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



CAROL MCMANUS/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

From the mezzanine of the Brooks Memorial Library, a contingent of Brattleboro firefighters listen to speakers at a public hearing about the future of EMS in the town. The Selectboard is scheduled to take a vote on whether the town will go with a fire-based EMS model at the board's meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 19.

Brattleboro employees support municipal fire-based EMS model

Public forum to discuss future of EMS sees surprise recommendation by 11 town staffers

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO— Out of the gate at the Sept. 12 public forum at Brooks Memorial Library, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland surprised some by recommending the Selectboard choose a fire-based EMS service for the town — a move supported by the 10 other town staff members present, each speaking in favor of it. “I believe we have a fantastic opportunity in the municipal



CAROL MCMANUS/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Brattleboro Fire Chief Len Howard speaks on the EMS issue. Looking on, left to right, are Human Resources Director Sally Cruz Nix and Recreation and Parks Director Carol Lolatte.

model,” Moreland said. He continued to note that after reviewing the Request for Proposal (RFP) responses from American Medical Response (AMR) of Springfield,

Massachusetts, and locally based Rescue, Inc., plus follow-up discussion, he thinks the only viable options are the municipal model (fire-based EMS) and

He called AMR “not the right model for Brattleboro,” saying the town needs three available ambulances while that company’s proposal includes just one. ■ SEE EMS, A4

Funding in place to move families living in danger of flooding

\$6 million from federal and state sources will fund flood resiliency projects in 2020 Tri-Park master plan

By Ellen Pratt
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—With the final piece of financing approved on Sept. 11 by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Tri-Park Cooperative Housing Corporation, which owns three Brattleboro mobile home parks — Mountain Home Park, Glen Park, and Black Mountain Park — is set to implement flood resiliency projects outlined in its 2020 Master Plan.

The majority of the \$6 million in federal and state grant funds assembled for the project will be used for a voluntary buyback program to relocate 26 Mountain Home Park households out of the flood plain of the Halladay and Whetstone brooks, which run through the park.

Twenty-two of the homes are located in the FEMA-designated floodway, the flood hazard area where the risk is greatest. The new homes will be sited in the

■ SEE TRI-PARK MASTER PLAN, A5

Lawsuit seeks to prevent pharmacy from closing

Current owners announce closure of Greater Falls Pharmacy as previous owners ask for injunction to keep the business operating

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—In the latest legal confrontation in a long string of civil claims and counterclaims surrounding one of the last independent pharmacies in the area, the former owners of Greater Falls Pharmacy are seeking judicial intervention to keep the current owners from

closing the business.

On Sept. 8, Michelle and Donald Laurendeau, who have operated the pharmacy since 2018, announced on the pharmacy Facebook page that, “due to the changing pharmacy environment and the impact these changes have had on our business,” the Atkinson Street pharmacy would be closing on Friday. ■ SEE PHARMACY CLOSING?, A6

COLUMN | Reporter's Notebook

No easy solutions

Homelessness in Brattleboro is a multifaceted issue. It requires a multifaceted response.

THE UNEMPLOYED, the unhoused, the people with mental health problems, the panhandlers, the drug users, the dealers, the travelers, the thieves — it is hard to tell the players on the street without a scorecard. When I first thought about writing about homelessness in Brattleboro, I lumped all of the above together because homelessness has become an all-encompassing word. Yet it

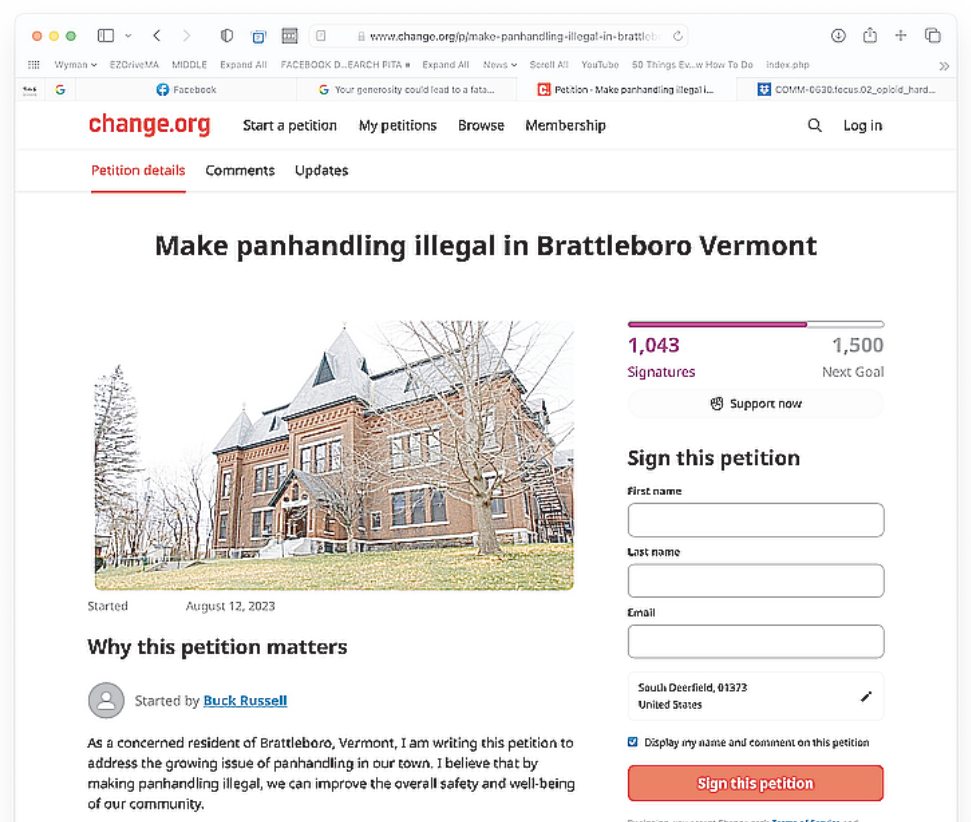
JOYCE MARCEL, a longtime contributor to The Commons, has been covering state politics and the complexities of homelessness and the opioid epidemic in recent months.

Many compassionate people and dedicated nonprofits are working on these entwined problems, but let me repeat: There are no easy fixes. Let’s pick it apart.

FIRST OF ALL, not all homeless people are drug users, and not all drug users are homeless people. Don’t automatically think drugs and say “homeless.”

I’ve heard this said emphatically by everyone from Brattleboro’s police chief, from Main Street store owners, from lecturers, and from reading eye-opening books such as Tracy Kidder’s new *Rough Sleepers: Dr. Jim O’Connell’s Urgent Mission to Bring Healing*. ■ SEE NO EASY SOLUTIONS, A2

shouldn’t be. Brattleboro has problems, certainly. But why should this town be different from everywhere else in the country? Our problems are historical, complex, and multifaceted. And at the moment — and let us face it — there are no solutions. Certainly no quick ones.



More than 1,000 people have put their names to an online petition demanding that Brattleboro make panhandling illegal.

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The Commons

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

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SUBMITTING NEWS AND TIPS

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

VOICES

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

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

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

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

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

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In memoriam:

- Alan O. Dann, Judy Gorman, Mia Gannon

No easy solutions

FROM SECTION FRONT

to Homeless People and the even newer Homelessness Is a Housing Problem: How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns, by Gregg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern.

We know from Colburn, who spoke at a statewide digital meeting a couple of months ago, that — as we reported in these pages — “California just came up with a huge study that demonstrated that 90% of their homeless population are people from California, and 75% of the people ‘were actually in the exact same county that they had been when they were previously housed [“We need more housing that’s more affordable for people who need it,’ News, Aug. 2].”

That makes many of our unsheltered people also our long-established neighbors and co-workers.

THE UNAVAILABILITY of affordable housing here, for many, many reasons, is the problem. Colburn uses the analogy of the game of musical chairs: If you play with someone who needs crutches, it will take that person longer to get to a chair when the music stops. In the end, that person will be the loser of the game, but through no fault of their own.

During the pandemic, the state acted promptly to clear the streets — it put those without homes in hotels. And as the pandemic slowly wound down, remarkably, there was no clear plan for when the hotel money ran out. And it did run out. Emergency legislation had to be passed, and even that legislation comes with deadlines.

In the meantime, very little new building has broken ground, and the NIMBYs are out in force.

As I said, no quick fix is on the horizon.

So, NOT ALL homeless people are entangled in the drug epidemic. That is why one street sign particularly enrages me.

When I first started writing about homelessness, someone sent me a story about this street sign in Manchester, New Hampshire, but I’m sure it appears in other towns as well. “YOUR GENEROSITY COULD LEAD TO A FATALITY/PLEASE DONATE TO A LOCAL CHARITY,” it says, and then it lists three very worthwhile ones.

Of course, here we should be donating to Groundworks, to St. Bridgid’s Kitchen and Loaves and Fishes, to the Vermont Foodbank, to United Way of Windham County, to the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust, to the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library, and/or the many other nonprofits working on the issue.

But on an individual level, who are we to judge?

If someone is standing in the pouring rain at a parking lot

entrance holding a sign written on a flattened cardboard carton that says “Homeless, grateful for any help,” and we have a few quarters or dollar bills — and a house and a car — why should we automatically feel superior? Why not offer some help?

So what if they use it to buy alcohol or drugs? We don’t know the reasons behind their begging. If it helps them get a meal, then fine. Or maybe a motel room for the night. And if they need a fix, so what? That’s tragic, that’s not our business, and also it’s another problem entirely.

Remember, so many of us — 59% of us nationwide live paycheck-to-paycheck, by one pre-pandemic measure — are perilously close to being homeless, one way or another. And living on the street — living your life in public, often in the worst weather — is a horrible, humbling fate.

Then there are the panhandlers; they can be homeless or addicted. Some of the panhandlers — and their dogs — are just traveling through, living off the kindness of strangers. Either give them some cash or ignore them.

Panhandling appears to be protected as free speech, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

In 2018, “the ACLU of Vermont sent letters to six Vermont cities and towns, urging them to repeal anti-panhandling ordinances that infringe on the free speech rights of Vermonters in need,” according to its website (acluvt.org).

“The letters were part of a nationwide effort among 18 organizations in 12 states that targeted more than 240 similar outdated ordinances,” the organization said in a news release, explaining that it “joined this effort because it should never be illegal to ask for help.”

In response, officials in Bennington, Brattleboro, Montpelier, Rutland Town, and Winooski took decisive action to protect the constitutional rights of their residents by repealing their anti-panhandling ordinances,” the news release continued.

Many people say they are refusing to go downtown any more because they feel threatened and frightened by panhandlers — particularly, they say, by “aggressive” panhandling. If someone becomes aggressive and harasses you while asking for money, the police can act on that.

But I have to say that I have walked on the streets of Brattleboro many times, passed many panhandlers, and never once have I felt threatened. Mostly, I only feel pity and sorrow. When I hand out a dollar in change while waiting for a light at the Hannaford shopping plaza, all I ever get is gratitude. And I can only think, “There



A panhandler gets a donation from a passer-by on the Whetstone Pathway in 2018, when the town repealed its anti-panhandling bylaw, acknowledging that such an ordinance was unconstitutional.



Brattleboro Police Chief Norma Hardy (shown here with her colleagues, following her taking her oath of office in 2021) points out that “it’s the entire town that’s involved and trying to come up with ways to lessen these effects of these drugs that are here” — not just the police.

but for the grace of God...” Still, I think I’m in a minority here. More than 1,000 people have now signed an online petition to make panhandling once again illegal in Brattleboro.

I’M NO EXPERT on mental health issues, but I recently learned that there has been an increase in mental health situations among the people who come to our hunger relief organizations. The volunteers who run these services need training, and luckily, it exists.

Recently, I was able to spend some time as part of an all-day training designed by the National Council for Behavioral Health. It was put on by the Richards Group at the request of the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance.

“I work for The Richards Group, and part of my job is to provide trainings and education to our business clients,” the trainer, Shannon Prescott, told me.

Since 2019, she has been teaching Mental Health First Aid, a program through the National Council for Behavioral Health, which certifies instructors like her.

The goal is to train people to provide help to someone “experiencing a mental health challenge, mental disorder, or mental health crisis,” the handbook says. “The first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis is resolved.”

After taking the course, a person will be able to recognize the common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges and understand how to interact with a person in crisis, whether on the street, in the workplace, or even in the home.

Prescott typically holds public trainings that are free to the insurance agency’s customers. Keep an eye on the Richards Group’s Facebook page (facebook.com/TheRichardsGroup) and website (therichardsgrp.com), or email her at sprescott@therichardsgrp.

It seems to me that these trainings should be made available town-wide.

DRUGS ARE A hideous problem, true. When I was growing up, we were warned about heroin. Now it appears to be the least of our problems. And the overdose rate is simply unacceptable.

Housed drug addicts are often on the street as well. It’s the drugs that are the problem, independent of wherever those who use them are living. That’s why the police sometimes have to sweep up needles, and why there are sharps boxes for used needles out on the street.

Brattleboro Police Chief Norma Hardy has some advice for those using drugs on the street, whether they’re living there or just hanging out.

“If you’re going to have needles, put them in these boxes,” Hardy told me last month. The problem, she said, is that “people don’t utilize them.”

That puts everyone — children, dogs, people in the parks — at risk.

“We don’t want people getting stuck,” Hardy said.

The drug crisis, the chief said, goes way beyond the police. “And sometimes, some avenues of the crisis have nothing to do with the police, even though the substances themselves are illegal,” she said. “But it’s the entire town that’s involved and trying to come up with ways to lessen these effects of these drugs that are here.”

WE READ in the newspapers about bodies being found on the

street, about people being shot for drugs, and we feel helpless. We despair for our little rural town.

We can go after the dealers, not those who use their product — but that becomes another problem. The police recently busted three drug houses, and the dealers were back on the street in days.

Selectboard member Peter “Fish” Case ran on a platform of dealing with the problems on our streets. He said that “being released on conditions” is a fundamental flaw in our legal system.

“A lot of these people that I consider to be acting in a predatory manner, when they do get caught they are often back out on the street the next day and returning to what they were doing with little or no interruption,” Case told me.

But there may be money available to help.

“The town of Brattleboro

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE



Street signs in Manchester, New Hampshire, seek to discourage people from giving money to others.

Advertisement for Aqua-Aid Systems, Water Conditioning & Filtration. Solving hard water, iron, blue staining, radon and arsenic problems in the Windham County area since 1984. Services include Water Conditioning, Free On-Site Water Analysis & Estimate, Iron and Manganese Removal, Radon & Arsenic Removal, Systems Maintenance, and Home Supplies Delivery. Contact: 800-252-8484. Hellenbrand logo: What's In Your Water?™

has had funding set aside for close to three years following the Community Safety Review, which called for some alternative forms of policing, which I support to a degree," Case said. "But this money has sat for years with no action. It's time to take action and put this money to use."

He cited the need "to provide more funding right now to our current system — the police department."

"These people are trained and know who the aggressors are," Case continues. "They are trained — and I've seen it firsthand — to know the difference between someone who is vulnerable and someone who is acting in a nefarious manner. If we can simply tackle the latter, a lot could change."

Case knows — we all know — that the Brattleboro Police Department is understaffed. But it is currently recruiting more officers.

"I am just very proud of this department," Hardy told me. "And I just have to say, it's one of the best police departments I've ever seen. I like the fact that they just keep going. And I'm happy that I've been able to do a lot of recruitment for them."

The chief hopes that by next year, "we'll have all of the empty spots filled," a milestone that she calls "major."

She thinks the current members of the local force deserve a fully staffed department "because of how they've been holding it together for as long as they have."

HOW CAN the police — how can we all — not be overwhelmed by the complexity of what we're seeing on the streets and roadways of Brattleboro? How can we not feel compassion?

"At the end of the day, all I really want — and I feel Brattleboro as a whole shares this ideal — is to reduce people's suffering," Case said.

The Selectboard member pointed out that we're dealing with humans who "are trying to survive, whether in business, getting to their next meal, off the streets, or getting clean from drugs."

"These are extremely complicated issues that will require some risk taking to resolve," Case observed. "I think that we need to take those risks as long as they smart."

Move allows community radio station to offer local access — literally

WVEW prepares to move its nonprofit Brattleboro radio station into a new studio — one without two long flights of stairs

By **Randolph T. Holhut**
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—After WVEW-LP 107.7 FM saw its second-floor studios and transmitter at the Brooks House heavily damaged in the April 17, 2011 fire that gutted the downtown landmark, the nonprofit, independent community radio station found itself homeless and unable to broadcast.

A year later, WVEW was back on the air from its new broadcast studio at the Hooker-Dunham Building, across the street from the Brooks House. But there was one big problem with the station's new home in the repurposed shoe warehouse — the two steep flights of stairs that people had to climb to get to the studio.

"It was great, in our desperation, to have a home at the Hooker-Dunham," said long-time WVEW member David Longsmith. "But inaccessibility has been a problem for some of our members."

That problem is about to be solved, as WVEW will be moving its studios back across Main Street, this time into the High Street & Green building, owned and operated by noted community radio advocate Tom Bodett.

WVEW's new home at 46 Harmony Place is on the ground floor of the building and offers access to the facility that is compliant with design standards specified in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The new offices will house multiple broadcast and production studios as well as office and meeting space for the all-volunteer radio station.

Before he came to Vermont nearly two decades ago, Bodett's long career in broadcasting began at a community radio station in Homer, Alaska.

His love of community radio — plus a chance meeting with Longsmith earlier this year — played a role in securing WVEW's new studios.

As Longsmith tells the story, he and his son were heading into Bodett's building to see if his son could get a dishwashing job at a

Vermont Table.

"We started talking about radio and mentioned how WVEW was looking for a new place for its studios," said Longsmith. "He said he had just the place for us, and the space he showed us takes care of a lot of what we needed. It's a dream setup for us."

According to Longsmith, the new space will contain two separate radio studios.

"Hosts will be able to set up their shows in one studio while the preceding show ends in the other studio," he said. "The empty studios will also be used for production of underwriting, public service, station identification, and other notices."

The two studios, he said, "will also allow people to pre-record their programs, perform interviews in an appropriate setting, and practice both the skills of operating the equipment and of finding and assessing musical or other content."

Making it happen

Longsmith said that WVEW's move would not be possible without the financial support of many contributors. The biggest donation was \$20,000 from state Rep. Sara Coffey, D-Guilford, and Dave Snyder, the founder of Guilford Sound.

That gift launched the fundraising process, and Brattleboro Community Radio is continuing to raise funds to build out what Longsmith called "a Forever Station for our members and our community."

With a \$20,000 goal set forth by the WVEW Board President John Lightfoot, Longsmith set up a GoFundMe page and did some networking that quickly yielded \$1,410 as of Sept. 8.

In the coming months, WVEW will tackle the huge task of turning the new space into a broadcast-quality studio. In the meantime, Longsmith said, the station will continue to broadcast and stream from the Hooker-Dunham Building until the new studio is ready.

"Our lease expired on Sept. 1," he said. "The Hooker-Dunham folks are flexible and letting us



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT / THE COMMONS

David Longsmith stands in the future new home of WVEW-LP at Harmony Place in Brattleboro.

go month to month at this point, but we'd rather rent two spaces at the same time for as little time as possible."

A little history

The genesis of WVEW started in 1998, when a group of citizens started a low-power FM station, radio free brattleboro (rfb). It was not licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and, after a long battle, was ultimately shut down by the federal agency.

While rfb's struggle played out, a local nonprofit, Vermont Earth Works Inc., was concerned for the future of community radio in Brattleboro and filed an application for one of the new 100-watt low-power FM (LPFM) licenses during a five-day window set by the FCC in 2001.

On March 3, 2005, Vermont Earth Works was granted a construction permit for a 100-watt LPFM radio station to serve the

Brattleboro community. Legally,

"After years of patiently waiting, a chance had finally been given to provide Brattleboro with its own licensed, non-commercial, independent, community access radio station," according to a history on the WVEW website (wvev.org).

"Vermont Earth Works is committed to operating a station that increases community access to information and music, and that reflects the diversity of our community in its programming."

On Sept. 1, 2006, WVEW made its official debut and, aside from the disruption caused by the Brooks House fire, has been broadcasting ever since.

Its program schedule is filled with locally produced shows featuring a diverse range of music, interviews, and educational and political programming. It remains an all-volunteer operation, one where the current hosts help train newcomers and where new

voices and ideas are encouraged.

"Think of what we're doing as Brattleboro Community Radio, version 3.0," said Longsmith. "Version 1.0, radio free brattleboro, [was the brainchild of] the wild pirates that launched the idea of local, community-focused radio. Version 2.0 was Vermont Earth Works putting together the legal and logistical framework with the FCC that created WVEW. It was stable for 15 years, but every month was a challenge."

Now, he said, "we have version 3.0, which will begin with a custom-built, accessible studio to help us move into a new era of community radio."

And you might even hear WVEW's new landlord on the air.

"Who knows? Maybe I'll fill an on-air shift someday," Bodett said in a news release. "If I can remember how to do it."

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Tri-Park Master Plan

FROM SECTION FRONT

Mountain Home Park and the previously occupied flood plain lots will be put into a conservation easement.

A smaller portion of project funding will be used to repair and/or replace two bridges in the Mountain Home Park, and to upgrade the wastewater treatment systems at Glen Park and Black Mountain Park.

As highlighted by the record flooding throughout much of the state in July, Vermont's severe housing shortage has been exacerbated by the loss of housing due to such climate catastrophes. While estimates are still being revised, July's flooding may have rendered 700 homes uninhabitable, according to the state's 211 data, which is self-reported by residents.

Mobile homes account for about 7% of the state's housing stock but are disproportionately affected by flooding. In Vermont, nearly 12% of mobile homes in parks are in flood plains, according to a 2014 study conducted by UVM researchers Daniel Baker and Scott Hamshaw.

Statewide, in the four mobile home parks that saw major flooding in July, 52 homes have been condemned by the state's Division of Fire Safety. According to the state Agency of Commerce and Community Development, of the housing that was damaged or destroyed in Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, 15% were mobile homes. Though largely spared in the heavy rains in July, many Tri-Park residents remember the destruction caused by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011: 16 homes were destroyed in Mountain Home Park, and 10 homes in Glen Park suffered substantial damage.

'Everybody knows somebody who lives at Tri-Park'

Founded in the 1950s and incorporated as a mobile home cooperative in 1989, Tri-Park is one of the largest privately owned, unsubsidized providers of affordable housing in the state. With 300 mobile home sites and nearly 1,000 residents, Tri-Park represents about 9% of the total population of Brattleboro.

"Everybody knows somebody who lives in one of Tri-Park's three locations, whether you realize it or not," said Dan Ridlehoover, who is leading the flood resiliency project at Tri-Park.

Ridlehoover, a senior project manager with M&S Development of Brattleboro, spoke highly of the Tri-Park co-op.

"They are a huge supply of affordable housing in Brattleboro. Because they're co-operatively owned and managed, they often get held up statewide as an example of the ways that mobile home parks should be organized to allow them to keep the rents down," he said.

"They've had some bad luck, certainly, with where they were originally built," Ridlehoover continued, noting that Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 "hit them pretty hard."

"But what they're trying to do is prevent their finances from getting worse in the future when the next flood comes — which it will," he said.

The Tri-Park flood resiliency project is funded by the state's Community Recovery and Revitalization Program, the federal Community Development Block Grant Program, the Flood Resilient Communities Fund, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, state homeowner tax credits, and a congressionally directed spending appropriation by U.S. Sens. Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch.

"This is one of the most complex development projects that

I've ever been involved in, and I'm not doing the work," said Mary Houghton, a non-resident board member of the co-op for 17 years who has worked in the affordable housing field for 30 years with the Burlington Community Land Trust and Brattleboro Housing Partnerships.

"It's like doing one of those interlocking Chinese puzzles where you have to get all the pieces in place so that it holds together, but until then, you need three hands," she said.

"All the funders have to understand what each other is doing, what their requirements are, and how it's all going to work for it all to happen," Houghton noted, while also noting "how much effort the funders are putting into it to make it work and to coordinate with each other."

"If you're going to do any kind of housing development, you have to be optimistic," she added.

"These projects take years, and people who aren't familiar with them say, 'Well, why can't we just do this?'" Houghton said. "And people are shocked by how much it costs. But, you know, we build roads and bridges that cost gazillions of dollars, and nobody says anything."

A different kind of buyout program

Ridlehoover is working on converting conceptual designs into a final design so that the co-op can get the permits needed to begin the project. He hopes that residents will be in their new homes by the fall of 2024.

He explained that in a typical FEMA buyout program, homeowners receive only a percentage of the appraised value of the home.

"But that doesn't cover the cost of a new home," he said. "And so they're out of luck."

The Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF) will close that gap, and that is one of the project's biggest successes, according to Ridlehoover.

"Without FRCF's willingness to engage Tri-Park with project-level funding — how much will it take versus how much does it appraise for? — the residents would not be able to move, and there would be no conservation easement on the floodplain," he said.

"The cost difference between appraisal and 'what it takes' is a five-figure number, but when new multifamily units are going up at \$350,000 per unit, pitching in a little extra to be able to also buy an easement seems like a no-brainer to me," Ridlehoover said.

He acknowledged that some state programs that cap buyout offers to the property's appraised value do so in the spirit of fiduciary responsibility of a publicly funded budget.

"But I think that neglects the reality that taxpayers also end up being on the hook for disaster cleanup and the other flood-related issues we're seeing this summer," Ridlehoover added.

Homeowners who don't take advantage of the buyout program will continue to face flood risk — and, potentially, the loss of their homes in a future catastrophe.

Future homes cannot be sited in the floodway.

Losing housing would put a big financial squeeze on the cooperative because fewer households would be paying rent to cover the operating expenses and debt. By stabilizing co-op finances, the project will also stabilize housing for all Tri-Park households.

With a "pressing need for more than 500 housing units of which nearly 60% are needed for those with incomes under \$50,000," according to the action plan, the town can ill afford to lose existing housing.



These mobile homes sit in the floodplain at Mountain Home Park in West Brattleboro.

A mixed response to moving

Will homeowners take advantage of the program?

"I'm gonna take it," said Mountain Home Park resident Richard Ewings, when asked about the buyout offer. "You might as well go up, right? Don't stay at the bottom of the hill."

In July's heavy rains, water from the brook behind his house rose to his front steps.

"My neighbor had a pond in his yard," Ewings said. "I've been here almost four years and we really never had it like that."

Richard Matteson and his wife, Sandy, have lived at Mountain Home Park for 35 years, in a neat mobile home beside the Whetstone Brook. In that time, they've had to evacuate at least four times, once in a bucket loader, when the brook overflowed its banks.

Asked whether he will take advantage of the buyout program, Matteson hesitated.

"We've been thinking about it," he said. "But it depends on how much our taxes are going to go up with the new place. We're on a fixed income and will be till the day we go into the ground."

Matteson has lived in Vermont his whole life and has seen the impact of climate change.

"I think in another two years half of the state of Vermont is going to be damaged because of climate change. It's gonna get a lot worse before it gets better."

He began seeing that coming a decade ago, he said.

"I see the difference in the way the animals acted," he said. "I hunt and fish and see all kinds of different things. My whole family, we're all outdoors people and we can see the change."

Ridlehoover is sympathetic to residents' concerns. "We've gotten a good number of enthusiastic yeses, but we've also got a good number of skeptics," he said.

"I think they're rightfully skeptical that this will happen because they're not living the project day to day," he continued. "They have questions about property tax increases and the transference of tax credits that will help to fund the new homes."

"It's perfectly reasonable for someone to not be sure," he said. "But I think we'll get 26."

Ridlehoover cited the efficiencies in heating and cooling that the new mobile homes will provide as one way to offset any potential property tax increases. Additionally, many Tri-Park residents would be eligible for property tax credits offered by the state.

"I was surprised to find out that some of the residents didn't know about the tax credit program," he said.

"Some residents are saying, 'You're gonna take me out of here first,'" said Houghton. "And some people are saying, 'Well, I might want to move if I can have a porch, or if I don't have to live next to so and so.' There are all these contingencies that add a layer of complexity."

"I don't want anyone to get flooded," added Houghton, "but I was sort of hoping that these last floods would wake a few people up, and I don't know that they did. What you know intellectually and what you act on are not always the same thing. People say, 'Well, I've lived here for x



Roger Haydock and Dan Dubie ponder the origins and history of a stump in the Deer Run woods.

Green Mountain Conservancy opens new trail at Deer Run Nature Preserve

DUMMERSTON—On Saturday, Sept. 16, Green Mountain Conservancy celebrates the opening of the new North Trail at Deer Run Nature Preserve with a pair of hikes led by trail builder Roger Haydock, and naturalist and ecologist Dan Dubie. All interested should meet at Deer Run Nature Preserve Trailhead, 940 Camp Arden Rd., at 9:30 a.m.

Haydock will lead the North Trail hike, which joins three existing trails at the Preserve. It begins where the Shoulder Trail ends at a viewpoint looking north at the Grassy Brook Valley, northwest up the West River Valley, and looking down on the horse stables far below.

After this vista, the North Trail enters an oak-hop hornbeam savanna, zigzags through hemlock woods, and passes jumbled boulders. Eventually it emerges at the north end of 50 acres of floodplain fields, which

the trail crosses to reach its endpoint on the West River.

The total distance from the parking lot and back is 7 miles with a vertical climb of 1,500 feet. Only the energetic should attempt this hike. Bring water and a snack or lunch.

The North Trail is the second to last addition needed to create a 7-mile loop trail at Deer Run. The final section to complete that goal, called the Meadow Trail, is currently under construction and will be open in 2024.

Organizers say Dubie, who is fairly new to the Brattleboro area, is becoming known for his incredible knowledge of all aspects of our region's forests and wild lands.

On this walk with Dubie, hikers can expect to explore the woods of Deer Run Nature Preserve in detail, stopping to wonder at the remainder of a red pine plantation planted after

the Hurricane of 1938 decimated the white pine forest, or to figure out why there is a ravine here and a plateau there, or what caused that pillow in the forest floor right next to a deep crater.

The mushrooms along the trail are plentiful this year, and some are edible. Hikers will learn the name of the tiny plant that can be discovered on close observation of an old log and the name of the bird that is vociferously accompanying participants on this walk. The total distance of this meander will be as far as the hikers want to go. Those interested are asked to bring water and a snack or lunch.

If there are questions about either hike, contact the Green Mountain Conservancy at 802-257-0012 or info@greenmountainconservancy.org.



Project funds will be used to replace bridges at Mountain Home Park in West Brattleboro.

number of years, and I've never gotten flooded."

Ridlehoover pointed to the recently completed floodplain restoration at Melrose Terrace as something that could be done at Mountain Home Park, once the homes have been removed.

"During the heavy rains in July, the flood plain at Melrose Terrace held back water that would have historically inundated Glen Park, directly across the brook from Melrose Terrace," Ridlehoover said.

"It's proof of concept of these floodplain restoration efforts," he said. "They work."

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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 **Turtle**, I'm a sweet older gal with the cutest little head tilt! I came in as a stray so not much is known about my background but I've been friendly and lovey with people so far! I was found outside, but with my head tilt I should stay indoor as much as possible since I may not be able to run as fast as a normal kitty. The staff here isn't totally sure what causes my head tilt but it doesn't seem to bother me and it's likely how I've been my whole life. I don't seem to mind other cats so I might be able to have a feline friend in my new home. Dogs and children are unknown so introductions should be gradual and everyone should be cat-savvy. Come make me the happiest girl alive and adopt me today!

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Pharmacy closing?

FROM SECTION FRONT

Sept. 29. However, on the same afternoon as the Laurendeaus' announcement, former pharmacy owners Marc and Eugenia Cote filed a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction against the Laurendeaus through their attorney, Alexandria Nelson, of Burlington's Sheehy Furlong & Behm P.C., requesting a court order preventing the couple from proceeding with the closure.

The Cotes assert that their agreement with the Laurendeaus when they sold the business to them in 2018, is being violated by the decision to close the pharmacy.

The Cotes say they want to take the business back and keep it in operation.

To that end, the restraining order requests that the Laurendeaus "retract all public statements directing customers to other pharmacies and all public statements that [the Laurendeaus] intend to close the pharmacy on Sept. 29."

In their announcement, the Laurendeaus thanked their customers "for selecting us as your pharmacy and for supporting us for so many years" and said they would "continue to operate through [Sept. 29], filling prescriptions and transferring patient records through this date."

"Records will not be taken over by any other pharmacy so patients are encouraged to let us know where you would like your prescriptions transferred prior to our close," they continued. "You can also reach out to your provider to have them send prescriptions to your new pharmacy of choice."

The Cotes said they were

caught by surprise by the announcement. They had owned the pharmacy for 15 years prior to selling it to the Laurendeaus — who they described as their longtime employees and friends — in 2018.

According to the court filings, the Cotes agreed to provide 100% of the seller financing when the Laurendeaus purchased the pharmacy, with the business as collateral, according to the court documents.

"Gina and I were shocked and saddened to hear that the owners of the Greater Falls Pharmacy have decided to close the pharmacy's doors," Marc Cote said in a written statement to *The Commons*.

"Not only is this decision harmful to the Bellows Falls community, but it is also in direct violation of our agreements with the current owners," Cote said. "We have petitioned the Court to stop the pharmacy's closure. We are hopeful the pharmacy will remain open and serve the Bellows Falls community for many years to come."

Background of the restraining order

The court filing is the latest salvo in a docket that goes back to 2020 and is filled with claims and counterclaims alleging fraud, violations of the Vermont Securities Act, defamation, and tortious interference.

According to the restraining order, the most recent litigation arises out of the Cotes' sale of the pharmacy to the Laurendeaus in October 2018.

The court papers state that though Cote had a 12-year



The Greater Falls Pharmacy on Atkinson Street in Bellows Falls.

ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

contractual term of employment with the pharmacy as part of the transaction, the Laurendeaus terminated his employment 43 days into the contract.

It continues, stating that they "subsequently refused Mr. Cote's request to monitor GFP's financials and the collateral securing the loan Mr. Cote provided to the Laurendeaus to purchase GFP."

Cote currently works at the Rite Aid pharmacy in Brattleboro.

According to the promissory note of the 2018 sale of the pharmacy, the Laurendeaus, as borrowers, agreed to pay Cote \$893,280 plus interest. Collateral for the loan included "all of the Pharmacy's real, personal, tangible, and intangible property, including all accounts receivable."

The restraining order states that a core question about the situation is whether the Laurendeaus are in breach of the agreement they made with Cote, and if so, whether Cote is entitled to a default judgment that would enable him to retake possession of the pharmacy.

The security agreement for the sale required the Laurendeaus to

maintain and protect the pharmacy's collateral, keeping it in "good order and repair," and they were not allowed to "materially alter the business" without Cote's permission.

Thus, Cote requested that the court order the Laurendeaus to retract any public statements directing customers to other pharmacies and all public statements about closing the pharmacy.

Cote also asked the court to prohibit the Laurendeaus from taking further action to close accounts, fire employees, cancel vendor contracts or terminate the pharmacy's professional licenses without his permission.

In an affidavit submitted as

part of the filing, Cote described customer relationships as "an intangible but critical asset of pharmacies in general and GFP in particular."

"Once a customer chooses to transfer their records to another pharmacy, it is all but impossible to convince that customer to return their business to the first pharmacy," Cote said. "It is also impossible to calculate the loss in terms of that customer's future business."

Similarly, Cote said that "over its years in business, GFP has built up immeasurable customer goodwill as a family-run pharmacy in Bellows Falls, Vermont."

"Customer relationships and goodwill are critical to the success of a pharmacy," the court filing said. "If GFP stops filling prescriptions and closes its doors, Mr. Cote's collateral under the security agreement will be destroyed. It is well established that the loss of client relationships and goodwill can constitute irreparable harm. [...] If the pharmacy loses its customers, Mr. Cote also loses the ability to save the business."

The order asserts that Cote has the right under the security agreement to "take possession of the Collateral," that is the pharmacy and its customers, "in the event of any default by the Debtor under any of the other Loan Documents."

Feeling that action has to be taken as soon as possible to maintain the pharmacy's business, the Cotes are requesting the court to hold a hearing on the matter as soon as the "Court's schedule will permit."

The Laurendeaus declined to comment to *The Commons* on the lawsuit or the issues surrounding their intent to close the pharmacy.

Additional reporting by Jeff Potter.

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'Overflow the Opera House' food drive in BF

BELLOWS FALLS—It will be food instead of films when the Bellows Falls Opera House becomes the stage for the annual Overflow the Opera House food drive to benefit Our Place Drop-in Center Thursday, Sept. 21.

Beginning at 8 a.m. and continuing to 4 p.m., board members and other volunteers will be on hand curbside to accept donations of food and funds to stock the food pantry at Our Place.

Employees of Chroma Technology and Sonnax are also playing a role in making the drive a big hit by holding in-house drives and providing onsite help, and the BFOH is also a sponsor. KOOL-FM radio will be broadcasting live to encourage listeners to support the effort.

Also taking part are members of the Bellows Falls Rotary Club and the Bellows Falls Woman's Club, which are both holding in-house food drives.

Donors can visit an online site that allows anyone to "buy" a seat at the Opera House with a \$20 donation.

"We're hoping to fill all 500 plus seats in the theater with either a bag of groceries or a \$20 donation," said Our Place executive director David Billings. "That \$20 represents a food box for a family."

A surprise sampler

Actors Theatre Playhouse closes out its season with its Pay-What-You-Like show, with proceeds to maintain the company's building fund

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Jumpers, Travesties, Leopoldstadt, Brazil, Billy Bathgate, and Shakespeare in Love.

WEST CHESTERFIELD, N.H.—Actors Theatre Playhouse (ATP) offers a “Pay-What-You-Like Season-Ending Celebration: Shakespeare to Durang” on Fridays and Saturdays from Sept. 15 to Sept. 30, with a theatrical sampler of sorts.

The show is designed as a dip-sticking into theater history with monologues, scenes, and one-acts by a host of playwrights and authors. While the Playhouse chooses to keep as a surprise the title of each work on the program, the range of writers tips a hand to the variety in store.

- Christopher Durang, 74, is an American playwright known for boundary-breaking comedy. His works — among them, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You* and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* — often deal critically with issues of homosexuality, culture and counterculture, abuse, and dogma.
- Philip K. Dick (1928–1982) was a post-modernist writer from the United States who focused on science fiction and its offshoots, known for works such as *Ubik*, and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

- Tom Stoppard, 86, a Czech-born British playwright/screenwriter who started his career — without a university degree — in journalism, is widely known for his plays and films, among them

- Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), a Russian playwright and short-story author, has been hailed by many as one of the greatest writers of all time. As a playwright, he earned fame for several full-length plays — *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters*, and *The Cherry Orchard*, among them — and for a few great enduring one acts.
- Eugene O’Neill (1888–1953), was an American playwright who brought realism to the stage as Chekhov did in Russia; Henrik Ibsen also did so in Norway and August Strindberg, in Sweden. O’Neill’s epic *A Long Day’s Journey Into Night* is considered one of the greatest American plays of the 20th century.
- Vincent Panella, of South Newfane, grew up in Queens, New York and graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School with, according to his website, “the intention of becoming an engineer in the age of Sputnik. Doses of Homer, Whitman, and too many writers to mention here cut short his engineering career and he went on to study literature and then fiction writing at the Iowa Workshop.”

He worked for a short time in Dubuque, Iowa as a reporter for the *Telegraph Herald*, all the while continuing to write fiction. He has taught writing of

■ SEE ATP PAY-WHAT-YOU-LIKE, B6

Rachel Bell on accordion and Becky Tracy on fiddle rehearse at the Creamery Covered Bridge in Brattleboro for their upcoming benefit community dance at Scott Farm Orchard in Dummerston.

Eloise & Co. will lead a French tunes jam session and bal folk dancing to benefit Scott Farm, one of many whose apples were wiped out by a late freeze this year



VICTORIA CHERTOK, THE COMMONS

a community party for a farm in need

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

DUMMERSTON—When Brattleboro residents and musicians Rachel Bell and Becky Tracy heard about Vermont’s apple crop devastation, the fans of Scott Farm Orchard decided to do something about it.

“We were so distressed to hear how they lost 90% of their apple crop this year due to the deep freeze in May [see sidebar, this issue], so we wanted to do

something to help,” notes Bell. The two members of the musical duo Eloise & Co. invite the public to Scott Farm Orchard on Sunday, Sept. 17 at 3:15 p.m. for some bal folk music.

“Bal folk are French traditional social dances, and it always has a really welcoming community party feel,” Bell says. “There will be food for sale, too.”

Those participating are welcome to bring instruments for a French tunes jam session, which will be followed by a community dance at 4:30 p.m.

Eloise & Co., with Bell on accordion and Tracy on fiddle, started in 2016 and released an album — *More, Please* — in 2018.

“I played music all my life,” says Bell. “I was really serious about piano but fell into accordion accidentally when I was in college and fell in love with it. I got swept up into this collaborative and creative dance music that we play.”

Tracy came from a musical family in Simsbury, Connecticut.

“I studied classical music through school, but when it was my turn to do whatever I wanted

to do, I chose this music,” she says. “I was 9 years old when I chose fiddle. My older sisters played violin, one played viola, and one played cello.”

“We’ve been dreaming of getting this kind of French dancing into the area for a long time, so we’re thrilled that it’s finally happening,” adds Tracy.

‘The dances are so fun and easy’

The Commons met up with Bell and Tracy recently to hear some

■ SEE SCOTT FARM BENEFIT, B5

COLUMN | Deeper Dive



Dayramir Gonzalez

COURTESY PHOTO

Jazz Center launches season with cutting-edge Cuban jazz

Dayramir González ‘is the whole package — charisma, talent, good taste, fascinating concepts, and authenticity, all wrapped up in a grooving sound that makes audiences want to dance’

THE VERMONT JAZZ CENTER kicks off its 2023–24 season on Saturday, Sept. 16 at 7:30 p.m. with exciting, cutting-edge

Cuban jazz, featuring pianist Dayramir González and his Habana enTRANCÉ quartet, which includes James Robbins on bass, Juan Chiavassa on drums, and Taka Nikaïdo on percussion.

With piano playing reminiscent of that of his Cuban compatriots Chucho Valdés and Alfredo Rodríguez, González developed blazing technique through rigorous practicing in the classical tradition. He’s supercharged it by an embodied sense of internalized



EUGENE UMAN is director of the Vermont Jazz Center. The Commons’ Deeper Dive column gives artists, arts organizations, and other nonprofits elbow room to write in first person and/or be unabashedly opinionated, passionate, and analytical about their own creative work and events.

rhythms.

González applies to those skills a profound understanding of jazz harmony, resulting in a performance style that is both forward thinking and respectful of tradition.

He is also a percussionist whose music serves as a living reminder of how drumming was a critical element

that gave the enslaved peoples in the Americas an essential tool in their efforts to maintain their spirits and culture.

González is the whole package — charisma, talent, good taste, fascinating concepts, and authenticity, all wrapped up in a grooving sound that makes

■ SEE GONZÁLEZ, B6

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Martin Sexton returns to Brattleboro on tour for new EP

In '2020 Vision,' the musician tackles the global pandemic, the opioid epidemic, and life lessons like 'the power of togetherness'

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Billboard calls him “the real thing, people.” Singer-songwriter Martin Sexton returns to the Stone Church for the second time, on Friday, Sept. 15 with what *Rolling Stone* calls his “soul-marinated voice,” along with his acoustic guitar and a suitcase full of heartfelt songs.

His 2023 tour has taken Sexton across North America in support of his latest release, *2020 Vision*, produced by three-time Grammy nominee John Alagia, whose work includes collaborations with Lukas Nelson, John Mayer (who guests on Sexton’s album), and Dave Matthews. Alagia is also still reinventing his own classic songs for these intimate solo performances.

“His live shows are emotional and interactive; the audiences sing along and dance, and fans shout out suggestions that they fully expect Sexton, ever the crowd-pleaser, to play. He unabashedly mixes folk, rhythm & blues, jazz, boogie woogie and rock into his songs,” Marie Elsie St. Leger wrote in a review of Sexton’s album *Wonder Bar* in *Rolling Stone* in 2000.

Sexton started in the streets around Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the

1990s. Despite headlining venues from The Fillmore to Carnegie Hall, he remains “fiercely independent and has influenced a generation of contemporary artists,” according to his biographical information.

His songs have appeared in a number of television series, including *Scrubs*, *Parenthood*, *Masters of Sex*, and *Sprung*, and in numerous films, though it’s his live shows, honest lyrics, and vocal proficiency that keep fans coming back for a novel experience each time.

An EP on lockdown

During lockdown, the tracks for *2020 Vision* — his first release in six years — were recorded virtually in Los Angeles and Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

In those songs, he tackled difficult issues like the global health pandemic, the opioid epidemic, and life lessons like “the power of togetherness.”

According to publicity materials, the album, which includes “snapshots or moments of clarity during the pandemic,” resulted in “a poetically emotive and an elegantly evocative pandemic scrapbook.”

“In one song, I’m building a treehouse with my son,” Sexton said. “In another song, I’m crossing America and seeing the beauty in people rising through adversity and loving each other.”

In an article in *American Songwriter* (americansongwriter.com), Sexton said he sees the United States as “flawed, but not irredeemable.”

“I love that we have community leaders, politicians, actors, and artists from all backgrounds speaking up, raising their voices, and becoming the heroes of today,” he said. “My faith is renewed to see the injustices of the world now beginning to be met with accountability. I remain hopeful and optimistic.”

Unity through music

“My mission statement for the past 15 years has been unity through music, and I am committed to sharing peace and harmony through my songs,” Sexton told *The Commons* from the road recently.

He called music “such a powerful, motivating force.”

“I’ve always tried to use it to bring people together who would not otherwise be together,” he said. “In this divided world we live in, we need to remember we are all family, all children of this planet.”

“I am so honored every night when I see my audience, people of all different walks of life singing in three-part harmony at my shows. Folks tend to leave their differences outside the door and focus on our likenesses. And



Martin Sexton returns for the second time to the Stone Church on Friday, Sept. 15 at 8 p.m.

that’s my mission accomplished,” Sexton added.

When asked about how he and Mayer began working together, Sexton said that he first met him “way back at my show in Atlanta in 1999. He was a young guy cutting his teeth, handing me his demo.”

“Fast forward two years, I was opening for him on his sold-out arena tour, he had just won a Grammy, and his girlfriend was [actor and singer] Jennifer Love Hewitt.”

Sexton described Mayer as “so gracious over the years: tipping his hat, inviting me on shows, etc. And what a treat it was to have him play on my latest record.

Dig it!”

When asked about advice he would give to a young singer/songwriter who is just starting out, Sexton says, “Stay true to your heart, write a lot, and play your ass off.”

Stone Church sets fall lineup

Robin Johnson, owner of The Stone Church, thinks this Friday night show will probably sell out, just as Sexton’s previous shows there.

He described Sexton’s first show in the venue as “magic.”


“Martin is an incredible performer who has to be experienced live,” Johnson said. “We

don’t have a lot of listening room shows these days, but for a show like this, the atmosphere in the church is unparalleled.”


Looking forward to fall, Johnson described what he called a “spectacular” lineup of shows, including The Nude Party, Courtney Barnett, and Lady Lamb.

Martin Sexton (martinsexton.com) plays at *The Stone Church*, 210 Main St., Brattleboro, on Friday, Sept. 15. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the show is at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$45 in advance and \$50 at the door. For more information and to buy tickets, visit stonechurchvt.com.

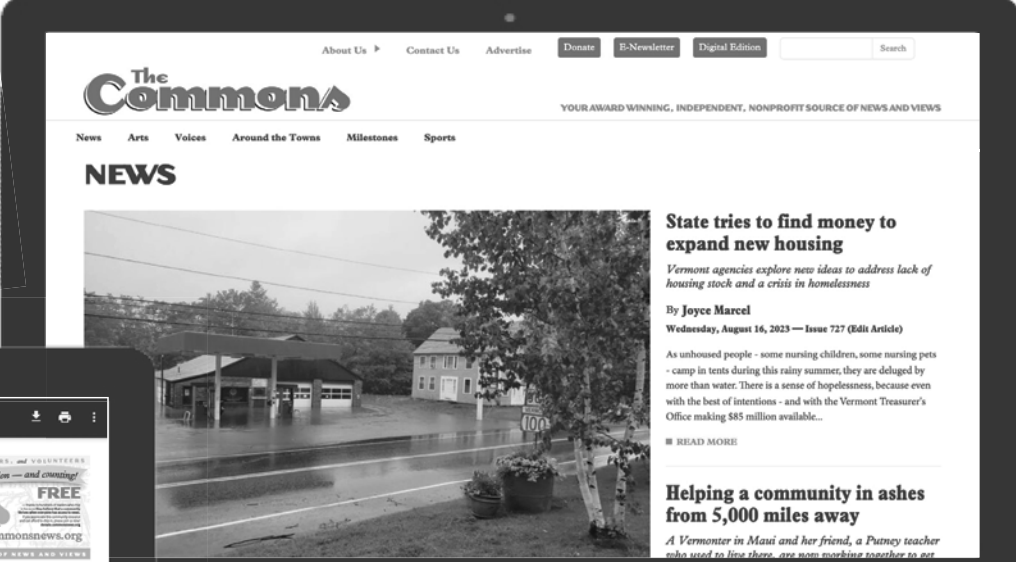
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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries



Elizabeth "Beth" Brassel, 59, of Lowell, Massachusetts. Died peacefully, surrounded by family and friends, on July 28, 2023.

Beth lived every day of her life to the fullest, and never took for granted the time she had in this world. The daughter of Barbara J. (Lynch) Brassel and Dr. Roger W. Brassel, Beth was born in Montreal, and grew up in Queensbury, New York. She attended Saint Michael's College, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in philosophy. She later received a master's degree from SUNY-Buffalo in American studies and a master's degree in library science from Simmons College. While at SUNY, Beth was one of the editors for the inaugural issue of the journal *Circles: Buffalo Women's Journal of Law and Society*, later renamed *Buffalo Journal of Gender, Law and Society*. Throughout her life, Beth enjoyed running, skiing, swimming, hiking, backpacking, and spending time in the mountains in Alaska, Montana, Western Massachusetts, and upstate New York. After receiving her undergraduate degree in 1986, Beth joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and worked with the community on a Native American reservation in Kalispell, Montana. In the late 1980s and much of the 1990s, she lived in western Massachusetts where she became part of a group of friends who would cook, hike, travel, and garden together, and celebrate "anything, anytime" as one friend put it, birthdays and heartbreaks alike. Dogs and time in nature were always part of the equation. Many of these friends remained close for the rest of her life. It was through one of them that Beth met Tatiana Schreiber of Westminster West in 2004, and they remained long-time, long-distance companions for the next 19 years. Beth was the consummate librarian, working first at Northeastern University and the Bedford Public Library and then for 18 years at the Pollard Memorial Library in Lowell, always dedicated to ensuring access to whatever information patrons needed. As the Young Adult librarian, Beth developed a number of programs supporting youth in reading, writing, and creativity, including lively Dungeons and Dragons and interactive fiction groups, and just plain fun activities such as the "Totally Twisted Team Tongue Twister Tournament." After moving to Lowell, Beth took up rowing, reveling in her time on the water and the friendship of her rowing buddies. She enjoyed reading in all genres, and loved language, a passion she shared with her mother, a trained linguist. She was also interested in the history of gay and lesbian communities in Lowell; one project that meant a great deal to her was conducting interviews and documenting the lives of patrons of gay bars who were under police surveillance in the 1960s. She attended the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay rights and protested anti-gay legislation in Massachusetts and nationally. She valued justice, especially with respect to those marginalized in our society, and had an abiding interest in constitutional issues and the deliberations of the Supreme Court. Due to a childhood cancer, Beth coped with gradual vision loss. In 2017, she began a partnership with her intrepid and devoted guide dog, Leila. Beth continued to work as a librarian full-time (including after another cancer diagnosis in 2021) and became an advocate for accessibility in her community. For several years, she served as Chair of the Lowell Commission on Disability. Beth was kind, generous, and empathic, qualities revealed by the many people of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences whom she befriended over her life. She also had a sharp sense of humor that brought joy to her friends, family, and especially the young people she worked with at the library. In addition to her parents, Beth was predeceased by her older brother Tom, and is survived by her partner, Tatiana; a sister, Kate Brassel; close friends whom she considered family Debbie (Burt) Ames and Josephine Power; a posse of other close friends who came together to help provide care; sister-in-law, Suzanne Brassel; many loving aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins in the Brassel and Lynch families; and countless beloved friends made and cherished throughout her life. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Donations in Beth's memory may be sent to Massachusetts General Hospital, Neuro-oncology Innovation Fund, 125 Nashua St., Suite 540, Boston, MA 02114; the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association-Young Parents Program, 465 School St., Lowell, MA 01851; or to Guiding Eyes for the Blind, 611 Granite Springs Rd., Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.

Christopher "Chris" Coburn, 57, of Athens. Died, with his beloved "grand-dog" Cash by his side, on Sept. 1, 2023. Born on April 4, 1966, Chris was the kind of man you'd meet and

instantly love. He had a way with animals that absolutely no one understood. He enjoyed anything to do with the outdoors, especially hunting in the woods of the Northeast Kingdom. He was a jack of all trades and was always there to give the shirt off his back to anyone in need. Chris was just shy of reaching 30 years of employment at Temple Plumbing & Heating in Putney. Above all, his three children were his pride and joy. Chris is survived by his mother, Gail Coburn; sister Deb (John) Davey; daughters Kayla Coburn and Kori Coburn (Eric Laurendeau); son Colton Coburn; stepchildren Kori (Alex) Jameson, Erellyn Griffin, and Sean Griffin; grandson to-be Griffin Jameson; grand dogs Cash, Bane, Harper, and Jasper; as well as many nieces, nephews, and great nephews. Chris was predeceased by his father, David Coburn. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life will be held at a later date and burial will be private in Houghtonville Cemetery. Donations may be made to the Coburn Memorial Fund at any branch of 802 Credit Union.



Kenneth Joseph Craig, 48, of Brattleboro. Died on Aug. 30, 2023. He was born at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital on Jan. 4, 1975, to his loving mother, Kenneatha Ann

Craig. A true Capricorn, Kenneth was loyal to those he loved. He had a dynamic personality with a rather unique balance of confidence and humility. Kenneth was a native Abenaki and was quite proud of it. His mother instilled core Native values early and they stuck. As a family, they would frequent the festivities in Swanton and enjoy the museum at the council building. It is there he learned that in Native culture it is believed that the spirit lives on. In his early years, he was a great student and an excellent big brother to Jeremy. They spent many days on adventures together doing what boys do and bringing treasured trinkets back to their mom. Only two years apart, Kenny always protected Jeremy. Kenny later graduated from Winooski High School and then set off to travel to Alaska for a while before returning to Vermont where he became a father. As a father, Kenny was devoted to what he called his greatest accomplishment, his son. Anyone who spoke with Kenny would soon hear about Jaymz. As an artist, any canvas was open to Kenneth's expressions: paper, actual canvas, walls... There was no limit to where he would show his talent. As a musician, he played any instrument of music beautifully and with ease. Both of these loves he passed on through Jaymz. Kenneth's love for music can be heard throughout all of Jaymz's recordings. His love of the arts will live on in so many ways, as many friends have a piece of Kenny's heart in a drawing or doodle he's done or trinket he gave. Kenny is survived by his only son, Jaymz Richard Zimmerman-Craig of Brattleboro; his brother, Jeremy Craig and his children; his aunts, Tammie and Ila; his uncle, Kenneth "Buggy" St. Francis, Jr.; and many cousins, as well as very special people Kenneth kept as family throughout his life — his son's friends, whom he cherished as his own, Devin, Marco, and Walter. Additionally, he leaves the mother of his son, Kara Zimmerman, and her children, Jaymz's siblings, Kaleb, Kamron, and Cadence. Kenneth was predeceased by his grandparents, Ila and Kenneth St. Francis, Sr.; his mother, Kenneatha Ann Craig, and her wife, Nancy Comeau; many aunts and uncles, as well as a beloved friend of the family, Trevor Quest. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A private burial will take place where he will be laid to eternal rest in the family plot with his mother at Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery. A public celebration of life for both Kenneth and his mother, Kenneatha, will occur at a time and location to be determined and announced by the family. Donations to The Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, 100 Grand Ave., Swanton, VT 05488 (abenakinaton.com/donations/1395), where they can use the funds for programs in the arts, music and feeding the community; all passions of Kenneth's. To express condolences to Kenneth's family, visit atamaniuk.com.



Margaret Dowley, née Plumley, 60, died peacefully, surrounded by her loved ones, on Aug. 2, 2023 at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend. In the short weeks before her death, she had many visits and celebrations with family and friends. In that short span, they took the time to celebrate her favorite holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. In Margaret's lifetime, she was a devoted and loving wife, daughter, mother, sister, aunt, and friend who will be deeply missed by all who knew her. Margaret was born on Sept. 26, 1962 to Marie Plumley, née Beam, in Townshend. The oldest of four siblings, she grew up in Brattleboro and later moved with her family to Newfane. She attended Brattleboro Union High School and

Leland & Gray Union High School, and briefly spent a short time in the Army before being medically discharged. Margaret was the definition of a hard worker, wearing many different hats, and she had a genuine love for helping others. Throughout her teens and twenties, she worked at various places in Southern Vermont while also taking college courses. Eventually, she began working in the kitchen at Grace Cottage Hospital. She loved the relationships she formed with patients and co-workers, and continued there for 20 years. Afterwards, she drove a taxi for Adventure Taxi, and later was a bus driver for the Windham Central School district and an assistant cook at Leland & Gray. Again, she truly enjoyed the connections she made, and especially loved the time she spent with the students she transported. Margaret had a dedication to her family that is best remembered through the memories and in the hearts of her two children, Desiree and Patrick, and her mother, Marie. She was a hardworking single parent who always put her children's needs above her own. While she never received a degree, her children will always recognize all of the many jobs she personified daily: nurse, teacher, referee, chef, therapist, accountant, and wonder woman. The most important lesson her children learned from her was that it's okay to not be perfect, and what matters most is to be happy and healthy, and that what others think of you doesn't matter. A favorite motto that she would often tell her children was, "If they don't like me now, they wouldn't like me if I were (insert adjective): skinnier, prettier, richer..." Fifteen years ago, Margaret reunited with a previous love, Richard "Rich" Dowley. After their reunion, they were married by Rich's mother at his childhood home. Rich and Margaret enjoyed traveling and, shortly after their wedding, they went to Vieques, Puerto Rico with Margaret's daughter Desiree, and family friend Heather Coleman. Margaret fell in love with Vieques, and a few years later, returned for a "girls trip" with Desiree. Margaret always said that those trips were two of her favorite memories and she always wanted to return. Margaret requested that some of her ashes be scattered in Vieques, Puerto Rico. Margaret was a kind, caring, and giving person, full of love and warmth. She faced every challenge in her life with courage and dignity. She had a great sense of humor and, even in the last two weeks of her life, she was able to tease and have a laugh with both her family and the kind and caring staff at Grace Cottage. She leaves behind her husband, Richard Dowley; her mother, Marie Plumley; her two children, Desiree Plumley and Patrick Devens, Jr.; her sister, Deborah Plumley (John Vachon); her brother, Todd Plumley (Mary McGinnis Dezess); a niece, Jessica Plumley; and nephews Justin Plumley, Joseph Vachon, and Nicholas Vachon. She was predeceased by three infant children, Christopher, Nicholas, and Alasia; and her brother, James Plumley. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life is planned for Sunday, Oct. 1, from noon to 3 p.m., at the New Brook Fire Station in Newfane. Donations to Grace Cottage Foundation, P.O. Box 1, Townshend, VT 05353, or the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302.



Peter R. Duggan, 70, of Brattleboro. Died on Aug. 9, 2023. Born in Chittenden on Oct. 7, 1952 to Bernice (Feeley) and Raymond Duggan, Peter grew up in Vermont, with most of his years spent in Brattleboro, graduating from high school there. He entered the University of Vermont on an art scholarship, graduated with a B.S. in biology, then spent his career as a master electrician, first working for Tyler Electric, then at Landmark College for many years. A bit of a "Jack of All Trades," Peter could be counted on to help whenever he was needed. He loved adventure and travel in his younger days, hitchhiking across the country with a friend and his brother and later taking a tour of the Egyptian pyramids. An avid reader, Peter had a wide range of interests from spiritual development to politics to humor. Always active, Peter loved to ice skate and play hockey and took up martial arts. Music was a staple in his life and, in his 30s, Peter took up ballroom dance, a passion that never waned. He was active on the "dance scene" until his illness prevented him from attending during his last year of life. Peter leaves his friend and caretaker, Laura Winter of Wilmington; sparring buddy and devoted friend, Doug Richmond of Vernon; those he had connections with through dance and Landmark College; sisters Deb Kent and Jackie McElroy, whom he thought of often, and their families; niece Hilary Duggan and nephew Evan Duggan, whom he kept close in his heart, and their children. Peter was predeceased by his brother Edward "Chuck" Duggan, Chuck's wife Linda, and by his parents. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: There are no services, as Peter would have preferred that

we all take time to dance and enjoy a good song.



Mark Robert Heywood, 43, of Millinocket, Maine, formerly of East Dummerston. Died June 24, 2023 after a nearly year-long battle against an

aggressive form of tongue cancer. He fought hard to conquer his illness, and lived twice as long as his doctors predicted. Supporting him all the way was his beloved soulmate and long-time companion, Sara Brown. Last summer, just before his diagnosis, he climbed Mt. Katahdin twice and, this winter, started his vegetable plants in anticipation of his summer garden. He spent what would be his last spring enjoying long walks down the driveway, sitting on the deck in the sunshine, and watching the birds at the feeder. Mark was born in Rutland on Oct. 22, 1979 and was adopted by Greg and Carolyn Heywood. He grew up in East Dummerston and graduated with honors from Brattleboro Union High School with the Class of 1998. Mark was an excellent athlete throughout his school years in basketball, baseball, soccer, and track. He also displayed outstanding abilities in art and especially loved to sketch in the manner of his favorite artist, Edward Gorey. His art skills led him to the Maine School of Art in Portland and, after college, he remained in Maine and worked in a screen print shop until the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to close. At that time, Mark and Sara moved to Millinocket, where they worked hard to turn their camp into year-round housing. He worked for the U.S. Postal Service until his illness. Mark was much loved, appreciated, and supported as a valuable team member at any job he had ever held. He was hardworking, yet was quiet and easy-going and ready to offer help to anyone who needed it. He loved animals, nature, and being outdoors. He also enjoyed cooking, especially for friends, and loved to tend his vegetable garden. He was looking forward to and deserved many more good years, but God had other plans. All who knew him will always remember Mark and will miss him. In addition to his adoptive parents, Mark is survived by Sara and her daughter, Olivia Mitchell; a sister, Bethany Heywood (Bob) of Swanzy, New Hampshire; and several aunts and uncles. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: No services are planned. Instead, in Mark's memory, gift someone with an unexpected act of kindness.

Oliver William Hutchison, 21, of Brattleboro and Westminster West. Died unexpectedly on Aug. 30, 2023. The beloved son of Lucy Burdo Hutchison and Charlie Hutchison, he was born on June 12, 2002 in Boston, and grew up in Jamaica Plain and Lexington, Massachusetts, before moving to Vermont in his early teens. He attended elementary school in Lexington and Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Massachusetts, followed by Compass School in Westminster and, briefly, Brattleboro Union High School. He made good friends in all of these places. In 2018, Oliver became sick from the combination of Lyme and black mold poisoning. Over the next five years, he spent much of his time bedridden. He fought tenaciously for his health, researching and implementing every Western and complementary modality he and his parents could find. Oliver was a talented musician who played piano and guitar, composed his own songs, and loved to sing. He was inspired by the guitar skills of John Mayer. While at BUHS, he enjoyed chorus, Madrigals, and sang with the Shoulder Narrows cappella group. With his innate curiosity, he quickly deciphered how to access the secret cash drawer at the old general store at his Westminster West home and on his own initiative, later converted his road bicycle into an electric one, even while he was sick. Oliver was intensely engaged with science and math and was an all around athlete from the moment he could crawl. He especially loved hockey, as well as hip hop dancing, basketball and baseball (pitcher), as well as karate and yoga. Oliver's innate love and empathy for humanity and for all those he encountered was enormous. He wanted all to be free from suffering. To that end, he was passionate about social justice, and was especially interested in inventing innovative technologies to create healthy green buildings with clean air so others need not suffer the harmful effects of mold contamination. He was a healer by nature, and learned many naturopathic healing modalities which he implemented for his own healthcare. He held an enormous love and compassion for animals, and always advocated for them. Oliver was a bright light and huge heart to all who knew him in his brief time with us. In addition to his parents, Oliver is survived by his loving aunts, uncles, and cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Sept. 16, at 2 p.m., at Dummerston Congregational Church, followed by a reception and celebration of his life with food and singing across the street at the Evening Star Grange. A private burial will be held at a future date. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society.



Kenneth Otis "Ken" Kingsbury, 64, of Brookline. Died unexpectedly on Aug. 31, 2023 at his home. Ken was born at Grace

Cottage Hospital in Townshend on Jan. 28, 1959, the son of Durwood and Mildred Mae (Rawson) Kingsbury. A lifelong resident of the West River Valley, he attended local schools and was a graduate of Leland & Gray Union High School, Class of 1977. Following graduation, he proudly served in the Army. Ken had been employed as a chef working at Stratton Mountain Resort, at several seafood restaurants in Maine, and at the former Rick's Tavern in Newfane. He was a gifted auto mechanic and tinkered on cars on a part-time basis. Ken enjoyed music, travel, day trips to the coast of Maine, spending time with his family, and he especially loved his dogs. On July 4, 1987, at the Chapel in Stratton, he was married to Lora Valard who predeceased him on April 24, 2014. Survivors include his father, of Chesterfield, New Hampshire; two daughters, Amanda Valard and Deanna Case and her husband, Mitchell. Additionally, he leaves many nieces, nephews and several cousins. He was predeceased by He was predeceased by his mother, Mildred Mae Devens; his stepfather, Raymond Devens; and brothers Everett and Charlie Kingsbury and Thomas Devens.

MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life will be held at a future date and time. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society. To send condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



Michael Paul Reffi, 63, of Brattleboro. Died Aug. 31, 2023 at home, surrounded by Mary, the love of his life, and his family, after a long,

courageous battle with Alzheimer's. He was born on May 3, 1960 in Greenfield, Massachusetts to Paul and Regina (Klepaddl) Reffi. He was raised and educated in Brattleboro, beginning at St. Michael's School. He graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 1978. Michael was athletic and involved in sports, playing Little League and candlepin bowling and starring on BUHS's basketball and football teams. He was selected to play on the Vermont Shrine Bowl football team in 1978. Michael was a "pool shark," playing in many local leagues. He also enjoyed miniature golf, playing darts, and taking long walks, racking up many miles. His favorite teams included the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame, as well as the Patriots and Red Sox. Michael was an avid baseball card collector with thousands of cards acquired over his life. As a young boy he delivered the *Brattleboro Reformer* and won a trip to Orlando, which started his love of travel. After graduation, he moved to Hawaii for a few years and then returned to his hometown. Michael and Mary spent many vacations in Atlantic City and Orlando where they bought a timeshare condo and brought family down to enjoy time together. "Ref," as he was known by many, had a weightlifter's body. With his long hair, beard, and leather vest, friends will remember his years of being a bar-room bouncer at Ransom Hastings and Molt's Roadhouse. His past employers included C&S Wholesale Grocers, Finnell Roofing, Brattleboro Roofing, LaRock & Sons, and Manning & Sons paving. In summers, you could see Michael in the Curtis' BBQ bus working alongside Mary, Christine, and Curtis. His love of driving landed him a courier position for Vermont National Bank, where he logged thousands of miles. Other fond memories include his pet raccoon which would ride on his shoulder through town on his 10-speed bike. Michael was also a Boy Scout and enjoyed earning many badges and camping on the trails in the winter with his father. On Aug. 20, 2023, surrounded by family, Michael and Mary Draper were married in a spiritual ceremony. They have loved each other for over 25 years (though Mike was secretly admiring Mary for many years before), always making sure the other was happy, cared for and protected. Their love has always been so strong and in these final days for Michael everyone could feel the true love they shared. They danced many dances together until Michael could no longer dance. Michael may have had a tough exterior but he had the biggest caring heart for those he loved. He devoted his time to helping to care for parents and family. Grampa Mike taught the grandkids and great-grandkids to swim, spending many hours at the pool and enjoying time with each child. He showed the kids how he could bring ants back to life and fish would swim up and eat out of his hand. He also enjoyed Halloween and dressing up to scare the kids. He was predeceased by his parents; a brother, David Reffi; in-laws, Secler and Lorraine Goulas, Donna McDurfee, and Curtis Tuff; as well as many aunts, uncles, grand nieces and nephews. Survivors include his loving wife, Mary; brother Mark (Jennifer) Reffi; sisters Cynthia (Steve) Reffi-Bear and Deborah (Bruce) Lemnah; daughters, Cynthia (Steve) Boothby and Sheri Reffi; niece, Michelle (Andrew) Reffi-Commo; nephews, Rex (Emma) Sheldon, IV

and David (Alicia) Reffi; granddaughters, Courtney (Nate) Cretelle, Meghan (Tim) Zinn, and Olivia (Anthony) Reil; and several great-grandchildren, great-nieces and nephews and cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of Michael's life will be held Sunday, Oct. 15 at noon at the VFW on Black Mountain Road in Brattleboro. Memorial donations may be sent to Bayada Hospice, 1222 Putney Rd., Suite 107, Brattleboro, VT 05301; or Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT/NH, 88 Prospect St., White River Jct., VT 05001.



Jacob Michael "Jake" Topping, 26, of Brookline. Died on Sept. 1, 2023, surrounded by his loving family, from injuries sustained

in an Aug. 27 accident while doing what he loved — riding his Harley. Jake was born Oct. 1, 1996 at Concord Hospital in New Hampshire. He is survived by his mother, Julie Lowe, and stepfather, Chris Lowe, of Jamaica; his father, Jaye Topping and his significant other, Heather Pierce, of Dummerston; sisters Abigail and Kristen Lowe of Jamaica; brother Evan Topping of Dummerston; grandsons Penny and Larry Wilkens of Hillsboro, New Hampshire, Sheila Lowe of Jamaica, and Heidi Topping of Peterborough, New Hampshire; and many aunts, uncles and cousins. He is predeceased by his Gramps, Reg Lowe, and Aunt Tam. A 2015 graduate of Leland & Gray Union High School, Jake lived his life to the fullest. He was wild and daring, and there was no changing that. He loved souped-up vehicles, heavy equipment, snowmobiles, and anything that flies, but his greatest passion was anything on two wheels, which he was usually on one. He liked boating, fishing, mini biking with his brother, shooting guns, and swapping funny videos and texts with his sisters, but always watching out for them. He was the cool big brother every kid wants, but only the lucky ones get, even if only for a short time. Jake was proud that he flew helicopters and was a natural when behind any controls. He also had an affection for cats; his favorite was Whiskers (a.k.a. MuseMuse), which he taught many tricks. Jake loved spending time with his circle of friends riding and tinkering on anything involving a motor and "drinking beer with the boys," but he was also the type of guy that could always enjoy a "mommy drink" with his mom and sister. Jake was just an all-around fun person to spend time with. His previous employment included Hunter Excavating, WM Enterprises, Southern Vermont Sprinkler, and Lowes Real Estate. His last job was where he always wanted to be, running heavy equipment for his father at Advanced Harvesting. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of his life will be held on Sunday, Oct. 1, Jake's 27th birthday, at noon. Family and friends will celebrate all the memories and fun stories of the great life he lived and they will give Jake his last ride from his home in Brookline to The Lowe Family Field (764 South Hill Rd. in Jamaica). If you'd like to join in on that, bring a ride you think Jake would like. They'll be departing his home in Brookline at 11:30 a.m. Donations to Rescue Inc., Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, where he received the best care we could've asked for, or the Jack Byrne Center for Palliative and Hospice Care. To express condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



Douglas J. "Woody" Wood, 77, of Guilford. Died at home with his daughter by his side on Aug. 31, 2023, following a short period of illness.

Born in Brattleboro on July 30, 1946, the second son of Joseph E. Wood and Evelyn Emma Howe, he was a descendent of Col. John Sargent, who was born Dec. 4, 1732, at Fort Dummer and, so far as is known, was the first non-native child born within the present borders of the state of Vermont. Woody's lifelong career was in auto mechanics. He started at a young age with his younger brother Bob, working on bicycles. From there, they moved on to cars. Woody's Auto & Truck Repair opened at its location off Bridge Street in 1978, where he shared a six-bay garage with Bob's Service Center. They served the public from that location for almost 30 years. Doug was an avid collector of antique gas engines and classic cars. He amassed many friends while enjoying his hobbies, gathering at engine shows or traveling around the U.S. and beyond. He is survived by his daughter, Amy Beth (Daemon), and their three daughters Emma, Hanna, and Alyssa, with whom he resided for the last four years; his bonus children: Billy Franklin, Melissa (Mike) Bronson, Missy (Jim Charuhars) Snow, PJ (Cheryl) Snow, and their families, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother Robert (June) Wood, sister Linda Wood, and brother Steve (Michele) Wood, sister-in-law Iva Wood, as well as many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents, older brother Joseph E. Wood, and brother-in-law Jim Dunleavy. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service took place at Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery on Sept. 9.

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Scott Farm benefit

FROM SECTION FRONT

bal folk music, learn all about this upcoming benefit concert, and learn more about Eloise & Co.

“Dancing bal folk is super accessible and is open to all ages,” Bell says. “We teach everything, and the dances are so fun and easy.”

She explains that “bal folk is French traditional social dancing with a contemporary twist and with other European influences.”

The huge variety of dances range from raucous, energetic dances to beautiful, meditative dances, all in “lots of different configurations including circles, lines, spirals, and couple dances,” she says.

“You don’t have to show up with a partner, because a lot of the dances don’t even require a partner, and when they do, you’re invited to ask anyone in the room to dance,” Bell continues.

“We’ll play every dance, offering the basics for beginners as well as some new dances and new variations for those who have been dancing for a while,” Tracy says.

“We’ll play authentic French traditional music (and some of our own compositions based on that style) on accordion and fiddle,” she adds.

From the perspective of Scott Farm Orchard, a grateful Simon Renault, the general manager, called the benefit “amazing and super generous.”

“Having grown up in France, I love that style of music and the dancing that goes with it,” Renault says.

In fact, Tracy says that during a previous performance at Scott Farm, she and Bell noticed that Renault “knew the words to some of the tunes that we play because he’s from Brittany, [France].”

“We did a video at Scott Farm last year and thought it was a great excuse to have that party-like atmosphere again,” she says.

She and Bell “have always felt that connection to the farmers,” she says. “We feel so connected to the food around here. We go to farmers’ markets.”

And, she says, the two had “that sense that they are hurting and this is something we can do, which is in our wheelhouse.” So they will.

Orchard Aid Benefit Concert

Other local musicians will also offer their time and energy to help raise funds for several local orchards whose apple crops were devastated this year.

Orchard Aid — a live day of music — will benefit five local orchards: Dutton Berry Farm, Green Mountain Orchards,

Harlow’s Sugarhouse, Scott Farm, and Dwight Miller Orchards.

The concert will take place at Retreat Farm with performances by Pete Bernhard (singer/songwriter for The Devil Makes Three), Slow Pony, Zara Bode and Stefan Amidon, Vermont Timbre, Hazelnuts, Peter Siegel and Friends, Madame Sherri’s Bathwater Guzzlers, and Jatoba.

The concert takes place on Sunday, Oct. 1 from 1 to 7 p.m. at Retreat Farm on Route 30 in Brattleboro, and tickets cost \$20. Those younger than 12 may attend for free.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit retreatfarm.org/gatherings/orchard-aid.

Bal folk at Scott Farm Orchard, 707 Kipling Road in Dummerston, takes place on Sunday, Sept. 17 with the jam session at 3:15 p.m. and community dance at 4:30 p.m. Suggested donation from \$10 to \$30 per person. Appropriate for all ages. Rain or shine. Food will include crêpes, savory hand pies, cider, hard cider, baked goods, and apples.

For more information and to purchase advance tickets, visit scottfarmvermont.com/bal-folk-9172023.

Eloise & Co. (eloiseandco.bandcamp.com) plans to return to Scott Farm Orchard in Dummerston and Broad Brook Community Center in Guilford with more bal folk dancing in October (date to be announced) and on Sunday, Nov. 26 and Sunday, Dec. 17.

For more information about Rachel Bell, visit rachelbellmusic.com. To learn more about Becky Tracy, visit blackislemusic.com.



‘Beaten up but not beaten’

Three Windham County orchards report the loss of almost all their apples, other crops

As a headline in the June 7 issue of *The Commons* reported, “Hard-hit Windham County farms hope for federal relief for an overnight devastating loss of fruit, berry, and vegetable crops.”

Beneath a close-up photo of brown and shriveled buds on trees at Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, a caption elaborated: “Apple buds in orchards throughout Windham County and Vermont were damaged by freezing temperatures overnight on May 17–18, destroying much of this year’s crop.”

The Commons reached out to three local farms for updates on how they are faring after the apple crop devastation earlier this year. Here are their updates.

Simon Renault, general manager, Scott Farm Orchard, Dummerston: “It’s a challenging year for us! We had a freezing on May 18, and it was a perfect storm, because the apples were at the end of bloom — the stage where trees begin the development of apples — the worst possible time. They were just a few millimeters in size. Everything froze, and we lost 90% of the crop!”

“We lost the cherry crop — peaches and plums, too. We have 12 varieties of plums. In February, there were very low temperatures and the wind chill went to –38. That is too cold for

the stone fruit; they all died.

“On a good year, we harvest 14,000 bushels, so 90% of that was lost. The way our business is designed, we do a lot of wholesale throughout New England. We have 130 different varieties of apples. It is very special fruit, and very few commercial orchards have a collection like ours. We send our fruit to food co-ops and specialty stores, and it’s a big loss for a lot of people. The bulk of our income comes from that.”

“This year, 1,000 bushels is what we are left with. It’s still enough to make cider here. At our farm we can still sell apples and cider.”

Scott Farm is a for-profit business whose parent organization is the Landmark Trust USA which is a non-profit historic preservation organization. Its farmstand is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and its café, which serves sandwiches, hard cider, and farm-baked goods, is open Thursday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Read Miller, owner, Dwight Miller Orchards, Dummerston: “Most of the apple crop was devastated by the late May frost. We are beaten up, but we are not beaten.

“We’ve been through things before and we’ve found ways to work through. We are keeping our heads and emotions looking forward. We can’t get caught up

in the emotion of being taken down by something like this.

“The best way the community can help us is to visit the farm and/or a farmstand. We have apples. The thing that really benefits these orchards is to go out and support your local orchard by buying apples, fruit pies, or blueberries, so that we can continue to provide these services.”

Andrea Darrow, co-owner, Green Mountain Orchards, Putney: “We have 85 acres of apple trees and 18 acres of blueberries. This year we only have 5–10% of an apple crop left that we can harvest.

“We are very sad. It’s the first time *ever* that we can’t offer pick-your-own-apples. We’re worried about what it is going to do for families who want to come and pick your own. It’s become a more and more of a fall family pastime.

“We didn’t have peaches or plums, too, this year. Blueberries did well, and we are thankful for that.

“We are thankful for all of the community support. We will be trying to stay open through Christmas with our cider, pies, and doughnuts. We have enough apples that are good-enough quality for sales in our farm store.”

Green Mountain Orchards’ farm store is open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, through the end of October.

CSAG show pairs fine art glass with pastel painting

BELLOWS FALLS—Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St., presents “Glass | Pastel,” a group show exhibiting blown and sculpted glass with pastel paintings from local artists. Glass | Pastel opens on 3rd Friday Gallery Night, Sept. 15, with a celebration and chance to meet the artists from 5 to 7 p.m. The show will be on view through Saturday, Nov. 4.

Artists include Clare Adams, Robert Burch, Deedee Jones, Nicholas Kekic, Marcie Maynard, Patricia McPike, Melissa Rubin, Chris Sherwin, and Maggie F. Smith.

Adams, based in

Cambridgeport, shows new reverse painted glass. Burch, based in Putney, creates a new series of ocean and beach inspired blown glass. Jones, based in Brattleboro, makes pastel paintings of the Vermont landscape and water from the artist’s travels. Kekic, based in Bellows Falls, blows glass vessels using traditional venetian techniques with modern designs.

Maynard, based in Bellows Falls, displays a collection of pastel paintings of boats, marshes, and still lifes. McPike, based in Brattleboro, offers a selection of pastel paintings focused on vibrant colors from the places the artist spends time.

Rubin, based in Cambridgeport, brings a series of pastel paintings of seabirds to the show. Sherwin, based in Bellows Falls, is making new series such as underwater themed glass paperweights with lily pads and frogs. Smith, based in Putney, exhibits pastel paintings of landscapes and architecture.

The Glass | Pastel show “is a newly envisioned medium focus show, of the type Canal Street Art Gallery exhibited in its first four years,” according to a news release. “One of the goals of these shows was to bring together artworks from different artists using the same medium to achieve

common, unique, and sometimes surprising results. These shows presented to visitors an opportunity to learn in depth about how these artists use their materials and techniques to create their art.”

Canal Street Art Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit canalstreetartgallery.com. All Gallery events are free. For wheelchair accessibility, call 802-289-0104 upon arrival.

BMAC celebrates Andrews Inn and its legacy as a LGBTQ space

BRATTLEBORO—In 1973, the Andrews Inn opened in Bellows Falls and became a legendary dance club, restaurant, hotel, and gathering place for southern Vermont’s LGBTQ+ community for more than a decade. Fifty years later, in honor of the people and culture that shaped the inn’s legacy, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) hosts a day-long celebration of the inn on Saturday, Sept. 23.

In partnership with Vermont Folklife and Out in the Open, BMAC is inviting visitors to drop in anytime after 10 a.m. to view the exhibition “Pride 1983” and record their own stories to be included in the Vermont Queer Archives.

At 5 p.m., there will be a panel discussion about the Andrews Inn moderated by HB Lozito, executive director of Out in the Open.

Following the panel discussion, the celebration continues with an Andrews Inn-inspired dance party, complete with pop-up bar, 1970s decor, and plenty of disco tunes.

Kirsten Martsi, manager of education and community engagement programs at the BMAC, called the day-long event “a way for Vermonters to honor and celebrate a state landmark and the people that came together to make it possible.”

The Andrews Inn embodied the spirit of gay liberation and pride that emerged in the 1970s in the wake of the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in New York. The three-floor brick building in the center of Bellows Falls became a social beacon in the rural New England LGBTQ+ landscape — a place to eat, drink, meet people, stay overnight, work as activists, and exchange mutual support during

a time when homophobia was rampant.

The inn’s visibility in Bellows Falls helped break down barriers, but also made its patrons vulnerable to prejudice and backlash. “There was always tension,” Thom Herman, a co-owner of the Andrews Inn, told Vermont Public in June. Regular patron Michael Gigante remembered “tremendous animosity” in Bellows Falls toward people who gathered at the inn.

First-person accounts from Herman and Gigante, among others, are part of the Andrews Inn Oral History Project, which emerged in 2015 from a collaboration between Out in the Open (formerly Green Mountain Crossroads), Marlboro College, and Vermont Performance Lab (VPL).

The result was new performance work by VPL-affiliated

artists, Marlboro College student projects grounded in oral histories collected from local radicals, and Out in the Open’s Andrews Inn Oral History Project.

Part of the impetus behind the collaboration and the oral history project was to correct inaccurate perceptions. “There is a pervasive narrative,” Lozito said, “that LGBTQ+ people don’t, can’t, or shouldn’t live in rural communities, or that our presence in these places is somehow ‘new.’ The story of the Andrews Inn illustrates not only that we can and should, but also that we have for a long time — even before the advent of the Inn. Our legacy is long and getting longer every day.”

To kick off the Sept. 23 event at BMAC, educators from Vermont Folklife will record interviews with anyone who has a story to tell about Vermont’s queer community. Those interviews will be added to the Vermont Queer Archives, a collection maintained by the Pride Center of Vermont. From 10 a.m. on, anyone can come to the museum and share a story; no registration is necessary.

While at the museum, visitors can also view the exhibition “Pride 1983,” which explores the origins and legacy of Burlington’s first Pride celebration. The exhibition draws on archival materials from the Pride Center of Vermont, UVM Special Collections, and the Andrews Inn Oral History Project, as well as the personal collections of individuals featured in the exhibition.

The 5 p.m. panel discussion features several local icons — including Herman, Gigante, and Robert McBride of the Rockingham Arts and Museum Project — who brought the Andrews Inn to life in the 1970s and kept the party going until the establishment closed in 1984.

Admission to all the day’s events, including the dance party following the panel discussion, is free.



A scene from a 1970s-vintage drag show at the former Andrews Inn in Bellows Falls.

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SUNDAY 2:15 / 6:40

THE RETIREMENT PLAN R
MON.-THUR. 4 / 7
FRIDAY 4 / 7 / 9
SATURDAY 2 / 7 / 9
SUNDAY 2 / 7

ARISTOTLE & DANTE PG-13
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FRIDAY 4 / 6:50 / 8:50
SATURDAY 2:15 / 6:50 / 8:50
SUNDAY 2:15 / 6:50

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Here We Are - Wyn Cooper, Poet, Songwriter: Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 10:45a, Thurs 12:00p & 9:15p, Fri 12:15p, Sun 5:20p	Brattleboro Selectboard EMS Forum 9/12/23 - SUBJECT TO CHANGE: Tues 6p, (LIVE), Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 12p
The World Fusion Show - Ep# 160 - Mathieu Borgne: Mon 4p, Tues 10a, Wed 9a, Thurs 2:30p, Fri 6:15a & 9:30a, Sat 6:30p, Sun 4:30p	Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg. 9/11/23: Tues 12:45p, Wed 7a, Thurs 1p, Sat 8:30p
Brattleboro Gallery Walk - September 1, 2023: Mon 11:50a, Tues 9:50p, Wed 11:20a & 5:20p, Thurs 10:50a, Fri 12:50p & 5:50p, Sat 12:20p & 9:50p, Sun 2:20p	West River Education District Board Mtg. 9/11/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
Couch Potatoe Productions - PLANET ZYDECO presented by Next Stage Arts & Twilight Music: Mon 10a, Tues 8p, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 9a, Fri 4p, Sat 8p, Sun 12:30p	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 9/11/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p
Around Town With Maria - Artful Streets at Gallery Walk 9/1/23: Thurs 3:30p, Fri 1:30p, Sat 9a, Sun 6p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 9/11/23: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
BCTV Open Studio - FEMA and SBA Disaster Relief Resources 8/31/23: Mon 9p, Tues 6:15a, Wed 9:30a, Thurs 3p, Fri 11:30a, Sun 9:45p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 9/12/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 2:30p
Vermont Skate Broadcasts - Fall 2023 Promo: Thurs 7:45a, Fri 7:55a, Sun 5:55p & 9:40p	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 9/12/23: Sat 6p, Sun 9:30a
Thorn in My Side - Tournament of Champions 8/6/22: Mon 12:15p, Tues 3:50p, Wed 9p, Thurs 9:45p, Fri 6:45a, Sat 2p, Sun 8:30p	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg. 9/13/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
Brattleboro Historical Society presents - East Dummerston School History: Mon 6:35p, Tues 6:35p, Wed 6:35p, Thurs 6:35p, Fri 6:35p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 9/5/23: Mon 7:15a, Tues 8:30p, Wed 4p
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Fimmel: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 9/6/23: Mon 10:45a & 12p, Tues 11:30a, Sun 8:15a
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Rescue Inc Presents - Open House 8/26/23: Mon 4:30p, Tues 10a, Sun 6p
News Block: WTSR News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Training For Board Members 8/16/23: Mon 3:30p, Tues 8a, Wed 12p, Sat 11a
St. Michael’s Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 8/10/23: Mon 9:30a, Tues 9:15p, Thurs 11:15a, Fri 4:45p, Sun 7:30p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 5p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 8/16/23: Mon 1:15p, Tues 6a, Wed 2p, Sun 6:15a
Guilford 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.

View full schedule and watch online at **brattleborotv.org**

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

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González

audiences want to dance.

GONZÁLEZ STUDIED initially with Valdés's sister, Mayra Caridad Valdés, and then continued in the esteemed Centro Nacional de Escuelas de Arte de Cuba (the National Art Schools of Cuba), earning his "monster technique" — a description from one reviewer — by fortifying his given talent with hours of classical study, six to eight hours a day.

At the age of 16, González joined former Irakere member Oscar Valdes's Afro-Cuban jazz ensemble Diákara, and he immersed himself in timba music of the highest level.

González has twice won first place in Havana's Jo Jazz Festival and earned three Cubadisco Awards, considered the Grammys of Cuba.

He attended Berklee College of Music as the first Cuban national Presidential Scholar and performed at Carnegie Hall as one of the representatives of the up-and-coming generation of Afro-Cuban jazz pianists in their Series.

As a young man, González toured the U.S. and Europe with the father and son dynasty of Cuban piano: Bebo and Chucho Valdés. He was mentored by these two legendary musicians, the most important living exponents of Cuban piano music at that time.

In conversations and lessons, González deepened his knowledge about the broad expanse of Cuban popular music and how to channel it through the piano (which he considers an extension of the drum).

He learned from Bebo Valdés about the rich, historical Cuban piano repertoire of son, mambo, and cha-cha-chá harkening back to Bebo's association with the legendary Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona.

González was also strongly influenced by the younger Chucho Valdés's modern approach to the piano and composition and the dramatic impact it had on the direction of Cuban music in general.

Chucho's group, Irakere, was one of the most significant ensembles to shift the weight of Cuban music from salsa to timba. One of González's recordings as a leader is a tribute to Juan Formell and Los Van Van, a timba supergroup whose style and popularity grew from the seeds planted by Chucho Valdés and Irakere.

DAYRAMIR GONZÁLEZ understands the Cuban musical structures on both micro and macro levels — from its historical roots to its modern, urban, and electric sounds. He also is keenly aware of music's impact on the cultural and social soul of the nation. Many of his original compositions use facets of the

time-honored styles of Cuban music as building blocks and referential blueprints.

But as a conceptualist and creative person with a voice all his own, González's music demonstrates the integration of all aspects of Cuban music, from folkloric drumming to its connection to newer styles that include hip-hop and electronics. His repertoire demonstrates a deep knowledge and respect for the origin of stylistic details and a delight in moving the tradition forward.

In a conversation with Brian Pace, González discussed the presence of rhythm and emotion in Cuban music and how those two factors serve as catalysts for creativity.

"One of the biggest blessings we have in Cuba is that we still carry the legacy of the Yoruba tribe, it's still very alive," he said. "I'm talking about those who came from West Africa — Benin, Congo, Nigeria."

"When our ancestors came as slaves to Cuba they were able to establish themselves and express their joys and sorrows through the tambor (hand drums). Many of generations of musicians used drums before we had the piano to express how happy or how sad we feel.

"In the Rumba we have Yambú, a slowed-down, crying music that conveyed frustration and disappointment. You can see those emotions in the movement of the body, and you hear the emotion in the playing of the tambor and the singing. You notice [early on] the person was able to communicate these feelings through the drum and voice.

"And then — it was transferred to the piano. I'm a percussionist who plays piano who has the blessing to understand harmony and to have control of the craft. The piano is a percussive instrument that channels rhythm through the lens of harmony and scales — that's the craft."

FOR THE VJC concert, González will be playing the Steinway concert grand in a quartet setting with bassist James Robbins, a former student and junior instructor of the Vermont Jazz Center who is now an established player on the New York scene.

Robbins has released one album as a leader and played with Clark Terry, Billy Taylor, George Benson, James Moody, Freddie Hubbard, Eric Lewis, Johnny O'Neal, Gerald Clayton, Sullivan Fortner, Joel Frahm, and many others.

He also played with the Colombian electro-group Delsonido and the rock band Thank You Scientist. Robbins teaches part-time at the American School of Modern Music in Paris.

FROM SECTION FRONT

The group's drummer is Argentinian-born Juan Chiavassa, who graduated from Berklee College of Music after attending Escuela de Música Contemporánea in Buenos Aires.

In addition to González, he has worked with Mike Stern, Paquito D'Rivera, Esperanza Spalding, Omar Rodríguez-López, George Garzone, David Kikoski, Leo Genovese, Benito Gonzalez, Jeremy Pelt, Eric Alexander, Leni Stern, and Bob Moses. He also performed on *The Tonight Show* starring Jimmy Fallon with multi-Grammy winning rappers Residente and Bad Bunny. He has released two records as a composer and producer.

Taka Nikaido will be playing percussion. He has performed with Carlos Vives, Yosvany Terry, Terence Blanchard, Jon Secada, Darren Barrett, Totó la Momposina, Paquito D'Rivera, Arturo O'Farrill, and others.

Nikaido received a Best Foreign Entrant award in La Fiesta del Tambor in Cuba. He has performed at the Montreal International Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival, and others. He has recorded numerous CD projects and is one of the soundtrack creators of the video games *Final Fantasy XV* and *Dr. Stone*.

The press for his concert at Carnegie Hall claimed "Dayramir González can be added to the pantheon of distinctive Cuban jazz voices [...] setting the Latin jazz world on fire in America." Come see and hear for yourself the amazing level of his infectious performing.

ADMISSION TO THIS in-person event is by a sliding fee (\$25 to \$60). All seats are general admission and available at vtjazz.org and by email at ginger@vtjazz.org.

For accessibility needs, email ginger@vtjazz.org.

The streaming of this concert at vtjazz.org and at [facebook.com/VermontJazzCenter/live](https://www.facebook.com/VermontJazzCenter/live) will be offered free, but donations will be welcomed.



"Middle Path" by Liz Hawkes deNiord

COURTESY PHOTO

Putney Library exhibits artwork by Liz Hawkes deNiord

PUTNEY—"Portals," a series of abstract paintings by Liz Hawkes deNiord, is now on exhibit at Putney Public Library, 55 Main St., through Dec. 2.

"Liz's dynamic paintings reflect her immersion in the physical process as well as her love of saturated, radiant color and luminosity," the library said in a news release. "The paintings are both dreamlike and grounded. Her process is one of multiple layering, scraping, covering up, and building up heavily textured surfaces with palette knife and paint. The paintings emerge layered with pure colors creating an iridescent quality."

She says, "What lies beneath

each one is essential to what one sees on the surface. Working mostly on large vertical canvases, the vertical alignment resonates as a physical presence. The paintings evolve through layers, through rotation of the canvas and through a suspended trust in the outcome to 'pay attention' consciously and unconsciously."

Liz Hawkes deNiord is a painter, ceramic artist, and educator, having taught for 38 years in Vermont, Connecticut, Iowa, and Virginia. Locally, she taught ceramics at The Putney School and drawing at Landmark College. For more than two decades, she taught Foundations in Art, sculpture, and ceramics at Brattleboro

Union High School.

A studio art major and Asian studies minor in college, she took two masters degrees in education, one in learning disabilities, which enabled her to tutor and or teach in schools, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals, and the other in art education.

She works in her Westminster West studio and currently shows her work regionally in Manchester and Burlington, Vermont. For more information about her work, see lizhawkesdeniord.com.

The library will host an artist reception on Saturday, Oct. 21, from 1 to 3 p.m.

ATP Pay-What-You-Like

FROM SECTION FRONT

all kinds, and for several years he served as the writing specialist at Vermont Law School.

Panella is the author of the memoir *The Other Side: Growing up Italian in America*, and the novel *Cutter's Island*, which won a Foreword Indies fiction award.

Of his latest novel, *Sicilian Dreams*, set in 1907, one review said "the volume calls to mind the work of 20th-century Italian novelists like Cesare Pavese and Leonardo Sciascia, wherein the convictions of a moral man are tested by an invariably amoral environment."

• William Shakespeare is ... well, Shakespeare — probably the most quoted writer of all time, anywhere. But as high as the pedestal on which we put him, it's important to remember he was an actor, too, a working man of the theater very aware of the need to

please his audiences — and sponsors — in order to make a buck.

The evening's performers include Josh Goldstein, Wendy Almeida, Mo Hart, Munson Hicks, Bruce Holloway, Susan O'Hara, Nan Mann, and Sue Rowell.

Sherman Morrison, Bob Kramsky, and Sam Pilo direct.

In a media release, Pilo, the event's producer, invites people to "come join the party" — actually, a fundraiser for the Playhouse Building and Maintenance Fund, which supports the protection and preservation of its facility.

"We wanted to do a yearly benefit for the Fund," he adds, "which keeps the Playhouse secure and handsome, and at the same time look for a type of program to cap the end of each season with a project that reflects somehow to the beginning of

each season, which is usually our Ten Minute Play Festival."

In other words, the aim was to create "a grab bag of comedy and drama that gives our actors and directors a bit of challenge," Pilo says.

"When we started to line up the theatrical and literary materials at our disposal, the format of a 'variety show' jumped out at us," he continues, calling it "a chance for actors and directors to hop across the theatrical universe with the flick of a switch."

And that, he observed, is "pretty much a good definition of our Ten Minute Play Festivals that begin each season."

"So it seemed a logical conclusion to achieve both goals...and the most fun," Pilo says.

When the 2023 season is put to bed, ATP will start percolating ideas for next year, which

will include, says Pilo, another 10-minute play festival, a production or two, staged readings, and a spoken word project.

And what of the building's needs?

"Nothing dire," says Pilo. "Painting and minor plumbing repairs...maintenance!"

All performances begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. Actors Theatre Playhouse is at the corner of Brook and Main streets in West Chesterfield, New Hampshire. To purchase tickets, visit atplayhouse.org. Admission is "pay-what-you-like," which Pilo says is designed to encourage attendance and participation. "It reflects our appreciation to our audiences for the good will and support they offer us."

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NECCA welcomes Harris as strategic development director

BRATTLEBORO—Lissa Harris has joined the staff at the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) as the Director of Strategic Development.

According to a NECCA news release, this position "was created as part of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan to build financial

longevity, increase capacity for program impact in the community, and to address the pressing need of increasing wages and benefits for staff."

As former development director for Food Connects, Harris created financial stability for that nonprofit organization through

strategic fundraising and storytelling and was responsible for grants and campaigns, including a capital campaign yielding more than \$1 million for a new storage facility.

Harris has extensive experience and a solid track record in fundraising and community engagement. With a career spanning over two decades, she has directed development efforts for a diverse range of organizations.

"As executive director at Strolling of the Heifers, she defied challenges, retained sponsorships and propelled events beyond setbacks," states the news release. In New York, "her passion for mission-driven work led her to positions at national organizations, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the American Cancer Society, where she worked to secure funding and support for critical missions that touched lives on a national scale."

Her career journey encompasses fundraising, marketing, brand management, journalism, and working as a veterinarian technician. Rooted in a degree in psychology from Hofstra University and fortified by Fundraising and Development certifications from Marlboro College, NECCA says Harris "blends vision with action in all her development activities. Beyond her professional endeavors, Lissa also demonstrates community leadership having served on a school board, nonprofit boards, and community councils."

NECCA says Harris will be busy in her new role getting acquainted with current and prospective donors, organizing a fall donor event, and leading the end-of-year appeal. She can be reached at development@necenterforcircusarts.org.

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ESSAY

Leaving the prescription and facing the fear

I depended on a prescription controlled substance to get through life for four years, and I'm far from alone. I decided to leave the meds behind and try again to confront the experiences, to try to learn from them. The first thing I faced was terror.

Halifax
I WAS PRESCRIBED, and took, a 0.5 mg pill of clonazepam nightly to suppress night terrors for four years, starting in 2011. It's a low dose, but I became habituated — as one does.

I stopped cold turkey eight years ago this month and then used somatic therapy to heal my life-destroying sleep disorder.

This choice rescued my life. Knowing that my medical conditions are isolating yet widespread in Vermont and the U.S., I wanted to pass on a few things I learned. For anyone stuck like I was, I hope there's something here that helps.

Clonazepam is a sedative in the same class (benzodiazepines) as Valium ("Mother's Little Helper") and Xanax. I depended on a prescription controlled substance to get through life for four years, and I'm far from alone. While benzos are far weaker and less fatal than fentanyl, addiction in this class has taken a huge toll over decades, and it continues to.

I offer these details so that anyone in recovery has a concrete sense of my path — what it is and what it isn't. Also, I'm benzodiazepine-free and alcohol-seldom, not substance-free. I don't want to come across as something I'm not.

AS A ROOKIE LEGISLATOR this year, I was shocked at times to learn how much Vermont has normalized permanent opioid addiction. For example,

TRISTAN ROBERTS is serving his first term in the Vermont House of Representatives for Windham-6. Comments or questions? In honor of National Recovery Month, he's extending an invitation to reach him at tristan@tristanroberts.org for more resources for anyone who's struggling.

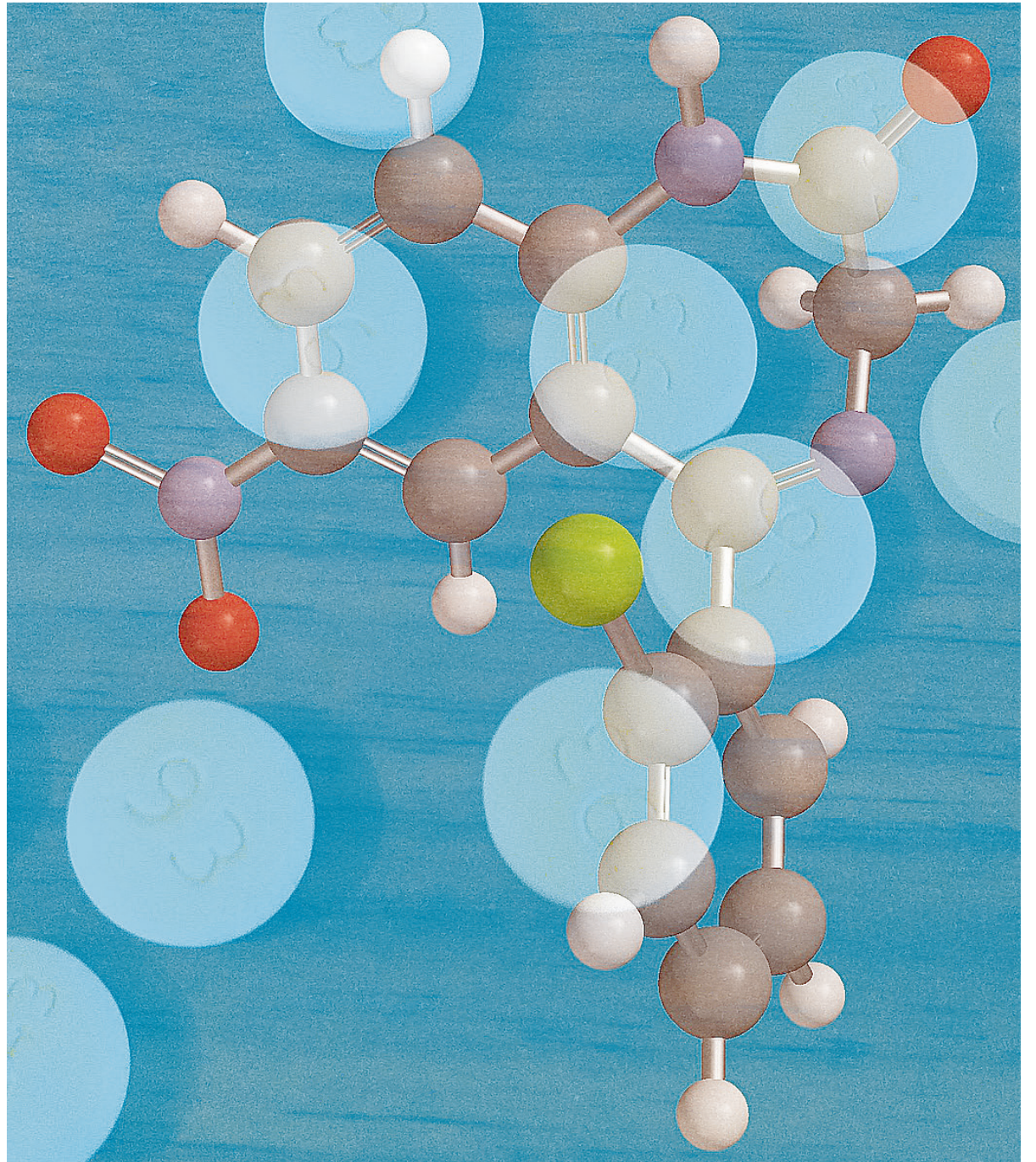
Vermont's inmates have the medical right to a daily dose of a "clean" version of the more dangerous street drugs, but have no similar right to 12-step programs, and often lack access.

This is how we try to keep opioid users alive and away from illegal activity. We enforce compliance by watching their pee. The hope is that someone pisses clean for a few weeks, months, and then years, all while putting their life back together.

Maybe one day they'll choose to wean off. Until then, the opioid user gets buprenorphine. This pathway, part of Vermont's overall focus on "harm reduction," is essential to saving lives today.

In the long run for me, sobriety meant choosing to confront hard feelings and hard thoughts rather than push them away.

As I've developed that skill, it's like what author and activist Ann Braden said at a recent event in her honor: "Once you've found out what you're capable of, you don't often forget it."



PHOTOILLUSTRATION BASED ON IMAGES FROM WIKIMEDIA COMMONS CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE
The molecular structure of clonazepam, a benzodiazepine that's tightly regulated by the federal government and puts users at risk of dependency.

WHAT IS A sleep or night terror?

It's a type of sleep disorder. It's as bad as your baddest nightmare, but also worse. Normally, while dreaming, your body is as limp as a rag doll. A sleep terror is embodied and experienced. One's body leaps into action as if in response to a real threat. There's no sense that it's a dream.

To add to the confusion, there's often no conscious recall.

My episodes started around age 7, lasting from a few seconds to a couple of minutes long. My dad became expert at running down the hall and turning on the light, which would jolt me back to conscious reality.

In one night terror, I'd hallucinated that I was being crushed under concrete. The bedroom light woke me crouching with my arms above me, pushing on the underside of the upper bunk for dear life. I'd be out of breath, feeling my heart racing but not knowing why.

I'd wake up, too few hours later,

for the school bus, then stumble to the breakfast table asking, "Did I do anything last night?" Pouring cereal, I'd recall a flash of the event and the horror.

Rolling out of control in a vehicle downhill was a theme that started when I'd sleep in my Subaru while driving cross-country to Idaho at 18. I'd wake up to find myself pumping my legs for the brake but only finding air.

There's no off-switch on this disorder for sleepovers or top bunks. At home, I'd run through my (ground floor) window in my effort to escape annihilation.

At times I was able to chuckle about it, like the time I was seen running in my seat while sleeping on an airplane.

Inside I felt like a freak. My pediatrician said I'd "grow out of it," without offering any tools. Instead, I lived that car crash and other bone-crushing scenarios at least 24,090 times by the time I filled that 0.5 mg prescription in

my late 30s.

Weeks after the Subaru car crash became a recurring theme, I survived a fall of 200 feet in Idaho's Sawtooth Wilderness. I labored to understand how I kept ending up injured, in seemingly preventable ways, in both waking and sleeping life.

I worried that the term "self-destructive" could apply to me and felt powerless to do anything about it.

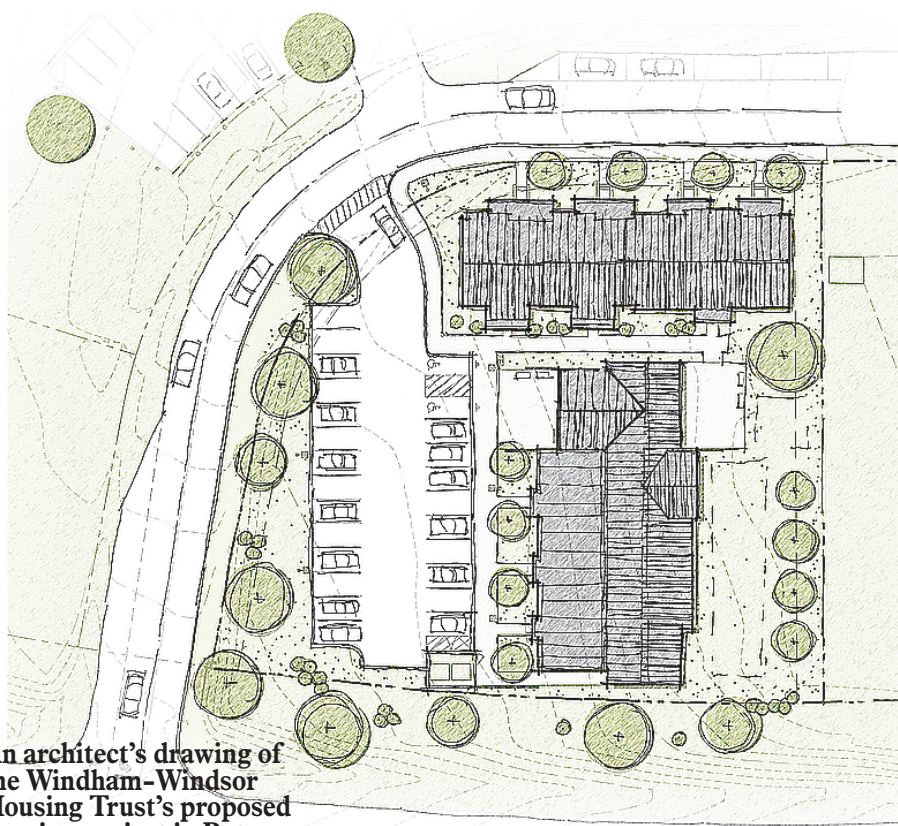
Seeking help after that accident, I was prescribed 4 mg of clonazepam daily for what that doctor called nighttime panic attacks. I slept OK, but after five medicated months, I gained the sense that waking life had hazed over.

I quit and ended up feeling better. I started at Marlboro College months later, sober and optimistic.

UNFORTUNATELY, I never outgrew it. When my doctor offered me low-dose clonazepam in my late 30s, I filled the prescription.

■ SEE LEAVING CLONAZEPAM, C2

RESPONSE



An architect's drawing of the Windham-Windsor Housing Trust's proposed housing project in Putney.

The confusion is understandable

The town website describes the Putney Selectboard as the final decision-making authority for the town. It seemed obvious that the board would have the power to reverse a DRB decision upon hearing reasonable arguments from the community.

Putney
AS FORMER APPELLANT on cases 22-ENV-0003 and 23-AP-080, I write to honor all the courageous, honest people who took a stand and signed a petition to the Putney Selectboard to withdraw approval of Windham & Windsor Housing Trust's permit for construction of 25 units of mixed-income housing, in two massive buildings, accompanied by a 25 space parking

LAURA CAMPBELL was the appellant in two cases contesting the town of Putney granting permission to the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust to create a multi-unit housing project downtown. This piece is in response to "We cannot consider this petition" [Primary Sources, Aug. 30].

lot, south of the Community Garden, on 0.91 acres east of Alice Holway Drive.

Between Aug. 11, when the petition began circulating, and the Aug. 23 Selectboard

meeting, where Putney Selectboard Chair Aileen Chute disallowed its being read aloud, well over 100 interested persons — over 5% of registered

■ SEE PUTNEY PETITION, C2



garage provides direct access to the house and there is a shed attached for storage. The back yard has terraced garden space and plenty of room for play and relaxation on the 1.58(+/-) acres and a shed to store toys and tools.

Wonderful home with plenty of indoor and outdoor space. The family room has a gas fireplace and hardwood floors. There is a slider to the large deck. The kitchen has a breakfast nook space that overlooks the deck and back yard. Ample dining room for family gatherings and a spacious living room with built in book shelves. The 2nd floor bedrooms are spacious and have great closet space. The primary bedroom has ensuite 3/4 bath and two large closets. The basement media/rec room is ready for your pool table and great as a game room. There is also a potential workshop with slider to the back yard and a cement patio. The in-law apartment has a modest kitchen area/living room area with spiral staircase to the 2nd floor bedroom and slider to the back deck. The attached 2 car



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■ Leaving clonazepam

FROM SECTION FRONT

Anything for relief. I was terrified to go to sleep.

In those days, the car crashes had been replaced with another harrowing scenario: watching my baby boy get smothered by a plastic bag while I clawed at the dark chasm he had fallen into.

I had trouble scheduling an appointment the first time I needed a refill. I left messages for the doctor about my fear of going off the drug. It was clear that the meds had become a crutch, but at least one that sheltered me.

When I was off medication, a quiet week was rare. I'd study myself for clues, always tweaking my diet or supplements. Nothing improved in the long run — until I addressed my underlying emotional landscape.

Adverse childhood experiences — ultimately diagnosed as childhood PTSD — left me afraid that I could die at any moment. I lacked resources to heal this and turned it into thousands of other fearful experiences.

I never stopped looking for help. Upon seeing a new doctor or homeopath or hypnotist, the conversation would come around to something like this: "Do you recall any major events when you were 7 that could have caused this?"

No one told me how identifying a formative event would heal it, and this waylaid me.

I'd freeze. I'd tell them I had a pretty normal childhood. The terror I felt around my parents, who seemed nice enough as far back as I could consciously recall, was as invisible as the air I often clutched at.

One of the diagnostic criteria for sleep-terror disorder is that the "episodes" cause significant distress in the daytime, so that was always on the doctor's questionnaire. My life had struggles, but also successes.

"I'm doing OK," I'd say, in incensed denial.

Some treatments seemed to help — for a while — and then I'd do something like jump headfirst over the football to escape a locomotive. Walking into my new job with a black eye, I couldn't be present with my own hopelessness. That left me disembodied.

I feel very lucky to have noticed that I was missing, often with the help of a true friend. I feel lucky that I held on to my intention to not turn a temporary solution into a permanent problem, and confuse

suppression with treatment.

"Benzodiazepine medications used at bedtime will often reduce night terrors; however, medication is not usually recommended to treat this disorder," says Johns Hopkins Medicine, for example.

In 2015, I decided to leave the meds behind and try again to confront the experiences, to try to learn from them.

The first thing I faced was fear. I anticipated a "rebound reaction" of nighttime activity. I barely slept for four days.

THE RESOURCE I found that all that made the difference was trauma-informed therapy.

I still remained stuck, having identified no foundational event to heal.

This time, I got curious: "What if my body is trying to tell me something?" I wondered. I developed more tools to be present with the terrors. I listened to my own thoughts, rather than push them away.

I started seeing Lisa Newell of Brattleboro weekly for somatic experiencing, a modality in which I gave my body the respect of feeling it, with the benefit of tools that instilled safety.

Some sessions were nothing but a series of intuitive movements. One week at a time, I'd revisit my nightmare scenarios — but this time, with a coach in my corner.

I'd done years of talk therapy, but this felt different. I learned that I could metabolize hard emotions from the past and let them go.

I also continued in concert with my talk therapist, using that time to unlock my voice. Throughout 2016 (a good year for feeling triggered!) I revisited memory fragments that had long puzzled me, and I noticed ways to stop cycling through patterns.

I dare say, I grew.

THE FALLBACK EXPLANATION for my sleep disorder was "You've got bad genes."

That's how I felt — defective.

When my sleep habits and sleep loss contributed to break-ups, I'd freak out about feeling abandoned. I'd search again for cures, like the time my doctor had me give every prescribable sleeping pill a five-night trial, or the time I persuaded my skeptical doctor to let me try taking an anti-seizure med at bedtime.

All of this succeeded only at getting my hopes up, and,

VIEWPOINT

Child care law invests in future generations

With the passage of the groundbreaking legislation, Vermont takes a decisive stand in support of families — and places our smallest, most vulnerable Vermonters at the forefront

IN JUNE, the Vermont Legislature demonstrated strong commitment to families by overriding the governor's veto and enacting the 2023 Child Care Bill into law.

This landmark legislation, investing \$125 million annually into the child care system through sustainable and fiscally responsible public investment, stabilizes Vermont's child care sector. It also represents a monumental leap forward in providing accessible, high-quality child care for all Vermont families.

By championing this law, Vermont has positioned itself as a national leader in child care, an achievement that should fill us all with pride.

The law's expansion of eligibility means about 7,500 more Vermont children and their families will have access to child care financial assistance. Increased public funding will help bolster child care programs' staffing and capacity. The law sets the stage for increased investments in Vermont's early childhood education workforce and in minimum-pay standards for educators.

GROWING UP WITH a mother who worked as a child care provider in Vermont, I witnessed firsthand the paltry compensation she received for her invaluable contribution.

ISAAC EVANS-FRANTZ serves as the executive director of a national nonpartisan organization that campaigns for U.S. policies to save lives around the world. To learn more about the law's impact on you, your family, and Vermont's economy, visit bit.ly/731-childcare.

For years, my mom made just \$7 an hour. At my high school job, I made more than she did.

During my U.S. Senate campaign last year, as I biked across Vermont, I heard from fellow Vermonters about the exorbitant costs of child care and their arduous struggles to secure available slots.

One man here in Windham County told me he was spending as much on child care as the cost of college tuition. Many families are allocating nearly a third of their household income toward child care expenses.

And yet, child care workers are still among the lowest-compensated workers.

This reality has stayed with me and shows the urgency of investing in our state's child care system.

PROVIDING MORE resources to our state's child care system is a farsighted decision that holds immense benefits. With long-term and sustainable public funding, we will empower thousands of parents, particularly women, with the option to reenter the workforce. This will enhance the financial stability of Vermont families and

bolster our state's economy to the tune of millions of dollars.

Having worked in Federally Qualified Health Centers for over eight years, caring for new families and supporting frontline workers, I have personally witnessed the critical role of early childhood care.

As we grapple in Vermont with challenges like homelessness, incarceration, and addiction, it becomes imperative that we adopt a long-term perspective and invest in future generations.

To fund the new child care subsidy, a simple payroll tax will be implemented. The tax, amounting to less than half a percent (0.44%), is shared between employers and employees.

This modest cost will yield immense rewards for families, businesses, and communities, ensuring access to affordable child care and impacting the lives of thousands. It's no surprise that dozens of businesses across Vermont endorsed this initiative.

WHILE MY HUSBAND Derrick and I do not currently have children, the concept of collectively supporting families

resonates deeply with us. Parenting is a journey filled with sacrifices and challenges.

A tax system based on income helps alleviate the burdens faced by families. None of us can predict when we may need assistance, and investing in the well-being of the next generation of young Vermonters will ultimately improve all our lives.

The term "family values" has been used as code language to advance homophobia and social conservatism. However, right-wing opportunists do not hold a monopoly on valuing families: Families are a fundamental unit in our society.

For Vermonters to have better lives, we need to make life easier for our families. The new law epitomizes this notion by extending material support to parents, and it grants breathing room they and their children need to thrive.

With the passage of the groundbreaking child care law, Vermont takes a decisive stand in support of families — and places our smallest, most vulnerable Vermonters at the forefront. They are the very embodiment of our future.

By thanking our state legislators for their commitment to child care and expressing gratitude to child care providers, we can celebrate this historic achievement and further propel our state towards a brighter future.

a couple of years later, red-flagging my life-insurance application.

Medicating was a relief from the powerlessness. But to let go of it risked nothing but deeper hopelessness.

NO MEDICINE WORKS for free. I had to show up.

Leaving the prescription and facing the music was overwhelming at first. My mental dial spun out of control.

But I survived, and felt better.

The constant tightness I felt in my chest, the congestion in my forehead for which I'd been prescribed an inhaler as a child, evaporated.

The tightness came back. But then it disappeared, for longer and longer periods.

TODAY, I still — often — wake with a start. But my most harrowing experiences are now

only memories.

When I feel fear or anxiety, I'm more often grateful that my body's barometers are telling me something.

"There are many pathways to recovery" is something you hear about substance use. It also fits night terrors. Tens of thousands of Vermonters suffer with this disorder, and everyone finds a different path.

Some experts argue that we should reclassify sleep terrors

as trauma-associated sleep disorder (TSD). Interesting idea. What if we took a fresh look at how we get kids trauma-informed therapy?

Unreported child abuse and neglect is endemic. What if, instead of expecting that a kid in an exam room will report that, the doctor just prescribed treatment on the spot?

We might be able to give more kids back their childhoods.

■ Putney petition

FROM SECTION FRONT

voters, including myself — stepped up to sign the petition, placing their faith in our Selectboard as it is introduced and described on the town website. Additional signatures await filing with the town clerk.

In paragraph 2 of her statement to the Selectboard and attending citizens, Chute informed a surprised audience that "the Selectboard does not have the authority to rescind zoning permits and, consequently, we cannot consider this petition."

She offered support for her conclusion from Town Attorney Lawrence G. Slason, who, she says, "has confirmed this." The statute is relevant to the current situation, stating in no uncertain terms, "Interested persons [such as Putney residents signing a petition] affected shall not thereafter contest, either directly or indirectly" municipal panels' decisions, like those of the Development Review Board and the Selectboard.

However, the Putney town website conveys a different message.

"The Select Board is the final decision making authority for the Town of Putney. This three [sic] member Board provides general supervision and control over town; enacts ordinances, regulations, and policies; oversees town property and personnel; prepares, presents and manages budget; and oversees roads, including laying out, discontinuing, reclassifying roads, and reviews the biweekly financials of the municipality. The Legislative Body acts as local Town Agent(s), liquor control commission, and water/sewer commission."

If Putney Selectboard were indeed the final decision-making authority for the town in the areas of its warrant listed above, it seemed to me prior to reading the relevant state law that board would have the power to change its mind upon hearing reasonable arguments from the community in opposition to authorization — authorization I learned only after signing the petition was *not* the Selectboard's to give — since all responsibilities of the

Selectboard warrant, as presented at the website, would be directly impacted by WWHT's projections.

The confusion is understandable, I think.

The final decision-making authority, I now learn, is Putney Development Review Board's alone. Our DRB granted WWHT approval on March 9, 2022 while the Selectboard met and followed an agenda on which the WWHT application did not appear.

IN RESPONSE to soil testing in September 2021, WWHT had had to revise its original project designs quickly and radically prior to gaining DRB approval.

Up until that point, initial plans, which WWHT energetically promoted from 2019, called for 10 to 12 units in five or six duplexes on 0.91 acres east of Alice Holway Drive. This was fewer than half the number of units that WWHT ultimately proposed for the lot in question.

A far more spacious initial project design welcomed a

gazebo at the highest point of the 0.91 acres; however, that complementary feature has disappeared from the approved plan along with the duplexes. There was no longer any room for it.

The path to Putney DRB's approval of WWHT's permit application on March 9, 2022 was subject to several procedural irregularities, to which the petition attests.

The upshot is that the permit application for the project effectively contradicts the 2015 Town Plan with respect to preliminary planning, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations.

It puts prospective tenants' safety and peaceful enjoyment of the premises at serious risk in an excessively cramped interpersonal environment surrounded by three busy thoroughfares.

It also impinges on the Putney Community Garden to a degree the initial plans did not.

And it sacrifices the last open green space available for the health and recreation of the Putney community.

My March 1, 2022 letter to Peter Paggi, WWHT real estate development director; Pip Banister, the DRB and Planning Commission chair; and Karen Astley, the town manager, followed the one-and-only Covid-era Feb. 15, 2022 hearing on WWHT's application, which many residents of Putney could not attend. The letter predated the DRB's March 9, 2022 vote to approve WWHT's application.

I received no reply to my letter. Appeals were rejected by Vermont Environmental and Supreme Courts. The cases are closed.

I signed the petition because it addresses points raised in the appeals — points that Putney's municipal panels and, in their approvals, and Vermont Environmental and Vermont Supreme Courts and Vermont, did not address.

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AROUND THE TOWNS

Introduction to hawkwatching offered in Putney

PUTNEY — On Saturday, Sept. 16, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., longtime Putney Mountain hawk-watcher John Anderson will give an introduction to hawk-watching. Those interested can join Anderson in the Putney Mountain summit clearing for this event. While not absolutely necessary, binoculars are highly recommended. Participants should also bring food, water, and sunscreen.

After finding their way to the summit clearing, participants should introduce themselves to Anderson and wait patiently for what is hoped to be great broad-winged hawk flight. Historically, Sept. 16 has been the peak day for hawk sightings on Putney Mountain.

In case of rain, Anderson will also be on the mountain on Sunday, Sept. 17 to answer questions.

Chester Townscape hosts spring bulb sale

CHESTER — On Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 16 and 17, Chester Townscape volunteers will again be selling spring-flowering bulbs at Chester's Fall Festival at a location near the Hearse House and the Information Booth. All bulbs are top quality, hardy, easy care, shunned by deer and voles, and expected to return year after year when grown in full or part sun and in well-drained locations.

Shipped straight from Holland, the four varieties of narcissus offered this year include early and mid bloomers with a variety of colors and heights. Those labeled Landscape Size (LS) are a bit smaller and thus more economical, but should increase in size each year. The larger bulbs are dramatically two-toned.

Bulbs will be sold cash and carry from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 16 and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sept. 17. All sales help support Chester Townscape's seasonal floral displays, which will be changed later this fall to display pumpkins, flowering kale, and corn stalks at public locations around town.

Rock Voices begins a new season

BRATTLEBORO — For those looking for an amazing singing experience this fall, think about joining Rock Voices — the community choir that sings only rock music. There are no auditions,

and singers don't need to know how to read music (although it helps if they can carry a tune).

This fall, the choir will be singing songs by Simon & Garfunkel, Yes, the Jonas Brothers, Level 42, Sinead O'Connor, Tina Turner, Chicago, and more. Final performances will be in early January 2024. Brattleboro rehearsals are held Monday nights, 7 to 9 p.m., at the Vermont Jazz Center in the Cotton Mill building. The first rehearsal is Monday, Sept. 18. Go to rockvoices.com for more information.

History of diners discussed at RFPL

BELLOWS FALLS — Diner expert Richard Gutman discusses the history of the lunch cart, how it evolved into the diner, and how the Miss Bellows Falls Diner fits into that larger history on Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 7 p.m., at the Rockingham Free Public Library (RFPL). This program is free and accessible to those with disabilities.

"In just over five months, re-viving, restoring, and rejuvenating the Miss Bellows Falls Diner, built 80 years ago and shuttered since the pandemic, has gone from a mere idea to a fast-moving project," say organizers. They now invite interested citizens to continue the conversation.

Over the last few years, moisture has penetrated the diner's steel and porcelain exterior; foundations have cracked, wood has buckled and rotted, and the limited seating and cramped quarters have daunted prospective operators. It is no secret that a 32-seat lunch car faces a challenging future in today's competitive food-service world. What will the future bring, and what should it look like for the Miss Bellows Falls?

By the beginning of 2024, restoration work should be underway, and by May of 2025, the diner's 81st anniversary of arriving in Bellows Falls, the hope is that the diner will reopen. The RFPL, the Historic Preservation Office of the Town of Rockingham, and Rockingham For Progress join together in a series of conversations about the diner's past and its future with free events at the library. Find out more at RockinghamForProgress.org.

VNH to hold information session in Bellows Falls

BELLOWS FALLS — Visiting Nurse and Hospice (VNH) for Vermont & New

Hampshire offers a variety of services, which they'll discuss at the Rockingham Free Public Library on Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Anthony Kox of VNH states "our mission is to deliver outstanding home health and hospice services that enrich the lives of the people we serve. We will discuss our Home Health and Hospice programs, which are the most recognized services, but we will also talk about our long-term care service and our maternal and child health services. The VNH provides support for individuals from before a child is born until the end of life, and everything in between."

VNH is active in more than 100 towns across Vermont and New Hampshire. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact rockinghamlibrary.org, programming@rockinghamlibrary.org, 802-463-4270, or stop by the library at 65 Westminster St.

Breakfast served at Williamsville Hall

WILLIAMSVILLE — Another breakfast at the Williamsville Hall will be served on Thursday, Sept. 21, from 8 to 10:30 a.m. This monthly breakfast is complimentary (donations for the Hall are appreciated) and open to everyone.

Homemade pastries, tea, coffee, and orange juice will be provided. The event will be held outdoors, or, in case of rain, indoors. The Hall, which is ADA compliant, is located at 35 Dover Rd. For more information, email williamsvillehall@gmail.com, or visit williamsvillehall.org.

Free family law clinic to be held in Brattleboro

BRATTLEBORO — Legal Services Vermont is hosting a free Family Law Clinic for low-income Vermonters on Tuesday,

Sept. 26, from 9 a.m. to noon. Participants will meet by phone or video conference with a lawyer who can answer questions about divorce, parentage, custody, visitation, child support, and more.

Space is limited. Interested parties must call Legal Services Vermont at 800-889-2047 and leave a message with their name and contact number, mentioning the Family Law Clinic. An advocate will call back to screen for eligibility and schedule the appointment. Find our more at vtlawhelp.org/family.

Monthly produce distribution

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

across from the Putney Coop and Putney Fire Station).

All are welcome. This is a drive-up service. Bags provided. The next monthly food drop is Thursday, Sept. 28.

Putney Winter Farmers Market seeks vendors

PUTNEY — The Putney Winter Farmers Market, will run from Nov. 19 through Dec. 24 on Sundays at the Green Mountain Orchard farm store on West Hill Road. Vendors of produce, crafts, and prepared foods are invited to apply at putneyfarmersmarket.org, or by contacting the market manager at putneyfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

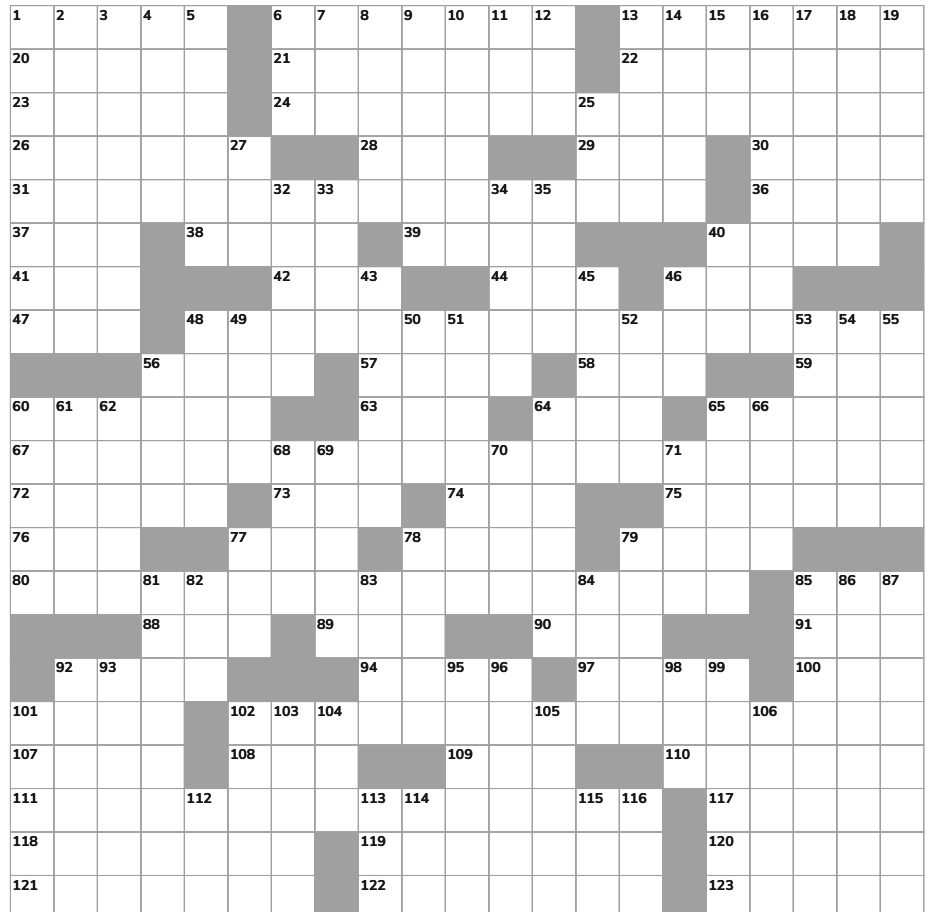


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- 1. Grilling name
6. Chris Paul, e.g.
13. "Let You Love Me" singer
20. Bisect
21. Nazareth native
22. "Elf" actor
23. __ fusion
24. Really fun time with the "Daydream Believer" band?
26. Serve
28. "Wonderful!"
29. Hullabaloo
30. Flaky dough in Greek pastries
31. Soaking wet, with the "Round And Round" band?
36. Valhalla chief
37. French article
38. Tap trouble
39. Spice Girl Halliwell
40. Comic Drescher
41. Mid.
42. Anguish
44. Smashed server at Wimbledon
46. Yale student
47. Big belts, briefly
48. German cars with the "Come Together" band?
56. Signs of disuse
57. They come in a pack, for short
58. Nonprofit URL ender
59. 911 responder
60. Like contacts solution
63. Simile's words
64. Madness music
65. Elegance
67. Dating advice with a Vermont jam band?
72. Carries on
73. Lode load
74. Prefix with colonialism
75. Hiker's stopover
76. "Baby __ Want You" (Bread song)
77. Abril to abril
78. Putin's birthplace
79. Punching parts
80. Dian Fossey book with the "Feel Good Inc." band?
85. Curator's first deg.
88. Lawyer's retainer
89. Starter for the Sox?
90. Pilkey who drew the Captain Underpants series
91. Gloss surface
92. Mountain seen from Taormina
94. August babies
97. Get a lower APR, perhaps
100. Practitioner of bagism
101. Out of the wind, on a boat
102. Term meaning a market downturn in stock analysis with the "Hard to Handle" band?
107. Bank number
108. Stimpmy's TV pal
109. __ cit. (footnote abbr.)
110. Kelly to Mark, e.g.
111. Kindred spirits with the "Mr. Tambourine Man" band?
117. Like warships
118. Belaboring the point
119. "My package arrived!"
120. Romance writer Hannon
121. Feels indignation toward



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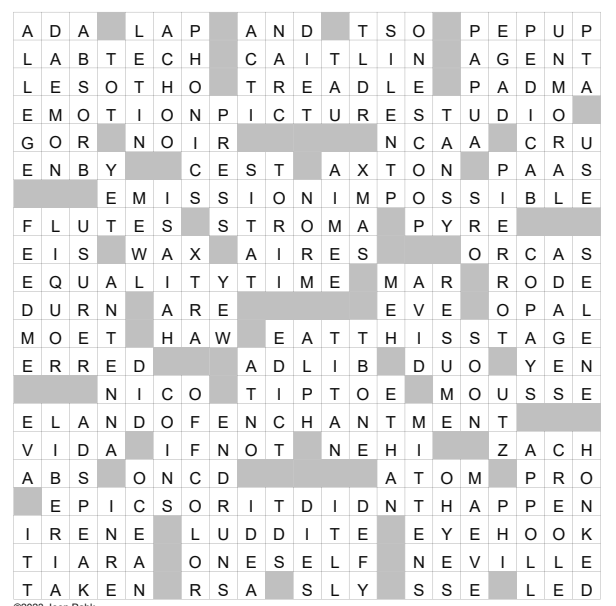
- 122. Towels off
123. Pokémon collectibles
Down
1. "Can you believe it!?!?"
2. Start slowly
3. Turn signals
4. Skirt
5. Dollar offering
6. Point of writing
7. Troop grp.
8. It shows the way
9. Indonesian garment
10. Subdued snicker
11. Every last one
12. Carnival hot spot
13. Send in, as payment
14. Abstainer's comment
15. Brown hue
16. Invite trouble
17. Iroquois tribe
18. Land, as a 102-Down
19. Match play?
25. Pending __ approval
27. Literary piece
32. R&B Grammy winner Lou
33. "I get it, I get it!"
34. Moves by slowly
35. Curry base
40. Jacksonville's st.
43. Jail break
45. Miso soup mushroom
46. Hosp. readout
48. Lets off steam
49. Do as directed
50. Long (for)
51. Versus
52. Cereal choice
53. Minimum
54. Mike holder
55. Take things the wrong way
56. Press release?
60. Tiny shoot
61. Texas shrine, with "the"
62. TV actor Burton
64. Bolstered, with "up"

- 65. Ignore cellphone calls from
66. Relax
68. Actress Chaplin
69. Got stage fright
70. Jammer's meeting, informally
71. "Get a load of __"
77. Microbrewery drink
78. "Too bad I can't __ that"
79. Beginner's race
81. Should events call for it
82. Shepherd's locale
83. Castaway's place
84. Designer Jacobs
85. Calm down, as trouble
86. Hourglass contents
87. Jesus' followers
92. Comic Boosler

- 93. Colorful fish
95. Russian administrative division
96. Sluggish animals
98. TV monitor?
99. Like some satire
101. Shaded garden spot
102. Rainbow __
103. Tests by lifting
104. Cellular stuff
105. Hurt
106. Kim's last name in Kipling's "Kim"
112. Junior
113. Mediterranean fruit
114. Riviera season
115. Goof up
116. Jedi mentored by Luke

Last issue's solution

"Equiping"



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COLUMN | *Sports Roundup*

Weather makes mess of sports schedules

Excessive heat, thunderstorms force cancellations, postponements, and truncated games

A week of hot weather and thunderstorms is not unusual in early September. However, last week's heat wave, followed by a series of violent thunderstorms, is highly unusual for this time of year.

As a result of Vermont getting weather that was more like July than September, the high school sports schedule was thrown into chaos.

Football saw the most chaos as nearly every team in Vermont was unable to complete its games due to thunderstorms. The mess was compounded by the ongoing shortage of game officials, which meant some crews had to work multiple games last weekend in a frantic effort to finish what was started.

As for soccer, field hockey, and cross-country, games and meets had to be postponed due to extreme heat and humidity.

Football

• Hartford got a 27-7 win over Bellows Falls on Sept. 7 in White River Junction in a night game cut short by bad weather.

BF quarterback Eli Allbee scored the game's first touchdown on an 11-yard run. After that, it was all Hartford as quarterback Brayden Trombley had a pair of touchdown runs for 41 and 24 yards, and threw a 58-yard TD pass to Austin St. Peter as the Hurricanes took a 20-7 lead.

The Terriers were driving toward a potential score as the first half was winding down, but the drive was derailed after Allbee had to leave the game with an injury. Hartford got the ball one last time and Ezra Mock closed out the first half with a 6-yard run.

Thunderstorms moved in at halftime and, with little prospect of safe conditions returning at a reasonable hour, the coaches agreed to end the game and make the result official.

The Terriers held their own against a tough Division I opponent, but between Allbee's injury and Hartford's big lead, the decision to call it a night was the right one for coach Bob Lockerby. The 1-1 Terriers will now have some extra time to prepare for their next opponent, as Bellows Falls plays a rare Sunday game against the Mount Mansfield Cougars in Jericho on Sept. 17.

• The BF coaching staff were in the stands at Natowich Field on Sept. 9 to do some scouting of Mount Mansfield and Brattleboro as they faced off in a non-division game under the lights.

There wasn't much to see, as this game was stopped with 2:09 left in the second quarter for a 30-minute lightning delay. At that point, the Cougars and Bears were tied, 8-8. Once it became apparent that more stormy weather was on the way, the coaches and officials agreed to end the game and put it down in the scorebook as a tie.

It was something of a victory that the game got played. Mount Mansfield made the long journey south to Jericho on Sept. 8, only to be welcomed by a particularly nasty thunderstorm that downed trees and knocked out power to thousands in Windham County. The game never got played and the Cougars had to turn around, go



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.

home, and make the same trip again the following day.

Despite the Bears having the advantage of not riding three hours each way on a school bus, Brattleboro looked as out of sync as Mount Mansfield, particularly in the passing game.

In the first quarter, Jackson Emery stopped the Cougars' opening drive with an interception, but Cougars defensive back Luke Subin-Billingley more than returned the favor with a pair of interceptions. His second, with 1:48 left in the quarter, set up the Cougars' only touchdown, a 1-yard run by Philip Gulizo on the first play after the turnover. A two-point conversion try was successful for an 8-0 lead.

The teams traded interceptions to start the second quarter before the Bears finally got it together on offense and put together a scoring drive that ended with a 15-yard touchdown run by Noah Perusse. Quarterback Carson Elliott ran in the two-point conversion to tie the game, 8-8, with 6:55 left in the first half.

Brattleboro had a golden chance to take the lead when Jack Cady returned a punt for an apparent touchdown with 4:09 left, but the play was wiped out by a penalty for an illegal block by the Bears' return team. Brattleboro ultimately had to kick it away and gave the Cougars a chance to break the tie.

Unfortunately, Mount Mansfield couldn't score either and they had the ball when the lightning sighting suspended the game.

Now 0-1-1, the Bears head to Bennington this Friday night for the Elwell Trophy game against their Route 9 rivals, the Mount Anthony Patriots.

Girls' soccer

• Brattleboro opened its season in Bennington on Sept. 7 with a 4-1 loss to Burr & Burton in the opening round of the Patriot Classic. The Bulldogs scored four unanswered goals before Brattleboro's Zadie Olmstead scored with 18 minutes left in the second half. The game was later stopped due to thunderstorms with about 10 minutes to play.

The Bears then played Hoosac Valley in the consolation game of the tournament on Sept. 11 and won, 5-2.

• Green Mountain got clobbered by the Fair Haven Slaters, 9-1, in a road game on Sept. 6. Last season's Division III runner-up poured it on, with four goals from Lily Briggs and three more from Maddy Perry. GM's only goal was scored by Linsey Miles with 14 minutes left in the second half.

• Leland & Gray lost to Green Mountain, 2-1, in the opening night of the Green Mountain Tournament on Sept. 8 at



Twin Valley's Cory Magnant, left, seen here passing the ball past a pair of Leland & Gray defenders in the season opener on Sept. 1, scored three goals against Green Mountain in a 3-1 win for the Wildcats on Sept. 5 in Chester.

Dorsey Park in Ludlow.

• Twin Valley is still looking for a win, but acquitted itself well in a pair of 2-1 losses to Long Trail School on Sept. 6 and Arlington on Sept. 9.

• Bellows Falls got torched by Fair Haven, 10-0, in the Terriers' home opener on Sept. 9. The Slaters led 7-0 at the half.

Boys' soccer

• Cody Magnant scored three goals in the first half to lead the Twin Valley Wildcats to a 3-1 victory over Green Mountain on Sept. 5 in Chester.

Magnant converted a penalty kick early in the first half, scored on a break-away about a minute later, and completed his hat trick just before halftime. GM's lone goal came midway through the first half from Evan Kirdzik.

It was among the few games that got played that day due to extreme heat. Several water breaks and the appearance of a few clouds to block the sun helped the two teams avoid a suspension or postponement.

• Weather wiped out all of Leland & Gray's games last week. The Rebels' game against Springfield on Sept. 5 was postponed to Oct. 14 due to extreme heat, while thunderstorms led to the cancellation of a Sept. 8 game at Bellows Falls.

Field hockey

• Bellows Falls lost their season opener to South Burlington, 3-0, on Sept. 8. Sabrina Brunet, Elise Knoth, and Lily O'Brien were the goal scorers as BF goaltender Livi Clough made 25 saves.

• Hartford blasted Brattleboro, 11-0, at Sawyer Field on Sept. 9. The 0-2 Bears will face Fair Haven and Bellows Falls this week.

Cross-country

• Extreme heat forced the cancellation of a scheduled meet in Bellows Falls on Sept. 5.

Senior golf

• Friend of *The Commons* Tom Bedell passed on these details about the 2023 Vermont



Brattleboro defensive lineman Colby Bristol (58) closes in on Mount Mansfield quarterback Nathan Messier during first quarter action on Sept. 9 at Natowich Field.

Senior Amateur Tournament, which was held at Brattleboro Country Club (BCC) on Sept. 5 and 6.

David Arakelian of Lake George, New York needed three extra holes to win a playoff with BCC's Greg Birsky for the Senior (ages 55-64) Amateur title. While Birsky lost the overall Senior title, he was the winner in the Super Senior (65-plus) division.

Local golf icon Hugh Barber added to his many trophies with a win in the Legends (70-plus) division. Barber has won BCC multiple club titles over the years.

All three champions finished 6-over par in their respective divisions over two days of play

in humid 90-degree weather. Other BCC members in the tournament included George Roberge, David Washburn, and Wayne Wright.

Senior bowling roundup

• The fall/winter season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl began on Sept. 7 with PEWJ, No Splits, Stepping Stones, Skippers, and Hairiers (all 5-0) tied for first place, followed by Four Seasons and Four Pins (both 4-1), and Dumblebor and No Splits (both 1-4).

Debbie Kolpa had the women's high handicap game (229) and series (634), while Robert

Rigby had the men's high handicap game (254) and Bob Uccello had the high handicap series (716). Stepping Stones had the high team handicap game (900) and series (2,636).

Rigby had the men's high scratch series (695) with games of 247, 224, and 224. Chuck Adams had a 573 series with games of 229 and 193, while Milt Sherman had a 552 series with games of 229 and 193 and Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 554 series that featured a 194 game. John Walker had a 542 series and Duane Schillemat had a 534 series with a 199 game.

Carol Gloski had the women's high scratch series (568) and game (172), while Kolpa rolled a 160 game.

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