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Town Meeting floors will reopen to voters

After Covid pause, 70% of Vermont communities set to convene Annual Town Meeting in person

By Kevin O'Connor
ViDigger.org

Vogue.com is headlining “The Return of Big Belt Buckles.” *People* is heralding “The ’70s Flip,” “’80s Workout Headbands,” and “’90s Supermodel Blowout.” But in Vermont, this season’s biggest retro trend will showcase plaid flannel, mud boots, and gloved hands raised high in the air.

After a pandemic pause, March Town Meeting is set for a comeback.

Some 70% of the state’s 247 municipalities are scheduled to return to shoulder-to-shoulder decision making on or around the traditional first Tuesday in March, according to a VTDigger survey. That’s about the same percentage that opted for Covid-safe mailable ballots or warm-weather outdoor proceedings during the pandemic.

State leaders recently approved legislation, signed into law last month, to extend such alternatives for another year. [“Legislature extends towns’ flexibility for Town Meetings,” *News*, Jan. 25]. But 175 communities have decided to resume in-person Town Meetings next month — up from five in 2021 and about 40 in 2022 — with only a handful of others choosing to cancel or postpone until spring.

Windham County towns that will hold a March Town Meeting which will include some sort of floor vote include Athens, Brattleboro, Brookline, Dover, Grafton, Guilford, Halifax, Jamaica, Londonderry, Newfane, Putney, Rockingham, Stratton, Townshend, Vernon, Westminster, Whitingham, Wilmington, and Winhall.

“We are back to business as usual,” said Teri Gray, municipal clerk in the Northeast Kingdom town of Charleston, population 1,021.

“Like Covid never happened,” added LaDonna Dunn, clerk of the nearby town of Westfield, population 534.

Some 60 municipalities will cast ballots rather than hold Town Meetings.

“We are usually a floor-vote town,” said Becky Fielder, Pomfret’s town clerk, “but with recent local Covid outbreaks, the Selectboard thought it prudent to postpone the in-person vote one more year.”

Morristown has a different argument for once again replacing a gathering that drew about 200 participants for ballots cast by some 2,000 people.

“Traditional Town Meeting attendance has been dwindling,” Morrystown Selectboard Chair Bob Beeman said. “While I appreciate the importance and

historical value, it seems much better to have a large group of our community make the decisions for the town’s future.”

Many communities that switched to ballots during the pandemic aren’t changing back.

“Participation was way higher,” said Tinmouth Town Clerk Gail Fallar, “so our traditional floor meeting bit the dust.”

Duxbury had a special Town Meeting in November so it could vote to cast ballots going forward. Similar proposals are set for consideration next month in Bakersfield, Bradford, Coventry, Danville, Highgate, Lunenburg, Marshfield, Strafford, and Wilmington.

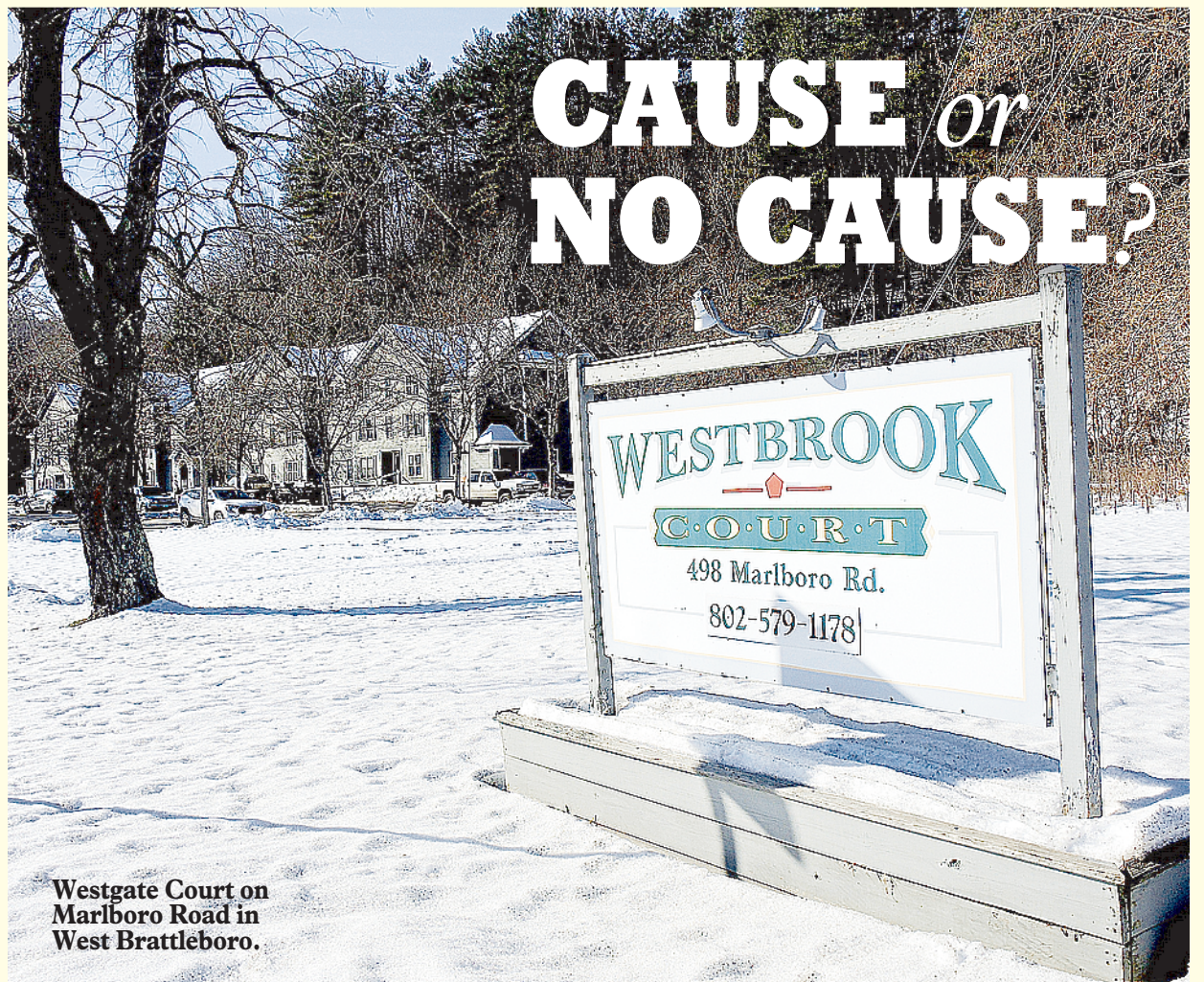
“We have asked this before,” Highgate Town Clerk Wendi Dusablon said, “but now that we have data, I think the voters might be ready to at least think about a change.”

Not everyone agrees. Marlboro leaders are facing “a pretty emotion-filled moment” as they propose a permanent move to ballots.

“There is a faction that is livid with us for supporting the change,” Marlboro Town Clerk Forrest Holzapfel said. “But we all feel the advantages of equalizing access to voting by mailing every voter the ballots is more important than preserving a tradition that excludes too many voters. As budgets have grown much larger in recent years, a voice vote by 10% or less of our voters is unjust.”

Some towns with meetings are tinkering with timing in hopes of drawing more people. Cornwall will move from the traditional first Tuesday (this year March 7) to Saturday morning, March 4, while Richmond will try Monday evening, March 6.

■ SEE TOWN MEETING, A6



Westgate Court on Marlboro Road in West Brattleboro.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

In this overheated rental market, Brattleboro voters will consider a measure next month to prevent tenants from being summarily removed from apartments. Meanwhile, landlords contend that the proposed charter change will complicate their removal of problem tenants.

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—There is uncertainty brewing in the town’s complex landlord-tenant relationship as voters prepare to decide on an amendment to the town charter.

As proposed, landlords — with some exceptions, including owners who live in their duplexes and triplexes and who rent accessory units on their property — would be prevented from evicting tenants without cause. Rent increases would be capped at 12%. [See sidebar, A3.]

The tightness of the housing market means that an eviction, for cause or no cause, can lead to homelessness.

Brattleboro currently has a shortfall of 500 housing units, according to the town planning office. That boils down to a vacancy rate between 0.5% and 2.8%, according to three separate surveys looked at by the town.

“A rental housing market is typically considered healthy when its vacancy rates are between 4% and 6%,” Planning Director Sue Fillion wrote in a memo to the Selectboard in 2020.

Economically vulnerable tenants are looking to the proposed charter change as a way to add some stability to their lives and ensure that they can keep a roof over their heads.

Meanwhile, landlords say the proposed charter change would remove the leverage they need for removing drug dealers and tenants who create problems on their property — and their control over who can live on their turf.

“This takes away landlord rights,” said landlord and property manager Susan Bellville.

There does not seem to be a middle ground.

Just cause?

Voters will have a chance to weigh in on the controversy by

■ SEE EVICTION QUESTION, A2

Building a bridge from Brattleboro to Rwanda

The Inshuti of Rwanda project calls on Vermonters to build homes and more for those in need in Africa



COURTESY PHOTO

Lauren Rose (Rosa) Marino, founder and executive director of the Brattleboro-based nonprofit Inshuti of Rwanda.

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Through her local nonprofit, Inshuti of Rwanda Incorporated, Rosa Marino continues to connect people in Rwanda with the “socially conscious and giving” community here, hoping to build 25 new houses in 2023.

“Inshuti” means “friends” in the Kinyarwanda language, Marino says, adding that if successful in achieving the goal, the number of families sheltered since she founded the nonprofit in 2015 will rise to 100.

“Our mission is to construct sustainable houses in Rwanda to build wellness, stability, and a future for impoverished families,” she says. “Through our house-building projects, we are improving living conditions, creating local jobs, and growing the community of Inshuti.”

Cross-continental community connections

Marino, better known here by her legal name, Lauren Rose Marino, is a native New Yorker from Long Island who moved to West Dover and worked as a nurse at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

While Lauren is her legal first name, Marino says she learned many years ago that it is a difficult name for most Africans to pronounce, “so I started using my middle name.”

She then massaged it to “Rosa,” as that name is more common in East Africa. Marino says as she traveled more and began to live most of the year abroad, “Rosa became my preferred choice.”

As the project has grown, Marino, who has called herself “practical” and is certainly hands-on, has been living half the year in Rwanda.

The idea for Inshuti of Rwanda was born of Marino’s desire to build one house for one family she had met on her second trip to Rwanda.

“Since then, we have continued to grow, sheltering 75 families, and even became a nonprofit organization in Rwanda,” says Marino. “The impact of our house-building projects extends past our home recipients and into the community by providing hundreds of local jobs with livable wages.”

Why did Marino choose Rwanda? “I think Rwanda chose me,” she says.

“I believe people who travel have a gravitational pull to certain regions of the world. I have always been pulled toward

■ SEE RWANDA, A6

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

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

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Eviction question

FROM SECTION FRONT

Australian ballot at the Annual Town Election on Tuesday, March 7.

Essentially, the charter amendment question will ask the town to “provide protections for residential tenants from evictions without ‘just cause,’” where “just cause” includes: “a tenant’s material breach of a written rental agreement; a tenant’s violation of state statutes regulating tenant obligations in residential rental agreements; non-payment of rent; and a tenant’s failure to accept written, reasonable, good faith renewal terms.”

If the amendment passes, it will have to go to the Legislature, where some of the wording might be changed, and then go on to Gov. Phil Scott for his signature.

The amendment is similar to one passed in Burlington last year; it came out of the Legislature, only to be vetoed by Scott. The push to override his veto failed by one vote.

This year, Brattleboro is joining Essex and Winooski in proposing similar changes to their respective town charters, and Burlington will reintroduce the amendment that failed last year.

“Just cause” eviction reform has been passed in California, Washington, and Oregon.

Proponents of the charter change here contend that it is not “just cause” when landlords are throwing tenants out because they want to gentrify their buildings and either turn apartments into high-paying short-term rentals (such as Airbnb) or into luxury apartments that can rent for over \$2,000 a month in Brattleboro’s overheated housing market.

The amendment would still allow a landlord to evict a tenant in order to upgrade the building — but with many restrictions.

“This is more than just a little onerous,” said property manager Sally Fegley. “If you want to do an upgrade to the property, and you need to remove someone in order to do that, they want you to pay a penalty to relocate the tenant to another unit. And if you have [another] unit available in your building or in your inventory, just make it available to them.”

“And also, there’s also the provision when you put that unit back on the market, you’re supposed to offer it to the same tenant,” she continued.

“Now, I just asked three people to move out of one unit that I own because it was so disgusting,” Fegley said. “I have to literally

spend about \$15,000 to fix it up. And I’m supposed to offer them the opportunity to come back? And do that again?”

The amendment also calls for a 12% cap on rent increases and has a provision excluding from “just cause” the “expiration of a rental agreement as sole grounds for termination of tenancy.”

Property managers and landlords say this means they will be forced to renew leases whether they want to or not.

But Zoe Cunningham-Cook, a staff attorney at Vermont Legal Aid and one of the organizers of the charter amendment explained that in general, as things stand now, “landlords cannot evict for no cause during the lease term if there is a written lease. They can evict for cause at any point.”

“The basis for terminating for cause are nonpayment of rent and breach of rental agreement, which include failure to comply with material terms of the lease or criminal/illegal drug/violent activity,” Cunningham-Cook continued.

However, tenants who participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) can be evicted for just cause only when they have a lease agreement, she said.

Tenants who qualify for Section 8 pay 30% of their income, and the voucher covers the difference.

“Voucher holders cannot be evicted for no cause during the initial lease term,” Cunningham-Cook said. “They can be evicted for no cause after the initial lease term.”

Situation ‘dire’ for renters

The Vermont chapter of the nonprofit organization Rights & Democracy (RAD) supports just-cause eviction.

“The situation for renters in Vermont is dire,” said RAD’s housing and justice organizer, Tom Proctor. “Renters make up about one-third of all Vermont state residents, and it’s not a good market right now. We have historically low vacancy rates across the state. What that means is, if you get evicted, you’re essentially homeless.”

“It manifests in several ways,” Proctor said.

“First, there’s no way you can live in the town you’ve lived in for however many years. Your kids may go to school in that town. You may work in that town, and may not be able to continue in your job. In some cases you



Brattleboro landlords Jaki Reis, left, Susan Bellville, center, and Sally Fegley are interviewed on the porch of an apartment house on 41 Cedar St.

become homeless and have to live out of motels, cars, or tents. And this is affecting a wide range of people.”

Part of the problem is what Proctor called “a housing gold rush” following the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

“House prices have risen, property taxes have risen, and landlords are either evicting tenants to find richer tenants or selling their houses to corporate landlords who immediately jack up the rents,” he said. “As a result, we have seen the homeless population in Vermont rise 125 percent in the last two years. So we need to give tenants protections if they stick to the rules.”

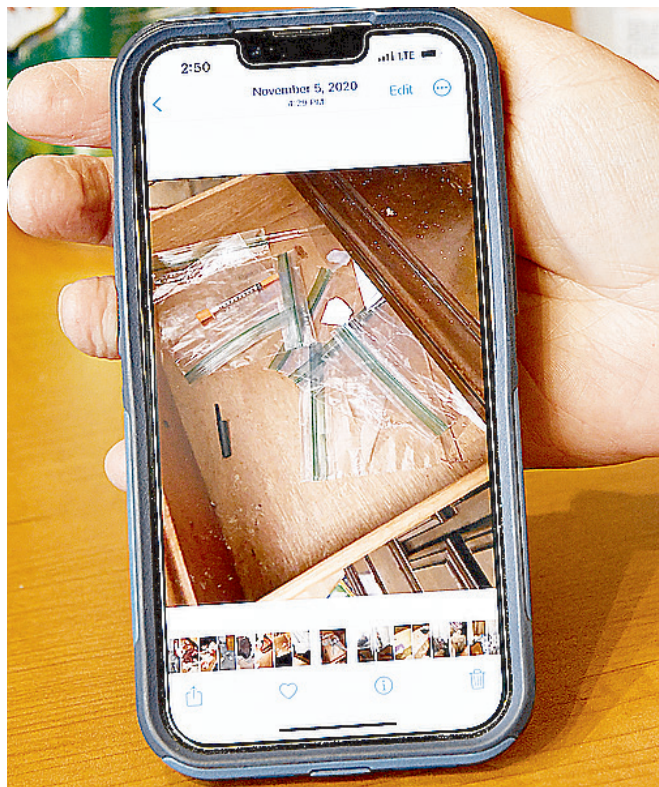
“Sticking to the rules” means paying their rent on time, not being too noisy, taking care of their apartments and, in general, being a good tenant.

But even if tenants play by the rules, they can still be ousted if a landlord wants to increase the rent or turn the property into a vacation rental property.

“Tenants are being evicted and made homeless or having enormous mental strain on their lives [and they] haven’t broken the rules,” Proctor said. “Tenants who have paid their rent on time, been courteous neighbors and upstanding members of their communities. This has also put enormous strain on our public services, hospitals, schools, police, and our court system.”

Section 8 issues

In the Brattleboro Housing Partnership’s seven housing



Brattleboro landlord Susan Bellville shows a cell phone photo of a drawer full of used needles and drug paraphernalia found in a vacated apartment.

projects, more than 150 households in the 298 apartments use Section 8 vouchers.

According to Executive Director Christine Hazzard, “We closed our program because we had a long waiting list. However, Vermont State Housing Authority has opened up their waitlist with the same subsidy.”

Even in public housing, people can be evicted for cause, Hazzard said.

“We’re under constraints,” Hazzard said. “In public housing, we need to have a cause for eviction. We can’t just stop their lease because it’s expired. There has to be a severe reason and at that point we have to go through a formal eviction process in the courts. So this amendment won’t affect us.”

People who have apartments through the Brattleboro Housing Partnership do not tend to move out.

“We haven’t seen a lot of movement,” Hazzard said. “We haven’t had many people move because the landlord did not renew their lease.”

Marta Gossage, who wrote the Brattleboro charter amendment, said she was catapulted into activism after watching a friend be evicted for no reason.

“The thesis is that someone who has always paid their rent on time and who has done nothing wrong should not lose their home,” Gossage said. “We have legislation so the most vulnerable in our society are protected from losing their home unjustly. We have laws against price gouging. We have laws against renting an unsafe home.”

“If we don’t regulate capitalism, we tend to end up in a situation like in the game Monopoly. It was created as an illustration of unjust capitalism, where there’s only one winner — one person has everything. Regulated capitalism allows us to make it so that ownership of capital and property is regulated, so that it doesn’t create either suffering or unfair conditions.”

Near to the center of this struggle is the 48-unit Westbrook Court Apartments at 498 Marlboro Rd. in West Brattleboro. Late last year, the building was bought by BSAG Realty, a real estate investment company based in Boston.

The company is proposing to build 70 more apartments on the property, but many of its current tenants, including Section 8 tenants, are losing their homes as the new owners look to upgrade the apartments.

Critics are charging that the upgrades are crossing a line and targeting wealthier tenants, a process that will lead to gentrification and move that housing out of reach of those who had lived there.

According to Gossage, chosen current residents are being

evicted because the corporate owners are not renewing leases.

“I know of 12 people for certain but it could be as high as 20, all Section 8 or on different forms of housing assistance,” Gossage said. “What we believe is happening is the corporate landlords want to remove all the residents who are paying reasonable rents and replace them with residents who can pay a lot more.”

Gossage asserted that for the most vulnerable people in the rental housing market — people “who are seniors or have disabilities or have no place to go” — this practice is making people homeless.

“Even when you’re hooked up with the right services, you’re making phone calls every day, checking Front Porch Forum [...] and other places where apartments are listed,” she said.

“And when places become available, the rent is 50 or 60% above what you can afford,” Gossage said. “And even if you could afford it, with 30 or more applications per open apartment, landlords will pick the ones with the highest income and highest credit score.”

Landlords and moral compasses

Gossage began to sob when telling stories about the individual tenants she has met who are facing homelessness — people in wheelchairs, people who need oxygen, a man who needs major surgery that will put him in a wheelchair for life, a single mother with a daughter in high school who was not able to find housing in Brattleboro and was forced to take a place in Keene and leave her daughter staying with a friend.

One person who is losing her home is Damaris Mills, a Section 8 tenant at Westbrook Court, who wrote to *The Commons* about her situation.

“I am hopeful that the town of Brattleboro does not have in its plans to throw people out into the street, so some corporation can come into town, bully the locals, kick people out of their homes whether or not they are good tenants who pay their rents on time and don’t cause any trouble,” Mills wrote.

“BSAG Properties bought Westbrook Court in September of 2021,” Mills continued. “I knew we were in trouble when they came in here like gangbusters.”

She cited “the shocking notices found under our doors that a dozen or more families got from BSAG Properties.”

With those notices, selected tenants, she said, were, with no explanation or rationale, given “60 to 90 days to move out! In the middle of the winter, no less!”

“Folks who were not asked to leave had their rent raised exponentially!” Mills wrote. “Plus

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

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they had to add more money to their original security deposits.”

“But here’s the kicker,” she said. “The majority of us who got those ‘get out’ notices were low-income and several of us were on some sort of housing assistance like HUD Section 8, or VEWRAP [the Vermont Emergency Rental Assistance Program] or some sort of assistance[...]. This majority were mostly handicapped in some way, and/or elderly.”

“Needless to say, people freaked out!” Mills said.

“When Covid shut the world down, I had to leave my job because I was high risk,” she continued. “Because of that, I lost out on the opportunity to finally purchase my own home.”

But, she said, “several of us had each other for support. In other words, we were a community. A community that cared and watched out for their neighbors.”

In contrast, Mills accused her landlord of having “no moral compass. Not an ounce of passionate humanity for his fellow human beings.”

This lack of compassion upsets Gossage.

“We as a society recognize that a stable home is necessary to live a life,” she said. “We have created state laws that govern what is a reasonable reason for an eviction. Those include illegal activity, noise violations, and violations of lease conditions — if it’s a non-smoking unit and you smoke you have violated a lease condition.”

“That’s how you get folks out who have broken the rules. For cause. The minority of evictions end up in court. Most of the time, a landlord serves a tenant an eviction notice, the tenant is angry, but they leave. They might fight, but most leave.”

“As a society and as a country, we have written well-thought-out standards,” Gossage said. “We’ve created a system to be fair, so people don’t lose their housing unfairly.”

[The Commons reached out to Gravel & Shea PC — the legal firm in Burlington listed in corporate records for BSAG as the company’s registered agent — but received no response by press time.]

Local landlords struggle, too

Brattleboro landlords have a different take on the situation.

Although Bellville sympathizes with tenants who lose their leases and have to leave their rental units, she still does not see the amendment as anything but a rights grab.

“Quite frankly, I am incredibly distressed at what’s happening

at Westbrook Court,” Bellville said. “I have a brother who lives there. And I understand that his rent went up over \$500 a month, which he can’t afford. So I get it. I don’t feel that it’s fair.”

But, she said, the proposed charter change is “throwing the baby out with the bathwater.”

Bellville, along with Windham Property Management co-owner Sally Fegley and landlord Jaki Reis recently met with *The Commons* to describe some of the bad situations they have been involved in with unpleasant tenants.

Fegley co-owns Windham Property Management. She and her husband manage 50 rental units in Brattleboro, plus Morningside Commons and Arbor Hill Commons. Bellville manages 17 downtown apartments and four commercial spaces for a property owner, as well as owning three buildings with approximately 17 tenants. She also manages a three-unit for someone else. Reis manages eight units in Brattleboro and owns a four-family house.

At the meeting, Bellville scrolled through photos on her cell phone of blood-splattered walls, used syringes in bottles, and urine-soaked carpets. One photo showed the foam back of a couch with a section carved out to conceal a knife.

The three women told of tenants who smoked so heavily in nonsmoking apartments that the nicotine-stained apartment had to be fumigated — at great cost — before the unit could be rented anew.

They talked about having couples involved in domestic violence. About tenants who have threatened landlords. About one violent guy who might have cut the brake lines of a neighboring tenant who complained about him. About a tenant so stoned on marijuana that they got the munchies, started to cook something, fell asleep, and set their apartment on fire. About the tenant who kept the windows open in the winter, which drove up heating costs for the building. About having to clean up pet urine and feces. About noise. And especially, about losing good tenants because of bad tenants.

They don’t even like the terminology.

“It’s a complex issue, and the nomenclature really hurts us,” Fegley said. “‘No-cause eviction’ sounds different than what it really is. These aren’t really evictions. At the end of the lease terms, the tenant can leave. Or, the way the law reads now, the housing providers can ask the tenants to leave.”

“And generally, housing providers don’t ask tenants to leave unless there’s a reason. So there is a cause. So to say that it’s a no-cause eviction is completely misleading.”

“They are lease terminations, probably for reason,” Fegley said. “And the reasons could be there’s drug dealing going on.”

The landlords said they needed no-cause evictions to get drug dealers and drug users out of their apartments. They complain that the new amendment would prevent them from getting rid of a tenant who was selling drugs, using drugs, or behaving in manners that cause other tenants to complain about them.

“If a tenant is behaving badly, no-cause eviction is a way for us, at the end of the lease, to say, ‘Sorry, this isn’t working out, we’re not going to renew your lease and you have to move on,’” Fegley said.

“The advantage to these tenants is that nothing negative goes on their records. If they get evicted by the court, it goes on their record, and it becomes very difficult for them to find housing. So, in a way, no-cause eviction is a very gentle way of parting company and saving the building for the rest of the tenants.”

Fegley said the no cause/just cause confrontation aims a dagger at the middle class.

“Most of the landlords are people like me, people like Sue, people like Jaki, who own a couple of units or manage a couple of units, maybe a dozen units,” Fegley said. “We’re not conglomerates, we’re not corporate. We’re Brattleboro people, middle-class people trying to make a living. Some of the owners we manage for use their properties for their retirement income.”

“Westbrook Court is different,” she conceded. “But that’s not the majority of us.”

“We acknowledge there are a couple of culprits,” Fegley continued. “But there are hundreds of the rest of us. This amendment would be very detrimental.”

The amendment would also be detrimental to the good tenants in town, Fegley said.

“What would happen is that landlords would have to become really, really strict as to who they let into their buildings,” she said.

“Because once you’ve brought somebody into your building, there’ll be no way to get them out. So what landlords are saying, ‘Oh, you accept a tenant, you have a tenant for life, whether the tenant is dealing drugs or being belligerent to other tenants in the building or making noise in the middle of the night or hoarding

The proposed addition to the Brattleboro town charter

BRATTLEBORO — Following is the text of the proposed addition to the town charter:

A. Residential tenants, as defined in Chapter 137 of Title 9 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, shall be protected from eviction without ‘just cause,’ where just cause shall include:

1. a tenant’s material breach of a written rental agreement,
2. a tenant’s violation of state statutes regulating tenant obligations in residential rental agreements,
3. non-payment of rent, and
4. a tenant’s failure to accept written, reasonable, good faith renewal terms.

B. This charter provision excludes from “just cause” the expiration of a rental agreement as sole grounds for termination of tenancy.

C. Exemptions to this charter amendment, include properties defined in Chapter 137 of Title 9 [the state laws that apply to residential rental agreements], in addition to:

1. sublets
2. in-unit rentals
3. owner-occupied duplexes and triplexes
4. Accessory Dwelling Units on owner’s property

D. A landlord shall not evict a tenant for the sole purpose of raising the rent. When rent increases are legitimate, the total rent increase, including consideration of operating expenses,

maintenance expenses, capital improvements, and cost-of-living (CPI) adjustments shall not exceed 12% in any twelve-month period.

E. The terms of this amendment shall not be binding on a landlord in cases where the tenant is effectively evicted by extreme weather or acts of God. Otherwise, a landlord may evict a tenant for purposes such as major required construction, lead remediation and abatement work, or housing a family member(s). However, the following restrictions apply to such evictions:

1. If a comparable unit owned by the landlord is already available, or if such a unit becomes available before recovery of the rental unit, the landlord shall rescind the notice of eviction and dismiss any action filed to recover possession of the unit and offer the comparable unit to the tenant at the rate currently paid by the tenant
2. If a non-comparable unit becomes available before recovery, the landlord shall offer the non-comparable unit to the tenant.
3. If a landlord cannot accommodate the tenant, the landlord must pay one month’s rent as hardship and relocation assistance
4. The rental unit must be offered first to the displaced tenant when the required repairs, abatement, construction or other work is complete, or

when a family member moves out before a term of 36 months.

F. The landlord seeking to recover possession of a unit must submit with the notice of eviction a notarized affidavit attesting to the need for the eviction, and when appropriate, the identity of the family member(s), and the intent of the family member(s) to have no other principal residence. Evidence that the landlord has not acted in good faith may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

1. The landlord or family member(s) for whom the rental unit was vacated did not move into the unit within three months of the recovery date and subsequently did not occupy the unit as a principal residence for a minimum of 36 consecutive months.
2. The landlord rented the unit to a new tenant at an increased price exceeding the yearly rental increase as allowed in section C of this Charter Amendment.

G. This legislation shall take effect upon approval. H. If any provision of this legislation is held to be unconstitutional or to be otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, and they are held to be severable.

I. This legislation can be rescinded in a plebiscite according to law without approval of the state legislature.

or, you know, whatever.’ When you read the surface of the warning, it sounds very compelling. But when you know the background, it’s really very different.”

Taking a tenant to court in order to evict them for cause is a long and potentially costly process.

Court dockets are backed up. Often there is no legal proof of misdeeds. Or the tenant retaliates. Or the landlord cannot afford the legal fees, which range in the thousands of dollars.

“It’s very, very difficult to get evictions to the courts,” Fegley said. “If you say they’ve been smoking, they can always say, ‘We stopped smoking.’ Or ‘I know I wasn’t making noise in the middle of the night.’ Or ‘No, I didn’t beat my wife’ even if you know that’s exactly what he did.”

“Once you start the process

and bring a tenant to court, you’ve got to give them 60 days notice of the eviction,” she continued. “They’ve got 60 days in which to destroy your building, not pay rent, or do whatever they want. And sometimes they don’t even end up in court. But if they do, you don’t always get them out anyway. It’s not guaranteed.”

A middle ground?

The three property managers had a list of possible ways to help both landlords and good tenants without a change to the Brattleboro Town Charter. Among them:

- Setting up a lower court to handle housing issues, something along the lines of a traffic court.
- Increasing the housing stock is a top priority. With more housing available, the prices might go down.

• Being creative with housing projects, such as the ones reusing old buildings or motels that have been developed by the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

• Setting up “pods,” or groups of tiny houses, to increase the housing stock and get homeless people off the streets.

• Offering training to landlords and property managers.

• Creating a coalition of landlords, tenants, the police, the health department, mental health services, and developers.

“The solution is not to penalize property and housing providers who are doing a good job,” Fegley said. “You want to help the people who are doing a good job, and then address the problem situations. But this will penalize the good landlord.”

“It’s all about keeping people safe,” Reis said.

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• **Sydney Hescoek**, a childhood/special education major from Wardsboro, was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2022 semester at The College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York.

• **Lucas Forthofer** of Dummerston was named to the fall 2022 Dean's List at Quincy (Illinois) University.

• **Griffin Waryas** of Bellows Falls, **Ansley Henderson** of Brookline, **Savannah Sylvester-Neal** of Putney, and **Claire Holmes** of Wardsboro were all named to the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Rhode Island.

Obituaries

• **Pearl Eva (Dustin) Bonnet, 72**, of Saxtons River. Died Jan. 28, 2023. She was predeceased by her father, Harold Dustin; her mother, Thelma Baker; and two of her beloved siblings, Gloria Gallagher and Robert Dustin. Pearl is survived by her daughter, Britton (Robinson) Walker, and two grandchildren: River Madison and Mage Riley. She also leaves her siblings Marilyn Kimball, Julie Barry, Patti Clark, and Ron Clark. Known affectionately to the family as "AP," Aunt Pearl loved her nieces and nephews, and their children held an extra-special place in her heart. Pearl lived in Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, California and South Carolina. She worked for Rockwell International as a human resources specialist, and both FiberMark and VerMed as a sales representative. She was well known for her meticulous organization and exceptional attentiveness to her clients, but her most dear position was as a shop clerk at the Saxtons River Village Market. Many folks say they will miss being greeted by her at the store and hearing her laughter. Pearl loved the great outdoors, and spent her time cultivating her garden and bird watching. Always active, Pearl enjoyed walking and hiking around Saxtons River and on her favorite trails surrounding Vermont Academy. She enjoyed words and wordplay and secretly dreamed of being a writer. She loved a challenger at Scrabble, Bali, cribbage or backgammon, but Sundays were always reserved for The New York Times crossword puzzle. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A visitation will be held on Thursday, Feb. 23, from 5-7 p.m., at Fenton & Hennessy Funeral Home, 55 Westminster St., in Bellows Falls. A celebration of her life will be held this coming summer in Saxtons River, and details will be posted at the Market.

• **Larry Daly, 63**, of Brattleboro. Died Dec. 23, 2022 after succumbing to an insidious assault from cancer. Mother Earth lost a dedicated and talented Master of Her garden with his passing. He will be remembered



by the miles of stonewalls, the specimen trees and plants artfully placed in the landscape, the ponds nurtured and thriving with aquatic life, and the pathways and walkways set in stone. This is the beauty Larry created, and that make his presence known. To all the loved ones, friends and companions left behind, he would want you to believe in the promise of tomorrow, to get out there and dig in the dirt, plant, cultivate, produce. Leave your mark. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: None provided.

• **Aaron Joseph Devens, 27**, of Jamaica. Died suddenly on Jan. 21, 2023. Predeceased by his brother TJ Devens in 2019, and his father, Tom Devens, in 2022, Aaron is survived by his mother, Mary Devens and her partner Steve Bryant of Jamaica; Aaron's girlfriend, Cassandra Peterson of Amesbury, Massachusetts; and many friends, cousins, aunts, uncles, and beloved pets. Aaron was born at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend on Feb. 28, 1996. He grew up in Jamaica and had a happy, typical small-town childhood, playing baseball, video games, fishing, hiking at Ball Mountain Dam, and swimming with friends in the local swimming holes. He and his dad once traveled to Australia together and spent a month there. Aaron worked as a line cook at Stratton Mountain Resort for most of his adult life and, most recently, at Jake's Tavern in Londonderry. He loved the band Twiddle since his teen years and one of his favorite things to do was traveling with friends and family to Twiddle shows, where he found great joy and made many friends over the years. Aaron loved animals and they loved him. He always made time to sit and snuggle with the family pets, especially MeMe, his favorite old cat. He had a free spirit, an infectious smile and a complex mind entirely of his own. He will be missed by many. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of Aaron's life will take place at a later date. Donations in Aaron's honor can be made to Divided Sky Foundation (dividedskyfoundation.com), or to the Windham County Humane Society.



• **Dr. Frederick 'Fritz' Engstrom, 74**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully at his home, in the care of family, on Jan. 17, 2023. Fritz loved his work and had a great desire to engage with all people. His lifelong interests include tennis, jokes, fiction, bodysurfing, live music, and bridge. He was a wonderful psychiatrist, teacher, and father. But a special and noted contribution, Fritz used his position of power to advocate

for positive change in mental health. The son of Dr. William and Elizabeth (Wulf) Engstrom, Fritz was born on June 21, 1948 in New Haven, Connecticut. Fritz was raised in Elm Grove, Wisconsin, where he happily attended Brookfield Central High School and was on the debate and tennis teams. Fritz's interests were expanded and shaped by attending many summers at Red Arrow Camp. Fritz went to Harvard College, where he enjoyed his first rebellion, a switch to majoring in government after being inspired by campaigning for Eugene McCarthy in 1968. Pressured by the Vietnam War draft, Fritz chose to go to medical school at the University of Rochester during which time he married Ellen (Urquhart) Engstrom. They lived in Colorado, Minnesota, and Vermont and had two children, Carl and Anna. His second rebellion was choosing psychiatry, much to his father's dismay. Fritz finished his residency at the University of Colorado in Denver. In 1977, Fritz and his family moved to Edina, Minnesota. Fritz worked as a psychiatrist at Park Nicollet Medical Center, where he served as chair of the Mental Health department and as a member of the Board of Trustees. Wanting a simpler country life away from the suburbs, Fritz and his family moved to Brattleboro in 1998 and he joined the leadership team at the Brattleboro Retreat, where he remained happily and dedicatedly for 20 years. His final work as a psychiatrist was at Baystate Health in both Springfield and Greenfield, Massachusetts, where he loved the opportunity to teach medical interns. In 2005, Fritz married Stephanie Keep, he became a stepfather to Alexandra Keep and a new father to Thaddeus. As an again, but later-in-life, father, Fritz exceeded his own expectations — learning to cook, take naps, laugh at himself, and put parenting ahead of his work and interests. After experiencing nature-based preschool for his toddler, Fritz fell in love with Waldorf early childhood education and he actively supported his wife in the 2009 founding of The Garland School, where he was a board member, volunteer, parent, and very often their "King Winter." Fritz completely loved his work, particularly his strong connections with patients and his coworkers. The hardest part of his brain cancer diagnosis in 2020 was the sudden end of his long career. Up until the last few months, Fritz happily continued to teach medical interns about the intersection of mental health, human development, and life circumstances using his favorite method, movie clips. Fritz used humor at work and at play, always an Ole and Lena joke on hand. His lifelong love of tennis turned to pickleball in the last two years. He would want to acknowledge the fun he has had with new and renewed friends that he made playing bridge and

Richard H. Hamilton recognized by Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of Scottish Rite Freemasons with Tompkins Award

BRATTLEBORO—Richard H. Hamilton, who celebrated his 100th birthday on Sept. 28, 2022, was recently selected to receive the Tompkins Award.

The Tompkins Award is named after Daniel D. Tompkins, who became the first Sovereign Grand Commander of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of Scottish Rite in 1813, and served as Vice President of the United States under President James Monroe.

It may be conferred by the Supreme Council or by the Sovereign Grand Commander upon a deserving Masonic or Scottish Rite Brother who has rendered outstanding distinguished and exemplary service to his country or the Masonic fraternity at large not often witnessed among the general membership. Scottish Rite is one of the concordant bodies of Freemasonry that a Master Mason in the fraternity may choose to join in addition to being a member of the local Masonic lodge.

Sovereign Grand Commander of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of Scottish Rite Freemasons, Peter J. Samiec, in consultation with members of the Supreme Council, selected Brother Richard H. Hamilton to receive the Tompkins Award for his service not only to Freemasonry, and Vermont, but also to the nation.

During World War II, Hamilton served as a technical sergeant stationed in England with the Army Air Force's 91st Bomb Group as radio operator/mechanic/gunner aboard the B-17 "Destiny's Child." On his ninth mission, Hamilton was shot down over Germany. He was captured and held as a prisoner of war for 10 months. After a 77-day forced march he was liberated by two



Richard H. Hamilton shakes hands with William Basso II, Representative of the Scottish Rite, upon receiving the Tompkins Award. Looking on are Hamilton's daughters, from left, Karla Bills, Barbara Giard, Becky Mrozcek, and Marcia Hamilton.

Russian soldiers. For his service in World War II Brother Hamilton was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Air Medal.

A presentation luncheon was held at Brattleboro Lodge on Jan. 21 hosted by members of the lodge and the Scottish Rite Valley of Southern Vermont. Among those attending were Brother Richard Hamilton and his family, veterans representing the American Legion and VFW,

as well as Masons from around the district.

Special presentations of appreciation for their service to the nation were given to the dozen veterans who attended in support of Brother Hamilton. William Basso II, a 33rd degree MSA and one of three members of the Supreme Council representing Vermont Scottish Rite, presided over the special presentation of the Tompkins Award to Brother Hamilton.

pickleball. He was excessively proud of all his children and he relished time spent with his family and friends. His warmth, sense of humor, and a lightness of spirit were felt by all in his midst. Fritz is survived by his wife Stephanie Keep of Guilford, and his first wife Ellen Engstrom of Minneapolis; his children Carl (Mironda) Engstrom, Anna (Griff) Engstrom, Alexandra Keep, and Thaddeus Engstrom-Keep; his grandson Anders Engstrom; his sisters Ann Reydel and Sara (Art) Foss; his cousin Sue O'Neill and his childhood sweetheart and dear friend Elizabeth Klem. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of his life and his humor will be held in the early summer. Donations to the William W. Engstrom Memorial Scholarship Fund, Medical College of Wisconsin, P.O. Box 26509, Milwaukee, WI 53226.

• **William C. "Bill" Hull Jr., 68**, of Brattleboro. Died Jan. 31, 2023. Those who know Bill knew he was always up

for a chat about sports. He was a lifelong fan of the Red Sox and Patriots. He never missed a game and always high-fived his family even from miles away when the Patriots scored a touchdown by calling and celebrating with them over the phone as he high-fived south, and they high-fived north. He met the love of his life in 1972 when she was 16 years old, and he was 17. They married in 1973 and welcomed a daughter to their family in 1974. Another daughter was welcomed in 1975 and, in 1978, they welcomed a son completing their family. Bill served in the Army, and was honorably discharged in 1973. He had a wicked sense of humor that sometimes got him into trouble. He always had a smart comment or reply ready, especially when asked how he was feeling his reply was always "with my fingers." Bill loved to play softball and bowl. He gained many friends over the years while playing on many softball teams and bowling leagues. For Christmas last year, his only wish was to have his family all together for one big celebration. The family celebrated Christmas together making wonderful memories that will be cherished forever. In true Bill style, he was cracking jokes and keeping us all on our toes. His grandchildren lovingly referred to him "Papa Potato." He was preceded in death by his parents, William Hull and Shirley Marsh, and a brother, Frederick Hull. His wife Roxanne became his angel in 2004. He is survived by daughters Melissa and her husband Andy Houle of Lillington, North Carolina, and Tina and her husband Chris Dunham of Brattleboro; a son, Billy Hull, and his girlfriend

Amanda Thomas; grandchildren Julianne and her husband Edward Mills of Spring Lake, North Carolina, Justin Suprise of Brattleboro, Brian Houle and his fiancée Madison Stack of Fayetteville, North Carolina, Courtney Dunham of Brattleboro, and Andrew Hull of Brattleboro. He loved his great-grandchildren Gavin and Chloe Mills and was looking forward to his third great-grandchild, Raelynn Houle, joining the family this May. He is also survived by sisters Shirley, Lona, Sue, and Norma, his brother Ronald, and many nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Per their request, Bill and Roxanne will be buried together this June at Evergreen Cemetery in Winchester, New Hampshire. Donations to the American Cancer Society, in memory of Roxanne.

• **Isabelle J. Mann, 85**, of Spofford, New Hampshire. Died peacefully Jan. 29, 2023 at the Jack Byrne Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Services will take place in the springtime and an obituary will be published at a future date. Atamaniuk Funeral Home of Brattleboro is in charge of arrangements.

• **Jude William Melton-Houghton, 20**, died suddenly on Feb. 1, 2023 after an excruciating mental health struggle. He had a brilliant mathematical, scientific, and philosophical mind and was valedictorian of the Brattleboro Union High School Class of 2020. Jude also had a beautiful heart. He was surpassingly kind and thoughtful, and he had a delightful and quirky sense of humor. Jude was a talented visual artist as well as a creative and innovative software developer, and he had been working in the software field since the age of 15. He kept his light under a bushel, but everyone who knew him could see it and feel it blazing. Jude has left behind many grieving loved ones, including his parents, David Houghton and Paula Melton; his siblings, Ada Melton-Houghton and Cassandra Melton-Houghton; his grandparents, Leah Higginbotham, Jeanne Houghton, Mary Jane Melton, and Paul David Melton; his aunts, Kristie Houghton, Mary Catherine Melton, and Cynthia Parker-Houghton; his uncles, Kevin Houghton and Rolf Parker-Houghton; his cousins, Amanda Harris, Mica Houghton, Skyler Houghton, Buddy Jackson, Morgen Parker-Houghton, and Laila Woodruff; dear family friends Jasper Guyette, Melissa Haertsch, Jamie Hammarlund, the Stratton Treadway family, Phyllida Whittaker, and St. John Whittaker; and many other relatives, friends, acquaintances, teachers, mentors, and colleagues, all of whom will miss his insight,

intelligence, and thoughtfulness. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Jude's family warmly welcomes cards from those who knew him. Send cards to The Melton-Houghton family at 1108 Western Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301. In lieu of flowers, the family is encouraging charitable donations in Jude's memory. He taught himself to program at an early age through Khan Academy (khanacademy.org). Jude was a core developer for the open-source game Minetest (minetest.net); gifts in his honor can be sent to the founder, celeron55, to support the group's work. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Prevention Hotline (988lifeline.org) works to prevent lives like Jude's being cut short.

• **Raymond Henry "Ray" Mercier, 71**, of Marlboro. Died in the comfort of his home, surrounded by his family,

on Jan. 29, 2023 following an extended period of declining health. Ray was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts on Feb. 10, 1951, the son of Henry and Lucille (Lepine) Mercier. He was raised and educated in Holyoke graduating from Holyoke Trade School. He attended college before enlisting in the Army. He was stationed in Germany during the Vietnam War. Ray worked in maintenance and was employed by Agri-Mark in West Springfield, Massachusetts, which he retired from in 2022 following 32 faithful years with the company. Previously, he worked as a welder for Digital Equipment of Westfield, Massachusetts. An ardent outdoorsman, Ray enjoyed hunting and fishing, welding, and time spent with his family. A communicant of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Brattleboro, he was married at St. Michael's to Terry Jane Hrib on Aug. 14, 2010. Besides his devoted and faithful wife, he leaves his five children: sons Matthew of Marlboro, Timothy of Jamaica, and Raymond of Vernon; and daughters, Lisa Barns of Connecticut and Amy Hinkle of Shelburne Falls, Mass.; brothers Richard and Michael Mercier; sisters Susan, Pauline, Rose, Diane, Janice, and Donna; stepbrothers Charles and Norman Blake; and stepsister Helen Wilkinson. Additionally, he is survived by 10 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was predeceased by one son, Richard "P.T." Mercier, and brothers Dennis and Henry Mercier. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was held Feb. 3 at Saint Michael's Catholic Church. Committal services and burial with military honors will take place in the springtime in North Cemetery in Vernon. Donations to the Windham County Humane

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

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



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Hi, my name is **Apolo!** I am a sweet boy looking for a new place to call home. I have lived in a home with other dogs and kids previously and may be able to again with a proper introduction. Cats are way too exciting for me and I shouldn't live with any. I am strong with a lot of energy to burn and would like to go on lots of adventures with my new family. I also like to ride in the car, snuggle my humans and I know a couple of basic commands.



Hi, my name is **Zoey!** I am a gentle older gal looking for my retirement home where I can soak up sunbeams and love. I would need someone who can take me out a lot because I can't hold my bladder as long. I enjoy lounging on my dog bed and taking walks in nice weather. I'm generally mellow although I occasionally get some zoomies in the yard! I am well behaved on a leash plus I seem to be mostly housebroken! I have been used to being the only pet and would rather not have to get used to other animals at my age. I would be happy in a home with kids as long as they can be respectful of a sweet senior like me.



Hi there, I'm **Tenzin!** I am a sweet boy who takes a little while to settle in and seem to enjoy the company of other cats. In fact some of my friends from my previous home came with me! I could probably go home with any of them (Korra, Mako or Asami) or learn to live with other cats with some time to get to know each other. Dogs and children are unknown in my history so introductions should be gradual and everyone should be cat-savvy. I'm ready to start a new adventure, can it be with you?



Howdy, I'm **Junior!** I'm a friendly guy who was originally surrendered to a shelter in New Jersey as my previous owner had too many cats to care for. It took me a little while to settle in but once I'm comfortable I'm very friendly and affectionate to both people and other kitties. Dogs and children are unknown in my history so introductions should be gradual and everyone should be cat-savvy. I don't want to wait for my new home any longer, can it be with you?

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Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To share a memory or send condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Florence “Tillie” Moore, 89**, of Readsboro. Died Jan. 27, 2023 at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington. Florence was born in Jacksonville on March 31, 1933, the daughter of the late Everett and Viola (Gottard) Williams. She graduated from Whitingham High School and attended Becker Junior College in Worcester, Massachusetts. Florence worked as a medical secretary and bookkeeper for Dr. Wolfe, the Holstein-Friesian Association in Brattleboro, and was responsible for the bookkeeping for the family logging business. Florence enjoyed knitting, playing with her grandchildren, and camping in Maine with her family. Florence is survived by her children John R. Moore (Trudy) of Whitingham, Brian Moore (Julie) and Mark Moore (Donna), both of Wilmington, and Scott Moore (Diedra) of Whitingham; grandchildren Jessie, Tyler, Sara, Joseph, Jason, Christina, Nathan, and Cylie, and many great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband John “Joe” Moore and her sister Thelma Dustin. **MEMORIAL INFORMATION:** At the request of the family, graveside funeral services will be private. Donations to the American Diabetes Association or the Readsboro Fire Department, in care of Covey-Allen & Shea Funeral Home, P.O. Box 215, Wilmington, VT 05363. To send condolences, visit sheafuneralhomes.com.

• **David “Dave” Struthers Sr., 81**, of Port St. Lucie, Florida, formerly of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Jan. 3, 2023. Dave was the son of Larry and Irene Struthers and was one of seven children, including his two surviving siblings, Peggy (Bob) Hadley of Westminster West and Russell Struthers of Port St. Lucie, and his predeceased siblings Betty Hazelton, James Struthers, Eddie Struthers, and Mary Pat Sabine. He also leaves behind his beloved sister-in-law, Carol Bryant of Putney. On April 29, 1960, Dave married his high school sweetheart, Barbara (Bryant), and they raised four children, David (Elena) Struthers, Jr., Tammi (Mark) Stockwell, Kevin (Becky) Struthers, and Karen (Randon) Rhodes, in Brattleboro. Dave and Barbara were married nearly 55 years until her passing on Christmas of 2014. Dave leaves behind grandchildren Andrew, Melissa, Cassandra (deceased), Alicia, Carissa, Jared, Colin, Matt, Chelsea, Levi, and Devin; and great-grandchildren Liam, Mia, Joseph, Davina, Timothy, Amity, Colby, Maxwell, Alexander, Bennett, Aiden, Kali, Rory, Olivia, Logan, Bella, Grayson, Violette, and Malcom. In his early years, Dave operated a contracting business in Brattleboro and later ran a successful auto body/used car business, Perfection Auto, in West Palm Beach, Florida. After Barbara’s death, Dave met and married Cecile Beausoleil Struthers, and they moved to Port St. Lucie. Dave was an avid motorcyclist and owned more than 30 Harley-Davidsons in his lifetime. He also had a huge heart for children and was a two-time past Potentate of Amara Shrine where he raised money for the Shriners Children’s Hospitals. His loved ones will miss his mischievous and bright smile where one side crinkled up just a little more and his generous spirit. **MEMORIAL INFORMATION:** A Memorial Service will be held at the Evening State Grange in Dummerston Center on Saturday, Feb. 25, at 11 a.m. with a potluck luncheon to follow. Feel free to bring a dish to share. Donations to the Shriners Children’s Hospitals.

• **Linda Louise Tuttle, 74**, of Bellows Falls. Died peacefully on January 25, 2023 at Springfield (Vt.) Hospital. The daughter of Harland and Sylvia Dopp, Linda was born Nov. 25, 1948 in Bellows Falls. Graduating from Springfield High School, Linda went on to work for a variety of companies, including Brown and Sharp in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, National Grange Mutual in Keene, New Hampshire, and the Holstein Association USA in Brattleboro. Linda worked hard, excelled at everything that she did, and was always learning new skills throughout her life. She loved traveling and learning, and shared that love with all who knew her. Linda lived in many places, including Nantucket, but Vermont was always considered home. Family meant everything to Linda and she could be found at the games, productions, and events of her children and, later, her grandchildren, whom she loved to photograph and create keepsakes for them to cherish. She dearly loved her grandchildren. She enjoyed taking walks, riding her bike, documenting her adventures in her blog, the hunt for the perfect trinket for the occasion, and scrapbooking. She was a soft spoken, loving person, but those who knew her best knew

COLUMN | Deeper Dive

‘Tree army’ reshaped Vermont — and the U.S.

Ninety years ago, the Civilian Conservation Corps was founded to provide jobs for the unemployed and workers for conservation projects

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

The CCC was a public works program that operated from 1933 to 1942 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. It targeted single men, 18–25 years old, and World War I veterans in relief of families who had difficulty finding jobs during the Great Depression. The program provided unskilled manual labor in environmental conservation and the development of natural

resources in rural lands. Roosevelt proposed the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) Act, which created what we commonly know as the Civilian Conservation Corps., on March 21, 1933, and it went through both houses of Congress and landed on the president’s desk to be signed only 10 days later. He proposed to recruit thousands of unemployed young men, enroll them in a peacetime army, and send them into battle against destruction and erosion of our natural resources. “I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work [...] more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work.” On April 5, the birthday of the CCC, FDR signed the executive order creating the ECW/CCC. On April 7 the first enrollee was selected, and by April 17, the first camp, Camp Roosevelt, began operating near Luray, Virginia. Roosevelt brought together two unused resources: the young men and the land. He promised he’d have 250,000 men in camps by the end of July that same year. The Department of Labor, through its state and local relief offices, was responsible for the selection and enrollment of applicants. Enrollees had to be single and unemployed men aged 18–25 with families on relief. They enrolled for six months and worked a 40-hour week for \$30 per month. The government sent \$25 a

month home to the workers’ parents, and the men kept \$5 for spending money. By July 1, 1933, there were 275,000 enrollees and 10,000 supervisory personnel in 1,468 camps. It was the fastest large-scale mobilization of men in U.S. history. Roosevelt chose the Army to supervise the camps which consisted of approximately 200 men each. The Army moved thousands of enrollees from induction centers to working camps in record time. It used its own regular and reserve officers, together with regulars of the Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy to temporarily command camps and companies. Enrollees received good food, uniforms, shelter, and medical care. During the summer of 1933 they lived in tents; later, they moved into wooden buildings. CCC camps were located in all 48 states and the U.S. territories. There were separate camps for white enrollees, for Black enrollees, for unemployed veterans who served in World War I, and for Native Americans, who worked on tribal lands. MORE THAN 30 CCC camps emerged in or near Vermont towns, including Bellows Falls, Ludlow, Peru, Proctorsville/



The Bellows Falls CCC camp housed approximately 200 young men. It was located in North Westminster and had four barracks, a mess hall, a recreation hall, an administration building, an infirmary, garages, and a blacksmith shop.

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MARTIN PODSKOCH is a board member of CCC Legacy. He has authored three books on the history and lore of CCC camps of the Adirondacks, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, available at major booksellers and at martinpodskoch.com. Podskoch is researching Vermont’s CCC camps; those with information may contact him at 860-267-2442 or podskoch@comcast.net.

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MORE THAN 30 CCC camps emerged in or near Vermont towns, including Bellows Falls, Ludlow, Peru, Proctorsville/

Cavendish, Weston, Wilmington, and Windsor.

Vermont was originally allocated four CCC camps, but thanks to the dynamic presence of State Forester Perry H. Merrill, the state received more assistance than other states.

Merrill’s foresight in earlier developing long-range conservation, flood control, and forest management activities, and his lobbying of CCC National Director Robert Fechner, attracted substantially increased funding of CCC activities in Vermont.

Approximately 30 CCC camps operated in Vermont in 1937, and between 1933 and 1942, 40,868 individuals worked in Vermont camps. Only about one-quarter of these were Vermonters (11,243). Most of the CCC men who worked in Vermont camps were from Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.

A camp superintendent was selected to plan, organize, and supervise projects on state and national forest land. Workers built trails, roads, campsites, and dams; stocked fish; built and maintained fire tower observers’ cabins and telephone lines; fought fires; and planted millions of trees.

THE CCC DISBANDED in 1942 due to desertions, increased employment opportunities, changes in public opinion, lack of funding, and the need for soldiers to serve in World War II.

The program is considered by many to be one of the most successful of Roosevelt’s New Deal programs. Roosevelt’s “Tree Army” planted more than three billion trees on land made barren from fires, natural erosion, intensive agriculture, or logging. In fact, the CCC was responsible for over half the reforestation, public and private, in the nation’s history.

Enrollees constructed trails and shelters in more than 800 parks nationwide. The CCC helped to shape the modern national and state park systems we enjoy today.

CCC companies contributed to an impressive number of state and national park structures that visitors can still enjoy. The CCC developed 94 sites, including national parks, monuments, recreation areas, and historic sites.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a national organization that is “dedicated to research, preservation, and education of future generations to create a better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture.” Anyone interested in learning about the work of the CCC Legacy and joining should visit ccclegacy.org or [facebook.com/groups/ccclegacygroup](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ccclegacygroup).

Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro to host Selectboard candidate forum

BRATTLEBORO—The Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro is hosting a Meet the Candidates Forum for candidates vying for two Selectboard races “to talk about the important issues facing our town,” the organization writes in a news release.

In the upcoming Annual Town Election on Tuesday, March 7, voters will vote for one candidate for a three-year seat and two candidates for

two one-year seats at American Legion Post 5 at 32 Linden St.

The forum will take place at the club, 17 Flat St., on Thursday, Feb. 16, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Each candidate will answer questions on a variety of topics affecting Brattleboro and share their vision on how to move the town forward.

Candidates include Dick DeGray and incumbent Liz

McLaughlin, the candidates for the single three-year seat; and Spoon Agave, Peter “Fish” Case, incumbent Jessica Callahan Gelter, Franz Reichsmann, and Samuel Stevens, the candidates for two one-year seats.

The public will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

The event will be moderated. An American Sign Language interpreter will be available.

The club says it is hosting this

event “to highlight public and youth engagement in the political process.” Anyone interested is invited to attend, regardless of voting age.

Learn more about the Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro at bgcbrattleboro.org, which includes links to the club’s outreach on social media.

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Rwanda

Africa,” Marino explains.

“My first trip to Rwanda was in 2011 and, from my first steps in the country, I knew I would come back. A year later, I returned and volunteered for a micro-loan organization. This was when I met Solome, who became Inshuti’s first house recipient.

“At the time, I could not envision one house for one family would be the catalyst for an entire organization and we would grow a community of Inshuti (friends) from it. But we did,” she continues.

She describes the connection between Rwanda and Brattleboro as “linked through community.”

“As a transplant to Brattleboro, I always found the town to be socially conscious, to be involved in community-led initiatives, and to have a strong sense of connection among its citizens,” she observes. “This is very similar to Rwanda.”

“I always felt that Inshuti’s purpose is not only to build homes to shelter families or create jobs but also to grow a community of Inshuti,” Marino continues. “One that links our previous house recipients and workers in Rwanda with our many supporters around the world.”

Building bridges

Housing is the primary focus of the Inshuti project. It costs just \$3,000 to build an Inshuti home, including all building material, labor, project coordination, and home provisions.

“Inshuti families are given all the essentials to begin a new life, such as a pit latrine, electricity, beds, mattresses, mosquito nets, and cookware,” says Marino. “Inshuti’s newest initiative of providing necessary school uniforms and books to house recipient families ensures children have access to Rwanda’s free education program. The project has grown from one building season to two, and with that, the amount of families they support is ever-increasing.”

Honoring the second part of Inshuti’s mission, the organization plans on providing a 20% raise for all Inshuti masons, workers, and porters, guaranteeing that their wages are not only keeping up with inflation but also are higher than those of other local jobs.

“The extra income gives Inshuti employees a chance to better support their own families by paying for clothes, national health insurance, buying livestock, and increasing their standard of living,” Marino says.



It costs just \$3,000 to build an Inshuti home in Rwanda, including all building material, labor, project coordination, and home provisions.

To date, Inshuti of Rwanda has sheltered 75 families and created hundreds of jobs through its house building projects. Since 2015, Marino and her group have raised more than \$250,000.

Inshuti works closely with the Rwandan government, Marino says, to select families to help, with 80% chosen from the government’s list of people in immediate need of housing. The other 20% are chosen from the Inshuti community of masons, workers, and porters.

“Predominantly, our families are single mothers whose husbands ran off, an unfortunately common problem in Rwanda,” says Marino. “We also help widows, genocide survivors, and hard-working father families who have school-aged children. By focusing on younger families, our houses have a longer-lasting impact by improving lives early on.”

How to help

Inshuti’s fundraising goal for the 2023 programming year is \$75,000 to build the 25 new houses and provide local jobs with livable wages for staff members.

Those who wish to support Inshuti can donate at inshutiorwanda.org and choose to contribute to such specific items as cookware (\$40), a truck of bricks (\$80), or a mason’s monthly salary (\$120). A \$10 monthly contribution can give a child school uniforms and books.

To become more involved, supporters can start a campaign for a family in need of shelter.

Each person starting a

campaign will be connected to an Inshuti family through stories and pictures. With this information and guidance, campaigners raise money from their circle of friends for a new house for their Inshuti family.

“These campaigns allow for more than the building of homes; it also builds a bridge between communities, and a lifelong connection is made between the campaigner and their Inshuti family,” Marino says.

“The community extends to the many supporters around the world who help Inshuti succeed in their mission. In essence, creating a community of Inshuti — friends — with the common goal of providing the basic need for shelter and necessary local jobs in

Rwanda, further strengthens the idea that we are all interconnected people and the importance of supporting each other,” she says.

“Inshuti house recipients are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to start a new life by having the stability provided by secure, safe, and clean housing,” Marino says. “It has been astonishing to witness house recipients’ progress in the following years.”

“Many of our Inshuti community members have saved money to buy living room furniture, put their children through secondary school, or buy pigs as a form of investment,” she notes.

For more information about Inshuti of Rwanda and to support its work, visit inshutiorwanda.org.

Town Meeting

FROM SECTION FRONT

“Hopes are high for a greater turnout,” Cornwall Town Clerk Susan Johnson said.

Only a handful of communities are rescheduling proceedings until spring, down significantly from the up to 50 that did so the past two years. Sheffield and Wardsboro will postpone until May, when each can meet under a tent. Verrill and Windham will vote at later dates yet to be publicized.

Many municipalities casting ballots will hold in-person or on-line informational sessions (unlike official Town Meetings, they

don’t allow the opportunity for floor votes). Such gatherings, in turn, are bringing back another seasonal staple: the shared meal.

Panton will hold a potluck before its March 6 informational session.

“Join your neighbors to share food and fellowship,” the town website says.

Killington will see the return of the “Town Informational Meeting Drive-Thru Pasta Dinner” before its March 6 gathering.

“\$5 donation accepted and appreciated but not required,” the town website says.

AROUND THE TOWNS

Brattleboro’s Charter Revision Commission meets Feb. 9

BRATTLEBORO — Brattleboro’s Charter Revision Commission will meet on Thursday, Feb. 9, at 6 p.m. in the Selectboard Meeting Room in the Municipal Center, 230 Main Street.

The meeting agenda includes a discussion of how to structure the charter review and revision process and how to encourage, gather and review public input. All commission meetings are open to the public and are recorded and available on BCTV’s website, brattleborotv.org.

The seven-member commission was established by the Selectboard in December 2022. Article 4, Section 5(H) of the Brattleboro Charter requires, “At least as often as every 15 years, the Selectboard shall appoint from among the voters a charter revision commission to review the language of the charter and the rights, powers, duties, and responsibilities specified therein. The commission may propose amendments and may redraft the charter in whole or in part.”

Members of the commission are Hannah Clarisse, Peter Elwell, David Gartenstein, Denise Glover, Maya Hasegawa, Kate O’Connor, and Joy Tournoux. The charter is available for viewing at brattleboro.org.

Habitat hike on Hogback Mountain

MARLBORO — Ten years ago, Hogback Mountain Conservation Association (HMCA) started a multi-year Early Successional Habitat (ESH) program in the Hogback Mountain Conservation Area to try to generate a variety of wildlife niches on the mountain.

The HMCA picked several of the overgrown ski slopes, and more than 100 volunteers cut back the trees and shrubs, hoping to stimulate growth of ESH, also known as “young forest,” which can be very attractive to certain birds, mammals, amphibians, and insects.

Hikers can take a look at how things are regrowing and look for signs of use by wildlife during a hike planned for Saturday, Feb. 11, led by Diana Todd.

Meet at 10 a.m. in the parking lot on Route 9 in between the distillery and the gift shop. There’s plenty of parking available in the big lot on the north side of Route 9 across from the distillery. Bring snowshoes or cleats as appropriate for the snow conditions. Skis will not be appropriate for this hike, since hikers may end up bushwhacking through some dense growth. The goal is to return to the parking lot by noon. For more information, email hmca@hogbackvt.org.

Valentine-making workshop offered

GUILFORD — Start a new tradition and make Valentine’s cards for your family and friends to express love and appreciation on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Drive.

This Valentine-making workshop is for families, children, and teens and will be led by craftswoman Carole Crompton. This is a non-denominational activity open to all and sponsored by Guilford Community Church. Light snacks and materials are provided. The cost is a suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family (all welcome regardless). Call 802-257-0994 to register, or contact Crompton at cmcrompton51@gmail.com.

Library sponsors showing of ‘Top Hat’ at Opera House

BELLOWS FALLS — Celebrate Valentine’s Week at

the Bellows Falls Opera House with one of the great 1930s dance musicals, *Top Hat*, featuring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers on Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 7 p.m., sponsored by the Friends of the Rockingham Library.

It’s love at first dance, until Ginger thinks Fred is her best friend’s husband. The film satirizes stuffy upper-class manners while providing sumptuous Hollywood representations of London and Venice. Songs by Irving Berlin including *Top Hat*, *White Tie and Tails*, *Isn’t It a Lovely Day?* and *Cheek to Cheek*. The Friends of the Library invite everyone to the fun at the Opera House. Tickets for the movie are \$6.

A Friends of the Rockingham Library table will be set up before the movie to provide information on the Friends activities and invitations to join. The Hunter Art Studio is sharing the love by providing free “Triple Up” treats (popcorn, candy, and soda) for each new member of the Friends at \$10 or higher level.

Rec. Dept. offers youth chess classes

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department will offer another session of youth chess classes from Feb. 17 to April 28. Note there will be no class on Feb. 24. The fee is \$55 for Brattleboro residents and \$70 for non-residents.

Intermediate classes will take place on Fridays from 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. These players must know basic checkmate and a few tactics and strategies. Beginner classes will be on Fridays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Eric Strickland is the instructor.

Register online at bit.ly/701-chess, or in person at the Gibson-Aiken Center located at 207 Main Street, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m.

GMP expands rebates for customers

COLCHESTER — Green Mountain Power has renewed savings opportunities for customers in 2023, to continue to switch away from fossil fuel for driving, heating, and more. These rebates are available to all customers to make the switch and help cut carbon and costs for customers.

GMP’s rebate for all-electric vehicles (AEVs) is increasing for 2023, to \$2,200 for qualifying new vehicles, up from \$1,500 last year. Income-eligible customers can still get an extra \$1,000 rebate for up to \$3,200 in savings. If you purchase or lease from a participating dealership, they can apply the rebate as a discount during the transaction for immediate savings.

This bigger AEV rebate is valid through June 2023, and it can be combined with up to \$4,000 in state EV rebates and \$7,500 in federal tax incentives for qualifying vehicles, adding up to big savings. GMP’s base rebate for used AEVs is also increasing — to \$1,500, up from \$750 last year.

GMP reports that with its customers, it has helped to offset 306,000 Metric tons of carbon emissions through GMP programs last year, which is the equivalent of taking about 66,000 fossil fuel vehicles off the road for a year.

More details on all of GMP’s rebates and programs for residential customers are online at bit.ly/701-gmp and include:

- Heat pumps, \$400 rebate with up to \$1,000 in savings for income-eligible customers.
- Motorcycles, \$500 rebate.
- E-bikes, \$200 instant rebate at participating shops.
- Induction stoves, \$200 rebate.
- Lawn tractors and mowers, up to \$100 rebate.

February is American Heart Month

Give Your Heart Some LOVE!



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- MOVE your body—even 5 minutes a day can help.
- DISCUSS your family history of heart disease with relatives and loved ones.

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The home should be the treasure chest of living.
—LE CORBUSIER

The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.
—MAYA ANGELOU

Cultural appropriation?

'I can't imagine doing this show without involving the local Jewish community,' says the director of 'Fiddler on the Roof'

THE ISSUE OF cultural appropriation was raised when we were introducing *Fiddler on the Roof*, and that concern was surprising to me, especially because I had been vocal about partnering with local Jewish community leadership when discussing the possibility of doing this play.

Once the issue was raised, I began the process of doing some research online, speaking with adults in and out of the school community, and most critically, connecting with the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community — specifically, Rabbi Amita Jarmon, who put me in touch with Rabbi Avremy Raskin of the Chabad Jewish Center of Brattleboro.

It was important to me to go directly to Jewish community leadership for two reasons: first, to determine whether they felt non-Jewish actors portraying Jewish people was indeed cultural appropriation — if they had, we wouldn't be having this conversation!

And second, I knew I would need the support of the local Jewish community to make sure we portrayed characters, customs, traditions, and ceremonies as accurately as possible within a theatrical context.

I also wanted to provide opportunities for my actors to learn about Judaism and why certain things are the way they are in the show.

BOTH Rabbi Jarmon and Rabbi Raskin individually told me that this was the first time that anyone who was directing *Fiddler* had ever reached out to them about

REBEKAH KERSTEN, BUHS English and theater teacher, is directing *Fiddler on the Roof* for this year's Brattleboro Union High School musical and responds here to the criticism from some students who have perceived the casting of non-Jewish actors to portray Jewish people as cultural appropriation.

the show. This shocked me: I can't imagine doing this show without involving the local Jewish community.

I've had wonderful, extensive conversations with both rabbis. They have been so generous with their time, sharing their knowledge with all of us, and answering any number of questions.

Once I had confirmed that both rabbis were interested in working with us, I invited them to attend our audition-information meeting at the start of the school year.

I hoped to allay concerns about cultural appropriation and the educational piece to this show by giving students an opportunity to speak directly with Rabbi Raskin and Rabbi Jarmon prior to deciding whether to audition.

Some of the students decided to audition after this meeting, and others expressed their curiosity and excitement about learning about Judaism through this show.

Still others, even though they didn't audition, decided to attend the rabbi-led "What is Judaism?" Diversity Day workshops we

■ SEE APPROPRIATION?, B5



COURTESY PHOTO

The cast of the BUHS production of "Fiddler on the Roof." Back row, from left: Griffin Woodruff as Tevye, Genny Schneski as Golde, Abby Sharff as Tzeitel, Lila Armour-Jones as Hodel. Front row, from left: Soma Lever as Bielke, Lizzie Elkins as Shprintze, and Isabella May as Chav.

Life, love, and tolerance

'Fiddler on the Roof' marks 50th annual musical at BUHS

By Nancy A. Olson
Special to *The Commons*

BRATTLEBORO — This year's musical at Brattleboro Union High School, the 50th to be staged there, is "Fiddler on the Roof," opening on Thursday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m. With book by Joseph Stein, music by Jerry Bock, and lyrics by Sheldon

Harnick, it tells the story of Tevye, a poor dairyman, who lives with his wife Golde and their five daughters in the small Jewish village of Anatevka, in czarist Russia, in 1905. It is based on the short stories of Sholem Aleichem.

Life in the shtetl has been the same for generations, sustained by the traditions that are its foundation. Now that his three oldest daughters are of marriageable

age, Tevye wants to find good husbands for them, so he consults the matchmaker, as is the custom. The young women, however, while outwardly obeying their parents, have strong ideas of their own. Tevye's familial struggles and joys mirror in microcosm the larger cultural shifts percolating in society.

In a recent interview, some of the students participating in the

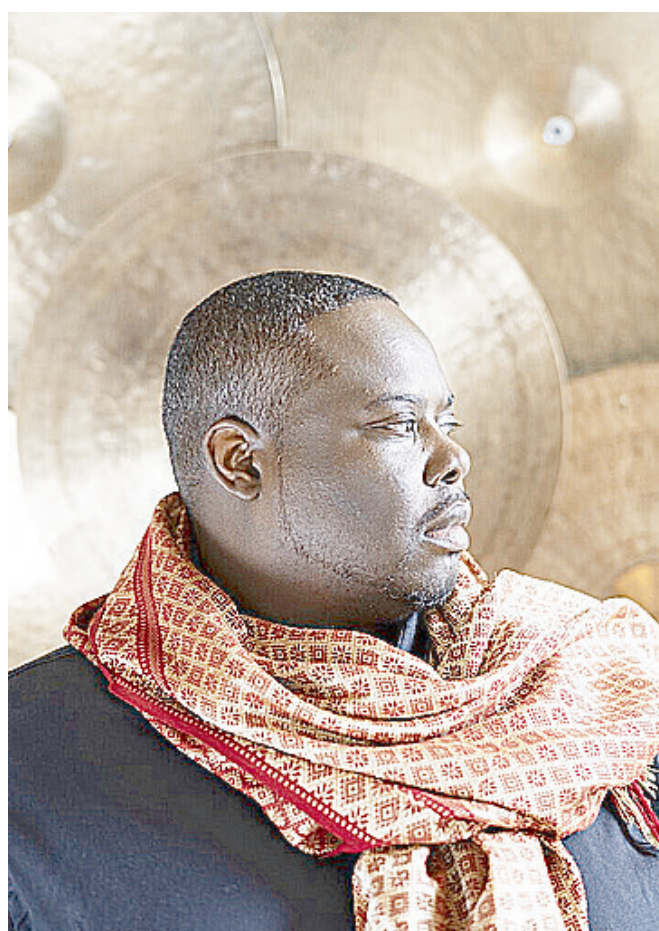
production talked about the characters they portray and the experience of working on the show.

Abby Sharff plays Tzeitel, the eldest daughter, who is the first to rebel.

"Tevye has already approved her marriage to Lazar Wolf, the town's butcher, but she, herself, has promised to marry Motel, the poor tailor," Sharff said. "In

■ SEE FIDDLER, B5

COLUMN | Deeper Dive



Johnathan Blake

DAVID ELLIS

Three come together as one

Vermont Jazz Center hosts Johnathan Blake Trion on Feb. 18

THREE OF THE top musicians in jazz come together to perform as one in an evening of adventurous and energetic music at the Vermont Jazz Center, Saturday, Feb. 18, at 7:30 p.m.

Johnathan Blake's Trion is a chord-less jazz trio (includes no chordal instrument such as piano or guitar) featuring three of the leading players of their generation: Chris Potter on tenor saxophone, Linda May Han Oh on acoustic bass and band leader Blake on drums.

Reviewing their self-titled recording, *Trion*, Apple-music states "Blake rides a hurricane as he convenes with two giants [...] Each player is amply and repeatedly featured, but the trio sounds like a genuine collective, not stars hunkering down in

their respective corners."

The repertoire of the group ranges from original compositions and pop tunes to Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk standards, all performed with an open-ended concept.

This group doesn't hold back. All three are virtuosos on their instruments; they use their prowess to swing hard, think hard, and communicate at a level that's unrestrained by the confines of technique, knowledge, and ability. They know when to burn and when to leave space, when to swing and when to play a ballad, when to sit in the pocket and when to go wild.

After years of playing with the top musicians of the world, this trio of leaders has refined their ability to convey their ideas, thoughts, and emotions into instantaneous poetry, using



EUGENE UMAN is director of the Vermont Jazz Center. Admission to this in-person event is offered for a sliding fee (\$20 to \$50). Masks will be required. 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. 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.

notes as a proxy for words. Their ears guide them to a universe unfettered by the demands of their instruments and unobstructed by the constraints of harmony.

Their musical conversations evolve into well-informed compositions, and we, as listeners,

are privileged to eavesdrop and follow each thread as it morphs from a germ of an idea into a fully developed construct. This is music for deep listening, and the rewards are great.

Johnathan Blake's website clarifies his use of the word

■ SEE TRION, B6

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KELLY FLETCHER

One of the many Artful Ice Shanties that were on display at the Retreat Farm during the 2022 event.

Artful Ice Shanties return to Brattleboro in February

BRATTLEBORO—The past two winters have seen thousands of visitors attend Brattleboro’s Artful Ice Shanties exhibit, presented by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) and Retreat Farm. They saw ice shanties shaped like a giant iridescent fish, a black die with moon-shaped dots, a seascape with a three-dimensional octopus, a cockeyed castle, and more.

The Artful Ice Shanties are coming back for the third time, Saturday, Feb. 18, through Sunday, Feb. 26, generously sponsored by Foard Panel, Brattleboro Subaru, and The Marina, and

with grant support from the Vermont Arts Council.

“For the first time, the shanties are going to be out on the ice at Retreat Meadows,” said BMAC Director Danny Lichtenfeld in a news release. “The past two years, we had to set them up on land at Retreat Farm, but the vision was always to have them on the ice, alongside the ‘real’ ice fishing shanties, and this year, that’s where they’ll be.”

Lichtenfeld continued, “As anyone who’s gone skating or snowshoeing at Retreat Meadows can attest, it’s a magical experience. Being out there on the ice

is going to add yet another layer of wonder to the exhibit. Of course, that’s all contingent on the weather. If there is any question whatsoever about the quality of the ice, we’ll set up the shanties on land.”

Visitors are welcome to view the shanties from dawn to dusk. There is no fee for admission. Free parking is available at Retreat Farm, and signs will be posted directing visitors to the shanties. A welcome hut with exhibit information and complimentary hot chocolate will be staffed 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day the exhibit is open.

On Saturday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m., a panel of local judges will bestow a variety of lighthearted awards during an outdoor Awards Ceremony near the welcome hut.

Earlier in the day, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department of will be offering an ice-fishing clinic. For more information and to register for the clinic, visit retreatfarm.org. And in the evening, from 5 to 7 p.m., there will be a free, all-ages, outdoor dance party, with Jaci’s BBQ food truck and the Thirsty Goat Bar on hand to provide nourishment.

Among those constructing shanties for this year’s exhibit are returning builders Annaliese Bischoff, Bruce Campbell, Justin Kenney, Charlie Konkowski, and Rachel Suplee.

They will be joined by first-timers Dakota Benedetto, Samuel Daoud, Joshua Farr, Zak Grace, Keene State College’s “Art in Community” class, Angus McCullough, Anne Murphy and Amy Nelson, Matt Neckers, NewBrook Elementary School fourth graders, Ronald Schneiderman, and members of Zea Mays Printmaking studio.

This year’s Artful Ice Shanties exhibit coincides with numerous other events taking place in Brattleboro, including the iconic Harris Hill Ski Jump (Feb. 18-19), Brattleboro’s Winter Carnival (Feb. 18-26), and the opening of “Keith Haring: Subway Drawings” at BMAC, Saturday, Feb. 18, at 5 p.m.

‘Winter Oasis’ exhibit opens at Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts

BRATTLEBORO— Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 181-183 Main Street, introduces Mutsu Crispin and Jessie Pollock, featured artists in “Winter Oasis,” opening with an artist reception Saturday, Feb. 11, 5 to 7 p.m. All are invited to an artists forum scheduled for Sunday, March 12, at 4 p.m. The exhibition continues through April 2.

Presented as a rotating exhibit, “Winter Oasis” includes recent paintings, prints, photographs, and sculpture by Amy Arbus, Eric Boyer, David Brewster, Rona Lee Cohen, Jim Giddings, and Gay Malin.

Mutsu Crispin, aka Johnny DiGeorge, recently relocated to Hawaii and has exhibited sculpture, created public art installations, worked as a welder, performed as a dancer and clown, and run a small design company.

Many of his pieces are crafted from layers of vibrantly tinted plexiglass, laser cut, and assembled into different designs, “often fantastical or hypnotic,” say organizers in a news release. In some sculptures, the artist uses mirrors and lights “to create the illusion of infinite depth.”

Jessie Pollock is a 2022 Ruth and James Ewing Award winner for 2D Visual Arts. Incorporating collage, pencil and small stones into her richly textured, abstract, mixed-media landscapes, Pollock “aims to capture (a) sense of ancientness — of a time when humankind



COURTESY PHOTO

“Pink Love Portal” (2021) by Mutsu Crispin.

stood alone,” said Ryan Spencer in the Ruth & James Ewing Arts Awards Magazine.

Also of special interest are two woodblock prints by Southwest artist Gustave Baumann. Baumann (1881-1971), became one of the most important members of the Santa Fe, New Mexico, artist colony, and his eagerly collected woodcuts have come to shape and define our perception and

understanding of the American Southwest.

Pine and Aspen, 1946, and *Piñon - Grand Canyon*, “are exemplary prints,” say organizers, “boasting Baumann’s relatively flat, broad passages of saturated, local color and iconic subject matter.”

For more information, contact Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts at 802-251-8290, or visit mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com.

Theatre Adventure receives grant from Vermont Arts Council

BRATTLEBORO—Theatre Adventure, Inc. is a nonprofit organization providing year-round performing arts programming for people with disabilities. Working with student’s individual abilities, they create productions using multiple artistic media in which the unique abilities of each student can flourish.

Theatre Adventure recently received a \$15,000 Creative Futures Grant from the Vermont Arts Council to create innovative performances throughout the pandemic.

“In response to creating and developing our hybrid program, the students have risen to new levels of independence and leadership, as they present seamless hybrid performances,” said Julianne Kaplan, a board director,

during a Theatre Adventure presentation on the organization’s growth and change at the West Village Meeting House.

The hybrid model has also expanded opportunities for participation in community events, and marketing and outreach.

According to the Vermont Arts Council, Creative Futures Grants “provide funding for creative programs impacted by the pandemic, empowering artistic organizations to thrive in creating new performance models both in person and online.”

For more information about Theater Adventure’s inclusive theater arts programming, contact Director/Co-Founder Laura Lawson Tucker at 802-387-0765 or visit theatreadventure.org.

Latchis Arts film series showcases Keene State College curators

BRATTLEBORO—Latchis Arts’ Spotlight Series returns in February with a month of films curated in collaboration with Keene State College’s KSC Film Society.

Spotlight is a curated series featuring films that highlight different voices in film, in this case the curatorial voice of students at Keene State College.

The KSC Film Society is a student organization of film aficionados who meet weekly to share their passion for film and to program weekend screenings at KSC’s Putnam Theater, bringing the best of art house, indie, and unusual cinema to the Keene State community. KSC Film Society members will attend some of the Spotlight screenings at the Latchis to share their thoughts on the selections.

On Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 11 and 12, the series features *First Cow*, a 2019 feature film about a skilled cook who joins a group of fur trappers out West in the 1820s and finds true connection with a Chinese immigrant. Soon

the two collaborate on an unusual business venture involving the secret use of a landowner’s prized dairy cow. *First Cow* has a 96% score on Rotten Tomatoes and is rated PG-13.

Spotlight continues the weekend of Feb. 18 and 19 with the documentary *Dawson City Frozen Time*. In 1978, a bulldozer uncovered a cache of silent films buried in the Canadian permafrost for decades. Director Bill Morrison weaves images from this unearthed cinematic treasure trove into a mesmerizing and thought-provoking film. It has a perfect 100% on Rotten Tomatoes.

The series wraps up on Feb. 25 and 26 with *The Last Black Man*

in *San Francisco*. In this feature film from 2016, two friends try to reclaim a family house, launching them on a journey that connects them to their past as it challenges their friendship and their sense of home. The film has a 92% score on Rotten Tomatoes and is rated R.

Films in February are shown on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. at the Latchis Theatre. Admission is by suggested donation of \$10, but no one will be turned away.

Proceeds from Spotlight Series films benefit the nonprofit Latchis Arts. For more information, visit latchis.com.

Musicians from Marlboro return to BMC on Feb. 11

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Music Center’s Chamber Series continues Saturday, Feb. 11, with a visit from the Musicians from Marlboro Group II.

The 7 p.m. concert at the BMC at 72 Blanche Moyses Way will include a work titled *Moon Songs* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Shulamit Ran, who was in residence at Marlboro in 2018 and worked extensively on her music with these artists in Vermont.

Also on the program is Haydn’s

String Trio in G major, Op. 53, No. 1 and Mozart’s Divertimento in E-flat major, K. 563.

Performers are Kristina Bachrach, soprano; Giorgio Consolati, flute; Joseph Lin, violin; En-Chi Cheng, viola; Brannon Cho and Matt Zalkind, cello; and Lydia Brown, piano.

Tickets are \$30 general admission and are available online at bmcvt.org, by calling the BMC at 802-257-4523, or emailing info@bmcvt.org.

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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
Feb. 6-12
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are with guest Negin: Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 12:10p, Sat 9a, Sun 9p	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 2/7/23: Tues 6:15 (LIVE), Thurs 1p, Fri 2:30p, Sat 1p
The World Fusion Show - Ep 145 - Mai Maiz: Mon 8:45p, Tues 8p, Wed 9a, Thurs 12:10p, Fri 6:10p, Sat 6:30p, Sun 9:30a	Brattleboro Selectboard - Public Hearing on Amendments to the Brattleboro Town Charter 2/3/23: Mon 6p, Tues 10a, Wed 1p
Windham County's Got Talent 1/26/23: Mon 3p, Tues 8:30p, Wed 12:15p, Thurs 9a, Fri 9:30p, Sat 7p, Sun 5:30p	River Valleys Unified School District Mtg 2/6/23: Thurs 6p, Sat 10a, Sun 12p
Northern Roots Festival 1/28/23: Mon 9a, Tues 12:10p, Wed 9p, Thurs 4p, Sat 2:05p, Sun 7:05p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg 2/6/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 12p
Lil Balzac 2: Tues 10p, Thurs 10p, Sat 9:50p, Sun 5a	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg 2/6/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Sun 2:30p
At BMAC - Conversation: Renate Aller and Makeda Djata Best: Mon 12:10p, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 10:45a, Sat 8:30p, Sun 5:45a	Vernon Selectboard Mtg 2/7/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 6a
Thorn in My Side - MEDIEVAL TIMES! - April 21st, 2022: Mon 10:45a, Tues 4p, Wed 4:45p, Fri 12:45p, Sat 6a	Putney Selectboard Mtg 2/8/23: Sat 4:30p, Sun 6a & 7:30p
At BMAC - Lunar New Year Cooking Demo: Mon 7:15a, Tues 6a, Wed 6:10p, Fri 1:45p, Sun 12:30p	West River Education District Mtg 2/8/23: Fri 6p, Sat 7:30a
Around Town with Maria - A Ray McNeill's Celebration at the Stone Church 12/17/22: Thurs 1:30p, Fri 3:30p, Sat 9:30a, Sun 9:45p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg 2/8/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 5:30a
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg 2/8/23: Sat 8p, Sun 8:30a
WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg 2/9/23: Sun 5p
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Newfane Planning Commission Mtg 2/9/23: Sun 10p
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service: Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	Guilford Selectboard Mtg 1/23/23: Mon 10a, Tues 3:30p, Wed 3:30p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 5p	Windham Southeast School District Mtg 1/30/23: Fri 11:30a, Sat 12:45p, Sun 5:45a
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tue 5p, Wed 12p, Thu 11a & 6p, Sat 7p, Sun 11a
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

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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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	CON.T.	MONDAY	CON.T.	WEDNESDAY	CON.T.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<p>Performing arts GUILFORD Guilford Center Stage announces Auditions for the play "Our Town": This Thornton Wilder classic, directed by Ian Hefele, will be performed the first weekend in May, marking the return of theater to Guilford after a three-year COVID hiatus. Written in 1938 and based on the nearby town of Peterborough, NH, "Our Town" is one of the most often performed American plays. A full range of ages is represented among the characters, and there are both major roles and small ones, with possibilities for actor doublings. ▶ 6:30-8:30 p.m. Arrive anytime during session; no appointment necessary. Prepare or bring a short dramatic reading of your choosing. Hefele will also suggest a reading from the play script. Rehearsals will begin in mid-March for about 6 weeks and many individual scenes will be rehearsed in small groups so most actors will not have to be at all rehearsals. Dir. Ian Hefele has appeared on stage in three previous Guilford shows, as well as in performances with many companies in the area. He has directed Ten Minute Plays with Actors Theatre Playhouse and a full-length play, "The Road to Mecca," with Vermont Theatre Company. ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Unable to make this audition date, call Ian: 802-246-7096. Or email ian.hefele@gmail.com and copy your message to ian.hefele@gmail.com.</p> <p>Community building The Rockingham Energy Committee presents a Biofuel Discussion (via Zoom): Learn about the emerging renewable liquid heating fuels from Sean Cota, President and CEO of the National Energy & Fuels Institute from Washington, DC. This presentation reviews why these fuels reduce CO2e and why immediate cumulative uses of renewable fuels impact total cumulative emissions. Cota has over 35 years of experience in the heating fuels industry. ▶ 6 p.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. Information: Receive Invite: programming@rockinghamlibrary.org or call the Rockingham Library: 802-463-4270.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Downtown Brattleboro's Historic District 6th Annual Luv Crawl: Participating shops/tastemakers: Altiplano/Barr Hill, The Collective/Bratt Food Coop, Taylor for Flowers/VT Distillers, Beadniks/Zero Gravity Brewing, VT Artisan Designs/St. Johnsbury Distillers, ZPOTZ/Mad River Distillery, Cara Wolff Jewelry/Silo Distillery, Boomerang/AVT Table, Saxton's River Distillery/The Good Spot, The Lounge/Superfresh, River Garden Marketplace/Frisky Cow Gelato, AVT Table/Grafton Cheese, First Proof Press/Stonecturter Spirits, Tierra Botanics/Heart Grown Wild. ▶ 6-8 p.m. Spirits/beer/cider/wine/snacks. Shop for a special idea, gift, experience. Check in at Stone Church and choose your adventure! Each stop gets you a stamp. Each stamp gets you closer to a prize. Everyone who obtains 14 stamps is entered in a drawing to win a \$100 gift card to any participating shop. Each year we offer a commemorative tasting glass for purchase which you can use on your stroll. <i>Fire Arts Studio & ZPOTS offer blown glass/clay shop glasses for purchase this evening.</i> ▶ \$15 at door of The Stone Church. ▶ The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.</p> <p>Community meals NEWFANE Lunch offered by Senior Solutions: Appetizer: Ham Salad on crackers; Main Meal: Pot Roast with Mashed Potatoes, Green Salad, Beets, Bread. Dessert: Strawberry Cake with cream. ▶ 12 noon. Meal is prepared by the hard-working volunteers from the church and community. ▶ \$3.50 suggested donation. ▶ Newfane Congregational Church, 11 Church St. Information: Questions? Call Winnie Dolan: 365-7870.</p> <p>GUILFORD Guilford Cares Food Pantry: "We're well stocked w/ wide selection of staples (pasta, soups, canned/packaged items), fresh produce, butter, eggs, frozen meat. All are welcome. With the high cost of food and fuel, come to the Pantry so you/your family stay healthy and well nourished." ▶ 3-4 p.m. on Thursdays in the red "first aid" building. If you can't come due to illness/high risk, arrange food delivery by a volunteer - 802-579-1350 or guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com. ▶ Free. ▶ Guilford Fairgrounds, Fairgrounds Rd. off Weatherhead Hollow Rd. Information: 802-579-1350 or guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com.</p> <p>Visual arts and shows Artist and Curator Conversation: Alison Moritsugu and Sarah Freeman: "Moons and Internment Stones" (Zoom/Facebook Live): Artist Alison Moritsugu, Densho community activist/artist Erin Shigaki, and curator Sarah Freeman discuss this exhibit of paintings of the moon and of stones collected by Moritsugu's grandfather in the Santa Fe Internment Camp during WW II. Presented in partnership with Densho, a non-profit committed to documenting the oral histories of Japanese Americans incarcerated during the war. ▶ 7 p.m. Hosted by the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center. A recording will be made available afterward. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. Information: Sign up: 802-257-0124 x 101 or tinyurl.com/352t6thc.</p>	<p>Performing arts WILLIAMSVILLE "Food of Love" - A Valentine's Cabaret presented by The Rock River Players: Producer Annie Landenberg. "Cabarets are typically adult-focused with a heavy dose of subversion. They have been the hot bed of creative energy for a decades. In its earliest form, it gave us out-of-the-box perspective and material. With a collection of scenes, songs, satire, surprises - and in keeping with the essence of the cabaret, these RRP evening promises laughs, love, epiphanies." ▶ 7 p.m. both nights. Featuring Adrienne Major, Tracy Berchi, Tom Ely, Ramsey Demeter, Amy Donahue, John Ogorzalek, Cris Parker-Jennings, Stewart McDermet, Randy Lichtenwalner, Rose Watson, Peter Broussard, Breeze Verdant, Pamela Corkey, Tino Benson, Rick Contino, Laura Elisabeth in a range of comedy from original standup to Monty Python and music from Ella and Louie to Johnny Cash. Dan DeWalt accompanist. ▶ Through Saturday, February 11. ▶ \$10 (includes sweet and savory treats - bring your own beverages). ▶ Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: Reservations: rockriverplayers.org. More information: verbatimvt@gmail.com.</p> <p>Ideas and education BRATTLEBORO DIY Beekeeping: Nancy Frye will give you a basic introduction to beekeeping, including bee behavior, hive set-up, and apitherapy (medicine based on bee products). She'll show some of the things you can make with honey and wax, including candles, cosmetics, bowl toppers, and mead. ▶ 3-4 p.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op Community Room, 7 Canal St. Information: Register by 2/9: Education@BFC.coop.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SATURDAY</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">11</p> <p>Music BRATTLEBORO Fever Dolls: "Fever Dolls is the shape-shifting, label-defying project of producer-songwriter Evan Allis. Founded in 2018 with singer Renn Mulloy, it was born out of a desire to forego the self-seriousness of indie rock in favor of big hooks, clever lyrics, and broad musical range. Reflecting the highs and lows of modern life, Fever Dolls' sound draws on everything from country folk to heavy metal to present a catalog of material as diverse and varied as its audience." ▶ 8 p.m. ▶ \$15 in advance, \$20 at door. ▶ The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.</p> <p>PUTNEY Global Music with Argentinian Guitarist/Singer Cecilia Zabala and American Cellist Eugene Friesen: Zabala's music bridges the European classical guitar tradition to Brazilian bossa nova and MPB, from Chilean Nuevo Cancion and its Argentine relative Nuevo Cancionero, to global jazz. It combines elements of global folkloric music in a synthesis bridging many styles and genres. The essence of her artistic identity as a singer songwriter has a poetic rather than narrative character distinctly South American. Her music is dream-like - steeped in her native Argentina. ▶ 7:30 p.m. VT resident Friesen is active internationally as a cellist, composer, recording artist, teacher. He's performed on 6 continents as a soloist and with Grammy Award-winning Paul Winter Consort. He's an artist-in-residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC and on faculty at the Berklee College of Music. More info on Eugene can be found at www.celloman.com. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar. ▶ \$20 in advance, \$24 at door. ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org.</p> <p>GUILFORD Valentine's Dance Party with Groove Prophet: Come dance to the hot music of Groove Prophet on the slick and smooth, just-refinished dance floor upstairs at the Broad Brook Community Center. This is a fundraiser for the newly reopened BBCC and a chance to put on your dancing shoes and have some midwinter fun. Groove Prophet is one of the best bands in the area. Great music in a great venue for dancing! ▶ 7-10 p.m. ▶ Tickets are \$10 and there will be beer and wine available for purchase downstairs along with free light snacks. ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-451-0405; broadbrookcommunitycenter.org.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Musicians from Marlboro Group II: Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Shulamit Ran was in residence at Marlboro in 2018 and worked extensively on her music with these artists in VT - Haydn: String Trio in G Major, Op. 53, No. 1; Ran: Moon Songs; Mozart: Divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563. Kristina Bachrach, soprano; Giorgio Consolati, flute; Joseph Lin, violin; En-Chi Cheng, viola; Brannon Cho & Matt Zalkind, cello; Lydia Brown, piano. ▶ 7 p.m. N95 or equivalent masks must be worn at all times while at our concerts. ▶ \$30. We recommend purchasing tickets in advance since we cannot guarantee tickets will be available at door. ▶ Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moysse Way. Information: 802-257-4523; bmcvt.org.</p> <p>GREENFIELD String Spectacular - Students from Greenfield High School: Students perform seven pieces from different musical backgrounds including jazz, fiddle, classical, traditional spiritual, Latin jazz, suzuki, neoclassical. This performance is the culmination of a day of rehearsals and workshops for students led by faculty from Strings for</p>	<p>Kids and Musica Franklin. Sponsored by Greenfield Local Cultural Council, Artspace, Musica Franklin. ▶ 5 p.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Greenfield High School, 21 Barr Ave.</p> <p>Farmers' markets BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Winter Farmer's Market: Weekly diverse indoor farmers market. Local farm produce, meats, syrup, fresh baked goods, fruits, cider, preserves, handmade jewelry, pottery, soaps, more. SNAP shoppers turn \$10 into \$40 each week! ▶ 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays through 3/25 in the gymnasium. ▶ Through Saturday, March 25. ▶ Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market, 60 Austine Dr. Information: farmersmarket@postoisolutions.org, 802-275-2835.</p> <p>The written word Workshop "Open the Door: Finding Scenes in Exposition" (Online) ▶ 4-5 p.m. Led by Barbara Morrison. ▶ \$10. All are welcome even if unable to donate at this time. ▶ Zoom. Information: To get link, email: info@timetowrite.us. Website: b Morrison.com/events.</p> <p>Kids and families PUTNEY Sandglass Theater Presents, Winter Sunshine Series, Puppet shows for families: Join us as we celebrate the magic and warmth of puppetry for young audiences with a different live performance on Saturdays. Series includes performances by Modern Times Theater, Little Uprings, and The Gottabees. ▶ 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturdays. (2/11, 3:30 p.m.): "Following today's 2nd performance, we offer a Junk Music and Sound Experimentation Workshop led by junk musician and art educator Justin Lander. Have you ever written a song on the bicycle pump? Now's your chance!" ▶ Through Saturday, February 25. ▶ \$9 EBT, Medicaid cardholders: \$7.50. Buy 1 ticket for each week totaling \$30. Discount appears after tickets ordered for all 4 performances. ▶ Sandglass Theater, 17 Kimball Hill. Information: Tickets: tinyurl.com/mr36jzv, Junk Music and Sound Experimentation Workshop: \$10: tinyurl.com/mr36jzv.</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS "The Media and Me: A Guide to Critical Media Literacy for Young People" with Ben Boyington: During the last presidential election, "media literacy" came to signify the threat media manipulation posed to democratic process. Now kids 8-18 pack over 11 hours daily with "media multitasking." Through storytelling, recognizing fallacies, building arguments, surveillance/digital gatekeeping, advertising/consumerism, seeing global social problems through a critical media literacy lens, Boyington explains how to grow from passive media consumers to engaged critics/creators. ▶ 1 p.m. Copies of the book are available for purchase through the Village Square Bookellers. The Media and Me is a joint production of The Censored Press and Triangle Square Books for Young Readers. ▶ Free. ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270, youthservices@rockinghamlibrary.org, rockinghamlibrary.org.</p> <p>GUILFORD Valentine-Making Workshop: Start a new tradition and make Valentine's cards for your family and friends to express love and appreciation! This workshop - fun for families, children, and teens - is led by craftswoman Carole Crompton. This is a non-denominational activity open to all. Light snacks and materials provided. ▶ 9 a.m.-12 noon. Sponsored by the Guilford Community Church. ▶ \$5 per person or \$10 per family (suggested donation - all welcome regardless). ▶ Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Dr. off Rte. 5. Information: Register with the church: 802-257-0994. Call Carole Crompton with questions: cmcrompton@gmail.com.</p> <p>Well-being BRATTLEBORO The Brattleboro Zen Center - Meditation (In-Person or wherever you may be): One way to engage with the ecological crisis - we chant briefly and then sit in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action, either in-person or from wherever they might be. ▶ 1-1:35 p.m. on Saturdays. ▶ Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct. Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30). Information: alison.f.bundy@gmail.com.</p> <p>Arts and crafts BRATTLEBORO Make your Own Valentine Glass Heart: Consider bringing your loved one to this make your own valentine heart workshop. Ages 13 and up. Please wear comfortable natural fiber clothing and close toed shoes. ▶ 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (choose from 2 slots). ▶ \$55 per heart. ▶ Fulcrum Arts Center, Rte. 30, 485 West River Rd. Information: fireartsvt.com/workshops/make-your-own-valentine-heart.</p> <p>Dance WINCHESTER Monadnock Tri-State Dance Club Valentine's Party with live music by Playin' Boomer: Come and dance. Non-alcoholic beverages and 50/50 Raffle. ▶ 7-10:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. ▶ \$10 members / \$12 non-members. ▶ Elmm Community Center, 21 Durkee St. Information: More information: Tom: 978-249-6917 / 978-790-9322 or Barbara: 802-722-9205 / 802-376-0317.</p> <p>Visual arts and shows WILMINGTON Nicki Steel Reception and Photography Show: Steel will have cards and enlargements available from her popular "Hearts in Nature" series in honor of Valentine's Day. Show also celebrates VT's working landscapes with canvas prints and cards featuring beloved local landmark the Wheeler Farm, plus her newest boxed set of cards, Frames & Barns. The show has its traditional selection of photographs highlighting local landscape as boxed sets, mini-mats, cards, matted and canvas prints. ▶ 2/11: 3-5 p.m. Reception: Join us for a chat with Nicki Steele and a slide-show viewing of her latest work. Light refreshments served.</p>	<p>▶ Through Tuesday, February 28. ▶ Free. ▶ Bartleby's Books, 17 W. Main St. Information: 802-464-5425; myvermontbookstore.com.</p> <p>Celebrations and festivals W. BRATTLEBORO Acoustic Duo Sharon Leslie & Daniel Kasnitz host Valentine's Day Love Party: Music for singing/dancing, luscious party fare includes fondue, desserts, "Love Potion" punch. Hands-on art table to create your valentine and more. With playful harmonies, acoustic guitars, percussion, keyboards, upright bass, Sharon and Daniel perform hits with a funky/jazzy twist. "From romantic, acoustic ballads to vibrant dance music, we're thrilled to put a new twist on Valentine's day making it about celebrating together/exploring our collective creative energies." ▶ 7 p.m. ▶ Proceeds benefit All Souls Church Driveway Paving fund to help make West Village Meeting House more accessible. ▶ West Village Meeting House, 29 South St. Information: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.</p> <p>Film and video BRATTLEBORO Latchis Arts' Spotlight Film Series showcases Keene State College Curators: Feb. Spotlight: "First Cow" - 2019 PG-13 feature about a cook who joins fur trappers out west in the 1820s and connects with a Chinese immigrant. Soon the two collaborate on a business venture involving secret use of a landowner's prized dairy cow. "First Cow" has a 96% score on Rotten Tomatoes. Films are curated in collaboration with KSC Film Society - student organization of film aficionados meeting weekly to share their passion for film and program weekend screenings. ▶ 1:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. KSC Film Society members will be on hand for some of the Latchis' Spotlight screenings to share their thoughts on the selections. Series continues 2/18, 2/19, 2/25, 2/26. ▶ Through Sunday, February 12. ▶ \$10 suggested donation (no one turned away). Proceeds from Spotlight Series films benefit the non-profit Latchis Arts. ▶ Latchis (Films), 50 Main St. Information: 802-246-1500; latchistheatre.com.</p>	<p>and caregivers of folks with dementia. "People tell us that sharing their experiences in the company of others who understand their particular situation can provide comfort, strength, validation, reassurance and hope to endure the challenges and realize the joys of their daily lives." ▶ 4-5:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month. ▶ Free. ▶ Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal St. Information: Ruth Nangeroni: 802-257-0775 x 102, ruth.nangeroni@brattleborohospice.org.</p> <p>Community building BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Time Trade Monthly Potluck: Come meet folks who exchange services for hours. Enjoy good and varied good eats, mostly vegetarian, and talk about communities of service. All are invited. ▶ 5:30 - 7 p.m. in the Community Room. ▶ Free. ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TUESDAY</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">14</p> <p>Kids and families BRATTLEBORO Sing & Dance with Robin: This lovely class is an enriching musical experience for toddlers and preschoolers, designed to support healthy cognitive, physical, and social development. Children will sing, clap, stomp, dance, and play along with the curriculum of traditional and modern folk songs. Parents will be encouraged to fully sing and participate with their child in the class. ▶ 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays. ▶ Through Tuesday, April 25. ▶ Free. ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.</p> <p>Well-being BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance. ▶ 5-6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays. ▶ Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; brattleborowalkinclinic.com.</p> <p>Dance BRATTLEBORO Argentine Tango Class and Practice: Guest instructors and DJs, many from Argentina! Beginners and all levels are welcome. No partner needed. ▶ Tuesdays: 7-8 p.m. Tango; 8-10 p.m. Practica. N95 masks required. ▶ \$12 Class, \$5 Practica, \$15 for both. First class is free. ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: 118elliot.com.</p>	<p>and audience members while on stage. ▶ 7 p.m. ▶ \$30 (in advance and at door). ▶ The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: Tickets: stonechurchvt.com.</p> <p>The written word GUILFORD Talk About Books: "Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel" by Carl Safina (In-Person/Zoom): Safina offers an intimate view of animal behavior to challenge the fixed boundary between humans and nonhuman animals. Travel to Amboseli National Park in Kenya and witness struggling elephant families work out how to survive poaching/drought. In Yellowstone National Park observe wolves sort out the aftermath of one pack's personal tragedy. Then plunge into the astonishingly peaceful society of killer whales living in the crystalline waters of the Pacific Northwest. ▶ 6:30 p.m., 3rd Wed. of every month. This book brings forth powerful and illuminating insight into unique personalities of animals through extraordinary stories of animal joy, grief, jealousy, anger, love. ▶ Free. ▶ Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Get a copy of this book by calling or emailing the library: 802-257-1350, staff@guilfordfreeibraryvt.org..</p> <p>Well-being Taking Steps Brattleboro: Advance Care Planning Weekly Information Sessions (via Zoom): Advance Care Planning ensures that your loved ones and health professionals know what you want in a medical emergency if you are unable to speak for yourself. It's a process of creating a written health care plan that tells others what you would want if you couldn't tell them yourself. Includes discussing choices about end-of-life care with your medical provider, family, others, choosing/educating your Health Care Agent, making informed decisions to complete an Advance Directive. ▶ 10-11 a.m. on Wednesdays. Find out if adding a COVID-19 or Dementia provision would be beneficial to include or add to a previously completed Advance Directive. This is a program of Brattleboro Area Hospice. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. Information: Ruth Nangeroni, Advance Care Planning Program Coord.: 802-257-0775 x 101, ruth.nangeroni@brattleborohospice.org.</p> <p>Community building PUTNEY Richard Powers Speaks for the Trees - Screening and Discussion with Paul Levasseur of Trees for Good: In 2019, Richard Powers published "The Overstory," dealing with environmental destruction and ways humans are conditioned to ignore it. Powers was awarded the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for this work of fiction and interviewed at the Library of Congress National Book Festival. Join Paul Levasseur for a screening and discussion of the interview. Paul is co-founder of Trees for Good whose mission is to raise awareness about</p> <p style="text-align: right;">■ SEE WEDNESDAY, B4</p>		
<p>Visual arts and shows Artist and Curator Conversation: Alison Moritsugu and Sarah Freeman: "Moons and Internment Stones" (Zoom/Facebook Live): Artist Alison Moritsugu, Densho community activist/artist Erin Shigaki, and curator Sarah Freeman discuss this exhibit of paintings of the moon and of stones collected by Moritsugu's grandfather in the Santa Fe Internment Camp during WW II. Presented in partnership with Densho, a non-profit committed to documenting the oral histories of Japanese Americans incarcerated during the war. ▶ 7 p.m. Hosted by the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center. A recording will be made available afterward. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. Information: Sign up: 802-257-0124 x 101 or tinyurl.com/352t6thc.</p>	<p>Visual arts and shows Artist and Curator Conversation: Alison Moritsugu and Sarah Freeman: "Moons and Internment Stones" (Zoom/Facebook Live): Artist Alison Moritsugu, Densho community activist/artist Erin Shigaki, and curator Sarah Freeman discuss this exhibit of paintings of the moon and of stones collected by Moritsugu's grandfather in the Santa Fe Internment Camp during WW II. Presented in partnership with Densho, a non-profit committed to documenting the oral histories of Japanese Americans incarcerated during the war. ▶ 7 p.m. Hosted by the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center. A recording will be made available afterward. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. 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Literary Cocktail Hour hosts Fred Pearce

BRATTLEBORO—On Friday, Feb. 10, from 5 to 6 p.m., the Brattleboro Literary Festival will host U.K. author and environmentalist Fred Pearce to discuss his book, *A Trillion Trees: Restoring Our Forests by Trusting in Nature*.

Pearce's new book is a guide through spectacular forests around the world. Along the way, he charts the extraordinary pace of forest destruction, and explores why some are beginning to recover.

"With vivid, observant reporting," states a news release, "Pearce transports readers to the remote cloud forests of Ecuador, the remains of a forest civilization in Nigeria, a mystifying mountain peak in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and the boreal forests of western Canada and the United States, where devastating wildfires are linked to suppressing the natural fire cycles of forests and the maintenance practices of Indigenous peoples."

Pearce is a veteran author and

journalist based in the U.K. who has reported from more than 80 countries. A former environmental consultant for *New Scientist*, he is a regular writer for *Yale Environment 360* and contributing writer for many other publications, including *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. He is also the author of numerous books, including *A Trillion Trees*, *When the Rivers Run Dry*, *Confessions of an Eco-Sinner*, and *The Land Grabbers*.

He will be in conversation with area filmmaker Lisa Merton. Merton has been collaborating with filmmaker Alan Dater at Marlboro Productions since 1988. Their award-winning films focus on the arts, social issues, and education, including two on subjects mentioned in Pearce's book, *Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai* about the Green Belt Movement of Kenya, and *Burned: Are Trees the New Coal?* Join the conversation online at bit.ly/701-pearce.

Guilford Center Stage to hold auditions for 'Our Town'

GUILFORD—Guilford Center Stage announces open auditions for the play, *Our Town*, on Wednesday, Feb. 8, and Thursday, Feb. 9, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Road.

The Thornton Wilder classic, directed by Ian Hefelee, will be performed the first weekend in May, marking the return of theater to Guilford after a three-year Covid hiatus.

Those interested in auditioning may arrive anytime during the session; no appointment is necessary. They should prepare or bring a short dramatic reading

of their choosing. The director will also suggest a reading from the play script.

Rehearsals will begin in mid-March for about six weeks, and many individual scenes will be rehearsed in small groups, so most actors will not have to be at all rehearsals.

Hefelee has appeared on stage in three previous Guilford shows, as well as in performances with many companies in the area. He has directed Ten Minute Plays with Actors Theatre Playhouse and a full-length play, *The Road to Mecca*, with Vermont Theatre Company Wilder's *Our Town*, which

was written in and based on the nearby town of Peterborough, New Hampshire, is one of the most often performed American plays. While thus a departure for Guilford Center Stage, this tenth production continues the group's interest in plays with a regional setting.

When it debuted in 1938, *Our Town* was a radical departure from the prevailing mode of American theater, with its lack of scenery and elimination of the standard theatrical convention of the "fourth wall" separating the players from the audience.

Our Town is presented by

arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. A full range of ages is represented among the characters, and there are both major roles and small ones, with possibilities for actor doublings.

Those unable to make these audition dates should contact Hefelee at 802-246-7096. Email him at ian.hefelee@gmail.com, and copy your message to don.inscape@gmail.com. Information about Guilford Center Stage may be found at [facebook.com/GuilfordCenterStage](https://www.facebook.com/GuilfordCenterStage), and at [broadbrookcommunitycenter.org](https://www.broadbrookcommunitycenter.org).

Acoustic duo Sharon & Daniel host Valentine's Day 'Love Party' at West Village Meeting House

WEST BRATTLEBORO—Musical duo Sharon & Daniel and All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church will present a Valentine's Day Love Party on Saturday, Feb. 11, starting at 7 p.m., at the West Village Meeting House.

The evening will include music for singing and dancing and party fare including fondue, myriad desserts, and a "Love Potion" punch. There will be a hands-on art table where participants can create their own valentines. Door prizes and a pop-up boutique of

local handcrafted and vintage accessories round out offerings.

Proceeds for the evening will benefit the All Souls Church driveway paving fund to help make their West Village Meeting House home more accessible. Admission that includes the music, food, and art supplies is by donation, with a suggestion of \$20 per person.

With playful harmonies, acoustic guitars, percussion, keyboards, and upright bass, Sharon Leslie and Daniel Kasnitz perform

acoustic versions of popular hits with a funky, jazzy twist.

"From romantic, acoustic ballads to vibrant dance music, we're thrilled to put a new twist on Valentine's day and make it about celebrating together, exploring our collective creative energies," Kasnitz said in a news release.

"With this party, we're paving the way for love," added All Souls Church Board President Leslie Kinney.

For more information, visit ascvt.org or call 802-254-9377.

Rock River Players will mark Valentine's Day with cabaret

WILLIAMSVILLE—The Rock River Players (RRP) present "Food of Love, a Valentine's Cabaret," Friday, Feb. 10, and Saturday, Feb. 11, at 7 p.m. at the Williamsville Hall, 35 Dover Road.

Admission is \$10 per person and includes sweet and savory treats. Cabaret-goers are asked to bring their own beverages. For reservations, visit rockriverplayers.org and, for more information, email verbatimvt@gmail.com.

Producer Annie Landenberger notes that "the cabaret, with deep

roots in France and Germany in the early 20th century, has historically been a trend-setting form of entertainment featuring a variety of performance styles for an audience that's typically enjoying from small café tables, which we'll have. Moreover, cabarets are typically adult-focused with a heavy dose of subversion."

Landenberger said that cabaret "has been the hotbed of creative energy for decades. In its earliest form, it gave us out-of-the-box perspective and material. With a collection of scenes, songs, satire, and surprises — and in keeping with the essence of the cabaret — the RRP evening promises laughs, love, and epiphanies."

"Food for Love" features Rock River Players Adrienne Major, Tom Ely, Ramsey Demeter, Tracy Berchi, Amy Donahue, John Ogorzalek, Cris Parker-Jennings, Stewart McDermet, Rose Watson, Randy Lichtenwalner, Peter Broussard, Breeze Verdant, Pamela Corkey, Tino Benson, Rick Contino, and Laura Elisabeth in a range of comedy from original standup to Monty Python, and music from Ella and Louie to Johnny Cash. Dan DeWalt will be the accompanist.

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RETREAT FARM
Retreat Farm is hiring a Community Outreach Manager!
This position is an integral part of outreach to and engagement of communities the Retreat Farm seeks to serve.
The Community Outreach Manager will be responsible for management of Retreat Farm's volunteer and membership programs as well as support of communications such as development of social media and e-blast content.
Full-time position based at the Retreat Farm farmhouse.
Learn more at www.retreatfarm.org/outreach-manager

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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STATE OF VERMONT
SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION
Windham Unit Docket No.: 22-PR-05616
In re ESTATE of: Beverly J. Coleman
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
To the Creditors of: Beverly J. Coleman (Decedent)
late of Vernon, Vermont (Decedent's town of residence)
I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**
Dated: February 1, 2023 147 Western Avenue
Molly Ladner, Attorney Brattleboro, VT 05301
Name of Publication: The Commons 802-257-7244
Publication Date: February 8, 2023 mladner@pdsclaw.com
Name of Probate Court: Vermont County Superior Court, Windham Unit
Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, 2nd Floor, Brattleboro, VT 05301

STATE OF VERMONT
SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION
Windham Unit Docket No.: 22-PR-07420
In re ESTATE of: Eden Bird
late of Brattleboro, Vermont
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
To the Creditors of Eden Bird, late of Brattleboro, Vermont.
I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**
Dated: November 30, 2022 c/o Costello, Valente & Gentry PC
Kristin Gottschalk, Executor 51 Putney Rd.
Brattleboro, VT 05301
802-257-5533
Name of Publication: The Commons
Publication Date: February 8, 2023
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Unit, Probate Division
Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

NOTICE OF BID
The Town of Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department is accepting bids to maintain Morningside Cemetery & Prospect Hill Cemetery on a per mowing basis.
For more information regarding the project, please contact the Recreation & Parks Department Office at 802-254-5808.
Bids should be sent to the Town of Brattleboro, 230 Main Street, Suite 208 Brattleboro, VT 05301, and must be received by 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, February 22, 2023. Please mark your bid package Cemetery Bids
The Town of Brattleboro reserves the right to refuse any and all bids and accept the bid that best serves the interest of the Town.
BRATTLEBORO Architecture + Design Film Series: David Hockney at the Royal Academy of Arts (In Person/Online): Today, this monthly series focuses on one of the world's most accomplished painters - David Hockney - and is hosted by local architect Jim Williams. Filmmaker Phil Grabsky. Series presented by the American Institute for Architects VT Chapter, Burlington City Arts, and 118 Elliot among other sponsors, with simultaneous screenings in Brattleboro and at Burlington City Arts.
► 6:30-7:55 p.m. (doors open 6 p.m.).
► Free.
► One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. View online today: <https://adfilmsseries.org>. Questions/special needs: 917-239-8743, 118Elliot@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY FROM B3.

the importance of trees. Join with others to do something about it.
► 7-8:30 p.m.
► Free.
► Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: Questions or to get on the Trees for Good email list: PaulLeVasseur.plevasseurputney@gmail.com, 802-380-2226.

Recovery Day 2023! - Annual Advocacy Celebration to honor the Power of Substance Use Disorder Recovery (Online): Hosted by Recovery Vermont, this is a celebration of recovery and the many pathways of the recovery journey where we can listen to one another's experiences and honor powerful individual transformations. Recovery Day is also an opportunity to learn about the strengths and challenges of the many organizations that offer recovery support in our communities, and to envision what "recovery-friendly communities" could look like across VT.
► 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
► Free.
► Online. Info: <https://recoveryvermont.org/recovery-day-2023>
Register: tinyurl.com/47acpeur.

WESTMINSTER Meet the Select Board Candidates: Westminster residents are invited to attend a public conversation with the candidates running for the town's two open select board seats. The two candidates are Stephen Major (3-year seat) and Dan Crocker (2-year seat). The sitting Select Board has been invited to join the conversation. David Major will moderate the event. This is an opportunity to share concerns/hopes for our town and discuss how the community can become more engaged in all aspects of civic life.
► 7 p.m. (Snow/bad weather event will take place: Monday, 2/20, 7 p.m.).
► Westminster Institute, 3534 Route 5. Information: Susan Roman: 802 869-2071.

Ideas and education
BRATTLEBORO Djeli (aka William Forchion) Reads Poetry and Discusses Black History at Brooks Memorial Library: Djeli reads from his most recent book of poetry, "The Day after Juneteenth" and leads discussion about Black history and where we are today. "Too often we discuss opposites to find commonality. This presentation is a sharing of new perspectives on recentering community," says Djeli - thought leader, life coach, public speaker, lifelong storyteller, former Cirque du Soleil acrobat who has traveled the world collecting stories.
► 7 p.m. Main Reading Room (wheelchair accessible). Books available for sale and signing. Oral/written traditions, including poetry, can create an atmosphere of curiosity and dialogue, even around difficult topics and help transform overwhelm to joy.
► Free.
► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Film and video
BELLOWS FALLS "Top Hat" - 1930s Dance Musical featuring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers: It's love at first dance, until Ginger thinks Fred is her best friend's husband. This film satirizes stuffy upper-class manners while providing sumptuous Hollywood representations of London and Venice. Songs by Irving Berlin including "Top Hat," "White Tie and Tails," "Isn't It a Lovely Day?" and Cheek to Cheek.
► 7 p.m. Sponsored by Friends of the Rockingham Library. A Friends of the Rockingham Library table will be set up before the movie to provide info on the Friends activities/invitations to join. The Friends support library activities including "1000 books before Kindergarten," educational and cultural events, state park/museum passes, VT Humanities Council programs. The Hunter Art Studio is providing free triple up treats for each new member of the Friends at \$10 or higher level.
► Tickets: \$6.
► Bellows Falls Opera House, Town Hall, 7 Square. Information: 802-463-4766; rockfb.org.

Fiddler

real life, I'm the youngest daughter, so I've based my character on how my older sister was to me."

Lila Armour-Jones, who has acted at New England Youth Theatre, portrays Hodel, the second oldest daughter.

"This is my biggest role so far," Armour-Jones said. "Hodel is very witty. She is not afraid to talk back to people. She understands some of the values her father has, that he wants her to marry a learned Jewish man who will take care of her, love her, and protect her. She doesn't wait for the matchmaker, though. She finds her own match: Perchik, the student radical."

Isabella May plays Chava, the third oldest daughter, whom May describes as the bookworm of the family.

"She doesn't say much," May said. "She doesn't talk unless spoken to. Her 'lines' are in her reactions. She carries the second act. The most rebellious of the three, she falls in love with Fyedka, a Russian soldier and a non-Jew. They meet through their love of books."

Auzan Arvian, an exchange student from Indonesia, plays Motel.

"Back home, we don't have shows or plays in high school," he said. "I'm very excited — I just wanted to try this acting, and I enjoy it so much."

He describes Motel as loving Tzeitel deeply and wanting to marry her, but being poor and having nothing, he is afraid to ask Tevye for her hand.

Genny Schneski plays Golde, Tevye's wife and mother of their daughters.

"She is the empress," Schneski said. "Tevye is supposed to be in charge, but it's really Golde who runs things. They've been married 25 years. They met on their wedding day. She is not afraid to speak her mind to anyone. With her, it's work, work, work. She loves all her daughters and is also fed up with them. She is very gruff."

"I'm not very gruff in person," Schneski continued, "although I'm not afraid to speak my mind. (In building Golde's character) I use my experience with my sister, who is two years younger, to fuel my gruffness with my daughters." Griffin Woodruff portrays Tevye.

"He is definitely stubborn," Woodruff said. "He believes he would do anything for his daughters. He looks for the best in people, and he tries to find the silver lining. He holds a close connection to his G_d and talks to G_d about what's happening and how it's all G_d's fault. Tevye is a partially learned man, which is why he wants his daughters to marry learned men."

John Mosher plays Lazar Wolf, the butcher, whose wife died several years ago.

"He's more on the wealthy side," Mosher said, "and he's very lonely. His goals are simple. He knows what he wants, but the ways he tries to get it are not the best ways."

Mosher noted that he has been acting since he was in sixth grade. "I've been in tons of musicals," he said. "This is my second play here at BUHS. It's significantly more fun to play an older character."

Karine Hayrapetyan portrays Yente, the matchmaker, and Grandma Tzeitel, a ghost figure. This is Hayrapetyan's first time acting.

"Yente is a lot of fun to play," she said. "She's gossipy and charismatic and knows what everybody else wants."

Luke Horn, a student at Brattleboro Area Middle School, brings the character of Fyedka, the Russian soldier, to life.

"He has an ego, and he's confident," Horn said. "He has a lot of pride. Whenever he goes by the bookshop, he sees Chava there. Although it is forbidden, he insists on giving her a book. His character proves that people are not as different as they may seem."

Zoe Peterson, also a student at BAMS, plays both a Russian priest and Shaindel, who is Motel's mother.

"She is quite strong," Peterson said. "She's a widow and poor, so she has been both providing for and taking care of her family for a while. I'm having to learn how to be the mom of a 17-year-old, so I'm incorporating what I see from my parents."

Peterson said she has been acting since she was quite little and is the youngest person in the cast. This is her second play at BUHS.

Leo Storm portrays several characters: a Russian, the beggar Nachum, and one of the bottle dancers. He said his training in gymnastics has helped with the bottle dance.

"It's really fun," he said, "and a bit challenging. I have to keep my balance while remembering the different moves."

Remy Flood is co-stage manager with Charlie Forthofer. As stage manager, Flood writes down the blocking (the position

FROM SECTION FRONT

Appropriation?

had in December, which was encouraging.

These statements and expressions of support from the rabbis did have a positive effect on some students' thinking, which was marvelous.

BOTH RABBIS expressed their support for the show, their opinions that it isn't cultural appropriation, and that they

BUHS graduate herself, class of '00, Kersten joined the BUHS faculty for the 2019–2020 school year.

"This show is special for several reasons," she said. "It's the 50th musical on the BUHS stage; it's the first show for which Julie Ackerman-Hovis is serving as the vocal director; and, perhaps biggest of all, this will be Steve Rice's last show with us, as he is retiring at the end of this school year."

In order to address the concerns of some students that having non-Jewish actors portray Jewish characters was cultural appropriation, Kersten approached two local rabbis to ask their thoughts on the question and to ask their help in portraying the characters, ceremonies, customs, and traditions

consider it a way for the community at large to see Jewish people portrayed in a positive way. So many stories focus solely on the hatred and persecution Jews have experienced for millennia. *Fiddler* shows more of the joy and more of the day-to-day lives of Jewish people.

I recognize that others may disagree, due to the variety

FROM SECTION FRONT

and nuance of individual perspectives regarding cultural appropriation.

But while there are moments of pain and fear and suffering in the show, *Fiddler* does a wonderful job of telling the story of people.

That is what makes it special — and a favorite among many Jewish people.

show is magical. So many people have done these songs before us."

Armour-Jones agreed, saying, "There are similarities between this show and my own family background. [All] people see something of themselves on stage."

Performances of Fiddler on the Roof will take place on Thursday, Feb. 16, and Friday, Feb. 17, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m., in the BUHS Auditorium. Tickets for all performances are \$10 for general admission and \$6 for seniors. All tickets will be available at the box office before the performances; there are no advance sales. For more information, call 802-451-3511 or visit buhs.wesdvt.org.

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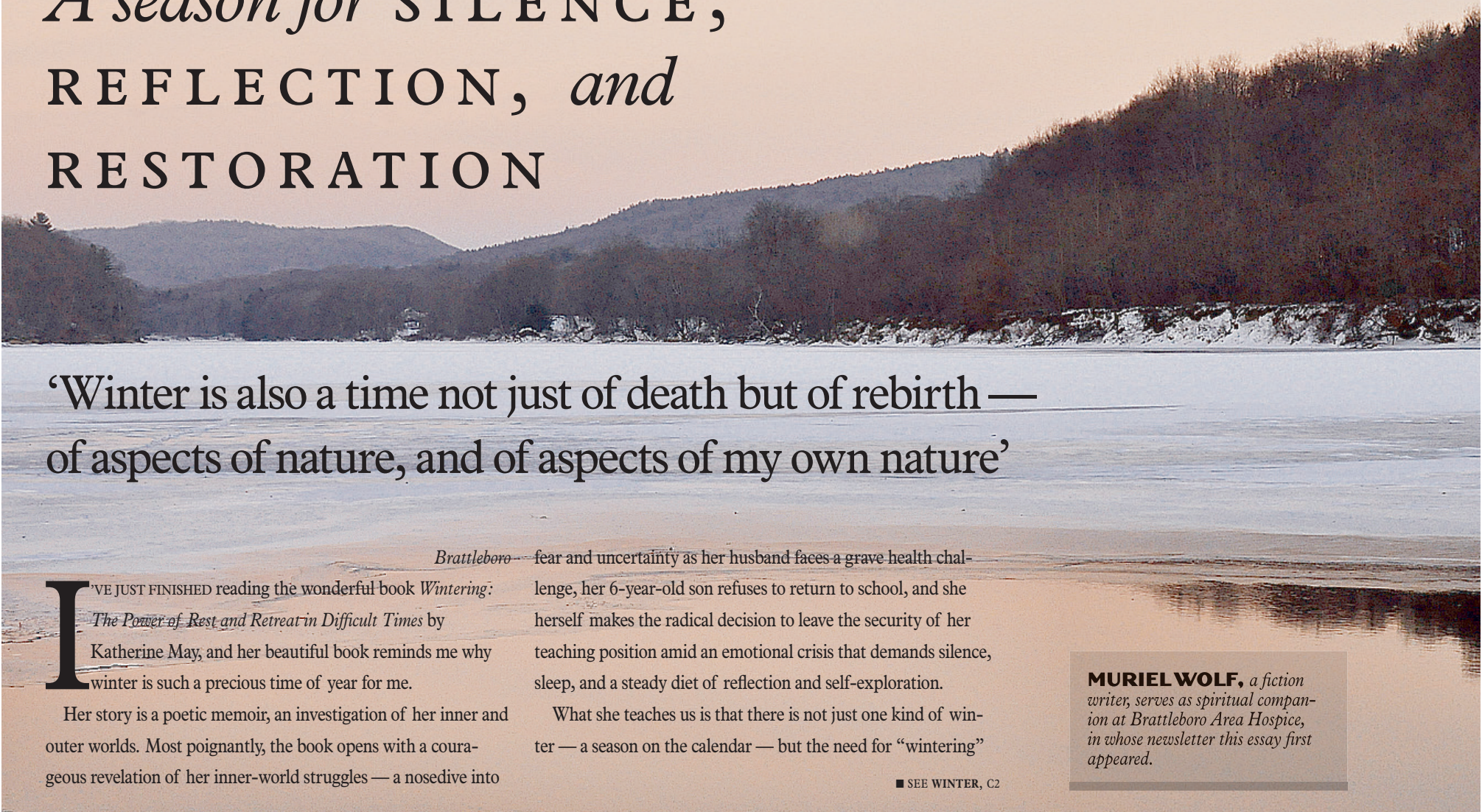
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ESSAY

*A season for SILENCE,
REFLECTION, and
RESTORATION*



‘Winter is also a time not just of death but of rebirth — of aspects of nature, and of aspects of my own nature’

I’VE JUST FINISHED reading the wonderful book *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times* by Katherine May, and her beautiful book reminds me why winter is such a precious time of year for me. Her story is a poetic memoir, an investigation of her inner and outer worlds. Most poignantly, the book opens with a courageous revelation of her inner-world struggles — a nosedive into

Brattleboro — fear and uncertainty as her husband faces a grave health challenge, her 6-year-old son refuses to return to school, and she herself makes the radical decision to leave the security of her teaching position amid an emotional crisis that demands silence, sleep, and a steady diet of reflection and self-exploration. What she teaches us is that there is not just one kind of winter — a season on the calendar — but the need for “wintering”

MURIEL WOLF, a fiction writer, serves as spiritual companion at Brattleboro Area Hospice, in whose newsletter this essay first appeared.

■ SEE WINTER, C2

TRUTH, POLITICS, and GEORGE SANTOS

VIEWPOINT

The new reality

The inability to differentiate the real from the illusion and fact from opinion seem to have escalated virally

Brattleboro IN THESE EARLY DAYS of 2023, we have been introduced to the concept of “embellishment” as a synonym for lying. I believe it is a new interpretation of the word, as I cannot find it in my Roget’s Thesaurus.

A certain Congressperson claims not to have lied on his resume but merely to have embellished it. If you have two good knees, how is claiming to have two knee replacements an embellishment? Is a claim to have relatives who survived the Holocaust when you have none an embellishment or a lie?

It is useful to examine words and phrases that have been newly introduced into our vernacular, our common language, and how they might affect our perceptions of reality. We have become very accustomed to some of these new terms: I have written about the increased use of words such as *monetize*, *weaponize*, and *existential*. We have seen the power of *alternative facts* or *true facts* as delivered by White House press secretaries and their personnel.

I was surprised, but not shocked, to learn that Congress has no rules or regulations — or possibly even ethical standards — regarding the truthfulness of its members. I have learned from what

JIM FREEDMAN is a leadership consultant whose latest book, published in 2020, is *Becoming a Leader: Identity, Influence, and the Power of Reflection*.

we have witnessed from those who have testified before the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack: It is not a lie if you present facts that you experienced in an alternative reality and really believe in them.

The inability to differentiate the real from the illusion and fact from opinion seem to have escalated virally. Maybe this is long-haul disillusionment on my part.

IT GAVE ME such pause to think about what the House Ethics Committee really does, I decided to read the rule book published by that committee. I couldn’t find any reference to embellishment of any kind.

Virtually the entire text seems to be related to a Congressperson’s finances before, during, or after serving their respective terms. Misuse and abuse of money seems to be far more important than misuse or abuse of the truth. It leads me to believe that

■ SEE NEW REALITY, C2



U.S. Rep. George Santos (R-N.Y.) reacts to a reporter’s question on Jan. 31 after he stepped down from his committee assignments amid fabrications.

VIEWPOINT

George Santos fits right in

The acceptance of bald-faced lies that are incredibly easy to disprove has become the hallmark of Republican politics

Guilford THE ONGOING SAGA of George Santos feels like a complete re-run of the Trump show, highlighting another completely unqualified and morally bankrupt candidate who has become a face of the Republican Party.

The most interesting part of the Santos saga is not the abject failure of the Democratic Party to vet this scoundrel, not the inability of the local Republicans to see through his

NANCY BRAUS, an independent bookseller, is a longtime activist.

sorry tale, but the fact that he has succeeded in being seated and will probably remain in the House for two years or longer.

The fact that George Santos has become a pariah among the Republicans of Long Island is interesting, but those Republicans have no clout. House Speaker Kevin

McCarthy has shown us clearly, during his entire career as one of the weakest men with great power we will ever see, that the Republican Party has no interest in the concepts of honesty, integrity, doing the right thing for the people, or even trying to appear to care about these values.

Donald Trump, with his complete lack of any moral framework, has created a Republican Party that says all the unsaid stuff out loud now. Most Americans would not

have believed, 10 years ago, that a person who bragged in a horribly vulgar video about molesting women, who has openly consorted with self-identified Nazis, who has clearly stated that democracy does not apply to him, could have been elected president by a large minority of voters.

Racial hatred — which was always present but quieter between the ugly period of Strom Thurmond et al. in the Senate and the current crop of some

■ SEE SANTOS, C2



Wonderful home on approximately 4 acres of open and level land. Ample oversized 2 car garage with attached entrance to mud room with lots of storage. Enter into the kitchen with tile floor and bunches of cabinets. Wall oven and cook top for easy meal preparation. Plenty of counter space and open to the dining room. The good sized living room has hard wood floor and great picture window for lots of light. The 3 bedrooms have plenty of room and the primary bedroom has an ensuite bath and large walk in closet. There is a mix of hardwood, tile, and carpet flooring. The full basement has a bathroom and plenty of space for that cave or game room. Lots of great natural light. Out back of the house is a really cool and cozy covered patio for relaxation. Paved driveway with plenty of parking. Great home.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Please give landlords a break!

Regarding the “no-fault eviction”: Wrong! It should be called “no-fault termination”!

I have been a landlord in Brattleboro since 1969. Because I am self-employed, no pension, I saw owning rental property as an opportunity to provide for my old age!

All my apartments have one-year leases, which allows a tenant not to renew after one year. Why should the owner not have the same opportunity?

If you have a good tenant, you hope to keep that person. However, sometimes it doesn't work out, for various reasons, and the tenant will have two months to find a new rental.

In all the years that I have owned rental property, I have only once not renewed a lease! I have dealt with two evictions, which is an altogether different process. You get the sheriff involved and the courts, a lengthy and costly situation.

Please give landlords a break! We do our best to provide safe housing for our tenants. It is in our own best interest to make sure that the buildings are up to code and well maintained!

**Iedje Hornsby
Dummerston**

Governor, legislature casually dismiss Vermont law and citizen involvement in local government

One can only guess what is going on in Montpelier to explain why the Vermont Legislature recently passed Bill H.42 [“An act relating to temporary alternative procedures for annual municipal meetings and electronic meetings of public bodies (legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/H.42)”], which suspends the Vermont Open Meeting Law until July 1, 2024.

Bill H.42 was signed into Vermont law by Gov. Scott on Jan. 25. There is no explanation in its language for the purpose or need for the sudden suspension of Vermont Open Meeting Law or the changes made to Annual Vermont Town Meeting procedures.

This unexpected new law was passed just in time to greatly affect Vermont's tradition and practice of annual open town meetings throughout the state. Its directives will oppress the freedoms of Vermont citizen involvement in their local governments.

The decisions made annually at Vermont town meetings on the spending of citizen tax dollars and on other local matters directly affect the everyday lives of Vermonters. Many citizens look forward to participating in their local town meetings.

This bill also mandates

certain requirements and it omits others:

- It allows public meetings including pre-town informational meetings, to be entirely electronic.

- It dismisses the previous requirement to have a “designated physical location” when holding a public electronic meeting. The previous physical location requirement served those without access to electronic meetings and/or those choosing to attend in person.

- It says that meetings of legislative bodies in municipalities and also school boards shall record their meetings, “unless unusual circumstances make it impossible to do so.” This language seems to say that recordings of public meetings required in the past are now optional.

- It changes the requirements regarding the postings of public meeting notices and agendas that inform the public.

- It allows for the use of Australian ballot voting (paper ballots) for what would otherwise be an open floor gathering of the citizenry, taxpayers, and/or representatives to allow for in-person questioning, debating, making changes where allowed, and open floor voting.

- It suspends the use of the specified language previously used for the school budget ballot.

Over the past two plus years we have experienced the repeated usurpation of our Vermont state and United States Constitutions in many ways. Our Vermont state politicians have repeatedly joined in agreement to violate their oaths allowing for laws and actions that betray us as the people they are supposed to serve and protect.

It is disconcerting to see how the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont governor are now betraying us once again, as they casually dismiss Vermont law and Vermont citizen involvement in their own local governments.

Is this the action of elected public servants who took an oath with serious intent and are supposed to act in the best interest of the citizenry — upholding our constitution and laws; protecting our freedoms, rights, and privileges? Or is this one more action of out-of-control, power-hungry politicians who see themselves as rulers above the citizenry and the law?

In our Constitutional Republic, it is our duty as both United States and Vermont Citizens to hold our elected officials accountable (Vermont Constitution, Article 6). Please call your representatives, senators, and governor and hold them accountable for this unreasonable and unnecessary oppression of Vermont's citizenry.

**Nancy Gasset
Vernon**

Editor's note: Gov. Scott did explain his support of H.42: “I'm

signing this bill at the request of Vermont municipalities who value an extension to pandemic-era flexibilities.” The governor had his own issues with the bill. His full statement appears at [bit.ly/701-gov-act1](https://www.vermont.gov/news/2023/01/31/701-gov-act1).

Reparations to African Americans would help heal lasting effects of enslavement

Dear Becca Balint, Many congratulations on your recent election to the U.S. House of Representatives. We look forward to your skill, energy, and dedication to making this a country and world that works well for all people. We do recognize that it will take some time for you to get to know your colleagues and the whole culture and system in Washington.

We do want to call your attention to a particular bill that has been there awhile.

We urge you to co-sponsor the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act (HR

40). The Putney Friends Meeting is deeply committed to ending all racism, particularly that experienced by African Americans. H.R. 40 will be an important step in that direction. In addition to sponsoring H.R. 40, we encourage you to check out issues of importance to the Congressional Black Caucus.

As Vermonters of primarily European heritage, we know we have much to learn and unlearn. We seek to better understand the lasting effects of enslavement — the continuing injustices and economic, social, and political discrimination.

We see the benefit to ourselves and to the nation to look at our history clearly, recognizing both the ideals that have guided us and the injuries we have inflicted. We are finding that facing our own history is painful and is the only way forward. As a group we have committed to learning as much as possible and to taking actions that will move us closer to ending racism.

In our study we found “The Case for Reparations” by

Santos

truly unsavory racists — has come to be a vital part of the Republican playbook. The war on women is all but openly declared.

And when these Republicans talk about a post-truth America, they mean it.

THE ACCEPTANCE of bald-faced lies that are incredibly easy to disprove has become the hallmark of Republican politics.

One of the very few true statements Donald Trump made during his first presidential run was “I love the poorly educated.” For the most part, it is because people with no education are unlikely to have good research or critical thinking skills, and they often have low literacy levels.

To the surprise of exactly nobody, these people are often among those brought up in Christian home-schooling environments, or in far-right-wing academies, as well as in the underfunded public schools in the U.S. South.

The attack on teaching the truth about our country's history and culture is a strong reason why Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is currently the darling of the far right. Refusing to allow students in his state to even vie for the college credit that comes with AP African American History is pretty

astounding, but the idea that a teacher can be accused of a felony for having books in her classroom that are not on a statewide approval list is even more amazing.

At this point, Florida teachers, you are probably safest if the only books in your classroom are the Bible and the Little House series.

I BELIEVE many of you reading this will identify as I do: as a lifelong learner. Most of the people I know who lean left make a strong effort to read, to have issue-based discussions, to look and think critically about the news and our government.

For as long as I can remember, the Republicans in leadership have attended elite universities — although Trump is a bit of an exception — and many went to the fanciest prep schools. And yet, these are the same people who, for as long as I can remember, accuse the left of being the “coastal elite.”

How is being a person who wants to understand the truth of how the world works — rather than being fed the lies of a stolen election, or “pizzagate,” or that John F. Kennedy Jr. did not die in a plane crash in 1999 and would become vice president to a reinstated Trump — make a person an elitist?

Winter

at times of challenge, transition, and fresh yearnings of the spirit.

In her outer-world adventures, Ms. May takes us from winter solstice ceremony at Stonehenge, to sauna in Scandinavia, to icy January plunges in the Atlantic with friends.

She partakes of these things as a way to process her inner turmoil, making use of the spiritual medicine and physically rousing properties they offer to her. She pairs them with long winter mornings at home beneath the covers, searching for the inner resources that will carry her forward into the next, and as yet unknown, chapter of her life.

OUR OWN SNOWSTORM on Jan. 23 was a true reminder for me of what winter can be: the silence of falling snow muting the sounds of dwindling traffic; the intricate lacework of overlapping boughs and branches wearing white stockings; the scurry of small animals tunneling their way through the chilling blanket that rises hour by hour. A friend's photo of his yardstick emerging from the snowfall, measuring 14 inches.

With the dwindling of snowfall during recent years, a day when nature calls a halt to our daily routine is a rare gift — especially on a Monday, that day of the week when so many of us push ourselves to make the transition between relative rest (if we are so fortunate) and the return to busy-ness.

With thick snow falling, my

friend and I, she on snowshoes and I without, head into the Retreat Trails near the stone tower, down the hill to Cedar Street. No sign or sound of a car. Past the ski jump, and uphill to the Ice Pond — a lovely body of water embedded in the midst of forest high above the Retreat Farm.

During our journey, huge hemlocks shiver and release massive amounts of snow toward the ground with a great *thwunk*. Boughs break under the burden of snow, with a cracking noise that sends us scrambling for safety.

UNLIKE MOST FOLKS, I celebrate happily the day when the clocks get turned back. Early dark gives me license to spend more time in the interior — within my warm home, within my emotional and imagination-driven worlds, within reverie, amid reflections about where I've been and where I might be headed.

I watch the fire and do nothing else, and I feel at peace. I revisit the intentions I've formulated for living my life, measure them against new longings, goals, ideas, and aspirations. I ponder the contours of my life with gratitude, with grief, with celebration.

I remind myself that beyond and beneath a steady stream of endless thoughts, fetters, and concerns, I am a cosmic being, filled to the brim with awe as I dwell on a miraculously formed planet spinning through space. I contemplate beginnings and endings.

GOT AN OPINION?

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



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

Ta-Nehisi Coates very helpful. This article details the lasting injustice inflicted on African Americans through the practice of redlining and the ongoing, perhaps more subtle, practices that continue today. We highly recommend it as you continue to shape your thoughts about reparations. It was originally published in *The Atlantic Monthly* and then included in Coates' book *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy*.

As a step in this process, we want H.R. 40 to pass and we urge you to become a cosponsor. The bill will “establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and a proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies.”

We believe that now is the time for this essential conversation. The Black Lives Matter

movement and growing awareness of racially biased law enforcement and mass incarceration of African Americans is a powerful reminder that equality has not yet been reached.

Although we cannot know what a commission might find, we believe that reparations is about healing ourselves and repairing our relationships to each other as well as recompensing African Americans for past injustices.

We are ready to add this focus to the national discourse, and H.R. 40 is the place to begin. Please join us by co-sponsoring this bill.

**PUTNEY FRIENDS MEETING,
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
Putney**

Putney Friends (putneynfriendsmeeting.org) has sent this open letter to U.S. Rep. Becca Balint. “This letter reflects our continuing spirit led commitment to ending all racism, particularly that experienced by African Americans,” writes Julie Forsythe, who submitted the letter on behalf of the congregation.

FROM SECTION FRONT

to support teaching of critical thinking — how to read between the lines in the media. In fact, Fox News is very much bothered by a new New Jersey law — the first of its kind — making it compulsory for students to learn media literacy, from kindergarten until they graduate. Hopefully, some of us can work to create similar laws in our own states.

We also need to combat lies — openly and always, no matter who is telling them. And it is generally members of the cult that used to be a political party who are guilty.

If we are successful in making sure our voters are able to understand issues, know how laws are made and broken, and understand what really benefits the majority of citizens and not only the elites, we might have a chance to save our democracy.

And when the next huge crisis occurs, we need to be prepared to combat the far right's push for martial law — fascism can often be presented as the answer to any problem of governance.

The time to make sure we are presenting the sane portion of the American public with the strong arguments for democracy — for a real multiracial democracy — is now.

SO IT IS all the more vital for us

FROM SECTION FRONT

more I experience peace around their inevitability.

Winter is also a time not just of death but of rebirth — of aspects of nature, and of aspects of my own nature. In the quiet of the cold season, lying under thick blankets and sitting in front of steaming bowls of hot soup, gazing up into the winter sky or watching birds flit from branch to bare branch, I heal old wounds, contemplate the scars left behind, and celebrate my dedication to my own spiritual evolution.

I give thanks for the wisdom given me by benefactors near and far, living and gone, and I know that when given the opportunity, I will pass some version of this wisdom along to others.

I pause long enough to see my place in the Circle of Life, and in so doing, become intimate with the gifts I have inherited, as well as the gifts I have built from the ground up, using courage and determination as bricks and mortar.

WHO ARE YOU today? And who do you wish to become, while still in this body, in this passing season?

Do you trust your intuition? Do you crave adventure?

Do you love with your whole heart? How is your love cultivated, and where do you deposit it?

Can a toothache or a broken toe be a reminder of the exquisiteness of dwelling within a physical form? Are you curious? What parts of you are asking for comfort and repair?

Winter is the season for contemplating questions like these — not just to reveal their answers but holding the questions themselves as the precious opportunities granted to a life that grows with each passing year, into its next iteration, season by glorious season.

May you reap the abundance of invisible growth that this seemingly bare season holds in store for you.

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COLUMN

We mustn't allow comfort to yield to complacency and chaos

Given the way autocracy has already crept into our lives, vigilance is still necessary

Brattleboro

AS WE BEGIN a new year with the relief of mid-term elections behind us, many Americans are enjoying a sense of comfort about our political future.

We saw a blue wave when a red one was predicted and a long-overdue increase in diversity among those elected to office at all levels of governance. We moved closer to holding accountable those who wished to do us harm, including a past president and his collaborators and insurrectionists.

So it may seem too early to be thinking about 2024, or even what the rest of 2023, will bring.

While the sense of relief was warranted, we're still not out of the woods, and we mustn't allow comfort to yield to complacency and chaos. Given the way autocracy has already crept into our lives, vigilance is still necessary.

AMERICANS HAVE never experienced a true, full-blown autocracy, although we've come close. We have never had one single person hold absolute power over society, the military, the economy, and civil rights. We have not had to fear threats or punishment for lack of loyalty or disobedience, nor have we lived with hideous rules and regulations, demands, or orders.

We have no real idea of what it's like to live in a country that has these rules and orders, where death or imprisonment looms large for ordinary people.

But we have seen alarming elements of autocracy creep into our lives over the past few years, and we can't ignore them in the belief that it can't happen here.

We may not have a Viktor Orbán or a Vladimir Putin at the helm yet, but we have experienced much of what occurs in autocracies.

We've seen voting rights eroded in 47 states and a politicized Supreme Court; an increase in domestic terrorism, political violence, and police brutality; an end to privacy; horrific repression for women; hateful acts against immigrants, Jews, and the LGBTQ community — all scapegoats who are the targets of fearmongering aimed at controlled political agendas and a planned



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

landscape by right-wing zealots operating from a fascist playbook.

Let's not forget that on Jan. 6, 2021, we also came perilously close to an overthrow of our government in a violent coup attempt.

AUTOCRACY OFTEN BEGINS incrementally, so those not affected by early moves don't notice the first steps. It becomes easy to take democracy for granted, unless you find that you are hassled by police, you find that graffiti appears on your synagogue or business, you need an abortion or birth control, or you find yourself watching what you say to whom and where you congregate with friends.

Soon, science is suppressed, books are banned, school curricula are controlled, and texts are revised while religious schools are funded. Environmental concerns are dismissed, and climate change is ignored.

All of these things have already occurred in our country. What's next? The military ending protests or dissent?

As President Biden says, "Democracy doesn't happen by accident. We have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it."

FURTHER, A troubling view held by a large segment of our electorate is also something we must keep in mind as we march toward one of the most crucial elections of our lifetimes.

Many Americans find false comfort in the notion that a centrist government is a safe government, but that assumption requires a deep understanding of what constitutes centrist positions and political priorities.

For the most part, centrist Democrats and their Republican colleagues fail to enact legislation that focuses on the human rights and basic needs of constituents whose lives are an anomaly for those

who have the wealth and status to achieve political power.

Issues like livable wages, parental leave, child welfare, support for single mothers and working women, affordable housing, help for mentally ill people, community policing that includes opinion leaders and social workers from within the community, and other necessities promulgated by progressive leadership (like gun laws) hardly ever make it to the Congressional floor or meet defeat even when they manage to.

Those who like to call themselves progressive centrists

often talk about moderation and reasonable social equality in balance with moderate authority and sensible order.

But who decides what is moderate or reasonable or what constitutes a fair balance between just law when all values are laden with interpretive views rather than fact-based, objective analysis?

AS GEORGE LAKOFF has noted in an essay, "The 'New Centrism' and its Discontents": "When a Democrat 'moves to the center,' he is adopting a conservative position — or the language

of a conservative position. Even if only the language is adopted and not the policy, there is an important effect. Using conservative language activates the conservative view [...] which strengthens the conservative worldview in the brains of those listening."

In addition, Public Citizen has pointed out periodically on Twitter that "everything that gets labeled 'far-left' in the U.S. is common sense policy in the rest of the industrialized world. Guaranteed health care. Paid family leave. Government drug price regulation. This stuff isn't

radical. We're talking about the basics of a functioning society."

Democrats (small and large D), whose pluralism often interferes with their solidarity, must keep autocracy and centrist governance high on their list of priorities when the next time to vote arrives.

As Rep. Cori Bush (D-Mo.) told *The Hill*, "Winning elections is not about looking good. It's about being good."

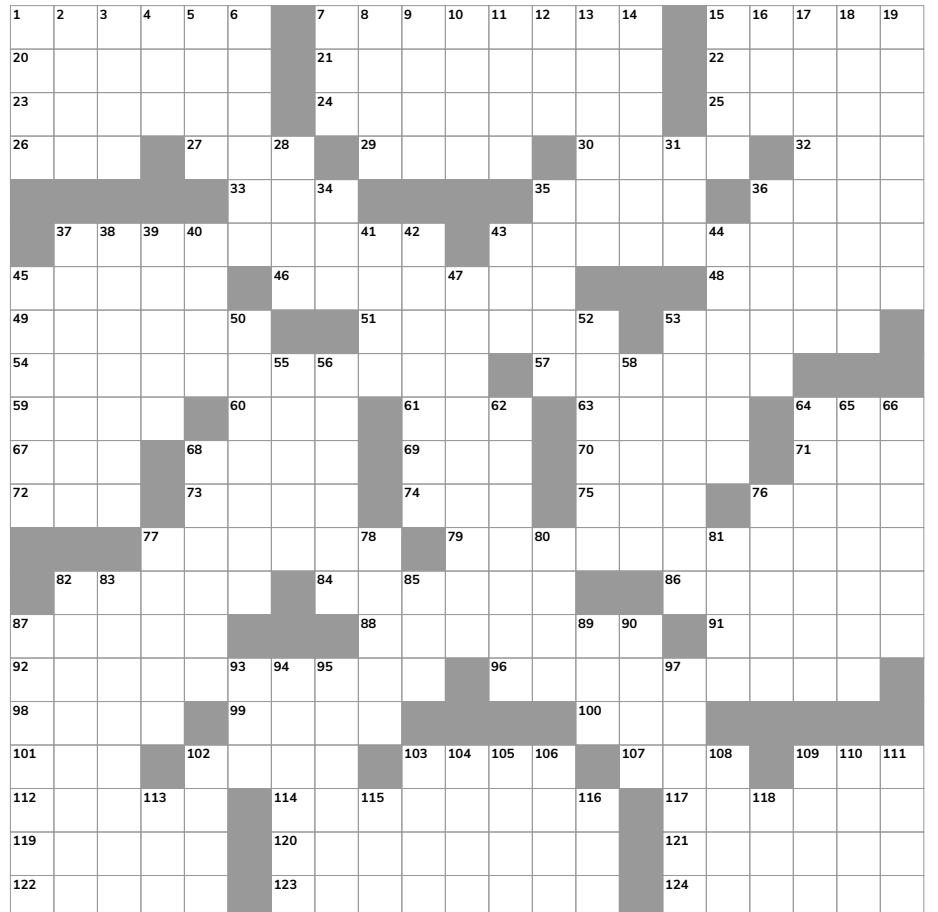
"The path forward is to actually enact policies that address the pain people are feeling across the country, not pretend that pain doesn't exist."

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Sad Trombone"

Across

- 1. Gave a smooch to
7. Architectural feature
15. Feminist Jong
20. "Lawrence of Arabia" star
21. Ready to run
22. Sofa relative
23. Guitarist's pedal
24. "Gimme a second, the answer's coming to me"
25. Roger with a prominent thumb
26. "City on a Hill" channel
27. "Unh-unh"
29. Week septet
30. Phineas or Ferb, e.g.
32. Eight pts.
33. Kanga's baby
35. Office plant
36. "___ gustó" ("I didn't like")
37. Doing battle
43. It gets treated in some plants
45. Preserve once more
46. Legal
48. Flags down
49. On land
51. Paper plane, e.g.
53. Early Scots
54. Jerusalem holy site
57. Pull up stakes quickly
59. Tournament breaks
60. Fitting
61. Dated
63. Obscures
64. Rover's greeting
67. Moron
68. Irritable 'tude
69. Reuters competitor
70. Alabama governor Kay
71. Sun Devils' sch.
72. Balderdash
73. Ian of "Chariots of Fire"
74. Lean-___ (sheds)
75. Replayed serve
76. Highlands hillside
77. Burmese realm?
79. Foil of Woody Woodpecker
82. Little rock
84. Kosher-certified
86. Get situated
87. Maze opening
88. Some cervezas
91. Bandleader Skinnay ___
92. "Get up, sleepyhead!"
96. Shapely midsection feature
98. Looks over
99. Old-time oath
100. Japanese pond fish
101. "Now that makes sense"
102. Use the barbecue
103. Some nest eggs
107. French bullet train
109. Political commentator
112. COVID test company
114. With 117-Across, Bugs Bunny, to Elmer Fudd
117. See 114-Across
119. Message from another Galaxy
120. Partygoer
121. Space race?
122. Refuse to conform
123. Major tantrum
124. Musical mélange



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Down

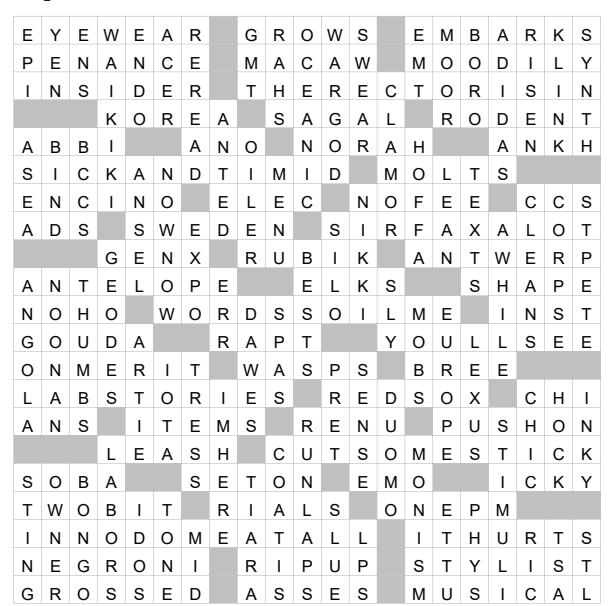
- 1. Acknowledges applause
2. Wasatch Range state
3. New York or London neighborhood
4. Do a seedy job?
5. Panache
6. Remove 19-Down
7. Punching sound
8. Apple Pencil device
9. She killed Jabba
10. La-di-da
11. Clichéd phrases
12. [Unscheduled]: Abbr.
13. Privileged classes
14. Snappy comeback
15. Tree of Life location
16. Tease relentlessly
17. "Eureka!"
18. Some chewy candies
19. See 6-Down
28. Caesar wrap?
31. Singleton
34. Duo in Duolingo, e.g.
35. Lost its color, maybe
36. Image Awards org.
37. Parents' justification
38. Most in pain
39. Coventry clinks
40. Crucifix inscription
41. Pond scum
42. Introduce
43. Become married
44. Flight of fancy
45. Restaurant that serves clams
47. Self-control
50. Citation's spot
52. Soda request
53. Masthead's location, sometimes
55. Trade union
56. Floor cleaner
58. Flock of quail
62. Deny responsibility
64. Judge Earl and

- 65. En masse, military-style
66. Spare bedroom users
68. Song sung at sea
76. Russian crepes
77. Central pieces
78. Sprayed, defensively
80. "Catherine Called Birdy" director Dunham
81. Surrounding ___
82. Spend an evening in
83. Eschew Uber or Lyft, say
85. "Succession" family name
87. Foul-mouthed one
89. Set a price of
90. Tiny mark
93. Very tiny

- 94. Six Flags New England locale
95. Black-belt's skill
97. Reservation construction
102. Hawk
103. Rapper at the first Lollapalooza
104. Paul in the Senate
105. Designer Gucci
106. Large number
108. Caesar's farewell
109. Biblical shepherd
110. Field of work
111. Teeny
113. "Scram!" in the Globe
115. Cardinal's insignia
116. Craving
118. Contractor's quote

Last issue's solution

"Upscale"



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COLUMN | Sports Roundup



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Brattleboro's Charlie Clark (3) carries the team banner as he fires up his teammates before they take the field on Oct. 21 against Mount Anthony. After several seasons of playing football in Division II, both Brattleboro and Mount Anthony will be moving up into Division I for the 2023 season.

Brattleboro will return to Division I football in 2023 season

Brattleboro and Mount Anthony are moving up, and Bellows Falls is staying put. That was the outcome of the new divisional realignment for Vermont's 31 high school football teams for the 2023 season, which was announced last week by the Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) and the Vermont Interscholastic Football League (VIFL).

While Bellows Falls will remain in Division II for the 2023 season, Brattleboro and Mount Anthony will move back to Division I. These three schools have each been Division II champs in recent years — Brattleboro in 2019, Bellows Falls in 2021, and Mount Anthony in 2022 (tackle football wasn't played in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

The VPA and VIFL met multiple times in December and January to hash out the new setup, which is based on the total number of boys enrolled in the public high schools in Vermont playing football.

Teams could petition to move up to a higher division, which is what Bellows Falls and Fair Haven did. By size, those two teams would have been dropped into Division III, but both successfully petitioned to stay in Division II.

Division II schools Hartford and Middlebury successfully petitioned to move up into Division I, which took the spots of two larger schools, Mount Mansfield and North Country, who will play in Division II in 2023.

Milton, Mount Abraham and Rice all made the move to Division II, which now creates 11-team divisions in Divisions I and II. No new teams are entering Division III for 2023, which drops from 12 teams to nine because of the movement of teams into Division II.

The 2023 Vermont high school football divisional alignments are as follows:

- Division I: BFA-St. Albans, Brattleboro, Burr & Burton, Champlain Valley, Essex, Hartford, Middlebury, Mount Anthony, Rutland, Burlington/South Burlington, St. Johnsbury.

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.

- Division II: Bellows Falls, Colchester, Fair Haven, Lyndon Institute, Milton, Mount Abraham, Mount Mansfield, North Country, Rice, Spaulding, U-32.
- Division III: BFA-Fairfax, Mill River, Missisquoi Valley, Otter Valley, Oxbow, Poultney, Springfield, Windsor, Woodstock.

One big change in the new system is that the schools will play a league schedule for the regular season. Teams will play each team in their league and then fill out the rest of their eight-game regular season schedule with non-league opponents. The VPA and VIFL said the goal was to create competitive schedules while reducing travel for schools.

Five new leagues, which remain nameless for now, have been created as follows:

- League 1: BFA-St. Albans, Colchester, Champlain Valley, Essex, Burlington/South Burlington, St. Johnsbury.
- League 2: Brattleboro, Burr & Burton, Hartford, Middlebury, Mount Anthony, Rutland.
- League 3: Bellows Falls, Fair Haven, Lyndon Institute, Mount Mansfield, North Country, U-32.
- League 4: BFA-Fairfax, Milton, Missisquoi Valley, Mount Abraham, Otter Valley, Rice, Spaulding.
- League 5: Mill River, Oxbow, Poultney, Springfield, Windsor, Woodstock.

After the eight-week regular season schedule, postseason play will be broken down by the divisional alignments, as is done in all VPA-sanctioned state tournaments.

The new league set-up makes a lot of sense. For Brattleboro,

they get five league games against comparable competition within a reasonable driving distance, while having the opportunity to continue their series with Bellows Falls as one of their three non-league games.

BF may have long road trips in their league, but they too can keep their rivalry game with Springfield and maybe get Windsor or Woodstock back on their schedule.

Girls' basketball

Karsyn Bellomo scored 14 points as Rutland defeated the visiting Brattleboro Colonels, 46-35, on Jan. 30. The Colonels kept it close, rallying from an early 14-4 deficit to trail 25-18 at halftime, but Rutland took control in the second half. They built up a 14-point lead in the third quarter and held on from there. Abby Henry led the Colonels with 12 points, while Reese Croutworst added eight points.

The next night, the Colonels bounced back with a 46-41 win over Mount Anthony at the BUHS gym. Brattleboro withstood a late comeback by MAU as Croutworst had her best game of the season with 16 points. Montana Frehsee added 10 points, including a couple of key free throws in the final minutes. Brattleboro is now 5-10 on the season.

Leland & Gray defeated Green Mountain, 53-45, in Chester on Jan. 31. Great defense by the Rebels was the key to victory. The Rebels still hold the No. 3 spot in Division IV with a 12-3 record.

Bellows Falls lost to White River Valley, 65-31, on Feb. 1. Laura Kamel led the Terriers with 13 points, while Eryn Ross and Delaney Lockerby finished with eight and six points, respectively. BF ended the week with a 43-39 win over visiting Green Mountain on Feb. 3. GM's undoing came at the free throw line, where they went 1-for-11 and opened the door for the Terriers to grab the victory. Ross had 16 points for the 5-10 Terriers, while Kamel added 12 points. GM was led by Colie Roby, who scored nine points.

Twin Valley is still searching

for its first win. On Feb. 1, visiting Poultney rolled to a 43-8 win. The next night in North Clarendon, the visiting Wildcats had only their second double-digit scoring effort of the season, but fell short to Mill River, 36-22. Bianca Place led the 0-9 Wildcats with 11 points.

Boys' basketball

Rutland rallied to defeat Brattleboro 48-31 on Feb. 2. The Colonels led by one after the first quarter, but Rutland came back to get the lead up to seven by halftime before outscoring Brattleboro, 17-4, in the third quarter to put it away. Eli Pockette led Rutland with 12 points and seven assists. Tate Chamberlin was the Colonels' top scorer with 12 points. Brattleboro is 7-7 on the season.

Jamison Nystrom scored 18 points, including 12 points during a 15-2 surge in the second quarter, to lead Bellows Falls to a 47-41 win over Green Mountain on Feb. 1. BF was trailing by 10 before Nystrom starting raining down shots in the second quarter. The Terriers then improved their record to 9-4 with an 88-35 demolition of Mill River on Feb. 4.

Twin Valley played four games in six days as the Wildcats worked their way through a bunch of make-up games. Green Mountain traveled to Whitingham on Jan. 30 to take on Twin Valley and came away with a 49-32 win. Austin Kubisek and Tanner Swisher led GM with 15 points apiece and Eben Mosher added 10.

The next night, the Wildcats turned aside Mill River, 46-36. A strong second half by the Wildcats keyed the victory. On Feb. 1, Twin Valley topped Poultney, 44-36, as Noah Dornburgh scored 13 points and Caleb Dupuis added 12 points. The grueling week ended for the 3-9 Wildcats with a 50-30 loss to Rivendell on Feb. 4.

Leland & Gray lost to White River Valley, 46-40, in Townshend on Feb. 4 to fall to 4-7 on the season.

Ice hockey

The Brattleboro girls lost to the Middlebury Tigers, 3-1, on Feb. 4. Quinn Doria, Hans Doria, and Erin Sears were the goal scorers for the Tigers. Brattleboro's lone goal came from Alex Gregory, assisted by Willow Romo and Lily Carignan, and goaltender Angela Jobin made 29 saves for the visiting Colonels. Three days earlier, the Colonels were shut out by Kingdom Blades, 6-0, at Withington Rink. Brattleboro's record is now 2-11.

The Brattleboro boys lost to Middlebury, 5-2, on Feb. 1 at Withington Rink, but they came back strong with a 5-0 win over Northfield on Feb. 4. Evan Wright scored three goals, and Alex Baker and Alex Dick scored the other goals for the 5-8-1 Colonels.

The Feb. 1 home games for both Colonels teams were part of the annual "Pink the Rink" fundraiser for Brattleboro Memorial Hospital's Oncology Department. They raised more than \$1,000 to help support patients undergoing cancer treatment.

Indoor track & field

Athletes from Bellows Falls and Green Mountain competed in the state Division II indoor track & field championships at the University of Vermont on Feb. 4.

The BF girls finished 15th as Haley Gleim won the triple jump with a mark of 28 feet, 8.75 inches. She was also fourth in the 55 meter dash. The GM girls finished seventh.

In the boys' meet, Green Mountain finished fifth, led by Eben Mosher, who won the 55 meter hurdles in 8.53 seconds. Bellows Falls finished eighth. Brandon Keller finished second behind Mosher in the 55 meter hurdles, while the 4 x 200 meter relay team finished second and Riley Tuttle turned in a sixth place performance in the shot put.

Nordic skiing

The first segment of the Southern Vermont League Nordic skiing championships

— a skate race — was held on Jan. 31 at Mountain Top Resort in Chittenden.

Mount Anthony swept the boys' and girls' team titles. Defending state champion Luke Rizio led the MAU boys with a time of 13 minutes, 35 seconds for the 5.5 kilometer course, while Tanis White (16:55) led the MAU girls.

Brattleboro placed two skiers in the top 15. Katherine Normandeau (seventh, 18:48) and Ava Whitney (eighth, 18:53). The SVL Championships continue on Feb. 9 with the classical race at Prospect Mountain in Woodford and the relays on Feb. 15 at the Brattleboro Outing Club.

Senior bowling roundup

Week 4 of the winter/spring season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Feb. 2 saw The Markers and Slo Movers (both 14-6) tied for first place, followed by The A-1's (13-7), Split Happens (12-8), Trash-O-Matic (11-9), 10 Pins (6-14), and The Strikers and Fab Four (both 5-15).

Melanie Silvano had the women's high handicap game (223) and series (629), while Gary Montgomery had the men's high handicap game (278) and series (705). Slo Movers again had the high team handicap game (903) and series (2,552).

In scratch scoring, Robert Rigby again led the men with a 654 series that featured games of 268 and 211, while Montgomery had a 603 series that features games of 244 and 200.

Six men rolled a 500-plus series: Fred Ashworth (562, with games of 212 and 189), Warren Corriveau Sr. (552, with a 212 game), Marty Adams (521, with a 203 game), Stan Kolpa (521, with games of 196 and 183), John Walker (514), and Skip Shine (510, with a 190 game).

Gloski again had the women's high scratch series (497) and game (177). Silvano rolled games of 175 and 173.

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