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## State tries to find money to expand new housing

### Vermont agencies explore new ideas to address lack of housing stock and a crisis in homelessness

By Joyce Marcel  
*The Commons*

As unhoused people — some nursing children, some nursing pets — camp in tents during this rainy summer, they are deluged by more than water.

There is a sense of hopelessness, because even with the best of intentions — and with the Vermont Treasurer’s Office making \$85 million available for investment in housing, climate, and social equity initiatives — construction can not happen soon enough.

And as the state wrestles with homelessness within its borders, the number of the unhoused is growing.

Jess Graff, co-chair of Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, speaking last month at a virtual policy forum on homelessness organized by State Treasurer Michael Pieciak, noted the Point-in-Time Count, the federal government’s annual census that counts the number of unhoused people in the nation each year on the same day.

This year’s results for Vermont “represented a 19% increase from the 2022 count and a sort of shocking 36% increase in families with children,” she said.

### Rents rising faster than paychecks

Incomes are not keeping up with rising housing costs.

“Over the last 20 years, our incomes in this state — not everyone individually, but overall — have gone up about 3.5% a year over the last 20 years,” said Maura Collins, executive director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

“It’s been a good two decades for folks. But median rents went up 5.7% a year. And median home prices went up 7.4% a year,” she said. “So you can imagine that growing divide that we’re talking about.”

Collins said that the rise in prices is “getting worse and worse every year, when our incomes can’t keep up with the price of housing, and the price of housing is going up because that supply is too small.”

“Back in the 1980s, we were building and adding about 3,200 homes a year to our housing stock,” she said. “Those were just primary residences. I don’t even count vacation homes. Now it’s about 1,400 a year. But our population has grown by 26%.”

This turns being housed into a game of musical chairs, said the chief speaker at the forum, Gregg Colburn, who recently published a book on the subject,

### Homelessness Is a Housing Problem.

Colburn, an assistant professor of real estate in the University of Washington’s College of Built Environments, told the forum’s approximately 280 attendees that a good way to look at the problem is to think about playing musical chairs when at least one player is on crutches. Eventually, he said, because of their vulnerabilities, these players will be out of chairs and out of the game.

The answer, he said, is more chairs. The answer is more housing.

### Running to stand still

Social service agencies get to feel a sense of failing, Graff said, because they work so hard to provide resources.

“We have much success,” Graff said. “We have thousands of households a year we support around the state and who are exiting homelessness into permanent supportive housing.”

But often those conversations start at the local level, he said, as they ask questions like, “How are we going to get substance use treatment services on site? What can we do for vocational training and employment assistance?” Homelessness is not a personal failure, he said. “It is communities’, and the society’s responsibility, to be able to provide the housing stock that is needed.”

Pieciak’s office is tackling the problem directly through the substantial expansion of the “10% in Vermont” local investment program, which authorizes the treasurer to invest up to 10% of the state’s average daily cash balance for economic development in the state. Hence, his offer of \$85 million in investment opportunities.

“We have a program that’s that’s existed for about 10 years in the treasurer’s office,” State Treasurer Michael Pieciak told *The Commons*. “It allows the treasurer to invest up to 10% of the state’s cash on hand into economic development. The way they define economic development in the statute is basically

■ SEE HOUSING FUNDS, A6

## Helping a community in ashes from 5,000 miles away



US CIVIL AIR PATROL VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Burned-out cars and the remains of buildings are seen in Lahaina town.

### A Vermonter in Maui and her friend, a Putney teacher who used to live there, are now working together to get essential goods and financial support to the survivors of the devastation and trauma from wildfires in Hawaii



COURTESY PHOTO

Crystal Rollins, left, and Emmy Hurley on a hike up Lahaina Pali. Both friends are working together to try to help the people of Maui recover from last week’s devastating wildfires.

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen  
*The Commons*

“I’ve never been so proud to be a member of the Maui community. They are leading the searches because we don’t have enough emergency service personnel on the island,” says Crystal Rollins, 34, a native of Stratton.

Rollins moved to Hawaii after graduation from Castleton State College in Vermont and has lived in Maui since 2011.

She says she is “most fortunate” that she lives in Kihei, 23 miles to the east of the hardest-hit town, Lahaina.

While Rollins is grateful to have her home intact, parts of her town were also evacuated. Because of the conditions and the impact of what was happening all around her, the center where she works with children on the autism spectrum has been transformed into a center to distribute supplies they have been able to gather for their

colleagues. “A lot of our staff have family and friends missing,” said Rollins, downcast. The parents of a coworker have lost their home. Another coworker doesn’t know if her family is alive. “The trauma around here is unbelievable,” she said. “It’s a war zone.”

### A friendship blooms

Meanwhile, back in Vermont, Emmy Hurley was looking to help her friend from 5,000 miles away.

Hurley and Rollins met in

■ SEE LAHAINA, A2

## An entrepreneur picks up the pieces

### After cleaning up from the devastating flooding in July — and barred from receiving federal help — D’Elia-Laskin has a goal: open her cannabis dispensary in September

By Virginia Ray  
*The Commons*

LONDONDERRY—Kellie D’Elia-Laskin is a shining example of what true mettle really looks like.

The widowed, single mom and entrepreneur was on the cusp of opening her new cannabis shop at 2022 North Main St., when a state of emergency was declared in Vermont as epic flooding engulfed Londonderry on July 10.

All D’Elia-Laskin’s hard work since she signed a lease on April 20 with Center Merrill for the old service station, where she planned to open Green Mountain Therapeutics, was washed away as the nearby West River overflowed its banks.

She had hoped to open the shop by her son’s 17th birthday in July.

### A daunting task

Since the flooding, D’Elia-Laskin has had to face numerous challenges.

Notably, because cannabis is still prohibited at the federal level as a Schedule I drug, the business can’t receive federal flood grants, loans, or other economic relief.

She is paying to build out her business alone, the building owner didn’t have flood insurance, and although she was pre-qualified to open the business in preparation for full licensure, she can’t buy her own insurance until the business is licensed by the state Cannabis Control Board (CCB).

So she has had to start again.

“This industry is tough enough to get into in general, it’s all private funding — there are no grants, no federal loans,” she says. “The industry is not federally legal, so it’s not like opening a liquor store. I’m 100% the owner and financier, and I don’t have very deep pockets

to begin with.”

What D’Elia-Laskin does have is tenacity. And determination. And hope.

Now her goal is to get her license and open the shop by Sept. 30, the eighth anniversary of her builder husband’s death 10 days after pancreas surgery, which he needed after losing his spleen on a work site.

Six days before the rain came relentlessly, D’Elia-Laskin had scheduled electric and rough framing inspections. The next step would have been for the CCB to inspect and possibly approve her full license.

“But the universe had another idea,” D’Elia-Laskin says with a wry laugh.

### Carrying on

The entrepreneur says she recently started watching the Netflix series *Painkiller*, a drama about the opioid

■ SEE CANNABIS SHOP, A5

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**Lahaina**

FROM SECTION FRONT

Maui when both were campaigning door to door for Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential bid and discovered they both hailed from the U.S. senator's home state of Vermont.

"We've been best friends ever since," Hurley, a preschool teacher at Putney Grammar School, says with a wide smile.

Hurley, who now lives in the Brattleboro area, made her home in the greater Lahaina area from 2014 until late 2018.

"I was sick of the Vermont winter, and a friend introduced me to a work exchange for rent in Hawaii," she says. "She did the same trade work that I did, and she helped me land a job with a commercial flower grower."

"I still have many friends there, good friends," Hurley says. "One has lost his apartment; another friend has lost her house."

**Aid to Lahaina, one box at a time**

For these friends — and the community she still loves — Hurley is doing what she can from southern Vermont. She is collecting basic medications, pain relievers, underwear, first aid supplies, feminine products, baby formula, diapers, soap, shampoo and conditioner and mailing them in USPS priority flat rate boxes to Rollins for distribution in Hawaii. "I can buy six toothbrushes for \$1.25 at the Dollar Store. On Maui, one toothbrush usually costs \$5, and now there are none to buy," says Hurley.

Hurley is doing this on her own but is looking for donations for postage or products that she can send.

"I could use some help," she says. "If others were interested, I'd also like to get animal food to the island. I know that people will also be needing tents and generators."

Hurley hopes that local churches and organizations might help her with the cause.

"There are so many people missing," Hurley says. "It's been a week and only 3% of the areas have been searched. The need is great now, but as more survivors are discovered, it will become even greater."

**A devastating loss of an 'old Hawaii' town**

"My happiest workdays were when I would make up the bouquets, pack up a truck, and sell the flowers in Lahaina," Hurley says, reminiscing about the region on Maui.

There, 13,000 people lived and worked until Aug. 8, when wildfires, sparked by a downed power line, fueled by 80 mph winds tore through the historic community.

Hurley remembers Lahaina as "everything you would imagine old Hawaii to be. It has an old-world feel, and while it's a tourist destination, there is so much more to this town."

A 150-year-old banyan tree, the size of a city block, is smack in the center of town. It is still standing, though it is unclear whether it will survive damage from the fire.

"It's this beautiful, peaceful place that collects people under its huge branches," Hurley says wistfully. "Musicians meet there and play together. At Halloween there is costume party under the tree. When you are lying on the ground under the tree, you look up and imagine all the things that this beautiful tree has seen."

According to FEMA statistics, almost 5,000 structures — 86% of which were residential — were exposed to the fire, damaged, or destroyed, and 2,170 acres were burned. Early estimates peg the losses at \$6 billion.

**Many missing, likely dead**

More than 1,300 people remain missing.

"On the day of the fire, school was cancelled due to the high winds," she says. "Some parents, who thought they were in an area that wouldn't be affected by the fire, left their children at home and went to work. Now those areas are closed and haven't been searched. Parents are frantic to know if their children are still alive."

"The streets are full of charred vehicles. People were burned alive in their cars. The cars are still sitting there with the bodies inside," says Rollins. "We know that the majority of those still missing are likely dead. They are the elderly and the children who were home from school that day."

"As of [Aug. 14], there are now 100 bodies that have been found. We know that there are so many more," Rollins says.

One of Rollins' friends was one of the missing for three days.

"Emotionally, she is a wreck, but physically she is all right now. She was at her house, but she couldn't leave. She didn't have gasoline, [and she had] no cell phone service, no power," Rollins says.

"Eventually one of the local community groups out looking



The aftermath of the wildfires on Aug. 8 in Lahaina, on the island of Maui. U.S. NATIONAL GUARD, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

for survivors found her and got her to a shelter," she added.

Shelters are full, and new ones continue to open.

"However," says Rollins, "one of the new shelters was in an area where smoke and fires necessitated them having to evacuate it. Emergency services are flying some people to the island of Oahu, but most people want to stay and mourn together. We all want to stay on Maui and support one another."

One of Rollins' friends has 11 people living in her house. Another has lost everything.

"One friend told me that she hadn't been able to shower since Aug. 8, the day the fires began. The clothing that she is wearing is all that she has left," says Rollins, who also notes that the devastation surrounding everyone is "the worst thing that could possibly happen."

"If you are missing someone, emergency services suggests that you come and submit DNA of the missing person," Rollins says. Meanwhile, business developers have arrived on the island trying to buy up their land.

"People are asking in their time of grief, 'Can I buy your house?'" Rollins says. "It's so wrong."

**Community mutual aid**

"At first, I thought it would be temporary, but Maui is my home, and I love it here," Rollins says.



When Hurley worked in Lahaina, she would take students to different organic farms in the area, such as this pineapple farm shown here. COURTESY PHOTO

"The feeling of living in community with the local people is like nothing I have experienced before."

"It's a collective struggle on this island, but Maui family and community are so true," she adds.

"People who don't have anything are offering what little they have. I've seen people who received \$50 from their GoFundMe, sharing half of it with another family who needs it even more than they do."

Rollins notes that there is a history of tension between the local Maui people and governmental authority.

"There is a lot of mistrust between government, the higher-ups, and emergency services," says Rollins, who went on to explain that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) arrived on the island and closed the main road between Lahaina and Kihei.

"You must be emergency service personnel to use that road because they don't want the press and the curious to be driving through that area," Rollins says.

"However, since some cell phone service has been restored, we are aware of people in that area who are in desperate need of supplies, and no one is allowed in to help them," she continues. "They are stuck where they are without assistance while FEMA organizes."

Rollins heard from one family who stayed in the fire zone, unable to escape in time. They are now on the last of their diapers, and they can't get more. No one is allowed to leave that area.

Instead of using the main road, townspeople are thwarting the lockdown to render aid to their neighbors, Rollins says, using a rural back road to connect with those who are trapped in the fire zone.

"They are also using boats to get to restricted areas and are calling people and letting them know when to get to the docks to get supplies," she explains. "The governmental systems in place are so slow moving, without the locals even more people would be in need."

**Federal funds, but nothing to buy**

Complicating the situation is the fact that even though FEMA is now distributing \$700 to each family who have lost their homes or been affected by the fire, there is nothing left to buy.

"Any store still standing is now empty. Nonperishable food items are sold out. Costco has nothing left to sell. People don't know how the supplies that are coming in will be circulated — it seems

to be haphazard distribution," she says.

"Getting resources to an island normally takes time, and now everything on the island needs to be replenished," Rollins adds. "It will be two weeks before Amazon can begin delivering. The USPS is working, but where do you get your mail if you no longer have a house?"

Rollins told of one friend whose home has burned down but has a place to stay with friends. She went to a shelter, hoping to get some shampoo and other toiletries. The people running the shelter told her that they couldn't give her anything because she wasn't staying there.

Especially hard hit are the children.

"There is trauma for all survivors," Rollins says. "The children have lost their school, their home, their pets, and yet they know that surviving makes them the lucky ones," says Rollins. "It is a collective struggle on this island, but we're in it together."

School starts on Aug. 16. Locals have been advised to enroll their children in the school district where the family is now living, even if it is a shelter. Many children have no school supplies, or clothing to wear.

**Suggestions for donations**

In addition to Hurley's grassroots efforts in Windham County, Rollins suggests three Hawaii-based organizations — Maui Mutual Aide, Maui Strong Fund, Helping Hungry Heroes — as legitimate and worthy charities for donations.

"These three are local organizations where we are sure that money is spent wisely and distributed fairly," she says. "These groups are supporting local vendors, buying their food locally and delivering it to shelters."

Rollins says there is "such a collective struggle on this island for the simplest of needs: brushing teeth, finding a meal, finding clothing to change into, taking a shower."

"People are going to need housing, and help replacing what they've lost for months and months and months," she says. "We here on Maui are so grateful for our community and the help that others are willing to give."

For full details and verified links to the nonprofits assisting those affected by the Maui wildfire, visit [MauiRapidResponse.org](http://MauiRapidResponse.org). Those who wish to help Emmy Hurley with her local efforts may contact her at [holaitsemmy@gmail.com](mailto:holaitsemmy@gmail.com).

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

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



AROUND THE TOWNS

Disaster Recovery Center now open in Jamaica

WILLISTON — A Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) is now open in Jamaica to help Windham County residents affected by the July severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides.

The joint recovery center, a temporary facility established in partnership between the town, the state of Vermont, and FEMA, will help survivors apply for FEMA assistance, upload documents and answer questions in person. It is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and is located at the Jamaica Fire Department, 4017 VT-30.

FEMA locates DRCs based on where they are needed most and works closely with state and municipal partners in determining those sites. Once a location begins to see a significant drop in registration visits, FEMA and the state coordinate new locations where the center may receive more traffic from those in need of assistance.

All centers are accessible to people with disabilities and access and functional needs. Centers are equipped with assistive technology equipment. For reasonable accommodations or sign language interpreter, call 833-285-7448 (press 2 for Spanish).

Representatives from the U.S. Small Business Administration will also be at the center to explain how to apply for SBA's low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters, businesses, and private nonprofits, and provide information about rebuilding to make homes more disaster resistant.

Visiting a DRC in person is not required to apply for FEMA assistance. To apply without visiting a center, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362, go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/assistance), or download the FEMA App. For those who use a relay service such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service, or others, be sure to give FEMA that number in the application. The deadline to apply for federal assistance is Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023.

In-person caregivers support group begins at Brattleboro Area Hospice

BRATTLEBORO — On the first and third Tuesdays of the month, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Brattleboro Area Hospice will host an in-person caregivers support group. This event is free and the public is encouraged to attend. For more information, call 802-257-0775, ext. 102, or email [ruth.nangeroni@brattleborohospice.org](mailto:ruth.nangeroni@brattleborohospice.org).

Brattleboro Area Hospice provides a broad range of services for living and dying well, focusing on end-of-life, bereavement, and advance care planning. All services are offered free of charge and are available to anyone living in southeastern Vermont or bordering New Hampshire towns.

To learn more or contact staff, call 802-257-0775 or go online to [brattleborohospice.org](https://www.brattleborohospice.org).

Raptors visit Moore Free Library

NEWFANE — Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) presents "Raptors: Inspiring Conservation" at the Moore Free Library, 23 West St., on Friday, Aug. 18, at 1 p.m.

For hundreds of years, humans didn't understand the vital role that raptors play in our ecosystem. Some of our most charismatic birds, including the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, are or have been on the list of animals named in the Endangered Species Act, and today we know that a majority of bird species are in decline.

Come learn how people banded together to save these magnificent animals, and meet some live birds who will help tell these inspiring conservation stories. Best of all, learn what you can still do to help them thrive in the wild. For more information, email [moorefreelibrary@gmail.com](mailto:moorefreelibrary@gmail.com) or call 802-365-7948.

Evening Star Grange presents peach shortcake supper

DUMMERSTON — On Saturday, Aug. 19, the Evening Star Grange in Dummerston Center will hold their annual Peach Shortcake Supper, featuring homemade biscuits with fresh peaches and real whipped cream.

They will be serving both in-house meals and take-outs. The menu includes baked ham, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, Harvard beets, and summer squash. Reservations are strongly suggested so that they can plan how much food to make.

Call the Grange at 802-254-1138 and leave name, telephone number, how many meals, and whether the order is for eating in or taking out.

Meals will be available between 4:30 and 6 p.m. The cost of the meal is \$15 for adults, \$7 for children between 5 and 12 years of age, and free for children 4 and under. For questions or more information, call the Grange and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Village Square Booksellers presents 'Charlotte's Web' at BF Opera House

BELLOWS FALLS — Village Square Booksellers presents the movie *Charlotte's Web* as part of the Wednesday Classics at the Bellows Falls Opera House on Wednesday Aug. 23, at 7 p.m.

Based on the book by E.B. White, it is a tale of Wilbur, the pig, who is desolate when he discovers that he is destined to be the farmer's Christmas dinner, until his spider friend, Charlotte decides to help him. Charlotte weaves messages into her web in an effort to save her friend from slaughter.

The movie came out in

December 2006, and is a favorite with audiences with young Dakota Fanning in a starring role and many well-known actors performing the voices for the animal characters at the farm. Tickets are \$6. Books are available at the bookstore and will be sold at the event.

Monthly breakfast at Williamsville Hall

WILLIAMSVILLE — The monthly breakfast at Williamsville Hall takes place on Thursday, Aug. 24, from 8 to 10:30 a.m. This breakfast is complimentary (donations for the Hall are appreciated) and open to everyone.

Enjoy homemade pastries, tea, coffee, and orange juice. If the weather is good, seating will be outside; if the weather is poor, seating will be inside. The hall, which is ADA compliant, is located at 35 Dover Rd. For more information, email [williamsvillehall@gmail.com](mailto:williamsvillehall@gmail.com) or visit [williamsvillehall.org](https://www.williamsvillehall.org).

Monthly produce distribution in Putney

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

All are welcome. This is a drive-up service. Bags provided. The next monthly food drop is Thursday, Aug. 24.

T-shirt, hoodie sale benefits WRCP

WEST TOWNSHEND — The West River Community

Project (WRCP) is hosting a T-shirt and hoodie fundraiser. All profits go directly toward helping the nonprofit community center fulfill its mission of providing donation-based meals, supporting local agriculture, and fostering social activities.

T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts are available in adult sizes from XS to 4XL and youth sizes from XS to XL. They can be bought online from now through Aug. 23 at [bit.ly/727-wrcp](https://bit.ly/727-wrcp). All shirts will ship once the campaign is over, with a rough delivery estimate of Sept. 13. For more information, contact WRCP at [westtownshend.org](https://www.westtownshend.org).

New book discussion group forms at RFPL

BELLOWS FALLS — Pick up a copy of the novel *Anxious People* by Fredrick Backman at Rockingham Free Public Library's front desk today. Then join the discussion on Thursday, Sept. 28, at 6 p.m., on the library's main floor.

The scene: A robber takes a group of strangers hostage at an apartment open house. Each person carries a lifetime of secrets, passions, hurts and grievances that are about to boil over. And all of them — including the robber — desperately crave some sort of rescue. *People* describes it as "wry, wise and often laugh-out-loud funny, it's a wholly original story that delivers pure pleasure."

One does not need to be a patron of the Rockingham Library in order to borrow a copy of *Anxious People*. The book discussion is free and open to the public. For more information, visit [rockinghamlibrary.org](https://www.rockinghamlibrary.org), email [programming@rockinghamlibrary.org](mailto:programming@rockinghamlibrary.org), call the Library at 802-463-4270 or stop by the library at 65 Westminster St.

Raptors are smart. Very smart. Believe me, all the problems we have so far are nothing compared with what we'd have if the raptors ever got out of their holding pen. —ROBERT MULDOON

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## TRANSFER STATION ATTENDANT

Windham Solid Waste Management District is looking for a temporary part-time transfer station attendant for up to 20 hours per week, including some Saturdays. Must be able to lift 50 lbs. and work outside. Ability to operate heavy equipment a plus. Applications are available at 327 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT, or at [windhamsolidwaste.org](https://www.windhamsolidwaste.org). Applications must be received by August 31 at the office, or by email to [admin@windhamsolidwaste.org](mailto:admin@windhamsolidwaste.org). WSWMD is an equal opportunity employer.

## Childcare Lead Teacher

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



Elm Lea Child Care

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

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



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**TOWN OF PUTNEY REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RIVER ROAD SOUTH PAVING SERVICES**

The Town of Putney is soliciting bids for paving its Town roads for fiscal year July 1, 2024.

Paving will take place on River Road South at the intersection of Route 5 approximately 1.1 miles past Town Garage Road.

All work must be completed by Nov. 1, 2023.

Visit [www.putneyvt.org/notices](https://www.putneyvt.org/notices) and click on "Request for Proposals" to read the full notice.

**INVITATION TO BID WESTMINSTER ROAD (TH1) CULVERT REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

The Town of Putney is soliciting bid proposals for roadway repair and installation of a culvert on Westminster Road, Putney. The project scope encompasses removal of the existing pipe culvert; installation of a precast 6' x 8' box culvert with a length of approximately 48', pre-cast concrete head walls, wing walls, cutoff walls and membrane.

An onsite mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held on Thursday, August 17, 2023; 8:00 a.m. at the project site. Project site is located approximately 1.25 miles west of the intersection of Route 5 from Kimball Hill. Bidder or representative must be present at the pre-bid meeting in order to submit a bid.

Visit [www.putneyvt.org/notices](https://www.putneyvt.org/notices) and click on "Request for Proposals" to read the full notice.

**TOWN OF PUTNEY REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL GRANT WRITER CONSULTING SERVICES**

Overview: The Town of Putney is prepared to seek a consultant to assist the Town in researching and identifying potential grant opportunities, developing and preparing grant applications and submission thereof.

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis and those submitted by September 8, 2023 will be given priority.

Submit proposals via email to: Karen M. Astley, Town Manager at [Manager@putneyvt.org](mailto:Manager@putneyvt.org) with subject line "Putney Grant Writer Proposal."

Send questions to: Karen M. Astley, Town Manager at [Manager@putneyvt.org](mailto:Manager@putneyvt.org) or phone 802-387-5862 extension 11.

Visit [www.putneyvt.org/notices](https://www.putneyvt.org/notices) and click on "Request for Proposals" to read the full notice.



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Or email resume to: [employment@cersosimo.com](mailto:employment@cersosimo.com)

**TOWN OF LEYDEN Town Clerk**

The Town of Leyden is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Town Clerk. Responsibilities include managing official records, town meeting votes, elections, open meeting law postings, voter registration, local census, certain licensing, and other duties. Previous office experience preferred. Copies of the detailed job description are also available at the Town Office. This part-time position is expected to be 8-10 hours a week. The salary will be negotiated commensurate with experience.

**TOWN OF LEYDEN Part-Time Administrative Assistant**

The Town of Leyden is seeking to employ a part-time Administrative Assistant (19 hours per week) providing guidance and aid to town departments and committees. Individuals must be able to work independently, perform detailed work accurately and efficiently within deadlines, maintain confidential information and possess good communication and organizational skills. Computer skills required. Bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience required. Municipal experience a plus. This is a non-benefited position.

Please send a cover letter and resume to Select Board, Town of Leyden, 7 Brattleboro Road, Leyden MA, 01301 or email [selectboard@townofleyden.com](mailto:selectboard@townofleyden.com). Leyden is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



## EVENTS AND OFFICE MANAGER

**JOB SUMMARY:**  
The Vermont Jazz Center Events and Office Manager ensures the smooth operation of the non-profit organization through office management, bookkeeping and managing publicity. Coordinates, plans, and helps produce concert, festival, and educational events, including an intensive, week-long summer workshop, in conjunction with other staff members. Coordinates outreach including advertising, maintaining the website, and social media. The work is largely self-directed but requires active collaboration with the Director and regular reporting to the Board. This is a 80% part-time, with a flexible schedule requiring some evenings and weekends.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- Organization, accounting, communication.
- Excellent people skills
- MS Office Suite, Google Drive and other computer skills
- Event planning

**PREFERRED EXPERIENCE:**

- Bachelor's Degree or equivalent
- QuickBooks, WordPress, NeonCRM

**APPLICATION:**  
Please send a letter of interest and resume, including the contact information of two to three professional references, to [vjcapplications@gmail.com](mailto:vjcapplications@gmail.com). Position available until filled.



MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• **Kade Perrotti** of Vernon recently graduated from Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology with a B.S. in computer engineering.  
 • **Haley Covillion** of Bellows Falls was named to the spring 2023 Dean's List at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts.  
 • **Spencer Butynski** of Brookline, **William Frank** of South Londonderry, **Samuel Thibault** of Williamsville, and **Caroline Mehner** of West Wardsboro were all named to the Dean's List for the spring 2023 semester at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, Connecticut.

Obituaries



• **Adrienne Evans Carroll, 92**, of Jamaica. Died at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend. A loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend to many, she survived a stroke in 2017. Adrienne's husband, John M. Carroll, predeceased her in 2005. Adrienne is survived by her sons John (Robin) Carroll of South Londonderry and James Carroll of Hinesburg; her daughter Leslie Carroll of Marietta, Georgia; granddaughters Alison (Chad) Paris of Gainesville, Florida, Lindsay (Adam) Williams of Marietta, Jamie Carroll of Brattleboro, and Sarah Kate (Howard "Bo") Higgins of Spartanburg, South Carolina; grandsons Evan Carroll of South Londonderry and Eric Carroll of Hinesburg; great-grandchildren Hadley Aila Williams, Knox Ryder Williams, Emerson Sybil Higgins, Parker "Wilder" Paris and Howard "Bowen" Higgins; and sisters Carolyn Curry of Venice, Florida and Alice Schick of Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey and their families. Adrienne was born on Staten Island, New York, where she met and married her husband John and lived on Emerson Hill. She graduated from Curtis High School, worked as a Realtor, and raised their family. They enjoyed sailing and were members of the Richmond County Yacht Club, New York Yacht Club, Richmond County Country Club, Club Key, and Sailors Snug Harbor. They moved full-time to Vermont and their Jamaica home in 1976, where Adrienne was a real estate broker. She was a nature lover, bird watcher, and vegetable gardener.

She planted more than 1,000 daffodils in her town, loved playing the piano, was fond of antiques and skiing, and was a master bridge player and excellent cook. Adrienne also volunteered at the Stratton Arts Festival and the Weston Playhouse. Her talents were many and friends were plenty. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: The Cremation Society of New Hampshire has been entrusted with arrangements. Donations to Vermont Audubon, 255 Sherman Hollow Rd., Huntington, VT 05462 ([vt.audubon.org/donate](http://vt.audubon.org/donate)) or the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302 ([windhamcountyhumane.org](http://windhamcountyhumane.org)). To leave a message of condolence, visit [csnh.com](http://csnh.com).



• **Audrey Ann Craig, 77**, of Maryville, Tennessee. Died peacefully, with her family by her side, on Aug. 3, 2023. Born on Dec. 27, 1945 in Sheldon, Vermont, she lived in Brattleboro for 40 years before relocating to Tennessee. Audrey was a loving mother and "nanny." She was a lifetime member of the VFW and American Legion in Brattleboro. She was preceded in death by her mother, Ila M. St. Francis; brothers Richard, Paul, Romie, and Andy Craig; sisters Kenneetha Craig and Shirley Phelps-Garcia; a son, Stanley Ryan; and grandsons Nathan Head, Brian McCormick, and Avery Jacobs. Survivors include her loving companion of 28 years, John E. Roberts; daughters Lisa (Terry) Clayton, Patricia (Gary) O'Connor, and Robin (Terry) Sullivan; grandchildren Kimberly McCormick, Joseph Nicholas, Jessica Jacobs, Joshua Weatherwax, Caleb Smart, and Kelsey Smart; 12 great-grandchildren, brothers Joseph Craig Jr. and Kenneth St. Francis Jr.; and sisters Tammie McDonald and Ila St. Francis. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Inurnment took place on Aug. 12 at Clarks Grove Cemetery in Maryville.



• **Susan Fay "Sue" (Phelps) Rice, 85**, of Buckland, Massachusetts. Died at her home on July 27, 2023. Sue was born in Greenfield, Massachusetts on June 10, 1938 to Roger and Dorothy (Richardson) Phelps. She spent her early years in Colrain, Massachusetts before moving to Ashfield, Massachusetts and graduating from Sanderson Academy. It was at Sanderson that she met and fell in love with her husband, Wesley Rice.

She graduated from Becker Junior College in Worcester, Massachusetts. On Sept. 10, 1959, she married Wes and moved with him to Ohio so he could complete his degree. In 1961, Sue, Wes, and daughter Susy returned to Massachusetts, settling in Springfield, where their two other children, Sally and Stephen, were born. Sue was a loving and nurturing mother and remained so throughout her life. In 1972, the family moved to their brand new home in Buckland. Sue worked at the Hawlemont Elementary School as a Title I math tutor for several years, then as a secretary and receptionist at the West County Physicians office in Charlemont, Massachusetts. When Dr. Robert Miller left to start his own practice, Sue served as his secretary and receptionist until her retirement in 2002. Sue contributed to her community as a part of numerous committees. She was a longtime member of Trinity Church in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, where she served in a variety of leadership positions, worked on the garden team, and played in the handbell choir. She was president of the Mohawk Trail Regional High School Music Association, a member of the Buckland Bicentennial committee, and enjoyed volunteering at the Shelburne Falls Village Information Center in her retirement. Sue was, first and foremost, a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. She is survived by her husband of nearly 64 years, Wesley Rice; her children Susan (Michael) Mead of Charlemont, Sally (Scott) Rice-Lesure of Ashfield, and Stephen (Jennifer) Rice of Brattleboro. In addition, she leaves six beloved grandchildren for whom she was a primary caregiver in their early years and who knew her as "Grammie Sue." Aaron Mead, Lydia (Mead) Lively, Kayla (Rice) Schmidt, Molly Rice, Mae Rice-Lesure, and Guy Rice-Lesure, as well as three great-grandchildren, Kaia and Willa Mead and Emmaline Sue Lively. She is also survived by three sisters, Margery (Robert) Wallner of Greenfield, Donna Lynch of New Hampshire, and Robin Phelps of Connecticut, as well as her sister-in-law, Priscilla Phelps of Greenfield. She was predeceased by her parents, and her brother, Daniel Phelps. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of Sue's life will be held on Aug. 26 at 2:30 p.m. at Trinity Church, 17 Severance St., Shelburne Falls, with a reception in the fellowship hall to follow. Donations to Pioneer Valley Hospice & Palliative Care ([pioneervalleyhospice.org](http://pioneervalleyhospice.org)), 329 Conway St., Suite 2, Greenfield, MA 01301, or Cure PSP ([psp.org](http://psp.org)), 325 Hudson St., Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10013. Cure PSP seeks to raise awareness, build community, improve care, and find a cure for progressive supranuclear palsy.

Class of 1951. He went on to attend Oblate College and Catholic University, both in Washington, D.C. Mr. Roberts completed graduate work at Boston College. He entered Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1951 and was ordained a Priest in 1960. His priestly ministry was spent mainly in parishes and high schools in Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. In September 1973, he assumed the pastorate at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Brattleboro. In 1978, he left the priesthood after serving as pastor of St. Michael's for five years. Mr. Roberts later worked as an auditor and supervisor for the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, retiring in 2007. Steadfast in his daily walk of faith, he was a longtime communicant of Saint Michael's Parish. During his retirement, he ministered to bereaved families, conducting funerals, memorial services, and graveside committal services, giving consoling comfort and spiritual guidance to many area families. Of his pastimes and interests, Wally enjoyed taking day trips, especially afternoon rides with his wife, cutting wood, walking his beloved dogs, reading, and following sports. On May 5, 1979 in Brattleboro, he was married to Karen Castine Clarke, who survives. Besides his faithful and devoted wife of 44

years, he leaves three sons, Arnold Clarke and his wife Sue, Michael Clarke and his wife Cindy, and Brian Clarke, all of Brattleboro; two daughters, Kim Doleszny and her husband, Mike, of Guilford and Katrina Willette and her husband, Chris, of Brattleboro; a brother, Fred Roberts and his wife Theresa of Chelmsford, Massachusetts; and a sister, Sister Helen Roberts, OSF, of Quincy, Massachusetts. Additionally, he is survived by 10 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by brothers Francis Roberts, John Roberts, and Paul Roberts; sisters Marion Sweeney, Anne Casey, Dorothy Roberts, Rita Coughlin, Eileen Shea, and Mary Alice Curran; and a granddaughter, Caitlin Clarke Cheslawski. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was held Aug. 12 at St. Michael's Catholic Church, with committal rites and burial in St. Michael's Parish Cemetery. Donations to Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 486 Chandler St., Tewksbury, MA 01876; or Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To share a memory or offer condolences to the family, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).

• **Joseph L. "Leo" Weinburg, 63**, of Bennington. Died suddenly, after a brief illness, on Aug. 3, 2023 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Leo was born in Salem, Massachusetts on April 1, 1960, the son of the late Henry and M. Anita (Bernier) Weinburg and attended Salem schools. He loved the water, kayaking, carpentry, repurposing, Harley motorcycles and, most of all, his family. Leo worked in retail management for many years and previously, with his wife and son, owned Pizzeria La Toscanella in West Dover. He was an exceptionally proud grandfather to Jackson T. and Casey L. Weinburg. In addition to his grandsons, he leaves behind his wife of 42 years, Glennice (Webber) Weinburg of Bennington, whom he married on Feb. 14, 1981 in Salem; his son Christopher L. Weinburg and Beth Gypson of Readsboro; daughter Elizabeth A. Weinburg of Bennington; and former daughter-in-law Danielle Mixon, as well as many friends and extended family. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: An intimate graveside service for Leo was held Aug. 9 in Readsboro Village Cemetery. Donations to the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Cancer Resource Patient Fund, in care of Covey-Allen & Shea Funeral Home, P.O. Box 215, Wilmington, VT 05363. To send the family personal condolences, visit [sheafuneralhomes.com](http://sheafuneralhomes.com).

AAUW awards three scholarships in honor of longtime member Addie Minott

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) has awarded college scholarships to three local women in memory of longtime member Adelaide "Addie" Minott, who died May 2. Abigail Towle graduated from Leland & Gray Union High School and plans to study physics, astronomy, and creative writing at Stonehill College. Brattleboro Union High School graduate Magdalena Keppel will pursue studies in nursing at the University of Vermont, with an interest in pediatrics and childhood development. Alisa Arroyo of Brattleboro, in the Mature awardee category (age 25 or older), is entering her senior year at Keene State College, where she is majoring in safety

and occupational health applied sciences. Minott, in whose memory the scholarships were awarded, was a graduate of Skidmore College who promoted equity for girls in sports during her career as a physical education teacher, serving as Vermont representative to the National Association of Girls and Women in Sport as Title IX was being enacted. Active as a Girl Scout leader, school board member, president of the Guilford Historical Society, an organizer of Vermont History Expo and founder, with her husband Addison, of the Green River Preservation Trust, she also found time to head the branch's annual book sale that raised funds for scholarships for women and girls. "I always admired Addie, for her warm personality, taking

on big projects — such as the book sale — and for the seeming ease with which she took on challenging projects and carried them through. She was an amazing woman," said fellow branch member Marion Daley in a tribute to Minott at her recent memorial service. Norma Shakun, Karen Davis, Melanie Crosby, and Michele Delhaye served as members of this year's scholarship selection committee. AAUW is a national organization that advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. Information about the Brattleboro branch is available by contacting Membership V.P. Cassie Freese at 802-254-0030.

NEWFANE

Grace Cottage hosts presentation on new primary care clinic on Aug. 23

NEWFANE — A public forum to unveil plans for a new primary care clinic building at Grace Cottage will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 23, at 5 p.m., at the NewBrook Fire House on Route 30 in Newfane. Attendees will learn how Grace Cottage is planning for the future of primary care in southeastern Vermont. According to a news release, the current clinic operates out of two adjoining houses built in the 1840s. "With more than 31,000 patient visits annually (up from 20,000 in 2018), it is essential that Grace Cottage moves forward with this project in order to

meet the access needs of the community. The new building will be adjacent to the existing clinic building, connecting to the hospital building," hospital staff said. During the past year, Grace Cottage has been working on the steps required to begin what the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation and the Bennington County Regional Commission have named a "Vital Project" for the region's vitality and economy. Grace Cottage has submitted a Certificate of Need application to the Green Mountain Care Board, Vermont's healthcare regulatory body, and is preparing to apply for an Act 250 permit. It is also embarking on a capital campaign for

the construction of this new clinic building. This project, fulfilling a long-held dream, has been initiated by generous donors who have pledged \$5 million. Extensive feedback from employees who work in the clinic has been incorporated into the interior plan, according to hospital staff, and final exterior and interior designs have been completed for this new 23,000-square-foot building. These will be shared with community members at the Aug. 23 event. For more information about the new clinic and the forum, call 802-365-9109.

WCHS hosts Pet Remembrance Night

BRATTLEBORO — The Windham County Humane Society (WCHS) is holding its Pet Remembrance Night & Luminary Ceremony to honor the pets who have been loved and the lives they've shared with their humans on Monday, Aug. 28. "We thought, 'they are our favorite friends to snuggle with after a long day, are often present

during our important life moments, and for many of us, helped us cope with the pandemic,'" WCHS Executive Director Maya Richmond said in a news release, "and when they depart, we grieve." The Pet Remembrance Night & Luminary Ceremony will be held at Pliny Park. Hundreds of luminaries will be lit just after

dark (around 8 p.m.). WCHS invites animal lovers to purchase a luminary in memory of a beloved pet. Each luminary will have the pet's name and custom message on it. "Last year, over 200 luminaries were displayed, and the entire park glowed," Richmond recalls. "The entire night was full of laughter as people swapped stories about their lost friends." You don't have to attend to be part of the event. Each luminary will be displayed and photos from the event will be on WCHS's Facebook page. WCHS uses the money from the sale of the luminaries to provide veterinary care to the 600 homeless animals they adopt into new loving homes every year. You can purchase luminaries for the ceremony at [windhamcountyhumane.org](http://windhamcountyhumane.org). The cost for one luminary is \$25 and includes entry for two to the reception at River Garden Marketplace, along with drink tickets. Each additional luminary is \$10.

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](mailto: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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Until one has loved an animal a part of one's soul remains unawakened.  
—ANATOLE FRANCE



# Cannabis shop

FROM SECTION FRONT

epidemic. “I lived that, and that’s why I’m doing this,” she says of her choice to be part of the cannabis industry. “The days my husband would smoke pot were good days. The days he was on oxycontin and all that junk, not so much. I witnessed firsthand the benefits of this product.”

She’s inspired to rebuild and bring the business to fruition for her son.

“I feel like if I just curled up in a ball, it would be so disrespectful to who we were as a couple, to the dad I need now to be, and to who he was,” she says of her late husband. “You have to set the example for your kids.”

And the community has stepped up to support the 53-year-old and her son.

Born in Cheshire, Massachusetts, D’Elia-Laskin attended Green Mountain College in Poultney and then moved west, where she met her husband, Bradley Laskin.

After living in Colorado and Tahoe, Nevada, where her son was born and she lost her spouse, she returned to be closer to family in a place that offered the same outdoor beauty and activities she and her son enjoy.

“It seemed a reasonable place to do all the things we liked to do, at a more reasonable price tag for a single mom,” she says, adding that then Covid came along and made things “more expensive.”

Still, she’s persevering.

“We’ve really had to start over,” she says, adding Merrill, the cannabis shop’s landlord, has been “super helpful.”

Starting again has included tearing back the building even more than was initially done because of the nature of the flooding.

“We’ve pivoted a little out of necessity,” she says, noting that instead of installing planned hardwood floors, now the shop has concrete flooring. “The CCB expects you to be a little more environmentally resistant so we’re going above and beyond most expectations for this industry.”

## Vermonters helping Vermonters

After the flood, dozens of volunteers have stepped up with supplies and encouragement.

“What’s been kind of cool, in a weird sort of way, is I was trying to be low-key about what I was doing because you don’t know how people are going to react to this industry,” D’Elia-Laskin says.

“But the overwhelming, positive embracement I’ve had from the community has been just amazing — from the women at the church across the street to the concrete people,” she continues. “In the first couple of weeks, the food was just amazing and kept us going. You can’t even think about

feeding yourself when you’re in crisis.”

But time has passed, and D’Elia-Laskin says she realizes “people are back to their lives now.”

“I feel bad asking for help because people have to go back to their regularly scheduled existences,” she says. “I also know other people lost far more than we did, but it was still quite a hit for us. It was like \$8,000 for the concrete floor that wasn’t in my budget. For some people, that’s not much, but for me it was.”

A lot of times she says, “people assume that due to the nature of the industry, I have a bunch of money or a bunch of investors. And that’s just not the case.”

To help, friends have set up a GoFundMe profile for the family at [bit.ly/727-cannabis](https://bit.ly/727-cannabis).

As of Aug. 15, \$4,225 of a \$30,000 goal has been donated to help D’Elia-Laskin buy what’s needed to get to CCB approval and open the shop door.

“Thank you all that have donated,” D’Elia-Laskin posted this week on the GoFundMe website. “It’s been a journey, for sure. Funding is still one of the biggest hurdles to recovery and rebuilding so that I may open my little shop and provide for my son.”

She praised Record Concrete “for squeezing me in with my new sustainable and more flood-resistant flooring.”

When it opens, Green Mountain Therapeutics will offer everything available “seed to sale,” which means products offered must come from Vermont-licensed growers or manufacturers.

“It’s Vermonters helping Vermonters be self-sustaining,” she says.

“Given a chance, I believe that Kellie’s business will bring so much value to our community,” writes Myra Adams of Hidden Leaf Homestead. “She has been restoring a building that has been vacant and in disrepair for I’m not sure how long — as long as I’ve lived here. She will be providing jobs and meeting ‘positive impact’ criteria required by the CCB.”

D’Elia-Laskin, Adams says, “will be contributing to our local economy and driving traffic to our little town that will benefit other area businesses, including growers like myself. She will also be providing a local resource for those that choose natural remedies over manufactured ones. And she will be paying more than her fair share of fees and taxes, because that’s how it is in the legal cannabis market.”

A Pilates instructor for 30 years who was the first to teach pelvic floor Pilates, D’Elia-Laskin says she also hopes to offer classes down the road.

“I like to help people feel good in their bodies,” she says.



Green Mountain Therapeutics in Londonderry was just weeks away from opening when the West River overflowed its banks on July 10 and flooded the building. ERIC SCHWIPPET/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

## BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

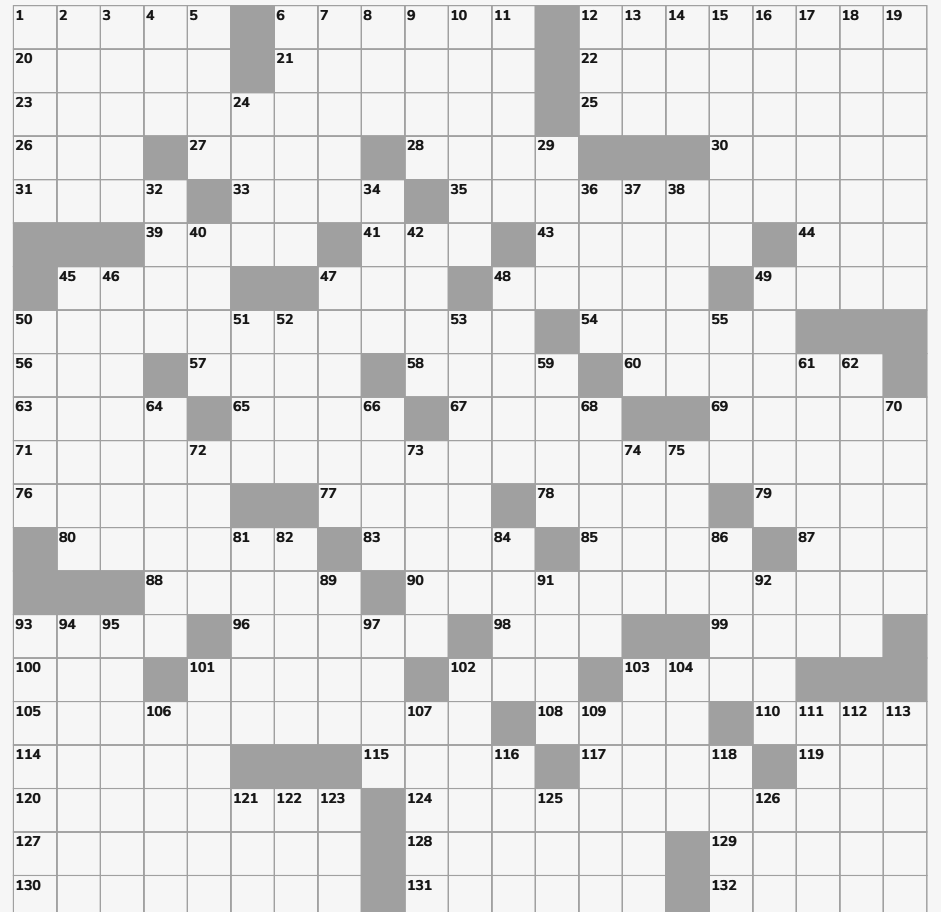
“It Takes Two”

### Across

1. Scarecrow’s guts
6. Full of energy
12. More like a wintry mix
20. One who might beg for treats
21. Turkish capital
22. Tarot symbol
23. Happy as can be
25. Put up a board so that the heads of the fastener may be seen
26. Root word?
27. Yearn (for)
28. Longings
30. One of Columbus’s ships
31. “Tropical Gardening” artist
33. Mountains
35. Parrot’s cry in “Treasure Island”
39. Use a sickle
41. Always \_\_\_ been (meme)
43. Poison
44. Computer add-on?
45. Trident-shaped letters
47. Midwest Indian
48. Hard cap
49. Moistens
50. “Dancing Machine” Motown band
54. “Für \_\_\_” (Beethoven work)
56. Twelve months in Tegucigalpa
57. After-dinner sandwich
58. Rescue with a chopper
60. Sign up
63. Like Logan: Abbr.
65. Like the Daniels movies
67. Wickedness
69. Chipped in chips
71. Do something incredible in the Masters
76. Chilled
77. Tiny mark
78. Just for men
79. Blowout on the field
80. Get ready
83. London district
85. Moderate pace
87. Meadow mom
88. Justice Sotomayor
90. 1927 A.A. Milne collection
93. Broad bean
96. “Try this!”
98. It includes Game Center
99. Microscopic part?
100. Buckeyes’ sch.
101. The latest and greatest
102. Actor Patel of “The Green Knight”
103. Lui’s partner
105. Abbie Hoffman’s group of antiwar protesters
108. European erupter
110. Slap on, as paint
114. Author Sinclair
115. Flimsy, as an excuse
117. Bee’s cousin
119. Bring into play
120. Located
124. Gymnastics coup
127. Stretch
128. Young raptor
129. Canadian Indians
130. Stretch in the slammer
131. Muzzles
132. Actress Condon of “The Banshees of Inisherin”

### Down

1. 2-in-1 eating utensil
2. Having harmony
3. Pfizer rival
4. Oft-torn knee part

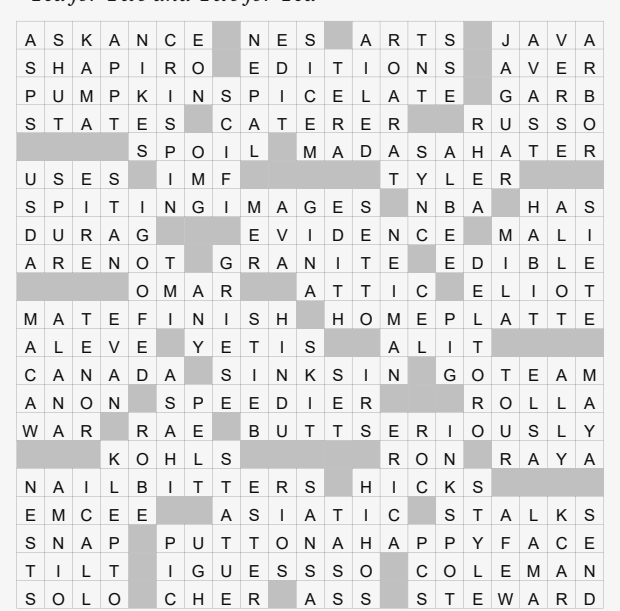


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5. “Easy, tiger!”
6. Cause of a hard-to-field grounder
7. Beginning
8. Instrument with strings attached
9. Dark blue hue
10. Walks in the shadows
11. Greek one-named New Ager
12. Tanning lotion letters
13. Meadow
14. The Tar Heels sch.
15. Walk over
16. “My Beautiful Laundrette” screenplay writer Kureishi
17. “You’ve made your point”
18. Music snob, e.g.
19. Takes a chill pill
24. Pac-12 school
29. Space-scanning proj.
32. Heat coach Spoelstra
34. Old Mideast ruler
36. Dog command
37. Cast out
38. Protest
40. Petro-Canada rival
42. It may be a lot
45. Going for the gold?
46. Short dog, for short
47. They’re skipped at the beach
48. Make tracks
49. BBQ meat
50. “Slumdog Millionaire” showstopper
51. Soup pasta
52. YA author Shusterman
53. As much as, for short
55. Czech or Serb
59. Smokes
61. Got elevation, as with a stool
62. Shaky
64. Residencia familiar
66. Nerves, with “the”
68. Drinks with foam art
70. Block
72. Life saver
73. Peter of “Herman’s Hermits”
74. Historian Westover
75. Composer Stravinsky
81. Remove one’s name, as on Facebook
82. Billy Joel’s instrument
84. Baby scrape
86. Poker player’s giveaway
89. “Oh, sure!”
91. Didn’t go straight
92. Silo contents
93. Turns one’s attention (on)
94. Fireplace detritus
95. Louis of fashion
97. Follow closely
101. Get by
102. Put down
103. Passes
104. Backspace?
106. Matter
107. Smokes e-liquids
109. Message to one’s followers
111. Tool
112. Theater employee
113. World Golf Hall of Famer Rawls
116. As a result
118. Eat like a bird
121. Color of some leather
122. And the like: Abbr.
123. Delayed opening?
125. Winter bug
126. Fiery feeling

### Last issue’s solution

“Tea for Two and Two for Tea”



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### CALL TO SERVICE YOUR A/C



# Vermont is struggling to line up housing for those living in motel rooms

*Of the 174 households who have left the motels, officials could only confirm that 34 had found housing in an apartment, and eight had found 'other' types of shelter*

By Lola Dufford  
ViDigger

MONTPELIER—The state was given an unusual task in a last-minute legislative deal brokered in June that extended publicly financed motel-based shelter for more than 2,000 unhoused individuals. It was charged with attempting to rehouse or shelter everyone by April 2024, and required to report back to the Legislature on its progress — every single month.

Lawmakers received their first update from state officials two weeks ago. The upshot: From an original cohort of 1,250 households, 174 left the program in July, according to data compiled by the state. But the vast majority did not necessarily leave for alternative housing or shelter.

Of those who left the motels, officials could only confirm that 34 households had found housing in an apartment, and eight had found “other” types of shelter. Another 11 households were kicked out for misconduct. But those figures are dwarfed by the number of households — 113 — that exited from the program because they did not successfully renew their benefits, a process that they must undertake every 28 days.

“You may see that number go down because as individuals lose their benefits, that sometimes entices them to reach out to the state,” Human Services Secretary Jenney Samuelson told the Legislature’s Joint Fiscal Committee on July 31. “And so we’re doing everything we can to make sure that they don’t lose eligibility just because they didn’t contact us.”

But on the ground, some who work directly with those staying in motels say it’s often the state that is hard to contact — not the other way around. Brenda Siegel, an activist who runs an informal housing hotline, said she’s seen people lose their rooms despite “literally calling every day and being on hold, but the hotel wasn’t able to wait anymore.” People with disabilities in particular are having difficulty navigating yet another new program, she added.

She was echoed by Rick DeAngelis, co-director of the Good Samaritan Haven, a network of shelters in central Vermont. He recounted how one employee, stationed at one of the motels, had helped an elderly man who sat on hold for hours trying to get his voucher renewed.

“If people are being bounced because they can’t be recertified, that’s probably not right, because it’s almost impossible to figure out how to get recertified,” he said.

Many of those sheltered in motels — or who have recently left — at one point participated in the state’s former transitional housing program, which would have entitled them to a \$3,300 publicly financed security deposit when that program ended,

as long as they kept their rooms in good condition. But former motel residents and their advocates have complained that certain motel owners wrongly pocketed the deposits instead.

In response to those concerns, lawmakers also required state officials to report how many households actually got their deposits back from motels. But while Samuelson’s report noted that just a little over \$5 million was due back to tenants, it was silent on how many had actually received that cash.

“So that \$5 million number there should have been returned?” Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Baruth, D/P-Chittenden, asked Samuelson during last week’s meeting. “But we don’t have any idea about how much was?”

“We do not have any information on the amount of that that was returned,” she replied. “We do know that the Attorney General’s Office and ... Vermont Legal Aid have been working with clients who feel like they did not receive their security deposits back and/or hotels who may not have administered the program appropriately.”

When Baruth pressed the point, asking why the state could not simply ask motels whether or not they had actually returned the money to its tenants, Doug Farnham, the deputy secretary for the Agency of Administration, jumped in. Federal rules, he said, blocked the state from “imposing additional conditions on landlords.”

“The state had very limited capabilities because of the federal restrictions on the program,” he said.

When Baruth remarked that he wanted to “note the craziness of pouring millions of dollars into a program” without any reporting on where the money wound up, Samuelson chimed back in.

“I can understand your being confounded by the federal regulations and policies,” she said. “But again, we did look into this several times and we were not able to legally require the hotels to report this back.”

The U.S. Department of the Treasury, which doled out the federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds that Vermont used to pay for the security deposits, however, disagrees. Asked whether federal rules prohibited Vermont from requiring motels to report whether they withheld deposits, Jenna Valle-Riestra, a spokesperson for the agency, pointed to the Treasury’s public guidance documents and wrote that “neither limits states’ ability to track the use of ERA program funds.”

Confronted by the Treasury official’s statement, Rachel Feldman, a spokesperson for the Vermont Agency of Human Services, appeared to reverse her boss’ prior pronouncement. But she also argued that, even if Vermont had kept tabs on where

the money went, its hands would have been tied.

“Treasury is correct that Vermont could try to track those payments but the disposition of the security deposit is a legal matter between the renter and the landlord, we have no standing to act on any information gathered,” Feldman wrote in an email.

On this point, Treasury appeared to disagree as well. Valle-Riestra again pointed ViDigger to the agency’s public FAQs, and wrote that “neither would prevent a state from taking action if a landlord failed to comply with requirements regarding security deposits.”

Baruth, in an interview, said he wasn’t surprised the Treasury Department had contradicted state officials. “I remember being underwhelmed by their answers,” he said.

The Joint Fiscal Committee is meeting again in about a month, and Baruth said he planned to follow up. The point of the new law was that “there would be more continuous oversight,” he said.

“This seems a good place to be exercising that and without, you know, relitigating too much of the past, we can say that the deposits are an ongoing issue, and we want to make sure that they’re distributed as was planned,” he said.

As for the number of people housed thus far, Baruth said he wanted to get more data before weighing in. But he acknowledged feeling discouraged by this first glimpse of the challenge ahead.

“The whole exercise, honestly, is a depressing one,” he said. “Our system is not currently capable of housing all these folks, other than the motels. And that’s obviously not an ideal solution.”

Meanwhile, Mark Hengstler, an attorney at Legal Services Vermont, a nonprofit that provides low-income Vermonters legal help in civil cases, said he continues to help motel residents pursue cases against motel owners who withheld deposits. But the Attorney General’s Office, he said, “is not being helpful.”

“I believe they are in a unique position to help people who are vulnerable,” he wrote in an email last week. “Thus far, they appear uninterested in doing that.”

Lauren Jandl, chief of staff to Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark, wrote in an email that it was office policy “that we do not comment on whether investigations exist, or on ongoing investigations.”

“I can, however, disclose to you that this matter remains a top priority for Attorney General Clark,” she said, before adding that Vermonters who believe their security deposits were wrongfully withheld should contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Assistance Program to assist in an investigation, “should one exist.”

They can do so by calling 800-649-2424 or visiting [ago.vermont.gov/cap](http://ago.vermont.gov/cap), she said.

## Housing funds

something that will create jobs or support the economy.”

### The link between housing, economic growth

When Pieciak took office in January, he looked at the program in terms of finding solutions for social issues.

“We looked at this program and said, ‘You know, this state’s cash balance grew from a few hundred million dollars when this program was started to now, where it’s a few billion dollars. It gave us about \$85 million dollars of available funding for economic development and job creation.’”

“And as we worked through that, during February, March, April, we determined that housing was the single greatest thing we could do for economic development and job creation, because businesses and hospitals and municipalities — basically, every public and private entity that we could hear from across the state — said they were having trouble attracting and retaining employees because of the cost of housing or the availability of housing.”

According to the stories Pieciak was hearing, organizations would hire people only to lose them before they started because they couldn’t find housing.

“So, that was our focus,” Pieciak said. “On that \$85 million, housing was the top priority. We also had a climate action as another priority. And then overlaying those priorities was a focus on social equity. So we started with the housing projects, we asked for applications, and those came in on June 1.”

“We said in the application process that we were prioritizing municipalities, nonprofits, and instrumentalities of government. We weren’t looking for private developers to come in and take advantage of these funds, because I should mention that it’s not just that we had \$85 million available, we had \$85 million available at a low interest rate. We were offering these loans out for 20 years or more at a 2% or a 2.5% interest rate.”

“Mostly, we were looking for entities like the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, or Champlain Housing Trust, or rural organizations in the housing space with specific projects, or general programs that they would apply this money toward. And we need to make sure that they’re financially stable enough that we that we have trust in the risk profile. And then we also get a guarantee from them that they’ll make good on the money.”

Pieciak’s office got 44 applications asking for a total dollar amount of more than \$300 million. “We were set to approve \$55 million on June 12, and then we put the program on pause because of the [July] flooding.”

As of this date, the application process remains on hold. “We are still surveying needs and considering the best use of the 10 percent in Vermont funds in light of the flood and discussing this with statewide leaders to ensure that we are doing all we can to help Vermonters,” said David Kunin, the State Treasurer’s director of outreach and communications. “We expect to have more news in the coming weeks.”

“We actually were going to vote on some applications the day after the flooding, but we put a pause on that,” Pieciak said. “We hope to get back to it in the next couple of weeks. But, you know, we’ll have over \$50 million available for lending to entities that are building workforce housing, affordable housing, and senior living. We need to continue to bring additional resources to the problem of building more units quickly.”

The applications on pause are for all three things: affordable

housing, workforce housing, and senior housing.

Remember the idea of the “grandmother apartment?” Where a family builds a small apartment on their property to house and care for an elderly relative? Called accessory dwelling units (ADU), they can either be an addition to a home or a separate apartment, like over a garage, on the property. They won’t change the character of the neighborhood.

The state is now extending the idea to help with homelessness.

“It allows individuals that own homes to get a \$50,000 grant from the state of Vermont if they’re turning their home into a multifamily home,” said Pieciak. “Or if they’re fixing up a rental unit. Or if they have a home that is currently unable to be occupied.”

He said that people are eligible for those \$50,000 grants “over the next couple of years, if they commit to having someone rent those units who has recently experienced homelessness. That’s another good recent legislative policy.”

To qualify for the grant, the owner has to put some of their own money into the project.

“The Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) offers grants up to \$50,000 per unit for repairs needed to bring vacant rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines, add new units to an existing building, or create an accessory dwelling unit on an owner-occupied property,” says the website of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development ([accd.vermont.gov/vhip](http://accd.vermont.gov/vhip)).

According to the website, “Program participants are required to provide a 20 percent match for VHIP project grants and maintain HUD Fair Market Rent prices. Property owners who are rehabilitating existing units or creating a new unit that is not an ADU must work with Coordinated Entry Lead Organizations to identify suitable tenants exiting homelessness.”

Bureaucrats with the best of intentions cannot wave a wand and create more affordable apartments. So, after the forum, *The Commons* asked Secretary Pieciak what comes next.

“Just to clearly identify the problem, I think we’re No. 1 in the country with the lowest vacancy rate for rental units,” Pieciak said. “And we’re No. 2 for the lowest vacancy rate for single family homes. We need more housing stock.”

His office has certain financial “levers” that it can pull to help create more housing, and Pieciak wants to pull as many as he can.

“The biggest lever that we have in our office is our local investment fund that we announced the expansion to \$85 million,” Pieciak said.

His office had received many applications for the money, but then Vermont got flooded and created an even greater need for housing.

“We actually were going to vote on some applications the day after the flooding, but we put a pause on that,” Pieciak said. “We hope to get back to it in the next couple of weeks. But, you know, we’ll have over \$50 million available for lending to entities that are building workforce housing, affordable housing, and senior living. We need to continue to bring additional resources to the problem of building more units quickly.”

The applications on pause are for all three things: affordable

FROM SECTION FRONT

housing, workforce housing, and senior housing.

“Really, housing along the entire continuum is important,” Pieciak said. “If we did more senior housing, then the hope is that individuals that are living in their homes that maybe they’ve lived in for decades now have a place to go.”

“And those homes get opened up, and then the single-family starter home individuals have somewhere to move into. Someone who is renting has somewhere to move into. And so on and so forth.”

“But we also are going to have to recognize that the housing crisis just got tougher from this flooding,” Pieciak said. “We have to move manufactured homes out of the floodplain, for example.”

### Will zoning changes help?

During the last legislative session, significant steps were made to change local zoning, most specifically making it possible to put up multiple-family dwellings.

“So anywhere that has single-family-only zoning is prohibited,” Pieciak said. “So if you’re single-family zoned, you have to allow for duplexes. And if you have water and sewer, it has to be triplex or quadplexes.”

The legislation allows for more density and more affordable housing to be built.

“It sort of overrides local municipal zoning,” Pieciak said. “I think it is 20% of developers’ building is going to be for affordable housing. And there is an even bigger incentive for density if developers also commit to having individuals that are exiting homelessness.”

Those policies are just weeks old, he said — “but to be able to build housing throughout the state, these laws are necessary.”

Given all these factors — the many groups working on homelessness issues, VHIP, the new zoning changes that allow multiple-family dwellings to be built, and Pieciak’s \$85 million, and other measures — towns like Brattleboro have an opportunity to design their own master plan, Pieciak said.

“There should also be a broader exemption for housing as it relates to Act 250,” he said, referring to Vermont’s significant planning law. “So that you don’t have to go through what’s required at the local level.”

Pieciak believes that such a scenario “would give more incentive for development in our bigger cities, where we want there to be more homes, and more multi-family homes.”

“That’s something that’s actively being discussed,” he said. “I think it’s another lever that the state of Vermont can pull to try to bring more homes on more quickly.”

Pieciak said that during the virtual policy forum, Colburn had summed up the problem perfectly.

“He said that when he sees somebody on the street, he doesn’t think that that individual has some sort of personal or individual failing,” Pieciak said.

Colburn, he said, “thinks all of us as a society have failed to provide enough housing in our community so that that person can have shelter. And I think that was really kind of stinging, right?”

“It brings the problem home for all of us,” Pieciak said. “And we have a real imperative to try to better focus on this as much as we can and all of our individual policies, positions and leadership positions.”



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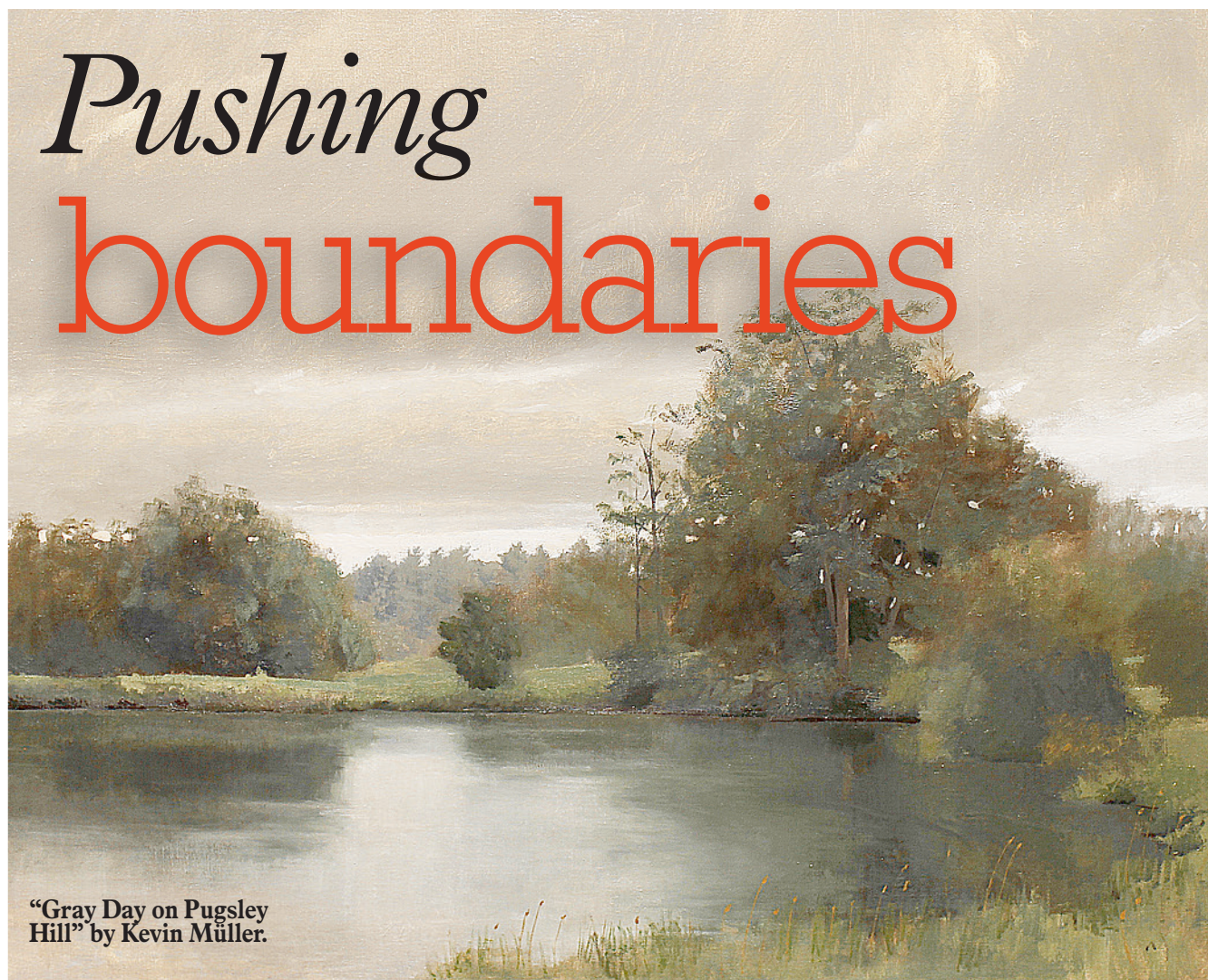
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COLUMN | Arts Notebook



“Gray Day on Pugsley Hill” by Kevin Müller.

# Pushing boundaries

## ‘Atelier: An Exhibit of Contemporary Classical Realism’ shows 75 works of 23 artists, classically trained in New York City, whose work resonates in today’s world

**T**HE VILLAGE OF South Newfane on the Dover Road, 7 miles west of Route 30 and 8 miles east of Route 100, might seem an unlikely spot for a cosmopolitan art event.

*Newfane*

But look again. This village, population around 380, is replete with artists — fine, graphic, literary, and performing — and the locus of the annual Rock River Artists’ Studio Tour.

At Willow Retreat, proprietors Tom Concannon and Ravi Shimpi fit in well, with their offerings and intentions to not



**ANNIE LANDENBERGER** is an arts writer and columnist for The Commons; she also is founder and artistic director of Rock River Players and is one half of the musical duo Bard Owl with partner T. Breeze Verdant.

only promote healthy living but also to support the arts.

When Concannon, a policy researcher and member of Tufts University’s medical school faculty, and Shimpi, a database engineer for the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, were looking at properties in the area, they sought a place to promote good living

— especially through yoga — and, Concannon adds, “to offer transcending experiences” while showcasing art. Their first major arts event should hit the mark.

“Atelier: An Exhibit of Contemporary Classical Realism” will be on display at Willow Retreat on Sunday, Aug. 27, from 1 to 6 p.m.

Throughout the spacious rooms in the softly-lit, high-ceilinged 1899 inn, 23 artists will display 75 works.

All are trained or teach at Grand Central Atelier (GCA) in Brooklyn, New York, which was formed in the 1990s by a group of artists who “envisioned an aesthetic sensibility motivated by works from Raphael to Ingres,” according to the organization’s website ([grandcentralatelier.org](http://grandcentralatelier.org)). “This inspired a method rooted in traditions predating the 19th century and the advent of photography.”

■ SEE ATELIER SHOW, B6

‘Puppetry speaks truth to power, it is full of surprises, it is silly and sublime’

## Hot Jam Puppet Slam Festival comes to NECCA on Aug. 20

By Annie Landenberger

*The Commons*

**B**RATTLEBORO—New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) just keeps growing, it seems, stretching its sinews to embrace an expanding universe of dramatic and kinesthetic arts.

This Sunday, Aug. 20, NECCA hosts North Star Puppets to present Hot Jam Puppet Slam Festival, an event of puppetry, music, theater, crafts, and food.

From 4 to 7 p.m. under the circus tent, a family-friendly festival will feature an all-ages puppet show, silkscreening, live music, and a craft workshop.

Festivalgoers will hear singer-songwriters Stephen Peter Rodgers, Ponybird, and Sean O’Reilly, and see Wandering Theatre’s festival-style puppets, Big Chicken’s large parade puppet, and Dragon Treasure shadow puppets by Nappy’s Puppets. Cloudgaze will also perform immersive theater.

At 7 p.m., festival creators Phoenix Leigh and Aaron Lathrop (North Star Puppets) will offer and host the Hot Jam Puppet Slam, an adult-oriented variety show of 12 short acts by 11 puppeteers from throughout New England and beyond.

“Puppet slams are an underground phenomenon,” Leigh explains.

According to [puppetslam.com](http://puppetslam.com), such an event is “an evening of curated short-form puppetry acts intended for adult audiences.”

Having settled in Brattleboro in 2022, Leigh — the reception manager at NECCA — and Lathrop first met at the National Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center in Waterford, Connecticut. Leigh, a

■ SEE PUPPET SLAM, B5



Kenzie Yellin portrays Sugar in the upcoming Actors Theatre Playhouse production of “Tiny Beautiful Things.”

## ‘Tiny Beautiful Things’ opens at Actors Theatre Playhouse Aug. 17

**WEST CHESTERFIELD, N.H.**—The Actors Theatre Playhouse (ATP) presents Nia Vardalos’s adaptation of Cheryl Strayed’s popular memoir *Tiny Beautiful Things* on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, Aug. 17 through Sept. 2, at 7:30 p.m.

Described as “a celebration of the simple beauty of being human,” this play is based on Strayed’s (*Wild*) journey as the beloved anonymous advice columnist “Dear Sugar.”

Over the years, thousands of people turned to Sugar for words of wisdom, compassion, and hope. At first unsure of herself, Sugar finds a way to weave her own life experiences together with the deep yearning and heart-rending questions from her readers.

“*Tiny Beautiful Things* is rich with humor, insight, compassion and absolute honesty, it is a play about reaching when you’re stuck, healing when you’re broken, and finding the courage to take on the questions that have no

answers,” reads a news release.

The cast features Kenzie Yelin, Wendy Almeida, Dakota Benedetto, and James Duffy. It is directed by Burt Tepfer.

In an interview with Nancy A. Olson for ATP, Tepfer said he chose the play after seeing Strayed give a talk before a packed house at the Latchis Theatre in Brattleboro during her 2019 book tour.

“I’ve been involved in theatre for 40 years. I read a lot of plays,” he said. “When I read this script, I thought, ‘This is a gripping, powerful piece, the most emotionally impactful play I’ve ever been involved with.’ I was amazed by her. I talked with her after her lecture and invited her to see the version I was directing, but COVID put an end to that. So this current production was four years in the making.”

Vardalos, the Academy Award-nominated writer of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, developed the script from Strayed’s book, a

collection of the letters written to her and the replies she wrote as Sugar. Strayed had to okay everything in the script.

Tepfer said there were some challenges in putting this production together.

“The play can seem static — there’s not much action. So I have to bring some motion to it, bring it alive, by making the scenes visually interesting. I have to move people around the space in configurations that catch the audience’s attention. That choreography took some doing. When one letter-writer is talking, the other letter-writers pay attention and listen, as if they are readers of Sugar’s column, as the audience is.”

Given the long gestation for this production, Tepfer was asked about the difference between the before and after times of the pandemic, and how it might have affected his approach.

■ SEE ‘TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS’, B5

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# arts & community CALENDAR

## THURSDAY

# 17

### Performing arts

**WEST CHESTERFIELD Nina Vardalos' adaption of Cheryl Strayed's popular memoir: "Tiny Beautiful Things":** Celebration of the simple beauty of being human, this funny and deeply touching exploration of resilience is based on Cheryl Strayed's (Wild) journey as beloved anonymous advice columnist 'Dear Sugar.' Over the years, thousands have turned to Sugar for words of wisdom, compassion, hope. At first unsure of herself, Sugar finds a way to weave her own life experiences together with the deep yearning and heartrending questions from her readers.

- ▶ 7:30 p.m. *Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays. Featuring Kenzie Yelin, Wendy Almeida, Dakota Benedetto, James Duffy.*
- ▶ Directed by Burt Tefper. Adapted for stage by Nina Vardalos, Academy Award-nominated writer of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding".
- ▶ Through Saturday, September 2.
- ▶ \$17.
- ▶ Actors Theatre Playhouse, Corner Brook & Main St. Information: Reserve tickets. [atplayhouse.org](http://atplayhouse.org).

### Music

**PUTNEY Putney Community Sing Along:** These community sing-alongs feature a printed songbook of well-known songs from many traditions: folk, golden oldies, gospel, Beatles, old pop, rock and show tunes. Participants will take turns choosing what to sing - binders with lyrics provided. Putney resident Rich Grumbine leads the singing and provides guitar accompaniment.

- ▶ 7-8 p.m. Sing-along occurs behind the library. Dress for the outdoors and bring insect repellent as needed.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: For more information, email Rich Grumbine: [richgrumbine@gmail.com](mailto:richgrumbine@gmail.com).

### Recreation

**BRATTLEBORO Season Three: "Thorn In My Side":** Thorn In My Side is an original award-winning game show created by Ben Stockman, Colin Hinckley, James Gelter, Jesse Tidd, and Shannon Ward. Each month, three contestants compete

## THURSDAY CONT.

in bizarre challenges that fit that month's theme. Stay after the show to see a preview for a new game show OMNISCIENCE, created by James Gelter.

- ▶ 8 p.m. Aired for adult audiences.
- ▶ \$10 suggested donation.
- ▶ Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: 802-281-3232; [hookerdunham.org](http://hookerdunham.org).

### Community building

**BRATTLEBORO "Load the Latchis":** Let's raise enough donations of cash or food to fill every seat in the Latchis Theatre with a bag of groceries for our neighbors who need help. Sponsored by The Peak 101.9 FM, this annual fundraiser benefits Foodworks, the food program of Groundworks Collaborative. Fish will be on the Flat Street side of the Latchis Theater from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. accepting donations so we can raise \$7,500.00 for Groundworks and Foodworks.

- ▶ Text "GIVE" to donate anytime: 833-603-PEAK(7325). For every \$20 donated, we'll put a virtual bag of groceries on a seat at the Latchis. Or go to [www.loadthelatchis.com](http://www.loadthelatchis.com). Sponsors include 802 Credit Union, G.S. Precision, Northeast Home Loans, Farnum Insulators, Brattleboro Savings & Loan, Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Members 1st Credit Union, Bob's Fuels.
- ▶ Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. Information: 802-254-1109; [latchisarts.org](http://latchisarts.org).

### Community meals

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

- ▶ 3-4 p.m. every Thursday.
- ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Questions: call Pat Haine, Pantry Director, 802-257-0626.

## FRIDAY

# 18

### Performing arts

**BRATTLEBORO TUNIDI Productions' Wagner in Vermont Festival:** Performances of "Wagner's Die Walkure" (8/18 and 8/22) and "Siegfried" (8/20 and 8/24).

## FRIDAY CONT.

- ▶ 4 p.m. all four days. Brattleboro is on the map as one of the rare places where Wagner's work is presented. Experience the power of these masterworks unfolding on the Latchis stage.
- ▶ Through Thursday, August 24.
- ▶ \$36 to \$200 for either performance: "Wagner's Die Walkure" or "Siegfried".
- ▶ Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. Information: More details and to buy tickets: [tundiproductions.org](http://tundiproductions.org).

**GREENFIELD XFest Festival: Weekend of Music and Art:** XFest is a weekend of deep listening and observation with performers assigned to unfamiliar ensembles. Each performance is an opportunity for improvisation, experimentation, adaptation and shenanigans; players range from formally trained to self-taught, jazz to noise, rock to avant-garde. Featuring local and visiting musicians.

- ▶ Fri. and Sat.: 7 p.m.-12 midnight. Sun.: 1 p.m.-4 p.m. CDs, tapes, records, etc. of performers' individual projects will be available for sale directly from the artists (cash, Venmo, Paypal).
- ▶ Through Sunday, August 20.
- ▶ Free. Donations accepted and will be immediately spent on pizza.
- ▶ 10 Forward Venue, 10 Fiske Avenue. Information: [xfestma.com](http://xfestma.com).

### Music

**BRATTLEBORO Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series: Armo - an Afrobeat ensemble:** Armo's intimate/energetic sound is contemporary and classic Afrobeat. Antibalas bandmates guitarist/keyboardist Nikhil P. Yerawadekar, trumpeter/percussionist Jordan McLean, vocalist/keyboardist Amayo, vocalist/percussionist Marcus Farrar, drummer Kevin Raczka, bassist Justin Kimmel, guitarist/ keyboardist Nikhil P. Yerawadekar, Armo create spontaneous arrangements of music from Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Ebo Taylor, The Daktaris, William Onyeabor, Art Ensemble of Chicago.

- ▶ 6:30 p.m. Bring picnic and a blanket or fold-up chair. Next Stage provides a cash bar. Crossroad Tacos and Vermont Gelato will sell food on-site.
- ▶ \$20 in advance, \$25 at gate, free for children under age 12 (dedicated play area).
- ▶ Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Sq. Information: Tickets/Information: [tinyurl.com/5derz5yc](http://tinyurl.com/5derz5yc) or [tinyurl.com/5derz5yc](http://tinyurl.com/5derz5yc), 802-387-0102.

### Dummerston Easy Street Duo:

Mark Trichka and Lisa Brande - 40-year musical veterans from Putney - play Swing to Swamp, Rockabilly to Real Jazz and Blues to Bluegrass on guitars, mandolin, fiddle and vocals.

- ▶ 6-8 p.m. Outdoors in picnic area (under pavilion if it rains). Food beer and ice cream for sale.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Kampfire Campgrounds, 792 US-5. Information: More information: 802-254-2098.

### MARLBORO Brattleboro's Serenata Bossanova performs original and traditional Brazilian Bossa Nova music:

Bossa Nova is a mix of samba and jazz originating in Rio de Janeiro in the 1960s. People most likely will recognize "Girl from Ipanema," one of the most well known bossa nova songs. Serenata Bossanova performs both classic and original songs and is made up of Jesse Lepkoff guitar and vocal, Alison Hale flute, Darryl Kniffen drums, and Amy Rose keyboard. Relax or dance to the smooth and mellow sounds.

- ▶ 6 p.m. Outdoor stage. Bring a blanket or a picnic if you wish. Chairs available.
- ▶ Admission: \$15 suggested donation.
- ▶ Thrush Hill Studio/Outdoor Stage, 314 Upper Houghton Rd. Information: More information: text 802-579-3386 or call 802-254-2273.

### Community building

**NEWFANE Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) presents "Raptors: Inspiring Conservation":** For hundreds of years, humans didn't understand the vital role raptors play in our ecosystem. Some of our most charismatic birds - Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon - wound up on the Endangered Species List. Today we know that a majority of bird species are in decline. Learn how people banded together to save these magnificent animals and meet some live birds who help us tell these inspiring conservation stories. Best of all, learn what you can do to help them thrive in the wild.

- ▶ 1 p.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Moore Free Library, 23 West St. Information: 802-365-7948; [moorefreelibrary.org](http://moorefreelibrary.org).

## SATURDAY

# 19

### Music

**E. ALSTEAD Mole Hill Theatre presents The Stockwell Brothers:** All ages, family-friendly venue.

- ▶ 7 p.m.
- ▶ \$15 at door.
- ▶ Mole Hill Theatre, 789 Gilsum Mine Road. Information: 603-352-2585; [molehillnh@gmail.com](mailto:molehillnh@gmail.com).

### BRATTLEBORO Keith Murphy/Becky Tracy in Concert with special guests: Cindy Kallet, Grey Larsen, Rachel Bell:

Keith and Becky have been leading lights in the traditional music scene in VT and across the country for over 25 years. Their connection to traditional fiddle music/songs runs deep and they showcase the music of Ireland, Quebec, Newfoundland

and their own compositions inspired by these traditions. Dance tunes are mixed with singable chorus songs in tasteful arrangements and good humor.

- ▶ 6:30 p.m. (5:30 p.m. gates open). All are welcome to bring lawn chairs, a picnic, and enjoy craft beers at Thirsty Goat bar plus cool treats from Vermont Gelato. Since this is an outdoor concert, check our Facebook page and website on Saturday for rain date info!
- ▶ Free, donations welcome.
- ▶ Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Sq. Information: 802-490-2270; [retreatfarm.org](http://retreatfarm.org).

### Recreation

**BRATTLEBORO Mushroom Mini-Course:** This summer's rains have led to a profusion of fungi. Justin Garner leads 3 forays to explore the strange and wonderful diversity of mushrooms. During each outing, we'll spend several hours in the field looking for/collecting mushrooms. Then, gather around tables to admire/learn what we found. If good edibles are available, we'll prepare some to sample.

- ▶ Also 9/10 (Sun.) 9-11:30, and 10/8 (Sun.), 1-3:30 p.m. Mushroom Mini-course.
- ▶ Single outing: \$35 / \$25 BEEC members. All three: \$90 / \$60 for BEEC members.
- ▶ Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. Information: 802-257-5785; [beec.org](http://beec.org).

### Farmers' markets

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

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

### Well-being

**BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Zen Center (In-Person or wherever you are):** One way to engage with the ecological crisis: This group chants briefly and then sits in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action.

- ▶ 1:00 - 1:35 p.m. on Saturdays.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct. Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30).

### Visual arts and shows

**BRATTLEBORO Bob Boemig Retrospective and Opening Reception:** CX Silver Gallery reveals the works of Bob Boemig 'hidden in plain sight' for the past several decades. Boemig is known for his public outdoor land sculpture. His work defies classification by fusing sculpture,

architecture, landscape design into a distinctive medium. His series of abstract, minimal, and contemplative sculptural landscapes include the Nebula Series, 'Ashes to Ashes; Dust to Dust' and 'What we do and how we do'.

- ▶ Reception 9/2: 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
- ▶ Through Sunday, October 29.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ CX Silver Gallery, 814 Western Ave. Information: [cxsilvergallery.com/bob-boemig](http://cxsilvergallery.com/bob-boemig), info@[cxsilvergallery.com](http://cxsilvergallery.com), 802-257-7898 x.1. Open Wed. thru Mon., 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

### Celebrations and festivals

#### BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Museum & Art Center - Join us for a Joyous Evening of Celebration!

Inaugural BMAC Award for Service to Art & Humanity, will be given to artist Aurora Robson in recognition of her extraordinary work increasing awareness and developing creative solutions to the pernicious problem of plastic pollution. The BMAC Gala is a one-of-a-kind celebration that raises vital funds for BMAC's contemporary art exhibitions, always-free admission, transformative education initiatives, and dynamic public events.

- ▶ 6-7:30 p.m.: Cocktails, appetizers, live music: Draa Hobbs. 7:30-9 p.m.: Dinner, award presentation, dessert. 9-10 p.m.: Dance Party: DJ Woolly Mar. Bar: Saxtons Distillery. Catering by The Porch. Dress imaginatively!
- ▶ Gala Ticket: \$250 (\$150 tax-deductible) includes entire Gala plus Late Night Dance Party and open bar.
- ▶ Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Late Night Dance Party Ticket: \$50 (\$25 tax-deductible) includes dance party w/ DJ Woolly Mar, late-night bites, one drink. 802-257-0124; [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org).

## SUNDAY

# 20

### Music

**PUTNEY Cajun and Zydeco music by Planet Zydeco - presented by Twilight Music and Next Stage Arts:** New England-based Planet Zydeco plays dance music of southwest Louisiana in the Cajun and Zydeco traditions. Featuring accordion, fiddle, vocals backed by electric guitar, bass, rubboard, and drums, Cannon Labrie, Mark Trichka, Alan Bradbury, Michelle Kaminsky, Jack Ezikovich, and Bonita Weisman mix up-tempo songs with traditional waltzes.

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

**Be Sure To Check Our Full Program Schedule @ [brattleborotv.org](http://brattleborotv.org)**

**bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**  
Aug. 14-20  
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

<b>Here We Are - Nye Ffarabab, Artist, Writer:</b> Mon 8p, Tue 6a & 3:15p, Wed 12:15p, Thurs 1:15p & 9:15p, Sat 12:20p, Sun 5:15p	<b>Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 8/15/23:</b> Tues 6:15p (LIVE), Sat 5:15p, Sun 8a
<b>The World Fusion Show - Ep# 158 - Frank London:</b> Mon 5:30p, Tues 1:30p, Wed 9:30a, Thurs 9:55p, Sat 6:30a, 5p & 8p, Sun 9:30a	<b>Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 8/14/23:</b> Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
<b>Couch Potatoe Productions - Twilight on the Tavern Lawn presents The Woodpeckers:</b> Mon 10a, Tues 8p, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 9a, Fri 4p, Sat 2p, Sun 6p	<b>Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 8/14/23:</b> Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p
<b>Mitchell Ciddings Fine Arts - Maggie Cahoon, Jessie Pollock, Erika Radich:</b> Mon 3p, Tues 10a, Wed 9p, Thurs 4:30p, Fri 6:30a, Sat 8:30p, Sun 12:30p	<b>West River Education District Board Mtg. 8/14/23:</b> Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
<b>Around Town With Maria - Artful Streets at Gallery Walk 11/4/23:</b> Mon 8:35p, Tues 5:30a & 9:45p, Wed 5:25p, Thurs 12:15p, Sun 7:45p	<b>Windham Elementary School Board Mtg. 8/15/23:</b> Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
<b>Couch Potatoe Productions - Windham Philharmonic Independence Day 2023:</b> Mon 12:15p, Thurs 2p, Fri 10a, Sun 8:30p	<b>Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 8/15/23:</b> Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
<b>Chesterfield Historical Society - David Mann - The Surveys and Surveyors Part 2:</b> Mon 1:40p, Tues 12:15p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 10:40a	<b>Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 8/16/23:</b> Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
<b>BCTV Summer Video Camp - 2023 Video Reel:</b> Mon 7a, Tues 3:45p, Wed 12:45p, Thurs 3:20p, Fri 12:15p, Sat 9:45a, Sun 9:45p	<b>Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 8/7/23:</b> Tues 1:30p, Sun 6:30a
<b>Energy Week with George Harvey &amp; Tom Finnell:</b> Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	<b>River Valley Unified School District Board Mtg. 8/7/23:</b> Mon 12p, Sat 9:15p
<b>Vermontitude - Weekly Episode:</b> Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	<b>Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 8/8/23:</b> Mon 5p, Wed 6a, Sun 7p
<b>News Block: WTSN News:</b> Mon-Fri 12p & 6p <b>Reformer News Break:</b> Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	<b>Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 8/8/23:</b> Sun 9p
<b>St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	<b>Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 8/9/23:</b> Mon 1:30p, Tues 6:15a, Thurs 5p, Sat 11a, Sun 8p
<b>Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service:</b> Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	<b>Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg. 7/24/23:</b> Mon 3:45p, Fri 4:45p, Sun 5:45p
<b>Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	<b>Brattleboro Planning Commission Special Mtg. 7/5/23:</b> Tues 7:15a, Wed 7a, Thurs 11:15a
<b>Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	<b>Town Matters - Weekly Episode:</b> Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
<b>St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass:</b> Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	<b>The David Pakman Show:</b> Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

**Note: Schedule subject to change.**  
View full schedule and watch online at [brattleborotv.org](http://brattleborotv.org)

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

**Brattleboro Community Television - 257-0888**

\*SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR HONORARY CHAIR, CATHY CONE OF CONE EDITIONS PRESS & INJET MALL

## Call to Youth Photographers!

**IN-SIGHT'S YOUTH PHOTO CONTEST & FAIR**

**PHOTO CONTEST CATEGORIES**  
NEW ENGLAND EXPERIENCE  
ANALOG/FILM  
PEOPLE  
PLACES  
ARTISTIC

**In-Sight is seeking photography submissions for the Youth Photo Contest & Fair!**

\*If you are between 11 & 18 years old, live within an hour of Brattleboro, and have an eye for photography, submit your images in any or all of our categories!

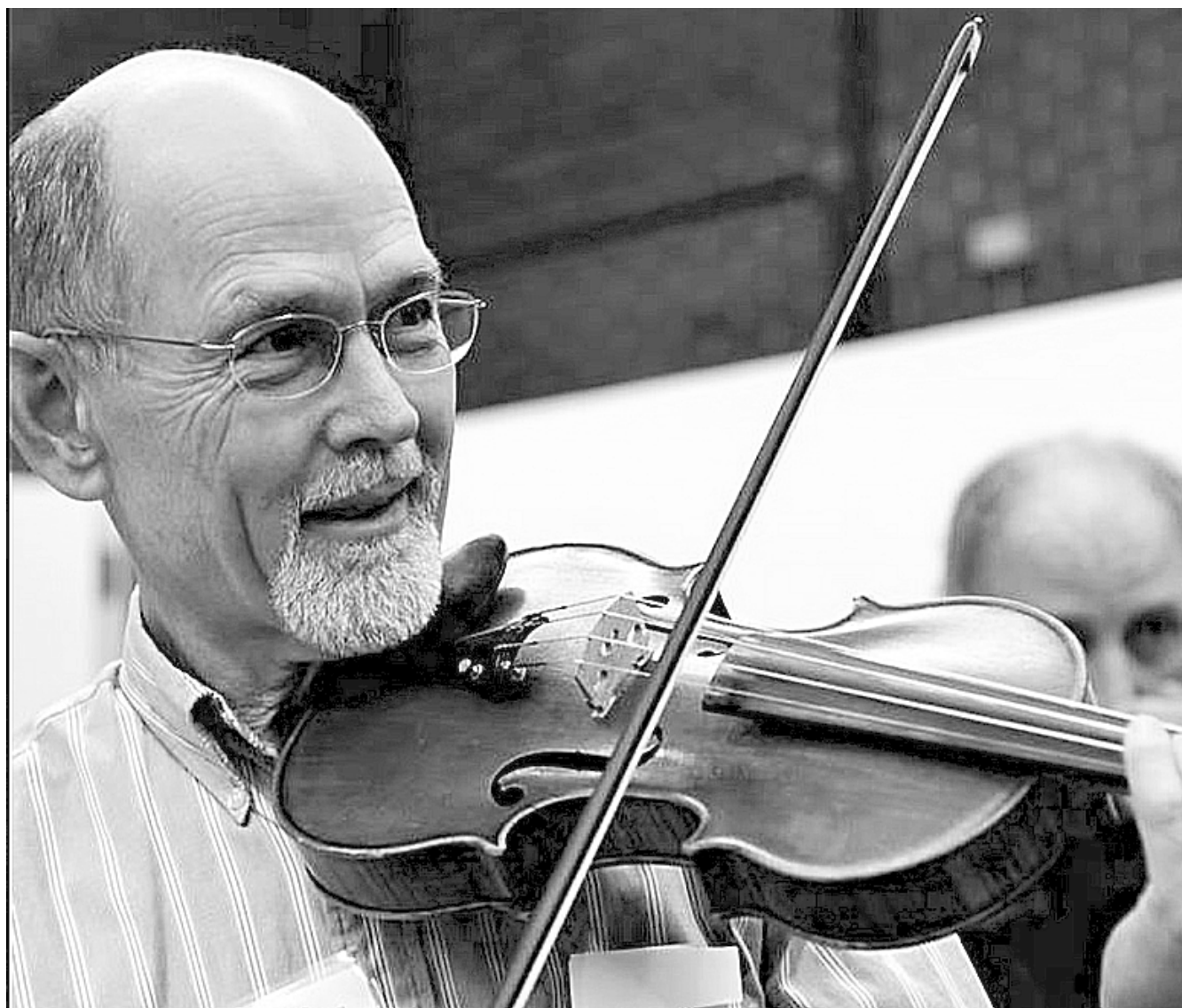
**Submit by 8/20/23**

**Win prizes!**

**FAIR & AWARD CEREMONY**  
9/30/23  
THE LATCHIS THEATER  
4-7PM

**802 credit union** **C&S Wholesale Grocers** **vermont arts council** **VCP Vermont Center for Photography**





Fred Breunig

COURTESY PHOTO

## Brattleboro Literary Festival features more than 60 authors

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Literary Festival organizers invite everyone to join them in downtown Brattleboro for the 22nd annual Brattleboro Literary Festival, set for Friday through Sunday, Oct. 13 through 15. All events are free.

“The festival this year is the story of us — about who we are, how we are surviving, and what issues are we facing as humans with a focus on people who are marginalized,” organizers wrote in a news release. “Life is overwhelming and we find comfort in books that often make us realize we are not alone.

“It is more important than ever that we remain united by compassion and understanding; that we can come together through books to realize what binds us together and what tears us apart: how books help us sort out our messy, imperfect lives. And that we always remember that we are all in this together.”

Featured authors and books this year include Holly Black (*The Stolen Heir*), Chen Chen

(*Your Emergency Contact Has Experienced an Emergency*), Oliver de la Paz (*The Diaspora Sonnets*), Jennifer De Leon (*Borderless*), Andre Dubus III (*Such Kindness*), Jean Kwok (*The Leftover Woman*), Tracy Kidder (*Rough Sleepers*), Kelly Link (*White Cat, Black Dog*), Kyle Lukoff (*Too Bright To See*), Madeleine May Kunin (*Walk With Me*), Jonathan Rosen (*The Best Minds*), and Will Schwalbe (*We Should Not Be Friends*).

For the complete list of more than 60 authors, visit [brattleborolifefest.org](http://brattleborolifefest.org). And, while you're there, organizers ask supporters of the fest to consider making a donation of any size.

“We've created an event that's truly for our community, and it cannot survive unless attendees who are able to donate to the festival do donate to the festival,” organizers wrote, adding that these contributions “help to forge a cultural identity that is much larger than that of a small Vermont town.”

## Community dance in Guilford

GUILFORD—A family-friendly community dance featuring traditional New England dances (squares, contras, circles, waltzes, and polkas) will be held at the new Guilford Community Park Pavilion, 24 Church Drive (behind the Country Store, next to Guilford Community Church) on Sunday, Aug. 20, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

All dances will be taught; no partner needed. All are welcome and admission is by suggested donation of \$10 per person with a family limit of \$20 (but no one will be turned away).

Music for the dance will be provided by some of the best

in the business, say organizers: Laurie Indenbaum on fiddle, Carol Compton on keyboard, and Fred Breunig, teaching and calling.

Indenbaum has been fiddling for dances in New England since 1976. She has played in numerous bands over the years drawing on Quebecois, New England, Scandinavian, and old-time style.

Compton grew up in a family steeped in music and dance from all over the world. Since college, she has played for contra, English country, Morris, and Colonial-era dancing traditions.

Breunig started calling while in college in the early 1970s, and

says he still loves it best when he is introducing dancing to those who have never danced before. He is experienced teaching people of all ages and abilities. “His patience and good-natured manner are legendary,” states the news release.

The dance is sponsored by Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA), a Vermont-based social justice organization run by volunteers and some paid staff, organizing Vermonters on the social issues of the day.

These issues include housing — especially, housing the unhoused — and racial justice, including work on Prop 2 (the

Anti-Slavery Amendment to the Vermont Constitution) and the Declaration of Inclusion Campaign (which is now up to 110 towns across Vermont, who have publicly committed to be more welcoming and inclusive). VIA has also worked on immigrant issues, prison reform, and better community-police relations.

For more information about the dance or VIA, contact Mike Mrowicki, the Southeast Vermont Organizer for VIA, at [mike@viavt.org](mailto:mike@viavt.org).

### Classic Rock Band drummer

seeking a lead guitarist, and a male lead vocalist to play at small parties, events, etc. for fun!

Interested? Call for info. (802) 258-7056



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#### SUNDAY CONT.

► 6 p.m. *This is the final concert for Twilight Tavern on the Lawn series this year. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Food available. Concert moves to Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill, if it rains.*

► Free (donations accepted). Putney Tavern Lawn, Main St., downtown Putney. Information: [twilightmusic.org](http://twilightmusic.org), 802-387-5772.

**GRAFTON Grafton Cornet Band:** Informal mix of familiar and upbeat music for the whole family in beautiful surroundings with director Glen D'Eon.

► 5-6 p.m. *on the lawn. Bring chairs or a blanket or just stroll by. Some loaner instruments are available. Visiting band instrument players who would like to help should come to the rehearsal one hour earlier. Band website: [www.GraftonBand.org](http://www.GraftonBand.org). Rain venue: Grafton Community Church.*

► Free. Grafton Public Library, 35 Grafton Common. Information: 802-843-2404; [librarian@graftonpubliclibrary.org](mailto:librarian@graftonpubliclibrary.org).

#### Farmers' markets

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

► 11 a.m.-1 p.m. *on Sundays - corner of Frost and Elm. (Gardeners may drop off surplus from their gardens from 10:30-closing: before noon preferred).*

► Through Sunday, October 29. ► Free. Turning Point, 39 Elm St. (corner of Frost and Elm St.). Information: [EdibleBrattleboro@gmail.com](mailto:EdibleBrattleboro@gmail.com).

**PUTNEY** Putney Farmers Market - plus Live Music today with Cedar Stanistreet

► 11-3 p.m. *on Sundays. Across from the Putney Food Coop.*

► Putney Farmers Market, 17 Carol Brown Way. Information: [putneyfarmersmarket.org](http://putneyfarmersmarket.org).

#### Kids and families

**W. BRATTLEBORO** "Opinions and Opossums" - Ann Braden's new book for middle school children (In-Person/Zoo): In this book, a girl struggles with how much she dares to speak her mind in her confirmation class. Led by Christina Gibbons, we'll read scenes from the book and talk about the important and timely issues it raises.

► 10 a.m. All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: [www.ascvt.org](http://www.ascvt.org) shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.

**BRATTLEBORO** Hot Jam Puppet Slam at NECCA: North Star Puppets and New England Center for Circus Arts team up to present a festival of puppetry, music, theater, crafts, food, performance. First part is a Family-Friendly Festival with

activities for all ages including silk-screening, live music, family puppet show, craft workshop, food. Second part is Hot Jam Puppet Slam - an adult-oriented variety show of ten short acts by renowned puppeteers from New England and beyond.

► 4-7 p.m. *Family-Friendly Festival. 7 p.m. Family Fun Festival (recommended for ages 13 and up). Presented with support from sponsors Latchis Arts and Latchis Hotel.*

► *Family Friendly Festival is by donation (no ticket needed). Family Fun Festival tickets \$10 to \$50 (sliding scale).*

► *New England Center for Circus Arts (Trapezium), 10 Town Crier Dr. Information: Tickets and information: [circusschool.org](http://circusschool.org).*

#### Community building

**GUILFORD Write Action Picnic:** Bring a dish to share and poem or short prose to read at the open reading (4 minute slots). All are welcome! Music by Anders Burrows. Announce your latest project or publication; sign-up to help at the Literary Festival happening in October, hear a preview of authors reading at this year's festival.

► 1 a.m.-4 p.m. *Address: 640 Melendy Hill Rd. in Guilford, VT. Please bring a chair if you can, or a blanket.*

► *Private location in Guilford (Write Action), 640 Melendy Hill Rd. Information: More information/questions: [info@writeaction.org](mailto:info@writeaction.org).*

#### Dance

**GUILFORD Family-friendly Community Dance:** Featuring traditional New England dances (squares, contras, circles, waltzes, polkas) at the new Guilford Community Park Pavilion. Dances taught; no partner needed. Music: Laurie Indenbaum on fiddle, Carol Compton on keyboard, Fred Breunig teaching and calling.

► 2:30-4:30 p.m. *Dance is sponsored by Vermont Interfaith Action, a social justice organization mostly run by volunteers organizing Vermonters on the social issues of the day such as Housing and Racial Justice work as well as immigrant issues, prison reforms, Community-Police Relations.*

► *By donation - suggested \$10 per person and family limit of \$20 (no one will be turned away).*

► *Guilford Community Park Pavilion, 24 Church Dr. (behind Country Store, next to Guilford Community Church). Information: For more info about the dance or VIA, contact Southeast VT Organizer for VIA: Mike Mrowicki at [mike@viavt.org](mailto:mike@viavt.org).*

#### MONDAY

21

#### Well-being

**Spiritual Practices: Zazen (via Zoom):** Zen is a Mahayana Buddhist tradition emphasizing simplicity, present-moment awareness, nonconceptual understanding, nonduality, and zazen ("just sitting") meditation - the tradition's most important practice. Zazen is a meditative practice to give insight into your true nature of being and originates from the teachings of Buddha - who lived in India 2,500 years ago and founded the religion and philosophy of Buddhism.

► 7 p.m.  
► \$9 (or choose your donation).  
► Zoom. Information: [tinyurl.com/5j3temt9](http://tinyurl.com/5j3temt9).

#### TUESDAY

22

#### 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](http://brattleborowalkinclinic.com).*

#### Dance

**BRATTLEBORO Benefit Concert & Barn Dance:** RiverJam Romp is a weekend-long, all-ages, community-rich creative celebration rooted in the local music and dance traditions of Southern VT, the Monadnock Region, and Pioneer Valley, featuring all-local staff. Performers: RiverJam Romp staff Peter Siegel, Amanda Witman, Louisa Engle, and friends including Jay Bailey, Samuel Foucher and Laurel Swift. Help us raise funds for our beloved local music and dance weekend.

► 6 p.m.-7:30: *Outdoor concert - Bring a chair, dinner and enjoy showcase performance of local musicians featuring Romp staff. 7:30-9 p.m. Barn dance - All-comers band plays and Louisa calls. Dancing is beginner friendly, all ages. You are welcome to join in the band during the dance. Parking is limited; carpool if you can.*

#### TUESDAY CONT.

► *By donation (\$20 suggested).*  
► *Fair Winds Farm, 511 Upper Dummerston Road. Information: Donate in-person at the event or online at [riverjamromp.org/donate](http://riverjamromp.org/donate). Questions?: Email [riverjamromp@gmail.org](mailto:riverjamromp@gmail.org).*

#### WEDNESDAY

23

#### Film and video

**BELLOWS FALLS "Charlotte's Web":** Based on the book by E.B. White about Wilbur, a pig, who is desolate when he discovers he's destined to be the farmer's Christmas dinner - until his spider friend helps him. Charlotte, a large, gray spider weaves a message into her web in an effort to save him from slaughter. The movie came out 2006 and is an audience favorite. Young Dakota Fanning is in a starring role and well-known actors perform voices for the animal characters at the farm.

► 7 p.m. *Part of the Wednesday Classics at the Bellows Falls Opera House.*  
► *Tickets are \$6. Books are available at the Village Square Bookshop and will be sold at the event.*  
► *Bellows Falls Opera House, Town Hall, 7 Square. Information: 802-463-4766; [rockfb.org](http://rockfb.org).*

To submit your event: [calendar@commonsnews.org](mailto:calendar@commonsnews.org)

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

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# Oscar-nominated Indian film 'Chhello Show' to be screened at Epsilon Spires

BRATTLEBORO—Epsilon Spires, in collaboration with Vidhi Salla of “Vidhi’s Bollywood Jukebox,” will host a special screening of *Last Film Show* (2021), also known as *Chhello Show* on Friday, August 18, at 7:30 p.m. In this film, a nine-year-old boy, Samay, lives in a remote village in western India and harbors dreams of becoming a filmmaker after watching his first Bollywood film.

*Last Film Show* was India’s official entry to the 95th Academy Awards in the Best International Feature Film category. The movie premiered at the 20th Tribeca Film Festival in 2021 and was the first Gujarati-language film selected for the festival section. It will be screened inside the sanctuary at Epsilon Spires in the original language along with English subtitles.

Salla will present a pre-screening introduction about the background of the film and share snippets of her interview with director Pan Nalin. During the screening, audiences can enjoy

masala chai and samosas and shop for Indian handicrafts curated by Salla. Tickets are priced at \$12 and can be purchased on [epsilon-spires.org](http://epsilon-spires.org).

“The production design as well as cinematography of *Last Film Show* are exceptional, and it’s a must-watch on the big screen,” Salla said in a news release. “I can only imagine how magical it will look on the screen inside the sanctuary at Epsilon Spires. Filmmaker Nalin mentioned in my interview that for most of his career, he kept his backstory hidden from the media, but a decade ago, when he visited his projectionist friend from his childhood, Nalin was heartbroken at his state.

“With the introduction of digital screening, projectionists all over India who did not have knowledge of English or computers were forced out of work. On his bus ride back home, Nalin decided to write the story that became this film. *Last Film Show* is sweet, optimistic, and resonates with cinephiles all over the world.

The film has received an overwhelming response in different parts of the USA, Europe, and Japan. I can’t wait for our local audiences to watch it.”

Salla is a cultural arts curator, radio show host and journalist from Mumbai, India, now based in Guilford, Vermont. Through her internationally streaming radio show and movie events, Vidhi has cultivated an audience for Indian music and films around the world.

“Vidhi’s Bollywood Jukebox” is a theme-based, live radio show broadcast every Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m. on Brattleboro’s community radio station WVEW-LP and is available for streaming worldwide on [wvew.org](http://wvew.org). She also writes a monthly column on Indian cinema exclusively for the *Brattleboro Reformer*, *Bennington Banner*, and *Manchester Journal*.

Seating for the movie screening is on first-come, first-served basis. For more information and tickets, visit [epsilon-spires.org](http://epsilon-spires.org) or [vidhiism.com](http://vidhiism.com).



Pan Nalin

COURTESY PHOTO

# Food as Art at BMAC features dinner by award-winning area chef



Chef Erin Bevan

COURTESY PHOTO

BRATTLEBORO—Award-winning chef Erin Bevan, formerly of the Four Columns Inn and The Hermitage Inn, is coming to Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) on Saturday, Aug. 26, at 6 p.m., offering a rare opportunity for guests to dine amid works of art currently on view in the museum’s galleries.

Diners will enjoy a four-course meal among the upcycled plastic sculptures in “Aurora Robson: Human Nature Walk” and a table arrangement inspired by the still-life paintings in “Alec Egan: Drawing Room.”

Trained as a sculptor before shifting to the culinary arts, Bevan is the mastermind behind both the event’s original dishes and the table décor.

After studying at the Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Bevan broke into her first kitchen under James Beard Award-winning chef Michael Schlow at Via Matta, where she developed a love of regional Italian food. For 17 years, she continued studying in Boston

under other great chefs of Italian kitchens, including Jody Adams at Rialto, Jamie Bissonette at Coppa, and Charles Draghi at Erbaluce.

In 2016, Bevan relocated to Vermont and took the lead at Newfane’s Four Columns Inn. After the pandemic, she reopened The Hermitage Inn in West Dover, restoring its reputation as a culinary destination.

Today, Bevan works as a private chef, bringing her years of expertise into people’s homes and other venues, where she provides distinctly creative, bespoke menus that draw upon her relationships with local producers.

Having grown up on a small family farm in western Massachusetts, Bevan has a deep appreciation for sustainable production and fresh flavors. Her menus draw on seasonal ingredients sourced from local producers.

The dinner at BMAC includes products from local farms, including Parish Hill Creamery, Rebo Farm, and

Slipstream Farm, as well as the local bakery Against the Grain Gourmet. The dishes are all gluten-free, but some contain nuts and dairy. There is a vegetarian option. Wine pairings are curated by Windham Wines.

Space for the dinner is limited. To purchase tickets (\$90; \$75 for BMAC members), call 802-257-0124, ext. 101, or visit [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org).

There are so many things to be tortured about. So many torturous things in this life. Don't let someone who doesn't love you be one of them.

—CHARLIE TROTTER

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### PETER HAVENS







Hot Jam Festival creators Phoenix Leigh and Aaron Lathrop.

## Puppet slam

puppeteer for nearly 20 years, is a writer, creator, director, and producer who's had their hand in a host of puppet slams, variety shows, festivals, and workshops.

Lathrop, an actor by training, began in puppetry in 2008 and has been working with, and married to, Leigh since then. Together they've toured the United States performing in family shows and late-night puppet slams.

They've puppeteered for The Jim Henson Company, Tears of Joy Theatre, Enchantment Theatre Company, and Dragon Con, and they co-produced Puppet-Delphia Fringe Slam in the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. Resident puppeteers for the Philadelphia Folk Festival since 2016, they're the balloon handlers in New York's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Lathrop's act — "This Too, Too Solid Flesh," directed by Sarah Borne and developed as part of the O'Neill Center National Puppetry Conference — will be in the lineup while Leigh invites attendees to "experience what's possible when puppetry is presented with its full scope,"

according to a media release. "Prepare to be dazzled, to laugh, to cry, to ask: How did they do that?" Leigh and Lathrop promise.

Also on the program, the first of its kind at NECCA, the 7 p.m. show in the school's Trapezium features acts that are, Leigh explains, "fun [and] participatory — small and intimate to meaningful to fast and silly to experimental."

Among them will be Theatre Adventure of Brattleboro; marionettes by Cripps Creations of Northfield, Massachusetts; toy theater by Eva Cranky Pantz Productions of Fort Greene, New York; Break-Fast Puppets from Storrs, Connecticut; toy theater with Massachusetts' Christine Dempsey; Playdoh Puppet Productions from New Orleans; projections, shadow puppetry, and movement by Theatre Immediate of western Connecticut; body and rod puppets by OompaPossum Puppets of Western Connecticut; marionettes by Frechetist Marionettist of Burlington; and clowning/mixed styles puppetry with Joel Baker of Brattleboro.

FROM SECTION FRONT

"Puppetry is alive and vital today," Leigh adds. "It's getting harder to make a living in today's world of performing arts, but it's accessible to pick up puppets and create a show."

Furthermore, "there are so many styles of puppetry, from cardboard to intricate marionettes, and they're all effective in their own way," they add.

"Puppetry is one of humanity's oldest art forms," Leigh continues. "It will continue to survive no matter what. Puppetry speaks truth to power, it is full of surprises, it is silly and sublime. There is a lot to be said for gathering together in one place to laugh, cry, think, and be entertained."

"New England Center for Circus Arts is proud to host the first Hot Jam Puppet Slam," says NECCA's producing director, Serenity Smith Forchion, the school's co-founder.

"This production supports NECCA's goal to be a vital resource for the local community and beyond," she continues. "We will continue to expand our ability to offer the community outstanding professional

## Stage 33 Live presents Stone & Snow with Luminous Crush on Aug. 25

BELLOWS FALLS—Named "Best Folk/Soul Artist" at the 2022 Richmond International Film & Music Festival, Stone & Snow is an Americana pairing of songwriters and multi-instrumentalists Karen Bridges and Clint Thomson. "Their collaboration is filled with close harmonies and thoughtful lyrics, with a name that nods to mountain landscapes of the West," notes the artists' website.

Their latest album, *Delicate and Wild*, released this year, was recorded with producer David Mayfield.

Stone & Snow are on tour and, through a late-breaking unexpected twist of fate, the opportunity developed to bring them to Stage 33 Live on Friday, Aug. 25, at 7 p.m., with a very special low \$10 ticket.

Luminous Crush, performing as an acoustic duo, will open.

Bridges and Thomson are passionate about elevating women in music. Through hosting performances for women artists, their work collecting data on the gender balance in their local scene, and Bridges's involvement in the "Girls Rock!" franchise, Stone &

Snow are invested in seeing more women grow and thrive in the music industry. They currently reside in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Regional favorites Laura Molinelli and Ben Campbell of Luminous Crush will open in their acoustic duo configuration — sometimes dubbed AcoustiCrush — with their fusion of bluegrass, outlaw country, dream pop, and indie rock.

Molinelli came up as a singer-songwriter during the 1990s folk scene in New York City alongside such artists as Dar Williams and Lucy Kaplansky. Campbell has written and produced records under the moniker "Saint Albums" on the indie label Lonely Highway and has collaborated with musical luminaries including Tony-winning artist Anais Mitchell (*Hadestown*), Caleb Elder (Route 7 Ramblers) and Jake Geppert (Bondville Boys).

Tickets for this show are available either in advance through [stage33live.com](http://stage33live.com) or at the door. Advance tickets guarantee entry if the intimate 40-person capacity is reached. The event will be recorded and filmed.

performances, attract visiting guest artists and instructors from around the world, provide a high level of training for students who aspire to be professionals, and facilitate greater access and programming to area schools and youth organizations."

*The Aug. 20 Hot Jam Puppet Slam Festival will take place at NECCA, 10 Town Crier Dr., Brattleboro, with support from sponsors Latchis Arts and Latchis Hotel. The free family festival preceding the adult-themed slam requires no tickets but donations are appreciated. For information, visit [bit.ly/727-necca](http://bit.ly/727-necca).*

FROM SECTION FRONT

## 'Tiny Beautiful Things'

"There are more difficulties in our emotional lives: more angst, anger, disaffection, and polarization in our society than three years ago. The letter-writers are really hurting. Their circumstances are varied, some serious and traumatic. Sugar responds to them in a caring, loving, compassionate, forthright, empowering way to help people face their challenges.

"This play makes us more human. It broadens and softens our view of humanity — helps us empathize. We're more intolerant than we were. We have less capacity to see others' problems. We need this play.

"It's important to remember: these letters are real. Sugar's answers are real. She divulges her vulnerability. She uses her own tumultuous past to offer others hope and empowerment, to help them think differently about their lives and to feel better about themselves. The message under

all the letters is 'I want love, and I'm afraid I'm never going to get it.' The letter writers don't think they're worthy, and Sugar helps them to see that they are."

Tepfer said he took "a no-frills approach to the play. Each individual character has to be fully developed—I want that depth. I focus on the relationships at hand. It's the words in the play that count. What is the moment trying to say? How can I help these thoughts, emotions, and content be received by the audience?"

"I haven't directed too many comedies. Plus, this is a no-frills theater space. This play has very little set. I have to be very conscious of how actors move in relation to the audience."

According to Tepfer, you can tell the success of a production "by how quiet the audience is. In live theater, if you've really captured their attention, during the show there is no shuffling of feet, no coughing, no noises.

"You can't use applause as a measure of success. Some shows call for thunderous applause. Others affect the audience so strongly that they file out quietly because they're so moved they can't talk about it. Sometimes a character delivers a line, and you'll hear an 'ooh' or an 'oof' from the audience. That tells you you really got to them."

*The Actors Theatre Playhouse is located on the corner of Brook and Main streets in West Chesterfield. All tickets are \$17 and reservations may be made at [atplayhouse.org](http://atplayhouse.org) or email [atptixx@gmail.com](mailto:atptixx@gmail.com).*

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—CHERYL STRAYED

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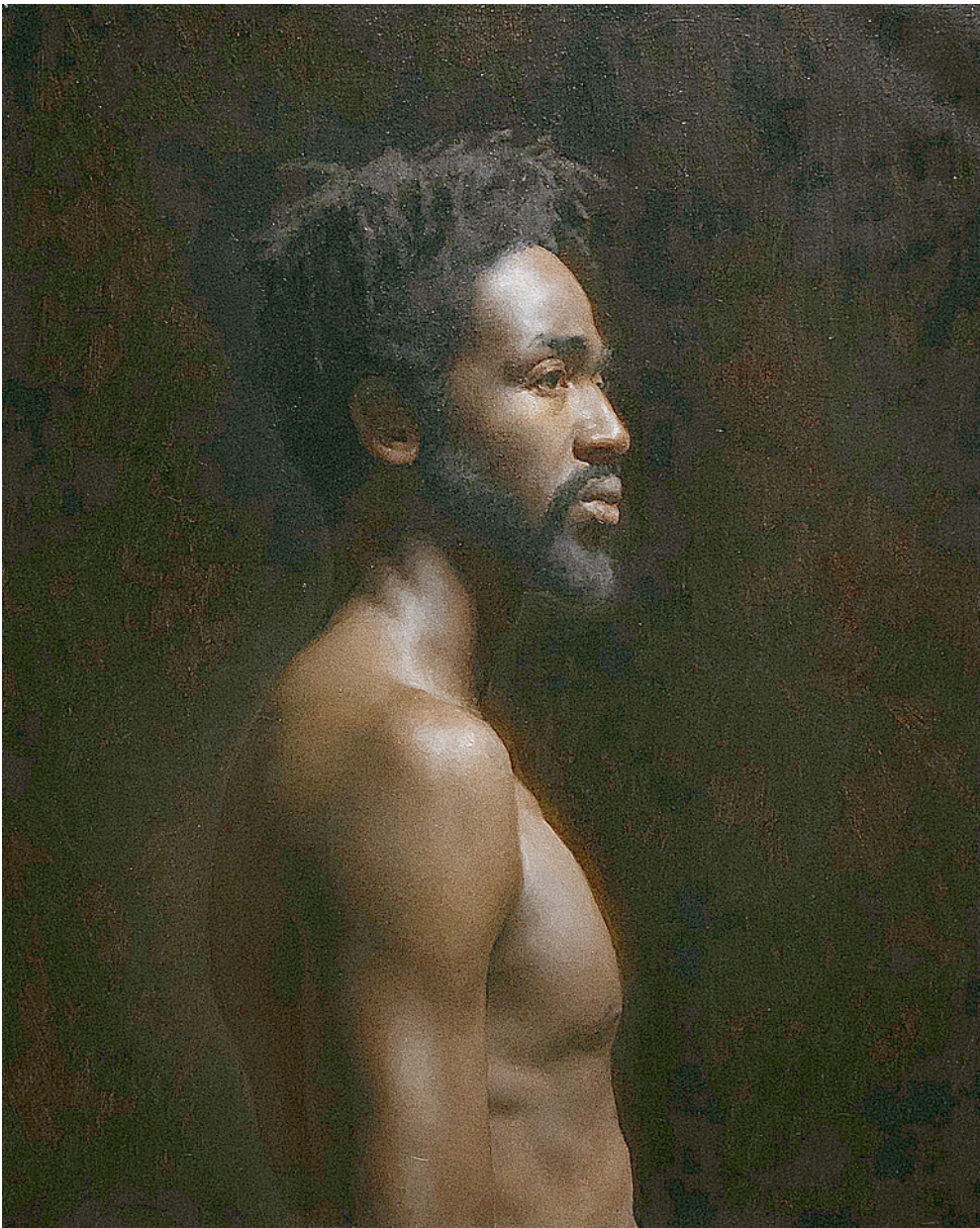
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“Clayton” by Tyler Berry.

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“Roses” by Lorenzo Torres Narciso.

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## Atelier show

In 2014, GCA became organized under nonprofit status to provide a “rigorous four-year program” of “authentic classical art education,” which the website describes as in the “unbroken 600-year-old tradition of artists contributing works of art untouched by modernism, inspired by the direct observation of nature.”

Concannon, who has followed GCA artists for years, describes these artists learning techniques of the masters before they go “spinning off like mercury balls doing amazing contemporary works.”

And that is the central theme of the show, which, according to a news release, “tells a story of the artists’ evolution from classical training to their emergence on the contemporary art scene.”

The movement, it continues, “pushes boundaries by focusing on works that are both technically impressive and emotionally resonant for a contemporary audience.”

Concannon banded about the idea for this Vermont show not long ago with several GCA artists.

The exhibit, says GCA organizer and contributor Michael

Fetherston, is a standout for the breadth and depth of works on display.

With all artwork rendered in real time from life — not from photographs — the show features a variety of media in works by Fetherston and other GCA alumni: Liz Beard, Tyler Berry, Brendan Johnston, Janice Barnes, Chelsea Bard, Patrick Byrnes, Devin Cecil-Wishing, Tori Cole, Kate Donovan, Ananda Fetherston, Jacob Gabriel, Scott Garder, Elena Gladkova, Lukas Griffiths, Eric Lei, Noorjahan Mahajabin Asha, Rodrigo Mateo, Kevin Müller Cisneros, Lorenzo Torres Narciso, Heather Personett, Giovanni Priante, and Lara Saunders.

In a sampling previewed, the works — beyond demonstration of technical skill — resonate in subtleties, dynamic contrasts, fine brush strokes, and vivid color, as well as in their use of light, boldness of subject, and sympathy with nature.

In their manifesting an affinity for the human form, for landscapes and still life, some touch on myth, while others are quite dramatic. Some are ethereal, while others are agitating. Some are serene.

Concannon, a seasoned art

collector, contributes his connections to the art world to the Willow Retreat mix while Shimpi, a lifelong yoga practitioner, brings his expertise in that area as well as cooking savvy honed from his early days helping his mother in the family’s kitchen in Maharashtra, a western India state where he still has relatives.

Reflecting the many styles of Indian food, Shimpi’s innovative and diverse cuisine will be offered one Saturday each month at an onsite pop-up take-out enterprise.

Contributing Atelier artists will “enjoy Ravi’s food each evening,” Concannon says, while they remain in residence at Willow Retreat from Aug. 28 through Sept. 1, venturing out in pairs each day starting Aug. 28 for plein-air landscape painting of sites offered by various area landowners with “landscape-worthy views.”

JUST A LITTLE over a year into being new stewards of the former Inn at South Newfane, which has seen many changes of hands over the years, Shimpi and Concannon note the response to Willow Retreat and its offerings has exceeded expectations as they look back on nine full retreats in their first year.

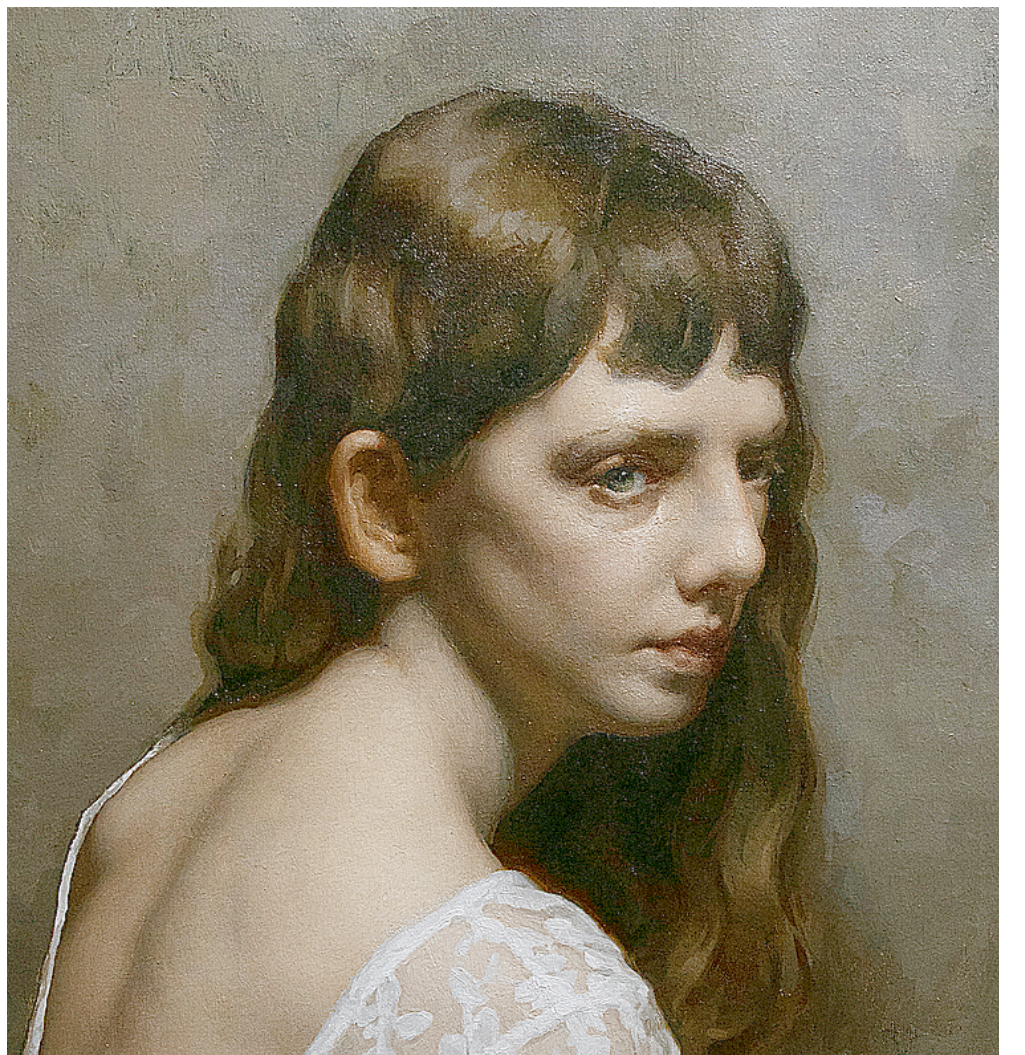
“We came to Vermont to spend more time doing yoga and being outdoors,” Concannon says. “We didn’t come up with the intent of running an inn.”

After looking at a number of properties, large and small, the former inn “won out,” he says.

“We came up with the idea we could run a retreat center dedicated to helping people reconnect to the passions and interests that make them feel alive,” Concannon says.

Upcoming retreats and programs include Fitness for Body and Mind; Fall Into Balance: a Yoga and Wellness Retreat; Portrait Drawing and Painting Essentials; and Remembering Our Natural State of Being.

FROM SECTION FRONT



“Calliope” by Tyler Berry.

COURTESY PHOTO

While these are designed primarily as residential retreats, Willow offers rates and a limited number of slots in each for participants who want to come just for the program.

Committed to offering the best they can in yoga, art, food, and accommodations,

Concannon explains, they’ve made every effort to use “hand-made, local, eco-compostable products and foods at Willow.”

“We’re interested in multiplying connections among creative people here,” he says.

“Atelier: Exhibit of

*Contemporary Classical Realism*” takes place at Willow, 369 Dover Rd. Admission is free, and light refreshments will be served. For a catalogue, biographies of the artists, and information about and directions to Willow, visit [willowvt.com](http://willowvt.com).

## Brattleboro Camerata seeks new members

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Camerata is currently seeking new members of every voice part for its upcoming third season. It especially invites BIPOC singers and singers of all gender identities to join.

The Camerata is a small select choir specializing in both Renaissance-era and Renaissance-inspired music, and this fall, it will be preparing a program titled “Treasure Hidden Within” to be presented on Sunday, Dec. 10.

The concert will include four pieces that use pre-existing tunes hidden carefully within their overall musical textures: Palestrina’s “Missa

L’homme armé a 4,” Verdi’s “Ave Maria” from *Quattro Pezzi Sacri*, Durufle’s “Quatre Motets sur des thèmes grégoriens,” and Josquin’s “Missa La sol fa re mi.”

Auditions for the fall concert begin mid-August, and will consist of exercises for range, tonal memory, intonation, and sight-singing. In addition, when interested singers sign up for an audition, they will receive a piece to prepare in advance.

To schedule an audition with Music Director Jonathan Harvey, or to ask any questions, contact the BMC at [info@bmcvt.org](mailto:info@bmcvt.org).

Rehearsals are Mondays,

6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the BMC Auditorium starting Sept. 18. It is anticipated that the 2023–24 season will be mask-optional for all singers.

In Spring 2024, the Brattleboro Camerata will prepare a program titled “Make It a Place of Springs,” which will consist of pieces focused on nature and the natural world, including Renaissance works by Clement Janequin, Maddalena Casulana, Thomas Tallis, Vicente Lusitano, Thomas Morley, and others, as well as more recent pieces by Charles Stanford, Benjamin Britten, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw.

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COLUMN

# Labor leaders and workers have had enough

*Union membership is growing again after a slump, thanks in part to the pandemic and a rapidly changing labor market*

WHEN I THINK about labor movements and unions, two favorite stories come to mind, and both are true.

The first one is about a group of girls and young women known as the Lowell Factory Girls. They worked in the mills and factories of Lowell, Massachusetts in the 19th century.

Little more than children who labored for long days doing dangerous and exhausting work, they revolted in 1836 when their dismal wages were cut while their factory-owner-mandated living expenses went up.

One day, an 11-year-old worker named Harriet Hanson decided enough was enough. She walked out “with childish bravado,” as she wrote in her 1898 memoir, declaring that she would go alone if she had to.

That wasn’t necessary. A long line of girls followed her and thus began a strike that led to an organized labor movement launched by women, and the establishment of an early U.S. union.

THE SECOND STORY is less well known. It involves a labor leader and activist, Esther Peterson, who was born in 1906 into a conservative family in Utah. Esther, with whom I had a special friendship, eventually came to New York, where she taught wealthy girls by day and the daughters of their household maids at night.

Working at home, the



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

young girls sewed pockets onto Hoover aprons if they were old enough, alongside their mothers. The pockets were squares until management decided heart-shaped pockets were nicer. The work was piecework, and hearts took longer than squares.

Esther was outraged that they weren’t paid more.

“Why don’t you do something about it?” her husband asked. “Organize a strike!”

Esther, who grew up thinking unions led to danger and violence, resisted. But she decided to advocate for the children, so she organized the Heartbreakers Strike, inviting her wealthy day students’ mothers to go on picket lines since the police would never brutalize them as they would the poor mothers.

It worked, and Esther was on her way to becoming a beloved labor leader.

I THINK OF the Factory Girls and Esther now, when so many large-scale strikes loom large — and for good reason.

It’s no coincidence that workers at UPS and in Teamsters unions in Amazon warehouses across the country and at Starbucks — as

■ SEE UNIONS, C4

VIEWPOINT



# ‘Safety’? For whom? ‘Calm’? About what?

An exercise posed to participants at the Brattleboro Community Safety Fair on Aug. 8.

SOMETHING has gone terribly wrong.

In a world of increasing uncertainty, climate chaos, and political polarization, we’re shutting out the voices of the most vulnerable citizens of Brattleboro. Instead of listening to them, we are amplifying the voices of those who already enjoy the most resources, power, and privilege.

I attended the Brattleboro Community Safety Fair on Aug. 8 in a spirit of curiosity as well as anxiety. The event, co-sponsored by the town of Brattleboro, the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance, shared resources and collected opinions.

The goal, if I understood it correctly, was to inform a longer-term effort — a conversation about how to increase prosperity and quality of life for all of us by encouraging dialogue and recognizing that the

**PAULA MELTON** describes herself as “a writer, mother, wife, and opinionated person who lives in Brattleboro, Vermont” and “a cis white woman trying to make things better, especially when it comes to climate change and environmental justice.”

interests of businesses and the interests of each human being can align to advance the common good.

I especially appreciated opportunities at this event to share what I love about Brattleboro, what worries me, and what wishes I have.

One such opportunity that I found pretty disturbing, though, was a survey developed by the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), which the town is repurposing to inform strategies for responding to various types of crime, as well as diverse perceptions of “safety.”

IT APPEARS THAT SPUR developed this survey as part of a three-part toolkit supporting a

‘I fear that skewed survey responses may be used to serve the needs and desires of the most privileged in our town at a time when the most vulnerable need compassion and support from all of us’

multidimensional community engagement effort in downtown San Francisco.

As a standalone tool, applied to Brattleboro and far removed from its very specific original context, this survey comes off as a push poll. It appears that the survey is meant to answer the question, “Which nuisance behaviors of unhoused people do we all hate the most?”

The biggest flaw concerns the rating scale that underpins the survey.

This rating scale conflates “calm” and “safety” — as though the only thing people (which people ... ?) think about while they are downtown is their own autonomy and security.

We live in a community, and

compassion compels us to not feel calm when witnessing the pain and vulnerability of other people. Flying in the face of that reality, this survey asks exclusively about the respondent’s feelings regarding their own personal safety when confronted with another person’s suffering.

For example, when other people are “lying on a bench or on the ground,” the survey respondent is forced to choose a number on a scale from 1 (“doesn’t bother me; I might even welcome it”) to 5 (“acutely disturbs my sense of safety and calm”).

When I see a person lying on a bench or on the ground along the Whetstone Pathway as I walk into the Brattleboro Food Co-op to buy organically grown fruits and vegetables to feed my cherished loved ones, I am not calm. I fear for that person’s safety.

But this survey does not offer

■ SEE SAFETY? CALM?, C4

LETTERS FROM READERS

## The bigger picture: Racism is the source of poverty, instability and, often, homelessness

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

Ge. Who would have thought?

A better headline for Joyce Marcel’s thorough and revealing story on homelessness might have pointed to the actual conclusion of the studies of researchers Colburn and Aldern: Homelessness is one of the consequences of institutional racism. “Systemic discrimination across multiple systems, education, housing, criminal justice, etc. produce these disproportionate outcomes [...]” as Colburn said in the state treasurer’s forum.

In all aspects of our society, people of color fare worse than whites. Discrimination in hiring and promotions, poorer quality public schools, lower rates of acceptance to colleges, and generally the failure to be treated justly almost everywhere — all this channels a life toward

poverty, instability and, often, homelessness.

Who owns all the unaffordable housing? As a white male, it has been a lifelong process learning to even recognize the institutional racism that I swim in. It’s everywhere around me but I don’t feel it, and thus I don’t see it since I am white.

The irony of the headline is that the editor, too, is white and failed to grasp the key point of the forum being reported.

Unrelated to this *Commons* story but related to the subject, I shall mention the recent racist assertion, by an individual, that our police chief was hired only because of her skin color and not because of the very strong credentials and skills that more than qualified her for the job.

The town did respond with an official, almost pro forma, statement condemning such accusations and reaffirming support for the chief but, as it was signed only by the Selectboard chair and the town manager, it seemed like a very tepid reaction.

The Selectboard chair and town manager sign off on everything. It’s their duty. In this matter, it would have been a lot more reassuring if the statement were signed by every

Selectboard member and perhaps every department head as well.

If one would like a clearer example of institutional racism at work, think back to the testimony of Curtiss Reed Jr. at a Selectboard candidate forum several years ago, pointing out that of our 139 town employees not one was a person of color.

Think back on the town’s history. How many people of color have ever been on the town payroll? How many non-white faces appear at Representative Town Meeting? How many non-white faces are employed in our schools?

Look at the history. The small handful of students at Brattleboro Union High School who, not so many years back, formed a vicious, racist “club.” Though few in number, I don’t think they felt alone.

What can explain a state population that is 98% white? A state that fostered a highly active segment of the eugenics movement.

What do we mean by “Vermont Strong”? Is it only that we have become exceptionally adept at cleaning up flood damage?

Spoon Agave  
Brattleboro

## A tragedy indeed, on both sides of the aisle

RE: “Lies and bamboozling distractions” [Viewpoint, Aug. 9]:

This piece weaves an elaborate tale of Shakespeare’s *Othello* and draws a comparison to Trump and his insistence he won in 2020.

Regardless of how one feels about Trump, let’s recall there are others who refused to accept election results. Remember Al Gore vs. George W. Bush, endless court tie-ups, and people saying Bush was not their president?

Stacey Abrams never conceded the 2018 Georgia governor’s race and filed multiple lawsuits.

Hillary Clinton (and many of her supporters) refused to believe she lost to Donald Trump, claiming Russian interference, and to this day maintain she should have been president.

A tragedy indeed, one that spans both political parties.

Sandy Golden  
Hinsdale, N.H.

## Condolences to Barbour family

On behalf of the board of directors at the Brattleboro Ski Hill, we would like to acknowledge the death of Timothy Barbour of Brattleboro and express our tremendous condolences to his family.

This untimely death has shaken our community deeply. Our thoughts are with the family as they mourn the loss of someone they love.

With heavy hearts,

BRATTLEBORO SKI HILL BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Brattleboro

## We need transparency to restore trust in the electoral system

RE: “Lies and bamboozling distractions” [Viewpoint, Aug. 9]:

Robert Fritz delivered the basic democratic line that the 2020 elections was the freest and fairest election to date, and without a doubt Joe Biden was fairly elected.

As someone with an interest in the discipline of philosophy, and who has respect for the principles of epistemology (the study of how we know), I find this claim quite amusing.

It has always been my position and remains so to this day that neither the Trump cult, who insist that the election was

stolen from him, nor the Biden blue checkmarks, who claim the election was the freest and fairest ever, have a legitimate reason to know of the truth of their claims. I have no way to know if Biden was legitimately elected and find it hard to believe anyone could know.

There are many reasons to be skeptical of the 2020 election. First, much of the counting was done on programmable voting machines to which the source code is not accessible by the public.

The justification for this is that the source code is proprietary, which ignores the axiomatic fact that without public access to the source code, there is no way to know the votes were counted fairly.

■ SEE LETTERS, C4



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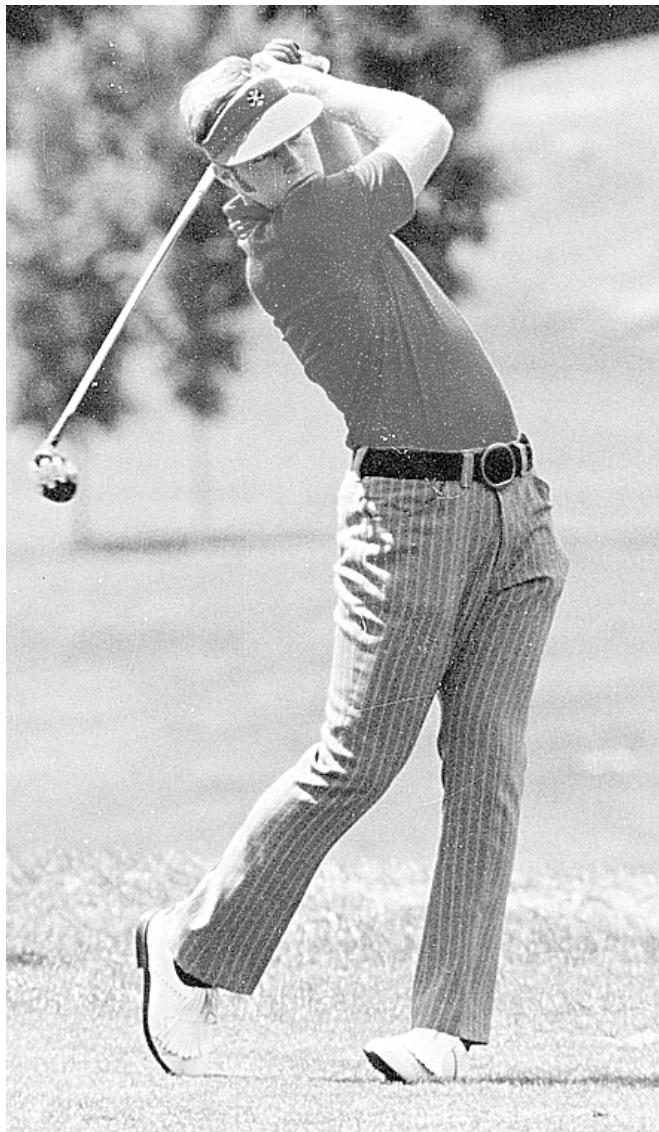
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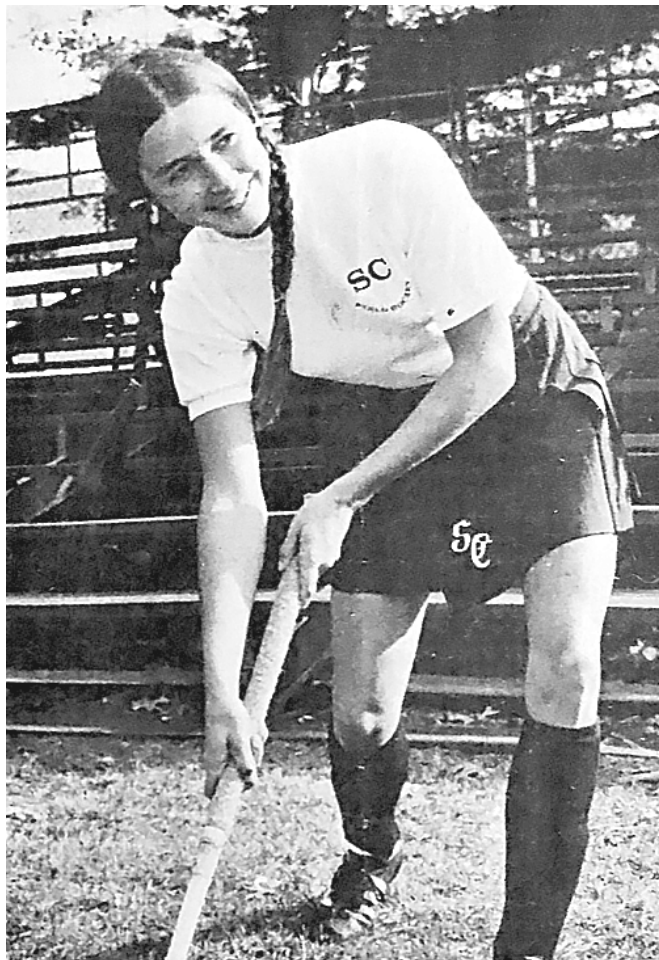
COLUMN | Sports Roundup

# BHS/BUHS Athletic Hall of Fame announces its Class of 2023 inductees

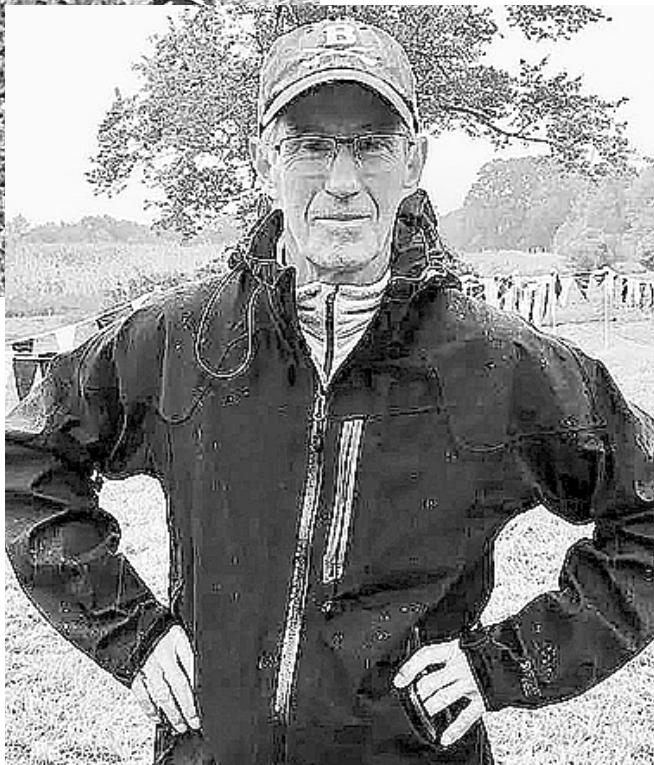


Hugh Barber

COURTESY PHOTO



Donna Dearborn



John Dimick

The Brattleboro High School/Brattleboro Union High School Athletic Hall of Fame recently announced its Class of 2023 inductees.

The induction banquet will be held on Oct. 28 for new members Beth Juscen (1978), Denny Robinson (1966), Diedrich Stolte (Coach), Don Robinson (1966), Donna Dearborn (1971), Hugh Barber (1968), Jeff Dixon (1999), John Dimick (Coach), Kyle Henry (2003), Pam Packard (1974), Pete Beebe (1956), Phil Natowich (1966), and Scott Nadeau (1983). Here, in alphabetical order, are capsule biographies of the inductees:

• **Hugh Barber** was a standout in golf and ski jumping. As a BUHS athlete, he was the Vermont Ski Jumping State Champion in 1967 and 1968. At Middlebury College, he won winter jumping events at four of the college's winter carnivals and placed in the top five of the NCAA events. In 1971, Barber was an NCAA Ski Jumping All-American and was the only American named. In 1972 he was named to the Eastern Ski Association Ski Team and competed in the 1972 Olympic Tryouts. Most famously, Barber won the 1972, 1973, and 1974 competitions at the Harris Hill Ski Jump, becoming one of few who retired the Winged Ski Trophy after three victories. As a golfer, Barber has been the Brattleboro Country Club Junior and Senior Champion 10 times and the Club Champion 13 times.

• **Victor Louis "Pete" Beebe** was among Brattleboro's greatest athletes of his era. He was a three-year starter in football, basketball, and baseball and was awarded the Stolte Cup and the Sherman Award at his graduation in 1956. As an end and halfback in football, he was a first-team All-State selection in 1952 as a freshman. He was second in scoring on the undefeated 1953 team, and was a second team All-State selection in 1953 and 1954. He was captain of the 1954 team, which he led in scoring, and was selected to play in the 1956 Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl. On the basketball court, Beebe was Brattleboro's first 1,000-point scorer and twice led the Southern Vermont League (SVL) in scoring. A great catcher and strong hitter on the baseball diamond, in 1959, he signed with the Boston Red Sox and played one season for their New York-Penn League affiliate.

• **Donna Dearborn** lettered in five different sports at BUHS. Dearborn was co-captain and



**RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT**, deputy editor of this newspaper, has written this column since 2010 and has covered sports in Windham County since the 1980s. Readers can send him sports information at [news@commonsnews.org](mailto:news@commonsnews.org).



COURTESY PHOTO

"Pete" Beebe

leading scorer in her junior and senior years on the varsity field hockey teams in 1970 and 1971. She was two-year co-captain on the tennis team and was undefeated at No. 1 singles and doubles as a junior and senior. She also played two years of varsity basketball and was co-captain and leading scorer in her junior year. She was on the ski team as a freshman and senior and vaulted on the gymnastics team for one year. She won the Sherman Award in 1971.

Her athletic success continued at Springfield College, where she was a four-year varsity field hockey player and two-year co-captain. Her teams went undefeated in her junior and senior years, and she was twice named to the Northeast Field Hockey Association All-Star Team in the National Tournament and was captain of the All-Star Team. She won the Maroon Award and Scholar Athlete Award for her field hockey performance and also played on their tennis team for one year.

Her post-graduate achievements included winning multiple Brattleboro Outing Club

singles and doubles championships. A committed runner, she participated in multiple marathons, half-marathons and other long-distance races and track meets. She was the women's winner in 54 races, and her age-group winner in 98 races. She ran the Boston Marathon twice and took first place in the 1984 National Masters' Indoor Track Championships. She also competed in cross-country ski races, and completed the Catamount Trail, skiing the length of Vermont in 2013.

Her outdoor adventures, no doubt inspired by her father Frank, also include extensive hiking accomplishments, including the Long Trail and most of New England's high peaks. She has also tackled trails, treks and peaks in New Zealand, Australia, Nepal, Peru, Patagonia, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Her commitment to athletics and fitness extends to her professional life, which includes graduate degrees in exercise physiology, and stints as a tennis professional, tennis coach at BUHS, field hockey coach, fitness trainer, ski instructor, and Outward Bound instructor.

• **John Dimick** revived the sport of cross-country running at BUHS and served as boys' and girls' head coach from 1986 to 2018. His boys' teams were Division I state champions in 1992 and 1997, were runners-up in 1993 and 1998, and qualified for the New England championships 10 times between 1990 and 2008. His girls' teams were Division I runners-up in 1992 and qualified for the New England championships. Both won multiple SVL/Marble Valley League girls' and boys' championships during his tenure.

Some of the standouts that Dimick's program produced Jason Dunklee, Ben Copans, Sarah Lange, Jordan Peoples, Amy Springer, Jon Kulas and Isaac Freitas-Eagan. Dimick's expertise has come through personal experience as a distance runner. He won the 1979 USATF National Marathon Championship at the Mardi Gras Marathon in 1979 in 2:11:53. He ran in the U.S.

Olympic Marathon Trials in 1976, 1980 and qualified in 1983. He was inducted into the University of Vermont Athletic Hall of Fame in 1984 for cross country, track and field, and Nordic skiing.

• **Jeff Dixon** was a three-sport standout, pitching BUHS to Division I state baseball championships in 1997 and 1999. He was also a three-year starter on basketball teams, which went to three straight Vermont Division I Final Fours. He was selected to participate in the Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl football game but opted not to play so he could play for the Post 5 American Legion baseball team, leading them to the state championship in 1999 and on to the Regional Tournament, where he pitched Brattleboro to a first-round win over Manchester, New Hampshire.

Dixon continued his success with the UVM baseball team, where he was a second team All-New England selection in 2003, a season in which he led the league with a 9-0 record and a 1.93 ERA. He helped UVM to its first-ever America East regular season title. He garnered several America East awards, and finished his college career with an 18-8 record. He played two seasons with the Keene Swamp Bats and one with the Thread City Tides of the New England Collegiate Baseball League. He was signed by the Montreal Expos as an undrafted free agent in 2003 and was invited to spring training in 2004.

• **Kyle Henry** was a dominant player in two sports. He helped lead Brattleboro's basketball team to the Division I finals in 2002 and was a leader on baseball teams that won the state championship in 2001 and were semi-finalists in 2002 and 2003. A 1,000-point scorer for the basketball team, Henry was team captain and MVP in 2003 and won scores of other basketball honors. On the baseball diamond, he was a force with his bat and on the mound. He was selected to the Twin-State Baseball game in 2003 and was named Gatorade Baseball Player of the Year in 2003. He signed to attend University of Connecticut on a baseball scholarship and transferred to UVM in 2006 where he had a solid career as a pitcher and first baseman. He played for the Keene Swamp Bats in 2007.

• **Beth Juscen** was a pioneer in women's sports in the 1970s



COURTESY PHOTO

Jeff Dixon

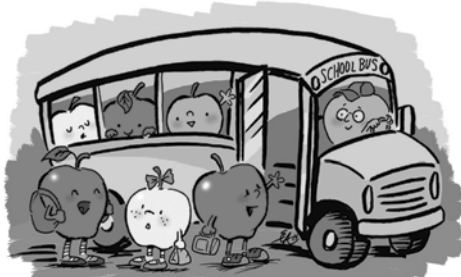


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Pam Packard

COURTESY PHOTO

after the passage of Title IX. She lettered in four sports at Brattleboro Union High School and, in 1978, became the first female athlete to win the Stolte Cup. A four-year letter winner in basketball, she won the Rookie of the Year award as a freshman guard, was the leading scorer as a junior, and co-captain as a senior, when she won the Coach's Award. In field hockey, she was co-captain as a senior, selflessly switching positions to become the team's goalie. She earned a varsity letter on softball as a freshman, but switched to track and field in her sophomore year, where she found her greatest success.

As a sophomore, she set school records in the 100, javelin, and long jump. As a junior, she won the 100 and 220 at the Southern Districts and was

second in the 100, third in the 220, and ran a leg on the school record 4x100 relay team at the state meet. In her senior year, she was first at the Southern District in the 100 (a school record 11.1 seconds) and in the 200. At the state meet, she was second in the 100 and third in the 200, setting school records in both. She took fourth in the 100 at the New England meet.

She carried on her athletic success at the University of Vermont, where she played two seasons of varsity basketball. Since then, she has played women's slow-pitch and fast-pitch softball, coached the girls soccer and track & field teams at Vermont Academy, varsity girls' basketball and softball at Colchester High School and middle school girls' basketball in Williston.

• **Scott Nadeau** was regarded as an elite player in both football and baseball. He played right guard on the offensive line and linebacker on defense. During his career, 70% of the Colonels' plays were run to Nadeau's side. On defense, he led the team in tackles his junior year when the Colonels went to the state championship game and repeated that feat during his senior season. He was selected to play for Vermont in the 1983 Shrine game.

In baseball, he was the No. 1 pitcher his senior year and, at the plate, Nadeau led the team in average, home runs, and runs batted in. He received the Stolte Cup and the Wally Carlson Award for athletic achievement prior to graduation in 1983. Also that year, he led Post 5 to its first state Legion baseball title since 1965. Nadeau took his natural leadership ability to the Marine Corps, serving from 1985-1991. He then spent 36 years in public service as subject matter expert in the development, creation and production of Digital Nautical Charts, which are used for safe navigation of the U.S. Navy.

• **Phil Natowich** was the quarterback for the undefeated 1965 state football champions that finished the season averaging 55 points a game, the highest in the entire country, while giving up only 32 points in eight games. He was a unanimous All-State selection in his only season as quarterback at BUHS. He completed over 60% of his passes, threw for 15 touchdowns, and scored 72 points. His statistics are even more impressive when one realizes that he played only about half of every game due to the team's scoring efficiency.

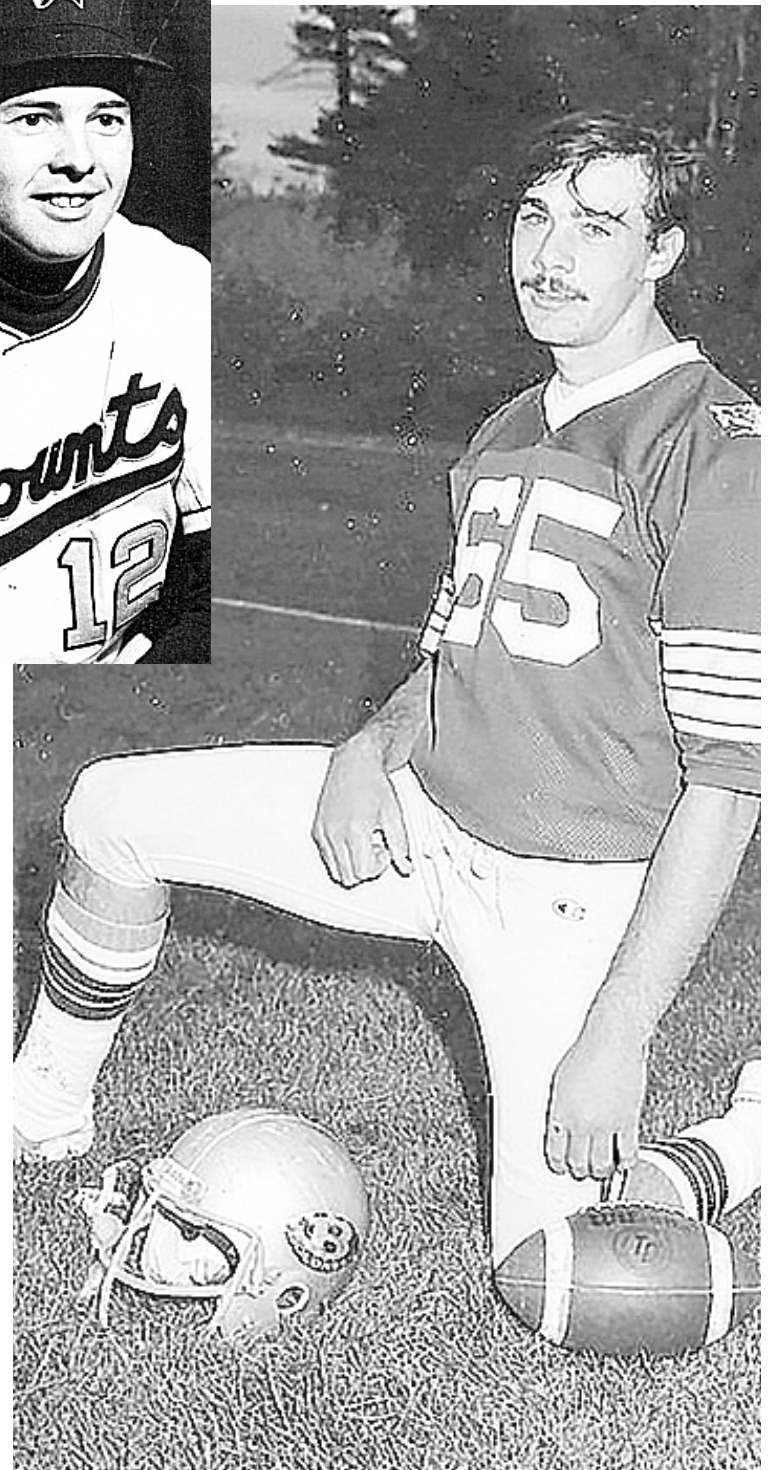
Natowich was equally outstanding as a defensive cornerback. In four years, 32 games of varsity football, he never gave up a passing touchdown. In his junior year at BUHS, he was an All-State second team running back. He went to Vermont Academy for a postgraduate year and led VA to one of its most impressive football seasons ever.

He was a four-year starter for the BUHS baseball team. In his senior year during the state baseball tournament, he hit .778 with two home runs,



Phil Natowich

COURTESY PHOTO



Scott Nadeau

two triples, three singles, and three stolen bases. In 1965, he, along with fellow Hall of Fame inductees Denny and Don Robinson, led Post 5 to its first-ever state Legion baseball championship. He went on to play three years of college baseball at UVM, where he captained the team during his senior year while joining with Denny and Don Robinson in an all-Brattleboro outfield. Natowich later coached the BUHS boys' tennis team, guiding them to three appearances in the state championship finals.

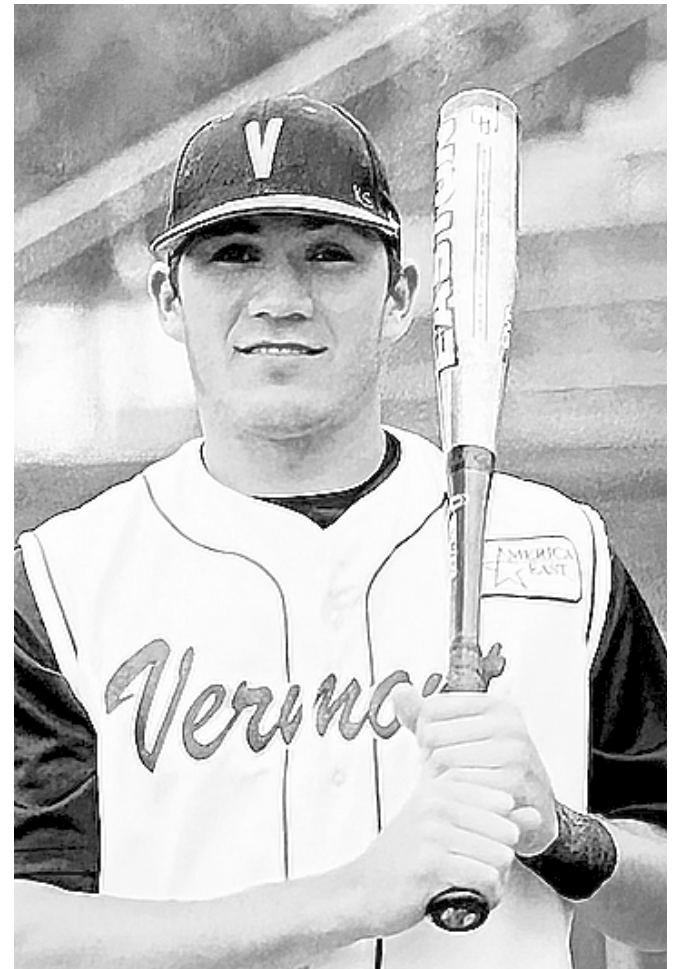
• **Pamela Marie Packard Loney** was the epitome of a student-athlete as she was an integral member of the BUHS softball and ski teams, a fall cheerleader, and an inductee to the National Honor Society. After graduating in 1974, she continued her exceptional athletic and academic success in college at UVM. At a time when many student-athletes were beginning to concentrate on one sport or two at the most, Pamela excelled in three sports at UVM — field hockey, skiing and softball — while earning a degree, cum laude, in 1978.

For all her accomplishments at UVM, Pam received the Semans Trophy, awarded to male and female senior athletes for outstanding leadership, loyalty and service to the university. She also served on the University's Athletic Council and found time to play intramural basketball and ice hockey. She was elected to the UVM Athletic Hall of Fame in 1988 for her accomplishments in all three sports.

In field hockey, she participated in the National Sectional Field Hockey Tournament in 1976-77 and was at the Olympic Developmental Camp for two years. After graduating, she served as head coach of UVM's Summer Field Hockey Camp from 1981-85. That launched a career in coaching that included state championships with the Monadnock High School field hockey team in 1993 and 1996. She continues to coach field hockey to this day.

• **Don and Denny Robinson**, twin brothers who grew up in Dummerston, were key members of some of the most successful Brattleboro teams of their era.

As an exceptional three-sport athlete at BUHS, Vermont Academy, and University of Vermont, Don's athletic power and skill stood out, just as his personal qualities of humility, industriousness, and positivity embodied the values that make Brattleboro great. Don played football, basketball, and baseball, earning spots on these Brattleboro teams, including the 1965 undefeated state championship football team. He was an All-Southern Conference All-Star, Vermont All-State second team, All-New England



Kyle Henry

COURTESY PHOTO



Diedrich Stolte

COURTESY PHOTO

Division I Team, 1970 All-Yankee Conference, and a Cape Cod Collegiate Baseball League All-Star. He played in the Cape League All-Star game at Yankee Stadium.

Denny had a season to remember on the 1965 state football champs. He scored 163 points (25 TDs and 13 PATs), a single-season record that remains unmatched in Vermont. He was a 1966 first team All-State Co-Captain and a captain of the 1966 Shrine team. Robinson also excelled at basketball and was a baseball superstar. After graduating from BUHS, Denny led the Vermont Academy football team to a 6-2 record while leading the

team in both rushing and scoring. A knee injury at VA ended his football career, but became UVM's starting center fielder. His team-leading .372 batting average placed him second in the Yankee Conference and his five triples set a single season record. He was voted by his teammates as Most Valuable Player.

After graduating from UVM, Denny joined the Peace Corps. While serving in Nicaragua he was selected to the All-Nicaragua Baseball Team to compete in the Pan-American Games, though he could not play as a non-Nicaraguan citizen. Denny finished out his baseball career playing with the Brattleboro Maples.

• **Diedrich Stolte** is among the greatest coaches in school history. His name was bestowed on the Stolte Cup, given each year at graduation to the outstanding graduating senior athlete, and on the playing fields that surround today's BUHS campus, the Stolte Athletic Complex. Stolte coached Brattleboro to six state championships in track (1913, 1914, 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922) and one state football championship (1917). He was the school's first physical education instructor and was described as inspiring students "to live and play clean, to fight fairly without regard to the results of the contests, and his quiet encouragement to his boys and girls in the stress of closely contested events helped add many points to his teams' totals."



Beth Juscen

COURTESY PHOTO



Don Robinson

COURTESY PHOTO



Denny Robinson

COURTESY PHOTO



Letters

FROM SECTION FRONT

Some might come back with the claim that Republicans won their elections on these same machines, but that claim is irrelevant and beside the point.

Also, two innovations that were commonplace during the 2020 vote provided ample opportunity for cheating. Results for 2016 and 2018 congressional elections were overturned in North Carolina due to massive cheating that occurred due to ballot harvesting. How do we know that harvested ballots were gathered and submitted fairly? We don't!

The innovation of ballot drop boxes creates great opportunity for ballot box stuffing by pseudo-voters. Who believes that every signature on these ballots was properly verified? I don't! I think there is good reason to doubt the legitimacy of at least some of these votes.

I applauded the attempt at a full forensic audit in Arizona, but that was compromised by the failure to forcibly obtain router data.

The fact remains that there is no way to know the validity of the 2020 election, whether you are a Trump voter, a Biden voter, or a third-party voter like myself, because there is no transparency. Without proper systems and safeguards in place, knowing the results is just a pipe dream.

A priority for everyone in this so-called "democracy" is to make certain there will be full transparency. All voting machines for which the source code is not available for public inspection need to be ditched. Get rid of drop boxes because it is too difficult to validate the ballots deposited within. Make ballot harvesting illegal.

Instead, institute mobile polling stations for institutions such as nursing homes that request them. At least two or more sworn election officials ought to be responsible for collecting such ballots.

If you want to restore trust in the American electoral system, I suggest getting behind a call for transparency over a desire to simply have more ballots cast.

Without transparency, it does

not matter how many ballots are cast.

Edward C. Morris  
Brattleboro

We can do better

RE: "Lies and bamboozling distractions" [Viewpoint, Aug. 9]:

I am not going to comment on this commentary by Robert Fritz, as it simply plays the same old tune that has been kicked around for a long time. But it made me think.

If people watch the man we now call president and believe he has any kind of grip on reality, then we are fooling ourselves or we are blinded by our hate for the former president.

There are better, younger, and more qualified folks out there who could make this country better.

Don Rosinski  
Vernon

By definition, a NIMBY debate

RE: "This is hardly a NIMBY debate" [Letters, Aug. 2]:

This is the definition of a NIMBY ("not in my backyard") debate.

It's harmful, and I really wish it would come to an end. But since it's not going to, let's not pretend that it's something other than what it is.

Brandie Starr  
Brattleboro

Impact of more housing would be the impact of more cars

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

I also appreciated the article by Joyce Marcel on housing supply and homelessness. In 2022, for family reasons, I tried to find an apartment in Brattleboro with zero responses to inquiries. Now, I've been there enough to know you are not rude. Inundated? Call this a casual data point

Safety? Calm?

me an option to express my anxiety about another person's safety.

The survey's constraints are senseless, applying only to the respondent's own sense of safety. Thus, any alleged "findings" from this survey will be inherently untrustworthy.

IN PARTICULAR, I fear that the people who complete this survey are far more likely to be in the "make the speech of poor people illegal" camp represented on the sticky notes I saw on the wall at the Community Safety Fair.

Three big sheets on the wall requested answers to these questions:

- What do you love about downtown?
  - What are your concerns?
  - What are your solutions?
- The "solutions" sheet included crowdsourced sticky notes. "More police presence — law against panhandling," one said. "We need an ordinance against panhandling," said another.

The writers of these messages appear to have failed

high school civics — particularly the lesson concerning the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

On a more pragmatic level, consider my compassionate reaction to someone "lying on a bench or on the ground."

How am I supposed to rate my response when the available options range from "Yeah, sounds great! More like that!" to "I am afraid this person is going to attack me, and I plan to call 9-1-1."

Nothing on that spectrum makes any sense in relation to my authentic emotional response to a person who, unlike me, has no other place to sleep than on a bench or on the ground.

SO WHAT SHOULD I do if I want to provide feedback to the town? Should I try to game the survey by ranking every listed behavior as a 1 to express my overarching feeling that un-housed people and other people who are struggling don't scare me just because they happen to be in existence in the same public place where I am in existence?

on your supply constraints. I can only imagine how hard it is at lower incomes.

Another angle on housing is transportation. My sense of Vermont is that, despite the concern to preserve the environment, you are more car people than the city dwellers where I used to live. The impact of more housing is as much the impact of more cars and the asphalt holding them as it is the building, yes? And so with total costs to provide it.

Can people spread across small towns live car-free (or car-left-home)? Can there be more than one train a day or inter-town bus networks?

With fewer cars, could some of your asphalt fields be sites for apartment buildings or even town parks?

If we would live at lower energy and land intensity levels, would you fear less the hordes who would overrun and ruin your place? Or might improvements be sopped up by us and not get to those in need?

Perhaps it's just as well no one returned my emails if nothing can be built.

Mike Small  
Greenfield, Mass.

It's getting hot

This planet is getting crowded, and it's getting hot.

There is no free lunch; there is no free ride.

The prices are going to keep rising.

The rules are going to keep changing. It is not a good time to hide your head in the sand.

Every freedom has a cost. Each of us will end up paying something for everyone else's freedom.

Your personal pursuit of happiness had better not mess things up for everyone else.

Sharing is not just for children anymore; it's time to do more.

Start thinking smaller; small is beautiful.

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The Earth does not belong to us; we belong to the Earth.

Gino Palmeri  
Putney

Hold Bernie accountable to his promises on Yemen

At a meet-and-greet town hall hosted by U.S. Sen.

Bernie Sanders at the Senior Center in Brattleboro on Aug. 10, Action Corps Vermont presented him with a petition signed by almost 900 people across the country, including many Vermonters, asking for his leadership in the Senate — now — to end endless wars, starting with the U.S.-backed Saudi war and blockade on Yemen.

Bernie met the December setback in his efforts to force a vote on his Yemen War Powers Resolution with a vow to return to Congress if sufficient progress wasn't made on moving administration policy to end the Saudi war and blockade on Yemen.

At the Brattleboro event, Bernie reconfirmed that stance, stating that he's not giving up on the issue.

Yemenis report that they continue to endure great hardships due to the Saudi blockade of their country. Thanks to U.S. support, Saudis control all the seaports and airports, restricting movement of supplies.

Three round-trip flights a week, and only to Jordan, allow for little opportunity to obtain medical care. Some have been stranded in Jordan for nine months, since the Saudis also curtail movement of people.

Medical equipment is not allowed to be shipped directly to Yemen, resulting in unconscionable delays. Yemen's current de facto cease-fire, while a welcome improvement over Saudi bombing, is not enough. The Saudi blockade of Yemen is also an act of war. The Biden administration is still helping Saudi Arabia maintain that blockade.

There is currently some small improvement in the quantity of supplies allowed in. With Yemenis dependent, though, on imports for 83% of their calories, U.N. documents show Yemen receiving drastically less than the 500,000 tons of food and 400,000 tons of fuel its residents require per month.

For a country facing what the U.N. calls "dire economic and humanitarian challenges," with three-fourths of the population in need of humanitarian aid, the end of the continuing Saudi blockade is essential and urgent. The human cost is too massive to do otherwise.

Action Corps Vermont is asking Bernie to do two things to help end the Saudi blockade on Yemen, and all Vermonters will be able to easily see if and when Bernie has done them.

Within the constraints of this profoundly flawed survey, where do I get the opportunity to share my true, compassionate response?

It's not even possible to skip the long list of (mostly) nuisance behaviors and go straight to "write a comment": Aside from this final long-form comment field, every other item is a required question.

I think the folks at SPUR in San Francisco probably had a fairly clear sense of what they wanted to get out of this survey within the context of their many other efforts to engage diverse community members and nurture dialogue among them.

Does the town of Brattleboro?

I AM CALLING ON town leaders and the downtown business community to answer the following questions:

- How do you anticipate interpreting the data you're receiving from this survey?
- How will survey data inform other efforts at community engagement and dialogue?
- How will survey data

FROM SECTION FRONT

inform complex decisions the town needs to make about policing, restorative justice, and other community safety strategies?

• What other opportunities for dialogue will the town and the business community be facilitating?

• How will future events live out the town's commitment (as documented on **brattleboro.org**) to condemn racism; to welcome all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, and socioeconomic class or disability; and to ensure everyone feels safe and welcome in our community?

Without explicit and proactive answers to these questions, I fear that skewed survey responses may be used to serve the needs and desires of the most privileged in our town at a time when the most vulnerable need compassion and support from all of us.

And — most especially — from the people we've entrusted with political power.

he has done them, and we ask all Vermonters to help us hold our senator accountable to his promise.

MaryDiane Baker  
Brattleboro

The writer volunteers as Action Corps' organizer for Vermont.

Unions

FROM SECTION FRONT

well as Hollywood writers and actors — are striking or have contemplated doing so for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. American Airlines cabin crews may soon be joining them.

That's a wide, diverse swath of American workers and a huge number of jobs, goods, and services at stake.

The implications are alarming. A short time ago the threat of a railroad strike was enough to make economists shudder, and that's only one sector that could have wrought havoc throughout the country.

Leaders of unions that represent large numbers of people working in companies trying to deny them their right to unionize act as though union organizing was something new and egregiously difficult.

The fact is that huge, organized strikes are nothing new in this country. We've had labor unions forever, inspired originally by the 18th-century Industrial Revolution in Europe.

Shorter work days, livable minimum wages, and rational benefits have always been a big part of union organizing. For example, poor pay and working conditions led to strikes by the Pullman Company railroad workers in 1894 and the United Mine Workers in 1919.

OVER THE YEARS, unions grew across many sectors, and by 1979 there were 21 million union members in the United States.

Today, union membership is growing again after a slump, thanks in part to the pandemic and a rapidly changing labor market.

Young workers are unionizing across various sectors now because of tech-driven jobs. They are joining farmers, factory workers, food handlers, and others as they

seek safe and equitable employment, just as factory girls and children sewing apron pockets did before them.

For UPS drivers, Amazon workers, Starbucks baristas, and others, companies that refuse to bargain are enraging. Labor leaders and workers have had enough. They are tired of corporate leaders who make phenomenal amounts of money a year, own mansions and yachts, and still continue renegeing on workers' rights.

Amazon, for example, has engaged in dozens of unfair labor practices, including terminating the entire unit of newly organized workers.

Starbucks "has become the most aggressive union-busting company in America," according to a staffer for U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), and more than 200 workers have been fired for taking part in organizing activities.

I'M NOT TRYING to put a Pollyanna spin on unions. I know there is a troubling history of corruption and criminal intent in some organized labor movements and unions, and that is not something to be overlooked.

But I agree with John F. Kennedy that labor unions "are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours, and provided supplemental benefits. [...] They have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor."

More to the point, perhaps in these troubling political times, labor leader Dolores Huerta was right when she put the point this way: "If we don't have workers organized in unions, we are in great danger of losing our democracy."

My friend Esther would agree with her old boss, JFK, and with Dolores Huerta, with whom she worked on labor rights for women and children.

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Hi, my name is Minnie! I do have some medical issues and I am looking for a hospice home for me to live out rest of my life. I am very sweet and loves to be in your lap. I have no history with other animals but I may be able to live with a low energy dog or cat.

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

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