, but chose to base her business in Brattleboro

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen  
The Commons

**B**RATTLEBORO—Imagine one of the hottest days this summer, when the air was thick with humidity and your car is scorching hot inside. On one such day, Clare Barboza, internationally known food photographer, needed to shoot a magazine cover.

The subject? Ice cream. “When I went to the store to buy it, the ice cream was already soft,” says Barboza, of Brattleboro, with a hearty laugh. “You can imagine the rest.”

Barboza, who hails from the state of Washington, has always loved the arts. She originally focused on the performing arts but fell in love with photography.

Since that happened, “I’ve stayed true to my field, but I tried out different parts of the profession,” she says.

At the beginning of her career, Barboza discovered that lots of people were looking for documentary-style wedding photographers. That became a focus, and eventually, a regional magazine, *Seattle Bride*, named her the Best Wedding Photographer in 2005. However, after several years, the work left her feeling stressed.

Barboza remembers what happened next.

“Around that time, I was hired to document a small farm on Washon Island, off the coast of Washington state,” she says. “I arrived at a 13-acre raw-dairy farm where they featured only food that was raised on the farm. They made their own apple cider vinegar and had weekly farm dinners.”

She was hired to document the farm over the course of the year, photographing life and work as it was taking place — from slaughtering the meat to harvesting the crops — through the four seasons. “The work simply lit me up inside,” she says.

After Barboza rebranded herself as a photographer of food and farms, she took on a project of shooting photos for three different cookbooks. At this point in her career, her photographs have illustrated three dozen cookbooks.

Hired by Vermont author and Montpelier resident Rowan Jacobsen, Barboza visited Vermont in 2012 to photograph his book *Apples of Uncommon Character*. She found herself “totally charmed with his life.” “We were working in different

people’s houses, as he had asked several people in his area if they would open their homes so that we could use their dishes as props in the photos,” Barboza says. “I fell in love with everything in his world. I found Vermonters charming, the scenery gorgeous, and the people authentic, real, and welcoming.”

For many years, Barboza traveled back and forth from the East Coast to the West Coast, building her business. But eventually after the birth of their child, Hugo, she and her husband, Joe, decided to make the move to Vermont in 2016.

The Barbozas chose Brattleboro after visiting a relative here. They purchased a house, and eventually rented an 1,800-square-foot studio at the Cotton Mill. Joe built a functional kitchen in the space where racks and racks of dishes, cookware, and cutting boards line the walls and a living room and kitchen table make a welcoming space ideal for professional food photography.

Clare Barboza creates her photos with the assistance of a food stylist.

While some food photographers will solve the problem of ice cream on a hot day by shooting tempting scoops of lard, “the food is always real,” she says.

“And when working with someone who knows how to style food, they time the elements to a dish differently so that everything is looking its best,” she says.

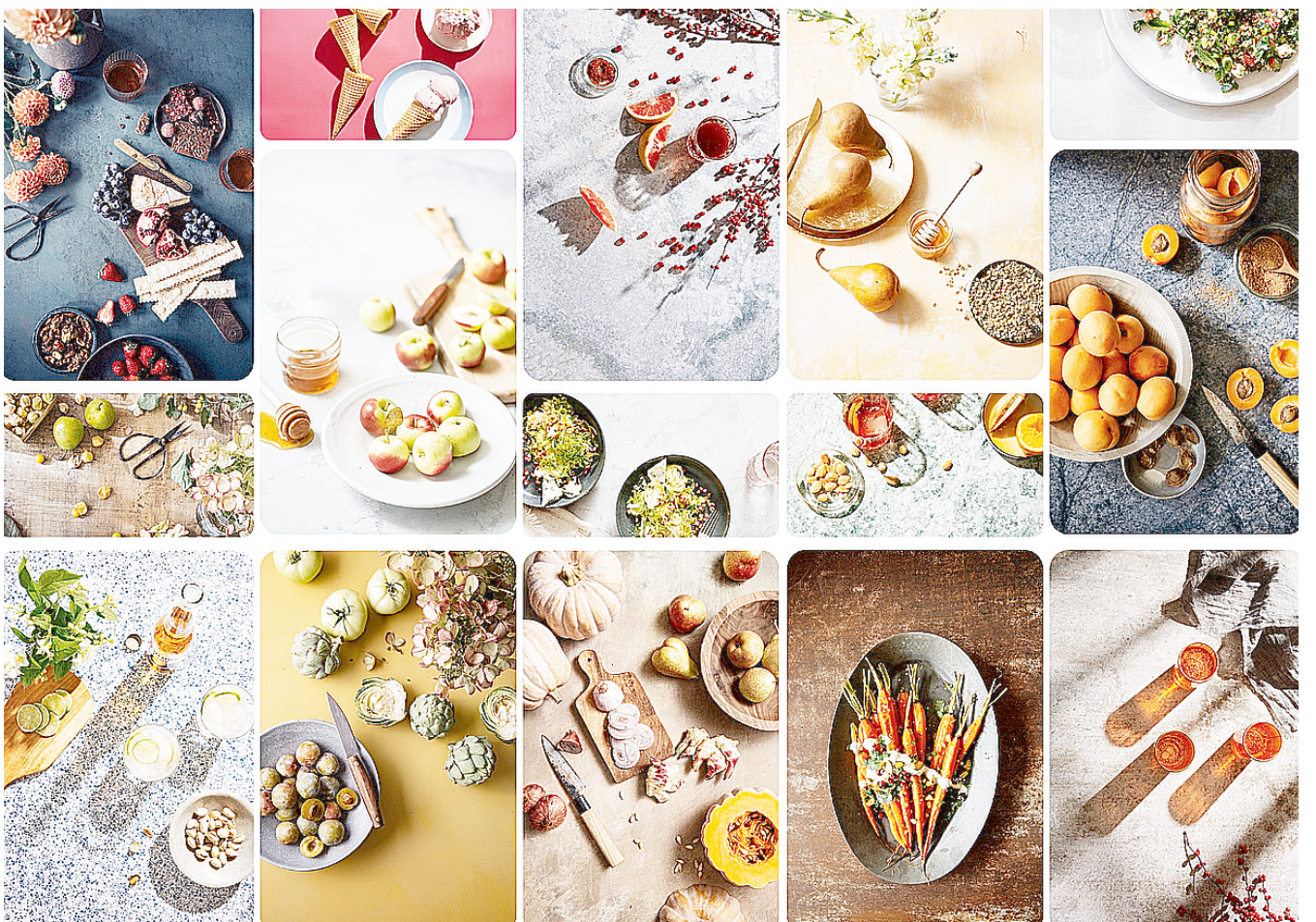
## Showing food from farm to kitchen to table

“To put it simply,” says Clare Barboza, “I work with awesome, socially responsible food brands around the country and help them tell their story.”

But then, she adds that “really — creativity, in all its forms, is what rocks my world.”

Most of Barboza’s clients represent food brands, but she also works with restaurants, chefs, and publishers. She produces photos for egg producers, coffee pot manufacturers, bread bakeries, cheesemakers, and other categories of food producers.

She also works with a lot of Vermont brands, including Taverrier Chocolates, Vermont Wagon, Maplebrook Farm, Back Roads Granola, True North Granola, Stowe Bee Bakery, and others. Barboza also enjoys going to farms and photographing farm products and food right on



Samples of Clare Barboza’s food photography, all shot on backgrounds that she and her husband, Joe, create in their second enterprise, Poppy Bee Surfaces.

the vine. Over the years, she has built her business by word of mouth and has covered food topics from arugula to zucchini. And since her passion is to show the progression of food from farm to kitchen to table, she’s taken thousands of photographs used in cookbooks and advertising over the course of her 15-year food photography career. She also teaches photography classes, enjoying sharing her skills with others.

Then her business took yet another turn.

“Food and product photographers are always looking for surfaces and backdrops to use in their shoots,” Barboza says, calling the quest “a constant struggle.”

In 2020, the pandemic provided a quiet opportunity to design a new business to fill that need — a company that makes photo backdrops.

Poppy Bee Surfaces was born. As described on the company website ([poppybeesurfaces.com](http://poppybeesurfaces.com)), “After going through five different printers, we had the ridiculous thought that perhaps we could make printed surfaces ourselves. ‘How hard could it be?’ we laughed casually, like a child eyeing a hot stove.”

A technical advisor from Canon helped us find the right printing technology and, suddenly, we were able to perfectly replicate our digital files. The quality of the prints far exceeded anything we had seen before.”

But the “beautiful, matte material” on which the backgrounds were printed turned out to be “supremely scuffable.”

Joe Barboza used his background in multimedia art production to create “a complex, proprietary, and labor-intensive method of laminating each print we sell” — a process that preserves the colors and textures but makes the final product “matte, durable, and waterproof.”

He makes and applies the liquid laminate by hand.

“I design and create all the content photos, and Joe does all the production work,” Clare Barboza says. “So far, we’ve created over 200 designs. I use our own backdrops for specialized photo shoots is even smaller. As a result of the success of their handmade product, the Barbozas are now shipping to every continent around the world.”

While the numbers of professional food photographers in the world are modest, the numbers of companies that sell photo backdrops for specialized photo shoots are even smaller. As a result of the success of their handmade product, the Barbozas are now shipping to every continent around the world.

“While our best customers are professional food photographers, those we sell photo backdrops to range from amateurs to professionals, from food stylists to prop stylists,” she says. “We also sell to people who make their own products, like potters.”

While business is good, and it’s exciting to launch a new enterprise, the Barbozas have realized that there are other benefits to living and working in Vermont. The example set forth by her first Vermont customer in Montpelier showed the family the route they wished to travel.

“You live here in this tiny, charming town, but all your work is not here,” Clare Barboza says. “The vast majority of my work comes from outside Vermont. I get my income from the city, but then I come home and put that money back into my community.”

It’s the best of two worlds. “I don’t have to rely on this small area for clients, but I bring my business here and put what I earn back into our community,” she says. “We support this place that we love — a lot. We want every business to thrive and succeed here.”

For more information about Clare Barboza’s photography, visit [clarebarboza.com](http://clarebarboza.com) ([clarebarboza.com](http://clarebarboza.com)/vermont-studio). Joe and Clare Barboza’s new business venture can be found at [poppybeesurfaces.com](http://poppybeesurfaces.com).



Food photographer Clare Barboza and her husband, artist Joe Barboza, have launched a second business, Poppy Bee Surfaces, which manufactures backgrounds on which photographers worldwide can shoot food or other subjects.

## Public safety

“I’ve been starting to figure out how to do that,” he said on Aug. 8. “I have a team meeting [on Aug. 9] with town staff working on this project, and we’ll be doing that. I expect in the next month or so we’ll get that done.”

Asked what qualifications he’s looking for in a safety consultant, Potter said he has two major areas of interest: focusing on first response and alternative approaches to first response, informed by best practices from across the country and by co-production feedback from across the community.

The consultant’s fees would be funded through the Community Safety Fund, and the person would assist with an independent evaluation of past work, review current data and policy, and help development a community-involved Community Safety Implementation Plan.

“I’m looking for somebody with expertise, particularly, in alternative first response,” Potter said.

That means that when a crisis call comes in, that person is knowledgeable to have “a different approach than just sending police,” he said.

“I’m also interested in someone who is good about police data analysis and management,” Potter said, pointing out that the topic was flagged in the initial CSR report as an area of concern and in the years since the town has made big improvements.

“Those are two areas where I feel having some experience and outside expertise would really help,” Potter said.

He’s also “trying to get to speed” regarding the 2021 report to understand the circumstances behind the thinking then and to prepare to update the approach to take current circumstances into consideration and offer a plan that’s going to be “broadly supported by the community.”

During a July 11 discussion, Selectboard member Elizabeth McLoughlin echoed the thought that the needs of the community have changed in the two years since the report was submitted.

She applauded aspects of Potter’s alternatives, supporting the chosen path.

Potter noted that some items from the CSR report can’t be done legally by the town. He said the focus should be on the needs of those impacted by policing to determine what is practical and doable and to adopt a way forward that the whole community can support.

To that end, two study sessions will be scheduled. One will occur before a consultant would start, and it will focus on what the board wants to learn before moving forward.

Selectboard member Franz Reichsman said it would be a good idea to move slowly and purposefully, noting the importance of the issue. He also said he hopes everyone speaks their minds at the meetings.

Board Chair Ian Goodnow also expressed support for this direction, noting the effort will require expertise the Selectboard doesn’t necessarily have.

Goodnow said he hopes the

outcome will provide clear, actionable items that will help move the town in the right direction.

After the death of George Floyd in 2020 at the hands of police in Minneapolis, a national reckoning about race and the role of law enforcement took place in the United States. Brattleboro hired facilitators Shea Witzo and Emily Megas-Russell at a cost

of \$40,000 and established a committee to explore community safety.

The Jan. 1, 2021 report advocates reforming the Brattleboro Police Department’s complaint system, acknowledging systemic racism, strengthening support networks and structures, and examining how to help meet people’s basic needs.

FROM SECTION FRONT

**EVERYONE'S BOOKS**  
for social justice & the earth

Working for a better world  
since  
**1984**

**We are OPEN!**  
9:30-5:30 Mon.-Sat.; 11-5 Sun.

25 ELLIOT STREET  
BRATTLEBORO, VT  
802.254.8160

ORDER ONLINE OR BY EMAIL  
[WWW.EVERYONESBKS.COM](http://WWW.EVERYONESBKS.COM)  
[INFO@EVERYONESBKS.COM](mailto:INFO@EVERYONESBKS.COM)

**Be Sure To Check Our Full Program Schedule @brattleborotv.org**

**LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

Aug. 7-13  
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

<b>Here We Are</b> – Lisa McCormick, Musician: Mon 8p, Tues 12:15p, Wed 9p, Thurs 1:25p, Sat 12:20p & 8p, Sun 5:20p	<b>Newfane Selectboard Mtg.</b> 8/7/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
<b>The World Fusion Show – Ep# 158</b> – Frank London: Mon 5:30p, Tues 4:30p & 8p, Thurs 10:30a, Fri 5:30p, Sat 6:30p, Sun 9:30a	<b>Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg.</b> 8/7/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p
<b>BCTV Summer Video Camp – 2023 Video Reel:</b> Mon 8:35p, Tues 5:45a, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 2p, Fri 10a & 3:40p, Sun 6p	<b>River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg.</b> 8/7/23: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30a
<b>Chesterfield Historical Society – David Mann: The Surveys and Surveyors Part 1:</b> Mon 2:30p, Tues 8:30p, Thurs 4p, Fri 3a, Sat 2p & 8:35p, Sun 1p	<b>Townshend Selectboard Mtg.</b> 8/8/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
<b>Brooks Memorial Library – Tin Pan Alley Sing-Along:</b> Tues 1p, Wed 9a, Thurs 9:35a & 3p, Fri 4:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 4p & 6:45p	<b>Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg.</b> 8/8/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
<b>Brattleboro Gallery Walk – July 7, 2023:</b> Tues 5:30a, Wed 9:30p, Thurs 5:45a, Sat 5p & 10:45p, Sun 12:45p	<b>Dummerston Selectboard Mtg.</b> 8/9/23: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
<b>Brooks Memorial Library – Stay Connected with a Wi-Fi hotspot:</b> Tues 11:55a & 1:55p, Wed 9:55a, Thurs 1:15p & 3:55p, Sat 12:55p, Sun 12:55p & 5:55p	<b>Putney Selectboard Mtg.</b> 8/9/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
<b>Windham World Affairs Council – Antarctica: Ocean Currents, Climate, and Exploration</b> 3/23/23: Mon 10a, Wed 12:15p & 4:15p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 12:15p, Sat 9a, Sun 7:45p	<b>Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg.</b> 8/10/23: Sat 8:30p, Sun 6a
<b>Energy Week with George Harvey &amp; Tom Finnell:</b> Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	<b>Guilford Selectboard Mtg.</b> 7/24/23: Wed 6:15a
<b>Vermontitude – Weekly Episode:</b> Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	<b>Jamaica Selectboard Mtg.</b> 7/24/23: Mon 10:45a, Tues 1:30p, Wed 10:15a, Thurs 11:15, Sun 9:30p
<b>News Block:</b> WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p, Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	<b>Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg.</b> 7/24/23: Mon 3:30p, Tues 9:25p, Fri 4:45p
<b>St. Michael’s Episcopal Church – Weekly Service:</b> Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	<b>Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg.</b> 7/25/23: Mon 6:15p, Tues 10a, Wed 1p, Thurs 2:30p, Sun 6p
<b>Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley – Weekly Service:</b> Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	<b>West River Education District Board Mtg.</b> 7/10/23: Mon 6a, Tues 3p, Wed 5:35a & 9:45a, Thurs 12:45p
<b>Trinity Lutheran Church – Weekly Service:</b> Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	<b>Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg.</b> 6/21/23: Mon 1:45p, Tues 4:30p, Wed 8a
<b>Guilford Community Church – Weekly Service:</b> Wed 6:30a, Fri 3p, Sun 8a	<b>Town Matters – Weekly Episode:</b> Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
<b>St. Michael’s Catholic Church Mass:</b> Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	<b>The David Pakman Show:</b> Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

**Note: Schedule subject to change.**

View full schedule and watch online at [brattleborotv.org](http://brattleborotv.org)

BCTV’s Program Highlights are sponsored by **The Commons**. BCTV’s municipal meeting coverage helps **Commons** reporters stay in touch. Read about it in the Town & Village section at [www.commonnews.org](http://www.commonnews.org).

**Brattleboro Community Television – 257-0888**



## Last Mile Food Project

At that time, Everyone Eats was ending, and agencies were re-evaluating who would qualify for many other government safety net programs like Meals on Wheels, 3SquaresVt (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, still often called “food stamps”), WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), and heating benefits. And many people were losing Medicaid.

“We were really worried because we know these people who were losing assistance — these are our neighbors,” Carr said. “This project ensured that there was no gap in food delivery for our highest-risk community members.”

“The volunteer effort has been amazing,” she said. “It seems like you can’t shake a tree in Vermont without a couple of heroes falling out.”

One such hero: Kathy Squires, director of the Townshend Community Food Shelf, who packages the weekly deliveries.

Carr said the biggest challenge the project faces is identifying the need.

“The people who most need the help are not necessarily plugged into existing services, so they’re not on a list. They are the people who live off a dirt road, off another dirt road, on the side of a mountain. They’re very isolated, mostly elderly, very low income. These people have transportation barriers.”

Carr, a nurse practitioner at Grace Cottage Hospital, noted that “in the health care field, we talk about factors that influence physical and mental health.”

She called lack of transportation, which makes it impossible to access food, “one of the biggest influences on health in rural areas.”

“Addressing even a small part of the transportation barrier through our project feels like a

big accomplishment,” she said.

The grant funds a delivery driver, Mike Bills, and the project coordinator, Ilana Newton.

“There are a lot of people who have more needs than the public might perceive: homebound people, people who don’t have cars, those who don’t have a regular way to get out of the house,” said Newton, a registered nurse at Grace Cottage Hospital and a lifelong southern Vermont resident. “The pandemic really brought them to the forefront. The amount of food insecurity in Vermont is so sad.”

Bills has been delivering food since the program began.

“A lot of people are off the beaten path, they don’t see many people, and don’t have transportation,” he said. “So the project is a way for them to get human contact and food. I’m thankful that I have the opportunity to do this.”

Diana Lane is a recipient of the project.

“I don’t have a car, so I rely on others,” she said. “I’m very pleased with the program’s offerings. Sometimes they do interesting things — like, they’ll make a shamrock cookie on St. Patrick’s Day.”

And, she added, “The people are so nice. Mike is a sweetheart.”

### Need is increasing

For the Vermont Foodbank and its 250 food pantry partners throughout the state, the need has been increasing since the pandemic.

“With the [July] flooding, and the increased cost of living, the numbers continue to climb,” according to Zach Hebert, an associate manager for community engagement at the Vermont Foodbank.

“Several food shelves in the area report having double the number of ‘shoppers’ in the past two years,” he said. “Some food shelves have had to open more

days each week and hire more staff to meet the need.”

Hebert said that “events like the flooding or the pandemic — anything that disrupts our day-to-day life — is hard for everyone. But it’s particularly hard for folks who have the least amount of resources to adjust to something like that.”

“Unfortunately, for a lot of families, the easiest line in the budget to adjust is food, so they turn to a food shelf to make ends meet,” he said.

“Mutual aid organizations are wonderful,” said Anore Horton, executive director of Hunger Free Vermont, a statewide nonprofit organization providing anti-hunger advocacy, training, technical assistance, and public education. “It’s admirable and valuable for communities to come together and collaborate on taking care of people in their communities.”

However, Horton said that “the scale of the problem that we have in Vermont with hunger and the lack of transportation really requires the government to take accountability so that nobody goes hungry.”

“We need statewide solutions to our transportation problems, to ensure that grocery stores are accessible to every community,” she said. “There’s no reason why anybody should be experiencing hunger in our state.”

The Vermont Foodbank is grappling with how to sustain their response in the long term.

“After an emergency, the immediate response is critically important, but the long-term recovery takes so much more time and is often hidden,” said Hebert.

“It’s often easy to do the emergency cleanup but then to forget about the long-term impact that it has on families and their budgets,” he said.

How to sustain the Last Mile Food Project after the grant runs

out is one of WRVMA’s biggest challenges.

“The logistics of running the project long-term is probably more than we have volunteer capacity for,” said Carr. “But we would love to see it continue.”

She called it “a really good program, filling an important need in the community.”

“We’d love to find a more established community-based organization to take it over,” she said.

Newton added that she, Carr, and other members of WRVMA’s Steering Committee — Gloria Cristelli, Jeryl Julian Cisse, and Kate Gehring — are grateful to those who worked with them to improve food access in the West River Valley.

They cited the close collaboration of the United Way of Windham County’s Community Impact Committee for awarding the grant, United Way of Windham County Executive Director Ruben Garza for guidance and encouragement, Restorative Justice of Southern Vermont for fiscal sponsorship, and Kathy Squires, director of the Townshend Community Food Shelf.

“Everybody involved in this project — people working behind the scenes to make it happen — all have positive things to say about it,” said Carr.

“It’s really nice to see your volunteer work filling a gap and making a big difference for people who need it,” she said. “Everyone’s pretty happy. And with all the bad news lately, how often do you get to be happy, you know? We are having a moment of happy!”

More information about the Last Mile Food Project can be found at [westrivervalleymutualaid.wordpress.com](https://westrivervalleymutualaid.wordpress.com).

## AROUND THE TOWNS

### Wildlife tales told at RFPL

BELLOWS FALLS — The Southern Vermont Natural History Museum offers an exciting journey around the world in “Wildlife Tales” on Friday, Aug. 11, at 5 p.m., at the Rockingham Free Public Library.

Each story will feature a live animal, including raptors, reptiles, and more to bring a natural history element to the myths and legends.

This free, all-ages program is part of “All Together Now,” the 2023 summer reading program. For more information, contact 802-463-4270, [youthservices@rockinghamlibrary.org](mailto:youthservices@rockinghamlibrary.org), or [rockinghamlibrary.org](https://rockinghamlibrary.org).

### Lasagna dinner served

NEWFANE — The Newfane Congregational Church is hosting an Italian dinner night on Saturday, Aug. 12, at 6 p.m. at the church. The menu includes lasagna (regular and gluten-free vegetarian), green salad, garlic bread, and a blueberry dessert.

The cost is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children 10 and under. Take-out meals will be available by reservation only, and requests must be received by Friday, Aug. 11. To request take-out meals, call 802-558-7691 or email [jananderson1234@gmail.com](mailto:jananderson1234@gmail.com) with “lasagna” in the subject line by Aug. 11, and leave name, phone number, and the number of meals requested. Carry-out diners are asked to bring their own bags.

### Pig roast in Chester

CHESTER — Celebrate summer, rain or shine, with a southern-style pig roast and accompanying favorite picnic foods on the lawn (or in Willard Hall, if raining) at St. Luke’s Church, 313 Main St., on Saturday, Aug. 19, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Barbecue master Henry Jesse Pixley will smoke the beast on location, and Pixley

will offer several of his homemade sauces. Prepared by additional seasoned cooks, favorite side dishes will include potato salad, coleslaw, baked beans, and cookies, plus rolls and hot and cold drinks.

Meals may be enjoyed at tables on the back lawn of the church, where lawn games will also be available, or brought home. With summer heat and picnic pests in mind, side dishes will be organized ingeniously so distribution will be fast, clean, and perfect for transporting to a table or away.

Early reservations are recommended to guarantee a spot. Ages 5 and under are free. Early bird reservations made and paid by Monday, Aug. 14, receive a discount: \$18 for adults, \$8 for youths 6–12 years, and \$45 for a family of five. After Aug. 14, the prices are \$20 for adults, \$10 for youths 6–12, and \$50 for family of five.

To make a reservation, contact David or Marjorie Carey at 802-875-4235. Make check out to St. Luke’s Church, write “PIG” in the memo line, and mail the check in advance to St. Luke’s Church, P.O. Box 8, Chester, VT 05143. For more information, visit [stlukeseiscopalvt.org](https://stlukeseiscopalvt.org).

### BUHS Class of 1982 prepares for ‘40+1’ reunion

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Union High School Class of 1982 is making up for missing their 40 year reunion in 2022. This fall, their “40+1” reunion weekend will be held Sept. 22–24.

The weekend’s highlight will be on Saturday, Sept. 23, with a social hour, buffet dinner, and an evening of music by Wild Nightz. Contact information is sought for all alumni to share reunion information, including ticket purchase. All alumni are asked to send their name, email address, and telephone number to [buh1982vt@gmail.com](mailto:buh1982vt@gmail.com) to be included in updates for this and all reunions, and ticket purchasing.

## Entries sought for Rockingham Old House Awards

ROCKINGHAM — Nominations are open for Rockingham Old House Awards 2023.

“Inaugurated by the Bellows Falls Historical Society over 25 years ago, the Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission carries the baton to celebrate with property owners their ongoing restoration and renewal of historic homes and commercial buildings,” John Leppman, Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission chair, said in a news release. The awards program is sponsored by the Commission.

Multiple award categories include awards for best private residence, commercial building, and apartment building. There will be multiple awardees.

“Since its start in 1997, owners of over 170 homes and commercial buildings have been honored for conservation of their properties,” said Commission coordinator Walter Wallace.

Eligible properties are older homes that have been renovated, painted, or otherwise enhanced on the exterior, usually in the past five years. Properties must be located within the town

of Rockingham, including the villages of Bellows Falls and Saxtons River, the hamlets of Bartonville, Cambridgeport, Brockways Mills, and the town’s rural areas. To qualify, properties must be at least 50 years old and may be residential or commercial.

The deadline for nominations is Monday, Sept. 4, at 5 p.m.

Nominations may be made by sending an email to [clg@rockbf.org](mailto:clg@rockbf.org), or writing to Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission Coordinator, Town of Rockingham, P.O. Box 370, Bellows Falls, VT 05101. All nominations should include the property’s address and, if possible, the owner’s name.

The awards will be announced Saturday, Sept. 30, with a presentation ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 14, at the Meeting House in Old Rockingham Village during the Southern Vermont Flannel Festival.

The Old House Awards program is supported in part through funding from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service through the Certified Local Government program.

## Four Seasons OBGYN & Midwifery and BMH Birthing Center

# OPEN HOUSE!

- Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> from 4:00—6:00 pm
- Meet our providers and nurses.
- Tour the offices of Four Seasons OBGYN & Midwifery and BMH’s Birthing Center.
- Registration encouraged but not required.

To pre-register, use the QR code below, or visit [bmhvt.org/august-15-open-house](https://bmhvt.org/august-15-open-house)



**Brattleboro Memorial Hospital**  
EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY  
17 Belmont Ave., Suite 2401



Open Wednesday-Sunday 10-5

August bloomers opening daily

[daylilygarden.com](https://daylilygarden.com)

129 Auger Hole Rd.  
So. Newfane

**OLLIE DAYLILY GARDENS**





Brünnhilde (Jenna Rae) pleads with her sisters.

COURTESY OF TUNDI

*Wagner in Vermont festival returns for its third round as Tundi Productions prepares performances of two epic operas from Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle*

By Victoria Chertok

The Commons

**B**RATTLEBORO—Hugh Keelan isn't daunted by the herculean task of bringing not one but two of Richard Wagner's most famous operas to the Latchis. He's done it before — twice.

Tundi Productions' Wagner in Vermont 2023, the festival's third visit to the Latchis Theatre, will assemble more than 70 performers from near and far from Friday, Aug. 18, to Thursday, Aug. 24.

Keelan, the music director and the festival's orchestra conductor, and his wife, General Director Jenna Rae, co-founded Tundi, which will bring as main stage events two gritty, solemn, and notable works: *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, which are in the middle of the epic Ring Cycle. They will stage two performances of both works.

Keelan explains that Tundi's mission is "to perform music that summons the deepest emotions and the most burning issues of being human, so people can experience transcendence, interact with the music and artists, and engage in their own creativity."

This festival, which began in 2019 and skipped two years due to Covid, also includes a week of concerts, lectures, panel discussions, and interactive activities, including a Valkyrie flash mob, which stopped traffic outside BMAC a year ago during last year's festival.

Keelan sat down with *The Commons* to talk about these two upcoming performances and the enduring impact of Wagner, and he made some promises for the Brattleboro audiences.

In 2022, the festival drew record crowds of local and international attendees to the Latchis.

"We were overwhelmed by the quality of experience that people reported," Keelan says. "Apparently, we provided a transcendent and, for some people, healing experience for our audience members."

One audience member, he reports, told him that those performances offered "a blueprint for living out [their] remaining years."

The large-scale productions get backing from a few big private donors.

■ SEE WAGNER FESTIVAL, B6



Cantrip

COURTESY PHOTO

## Celtic Music Festival with Cantrip, House of Hamill, and Hildaland comes to Scott Farm on Aug. 13

**DUMMERSTON**—Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present a Celtic Music Festival featuring bands Cantrip, House of Hamill, and Hildaland, as part of the "Bandwagon Summer Series," on Sunday, August 13, at 4 p.m. at Scott Farm, 707 Kipling Rd. The triple bill features multi-instrumentalists and singers from both sides of the Atlantic who build upon traditional Celtic music with original songs and tunes, innovative arrangements, and three-part harmonies.

Twilight Music and Next Stage Production Director Barry Stockwell said in a news release that "the stars lined up for this

Bandwagon event, with these three phenomenal bands all passing through New England and available to perform on the same day. They're all breaking new musical ground, enhancing traditional Celtic music with elements of other musical genres — a magical mix of the old and the new."

From the base of its Celtic roots, Cantrip branches into the music of other European cultures. With border pipes, fiddles, guitar, and four voices, Dan Houghton, Jon Bews, Eric McDonald, and Alasdair White "take audiences on a cultural journey, putting their own spin on each musical style," says Stockwell.

The band name is an old Scots word meaning a charm, magic spell, or piece of mischief, "and it aptly describes the unexpected twists and turns in the quartet's musical arrangements as well as the compelling potency of their musicianship." Sprung from a local music session in Edinburgh, Scotland nearly 20 years ago, Cantrip has toured throughout Scotland and the U.S. and has released six CDs.

"Whether they're ripping through a set of original jigs and reels, adding three-part harmonies to traditional folk ballads, or cracking up an audience with stories from the road, House

■ SEE CELTIC FESTIVAL, B5

Publication of this week's Calendar is underwritten by BERKLEY & VELLER GREENWOOD COUNTRY REALTORS • [www.berkleyveller.com](http://www.berkleyveller.com)



Buyer demand is still soaring!

Get in touch today for tips on getting your home ready for the market.

Let Us Help You Reach Your Real Estate Dreams!



Brattleboro: 802-254-6400 • Dover: 802-464-8900 • [www.berkleyveller.com](http://www.berkleyveller.com)



arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY 10

Music

BRATTLEBORO Northeast Men's Summer Chorus: Every August, this Chorus gets together to perform a variety of music such as musical theater, pop, patriotic, glee club, spiritual selections. The singers/ their families come from various states including SC, NJ, NY, CT, MA, NH, VT. Conductor Walt Sayre is from Keene, NH.

BRATTLEBORO Summer Salon Explores the Method and Magic Behind the Music - "Mozart's Arias for Aloysia": Wolfgang fell head over heels for his 17-year-old student Aloysia Weber in 1777. Though there was hardly romantic reciprocation on her part, the seven arias which came from their musical connection reveal a range of virtues - from exquisite depth of emotion to stunning coloratura writing.

Dance

SAXTONS RIVER Summer Swing Dances at Main Street Arts: These summer dances are hosted by Matt Peake and Friends with guest DJs. No partner necessary.

Community meals

GUILFORD Guilford Cares Food Pantry: All are welcome to shop curbside from a list of fresh and frozen foods, canned and packaged items, dairy products.

Ideas and education

BRATTLEBORO Isle Of Klezboz: Yiddish Cinema Revisited: Klezmer quartet approaches tradition with playful irreverence and deepest respect to create re-imagined vintage music scores played in new Klezmer arrangements, juxtaposed with Yiddish film clips - celebrated and obscure. Repertoire ranges from Neo-traditional folk dance, mystical melodies, Yiddish swing and retro tango, late Soviet-era Jewish drinking songs, re-grooved standards, genre-defying originals.

FRIDAY 11

Music

BRATTLEBORO Sweeping Promises / Lost Film / Wojcicki > 8 p.m. > \$15 in advance, \$20 at door.

FRIDAY CONT. 10

GUILFORD The Woodpeckers (Swing Quartet.): Outdoors. Stay and watch the Perseid meteor shower.

PUTNEY Vermont Jazz Center announces Summer Workshop Student Concert: Showcasing six faculty-coached student ensembles, vocal performers accompanied by a professional rhythm section and piano trios (student pianists with pro rhythm section).

SOUTH NEWFANE Indie/Folk Musician Jason Anderson returns to South Newfane with Songs and Stories > 7 p.m.

Kids and families

BRATTLEBORO TGIF Morning Matinee: Magic by George > 10 a.m. T.G.I.F. is offered through Brattleboro Rec. and Parks in the Rotary Outdoor Theater.

Well-being

WILLIAMSVILLE Healing Walk at Manitou: Meditative walk, includes poems or other readings, and chances to share. Led by Fred Taylor.

Dance

GUILFORD Bal Folk Dance: Live Music & Dance Instruction by Eloise & Co.: Becky Tracy: fiddle, Rachel Bell: accordion. "Don't know any French tunes? No problem. Bring your instrument to the jam session - they're easy to pick up!

Ideas and education

BELLOWS FALLS Wildlife Tales at the Library (for all ages): Take an exciting journey around the world with the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum and live animals with tales of animals and magic.

SATURDAY 12

Performing arts

WEST CHESTERFIELD "Misalliance": Staged Reading of George Bernard Shaw's "Comedy of Marriage": Play takes place one afternoon in the conservatory of a large country house in Hindhead, Surrey in Edwardian era England.

SATURDAY CONT. 10

through the conservatory bringing two unexpected guests. > 7:30 p.m. Cast: Phil Kramer, Bob Gruen, Ian Hefele, Damien Licata, Roberta Barnes, Heidi Schwiager, Michael Auerbach, Charlotte Traas and Harral Hamilton.

Music

GUILFORD Bard Owl offers a Benefit Concert: Springs Farm Music Under the Maples (series): T. Breeze Verdant on guitar, vocals and stomp box, and Annie Landenberger on vocals and percussion. Playlist is rhythmic, upbeat, foot-tapping tunes, mixed among jazz, ballads, rocking blues, sweet and slow tunes: new, old, original, familiar, unexpected.

SO. HADLEY North Indian Classical Music Workshop - Learn About Traditional Music from India: Join Joel Veena and Mir Naqibul Islam for a workshop about the use of rhythm and cyclical time in Hindustani (North Indian) music. Joel presents time theory of Indian ragas, the system that ascribes certain musical pieces to specific times of day or seasons, and explains a typical performance structure.

BRATTLEBORO "Second Saturday with Sharon & Daniel!": This begins a residency every 2nd Saturday of the month at the Latchis Pub for the musical duo Sharon & Daniel. With playful harmonies, acoustic guitars, percussion, keyboards and upright bass, Sharon Leslie and Daniel Kasnitz perform fresh renditions of classic hits with a funky, jazzy twist.

Farmers' markets

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Area Farmers Market: BAFM has over 50 vendors, bringing our region's best farmers, makers, and chefs all to one place. Live music 11 a.m.-1 p.m., special events and workshops throughout the season.

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Zen Center (In-Person or wherever you are): One way to engage with the ecological crisis: This group chants briefly and then sits in silence for a

SUNDAY CONT. 10

half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action. > 1:00 - 1:35 p.m. on Saturdays. > Free. > Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct . Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30).

Community building

DUMMERSTON Landmark Trust USA offers Historic Walking Tour of Scott Farm > 2 p.m. > Free.

Visual arts and shows

NEWFANE Crowell Gallery presents works by artist Leonard Ragouzeo: Leonard began working with India Ink on paper in a representational manner in the 90's, focusing on faces and single common objects like tools or fruit.

Ideas and education

GUILFORD Everyday Herbs That Make Life Special - Workshop: Herbs can turn a bland meal into a culinary delight or help to heal a serious illness, but somewhere in between medicine/food is where herbs make life feel special. Incorporating herbs into your daily life is as simple as making a cup of tea or taking a quiet moment to experience the uplifting scent of a rose.

Film and video

BRATTLEBORO "Der Golem" (1920): "Widely recognized as the source of Frankenstein, "Der Golem" tells the Jewish legend of a magical figure made of clay who comes to life to prevent the Jews' expulsion from the city.

SUNDAY 13

Music

DUMMERSTON Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present a Celtic Music Festival featuring Cantrip, House of Hamill, and Hildaland: Part of the 2023 Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series, triple bill features multi-instrumentalists/singers from both sides of the Atlantic who expand boundaries of traditional Celtic music with original songs and tunes, innovative arrangements, lush three-part harmonies.

SUNDAY CONT. 10

> 2 - 4 p.m. > Free. > Dover Park, Rte. 100. WILLIAMSVILLE Big Woods Voices Outdoor Concert at Manitou: Featuring local singers Amanda Witman, Becky Graber, Will Danforth and Alan Blood; original vocal compositions and arrangements from American roots, world folk styles, and more.

ATHENS Andy Davis: Andy presents a program of his original songs written in his traditional and participatory style. Come prepared to both listen and to join in on the choruses. Each song is drawn from local history, personal experience and heartfelt memory.

Farmers' markets

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro's Share the Harvest Stand: Free Fresh Produce for All! > 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on Sundays - corner of Frost and Elm. (Gardeners may drop off surplus from their gardens from 10:30-closing: before noon preferred).

Well-being

W. BRATTLEBORO All Souls Church Worship Service: "Leaning Into Change" with Rev. Telos Whitfield (In-Person/Zoom): "We recognize that change is inevitable, a part of living that can be challenging and transformative. We will reflect on how to adapt to changes happening to us on a personal level, within our community, and the change/trans-formations happening at the UU national level."

Community building

SO. NEWFANE Old Ways Herbal: Herb Garden Days: Join us on the farm this summer to grow your knowledge and be in herbal community. Connect with nature in community: tend the gardens, harvest herbs, and ask your herb-growing and wild-crafting questions in a casual, small group setting.

SUNDAY 13

DUMMERSTON Orchard Stroll: "Part of Vermont Open Farm Week, join Scott Farm Manager Simon Renault and Orchardist Erin Robinson for a stroll in our heirloom apple orchard and learn a bit about the history of these of unique and historic fruits. We'll discuss orchard ecology, what it takes to manage the farm, why preserving these heritage varieties is so important.

MONDAY 14

The written word

BRATTLEBORO Celebrate publication of the novel "Altar to an Erupting Sun" by Chuck Collins in conversation with Frida Berrigan: Rae Kellier is a veteran environmental activist/pioneer in the death-with-dignity movement. Facing

MONDAY CONT. 10

diagnosis of terminal illness, Rae engages in a suicide-murder, taking the life of an oil company CEO for his complicity in delaying responses to climate catastrophe. Seven years later, Rae's friends and family gather at her VT farm to try to understand her violent exit and rapid social transformations it triggered.

TUESDAY 15

Music

GUILFORD "Fogo no Trio" performs in Wendy's Jazz Soiree series: Fogo no Trio is an instrumental Brazilian trio featuring original music influenced by Brazilian choro and samba. Award-winning musicians: U.S. violinist Andrew Finn Magill, Brazilian mandolinist Ian Coury, Brazilian guitarist Cesar Garabini.

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance.

WEDNESDAY 16

Community building

VERNON Vernon Community Market: This new Market features J&B's Curbside Cafe, handmade crafts, farm produce, baked goods, flowers, and more.

Ideas and education

DOVER "Pilgrimage": Book Discussion Series hosted by Dover Free Library: Human beings have undertaken pilgrimages of all kinds for thousands of years. Discover a variety of journeys - and whether the seekers find what they are looking for - in these varied writings.

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday



# St. Michael's Episcopal Church names new music director

Keane Southard, a committed music educator, believes that music can engender compassion and caring in any setting

By Annie Landenberger  
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—After a several-month search, St. Michael's Episcopal Church has called Keane Southard, Ph.D., as its next music director beginning Aug. 13.

"The Music Director Search Committee was impressed by his creativity, depth of musical knowledge, international experience, devotion to social justice, and personal integrity," said the Rev. Mary Lindquist, rector. "We look forward to many years of ministry together."

Responsible for music — instrumental and vocal — at weekly services, for directing both adult and children's choirs, and for developing music as both an outreach and a church community development vehicle, Southard, 36, brings experience, expertise, and vision to the position.

A musician who "believes deeply in the power of music to inspire positive change in the world," Southard produces work that reflects diverse musical tastes from "medieval chant to '70s rock, Bach to the Blues, and 19th-century romanticism to Latin dances," according to his professional website ([keanesouthard.com](http://keanesouthard.com)).

His range spans "traditional to experimental, systematic to free, and sacred to secular." Such eclecticism has been heard for decades at St. Michael's where his predecessor, Susan Dedell (who retired in January), drew not only from the Episcopal hymnal, but also from *Lift Every Voice and Sing: An African American Hymnal* and well as from ancient to modern traditions including chant, gospel, Sacred Harp, Appalachian, and classical works.

Moreover, Southard wrote in an open letter to the St. Michael's congregation: "I deeply resonate with St. Michael's commitment to social justice." Having recently earned his doctorate in composition from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York,



Keane Southard

he explains that his dissertation research focused on "ways that music education programs can enhance their social justice outcomes by integrating Dr. Martin Luther King's teachings [and philosophy] on nonviolence into their curricula and organizational structures."

Southard's range of compositions — a sampling of which can be heard on his website — includes those manifesting his stance for environmental conservation, for nonviolent conflict resolution, for climate change amelioration, and for creating positive social change.

Winner of numerous awards and competitions, Southard has been granted multiple residencies and fellowships.

Southard has taught theory and composition at Bennington College and Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, has conducted and recorded his own works, and has served as musician and music director for churches in Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio.

Prior to undertaking studies at Eastman, he directed the adult, children's, and handbell choirs and played organ and piano for the First Congregational Church of Walpole, New Hampshire.

A native of central Massachusetts, Southard camped throughout New Hampshire and Vermont in his youth and has hiked both the Appalachian and Long Trails. On a 2016 hike, he kept a journal and took music notes with an audio recorder, ultimately creating "An Appalachian Trail Symphony: New England," commissioned by a consortium of New England orchestras.

With his parents now living in New Hampshire and other family in Boston, and having had church, academic, and community chorale positions in the region, Southard, a self-professed lover of nature, says he's happy to be back in New England.

Southard's part-time post at St. Michael's will allow him time to carry on with his teaching and composing while his wife Diane, a social worker for the past 12

# Marlboro Music's 72nd season culminates with Beethoven's 'Choral Fantasy'

MARLBORO—Marlboro Music concludes its 72nd Season on Sunday, Aug. 13, with the traditional Beethoven *Choral Fantasy* — a work of profound joy in which every community member has a voice.

After a three-year hiatus and with Co-Artistic Director Jonathan Biss at the piano, the return of the *Choral Fantasy* is bound to be an emotional experience for musicians and audiences alike.

Before Biss and the Festival Orchestra and Chorus bring another Marlboro summer to a triumphant conclusion, Marlboro Music's resident artists will present nine more lovingly prepared pieces.

Over the course of the weekend, audiences will hear Samuel Barber's lyrical *Dover Beach* for baritone and strings; three masterworks by Brahms, including the famous Horn Trio and Clarinet Trio; string quartets by Beethoven and Berg; and much more.

Many outstanding senior artists — including horn player Alberto Menéndez Escribano; violinists Joseph Lin and Carmit Zori; violists Kim Kashkashian and Sally Chisholm; cellists Marcy Rosen and Peter Wiley; and pianists Anna Polonsky, Cynthia Raim, and Lydia Brown — will perform alongside Marlboro's talented emerging instrumentalists and singers.

Some tickets are available for the Friday, Aug. 11, and Saturday, Aug. 12, concerts, which begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 to \$40 and may be purchased at [marlboromusic.org](http://marlboromusic.org) or by calling the Marlboro box office at 802-254-2394.

Sunday's 2:30 p.m. performance is sold out; the box office maintains a waiting list for returned tickets. Audience members may contact the Marlboro reception desk for more information at 802-254-2394 or [reception@marlboromusic.org](mailto:reception@marlboromusic.org).

years, pursues a divinity degree aiming to become a chaplain with a honed interest in hospice and end-of-life work. The couple are parents to a toddler son.

## Music for social change

Southard speaks enthusiastically about coming to Brattleboro and to St. Michael's. Most exciting, he says, is working with a "decent-sized choir" and "to all the things we can do and sing" — including new works he expects to compose for the ensemble.

A committed music educator, Southard's belief that music can engender compassion and caring in any setting led to an interest in El Sistema, a music-education program, founded in Venezuela in 1975 by educator, musician, and activist José Antonio Abreu, who believed that, in the words of author and music educator Tricia Tunstall, "music has to be recognized as an agent of social development in the highest sense because it transmits the highest values — solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion," crediting it with the ability to "unite an entire community."

With its motto "music for social change," El Sistema has since become a worldwide movement, with an active network in the U.S. and, as a Fulbright Scholar in Brazil, Southard studied the program before researching and writing his dissertation.

He hopes, once he has settled in and has gleaned more of the area's music offerings and needs, to realize what he theorized in his dissertation — to create, through St. Michael's, "a new iteration of El Sistema" for area students who otherwise would not have access to music's benefits.

"We all look forward to meeting you all," Southard says, "and to becoming active members of the St. Michael's community!"

Southard's first Sunday at St. Michael's will be Aug. 13 at 10:15 a.m. As always, the public is welcome to attend the service.

St. Michael's Episcopal Church is at 16 Bradley Ave. in Brattleboro. For more information on the church and its work, visit [stmichaels-vt.org](http://stmichaels-vt.org).

**Transcribing, Editing and Proofreading Services**  
Accurate, Confidential, Fast Turn-Around, Fair Pricing  
Elizabeth:  
[elizabethjulia88@aol.com](mailto:elizabethjulia88@aol.com); 802-257-7475

**VACANCY**  
WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
**Brattleboro Representative**  
If you are a Brattleboro resident and interested in applying, please send letter of interest by September 22nd to: Kelly Young, Chair WSES School Board c/o 53 Green Street Brattleboro, VT 05301 [kyoung@wsesdvt.org](mailto:kyoung@wsesdvt.org)  
We anticipate applicants who represent our diverse population.

# NOW PLAYING at the MOVIES

**LATCHIS THEATRE**  
[latchis.com](http://latchis.com) | 802.246.1500

**AUGUST 11-17**  
**OPPENHEIMER** R  
WEEKDAYS 3:30 / 6:50  
SAT. & SUN. 2:15 / 6:50

**BARBIE** PG-13  
MON.-THUR. 3:45 / 6:45  
FRIDAY 3:45 / 6:45 / 9  
SATURDAY 2 / 6:45 / 9  
SUNDAY 2 / 6:45

**TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES MUTANT MAYHEM** PG-13  
MON.-THUR. 4 & 7  
FRIDAY 4 / 7 / 9  
SATURDAY 1:45 / 7 / 9  
SUNDAY 1:45 / 7

**OFF THE BEATEN PATH THE MIRACLE CLUB** PG-13  
SATURDAY & SUNDAY @ 4PM

**Twice Upon A Time**  
"A little something for everyone!"  
10,000 sq. ft. of Antiques, Collectables, Vintage Clothing and Jewelry, Consignment and Dealer Mall.  
63 Main St. Brattleboro • 802.254.2261  
[www.twicetime.com](http://www.twicetime.com)

**MARLBORO MUSIC**  
**Friday, Aug. 11 at 8pm** Works by Barber, Shostakovich, & Brahms  
**Sunday, Aug. 13 at 2:30PM** Works by Berg, Busch, Brahms, & Beethoven  
**Saturday, Aug. 12 at 8pm** Works by Brahms, Kurtág, & Beethoven  
**Tickets & Event Info: 802-254-2394**  
Scan the QR code, or visit [marlboromusic.org](http://marlboromusic.org)

**PETER HAVENS**  
Food Wine Spirits  
32 ELLIOT ST. BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301  
**Open Sundays starting April 30th**  
New Hours: Wednesday-Sunday 5pm - Close  
Reservations can be made online via RESY, or by calling 802-257-3333.

# Vermont Center for Photography artists display work at NXT Gallery

PUTNEY—NXT Gallery is hosting an exhibit of diverse photographic works from Aug. 19 through Nov. 12 on the second floor of Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. Entitled "Four Perspectives," the exhibit represents the work of Al Karevy, Davida Carta, Joshua Farr, and Vaune Trachtman — four local artists who are members of the Vermont Center for Photography in downtown Brattleboro.

"The Vermont Center for Photography's group show is an opportunity for us to highlight a peer cultural organization and the range of talented visual artists within that medium," Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said in a news release.

"Each of these artists creates photographic work covering a range of styles and subject matter, though they are unified by a shared passion for the

photographic arts and its many expressive possibilities," continues the news release. Each of the four artists will display a small selection from a body of work, "giving a greater context to their creative vision and process."

The gallery is open during events in the theater and by appointment. An opening reception will be held in the gallery on Sunday, Aug. 27, from 3 to 5 p.m.

# Big Woods Voices to perform at Manitou

WILLIAMSVILLE—The Manitou Project will offer a musical experience with Big Woods Voices (BWV) on Sunday, Aug. 13, at 3 p.m., in the woods on Manitou's forest land.

BWV celebrates a cappella vocal harmony through arrangements grown from American roots genres, world folk styles, poets old and new, and BWV member Will Danforth's deep creative well. "From heart-stopping to foot-stomping, prayerful to fun-filled, dissonant to dulcet, Big Woods Voices interweaves harmony and dissonance in riveting and melodic soundscapes," they say.

The quartet shared these comments from their audience: "The music last night was extraordinary. [...] The exquisite care each of the four of you put in, your combined harmonic sound, your humility, your bright spirits sending out the hope we are thirsty for. Each song was a jewel, a treasure" and "Singing sublime; songs sophisticated and meaningful; altogether a 'pinch me, I'm in southern Vermont' experience!"

The Voices (from high to low) are Amanda Witman, founder of the Brattleboro Pub Sing; Becky Graber, director of the Brattleboro Women's Chorus; Will Danforth, an award-winning,

multi-instrumental solo acoustic artist and a member of the Brattleboro Camerata; and Alan Blood, longtime member of area groups such as the Blanche Moysse Chorale, I Cantori, Blue Moon, and House Blend.

The experience is by free will offering, with a suggested \$10-25 donation.

Manitou is located at 300 Sunset Lake Rd. in Williamsville; 1.4 mi. up Sunset Lake Rd. from Williamsville Road (sign on right), or 5.6 mi. on Sunset Lake Road from Route 9 in West Brattleboro. For more information, call 802-258-8598, or visit [manitouproject.org](http://manitouproject.org).

# Music Under the Stars concludes with Keith Murphy & Becky Tracy

BRATTLEBORO—The "Music Under the Stars" concert series presented by the Brattleboro Music Center and Retreat Farm concludes Saturday, Aug. 19, with a performance by Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy and special guests.

"We always love playing at the Retreat Farm," Murphy said in a news release. "It is such a beautiful setting and atmosphere and a fun chance for us to invite some favorite musical friends to join us for a few tunes, which always feels festive for us."

Murphy and Tracy have been leading the traditional music scene in Brattleboro and Vermont and across the country for more than 25 years. They have taught

and inspired generations of traditional musicians.

Their connection to traditional fiddle music and songs runs deep, and their performances showcase the music of Ireland, Quebec, and Keith's native Newfoundland, as well as their own compositions inspired by all these traditions. Dance tunes are mixed with singable chorus songs. "Their shows are a delight for the trad music aficionado as well as the casual fan of fiddle music," organizers say.

Joining them on stage on the 19th will be Cindy Kallet and Grey Larsen, among others. Kallet "is a superb singer, guitarist, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist," notes their website, while Larsen "is one of America's

finest players of the Irish flute and tin whistle, as well as an accomplished singer and concertina, fiddle, piano, and harmonium player."

Admission is free, with donations welcome. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. at Retreat Farm, and the concert begins at 6:30 p.m. The rain date is Sunday, August 20. All are welcome to bring lawn chairs and a picnic, and to enjoy craft beers at The Thirsty Goat bar, and cool treats from Vermont Gelato.

For more information about Music Under the Stars, contact the BMC at 802-257-4523 or email [info@bmcvt.org](mailto:info@bmcvt.org).

Your local sources for home improvement

**NUTS 'n' BOLTS**

**JEWETT PLUMBING & HEATING**  
SERVING THE BRATTLEBORO AREA WITH RELIABLE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE  
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL  
- BATHROOM & KITCHEN REMODELING  
- COMPLETE HEATING SYSTEMS  
- WATER PUMPS & SYSTEMS  
**802-254-4963**  
1090 WESTERN AVENUE WEST BRATTLEBORO

**Steve's SEPTIC SERVICE**  
Septic Tank Pumping & Portable Toilet Rentals  
**802-257-1619**  
Vernon, VT • [stevesssepticpumping.com](http://stevesssepticpumping.com)

**Vernon SELF STORAGE**  
493 Stebbins Rd. Vernon, VT  
802-490-9771  
[vernonselfstoragevt.com](http://vernonselfstoragevt.com)



## Bard Owl to perform benefit concert for Loaves and Fishes on Aug. 12

GUILDFORD—Under the maple trees at the Historic Springs Farm, 49 Carpenter Hill Rd., in Guilford Center, Bard Owl, the acoustic duo of T. Breeze Verdant and Annie Landenberger, present a concert to benefit Loaves and Fishes Community Kitchen in Brattleboro, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 12.

Bard Owl's playlist includes jazz, ballads, blues, sweet and slow tunes — new, old, original, and familiar. According to the artists' website, "Verdant's sound, honed over 50 years, is driven by complex guitar rhythms matched by his stomp box beats and fully-ranged vocals.

"At age 3 he started singing Little Richard and Elvis interspersed with military tunes while lying in bed at night," as written on the duo's website. "He has since dropped the military songs and allows others to sleep. An intuitive musician, he only plays music that he feels."

Landenberger has been singing since age 6 when she regaled her parents' dinner guests with a litany of Mitch Miller favorites. To Bard Owl she adds percussion and her voice, which has been heard widely for decades in a range of styles and in musical theater.

Folklore scholar, athlete, and circus performer, Montana Miller says of Bard Owl, "Annie and Breeze are the kind of singers who, like other artists we grew up singing along with, know how to embrace and gather an audience into the warmth and generous spirit of their music. Their love for each other permeates every song; humble and heartfelt melodies invite us to join in and it's

healing just to listen."

Storyteller Mary Wallace Collins will perform between sets. Wallace is a veteran storyteller who has performed at story slams around New England.

Loaves and Fishes, the beneficiary of event proceeds, started in 1984 at Brattleboro's Centre Congregational Church. Joining Bridget's Kitchen of St. Michael's Catholic Church, Agape Church, and Trinity Lutheran to serve meals to the hungry, St. Michael's Episcopal supports this ministry by providing volunteers, funding, and food, coordinated by Ruth Tilghman.

Operating on Tuesdays and Fridays, Loaves and Fishes serves food to unhoused persons and a few meals to drop-ins from the community. They deliver 200 meals each day, while others receive basic grocery bags as well as fresh vegetables, meats, and frozen foods.

Concert-goers are invited to picnic before and during the concert with friends and family on the Farm's lawn. Suggested admission is \$10 to \$20, with no one turned away. Children are admitted free.

There is limited parking at the farm for anyone who needs close-in access. Otherwise, parking is available off Carpenter Hill Road, at the library, on the lower field, or at Playscape. Some chairs are available; concert goers are encouraged to bring blankets and low chairs. For more information, visit [springsfarmvt.com](http://springsfarmvt.com), [bardowlmusic.com](http://bardowlmusic.com), or [stmichaels-vt.org/loaves-and-fishes](http://stmichaels-vt.org/loaves-and-fishes).

## In-Sight Photography Project launches its first Youth Photo Contest & Fair

BRATTLEBORO—In-Sight Photography Project announces its first Youth Photo Contest & Fair.

For 30 years, In-Sight Photography Project has been nurturing the creativity of young artists in the Brattleboro community and across the country.

"Seeing an opportunity to give young artists an opportunity to have their work exhibited in the community and seen by professionals in the field, this year, instead of our Annual Benefit Art Auction, we made a choice to ask the community to support an event that will directly benefit and promote our talented youth," Emily Wagner, In-sight Photography Project's executive director, said in a news release.

The competition is open to youth 11–18 who live within an hour of Brattleboro. Contestants are invited to submit one image in each of the following categories: Analog Film, Artistic, People, Places, and The New

England Experience.

The deadline for submissions is Sunday, Aug. 20.

Images submitted to the contest will be exhibited in In-Sight's gallery Sept. 1 through Oct. 6. Three winning images in each category will be selected by a blue-ribbon jury panel to win awards, with the top award being a DSLR camera kit.

Cathy Cone, photographer and long-time In-Sight supporter, is the event's honorary chair. Her works are in the collections of IBM, Hallmark Fine Art Collections, and American Express, among others.

As a long-time supporter of In-Sight and its students, Cone says this is an opportunity for the community to encourage and help guide a young photographer's dreams, especially now when the visual arts are so much in demand.

Cone and In-Sight are planning a red-carpet awards ceremony, a photo fair to include a display of the submitted images, a photo booth, games, and more

that will take place at the Latches Theatre on Saturday, Sept. 30.

In-Sight's board of directors vice-chair and local photographer, Rachel Portesi, has helped Cone assemble the jury panel, which includes a mix of local and national photographers, including Cone, Portesi, Jon Gitelson (Keene State College), Michael Kirchoff (*Analog Forever* magazine), Joan O'Beirne (Greenfield Community College), Geoffery Peckham (Tusen Takk Foundation), Dale Rio (The Halide Project), Aline Smithson (*Lenscratch* magazine), Vaune Tractman (Olcott Family Award/ The Print Center's Annual International Competition), and Tim Trelease (Deerfield Academy).

Additionally, viewers of the virtual show will be able to vote for one contest participant to win a People's Choice Award.

Most photography contests require entrance fees, but this competition is unique because it is entirely free to youth, thanks to the help of the community.

From its humble beginnings in the Brattleboro Teen Club, In-Sight's programs have always uplifted youth to use photography as an expressive medium and language. Throughout its history, In-Sight has offered a wide breadth of programming, such as the Exposures cross-cultural program that brought youth from different cultures together to the current Photo Team! Program, specifically designed to help youth explore professional pathways.

In-Sight's approach to photography is to foster personal expression, artistic growth, and self-confidence. The programming includes core classes in analog film and digital photography, after-school partnership programs, a Photo Team, and an Artist Residency. All classes are fully accessible through their sliding scale fee structure, and all equipment is provided.

For more information, visit [insightphotography.org](http://insightphotography.org), or call 802-251-9960.

## Concert by Isle of Klezbos celebrates music of Yiddish cinema

BRATTLEBORO—Epsilon Spires, 190 Main St., presents a performance by Isle of Klezbos on Thursday, Aug. 10, from 8 to 10 p.m. The quartet will perform music inspired by Yiddish cinema soundtracks as well as exhibiting source Yiddish film clips.

According to a news release, the New York City-based klezmer group "approaches tradition with playful irreverence and deepest respect to create [...] soundtracks for Yiddish films both celebrated and obscure. Their repertoire ranges from rambunctious and exuberantly original fusion to entrancing neo-traditional

folk dance, mystical melodies, Yiddish swing and retro tango, late Soviet-era Jewish drinking songs, re-grooved standards, and genre-defying originals."

This captivating tour is led by drummer/cinema scholar Eve Sicular, with live movie music adaptations as well as original sound footage from famous celluloid such as *Der Dybbuk* and Molly Picon hits *Mamele* and *Yidl Mitn Fidl*, plus lesser-known movie masterpieces from early sound feature *Uncle Moses* to operatic screen cantor Moishe Oysher's tour de force *Overture to Glory* [*Der Vilner Shtot Khazn*],

as well as Edgar Ulmer's comedy *American Matchmaker*, early Soviet Yiddish theater newsreels, and more.

Sicular leads the band and is joined by Debra Kreisberg (clarinet and alto saxophone), Rebecca Steinberg (trumpet), and Shoko Nagai (accordion, piano, and playing the Epsilon Spires pipe organ). Sicular's archival research background is based on her curatorial roles at YIVO (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, or Yiddish Scientific Institute) Film Archives and the MoMA retrospective "Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between

Two Worlds" and her subsequent lectures and publications "Music in Yiddish Cinema" and "The Yiddish Celluloid Closet."

Since 1998, the group has performed their soulful brand of Klezmer fun-loving powerhouse arrangements and has toured from Vienna to Vancouver for the past 25 years. Broadcast credits include *CBS Sunday Morning*, *The L Word*, and PBS, as well as more than a dozen film soundtracks such as *Grace Paley: Collected Shorts* and *Esther Broner: A Weave of Women*.

For ticket information, visit [bit.ly/726-klezbos](http://bit.ly/726-klezbos).

### GOT AN OPINION?

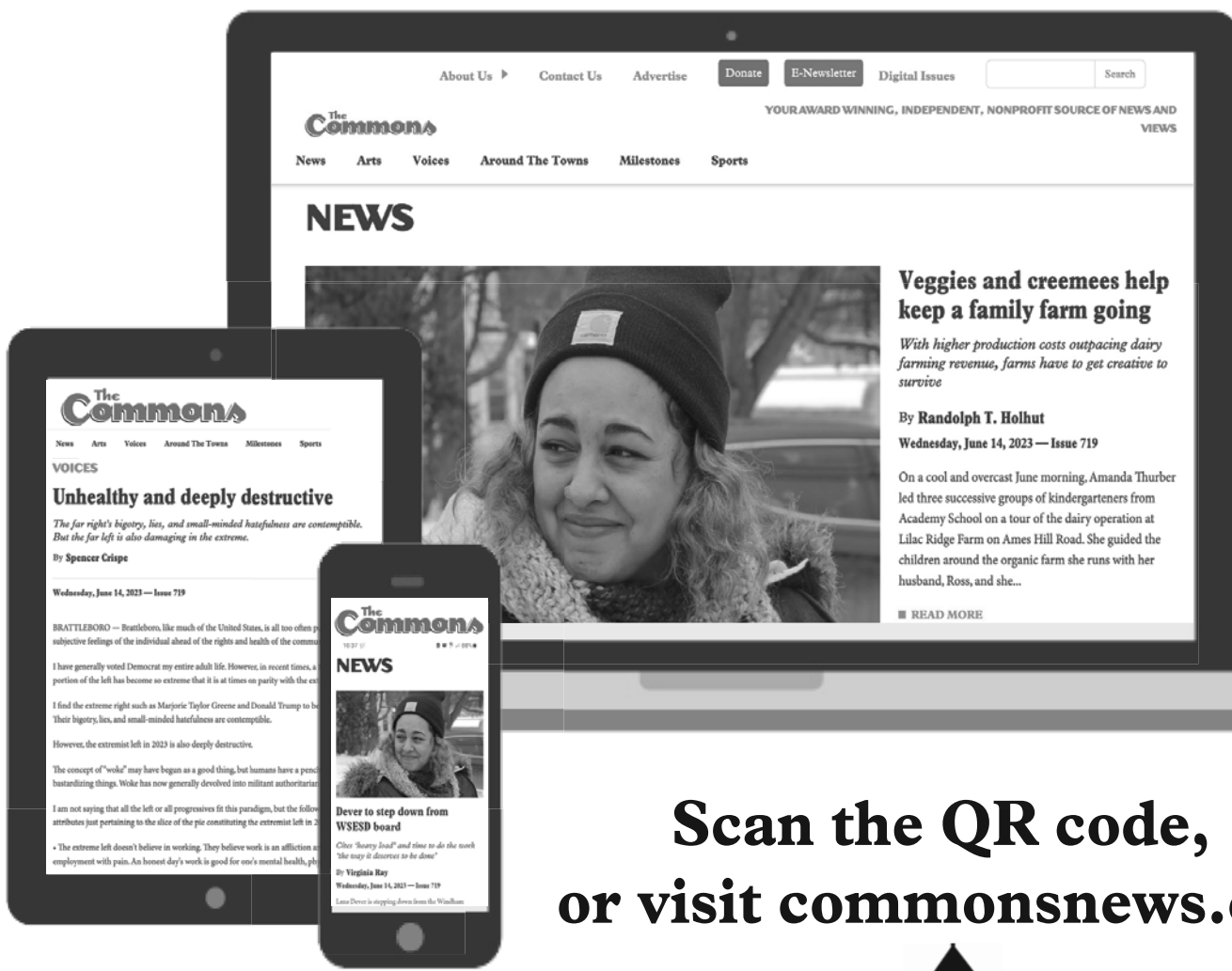
(Of course you do! You're from Windham County!)



Got something on your mind? Send contributions to our Letters from Readers section (500 words or fewer strongly recommended) to [voices@commonsnews.org](mailto:voices@commonsnews.org); the deadline is Friday to be considered for next week's paper. When space is an issue, we give priority to words that have not yet appeared elsewhere.

# WE HEARD YOU!

## Visit the NEW Commons Online...



It's simple to use with better access to the newspaper you love!



Scan the QR code, or visit [commonsnews.org](http://commonsnews.org)

Visit [commonsnews.org](http://commonsnews.org)!  
Click on the ad to enter for a chance to win...  
\$100 certificate to Peter Havens!  
A winner will be chosen Friday, August 18th.

PETER HAVENS





# Museum to honor 'service to art and humanity'

Robson named the first to receive new award, to be presented at annual gala Aug. 19

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) will present its inaugural Award for Service to Art & Humanity to artist Aurora Robson at the museum's annual gala on Saturday, Aug. 19, beginning at 6 p.m.

"BMAC believes in the power of art and artists to imagine new possibilities, to communicate across political and cultural divides, and to encourage empathy and collaboration," BMAC Director Danny Lichtenfeld said in a news release. "We have great admiration for artists who apply their creative talents in an effort to make the world a better place, and we seek to support and encourage them in whatever ways we can. That's the fundamental motivation behind this new award."

Aurora Robson was born in Toronto and raised in Maui, Hawaii. She lived, studied, and worked in New York City for two decades before relocating to her present home in New York's Hudson Valley. Her sculptures have been exhibited and collected internationally, and she has been the recipient of grants and fellowships from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Robson recently completed a major public art commission for Amazon's HQ2 in Arlington, Virginia.

According to Lichtenfeld, as the museum's staff and board got to know Robson and her work in the course of developing the exhibition "Human Nature Walk," which opened at BMAC on June 24 and is on view through Feb. 11, they were inspired by the artist's longstanding commitment to developing creative solutions to the pernicious problem of plastic pollution.

"I believe our responsibility as humans is to study, honor, and maintain the complex balance of life on Earth, and to tinker with the systems we have put into place so that they serve life, rather than destroy it. While my work is a call to action to break our negative behavioral patterns and to change attitudes toward perceived disposability, it is also a love poem

dedicated to the intersection of nature and culture, with the aim of softening the edges between," said Robson.

Over the past 20 years, Robson has refined a variety of techniques for turning plastic debris into art, transforming harmful waste destined for the landfill or the ocean into objects of beauty and lasting value. "Human Nature Walk" represents a compendium of those techniques, ranging from sewing and welding to injection-molding and 3D printing.

Robson's commitment to stemming the tide of plastic pollution extends beyond her own artistic practice and includes supporting fellow artists engaged in similar work through Project Vortex, which she founded in 2009; creating educational resources for students and schools, such as Trash Tetris 101; and speaking powerfully and often about the capacity of art and artists to help solve one of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

"One of the remarkable things about Aurora's work," said BMAC Board President Suzie Walker, "is that although it directly addresses the scary, often overwhelming topics of plastic pollution and climate change, it does so in a way that feels hopeful. I don't mean the naive notion that 'everything will be fine,' but rather a sense that through creative ingenuity of the sort demonstrated by Aurora, we can figure out how to solve these seemingly impossible problems."

According to the museum's website, the gala raises vital funds for BMAC's contemporary art exhibitions, always-free admission, transformative education initiatives, and dynamic public events. Tickets to the gala are available at [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org).



Aurora Robson installing "Human Nature Walk" at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

KELLY FLETCHER

## Northeast Men's Summer Chorus offers three concerts at local venues

The Northeast Men's Summer Chorus (NMSC) gets together in August each year to perform a variety of music, including musical theater, pop, patriotic, glee club, and spiritual selections.

The singers and their families come from many states, including South Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Conductor Walt Sayre is from Keene, New Hampshire.

Concert performances will be on Thursday, Aug. 10, at First Congregational Church of West Brattleboro; Friday, Aug. 11, at First Congregational Church of Walpole, New Hampshire; and Saturday, Aug. 12, at Grafton Community Church. All concerts start at 7 p.m. Concerts are free and open to the public. A free-will donation will be collected at each venue to be used by the local church.

The group is always looking for

new singers. More information is available at [conductorsclub.org](http://conductorsclub.org) ([conductorsclub.org/nmsc.htm](http://conductorsclub.org/nmsc.htm)) or on Facebook.

The NMSC offers a stipend/scholarship of at least \$250 to local high school juniors and seniors who would like to sing with them. Information is available through Dave and Priscilla Lambert at 802-463-2271 or at [lambert323@gmail.com](mailto:lambert323@gmail.com).

**Unity Heat Pumps**

Home Heating - Cooling Magic!

Zero emission mini split furnaces.

Serving VT, NH, MA  
802-365-1009  
[james@unityheatpumps.com](mailto:james@unityheatpumps.com)

**Summer Shorts**

Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup> 6PM  
Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup> 6PM

Tickets available at the door. Suggested donation is \$10 per ticket

Sponsored by The Bear Book Shop & Foard Panel

100 Flat Street, Brattleboro | 802-246-6398 | [neyt.org](http://neyt.org)

## Brattleboro Concert Choir announces 2023-24 season, offers auditions

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Concert Choir has announced its 2023-24 season and is offering auditions to those interested in joining its numbers.

Starting Wednesday, Sept. 6, the Brattleboro Concert Choir will prepare "Songs for the People," a program of music by living American composers speaking to issues of our time, including immigration, civil rights, climate change, and global conflict.

Composers include Eric Whitacre, Ysaye Barnwell, Frank Ticheli, Joel Thompson, Mari Esabel Valverde, Melissa Dunphy, B. E. Boykin, Sydney Guillaume, and J. Andrés Ballesteros. The performance will be at the Latchis Theatre in downtown Brattleboro Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 13 and 14.

Then, in the spring, the group will prepare "In Paradisum: Music of Gabriel Fauré," a program featuring three choral-orchestral works by this French Romantic: Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11; "Tu Es Petrus"; and Fauré's Requiem, Op. 48. The spring concerts will be performed Saturday and Sunday, May 4 and 5, at Persons Auditorium in Marlboro.

The Concert Choir rehearses 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday evenings in the Brattleboro Music Center Auditorium and is currently seeking new members of every voice part for the upcoming season. The Concert Choir especially invites BIPOC singers and singers of all gender identities to join.

To schedule a low-pressure placement hearing with Music Director Jonathan Harvey, or to ask any questions, contact the BMC at [info@bmcvt.org](mailto:info@bmcvt.org).

## Guilford author will talk about his new book

BRATTLEBORO—Join author Chuck Collins in conversation with Frida Berrigan as they explore the ethics and evolution of environmental activism through the lens of his novel, *Altar to an Erupting Sun*, Monday, Aug. 14, at 7 p.m., in the Main Reading Room of Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St.

The novel's main character, Rae Kelliher, is a veteran environmental activist and pioneer in the death-with-dignity movement. Her husband, Reggie, calls her "party in a box" and "a weaver of people and movements."

Facing a diagnosis of terminal illness, Rae engages in a shocking suicide-murder, taking the life of an oil company CEO for his complicity in delaying responses to climate catastrophe. Seven years later, Rae's friends and family gather at her Vermont farm to try

to understand her violent exit and the rapid social transformations triggered by her desperate act.

"I felt such a personal connection to this novel as I traipsed through familiar territory, in both time and terrain, following Rae's experiences and her relationships with the people, both real and fictional, that formed her," said Library Director Starr LaTronica in a news release. "From Guilford and Greenfield to the Book Mill in Montague, through the 1960s to the present, local readers will find many recognizable elements that resonate."

Frida Berrigan is an activist, urban farmer, and columnist who lives in New London, Connecticut, and is the author of *It Runs In The Family: On Being Raised By Radicals and Growing Into Rebellious Motherhood*. She is the daughter of Philip Berrigan

and Elizabeth McAlister and niece of Father Daniel Berrigan S. J., prominent activists against the war in Vietnam.

Guilford resident Chuck Collins is a campaigner, storyteller and author. His earlier books include: *Born on Third Base*, *The Wealth Hoarders*, *Wealth and Our Commonwealth* (with Bill Gates Sr.), and *Economic Apartheid in America*. Collins directs the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies where he co-edits *Inequality.org*.

Books will be available for sale and signing. The program is free and open to the public and is sponsored by the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library. The venue is accessible to people in wheelchairs. For more information, visit [brookslibraryvt.org](http://brookslibraryvt.org) or call 802-254-5290.

## Next Stage Bandwagon Series presents Afrobeat ensemble Armo

BRATTLEBORO—The Next Stage "Bandwagon Summer Series" presents Afrobeat ensemble Armo on Friday, Aug. 18, at 6 p.m., at the Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Square.

Armo's sound focuses on classic and contemporary Afrobeat. Founded by longtime Antibalas bandmates Amayo (vocals, keyboards), Jordan McLean (trumpet, percussion), Marcus Farrar (percussion, vocals), Nikhil P. Yerawadekar (guitar, keyboards), Kevin Raczka (drums), and Justin Kimmel (bass), Armo creates spontaneous arrangements of the music of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, The Daktaris, Ebo Taylor, William Onyeabor, The Art Ensemble of Chicago and original rhythm-based music.

This band features a revolving

cast from the Daptone Records family and the New York City Afrobeat scene. Members of the band now include Dave "Smoota" Smith on trombone and keyboards, Binky Griptite and Tony Jarvis on saxophone and keyboards, and drummer Dylan Fusillo.

Collectively the members of Armo have performed thousands of concerts around the world working with such performers as David Byrne, Angeliq Kidjo, Public Enemy, TV on the Radio, Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings, Ornette Coleman, and in the band for the Tony Award winning musical *Fela!*

Their first recording, a self-titled EP, was released on System Dialing Records in 2018 and is

available on 10-inch 45 rpm record, as downloads, and streaming on all major platforms. Their 2020 single "New Beginning" is available on Bandcamp.

The band holds a monthly jam session at the legendary Bitter End in the West Village. Most recently they served as the house band for the City Winery-Carnegie Hall afterparty tribute to Paul McCartney, and have restarted their years-long residency at Brooklyn's famed Bar Lunitaco.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate. Children under 12 are admitted free. Next Stage will provide a cash bar. Advance tickets are available at [nextstagearts.org](http://nextstagearts.org). For information, call 802-387-0102.

## Celtic festival

of Hamill puts on a show that captivates audiences from the very first note." Rose Baldino, Brian Buchanan, and Caroline Browning are also half of the Toronto-based Celtic-rock band Enter the Haggis.

Orkney-born fiddler Louise Bichan and Indiana mandolinist Ethan Setiawan present a collaboration and meeting of their musical worlds. A path steeped in the fiddle traditions of their respective sides of the Atlantic, the journey taken winds

through Scottish-, old-time-, and Swedish-inspired music intertwined with contemporary compositions. Stockwell characterizes Bichan's fiddling as "a melodic foil to Setiawan's counterpoint and harmonic depth," and says the two "weave in and out seamlessly."

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25

at the door, and kids under 12 are admitted free. For advance tickets and more information, visit [nextstagearts.org](http://nextstagearts.org). Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar, and food by Crossroads Tacos and Vermont Gelato will be available. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for outdoor seating on the lawn.

FROM SECTION FRONT

Celtic music is part of the language in Scotland and Ireland, where every kid and grandparent knows those songs, music by the likes of Woody Guthrie and Hank Snow is getting entrenched here. They're part of our cultural language. It's part of a living treasure. It doesn't just belong to a museum.

—ROSANNE CASH

**Members 1<sup>st</sup>** [members1cu.com](http://members1cu.com)

**CREDIT UNION**

Small Credit Union. Big Heart.

10 Browne Crt.  
P.O. Box 8245  
N. Brattleboro, VT 05304

Equal Housing Opportunity

NCUA

Tel: (802) 257-5131  
Fax: (802) 257-5837

Promote your **EVENT** in **The Commons**

Your ad can run in the **Arts** section of the paper (the same section as the calendar), and in our **e-newsletter** of the calendar and other events.

**\*ADS START AT \$37.50\***  
**AND YOUR EVENT WILL BE SEEN BY 20,000 READERS!**

Call 1-888-511-5150, or email [lori@commonsnews.org](mailto:lori@commonsnews.org), or [nancy@commonsnews.org](mailto:nancy@commonsnews.org)



## Wagner Festival

FROM SECTION FRONT

Tundi is approved by the IRS as a tax-deductible, tax-exempt arts charitable organization, but it doesn't yet receive any grant funding, and its public filings available report an operation with an annual budget less than \$50,000.

"Money is not the primary incentive," he says, noting that the performers are compensated with "a base pay with profit-sharing model."

"It is not the pay that draws the people," Keelan says.

### Two epic operas

In *Die Walküre*, Wotan, the battle-lord of the gods, has a favored daughter, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde. After some serious infractions and disloyalties inside the god-family, Wotan is compelled to punish her, from a context that might in today's language be called "toxically masculine."

At great cost to herself, Brünnhilde asserts her values of love, freedom, and emancipation.

This most serious work of the Ring Cycle starts in rough woodland homesteads, and ascends to epic, cosmological heights.

Performances take place on Friday, Aug. 18 and on Tuesday, Aug. 22 starting at 4 p.m. There will be breaks for dining and refreshments: 90 minutes between acts 1 and 2, and 25 minutes between acts 2 and 3.

In *Siegfried*, the title character is an orphaned boy, brought up deep in the forest, who asks uncomfortable questions as he starts to seek independence from his foster parent, Mime.

Siegfried will fully emancipate himself, slay a dragon, learn the speech of a spirit bird to guide him, and unwittingly enter the cosmic struggle between immortals for a magic ring.

Performances of *Siegfried* take place on Sunday, Aug. 20 and on Thursday, Aug. 24 starting

at 4 p.m. As with *Die Walküre*, the audience will get two breaks for dining and refreshments of 90 minutes and 25 minutes, respectively.

### 'A world unto themselves'

To stage the two operas and the rest of the festival, Tundi has assembled 80 individuals, 70 of whom are performers, vocalists, and instrumentalists. The remaining 10 are technical and theater staff. The festival orchestra includes 40 members, some of whom are local.

The vocalists and performers come from all over the United States — including Brattleboro and Windham County, such as Rae, who plays Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* — as well as Canada, Singapore, and the United Kingdom.

These operas are written in German and performed in German, so Tundi offers audience members "integrated supertitling," which displays English translations unobtrusively.

Keelan says reassuringly that the supertitling will allow everyone to appreciate the performances without having to learn or understand the operas' native language.

He also praised the venue.

"It's inspiring for us to be [at the Latchis] for many practical reasons: balconies, catwalks, etc. Wagner's operas are powerfully voiced, so that they carry some sort of stentorian and heroic quality, emotionally overwhelming at times. None of our performers use microphones," Keelan said.

"We find the Latchis beyond favorable. A very rich and enhancing place. And the acoustics are such that if you are sitting in the very last row, you can hear our unamplified singers with full force."

Jon Potter, executive director of LatchisArts, the nonprofit



Brünnhilde (Jenna Rae) explains the Sieglinde (Roseanne Ackerley) situation.

that owns the theater and hotel, calls the Wagner in Vermont festival "a special experience for the Latchis."

"We feel more intimately connected with these performances than others, and they are designed very much with the Latchis in mind," he says.

"Because Tundi spends so much time here preparing these operas, we have a rare opportunity to become close to the people who make this happen," Potter observes.

"Wagner's operas are a world unto themselves, and the Latchis was designed to be a world unto itself, so we're ideal companions on this Wagner journey," he adds.

### Music that endures

The classic operas are works of Richard Wagner, a German composer, theater director, polemicist, and conductor, who lived from 1813 to 1883.

He avoided the term "opera," which even during his time conveyed overtones of privilege and pomposity; instead, he used a term, "Gesamtkunstwerk," which means an all-encompassing artwork — one that uses action and evokes emotion by melding and unifying poetry, scenic design, and music on an epic scale.

Wagner infused his operas with drama and is known for his complex textures, rich harmonies, interesting orchestration, quickly shifting tones, and unusual musical phrases (leitmotifs).

"Der Ring des Nibelungen" ("The Ring Cycle") — Wagner's most ambitious work, of which this year's performances are part — shares mythological and plot points with the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and took over 25 years to complete. It comprises four major works, each demanding a long evening.

The influence of these works remains incalculable and has permeated popular culture. Wagner's motifs are vividly heard in the



Ride of the Valkyries: Gerhilde (Alexandra Lang), Waltraute (Wendy Silvester), and Schwertleite (Ema Mitrović).

film scores of John Williams and in soundtracks of certain styles of video games.

And in 1957, Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd starred in *What's Opera, Doc?*, in which director Chuck Jones distilled the Ring Cycle into one of the most highly acclaimed animated cartoons in history and introduced generations — many unwittingly — to the phrase "kill the wabbit," sung to "Ride of the Valkyries."

### Relevant — and problematic

Wagner remains a controversial and problematic artist who, as a young political firebrand, wrote anti-Jewish pamphlets. Long after his death, his works became favored by Adolf Hitler and aspects were appropriated by the Third Reich in the rise of Nazi nationalism.

"There are many things to really dislike Wagner for," Keelan acknowledges. Among them,

"Number 1 is racism in the form of anti-Semitism." He also acknowledges Wagner's "misogyny, his relationships to women."

In Keelan's view, these qualities should actually pique audiences' interests in these works.

"All of those things are there, and the works that he produced are a perfect crucible for us addressing those characteristics and issues that remain in us," he says. "That is the source of his genius: his capacity to confront us with ourselves."

Wagner's music is still so relevant today, over 140 years after his death, Keelan says.

The four operas in the Ring Cycle follow one character — Brünnhilde — "finding and re-finding herself in greatly reduced circumstances, finally, to be a savior of the world," he says.

The operas "deal with real issues like parenting, foster parenting, and the handling or mishandling of basic family relationships," he says — in particular, the father/daughter relationship: "A daughter who couldn't possibly say she's disempowered, but she has to deal with a toxically furious father figure."

"And finally, there is an act of forgiveness towards her father. It is by no means the most noticeable moment of the incredibly rich story," Keelan points out. "But it is a moment in which she decides, enough of grudge-holding and vengeance."

He says that Wagner's work deserves to be criticized — and acknowledged, studied, and performed.

"You could say that, at a certain point of the 19th century, different European nations started being really interested in developing

a national music and national style, which arguably, they hadn't before," Keelan says.

He describes Wagner as "one of the primary German examples."

"He's the one who started using certain fairy tale and folk themes in his operas," says Keelan.

### Making Wagner for the masses

Keelan hopes that audience members will experience the performances with "fresh ears" and "fresh eyes," rather than "'Oh, opera, I don't like opera.' Or, 'Oh, opera. I'm an opera fanatic.' We're creating another world that is, in a sense, not polarized."

"I tell the audience to try not to come with their biases or hate or distaste for the genre. People often have a negative connotation to it. They think 'I don't like opera. I don't understand it. I can't speak the language.' So people can be afraid of it, I think," Keelan adds.

Wagner's works are often the most polarizing of opera, he says, and they can be "intimidating for people new to his music."

Keelan says that Tundi's performances are designed to "lay the doors to Wagner wide open."

This is achieved, Jon Potter says, by something elusive.

"It's hard to describe the power and the artistry of these performances," he says. "It's also hard to put into words what it takes for Tundi to present these works, which are normally offered in very few cities and venues around the world, in our town of Brattleboro."

He calls the festival "a wonderful demonstration of courageous commitment to a collective artistry."

"Something quite wonderful is happening at the Latchis with Wagner in Vermont, and we want the world to know about it," Potter says.

For more information on Wagner in Vermont Festival 2023 and to buy tickets, visit [Tundiproductions.org](http://Tundiproductions.org) or [latchis.com](http://latchis.com).

## 32nd Vermont Summer Book annual & Ephemera Fair

# Books

Postcards

Sunday, August 13th, from 10am - 4pm  
Free Appraisals 11-1  
Free Admission

# Maps

Grace Christian School  
104 Kocher Drive  
Bennington, VT

# Prints

Presented by the Vermont Antiquarian Booksellers Association.  
For more information, contact Karen Austin  
[karenfaustin@gmail.com](mailto:karenfaustin@gmail.com), or call 802-233-3076  
[www.VermontIsBookCountry.com](http://www.VermontIsBookCountry.com)

## Primary Care with Compassion & Convenience



New Patients Welcome

On-site Lab, X-ray, CT scanner, & Pharmacy

**GraceCottage**  
FAMILY HEALTH & HOSPITAL

185 Grafton Rd, Townshend, VT  
[gracecottage.org](http://gracecottage.org) • 802-365-4331



## DICK'S LOCK REPAIR

Richard S. Frost  
802-254-8533  
802-451-6989

Residential - Commercial  
Bonded & Insured

[www.dickslockvt.com](http://www.dickslockvt.com)  
356 S. Main St. Brattleboro, VT 05301

## HOUGHTON SANITARY SERVICE INC.

### SEPTIC TANK SERVICE CLEANING

Commercial & Residential Septic Pumping

Portable Toilet Rentals  
also available

Family Owned  
for 50 years



Call 802-254-9221

Guilford Ctr. Rd. Guilford, VT

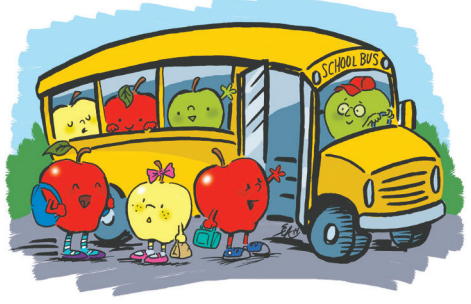


Illustration by Sarah Adam

## Promote your BACK TO SCHOOL offerings in Commons!

August is back to school shopping month!

WSESU school information will be in our featured BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE – Wednesday, August 23rd.

For advertising: 1-888-511-5150 x2 / [lori@commonsnews.org](mailto:lori@commonsnews.org) / [nancy@commonsnews.org](mailto:nancy@commonsnews.org)



COLUMN

# Our quiet superheroes

*Given the dedication and the smiles crossing guards share, I have to believe that their hearts are involved. That these people care deeply in their hearts and want to see others be safe.*

**F**OR THOSE OF US who had the good fortune to grow up in quiet neighborhoods, we saw the roads as a resource and gathering place. A place to play games. An opportunity for fun.

The open space and firm surface provided the raw elements for team sports like baseball and touch football. Basketball hoops on the edge of the road created the conditions for a basketball court.

The curbing and telephone poles offered boundary lines that would contain games we would sometimes invent on our bikes.

A local historian of bicycle travel tells me that before motor vehicles were invented, these conditions were common on many roads in towns and cities across the United States.

But the invention of Henry Ford's Model A and Model T changed all that. Heavy metal vehicles moving fast along our roads rendered them unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists, and the games that were played there.

Motor vehicles transformed our streets from a place to play and talk and congregate to the territory of the fast, the anxious, and sometimes furious. Elevating the risk to our young children. Sometimes when they were simply doing as they were told and walking to school.

SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS HAVE

**PAUL RODRIGUE**, a marriage and family therapist, teaches meditation and brings mindfulness into a therapeutic environment. He is active with Compassionate Brattleboro and in restorative justice.

been the quiet super heroes who have been reducing that risk. For decades, they've been an added feature of our streets during the school year.

Often, they're retired residents whose primary motivation seems to be to give back to the community. They stand as sentinels in some of the more challenging intersections of our town, shepherding children (and adults, too!) while holding the motor vehicles at bay.

They express kindness and compassion by acting in the interests of our children's safety. And in so doing, they help to create the conditions of trust in environments that otherwise would be dangerous to our children.

YEARS AGO, I met two twin brothers who've been doing this work in Brattleboro. In the past year, I've enjoyed traveling through the two intersections that Scott and Stanley Haselton manage. They smile often and always exchange friendly comments with people going by.

■ SEE CROSSING GUARDS, C2

VIEWPOINT



"Othello," Christian Köhler (1809–1861).

# Lies and bamboozling distractions

*These days, politicians who lie about the results of the election are undermining trust in our country while all the time claiming patriotism. The undermining of our social agreement is creating a Shakespearean tragedy.*

**L**ET'S STEP BACK for a moment. Imagine we are social scientists or anthropologists as we take an objective look at the United States. What would we see?

We'd notice that the so-called "great experiment" in democracy has produced some bizarre phenomena.

On the one hand, life in the U.S. for most people is highly agreeable. That doesn't mean most people talk about it that way or even think about it that

**ROBERT FRITZ** ([robertfritz.com](http://robertfritz.com)) works as an author, composer, filmmaker, and management consultant.

way, but then, they have little to compare it to. As Robert Frost wrote, "How are we to write / The Russian novel in America / As long as life goes so untrivially?"

On the other hand, right now, a schism corrupts the fabric of the country.

SOCIAL AGREEMENT is the

collective understanding that governs the behavior of individuals within a specific context. In the United States, social agreement is a rare bird — it happens only when an American team is on the world stage, and then, suddenly, most Americans agree that our team should win.

In Ken Burns's series *The War*, the spirit of social

agreement was a fact of life in those hard times when the very existence of our country was on the line during World War II. Americans would need to pull together, or we would lose.

No one argued on Dec. 7, 1941 that Japan did not bomb Pearl Harbor. Now there is the undermining of the ground Americans stand on, which leads to upheaval, chaos, turmoil, and uncertainty.

The saying "You can fool some of the people all of the

■ SEE TRAGEDY, C2

LETTERS FROM READERS

### Conversation about Guilford development plans lacks one crucial word

**R**E: "Preserving the best of Guilford while planning for the future" [Viewpoint, Jul. 19]:

As a resident of Guilford, I read Jean Eastman's commentary. In chronicling the purchase of a 24-acre piece of land at the entrance of Guilford on Route 5 by GPI (Guilford Preservation Inc.) from John L. Hannigan, a former resident of Guilford (now deceased), Ms. Eastman writes, "GPI immediately conveyed a conservation easement to the Vermont Land Trust on the parcel, thus ensuring its conservation in perpetuity, with a 5.5 acre exception for future development of affordable housing [...]." (Emphasis is mine.)

If one reads the Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions and Public Access Easement document — which, by the way, was executed on Feb. 27, 2003, the very same day as the purchase of the property by GPI from John L. Hannigan — one will notice that Ms. Eastman leaves out a very crucial word when she says the 5.5 acres has been set aside for the future development of affordable housing.

That one crucial word is "senior."

The easement stipulates not once, but three times, in paragraph 7 of the section "Permitted Uses of the Protected Property" that the acreage set aside for housing was to be for "affordable senior housing." (Again, emphasis is mine.)

Since both the deed and the easement were executed on the same day, we can presume Mr. Hannigan was present. (He signed the deed.) It only stands to reason that he approved of the use of the property for "affordable senior housing."

So that would mean that not a few of the units in the project be designated for seniors — thereby giving lip-service to the stipulation of "senior housing" — but that the entire facility be inhabited by seniors, and none other.

I encourage all active participants in this project, and, further, all Guilford residents, to read in its entirety the Hannigan/GPI deed with the accompanying easement and that they all dedicate their efforts to the carrying out of John Hannigan's legally binding wishes — affordable senior housing.

Connie K. Burton  
Guilford

### Brattleboro EMS: corrections where due

**R**ECISION was shortsighted, horrendously wrong bureaucratic expansion" [Letters, Aug. 2]:

In my letter regarding Brattleboro's EMS project, I listed some incorrect costs, and I strongly believe that I have an obligation to clarify things and do apologize for not doing my due diligence.

After a conversation with Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, I am able to speak on two issues where I was inaccurate.

First, based upon the town's EMS projections, it appears that the fiscal year 2025 cash flow will have little impact upon the general fund. I had erroneously predicted large annual losses.

Second, the total cost to implement the EMS is predicted to be in the \$1.3 million to \$1.9 million range. I had stated \$1 million in my letter.

There are two possibilities on funding the startup costs. The first is using the stimulus funds, which currently has a balance of \$2.7 million. This would completely fund the startup and leave money available for other projects. The other would be to bond the startup, leaving all the

\$2.7 million for other projects, but obligating the town to debt payments.

As I stated before, I question whether this whole EMS project is more than our town can handle. With seven new employees and the huge startup costs, is Brattleboro biting off more than it can chew? Can a much cheaper plan be worked out?

I urge the Selectboard to carefully weigh all the options to make a decision for the present and future benefit of Brattleboro.

Hugh W. Barber  
Brattleboro

### Would it be better for Brattleboro to use ARPA funds for other capital projects?

**T**own staff have estimated the startup costs for a Brattleboro Fire Department municipal ambulance service to be between \$1.3 million and \$1.9 million. The Selectboard would like to use one-time ARPA funds to pay for these costs.

I want to say at the start that I deeply appreciate our BFD. They are skilled, they are very hard-working, and they risk their lives for us when they fight fires. They have also been skilled EMS first responders

when Rescue was last contracted to do the ambulance transport for \$285,000 a year.

If, in the future, the town were to hire an independent contractor for ambulances, the BFD would probably continue to be the EMS first responders, as this is a service that most fire departments provide to the community since there are many fewer fire calls now throughout Vermont.

So, my question for Brattleboro taxpayers is: Do we need the BFD to become an ambulance provider or would it be better for the town to use the ARPA funds for other needed capital projects?

Some of you may remember that there were more than 40 projects that the town staff listed as valuable capital projects for these one-time funds.

In addition, I have heard some townspeople mention the desirability of a police substation downtown so the police can be more responsive to crime in that area.

We also know that the pool at Living Memorial Park, used by so many children and families, is in dire need of repairs or replacement — a potential cost of thousands, if not millions.

Do we really want to use this huge amount of money for an ambulance transport system that will also require annual

operating expenses that will be significantly higher than the BFD required in the past?

Judy Davidson  
Brattleboro

### Time is running out to weigh in on Brattleboro Selectboard's EMS decision

**W**hen an issue is discussed for a long time, one might experience fatigue. Or, as a prominent member of this community wrote to me, "Can we drop this issue? It happened. Let's please move on."

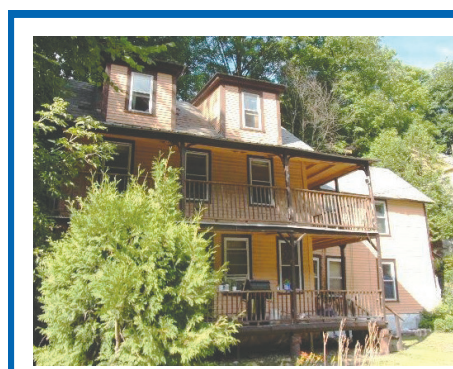
But as Yogi Berra accurately predicted: "It ain't over till it's over."

In point of fact, the Selectboard still needs to make a decision in about a month — on Tuesday, Sept. 19 — as to how emergency medical services will be delivered in Brattleboro.

If you've been studying this, a few points are clear:

- The town had a relationship with Rescue for 56 years. It was bumpy at times and personalities are a challenge, but we, as entities, are bigger than that. We must restore the relationship. We are part of a region served by Rescue.
- Rescue and its employees care about the people of this

■ SEE LETTERS, C2



### Great opportunity for starting or expanding your investment portfolio.

- Good rental income and affordable property.
- Nice location.
- Good parking for tenants and private porches for unit 1 and for unit 2.
- Minimal yard maintenance.
- Fully rented.

**EXCLUSIVE: \$145,000**



Ask for Sue  
802-257-7979 x 2

255 Western Ave, Brattleboro, VT  
[www.bellvillerealty.com](http://www.bellvillerealty.com)



Letters

town. This is not just a slogan. See for yourself: there is an Open House at Rescue on Saturday, Aug. 26, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

• Fire-based EMS for Brattleboro in 2023 is more expensive. A squandering of ARPA funds that could be better used elsewhere, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. A gamble based on (maybe) some revenue from insurance reimbursement. And not the right decision for today.

Even the International Association of Fire Chiefs, a major proponent of fire-based EMS, advised: "The majority of agencies across the United States are fire-based EMS systems, though this doesn't mean this is necessarily the best system for your community."

The Selectboard — its five members — will make this decision, and time is running out. They will hold one more meeting for public input on Tuesday, Aug. 15, and a public forum planned for Tuesday, Sept. 12.

You can also reach out directly to your Selectboard members. You can learn who they are and how to contact them at [Brattleboro.org](http://Brattleboro.org). Do it now!

Robert A. Oeser  
Brattleboro

Disputing causes of homelessness

RE: "We need more housing that's more affordable for people who need it" [News, Aug. 2]:

State Treasurer Michael Pieciak thinks high rent causes homelessness. Typical of a state treasurer to think like that!

Homelessness has many causes, but the majority of them are discrimination, mental crisis, and substance disorders — all of which require compassion, trust, and intensive prolonged social services.

Building new housing will destroy the natural habitat and bring in tax revenue only, which should be obvious coming from the source. There is no correlation to investors building housing and ending homelessness, so let's stop spreading that disinformation!

Deborah Geis  
Brattleboro

Project planners should offer more information

RE: "Opposition to Putney affordable housing project is not about opposition to affordable housing" [Letters, Aug. 2]:

I found Maureen Tadlock's letter to be interesting and respectful. It seems to me that the controversy around the affordable housing project in Putney is really more about the size, scope, and location than it is about whether to create some.

Perhaps if the planners put out more illustrations of the footprint of these buildings and the parking in relation to what is already there, people would be able to better form opinions.

I regularly read the bulletin boards at the Putney Food Co-op, the Putney Public Library, and the Putney General Store, and yet all this managed to slip my notice until I was presented with what I'm told is a done deal.

Well-meaning liberals ascribe ignorance or bad motives to those who disagree with their point of view, and I find their willingness to do so disconcerting, to say the least. They might think about checking the self-righteous arrogance at the door. After all, that's what created Trump's base!

Joseph A. Valaske  
Putney

State Supreme Court decision brings 1.2-acre parcel closer to conservation in Putney

RE: "Vt. Supreme Court rejects challenge to Putney housing" [News, Jul. 26]:

I write to highlight the importance to Green Commons of Vermont, Inc. of the Vermont Supreme Court's decision giving the green light to Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT) to purchase land for proposed mixed-income housing units in Putney on property across from the Putney Food Co-op.

Green Commons of Vermont, a Putney-based nonprofit, is now one step closer to purchasing the portion of the property now occupied by the Putney Community Garden and the Sunday Putney Farmers

FROM SECTION FRONT

Market.

WWHT and Green Commons of Vermont have worked closely throughout the lengthy planning process for the housing project to determine if housing and community space can coexist on the now-open piece of property. The organizations agreed that splitting the parcel into two parts will address Putney's need for both housing and green space in the village.

Once WWHT signs its purchase and sale agreement for the entire parcel (expected in September) from the property's current owners, the Putney Gateway Associates, WWHT will sell a 1.2-acre piece to Green Commons of Vermont. This land, actively used since 2010, will be preserved for community uses.

WWHT's two planned buildings containing 25 units of housing will be built to the south of the garden/market section of the property.

Green Commons of Vermont is partnering with Vermont community and conservation nonprofits to secure the funds needed to purchase and steward the parcel. Local public fundraising will also play a key part in preserving and improving this open, accessible green space.

The organization's directors will seek community input and participation once the property is conveyed by WWHT.

LOUISE GARFIELD, TOM DESHAIES, ALEXIS DOSHAS, DIRECTORS  
Green Commons of Vermont, Inc.

In support of Dover library director

John Flores was the librarian at the Dover Free Library for 24 years. He has been a dedicated community servant, putting on creative and interesting programs and thoughtfully buying books locally whenever possible.

In June, John was fired from the library with no cause. After 24 years, he was escorted out of his former workplace like a criminal. No notice. No "thank you for your service." Just walked out as if he was a thief.

In the news article in the *Brattleboro Reformer*, a recently resigned trustee echoed John's feeling about the library board: that they wanted to micromanage the library. The board has a job, but it is not to argue with the staff about, for example, the physical arrangement of the library partitions.

It is curious that a board in a small community would think it a great idea to purchase from Amazon, a company that has contributed to countless small businesses' failures, with an impact on town centers.

As a bookseller, I frequently sells books to area libraries, at a 25% discount on almost all purchases. I have researched Amazon pricing and have concluded that despite the vast variety of discounts there, we are offering prices that are completely comparable in the aggregate.

John confirmed to me that the story in the *Reformer* was correct — that his firing was likely a personal vendetta.

I am outraged that a hard-working, creative, and loved employee can be fired in this manner with no consequences to the board. So are the co-signers of this letter. We are Windham County residents who work in the field of books.

John was planning to retire



JEFF POTTER COMMONS FILE PHOTO

In this 2013 photo, Brattleboro crossing guard Dave Wheelock talks about pedestrian safety at the intersection of Union Street, Cedar Street, and Western Avenue.

Crossing guards

FROM SECTION FRONT

I don't know much about the Haselton twins. I'm sure they have lives both varied and complex. Perhaps even lives that challenge their ability to be compassionate under all circumstances.

But they show up all the time on these streets and smile and express care and kindness.

They make it safer for our kids to manage through the difficult network of streets that weave through this town.

They make it easier for our kids to trust that they'll be kept safe and protected by the older generation.

THEY'RE NOT ALONE in this work. The other crossing guards do the same. Regardless of the weather or the season. They show up and

make these streets a little more humane.

All of them. That's a gift. I don't know what motivates people to do this work. Motivation can be multiple in its sources and expectations.

But given the dedication and the smiles I see shared each morning, I have to believe that their hearts are involved. That these people care deeply in their hearts and want to see others be safe.

They help nurture our next generation. They give back. Just some among the many in our community who create the conditions for a compassionate community.

A big thank you to the many crossing guards in our town.

*Compassion Story of the Month: With Brattleboro voting overwhelmingly to become part of the international Charter for Compassion, the Reformer and The Commons have agreed to publish a "Compassion Story of the Month." This is the 73rd. Submissions, from Brattleboro area residents, for future publication, not to exceed 650 words, should be emailed to: [compassionstory@gmail.com](mailto:compassionstory@gmail.com) or mailed to: Compassion Story of the Month, PO Box 50, Marlboro, VT 05344. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. Earlier submitted stories will automatically be considered in subsequent months.*

from this job after 25 years This firing was strictly an act of cruelty, something we are seeing far too much of at this time.

Firing John was likely not done with the input and support of the community, and he should be rehired with back pay immediately. An apology would not hurt, either.

Nancy Braus  
Guilford

This letter was also signed by Ann Zimmerman (Guilford), Clea Boone (Marlboro), Fhar Meiss (Brattleboro), and Sequoia Salasin (Brattleboro).

Understanding the causes of homelessness

RE: "We need more housing that's more affordable for people who need it" [News, Aug. 2]:

I just wanted to say how great I thought the article about homelessness by Joyce Marcel was in the Aug. 2 issue. I've been troubled by this issue for a long time.

The explanation by Gregg Colburn makes so much sense — and it makes clear why Vermont has such a high rate of homelessness. Of course there aren't any easy solutions, but at least we can maybe start to look at different ways to tackle it.

The Commons continues to do

such outstanding work!

Kim Noble  
Brattleboro

Retreat Farm gives back to nonprofits

This is a shout-out to the wonderful people at the Retreat Farm, especially the new executive director, Kristin Sullivan, and the director of development, Jenny Crowell.

For the first Food Truck Roundup of the season,

the Retreat Farm made the Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP) the first beneficiary of the organization's Collective Impact Program.

The Retreat Farm has donated part of their admission tickets to local nonprofits all summer! We at CASP are greatly appreciative. Thanks to the Retreat Farm for giving back to our community.

COMMUNITY ASYLUM SEEKERS PROJECT,  
Brattleboro

John Hatton

Tragedy

FROM SECTION FRONT

time" is more true than we might have previously thought. According to a CNN poll, "All told, 69% of Republicans and Republican-leaning say Biden's win was not legitimate."

How is that possible? When Donald Trump said he could shoot someone on 5th Avenue and his followers would still support him, I thought that he was ignoring the innate fairness of Americans. I have to admit, he knew something about the dark side of our country that I was unaware of.

Until now.

LET'S PUT THOSE who claim the big lie, that somehow Trump actually won the 2020 election, into three separate groups.

Of course, there is Trump, a group unto himself. He is obsessed with avoiding losing. Even when he plays golf, according to some of his caddies, he cheats so he can seem like he won.

The second group knows that Biden actually won, but they have an opportunistic reason to say the opposite. These are politicians and right-wing media outlets. Their motivation is crystal clear: to stay in power and to make money.

Power and greed are Shakespearean. Think of Othello. Othello marries Desdemona, a beautiful and wealthy Venetian woman who is much younger than he.

Why, in the story, does Shakespeare create her as rich, young, and beautiful? Because she loves Othello and is not after his money, power, or position. How can Othello be convinced that she is betraying him? Through the treachery of Iago, his aide, who strokes his master's jealousy and passion until Othello kills the thing he loves most — Desdemona.

These days, politicians who lie about the results of the election are lingo, undermining trust in our country while all the time claiming patriotism. They are, in fact and deed, anti-American, because they do not want America to work well. If it did, they would have no claim on power.

And then, there is the most interesting group, the true believers. They actually do think that Trump won and Biden lost.

They are the modern version of Othello and, in the end, they may just find their way to killing what they love most: the U.S.A. as Desdemona.

We are talking about a third of the population. That means that two-thirds have a fix on reality. You can't fool all of the people all of the time.

But what are we looking at?

ALL CULTS HAVE this in common: They discredit reality as a standard of measurement.

The cult leader tells his followers: *Don't trust your perceptions, don't talk to your parents, don't research facts, just listen to what I'm telling you. Don't believe what you're seeing. Believe what I'm telling you to believe.*

The great Kenneth Clark, British art historian and broadcaster, said: "Authoritarian governments don't like dictionaries. They live by lies and bamboozling abstractions. They can't afford to have words accurately defined."

One of the ways that reality is distorted these days is by changing the meaning of words or inventing words that are designed to — as Clark so eloquently said — bamboozle.

A society that adopts truth for truth's sake has a future. A society that is incapable of standing on reality in a truthful way has a questionable outlook.

**LAWTON Floor Design**  
LOCALLY OWNED  
"DOING IT RIGHT FOR DECADES"  
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

CERAMIC TILE  
HARDWOOD  
CARPET  
BAMBOO  
VINYL  
CORK  
AREA RUGS  
MARMOLEUM

OUR OWN IN-HOUSE  
INSTALLATION TEAM

972 PUTNEY RD. UNIT 3, BRATTLEBORO  
LAWTONFLOORDESIGN.COM • 802.254.9303

**The Commons**  
is Southern Vermont's  
go to source for news  
and views!

Average print circulation  
**8,000**  
and a strong digital following,  
equals weekly total reach of  
**20,000**

**32 towns**  
**260 locations**  
in Windham County,  
and neighboring counties  
in NH and MA.

To submit news, email  
[news@commonsnews.org](mailto:news@commonsnews.org)  
To advertise, email  
[lori@commonsnews.org](mailto:lori@commonsnews.org),  
or [nancy@commonsnews.org](mailto:nancy@commonsnews.org)

**fearless computing**

Working from home?  
Teleconferencing?  
Just plain old  
computer hell?

For 22 years, I've provided all kinds of tech support to many households & businesses in the Brattleboro area. Work done on-site, remotely or with safe drop-offs.

Serving the Brattleboro area since the turn of the century  
[WWW.FEARLESSCOMPUTINGVT.COM](http://WWW.FEARLESSCOMPUTINGVT.COM)  
**(802) 387-0058**  
Discounts available to seniors, essential workers and anyone who needs a break



LONDONDERRY

# For one restaurant, it's three strikes but definitely not out

## Garden Market, Café and Gallery has withstood a half century of rising above washouts in 1973, 2011, and again this summer

By Kevin O'Connor  
VtDigger

LONDONDERRY—When Judith Platt married her husband, Tom, in 1970, they chose Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" as their wedding song for its vow of rising above any torrent of misfortune.

Going on to open this town's Garden Market, Café and Gallery, the couple didn't foresee the lyrics would flow so literally.

Just before the Main Street business debuted in 1973, a flood soaked everything and scared off the hired help. Platt, then a new mother working as a registered nurse, turned to *The Joy of Cooking* and taught herself culinary arts.

"The quality of the food was beyond wonderful," one diner wrote on [tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com) by the summer of 2011. "The ambiance and physical setting are a life's work in the combination of fine art, fine food, gardening and creative detailed architecture to soothe the soul and comfort the traveling weary."

Enter that year's Tropical Storm Irene. When Platt makes cashew cream — the base for a vegan au poivre sauce of porcini mushrooms, shallots, green peppercorns, and brandy — she usually tosses two handfuls of nuts into a blender with a cup of water. But on Aug. 28, 2011, Mother Nature added hundreds of thousands of gallons more from the West River before puréeing it all into a surreal soup hopping with frogs, turtles, and snakes.

The price: \$800,000. The Platts, believing they had invested too much economically and emotionally to retreat, spent years rooting their business' two buildings on concrete pads, replacing wood floors with tile, and raising most of the inner workings above flood level.

Enter this year's July 10 storm on the eve of their 53rd wedding anniversary.

The good news: Having taken flood mitigation steps, the Platts had no basements to bail out and fewer warped planks and wires to replace.

And the bad: They still must strip away drywall and sanitize everything else — a \$44,000 expense before calculating the costs for new furniture and appliances.

And so the 70-something couple faces a decision: Retire with few tangibles of the past, or rebuild for an anything-but-solid

future?

"This has been a labor of love," Platt said this week. "We could take a buyout from the government, but it would be pitance compared to what we've put into it."

And so the Platts are starting again, just like when Irene swept away all their records and recipes, requiring the chef to reconstruct her life's work from scratch.

"You don't forget how to make mashed potatoes," she said.

Zabaglione Italian dessert cream — a custardy froth that requires a precise balance of egg yolks, sugar, and wine — is a different story.

That's why the Platts will first work to reopen their less-damaged market in three to four months, then focus on restoring the more-ravaged café and gallery after that.

Speaking with Vermont's congressional delegation during a July 15 flood assessment, the couple stressed the need for more mitigation measures for both individual properties and the town as a whole — starting with the state-recommended removal of the nearby Williams Dam.

"Londonderry is really hurting," she said after. "We just lost our pharmacy. The lawyer moved out. The real estate agent moved out. Several businesses have come and gone, and there's no moderately priced housing for local workers."

### 'It's not a dream. It's been done.'

To help the Platts, friends have organized an online fundraiser ([bit.ly/726-garden](https://bit.ly/726-garden)) to pay for expenses not covered by insurance.

"In the coming days and weeks, we will be working diligently to restore our property with the intention of returning to business and serving the community as quickly as possible," the couple has posted on the Garden Café and Gallery website ([gardencafeandgallery.com](https://gardencafeandgallery.com)).

The Platts will start by seeking a permit and funding for the type of flood control wall that protected the town of Lincoln's Burnham Hall community center ([bit.ly/726-floodwall](https://bit.ly/726-floodwall)) from nearly 4 feet of stormwater during Irene.

"It's not just a dream. It's been done," she said. "This could be an example for the future. It's reinventing yourself and evolving into what's needed."

## Retreat Farm hosts Community Days celebration

BRATTLEBORO—On July 30, Retreat Farm hosted the first Community Days to celebrate the locals and regular visitors who call the farm home. One highlight of the event was the animal meet-and-greet.

Animal Care Manager Emma Recchi provided a special opportunity for visitors to get up close and personal with Carlos the Ox, Sassy the Donkey, and the farm's herd of goats, including Pip, Trouble, Sundae, Cinnamon, with Noon and Meridien visiting from Big Picture Farm.

"The farm is a platform for bringing different communities together. This place means so many different things to people.

Community Days is a way to celebrate everyone who has a special relationship with the farm," Community Outreach Manager Jen Zakrzewski said in a news release.

More than 300 people attended the festivities, with free lemonade, lawn games, Far Out giant bubbles, and a trail scavenger hunt. Thanks to support from M & T Bank, Retreat Farm will host another Community Day on Sunday, Aug. 27, from noon to 4 p.m.

For more information on Community Days, and to register for the animal meet-and-greet, visit [retreatfarm.org](https://retreatfarm.org).

If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right.

—M. S. SWAMINATHAN



Judith and Tom Platt assess recent flood damage to their Garden Market, Café and Gallery in Londonderry.

KEVIN O'CONNOR/VTDIGGER.ORG

JOON PAHK

## THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

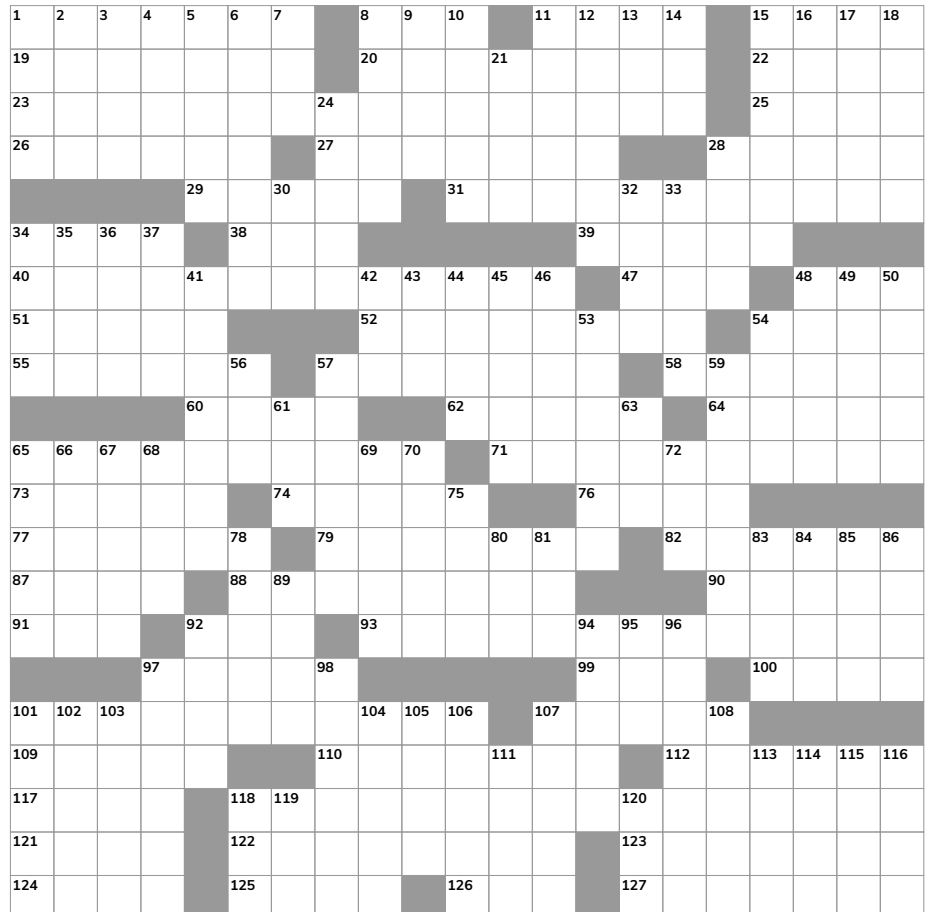
"Tea for Two and Two for Tea"

### Across

- Obliquely
- Super Mario Bros. console
- Part of BA
- World's most populous island
- Ari of NPR
- Book versions
- Profess
- Fall flavoring used in winter?
- Attire
- Gas and Maine, for two
- One covering the spread?
- Rene of "Thor: The Dark World"
- Ruin the ending of
- Angry like an unrepentant critic?
- Applications
- World banking org.
- TV host Aisha
- What iconoclasts were known for?
- Jaylen Brown's org.
- Owens
- Head covering
- Empirical scientific data
- Timbuktu's nation
- Fail to be
- Hard rock
- Fit for consumption
- Poet Khayyam
- Top story
- Poet who wrote, "April is the cruelest month"
- Chess match ending?
- Nebraska river, to the creatures that live in it?
- Pain relief brand
- "Smallfoot" creatures
- Landed
- Where to spend loonies
- Finally registers
- Pep rally cheer
- Auth. unknown
- Fleeter of foot
- Missouri S&T college town
- Milieu for Mars
- Singer Carly \_\_\_ Jepsen
- Really try to hit someone with your head?
- Department store chain
- Fictional anchorman Burgundy
- "\_\_\_ and the Last Dragon"
- Get a Manhattan ingredient exactly right?
- Stand-up great Bill
- Host
- \_\_\_ cheetah (subspecies native to Iran)
- Flower stems
- Epitome of ease
- Play a smiley-shaped mini-golf course?
- Lean
- "Uh... sure"
- Pioneering aviator Bessie
- Number for one
- "Clueless" protagonist
- Jerk
- Supervisor of passengers

### Down

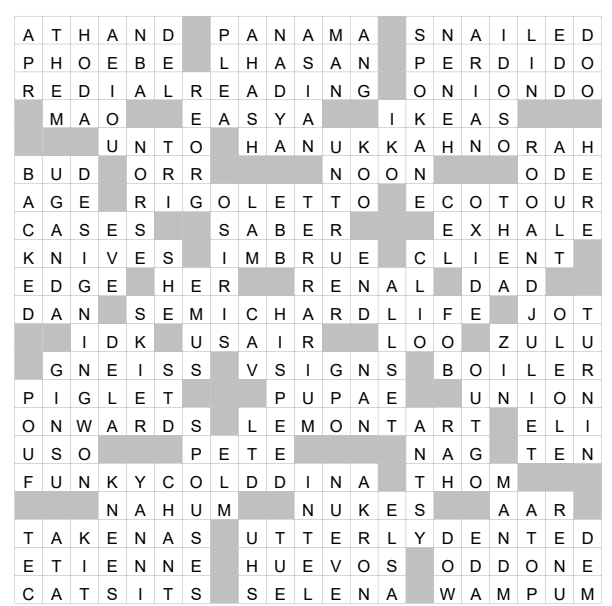
- Egyptian cobras
- Closed
- "\_\_\_ Sutra" (70-Down text)
- Datebook entry: Abbr.
- LeBron XX's, e.g.
- Actor Glover
- A billion years
- Himalayan nation
- Menu with cut and paste
- Attack dog command
- Was under the weather
- Find hilarious
- "Animal Kingdom" channel
- Dir. opposite NNW
- Mesoamerican wildcat
- Stop talking like a pirate?
- Poetry
- Shady garden
- Prefix for a trillion
- "Everything Everywhere All at Once" genre
- Mother of Zeus
- Startled text
- Bring into agreement
- "Three Tall Women" playwright
- Meat-inspecting agcy.
- San Antonio baller
- The Emerald Isle
- Comics legend Lee
- "My bad"
- Mal de \_\_\_
- Director DuVernay
- "Suits" actress Torres
- "Untold Power: The Fascinating Rise and Complex Legacy of First Lady \_\_\_ Wilson"
- Argument
- Behavior pattern
- Apportion
- Seven, in Spanish
- Marcus's retail partner
- Kunis of "Bad Moms"
- "Am I oversharing?"
- Hall of Fame QB Bob
- Oscar winner for 2022's "Pinocchio"
- "\_\_\_ ideas?"
- Animation frame
- Hyacinth \_\_\_ (large blue parrot)
- Hoops great Beard
- Operatic hero, often
- Figure skater Lysacek
- 1980s Blue Jays ace Dave
- See 3-Down
- Guinea \_\_\_ (non-porcine mammal)



©2023 Joon Pahk

### Last issue's solution

"The Me-Less Crossword"



©2023 Brendan Emmett Guigley

PUBLICATION OF THE COMMONS CROSSWORD IS UNDERWRITTEN BY

## BRATTLEBORO TIRE

802-254-5411 • 558 Putney Road, Brattleboro

LOCALLY OWNED FOR OVER 46 YEARS  
**WE DO TIRES AND ALL UNDER CAR SERVICE**

**OIL CHANGE**  
FULL SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE **\$74.95**  
\*up to 5 qts

**PLUS FREE SAFETY DRIVING CHECK OVER**  
INCLUDES 30 POINT COURTESY CHECK  
• Fluids • Belts • Hoses • Steering • Brakes  
• Lights & Much More Upon Request

\*(\$3.00 disposal fee) Most cars. Special diesel oil & filter extra. Call for an appointment. Offer ends 8/31/23. No other discounts apply.

**WE SELL & SERVICE ALL MAJOR TIRE BRANDS...**  
CALL US WITH YOUR NEEDS!



Courtesy cars or rides always available at no cost

VT State Inspection Check your sticker to see if it's due!

## HELP WANTED

Top pay and benefits.  
Come join our team!

The weather is HOT!!!!

**CALL TO SERVICE YOUR A/C**



**COLUMN** | Sports Roundup

# Local players help Vermont win Shrine football game

With the help of several local players, Vermont snapped a three-game losing streak in the 70th Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl with a 28-6 win over New Hampshire on Aug. 5 at Vermont State University Castleton's Dave Wolk Stadium.

Vermont had a slim 7-6 lead late in the second quarter when Essex defensive back Tanner Robbins picked off a pass by Concord quarterback Zach Doward and returned it 73 yards for a touchdown.

That was the second New Hampshire pass that was intercepted by the Vermont defense in the first half, as Robbins also picked off Doward in the drive that preceded his pick-six.

Vermont's defense was just as stout in the second half of the game, shutting out the Granite Staters. Jamison Nystrom of Bellows Falls, playing as a defensive back, recovered a New Hampshire fumble and had two interceptions.

On offense, Brattleboro receiver Tristan Evans was part of the wildest play of the game. Evans caught a pass from Champlain Valley quarterback Max Destito, who then lateraled the ball back to Colchester's Caleb Levesseur, who raced down the right sideline for a touchdown.

The "hook-and-ladder" play, a play that Colchester has been known to run with success, worked to perfection thanks to the teamwork of Destito, Evans, and Levesseur. It served as the finishing touch on Vermont's first victory in the Shrine game since 2018. New Hampshire still has a 50-17-2 record in the series (there was no game in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Evans finished with two receptions for 38 yards for Vermont. Bellows Falls running back Caden Haskell, who was one of the co-captains of the Vermont squad, was the leading rusher with 34 yards on nine carries.

Both Evans and Haskell were in the starting line-up for Vermont, as well as Bellows Falls offensive lineman Jake Moore. Nystrom was a starter at defensive back and returned one punt for 18 yards, and BF's Dillon Perry also saw action in the game on special teams and as a linebacker.

It was also a big day for Windsor coach Greg Balch, who won his second Shrine game. Balch was also the winning coach in Vermont's 24-13 win over New Hampshire in 2018.

Of course, the biggest winners in this game are the local Shriner's Children's Hospitals, for which this game has served as a fundraiser since 1954. Since the game's inception in 1954, it has raised nearly \$5 million to support the Shriner's hospitals in Boston and Springfield, Massachusetts and Montreal, Quebec.

## Rec. Dept. offers youth soccer programs

The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department is now accepting registrations for youth soccer programs for kids from pre-Kindergarten to sixth-grade.

Pre-Kindergarten soccer for



**RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT**, deputy editor of this newspaper, has written this column since 2010 and has covered sports in Windham County since the 1980s. Readers can send him sports information at [news@commonsnews.org](mailto:news@commonsnews.org).

children ages 4 and 5 years old will be offered from 5 to 5:45 p.m. on Wednesdays, beginning Sept. 13 and continuing until Oct. 11. This program will be held at the Lower Field at Living Memorial Park. Children must be 4 years old by registration. Pre-Kindergarten soccer has a limit of 16 participants.

The fee is \$25 for Brattleboro residents and \$40 for non-residents and includes a t-shirt. Basic soccer skills will be taught in a fun format. Shin guards are required, and sneakers or cleats are recommended.

Kindergarten soccer will also meet on the Lower Field on Mondays from Sept. 11 to Oct. 16, with no session on Oct. 9. The fee is \$25 for Brattleboro residents and \$40 for non-residents. They will offer two options, from 4 to 4:45 p.m., and 5 to 5:45 p.m., with a maximum of 15 participants per group. Shin guards are required for all games and practices, and don't forget to bring a full water bottle.

Youth soccer for grades 1-6 will also be offered, starting Sept. 11. The fee is \$35 for Brattleboro residents and \$50 for non-residents. Teams will have one practice and one game a week. The fifth- and sixth-grade teams will be participating in the Tri-County League and will have games against neighboring towns. Shin guards are required for all games and practices, and don't forget the water bottle.

Register online at [register1.vermontsystems.com/wbwc/vtbrattleboro.wsc/splash.html](http://register1.vermontsystems.com/wbwc/vtbrattleboro.wsc/splash.html). In-person registration at the Gibson-Aiken Center main office is available Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. There is a \$10 fee for late registration, beginning

**The A Team, from left, Belinda Dellabough, Chris Hart, Theresa Terault, and Sandy Clark, were among the 103 golfers who participated in the annual Youth Services benefit golf tournament at Brattleboro Country Club.**



DOUGLAS MACPHEE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS



DOUGLAS MACPHEE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

**Bellows Falls defensive back Jamison Nystrom, right, runs by Matt Cleary of Plymouth as he returns a punt during the Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl on Aug. 5 in Castleton.**

Sept. 1. Anyone registering on or after Sept. 8 will be added to a wait list and will be permitted to register for the program only if space allows.

For more information, call the Gibson Aiken Office at 802-254-5808 or visit the Recreation & Parks page at [brattleboro.org](http://brattleboro.org).

## Youth Services golf tourney raises more than \$20,000

With 103 local golfers and strong corporate support, the Youth Services' 38th Annual Golf Tournament was a rousing success, generating more than \$20,000 to help underwrite the agency's programs.

The charity tournament at the Brattleboro Country Club (BCC), was presented by G.S. Precision and NorthStar on July 26 on a warm and humid 85-degree day, one of few this summer without rain showers.

The Prentiss Smith team of Bob Cullinane, Jerry Carbone, Prentiss Smith, and Tom Bedell won First Gross, with the 802 Credit Union team of Ethan Grimes, Amanda Rosenbeck, Sean Gammon, and Steve

Adams winning First Net. The Dimension-Cold River Bridge JV team of Joel Petrie, Chad Contaldi, Jim Hollar and Tom Lentocho took Second Gross with team of Susan Buhmann, Joel Robinson, Paul Soccoccio, and Loren Forrister taking Second Net.

Nanette Stevens won the prize for the Women's Longest Drive. Susan Buhmann won the prize for Women's Closest to the Pin. In the Men's Division, Griffin Waryas took the prize for Men's Longest Drive. Rich Cogliano took Men's Closest to the Line with Amos Ireland winning Men's Closest to the Pin.

Youth Services' Executive Director Russell Bradbury-Carl and former board member Timm Harris ran a Putting Contest, won by Melanie Boese, which raised \$243 for the agency.

The Helicopter Golf Ball Drop took place for the 11th year, thanks to the Renaud Bros. Inc. helicopter, piloted by Mike Renaud. Nearly all 100 balls, priced at \$100 each, were sold this year, according to organizers, who credit Karen Bergstrom of Belle Notte, who

singlehandedly sold the vast majority of the balls to patrons of the Bella Notte bar.

A bucket of golf balls was dropped from 20 feet on the BCC fairway, and the winner of the \$3,000 cash prize is Tami Purcell of Berkley & Veller Greenwood Country Realtors with ball #29, winning for the second year in a row, only 32 inches from the pin. Second closest was ball #75 which was 43 inches from the pin and Jim Woodberry's ball #77 which was 49 inches from the pin.

All proceeds from the tournament, which annually nets close to \$20,000, will help support Youth Services' programs. For more information or to get involved in Youth Services, call 802-257-0361 or visit [youthservicesinc.org](http://youthservicesinc.org).

## Brattleboro Ski Hill seeks to upgrade its snowmaking

As we start seeing more winters with less snow, snowmaking has become crucial to ensuring there is a ski and snowboard season in Vermont.

The volunteers who operate Brattleboro Ski Hill at Living Memorial Park knows this well, and are in the midst of a fundraising effort to upgrade its snowmaking equipment. They started a GoFundMe page at [gofundme.com/f/the-brattleboro-ski-hill-snowmaker-fund](http://gofundme.com/f/the-brattleboro-ski-hill-snowmaker-fund) and, as of this week, have raised nearly \$3,000 toward their \$10,000 goal.

According to their GoFundMe page, Living Memorial Park Snow Sports Inc., the nonprofit group that has run the hill for the past 26 years, says that the snowmaking equipment it purchased second-hand in 2006 dates back to the 1990s and "is getting very old, tired, and expensive to maintain." They are down to two operative units and say they "need to make a significant capital investment in additional equipment."

Snowmaking made a big difference in the 2022-23 season. The hill was able to open on Christmas Eve and offer a total of 68 days of skiing and riding. They say that their top focus is

"to be able to provide the level of skiing and riding next season as we just did, but without a third (or ideally a fourth or fifth) gun, this won't be possible."

To keep costs down, they are currently looking at second-hand equipment from other ski areas around New England. They want to be able to continue to offer \$5 daily lift tickets and provide local skiers and riders an inexpensive entree into snow sports, and hope to do so with continued community support.

If you prefer to make a donation to the campaign by mail, you may send your cash or checks payable to LMPSS Inc. to P.O. Box 1945, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

## Senior bowling roundup

Week 14 of the spring/summer season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Aug. 3 saw Five Pins (50-20) have their third straight 5-0 week to stay in first place. Turkeys and Slo Movers (both 43-27) are tied for second place, followed by No Splits (42.5-27.5), Skippers (40.5-29.5), Stayin' Alive (31.5-38.5), The Bowlers (31-39), Wrecking Crew (29.5-40.5), and High Rollers (27-43).

Diane Cooke had the women's high handicap game (238), while Vicki Butynski had the high handicap series (677). Chuck Adams had the men's high handicap game (244), while John Laamanen had the high handicap series (643). Skippers had the high team handicap game (888), while Wrecking Crew had the high team handicap series (2,543).

Chuck Adams led the men's scratch scoring with a 635 series that featured games of 244, 202, and 189, while Robert Rigby had a 512 series with a 193 game and Marty Adams had a 504 series with a 185 game.

Butynski had the women's high scratch series (464) that featured games of 162 and 160, while Cooke had the high scratch game (171) and Pam Greenblatt rolled a 165.

**Register Now for Fall Sports & Activities**

**Flag football, Pre-K through 6th-grade soccer, field hockey, chess & gymnastics**

Register in person at the Gibson-Aiken Center Monday-Friday, 9am - Noon / 1pm - 4:30pm.  
\$10 late fee for late registration starting September 1st.  
Late registrations starting September 8th, must register at the Gibson-Aiken Center.  
For program info call 802-254-5808, visit our Facebook page, or visit [brattleboro.org](http://brattleboro.org).

**REGISTER ONLINE**

Scan the QR code or visit [rebrand.ly/fall-registration](http://rebrand.ly/fall-registration)