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PUTNEY

Foes of planned housing project return to court

A third appeal of the approval of a 25-unit housing plan is set to be heard Nov. 27, with backing from a new nonprofit

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

PUTNEY—A third appeal to the proposed the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT) 25-unit, mixed-income, residential rental housing project on Alice Holway Drive has been filed in Vermont Superior Court.

A hearing date has been set for Monday, Nov. 27 at 3 p.m. via remote video conference. It is expected that next steps will

be defined at that hearing. Appellants Laura Campbell and Deborah Lazar, represented by attorney Harold B. Stevens, oppose the Environmental and Superior courts' previous opinions, effectively dismissing their prior two appeals.

The new appeal, filed on Oct. 31, challenges the former court opinions that the lots in question are contiguous and whether the WWHT project does, in fact, "satisfy the definition of

■ SEE THIRD LAWSUIT, A3



The TOUGHEST JOB

Leo Good, Martha Good, and Anna Schwan would sit together in a circle, listen to music, hold hands and move to the beat. Victor and Julie Good cared for their parents in their home, and Victor has written a book about the family's journey.

COURTESY PHOTO

SEVCA bids goodbye to Good Buy stores

Nonprofit will close remaining stores, in Bellows Falls and Springfield, in December but has not elaborated on the decision or on future voucher program

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—After more than a half century of operation, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) has announced that it is closing its Good Buy thrift stores in Bellows Falls and Springfield.

The recent decision by the anti-poverty nonprofit's board of directors takes effect Dec. 16.

The stores will remain open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., until then but will no longer accept any donations for the stores as they sell the remaining inventory at a 20% discount.

SEVCA says it is actively working to develop new partnerships with thrift stores throughout Windham and Windsor counties to continue its voucher program, which lets community members in need access free clothing, furniture, and housewares in their neighborhoods.

Agency officials did not respond to daily telephone calls from *The Commons* over the past two weeks to clarify what these new partnerships might look like.

According to the nonprofit's public financial filings with the Internal Revenue Service, the thrift store brought in \$202,782 in 2021, compared to \$263,560 the previous year and \$188,508 in 2019.

In the Rockingham area over the last several years, other major thrift-store-type resources have

disappeared.

The Oh Zone, a popular source of inexpensive used furniture, appliances, books, housewares, and clothing in Bellows Falls, closed its doors several years ago.

More recently, the Rockingham Recycling Center in Westminster closed its popular free section when the COVID-19 epidemic struck. People brought furniture, household items, tools, books, and more, with some limited exceptions, that other recycling patrons could take.

The exchange remains closed, despite petitions calling for the town to reopen it.

■ SEE GOOD BUY STORES, A2

A Hinsdale author chronicles the ups and downs of how he and his wife cared for three aging parents and offers advice for how to cope

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

HINSDALE, N.H.—The number of people in the United States age 65 and older reached 55.8 million in 2020, or nearly 17% of the population. That is estimated to grow to 73 million by 2030, and by 2050, it is estimated that 27 million people will need long-term care.

That figure may be low.

At some point in their lives, statistics say that 70% of adults 65 and older will require long-term care, with an average stay of 3.2 years. That could number over 50 million people by 2050.

For Victor Good and his wife, Julie, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire, taking care

■ SEE CAREGIVERS, A8



Victor Good, author of *The Caretakers*, helps his mother, Martha Good, with her fingernails.

JULIE GOOD COURTESY PHOTO

How can bystanders address mental health crises?



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Bouquets of flowers left at the foot of the driveway at Morningside House shelter in Brattleboro, where manager Leah Rosin-Pritchard died at the hand of a client who is currently in the custody of the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

Training from a Brattleboro insurance agency lets people develop compassionate strategy for responding to those experiencing psychiatric emergency and to discern when such incidents can be dangerous

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

B RATTLEBORO—Imagine walking downtown through the Harmony Lot in broad daylight when a young man approaches and asks you for some money. You refuse. He passes by you and then starts shouting and howling into the wind. He's not even looking at you as he shouts. Disconcerting? Yes, of course.

Threatening? Could be. Did you cause the incident? You'll never know.

Is there anything you can do about it? Well, maybe.

One person who knows how to handle events like these is Shannon Prescott, 40, who works for The Richards Group as the insurance agency's director of risk control services, assisting clients with complying with state and federal workplace regulations and

■ SEE MENTAL HEALTH, A4

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vim

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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,
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We welcome story ideas and news tips. Please contact the newsroom at 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.

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.

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

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and Jon Pakh

In memoriam:
Alan O. Dann, Judy Gorman,
Mia Gannon

AROUND THE TOWNS

Hospice hosts 'Kitchen Table Conversation' on Act 39

BRATTLEBORO — On Thursday, Nov. 16, from 2 to 3:30 p.m., Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal St., will host a conversation on Act 39, the Medical Aid in Dying act. In Spring 2023, legislation was passed to allow terminally ill people from out of state to take advantage of it to end their lives. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss this change and the special challenges it may create, as well as talk about Act 39 in general.

What is a Kitchen Table Conversation? Some of the most engaging and interesting conversations happen around a kitchen table. Staff and volunteers with knowledge and experience on this subject will be sitting around the table with participants, and together they will talk in a supportive and congenial atmosphere.

This event is free. RSVP by emailing info@brattleborohospice.org or calling 802-257-0775. Space is limited.

Holiday craft fair at Town Hall

TOWNSHEND — On Saturday, Nov. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon, on the second floor of the Town Hall on Route 30, there will be a holiday craft fair, featuring more than 15 local vendors selling handmade arts, including

crocheted products, baby blankets, painting, and jewelry.

Coffee and treats will be available by donation to support Valley Cares activities programming.

Friends of Brooks Memorial Library host annual book sale

BRATTLEBORO — The Friends of the Brooks Memorial Library will host their annual Friends of the Library Book Sale on Friday, Nov. 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, Nov. 25, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Unsold books will continue to be available through December. All proceeds from the book sale go to support programs at Brooks Library. Many items are \$2 or less.

The Friends are also raffling off several gift baskets. The raffle ticket prices are one for \$2 and three tickets for \$5.

Monthly produce distribution in Putney

PUTNEY — The Vermont Foodbank and the Putney Foodshelf co-sponsor a monthly food drop of free produce and some nonperishables on the fourth Thursday of every month from 9 to 9:45 a.m. on Alice Holway Drive (in front of Putney Meadows, the white building across from the Putney Co-op and Putney Fire Station).

Due to Thanksgiving falling on the fourth Thursday, the November Free Produce Distribution will be on the fifth Thursday, Nov. 30. All are welcome. This is a drive-up service. Bags provided.

SEVCA requests input on Community Needs Survey

WESTMINSTER — Every three years, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) conducts a Community Assessment to discern current and emerging community needs in the areas of employment, education, income and asset building, housing, health/social behavior development, civic engagement, and community involvement.

The resulting data will be used by SEVCA's Strategic Plan Committee, who are working with Bright Minds Consulting, Inc., of Columbus, Ohio, to develop a multi-year workplan. Community action agencies like SEVCA are required by their funders to regularly engage in strategic planning to assure that their programs and resources align with the needs of the communities they serve.

The survey can be found online at sevca.org. Paper versions are also available SEVCA locations in Brattleboro, Westminster, and Springfield. The survey will be live through Friday, Dec. 8. More information is available by emailing kdevlin@sevca.org.

Putney Library offers help for stuttering

PUTNEY — The Stuttering Foundation has donated books and DVDs to public libraries across the country, including the Putney Public Library.

Stuttering Foundation books are directed to parents of children who stutter, adults who stutter, speech pathologists, pediatricians, family physicians, nurses, health care professionals, hospitals, schools, clinics, day-care centers, and all those concerned with the problem of stuttering. The DVDs feature some of the world's leading therapists with children who stutter. Since the original publication, Foundation materials have reached millions of individuals worldwide.

"More than three million Americans stutter, yet stuttering remains misunderstood by most people," Jane Fraser, president of The Stuttering Foundation, said in a news release. "Myths such as believing people who stutter are less intelligent or suffer from psychological problems still persist despite research refuting these erroneous beliefs."

Sixteen books and DVDs produced by the 76-year-old nonprofit Stuttering Foundation are available free to any public library. The Foundation has provided free materials to over 20,000 public libraries nationwide. A public library that will shelve them can email info@stutteringhelp.org.



ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is closing down its Good Buy thrift stores, including its Bellows Falls location, on Dec. 16.

Good Buy stores

FROM SECTION FRONT

SEVCA said in a news release that the decision to close its Bellows Falls and Springfield thrift shops was not an easy one, but that the board members "believe it is necessary for SEVCA's long-term growth and effectiveness," SEVCA Interim Executive Director Kathleen Devlin wrote. "This change will allow SEVCA to direct its resources where they are needed most."

SEVCA has operated a thrift store in the Windsor and Windham region since 1970; the Bellows Falls store opened in 1983.

The stores have served two purposes: first, to offer low-income community members access to free and low-cost furniture, housewares, and clothing, and second, as a source of revenue supporting SEVCA's economic development programs in the region and visibility for the

nonprofit. In 2022, SEVCA closed a third thrift store in White River Junction. At the time, the organization said it was closing that location to focus its resources on its Bellows Falls and Springfield stores.

"SEVCA is grateful to the staff, volunteers and thrift store donors for their many years of dedication, hard work, and commitment to providing a welcoming space to our community," Devlin's statement continued. "We truly appreciate the contributions made to support the success of the stores over the years."

Thrift shopping is all about going into the thrift shop and having no expectation of what you might find.

—MACKLEMORE



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Third lawsuit

‘affordable housing’ since the lots are not contiguous.”

It also asks whether the district commissioner erred in the jurisdictional opinion that concluded the project is exempt from Act 250 review.

The appellants say the court “should require land use review and a project permit.”

WWHT has proposed a 25-unit, mixed-income residential rental housing project on Alice Holway Drive.

“We are confident that the Courts’ prior rulings will be upheld,” says WWHT Executive Director Elizabeth Bridgewater. “At a time where affordable housing is so desperately needed in our community, where local wages are far outstripped by housing costs, we remain focused on creating—much needed homes in our region.”

“The new case is also a legally viable response to Environmental Court’s failure to address the central issues of the first two appeals, which are that court insisted repeatedly via their denials, were ‘outside of their jurisdiction,’” says Campbell. “We are persevering in order to involve Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, to contest a misrepresentation of the lots in question as ‘contiguous,’ and to review the development strategy by which Peter Paggi of WWHT applied exemptions of Act 250 articles and other abnegations of significant regulations in the WWHT permit process from 2019 to 2022.

“We are continuing in our opposition to WWHT’s Alice Holway Drive project because it amounts to is a gross misuse of .91 acres of precious open, green space which benefactors of Friends of Putney see as ideal for outdoor recreational, social, contemplative, educational, and aesthetic activities essential to the health, vitality, and enjoyment of the Putney Community and visitors.”

From one nonprofit, a new nonprofit emerges

“I see a park where WWHT has contrived to lay the ground for an oversized, ‘big-box’ housing project taking up any and all outdoor space and leaving no safe place for play,” Campbell says.

She avers that Julie Tamler of the former Inclusion Center also saw a park when she transferred her 501(c)3 Internal Revenue Service not-for-profit status to Friends of Putney.

A 501(c)3 nonprofit refers to the section and subsections of the United States tax code under which the tax exemption is allowed. Such public charities are exempt from corporate taxes, and their donors can deduct their contributions on their own personal federal income taxes.

According to filings with the Vermont Secretary of State’s Corporations Division, Campbell and Lazar are directors of Friends of Putney, along with a third director, Daniel Hartigan.

“Julie envisioned an inclusive, accessible park, welcoming the Putney community of all ages and capacities as well as greeting visitors to Putney,” says Campbell. “A spacious green, with flowing walkways through diverse, carbon-sequestering shade trees, alternating with areas under cultivation with native shrubs and wildflowers for pollinators, a gazebo, picnic tables, and benches.

“On the western side of Alice Holway Drive, I see a natural pavilion for events, crafts sales, and even winter season gatherings. An accessible, safe, locally designed, sourced, and available children’s playground and a kiosk for trail and bike maps, craft tours, and all the performance venues, shops, and eateries a revitalized Putney will offer.”

“I don’t know a lot about legal things, but you can change the name and essentially the purpose of a nonprofit,” says Tamler, adding that she supports the Friends’ vision for the acreage in question.

The Inclusion Center was incorporated in 2014 as an organization to provide educational and social activities for people with disabilities, including a drop-in activity center.

“During Covid, Inclusion Center was no longer meeting and we went online,” Tamler said. After her son, Ruben Tamler-Schottland, died in 2021, “we lost most of our board for various reasons, and things very dramatically changed.”

“We were trying to figure out what to do with our nonprofit status, and we had some money we wanted to do something good with, something that would promote inclusion,” Tamler added.

In 2022, a group called Envision Putney met several times, and Lazar says she realized in those meetings that residents “were unclear about the new development of housing and wanted information about exactly what was being proposed.”

That group ultimately melded

into the Vermont Council on Rural Development meetings that took place last year. One takeaway of those meeting results is to look at creating housing here.

Lazar explains that Tamler’s offer of transforming the Inclusion Center into Friends of Putney came out of those original discussions.

“The original board elected a new board and resigned,” she says. “The new board’s first task would be to change the name and mission statement.”

That new board — Lazar, Campbell, and Hartigan — created a new mission and direction for the organization.

“We chose the name ‘Friends of Putney’ and changed the mission statement to include protecting open space in Putney, creating affordable housing for Putney residents, and supporting the creative sector,” Lazar says.

The IRS, which approves the federal tax-exempt and tax-deductible status for nonprofits, routinely allows organizations to change their name.

According to a post from Foundation Group, a nonprofit management consultancy, “Once a charitable nonprofit receives 501(c)3 status, it is free to operate any program it desires, as long as that program satisfies a charitable purpose within the IRS definition, even if that includes a wholesale change in mission,” its CEO, Greg McKay, posted on the organization’s blog in 2021.

The only thing the IRS requires is that the organization report that change on its next annual filing with the IRS, McKay added. In lieu of taxes, nonprofits file form 990, which by law must be made available for public inspection.

One lot or two?

Campbell, who has lived in town for 33 years, was the sole appellant on the first appeal, filed in March 2022.

Before the Development Review Board (DRB) approved WWHT’s permit application on March 9, 2022, she wrote about her concerns in a letter to Chair Phillip “Pip” Bannister, WWHT Director of Real Estate Development Peter Paggi, Putney Town Manager Karen Mathieu-Astley, and Windham Regional Commission Executive Director Chris Campamy.

She says she received no replies and thus turned to the Vermont Superior Court’s Environmental Division, as an appeal.

In her letter, Campbell expressed concern about the WWHT permit application, noting some omissions and discrepancies, in her view, in that application.

She wrote her review of the information left her “with the impression that the application submitted on Dec. 14, 2021 was completed carelessly and may not meet legal requirements.” She noted the issues of contiguous lots and questioned whether acreage requirements for such a development are being met in the WWHT plan.

Campbell and others contend the two lots the housing plan involves, noted as Lots A1 and A2, are “separate parcels set apart by an essential roadway of the town of Putney” and not contiguous. “Alice Holway Drive is a heavily trafficked, town-of-Putney street separating Lot A1’s remaining .91 acres and A2’s 2.02 acres,” Campbell wrote in the letter. “Alice Holway Drive already poses safety problems for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Traffic of all sorts will endanger children who are expected to live in WWHT proposed housing units, children who will need space for play and who will also rely on the school buses that pick up and discharge students along Alice Holway Drive.

“A distinction between Lot A1, where WWHT proposes building on .91 acres, and Lot A2, which has been correctly assessed as very clay-based soggy acreage given to frequent flooding and storm water run-off problems, is lacking. It would seem reasonable to me to distinguish between A1 and A2 soil quality by designating A2 as lying within the Flood Hazard Area.”

A 26-year resident, Lazar says she began learning about the proposed development as a member of the Community Garden in 2020.

“I became an interested person in the case during the first appeal of the WWHT permit in 2022,” she says.

“I read with enthusiasm the two opposing counsel’s opinions. WWHT’s lawyer said it is ‘one lot with a road on it.’ And the lawyer for the appeal described it as two lots divided by a road. How could it be both things? I wondered.”

Lazar says she travels Alice Holway Drive “almost every time I enter and or leave Putney.”

“I wondered how the lawyer could call the two lots contiguous because it is a main road for

FROM SECTION FRONT

Putney residents who enter and leave the town who also must travel on Alice Holway Drive regularly,” she says, adding the Drive is also the southbound exit for Putney Co-op customers, which she says average 500 daily, plus 20 employees and several delivery trucks.

“Putney residents had asked for [the DRB to conduct] a feasibility study and a traffic study before issuing the permit; it was never done,” says Lazar. “The current appeal in Environmental Court is asking for a review to determine if the current design has enough contiguous land for the density of 25 units.”

Lazar says when the Selectboard first received a petition signed by more than 5% of Putney’s registered voters, it was “dismissed” by Selectboard Chair Aileen Chute.

“The Selectboard does not have the authority to rescind zoning permits and, consequently, we cannot consider this petition,” Chute said at the outset of the Aug. 23 board meeting in the opening of a prepared statement that went on to forcefully rebut project opponents’ assertions.

Regardless, Lazar believes “there were issues raised in that petition worthy of discussion that could have received some attention.”

“Our board agreed to cover the expenses of the appeal in Environmental Court,” she continues. “The question before the Court was always about whether the land was contiguous. And whether the permit was given erroneously.”

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VCIL launches statewide in-home vaccine service

MONTPELIER — The Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) has launched a statewide, in-home vaccine service for people of all ages.

“COVID-19 and flu are still dangerous health risks, especially for people with disabilities and older adults,” VCIL Executive Director Sarah Launderville said in a news release. “These communities were reaching out and telling us that they felt forgotten, and we knew we needed to respond.”

Made possible by the U.S. Administration for Community Living with a grant through USAging, in-home vaccinations are available for anyone who has difficulty getting to or using traditional vaccination locations.

“Every day for the past month, we’ve heard from individuals and families desperate

to get vaccinated, but unable to due to lack of accessible options” said Kate Larose, VCIL’s pandemic equity coordinator.

According to Larose, “pharmacies and primary care providers are refusing to provide reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, there are transportation barriers, and the health equity focus our Agency of Human Services heralded at the start of the pandemic has long since fallen by the wayside.”

This service is free of charge to anyone in Vermont. No insurance information will be collected, and in-home vaccinators will wear masks. Entire households — including children, caregivers, and friends — can be vaccinated at once.

Newly updated COVID-19 and flu vaccines offer better

protection against currently circulating strains, just in time for the holiday season when many people spend more time together indoors.

“We know that both initial and repeat Covid infections can lead to Long Covid in people of all ages,” said Krista Coombs, VCIL Long Covid Advocate, “even when infections are asymptomatic or mild. Reducing the number of infections is critical. And staying up to date on vaccinations can help mitigate these risks and reduce the likelihood of severe illness and hospitalization.”

People wishing to learn more about this service, as well as upcoming drive-through clinics, can visit vcil.org/vaccines. Households ready to schedule an in-home vaccine can call 802-830-4137 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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GOTAN 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; 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.

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Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Sec. 133(b), notice is hereby given that the meeting to review the preliminary proposed budget meeting for Windham County for the ensuing year will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. at the Sheriff's Office 185 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT 05304.

The meeting will be held in person and virtually via Zoom. Please see below for meeting attendance information.

If interested in attending this meeting via Zoom, please contact the Windham County Clerk at CountyClerk@windhamcountyvt.gov. Please provide your full name and town in which you reside. The Zoom information, along with a copy of the proposed budget, will be emailed to you approximately 3 business days prior to the meeting date.

Note: If you prefer to attend the meeting via phone, instead of via the web (Zoom), a dial-in number will be provided to you.

Request for Proposal: IT Services
The Town of Jamaica, Vermont invites qualified providers to submit a proposal and statement of qualifications for professional Information Technology (IT) managed services for a period of one calendar year with two (2) optional one-year extensions if agreed by both the Town of Jamaica and the selected IT services provider. The qualified Vendor will enable the Town to significantly improve operational effectiveness, enhanced quality of services, minimize cost support and maximize return on investment. A contract will be awarded on the “best value” basis; factoring price and ability deliver services will be considered. While industry specific certifications and licenses will be taken into consideration, the Town places greater emphasis on the experience and long-term viability of the Vendor.

Also of importance, is the ability of the Vendor to deliver high quality helpdesk support that recognizes the varying levels of technical aptitude of Town staff and provides said support in terms of that can be understood by a layperson. The Town may also look to the successful Vendor for special project consulting from time to time such as the installation software/hardware, short and long-range IT planning, and other related services. Proposals Due: Monday, November 27, 2023 by 4:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time. A detailed copy of the RFP can be found on the Town of Jamaica website at www.jamaicavermont.org

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HireAbility VERMONT
JOB OPENING
Vocational Counselor

The Brattleboro office of HireAbility (formerly Vocational Rehabilitation) has an opening for a skilled Vocational Counselor to join our highly innovative team of professionals with the mission of helping Vermonters with disabilities to gain and maintain employment and to access career training and education opportunities. Job duties include assessment, guidance and counseling, case management, documentation and collaboration with many community providers.

The position is posted on the State of VT Department of Human Resources website. Deadline to apply is 11/23/23. For questions or further information about this position, please contact Leo Schiff, Sr. Vocational Counselor at 802-798-9163, leo.schiff@vermont.gov.

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REQUEST FOR BIDS
Windham Solid Waste Management District
327 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT 05301
Compost Aeration and Heat Recovery Project
Sitework, Concrete, Fabric Building, Aeration and Compost System and Electrical

Project Overview: Windham Solid Waste Management District (WSWMD) seeks General Contractor bids for a new Compost Aeration and Heat Recovery Facility to be installed at 327 Old Ferry Road in Brattleboro, VT. This project is funded by the USDA Community Facilities program. All requirements by the USDA Community Facilities are outlined in the provided bid package. There will be a 5% Bid Bond required. There is a 100% Performance and Payment Bond requirement.

Scope of Services: Provide all labor, materials, tools and equipment for a complete project per the plans and specifications provided by Steve Horton at stevnhorton@gmail.com. All inquiries, questions and clarifications must be directed to Steve Horton-Project Manager; stevnhorton@gmail.com. Addenda information shall be shared, as necessary, to all participants.

Bid Instructions: Bids are due no later than November 30, 2023 at 2:00 PM. Bids may be mailed or hand delivered to; Bob Spencer, Executive Director, WSWMD 327 Old Ferry Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Probable Schedule:
• RFB issued on October 27th, 2023.
• Mandatory Walk Through November 13th at 2:00PM
• All questions to be received no later than end of day November 21st, 2023.
• Bids due November 30th, 2023 by 2:00 PM.
• Recommendation to Board the first meeting following low qualified bidder selection.
• Notice of Award immediately following Board approval.
• Order materials immediately after Notice of Award December, 2023.
• Commence work in spring of 2024.

Expiration of Bid: By submitting a bid the applicant offers to enter into the Contract, the form and content of which shall be agreed upon by both parties. The applicant's proposal shall not be revocable for thirty (60) days following the response deadline indicated above.

Reservation of Rights:
• WSWMD reserves the right to waive any defects in the offer of any vendor, to reject any or all offers, and to request additional information from any and all vendors.
• In the event that an agreement cannot be reached with the firm initially chosen for contract, WSWMD may enter into contract negotiations with other qualified firms that submitted acceptable proposals or bids, rather than redoing the bid process for the project.
• Negotiate with another firm to include further services not identified in this RFB.

Mental health

helping them evaluate and implement safety programs.

Prescott has been trained in Mental Health First Aid by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and has been teaching courses in it since 2019.

"I've experienced this myself in downtown Brattleboro," she said. "There's a gentleman who is often downtown throughout the day, and normally, he just keeps to himself. He doesn't look at anybody. He looks down to the ground. He sometimes is talking to himself, but he doesn't pay any attention to anybody else. And he's not bothering anybody. So I've never felt threatened by this man."

One day, however, as Prescott was walking down Main Street, she saw this man actually out in the crosswalk, yelling and shaking his fist and getting in front of cars and pointing at cars.

"He was clearly agitated," Prescott said. "He wasn't throwing anything. He didn't have weapons. He wasn't hitting the cars. But he was going to scare other people."

She said she was concerned for him at the moment, "because he was in a dangerous situation and he might not understand fully what's happening. Also, it's putting himself and others in danger."

Prescott immediately called 911.

"I told them there's a gentleman here and I think he's having some psychosis," Prescott said. "He's jumping in front of cars and yelling at cars, and I'm afraid someone's going to get hurt."

Then Prescott found a safe spot and waited for the police.

"The great thing about Brattleboro PD is that we have social workers attached to the police department who can respond with them," Prescott said. "So if you let them know that this is a mental health crisis, they can [provide] the correct mental health response."

She called Brattleboro "a really lucky community to have something like that."

"Not every community does," Prescott said. "And that's really what we're trying to move towards, so that we can have the right response for our police. It's for their protection as well."

A nation's vicious cycle

The country, as a whole, is experiencing a mental health crisis — just ask the people in Lewiston, Maine. Their recent mass shooter may have had a home but, according to various news accounts, he was also hearing voices and his mental instability was known by local police well before he took up his rifle and shot up a bunch of innocent people on Oct. 25.

To exacerbate the problem, the U.S. has an ever-increasing population of people who are unsheltered, living on the streets, and who are badly in need of support services.



Shannon Prescott

These people have multiple issues, including mental health, physical health, and substance use, all of which can be exacerbated by — and exacerbate — the stress of living with housing insecurity.

And they're interfacing with a housed population also walking around with its own mental health problems and anxiety.

It appears as if our whole society is living in a vicious cycle of deaths from overdoses, from drug deals gone wrong, from suicides, from home, auto, and retail store theft. It feeds the general anxiety. It's not good for the community or the country.

How do we help while staying safe ourselves?

How best to help

Mental Health First Aid teaches participants what they need to know about mental health and substance-use issues.

"When a person is struggling with any kind of recovery or kind of mental health challenge, that's where the Mental Health First Aid comes in," Prescott said. "The class is really focused on helping people feel more competent about approaching when something happens or when they recognize that something's going on."

The program seeks to make the idea as common as offering physical first aid in an emergency. If a person is bleeding, we might offer them a bandage or a tissue. If a person appears to be having a heart attack, we can try CPR — if we know how to do it. If a person is struggling with dehydration, we can offer them a bottle of water.

But what do we do when we see someone standing in the middle of a busy roadway, trying to fight a car?

That is where Prescott comes in.

First of all, she says, we must acknowledge that at one time or another, most of us have struggled with a mental health issue. She uses herself as an example.

"My daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 2021," Prescott said. "And it was an emergent situation. She was near coma. Watching this happen was

FROM SECTION FRONT

the most traumatic thing I've ever been through in my life. And then learning that our entire life [would be] completely different now. And having to figure out: How are we going to afford this?"

It changed her. "I wasn't even able to teach my Mental Health First Aid classes for a time. I tried, and I really struggled through a class, because I just had too many raw emotions," Prescott said. "I'm very thankful to my employer because they understood that I needed time to step back."

Mental health issues can present themselves in younger workers as well as in older ones; employers need to be sensitive and aware.

"People can be one way in the beginning and slowly deteriorate or start developing situations," Prescott said.

"And certainly everybody right now is struggling with recovering from trauma from the pandemic, or anything else that happened over these last few years that maybe was traumatic for them," she added. "Maybe people of color are going through extreme trauma. There's lots of things going on right now. We all just need to be patient with each other."

Mental health issues can be frightening. There are hazards right now that are beyond our control, Prescott said.

"This isn't like something that we can throw a guard on or put a shield up in front of, or something we can put safety glasses on for," she said. "It's beyond what people are used to dealing with. And it's been building for a long time."

The issues are widespread. Over the past few months, Prescott said, every single commercial insurance client of hers is dealing with substance abuse issues touching their workforce or having an employee struggling with mental health.

"It comes up all the time," she said. "And in addition, with the closing down of the pandemic housing program, lots of people don't have places to go. So they are on the streets, or in the parking garages."

As a result, "that brings mental health out into the open and exposes its challenges to the general public, who are just going about their day," Prescott said. "Some of these challenges are really extreme. And they make people uncomfortable."

Prescott emphasized that people who are having episodes of psychosis on the street, as frightening as they may appear to strangers, are also simply struggling human beings.

"We're trying to remind people that these are humans that we're talking about," she said. "Sometimes it can be scary. Maybe somebody's getting aggressive or violent, which are two different things. Or it's scary because I don't know what to do and I feel for this person. Or sometimes I don't know if I should say anything."

Violence versus aggression

"The debate about addressing mental illness and violence often ignores key facts. Many people experience mental illnesses, so having had a diagnosed illness is

Bill McKibben featured at Guilford forum on climate action and the role of Faith Communities

GUILFORD — Bill McKibben will be the featured speaker for the program "Climate Action and the Role of Faith Communities," sponsored by Vermont Interfaith Action, at Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Drive, on Thursday, Nov. 16, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

McKibben — author, environmentalist, and co-founder of 350.org, the worldwide climate action group — will join the event remotely. There will be an in-person panel featuring state Sen. Becca White, D-Windsor, co-chair of the Legislative Climate Solutions Caucus; Dr. Becky Jones of 350Brattleboro; and Alex Wilson, author, environmentalist, and founder of BuildingGreen, Inc. and

BuildingGreen Report.

Afterward, the audience is invited to participate in a public forum to offer ways to take climate action from the grassroots in local communities up to the policy level at the Statehouse.

"A key question to explore is what role faith communities should be playing to address the current reality of extremes," organizers wrote in a news release. "Extreme temperatures, extreme rain and flooding, and even extreme wildfire smoke from nearby Quebec province and from faraway forest fires are increasingly common and threatening to Vermonters."

Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) has been organizing faith communities around the state

to advocate on issues of racial justice, immigration, housing and homelessness, and corrections reform. VIA is adding climate action to its issue agenda to help faith communities around Vermont amplify their voices calling on policy makers to act.

Admission to the event is by donation, and all are welcome. Register in advance at bit.ly/740-climate. A confirmation email with a link to join the meeting will be sent after completing registration. For more information, contact Mike Mrowicki at mike@viavt.org. For more information about Vermont Interfaith Action, visit viavt.org.

not a very specific predictor of violent behavior," says the abstract for a 2014 paper, "Mental Illness and Violence: Lessons from the Evidence," in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

"This means that many proposed policy approaches, from expanded screening to more institutionalization, are unlikely to be effective," its authors continue. "Expanded access to effective treatments, although desirable, will have only modest impacts on violence rates. Most people with mental health problems do not commit violent acts, and most violent acts are not committed by people with diagnosed mental disorders."

That means that the vast majority of the time, mental illness has nothing to do with violent crime, and people with psychiatric disorders often suffer from the stigma and stereotyping.

In her trainings, Prescott notes the difference between aggression, which often comes from a state of fear when people are feeling they need to defend themselves, and violence, which is more calculated and planned.

"The statistic I use in the class is that 4% of violent crime is driven by somebody in an active mental health crisis," Prescott said.

But within that 4%, those mental health crises can account for deadly and heartbreaking results.

Prescott referred to the April murder of Leah Rosin-Pritchard, the manager of Morningside House shelter, operated by Groundworks Collaborative.

"The community is still trying to move forward from the horrific event at Groundworks," she said. "It was violence, for sure. But those of us outside of the situation don't know exactly what happened in the interactions that drove the violent act."

The event "could have been a form of aggression that went to violence," she added.

Zaaina Mahvish-Jammeh, who has been charged with first degree murder in Rosin-Pritchard's death, has been found not competent to stand trial and is in the custody of the Vermont Department of Mental Health under a one-year involuntary

hospitalization order.

Groundworks, and its residence, Morningside House, are prime examples of places that have exposure to violence, Prescott said.

"Unfortunately, it just kind of comes with the territory of of the job," she noted. "So every now and then we'll have a shocking event that we can't account for. How do we prepare people? And how do we take care of people if stuff does happen?"

Prescott said she has empathy "for people on both sides of this." "The individual that did the act was struggling, and they're ill," she said. "But the entire community was affected by the loss of this person. It's a very hard situation."

Recently, Groundworks Collaborative was fined by the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration for serious workplace violations that resulted in Rosin-Pritchard's death.

Uncomfortable on the street

Given the Groundworks death, plus the number of homeless people and panhandlers, many residents of Windham County say they now feel unsafe on the streets of Brattleboro. Many refuse to come downtown any more.

"There's no one solution to solving the problem of what's going on downtown right now, unfortunately, because there are multiple issues," Prescott said. "Each individual is going to have their own set of needs that we need to try and address."

The first example: "Just finding someplace to have a shelter is complicated," she said.

"A lot of shelters require you to be sober to stay the night. And if somebody can't stay sober that day, they can't do that. So where does that person go?" Prescott said. "There's a lot to work through."

For people who want to grab lunch downtown, or shop, or maybe work in a downtown office, perhaps taking a self-defense class is an option.

"I think it's also important to take a Mental Health First Aid class so that you can have a better understanding if you happen to get into a crisis situation,"

Prescott said. "We talk about when safety becomes a concern. We talk about how to approach somebody who may be feeling aggressive or scary to you. *When do I call 911? When do I call 988, the mental health crisis hotline?*"

Once the national suicide prevention hotline, 988 is now a national mental health phone-in system. Each state, including Vermont, has its own volunteers who respond. When you call, a trained volunteer can talk you through whatever the crisis is.

"It's still very much meant for suicide prevention," Prescott said. "But anybody can call. I've even had friends call because they had a spouse that was making suicidal statements, and they didn't know what to do or how to approach it. In many communities, 988 can also connect you to emergency services if you need them."

What to do

Using Mental Health First Aid is not so different from common sense medical assistance.

"If you've ever taken a physical first aid class, it's the same thing," Prescott said. "The first thing you look for is the extreme things that we might need to call 911. If it's excessive bleeding, if they're not breathing, or they're not responding, we want to call 911."

In mental health, "That's a little bit harder, right?" she said. "We're not always sure. So we talk about how to assess somebody, what is a crisis situation, and when do we call 911."

Say, for example, that someone is self-harming and accidentally cuts themselves too deeply.

"Somebody who's self-harming is not intending to die by suicide," Prescott said. "Somebody who's self-harming is just intending to release emotions at that point. But sometimes accidents happen, and that's the 911 call."

"We look at early symptoms. We look at how to recognize when somebody might be struggling early on, because early intervention is key to recovery. So if we can get them in early stages, we're much more likely to get somebody into the right systems and through recovery."

Prescott remembers seeing two clearly intoxicated people walking down Putney Road.

"I don't know what they were on," she said. "They would weave themselves out into the road and then back and then they would yell at the cars if the cars got too close. So I pulled off over to the side and called 911. The operator let me know that others had already called it in. So people were on their way."

Calling for professional help is the least we can do for someone in that predicament, Prescott said.

"It's not safe for me to go and try to stop this man from jumping into traffic," she said. "It's absolutely not. But it is possible for me to stop to the side, keep an eye on things, and call 911. Only approach if you feel it's safe for you to approach. If you don't feel like it's safe, or you feel like it's it's going to cause harm, then you should call 911."

Prescott has been trained to deal with people with schizophrenia, who may be hearing voices in their head.

"We do an audio hallucination exercise, where you get to experience what it's like to have an audio hallucination happen while you're just trying to do a normal day," Prescott said. "It can be a lot. I needed to step away, because it was too much. It got me."

But the exercise builds empathy, she said.

"I can understand why this disease is so difficult for somebody, because I couldn't do 20 seconds of it. You can't differentiate when the voice is speaking to you versus the person who is in front of you. You're trying to pay attention to the person in front of you, but this voice is saying really negative things in your ear. And really, all you can focus on is what they're saying," Prescott continued.

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE



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“Even though I know it’s not true, and I know it’s not a real thing, it’s my brain trying to decipher what was happening, what just created chaos in my body,” she said. “And I can’t imagine having to live like that all the time.”

How do you help someone in that situation?

“The idea is to connect to how they’re feeling, not necessarily with what they’re seeing or hearing,” Prescott said. “So we don’t want to validate the delusions or hallucinations. But we do want to connect.”

So, she suggested: “Say something like, ‘You seem really scared right now. What can I do to help you?’ Try to de-escalate them to a point where maybe they can get calmed down, and then you could call for help. Ask, ‘Is there somebody I could call for you?’”

Prescott recounted an experience she had in Massachusetts when she was teaching an early-morning class in a homeless shelter and found “a gentleman sleeping in his sleeping bag with all his belongings” in the entryway.

“I know that this man is dealing with mental health challenges because he just spent the night outside sleeping,” she said. “There’s no way that this person isn’t traumatized by that in some way.”

The safest way to handle the situation would have been to go back to her car and call for help.

“And then, actually, a worker showed up who was taking the class,” she continued. “And she knew who he was. She woke him up. And he clearly was not on his medication. He has schizophrenia — I found that out after the fact because they know him very well. He’d been camping out there for the last few nights.

“They are never sure when he’s going to show up. And he’s been clearly unmedicated for a few days now. So somebody with schizophrenia who has been off their medication for days is going to start showing a lot of symptoms. He thought she was his sister, and that’s part of his struggle right now — he’s having some issues with his sister.”

The man got upset and started throwing shoes at the worker.

“She had to remove herself from from the space,” Prescott said. “He came out throwing shoes in the parking lot. And he was getting very upset and he was yelling, but not at us.

“Again, when I’ve experienced this stuff in public, it has never been an aggressive state towards anybody. This person is just upset in their own space right now. And he didn’t know who we were or what was going on. And he had just woken up. I can relate — if I had just got woken up and was a little confused.”

The worker called the man’s counselor.

“Then we kept him in our peripheral vision and made sure he was safe, and that everybody else who came was safe,” Prescott said.

“But we were allowing him to do what he needed to do,” she continued. “And then he saw his counselor, and I saw his whole body relax. This was his trusted person.”

Prescott said she uses this example in her class constantly, “because that staff executed perfectly what they should do in those situations. They handled him perfectly and with empathy and compassion. And had I been the one to try to wake him up, that could have turned into a 911 call.”

The unthinkable becomes thinkable

It has not yet happened in Brattleboro, but after Lewiston, Maine, the town cannot discount the possibility that it might some day have to confront a public shooter.

“I can give my personal perspective here,” Prescott said. “The best things we can do is to stay aware of our surroundings, listen to our instincts, and take an active shooter training course to learn how to protect yourself in these rare situations.

“I do believe we need to continue to move towards making real changes in our support of individuals seeking help when the mental health challenge has become a crisis,” Prescott said.

“But my heart goes out to all involved in Lewiston,” she added. “It’s a tragic event.”

The best way to take a course with Prescott is to follow her on Facebook, check out therichardsgrp.com/education, or email her at sprescott@therichardsgrp.com.

“We provide these trainings at no cost to our business insurance clients and we work on a fee base for all others,” she said.



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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries

• **Robert Edward Baybrook, 79**, formerly of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Aug. 15, 2023 in Florida, where he moved to 23 years ago to pursue his love of fishing. He was born Norman Edward Stewart on Jan. 28, 1944 in Burlington, the son of Helen Stewart Gilbert and Harold Rawson. He spent his childhood in Brattleboro, and graduated from Brattleboro Union High School with the Class of 1962. He was predeceased by his birth mother and his adoptive parents, Richard and Irene Baybrook. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Stephanie Baybrook, of New Port Richey, Florida; their two daughters, Jennifer Baybrook of Florida and Jaclyn Watson of Vermont; his three children from a previous marriage: James Lee of New Hampshire, Robert Lee of Vermont, and Carlena Hall of Maine; and his half-sister Patricia Gilbert of Brattleboro. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: His ashes will be spread in the Gulf of Mexico, where he spent much of his time fishing.

• **Michael L. Cassidy, 72**, died peacefully on Oct. 19, 2023 at the White River Junction VA Hospital while surrounded by loved ones. He was born July 7, 1951 in Springfield, Massachusetts to the late John and Barbara Cassidy (Hansen). He attended Springfield High School, then proudly served his country by joining the Navy. He received several medals and honors during his time served. Michael worked as a machinist for several years before retiring and then served countless years as a volunteer at the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. Michael was incredibly proud of the work he did and his community involvement, but nothing made him prouder than being a husband and father. While these duties were complicated by demons he gained while serving our country, Michael never wavered from expressing the love he had for his family. Michael tried to live life through the simple pleasures, visiting with friends, fishing, and spending time with family as much as he could. He is survived by his wife and best friend of 25 years, Michele Parent Cassidy; children Christine, Cori, Cheryl, Cassidy (Sean), and Sherie; stepchildren Cory and Renee; siblings Steven (Victoria), Laurie (Raymond), Thomas, and Virginia (John); and several grandchildren other family members he held close to his heart. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service will be held Nov. 15, at 3 p.m., at the Massachusetts State Veterans Cemetery in Agawam. In honor of Michael's final wishes, he left this message: "I want for my brother Steven to know that I forgive him." To view an online tribute, leave a message of condolence, or for information, visit cshn.com.

• **Jill Margaret Deaett, 69**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died Nov. 3, 2023 at Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, New Hampshire. Jill was born in Wantagh, New York on July 18, 1954, the daughter of Edward Washington and Gloria Cecelia (Crokus) Spanko. She grew up in Wantagh, on the south shore of Long Island, where, under her grandfather's tutoring, she became an expert fisherman and ocean swimmer. Her childhood summers were spent happily on the water with her extended family, including aunts, uncles and cousins. Her

affection for animals led her to take horseback riding lessons and she seemed to always have at least one pet close by wherever she lived. During her high school years at Holy Trinity High School (on Long Island), she became known locally for her lovely singing voice as a soloist in the folk choir at St. James Roman Catholic Church. Post high school, Jill pursued a degree in animal husbandry at State University of New York at Cobleskill. Post college, she returned to Long Island where she worked as an aide in a nursing home. A country girl at heart, she moved to Vermont to join her parents in Brattleboro. In Vermont, she put her cooking skills to good use, working as the cook at St. Michael's Catholic Church rectory for 12 years and singing in their church choir. She also put her training and natural empathy to work at Vernon Green where she was an LPN for several years. After marrying Francis Deaett, the couple moved to Hinsdale where, over the years, she became known to the local animal population of squirrels, chipmunks, birds, and rabbits who inhabited her garden and yard, where she spent happy hours feeding and watching out for her "critters." She also did beautiful embroidery work, much of which became prized possessions of family members who so looked forward to receiving her delicate pieces. Jill was known to those who loved her as fearless, strong, smart, and sometimes stubborn yet extraordinarily kind, with a great quirky sense of humor. She was unfailingly generous with the ones she loved and devoted to them to the end. Jill is survived by her loving husband of 34 years, Francis Deaett. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside services will be conducted Saturday, Nov. 18, at 11 a.m., in Oaklawn Cemetery in North Hinsdale. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To share a memory or offer condolences to Jill's family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Howard Alfred "Butchie" Deitz Sr., 85**, of Westminster West. Died at home, with his loving family by his side, on Oct. 27, 2023. He was born on October 10, 1938, in Newtown, Connecticut, to the late Mary (Towler) and Howard Walter Deitz. Butchie had a fulfilling career as a diesel mechanic working for Metro Hoist in Connecticut. After moving to Vermont, he worked as a tractor mechanic at Furgat Tractor in Brattleboro. He then continued his mechanic career working for Burtco in Westminster and did truck driving for them as well. His dedication and expertise in these fields made him highly respected among his colleagues. Family was very important to him and he enjoyed his time spent at all the family gatherings. He also enjoyed working with his tractors and excavation equipment and loved a challenge, especially digging out stumps with his backhoe. Butchie is survived by his beloved wife, Veronica (Dubyski) Deitz, to whom he was married for 65 loving years; their sons, Howard Deitz Jr., Daniel Deitz, Thomas Deitz (Teresa), David Deitz (Audrey); their daughters, Vicki Goulas (Steve), Teresa Sylvester (Michael), Joanne Deitz, Jennifer Lonard (Michael), and Kathleen Allen (Alexander); 15 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins, as well as brothers Wayne Deitz (Beth), Charles Deitz, and Billy Deitz (Terri), and a sister, Eleanor Fossaluzza (Philip). He was preceded in death by his son, Matthew Deitz, and his siblings, JD "John" Deitz, who is

survived by his wife, Rose; and Jeanne Accettullo Soares and Doris Wirttemberg. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service was held Nov. 4 at Westminster New Cemetery.

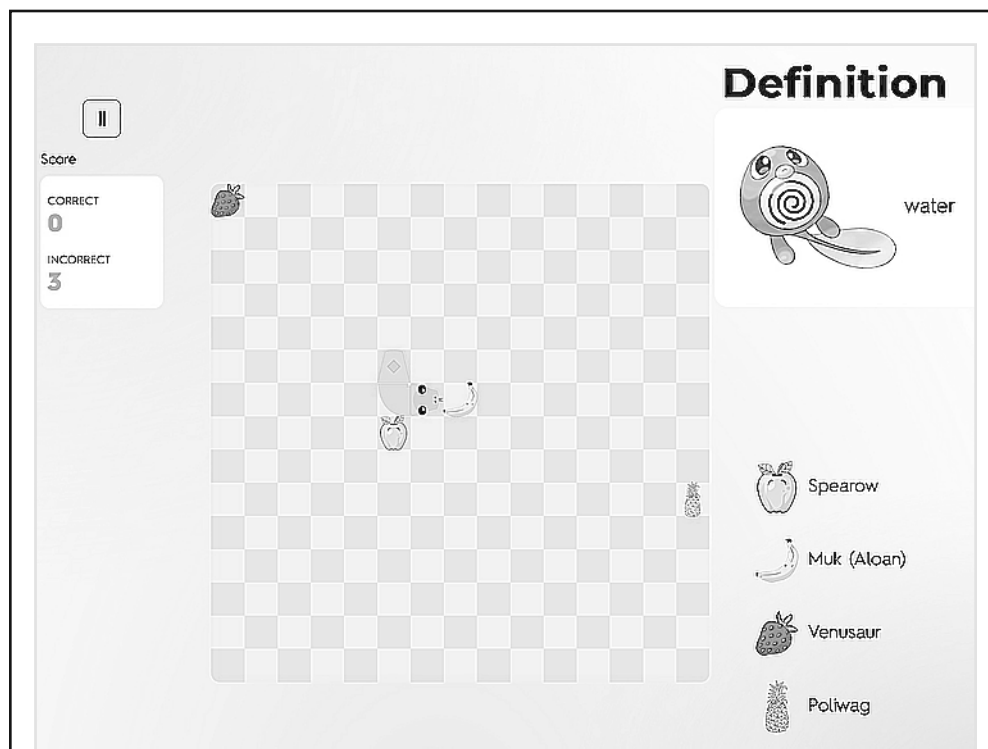
• **Paul Tyter Kane, 69**, died on Oct. 21, 2023. He passed peacefully while being comforted by his daughter Jaime Kamel and son Rodney Stowell. Paul was born in Bellows Falls on Nov. 8, 1952 to Hilda (Wright) and Harold Edward (Darb) Kane. Paul was raised in Bellows Falls for the first 11 years of his life before the family moved to Palatka, Florida, where they resided until 1967. Again, for Harold's career, Paul and his family moved to Cumberland, Rhode Island. After high school, Paul continued his studies in psychology and sociology at Northeastern University and New England College, with two semesters in Arundel in Sussex, England. Upon returning to the U.S. and graduating, Paul began his career in social services in South Carolina with the Department of Youth Services. In 1978, Paul returned to graduate school and studied at New York University in their School of Social Work. Paul continued studying at Georgia State University in the counseling program. He continued to work in social work/counseling/corrections and started a business, P.K.'s Public House, in Bellows Falls in 1988. He married Marie (Madore) Stowell, who predeceased him. He is survived by his daughter, Jaime, her husband Jim Kamel, and their children Peter, Laura, Sam, and Jake; his son, Rodney Stowell, his wife Dawn, and their children Noah, Zander, Eric, and Kaley; and a nephew, Martin Bartlett. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Visiting hours will take place on Friday, Nov. 24, from 4 to 6 p.m., at Fenton & Hennessy Funeral Home, 55 Westminster St., Bellows Falls. A funeral Mass will take place on Saturday, Nov. 25, at 10 a.m., at St. Charles Church in Bellows Falls, with burial will follow at Oak Hill Cemetery.

• **Robert James "Bob" Kenney, 88**, of Vernon. Died Nov. 4, 2023 in the comfort of his home, with his family at his side, following an extended period of declining health. Bob was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on Dec. 28, 1934, the son of Frederick and Margaret (Driscoll) Kenney. He was raised in Walpole, New Hampshire, attending Walpole schools and graduating from Walpole Academy with the Class of 1952. He enlisted in the Army in 1954 and served during the Korean Conflict. He was discharged from active duty in 1956. Bob had been employed at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital working in the hospital's maintenance department. Previously, he worked at the former American Optical Company for 18 years as a line control inspector. One of his first jobs upon his return from military service was at Hubbard Farms in Walpole. He retired from Landmark College in Putney in 1996. Of his affiliations, he was a life member of VFW Carl Dessaint Post 1034 and was a member of American Legion Post 5. Bob was first married to Anna Pfeffer in Munich, Germany on Dec. 1, 1956. He later married Virginia (Koshinsky) Whitaker on June 18, 1988. Besides his wife Ginny, he leaves one stepson, Lance A. Whitaker of Vernon; two stepdaughters, Lois A. Sparks of Vernon and Laurie A. Brockway of Boulder, Colorado; and eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews, including a special niece, Linda Shepherd. Bob was predeceased by a stepson, Lawrence Whitaker Jr. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside committal services in Tyler Cemetery in Vernon will be conducted in the spring of 2024 at a date and time to be announced. Donations to the Vernon Volunteer Fire Dept., 2842 Fort Bridgman Rd., Vernon, VT 05354; or Rescue, Inc., P.O. Box 593, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **James Charles "Jim" Kiehle, 80**, a beloved figure in Brattleboro. Died on Nov. 6, 2023. He was born on March 31, 1943, in Rochester, New York to Charles and Gertrude Kiehle. Jim's life was marked by a dedication to education, a passion for travel, and a commitment to community service. As a young boy, Jim had the unique opportunity to be a bat boy for the Rochester Redwings baseball team, where he likely developed a lifelong love for sports. He attended college at Wesleyan University and, after graduating, he joined the Peace Corps in 1964, serving in Liberia. During his time there, he played a vital role in building a school and met his first wife, Susan. Their union blessed them with two children, Ian and

Allison. Upon returning from the Peace Corps, Jim continued his educational journey by earning a master's degree from Antioch College. He then embarked on a remarkable 38-year career as a teacher at Brattleboro Union High School. For eight of those years, he served as the head of the social studies department, leaving an indelible mark on countless students. Jim's dedication to education extended beyond the classroom. He was not only a passionate educator but also a staunch union supporter. At the local level, he served in the Windham Southeast Education Association, and at the state level he served as the last part-time president of the Vermont National Education Association. Jim fervently advocated for making the position a full-time role, recognizing the importance of ensuring that teachers' voices were heard, and their interests protected. Jim's commitment to education and his advocacy for the teaching profession touched the lives of many. His legacy, not just as an educator but as a champion for teachers' rights, will continue to inspire and benefit educators throughout Vermont. Jim's love for sports and commitment to the community were evident in his roles as a soccer referee, softball umpire, and high school golf coach. His love for travel took him around the world, as he believed that one should never take the same path twice. He cherished the time spent visiting with his three sisters in Chicago, Alaska, and the UK. Jim's retirement from teaching in 2006 did not mark the end of his service to the community. He became the community service coordinator for the high school and worked part-time at the Brattleboro Country Club in the grounds department. Additionally, he served on the Vermont Labor Board from 2008 to 2019 and was a director in the Vermont Golf Association, where he contributed to running amateur tournaments throughout the state. Jim is survived by his loving wife, Janis, his sisters Myra, Marcia, and Janet, his three children, Allison and her husband Steve, Ian and his wife Katherine, their children Charlie and Evelyn, and Matt. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service will be held for Jim in the spring in the Brattleboro area. Donations to the Vermont Golf Association, 145 Pine Haven Shores Rd., Suite 2172, Shelburne, VT 05482, or to the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org/donate).

• **Joyce Lorraine (Colyard) Roy, 66**, of Whitingham. Died Oct. 17, 2023 at Albany (N.Y.) Medical Center. Joyce was born on Sept. 6, 1957, the daughter of the late Virginia Mary (Morris) Colyard and William Monroe



Ty Allembert and two collaborators won \$5,000 for Snakes, their entry to a game programming contest for the educational website Quizlet.

‘A fun little thing’

Local programmer part of prize-winning team in video game design competition

By Joyce Marcel

The Commons

DUMMERSTON—Ty Allembert and two friends entered a national competition to create a learning game on the website Quizlet (quizlet.com) and came away with third place and \$5,000.

Allembert, a native of Dummerston, graduated from Brattleboro Union High School and has just completed a bachelor's degree in computer science at the University of Vermont.

He works in Burlington as a freelancer in coding and web development.

"About three or four months ago, two friends and I joined a competition by the website Quizlet for students, or newly graduated students, to create a game," Allembert told *The Commons*. "The Quizlet website is a website for helping high school, middle school, or college students study. They have these study sets that you can use that

are like flash cards."

Allembert joined Nate Lawler of Manchester, Vermont, and Tate Osborne, from New Hampshire, to create a game based on the classic game Snake. In this case, the snake has to choose the right answer to a multiple choice question.

"It's a pretty simple game where you have a little snake going around on the screen," Allembert said. "You can move it up, down, left, or right."

Four choices to the question are each marked by a fruit. The player's snake has to eat the fruit corresponding to the correct answer.

"Say, for example, you're studying geography," Allembert said. "You would have a picture of a state, and it might say, 'What state is this?' And your four options would be New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, or Massachusetts. Each one of those would correspond to a different fruit that's on the

screen."

According to the game rules, "If you munch on the right fruit, you will get 1 block longer. Eat the wrong one, however, and you will shrink 1 block shorter. See how long you can get, and how much vocabulary you know! Happy slithering!"

Users can adjust the number of questions and the time allowed for selecting definitions. They can set the snake's speed as slow, normal, or fast.

About 20 entries were submitted, and 10 were chosen for the website, where players nationwide had a chance to try them out.

"The public was able to play it, which was kind of fun," Allembert said.

"It was a fun little thing," he said. "It was cool to hear that we actually got into top three in the nation."

For more information on Allembert, visit tyallembert.com.



Colyard in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Joyce was a very passionate person. She was a voracious reader, a master gardener, and a super painter. She enjoyed volunteering and loved laughter and quirky jokes. She loved to travel coast-to-coast, meeting new people, and seeing new places and things. Her most recent trip took her to Key West, Florida. She never made it to Europe, where she wanted to sip wine at a sidewalk café in Marseille. Her steady gait down Main Street and her hearty hello will be greatly missed. Joyce is survived by her sister, Kathleen Patricia Colyard; her life partner, Joey Butz; niece Teresa Butz and nephews Aaron Colyard and Charles Butz, all of Woodruff, South Carolina; her sons William Adonios Roy of Brattleboro and Oscar Thayer Smith of Whitingham; and granddaughters Danielle and Briella Roy of Brattleboro. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: At the request of the family, there are no formal funeral services. If friends desire, memorial gifts in Joyce's memory may be made to any suicide prevention service, in care of Covey-Allen and Shea Funeral Home, P.O. Box 215, Wilmington, VT 05363. To send condolences, visit sheafuneralhomes.com.



• **Mary E. Tyler, 94**, of Dummerston. Died on Nov. 2, 2023, surrounded by her loving family as she peacefully concluded a long, fruitful life. Born on Nov. 24, 1928, in Jersey City, New Jersey, Mary was one of five children born to Elizabeth (O'Neill) Canny and Patrick Canny. After completing high school in Jersey City, she exchanged vows with Terry Tyler on July 4, 1953, and they established their lifelong home in Dummerston. As a devoted mother of five, Mary embraced the daily routine of driving her children to St. Michael's School, a 7-mile journey to Brattleboro that held immense importance for her. As her children grew older, she dedicated herself to part-time work while they attended school. Mary was actively engaged in the West River Missions. She served as a Eucharistic minister at Our Lady of Mercy in Putney. In addition, she was a member of the Daughters of Isabella for many years. One of her proudest achievements came in her 60s when she earned her Certified Nurses Aide certificate.

In her later years, Mary discovered a passion for art and eagerly attended art classes at the Brattleboro Senior Center, forming lasting friendships with fellow artists well into her 80s. She also found joy and camaraderie in the "Stitch and Bitch" quilting group at the Dummerston Community Center. Demonstrating her unwavering commitment to her church, Mary spearheaded the bake sale fundraiser for Our Lady of Mercy Church in Putney. Her family and her church family were her greatest loves, and she fearlessly embraced her faith, exemplified even in her final moments as she held her rosary beads close. Mary is survived by her son Terrence and his wife Lois of Hubbardston, Massachusetts; Brian and his wife Joann of Dummerston; and her daughter Kathleen and her husband James of Dummerston. Her nine grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren, and her oldest sister, Kathleen Castle, age 102, of Jersey City, also survives her. Mary was preceded in death by her husband Terry, her sons Kevin and Jude, her grandson Jimmy, and her great-grandson Callan. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass held on Nov. 11 at Saint Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Brattleboro. Donations to Our Lady of the Valley, 92 Grafton Rd., Townshend, VT 05353. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Marion E. Whidden Tenney, 92**, died on Nov. 4, 2023, in Springfield, Vermont. Marion was born on Sept. 8, 1931 in Grafton to Horace and Rosie (Wyman) Whidden and was one of nine children. She graduated from Rockpoint Girls Academy in May 1950 and married James W.G. Tenney on Aug. 12, 1950. Together, they had four children. Marion enjoyed hunting and fishing and, later in life, playing Bingo and being with her Bingo friends. She is survived by one brother, Frank (Joan) of Florida and Vermont; one sister, Iverna of Chester; three daughters, Joyce (Ed) of Athens, Susan (David) of Grafton, and Addie (Charles) of Athens. She is also survived by nine grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Marion was predeceased by her husband, her three brothers and three sisters, a son, David, and one great-grandson, Roger. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Honoring her wishes, services will be private at Houghtonville Cemetery in Grafton.

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Hi, my name is **Drake!** I was a stray, so not much is known about me. I can be a little shy at first but I warm up quickly. I enjoy a leisurely walk and after that a nice cosy lap to lay on. I would need a slow intro if you have other animals because I have unknown experience with them.



Hey everybody! I'm **Hans**, and check out my awesome paw! I'm a super sweet guy who's just down on his luck. All I really want is a home of my very own with people who love me. Is that so much to ask? I'm not a fan of other cats. Dogs would be new to me, so a slow intro would be best. Young kids would be too much for me. Come in and meet me today.

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State ACLU honors Siegel for 'courageous' housing advocacy

MONTPELIER—The ACLU of Vermont has presented its highest honor to housing advocate Brenda Siegel for “her courageous advocacy on behalf of people experiencing housing insecurity in Vermont.”

“We are pleased to honor Brenda Siegel in recognition of her persistent and inspiring advocacy on behalf of the many Vermonters who are unhoused, facing eviction, or struggling to pay their rent,” ACLU of Vermont President Bill Boyd

said in a news release. “With great integrity and compassion, she has centered their voices and lived experiences, acted where the state has failed to act, and focused attention on these injustices in our communities—and the urgent need for solutions.”

The ACLU notes that this has been an especially difficult year for people facing housing insecurity in Vermont, which now has the second-highest rate of homelessness in the country.

Amid a statewide housing

crisis, the governor and state policymakers sought to end Vermont’s emergency housing program, and hundreds of people lost shelter before a partial compromise was reached in June. A month later, catastrophic flooding displaced hundreds more from their homes and sheltering sites.

“As an outspoken advocate in the State House, Brenda Siegel has refused to let policymakers ignore the real-world consequences of their decisions,” said

ACLU of Vermont Executive Director James Lyall. “By speaking truth to power, she changed the conversation, highlighting the impacts of Vermont’s ongoing housing policy failures on the lives of real people, and pointing the way towards a more humane and equitable state for all of us.”

Past recipients of the David W. Curtis Civil Liberties Award include Vermont NAACP leadership, Migrant Justice, Bob Gensburg, Beth Robinson, Phil Hoff.



Brenda Siegel

COURTESY PHOTO

Canoe Brook Nature Preserve established in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON—The Green Mountain Conservancy (GMC) has just established a new preserve in Dummerston. The Canoe Brook Nature Preserve, a 115-acre property located near the northeast corner of Dummerston, will remain undeveloped in perpetuity.

This represents the second preserve of the nonprofit GMC of Dummerston, which also owns the 900-plus-acre Deer Run Nature Preserve in Dummerston, Newfane, and Brookline, the first phase of which was established in 2019.

“We are thrilled with the new Preserve,” GMC president Mary Ellen Copeland said in a news release. “Particularly with the impacts of climate change, it is becoming more and more important to maintain protected natural areas that provide for wildlife and carbon sequestration,” she said.

The Canoe Brook Nature Preserve was donated to GMC in October 2023 by heirs of the Knight Family living in California and Florida. The property has been owned by the Knight family since they first settled there in the late-1700s.

“The Knight family features heavily in both the 1884 and 1990 published histories of Dummerston, going back to Jonathan Knight, who moved to the town in 1774 and was the Town Clerk from 1775 to 1780,” say group members. “Joel Knight, one of Jonathan Knight’s sons, bought the land that is

now the Canoe Brook Nature Preserve, likely in the 1780s, and the family farmed it for generations. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, this was land of the Abenaki Nation.”

The Knight name is known to many Dummerston residents from the prominent house on the green in Dummerston Center, known as the Asa Knight House. The Hon. Asa Knight was a grandson of Jonathan Knight and, in the early 1800s, he began operating the Asa Knight General Store at the corner of East-West Road and Middle Road in Dummerston Center. In 1972, the general store was dismantled and then reassembled in Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, where it is on permanent display, looking as it did when Asa Knight owned it.

All the buildings on the Canoe Brook Nature Preserve are long gone, but cellar holes and stone walls remain visible in places.

Roughly a half-mile of Canoe Brook crosses through the

preserve. Though there is erosion in places, this brook rises on the shoulder of Putney Mountain about three miles northwest of the preserve and flows into the Connecticut River about a mile to the southeast.

The woodland at the Canoe Brook Preserve is dominated by white pine, hemlock, sugar maple, red oak, white oak, white ash, and black birch. Some of these woodlands offer an inviting, open understory, while other areas are seeing significant growth of saplings. Past forest management has helped to control invasive buckthorn, but regrowth is now occurring, requiring follow-up control.

Of particular note in the preserve are a dozen or more massive, ancient white oak trees, which date from the 1700s or early 1800s. Daniel Dubie, a forest ecologist and board member of GMC, explained that these trees, including Vermont’s second-largest white oak specimen, “grew in the open initially, when most of the land in Dummerston

was cleared for farming or pasturing sheep.” Many of the huge sweeping limbs of these trees have fallen, and the trees are now surrounded by woodland.

The Canoe Brook Nature Preserve has been managed for timber and ecosystem health since at least the 1940s, with periodic timber harvests. “The intent moving forward,” according to Dubie, “will be to maintain healthy biodiversity, provide for low-impact recreation, and support the transition to old-growth forest characteristics—in keeping with the mission of the Green Mountain Conservancy.”

GMC will be establishing the Stewardship Committee to assist in ongoing management of the

Canoe Brook Nature Preserve. GMC Board member Alex Wilson is taking the lead in establishing the committee.

“The Stewardship Committee will be advising the board on a wide range of policies relating to management of the preserve, as well as helping us identify parking areas, hiking trail options, and the proper balance between recreational uses of the land and ecosystem protection,” said Wilson. “We expect to include on the Stewardship Committee a number of neighbors who live close to the preserve, both to ensure that the preserve is a good neighbor and so that those neighbors can keep an eye on how the preserve is being used.”

“With the Canoe Brook Nature Preserve, as with the Deer Run Nature Preserve, we want to help connect people to nature,” said Copeland. “We were handed an awesome opportunity with this land gift, and we want to use that to further the mission of the Green Mountain Conservancy.”

A public meeting about the Canoe Brook Nature Preserve will be held on Monday, Nov. 13, at 7 p.m., at the Evening Star Grange in Dummerston Center. Cider and cookies will be provided. For more information about the Canoe Brook Nature Preserve, contact Alex Wilson at alex[at]wilson.com.

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; 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.

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Caregivers

FROM SECTION FRONT

of their aging parents in their home became their life, as they cared for his mother and father and Julie's mother.

During the final eight years of their lives, all three parents suffered from some form of serious dementia.

Victor's father, Leo Good, was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia (FTD) — the same disease actor Bruce Willis has been diagnosed with — and died in February 2019 at age 87. His mother, Martha, suffered for 18 years from Alzheimer's disease, which worsened with time and eventually led to her death at age 85 in December 2019.

Julie's mother, Anna Schwan (or "Ma Schwan," as the family called her), had paranoid schizophrenia, and died in 2022 when she was 97 years old.

The experience of caring for their parents in their home, what they learned from it, and what caregivers can do to improve the experience for everyone is chronicled in Victor's newly released book, *The Caregivers: An Extraordinary Journey of Love*.

This independently published book offers an honest look at both the humorous and the horrific aspects of aging and of the Goods' all-consuming efforts to help their parents spend their final years at home, despite each of them suffering from conditions that only worsened as the end of life drew closer.

Victor Good's major conclusion will surprise no one. His family's experience, he writes, "showed us how unprepared we as a society are in caring for our aging [population]." He said, "Our healthcare system can't begin to handle this in any way."

Yet, at the same time, the Goods discovered ways to bring joy to their parents' last years, as well as gain a sense of personal satisfaction that they were doing their best for their parents under the circumstances.

Enjoying their retirements

Victor writes that his father and mother had enjoyed a long and satisfying retirement before they moved to their son's home in Hinsdale.

An educator, musician, and master gardener, Leo Good retired in his mid-50s. He and Martha had planned well and bought a retirement home on 20 acres in rural Colorado in Lewis, a small town near Cortez.

For over 25 years, they enjoyed their life there. They were active

in a number of groups, from gardening to painting. His father grew crops and sold them at the local farmers market.

They owned a much-loved recreational vehicle, which Leo used as his "man cave" for reading or napping. They traveled with it extensively, taking it to the Sea of Cortez in Mexico and living in it there during the winter.

Victor said that his parents truly enjoyed their retirement life. They loved where they lived, loved traveling, and loved the numerous activities they were involved with. Both of them told him, "Our dreams came true," he said.

Even after Martha was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Leo was able to care for her on his own for quite a while. But taking care of both a 20-acre property in rural Colorado and a wife with advancing Alzheimer's — and living literally hours away from any major medical facility — would eventually prove too difficult.

Victor and Julie talked with his parents about moving to their home in New Hampshire, where the couple would be able to help. It was a hard decision, but their parents eventually agreed to the move, his father requesting of him that Victor do what he could to help "keep them out of a nursing home."

The move was fortuitous, as was its timing.

Little did they realize that shortly after the move was completed, Leo Good would be diagnosed with FTD and would deteriorate rapidly. Within two years he would need even more care than his wife.

Preparing for final years

Victor and Julie Good had done marketing and worked as business professionals and entrepreneurs in Florida. Semi-retiring early, they bought a large 1850s Victorian fixer-upper house in Hinsdale in 2011 to be closer to Julie's mother, who lived a few hours away in New York state.

The plan was to restore the house, which was in need of a great deal of work. Those plans called for creating a small apartment for Victor's parents, then eventually converting a carriage house into its own separate home for them.

Both projects proved to be formidable, expensive, and time consuming, especially with the Goods doing much of the work themselves.

When the carriage house



Victor Good walks with his dad, Leo Good.

renovation was finished, the Goods did their best to make it as much like his parents' Colorado home as they could. The same photos lined the hallways. Easy chairs and the television were set up just as they had been back home. Even the kitchen cabinets matched those in the Colorado house's kitchen.

Victor said that he felt a sense of relief when his mother, mostly non-verbal at this point and given to spelling out words, walked into the completed house and spelled out "H. O. M. E."

On the other hand, Ma Schwan, long widowed, was living on her own in New York in a two-story home, with her bedroom on the second floor — hardly a suitable setup for a 90-year-old with growing stability issues.

Shortly after Victor's parents were settled in their new home and the family had worked out a viable routine, they got a call that Julie's mother had taken a bad fall off her steps and had lain injured on the floor for at least 18 hours after the fall.

In the hospital, X-rays showed that Ma Schwan had a broken hip, bruised ribs, a broken toe, and a concussion. After surgery, she recovered remarkably well and quickly, but it became obvious that she could no longer return to her home or live alone.

Thus, a third aging parent moved into the Goods' home.



Victor Good said that music had been vital to his parents, who enjoyed playing, singing, and dancing.

She would be there seven years until her death.

The reality of caregiving

The Caregivers gives an honest, detailed and, at times, painful account of those years caring for parents at their end of life.

The book chronicles the selling of a much-loved family home and the process of dismantling life-long collections of books, tools, family heirlooms, beloved dolls, pictures, knick-knacks, and family china. The decisions of what to save and what to give away or get rid of proved heartbreaking at times.

The Goods learned a truth that all caregivers and aging people come to realize — the majority of the things you collect over a lifetime are only important to you. You may have treasured memories about the items, but those feelings are unlikely to be shared by your children or grandchildren — a harsh and difficult reality.

The disruption and transitions can cause considerable friction in a family. Some can be more concerned about an inheritance than about the well-being of their relatives.

The Goods found that even their decision to care for their parents at home in their final years instead of putting them in an assisted living facility or nursing home became controversial.

"My wife and I were variously loved, condemned, ostracized, praised, hated, admired, despised, pitied, and shunned by members of our community," Victor wrote in the book's preface. "One thing we never saw coming was the division that formed between family and friends as Julie and I did our best and sacrificed the most to care for our parents."

Victor said that he still finds himself second-guessing some of the decisions they made. Their intense personal care certainly extended their parents' lives — but they have been criticized even for that effort, with some saying that it might have been better if their parents, with their quality of life declining, had died sooner.

He said that their quality of life was a constant concern throughout this journey and that he knew his parents were pain free and still experiencing real moments of joy, happiness, and love daily.

"I was with them every day," Victor said. "We got to experience the laughs, the smiles, and the hugs."

He also said that for a variety of reasons — physical, financial, emotional, and psychological — many families facing similar issues about elder care will make decisions quite different from the ones that he and Julie made for their parents.

The choices will change from family to family, and there is no right or wrong way to do things, he said — and that principle must be recognized and respected.

Victor remembers his father saying — as many, many others have — "When I can't wipe my own ass, I don't want to live any longer." Yet, when things got to that point with all three of their parents, they made different decisions. Aging forces families to confront some very difficult situations.

By discussing these concerns freely in his book, Victor hopes that the conversation will move others to talk openly about these important issues — one of his reasons for writing the book.

His conclusion about his and Julie's decision to care personally for their parents until the end remains solid.

"Most importantly, though, we were loved and appreciated by my parents," he said.

Lessons learned

The Goods said they learned a number of important lessons during their caregiving years. On their website, they have published "Advice for Caregivers," which they intend as a useful, practical, and extensive list that touches on topics ranging from how to communicate when someone has dementia to how to use Hoyer lifts to evaluating brands of adult diapers.

Finding qualified medical help was key. They said they were very pleased with the help they got from Brattleboro Area Hospice and the Hollowell Singers, from help who came to their home to assist with their parents' care, from the people and programs at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, and in particular from Dr. Tony Blofson of Maplewood Family Practice, who shared his extensive experience in dealing with dementia in his own family.

Victor said that music had been vital to his parents, who enjoyed playing, singing, and dancing.

At one point, Blofson wrote a prescription that read "1 song — 3 times per day — voice and guitar." The doctor handed it to Leo and told him, "This is the best thing you can do for yourself and for your wife."

When playing guitar, dancing, and singing became impossible, the Goods created a daily "evening balloon time," where from 4:30 to 6:30 their parents would sit together in a circle, listen to music, hold hands and move to the beat, while getting some exercise by bouncing a balloon around the room.

Music often elicited a response, including even singing, when nothing else seemed to work.

"Music was shockingly, amazingly effective," Victor said. "It seems to awaken the brain when they are trapped in there."

Movement and walking were vital. Doctors told the Goods that even something as simple as helping a parent walk around their apartment a few times a day would have a dramatic, positive effect.

The Goods said they saw those

benefits for themselves, noting how it helped heal and prevent the recurrence of bed and foot sores.

One important lesson they learned from Blofson was how he treated dementia patients with dignity, including them in conversations about treatment, talking to them directly, picking up on their nonverbal cues. The Goods incorporated those lessons in their daily interactions with their parents, talking to them, giving warm, meaningful hugs and "I love you" several times a day.

And one vital lesson the Goods learned that they've been applying in their own lives is to make plans for the final stages of aging before it happens.

- Downsize. Prepare your home for declining physical abilities. Simplify and minimize your needs, home, and possessions. Get rid of clutter, and recognize that things you may value are unlikely to be as valued by others. Don't leave it to others to decide what to do with your possessions.

- Give away treasured or valuable items to friends and family members who will appreciate them. Often, doing so will be far more personally satisfying than leaving them in a will. If accumulating possessions is one of the pleasures of one's early life, make giving possessions away one of the pleasures of the end-of-life years.

Aftermath

With the death of Ma Schwan in 2022, Victor said that he and his wife went through an empty nest period. So much focus had been on the parents, he said that he hardly recognized himself in the mirror.

"It's a true shock to the system," he said.

Round-the-clock care for their parents over eight years had taken a toll.

"You're so involved in the day-to-day routine," Victor said, "that you don't have time to socialize. You don't realize how much it ages you. Since they've passed, we've spent a lot of time traveling around the country and reconnecting with friends and family."

They also have begun taking their own advice and downsizing and planning for their later years.

Victor concluded that all of these issues around aging "are a discussion people need to be having."

The recalibration of their family also gave them a renewed sense of purpose.

"We were acutely aware that we've got to finish our lives," Victor said. "It became very clear to us that you have to live your life as good as can while you're here."

For photos and videos, extensive information, and resources on aging, and to order the book (\$48.99, hardcover or \$9.99, e-book), visit The-Caregivers.com.

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PJ Mead stars as Claire in Wild Goose Players' *Claire in the Chair in the Cemetery*.

IRA WILNER, COURTESY OF WILD GOOSE PLAYERS

'Claire in the Chair in the Cemetery,' from Wild Goose Players, explores a tug-of-war between life and death — in a cemetery

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

PUTNEY—David Stern and the Wild Goose Players (WGP) partner again with Sean Hurley to produce Hurley's latest, *Claire in the Chair in the Cemetery*. It opened Nov. 10, and the production's offered again this weekend at Next Stage.

"This is another world premiere from our playwright-in-residence," says Stern of the play, described in its publicity materials as "a whimsical comedy about life and death and finding one's purpose in the unlikely of places."

It's both a "comedy and a moving piece of theater," Stern adds.

A multifaceted artist and theater person, Stern first

connected with Hurley in 2015 — not as a creative collaborator but as the subject of a public radio news segment that Hurley was reporting for New Hampshire Public Radio.

"He did a story about our production of *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*," Stern says. Only after the two had "become entrenched in each other's work" did Stern learn that Hurley was a playwright as well as an award-winning journalist, he said.

The first play that Stern and Hurley collaborated on last January was Hurley's *Food & Shelter*, which Stern called "one of the greatest pieces of writing in the dramatic literature tradition in the English language[...]."

"He writes in a surrealistic form, so if you're clinging to

understanding [...] every single bit, you'd find him frustrating," Stern says, likening Hurley's work to that of Irish literary powerhouse Samuel Beckett.

Claire in the Chair, Stern explains, is "a beautiful comedy about 27-year-old Claire who's moved to the local cemetery so her twin, Blaire, can live fully."

"Blaire has arranged for food, water, soap, books, clothes. Everything has been prepared for Claire's long life with the dead. She's visited by a gravedigger, an undertaker, and a chef — a set of clowns, but not silly ones," he says. "More the typical Shakespearean clown — wise and perspicacious."

The problem is, Stern adds, that "she hasn't told [them] she's not dying, while each expresses a pressing need for Claire's life to be as short as possible."

The play, he says, is "a show about the soul and the body," Stern continues.

"The soul is connected to the body in childhood, but as we grow and we become concerned with the stuff in our lives — whatever that may be — the soul takes up residence alongside the body, [but] separate."

He explains that the viewer will experience "cognitive dissonance around the twins."

"It's poetic, brilliant, multileveled, discoverable — but not a simple piece of writing," Stern says.

A reporter and playwright

A frequent presence at rehearsals despite the long drive from his Thornton, New Hampshire, home, Hurley has

■ SEE 'CLAIRE IN THE CHAIR', B4

A big transition for the valley's music scene

Iron Horse Music Hall gets new nonprofit owner, while the Green River Festival changes hands

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

NORTHAMPTON, Mass.— Last month, the Northampton, Massachusetts musical ecosystem was churning with major change.

On Oct. 12, the recording company Signature Sounds announced that the Green River Festival had been sold to DSP Shows of Northampton and Ithaca, N.Y. And the Parlor Room, now a nonprofit, recently bought the legendary, but long-defunct, Iron Horse Music Hall.

Northampton has long been a center for a kind of music that has too many names; you just have to know it when you hear it. Some of those names: folk, alternative, adult album alternative (AAA), Americana, singer-songwriter, indie rock, indie-everything-else.

Music fans who live in southern Vermont have for decades benefited from this thriving scene only 45 minutes south, eagerly driving down to hear performances by a host of local and touring musical stars.

The person sitting at the center of the musical ecosystem has been all-around nice guy and music impresario Jim Olsen, 65, who started his career as a popular radio DJ on WRSI-FM in Greenfield, Massachusetts in 1984, when the station played all kinds of music with few playlist rules. He was a full-time DJ there until 1996.

Then, in 1995, Olsen, with sound engineer Mark Thayer, moved on to scouting and developing new artists and artists and recording them for their own

label, Signature Sounds.

Their plan with Signature was to record and support the burgeoning acoustic music scene in and around Northampton. It has since proudly produced and released more than 180 albums of singer-songwriter, Americana, modern folk, and rock music.

"I'm looking for great, original voices," Olsen told *Music Connection* in 2015. "I want to hear someone doing something different or has a unique outlook, a unique voice, someone who doesn't sound like 30 other things. We're looking for great songs, great songwriters. I find great music because I'm a fan."

Signature Sounds' roster includes Chris Smither, Eilen Jewell, Brennen Leigh, Birds of Chicago, Rachel Baiman, Matthew Fowler, And The Kids, Winterpills, and Twisted Pine, among others. Alumni artists include Lake Street Dive, Josh Ritter, Mary Gauthier, and Lori McKenna.

Signature moved from Olsen's home into new offices in downtown Northampton in 2012. Then, in the same building, he opened The Parlor Room, an intimate 90-seat live-performance venue presenting concerts several nights per week. In 2015, Signature started an artist development and management wing to work with talented new artists.

Growth of a festival

Olsen became involved with the Green River Festival in Greenfield, Massachusetts, which originated as two separate events that were held just a week apart

■ SEE NORTHAMPTON AREA, B4

COLUMN | Deeper Dive

Musically minded youth take to the stage

Brattleboro comes to Stone Church on Nov. 18

THE YOUTH ROCK festival Brattleboro will return to the Stone Church Friday, Nov. 18 at with a dynamic lineup of four youth bands/performers.

These in-person performances will showcase three bands — YourArmsAreMyLegs, Godzilla with a Gun, and Ezra Holloway — as well as solo performer Jessica Beck.

Beck describes herself as a "common Greenfield hoodlum" who spends her days playing JRPG (Japanese role-playing games) such as Omori, which has a turn-based battle system with psychological horror elements. She describes

NANCI LEITCH is the development director for Youth Services. The Commons' *Deeper Dive* column gives nonprofits elbow room to write in first person and/or be unabashedly opinionated, passionate, and analytical about their own creative work and events.

her musical inspirations as a mix of the folk punk and archo-punk Pat the Bunny and Neutral Milk Hotel, whose music featured a deliberately low-quality sound, influenced by indie rock and psychedelic folk.

■ SEE BRATTLEBORO, B4

Colleen Harris (Alice the Undertaker) addresses Dennis Scott (Dennis) as Dominic DiBenedetto (Charlie) looks on.



IRA WILNER, COURTESY OF WILD GOOSE PLAYERS

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY

16

Music

BELLOWS FALLS Catch the Rising Stars : Crys Matthews, Peter Mulvey, Bettysoo at Bellows Falls Opera House:

A great joy of concert-going is discovering great new music. Established names sell tickets, but sometimes the opening act brings down the house on their own. That's the idea here: 3 acts - Crys Matthews, Peter Mulvey, Bettysoo - wowed our audience and return for a co-headlining triple bill. Matthews was unknown to most of the audience when she took the stage at the 1st Ray Massucco Concert Series show early this year. She left to a standing ovation.

► 6:30 p.m.: doors open, 7:30 p.m.: Showtime. Series presented by Ray's the Roof Productions and Next Stage Arts.
► \$42, \$35, \$24, \$18.50 (plus \$2/ticket service charge) No refunds unless show is cancelled and not rescheduled.
► Bellows Falls Opera House, Town Hall, 7 Square. Information: More information: 802-387-0102, info@nextstagearts.org.

BRATTLEBORO Música Franklin Community Concert: Student performance/family-friendly concert with Samirah Evans. Samirah is known for her dynamic and soulful approach to music, especially in the jazz and blues genres. Her musical style is heavily influenced by the New Orleans sound where she was one of the city's most popular and in-demand singers for nearly 20 years.

► 5-6 p.m. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Greenfield Local Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.
► Free and open to the public.
► First United Methodist Church, 18 Town Crier Dr. Information: 802-254-4218; fumcob@gmail.com.

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Area Hospice hosts Kitchen Table Conversation on the Medical Aid in Dying act (Act 39): Spring 2023: Legislation passed to allow terminally ill people from out of state to take advantage of it to end their lives. We'll discuss this, special challenges it may create, talk about Act 39 in general. When you think about your most engaging/interesting conversations, didn't many happen around a kitchen table? Staff/volunteers with knowledge/experience on this subject will sit around the table with you and together we'll talk in a supportive/congenial atmosphere.

► 2-3:30 p.m.
► Free.
► Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal St. Information: Please RSVP by emailing info@brattleborohospice.org or calling 802-257-0775. Space is limited.

Community meals

WILLIAMSVILLE Breakfast at Williamsville Hall: This monthly breakfast is complimentary (donations for the Hall are appreciated) and open to everyone. Enjoy homemade pastries, tea, coffee, and orange juice. If weather is good, seating will be outside; if weather is poor, seating will be inside.

► 8-10:30 a.m. Hall is ADA compliant.
► Donations for the Hall appreciated.
► Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: More information: email williamsvillehall@gmail.com, or visit-williamsvillehall.org.

FRIDAY

17

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO Rock River Players presents "Glengarry Glen Ross": Enter the coarse/unforgiving world of 1980s real estate sales, and in classic Mamet fashion, characters speak in fragmented speedy bursts and bulldoze their way through each other in what's a long desperate struggle for professional dominance. Old Shelly "The Machine" Levene fights tooth and nail to stay in the game while king of commissions Richard Roma demolishes his com-

FRIDAY CONT.

petition. And who in this office was desperate enough to break in and steal the good leads?

► 7 p.m. Is this really about salesmen, or about a bankrupt culture that produces/nurtures them? Starring Jim Bombicino, Alan Darling, Jay Gelter, Phil Kramer, Jon Mack, Adrienne Major, John Moran, John Ogorzalek. Directed by Bahman Mahdavi. Note: Show has adult language and portrayals of racism and sexism.
► Through Saturday, November 18.
► \$12.
► Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: Tickets: rockriverplayers.org.

BRATTLEBORO "Glengarry Glen Ross" presented by Rock River Players: Enter the 1980s unforgiving world of real estate sales. In classic Mamet fashion, characters speak in speedy fragmented bursts/bulldoze their way through one another in what's one long, desperate struggle for professional dominance. Old Shelly "The Machine" Levene fights tooth and nail to stay in the game while king of commissions, Richard Roma, demolishes his competition. Who in this office was desperate enough to break in/steal the good leads?

► 7 p.m. Is this really about salesmen or a bankrupt culture that produces/nurtures them? Starring Jim Bombicino, Alan Darling, Jay Gelter, Phil Kramer, Jon Mack, Adrienne Major, John Moran, John Ogorzalek. Directed by Bahman Mahdavi. Note: Show contains adult language/portrayals of racism & sexism. Not appropriate for ages 16 and under.
► Through Saturday, November 18.
► \$12 adults.
► Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: Tickets: rockriverplayers.org.

Music

BRATTLEBORO Sarasa Ensemble Presents: "Tendrils of the Soul": Sarasa Ensemble kicks off 25th Anniversary Concert Season with a special program that demonstrates the depth and power of the First Viennese School's masters: Beethoven's soul-searching "Cavatina" from his late Op. 130 string quartet, revel in Haydn's unstoppable inventiveness in his Op. 54 No. 2 quartet, exalt in Schubert's sublime Cello Quintet in C major. Zenas Hsu, Amy Galluzzo, violins; Marka Gustavsson, viola; Timothy Merton, Jennifer Morsches, C major.

► 7 p.m. All concerts available to stream free one week later on the Sarasa website. (As part of Sarasa's award-winning outreach program, this program will be presented to incarcerated teens at Massachusetts' Dept. of Youth Services facilities).
► \$25 general admission. Student and senior discounts available, free for children under 18.
► Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moysie Way. Information: 802-257-4523; bmcvt.org.

BRATTLEBORO Ali McGuirik: Ali McGuirik shares her Signature Sounds debut, "Til It's Gone," which dips into genres and sub-genres. But it never gets lost. Acting as co-producer with Tolchin, McGuirik lets the songs wander from shadowy emotional spaces to big, bad guitar workouts to delicate little confessions. But her voice - bold, buttery, spellbinding - carries each song to the next till they're gone.
► 7 p.m.
► \$17 to \$22 (in advance).
► The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: Tickets:stonechurchvt.com.

Visual arts and shows

BELLOWS FALLS Canal Street Art Gallery presents: Art For All Seasonal Group Show: Artwork by: Penelope Arms, Taffi Brown, Jean Cannon, Spaulding Dunbar, Len Emery, Jaqueline Evans, Nancy Fitz-Rapalje, Lesley Heathcote, Medora Hebert, Deedee Jones, Theresa Karinski, Carol Keiser, Charlotte Lacoste, Patricia Magrosky, Jeanne McMahan, Pat McPike, MC Noyes, Phyllis Odessey, Phyllis Rosser, Roxly Rubel, Gretchen Seifert, Marianne Shaugnessy.

► 11/17: Join us on 3rd Friday Gallery Night from 5-7 p.m. to celebrate and meet the artists. Curated show is reflective of what artists are currently creating with a mission to make art appreciation accessible and affordable to all. By re-introducing sliding commission scale, we take lower percentage on artwork under \$200. This makes art more affordable/directly supports the artists. Gallery also consigns new inventory from its 34 represented artists of unframed works for sale - many under \$100.
► Through Saturday, January 6, 2024.
► Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St. Open Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For wheelchair accessibil-

ity call 802-289-0104. 802-289-0104; canalstreetartgallery.com.

Film and video

WILLIAMSVILLE Friday Night Movie at the Williamsville Hall: "Peanut Butter Falcon" (PG-13): This 2019 sleeper hit stars Zack Gottsagen, who plays Zak, a young man with Down syndrome and no family living in a senior care facility with dreams of becoming a wrestler under the tutelage of his hero, Salt Water Redneck. When he escapes, he meets up with fisherman (Shia LaBeouf) running from his own troubles. The two of them (later joined by Eleanor - Zak's caregiver from the facility) set off on an adventure in a raft taking them along the southern Atlantic coast.
► 7:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.
► Admission is by donation (raises funds for Williamsville Hall).
► Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: williamsvillehall.com.

SATURDAY

18

Music

Sufi Music: Amir Vahab Ensemble in concert: Ensemble was formed by Amir Vahab in NYC in 1981 to perform mystical music of Sufis and folkloric music of regions of Iran & Turkey. Aim is to draw listener's attention to the spiritual dimension of existence. Vahab (vocals, tanbur, tar, setar, saz, Oud, ney, daf, Dohol and zarb) together with rotating group of musicians of diverse national/ethnic backgrounds. Today, ensemble includes Board Member/Founding Dir. of Global Music Institute, Michael Harrist, on yayli tanbur.

► 7:30 p.m. Honored as a peacemaker and virtuoso, Amir Alan Vahab is one of NY's most celebrated composer/vocalist of Sufi and folk music. He sings in different languages with a unique mystical style. Virtuosos of Amir weave fiery songs/instrumentals of the Ancient land of the Middle East include Persian, Turkish, Azeri, beyond. As an instrumentalist, he plays and teaches the tanbur, tar, saz, setar, oud, ney, daf and zarb.
► Tickets: \$10 to \$30.
► Halcyon Arts. Information: Tickets: tinyurl.com/4s98rptv.

BRATTLEBORO Trio Amphion Baroque presents: "The History of the Sonata": Trio Amphion Baroque: Jesse Lepkoff: baroque flute/recorder, Reinmar Seidler: cello, Gregory Hayes: organ/harpsichord. All are world class performers capturing essential passion/style of baroque music through historical instruments/techniques. Concert surveys the progression of the sonata from the first piece called sonata, early 17th century, to the pre-classical style from late 18th century. Features music by Cima, Purcell, Corelli, Leclair, Telemann, Lanzetti.

► 7 p.m. in the Atrium.
► \$20 in advance, \$25 at door.
► Brooks House, 41 Harmony Pl. (Main and High St.). Information: 802-490-4950.

BRATTLEBORO KaneloggiaHY-POTHESES presents Masters of Sonic Liberation #3: Third show in a 3-part series highlighting world renowned musicians in the ever expanding field of experimental music: Eric Dahlmen, Dave Pek, Glynnis Lomon, Alby Balgochian, Ayumi Ishito, Eric Plaks, Jon Panniker, Bonnie Kane, John Loggia, Ben James, Walter Wright.
► 7 p.m.
► \$10 suggested donation.
► One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: 118elliot.com.

Instruction

PUTNEY Occitan Singing Workshop with Brendan Taaffe: Occitan is the language of medieval France, the language of the troubadours and of the Cathars - repressed by the French monarchy for many generations, it has made a resurgence in recent years and a culture of Occitan song and poetry has blossomed along the Mediterranean.
► 1:30-4:30 p.m.
► \$30 general, \$40 generous.
► Putney Friends Meeting House, 17 Bellows Falls Rd. Information: RSVP brenndan@brendantaffe.com or if that's not doable, just show up on the day.

Kids and families

BRATTLEBORO Guilford Playscape & Weeks Forest: Animals Preparing for Winter: Join Boys & Girls Club and Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center for guided outdoor family adventures. Partake in short walks to local spots with naturalists and educators from both organizations. These excursions are themed to inspire families to have fun together outdoors, even when it's cold. All ages are invited though it's designed primarily for parents and caregivers and their children ages 5-11.
► 10 a.m.-12 noon. Pre-registration is required. Transportation available as is some outdoor gear. Each walk includes basic trail safety and a snack.
► Free. Pre-registration required.
► Boys & Girls Club, 17 Flat St. Information: More info: Renee Walker, Operations Director Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro, 802.254.5990, bgcbrattleboro.org/.

Well-being

so. NEWFANE Home Herbalist Appliance Program (Webinar): Focus is on specific uses of herbs (materia medica) organized by body system, holistic physiology, contraindications, drug interactions, interview

Community invited to join 35th anniversary celebration at Main Street Arts

SAXTONS RIVER—On Saturday, Nov. 18, from 5 to 7 p.m., the community is invited to celebrate Main Street Art's 35th anniversary. The event is free.

"This party will celebrate friendships, giving us the opportunity to reconnect with the past and meet those new to the community," said Anne Manner-McLarty, a member of the party planning committee, in a news release. "Come to share a story, revisit a fond memory, and experience how Main Street Arts fosters wellness and connection."

A multimedia exhibit titled, "All Through the Years," will feature paintings, puppets, and a slideshow of historic photographs of Saxtons River and Main Street Arts (MSA). There will also be an interactive timeline encouraging visitors to add

their own experiences.

Homemade sweet and savory finger foods, wine and beer will be available, as well as entertainment and more information about MSA and its current and future offerings.

The entertainment will feature the MSA's Children's Chorus and veteran performers singing songs from shows such as *Kiss Me Kate* and *HMS Pinafore*. They will be accompanied on piano by Maryann McArdle.

Main Street Arts began in 1988. Located in Saxtons River, it grew as a place where members of the community came together through the arts. Over the years, old and young people have gathered for parades, dinners, music, classes, and theater.

MSA's mission is to be a catalyst for arts and community, fostering creative expression

through artistic experiences, accessible to all. In recent months, the MSA board and new program director, Ashley Storrow, have been hard at work addressing building renovations and introducing new free or low-cost programs for families, teens, adults, and older Vermonters.

MSA has fostered collaborations with Senior Solutions, Greater Falls Connections, Rockingham Free Public Library, the WNESU, and many performers, artists and teachers from around Vermont.

Currently, MSA offers 14 programs in the areas of performing arts (music, dance, and theater), wellness, and community events. For more information about the party or making a donation to support MSA, visit mainstreetarts.org or email info@mainstreetarts.org.

SATURDAY CONT.

techniques, formulation, more. Each student will end the program with a handmade herbal apothecary customized for their personal needs, and receive a certificate reflecting their hours of study. Learn Herbalism from home this winter while developing a full custom-made apothecary of remedies for your loved ones!

► 11 a.m.-2 p.m. One Saturday per month through March.
► \$360 (Work-trade, BIPOC scholarships, free payment plans available).
► Old Ways Herbal School of Plant Medicine. Information: 802-365-0251; oldwaysherbal.com.

BRATTLEBORO The Brattleboro Zen Center In-Person Meditation: This group chants briefly and then sits in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action, either in-person or from wherever they might be.
► 1 p.m.-1:35 p.m. on Saturdays.
► Free.
► Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct. Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30).

Community building

GUILFORD Guilford Church Homemade Pie Sale: This is a fall tradition in time to save some preparations before Thanksgiving. Church volunteers will have baked apple, cherry, raspberry, rhubarb, pecan, pumpkin and specialty pies including combinations of fruit and gluten-free.
► 9 a.m.-12 noon in church's Zeller Hall. Proceeds benefit the church, which actively supports over 15 local programs that serve the community including Groundworks and The Root Social Justice Center. No pre-orders.
► \$20 per pie.
► Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Dr. off Rte. 5. Information: Information: Nanci Leitch: 802-257-0994, guilfordchurch@gmail.com.

Arts and crafts

GREENFIELD Workshop with VT Watercolorist Robert J. O'Brien
► 10 Forward Venue, 10 Fiske Avenue.
BRATTLEBORO Artist Talk: Aurora Robson: Artist Aurora Robson talks about her practice and the work on view in her current BMAC exhibition.
► 7 p.m.
► Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Information: 802-257-0124; brattleboromuseum.org.

Dance

WINCHESTER Monadnock Tri-State Dance Club with Live Music by "Champagne Jam"
► 7-10:30 p.m. Non-alcoholic beverages available. 50/50 Raffle.
► Everyone welcome.
► \$12 admission.
► Elmm Community Center, 21 Durkee St. Information: More information - Tom: 978-249-6917 / 978-790-9322 or Barbara: 802-722-9205 / 802-376-0317.

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

SUNDAY

19

Farmers' markets

PUTNEY Putney Winter Farms' Market: Local Products, Live Music, Lunch Cafe.
► 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sundays.
► Through Sunday, December 24.
► Putney Winter Farmers Market, 130 West Hill Rd. Information: putneyfarmersmarket.org.

Well-being

SAXTONS RIVER Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement® Workshops: Paris Kern has been a Feldenkrais Practitioner since 1992, and has attained the highest professional certification as a designated Feldenkrais Teacher.
► 11/19: 12 noon-4 p.m. Continues 12/9: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
► \$50 per session.
► Main Street Arts, 37 Main St. Information: Register: mainstreetarts.org/feldenkrais.html. More information: 410-303-8003, pariskern@comcast.net.

Visual arts and shows

PUTNEY NXT Gallery Presents "Dragon Land," Paintings by Sarah H. Paulson: Opening reception of "Dragon Land," an exhibition by artist Sarah H. Paulson. "My art practice is performative," says Paulson. "I believe that performance, in its sacred form, has the capacity to bring the human being closest to what it means to be human. This sentiment is at the heart of all my work, including my drawings and paintings." Paulson presents inner worlds, creatures, dynamic communication.
► 11/19 Opening Reception: 4-6 p.m.: Unique aspect of this series is the canvas itself - a collaborative creation involving artists, dancers, writers, musicians who dipped their feet in pigment and contributed to the foundation of these artworks. Natural earth-based inks, crafted from variety of organic sources, serve as the primary medium.
► Through Sunday, February 11, 2024.
► Free.
► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Open during events and by appointment with artist or contact Next Stage: info@nextstagearts.org, 802-451-0053
More information: Heather Ahrenholz - heather@nextstagearts.org, 802-451-0053.

Film and video

BRATTLEBORO "32 SOUNDS": Documentary followed by Sound Bath: Sam Green's 32 SOUNDS is an immersive documentary exploring the elemental phenomenon of sound and its power to bend time, cross borders, and profoundly shape our perception of the world around us. Film will be followed by sound bath performed by Matt Samolis and Thadd Comstock. Green samples the sounds inside the womb, the mating call of a now-extinct bird, the audio effects created by a Hollywood Foley artist, the hush of snow falling in Japan, and John Cage's "4:33."
► 7:30-10 p.m. Film is 97 min. Experimental musician Annea Lockwood (her Piano Burning performance captured the sounds of a piano on fire) suggests as

SUNDAY CONT.

20

Instruction

BELLOWS FALLS Internet Basics Workshop (11/20 and 11/22 - 2 days): Newly connected users will become familiar with basic terminology, functionality, and navigation of internet browsers, search engines, websites.
► 10:30 a.m. (2 classes: 11/22 class builds on 11/20 class).
► Free.
► Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org.

TUESDAY

21

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.
► 5-6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.
► Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; brattleborowalkinclinic.com.

WEDNESDAY

22

Community meals

VERNON Farm Picked Deliveries available for Thanksgiving: "Farm Picked is offering Thanksgiving Baked Goods and farm to home delivery again this year. We are delivering to homes on 11/22 - just in time for your Thanksgiving gatherings. Pick up in Vernon also available. Place orders: www.farmpickedvt.com."
► Farm Picked Deliveries. Information: farmpickedvt.com.



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Saxtons River Art Guild hosts watercolor workshop

SAXTONS RIVER—The Saxtons River Art Guild announces a one-day workshop given by Vermont watercolorist Robert J. O'Brien on Saturday, Nov. 18, at the United Church of Bellows Falls, 8 School St., from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Workshop fees are \$70 for SRAG members and \$90 for non-members. SRAG will provide coffee and tea; participants should bring a lunch.

The theme of the workshop is Portraits, and the human portrait will be explored in this workshop. Painting from a photo reference, students will be learning how

to use a layering process in water colors.

For a demonstration, O'Brien will paint a finished portrait, while explaining each step of the painting process. Participants are asked to bring watercolors, paper, and a reference photo featuring a person to work from; O'Brien will have several on hand if needed.

Painters will be creating their own artwork as O'Brien does his demonstration. A critique and class discussion will be held at the end of the session.

This class is open to all abilities; although, some drawing

and watercolor experience is suggested.

O'Brien has been painting in watercolor for over 40 years and organizers say he is a popular workshop instructor. More information and images of his artworks can be found at robertjobrien.com.

For registration or more information, please contact: Carolyn Berglund at poohear@ne.rr.com. Masks and COVID-19 vaccinations are suggested for those attending the SRAG workshops.

‘Art for All’ show opens at Canal Street Art Gallery

BELLOWS FALLS—Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St., presents the “Art For All” seasonal group show, sharing the gifts from the many artists of the region and marking the gallery’s seventh year. According to the gallery, the show is curated to be reflective of what artists are currently creating with a mission to make art appreciation accessible and affordable to all.

The show opens Friday, Nov. 17, and is on view through Jan. 6. During the 3rd Friday Gallery Night from 5 to 7 p.m. there will be a celebration and opportunity to meet the artists.

This year’s show includes artwork by 23 artists: Penelope Arms, Tafi Brown, Jean Cannon, Spaulding Dunbar, Len Emery, Jaqueline Evans, Nancy Fitz-Rapalje, Lesley Heathcote, Medora Hebert, Deedee Jones, Theresa Karpinski, Carol Keiser, Charlotte Lacoste, Patricia Magrosky, Jeanne McMahan, Pat McPike, MC Noyes, Phyllis Odessey, Phyllis Rosser, Roxy Rubel, Gretchen Seifert, and Marianne Shaughnessy.

The “Art For All” show offers what the gallery calls “affordable, easy-to-fall-in-love-with artworks.” This year,

the show introduces transparent pricing: Each artist sets a price for the artwork, and a price for the frame. The gallery takes its commission for sale of the artwork only, in an effort to help artists with rising framing costs.

Labels on each work also show the amount the artist is paid from the sale. The use of transparent pricing, the gallery says, is “to make the purchase of original art even more accessible, user friendly, and easily understood.”

The gallery employs a sliding commission scale, taking a lower percentage on artwork priced under \$200. The gallery also continues to consign new inventory in its flat file of unframed works from 34 represented artists. Many are priced for less than \$100; some for less than \$50.

All gallery events are free; for wheelchair accessibility call 802-289-0104. Canal Street Art Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit canalstreetartgallery.com, or contact 802-289-0104 or artinfo@canalstreetartgallery.com.



“Early Winter Cornfield” by David Brown.

Vermont Pastel Society exhibits in November at Crowell Gallery

NEWFANE—For the month of November, the Crowell Gallery, 23 West St., welcomes back the South East Regional Hub of the Vermont Pastel Society (VPS). Sixteen local artists have selected their finest original pastel work to display. A reception will be held on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 2 to 4 p.m. All artwork is for sale; artist information and pricing will be available.

Exhibitors include Deedee

Jones, David Brown, Gill Truslow, Monica Hastings, Lesley Heathcote, Carol Corliss, Carroll Durand, Melody Reed, Chris Reid, Matt Peake, Maggie Smith, Pat McPike, Cath Stockbridge, Matt Beck, Maureen Spinale, and Ann Coleman.

All are experienced artists who enjoy working in pastel, a medium that consists of pure pigment mixed with enough binder to form a stick. Pastels have been

used by artists for centuries. The finished works are highly archival and permanent.

The VPS is a volunteer organization founded in 1999, currently with about 100 members. The purpose of the VPS is to build and strengthen connections among pastel artists. The organization hosts two large exhibits per year, numerous workshops statewide, and now has several regional hubs that promote their own exhibits and events as well. A percentage of sales will support the Moore Free Library, a private, nonprofit, community resource. Library and gallery hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 1 to 5 p.m., Thursday 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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THE HOLDOVERS R
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SUNDAY 2 & 6:45
MON.-THUR. 4 & 6:45

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Epsilon Spires to sign 10-year lease for former church in Brattleboro

BRATTLEBORO—Epsilon Spires is about to sign a 10-year lease at 190 Main Street in downtown Brattleboro. The restored gothic church space with its historic Estey organ has been home to the nonprofit arts center since the center’s founding in 2019.

The mission of Epsilon Spires, according to its website, is “to illuminate the relationship between creative arts, natural sciences, equality, and sustainability through innovative performances, art exhibits, film screenings, panel discussions, and educational

workshops.”

With this 10-year lease, the organization said in a news release, it “is doubling down on its commitment to its audience, artists, and community with the promise of bringing great creative events to the heart of downtown Brattleboro for many more years to come.”

Part of that effort for Epsilon Spires is launching the 10 x 10 Match Challenge Fundraiser. Entrepreneur and inventor Bob Johnson, of Omega Optical and Delta Vermont, says he will match

every \$1,000 raised with one month of free rent. This means the value of every donation is basically doubled for Epsilon Spires. The fundraiser’s goal is \$10,000.

“As a nonprofit arts center that runs a full program on a very small budget, this fundraiser could make a world of difference for our organization,” said Executive Director Jamie Mohr. “This new 10-year lease will also allow us to plan and fund venue improvements. We are excited to bring even more great experiences to our wonderful

community.”

Epsilon Spires has also launched a New Membership Program that offers benefits such as exclusive ticket discount codes, invitations to Member-Only special events, advance ticket sales to popular limited capacity events, and more. For this November only, all the proceeds from new Memberships will be counted toward the 10 x 10 Match Challenge goal of \$10,000.

“Becoming a member is the perfect way to get the most out of your Epsilon Spires experience and meet like-minded devotees of music, film, and art,” says Epsilon Spires Board President Jessamyn Fiore, who is enthusiastic about the launch of the Membership Program. “We have a lot of fun ideas in the works for our new members. This program will allow us to directly connect and involve them in the creative process.”

For more information about donating the Epsilon Spires 10 x 10 Match Challenge Fundraiser, joining the New Membership Program, or for details about upcoming events, visit epsilonpires.org.

Plastic-debris artist will discuss her career

BRATTLEBORO—Aurora Robson, whose innovative works made of plastic debris are currently on view at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) in the exhibit “Human Nature Walk,” discusses her artmaking career on Saturday, Nov. 18, at 7 p.m.

The recipient of BMAC’s inaugural Award for Service to Art & Humanity, Robson has spent more than 20 years creating work with the aim of inspiring people to view plastic waste not only as a burden on the planet, but also as a reusable resource and a transformative material that can contribute to a greater good. Her intent, she says, is to “take plastic out of the waste stream and turn its longevity into an asset.”

To create each sculpture and installation, Robson works with hundreds, even thousands of small, discarded pieces of plastic in ways that exploit the material’s indestructibility and flexibility.

“Human Nature Walk” takes viewers into a landscape of carefully organized colors and a variety of shapes and lifelike forms. “Navigating the exhibition feels like wandering through a forest, or floating underwater in a tropical sea, yet it also serves as a reminder of the unsustainable situation society has created through the ubiquitous use of plastic.”

Robson calls her art practice “a form of serious play” and invites the public to join her in the process by contributing colorful plastic bottle caps to her installations. She says, “While my work is a call to action to change



Aurora Robson

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.”

By enabling viewers to add to her BMAC installation, Robson is “encouraging us to reimagine our relationship with plastic and with each other,” observes curator Katherine Gass Stowe. “She urges us not to throw plastic away, but rather to love it and transform it into an offering to others, a gift.”

Robson was born in Toronto and raised in Hawaii. She studied art history and visual art at Columbia University. Her

sculptures have been exhibited and collected internationally, and she has been awarded grants and fellowships from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

“Human Nature Walk” is on view through Feb. 11, 2024. It is funded in part by the Wolf Kahn Foundation and subLyme Payments.

Admission to the event is free. Registration is optional, and walk-ins are welcome. Register at brattlebormuseum.org or call 802-257-0124, ext 101.

Multimedia exhibit at Landmark College explores the human condition

PUTNEY—The Fine Arts Gallery at Landmark College is currently exhibiting multimedia works of art by six artists, all centered around the human form.

Curated by Landmark College Associate Professor of Arts Samuel Rowlett, “This Mortal Coil” opened on Sept. 22, and will be on display through Jan. 22. Visitors can view it daily, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., in the Fine Arts Building.

The six participating artists are N.E. Brown, Lorelei d’Andriole, Johannes De Young, Andrea Green, Johanna Hoogendyck, and Young Min Moon. From the Confucian funerary rites of South Korea, to a child’s imaginative

escape from poverty in Jamaica, to a trans-artist’s personal journey as a means to effect social change, Rowlett says, these works were selected to represent a diversity of cultural perspectives on the human condition.

“In the venerable tradition of artists depicting the human figure, the work in this exhibition explores themes relating to the human condition: both conscience and the consciousness of being, the viewer and the viewed, the body and mortality; to quote Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: ‘The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to,’” Rowlett said in a news release.

Additional works by Green are

also on display as a solo exhibition in the atrium and hallways of the Nicole Goodner MacFarlane Center for Science, Technology, and Innovation. Using allegory and drawing inspiration from Ralph Ellison’s novel *Invisible Man*, Green explores family relationships and ideas of identity, race, and perception.

For directions to both buildings and a campus map, visit landmark.edu and click the “Map and Directions” link at the bottom of the page. For more information about the exhibit, contact Rowlett at samuelrowlett@landmark.edu.

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■ 'Claire in the Chair'

earned recognition as a public radio reporter, podcaster, TV staff writer, and performer, and he has garnered awards in various arenas. His work won New Hampshire Public Radio a 2019 regional Edward R. Murrow award from the Radio Television Digital News Association for sports reporting.

His stories have aired nationally on NPR's *Here and Now*, *Morning Edition*, and *All Things Considered*; his TV credits include Amazon's *Patriot* and Epix's *Perpetual Grace, LTD*.

In the end, though, he reflects: "I'm probably most naturally a playwright. My mind just seems to embrace the sand and sea of it."

About the admittedly quirky Claire, Hurley says, "I love cemeteries. [...] Even though graveyards are especially quiet and cut away and unto themselves, they also offer that kind of still and thoughtless and exhilarating experience you get when you

climb a mountain, or go to the sea, or walk into some enormous stadium."

An avid runner, Hurley says, "I like to run in the mountains and along trails, and I've found six or seven old family cemeteries out in the woods. I like to revisit those places, too. I feel like my feet are on the ground in a graveyard."

More practically, he says, *Food & Shelter*, his first play with Stern, was "a technical monster."

"So I wanted to write something simple," he says. "A simple set that didn't kill David."

A tug-of-war notion

One day, while visiting the local cemetery, Hurley says he "saw a woman sitting in a chair at one of the graves."

"It was such a striking image," he says. "I just started wondering about her and her chair. This idea of wanting to spend such time by a grave in this way [led him to wonder] if there was anyone who'd ever moved into a cemetery, to live, maybe, with someone they loved so much they couldn't bear to be away from them."

"As I began to see Claire carrying a chair into the cemetery to live out her days, I also saw that she was being followed by the local gravedigger," Hurley says.

And that, in turn, led Hurley to ask himself: "What if she was there to live, but the gravedigger thought she'd come to die? What if he started digging out her grave?"

And what if the tombstone

I like this tug-of-war notion of life being a thing you try to figure out while all around you is preparing for your death. To some extent, I think this is a story about love and death.

— SEAN HURLEY

maker "started making her tombstone and the undertaker started bringing casket samples by?"

"I like this tug-of-war notion of life being a thing you try to figure out while all around you is preparing for your death," Hurley says. "To some extent, I think this is a story about love and death."

Cast and crew share their thoughts

P.J. Mead, who plays the title character, says "working on *Claire* has been wonderful. [...] Certainly the most compelling part is being part of the creation of a new play. Being able to work with the author, ask questions, and see the process has been incredibly interesting."

Colleen Harris, whose character — the larger-than-life Alice Algren — "runs through emotions like a person trying on hats," adds that "the language in the play is both poetic and colloquial, and the characters leap off the page."

"As an actor, I'm often interpreting the words of a playwright who wrote them decades

or centuries ago," Harris says. "In this process, he's in the room! It's gratifying to know that the work I do, the feedback I give, [...] will have a lasting impact on this piece of art."

Dom DiBenedetto, playing Charlie Dunn, concurs.

"One of the most exciting aspects of the process has been working with the playwright as we rehearse," he says. "The conversations we've had about the characters and the plot have helped frame our show so much, and the script even had adjustments here and there based on our work in that way."

"Since our seated reading of the original draft, I have been captivated by *Claire in the Chair*," DiBenedetto continues. "Something about the poetry of the informality of the characters' speech as well as the juxtaposition of the quaintness of a cemetery and the hugeness of life and death, I suppose."

Kristina Miema, who plays Blaire, adds, "I have had a lot of fun exploring my character and really getting to know her. I've never been in a show quite like this."



IRA WILNER, COURTESY OF WILD GOOSE PLAYERS
Kristina Meima (Blair) and PJ Mead (Claire).

Costumer Sandy Klein says, "I think part of the challenge was landing on an interpretation of this very abstract play that satisfies my own inner logic."

But, she adds, "it was less of a challenge because the casting was so spot on."

"When an actor fits a character so seamlessly, the costume design becomes more intuitive and obvious — like you're just filling in the other third of an existing work of art," Klein says. "As I watch [rehearsals] I am still laughing (very loudly) as all the nuanced (and audacious!) character work

is coming through. I think people are going to really enjoy this."

"It's a [tighrope] act to hold the balance between surreality and reality. I'm excited to see how the audience reacts to the world we've created," says Harris.

Oxymoronically tagged a "sparklingly dark comedy," Claire in the Chair in the Cimetière is at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, in Putney on Friday, Nov. 17 through Sunday, Nov. 19. Tickets are \$20 and are available at wildgooseplayers.com/tickets.

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■ Brattrock

The Western Massachusetts-based musicians who comprise YourArmsAreMyLegs tout themselves as a metalcore/post-hardcore band.

YourArmsAreMyLegs, formed in 2022, just released its first extended-play album, *May Burning Bridges Keep You Warm*.

What's scarier than a giant lizard? A giant lizard armed with the realities of America. Godzilla with a Gun mixes the 100-foot-tall lizard-with-a-gun imagery with that of punk rock.

From Brattleboro, this all-genre-encompassing punk

group puts on a show that is cathartic, energizing, psychotically loud, sure to please all, and full of passionately and vigorously played music.

The band consists of bassist Miles Ackerman-Hovis, drummer Lucas Majer, keys and rhythm guitarist Kyle Girard, and lead guitarist Lincoln Hurley. They're certain to be loud, powerful, and eye-catching, just as a 100-foot-tall lizard with a gun might be.

Holloway is an up-and-coming musician from Vermont. He released his

debut extended-play album, *A Moment in Time*, in 2023.

Known for his catchy melodies, introspective lyrics, and energetic live shows, his music is a mix of rock, pop, punk, and alternative.

A talented songwriter, Ezra Holloway's true passion is performing his music live and surrounds himself with highly talented musicians. He is working on new music and hopes to release new music in early 2024.

Brattrock raises funds for Youth Services with a mission of providing places for youth to

gather and a venue for musically minded youth from Vermont and the surrounding region to connect, learn, perform, inspire, and be inspired.

Brattrock takes place Friday, Nov. 18 at The Stone Church, 210 Main St., from 7 to 10:30 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. All ages are welcome and the cost is \$10-\$20 on a sliding scale. For more information, email info@brattrock.com or visit Brattrock.com.

■ Northampton area

in 1986 at Greenfield Community College. The Franklin County Chamber Of Commerce sponsored their first Upcountry Balloon Fair on one weekend and then WRSI held their fifth anniversary party the following weekend.

In the following years, music soon became primary and the two events merged and eventually became the Green River Festival. Olsen became festival director in 2013 under the Signature Sounds Presents umbrella. It is now, minus the balloons, a three-day event with camping located at the Franklin County Fairgrounds in Greenfield.

With multiple stages of music, this outdoor festival draws thousands of people who sometimes happily dance in the rain because there is no shelter or bake in the heat for a similar reason.

Every summer, the Green River Festival — called one of "50 essential summer music festivals" by *The New York Times* — presents a world-class lineup. Some of the well-known performers have been Emmylou Harris, Buddy Guy, Lucinda Williams, Mavis Staples, Arlo Guthrie, Alison Krauss & Union Station, Taj Mahal, Jon Batiste, Brandi Carlisle, Gillian Welch & David Rawlings, and Steve Earle.

According to Olsen, the festival just became too expensive.

"It got to a point where it felt, as an organization, we had taken it sort of as far as we could," Olsen told *The Commons*. "There was a lot of change over the last few years, obviously, with the pandemic and moving from the college to the new site. It's been a little bit of a difficult ride there."

After the pandemic wound down, the festival found that inflation could put it out of business.

"The amount of inflation on everything was incredible," Olsen said. "The price of everything went up by half. The nature of the festival business is that you rent the stages. You rent the port-a-potties and the golf carts and all the stuff that takes to run the festival. So when the prices go up tremendously, it really hurts."

Talent also costs more. "With the musicians, it's more expensive to tour, so they've raised their prices," Olsen said.

"We like to get musicians from all over the country, and even book international world music. And the prices for everything just went up quite a bit. It made for a challenging environment."

Another challenge was the rise in the number of music festivals in the immediate area.

"There have been a lot of changes in the marketplace in terms of new venues opening up and new promoters moving in," Olsen said. "There's just a lot more activity. And you know, there didn't used to be so many festivals on the summer calendar. Now every weekend there are festivals all over the place. It's a very competitive environment."

And even without those challenges, producing a festival is stressful, Olsen said.

"You're responsible for the whole thing," he said. "You've got camping. People are there for three days, but it is really a 10-day process. You've got to build it and get it going, and then tear it down again."

By 2022, Olsen was struggling to cope; the festival was no longer fun.

It was getting to the point where he "really wasn't enjoying it."

"That was a real reason to look to pass it on," he said. "It's been 37 years, and I just want to make sure that it keeps going."

He had a few offers for the festival.

"We didn't put it on Facebook Marketplace," he joked. "But I know other festival promoters around the Northeast, and there were a couple of them I thought might be interested."

But none of them actually made an offer.

"It's not the easiest business to place a value on," Olsen said.

"John Sanders, the main principal of DSP, I've known for many years," he said. "He's been coming to the festival for many years. And a few years ago, he started whispering in my ear, 'If you ever want to sell, we'd be interested in it.'"

And they were. Olsen declined to say how much DSP Shows paid for the festival.

"DSP is just the best fit," Olsen said. "They're very familiar with the local market and the culture of what we do. They respect it and they honor it and they just

want to move it forward."

If everything gets rented, then what did DSP really buy?

"There are very few actual physical goods that are included," Olsen said. "We have a couple of storage units worth of stuff that DSP now owns, I believe."

When you buy something like the Green River Festival, "you're really buying intellectual property," he explained. "You're buying an email list, and Facebook followers, and all that kind of stuff. We've had a very loyal customer base that's been coming every year. That's really what you're buying."

"The Green River Festival is the premier live music event in Western Mass., and we are honored to be entrusted with ensuring it continues for many years to come," Sanders said in a press release.

Olsen and Signature Sounds will remain involved as a sponsor and will host one of the stages.

"So it doesn't feel like completely cutting the cord and walking away at all," Olsen said.

Buying the Horse

Then there's the sale of the long-lamented Iron Horse on Center Street, which in its heyday often booked two shows a night, every night of year. It closed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 and never reopened.

Olsen donated the Parlor Room to a nonprofit in January of 2023. It was the nonprofit that bought the Horse.

"The Parlor Room itself was always kind of a labor of love," Olsen said. "It's a very small room. There was never a whole lot of money to be made there anyway. It was sort of a nonprofit all along. But when we came out of the pandemic, there just wasn't the same enthusiasm amongst our staff and crew to keep it going."

The nonprofit was able to buy the Iron Horse, with its all-important liquor license, in September 2023. It plans to reopen the concert hall, with food and liquor, in early 2024.

"So when we were approached about this nonprofit idea, it seemed like a really good one," Olsen said. "So we donated the Parlor Room to the nonprofit and they've done a nice job running it. They started a music school. It's

FROM SECTION FRONT

been very good."

The Horse's former owner, real estate magnate Eric Suher, who was forced by the city of Northampton to unload the place or have the liquor license revoked, said his decision to sell to the Parlor Room was helped by the nonprofit status, which allows for a number of funding sources not available to a for-profit buyer.

"I never thought that would have happened in my wildest imagination," Olsen said. "But here we are."

He sits on the advisory board, "not even the board of directors," he said.

"I'm essentially a nonvoting board member of the department because the fact that I donated the room just seemed like a potential conflict of interest," Olsen said. "They're completely their own organization."

Signature Sounds itself is thriving, and it remains Olsen's baby. But he still sits at the center of the musical ecosystem, which he had a big hand in creating, and he hasn't given up booking musical talent for the area.

"The record label is still going strong," Olsen said. "We are still releasing recent music and working with a great roster of artists. We're still producing some concerts around Western Massachusetts in places like the Academy of Music and the Shea Theater."

Signature Sounds has started doing some concert promotion and still produces the Arcadia Folk Festival at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton and Northampton, as well as the Back Porch Festival at multiple venues in March. "And I'm still involved with the Green River Festival," he said. "I'm just not running the show."

Olsen said he is sliding towards retirement — but he's not there yet.

"One of the nice things about this age is you're able to work remotely," he said. "It's given me some flexibility. It kind of makes the perfect sort of moving-towards-retirement job, but it's not a retirement job."

It's still great work, he said. "I love working with artists," Olsen said. "I've got a great staff. I see no reason to stop at this point."

VIEWPOINT

May we create a space for sanity and peace

The way forward in the Middle East can only begin with a ceasefire

ON THE MORNING of Tuesday, Nov. 2, in Westminster West, I participated in a service committing to the ground the body utilized by the beautiful and loving soul of Eshagh Shaoul.

Our brother Eshagh was a faithful, observant, Iranian Jew. If you ever fellow-shipped with him and his wife, Rosalyn, at their home in Putney, you would have transcended who you are as they escorted you though the “Temple of Love,” a sacred ground adjacent to their home whereupon all the world’s major faith traditions are observed and revered.

Dr. Jim Levinson led the service, as would a rabbi. He recited from the Torah. Dr. Amer Latif also participated in the service, as would an imam. He recited from the Holy Quran. I also recited from the Bible, as would a Christian cleric.

Jew, Muslim, and Christian laid to rest a brother whom we all wish to emulate.

THAT MORNING, while celebrating love, peace, and wisdom, I could not help but think of the Holy Land.

On Saturday, Oct. 7, a glimpse of the destruction which some wish on the nation of Israel catalyzed a new battle, reigniting a war that has been smoldering for some time.

Like most wars, especially World War II, civilians bear the brunt of casualties. Hamas targeted civilians and brutally slaughtered them or seized them as hostages to be used as bargaining chips.

SCOTT EVERETT COUPER, PH.D. is the minister and teacher at Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro (centrechurchvermont.org).

The reaction by Israel is all too predictable, for after the Holocaust, since 1948, she has been fighting for her very survival. Now the ground of offensive combines with the aerial bombardment, and the most casualties are innocent Palestinian civilians whom Hamas intentionally hides under and behind.

WHILE UNDERSTANDING the full context of the war, I urge our members of Congress — Sen. Bernie Sanders, Rep. Becca Balint, and Sen. Peter Welch — to advocate for a ceasefire and to propose a Gaza War Powers Act Resolution.

Let us preserve Palestinian civilian lives in the short term. To level Gaza with Palestinians buried in the rubble will only create hatred and animosity for the next hundred years.

To continue what is happening now is only mutually assured destruction. To some extent, it matters not who is right and who is wrong as all will end up dead in the medium to long term.

IN VERMONT, we have a shocking degree of per capita power; we have an influence on national policy disproportionate to our population through our three

■ SEE MIDDLE EAST, C2

VIEWPOINT



The Women's March on Washington in 2017 drew millions to Washington, D.C.

BRENDA LYNN SIEGEL/COMMONS FILE

On abortion, the numbers don't lie

The forced birthers didn't have a clue about the buzzsaw they were about to confront

IT IS CLEAR that the Dobbs decision by the Supreme Court caught the Republicans completely off guard, even though they have been working to take away the rights of women since before they killed the Equal Rights Amendment.

The Right must have thought that stealing the basic rights to bodily autonomy and to determining the size of one's own family would be upsetting at first, but then we would all get over it. The pundits always say that Americans have a short span of attention, especially

Guilford

NANCY BRAUS, until recently an independent bookseller, is a longtime activist who contributes often to these pages.

when it comes to politics, so it appears that the forced birthers didn't have a clue about the buzzsaw they were about to confront.

The discussion of abortion has shifted greatly from the pre-Dobbs days. It is standard now, unless you are a fan of Fox and its ilk, to hear abortion referred to as “abortion health care.”

In fact, the media now tells us that abortion is a part of the many procedures used by

doctors and midwives to keep women healthy. Some of the heartbreaking cases of doctors being unable or unwilling to do their jobs have resulted in permanent damage to the women who were denied care.

This damage ranges from being unable to have more children because of the damage done to the reproductive organs to the unbearable suffering they endured when they could have been resting, recovering, and

taking care of their lives.

A woman described her torment waiting for her sepsis to become life-threatening so she could be treated for a fetus that had no chance of survival. Another woman was thrilled to get pregnant, only to learn that her fetus was not viable. She had to stay pregnant for months until she birthed a child who suffered for a few days before passing away.

The real fanatics want to deny women with cancer the chance to be alive, since often the drugs will damage a fetus.

■ SEE ABORTION, C2

LETTERS FROM READERS

Urging Balint to support ceasefire resolution

Rep. Balint, how will we hold onto our humanity? Even Sen. Durbin of Illinois recognizes that a ceasefire is what President Biden must demand. Will any of us be able to look ourselves in the mirror, knowing that “evil will prevail if good people say nothing?”

Failing to call for a comprehensive ceasefire — not a meaningless “humanitarian pause” — will guarantee the continuation of the killing of innocents. How can we answer our children's questions about why we refused to call for a ceasefire, why we refused to take real action to save the lives of the children of Israel and Palestine?

Sen. Durbin had the courage to change his mind; Rep. Balint, why can't you join him? Why can't you join your 18 House colleagues who have signed the Ceasefire Now Resolution?

Additionally, failing to call for a ceasefire will encourage the forces attacking our democracy. Biden's polling numbers have plummeted since he sought the latest appropriation

of \$14 billion of additional weapons for Israel. Michigan now appears to have gone from favoring Biden's reelection to opposing the president. How many more swing states will move from blue to red?

Please don't turn away from our common humanity.

John Field
Putney

'The way to insure peace is to stop the oppression, not blast a population to death'

Dear Rep. Balint: I am writing to you in response to recent remarks on VtDigger.

First, I want you to know that I, too, am horrified and saddened by the violence committed by both Hamas and Israel. I hope that you will take a moment to read why I support a ceasefire and why your responses so far have left me with much confusion.

You say that you are working with the Biden administration to push Israel to follow humanitarian and international laws

related to this conflict. It should be clear that this is not working. Telling people to evacuate and then bombing the evacuation route probably breaks some law. And we all know that this has not happened out of the blue. Israel has a well documented history of attacking hospitals, homes, and schools of Palestinians.

As I listened to your excellent speech censuring Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, you mention how she pushed the lie that children were murdered in those school shootings. How could she say such when innocent children were killed and families destroyed, you asked.

But it is confusing to me when you won't sign onto the ceasefire bill that others in Congress are trying to introduce because continuing the bombing may help release the hostages taken by Hamas.

So are you saying that Palestinian children's lives (so far well over 2,000) are worth less than the hostages' lives? A ceasefire will save all lives.

You say that if you thought a ceasefire would make a difference, you would sign on. Do you really think your censoring

speech, as excellent as it was, is going to change anything? If we do only things that we think will be a success, we will never know — we have to keep trying.

I don't know how one can ask an oppressed population not to fight back and just accept punishment because of one's perceived otherness, whether it be Jews, African Americans, LGBTQ folks, women, Muslims.

And, no, it doesn't mean I support at all what Hamas has done. The way to insure peace is to stop the oppression, not blast a population to death. It's more than likely that more Hamas members are being recruited as a result of the way Israel is choosing to respond to this horror. Hamas won't be destroyed unless the remaining Palestinians feel safe in their homes and are allowed to live a normal life.

When I was a child, teachers would punish the whole class for the actions of one or two students. It never caused me to put pressure on those misbehaving students; it only caused resentment in me against the teacher.

The collective punishment of

all Palestinians due to Hamas is wrong. This is causing more resentment and assuring that this violence will never cease.

It is past time win over the Palestinian confidence and assure that their human rights matter.

Marcia Hylan
South Newfane

Vets call for peace

At its monthly meeting on Oct. 28 in recognition of Armistice Day (Veterans Day), the Will Miller Green Mountain Veterans for Peace Chapter 57 adopted a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and that negotiations begin for a lasting peace in the region.

WILL MILLER GREEN
MOUNTAIN VETERANS FOR PEACE
Bethel
Bud Haas, secretary

Where does America go from here?

The Republican Party has lost its mind. Out of desperation, its House members have elected a speaker

who, if his party's candidate is not elected, believes that the democratic election process is corrupt.

If his candidate is elected, no problem.

Where does America go from here?

T. Breeze Verdant
Williamsville

Nar-Anon Family Group can help families find peace of mind

In his youth, in 1979, a young man decided, along with a schoolmate, to try marijuana. In our state, it was illegal to possess pot, which only added to the mystique of the drug.

The young man and his friend continued to smoke throughout middle school and into high school, eventually moving on to the more sophisticated forms of dope, such as using bong and pipes of hashish.

At the end of his senior year, following graduation, he sought higher education, college. It wasn't too long afterward that his use of marijuana was, in his mind, not enough

■ SEE LETTERS, C2



looks over a lawn, a rambling stone wall to the meadow and mountain views. Entry porch has EV charger. There is two bay basement garage with high ceilings, ample work space, washer, dryer and laundry sink. The 32 x 40 barn has a workroom and a loft.

The peaceful, pastoral views to meadows and hills will captivate you! The ever changing cloudscapes and the way sunlight dances with shadows add everyday delight! In West Guilford, nestled away on 18 acres, this 1868 square foot, contemporary six room home, surrounded by mature woodlands was built by the current owners in 1974. Planned with simple lines outside, designed inside with personality and large windows for the kitchen, living room and primary bedroom to enjoy the lovely views. There are vaulted ceilings, light filled rooms, front entry w/cedar closet, a spacious living room with a centerpiece fireplace, a loft library with a sleeping alcove, the cheeriest of eat in kitchens with plentiful storage, counter space, views and a 16' x 10' deck. The versatile layout offers a dining room if desired, or a office/den as it is used now. The primary bedroom has a three quarter bath with a shower. A stackable laundry was added to the craft room/bedroom closet. The 20 foot long covered deck off the living room and primary bedroom

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Letters

“stimulation,” so he escalated into a different drug arena — cocaine. This brought excitement and pleasure to the young man; still, illegal and alluring. One drug followed the next, and now eight years had passed by. Unable to find his peace, the young man confessed his overwhelming and undermining full-blown addiction.

His parents were blindsided by this admission. “Not our son.” Wanting help, he found a detox bed within an inpatient rehabilitation program, where he began his chosen road to recovery.

All the while, the parents, baffled and unknowing, did not know where to turn. They started to ask questions, to make frantic phone calls to try to help their son with his recovery.

Little did they know, they had become as “sick” as their son.

By now, emotionally exhausted, they were in the encompassing throes of the family disease of addiction. It was then that they read a notice, an advertisement for Nar-Anon Family Group, a local support group for relatives and friends of drug abusers.

The parents began attending Nar-Anon. But at first they found it difficult to speak about their family’s difficult “problem.” It was just too embarrassing, yet they knew they had found a place for release and support from this very troubling issue.

They made a commitment to the group, attending meetings as often as possible and eventually they opened up about their son.

If this story sounds all too familiar to you, do not despair: Help and support exists in our community, and you, too, can find peace of mind in the company of others who understand your situation.

Nar-Anon Family Group may be able to help you by attending their ongoing support meetings:

When: 7 p.m.; every other Monday. Next meeting: Monday, Nov. 20.

Where: Arch Clinic of Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine, 8 University Way, Suite 11, Brattleboro.

Facilitator: Susan Avery, FMI. Cell: 802-345-4145.

Email: sueavery1@comcast.net. Susan Avery Brattleboro

‘To imply that this is Israel’s war is misleading and incorrect’

RE: “Oct. 7 was not Day 1 of Israel’s war on Palestinians” [Viewpoint, Oct. 11]:

Kate Casa, in her article on the Hamas unprovoked, barbaric terrorist attack on Israel, fails to mention the collaboration and funding from Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, all known terrorist groups — these would be the same ones that chant, “Death to America.”

She also fails to mention that upon breaking through Israel’s borders they proceeded to murder hundreds of innocent men, women, and children and take many innocent civilians as hostages. Some have been found abused and murdered.

Israel was celebrating the Jewish diaspora at the time of the attack during Simchat Torah, which was supposed to be among the most festive times on the Jewish holiday calendar.

Casa also fails to mention Hamas regularly lobs rockets into Israel, also unprovoked, and when Israel, which has every right to defend itself, responds in kind and causes a civilian casualty, they show the world and say, *See what Israel does*.

If Hamas would lay down their arms, there would be peace; should Israel lay down their arms, they would be annihilated.

To imply that this is Israel’s war is misleading and incorrect. Israel wishes to live in peace. Antisemitism has no place in a civilized world; if anything needs eradication, that would be it. Either Hamas needs to lay down their arms and end these atrocities against humanity, or they need to be annihilated.

Lyle Howe Guilford

Medicare Advantage: God’s gift to insurance companies, not patients

At the same time that more seniors are choosing Medicare Advantage (MA) over traditional Medicare, the very

real drawbacks to MA are becoming ever clearer.

Opting for Medicare Advantage (MA) instead of traditional Medicare places decisions about your health in the hands of a big insurance company intent on making a profit: 75% of MA business is in the hands of six huge insurers.

The blizzard of commercials that these insurers fund with their profits tout the MA program as God’s gift to seniors. But, unlike actual Medicare, these huge insurers have a great incentive to spend as little as possible on their insureds.

They accomplish this by, among other tactics, requiring that you get approval from them before getting many services, denying many of these requests, and denying or delaying payment to health care providers.

That’s why the gross profit per insured on MA policies was more than twice as high as on other commercial insurance policies in 2021.

The Health and Human Services agency Inspector General recently found that 13% of pre-approval denials and 18% of payment denials were improper. Each denial saves these insurance companies money while imposing a real hardship on patients and medical providers. Not surprisingly, there seems to be a trend for providers to stop accepting Medicare Advantage, which leaves patients in a lurch.

Two San Diego area medical groups are canceling Medicare Advantage contracts because of low reimbursement and prior authorization hassles, leaving 30,000 enrolled seniors to look for new doctors, or different coverage.

The St. Charles health system in Bend Oregon may withdraw its participation in all Medicare Advantage plans, affecting 26,000 participants. It is urging participants to consider shifting to traditional Medicare.

Please keep this in mind as we proceed through the Medicare open enrollment period. It is not as easy as you may think to switch back to traditional Medicare after you decided to go with Medicare Advantage.

Lee Russ Bennington

FROM SECTION FRONT

A revisionist history for Marlboro College

In a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (“When Your College Is Staring Death in the Face”), former Marlboro College Trustee Dena S. Davis wrote: “We decided to merge with Emerson [College]. The [Marlboro] Music Festival bought the campus.” This is not true.

The campus was purchased by Democracy Builders.

The sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, along with the turmoil that went along with the trustees’ decision to approve the sale, are all fully detailed in articles published in *The Commons*, the *Brattleboro Reformer*, *The Berkeley Beacon*, and other news outlets.

If you look at these articles, you will see why alumni were all upset about the end of Marlboro.

Furthermore, it was not a merger. Marlboro College has been shut down. There is no more Marlboro College.

Speaking for other alumni, we are disappointed that certain people continue to perpetuate a revisionist history of what has happened.

Shaw Israel Izikson Winsted, Conn.

Vermont papers over dirty energy use

Vermont’s electric utilities claim that their power comes from 100% “carbon-free” sources. This claim bears closer inspection. Since the closing of Vermont’s only nuclear plant in 2014, it is true that virtually 100% of the electricity generated in Vermont comes from so-called renewable sources. This includes the burning of wood waste, which, while renewable, is obviously not emissions-free.

Vermont has zero coal, oil, or gas-fired electric generating stations. However, more than half of the electricity used in Vermont comes from out of state, including a significant portion from the 81 oil- and natural-gas-fueled plants in the other five New England states. A significant portion also comes from nuclear plants in other states.

But, the largest portion of

Middle East

FROM SECTION FRONT

representatives (who listen to us!) to influence events in the world.

Here is what you can do: • Today, call and write your Vermont representatives to argue forcefully for a pause in the violence, a ceasefire.

• Today, call and write your Vermont representatives to encourage them to propose a Gaza War Powers Act Resolution that prohibits the executive branch from unilaterally waging war directly or through its Israeli proxy without legislative branch approval and oversight.

The way forward can only begin with the above. Jew,

Muslim, and Christian need not foster mutual insanity. We have the same capacity for love, understanding, and peace as we do for murder, hatred, and revenge.

I have seen goodwill in Brattleboro, where Christian, Jew, and Muslim today worship in the same building at the Centre Congregational Church, UCC (as do Zen Buddhists and others).

I have seen it in the life, example, and legacy of Eshagh.

Let us do what we can to create a crack, a crevice, an aperture, a space for sanity and peace to prevail.

out-of-state power used in Vermont comes from Hydro-Québec, a network of dams that flooded 3.8 million acres of forest in northern Québec beginning in the 1970s.

Vermont is the only state in New England that allows so-called “large hydro” to be included in its “renewable” energy portfolio. This is critical because Vermont has a Renewable Energy Standard (RES) adopted in 2015 which calls for electricity used in-state to be 75% from “renewable” sources by 2032.

By Vermont’s definition of “renewable,” this includes power from Hydro-Québec, which could hardly be called environmentally benign.

Besides displacing thousands of indigenous residents without any compensation whatsoever, those millions of acres of buried forest no longer absorb carbon dioxide. In fact, they emit tons of greenhouse gases in the form of methane from all that decaying organic matter.

Vermont’s Renewable Energy Standard also calls for a minimum of 10% of its electricity to come from “new in-state sources” by 2032. This is by far the least stringent requirement of any New England state. By comparison, Maine requires 50% of its power to come from in-state renewables, and Connecticut and Massachusetts, 40%. Vermont’s RES therefore actually disincentivizes new solar and wind generation in the state.

Vermont utilities, as in other states, can also purchase Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from so-called renewable sources (including Hydro-Québec) to meet their renewable energy goals while simultaneously purchasing power from non-renewable sources. In other words, RECs as currently structured allow a utility to claim that its energy portfolio is more renewable than it actually is.

Vermont needs a Renewable Energy Standard that makes the state a leader in green energy creation and use, not a standard that papers over its dirty energy use and puts a damper on incentives for new renewable energy. In fact, a series of reforms to the RES being discussed in the Vermont Legislature would do just that. The House Environment and Energy Committee has taken up discussion of H.320, a bill that would reform the RES to require 30% of Vermont electricity to come from new in-state renewable sources, with 30% coming from new out-of-state renewable sources, while capping the use of out-of-state “large hydro” at 40%.

Ask your legislators to support changes to Vermont’s RES that tighten up the definition of “renewable” and strengthen incentives for development of new, actually renewable sources in Vermont.

Daniel Towler Brookline

Abortion

FROM SECTION FRONT

UNLIKE 50 years ago, when the abortionist was forced to work in a back alley or underground, and most people who had the procedure did so secretly, dozens of brave women have opened up and discussed their worst moments in order to prevent others from having to face the same horrors. These stories are magnified many times over on social media.

In Ohio, the voters recalled the spectacle of the poor 10 year old, impregnated by rape, who had to travel out of state in the miserable no-exception land that state has become.

In Kentucky, Andrew Beshear was re-elected governor with the help of a brave young woman who addressed his Republican opponent directly, telling him about her

experience as a victim of incest at age 12.

The deplorable Glenn Youngkin thought he was real smart when he told Virginia voters that he had the solution for all this abortion talk: the 15-week ban with exceptions for rape and incest. We all agree on this, right?

Not so fast. The voting in the recent election showed us something very interesting: Women don’t want men making laws getting between us, our families, and our doctors. The vast majority of this country does not want Republican men deciding that six weeks should be the cutoff for treatment, or 12 weeks, or 15 weeks.

THE NUMBERS DON’T LIE:

women and those who love them say *no*. Taking away a human right that most of us felt was secure will not be compromised away.

After a long string of not-even-close defeats, the Republicans, who are loathe to compromise on anything, suddenly are talking about the need to come to “common ground.”

It is hard to imagine that these mostly white, buttoned-up men think that the women of 2023 — who either lived the explosion of feminism or have raised daughters with the feminist awareness of the past 50 years — believe they can persuade/force/bribe women into accepting their intervention into the most basic aspects of our lives.

Fifty years ago, women were not all in the workforce. In 2023, those who are trying to force women to give birth also fight tooth and nail against expanded Medicare, family medical leave, and any other programs helping women and families.

The level of delusion is remarkable: in Ohio, the tremendous margin of passage for the amendment enshrining abortion, birth control, and other good things into the state constitution did not seem to percolate down to the state legislature.

It took only a day after the vote for these guys to try in different ways to circumvent the will of the people. As former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum brilliantly deduced from the referendum, “pure democracies are not the way to run a country.”

MILLIONS OF WOMEN came out for the Women’s March after the disaster that was the 2016 election.

We did not disappear. We were waiting for the right opportunity, and after Trump-appointed justices gave us the Dobbs decision, now is the time.

Women are not going back to being chattels.

And Republicans think their problem is messaging.

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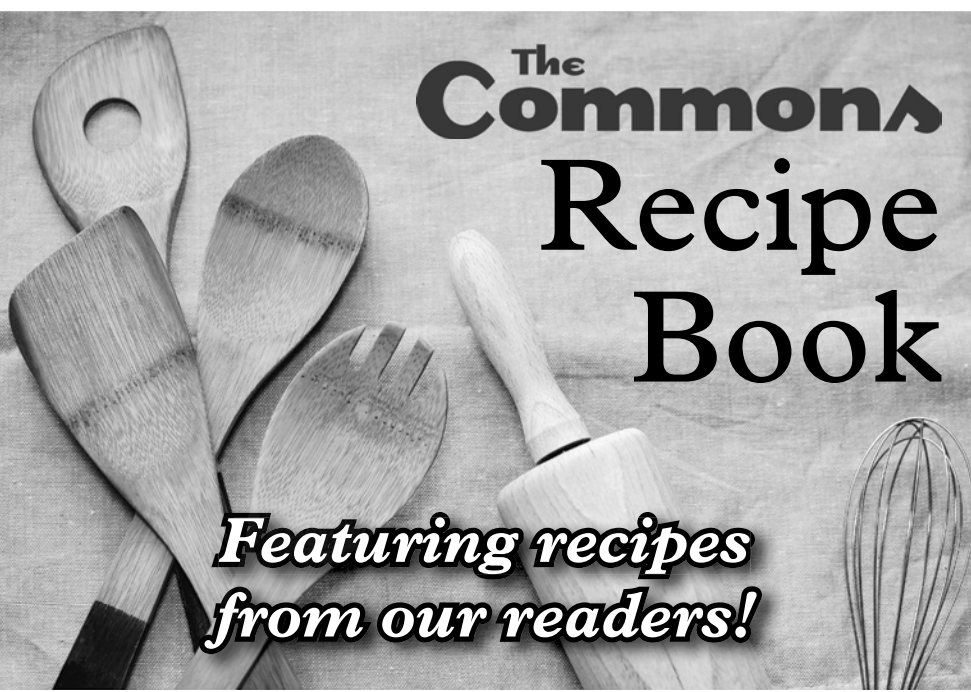


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Bellows Falls Pride marks Transgender Awareness Week

BELLOWS FALLS—From Nov. 13 to 19, organizations around the country will participate in Transgender Awareness Week to help raise visibility about nonbinary and transgender people.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance, which began in 1999, is observed annually on Nov. 20 to memorialize transgender individuals who have experienced violence and hate crimes because of their gender identity. The day is intended to draw attention to the discrimination and prejudice that transgender people face.

Bellows Falls Pride added a glossary provided by GLADD, a nonprofit organization focused on LGBTQ advocacy and cultural change, whose website (GLAAD.org) states: "In order to understand many of the terms used by transgender and nonbinary people, it is necessary to understand the difference between sex at birth, gender identity, and gender expression — and how those three things are not the same as sexual orientation." Visit bellowsfallspride.com to view the glossary.

In the United States, 2.6 million people, or 1% of the population, identified as transgender as of July. Data from the Trevor Project, a nonprofit that supports LGBTQ youth, indicates:

- 45% of LGBTQ youth

considered attempting suicide in the past year. That totals 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth, with youth of color reporting higher rates than their white peers.

- Fewer than 1 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth found their home to be gender-affirming.
- LGBTQ youth who found their school to be affirming reported lower suicide attempts.
- 60% of LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care were unable to receive it.
- LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported significantly lower rates of suicide attempts than those who do not.

What can one do to offer support? Bellows Falls Pride suggests that you "educate yourself, understand the challenges faced by trans and nonbinary people, speak up against discrimination and bullying, and provide support to youth at home, in school, and the community."

Bellows Falls Pride is a program of the Rockingham Arts & Museum Project (RAMP), a nonprofit organization founded in 1997 with a mission of integrating arts and public interest. To support the work of Bellows Falls Pride, donations can be made at ramp-vt.org. For more information, visit bellowsfallspride.com, or email bellowsfallspride@gmail.com.

Boys & Girls Club, BEEC team up for winter 'hike and seek' series

BRATTLEBORO—The Vermont Children's Trust Foundation is funding a collaboration between Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro (BGCB) and Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC) to provide guided, outdoor, free family adventures

On designated Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to noon, families are invited to partake in short walks with naturalists and educators from both organizations to local spots. These excursions are themed and are designed to inspire families to have fun together outdoors, even when it is cold. There is a spring series being planned as well.

All ages are invited, though it is designed primarily for parents/caregivers and their children ages 5-11.

Here is the schedule of upcoming programs:

- Nov. 18 — Guilford Playscape and Weeks Forest: Animals Preparing for Winter
 - Dec. 2 — BEEC: Nature's Treasures and Spray/Wreath Making
 - Dec. 16 — Retreat Farm: Fort Building
 - Jan. 6 — Retreat Farm: Fire Skills
 - Jan. 20 — BEEC: Winter Animals Track & Sign
 - Jan. 27 — make up date
- Pre-registration is required. Transportation is available, as is some outdoor gear. Each walk will include basic trail safety instruction and a snack. To register, or to learn more, contact info@bgcbrattleboro.org, 802-254-5990, or visit bgcbrattleboro.org and beec.org.

Our Place Empty Bowl fundraiser set for Nov. 19

BELLOWS FALLS—The 26th Empty Bowl event to benefit Our Place Drop-in Center's food pantry gets underway Sunday, Nov. 19, at 5 p.m. at Alyson's Orchard in Walpole, New Hampshire.

Tickets are on sale for the event at \$40 each, which includes a supper of signature soups from local restaurants and chefs, as well as silent and live auctions, with items and services donated by local businesses and individuals. Village Square Booksellers in Bellows Falls, Galloway Real Estate in Walpole, and Our Place are selling tickets, or they may be purchased online at ourplacevermont.org.

With the theme of "Gather and Share," the event begins with an auction preview and social hour. Proceeds of the dinner go toward supporting the food programs of Our Place, which include a food pantry, daily breakfasts and lunches

to go, and grocery deliveries to homebound seniors.

"Ever since the pandemic lockdown, and now with the rising costs of groceries, gasoline, and other necessities, we've seen more families having to supplement their food budgets with visits to the pantry," Our Place Executive Director Dave Billings said in a news release. "This important fundraiser helps us keep meeting the needs of our neighbors who are struggling."

"We've been serving a 100 lunches every weekday, so we know the need is there," said Our Place Board President Sarah Campbell. "We are so grateful for the community's support of our efforts to fill that need."

The oldest such event in the area, say organizers, the Our Place Empty Bowl is part of an international effort that began in 1990 to raise money for food programs. What started as



COURTESY PHOTO

Vermont Academy students in Ryan Burch's pottery classes create bowls for the Nov. 19 Our Place Empty Bowl fundraiser. From left, Sydney Palmiotti of Walpole, New Hampshire, and Ana Hernandez and Oliver Fischetti of Rockingham.

a local effort in a Michigan high school has grown into a worldwide program that has raised more than a million dollars to help fight hunger.

Located at 4 Island St. in Bellows Falls, the mission of Our Place is to connect people to food and each other. It

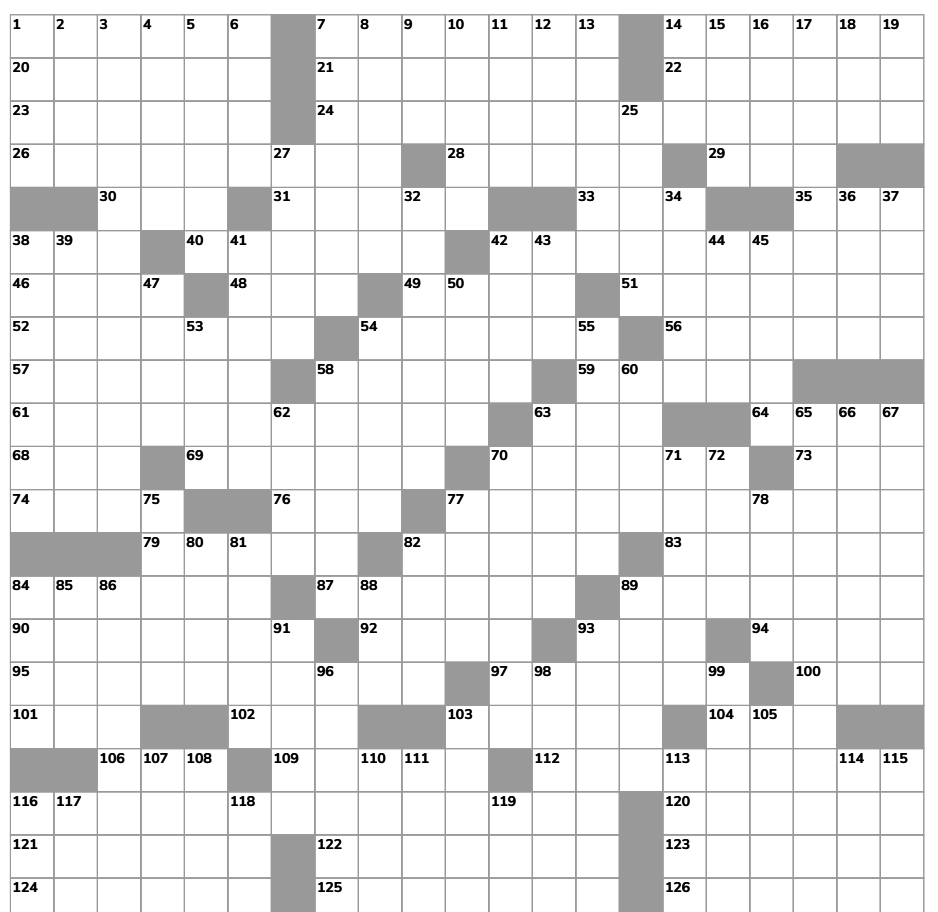
serves families in the greater Rockingham and surrounding areas, as well as Walpole and North Walpole. Further information is available by contacting Our Place at 802-463-2217, emailing info@ourplacevermont.org, or on Facebook.

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Switching Sides"

Across

1. "Life of Pi" director
7. State police officer
14. Handle hardship
20. Spit
21. Have dinner at 10 p.m., say
22. Of longest standing
23. "Dracula" author
24. People like Eubie and Shelton (who prefer jazz and country, respectively)?
26. Result after a game of Jenga ends?
28. Site
29. "Is that true about me?"
30. QB's error
31. Worth
33. River's destination
35. Jaylen Brown's org.
38. Part of UCSF
40. Extra tires
42. Marks on Knievel's report card?
46. Rose Zhang's org.
48. Colony insect
49. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" writer
51. Greet with a growl
52. Arrogant arriviste
54. They're felt on your head
56. Figure skater Plushenko
57. Toy for a baby
58. What Polonius was hiding behind when Hamlet stabbed him
59. Leisurely walk
61. Forgetting the words to the Our Father, e.g.?
63. Be the right size
64. Pranked with Charmin, say
68. Always, to a poet
69. Quickly
70. Card game also called Dominoes
73. Get older
74. K to 6th
76. Card game cry
77. Area worked by a fictional traveling salesman?
79. Of a pelvic bone
82. Superman's father
83. Viagra competitor
84. Oscar winner Jamie Lee
87. On the boat
89. Sugar in brewing
90. Lowest bridge bid
92. Teen breakout
93. 84-Down unit
94. Young newts
95. Very minor neck discomfort?
97. Cherished
100. Understand
101. Sun Devils' sch.
102. Most common Korean surname
103. Alaskan island native
104. Conductor's asset
106. Rent out
109. Specialized market
112. British Greek guy?
116. Top choices for a lawn?
120. Forgoes
121. Show up
122. Female lead
123. Way up
124. Confer
125. Starting locations in disc golf
126. Takes care of



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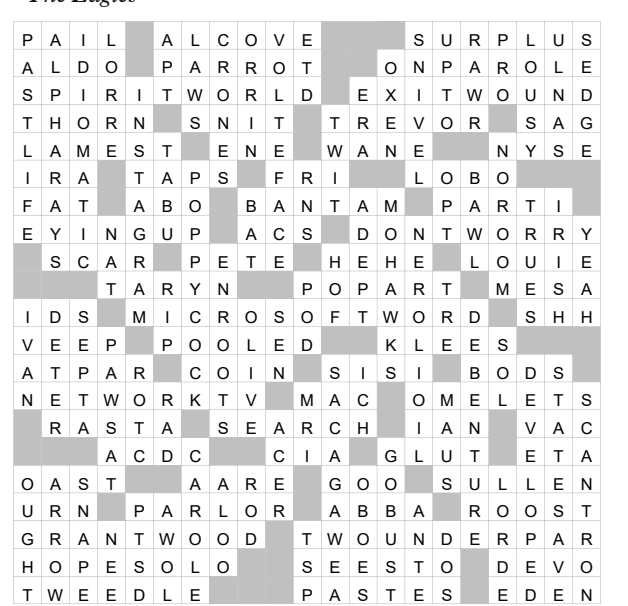
5. Turns inside out
6. British noble
7. Rolling server
8. Cause resentment
9. Hall-of-Famer Mel
10. Athena's gift to Athens
11. Cut back
12. Boys school founded in 1440
13. Remove (oneself) from a case
14. Move up and down gently
15. Singer Eyre
16. Former congressman ___ Clayton Powell Jr.
17. Revive, as a past relationship
18. Put to work
19. Scorer's stats: Abbr.
25. Topples (over)
27. ___garde
32. Herald
34. Choreographer de Mille
36. Kidney or pinto
37. Bubbly Italian wine
38. 7-Eleven trademark
39. Garb
41. Many a youth sports coach
42. Flock females
43. Dog doc
44. All-night party
45. Specialized lingo
47. Part of D.A.: Abbr.
50. Mouthy?
53. Actress Shawkat
54. Coffee maker brand
55. "This Is ___ Tap" (mockumentary)
58. Where homo sapiens originated
60. Letter-routing letters
62. "A Star Is Born" star, familiarly
63. Illustrious
65. Bucket used in orchards?
66. Fragrance from Chanel
67. Most thick?
70. "You mean it?"
71. Mysterious
72. Astronaut Armstrong

75. Comedian Hedberg
77. Matter of interest?
78. Airport area
80. Pleasant accent
81. "Ugh, not my day today"
82. Stereotypical high school athlete
84. Moxie, for one
85. Les États-___
86. Habitué
88. Breathalyzer measurement: Abbr.
89. One-named Brazilian soccer great with a record 17 World Cup goals
91. Take with you
93. Parts of a meal or degree program

96. "Put me down as a maybe"
98. Guard
99. Cheapen
103. 111-Down creator
105. "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" exclamation
107. Menu next to File
108. DVR brand
110. One of the First Nations
111. Fabled race loser
113. First word of "A Visit from St. Nicholas"
114. 6-Down in "King Lear"
115. ___ yeso ("this and that," in Spanish)
116. Science classroom
117. Afore
118. Never before seen
119. Slam poet Beau ___

Last issue's solution

"The Eagles"



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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Nov. 13-19
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

<p>Here We Are - Mariam Diallo, BUHS Student Mon 9p, Tues 12:30p, Wed 9a, Thurs 1:20p & 9:15p, Sat 12:15p, Sun 5:15p</p> <p>The World Fusion Show - Ep# 165 - Jim Matus and Richie Barshay Mon 5:30p, Tues 6:15a, Wed 5:30p, Thurs 12:30p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 6:30a, Sun 9p</p> <p>BCTV Annuals - Producer Awards Night 2023 Fri 12:30p, Sat 5p, Sun 7p</p> <p>Windham County NAACP 4th Annual Freedom Fund Dinner Wed 9p, Thurs 2p, Fri 2:30p, Sat 9a, Sun 9:30p</p> <p>Brattleboro Literary Festival - Madeline Kunin & Richard Michaelson Mon 10a, Tues 3:15p, Wed 12:30p, Thurs 9a, Sat 8p, Sun 9:30a</p> <p>Couch Potatoe Productions - Gilfeather Turnip Festival 10/21/23 Mon 8:30p, Tues 4:25p, Thurs 4:15p, Sat 11:15a</p> <p>BHS/BUHS Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony 10/28/23 Mon 1:30p, Tues 9a, Sun 12:30p</p> <p>Windham Regional Commission presents Preserving Guilford's Character 11/2/23 Fri 6a, Sat 2p</p> <p>Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p</p> <p>Vermontitude - Weekly Episode Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p</p> <p>News Block: WTSN News Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p BUHS-TV News Mon-Fri 12:15p & 6:35p</p> <p>St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a</p> <p>Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 5p</p> <p>Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a</p> <p>St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p</p>	<p>River Valleys Unified School District Board Special Mtg. 11/13/23 Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a</p> <p>Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 11/13/23 Wed 8:30, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p</p> <p>West River Education District Board Mtg. 11/13/23 Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p</p> <p>Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 11/13/23 Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p</p> <p>Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 11/14/23 Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p</p> <p>Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 11/14/23 Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p</p> <p>Putney Selectboard Mtg. 11/15/23 Sat 6p, Sun 8:30p</p> <p>Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 11/15/23 Sat 8:30p, Sun 6a</p> <p>Windham Central Supervisory Union Board and Exec. Comm. Mtg. 11/15/23 Sun 6p</p> <p>Brattleboro Development Review Board 11/15/23 Sun 8:30p</p> <p>Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 11/17/23 Mon 1:30p, Tues 6p, Wed 7:30a</p> <p>Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 11/6/23 Mon 8:15p, Tues 10a, Wed 2p, Thurs 1:15p</p> <p>Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 11/6/23 Mon 6:15p, Tues 7a, Wed 12p</p> <p>Windham Elementary School Board Special Mtg. 10/24/23 Mon 6:10p, Wed 4:40p, Thurs 1:10p & 5:55p, Fri 11:40a</p> <p>Town Matters - Weekly Episode Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p</p> <p>The David Pakman Show Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p</p>
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Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at brattleborotv.org

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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

TESTING her METTLE

Local distance runner and triathlete Elizabeth Bianchi goes the distance at the Ironman World Championships in Hawaii

Triathlons are not for the faint of heart, and the Ironman — a 2.4-mile swim, followed by a 112-mile bike ride, followed by a 26.2-mile run — is strictly for the fittest of the fit.

Elizabeth “Ebiz” Bianchi of West Chesterfield, New Hampshire, went to Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, to compete in the 2023 Ironman World Championship on Oct. 14. And while she was nowhere near the winning podium — just completing this event in one piece is a huge accomplishment.

The women’s winner, Lucy Charles-Barclay, 30, of Great Britain, set a course record, finishing in 8 hours, 24 minutes, and 31 seconds to win the event. It was her first Ironman world title after finishing second in four of the previous five editions, and led wire-to-wire in all three events.

The top U.S. finisher, Taylor Knibb, came in fourth in 8:35:56. Knibb, who won a silver medal in the Olympic triathlon, was trying to become the first U.S. Olympic medalist to win an Ironman world title.

Bianchi, competing in the women’s 55-59 age group, finished 97th in her division, 1,390th overall, in 13:25:41. She did the swim in 11:34:53, the bike in 6:37:18, and the 26.2-mile marathon in 4:47:31.

She’s not a newbie to events such as these. The 56-year-old Bianchi has run in marathons and ultra running relays and has done several triathlons over the years. But competing in the Ironman World Championship put her in elite company.

To be one of the more than 2,000 women from around the world to qualify for the World Championship, you have to complete an Ironman event in the same calendar year. Bianchi said she did her Ironman qualifier in July in Lake Placid, New York.

“In that Ironman, they take a certain amount of slots for the championship in each age group,” she told me in an email interview. “I was able to get the last slot for my age. You have to be there and decide [at] that moment. If you are not, it ‘drops down’ to the next person. There were 10 slots for my age group and I was 12th in line.”

But it takes a lot to train for an event that tests the outer limits of human endurance, and Bianchi said she had plenty of help from the people she referred to as “Team EBiz” in getting to Hawaii.

“My partner Jody was so supportive in all areas and I could not have done any of this without her,” said Bianchi. “She would go to all my events, help me with the swimming, and also be supportive of all of my long training days and mood shifts. I often would leave early on Saturday morning and bike 100 miles and then go for a run. I would be gone many hours on the weekend and during the week.”

Bianchi said her sister-in-law, niece, and brother-in-law



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.

“attended and supported all of my events,” and “my running group — Max, Nicole, Jody, and Lois — and others were always up for helping me practice my long runs and when I had to practice ‘running slow’ They loved that workout.”

The Colonial Hotel’s swim facility in Brattleboro was her training base for the aquatic portion of the event and Bianchi said “my swimming group at the Colonial — Todd and Jody (Team Jet), along with the regulars — Pam, Ed, and The Tribe (Lee, Anne, and Susan)” offered lots of support and encouragement.

Bianchi said she also had a group of bike riders and coach Joe Cerniglia “who would meet early in [the] morning and go for some very long bike rides through Killington and Acutney.”

She also had a big cheering section from Kindle Farm School in Newfane, where she works as the clinical supervisor. “My co-workers and students were so supportive of my training and were very great about giving me the time off and pretending to be so impressed by my ‘Bad Ass Adventures.’”

Bianchi is quick to point out, however, that “I don’t think of myself as a bad ass, but others do!”

The training and support in Vermont that helped get Bianchi to Hawaii is something that she deeply appreciates, since she needed every bit of it to complete the event.

Doing the Ironman in Hawaii means “you are swimming in a sometimes rough ocean, biking with intense winds in a lava field — I saw someone tip over with the wind — and running a marathon” with temperatures in the 80s and 90s. “There are cut offs for each event, and you have to complete it by midnight in under 17 hours.”

But once she got to Kona, Bianchi said the focus “was all about completing it and taking everything in. I never looked at my watch to see how I was doing. It was all about the adventure, survival, and finishing. The event was even more epic and thrilling because it was the first-ever all-women’s world championship.”

Will she do it again? “When I did my first full Ironman, I thought it was one and done,” Bianchi said. “But there is something about the challenge of such a long distance that was so appealing. I have now done seven full Ironman events. Whenever I do one, I am not sure I will finish it. It is such a



Elizabeth Bianchi approaches the finish line at the Ironman World Championships in Hawaii last month. She completed the 2.2-mile swim, 112-mile cycling course, and 26.2-mile distance run in 13 hours, 25 minutes, and 41 seconds.

challenge. I would love to do another.”

Brattleboro Turkey Trot is Nov. 23

• The Red Clover Rovers’ tradition of what the running club calls “celebrating moving in the fresh air and joining together as an active community” on Thanksgiving morning continues Nov. 23 with the annual Brattleboro Turkey Trot.

This 3-mile race (with a 1-mile kids’ race beforehand) has been run annually since 1977 as what the Rovers call their “gift to Brattleboro-area runners.”

The race starts and ends near the Brattleboro Country Club on Upper Dummerston Road. The event is 100% volunteer-run and donation-funded, so there is no race-day registration. As usual, there’s no entry fee, but you must register to get a bib and be timed. Participants are asked to register by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 22 at redcloverrovers.com/turkeytrot.shtml.

Once again, the Rovers are asking participants to consider making a donation. After expenses, proceeds will go to Groundworks Collaborative and the Vermont Foodbank.

Check-in and bib number pickup is Thanksgiving morning from 8 to 8:45 a.m. Participants are asked to be on time to check in, as they sometimes have more than 300 participants, so give yourself a few extra minutes to navigate the busy Country Club parking lot.

Don’t forget to dress appropriately; it can get pretty cold on a late-November morning in Vermont. Strollers are welcome; no dogs please. The road will be open, so runners/walkers need to keep to the left and be aware of traffic. If there are questions, contact race director Jennifer Smith at lovebugisthebest@msn.com.

Senior bowling roundup

• Week 10 of the fall/winter season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Nov. 9 saw another



Elizabeth Bianchi, 56, of West Chesterfield, New Hampshire takes a break after a training ride.

reshuffling of the standings. Four Seasons (32-18) went 4-1 to take over first place while High Rollers (30-20) went 5-0 to move into second place. Stepping Stones (29-21) had another 0-5 week to fall into third place, followed by No Splits, Four Pins, Skippers, and Hairiers (all 28-22), Dumblebor (25-25), and PEWJ (15-35).

Diane Cooke had the women’s high handicap game (283), while Pam Greenblatt had the high handicap series (682). Robert Rigby had the men’s high handicap game (267) and Milt Sherman had the high handicap series (670). PEWJ had the high team handicap game (905) and series (2,604).

Rigby had the men’s high scratch series (623) with games of 267 and 204, while Sherman had a 583 series with games of 212 and 195 and Duane Schillemat had a 546 series with a 214 game. Wayne Randall had a 515 series and Gary Montgomery had a 504 series, while Stan Kolpa and Skip Shine



Elizabeth Bianchi mugs for the camera before the start of the swimming portion of the Ironman World Championships held last month in Hawaii.

each rolled a 196 game. Greenblatt had the women’s high scratch series (498), while Cooke had the high scratch

game (197). Greenblatt had games of 189 and 183, Carol Gloski had a 176 game, and Shirley Aiken rolled a 170.



The Commons
HOLIDAY
guide NOVEMBER 22

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