

SECTION B

Fall

Foliage, Food, & Festivities

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Ranks of the unsheltered keep growing in state

In report to Joint Fiscal Committee, commissioner of the DCF outlines increasing needs and the actions needed to meet them

By Ellen Pratt
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The number of unsheltered people in Vermont is increasing, according to Chris Winters, commissioner of the Agency of Human Services' Department of Children and Families (AHS/DCF). "We're seeing as many people coming into homelessness now

as are exiting — even more," Winters reported at the Sept. 27 meeting of the Joint Fiscal Committee.

Statewide, as of Sept. 27, there are 874 households in what has been dubbed the "June 30 cohort" sheltering in motels through the state's Transitional Housing Program.

This number is down from

■ SEE UNHOUSED, A3

In praise of **PIE** ... and everything **APPLE**



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Slicing up freshly peeled apples for the pies.

Dummerston bakers prepare to celebrate the 54th annual Pie Festival, while Newfane's pie ladies get ready for the 52nd annual Heritage Festival

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

If baking hundreds of apple pies can make one as affable as the ladies of the Dummerston Congregational Church and the Newfane Congregational Church, we should all grab a bushel.

Despite the devastating effects of the May frost on the apple crop statewide, in Dummerston, pie lady Sallie May says her group will bake "as many pies as we can" for the church's 54th annual Pie Festival.

"Because of the problem with obtaining good-quality apples due to the late freeze this spring — and because we've had requests in prior years — we have decided to not only try to make a hearty quantity of apple pies, but we are also expanding our



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Bess Richardson, left, and Eliza Greenhoe-Berg make and fill pie crusts last week in the basement kitchen of Dummerston Congregational Church.

State senator becomes lawyer by taking road less traveled

State Sen. Nader Hashim passes the bar exam to become an attorney, using a rigorous and time-honored apprenticeship program to bypass law school

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

DUMMERSTON—On his very first try, state Sen. Nader Hashim, D-Windham, passed the bar exam — and did so in an unconventional way.

Vermont is one of the few states where people can still study for the bar exam by using an apprenticeship model, called the Law Office Study Program (LOS) in the state.

The LOS allows participants to "read the law," studying 25 hours a week for four years with a Vermont attorney or a judge instead of going to law school.

Who studies law that way? Well, Abraham Lincoln did, for one. (And Kim Kardashian is doing so now in California, but let's not go there.)

It used to be the way most lawyers learned their trade. Now Washington, Vermont, California, and Virginia are the only four states that allow it.

But North Dakota, South Dakota, Oregon, and Georgia are considering alternate licensure

paths for lawyers. So is Maine. They are seeing reading the law as a way for these states to address lawyer shortages, keep young lawyers from moving away after they earn their law degree, and help clear up case backlogs.

It is not an easy or popular method. According to Reuters, of the 7,543 people who took California's bar exam in July 2022, fewer than 11 studied under

■ SEE LAWYER, A6

For two farm families, an era ends

The deaths of lifelong friends Charles Robb and Stuart Thurber, patriarchs of neighboring farms in West Brattleboro, mark the beginning of yet another season of challenge and change

By Kevin O'Connor
ViDigger

WEST BRATTLEBORO—Growing up at Lilac Ridge Farm, which her family began in 1937, Helen Thurber vowed she'd never wed anyone who worked in that grueling before-sunrise-to-after-sunset business.

"I thought, 'I can't live that kind of life,'" she recently recalled.

Then Helen met her brother Stuart's friend, Charles Robb, at his family's farm a mile up the road.

Fast-forward a few years. "As we headed down the aisle, my dad whispered to me, 'I didn't think you were ever going to marry a farmer,'" Helen said.

Exchanging rings in 1964, Helen Robb and her new husband went on to run the property his

■ SEE FARMERS, A5



KEVIN O'CONNOR/VIDIGGER.ORG

More than 300 people gathered at West Brattleboro's Robb Family Farm on Sept. 30 for a memorial for its patriarch, Charles, who mourned the death of his friend and Ames Hill Road neighbor Stuart Thurber a month earlier.

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 888-511-5150 • fax 802-246-1319
 commonsnews.org
 Office hours by appointment

Jeff Potter Editor-in-Chief
Kate O'Connor Executive Director

EDITORIAL

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

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
 Virginia Ray, Joyce Marcel, Olga Peters, Fran Lynggaard Hansen, Robert Smith, Megan Applegate, Annie Landenberger, Dot Grover-Read, Victoria Chertok, Deborah Lee Luskin, Elaine Cliff, Kevin O'Connor, Alyssa Grosso, Thelma O'Brien

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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.

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Pie

menu to include some pumpkin, blueberry, and maple walnut pies as well," May says.

The Festival here opens on Sunday, Oct. 8 at 10 a.m. and, as May puts it, the ladies will "sell until we're sold out or the crew is exhausted, whichever comes first."

The tent is new this year, so there will be plenty of shade in which to enjoy a slice of pie and a cup of coffee.

The Dummerston ladies — and some gentlemen — have been preparing pies for days, with groups working at the church weekdays from 9 a.m. to noon and again from 5 to 9 p.m. all last week and this week through Thursday.

Bess Richardson, who has been baking pies for the Festival for 40 years, says in years gone by the goal was to produce 1,400 to 1,500 pies.

"And we used to do it," she says. "But now we have a lot of competition, so we've cut back to 1,000 pies. We work pretty hard."

The Festival started with homemakers, Richardson says.

"When the trains used to come here back 50 years or so, then buses would pick people up from the trains and take them for foliage tours. Some of the women started making the pies at home and sold slices when folks stopped for dinner in Dummerston."

Now the church kitchen is equipped with three big pizza ovens that each hold a dozen 9-inch pies.

When they were turning out 1,500 pies, the ladies used 19 bushels of apples. Now, says Richardson, it is "considerably less."

"We had a lot of trouble finding apples, but Read Miller [of Dwight Miller Orchards] found us apples somewhere," Richardson says, adding the ladies prefer Cortland apples for their pies, for which they use the same recipe they've been using for 54 years.

"It's just a pretty straightforward apple pie recipe," she says.

Miller says the group will "have more than enough apples," adding some came from his family's orchard and some came from Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain,

FROM SECTION FRONT

Massachusetts.

"This farm has been putting apples at the peelers' fingertips since the festival began," says Miller, who notes that "Windham County seemed to get walloped pretty hard" by the uncharacteristic spring freeze.

"We have a small crop, and we'll have apples for a while, but we won't be doing a lot of wholesaling — just farmers' market and retail," he says.

The process of getting pies made is a time-tested assembly line in Dummerston.

"We have a setup with a section of pie dough rollers, and then there's a person filling the pies, and a person mixing the spices the filler puts in," Richardson says.

And the apples have their own production line.

"Then there's someone peeling, and somebody will core them, and then they come to a big table with lots of people who core and slice, and then they come back to the filler," she continues.

Does she actually enjoy the work?

"I do," she says. "And I like the pies, too."

Costs at the Dummerston Pie Festival will be \$20 for fruit pies, \$18 for pumpkin and \$22 for Vermont-maple walnut, with slices going for \$6 each.

Newfane Heritage Festival focuses on apple pies and crisps

Baking appears to not only be in the DNA of the ladies who bake but part of their love language as well.

To a person, they also possess a characteristic good humor that seems to come with the territory.

Do you like apples?

"I used to," says Newfane Church's chief pie maker Ann Allbee with a laugh. "No, I actually kind of like it. The last week of baking we serve apple pie as a snack for everybody who comes to help and, I have to say, it was pretty good."

Chief baker Marie Malmstedt is unequivocal.

"I love apple pie," she says.

This year's Newfane Heritage Festival will take place on Saturday, Oct. 7 and Sunday, Oct. 8 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For 52 years, the festival has been a big part of the Newfane Church and the community. It offers a juried selection of work from artists and craftspeople, as well as food, a Super Raffle, and live entertainment.

Pie making here starts the first Wednesday in September and continues for four Wednesdays. The day starts around 9:30 a.m. with volunteer apple peelers, apple slicers, pan fillers, dough rollers, and bakers gathered around the tables working to produce about 105 pies a day.

Church Administrator Billie Stark says this year the group was able to source apples locally from Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, ordering four bushels at a time over four weeks for a



Merrill Barton, left, and Charles Richardson cut up apples.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS



Charles Richardson runs the apple peeler.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

It takes a lot of apples to make a Dummerston apple pie.

total of 16 bushels to make about 210 pies.

There's a time-proven process here to prepare pies, too.

"We have a recipe and an assembly line," Allbee says. "We have someone get the apples on

Tuesdays — one of the guys, usually — and some of the guys peel them with peelers attached to the table.

"Then we have 15 to 20 people who core and slice them, and then two who sugar and cinnamon them, and then usually one dough maker who uses the same recipe we've been using for probably 15 years, and five or six rollers," she continues.

And then there's the baker, Malmstedt, who says she "kind of fell into" the role.

Allbee says that, with just two

ovens to cook 16 pies at a time, baking takes a long time, "and Marie is willing to stay until three in the afternoon."

Before she puts the pies in to bake, Malmstedt says, "I flatten 'em out a little bit so they fit in the ovens, and then we have this metal thing that kind of scores them into seven pieces and gives them air vents. Then I brush them with milk and sprinkle more cinnamon and sugar." You can't go wrong with cinnamon and sugar.

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

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RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, THE COMMONS

Eliza Greenhoe-Berg puts a top crust on an apple pie last week in the basement kitchen of Dummerston Congregation Church.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, THE COMMONS

Dummerston Congregational Church pastor Shawn Bracebridge reaches into the oven for a freshly baked apple pie.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, THE COMMONS

A box full of apples awaits their destiny — to be turned into a Dummerston apple pie.

Allbee says the group usually uses Cortland apples but this year received mostly Ida Reds.

“With enough cinnamon and sugar, it doesn’t matter what kind of apple it is, but we never use McIntoshes. They’re too mushy.” Allbee says prices have gone up for the first time in three years because “we had such a hard time finding apples.”

“We didn’t know until five days before we started baking if we could get them,” she says, adding that this week the bakers will go through three more bushels to make two sizes of apple crisps. Allbee has been baking for

the Festival at least 17 years and Malmstedt for eight years. The event is not only the church’s main fundraiser, it’s also an effort that supports charitable giving throughout the community.

“And the community members work so hard,” Allbee says. “Half the cutters and rollers we had today weren’t even members of the church.”

Clearly, getting ready for the festival is a group effort. As Allbee says, “everybody has a job and I have a lot of helpers.”

“It’s huge,” she says of the fair. “Just pray it’s good weather. But we always have a good time.”

Unhoused

1,250 of the original cohort on June 30, when these households became eligible to extend their stay until April 1, 2024, through the enactment of Act 81.

However, Winters reported that while the number of households in the June 30 cohort is declining, the state’s General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing Program continues to take in new households under its “catastrophic” and “vulnerable populations” eligibility criteria that allow for either 28 or 84 motel nights (four or 12 weeks) in a 12-month period.

“While we are still exiting people from the cohort, there are close to the same numbers coming into the housing program,” Winters said.

In Brattleboro, 124 households, including 28 children, have been sheltering in six area motels. Of the 96 households in the June 30 cohort, 77 are individuals.

Act 81 requires the June 30 cohort households to participate in coordinated entry and case management, a program administered by local partners — Coordinated Entry Lead Organizations — that maintain a master list of homeless households eligible for housing. Groundworks Collaborative, which runs the 30-bed overnight shelter on South Main Street, performs these duties in Brattleboro.

Under Act 81, households in the June 30 cohort must attempt to locate their own alternative housing and contribute 30% of their income toward their own housing. Households will no longer be eligible for this extended housing benefit if they fail to meet any of the engagement requirements outlined in the law, decline the offer of an appropriate housing placement, or are asked to leave a hotel or motel due to misconduct.

The state is currently paying an average of \$133 a night for these motel stays, a rate that has been negotiated from \$140 on June 30. Given the demand for motel rooms, the state doesn’t have much leverage in these negotiations, noted Winters.

“We have to use as many of the hotel rooms as possible, and we don’t have a lot of alternatives,” he said. “But we hope to see that average nightly rate come down.”

The hotel/motel program has received criticism for poor conditions in rooms, including accounts of bedbug infestations, raw sewage being discharged into rooms, and mold. Additionally, households have reported difficulty in recouping the \$3,300 security deposits that were paid by the state on behalf of each client to motel owners.

Clients in the hotel/motel program are required to renew their eligibility each month with DCF’s Economic Services Division (ESD) to remain in the program.

After clients reported long phone wait times — peaking at three hours in July — DCF outsourced this service to increase staff capacity. DCF now reports wait times of less than two minutes.

‘It’s got to take everybody’s hands on deck’

DCF cites staffing challenges in the administration of the hotel/motel program. In 2019, 250 households participated in the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program. In the beginning of 2023, the program had

1,800 participating households and 15 limited-service positions at ESD while the program has increased in complexity.

“The [ESD] staffing was never intended to serve in this particular way,” said Sen. Jane Kitchel, D-Calendonía, chair of the Joint Fiscal Committee.

“They’re not staffed for the case management role. In many ways, our focus has been on economic services because they process the benefit. But so much of what is happening with these households actually requires our collective resources,” she said. “It’s got to take everybody’s hands on deck.”

With the potential for hundreds of households being evicted from the hotel/motel program in April, the state is under the gun to find alternate housing solutions.

Commissioner Winters reported that the state is attempting to shift from using motels as temporary shelter by planning for the development of both congregate shelters, with shared sleeping and living spaces, and non-congregate shelters, “where each individual or household has living space that offers some level of privacy, such as hotels [or] motels,” according to one federal definition.

“Congregate shelters are not preferred,” Winters said, “but we have to consider all options at this point, especially if we have a large number of people coming out of the hotel/motel program at the same time. It’s one of many approaches to providing safe shelter for people.”

The state is funding the creation and repair of manufactured homes (mobile homes) as one strategy to provide homes for households exiting the hotel/motel program.

Act 81 directs \$10 million to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board’s (VHCB) Manufactured Home and Replacement and Infill Program.

Grants and 0%-interest, deferred loans will be made available to manufactured-home park owners to fill vacant and underutilized lots in parks to house Vermonters exiting homelessness.

VHCB Executive Director Gus Seelig reported to the JFC that the Manufactured Home Replacement and Infill Program is accepting applications on a rolling basis and is reviewing an initial application from The Housing Foundation Inc., the largest owner of manufactured home communities in Vermont.

Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT), which owns three mobile home parks in this area, reports three vacancies in its Putney park, several miles off Route 5. But WWHT will not pursue this funding opportunity.

“We don’t feel that it is appropriate to have somebody exiting a motel and going straight into a home that’s down a dirt road away from the bus line,” said WWHT Executive Director Elizabeth Bridgewater. “It’s unfortunately not the best location.”

Act 81 also directs \$5 million to the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP). Administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, VHIP offers grants up to \$50,000 per unit for repairs to bring vacant rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines, add new units to an existing building, or create an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on an owner-occupied property.

Property owners who are rehabilitating existing units or creating a new unit that is not an ADU must work with Coordinated Entry Lead Organizations to identify suitable tenants exiting homelessness.

VHIP is designed to address two critical issues in the state: the declining quality of rental units and the homeless assistance programs that often struggle to find suitable housing for their clients.

According to Alex Farrell, deputy commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development, between January 2022 and September 2023, 216 VHIP housing units have either been completed, approved or are in progress statewide.

Of that number, 41 units are ADUs that don’t have the requirement to house somebody exiting homelessness.

“But we know that the vast majority of our VHIP units are going to the homeless population,” Farrell reported.

“These units are coming online in a matter of months rather than a matter of years,” he said. “So this is a really efficient way to get units online.”

WWHT administers the VHIP program locally. In Windham County, there is one completed VHIP project and three in progress. Bridgewater attributes the low numbers for Windham County to the program being new.

“We were in a holding pattern for a long time while the state finalized the program guidelines,” she said. “But we’re up and running now and have a lot going on.”

‘We need different strategies to address homelessness’

Winters outlined several strategies to address homelessness in the state.

DCF reports that the number one barrier to housing individuals in the motel program is the lack of affordable, available units.

“Although we’ve had unprecedented investment in affordable housing construction, the pace and volume we’re producing is not going to meet the needs for a very long time,” Winters said.

Winters said that even clients who are most prepared to transition to more permanent housing — those with support services and housing vouchers in hand — are still unable to find the units they need.

FROM SECTION FRONT

“Without a change in availability of this type of housing, the pressure on the hotel/motel program will continue,” he said. “We need to modernize our regulatory system to allow for the housing our residents need. That’s building affordable housing, that’s siting shelters.”

Providing support services to clients is another strategy to address homelessness.

“We need to use a more community-based, client-centered approach to addressing homelessness,” Winters said. “We have people who are stuck in the GA Housing Program unable to move forward. They don’t get the services they need. We need to invest in multiple levels of intervention and prevention to have fewer people entering into homelessness in the first place.”

For the past year, AHS has employed Care Coordination Housing Resource Teams to provide employment, health, and housing services to individuals and families housed through the GA Emergency Housing Program.

These interdisciplinary teams have helped clients identify barriers to transitioning to permanent housing: lack of sufficient income, poor credit history, bad or no landlord references, and need for additional mental health support.

These barriers, in addition to the lack of available, affordable units, have made it “incredibly challenging to help participants transition out of shelter to more permanent solutions,” according to DCF’s “General Assistance Emergency Housing Program Report” submitted to the Legislature on Sept. 1.

According to the report, Care Coordination Housing Resource Teams were “a critical first step in acknowledging that this motel shelter benefit was being accessed more as housing, and less as temporary emergency shelter — with households remaining in the program for years, instead of days.”

Without additional funding and staffing, these support services will end in April 2024.

Summing up, Winters said that “we need to change what we’re doing because doing the same thing the way that we’ve always done it is not going to match the need. We have to change the paradigm, and we’re prepared to come forward very soon with a different menu of options, a different approach.”

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people
from Windham County

College news

• **Jessica Tatso**, a biology major in the Class of 2024 from Brattleboro, was named to the Dean's List for the spring 2023 semester at St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Obituaries

• **Jane Arend-Denko**, 60, of Bellows Falls. Died suddenly on Sept. 12, 2023, at her home. She was born on May 6, 1963 in Waterbury, Connecticut, the daughter of Jan and Leola (Bullock) Arend. She attended school in Connecticut and received a master's degree from the University of Phoenix. Jane worked in human resources for area department stores. Jane enjoyed spending time with her dogs and cats and posting on Facebook. On Feb 14, 1998 in Brattleboro, she married Stewart Denko, who survives. She is also survived by two sons, Kevin and Richard; a daughter, Sabrina; and two sisters, Veronica Beam and Holly Hammond. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Following cremation there will be an hour of visitation on Oct. 6, 2023, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., at Fenton & Hennessey Funeral Home, 55 Westminster St., Bellows Falls.

• **Robert S. Dompier**, 86, of Brattleboro. Died Sept. 16, 2023, at Thompson House in Brattleboro.

He was born in Keene, New Hampshire on Aug. 5, 1937, the son of the late Sherman and Rachel (Pratt) Dompier. He loved to take walks, watch television, country music, apple pie, and had a great affection for animals, especially dogs. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister Gloria (Dompier) Turner of Brattleboro in 2015. He is survived by his sister Jeannette (Dompier) Bookhammer of Denver, Colorado, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service will be held on Sunday, Oct. 22, at 1 p.m., at Oakwood Cemetery in Townshend. Ker Phaneuf Funeral Home of Brattleboro has been entrusted with arrangements. To view an online tribute, leave a message of condolence, or for more information, visit phaneuf.net.

• **Linda M. Jones**, 73, of Rockingham. Died on Sept. 17, 2023, after a brief fight with cancer. Linda was born on Aug. 24, 1950, and was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She was a devoted animal lover and spent much of her time with her family and her beloved dogs. Linda was preceded in death by her husband, Raymond I. Jones. She is survived by her loving son, Steven Lanou and his wife, Heather; daughters Corinna Jones and Lisa Moul and her husband, Earl; as

well as many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life service was held at the Bartonsville Grange on Oct. 1. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to a local animal shelter in Linda's memory.

• **Sharee May Nelson**, 68, of Bellows Falls. Died on Sept. 23, 2023, surrounded by her children. She was born in Keene, New Hampshire on Sept. 29, 1954, the daughter of Donald and Mary (Bradbury) Nelson. Sharee was a school bus driver for the Windham Northeast school district. Her family includes her children Todd Bellefeuille of Alstead, New Hampshire, Laura Bellefeuille of Bellows Falls, April (Bellefeuille) Putnam of Walpole, New Hampshire, Mindy Sault of Bellows Falls, and Mandy (Sault) Holland of Waverly, Rhode Island; siblings Wayne Nelson of Winchester, New Hampshire, Danny Nelson of Keene, and Susan Smith of Shelburne, New Hampshire; and 12 grandchildren. She was predeceased by her parents and brother, George Nelson. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services will be held privately. To view an online memorial or send a message of condolence, visit stringerfh.com.



• **Thomas Francis Wells**, 76, died on Aug. 14, 2023 at the Hospice of the Upstate in Landrum, South Carolina, from complications of Alzheimer's. Tom was born on May 3, 1947 in Westfield, Massachusetts to Ann (Moore) and E. Stuart Wells. He was an active volunteer in the Guilford Elementary School PTA, and also contributed his time to the Brattleboro Small Fry, Little League, and Babe Ruth baseball programs and was a volunteer Study Buddy at Blythe Academy in Greenville, SC. Tom also enjoyed serving on the Old Deerfield faculty board. A sports enthusiast and an avid golfer, Tom was proud of winning a Club Championship award at the Pine Grove Springs golf club in Massachusetts. An active member of the Brattleboro Union High School Class of 1965, Tom graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with a B.A. degree in history. He taught high school history and math in New Hampshire, Vermont, and South Carolina. He leaves his wife of 57 years, Donna (Halladay) Wells; his son John Wells (Remy), daughters Jean Reilly and Jessica Wells, grandchildren Michael, Mackenzie, Dante, Madison, and Lucy; his siblings Martha, Steven, James, Mary, and Patricia; and many nieces and nephews. Tom was predeceased by his daughter Jennifer and his brother Bernard. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Requesting no funeral service, Tom asks instead that you support the Project Christmas Child/Shoebbox, a program of Samaritan's Purse. Or do a good deed for someone less fortunate.

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Milestones are published as community news at no cost to families, thanks to financial support of our members and advertisers. Send them to news@commonsnews.org. Though we ask that content for this column be sent by Friday at 5 p.m., we will do our best to include late obituaries. Please alert the newsroom at 802-246-6397 for post-deadline urgent submissions. We will always do our best to accommodate contributors in their time of grief.

AROUND THE TOWNS

Guilford Cares begins new Tai Chi class

GUILFORD — Guilford Cares presents a new Tai Chi Class starting Thursday, Oct. 5, at 10:30 a.m., at Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd.

Claudia Prat is the instructor for this class. In these sessions, participants will learn some of the basics of tai chi chuan (also known as tai chi), an ancient Chinese martial art that provides extensive health benefits, and practice some of the moves of the Yang style, 24 Form, to develop balance, coordination, and strength.

There is no charge, but donations are welcome. For more information, contact Guilford Cares at 802-579-1350 or guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com. Also, the ongoing Guilford Cares Fall Prevention classes are still meeting on Wednesdays at Guilford Community Church at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., and on Thursdays at Broad Brook Community Center at 9:30 a.m.

Prouty Center hosts Bingo Night fundraiser

BRATTLEBORO — The Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development will hold a Bingo Night fundraiser on Friday, Oct. 6. Doors open at 5 p.m., and games begin at 6 p.m. The event will be held in Thomas Hall on the Winston Prouty Campus, 209 Austine Drive.

The \$25 entry fee (\$30 at the door) includes cards to play each round of bingo. Additional sets of cards can be purchased for \$5. Bingo daubers will be available. Players can expect Bingo classics like 4 corners, Crazy T, postage stamps, picnic table, and cover-all.

Cash prizes total \$400, and there will be a set of games that award gift cards to local stores and restaurants. There will also be a cash bar, a light dinner for

sale, door prizes, and a 50/50 raffle.

Proceeds support the nonprofit organization's mission to provide inclusive education and family support to promote the success of children and families. Tickets and more information are available at winstonprouty.org.

Annual book sale on Oct. 7

GUILFORD — Guilford Community Church, UCC, is holding a book sale on Saturday, Oct. 7. Current books will be available by donation from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. If more than \$25 is donated, donors receive a complimentary hardcover best-seller. Coffee and baked treats are available for purchase.

For more information, contact 802-257-0994.

Design-A-Plate at Brooks Library

BRATTLEBORO — It is time for the annual Design-A-Plate workshop at Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Stop by the library's Children's Room to pick up a Design-A-Plate packet, which includes four paper templates and instructions. Participants create their drawings at home, then return the packet to the library by Tuesday, Oct. 17 at 8 p.m.

Design-A-Plate is great for all ages and makes a great gift for the holidays. Choices include an 8-inch melamine plate, a 10-inch melamine plate, or 12-ounce melamine bowl. To make this affordable to everyone in our community, this is a pay-what-you-can event. The suggested price is \$6 per item, and payment should be included when the completed drawings are dropped off at the library. Checks payable to Brooks Memorial Library and cash are accepted.

The finished plates and bowls will be ready for pickup around Thanksgiving. Brooks Memorial

Library is open Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library will be closed on Oct. 9 for Indigenous Peoples Day. For more information, call the Children's Room at 802-254-5290, ext. 1210, or visit brookslibraryvt.org.

Edible Brattleboro offers PYO apples

BRATTLEBORO — Many orchards around Windham County suffered 90-95% loss of their apple crop as a result of freezing temperatures on May 18. The Edible Brattleboro orchard survived that night, and the orchard is now open for community members to pick one/give one. Visitors are limited to one 5-gallon bucket's worth of apples to take, and asked to pick a second bucket to share with community members through the Share the Harvest Stand and FoodWorks.

There is also a need for much fall work to do to prepare new beds for spring, so interested volunteers should let them know they can offer help in the field. Any amount of time would be appreciated. Visitors at the site can learn about ways Edible Brattleboro is working with nature to improve soil and resiliency to flooding and drought while touring several projects that are supporting the transformation of the property into a thriving food forest ecosystem.

The orchard is located in West Brattleboro and open by appointment only. Volunteers should email ediblebrattleboro@gmail.com with their availability and contact number. Edible Brattleboro is a nonprofit organization that grows public help-yourself gardens and offers educational programs in growing, preparing, and preserving food. All offerings are free, and donations are accepted with gratitude.

Free Covid tests, N95 masks available

PUTNEY — With Covid cases on the rise, there is a rising demand for Covid antigen tests and N95 masks. Several Putney locations will offer them.

• The Putney Foodshelf, 10 Christing Square, 802-387-8551: during open hours, Fridays and Saturdays.

• The Putney Public Library, 55 Main St., 802-387-4407: during open hours Monday-Saturday.

• Putney Community Cares, 54 Kimball Hill, 803-387-5593: by appointment.

NewBrook Fire and Rescue gets ready for annual Silent Auction

NEWFANE — The 21st Annual NewBrook Fire and Rescue Department's Silent Auction will go live Saturday, Nov. 25 through Monday, Dec. 4. The Silent Auction Committee is seeking donations for this year's event. Donations may be in the form of gift certificates for goods or services, gift baskets, new or gently used items, furniture, household items, handmade crafts, antiques or collectibles, art, and holiday items. Gently used items must be in working order.

NewBrook Fire and Rescue is an all-volunteer fire department that serves the towns of Newfane and Brookline and is a member of Mutual Aid. All funds raised through the auction are being earmarked toward the cost of a new fire truck the department has ordered.

To donate and schedule a drop-off/pick-up, or to get more information, call Samantha Wilson (802-258-0614), Lauri Miner (802-365-4194), Angela Litchfield (802-579-3143), or Ruth Daigneault (802-258-1898), or email newbrookfiresilentauktion@gmail.com.

Estey Organ Museum plans annual re-homing session

BRATTLEBORO — For anyone who has wished for a parlor organ in their parlor, or sought parts to repair a reed organ, or searched for well-aged pieces of black walnut, they are invited to Estey Organ Museum's (EOM) sixth annual re-homing session, in partnership with the Brattleboro Historical Society (BHS).

This season's events will be held Oct. 7 and 14, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the museum at the rear of 108 Birge St., in Brattleboro.

For more information, visit esteyorganmuseum.org.

These events, which began in the fall of 2015, are a way for EOM and BHS to get their duplicate and non-museum-quality organs into the hands of those who will use and enjoy them. This is consistent with part two of the Estey Museum's mission: "to promote the continued use and enjoyment of Estey organs."

"Many of the instruments could be rehabilitated by cleaning

and bellows repair, but others are musically unusable," the museum stated in a news release. "Although purists may decry the idea of turning a musical instrument into a desk or liquor cabinet, that is still a way to respect and enjoy the fine woodworking and craftsmanship of Estey workers of long ago."

There will be several dozen restorable instruments available from the collections of both EOM and BHS. There are also a

baby grand piano, wooden pipes, clamps, vintage cabinet-sized speakers, and several non-Estey reed organs, including a fully restored Sterling. Most of the unrestored organs are free, but donations are appreciated.

The museum's re-homings are open to all, but staff cannot deliver or ship instruments. They recommend bringing a pick-up truck.

DVFiber connects Readsboro to high-speed fiber internet

READSBORO — Readsboro is now connected to high-speed internet service for the first time, thanks to DVFiber. One gigabyte speeds are available now for 160 Readsboro households and businesses, and all remaining on-grid locations will be connected in the next few months. A celebratory event will be hosted in November.

Customers interested in getting connected can check availability at dvfiber.net and begin the process of signing up. The town of Readsboro, through its support of DVFiber, is offering a

\$50 discount on the first month of service to all Readsboro customers who sign up by Nov. 1.

Omar Smith, a member of both the Readsboro Select Board and DVFiber Governing Board, said in a news release "Finally, after many years of pushing on privately owned providers plus seeking support and direction from local, state, and federal sources, an actual high-speed network is being built and is available to the whole town, not just the more densely populated areas." DVFiber began constructing

its new, 21st-century fiber optic network in 2022, focusing first on Readsboro, where most households and businesses have lacked adequate internet service for a long time.

A small group of customers was connected in December 2022 to test the network and to assure future customers that they could expect excellent service. This service will soon be available throughout the town.

"We look forward to doing the same for all remaining unserved or under-served locations

in our district," said DVFiber Governing Board Chair Steven John. Our universal service plan and mission is to ensure digital equity for all."

The Deerfield Valley Communications Union District (DVCUD, d.b.a. DVFiber) is a community-owned, professionally managed and operated special-purpose municipality for the purpose of providing affordable, reliable, and fast internet service to all households and businesses in its 24 member towns.

Historically, small rural communities were left behind by commercial providers as being too expensive to warrant investment of private capital. DVFiber and other communications union districts are Vermont's solution to this long-standing problem.

For more information about DVFiber and its mission to provide universal, affordable, reliable high-speed internet service, visit dvfiber.net.

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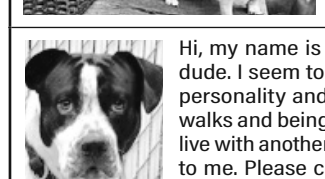
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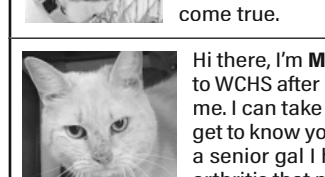
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Hi, my name is **Buddy!** I was a very spunky cool dude. I seem to like everyone. I do have quite the personality and loves to snuggle. I love going for walks and being around my peeps. I may be able to live with another dog. Cats are a complete unknown to me. Please come and make my sweet dreams come true.



Hi there, I'm **Maggie!** I'm an older gal who came to WCHS after my owner could no longer care for me. I can take a little while to settle in but once I get to know you I'm affectionate and talkative. As a senior gal I have a few age related things like arthritis that my new home will need to keep an eye on. I have an independent streak and enjoy time on my own, usually sitting up somewhere high to reign over my kingdom. As the queen I may prefer to be the only pet in my new home although I have lived with other cats and cat-savvy dogs in the past. Children are not my favorite so I would prefer an adults only home where I'm comfortable. I don't want to wait for my new home any longer, can it be with you?

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The Commons

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Visit commonsnews.org or scan the QR code, and look for the button to enter your photos.

To email your photos, please send them to amanda@commonsnews.org.



A winner will be chosen on Monday, October 23rd, and a gallery of all the photo entries will be shared on *The Commons* website for the public to enjoy.





Charlie and Helen Robb in 2014, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary at their West Brattleboro farm.



Stuart Thurber Jr., and his wife Beverley, in 2012.

Farmers

FROM SECTION FRONT

great-grandparents purchased in 1907. There they welcomed four children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild when not toiling, tilling, or tending from morning until night.

Back at Helen's childhood home, a similar scene unfolded when her brother married a year after she did, then ushered in four children, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild amid the ups and downs of the Thurber family's own fields.

Saunter up West Brattleboro's Ames Hill Road and, at first glance, the landscape of red maples, white barns and blue skies remains unchanged.

But more than 300 people who gathered there on Sept. 30 for a memorial knew everything was different with the loss of Stuart Thurber, who died Aug. 27 at age 84, and Charles Robb, who died Sept. 23 at age 86.

'A blow to agriculture'

"This is a blow to agriculture," said lifelong friend Paul Miller, the 86-year-old patriarch of his own family dairy in nearby Vernon.

Ames Hill Road, still paved with dirt, boasted three times as many farms when Robb and Thurber began their respective careers six decades ago.

Robb, who had seen his father deliver glass milk bottles in a Model T Ford, had high hopes when he moved to selling milk through a processor that favored plastic jugs.

But by 1983, drowning financially in a national dairy glut, he considered a buyout offer before acquiescing to his son's plea to pass on the farm.

Fifth-generation steward Charlie Jr. has survived a rough ride. He was chainsawing a tree just after Christmas 2004 when a flyaway branch shattered every bone in his face.

More painful still was selling the milk cows in 2011 in hopes of saving the 360-acre property by tapping its maple trees for syrup.

Change hasn't hit the Thurbers as hard, but they've nonetheless felt it.

After Stuart's son and daughter-in-law, Ross and Amanda, joined the 600-acre Lilac Ridge Farm a quarter-century ago, they switched its conventional dairy operation to organic while diversifying into such crops as vegetables and flowers.

The Robbs and Thurbers aren't the only ones branching out. Although the number of Vermont dairy outfits has plummeted almost 90% from 4,000 in the 1960s to about 500 today, the state reports nearly 7,000 farms are aiming to cultivate a 21st-century "working landscape," ranging from food and wood production to solar and wind energy.

Charles Robb was still alive when *People* magazine featured Brooke Shields — a celebrity he never met — recommending his family's maple syrup, spurring readers coast to coast to discover the farm's website.

Thurber, for his part, saw Lilac Ridge's summer introduction of the first certified organic soft-serve ice cream stand on the East Coast.

Sweeter still, he held his first great-grandchild shortly after.

Long fueled by what friends identify as grit and grace, both families are vowing to forge on.

Take Ross Thurber, who writes poetry when he isn't milking or haying. His recently published collection, *Pioneer Species*, includes a work titled "Making Spring."

§ Little death, little death

press my lips: this sprig,
this bud from how began
what we have left.

Ross read another poem, "Business Partners," at his father's service last month.

after we have finished chores,
Set up some fencing, mown a hayfield, changed
A tire on the hay tedder, hauled a load of sugar
wood
And checked on the dry cows — "There is one
due on the 15th" —
The morning has spilled into Thursday and is
threatening Friday

The Robbs appreciated the words so much that

they asked Ross to repeat them at Charles's week-end memorial.

§ I focus on the six cows that are waiting

To be milked. He heads out to the other barn
to feed

The young stock. "We'll get there" he says "We'll
get there."

What I don't say but think is: Dad, we're already
here.



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The Root celebrates its 10th anniversary

Nonprofit invites all to parade and party to celebrate a decade of centering and celebrating the BIPOC community

BRATTLEBORO—The Root Social Justice Center team invites the community to celebrate 10 years of the organization's work to center Blackness at what organizers describe as "a grand celebration where we elevate BIPOC leadership and joy, connect over delicious food, dance to music that moves body and soul."

The parade and a party are multicultural and intended for the whole community.

The celebration begins at 11 a.m. at the center, at 28 Williams St., where people are invited to make signs for a parade to follow.

"It will be indigenous People's Day weekend, and we hope to highlight in our messaging/signs themes of racial justice and lifting the Indigenous people and Black folks," the event organizers write.

Participants are encouraged to bring or donate paint sticks and cardboard for the signs to be assembled, completed signs, "puppets and parade stuff," and chant sheets.

At noon, the parade will start from the center. The route will take participants along Elliot Street and Main Street to the Town Common.

At 1 p.m., carpools will

bring people to the SuSu Community Farm in Newfane, where the festivities — including a potluck meal, food vendors, the I Am Vermont Too photo booth, music and other entertainment, tabling for organizations, a youth area, a raffle, and more — will continue from 2 to 6 p.m.

Admission is free. Organizers suggest that participants bring cash for BIPOC vendors or donations, food to share with a label noting ingredients, a water bottle, and a chair if you'd like to sit.

For more information, visit therootsjc.org.



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Lawyer

an attorney or judge, state bar records show. In 2019, VtDigger reported that 47 people in Vermont were reading the law.

But Hashim, 34, who lives in Dummerston, has experienced the law from a variety of angles — as a state trooper and a lawmaker as well as a paralegal.

And to him, the process makes perfect sense.

"I was considering law school," Hashim said. "But I also had to keep on making money. And I wanted to keep working. Then I heard about the law study program."

He described it as "basically four years of doing an apprenticeship and following an attorney around."

"It's learning from what they do, and learning how lawyers actually do the work," Hashim continued. "And after four years of doing that, you have to take the bar exam. Then you're an attorney."

On Sept. 15, he posted with glee, all-capital letters, and exclamation points on Facebook: "I PASSED THE BAR EXAM! I AM A LAWYER!"

Hashim studied long hours all summer for the exam and called it "one of the most stressful experiences of my life."

His sponsor was Evan Chadwick of Chadwick & Spensley, PLLC, of Brattleboro, also an LOS lawyer.

While doing the

apprenticeship, Hashim also spent four years as a paralegal at Chadwick's firm, earning a salary while being mentored.

"I am very proud of Nader and feel he will serve as a great asset to the Vermont bar," Chadwick said.

Hashim first got to know his employer and mentor during his years as a state trooper.

"Working as a trooper, you end up meeting and learning about different lawyers," Hashim said. "Evan was somebody I knew and somebody I respected."

Chadwick's firm "covers a wide range of different areas of law, and that's definitely an important thing to keep in mind when you're doing the program," he continued. "You want to have as much exposure to different areas of law as possible."

The program is administered through the Vermont Bar Association, and it requires a bachelor's degree as well as a mentor.

"You provide the bar association with the paperwork, you have to pay for the license and the fees, and you have to provide updates on what you're studying," Hashim said.

Furthermore, "your supervising attorney has to sign off on it. And you have to cover a certain number of subcategories to make sure that you're fulfilling all the prerequisites — like secure transactions, or criminal law, or civil procedure."

Chadwick's firm practices in the areas of criminal defense, divorce, child custody, child support, personal injury, wills, trusts and probates, real estate, and general civil litigation. So Hashim was able to gain hands-on experience in many areas of the law.

For example, if he was asked to draft a motion, he would do legal research, find the relevant Supreme Court cases, and study the legal precedents.

"You learn about things like criminal procedure and what evidence is admissible or inadmissible," Hashim said. "And it's that way, really, for many different areas of law. About 95% of the job is reading and writing."

The first thing an attorney does when they get a case is to send in a "notice of appearance" to the Windham County Superior Court to show that they are representing the client.

"Then we do an investigation to get an idea of what is going on," Hashim said.

"We do discovery, which is the process of getting all the information from law enforcement and the state attorney's office regarding photographs, police reports, dashcam and bodycam video footage," he added.

"And then, depending on what's in the case, there could be pretrial motions, [and] there could be a suppression hearing — meaning that we're trying to make certain evidence that we feel isn't relevant or admissible to not continue forward," Hashim said. "And then oftentimes cases result in a settlement or a plea deal. And sometimes they go to trial."

Learning different skills

Hashim said that he learned

more than just the law by doing an apprenticeship.

"There's an additional part that I think you don't get in law school," he said. "You learn how to talk to clients and how to do the actual people work."

In law school, Hashim noted, "you learn a lot of history, which is helpful in understanding the genesis of laws and understanding why certain things are the way they are."

"Doing the LOS program, you do a lot of legal research, but you also get that experience of learning how to talk to a person who's going through a really bad divorce," he said. "Or how to talk to a client who was wrongfully charged with a crime. That's the type of interpersonal skills that you don't learn in law school."

It is useful to learn from many lawyers, Hashim said.

"You tend to stick towards one, but you also work with others," he said. "Every attorney has their own knowledge that they can provide. And different attorneys have different ways of doing things. So it's good to learn from a variety of people. You learn what to do, and you also learn what not to do."

Hashim compared the method to being a state trooper, or a carpenter.

"The analogy that I use is the police academy," he said. "A police officer spends six months in the academy, but the vast majority of what they actually learn about doing the job is when they're on the road with a field training officer. They're watching how it's done."

Another example is carpentry or the trades, he said.

"You can go to the classroom and learn how to do carpentry, but nothing beats shadowing the carpenter and having them tell you everything they're doing, why they're doing it, and what not to do," Hashim noted.

In a few months, Hashim will be sworn in as an attorney, and then will undertake a mentorship. He is aiming for a career in family law.

"I feel like I make a good mediator," he said. "These are very stressful situations that people are in. And my past history on working with domestic violence cases, both as a trooper and in the Legislature, is driving me towards working on family law as my main goal."

A frugal approach

Considering that some law students graduate with a degree in jurisprudence and \$150,000 or more of debt, the LOS program can be a good way for a focused individual to become a lawyer.

"It costs \$200 to commence the program, and \$100 every six months," Hashim said.

"If you're a number of years out of your undergraduate school, and you have a family and bills the way I did, it's a great way to not incur thousands of dollars of debt, and get paid for the work that you're doing while also working towards getting your license," he said.

"It is the traditional way of doing it," Hashim said. "And I think it makes sense."

FROM SECTION FRONT



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT COMMONS FILE PHOTO

State Sen. Nader Hashim, D-Windham, recently completed his legal apprenticeship and passed the bar exam to become an attorney.

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Fall

Foliage, Food, & Festivities

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

page B1

Fall concerts, fun, and flannel

Food, music, history, and lots of plaid will abound at Flannel Fest 2023

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

ROCKINGHAM—The Southern Vermont Flannel Festival — held in Rockingham on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 14 and 15 — not only promises to be just about the perfect foliage experience (if the weather holds). It also has the added bonus of drawing visitors to one of the

best preserved, historic spots in New England.

A fundraiser for the civic and commercial projects of the Great Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce, the festival was started in 2019, just before the Covid pandemic. Intended to be a yearly event, the festival was canceled in 2020 and 2021.

Despite that rocky start, the festival has grown every year, with

■ SEE FLANNEL FESTIVAL, B2



Audience members listen to music in the autumn sun at the 2022 Southern Vermont Flannel Festival at Rockingham Hill Farm. FACEBOOK.COM/ROCKINGHAMHILLFARM

Newfane Heritage Festival returns to village common for weekend of crafts, food, and music

NEWFANE—Since 1970, volunteers have made the Newfane Heritage Festival in the heart of this historic village a fall season destination.

Once again, people will celebrate community, crafts, and entertainment. The event will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Indigenous People's Day weekend, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 7 and 8, rain or shine. Jan Anderson is the coordinator.

The sound of music will fill the air on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, thanks to Barnstormerz, Bourbon Shuffle, and Bard Owl, all arranged by Mike Kelly, the music director at the Newfane First Congregational Church.

Volunteers, headed by Ann Allbee and Maggie Bills, will

serve apple pies (whole and in slices), apple crisp with ice cream, breakfast sandwiches, doughnuts, clam chowder, slow-roasted corn chowder, chili, baked potatoes with toppings, hamburgers, bacon-cheddar cheeseburgers, hot dogs, chili dogs, egg salad sandwiches, potato chips, cold beverages, hot and cold local apple cider, and coffee.

New to the food menu are lobster roll sandwiches. Carrot-ginger soup and pumpkin cheese-cake are also back on the menu.

The Super Raffle will feature about 175 items, including quilts, art pieces, homemade crafts, and gift certificates.

More than 60 juried artists and craftspeople will display and sell their work in the tents set up in

front of the Windham County Courthouse and the Union Hall.

Festival memorabilia will be for sale, including embroidered hats and fleece, short- and long-sleeved T-shirts, sweatshirts, onesies, aprons, boat totes, and cookbooks.

Proceeds of the event benefit the wider missions of the First Congregational Church of Newfane, including community support. The church's mission is to make a difference in lives worldwide and in the community. For more information, go to the Newfane Heritage Festival website, newfaneheritagefestival.org, or phone the Newfane Church at 802-365-4079.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Newfane commons will be filled with arts and crafts, tasty food, and colorful foliage during the annual Heritage Festival.

20th Empty Bowls Dinner dedicated to the memory of Alan Steinberg

PUTNEY—The southern Vermont Empty Bowls steering committee is planning the 20th annual Empty Bowls Dinner this fall — benefiting Foodworks, the region's heavily utilized food redistribution program, operated by Groundworks Collaborative.

The local Empty Bowls effort was started in 2003 by Alan Steinberg—who died earlier

this year—and a team from Brattleboro Clayworks, planning the first annual Empty Bowls Dinner in October 2004 with the slogan: "Believe that we here on Earth can learn to feed each other."

Steinberg learned about the Empty Bowls Project that was started by ceramics teachers at a high school in Michigan. The concept has grown and evolved

since 1990 all over the country and worldwide — raising tens of millions of dollars globally, one bowl of soup at a time.

This year's dinner will be served on Saturday, Oct. 7, from 5 to 7 p.m., at Landmark College in Putney. Diners purchase a ticket to the dinner and choose a handmade bowl to keep from one of the hundreds

■ SEE EMPTY BOWLS, B4



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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DOROTHY GROVER-READ/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Gilfeather turnips not only are the official state vegetable, they also take center stage at Gilfeather Turnip Day in Wardsboro.

Gilfeather Turnip Day is Oct. 21

WARDSBORO—Come celebrate Vermont’s state vegetable at Gilfeather Turnip Day on Saturday, Oct. 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The festival, now in its 21st year, raises funds for the Trustees of the Wardsboro Library to support ongoing library programs. It is their largest community fundraising event.

Tents big and small set up on Main Street will be filled with craft and farmers’ market vendors and the turnip cart will be filled with multiple bushels of freshly dug turnips. Turnips will be sold by the pound, along with Gilfeather seed packets. The Trustees of the Wardsboro Library are also sponsoring games behind the library throughout the day to entertain the younger set. This free event takes place rain, snow, or shine.

Parking is \$5 to benefit Boy

Scout Troop 461. The vendor tent supports the Wardsboro Elementary School Group.

The annual turnip contest is free to enter. Contestants may register Gilfeather turnips in one or more categories from 10 a.m. to noon upstairs in the Town Hall. Categories are: largest grown in Wardsboro, largest grown outside Wardsboro, best turnip name, and best strange and funny turnip.

The largest turnip, measured by total weight with greens, will be awarded grand champion of the festival. Winners are announced and ribbons awarded immediately after the judging. All children age 12 and younger who enter a turnip will receive an honorable-mention award ribbon.

The Turnip Soup Cart outside Town Hall serves homemade turnip doughnuts and coffee beginning at 10 a.m., followed by

Gilfeather turnip soup for takeout beginning at 11 a.m. Inside Town Hall, The Turnip Café opens for turnip lunch samplings at 11 a.m. Local cooks peel, slice, and shred the tubers to make the creamy Gilfeather turnip dishes, served until the food runs out.

Wardsboro’s own strolling troubadour, Jimmy Knapp, loves to serenade visitors throughout the festival with his original Gilfeather turnip ballads and many more of his original guitar compositions. The Barnstormerz (Marvin Bentley and Ned Phoenix) will perform outside the entrance to the Town Office on Main Street.

At 1:30 p.m., the drawing for the Wardsboro Public Library’s “Best Raffle Ever” takes place at Town Hall. This year’s prize is a Generac 6500 portable generator, generously sponsored by

WW Building Supply. Details are available at the library’s website or at the festival until the drawing. Raffle tickets, for sale at the Festival, are \$10 each or 6 for \$50. The winner need not be present at the drawing.

The Gilfeather turnip, designated the Vermont state vegetable in 2016, has the added distinction of being the only turnip included in Slow Food USA’s Ark of Taste, a catalog comprised of only the best-tasting endangered foods.

Festival organizers say Wardsboro farmer John Gilfeather could never have imagined that one day, his town and the state of Vermont would celebrate and honor his humble tuber that he first propagated in the early 1900s.

Flannel Festival

FROM SECTION FRONT

an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 people attending over the two days, more than double the 1,500 who attended the first year. Organizers said that they are optimistic that the numbers will continue to increase — not only attendees, but also vendors and activities.

The festival — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday — will include food trucks, craft beers, art and artisans, and a homemade pie sale.

Live music will be presented on both days from a permanent stage on the site.

Saturday’s lineup includes A Company of Witches at noon and 1 p.m., a family-friendly performance troupe.

Saturday also includes performances by The Rough & Tumble and Cold Chocolate, while the Patrick Ross Band and the Stockwell Brothers play on Sunday.

“This is our fourth Southern Vermont Flannel Festival,” said Debra Collier, executive director of the Great Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“The Chamber needed some new sources of income since we could no longer offer group rate health insurance to our members because of the regulations associated with [the Affordable Care Act, the federal health insurance law],” Collier said. “We are not

federally, state-, or town-funded, so we rely on our members for revenue.”

She said that board members were tossing around ideas for a festival that would bring more tourists to the area, generating an economic flow.

“The idea of a flannel festival was mentioned,” Collier said. “We all thought it was a unique and fun idea to work with.”

Beautiful setting

The Southern Vermont Flannel Festival takes place at the Rockingham Hill Farm at 34 Meetinghouse Rd. Collier describes the site as “a stunning venue that allows us to showcase quintessential Vermont,” especially at peak foliage when the festival occurs.

This is one of the oldest farms in the region, located in the historic center of Rockingham. The hillside farm was operated by six generations of the Divoll family, starting with the arrival of Manasseh Divoll in 1806.

“With the stage and the flow of the hillside slope, it creates a natural amphitheater with great acoustics to enjoy the live music,” Collier said.

Charlie Jarras, the current owner, bought the farm from the Divoll family 17 years ago. It was an active farm well into the 1990s, for nearly two centuries, and the



CHARLIE JARRAS

A view from the pulpit of the Rockingham Meeting House.

house and farm buildings are preserved. Originally a hillside sheep farm, it was last used as a farm for dairy operations and beef.

Jarras operates the farm now as a three-season venue for weddings, celebrations of life, corporate parties, and other functions,

including the festival.

Within a very short distance of the farm are several other historic homes dating back to the incorporation of Rockingham, the vestiges of the town’s original center. A canal built from 1790 to 1801 circumvented the Great Falls on the Connecticut River and allowed for boat travel upstream, and the municipal and commercial center shifted to the village of Bellows Falls.

That population shift gained even more momentum when the first railroads came to Bellows Falls in the late 1840s, and the canal was converted to provide water power for numerous mills and factories built there along the banks of the Connecticut River.

Discovering the Historic Meeting House

One of the side bonuses of the Flannel Festival is that many attendees use it as an opportunity to also visit the Rockingham Meeting House, just across the road.

One of the oldest and best-preserved meeting houses in New England, dating back to the late 1700s, the Meeting House — built between 1787 and 1801 — was used both for religious services and civic, community, and government gatherings. The first Town Meeting took place there

in 1792, long before the building was completed.

Church services were held in the building until 1839, and Town Meetings were held there until 1869. Restoration and preservation of the building has been an ongoing project since 1906.

The Chamber says that part of its mission is to promote the businesses and area attractions at the festival. Collier noted that with the structure on the same road as the farm, “we can easily direct visitors to this historical gem. We’ve received numerous comments from enthusiastic tourists awed by the architecture of the Meeting House.”

The building, which offers no electricity or heat, has been restored to its original condition, inside and out, thanks to a citizens group that has worked for decades to help preserve the building.

The Flannel Festival weekend now brings record numbers of visitors to the Meeting House — and record donations. The meetinghouse, a natural draw for visitors enjoying Vermont’s fall foliage, sits on a knoll overlooking the Williams River valley, and adjoins a historic graveyard dating back to the earliest days of the town.

Annette Spaulding, who has served as a volunteer at the Meeting House, including on the Flannel Festival weekend,

said that the festival has become a highlight of the year for the historic building, which was designated a national historic landmark in 2000.

“I’ve seen visitors come in and donate a lot of money that weekend,” she said. “I’ve seen some people who have contributed up to \$100 toward its preservation after visiting the meeting house.”

The Meeting House was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and has been honored as an “exceptionally well preserved second period Colonial style meeting house.” It is still used regularly for weddings, memorial services, acoustic concerts, and municipal meetings.

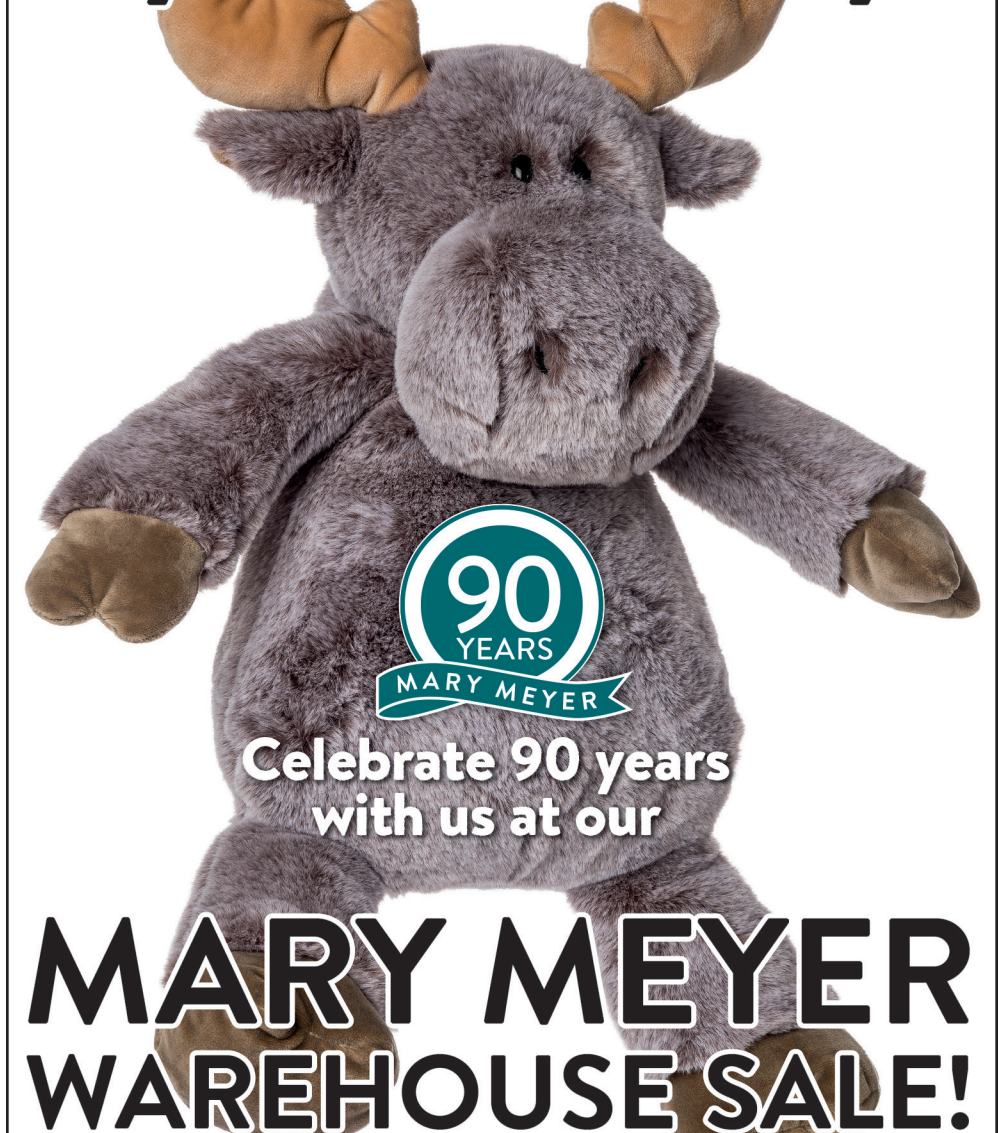
This year’s festival

Collier said that this year’s festival will offer more than 60 food and craft vendors, a pie contest, a raffle, six bands, craft beers and spirits, and pies sold whole or by the slice.

Admission is \$8 per person per day, with 12 and younger entering for free. If you’re wearing flannel you get a dollar off the admission price.

Organizers say that they are still looking for volunteers to help with the festival. For more information or to volunteer, call the Chamber at 802-463-4280 or email gfrcc.svf@gmail.com.

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COLUMN | Memorable Meals

From sweet to savory

Sometimes we have so many tomatoes we need to look at different ways to serve them up

ONE DAY, you are a miser with those first tomatoes; the next, it seems, you have them falling from every shelf.

I discovered recently I had accumulated just a few too many tomatoes. Do you get the feeling just about now? While we never actually get sick of them, sometimes we need to look at different ways to serve them up.

What to do?

The idea of making a savory clafoutis started moving around in my head.

Clafoutis is a French dessert, a kind of an eggy pancake that is most commonly filled with seasonal cherries and enhanced with a bit of sugar, vanilla, and almond extract. I make clafoutis every year when the cherries are in season, and it is a family favorite, often requested by the grandchildren.

It turned out quite simple to transform this dish — eliminate the sugar and extracts from the basic recipe and swap out small tomatoes and cherry tomatoes for the cherries. Extra creamy oat milk worked great here. That's what I had on hand.

Savory Tomato Clafoutis

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly oil a pie plate.

Beat together:

- ▶ 4 local eggs
 - ▶ ½ cup dairy or plant milk
 - ▶ ¼ cup flour
 - ▶ 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
 - ▶ A bit of salt and pepper to your liking
- Mix:
- ▶ 1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, minced
 - ▶ 2 Tbsp. fresh chives, minced
 - ▶ 2 Tbsp. fresh basil, minced

Save a bit for garnish and toss the rest in the batter.

Wash and dry well:

- ▶ 1 lb. cherry or small tomatoes
- Cut them in half if large, and squeeze out most of the seeds. Turn cut-side down on toweling for a few minutes to drain. Leave the small cherry tomatoes whole.

Pour the batter into the pie plate and arrange the tomatoes as you like. Nestle in:

- ▶ 2 oz. fresh mozzarella
- Then top with:
- ▶ ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan
- Bake for about a half hour; check at 25 minutes. You want the cheese to be nicely browned and the center to be set.

Let cool 5 minutes, and sprinkle the top with the remaining herbs.

AND NOW for an apple snack!

Ask New Englanders what they'd like on their apple pie, and they will probably answer, "Cheddar cheese!" We like the salty savory to cut the sweet, and that is the inspiration for this dish, although it is much less on the sweet side.

This is one of the easiest of party foods and one of the best. Whenever you can split open a baguette, fill it with lusciousness, and cut it into 16 portions, it's a good move! If you have a large gathering, double the recipe.

Look for a lovely sourdough baguette with crisp crust on the outside and a chewy and flavorful loaf on the inside. You know what I mean!

The mustard is an important component here, so don't skimp on it; you will want some in every bite. I like a nice, robust, grainy mustard, not only for the sharpness and flavor, but also the texture — but use whatever dark mustard you like.

As for the cheese, an extra-sharp white Vermont cheddar is the best — something with lots of character!

To make this sandwich vegan, simply swap out your favorite vegan cheddar. Look for one that melts easily and also has character. By contrast, the onion and apple should be sweet. As for the maple syrup? The real thing, please, and the



DOROTHY GROVER-READ's culinary talents can be found on her blog "The New Vintage Kitchen" (vintagekitchen.org), billed as "[a] Vermont innkeeper's collection of classics reimagined for today's kitchen," from which these recipes are gleaned. Her column has regularly appeared in The Commons' Food & Drink and other special sections for years.

darker the better!

This might be entertainment food, but it also makes a really quick and delicious supper.

Apple, Onion, and Cheese Party Sandwich

Preheat your broiler. Position rack just above the center.

Lightly grease a baking sheet and add:

- ▶ 1 sourdough baguette, sliced in half lengthwise, like a big grinder

Pop it into the oven to toast it until it just barely starts to color. Remove from the oven and smear the cut sides with:

- ▶ ½ cup grainy or regular French mustard
- Coarsely grate:
 - ▶ 4 oz. extra sharp Vermont cheddar

Divide this between the two baguette halves, and set aside.

Heat a large skillet over medium high and melt together:

- ▶ 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- ▶ 1 Tbsp. butter

Add:

- ▶ 1 large sweet onion, sliced

Sauté until softened but just starting to color. Add:

- ▶ 2 sweet apples, peeled, cored, sliced
- ▶ Pinch of cinnamon

Cover, and reduce the heat to medium low. Check frequently. You want the apples to just soften a bit, not turn to applesauce.

Divide the apple/onion mixture between the two halves, then sprinkle with a little more cheese.

Pop under the broiler and cook until the cheese melts and the edges of the baguette start to crisp up and brown.

Remove from the oven to a cutting board, and slice each



DOROTHY GROVER-READ/THE COMMONS

If your tomatoes are falling off your windowsills, consider whipping up a Savory Tomato Clafoutis. Neither a quiche nor a pancake, this humble dish will please the family — and use up some of those fresh tomatoes of any size.

side into eight pieces. Plate and drizzle with the maple syrup.

Chamomile Vinaigrette

To top off the salads served with the Tomato Clafoutis and the Apple and Onion Toasts, here's a slightly wild-tasting vinaigrette made with chamomile flowers. It has a flavor that is lovely and floral, but not too much so. If you don't have your own dried chamomile, use a tea-bag that contains just the herb.

In a saucepan, simmer:

- ▶ ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 - ▶ 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 - ▶ 2 Tbsp. dried chamomile flowers
- Let simmer for 15 minutes, then cool to room temperature. Strain into a jar and add:
- ▶ ½ cup white wine vinegar or sherry vinegar
 - Pinch of salt and pepper
 - ▶ 1 tsp. Dijon mustard

Shake well and serve. This will keep, unrefrigerated, until you use it up!

Cut the larger tomatoes in half and take out most of the seeds. Drain them a few minutes to remove excess moisture, tuck in some herbs and a little mozzarella, and sprinkle it all with a bit of Parmesan. Voila!

The result is a lovely dish, kind of quiche-like in flavor, but lighter. The little bit of cheese I added contributed to the creaminess, and the herbs really made everything shine. Best of all, it is inexpensive, easy to make, and a family pleaser.

Serve it up with a side salad, and you'll have a really tasty autumn lunch.

And fewer tomatoes on the windowsill.



DOROTHY GROVER-READ/THE COMMONS

Apples, onions, and cheddar combine in this simple appetizer, enhanced with a bit of French mustard, and drizzled with a dark amber Vermont maple syrup.

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

—MARTIN LUTHER

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Empty Bowls

made by local potters. The menu consists of soup donated by roughly 12 area restaurants, rounded out with local bread and cheese — all to help stock the shelves at Foodworks, which served over 4,000 local people last year alone.

“The dinner is a fun and family-friendly evening celebrating local potters, restaurants, and businesses coming together to raise vital funds for the important work we do at Foodworks,” Libby Bennett, Groundworks’ director of development and communications, said in a news release. “This year, we are remembering and appreciating Alan Steinberg’s years of shaping this event and the impact it has had on the Foodworks program as we know it today.”

“Alan regularly made what he called ‘Blessing Bowls,’” said long-time Steering Committee member Naomi Lindenfeld. “He talked about infusing each one with his blessings while making it.”

“The empty bowl is so emblematic for us,” said Groundworks’ Executive Director Josh Davis. “We love the way this event brings out so many people in our community to support not only our food distribution program, but also a love of the arts and local food. It’s a simple and delicious meal in a beautiful bowl to take home — which means there’s something meaningful in it for everyone, whether you’re there for the bowls or the mission.”

“We are thrilled to continue offering an in-person dinner this year,” said event co-Chair Sara Ryan. “Rather than having two seatings like we have in the past, we’ll be holding one open seating from 5 to 7 p.m.”

“Those who are unable to join us in person for the dinner can — like last year — purchase individual bowls in local storefronts,” added event co-Chair Beth Kiendl.

Last year’s Empty Bowls raised

just over \$28,000 in sponsorships, dinner tickets, and bowl sales. This year, organizers hope to out-raise years past, as now, due to inflation, supply chain challenges, and the increasing cost of food and fuel, Foodworks is seeing a marked increase in the need for supplemental food.

“We continue to see new people accessing our program every month. In July 2023, Foodworks recorded visits from 84 new households,” explained Foodworks Director Andrew Courtney. “The high cost of groceries is often cited by our shoppers as pinching their budgets.”

“In an effort to meet this increased demand, we have added staff at Foodworks in recent months to expand our Fresh Rescue efforts,” said Courtney. “Rescuing perfectly good, fresh food from grocery and convenience stores before it can go to waste is labor intensive, but in addition to addressing food insecurity in our region, we are also

able to remove a tremendous amount of waste from our local food systems.”

Foodworks is open for shopping hours on Monday through Friday each week. Patrons are able to choose their own groceries from what the program has on offer at 141 Canal St. in Brattleboro.

Empty Bowls Dinner tickets and bowls are on sale both in Brattleboro and Putney. Bowls and tickets are available at the Brattleboro Food Co-op, Everyone’s Books, The Shoe Tree, Zephyr Designs, and the Putney Food Co-op. Bowls are available for sale at The Kitchen Sync and the Putney General Store. Dinner tickets can also be purchased online at GroundworksVT.org/EVENTS.

Adult tickets are \$30, youth tickets are \$15 for ages 7–15, and children 6 and under are admitted free. Each bowl or ticket sold allows Foodworks to provide a family of five with supplemental food for two weeks, as the program purchases wholesale pallets of food from the Vermont Foodbank to supplement donations and Fresh Rescue items.

“It’s such an impactful event for Foodworks,” said Groundworks’ Development Coordinator Julianne Mills. “We are grateful to all who buy bowls and dinner tickets and to all of the potters, restaurants, florists, bakeries, cheese producers, sponsors, and storefront ticket and bowl sellers, as well as to Landmark College for hosting us. Everyone comes together to make this event a success so we can continue to be there for our neighbors who come to us for help.”

For more information, email JMills@GroundworksVT.org or call 802-302-8302.

In addition to Foodworks, Groundworks Collaborative operates the Groundworks Drop-In Center and Overnight Shelter on South Main Street, while also providing housing navigation and retention services to over 250 additional households. To learn more, visit groundworksvt.org.



The late Alan Steinberg stands behind some of the bowls created for an earlier annual Empty Bowl Dinner.



Two of Alan Steinberg’s “Blessing Bowls.”



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Fall happenings around the region

Grafton firefighters host their fall tag sale

GRAFTON — The Grafton Firefighters’ Tag Sale, now in its 42nd year of benefiting the local volunteer fire department, has become well-known in southern Vermont for its variety, its quality, and its value.

This year’s sale takes place on Saturday, Oct. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Sunday, Oct. 8, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., under the tents near the firehouse at 711 Route 121, just east of Grafton Village.

Locals and visitors alike line up early waiting for the fire engine air horn to signal the opening of the sale and their chance to search through well-organized displays of furniture, housewares, tools, toys, linens, small appliances, books, recordings, and much more. The next day, most everything will be half price.

The first day of the sale will also feature a food booth by the Grafton Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization serving hot coffee, baked goods, burgers, and more. Fire engines will be on display, and volunteer firefighters will be on hand to answer questions.

The sale will go on rain or shine.

Donations of goods for the sale can be brought to the Firehouse through Thursday, Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information, or to volunteer, call Auxiliary President Amber Stevens at istevensgm@vermontel.net, or call 802-376-5646.

Medieval Faire in Putney

PUTNEY — On Saturday, Oct. 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., The Grammar School will transform its campus at 159 Grammar School Lane into a medieval village once again as the school hosts its annual Medieval Faire, a family favorite for 35 years.

Children can ride the flying dragon and Sir Lancelot’s flying horse, take part in pillow jousting and foam-arrow archery, ride the

swan swing, ascend the climbing wall, battle a knight, scramble for treats at the candy catapult, make their own crowns and wands, visit the fortune teller, get their faces painted, and take part in a dragon treasure hunt.

Young attendees can also complete a quest and be knighted by the King and Queen, who preside over the fair on their royal thrones. Assorted games for the youngest children are offered at Merlin’s Midway.

Vermont Armored Combat will put on a live performance at 2 p.m., featuring knights in full armor battling in the ring. Pony rides will be offered from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Fairgoers of all ages can shop for treats and medieval-themed crafts in the Medieval Marketplace and enjoy a range of live music. Two food trucks will be on site: Crossroads, offering authentic Hispanic and American street food, and The HANGRY Traveler, providing smoked meats, sandwiches, and more.

Admission is free. Unlimited all-day ride passes are \$25, and individual ride tickets are also available.

Net proceeds go toward the school’s financial aid fund, which serves to make The Grammar School affordable for as many families as possible.

For more information, visit thegrammarschool.org/medieval or call 802-387-5364.

Christmas Under the Tent sale at Chester-Andover Family Center

CHESTER — On Saturday, Oct. 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Chester-Andover Family Center (CAFC), will hold the eighth annual Christmas Under the Tent sale.

Holiday items for decorating, entertaining, and gift giving will be available, including toys, gifts, artificial trees, and Christmas cards. Prices start at 25 cents.

Free hot dogs will be available. As always, the Thrift Shop will also be open and will offer new

displays, including fall and winter clothing.

The Family Center is a non-profit, volunteer-run organization. Proceeds from the thrift shop and the Christmas sale support the organization’s food shelf and financial assistance programs for Chester and Andover residents struggling to make ends meet.

For more information, visit chester-andoverfamilycenter.org or follow the organization on Facebook ([facebook.com/chesterandoverfamilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/chesterandoverfamilycenter)).

Scott Farm hosts annual Heirloom Apple Day

DUMMERSTON — On Sunday, Oct. 8, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Scott Farm Orchard, 707 Kipling Rd., hosts its 20th Heirloom Apple Day, a celebration of apples of all shapes, colors, and tastes, as well as their histories.

Admission and activities are free. Visitors are asked to keep their dogs at home.

The day will feature apple and cider tastings, presentations, apple picking, kids’ activities and games, and food trucks and other vendors.

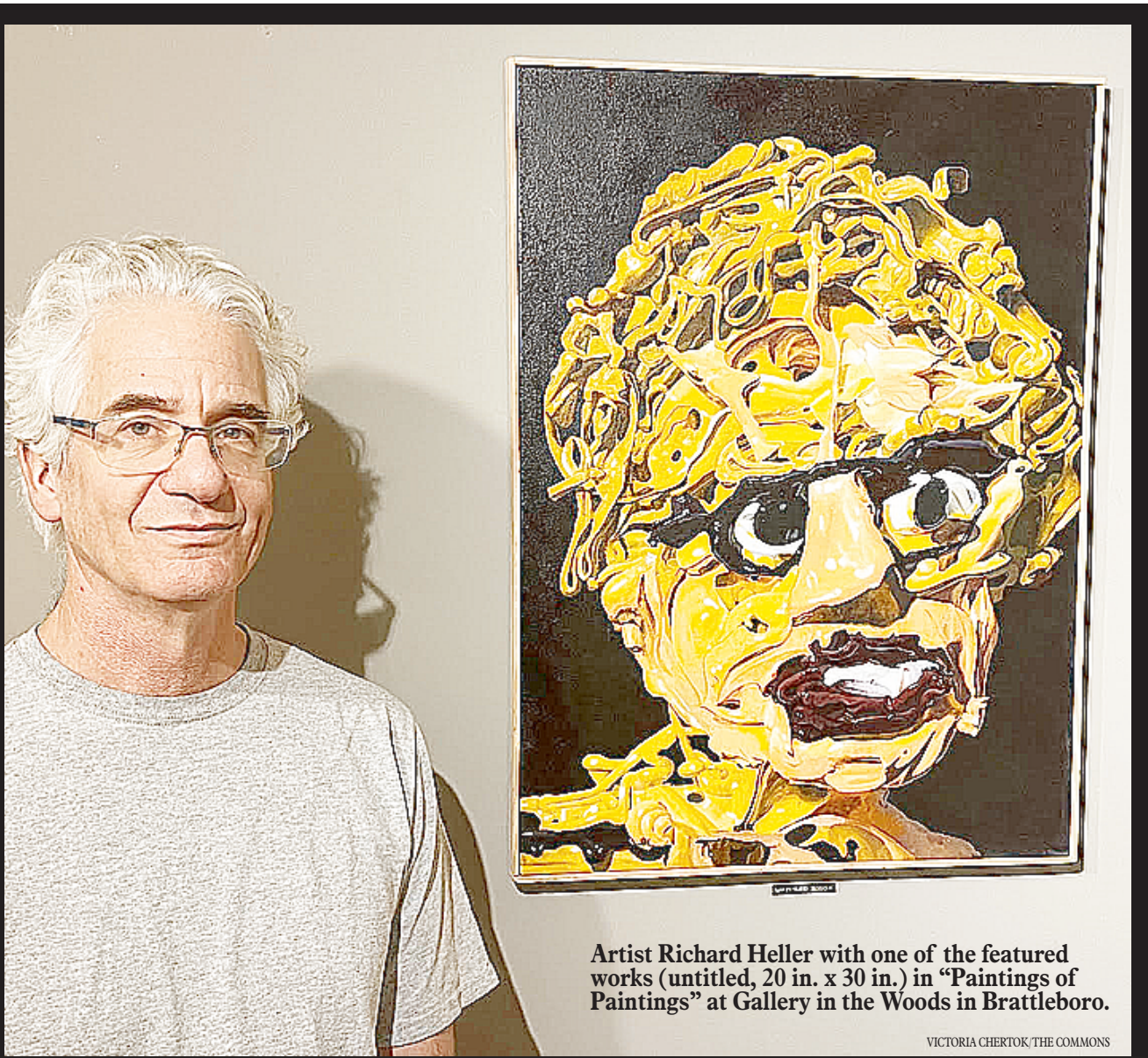
Elizabeth Garofalo of the University of Massachusetts Extension Fruit Program will give a talk at 1 p.m.: “Impacts of Climate Change in New England Orchards,” a timely topic after Scott Farm lost more than 90% of this year’s apple crop due to a mid-May freeze.

Tastings and talks are scheduled at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., led by Laura Sieger of Maine Heritage Orchard and apple sleuth Sean Turley. Guests will learn about the history of Scott Farm and some of its 130 varieties of ecologically grown fruits.

Also featured this year is a guided tour of the farm’s Stone Park at noon and 4 p.m., a puppet show by Sandglass Theater in Putney, and music by Aura Shards and Scandi.

For more information, visit scottfarmvermont.com/heirloomappleday.

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.
—ALBERT CAMUS



Artist Richard Heller with one of the featured works (untitled, 20 in. x 30 in.) in "Paintings of Paintings" at Gallery in the Woods in Brattleboro.

VICTORIA CHERTOK, THE COMMONS

COLUMN | Creative Conversations

'At its heart it's about humanism and compassion'

Rock River Players to perform 'Harvey' on Oct. 6, 7, 8

THIS WEEKEND, the Rock River Players (RRP) offer final performances of the classic screwball comedy *Harvey*, which won a Pulitzer Prize for playwright Mary Chase in 1945.

The story of Elwood P. Dowd and his unlikely companion, an invisible 6-foot-tall rabbit, traces Dowd's family's attempts to institutionalize him and his resistance to those efforts, dished out with wit, irony, and heart.

Pamela Corkey directs, and RRP co-artistic director Amy Donahue is producer. *The Commons* had occasion to talk with the team several days before opening on a set that looks great on a shoestring budget.

ANNIE LANDEMBERGER: Why should I come see *Harvey*?

PAMELA CORKEY: Because it is a marvelous unicorn of a show in that it is very diverting and fun but also extremely meaningful; it's light and frothy but also at its heart it's about humanism and compassion — which we need a lot more of these days.

A.L.: Can you find parallels between now and when Chase wrote the play in 1944 and why it's as production-worthy now as it was then?

P.C.: [Chase's time] feels like a time of everybody being on the same page with World War II and the conformity that can come with mindless nationalism and patriotism. This play is a bit of an antidote to a kind of mindless group thinking that can come when we're in crisis together.

A.L.: Aren't we in crisis



ANNIE LANDEMBERGER is founder of the Rock River Players and served as its artistic director until last June when, she announced "I don't want to be an engine anymore; I'm ready to be a caboose." Landenberger says she will continue producing cabarets with the RRP and is eager to launch RRP improv jams — "especially for those of us getting too old to memorize lines!"

now?

P.C.: That's what I'm saying: It's a good parallel — an excellent parallel — because I think that same pressure for everybody to think a certain way and to fall in line with certain ideologies is very much present now, and this [play] is advocating for tolerance, acceptance, non-judgment, and compassion.

A.L.: Amy, as producer, can you talk a little about the RRP?

AMY DONAHUE: The RRP has been such a meaningful pillar of this little village, and I myself have felt so honored to become a part of it; I'm really excited that more and more people seem to be flocking in.

I think about half our cast members are first-time stage types, which makes it a really exciting way for people to connect with other members of their community in a new context.

We're excited to have the opportunity to continue to grow and diversify. And I love giving people the chance to experiment and play in a way that they maybe never have before.

A.L.: Your background is

A.D.: Dance, formally, but I've been a theater kid since high school; it'd been about 10 years since I'd done any theater

■ SEE 'HARVEY', C3

Pushing himself

'Putting yourself in a position to transcend who and what you are is what art is about,' says artist Richard Heller, a longtime BUHS art teacher

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Richard Heller's "Paintings of Paintings," an exhibit that includes 15 of his paintings and drawings, will be on display until Tuesday, Oct. 31 at Gallery in the Woods.

On Friday, Oct. 6, from 5 to 8 p.m., the gallery, at 145 Main St., will host an opening reception.

"I came into this by accident," notes Heller, a longtime Brattleboro Union High School art teacher. "By documenting my work, I thought, 'Maybe

these have something else.'" Heller, 65, has been making art for close to 40 years. He earned a bachelor's degree from Boston University and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, from which he also has a master's degree in art education.

He moved to Brattleboro in 1995, and taught at the high school. Though he retired last year, "I have been subbing about four days a week this year, so I'm still there," he says with a laugh.

"It's quite an experience to see kids grow," Heller says. "It's amazing to see the awesome things that are going on in every

classroom at BUHS. Exceptional teachers are there, and the students are terrific."

In retirement he is looking forward to painting a lot and traveling. He and his wife, Deb, like to travel and plan frequent trips to visit their son, Jackson, 19, a sophomore at DePaul University in Chicago.

Transforming and transcending

The art in the show is "not the work I usually engage in," Heller explains.

"A while ago I was documenting my work through photography," he says. "As I reflected on the photographs, I began to see

them as means to other works explored through drawing and painting."

Along the way, he "became interested in how these were all different ways of looking at something and transforming it."

Heller wanted to show "how they ended up becoming paintings. I wanted to show it all together. It all came out of the same idea."

He liked working with the figure.

"The idea of flesh — it's human, it's our container," he says. "I think it's a recognizable image. People know when it's being distorted or in proportion."

■ SEE HELLER, C3



"Spectre" by Gianna Robinson.

COURTESY PHOTO

Gianna Robinson is featured artist for October at Crowell Gallery

NEWFANE—For the month of October, the Crowell Art Gallery presents an exhibit by Gianna Robinson entitled "The Ways of Water: Never Destroyed, Always Changing Form." An artist's reception will be held Oct. 14, from 3 to 5 p.m., in the gallery.

Three years ago, a news release states, Robinson took her first solo show down from the Crowell Gallery in August 2020, having enjoyed a successful response from the community. Sometime later that same night, her son Matthew passed away.

Painting halted; life itself halted for her. It took two months for her to get back into creativity, using her hands rather than brushes. Then she was moved to paint a few portraits of her son. Eventually, she was drawn to take a meditation painting course, out of which came her Mandala series. It took time, but gradually she returned to the art she had begun before Matthew's passing. Since then, she has been creating,

finding much solace in nature and recreating her experiences there. A strong theme that has emerged over the years is water. But not just water in its liquid form, rather, in all its forms: lakes, ocean, rivers, streams, clouds, snow, and ice.

A common thread is how water in all its different guises is changing our landscapes in beautiful as well as destructive ways. It is just the way nature works.

"It is not an angry, punishing force," she writes. "It is change and movement, evolving and regenerative. Water is matter and energy, and the law of energy is that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, rather, it only changes form."

The gallery staff invites the public to this exhibit to view how Robinson has made some peace with how life and nature have evolved. The Crowell Gallery, in the Moore Free Library, 23 West St. in Newfane, is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 1 to 5 p.m., Thursday 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Publication of this week's Calendar is underwritten by BERKLEY & VELLER GREENWOOD COUNTRY REALTORS • www.berkleyveller.com



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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY

5

Community building

BRATTLEBORO Got Books? Donate them to the Friends of the Library Holiday Book Sale! Books need to be in good condition! (no mold, stains, tears, highlights) and contain up-to-date information! (no textbooks). Book sale will be on November 9.

- Please bring your donations to the Adult Circulation desk on the 1st floor of the library.
- Through Thursday, November 9.
- Free.
- Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Community meals

PUTNEY Putney Monthly Free Produce Distribution: The Vermont Foodbank and Putney Foodshelf co-sponsor this monthly food drop of free produce and some non-perishables. All are welcome.

- 9 a.m.-9:45 a.m. 4th Thursday of every month. This is a drive-up service, Bags provided. Located on Alice Holloway drive (in front of Putney Meadows - white building across from the Putney Coop and Putney Fire Station).
- Free.
- Putney Foodshelf, 10 Christian Sq. Information: 802-387-8551.

W. BRATTLEBORO Chili Supper (vegetarian and with meat): Includes cornbread, apple crisp, and beverages.

- 5-7 p.m.
- Donations welcome.
- All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.

Visual arts and shows

BELLOWS FALLS "Kitchee Pontegu, Great Falls, Bellows Falls, a Sense of Place": Experience Bellows Falls through 8 artists' eyes inspired by unique geography, culture, industrial history of Bellows Falls. Charlie Hunter, Jean Cannon, Nancy Fitz-Rapalje, Arlene Scully, Robert McBride, Phyllis Rosser, Kristen Fehrenbach, Gregory Thorpe work in painting, watercolor, sculpture, photography. Each artist has a brief caption on how Bellows Falls has inspired their work. The video effectively captures the images and locations in the village that inspired them.

- 10/5-10/6, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.: "What is it about a particular spot that makes us feel like we belong? Is it what we see, feel, hear? Is it the people? Scenery or day to day energy? Probably all of those, but there's something else, that one thing that resonates; that strikes at something deep, makes us stop; that allows us to observe and be a part of it all simultaneously. It is a Sense of Place" - Gail Golec, historian.
- Through Friday, October 6.
- Free.
- Flat Iron Cooperative Coffee House, 51 The Square. Curated by Robert McBride, Dir. Rockingham Arts and Museum Project (RAMP) 802-463-3252, ramp@sover.net ramp-vt.org. Accessibility questions: 802-732-8371.

FRIDAY

6

Performing arts

WILLIAMSVILLE The Rock River Players present "Harvey": Classic screwball comedy by Mary Chase is the Pulitzer Prize-winning story of Elwood P. Dowd and his unlikely companion - an invisible six-foot-tall rabbit. As Elwood's family tries to commit him to a sanitarium, tale

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OCTOBER 6-12

THE CREATOR PG-13
FRIDAY 4/6:40 / 9
SATURDAY 2/6:40 / 8:45
SUNDAY 2/6:40 / 8:45
MON.-THUR. 4/6:40

A HAUNTING IN VENICE PG-13
FRIDAY 4/6:50 / 8:50
SATURDAY 2:15 / 6:50 / 8:50
SUNDAY 2:15 / 6:50
MON.-THUR. 4/6:50

BARBIE PG-13
FRIDAY 4:10 / 6:45 / 9
SATURDAY 2/6:45 / 9
SUNDAY 2/6:45 / 9
MON.-WED. 4:10 / 6:45

FLORA AND SON R
FRIDAY 4:15 / 6:45 / 8:45
SATURDAY 2/6:40 / 8:40
SUNDAY 2/6:45 / 8:45
TUE.-THUR. 4:15 / 6:45

PAW PATROL: THE MIGHTY MOVIE PG
FRIDAY 4:15 / 6:40 / 8:40
SATURDAY 2:15 / 6:40 / 8:40
SUNDAY 2:15 / 6:40
MON.-THUR. 4:15 / 6:40

FRIDAY CONT.

unfolds with delightful humor and heart, reminding us all of the power of imagination and importance of acceptance.

- 10/6 and 10/7: 7 p.m., 10/8: 2 p.m. Hall is ADA compliant.
- Through Sunday, October 8.
- Purchase tickets online in advance or at door (cash only): \$12 general admission / \$10 students/seniors (65+).
- Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: Tickets: rockriverplayers.org, info@rockriverplayers.org..

Fundraising and awareness events

BRATTLEBORO Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development hosts BINGO Night fundraiser: Proceeds support non-profit organization's mission to provide inclusive education and family support to promote the success of children and families. Bingo daubers available. Players can expect BINGO classics like 4 corners, Crazy T, postage stamps, picnic table and cover-all. Cash prizes total \$400 and there will be a set of games awarding gift cards to local stores/restaurants. Plus cash bar, light dinner for sale, door prizes, 50/50 raffle.

- 5 p.m. doors open in Thomas Hall. 6 p.m. games begin. Sponsors: Coldflame Mechanical, Studio 20 Hair Salon, Aflac, Family Movers of VT, Members 1st Credit Union.
- \$25 entry (\$30 at door) includes cards to play each round of Bingo. Additional card sets can be purchased for \$5.
- Winston Prouty Campus, 209 Austine Dr. Information: 802-257-7852.

Visual arts and shows

BRATTLEBORO New Works by Richard Heller: "Painting and crafting images is paramount. I want the viewer to remember an image. In this case, I enlarged small works that were deeply textured and painted them as flat as I could with as much attention to detail as possible. Elements of surrealism began to emerge. Like much art, they explore the human condition and a history of creating images through drawing and painting."

- 5-8 p.m. "I've always been drawn to how to make new pictures in new ways. That for me is at the creative core of making art. Jackson Pollock said the artist no longer had to go outside himself to make art. They could focus on the subconscious as the source of art. From the small textured studies to the drawings and paintings of them, in a way I haven't gone outside myself to appropriate images."
- Through Tuesday, October 31.
- Free.
- Gallery in the Woods, 145 Main St. Information: 802-257-4777; galleryinthewoods.com.

GREENFIELD "Kitchee Pontegu, Great Falls, Bellows Falls a Sense of Place": This exhibit features artwork by eight local artists whose work is inspired by the unique geography, culture, and industrial history of Bellows Falls. Artists include Charlie Hunter, Jean Cannon, Nancy Fitz-Rapalje, Arlene Scully, Robert McBride, Phyllis Rosser, Gregory Thorpe, and Kristen Fehrenbach who work in a variety of media, including painting, watercolor, sculpture, and photography.

- 10 Forward Venue, 10 Fiske Avenue.

BRATTLEBORO Gallery Walk: "The Long Way" - New Art Exhibition by Artist/Musician Aron Namenwirth: "A collection of the imagery that comes to mind: tree rings, a clock, the moon, the sun, the Earth, the eyes of my beloved, knobs, flowers, pearls, stars, molecules, atoms, targets, as well as abstract ideas such as zero. Other evocations include nipples, waves radiating from a stone skipped across calm water, and much more" says Namenwirth.

- 10/6, 5-9 p.m. Reception: Drawing, and to a lesser degree, painting, has been a practice Namenwirth has pursued for over 45 years. The concept of the circle has been a recurring subject in his graphic work since its inception and are rooted in the present moment like Zen sand painting.
- Through Sunday, October 29.
- Free.
- One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Gallery hours are by appointment; email:118Elliot@gmail.com.

SATURDAY

7

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO "Cirque Us Stories": Hosted Performance at NECCA: "New, thoughtfully curated show flips through pages of our troupe's favorite stories to bring you a touching, thrilling narrative about community/identity. Interweaving collection of folktales, classic literature, modern fiction, children's stories, more, show jumps off the page with twists, flips, rewrites, retellings of stories you'll love. Show features aerialists, jugglers, acrobats, clowns, contortionists, more, all ready to fly off straight to you."

- 4-7 p.m.
- \$20 to \$25.
- New England Center for Circus Arts (Trapezium), 10 Town Crier Dr. Information: 802-254-9780; necenterforcircusarts.org.

BRATTLEBORO Marlboro Morris and Sword: To celebrate the season and ensure return of spring, Marlboro Morris and Sword perform their annual sword dance for the 49th year.

- 10/7: 10 am: Thompson House, 11 am.: Brattleboro Food Co-op, 12 noon: Prospect and Washington Sts., 2

SATURDAY CONT.

pm: Brattleboro Farmer's Market, 570 Western Ave. 10/8: 10 am: Burdick's Restaurant, Walpole, NH; 11:15 am: Putney Harvest Festival; 1:15 am: Dutton's Farm Stand, Newfane; 2 pm: Newfane Heritage Festival.

- Through Sunday, October 8.
- Free.
- Thompson House Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, 80 Maple St. Information: Questions: Call Barbara at 410-382-8233.

Music

BRATTLEBORO Daring Coyotes - a Bluegrass Duo

- 7-9 p.m.
- Free.
- River Garden Marketplace, 157 Main St. Information: rivergardenmarketplace.com.

Farmers' markets

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

- 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays. Rain or shine.
- Through Saturday, October 28.
- Brattleboro Farmers Market, 570 Western Ave., Rt. 9, near covered bridge. Information: 802-490-4371; brattleborofarmersmarket.com.

HINSDALE Fall Festival: Hinsdale Area Farmers Market and Hinsdale Community Recreation Center: Featuring multiple farm, craft, flea market, food vendors, food truck as well as activities for all, games for kids, and more! The Hinsdale Farmers Market has been operating since 2014 and seeks to promote locally grown food and crafts while making fresh food available to residents.

- 9 a.m.-3 p.m. adjacent to Town Hall and Millstream Community Center.
- Millstream Community Center, 19 Main Street. Information: Questions/ comments: Email Market Manager at farmersmarketofhinsdale@gmail.com..

The written word

NEWFANE A Harvest of Books - The Friends of the Moore Free Library hold their fall Book Sale: During Heritage Festival weekend, over 40 well-organized categories will be offered. Prices will range from one to two dollars, more for special items.

- 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Free.
- Moore Free Library, 23 West St. Information: Julie: julielavorgna@gmail.com or 802-365-7278.

GUILFORD Book Sale at The Guilford Community Church, UCC: A wide selection of current books will be available for sale. Choose a few books or fill a bag. All books by donation. If \$25 or more is spent, you can receive a complimentary hardcover bestseller of your choice! Coffee and baked treats available for purchase while you browse!

- 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- By donation.
- Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Dr. off Rte. 5. Information: Call the church for more information including directions: 802-257-0994.

WESTMINSTER Butterfield Library Annual Book Sale

- 9 a.m.-3 p.m. book sale - behind the Westminster Institute building. "We are accepting books until 10/5 during Library hours. No text books or books in poor condition."
- Free.
- Butterfield Library, 3435 US Rte 5. Information: Questions 802-722-4891.

Kids and families

PUTNEY Grammar School hosts 35th annual Medieval Faire: Children can ride flying dragon and Sir Lancelot's flying horse, take part in pillow jousting and foam-arrow archery, ride swan swing, ascend climbing wall, battle knight, scramble for treats at candy catapult, make crowns/wands, visit fortune teller, get their faces painted, join dragon treasure hunt. Complete a quest and be knighted by King and Queen presiding on royal thrones. Assorted games for the youngest offered at Merlin's Midway.

- 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Food trucks on site: Crossroads - authentic Hispanic and American street food, and The Hangry Traveler - smoked meats, sandwiches, more.
- Admission: Free and open to all. Net proceeds go toward The Grammar School's financial aid fund.
- The Grammar School, 69 Hickory Ridge Rd. S. Unlimited all-day ride passes: \$25 1st pass, \$20 additional passes; individual tickets available. All-day passes for sale in advance and at Faire. 802-387-5364; thegrammarschool.org.

Community building

PUTNEY 20th annual Empty Bowls Dinner to benefit Foodworks: Each ticket includes handcrafted bowl you keep with a simple meal of homemade soup, bread, and cheese.

- 5-7 p.m. Open seating. Participating local storefronts to purchase tickets and/or bowls (\$25): Brattleboro Food Co-op; Everyone's Books, Kitchen Sync, Shoe Tree, Zephyr Design; Putney Food Co-op; Putney General Store.
- \$30 online and at door. Youth Tickets: \$15 (Ages 7-15) Free for ages 6 and under.
- Landmark College, 1 River Road So. Information: Questions: JMills@GroundworksVT.org.

Dance

WEST TOWNSHEND Flatfoot Clogging Workshop and Open Mic at West Townshend Country Store: Liana Gabel, percussive dance teacher and performer from the Hudson River Valley, teaches a workshop on flatfoot clogging at the West Townshend Country Store. This is a traditional form of step dancing, related to tap dancing, usually done to old time fiddle tunes. As you will see with Liana, it can be done to dif-

ferent types of music, anything with a good beat.

- Workshop: 3:30-4:30 p.m. Open Mic during Pizza Night: 5:30-7 p.m. Pizza served during these hours as well. Workshop and concert/open mic will be outdoors behind WTCS if weather is nice, inside if rainy or too cold.
- \$20 suggested donation for workshop. Open Mic is free of charge but donations are appreciated.
- West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: Questions/ sign-up for workshop: Call Sally: 802-874-7141.

WINCHESTER Monadnock Tri-State Dance Club and Live Music by "Crusin' Carl Band"

- Non-Alcoholic beverages available. 50/50 Raffle.
- Everyone is welcome. \$10 members, \$12 non-members.
- Elm Community Center, 21 Durkee St. Information: More information, call Tom: 978-249-6917, 978-790-9322 or Barbara: 802-727-9205, 802-376-0317.

Tag sales, auctions, bazaars

GRAFTON Grafton Volunteer Firefighters 42nd Annual Tag Sale under tents at the Firehouse: Large selection of items including furniture, housewares, tools, toys, linens, small appliances, books, recordings, and more. Coffee, baked goods, burgers by the Grafton School PTG.

- 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Through Sunday, October 8.
- Grafton Firehouse, 711 Rt. 121 East.

Visual arts and shows

GUILFORD Wood Sculptor Mason Young to speak at Green River Bridge Inn: Young's work is well-known throughout New England as a masterful blend of beauty and craftsmanship showcasing his profound understanding of wood. His table top sculptures (10" -20" in height) are described by fans as "exquisitely carved and irresistibly smooth, practically beg to be touched." Young's sculptures use cherry, walnut, butternut, black walnut and basswood.

- 3-5 p.m. Young speaks during wine and cheese reception. His work will be displayed at the inn all month. Butte Silver Bow Arts Foundation's collection of contemporary American artists has several of his pieces as do private collections.
- Green River Bridge Inn, 2435 Stage Rd. Information: Reservations: mason@wmasonyoung.com.

Ideas and education

GRAFTON Invasive Plant Workshop with Long View Forest and Alex Barrett: Learn to identify numerous common invasive species and why they should be removed to enhance ecosystem function. A hands-on workshop on the grounds of The Nature Museum.

- 9 a.m.-12 noon outdoors (indoors if the weather is especially not agreeable).
- By donation.
- The Nature Museum, 186 Townshend Rd. Information: 802-843-2111; nature-museum.org.

SUNDAY

8

Music

BRATTLEBORO Bandwagon Summer Series: Soggy Po' Boys: This jazz septet brings The Big Easy to street corners, clubs, festivals, concert halls celebrating the sounds/stories of New Orleans. Stu Dias (vocals, guitar), Eric Klaxton (clarinet, soprano sax), Josh Gagnon (trombone), Nick Mainella (tenor sax), Mike Effenberger (piano), Brian Waterhouse (drums), Scott Kiefler (bass) explore vast musical traditions of New Orleans to include traditional Caribbean tunes, Meters funk, soul, brass band/street beat.

- 3 p.m. Presented by The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series and Twilight Music.
- Free.
- West River Park, Route 30.

MARLBORO Juno Orchestra Celebrates Bach: Featuring music of Johann Sebastian Bach as well as works by his son and by Handel. Juno founder Zon Eastes explains: "This concert recalls the wonder of the New England Bach Festival, often presented this same weekend years ago, and created by Brattleboro Music Center founder Blanche Moyses. The works to be performed were often part of the Festival program."

- 2:30 p.m.
- Tickets: \$50 Circle seating, \$20 advance general admission, \$25 at door, limited number of reduced price tickets.
- Persons Concert Hall, 2472 South Road. Information: BMC: More information, email info@bmcvt.org.

Farmers' markets

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro's Share the Harvest Stand: Free Fresh Produce for All!

- 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on Sundays (corner Frost and Elm). (Gardeners may drop off surplus from their gardens from 10:30-closing: before noon preferred).
- Through Sunday, October 29.
- Free.
- Turning Point, 39 Elm St. (corner of Frost and Elm St.). Information: EdibleBrattleboro@gmail.com.

PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market - plus today Nate Paine plays some sweet fiddle

- 11-3 p.m. on Sundays (through 10/22/2023). Across from Putney Food Co-op.
- Putney Farmers Market, 17 Carol Brown Way. Information: putneyfarmersmarket.org.

SUNDAY CONT.

Kids and families

DUMMERSTON Fritzi's Flea Circus (supported by Sandglass Theater at Scott Farm Orchard): Celebrate 20th Heirloom Apple Day: Scott Farm Orchards welcomes visitors of all ages, from near and far, for Heirloom Apple Day, a celebration of apples of all shapes, colors, tastes, histories! Talks and tastings, a fair with local non-profits, guided tours of Stone Park, kids activities. Celebrate Scott Farm, apples and autumn with us at this unique local event! Learn about the history of Scott Farm orchard and its 130 varieties of ecologically grown fruits. Apple tastings after each talk.

- 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 12:30 p.m.: Sandglass presents "Fritzi the Flea" and "The darning circus acts. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.: Talks with Sean Turley: "Heirloom Apples in New England. Plus Laura Sieger from Main Heritage Orchard. No dogs please.
- Admission and activities are free of charge.
- Scott Farm, 707 Kipling Rd. Information: scottfarmvermont.com/ heirloomappleday.

Well-being

WILLIAMSVILLE Nature Immersion with an Indigenous View: Led by Amanda Kenyon, Certified Forest Therapy Guide. Inspiration from the Japanese tradition of forest bathing and Native American traditions, with themes of animacy, kinship, reciprocity, gratitude. Begins with peaceful, meditative, playful experience. Followed by guided prompts drawing on the wisdom of indigenous worldviews.

- 1:30-4:30 p.m. Explore connecting to/relating with Nature in deeper, more meaningful ways as a path to personal well-being and restoration of harmony/kinship with all beings. Combination of sitting, walking, meandering less than a mile of gently sloped terrain. Sit mats and lightweight, foldable stools available. All abilities, any age adult or youth able to sit attentively for periods of 20 minutes.
- Suggested contribution: \$5 to \$45.
- Manitou Project, 300 Sunset Lake Rd. Space is limited and advance registration is required. More information/ register: landkinguide.com or contact Amanda at 802-289-0108.

Community building

DUMMERSTON 20th Annual Heirloom Apple Day at Scott Farm: "Annual a one-day celebration of apples of all shapes, colors, tastes and their histories celebrates 20 years, making our biggest event of the year even better. Stop by the Landmark table to say hi and grab some delicious soup to directly support our preservation work!"

- 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Free.
- Scott Farm, 707 Kipling Rd. Information: 802-254-6868; scottfarmvermont.com.

Community meals

DUMMERSTON Pancake Breakfast: Pancakes, sausage, biscuits, sausage gravy, and applesauce. All you can eat. Benefits West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Dept.

- 7-11 a.m.
- \$11 adults, \$6 kids.
- West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department, East/West Rd. (Center Station). Information: 802-254-2793.

Ideas and education

BRATTLEBORO Fall Mushrooms: Mushroom Maestro Justin Garner leads this foray in quest of autumn's treasures. Spend several hours in the field looking for and collecting mushrooms, then, gather around the tables to admire and learn about the harvest. If good edibles are available, we'll prepare some to sample.

- 1:30 p.m. Justin has a long-standing interest in these often neglected and misunderstood life forms. He studied botany, plant chemistry, human physiology and biochemistry, and teaches about the nourishing, medicinal, toxic properties of diverse fungi.
- \$35, \$25 for BEEC members.
- Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. Information: Register and learn more at beec.org.

Celebrations and festivals

DUMMERSTON Evening Star Grange Craft Fair in conjunction w/ Dummerston Congregational Church's 54th Annual Pie Festival: Grange welcomes 20 crafters. Pie menu includes pumpkin, maple walnut, blueberry, etc. Church will also sell coffee, pie by slice with or without Grafton Cheese, cotton candy and ice cream to benefit the church and upkeep/functions. Start w/ breakfast at fire station, peruse crafts, visit Dummerston Historical Society Museum to see display by Dummerston artists, venture back to Grange for cup of baked beans, then swing by church for dessert and pie to take home.

- 9 a.m. Grange serves hamburgers, hot dogs, chili, baked beans, corn chowder, other goodies daylong. Coffee/doughnuts available as soon as doors open. Across street at church, bell will ring signaling start of pie sale around 10 a.m.
- Evening Star Grange, 1008 East-West Rd. Information: 802-254-1138.

MONDAY

9

Music

BRATTLEBORO Windham Philharmonic performs this Concert on Indigenous People's Day: Chicksaw composer Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate's featured composition, "Spirit

MONDAY CONT.

Chief Names the Animal People." Also, "The Academic Festival Overture" and "The Tragic Overture" by Johannes Brahms. Orchestra paints vivid pictures of the moment when the Spirit Chief named the animal people, weaving sounds of flutes, drums, chants into a captivating tapestry of sound. Tate, an American Indian classical composer/pianist, expresses his native culture in symphony

- 7 p.m. Don't miss opportunity to experience rich tapestry of human emotion/culture through the power of music. Whether you're a seasoned classical music enthusiast or newcomer to the genre, this concert promises discovery and enchantment. More about American composer Tate: https://jerodtate.com.
- By donation.
- Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. Information: 802-254-1109; latchisarts.org.

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Nar-Anon Family Group: In-person support. Meets alternating Mondays.

- 7-8:30 p.m. Handicap accessible, no stairs, 1st floor entry.
- Free.
- Arch Clinic of Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine, 8 University Way, Suite 11. Information: More information: sueavery1@comcast.net, 802-345-4145.

TUESDAY

10

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

11

Community building

BELLOWS FALLS Bellows Falls Pride - National Coming Out Day: Attend a public event to honor people who made a difference to the LGBTQ+ community, past/present. The historic marker for the Andrews Inn is now visible to all. Queer Youth Performance in style of Commedia del Arte presented by Sean Roberts. Stay for "Tales From the Lounge" - a chance to share remembrances of the years when the Andrews Inn was, for many, the only place where the LGBTQ+ community could feel safe/accepted.

- 5:30 p.m. Join us in the lounge at Ciao Popolo, the former home of the Andrews Inn, to recognize their accomplishments.
- Bar and full dinner menu available for purchase; reservations appreciated by Ciao Popolo.
- Ciao Popolo (The Andrews Inn), 36 The Square. Information: ciaoopollo.com.

Community meals

DUMMERSTON Dummerston Grange and Senior Solutions: Senior Lunch: Menu: Baked ham, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, vegetarian baked beans, marinated carrots, plus carrot cake with cream cheese frosting for dessert.

- 12 noon: In-house serving: 12 noon; 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.: take-outs.
- Donation of \$3 for those 60 and over and \$4 for younger set is suggested.
- Dummerston Evening Star Grange, 1008 East-West Rd. Information: Reservations strongly suggested: 802-254-1138 (leave name, phone #, number of meals, if eating in or take out).

Ideas and education

PUTNEY Putney Public Library: Putney Mountain Hawkwatch - 50 Years Counting Hawks: Each fall, an intrepid bunch of people heads up Putney Mountain with one goal in mind - count as many hawks and vultures as they can, regardless of the weather. For 50 years, volunteers have made this trek, enjoying the view, the company, but most importantly the drama of the hawk migration. Hear about the Hawkwatch's history, data it gathers, how you can get more involved!

- 7 p.m. Data collected on Putney Mountain is added to that from approx. 200 affiliated raptor monitoring sites and is organized by the Hawk Migration Assn. of North America - providing near-real-time international database of hawk counts across the continent. Access year-to-year data here: hawkcount.org.
- Free.
- Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: 802-387-4407; putneylibrary.org/events.

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

County artists awarded funds from Arts Council program

MONTPELIER—The Vermont Art Council recently announced the 22 recipients of its most sought-after award, the Creation Grant, which supports Vermont artists in creating new work. Two recipients were People's Choice Creation grantees, a new process involving the public's vote.

Four Windham County artists were among the recipients. They are:

- Sean Kirby, of East Dover, to support the creation of a feature screenplay based on the real life of Vermont dairy farmer Romaine Tenney, entitled "I Am My Domain."
- Shanta Lee, of Guilford, to support the creation of an immersive digital installation inspired by "Black Metamorphoses."

- Willow O'Feral, of Guilford, to support the creation of a short documentary about Fred Homer,

an 85-year-old wildlife rehabilitator and artist.

- Jessica Sticklor, of South Newfane, to support the creation of a novel exploring women's mental health.

A record 225 applications were received for this highly competitive award, with a total of more than \$1 million requested in funding. The Council typically has funding to support approximately 12-15% of requests for the annual grant.

Grants are awarded to Vermont artists or artist groups in amounts up to \$5,000 — an increase of \$1,000 from last year, thanks to support from the Vermont Community Foundation's Arts Endowment Fund.

Funding can be used for time spent developing new work, to purchase materials, or to rent equipment or space for the process. The award is only available

to artists who have not received a Creation Grant within the last five years.

Criteria for selection are artistic excellence (60%), project management (25%), and impact (15%). Recipients were selected by independent panels comprising 38 practicing Vermont artists and arts professionals. Applicants could submit audio or video files for their proposals in place of written applications.

The Creation Grant program has supported more than 200 Vermont artists since the program began in 2009. The Council's grant programs are made possible by support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the state of Vermont, and private donors.

For more information about the Creation Grant program, visit vermontartscouncil.org/grants/artists/creation.

Folk singer will come to Grafton

GRAFTON—Spencer Lewis offers a concert with solo guitar and violin at Grafton's historic Brick Meeting House on Saturday, Oct. 7, playing three sets from 1 to 4 p.m.

Lewis's music has been described by critics as "music that paints the rural landscape and quiets the mind." The *Times Argus* describes it as "a soothing blend of folk, pop, and classical influences where guitar and violin merge into an ambience of melody, with sounds building from ripples to brooks to rivers ending in oceans of music."

Lewis currently has 21 instrumental albums in the digital pipeline of iTunes and Spotify.

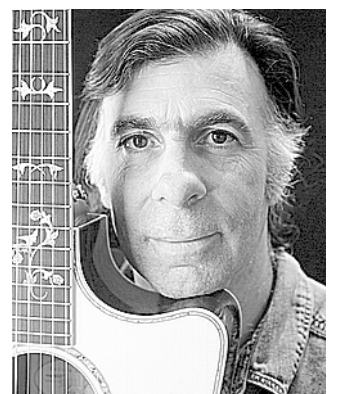
In the early 1970s, he started as a folksinger-songwriter in Wilmington, playing The Old Red Mill and Fat City, and he was the first one to play at The Common Ground in Brattleboro

after convincing them they needed music.

Since then, he's performed at many farmers' markets, town greens, wedding receptions, and summer festivals "with his signature sound that reflects his love of Vermont and its rural traditions," say organizers. When he's not playing music or recording albums in his home studio, he works as a stone waller based in Bethel.

In addition to the concert, other activities at the Brick Meeting House during Indigenous Peoples Week include the Grafton Firefighters 42nd Tag Sale, a Community Pig Roast, and the Grafton Coronet Band Concert.

Admission to the concert is free. The Brick Meeting House



Spencer Lewis

is ADA compliant. For more information, visit facebook.com/grafonbrickmeetinghouse or call 323-627-4625.



Anina Major with the exhibit "I Land Therefore I Am" at Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

Museum honors Major, teams with BrattRock during Gallery Walk

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) welcomes the public to a celebratory closing party for the exhibit "I Land Therefore I Am," on Friday, Oct. 6, during Gallery Walk, Brattleboro's townwide, first-Friday celebration of the arts.

Visitors may drop by the museum anytime between 5 and 8 p.m. to meet artist Anina Major and curator Sadaf Padder and to sample Caribbean snacks courtesy of Jamaican Jewelz Windham Wines will provide a cash bar. Admission is free.

Adding to the festivities, at 6 p.m. Brooklyn Ana will perform in the museum's Center

Gallery. In this BrattRock Unplugged performance, say organizers, Ana, a musician and theater kid from Massachusetts, will share her eclectic musical tastes, which she is honing under the tutelage of Nancy Andersen, chair of Vocal Studies at The Hartt School's Community Division in Hartford, Connecticut.

BrattRock is an initiative of Youth Services, pursuing a mission to provide youth with places to gather as well as a performance and learning venue for musically minded youth from Vermont and the surrounding region.

Major, whose exhibition

closes on October 9, is a multimedia artist who was born and raised in The Bahamas and is now on the faculty of Bennington College. Her BMAC exhibition highlights her ceramic work: dolls and sculptures that resemble straw objects and aqueous forms.

Major describes these objects as "present-day manifestations of the traditional weaving technique known as *plait*, taught to me by my grandmother," and the results of "a desire to fabricate my own terms of cultural integrity and its defining influence."

'Harvey'

work when I got involved with [RRP's 2022 and 2023 Evening of One Acts and 2022's *The Importance of Being Earnest*].

I've mostly been on the stage, but it's been a real joy to figure out what goes into supporting those on stage and building a world around them — I've found it very rewarding.

P.C.: I will say that Amy is an absolute powerhouse. A whirlwind. She's brilliant, and her creative instincts are some of the best I've ever worked with; she's generous and hard-working, and I feel less nervous than I did at the beginning because of her.

I think the RRP was wise to appoint — anoint — her. She is like an angel — kind, patient, but not a Pollyanna.

A.D.: To comment on Pamela's directorship, what's really started to become clear in the process are Pamela's strengths and her background as a film director.

This being a screwball comedy, she gets into those minute details of physicality that really make the characters pop and come to life with humor and dynamism.

She's fine-tuning moments for connections and moments to make each individual character shine and bring humor and heart, even if it's a character who at first read is not all that enjoyable. She's found a way with each to really make the character sparkle.

A.L.: Pamela, your background is in film. What challenges did you face taking on



From left, Rock River Player Emmadora Boutcher, Shey Nessler, Eric Fischer, and Joel Kaemmerlen perform a scene from an Oct. 1 performance of "Harvey" at Williamsville Hall.

live theater?

P.C.: The majority of my lucrative work was as a screenwriter. As a storyteller, it is those tiny, tiny details that really sell everything.

As far as working in the theater: I came off the last film I directed wanting desperately to spend more time with actors [but with all the facets of a production to be tended to in community theater, such time was scarce].

It's like setting up a crazy independent machine that has to unfold organically, over and over — every time. In film, it's

smoke and mirrors [because so much is done with editing]. On stage, it's all them and I'm trying to make sure they have what they need to look great up there every time.

Theater is a temporal art form, and film is more like a sculpture — permanent. It's like music or dance: It's alive, and you don't want to beat the life out of a moment by nailing it down too hard.

The Rock River Players' "Harvey" runs Friday, Oct. 6 and Saturday, Oct. 7 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 8, at 2 p.m.

at the RRP's home venue of Williamsville Hall (fully accessible, 35 Dover Rd., in Williamsville).

Tickets can be purchased online in advance or at the door (cash only): \$12, or \$10 for students and seniors (65 and older).

Up next with the RRP will be David Mamet's biting drama *Glengarry Glen Ross* the second and third weekends of November, directed by RRP Co-artistic Director Bahman Mahdavi.

For tickets and more about the Players, visit rockriverplayers.org, or email info@rockriverplayers.org.

Heller

We see bodies and faces our whole life."

He then asked himself, "How can I transform it and transcend it? How can I do that creatively?"

"I also felt like when I saw some of these, they are surreal," he says, adding that he was drawing stick figures and paring things down, documenting them, and photographing them.

"I liked the photos and thought these could become other images," he says.

Heller was surprised by what he found.

"I started doing drawings from the photographs and looking at light and contrast and the images as well as the expressive aspects," he says.

"For example, using photography to bring me into some place by using a macro lens that you would normally not have your eye into. I enlarge my photos to 8x10," Heller says.

"Jasper Johns used to do

drawings of his paintings and explore the image in other mediums, as well."

"I was always drawn to some form or gestural abstraction but began to feel I wasn't doing anything new with it," he says. "Committing to these works was a challenge."

So he pushed himself, and the result is this show.

"I have always tried to put myself in unfamiliar situations," Heller says. "It is a good way to grow."

He remembered a quote he liked from the artist Lucien Freud, who, when asked about his endeavor, said "I'm only trying to do what I can't do."

An exploration of the figure

When asked if there are re-occurring themes in his work, Heller says, "I am not telling anyone anything."

"My theme is an exploration

of the figure and portraiture and what else it can be," the artist says. "I get to explore something that is down-to-earth for me."

He wants the work "to be experienced without alluding to something necessarily beyond the piece itself," he says. "The work should exist in the moment you are looking at it."

"Like much art they explore the human condition and a history of creating images through drawing and painting," he says. "I have always been drawn to how to make new pictures in new ways. That for me is at the creative core of making art."

He noted abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock, who said that "the artist no longer had to go outside themselves to make art. They could focus on the subconscious as the source of art."

That's one reason Heller has made art for four decades.

"Putting yourself in a position

are is what art is about," he says. "The idea that you can be more in those moments of creation is the fundamental reason I choose to make art."

Heller says he has "always been interested in the painted image — that is the different ways we can see things through how an artist chooses to depict them."

"But ultimately I want to craft an image that will hopefully be remembered," he says. "I hope to entertain and inspire people with my art. Art is made to inspire more art or creativity."

Richard Heller's "Paintings of Paintings," is dedicated to the memory of his parents, Alan and Madeline Heller and is on display through Oct. 31 at Gallery in the Woods, 145 Main St., Brattleboro. For information, visit galleryinthewoods.com or call 802-257-4777.

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Invite to a planetary-wide party

Vermont artist Fran Bull brings together archetypal characters using unconventional materials to show ‘creativity and her passion for all that humanity has to offer’

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—At Gallery Walk this Friday, Oct. 6, visitors will be greeted by a giant 8-foot-tall fluorescent-blue David Bowie sculpture displayed prominently in the window of Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts.

This sculpture, part of an installation “We’re at a Party Called Life on Earth,” is part of Fran Bull’s exhibit “The Art Life,” which includes sculptures, etchings, prints, and paintings on display until Sunday, Oct. 15.

“In this work, I bring together stock characters of commedia dell’arte, circus, carnival, literature, theater, and history—they are archetypal figures,” explains Bull on a recent afternoon at the gallery. “They come from my great love for the Roman busts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.”

Bull, 85, is an award-winning sculptor, painter, printmaker, performance artist, and poet. She moved to Vermont 24 years ago and works at her studio in Brandon, as well as at a studio in Barcelona, Spain.

Her art has been acquired by the Museum of Modern

Art in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Guilin Art Museum, the largest museum in southwest China.

Bull, who grew up in Montclair, New Jersey, says she already “had a rich life as an artist” for many years when she arrived at Bennington College.

There, she took some courses with Paul Feeley, who chaired the art department, but “by the time I got to Bennington College, I had decided to major in music. I love to sing opera and art songs,” she says.

Graduating in 1960, Bull continued voice studies in New York and got two more degrees: one in textile design, and a master’s degree from New York University in art and art education.

Themes ‘bubble to the surface’ with imperatives

“This sculpture, a homage to David Bowie—he was Everyman,” Bull says.

“I am saying: We are all Everyman, we are all one. That is the party to which we are all invited—a planetary-wide party that encompasses all of life,” she adds with a laugh.

She explains that the English singer-songwriter and musician

wore a costume like the one in her sculpture when he assumed the persona of Pierrot, the sad clown.

“He thought he was Everyman, so the show itself is very much about earth consciousness,” Bull says. “We are all one being on the planet. And so I’m using these diverse characters to make the point.”

She hopes her art will inspire and inform viewers about the urgency of global awareness, which she calls “unity consciousness.”

“If we don’t have global awareness and we don’t care for each and every one of us, and all the creatures, then we’re doomed,” she says.

Bull points to “And We Shall Live This Life,” a painting that includes an image of her grandmother’s house.

“In that one I’m evoking the spirit of my grandmother and the house that she wore,” says Bull, who remembers her grandmother as “nurturing, with her food, her cooking, her kindness.”

“The grandmother is one who dispenses unconditional love,” she says. “I frequently say she saved my life.”

Bull describes herself as “feeling very liberated that I could do something improvisational on the canvas and keep making it work. I wanted that sense of coming from the interior and moving to the subconscious.”

When asked how she decides what to paint, she observes that “at different times there are different themes. They bubble to the surface.”

And when they do, “they are imperatives,” telling her, “You must investigate this.”

“I work through series, and I’m calling this my novel,” Bull says.

When asked where her inspiration for a sculpture in this show, “Hallelujah Chorus,” came from, she says, “I created this in 2008. Two of my dogs are in it. There is my partner Robert. These characters are all singing. That’s the idea.”

Pointing to another painting, “Older Than Geography,” she identifies “a garment, a slip, and this one is a white dress in my mind, and that’s a dog.”

Bull uses gold paint and gold powders and India ink in her work, as well as many unusual materials. “In my other etchings, I painted on the copper plates with this gloppy stuff which is actually piña colada mix!”

She also uses Rustoleum, cotton mops for hair, Crayola model magic, wood, wire, Venetian plaster, and Styrofoam for her sculptures.

Of her etchings, she says, “They are not classical etchings, as they are not made from metal plates. These are made from plexiglass plates.”

“These accidents were the things I really liked when I threw paint at the canvas,” she says.

Asking big questions

“In the 1980s, I enjoyed New York gallery representation working within the Photorealist movement,” Bull says. “My art evolved away from this constrained, exacting way of working and veered in a more personal direction — I needed to tell other stories through art.”

She says she needed to address “other persistent questions.”

“Who are we human beings?”



Sculptor, painter and printmaker Fran Bull with some of her art from her exhibit “The Art Life,” on display at Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts through Oct. 15.

What is our purpose in the universe? Why have we made such a mess of things? What is art’s purpose—can it heal? Can art illuminate and thus transform?” she says.

In her “Season of Bones” series, the viewer will see skeletons in Italy who were captured in a tight embrace about 5,000 years ago. She wanted to know, “How did they get to be there?”

“I was very interested in the theme of the love that survives death. It’s from Wagnerian opera. Timeless love. This one is autumn, and this one is summer,” notes Bull, as she points to the series.

When asked how Vermont inspires her art, Bull says, “I wanted to get away from the city, so I came to Vermont and my partner built me a gallery/studio in Brandon. It’s just so beautiful every single day. To have that kind of light and space, is amazing!”

‘I am in love with this woman’s work’

“The first visit I made to Fran’s studio was an absolute mind blower for me,” says artist and show curator Petria (Petey) Mitchell, co-owner of Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts. She saw her work in a show five years ago, and “I instantly gravitated towards it,” she says.

“I am in love with this woman’s work because of her creativity and her passion for all that humanity has to offer—the good, the bad, and the ugly,” she adds.

“The completeness of each image by itself is what stands out,” Gallery co-owner, artist Jim Giddings, says. “They stand so strongly by themselves. It’s a testament to her professionalism. But when you put it together, it is the zinc plate prints and her ‘Suite: Sweet’ prints are like fine paintings.”

Bull sums it up.

“I invite viewers to meditate on this [show] as they regard the characters and scenarios before them,” she says, urging “viewers to regard our lives as guests at this party, which has been in progress since the beginning of life on Earth.”

“To notice the beauty all around, given freely to us, to live in wonder and respect and to celebrate the astounding privilege of having been born,” Bull says. “To understand as David Bowie did, that this life is both sad and glorious.”

Fran Bull’s “The Art Life” is on display until Sunday, Oct. 15 at Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 181–183 Main St., Brattleboro. For more information, visit mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com/franbull-the-art-life and franbull.com.

Harmony Collective hosts ‘Women in Punk’ exhibit by Rachel Eleanor Brown

BRATTLEBORO—“Women in Punk,” a collection of new work by Harmony Collective artist Rachel Eleanor Brown, opens Friday Oct. 6, from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Collective’s Elliot Street gallery during Gallery Walk. It will be on display for the month of October.

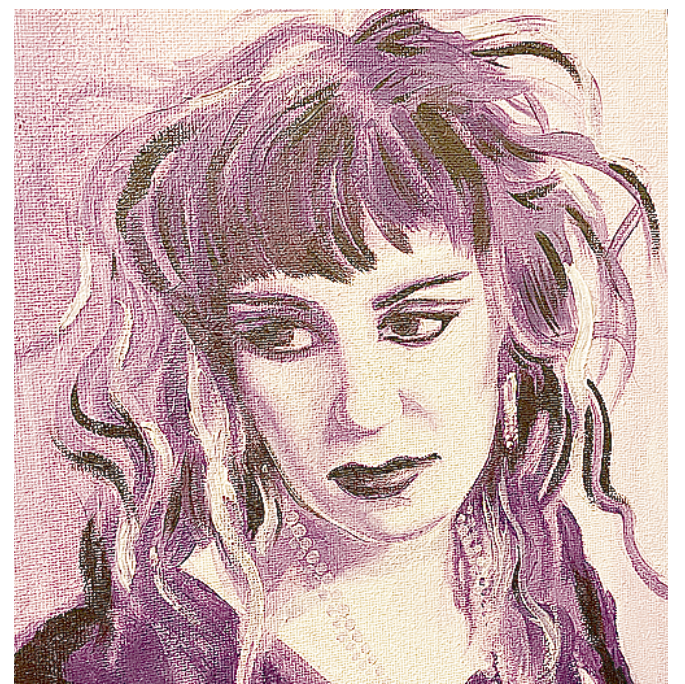
The aim of the show is to visually celebrate the role of women in punk rock during the 1970s and ‘80s.

“Punk rock is an attitude birthed by women who played with loud and aggressive honesty,” wrote the organizers of the exhibit in a news release. “Screaming with an unwavering belief in progress, and the will to fight for it, the female role in punk rock was the keystone of its culture.”

“A microcosm of feminism in a culture wrought with misogyny and racism, punk rock was never a unified subculture and experienced its divisions like every part of society. Even within a subculture where the misfits were meant to belong, women stood on their own.”

The exhibit is meant to interest every viewer, organizers say. “The attitude of these heroines transcends music and inhabits every person in society fighting for something better.”

The exhibit is hoped to serve as



“Exene” by Rachel Eleanor Brown.

remembrance, honor, and tribute to women in the punk world while inspiring viewers to want to hear and learn more about these feminist icons. “Through sound and vision, their voices reach those who are looking around at their world today; those who are listening, and those who are willing to raise a voice of their own.”

The show includes candid oil portraits, studded and painted leather jackets, multimedia collages, and “a killer soundtrack” on opening night.

Brown is a Brattleboro-based painter, tattooist, and writer.

After studying at Parsons/New School for Design in New York City, she pursued her apprenticeship in tattooing which led to opening Strange Brew Tattoo in 2011. Alongside tattooing, she has spent the last decade concentrating on watercolor illustrations that she says pull inspiration from traditional tattoo elements as well as oil portraiture of musical and historical influences.

For more information about the exhibit and the Harmony Collective, visit harmonyartsbrattleboro.com or call 802-490-3676.



Soggy Po' Boys

Bandwagon Summer Series presents Soggy Po' Boys at West River Park

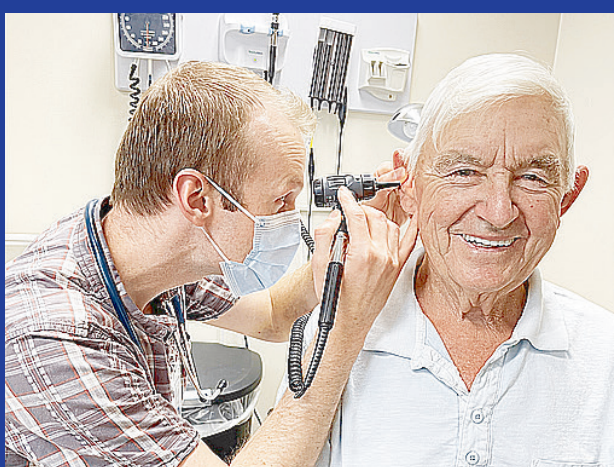
BRATTLEBORO—The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series and Twilight Music present an evening of music by the Soggy Po Boys, on Sunday, October 8 at 3 p.m. at West River Park, 333 West River Rd. (Route 30).

The Soggy Po Boys have “spread the good news of New Orleans music” across the northeast and beyond since 2012, according to their website. Stu Dias (vocals, guitar), Eric Klaxton (clarinet, soprano sax), Josh Gagnon (trombone), Nick Mainella (tenor sax), Mike Effenberger (piano), Brian Waterhouse (drums), and Scott Kiefner (bass) look beyond NOLA jazz to include traditional Caribbean tunes, Meters funk, soul, and brass band/street beat music.

Next Stage Production Director and Twilight Music’s Barry Stockwell notes in a news release that “the Soggy Po Boys lit up a full house at Next Stage on a cold, December Saturday night with the uplifting sounds and spirit of New Orleans. We’re thrilled to bring the party outdoors as part of the Bandwagon Summer Series.”

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, and kids 12 and under are admitted free. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar, and ice cream from Vermont Gelato will be available. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for outdoor seating on the softball field. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

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VIEWPOINT

We can break the car's cultural grip



The Marlboro Man in a 1968 television commercial.

YOUTUBE.COM/@OSBORNTAMAIN

Passenger vehicles are harmful to life, limb, and our planetary existence, but a world that's non-car-centric is unimaginable. Then again, 50 years ago, so was a world that frowned on smoking in public.

AT MIDNIGHT on Jan. 1, 1971, it became illegal under federal law for U.S. TV stations to air cigarette ads. At the time, roughly 38% of adults smoked, down from a high of 45% in 1954.

While it took until 2018 for most states to ban public smoking, there was a significant and steady decrease in smoking over those four decades.

Along the way was the 1964 Surgeon General's report on smoking and lung cancer, and in the 1990s came evidence linking secondhand smoke to chronic

illness and death.

Currently, 11% of adults in the U.S. smoke, down from 20% in 2005.

Smoking behavior changed, and public spaces became smoke-free when we agreed that smoking was harmful and that it was important to protect the public. The government stood up to the tobacco industry, publicizing the surgeon general's warning and requiring the warning on cigarette packaging.

Reports, laws, and public behavior each contributed in turn to a growing narrative, which in turn led more of us to decide

that public smoking was unfair. A butterfly flapping its wings may or may not change history, but a report showing tobacco smoke can be deadly helped shift culture.

WHAT IS CULTURE but an amalgam of laws, beliefs, desires, values, access, identity, alternatives, infrastructure, and financial interests? We are only beginning to collectively understand its force, and our own control over it. We have the power to determine how culture impacts us, and we are each a part of culture's force. Culture

■ SEE CULTURE CHANGE, D3

COLUMN | Power Corridor



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE/PUBLIC DOMAIN

Clarence Thomas (pictured here swearing in Sonny Perdue as secretary of agriculture in 2017) is under fire after investigations revealed the associate justice failed to disclose numerous financial entanglements with people who had cases before the court — or recuse himself from deliberating on those cases.

Can the Supreme Court decide to be ethical?

Public opinion of the court has never been glowing, but it's hit record lows this summer with revelations about unchecked and unaccountable justices accepting gifts and violating ethical norms

OVER THE SUMMER, the approval rating of the U.S. Supreme Court bottomed out at a record low of 40% in a nationwide Gallup poll, representing widespread dissatisfaction felt by many across America with its highest court.

The court's losing streak began in 2021 when it upheld a restrictive abortion law in Texas that culminated with the historic overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, as more than a dozen states imposed near-total bans on abortions.

Before that, from 2017 to mid-2021, Gallup reported the court's approval rating at 49% or higher. On average, its rating has stood at around 51% for the past 23 years, with a high of 62% in June 2001 and September 2000, the year Gallup began taking the poll.

The Supreme Court's dismal rating this summer followed controversial rulings to strike down affirmative action in university admissions, deny student loan debt



LEAH MCGRATH GOODMAN brings two decades of experience covering politics and money to Power Corridor (thedailyupside.com/power-corridor), a twice-a-week newsletter, where this piece was originally published. The newsletter is a product of The Daily Upside, a digital media company covering the world of business, finance, economics, and investing, where McGrath Goodman is lead editor and senior writer.

relief, and reverse a decision by a lower court to uphold Colorado's public accommodations law, which now allows some business owners to refuse service to same-sex couples.

Bottom line: Public opinion of the court has never been glowing.

Yet the Supreme Court's rating falling to its most enduring nadir this year

also stemmed from investigative journalists turning up evidence that a number of Supreme Court justices violated ethics rules by accepting unreported "gifts" from billionaires — many of whom are major donors to causes with business before the court.

AT THE TOP OF the list of offenders has been Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas — the longest-serving justice on the court — who has received millions of dollars of gifts from a tight-knit circle of right-wing billionaires who also happen to share the same conservative ideology that undergirds many of his Supreme Court decisions.

While the shoes just keep dropping on this story, the latest tally of gifts to Thomas came from such billionaires as Berkshire Hathaway's David Sokol, businessman H. Wayne Huizenga, and oil baron Paul Novelly. These individuals and others have showered Thomas with

■ SEE SUPREME COURT, D2

VIEWPOINT

Climate: code red

It's too late to fix an unraveling climate and its rising heat, which is already inflicting loss of property and life. It's time for municipalities like Brattleboro to set an example by treating the climate emergency as a climate emergency.

Athens

THE CURRENT STATE of the climate is in a "code red for humanity."

So stated the August 2021 report of the United Nation's authoritative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). As the U.N.'s secretary-general, António Guterres, noted, "The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable."

The only way we can avoid going beyond the internationally agreed threshold of 1.5 degrees C of global heating — which we are "perilously close" to exceeding — is by "stepping up our efforts, and pursuing the most ambitious path."

We are failing to engage in such a regimen.

Our president still refuses to declare a climate emergency — this, despite the worldwide killer heat waves, destructive flooding, tenacious fires, devastating droughts, and resulting food insecurity, thousands of climate refugees fleeing their homelands, not to mention his own admission as he left for Florida to inspect the destruction from Hurricane Idalia: "I don't think anybody can deny the impact of the climate crisis anymore, [which] has caused significant damage like we've never seen before."

A climate emergency declaration would allow the president to employ "the tools to lead a tectonic shift," according to Jean Su, director of the Center for Biological Diversity Energy Justice Program. As outlined by Common Dreams, the Center's report this past February detailed how Biden has the authority under the Defense

TIM STEVENSON, a community organizer with Post Oil Solutions, is author of Resilience and Resistance: Building Sustainable Communities for a Post Oil Age (*Green Writers Press*) and the recently published Transformative Activism: A Values Revolution in Everyday Life in a Time of Societal Collapse (*Apocryphile Press*). Contact him at bereal@vermontel.net.

Production Act, National Emergencies Act, and Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to:

- Halt crude oil exports.
- Stop oil and gas drilling in the outer continental shelf.
- Restrict international trade and private investment in fossil fuels.
- Grow domestic manufacturing for clean energy and transportation to speed the nationwide transition off fossil fuels.
- Build resilient and distributed renewable energy systems in climate-vulnerable communities.

BUT BIDEN IS not alone in needing to adjust to the present reality.

Climate activists, for example, need to turn the page from yesterday's worthy-but-limited practice of protest and demands on a petroleum industry and its political lackeys to seriously work toward a fossil-free society (something neither seems inclined to do),

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Supreme Court

FROM SECTION FRONT

approximately 38 destination vacations, 26 trips on private jets, eight trips by helicopter, a dozen VIP passes to various sporting events, overnight stays at pricey resorts both in the U.S. and overseas, and even a standing invitation to a private golf club.

If that was not startling enough, don't forget revelations earlier this year that Thomas also accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of gifts in the form of super-yacht cruises, private jet travel, and lavish vacations for decades, from conservative billionaire real estate magnate Harlan Crow (who also collects Nazi memorabilia and decorates his Texas home with statues of fallen despots, like Stalin and Mao — not at all troubling).

Many of these news stories have been broken by nonprofit news organization *ProPublica*, which further learned that Crow funded the private school tuition of Thomas's grand-nephew, reportedly running around \$6,000 a month.

It also discovered that Crow purchased the home of Thomas's mother, sinking tens of thousands of dollars into the property and paying Thomas and his relatives in an undisclosed, related real estate deal, representing what the publication called "the first known instance of money flowing from the Republican megadonor [Crow] to the Supreme Court

justice [Thomas]." As one White House ethics lawyer told *ProPublica*, "This is way outside the norm. This is way in excess of anything I've ever seen."

OTHER REPORTS followed, chronicling how another conservative Supreme Court justice, Samuel Alito, flew on the private jet of hedge fund billionaire Paul Singer as part of an Alaska vacation before he later ruled in Singer's favor in a Supreme Court case that reaped Singer's hedge fund \$2.4 billion.

And how one of the court's most liberal justices, Sonia Sotomayor, may have inappropriately used staff to push hundreds of thousands of dollars of sales of her books. Sotomayor has been criticized in the past for not recusing herself from cases involving her publisher, Penguin Random House, which, according to her financial disclosures, has paid her more than \$3 million.

Thomas defended his lack of reporting gifts and trips from Crow, saying he'd simply been accompanying close friends on "family trips" and that he had been "advised that this sort of personal hospitality from close personal friends [was] not reportable" to the Supreme Court.

Legal experts have largely disagreed that justices' failure to report gifts, trips, favors or deals that have financially benefited them is allowed under federal ethics guidelines.

Alito gave a lengthy response to the appearance of ethical breaches in an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal*, explaining that recusing himself from Singer's case "would not have been required or appropriate," emphasizing there was no corruption or undue influence.

Recently, more revelations cropped up about Thomas, showing that he also participated secretly in donor events for the highly conservative billionaire Koch brothers for at least a decade — even as the Koch donor network brought cases before the Supreme Court.

IN RESPONSE, Senate Democrats are calling for a Supreme Court ethics bill, and Republicans are blasting the press exposés of Thomas and Alito as an attack on the court's conservative majority. Meanwhile, media outlets are mostly toeing partisan lines, with conservative news

COLUMN

A is for 'absent'

So many good teachers, at all levels, who are leaving their chosen, and often undervalued, profession, for numerous valid reasons

HER NAME WAS Shirley Myers, and she was a gift in my life when I needed one.

I was in middle school and a loner, unlike most kids that age, because my mother suffered from depression and was hospitalized for long stretches.

Ms. Myers was a calm teacher and a gentle soul and, somehow, I started going to her classroom after school to talk with her. It was quietly comforting to be with her, and we formed a bond that got me through those lonely times.

She wasn't my only good teacher. In high school, Desmond Jones, who scared everyone with his high standards and grim demeanor, taught me how to consider literature carefully and to write cogently about it in his English class.

Vivienne Davenport gave me my love of language with her *Word for the Day*. They were delicious words, like *obsequious*, *sartorial*, *serendipity*, and *ubiquitous*. For each day's word, we were required to learn its definition and to include it in a sentence. I think about her each time I use one of her many fine words.

Doc Martin, slightly disheveled and occasionally distracted, got me through Latin; later, Spanish helped me become bilingual until I forgot how to conjugate. In college, I had fine teachers who taught me about literature, art, religion, psychology, sociology, and other subjects that interested me.

And in graduate school, I learned to do professional research, explore interdisciplinary methodologies in my chosen field, write for publication, and have confidence in my abilities. My advisor during that time is still a close friend.

Later, I became a teacher myself. I taught at high-end colleges and at universities and at community colleges, and I now teach in adult learning programs, because I love teaching, no matter where I do it.

I know the joy of watching motivated



ELAYNE CLIFT
(elayne-clift.com) has written about women, politics, and social issues from the earliest days of this newspaper.

students consider issues they've never contemplated, the pleasure of seeing their thinking and writing skills grow, their openness to new ideas, their new sense of confidence.

So I am deeply saddened by and worried by the loss of so many good teachers, at all levels, who are leaving their chosen, and often undervalued, profession.

They are quitting for numerous valid reasons. They work under poor conditions, and they suffer high stress, heavy workloads, and burnout, as well as insulting salaries and a lack of administrative support.

And now, more than 60% of them fear mass shootings at their schools, according to a 2018 survey conducted by the National Education Association (NEA) and reported by CNN earlier this year.

CNN also reported that "one in three teachers say they are likely to quit and find another job in the next two years, according to a recent survey by the EdWeek Research Center and Merrimack College."

Briana Takhtani, a teacher who resigned and spoke to CNN, said she quit her "dream job" because of the pandemic and school shootings. "It just became too much for me to handle on a day-to-day basis and still feel sane," she said.

Her statement is reflective of those made by numerous other teachers.

THE LOSS OF qualified teachers is alarming in many ways.

Some schools have had to cancel core classes, while others are hiring people who lack professional teaching qualifications and, in some cases, who don't even have

a basic college degree. The impact is especially dramatic for children who need special education or bilingual teachers, as well as those who live in rural areas.

One superintendent in Alabama, Christopher Blair, told the Associated Press at the start of the 2022 school year that "it really impacts the children because they're not learning what they need to learn."

"When you have these uncertified, emergency or inexperienced teachers, students are in classrooms where they're not going to get the level of rigor and classroom experiences," Blair said.

In other words, a generation of children are not being prepared adequately for what lies ahead for them — not only professionally, but intellectually, culturally, and psycho-socially.

AS A STORY IN *The Atlantic* revealed recently, "The education system is headed toward a cliff at a moment when it most needs to help students who fell behind during the pandemic."

The magazine reported that, "for nearly a decade, America's students have been backsliding on the nation's report card, which evaluates their command of math, science, U.S. history and reading."

That's a sobering reality. It makes me grieve for all the children who will never have a Shirley Myers, a Desmond Jones, a Vivienne Davenport, or a Doc Martin in their academic lives and will never experience the difference they make. Teachers like those I was gifted with understood that as a Tibetan proverb says, "A child without education is like a bird without wings."

I am ever grateful for having been educated in a time when they represented the finest members of the teaching profession, and I fervently hope that children will fly again once the reasons for our educational crisis are adequately resolved.

organizations vehemently defending the conservative justices and more-progressive media lambasting them for flouting federal ethics standards.

A number of conservative online news organizations have argued that the disclosures of Thomas's and Alito's apparent ethics violations and conflicts of interest amount to "leftist attacks," hair splitting over ethics rules, and even "fake news."

Conservative media also made the argument that, as Brietbart put it, "no Supreme Court justice in modern history has suffered as many years of vicious personal attacks as Thomas, who is the only black justice on the court, who was raised in poverty, but yet rejects the left's insistence that the Constitution must be interpreted in a manner to empower government to compensate for

the failings of history related to race."

More than 100 former clerks of Thomas signed an open letter insisting his integrity is "unimpeachable" and stating his "independence is unshakable," characterizing reports about his taking millions of dollars of gifts as a "malicious" affront to his ethics and character.

On social media, multiple commenters have opined that the media was wrong to attack justices' "social life" for including like-minded, wealthy, and successful friends, pointing out that it cannot be proven Thomas or Alito ruled in accordance with their benefactors' beliefs and not their own, when it is possible they also hold the same beliefs.

Among the more-liberal media, Thomas was roundly portrayed as a villain for taking

gifts and accepting financial favors without reporting them.

On Twitter, Joyce Vance, a law professor at the University of Alabama and a legal analyst for NBC and MSNBC, wrote, "The whole point of disclosing conflicts and recusing is to maintain public confidence in key democratic institutions, like the court. It's clear that the integrity of the branch of government he serves in is not important to Justice Thomas."

WHILE MUCH OF the response to justices' lack of disclosure — to their own enrichment — has been predictably partisan, the impact of news coverage on Thomas's reputation in particular has been noteworthy — not just because the Supreme Court's public approval rating has plummeted to its lowest level on record, but because views on Thomas have specifically shifted to not become more negative, but more polarized.

Interestingly, the largely negative headlines caused conservatives to hold a more positive view of the justice, with a 67% favorable rating, according to Gallup, while 76% of liberals reported a more-unfavorable view of Thomas.

The poll highlights how Americans remain at far ends of the spectrum on issues surrounding the ethical behavior of Supreme Court justices, especially relative to their rulings, across the political minefield.

Controversy has stalked the Supreme Court since its inception more than 200 years ago, but its ethical issues do not rest solely on conservative or liberal justices' behavior, says Gabe Roth, executive director of New York nonpartisan watchdog group Fix the Court. Instead, he says, it is a "global" conundrum.

According to research by Fix the Court, "While none of the justices has committed a removal offense, all nine of them are culpable of various ethical oversights, from leaving assets

off their annual financial disclosure reports, to speaking at partisan fundraisers, to ruling on cases despite credible conflicts of interest."

The nine justices of the Supreme Court are the only federal judges not bound by the code of conduct for U.S. judges, the group says. The code goes beyond the basic ethics laws enacted after the Watergate scandal to govern recusals, as well as justices' political activities.

Although the justices could "easily and formally adopt the code tomorrow if they so choose," says Fix the Court, "legal scholars believe that since Congress can legislate institutional changes to the high court, it may use its statutory authority to compel acceptance of the code."

Says Roth, "The ethics issue is not Clarence Thomas flew on a private plane and vacationed in a yacht. The ethics problems at the Supreme Court are clearly much greater than those events with that one justice."

Sheldon Whitehouse, Democratic Senator from Rhode Island and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Courts Subcommittee, wrote a letter to Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts this month about the lack of a formal process for receiving or investigating ethics complaints.

In it, Whitehouse took the justices to task for their inaction on what appears to be serious and repeated ethical breaches.

"As you have repeatedly emphasized, the Supreme Court should not be helpless when it comes to policing its own members' ethical obligations," Whitehouse wrote to Roberts. "But it is necessarily helpless if there is no process of fair fact-finding, nor independent decision-making."

"I request that you as chief justice, or through the judicial conference, take whatever steps are necessary to investigate this affair and provide the public with prompt and trustworthy answers."

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The World Fusion Show - Ep# 162 - Taproots: Mon 12:30p, Tues 9:15p, Wed 9a, Thurs 12:30p, Fri 7:30a & 12:30p, Sat 2p, Sun 9:30p	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 9/21/23: Mon 6p, Tues 7:15a, Wed 12p
1st Wednesdays Presents - The Joy of Lex with the Co-Host of "A Way with Words": Wed 7p (LIVE)	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 10/2/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
Thorn in My Side - FITNESS! November 17 th , 2022: Mon 10a, Tues 8p, Wed 3:30p, Fri 1p, Sat 8p, Sun 12:30p	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 10/2/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p
Windham County Genealogy Interest Group - What is a Reasonably Exhaustive Genealogy Research? Mon 6:15a, Tues 9:45a, Wed 8:30p, Thurs 4:15p, Fri 10a, Sat 5p, Sun 6p	River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 10/2/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
Groundworks Collaborative - Empty Works 2023: Mon 7:55a, Tues 11:25a & 1:40p, Wed 5:55p, Thurs 5:55p, Sat 10:10a & 2:55p, Sun 7:40p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 10/3/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
Stories By Tego - Behind the Pie - Dummerston Apple Pie Fest: Mon 11:15a, Tues 3:45p, Wed 11:25a, Thurs 1:55p, Fri 2:10p, Sat 9:10p, Sun 6a	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 10/4/23: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Around Town with Maria - Indigenous Peoples Day 2021: Mon 2:45p, Tues 5a, Thurs 2:30p, Fri 2:45p, Sat 10:15a, Sun 7:45p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 10/4/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
Brattleboro Words Project - Words on Water - Stories of Wantastegok, the West River and Abenaki Presence: Mon 1p, Thurs 9a, Fri 6a, Sat 2:30p, Sun 9:30a	VT Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel Mtg. 9/18/23: Mon 9a, Tues 11:45a, Wed 9:15a
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg. 9/25/23: Mon 2p, Sat 11a, Sun 6p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 9/25/23: Mon 3p, Sat 9:15p
News Block: WTSR News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p, Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	Cuiford Selectboard Mtg. 9/25/23: Mon 11:45a, Tues 10a, Thurs 11:15a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 9/26/23: Tues 6a, Fri 4:45p, Sun 8:55p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 9/26/23: Mon 6a, Sun 7p
Cuiford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Town Matters - Weekly Episode: Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

Note: Schedule subject to change.

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Culture change

FROM SECTION FRONT

is more than us, and it is also us.

Smoking has been compared to other public health issues, including cars and climate change. Where exposure to public smoke threatens individual health, the impact of carbon dioxide is global and all-encompassing.

Where the tobacco industry spent billions on advertising and lobbying, withholding and denying information about the harms of smoking and opposing industry regulations, the fossil fuel industry engages in the same tactics of perception management.

Interestingly, the fossil fuel and tobacco industries share membership in the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), known for helping state and local lawmakers write bills with industry-favoring agendas.

ALEC has been behind legislation that rolls back emissions standards, blocks the ability of the EPA to reduce carbon emissions, and blacklists companies that try to boycott the oil industry.

What smoking culture used to be, the car culture is now: a public health crisis. And yet, it might seem impossible to imagine a world that is not car-dependent.

CARS DEFINE OUR infrastructure; they dictate how we get around; it feels like we can't live without them, and it feels like we don't want to give them up — beliefs that industries (fossil fuel, tire, and car) are all too eager to confirm.

Many of us love our cars, or at least appreciate what they do for us. We feel that they offer us protection, identity, mobility, freedom. We like the way they look and the way they feel; we like being able to go fast.

So it is hard to think about the harm cars can cause.

Crashes cause 1.3 million deaths and 50 million injuries per year globally. Nearly half are pedestrians and cyclists,

especially children.

Car-filled roads mean there is less room for buses, trains, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Urban air pollution, much of it from tailpipes, causes more than a million deaths globally each year. Traffic noise leads to poor sleep and high blood pressure. Busy streets divide neighborhoods.

And our cars' contributions to climate change may be the biggest health impact of all.

THE ALTERNATIVE to a car-centric system can be called "active transportation," because walking, biking and rolling — even if it is to a bus or train — give us the opportunity to be physically active while we get where we want to go.

People who use active transportation have decreased cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, some cancers, and depression compared to those who rely on cars. Our lack of good transportation in this country is a missed health opportunity.

What holds the car at the center of our lives is culture. Culture is so powerful, it makes it hard for us to see any alternative to the single-occupancy vehicle: We simply cannot imagine a different world.

Then again, smokers were once entitled to smoke anywhere, supported by the power of the industry and its influence on media through advertising, retail through sales, agriculture through federal subsidies of tobacco — even the government through tax income.

If you are old enough, you probably remember the ubiquity of cigarette smoke and the way it lingered everywhere — airplanes, hospitals, restaurants. If you are too young to remember, it may be hard for you to imagine such a world.

I believe that in the not-too-distant future we will look back with the same disbelief that we let cars limit us so much.

Climate emergency

to also addressing the reality about which environmentalist and scholar Bill McKibben succinctly articulated.

"It's too late to stop global warming, that's no longer on the menu [and] even if we do everything right at this point, the temperature will go up," he said in a 2018 interview.

"The main question is whether we'll be able to hold the rise in temperature to a point where we can, at great expense and suffering, deal with those crises coherently, or whether they will overwhelm the coping abilities of our civilization," McKibben continued. "The latter is a distinct possibility."

WE CANNOT MITIGATE an unraveling climate and its principal agent — rising heat — that is already inflicting on our society enormous property damage and loss of life, human and non-human alike.

We need, instead, to be organizing people in their neighborhoods, communities, and towns to help them be citizens who are better prepared and more self-sufficient, resilient, and adaptive so they can take care of themselves and one another — to "deal with those crises coherently" — in the face of that which cannot be avoided because "even if we do everything right at this point, the temperature will go up."

Municipalities — especially sizable ones like Brattleboro which exercise an influence beyond their borders — need to step up to the plate, not only in the interests of their own citizens, but also for the example they can set for other towns.

Separate efforts in 2019 to convince the Selectboard to declare a climate emergency — through a youth-initiated effort by the activist group Brattleboro Common Sense, as well as in meetings by yours

truly with the former town manager and the energy coordinator — were summarily dismissed.

In the language of the Common Sense youth, it's time for "today's town leaders to formally acknowledge the truth of the emergency," and by so doing, as then-presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders declared, encouraging people to look at the climate crisis as if it were "a devastating military attack against the United States and the entire planet."

IN ADDITION to putting the town departments on a "war footing," so to speak, the Selectboard could also give their blessings to their fine climate coordinator to organize community conversations and forums, media education, and neighborhood mutual aid groups that engage town residents around becoming prepared for emergency.

FROM SECTION FRONT

Doing so would help empower a citizenry, many of whom currently feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the unprecedented crisis, by involving them in discussions and actions that would address their need to be more resilient, adaptive, and better prepared before the next disastrous event occurs — not simply reactive to it afterward.

Officially declaring our climate emergency is essential to becoming climate-relevant people, creatively and presciently acting on our lives rather than allowing them to be simply acted upon.

While not easy, accepting the truth of our situation liberates us from the incapacitating denial many of us find ourselves stuck in today, allowing the best of us to emerge to deal with what we already know in our hearts to be true — declaration or not.

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

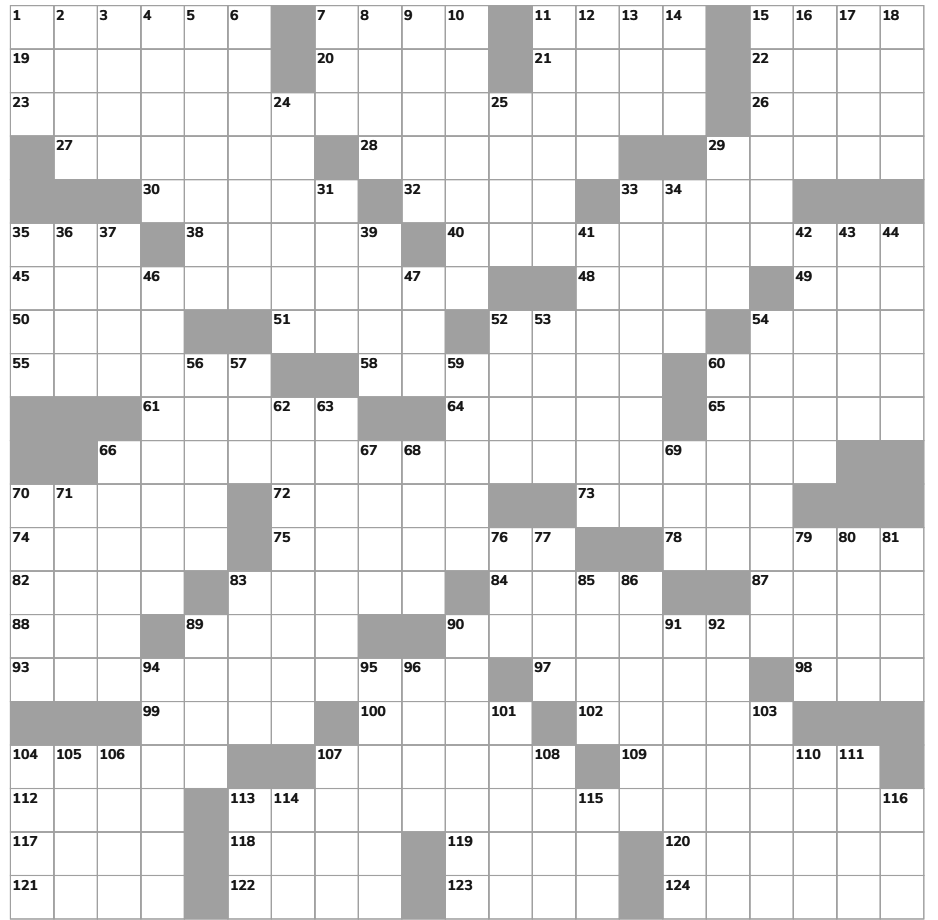
"Breaking Bread"

Across

- Cruelty
- Sleeveless top, in brief
- Rae of "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"
- Air kiss sound
- Pub quiz fare
- Arse
- See 108-Down
- "Here goes nothing" hashtag
- Keeping a loaf of pumpernickel hidden away?
- Irish __ bread
- "A Wrinkle in Time" author
- Drag to the Trash
- Spiral
- Buttonholes, e.g.
- "That's great!"
- And others: Abbr. "___ all good"
- Amazon's milieu
- Renown of braided bread?
- Greek bakeries?
- Westwood sch.
- Line below a subtotal
- Shakespeare's river
- Sectional, e.g.
- Fable lesson
- Beat but good
- Wooden rods
- Proven mathematical truth
- "That should do it"
- ^
- Yogurt-based drink
- Of the kidneys
- Dish out some shade with Ethiopian bread?
- Where 48-Across is, informally
- Matzo meal?
- Nary a soul
- Ease up
- Important date for a home buyer
- Birthplace of Polish Solidarity
- "And here it is!"
- Change
- Top-notch
- Pouty face
- Friend, in France
- River through Florence
- Utterly eradicate onion rolls?
- Stories of South Asian flatbread?
- Record half
- Possesses
- Singer Rexha
- Video file format
- Plumbing or security problems
- Sucky item?
- Decorous
- Basic gymnastics move
- Fertile soil
- "Oh yeah? Then it's going to be Italian bread for us!?"
- Airing
- Surrounded by
- Son of Aphrodite
- Take to the skies
- More than just tear up
- City of SW Arizona
- Blood bank fluids
- Got dark outside?

Down

- Ave. crossers
- __ Sea (former Asian lake)
- Make a splashy entrance?
- Political columnist Molly
- Tennis without a partner
- Portable illumination brand
- EMT's skill
- Desert-like
- Whiz
- Type of stress?
- Drink that may be sweetened
- Foal's father
- Farm enclosure
- Apt anagram of "yea"
- "I don't know about the rest of you, but..."
- Fleece
- Germany-based grocery chain
- Woodwink
- Corolla parts
- Apple sector
- LOL alternative
- Farm structure
- "Breaking Bad" sequel film
- Opposite of short
- Common point-of-sale device
- Record on DVR
- Put away
- Checked out
- Successfully tempts
- Odysseus's protector
- Governor Healey
- Cast out
- Personal observation, as opposed to scientific research
- Cheering syllable
- Ring of protection
- "Ish"
- Question upon regaining consciousness
- Bowl/spoon hybrid
- __ Lanka
- Nickname for Mexico's men's national soccer team
- Fashion
- Securely establish
- Posthumous Tony winner for "Cats"



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GOT AN OPINION?

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



Got something on your mind? Send contributions to our Letters to 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.

PETER HAVENS



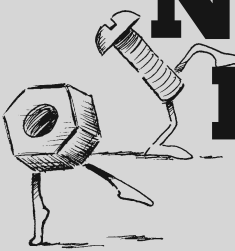
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COLUMN | *Sports Roundup*

Slaters stop Terriers, 27-20, in a battle of Division II's two top football teams

The two top teams in Division II football in Vermont faced each other at Hadley Field on Sept. 30, and fans were treated to a game that was not decided until the final seconds.

Fair Haven edged Bellows Falls, 27-20, in the Saturday matinee that likely will serve as a preview of the state title game in Rutland on Nov. 11. The Slaters and Terriers are evenly matched; very little separates these two teams.

"It was anybody's game," said BF coach Bob Lockerby. "We just ran out of time and didn't have as many points as they did. Play another quarter, maybe we win this game. My kids would enjoy to play them again. We're hoping we'll get to do that."

The Slaters opened the game with a long drive that ended with a 14-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Joe Buxton to wide receiver Trey Lee. The point-after kick failed, and Fair Haven had a 6-0 lead with 6:43 left in the first quarter.

BF then immediately tied the game as Walker James returned the ensuing kickoff 75 yards for a touchdown. A missed point-after kick left it a 6-6 game with 6:32 to go in the first.

Fair Haven was driving for another score on its next possession, but BF defensive back Blake Bertrand intercepted a Buxton pass with 2:51 left in the first quarter and set up the Terriers for a 13-play, 70-yard scoring drive capped off by a 12-yard TD pass from quarterback Cole Moore to Bertrand, who also plays at running back for the offense. Colby Dearborn's point-after kick was good, and BF led 13-6 with 8:26 left in the second quarter.

The Slaters then came right back with Lee as the catalyst. A good kick-off return by Lee set Fair Haven up at midfield. A few plays later, Lee reeled in a long throw by Buxton for a 40-yard catch. Running back Billy Lussier finished the scoring drive with a 3-yard run. A second missed point-after left BF in front, 13-12, with 6:11 left in the quarter.

Lee made his presence felt on defense as well. He intercepted a Moore pass to give the Slaters the ball on the BF 34-yard line with 1:58 left in the first half. Buxton did the rest as he connected with tight end Phil Bean on a screen pass for a 37-yard touchdown, then ran in the two-point conversion to give the Slaters a 20-13 halftime lead.

BF's first possession of the second half ended with Lee once again making a play, recovering a Moore fumble with 9:14 left in the third quarter. The Terriers then got the ball back when James picked off a Buxton pass near midfield with 4:52 left. This time, BF got to the end zone with a 39-yard pass from Moore to Bertrand to tie the game, 20-20, with 3:08 left.

The teams battled it out in the fourth quarter, but Fair Haven broke the deadlock on its final drive. It started with a 31-yard pass from Buxton to Sam Kyhill and ended with that man again, Mister Lee, who snagged a perfectly placed pass from Buxton in the right corner of the end zone for a 21-yard touchdown with 40.3 seconds to play.

However, BF had one last chance to force an overtime. James ran back the kickoff 40 yards, and a 15-yard penalty on the play by the Slaters put the ball on the Fair Haven 43. An 18-yard reception by James made it first-and-10 for the Terriers from the Fair Haven 18 with 16 seconds to play, but Slater defensive back Konner Savage ended the comeback hopes with an interception in the end zone with 7.9 seconds left.

This was a sweet win for Buxton, Lee, and the other seniors on the Slaters squad. None of them had experienced what it was like to beat the Terriers, and to do it at Hadley Field and spoil BF's homecoming weekend made it even sweeter.

The only two losses for the 3-2 Terriers this season have come at the hands of two undefeated teams, Hartford and Fair Haven. BF will host Brattleboro this Friday night at 7 for its



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.

final home game of the regular season.

Hurricanes blow down Bears

- The Hartford Hurricanes remain the only unbeaten team in Division I with a 21-0 win over Brattleboro in the Bears' homecoming game on Sept. 29 at a soggy Natowich Field.

Brattleboro put up more of a fight than they did the previous week in their 42-6 loss to Keene, but Hartford's powerful running attack eventually found a way into the end zone.

Quarterback Brayden Trombley scored on a 20-yard run for a 7-0 lead with 4:07 left in the first quarter. In the second quarter, Trombley connected with Austin St. Peter on a 40-yard pass play to set up another 20-yard touchdown run, this time by Brody Tyburski. The point-after kick was blocked to make it 13-0 with 6:37 left in the quarter.

The Bears' offense struggled as turnovers and penalties derailed promising scoring drives. Still, they trailed the Hurricanes 13-0 at halftime and had a chance to pull off an upset.

Unfortunately, Hartford had the first possession of the third quarter and went on a long, clock-eating drive that culminated in a 26-yard touchdown pass from Trombley to Nick Daniels. A two-point conversion run was successful, and Hartford had a 21-0 lead with 6:15 left in the third.

Brattleboro's defense did well to hold the Hurricanes to three touchdowns. But the Bears' offense sputtered in the second half with more penalties and turnovers foiling their chances to score. Hartford improved

to 5-0 and remains the top team in Division I. The Bears fell to 1-3-1.

Girls' soccer

- When Bellows Falls played a scrimmage against Brattleboro in late August, the Bears rolled to a 10-0 win. When the two teams met again on Sept. 27 at Natowich Field, the Bears blanked the Terriers, 5-0.

But as far as BF coach Holly King and her team was concerned, it was a better-than-expected result that was worth celebrating. "Brattleboro is a better-skilled team than we are, but I think our defense frustrated them," she said. "It was a real unified effort tonight."

Bears co-coach Ron Svec agreed. "They took us off the ball and made it difficult for us," he said. "Bellows Falls looks so much better now."

Brattleboro did struggle to get goals, but got them nonetheless. Kaitlyn Pattison got the Bears' first tally in the 16th minute. Sadie Cheslawski followed with another goal in the 25th minute, and Cynthia Velasquez got her first goal of the season in the 27th minute for a 3-0 lead at intermission.

In the second half, Zadié Olmstead scored in the 51st minute, and Cheslawski got her second goal of the game in the 70th minute to close out the Bears' scoring. Goalkeeper Abigail Henry did get challenged several times, but still came away with the shutout win.

The Bears lost to Mount Anthony, 3-1, on Sept. 30 to finish the week at 4-2-1. Bellows Falls lost to Windsor, 10-1, on Sept. 29 to fall to 1-5 on the season.

- Leland & Gray topped Springfield, 2-0, on Sept. 26 in Townshend. On Sept. 29, they traveled to Randolph and played the Galloping Ghosts to a 4-4 tie to end the week at 6-2-1.

- Twin Valley got shut out by Poultnery, 4-0, to fall to 0-8 on the season.

Boys' soccer

- Brattleboro had a pair of wins last week. The Bears journeyed to Claremont, New Hampshire, to take



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Bellows Falls running back Walker James (22) returned a kickoff for a 75-yard touchdown and intercepted a pass on defense to set up another touchdown in the Terriers' 27-20 loss to Fair Haven on Sept. 30 at Hadley Field.

on the Stevens Cardinals on Sept. 27 and came away with a 2-0 victory. Ozzie VanHendrick and Emmett Hoyer were the Bears' goal scorers.

The Bears then defeated Hartford, 2-1, in the Sept. 30 homecoming game that ended up getting played at Fort Dummer Field due to unplayable conditions at Natowich Field after the football game the night before. The Bears improved to 5-1-1.

- Leland & Gray played Springfield to a 2-2 overtime draw on Sept. 27 in Townshend. The game was tied 1-1 at the half as Springfield's Clayton Rousse scored in the 15th minute and Finch Holmes got the equalizer for the Rebels.

In the second half, Springfield's Mateo Fuentes converted on a penalty kick, but the Rebels forced overtime after midfielder Paul Persson scored with 13 minutes left in regulation. The Rebels are now 2-3-1.

- Twin Valley beat Springfield, 5-2, on Sept. 23 and shut out Green Mountain, 6-0, at Hayford Field on Sept. 27 to stay undefeated with a 7-0 record.

In the Springfield game, Cody Magnant scored four goals. Steve Oyer also scored as the Wildcats outshot the Cosmos, 18-3. Against GM, Magnant scored five goals and assisted on another.

Field hockey

- Bellows Falls continued their home-and-home series against Rutland and Hartford, with a 6-1 win over Rutland on Sept. 25 and a 2-1 overtime loss to Hartford on Sept. 26 in Westminster to finish the week with a 4-2 record.

Coming off an overtime loss at home to BF on Sept. 21, Hartford wanted revenge and got it when Sam Brower scored the game-winning goal with 1:08 left in overtime in the Sept. 26 rematch.

Both of the goals scored in regulation time came in the third quarter. Brower scored midway through the third, but BF's Emma Bazin got the equalizer with 35 seconds left in the third quarter. Both goalies — BF's Livie Clough and Hartford's Paige Vielleux — played well as Clough made 14 saves and Vielleux made nine saves.

- Brattleboro is on a two-game unbeaten streak. It began with a 1-0 win over Fair Haven on Sept. 23 and continued with a 2-0 win at Springfield on Sept. 28. A scheduled game on Sept. 30 with Otter Valley was postponed, and left the Bears with a 3-4 record to finish the week.

In the Springfield game, defender Emily LaClair got her first varsity goal off a "scoop-and-score" play in the final minute. Emma Gragen scored in the first half, and Mallory Newton played an excellent game in goal in relief of starting goalie Ericka Fletcher, who left the game with an illness in the first quarter.

Rotary Club of Deerfield Valley plans Winter Sports Sale

- As the winter season approaches, the Rotary Club of Deerfield Valley is bringing back its Winter Sports Sale, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 28, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Sundance Base Lodge at Mount Snow.

This sale is an opportunity for individuals and families to pick up reasonably priced winter sports equipment while supporting the Rotary Club of Deerfield Valley's charitable initiatives.

The club is calling upon the local community to donate their winter sporting gear and equipment for the sale. Donations of gear (no helmets or clothing, please) can be dropped off at the Sundance Base Lodge on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 7 and 8, between 8 and 10 a.m.

Senior bowling roundup

- Week 4 of the fall/winter season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Sept. 28 saw Stepping Stones (17-3) take sole possession of first place with a 5-0 week. Hairiers (16-4) had a 4-1 week and slipped into second place, followed by Skippers (13-7), Four Seasons (12-8), Four Pins and No Splits (both 10-10), High Rollers (8-12), Dumblebor (7-13), and PEWJ (2-18).

Carol Gloski had the women's high handicap game (244) and series (641). Robert Rigby had the men's high handicap game (280), while Skip Shine had the high handicap series (717). Stepping Stones had the high team handicap game (893) and series (2,520).

Rigby once again had the men's high scratch series (708) that featured games of 238 and 245. Skip Shine had a 594 series with games of 232 and 217, while Gary Montgomery had a 532 series with a 190 game, and Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 529 series with a 193 game. Chuck Adams had a 504 series, and Milt Sherman had a 502 series.

Gloski had the women's high scratch series (510) and game (198). She also had a 165 game.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Brattleboro midfielder Cynthia Velasquez (16) takes the ball past Bellows Falls' defender Abby Nystrom (7) on the way to scoring her first varsity goal in the first half of their girls' soccer game on Sept. 27 at Natowich Field.

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