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Leaving on a JOYFUL NOTE

Steve Rice leads his Brattleboro Union High School students in band practice. The musician and music educator will retire at the end of the school year after nearly 37 years in the classroom.

VICTORIA CHERTOK/THE COMMONS

Stephen Rice reflects on his career teaching music at BUHS, where he has enriched the lives of students, one student at a time, for decades

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—For Stephen Rice, moments of joy come in “the countless moments in rehearsals when a piece of music we’ve been working on starts sounding really good and everyone feels that powerful feeling of connection — that something truly special, unique, and memorable is happening.” Or they might come “in lessons when a student has been struggling with a skill or concept, and then there’s the moment when it clicks and you can see the sense of understanding and accomplishment.”

Next Thursday, May 25, Rice

will conduct the Brattleboro Union High School Band and Jazz Band for one last time at the annual Pops Concert. After nearly 37 years of teaching music and serving as band director and music department head, Rice, 57, will take a final bow to begin his retirement in June. Rice estimates that during his career here, he’s taught more than 1,100 students, served as music director for 35 musicals, and brought students to 140 music festivals, including district, all-state and New England, and all-Eastern. He’s directed bands in 270 concerts and led bands at 140 football games. “The thing above all that has kept me here is the way the

Brattleboro community so values my work and the arts in general,” Rice says. “Music specifically has such a rich tradition,” he continues. “Whether it’s classical, or jazz or traditional music, music of all styles, there is a lot of honest valuing of the work of musicians and the value of the arts. Those values of the community have kept me here.” The biggest challenge in the last few years was teaching band during a pandemic, when most of the learning was done remotely. “It proved itself to be difficult at best, if not impossible,” he says. “And so then conversely, over the last few years what’s been rewarding is getting back into

in-person live band and rediscovering the magic in that,” Rice says, noting the joy comes not only for him but for his students as well. **Growing up musically** “As a preschooler, I’d take things like wooden spoons and bang on chairs,” recalls Rice, who was born and raised in Buckland, Massachusetts. “Eventually after I’d done some damage to the furniture, my parents got me a play drum set — the Monkees drum set — which had paper heads on it. I’m sure I went through that pretty quickly. When I was 8, they got me a snare drum.” ■ SEE RICE RETIRES, A2

End of motel program will remove shelter and stability

With housing unavailable and the end of the emergency pandemic measure, advocates warn of looming crisis of homelessness in Brattleboro and all through Vermont

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—On June 1, the state’s motel voucher program will end. The Legislative session has adjourned without funding the pandemic emergency program, which sheltered homeless people throughout the state as a public health measure, a public policy decision that housing advocates predict will have devastating ramifications across the state. Seven hotels in Brattleboro participate in the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program — the formal name for the voucher program. These hotels — Black Mountain Inn, Colonial Motel, Covered Bridge Inn, EconoLodge, Latchis Hotel, Quality Inn, and Travelodge — are sheltering approximately 220 households, according to Department of Children and Families’ Economic Benefits Director Nicole Tousignant. DCF’s Economic Service Division anticipates that 65 households will no longer be eligible on June 1, with the end of the adverse weather conditions policy. Others will be forced out of their lodgings at the beginning of July. At stake is the question of how many will have shelter after that date. Even with the voucher program, Brattleboro has been struggling with homelessness. Prior to the pandemic, during the warmer weather, tent cities have emerged by the Connecticut River. Sometimes people sleep in the parks. ■ SEE MOTEL PROGRAM ENDS, A5

With affordable housing — really, any housing — increasingly scarce at any price, it is impossible to universally categorize people who are facing this future. Some voucher recipients are working people who simply can’t find housing in Brattleboro’s tight and expensive rental market. Some are families. The school bus stops at some of these motels. “I certainly wouldn’t necessarily equate people who are leaving the motel program with panhandling,” said Brattleboro Town Manager John Potter. “A lot of folks may have other options that they’re able to take advantage of,” he said. “Many of them, I understand, have jobs but have not had a roof over their head. We’re just starting to understand what could be the best solution for, obviously, a very difficult problem. And we don’t have the answers yet.” The exact number of people being evicted fluctuates. “The data is changing daily about how many people are exiting motels with the ending of each phase of the program’s unwind,” said Libby Bennett of Groundworks Collaborative, the town’s lead homelessness organization. As of May 10, 218 adults in 179 households were living in state-funded motel rooms in Brattleboro. Bennett said the program will end in two phases: May 31 and June 30. “On June 1, 67 households [with] 114 adults — all of whom are in the motels under the policy for adverse weather conditions — a relaxation of, or augmentation

Detours, lane closures, and blown tires

Road construction season is in full swing in Windham County

By Randolph T. Holhut
The Commons

The snowplows and sanders are put away for the season. Spring is here, and that means the start of construction season around Windham County.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) has several big projects going, the biggest being the \$61 million Brattleboro-Hinsdale bridge project and the \$27.5 million roadway reconstruction of Route 30 between Brattleboro and Newfane. The focus of the bridge project so far has been on the Vermont side, as construction crews work on building retaining walls and the pier that will support the bridge over the New England Central Railroad tracks and toward the New Hampshire side of the Connecticut River. Route 142 (Vernon Street) near the construction site — from just north of the access to Royal Road to just south of the access to 28 Vernon St. — will be closed for 90 days, starting on May 30. Installation of message boards

and signs for the detour will begin this week. Traffic will detour from Route 142 up Cotton Mill Hill Road, left onto South Main Street, continuing onto Fairground Road, and finally back to Canal Street. Drivers of vehicles with significant turning radius coming from the north will be able to turn around just south of the sharply angled Cotton Mill Hill Road intersection on Route 142, then return north to enter the road safely. A three-way stop will also be implemented at the Cotton Mill Hill Rd. and Route 142 intersection and the speed limit will be reduced to 45 mph along Route 142. **Rebuilding Route 30** The 10-mile roadway reclamation project along Route 30



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

A temporary trestle sits beside one of the completed concrete piers for the new Brattleboro-Hinsdale bridge across the Connecticut River. stretching from Cedar Street in Brattleboro to Hemlock Hill Road in Newfane began last fall with removal of materials from rock ledges in West Dummerston. Work resumed in April to remove and rebuild the roadbed with asphalt reclaimed from the existing paved surface, mixed with new materials, before the highway gets a new coat of pavement. Also included in the project, which is expected to be finished by late October, are improvements with road drainage, new guard rails and signage, and ■ SEE ROAD PROJECTS, A3

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- promotes local independent journalism,
- fosters civic engagement by building media skills through publication of *The Commons* and commonsnews.org, and through the Media Mentoring Project.

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

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

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

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

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

Editorials represent the collective voice of *The Commons* and are written by the editors or by members of the Vermont Independent Media Board of Directors.

The views expressed in our Voices section are those of individual contributors. Bylined commentaries by members of the Vermont Independent Media board of directors represent their individual opinions; as an organization, we are committed to providing a forum for the entire community. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Vermont Independent Media is legally prohibited from endorsing political candidates.

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

Rice retires

FROM SECTION FRONT

Rice credits Don Kitson as “the first teacher who connected me in meaningful ways to music.” “He started me as a percussionist in the fourth grade and gave me my first drum set lesson in fifth grade,” he says. “He made a place for me in the Jazz Band and was an important influence on my feeling connected to music and feeling successful in music.”

Although Rice’s parents were not musical themselves, they were “wholeheartedly supportive” of his passion for music and participated in the music programs at his small high school in Massachusetts.

“A lot of my early education in music was through people I was listening to: countless drum set players and other artists that gave me the real fever for music,” he says. Included among them: singer/songwriter James Taylor. “I loved to sing his music and singing was in some ways as central to my music identity as drumming was.”

“I had a group of friends who liked to get together to sing and harmonize and I had a little bit of singing training as a young child singing church choir,” Rice says. “Later, I got roles in high school musicals, which gave me solo singing opportunities.”

When he graduated from Mohawk Trail Regional High School, the prospect of a career as a music educator “was not even on my radar screen yet,”

says Rice, who started his post-secondary education at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

“But at the beginning of second semester of college I opted to transfer to UMass and had to declare an aspect of music which I would major in,” he says. “So by default I chose music ed.”

Though he did so because he didn’t see himself “trying to make a living as a performer,” teaching as a career “very quickly started to grow on me,” he says.

“I thought it was something I could do well and something I could balance that need to make a living with continuing to be a musician,” he adds.

Rice received bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in music education.

In January of 1987, he began student teaching at BUHS and that fall served as a long-term substitute teacher, applying for the permanent position that became available when his cooperating teacher chose not to return from maternity leave. He was made music department head in 2004.

Rice says one of his mentors shared the idea that “as teachers, we should be very interested in who our students currently are” but that the larger responsibility was to be interested in who they are becoming — “to help them see who they want to be.”

The goal, he says, is to get



VICTORIA CHERTOK, THE COMMONS

Steve Rice has taught more than 1,100 students, served as music director for 35 musicals, directed bands in 270 concerts, and led bands at 140 football games.

students to think about their reason for being on the Earth, so they don’t get “so wrapped up in the here and now.”

An accomplished musician, Rice plays a variety of instruments.

“I can make sounds and get through different scales on all of the instruments in band but the ones I’m most proficient at are in the percussion family,” he says. “Those are the ones that I can play at a professional level. I feel most at home on timpani and drum set.”

He considers his “strongest secondary instruments” to be low brass instruments: euphonium, tuba, French horn and trombone.

“They’re my favorite because I can play them best,” says Rice, who has led a Tuba Christmas event at the First Congregational Church in Brattleboro for many years. “I like the feeling, the sound of that low, low brass.”

Along the way, Rice has received numerous awards and honors, including a Governor’s Arts Award — The Arthur Williams Award for Meritorious Service to the Arts — in 2016 from then-Gov. Peter Shumlin and the Vermont Arts Council.

He was named Vermont Music Educator of the Year in 2014. He adds that the most meaningful awards were those from his peers. One example: the Madlyn Moore Outstanding Employee of the Year, which he received from the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union in 2018.

Witness to history

In 2009, Rice brought the BUHS Band to Washington to play for Barack Obama’s first presidential inauguration.

The scope of it still stands out, he says: first, the application process, and then, “once we were invited, the logistics of raising \$60,000 over the span of six weeks.”

“Then, preparing the band for that performance,” he continues. “I remember many, many rehearsals outdoors on days where it was 0 degrees or 10 degrees and brass players’ valves were getting stuck. But the students remained so enthusiastic and didn’t resist the need to be outside and doing that work.”

Once in Washington, the band was on its bus and found NBC’s Today Show and its weather reporter/host Al Roker needing to catch a ride to the staging area for the inaugural parade.

“I remember Al was in one of the front seats and I was on the other side in the front seat, and we were listening on the radio as Obama is being sworn in,” he says, recalling that he and Roker were “tearing up with the emotion of that moment.”

“And then going over the Potomac and by the Mall and seeing the throngs of people — it was so overwhelming, like nothing I had ever seen before.

“And the joy you could sense in the city that day. The parade itself was amazing. It was cold and windy and the students were really suffering. Marching by the

new president, we got a wink and a point from Joe Biden, and President Obama gave us a wave, so that was very memorable.”

A musical life

He met his wife, Jen, at UMass; she was also a music education major, and both are percussionists.

“We have family band nights at home with me playing keys and bass. Jen plays drums, my soon to be son-in-law Rob plays guitar, and daughters Kayla and Molly are on vocals,” Rice says.

Jen Rice taught music for many years in Wilmington before switching careers to early childhood education. She will also be retiring this year.

Steve Rice has performed with the Vermont Jazz Center Big Band and the VJC Sextet; the Windham, Vermont Symphony and Keene Chamber orchestras; the Brattleboro Concert Choir, and many other groups.

How did he keep such an active performance schedule while teaching full time and raising two kids?

“I felt like I had to keep playing — it’s such an important part of who I am,” he says. “I feel like, especially as a teacher at the secondary level, if I didn’t continue to experience music at high levels and do challenging things musically that I would have less to offer my students.”

Rice acknowledges that “it did create a significant deficiency of time, and that was stressful. Too often, it required me to sacrifice time with my family. I’m not sure I ever did find a healthy balance of work, music performance and family.”

After he retires, “Travel will be a big priority,” says Rice as he anticipates three travel experiences, including a trip to Ireland in September.

“I will continue to do private teaching, and am joining the illustrious faculty at Brattleboro Music Center, where they have a room specifically designed for brass and percussion,” he says. “I anticipate having more time to practice and being able to play more gigs.”

Last concert

“It’s my last school concert, and I’m really excited about it — and excited about the music the band and jazz band are playing,” Rice says.

He invited 38 former students and colleagues to sit in with the Band and Jazz Band, including alumni who are pursuing a career in music. “About 26 of them are able to attend and participate,” he says.

The last two songs in the Pops program are the most meaningful to him.

“Amazing Grace,” setting by Frank Ticheli, is my expression of gratitude for the many acts of human grace that brought me to Brattleboro and that have benefited me so much while I’ve been teaching here,” notes Rice.

And he calls the last song, an arrangement of Paul Simon’s *Late in the Evening*, “my expression of joy and celebration about my time here working with students, my joy in anticipation of retirement, and my joy in anticipation of the great things that await the band with the new director.”

The annual Pops Concert takes place on Thursday, May 25 at 7 p.m. in the Brattleboro Union High School auditorium. Performing groups include the Band, the Jazz Band, the Chorus, the Madrigals, and Jazz Workshop. Admission is free. For more information, call 802-451-3516.

Music doesn’t lie. If there is something to be changed in this world, then it can only happen through music.

—JIMI HENDRIX

Rockingham Meeting House Association hosts spring meet-up

ROCKINGHAM — A Rockingham Meeting House Association spring meet-up will be held on Sunday, May 21, at 4 p.m. at the Rockingham Meeting House, 11 Meeting House Road in Rockingham Village.

Since 1911, the Association has worked with the town Selectboard to steward the building that is the birthplace of the town, now a National Historic Landmark and Vermont’s oldest public building. The “old town barn” is open to the public every summer through the fall. Both public and private events are regularly held throughout the season.

Fueled with major funding from the National Park Service Save America’s Treasures program, and matched with support

from the town and from private donations, the meeting house is at the beginning of a major conservation and restoration project.

The purpose of the May 21 gathering is to review the Association’s future course in advocating and raising funds for the conservation program as well as to participate in restoration decision-making and educational programming. A new Board will be elected, empowered to elect officers.

A progress report on the preservation project will be available, but this meeting is not intended to be a detailed review of preservation plans. For more information, contact Walter Wallace at 802-591-0831 and clg@rockbf.org.

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Colleagues and students reflect on Rice's service to BUHS

Mitch Davis

Music teacher/band director/choral director, Brattleboro Union High School and Brattleboro Area Middle School, 1974-2004

I had the honor of working with Steve Rice for 17 years, and it was the highlight of my teaching career.

Steve did his student teaching semester at BUHS in the spring of 1987 under the supervision of then-band director Juli Holmes and he was hired to replace her in the fall of 1987. I was his supervisor and colleague who shared a whole lot of concerts, fundraisers, festivals, trips, and conversations for a whole lot of years.

Steve is a wonderful, caring, nurturing professional and person, and he brought many new ideas to the music program, which evolved for both of us over the years.

While we shared many wonderful musical performances over the years, I will always treasure Steve as the person who enabled me to become a better colleague for the long term. He will be missed.

Bob Kramsky

Retired English/theater teacher, Brattleboro Union High School

I worked with Steve Rice for 35 years and — besides his professionalism and his many talents — what always impressed me the most was that everything he did and all of the work he took on was always for the kids and their education.

Remember when we produced *Rent* at the high school, Steve was instrumental in bringing in members of the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont to meet with the kids to give them firsthand experiences talking with people who had AIDS and had lost loved ones to AIDS. It made a lasting impression on the kids and brought tremendous depth and sensitivity to their performances.

Sure, he wanted to put on great shows, but beyond that, he wanted the kids to learn important life lessons from the experience. And they did!

Tom Nasitaka

Band director/music teacher, Brattleboro Area Middle School

It's impossible to summarize Steve Rice in two to three sentences!

He leaves a legacy of excellence that's woven deeply into the fabric of our arts-rich community and provides a beacon of what's possible when student musicians are held to high standards while being shown compassion and understanding.

As a role model and friend to me over the last 15 years, I know that I'm a much stronger teacher and colleague because of him.

Rebekah Kersten

English/theater teacher and musical director, Brattleboro Union High School

Steve Rice has a unique ability to identify student leaders and foster opportunities for their growth, a quality that will have a lasting impact on BUHS music long after he retires.

I've been personally impacted by this twice: first, as a student musician who served as the drum major of the BUHS Band during my senior year, and second, as a theater educator chosen to serve as director of the BUHS musical, stepping into a position known

for high standards of excellence.

Steve's belief and faith in me as a leader has meant the world to me. I have been honored to call him both a colleague and one of the teachers who has shaped my outlook toward and work ethic in the arts. His professionalism, drive to achieve excellence, and passion have created incredibly tight bonds within the music community at BUHS, and, indeed, throughout the community as whole.

Michelle Page

Math teacher, assistant theater director, and musical producer, Brattleboro Union High School; president, Vermont Theatre Company

Steve Rice worked on and later ran the BUHS musical for almost three decades, a true testament of his patience and bravery.

He brought a calm presence to the otherwise chaotic world of theater and the orchestra was always phenomenal under his direction.

Steve will be greatly missed in the BUHS auditorium next year.

Julie Ackerman-Hovis

Choral director/music teacher, Brattleboro Union High School

It has been a real pleasure to work at the high school with Steve Rice these past two years and learn from him. It's been especially exciting having my own children in the band and jazz band during this time and watching them grow as musicians under his leadership.

Steve is a truly inspiring educator whom I feel lucky to have worked with, even for this short time.

Patty Meyer

Music teacher, Green Street School; former choral director/music teacher, Brattleboro Union High School

Steve Rice was inspiring to work with. The high standards he held himself to were contagious.



The Brattleboro Union High School Marching Band, under the direction of Steve Rice, got to represent the state of Vermont in the 2009 presidential inaugural parade in Washington, D.C. Here they march down Main Street in Brattleboro after their triumphant return.

Eugene Uman

Director, Vermont Jazz Center

Steve Rice is an excellent educator. He is a wonderful musician who understands how to communicate and be real with his students.

There's no pandering — Mr. Rice's students realize that he's an authentic person who believe in his mission to give them the tools to create and be part of a larger community.

Mr. Rice commands respect because he walks the walk and talks the talk. Students can sense that right away. Furthermore, he has been able to establish a fun-yet-controlled environment where young people feel safe and comfortable.

Because of his talent and supportive, generous attitude, Steve Rice's students are eager to work diligently and achieve high levels of accomplishment and work together in a group setting.

It's a beautiful thing to be present at the concerts he produces and feel the joy of the students as they join together to create beautiful music that they understand is greater than the sum of its parts.

I have always been grateful to Steve for his willingness to collaborate with The Vermont Jazz Center; from my first days on the job (25 years ago) I knew he was an ally. He encourages his students to attend concerts, and has always been actively involved with

the clinics and student presentations that occur during the VJC's Emerging Artist Festival. Now some of his students work for the Jazz Center in various capacities.

He has also been welcoming in cultivating relationships with BUHS students and the Jazz Center Summer Workshop. One of the highlights of each summer program is to hear and feel the enthusiasm that the more ambitious BUHS students bring to the workshop, thus enhancing our attempts to engage more youth in the amazing richness of

jazz music and to then bring them into our audience on a more permanent basis.

Wyatt Cudworth

Percussion, band and jazz band; All State musician; BUHS class of 2024

Steve Rice taught me that you have to earn your keep; you have to work for everything. Nothing is given to you.

This made me realize what I want in life and what I need to do to work towards it.

Benson May

Trumpet, band and jazz band; All State musician; New England Musician; All Eastern Musician; BUHS class of 2013

Steve Rice inspired me to test my trumpet playing and to always strive for better performance.

He was instrumental (no pun intended) in the formation of my ear for tuning, attention to dynamics, and love of big brassy marches.

Road projects

FROM SECTION FRONT

center-line rumble strips.

VTrans says multiple operations are underway with alternating one-way traffic in effect at several locations along the project. Motorists should anticipate multiple delays and should drive carefully, adapting to the varying surface conditions that result from the ongoing work.

In a news release, VTrans urged motorists to slow down and drive cautiously on this section of Route 30, where speed limits previously listed at 50 mph have been reduced to 40 mph while construction is underway.

Fines are doubled for speeding within the construction zone.

Numerous people have complained about vehicle damage,

ranging from flat tires and broken suspension parts to cracked windshields. Anyone who has suffered vehicle damage should contact Natalie Boyle, public information consultant for the project, at nboyle@vtech.com or 802-855-3893.

A busy summer

Other VTrans projects around Windham County include:

- A bridge deck replacement project on Interstate 91 over Route 121 in Westminster. I-91 northbound and southbound has been reduced to one lane of travel across the bridges, with the speed limit reduced to 55 mph within the project area.
- Route 121 under the bridge

will be closed until Friday, May 19. A detour route uses Route 5, the I-91 Access Road, and Back Westminster Road.

• Resurfacing is underway along I-91 northbound between Exit 5 in Westminster and Exit 8 in Springfield. VTrans said motorists can expect lane closures at two points.

• A series of culvert replacements continues along Route 100 in Wardsboro. Motorists should expect temporary one-way alternating traffic during weekdays.

• And on Route 9 between West Brattleboro and Wilmington, where repaving is in the home stretch, according to VTrans, motorists can expect alternating one-way traffic.

PUBLIC NOTICES

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Town of Brattleboro Recreation and Park Department Living Memorial Park Pool Repairs

The Town of Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department is seeking sealed bids from qualified firms for Architectural / Engineering Services for Improvements at the Living Memorial Park Pool. The Pool is located at the Living Memorial Park, 24 Memorial Park Drive Brattleboro, VT.

Please Send you sealed bids to the Town Managers Office, 230 Main Street, Suite 208, by 10:00 am on Wednesday June 14, 2023. Please mark your bid package Pool Project.

Interested bidders should request a complete bid packet by contacting The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Office: recreation@brattleboro.org or at 802-254-5808.

Town of Jamaica
Accepting applications for:
Highway Crew member
Truck driver/laborer

This position requires the ability to operate town equipment and perform jobs assigned, including general labor, truck driving, plowing and sanding, ditching, culvert work, maintaining equipment, roadside mowing, brush and tree removal, general road construction and maintenance and general equipment safety checks. A clean driving record, a CDL license, and the ability to pass drug/alcohol tests are required. Highway/road maintenance experience preferred.

For more details and full job description, contact the Town Clerks Office at 802-874-4681, or email townclerk@jamaicavermont.org. Position is open until filled.

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Benefits include medical, dental, vision, 401(k), short and long term disability, life insurance, paid personal and vacation time. **Please email resume and letter of interest to Peggy_Dolan@marymeyer.com.**

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HELP WANTED

MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries



• **Mary Elsie Aiken, 94**, of Putney. Died peacefully with her family by her side on May 9, 2023, following a brief period of declining health. Mrs. Aiken was born at home in the family homestead on July 2, 1928, the daughter of Ruben and Elsie (Fuller) Blood. She was raised and educated in Putney graduating from Brattleboro High School. She was employed as a machine operator at the former American Optical Co. in Brattleboro for many years until the company closed in 1981. She later worked at Basketville in Putney, and her last job was with Vermont Apple in Westminster. Upon her retirement, she devoted much of her time to taking care of her grandchildren. In her earlier years, Mary attended Putney Federated Church. She enjoyed gardening, loved horses, and followed thoroughbred racing, including the Kentucky Derby. Mostly, her life revolved around her family. On June 15, 1952, during a joint wedding ceremony with her sister Dorothy Conklin (Ted), at Putney Federated Church, she was married to William M. Aiken. Her devoted husband of 65 years predeceased her on Dec. 26, 2017. Survivors include four sons, Leonard and his wife Jeri of Pawleys Island, South Carolina, Roger and wife Linda of Putney, and Bruce and William, also of Putney; her sister, Dorothy Conklin of California; and four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren. Additionally, she leaves many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews. She was predeceased by a sister, Elizabeth Sargent, and a brother, Kenneth Blood. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside committal services will be conducted Saturday, May 20, at 1 p.m., in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Putney where she will be laid to rest next to her beloved husband. Donations to the Putney Volunteer Fire Dept., 21 Carl Snyder Drive, Putney, VT 05346. To send messages of condolence to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Bruce Alan Bryant, 67**, of Friendswood, Texas, formerly of Putney. Died on May 9, 2023. He was born in Brattleboro on Jan. 22, 1956 to Lawrence and Carol Bryant. He was raised and educated in Putney, graduating from Brattleboro Union High School, Class of 1974. He also graduated from State University of New York at Cobleskill and attended Dupage University in Illinois. Bruce started his career at the Putney Nursery before turning to real estate investment, first in Florida and then Houston, Texas, where he moved permanently in 1986. His Bryant Management Company was soon recognized as one of *Inc.* magazine's 500 fastest growing companies in the U.S. After focusing on ownership in the RV park sector, he owned and operated 14 parks in 11 states under the Legacy RV Resorts name. He became widely known throughout the industry for his exceptional financial and leadership abilities and received many awards and accolades throughout his long career. Bruce was well known for his integrity, generosity, creative thinking, sense of humor, love of both animals and baseball, boundless energy and exuberance for all of life, and deep devotion to family and friends, with whom he prioritized his time. Travel was a lifelong passion of his and he spent many years exploring as much of the world as possible, enjoying good food and wine. As a wine connoisseur, he also created his own wine under the label "6 North." Loved by all who knew him, the loss of Bruce is enormous. He is survived by his loving wife of 36 years, Andrea Baum; his mother, Carol Bryant; his sisters, Susan (Rudy) Rudolph and Pat Paduano; sister-in-law, Rosemary Bryant; three nieces and nephews, Kathleen Bryant, Christopher (Alie) Paduano, and Ashley Paduano; and innumerable close friends. He was predeceased by his father, Larry; brother, Bob; and his nephews, Ian Bryant and Ryan Paduano. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside committal services were conducted May 15 in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Putney. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To send condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Florina Therese Bokum, 91**, of Brattleboro. Died May 7, 2023 at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend, following a brief period of declining health. Florina was born in Brattleboro on July 8, 1931, the daughter of Henry and Lena (Burdo) Rabideau. She was raised and educated in Brattleboro, attending St. Michael's Parochial School and graduating from St. Michael's High School with the Class of 1950. She had been employed as a medical records clerk at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, which she retired from in 1998 following many years of faithful service. A devout Catholic, she was a lifelong communicant of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church. She enjoyed crocheting, making quilts, reading, and time shared with her family. On Sept. 8, 1951, at Saint Michael's Catholic Church, she was married to Fred Bokum, who predeceased her on May 31, 2016. Survivors include her three children: daughter Kathy Dunham and her husband Jim of Putney, and sons Rick Bokum and his wife Karen of Brattleboro and Randy Bokum and his wife Bridget of Dummerston; as well as five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by



• **Wilfred J. Colburn, Jr., 82**, of Brattleboro. Died May 7, 2023 at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend. He was born in Springfield, Vermont on Nov. 11, 1940 to the late Wilfred and Elizabeth (Forman) Colburn. He was a lifelong resident of the area. He was the husband of the late Patricia (Macie) Colburn. Wilfred was a machine operator for many years at G.S. Precision in Brattleboro. When not working, he enjoyed NASCAR racing and restoring old cars. He was an enthusiastic member of the Kingsbury Bowling League in



Keene, New Hampshire. Wilfred leaves behind his four sisters, Esther Mae Colburn of Maryland, Alice Reanaude of Rockingham, Jackie Hazelton of West Brattleboro, and Sylvia Colburn of Claremont, New Hampshire, as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Visitation will be held on Thursday, May 18, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with funeral services beginning at 1 p.m. at Ker Phaneuf Funeral Home, 57 High St., Brattleboro. Cemetery committal will follow at Morningside Cemetery in Brattleboro. Donations to a charity of your choosing.

• **Steven Gay, 45**, died suddenly on April 24, 2023 in Brattleboro. Steven was born on May 13, 1977 in Danbury, Connecticut to the late Alice and Gary Gay Sr. Steve attended schools in Bellows Falls and grew up in Saxtons River. Steven loved music and had a kind heart. Steve is survived by his stepfather, Ray White of Athens; his brothers Gary Gay Jr. of Athens and Joshua Gay of Vernon; sisters Theresa Gay of Brattleboro and Carrie Riendeau of Brattleboro; as well as many nephews, nieces, great-nephews, a great-niece, and many friends. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life is to be held at a later date.

• **Adelaide "Addie" Warner Minott, 91**, of Guilford. Died peacefully in her home on May 2, 2023. Adelaide was born Jan. 13, 1932 in Greenwich, Connecticut, the youngest daughter of Norman Gilbert Warner and Adelaide Stocking Milne Warner. Addie attended the Stoneleigh Prospect Hill School (now the Stoneleigh Burnham School) in Greenfield, Massachusetts. She graduated in 1950 and then attended Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, graduating in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in physical education. Adelaide married Addison Dean Minott of Brattleboro on Sept. 5, 1953. They first met at a square dance at the Broad Brook Grange in Guilford Center and they would have celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary this September. Adelaide was very active in her community, especially her beloved village of Green River. Addie and her sister, Mary Francis, arrived in Green River in 1944 to live with her Aunt "Cele" and Uncle "Sib." Addie knew the history of the village well and frequently gave history tours and presentations during village celebrations. She and Addison helped in the formation of the Green River Village Preservation Trust for the ongoing maintenance and preservation of the village, including the historic crib dam and the Green River Church. She and Addison earned the Preservation Trust of Vermont Recognition Award in 1999. Addie was very active in the Guilford Historical Society; she served as President and as co-chair of Guilford's 250th celebration in 2011. She and Addison helped organize and manage the Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge for the Vermont Historical Society for over 10 years. Addie represented the Guilford Historical Society at the Vermont History Expo, designing the booth and the costumes. Addie was a pioneer in the development of women's sports. She played field hockey in her youth, and was an accomplished ice skater, swimmer, and synchronized swimmer. She served as an aquatics instructor and lifeguard for the Brattleboro Recreation Department. She was an accomplished sailor having

spent many summers on her father's boat on Long Island Sound. Eventually, Addie took her love of sport and became an educator teaching physical education in Weathersfield, Vernon, and Brattleboro Union High School, where she also coached field hockey and gymnastics. She represented Vermont for the National Association of Girls & Women in Sport, (NAWGS), and as president of the NAWGS State Presidents; just as Title IX passed to protect equity for generations of young women to come. Addie was active in supporting education, serving on the Brattleboro Union High School Board of Directors and the Guilford School Board. She served as a Trustee of the Stoneleigh Prospect School, and was active in the Windham County Retired Teachers Association and the American Association of University Women (AAUW), of which she was president of the Brattleboro Branch as well as book sale chairman for 10 years. Addie was a member of the Vermont Girl Scout Council for many years, serving as a trainer, troop leader and day camp director in North Springfield. Adelaide was a member of the Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro since 1958 where she taught Sunday School, serving on the Education Committee and Building and Grounds Committee. Addie loved to sew, sewing her own wedding dress, wedding dresses for her daughters, bridesmaid and flower girl dresses, prom dresses, and clothes for children and grandchildren. She loved needlework, knitting, quilting, and making teddy bears. She and Addison maintained a large garden at their farm in Green River. They sugared, preserved, and froze from their garden and she made many jars of strawberry rhubarb jam and mint jelly for friends and family. She made the most amazing pies for holidays and loved hosting large family Thanksgivings in Green River. Adelaide was very proud of her Scottish Heritage from her grandfather Milne's family. She was a Mayflower descendant and a member of The Society of Middletown (Conn.), First Settlers Descendants for the Stocking Family. Adelaide is survived by her husband; daughters Celia Adelaide Minott Slason and her husband Lawrence of Keene, New Hampshire and Priscilla Hunt Minott Demovellan and her husband Lorenzo of Westwood, Massachusetts; sons Addison Dean Minott Jr. and his wife Marcia (Murray) of North Andover, Massachusetts and Christopher Milne Minott and his wife Karrin (Hoising) of Washington, D.C.; grandchildren Jonathan Slason and his wife Sara Lovitz, Laura Dobens and her husband Brett, Jennifer Sestito and her husband Nick, John Eric Demovellan and his partner Kayla Ochoa, Christa Bentley and her husband Austin, Katelynn Minott and her husband Rodolfo Sanchez, Meagan Kobiarski and her husband Kyle, Addison Paul Minott and his wife Christine, Angela Minott, Calvin and Adelaide Minott; and great-grandchildren Ezekiel and Gabriel Lovitz-Slason, Fletcher and Marguerite Dobens, Lyla Sestito, Nicolas, Ana Sofia, and Olivia Sanchez-Minott, Emma,



Ellie, Annabel, and Isla Kobiarski, and Pearl, Addison Basil, and Chauncey Minott. Adelaide is also survived by her sister Mary Francis Warner Whitney of West Yarmouth, Massachusetts, sister-in-law Joanne Minott Hayward of Keene, and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. Adelaide was predeceased by her parents; her aunt and uncle, Celia and Otis Sibley; her sister Barbara Cruickshank Warner Maslen; brothers-in-law Edward Whitney, Jack Maslen, and Donald Hayward; and Addison's parents, Chauncey and Dorothy Badger Minott. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of her life will be held at the Green River Church in Green River Village in Guilford on June 17 at 11 a.m. A graveside service will be scheduled for a later date for the family. Donations to the Green River Village Preservation Trust, in care of Lynn Pancake, 1082 Green River Rd., Guilford, VT 05301; Guilford Historical Society, in care of Scott Knickerbocker, School Road, Guilford, VT 05301; or Guilford Cares Inc., P.O. Box 2517, Brattleboro, VT 05301. To send condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Laura Pluto Murphy, 71**, of Burlington. Died on May 5, 2023 of pancreatic cancer. She was born on April 24, 1952 at Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. Her dad was a Navy captain, and each sibling was born in a different state. Growing up, she lived in at least 6 states and at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during the Revolution. As a teenager, she traveled throughout Europe taking care of the children of a diplomat. After Fort Hunt High School, she first went to Boston University, but transferred to the University of Virginia, graduating in 1974. She completed course work for a Master of Public Administration degree at George Washington University. She worked as a consultant in welfare policy, first at Moshman Associates and then as one of the original staff at Maximus. When Laura met Liam, her husband-to-be for 40 years, on their first date in June 1978 at Bamiyan in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C., she figured out how, between them, they could order everything on the menu. She was a foodie who loved to cook and try different foods. She read recipes and cookbooks as novels that would carry her away to a world of flavors and textures. She remembered the taste and smells of dishes eaten decades ago. She and Liam began traveling almost immediately after they met. Together, they visited 49 countries and all seven continents. She was always ready to pack a single suitcase for a week or three, even with just a few clues as to where she would be traveling on the "surprise" trips Liam arranged for them. Laura was a great mother and sibling. Daniel was born when she was 40, and Brendan when she was 42. She was loving, dedicated, and caring, providing the support and time each child needed. She was most proud of raising two fine men. She remained close to her Pluto family and became another sister in the Murphy family. In Vermont, Laura worked at Champlain Valley Agency on Aging from 1988 to 2016, initially as an outreach

social worker and then in a variety of roles including the Senior Helpline, Caregiver Respite Grant coordinator, and Transportation Services manager. She created a volunteer driver program, providing rides for seniors and people with disabilities. Laura was always willing to engage in a new adventure or challenge, whether it was buying and remodeling an old house on Capitol Hill, moving to Vermont to start a bed and breakfast, or building a house on an island in Lake Champlain. She was strong, and she always worked hard. No fuss, no drama, just get it done. Even when facing the worst, Laura always kept her good humor. She never complained about the unfairness of the cancer. She stayed optimistic. She always said, "you just have to laugh about it." Instead of having her family and friends have a remembrance of her life after she passed, she wanted a party beforehand, where she could attend, visit, and share memories. Laura is survived by her husband Liam Murphy of Burlington, (a 1972 graduate of Brattleboro Union High School); their children Daniel Murphy and daughter-in-law Lindsay Jones and their son, Brennan, of Louisville, Kentucky and Brendan Murphy of Charlestown, Massachusetts; her siblings and their families, Dianna and Bill Green and Donna Johnson of Bethlehem, New Hampshire, Valerie and Jonathan Sobel of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Michael and Carin Pluto of Boise, Idaho, and Patrick Pluto of Leesburg, Virginia; and by her more than "in-law" Murphy family, including Liam's siblings and their families: John Murphy, Sylvester and Colleen Murphy, and Kathleen Wellington, all of Brattleboro; Bridget and Michael Leclair of Chesterfield, New Hampshire, and James Murphy of Westmoreland, New Hampshire. She was predeceased by Mary and James McAlister and Dinah Dromgoole. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In memory of Laura, consider a contribution to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network at support.pancan.org/goto/LauraMurphy.

• **Paul R. Lyman** will be on Saturday, May 20, at 1 p.m., at the Veteran's Home in Bennington, under the Pavillion by the Trout Pond. Paul's favorite dessert will be served after the celebration — Apple Barn cider donuts and maple ice cream. Come share your memories as his family shares theirs.

• A memorial gathering and pot luck will be held for **Douglas Lawton "Joe" March** on Wednesday, May 24, at 5 p.m., at the Guilford Fairgrounds. Mr. March, 79, a member of the Brattleboro Union High School Class of 1962, died on March 27, 2023 at his home in Warren, Maine.

• A celebration of life for **Paul R. Lyman** will be on Saturday, May 20, at 1 p.m., at the Veteran's Home in Bennington, under the Pavillion by the Trout Pond. Paul's favorite dessert will be served after the celebration — Apple Barn cider donuts and maple ice cream. Come share your memories as his family shares theirs.

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Services



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

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thy atheist neighbor
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thy disabled neighbor
thy indigenous neighbor
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Estey Organ Museum opens for season May 20

BRATTLEBORO — Beautifully crafted instruments, made in Brattleboro: That's what you can see, hear, and play when you visit the Estey Organ Museum this season. As part of its mission to collect, preserve, and interpret the physical and cultural heritage of the Estey Organ Company (1846-1960), one of the world's largest organ manufacturers, the museum displays instruments dating as far back as the mid-1800s. Museum volunteers periodically offer organs and organ parts to the public. "Estey is unique in that anyone who comes to visit is turned into an instant musician," museum volunteers said in a news

release. "Unlike what we're used to in most museums, the hosts in this museum say to all visitors — adults and children alike — 'Please touch: Please sit down and play, please make the reed and pipe organs come alive again.' Visitors even have the opportunity of walking through a pipe organ to see how the mechanism works." In addition to the organs, the museum has a significant collection of music sheets, instructional books for amateur organists, catalogs, trade cards, advertising materials published by the company, and photographs of the buildings and workforce. A display on loan from the Brattleboro Historical Society

explores Brattleboro's industrial past. It includes an introductory video about the Estey Organ Company and an ornate Carpenter organ like the one on display at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. The museum urges guests to allow at least half an hour for their visit. "There is a lot to see," museum volunteers write. The museum, at 108 Birge St., will be open Saturdays from 2 to 4 p.m., from May 20 through Oct. 14 or by special arrangement. Admission is \$5 (free to museum members). For more information, to arrange a visit, to join the museum, or to contact the museum, visit esteyorganmuseum.org.

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O Musical! *Miraculous art! A blast of thy trumpet and millions rush forward to die; a peal of thy organ and uncounted nations sink down to pray.* —BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Motel program ends

to, categorical eligibility that was extended from this past winter — will exit Brattleboro motels,” Bennett said. “On July 1, another group of people will be exiting the motels — potentially everyone remaining in the program — including 52 children.”

How we got here

During the pandemic, when federal money created the voucher program to get people off the streets, motels seemed like the best answer to the problem. The program, which housed approximately 3,000 people statewide, is credited with keeping infections low. As the pandemic diminished, so did the federal funding, so the state picked up the bill for the rooms.

By many measures, the voucher program is coming to a natural end as the national state of emergency expired on May 11.

Some motels have decided to end participation in the program and return to engaging in the tourist trade. Others are having trouble finding staff. Others face complaints from those they are paid to house.

“[T]enants routinely complain that basic services traditionally offered at hotels, like clean sheets and toilet paper, are often withheld, while even more serious complaints abound, including severe plumbing problems, mold, chronic bed bug infestations, and doors that won’t lock,” VTDigger reported on March 13.

This year, Gov. Phil Scott’s administration said the state could not afford to fund the program any further.

Obviously, the motel vouchers were never meant to be the long-term solution to homelessness in Vermont. For one thing, the cost is prohibitive. According to the DFC, “The average cost of a hotel room through the GA Emergency Housing program is \$148 per night.”

Do the math: \$148 for one room, times 30 days in a month, comes out to \$4,440. To put that in perspective, an apartment at the recently restored Brooks House on Main Street, one of the most desirable addresses in Brattleboro, is significantly less.

The cost to the state of this program has been estimated at over \$50 million a year. VTDigger has estimated the cost at \$7 million to \$8 million per month, based on its own analysis of the state funding data.

A humanitarian crisis

The current situation is being called a humanitarian crisis by a number of important players. On May 10, a group of legislators, including Reps. Michelle Bos-Lun, D-Rockingham, and Mollie Burke, D-Brattleboro, sent out a press release that began:

“The mass eviction of 1,800 households, more than 2,500 people, is a humanitarian crisis. A crisis caused not by natural disaster, but by the willful indifference of a handful of leaders across state government making decisions that will unquestionably harm people. We know that the money is available to appropriate.

“This is a moral and political problem, not a money problem. We know that there is a better way forward. The Legislature has an opportunity to create a humane transition plan for Vermonters facing an immediate loss of shelter as the Covid-era rules for the General Assistance Emergency Housing program come to an end.”

The voucher situation — with massive uncertainty about its future — has been steadily building for years.

“Unfortunately, the end to this program has apparently been promised several times, and it looks like now it is actually real,”

Potter said.

Federal funding for the program was set to expire at the end of 2020, with the pandemic still roaring at full bore. Hundreds were forced from the program in mid-2021 as the Scott administration attempted to shut it down.

But the program stayed intact as Covid resurged, and later that year, anti-poverty advocate Brenda Siegel staged a protest on the steps of the Statehouse over 27 days and nights to pressure the Scott administration into extending the program to all homeless Vermonters.

“We are trying to understand the magnitude of the issue,” said Bos-Lun. “We’re understanding that maybe about 80 people or so will no longer be in protected categories at the end of May. And understand that the Agency for Human Services and a number of partners are working hard to help these folks that will no longer be eligible and come up with a plan for what happens on June 1.”

Last week, the town and local officials from the Vermont Agency of Human Services convened a Community Homelessness Strategy Team to look at the community impact of the motel exodus.

Groundworks, which ordinarily would take point on the issue, suffered a severe loss in April when a client brutally killed one of its staff. The traumatic incident shut down the nonprofit for a period of grieving and regrouping.

“We continue to reopen Groundworks programming with a phased approach after the three-week pause in frontline operations, during which scores of community partners kept services in place for the people we serve — allowing staff to grieve the tragic loss of our coworker, Leah Rosin-Pritchard,” Bennett said.

The end of the voucher program couldn’t have come at a worse time for Groundworks. Still, it is rallying.

“We recognize that Groundworks’ services are a key component of our overall community response to this crisis and we are pleased to be collaborating with the state, town, and our community partners on solutions,” Bennett said.

“The group will continue to meet every week to address this crisis through an emergency management model,” she said. “The faith community will be organizing a tent drive for usable tents and camping supplies.”

Lawmakers oppose funding

With the governor backing out, the Legislature could have stepped up to put funding for the program in its budget — it has the ability, should it choose, to override gubernatorial vetoes this year. It chose not to.

“Continuing the hotel-motel program, even for any additional short period of time, really robs us of the resources that we need in order to move forward into something that is going to be more sustainable for us and to invest in more permanent changes,” Rep. Theresa Wood,

FROM SECTION FRONT

D-Waterbury, told VTDigger.

Furious, Progressive Party legislators mounted a campaign to change legislators’ minds.

“We want to make it clear to you that we cannot support a budget that will cause a humanitarian crisis in our state,” six Chittenden County legislators wrote to their colleagues in a letter shared as a press release on May 5. “The Administration has shown us time and time again that they do not and will not support Vermont’s most vulnerable residents[...]. We are at a crossroads.”

The Progressives asked for, among other things, \$76 million to fully fund the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program “and establish a humane-based policy in statute to support Vermonters until we develop long-term, supportive housing options.”

Many of Windham County’s Democratic legislators felt the same way.

“Many of us within our delegation have been working to head off this humanitarian disaster,” said Rep. Tristan Toleno, D-Brattleboro. “In my case, it began in January when I realized we were poised to begin the un-housing in April for about one-third of the current participants. I proposed an additional \$7 million to extend the Covid eligibility rules for all until the end of the fiscal year. My assumption was that it would give us time to craft a long-term solution.

“The Senate then cut back the last month of eligibility for the so-called ‘non-prioritized population,’ which is those who are under 60, single, or are not on SSDI [Social Security Disability Insurance]. This woke me up to the political dynamic we are in, where the governor and key leaders in the Legislature are aligned around ending the program without a comprehensive plan.”

Toleno said that “it is not an exaggeration to say that I have tried to use every tool I have learned in my 11 years here to persuade us to shift course. At this point, I think we will not have a comprehensive package.”

He said he is “crushed.” “I know that if this is true, we have failed our most vulnerable,” Toleno continued. “As a member of House Appropriations, I know that the long-term costs of our failure will be more expensive than an extension of the emergency program.”

In the end, before the Legislature adjourned on May 12, House and Senate budget negotiators put an extra \$12.5 million in the budget for local service providers.

“Today, the House has taken a significant step in addressing Vermont’s housing crisis,” stated Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski in her closing remarks. “The budget is the culmination of months of work that reflects the commitment and dedication of the legislature toward building a resilient, more inclusive Vermont.”

Calling the \$8.4 billion budget “a reflection of our values,”



Michelle Bos-Lun, in her second term as state representative, is one of 17 Progressive members who did not vote with their Democrat leadership to approve the budget. For them, the budget must fund “a responsible, compassionate transition out of hotel housing,” she says.

Krowinski said it “addresses critical areas such as housing assistance, health care, education, workforce development, and the infrastructure vital in improving all Vermonters’ lives.”

Despite Krowinski’s upbeat tone, 17 legislators, including Bos-Lun, voted against the budget because of the abrupt ending of the voucher system.

“A lot of important policy is reflected in this budget which can benefit Vermont and Vermonters, but it is missing one critical allocation: funding a responsible, compassionate transition out of hotel housing,” said Bos-Lun. “I do believe the program needs to be phased out, but in a careful way that supports both the needs of individuals and our communities.”

Bos-Lun, who has worked as a case manager with homeless youth, said that at the beginning of the pandemic, she worked with some individuals who were sheltered in hotels.

“I cannot support a bill that evicts every individual currently housed in hotels without time to make supportive plans,” she said. “A director of a Vermont emergency housing program told me he was trying to get sleeping bags and tents to send current hotel residents out with some form of shelter.”

She called that measure “inadequate and inhumane.”

“With a bit more time and coordination, better options could be secured to make a smoother transition for all,” Bos-Lun continued. “I cannot support a budget that sends Vermonters out of temporary housing onto the

streets, into the woods, or to living in their cars. This was the hardest vote I ever cast, but I had to vote no.”

The budget was still passed, and the voucher program remained unfunded.

“This is a crisis for our community and communities throughout the state,” Bennett said. “Any solution that is not permanent housing transfers this crisis to persist in a new form.”

How and why?

If it looks like homelessness is increasing, that’s because it is.

The number of persons in the state who experience homelessness — measured on Jan. 26, 2022 in Vermont’s annual Point in Time Count — was 2,112, according to Martin Hahn, the executive director of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness. In 2023, that number was 2,537, an increase of 20%.

“Motels are not a long-term solution but better than nothing,” said Rep. Mike Mrowicki, D-Dummerston. “That’s why the big-picture plan is to continue efforts to build more housing for all segments of the population. We need workforce housing, housing for the homeless, and [housing] for those a paycheck away from being without a home. We need all of these pieces of the puzzle, since all the housing we build takes pressure off the system.”

The housing crisis goes back a long way. Some blame the rising cost of construction. Some blame Act 250, the state’s land-use and development law. Some blame the fact that a builder can earn more for building a million-dollar

mansion than for putting up affordable housing.

But in fact, according to Elizabeth Bridgewater, the executive director of the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust, you can date the problem to 1987, to the creation of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Vermont housing and Conservation Trust Fund, subsidized by a portion of the property transfer tax.

“In the statute, 50% of the property transfer tax was awarded to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board,” Bridgewater said. “The rest was intended to support affordable housing.”

However, Bridgewater said, “there is a provision called ‘Notwithstanding past statute.’ It enables future legislators to respond to current needs, regardless of the commitments that they made in the past.”

This creates a loophole that has allowed the Legislature to underfund housing for decades.

“When you talk to folks who have been following the implications of this during this time period, they estimate that over 1,000 housing units could have been built during that time had it been funded at full statutory levels,” Bridgewater said.

What’s next?

Groundworks is planning to phase in additional overnight beds in its South Main Street Drop-In shelter over the coming weeks, subject to its ability to adequately staff the program, Bennett said.

Similarly, the nonprofit’s day shelter will ramp up morning, afternoon, and evening hours. Daytime services will continue to be closed from noon to 2 p.m. daily for cleaning and staff training.

Morningside House, where the slaying took place, is closed indefinitely “while we figure out next steps,” Bennett said.

Some of the disenfranchised will move to the couches and spare rooms of friends or families. Some will sleep in their cars. Some will sleep in tents because the weather is becoming warmer and more welcoming. Some will continue to sleep on the benches in Pliny Park.

But come what may, the first part of the motel voucher program ends in two weeks. And by the end of June, an extra 179 households will be homeless in Brattleboro.

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Parker, Damkoehler to switch administrative roles at BUHS

'Collaborative' leadership model now in place after unsuccessful outside search for principal

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Come September, Brattleboro Union High School administrators Hannah Parker and Cassie Damkoehler will switch roles after an advertised search for a new principal failed — and caused some upset.

Following the second of four May 9 executive sessions, the Windham Southeast School District Board voted to appoint current Assistant Principal Parker as interim principal and current Interim Principal Damkoehler as assistant principal.

Current Interim Assistant Principal Traci Lane, who is filling in for Chris Day while he is on a two-year leave to serve on active duty with the National Guard, and Interim Dean of Students Chris Brewer will continue in those positions next school year.

The vote came after an April vote when the board approved the recommendation of a search committee selected by Superintendent Mark Speno to hire Tom Ronning, who had served as interim principal at Fall Mountain Regional High School in Langdon, New Hampshire, and had also been assistant principal there from 2001 to 2007.

However, Ronning had already taken a job in a different district by the time the board offered him the post here.

Speno spoke at the May 9 meeting, saying that “as we move forward with the BUHS school and leadership model,” he was recommending “reorganization of the administrative team,” which, he said, had been a collaborative effort.

“And that’s how we will move forward with our collaborative leadership team,” Speno said. “I think the future is bright.”

Following the vote, board members applauded.

Not so easy

While the superintendent is ultimately in charge of bringing a candidate to the school board for approval, the process can, apparently, look different from district to district.

In the case of the BUHS principal search, a committee of administrators, staff members, students, and a parent was formed by Speno.

“I developed a process that included all stakeholders,” Speno said. “This led to a recommendation to the board. By the time the board was able to consider the recommendation, the candidate accepted a different position. Luckily for us, we have four dedicated administrators who now have a year of experience in place working with the school community.”

“Over the course of three weeks, I worked collaboratively with the BUHS admin team and BUHS staff identifying strengths, challenges, and passions in reflecting on this school year and planning for the 2023-24 school year. The school board has been very supportive of this work, and we are excited to move forward collectively.”

That’s not how all school directors saw it.

“The school board didn’t have any part in the search process, though two members were on the search committee,” said board member Lana Dever.

“I and the other board members of color were rather blindsided when we found out that two board members had been chosen to serve on the committee without knowledge of the full board,” she said. “We can’t do the broadest search if all stakeholders aren’t included.”



Cassie Damkoehler, Traci Lane, and Hannah Parker

The Commons has asked Speno to address and clarify Dever’s public remarks, but he did not do so by press time.

Why the switch?

Damkoehler was known to be among the candidates interviewed, but no explanation of why the names of other candidates were not disclosed to the public has been forthcoming from the board or administration.

At one point in the process, Damkoehler withdrew her name. At the time, no explanation was given, but this week she told *The Commons* that she had “a variety of reasons” for withdrawing.

“I have three children at home, and I’ve worked a tremendous amount this year,” she said. “I also recognize that although I feel very positive about our leadership this year, I would like the opportunity to learn more and grow in the AP position.”

Damkoehler said that one of the most challenging parts of being interim principal “was the amount it takes me away from students.”

“We have created such a collaborative model of leadership that I fully trust we will stay on the positive trajectory we’re on, regardless of titles,” she added.

In April, after Damkoehler withdrew her name from the possibilities, parent and search panel member Lisa Ford was quoted in a *Reformer* story as questioning the board and saying members exhibited a lack of urgency and “bias” in deciding whether to support the recommended hiring of Ronning.

At the meeting, Dever took issue, saying, “The accusation of bias in the principal hiring

process from a member of the hiring committee is predicated upon the notion that my work and that of my fellow board members is unnecessary and in fact detrimental to the community. I would like to take this opportunity to respond directly.

“For the past year I have listened as accusations and conspiracy theories have run rampant — many making their way into the pages of our local paper and often with a consistent genesis. These words are not innocuous. They do what they are intended to do; they stir doubt and confusion, they divide and instill fear where there should be community and healthy discourse.

“Let me be clear: as a woman of color, these accusations cause harm. They make it difficult to do the job for which I was elected. They make me lose faith in my community, and they cause other women to question if being a public servant is worth their safety and mental well being.

“To accuse women of color of bias for not hiring a white man is either willfully ignorant or worse — knowingly weaponizing cultural and systemic racism. I will not sit by for either. I was elected to do a job that includes making tough decisions for the betterment of our schools and our future. I will not be bullied into anything less.”

The principal’s hiring was precipitated by the firing of former Principal Steven Perrin, who is now appealing the board’s decision in Superior Court.

Speno has said a new look at the hiring process and potential new search for a permanent principal will likely commence in the winter.

Red Knights plan ‘Ride to Remember’ to help those battling cancer

VERNON—In 2001, a small group of active and retired firefighters joined together to create the Vermont Chapter II of the Red Knights here in southern Vermont/New Hampshire. The Red Knights are an international organization of firefighters who enjoy riding motorcycles.

To put more meaning to the mission of the Chapter, in 2002, the group created its inaugural “Paul’s Ride” in memory of David Emery’s brother Paul McAuliffe and his valiant fight against cancer. For 20 years, the ride has been a favorite of riders from all over New England.

Over the past 20 years, Chapter II’s fundraisers have helped more than 150 individuals annually, and the club says it wants to be able to

do even more to “help our neighbors beat cancer.”

On Saturday, May 20, at the Vernon Recreation Center, they will initiate a new “Ride to Remember,” honoring all who fight cancer every day. The event includes the ride, a cookout, live music, and a raffle with prizes from local businesses.

The public is invited to ride or drive the route, or just come for the other events. Registration begins at 9 a.m., and the cookout starts at noon, with the raffle and silent auction to follow.

Tickets are \$25 per person. Contact Red Knights Vermont Chapter II President Joy Ellis at 802-380-5462 for more information.

Guilford Free Library’s ‘Send a Kid to Camp’ raffle on again this year

GUILFORD—Friday, June 9, from 5 to 7 p.m., the Rear Defrosters will play at what has become an annual summer concert in the Guilford Fairgrounds Cattle Barn.

This will be the Library’s second year hosting the Rear Defrosters, a honky tonk, country-soul, rock-n-roll band, whose players come from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Western Massachusetts.

This year’s Send a Kid to Camp Raffle drawing will be held during the concert to help fund the Library’s summer camp, which offers three weeks of free programming for Guilford students who’ve completed any grade from kindergarten through eighth grade. Interested parties may visit guilfordfreelibraryvt.org/summer-camp-2023 for more information.

Raffle tickets are \$10 and can be purchased in person at the library, 4024 Guilford Center Road, on the library website, or by contacting a Library Trustee or Friend of the Library.

Prize winners will receive two \$50 gift certificates to the following pairs of local businesses: Hidden Bean Bakeshop and Green River Inn, Guilford Country Store and Embue Cacao, or Hermit Thrush Homestead and Tapalou Guilds.

The library will keep a list of raffle entries and use a random number generator to select three winners. Winners do not need to be present at the June 9 drawing to win. Absent winners will be contacted by a member of the Friends of the Library after the event if they are not present.

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Topics to explore together:

- Substance Use Disorders
- Prevention
- Treatment
- Youth, seniors, & everyone else
- Harm Reduction
- Experiencing crime
- Experiencing homelessness
- Accountability with compassion & nonjudgement

CSUR is a collaborative effort that includes Voices of Hope, Turning Point of Windham County, the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, Building Positive Community, Grace Cottage Hospital, Meetinghouse Solutions, and others in the community.



Funding by the VT Dept. of Health Division of Substance Use

Putney native Kati Schwartz brings ‘Indecent’ — the story of an ‘incendiary drama’ — to Next Stage Arts as a direct challenge to increasing antisemitism and aggression toward LGBTQ+ people in our society

THEATER *as an act of* resistance

Sarah Hogewood, left, and Kati Schwartz rehearse a scene from “Indecent” at Next Stage in Putney.

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

PUTNEY—“In response to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation against trans folks that’s on the rise and, especially, as a response to antisemitism that’s now palpable in New York City.”

That’s the reason Putney native and actor/playwright Kati Schwartz is bringing *Indecent*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula

Vogel, to Next Stage Arts at the end of the month.

Now based in New York City, Schwartz, whose energy and mission are behind the upcoming production, is an alumna of Putney Central School who went on to The Putney School, where she worked in theater with Karla Baldwin, the school’s former academic dean and drama director.

Having availed herself of the area’s performing arts offerings, Schwartz recalls formative times at both New England Youth Theatre and at Brattleboro School of Dance. A silks performer and musician as well, she started playing clarinet in grade school and performed in the jazz ensemble at Putney School. Having started at Bard College, she continued her theater training at London’s Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Schwartz’s plays, honored by the New York New Works Theatre Festival, Eugene O’Neill Theater Center National

■ SEE ‘INDECENT’, B2

Marlboro Music gets set for its 2023 season

MARLBORO—Every summer at Marlboro Music, an international, multi-generational community forms anew, comprising some 80 professional musicians, as well as staff members, spouses, and children.

For seven decades, it has been Marlboro’s mission to mentor emerging artists, to provide nearly unlimited rehearsal time and artistic freedom, and to create a nurturing community with a joyful and loving spirit, surrounded by the verdant beauty of southern Vermont.

The 2023 season of Marlboro Music concerts will take place on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons from July 15 through Aug. 13 in Persons Auditorium on the Potash Hill campus in Marlboro.

There will be two additional evening performances on Friday, Aug. 4—the annual Town Benefit Concert at the Marlboro Dining Hall, with all proceeds supporting Marlboro town organizations — and on Aug. 11 at Persons Auditorium.

Known worldwide as an institution devoted to artistic excellence and to developing new leaders who illuminate all areas of music, Marlboro is where the concept of having master artists play together with exceptional young professionals was born, “initiating a dynamic, collaborative approach to learning,” organizers say.

Under the artistic direction of pianists Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss, the artists form more than 60 chamber music ensembles each week, working together intensively for seven weeks.

Five weekends of public performances emanate from this program. While the concerts feature only about a quarter of the hundreds of ensembles that rehearse each summer, “they represent the exceptionally high standards and spirit of collegiality and artistic discovery that characterize all of the groups,” organizers say.

Concert programs are selected from those groups that have worked to “especially

satisfying” results. For this reason, specific programs and artists are determined and announced only about one week in advance of each concert.

This season, Marlboro will welcome 20 first-year participants, representing nearly half the total number of young artists in residence. Their talent and sense of discovery brings a fresh and vital energy to the whole community.

There will be five new senior musicians — including cellist Marie Bitloch (of the Elias Quartet), Alberto Menéndez Escribano (former principal horn of the BBC Philharmonic), and tenor Mark Padmore (who will work on Bach Cantatas with Marlboro’s young singers).

Helmut Lachenmann will be this season’s composer in residence. This will be a rare U.S. visit for the 87-year-old German composer who is acclaimed for adventurous works “whose aim is the simplest and most direct that you can have as a composer—a desire to create beauty and transcendence” (*The Guardian*).

This summer’s roster, of course, also includes many senior artists, such as Uchida and Biss, who first spent formative summers in Vermont at the beginning of their careers and have returned to share their Marlboro and personal musical experiences with new generations.

They include pianists Anna Polonsky and Cynthia Raim, and current and past members of the Guarneri, JACK, Johannes, Juilliard, Mendelssohn, Orion, and St. Lawrence Quartets, and orchestra principals such as clarinetist Anthony McGill (New York Philharmonic) and oboist Nathan Hughes (Met Opera).

The vocal program will be led by returning artists Lydia Brown, Anja Strauss, and Benita Valente, and they are also delighted to welcome back two senior vocal artists, soprano Lucy Fitz Gibbon and mezzo-soprano Jennifer Johnson Cano.

Described by *The New*

■ SEE MARLBORO MUSIC, B2



COURTESY PHOTO



“Daffodils” (2019) by David Rohn.

COURTESY PHOTO

Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts hosts exhibition by David Rohn

BRATTLEBORO—Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main Street, presents “David Rohn: As I See It,” an exhibition of watercolors and oil paintings, opening with an artist reception Saturday, May 27, from 5 to 7 p.m. The show continues through June 9, and all are invited to an artist talk scheduled for Saturday, June 17, at 5 p.m.

Rohn was the anchor and chairman of the Windham College art department. Upon the college’s closing, he taught in New Jersey and New York, but maintained his studio in Putney. He has shown in the United States and abroad, and has been a longtime exhibitor at Mitchell-Giddings.

Whether in Rohn’s still-life watercolors or oils, states a news release, “a singular vision is suggested within the balance of broadly painted open passages of color and casually placed household objects, a shared compositional structure.” The artist says he feels the harmony is already present; it’s his

gift and insight which transform the informal, personal observation into a rich and collectively shared experience.

“The marvelous paradox is that in painting the small and ordinary objects of his everyday life, Rohn endows them with an extraordinary vitality, making them larger than they really are,” wrote Richard Muhberger in *David Rohn’s Watercolors: 1969–1984*. “We are grateful to him for having found an imaginative and richly contradictory truth inherent in these objects — the rare wonder of their everyday existence, the great and enduring qualities of their fleeting forms.”

The gallery is open Thursdays through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays, noon to 5 p.m. For more information, call 802-251-8290, email info@mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com, or visit mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com.

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COURTESY PHOTO

The 2023 summer season of Marlboro Music begins on July 15.

Marlboro Music

Yorker as “the classical world’s most coveted retreat,” Marlboro Music has attracted distinguished concert artists and promising emerging instrumentalists and singers to its idyllic Southern Vermont campus.

Founded in 1951 by the eminent pianist Rudolf Serkin and co-founders Adolf and Hermann Busch and Marcel, Blanche, and

Louis Moysé, “Marlboro continues to thrive today under the leadership of Uchida and Biss, remaining true to its core ideals while incorporating fresh ideas and inspiration,” say organizers.

Tickets are on sale and may be ordered online at marlboromusic.org or by contacting Box Office Manager, Patrick

La Vecchia-Burke, at 215-569-4690 or pburke@marlboromusic.org. Seating is reserved, with tickets priced from \$20 to \$40. There will also be free open rehearsals during the day in Persons Auditorium, beginning the week of July 10; audience members may contact the Marlboro reception desk each week this summer for more information at 802-254-2394.

FROM SECTION FRONT

‘Indecent’

Playwrights Conference, the Hollywood Fringe Festival, and others, have been produced off-Broadway and in regional theater venues.

Her acting credits include *The Wolves* at the Studio Theatre (Washington, D.C.), for which she won a Helen Hayes Award, as well as roles in *August: Osage County* at The Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and *Robin Hood* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts, for which she was an on-stage musician, playing recorder and clarinet.

A frequent improvisational performer, she’s been seen in several venues, including Upright Citizens Brigade in New York and The Groundlings in Los Angeles. Recently, her *Bad People*—which premiered at New York’s Dixon Place—has garnered attention as an audio play, listed online as a “hilarious and poignant window into the mind of a [metoo era], grief-stricken young woman.”

In film and TV, Schwartz recently finished filming *Lars Shrike Walks the Night* with Kelsey Grammer and will appear in Season 5 of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

A play within a play
Indecent, co-created by Vogel with Rebecca Taichman, has its

inspiration in the frenzy-generating 1923 Broadway production of Sholem Asch’s *The God of Vengeance*, which centers on the erotic awakening between two women.

According to a synopsis from its publisher, Dramatists Play Service, Inc., that 100-year-old play was “seen by some as a seminal work of Jewish culture, and by others as an act of traitorous libel. *Indecent* charts the history of an incendiary drama and the path of the artists who risked their careers and lives to perform it.”

Key to the scandal in the original *Vengeance* was the first lesbian kiss on an American stage. Shortly after the play moved to Broadway, where it became a hit, the kiss was cut, but the play caused an uproar still because of its lesbian themes.

According to an article in *The New York Times* in March 1923, the producer and cast of *Indecent* were indicted “for violating the penal code in giving an alleged indecent, immoral, and impure theatrical performance.”

A play within a play, the structure of Vogel’s 2015 *Indecent* assumes the audience is watching a production of *Vengeance*, over the span of a few decades.

FROM SECTION FRONT

to Broadway, garnering one Tony Award and three Tony nominations.

According to a 2021 review in *The Guardian* by Mark Lawson, “As the years tick down like a bomb, the defining moral horror of the 20th century waits at the end of the fuse.”

Lawson’s review cites the play’s exploration of “the histories of antisemitism, Jewish culture, and the debate between assimilation and celebration of identity” and called it a “a brainy play staged with the panache of a musical.”

‘A play about banned material’

About the upcoming Next Stage production, directed by Ellie Handel, Schwartz says, “It’s an act of resistance to mount it.”

She wants to share the work with her hometown, because “people now seem to feel empowered to share transphobic, queerphobic, homophobic rhetoric in such a way that it’s suddenly considered acceptable.”

In New York, she says, “I’ve noticed a lot of outright antisemitism. I see it now in graffiti and in the things people say. And some of my Jewish friends have experienced antisemitism directed at them.”

Schwartz likens the play to “a mirroring of the time [when *Vengeance*] took place, and now.”

Handel, who saw *Indecent* on Broadway, says that “from the violin’s first note, I felt a connection to my Jewish roots and knew that this play was going to be pivotal for me.”

She immediately started researching the play’s backstory and decided that she eventually would stage *The God of Vengeance*.

“When Kati and Sarah called me to ask if I could direct this production, my answer was an immediate ‘Yes!’” she said.

“I have loved exploring my heritage and sharing the Jewish experience with our company of actors and musicians—some who are Jewish, some who are not, and some who are half and half,” Handel continued.

The entire company in the Next Stage production is New York-based. Schwartz is joined by Sarah Hogewood, a new collaborator she’d met in final call backs for a couple of New York productions of *Indecent*.

“We were tired of waiting to be cast,” Schwartz says. “That, combined with what’s going on in the world, and given that Sarah is an incredible actor and multi-hyphenate theater person,” inspired the Putney production.

“This is a play about banned material,” Hogewood says. “And ever since Kati and I began working on [this production], there have been productions of [it] that have been banned due to the lesbian plotline. It could not be more timely.”

Adding her attraction to the script, Hogewood says, “I love this play so much and have been working on learning the dialects (for fun) ever since I saw the show on Broadway when I was still in college. I am just thrilled to have the opportunity to work with this company.”

Schwartz says she is choosing to present in Putney, not New York, because beyond the draw of the hometown audience, there are, she says, “far more venues to choose from in this region than are open for such work in New York.”

In addition to Schwartz, Handel, and Hogewood, the company of *Indecent*, a musical, includes Miles Eichenhorn, Patrick Grizzard, Abigail Lumsden, Caroline McPherson, Marissa Ruben, and Isaac Wellhausen; costume consulting is by Nicole Gentile and lighting design by Charlotte Seelig.

When asked to what she could attribute the hate she see ubiquitously today, Schwartz, 34, says, “To be blunt, I believe that Donald Trump started the culture of saying hateful things under the guise of freedom and liberty when it’s just hateful nonsense.”

For her, “the antidote to what’s going on in the world is art. It’s the inverse of what we’re seeing.”

Digging further, Schwartz adds: “A mentor once, while Trump was in office, asked if there were any artists—real and respected—who like Trump.”

She pauses and reiterates: “The arts are the antidote; they are what we have to counter the current escalated level of hate, misinformation, and ignorance.”

“Michele Obama said, ‘When they go low, we go high.’”

“And this production,” Schwartz says, “is our way of going high.”

Performances of Indecent will take place Sunday, May 28, at 7 p.m., and Monday, May 29, at 1 p.m., at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, in Putney. For tickets and more information, visit nextstagearts.org.

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YOUTH CIRCUS SUMMER CAMPS

AGES 3 - 17

June 21 - August 25 | Weekly Camps
June 26 - 30 | Teen Camp
July 10 - 14 | Advanced Performance

MORE INFO (802) 254-9780
Brattleboro, VT
CircusSchool.org

MAKE MUSIC WITH US

SUMMER

2023

What do you want to learn?

Register today!

BMC BRATTLEBORO MUSIC CENTER

bmcvt.org/summer-programs
802-257-4523

In-Sight Photography Project

insightphotography.org

OPEN CALL YOUTH PRIDE PHOTO CONTEST

Open to the LGBTQ+ youth, ages 11-18
Submit an image by May 26th

25 images will be chosen by our jurors to be displayed in our Tiny Gallery in June and Brattleboro Museum and Arts Center’s East Gallery December 20th, 2023 through January 14th, 2024.

Every artist will receive a gift for submitting and be featured in our online gallery.

Three artists will receive honors and prizes: including a Canon DSLR camera, Polaroid Now+ i-type Instant Camera, and Polaroid Go Instant Camera.

SUMMER CLASSES!

Intro to digital • 35mm
Artist Residency
Shutterbugs w. BEEC
Videography and MORE!

SIGN UP TODAY!

Sliding scale class fees
All equipment provided
Open studio time in the afternoons!

Registration Open

the CLUB 1/2 Day Teen Summer Workshops

www.bgcbattleboro.org/camp

- Thrifting and Fashion (7/10-7/14)
- Make Your Own Merch (7/17-7/21)
- Mural Makers (7/17-7/21)
- College and Career Counseling (7/24-7/28)
- Make Your Own Skateboard (7/31-8/4)
- Skate Camp (7/31-8/4)
- Paddle Adventures—full day (8/7-8/11)

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The Commons Keep the momentum going!



Here at The Commons, we've had an exciting start to 2023!

- We published our 700th issue on February 1.
- We brought you expanded coverage of the work our area legislators are doing in Montpelier.
- The Media Mentoring Project has hosted 3 live programs, 2 writing workshop groups, and brought journalists into local schools.
- We produced a paper despite a snowstorm and power outages. (Thank you, intrepid staff and volunteers!)
- Our talented writers won 5 awards from the New England News paper and Press Association.

And there's more to come! But we need your help to keep the momentum going.

Our goal is to raise \$25,000 by June 30 to help us expand our capacity to bring you even more of the award-winning local stories and commentary you look forward to each week.

Will you help by making a financial contribution today?

Any amount you can give will help our newsroom do what it does best - produce journalism that's worth your investment. Thanks to your generous support, The Commons is a community resource that people depend upon. Your continued support will help us achieve more great things in the future.

Receive The Commons at HOME!

...by mail – Your donation of \$100, can get you home delivery of The Commons for one year. Please indicate on the form below before you mail it to us.

...by email – Include your email address on the form below, and we will sign you up for FREE email delivery of The Commons.

Read the news online at commonsnews.org



CONGRATULATIONS to our New England Newspaper and Press Association award winners!

- 1st Place – Mindy Haskins Rogers, Virginia Ray**
Investigative/Enterprise Reporting, "Legacy of abuse in Brattleboro area schools"
- 1st Place – Randolph Holhut, Fran Lynggaard Hansen, Jeff Potter**
Spot News Story, Package: "Brattleboro breaks ties with Rescue"
- 2nd Place – Jeff Potter**
- Editorial/Commentary Page, "Roe v. Wade"
- 2nd Place – Fran Lynggaard Hansen**
General News Story, 'The people are the place, and the place is the people'
- 3rd Place – Jeff Potter**
Racial, Ethnic or Gender Issue Coverage, "A mural with meaning"

YES! – I want to keep the momentum going!

\$1,000
 \$500
 \$250
 \$100
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 Other \$_____

I would like my donation to include mail delivery of The Commons for one year (Donations of \$100 or more).

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Please make checks out to: Vermont Independent Media, and mail them to P.O. Box 1218, Brattleboro, VT 05302

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Questions?
Call 1-888-511-5150, or email info@commonsnews.org

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To find The Commons online, visit commonsnews.org

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY 18 THURSDAY CONT. FRIDAY CONT. SATURDAY CONT. SUNDAY CONT.

THURSDAY 18

Performing arts
W. BRATTLEBORO Theatre Adventure Wednesday Troupe presents: "The Seeking Traveler and the Cloudworld" (In-Person/Online): Written by Maia Gilmour, this inclusive troupe has woven together this production with originality and artistry. All the actors are of talent and disabilities. Movement and dance has been a highlight this year as the actors have developed specific movements that best bring to life their different characters.
 ▶ 10:30 a.m. Thurs. and Fri. "The actors own artwork is being used for scenic design. Original songs written by Rich Nethercott help to tell the tale of the Seeking Traveler's journey to discover 'the most beautiful art for all to enjoy!' Movement/sound artist Sher Levesque created original soundscapes to support the movement work of the actors. We request in-person audience members wear a mask in order to protect the health of our actors."
 ▶ Through Friday, May 19.
 ▶ Tickets sold on a sliding scale beginning at \$10.
 ▶ West Village Meeting House, 29 South St. 5:20. Online streamed performance at 6 p.m. or anytime after. Tickets available online at theatreventure.org, or at door the day of the performance.

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

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

Visit commonsnews.org for more listings with more details

THURSDAY CONT.
 insect repellent as needed. Continues 6/15, 7/20, 8/17.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: For more information, email Rich Grumbine: richgrumbine@gmail.com.

Ideas and education
BRATTLEBORO Windham World Affairs Council: "Surfing as Economic Development: Stories of postwar transformation on Nicaragua's Emerald Coast" (In-Person/Zoom): D﻿r. Tamara Stenn is a Professor of Business & Economics at Landmark College. Stenn and guests Dr. Jason Old and Dr. Lindsay Usher share stories of economic transformation on Nicaragua's Emerald Coast - Nicaraguan fishermen, caretakers, restaurateurs, surfers, and the expats amongst them who have changed the face of Nicaragua's remote coasts.
 ▶ 6:30-8:30 p.m. Considered the daredevils of travel, surfers withstand anything for the thrill of a good wave. Learn how their tenacity and networking created new value and industry for Nicaragua's sleepy coasts - paving the way for tourism development and eco-communities. After the presentation, join an interactive panel discussion with Dr. Jason Old and Dr. Lindsay Usher (surfers and academics) who have been studying Nicaragua development.
 ▶ Free. Donations welcome.
 ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Zoom and more info: tinyurl.com/yujnv525.

Film and video
BRATTLEBORO Wayward Ark Productions and the Monadnock International Film Festival present Indie Film: "Light Attaching to a Girl": Billed as a coming-of-age story, this film from NH director Laina Barakat weaves documentary/narrative elements to create a story festival audiences have found "tender, intimate and revealing." Suffocated by an overbearing father and two older sisters who soak up all the attention, Clare is desperate to escape. She plans a trip to Iceland by herself where she can experience nature and make her own decisions for the first time in her life.
 ▶ 6:30 p.m. "Light Attaching to a Girl" has garnered numerous awards at other festivals, including Best New Director, Score and Cinematography. Internationally, it was awarded a Jury Prize from the AUFF Cannes Art Film Festival. Today's event (co-sponsored by the Brattleboro Film Festival) also features "Georgia's Line," a short from VT filmmaker Keene State College professor Jo Dery Barakat and Emmy Award-winning producers Jennifer Latham and Karina Lyons will be present for a Q&A. More info: www.waywardarkproductions.com.
 ▶ \$15 adults, \$12 students and seniors available in advance and at door.
 ▶ Latchis (Films), 50 Main St. Information: Tickets: lightattaching.eventive.org/welcome.

FRIDAY 19
Performing arts
BRATTLEBORO "Year of the Rooster" by Olivia Dufault and

directed by Ben Stockman: Gil is a loser. He works at McDonald's, lives with his ailing mother, hasn't had a girlfriend since ever. But that's all about to change. He's been secretly training (and drugging) a rooster to fight. And Odysseus Rex AKA "Odie" is the baddest barnyard bird there is. Gil has so much faith in Odie's abilities that he bets everything on him - but victory and revenge may not yield the delicious spoils he anticipates.
 ▶ 7:30 p.m. Fri. and Sat, 2 p.m. Sun. Repeats 5/26-5/28. This fiercely dark comedy about cockfighting, connections, clawing your way to the top features Isaiiah LaPierre, Cassidy Majer, Harrah Hamilton, Gale Allen, Cameron Cobane. For mature audiences only.
 ▶ Through Sunday, May 21.
 ▶ \$15 cash or check only.
 ▶ Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: Email hookerdunhamtheater@gmail.com to make a reservation.

Music
PUTNEY Underground System to Open Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series at Cooper Field: Underground System is a Brooklyn NY-based band that draws on a diverse array of influences, including afrobeat, funk, and dance music. Known for their high-energy performances and infectious grooves, they've toured extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe, earning a reputation as one of the most exciting live acts on the scene.
 ▶ 6 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets, chairs, picnic baskets and enjoy the music under the open sky. Beer, wine, Barr Hill cocktails sold on site. Co-presented with the Stone Church.
 ▶ \$20 in advance or \$25 at the gate; free for children under 12.
 ▶ Cooper Field, Sand Hill Road.
DUMMERSTON Mark Trichka and Lisa Brande: Vermont's Easy Street duo plays Swamp to Swing, Rockabilly to Roadhouse, and Bluegrass to Blues.
 ▶ 6-8 p.m. Rain or shine. Outdoors in the picnic area weather permitting.
 ▶ No cover.
 ▶ Kampfire Campgrounds, 792 US-5. Information: 802-254-2098.

The written word
BELLOWS FALLS New Hampshire author reads from her book "Trophy Hunters": A monstrous evil is lurking in the back country of Pittsburg, NH. Born of the hatred he feels toward his dad for forcing him along on hunting trips, Thomas Nagazona begins to slowly go insane at the tender young age of only five! Sinister creativity leads Thomas on a course that will culminate in horrific changes for his family 16 years later. Kammy Jones is the tenacious FBI agent pursuing Thomas. She has a personal stake in finding him.
 ▶ 6 p.m. discussion.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Village Square Booksellers, 32 Square. Information: 802-463-9404; villagesquarebooks.com.
BRATTLEBORO Novels, Non-Fiction, and Nosh: The Friends of the Library are having a "Novels, Non-Fiction, & Nosh" fundraiser at Brooks Memorial Library. At this special after hours event, you can play on a historic Etesey organ and get literary-themed tarot card readings. Guests will enjoy an array of delightful treats and get a new wrapped surprise book to take home. Choose either fiction or nonfiction for your surprise book and have a great time with great food and great people.
 ▶ 6-8 p.m. in the Main Reading Room.

Friday CONT.
 ▶ Tickets: \$10 (purchase in advance or at door).
 ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Power Flow Yoga: Brattleboro Rec. & Parks and instructor Lissa Stark offer this year-round class on Fridays. Are you looking to take your yoga practice to the next level? Interested in learning new poses or brushing up on your yoga? Power Flow Yoga with Lissa will focus on strengthening, toning, balance, flexibility, core, inversions, and proper form.
 ▶ 12 noon-1 p.m. on Fridays.
 ▶ \$12 per class.
 ▶ Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Dept., 207 Main St. Information: Register in-person or online: tinyurl.com/2p92r7x.

Film and video
BRATTLEBORO New Documentary about Israeli Entrepreneur Pioneering Solar Energy in Africa: "Green Rebel" is a documentary about an Israeli-American doing large-scale solar energy work in Africa. Follow the struggles of solar energy visionary and businessman Yosef Abramowitz and his African partners to provide solutions to both global climate change, and to inequality in Africa. Leaders in 12 African nations and Belize have nominated Abramowitz for the Nobel Prize.
 ▶ 7 p.m. brief Shabbat service. 7:30 p.m. dinner. 8 p.m. film excerpts with director Harvey Stein.
 ▶ Contributions of \$10 to \$36 will go toward completion of the film.
 ▶ Brattleboro Area Jewish Community Congregation Shir Hekhtarim, 151 Greenleaf St. Film Trailer: <https://youtu.be/lbZJhAHMhvk> RSVP: Rabbi Anita at ravamita@bajcvermont.org or leave voicemail: 802-257-1959.

SATURDAY 20

Recreation
BRATTLEBORO Keep Brattleboro in Stitches!: Do you sew? Knit? Crochet? Embroider? Want to learn?: Share your expertise/enthusiasm. Stitch together friendships while working on projects old and new in our fiber arts makerspace. All ages and experience levels welcome.
 ▶ 12 noon-2 p.m. every Saturday. Sewing machines and some supplies will be available. Plus many books for inspiration!
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Farmers' markets
HINSDALE Hinsdale Farmer's Market opens for the 2023 Season: Visit our vendors (Farms-Crafts-Flea Market) while viewing the Tractor Parade.
 ▶ 9 a.m.-1 p.m. This market, located downtown, will be open Saturdays through 10/21.
 ▶ Hinsdale Farmers Market, Millstream Riverfront Park. Information: More info, email: farmersmarketofhinsdalenh@gmail.com or visit Facebook.

SATURDAY CONT.
The written word
BRATTLEBORO Poetry Release Party and Reading: Dara Barrois/Dixon, "Tolstoy Killed Anna Karenina" (Wave Books, 2022), Gillian Conoley, "Notes from the Passenger" (Nightboat, 2023), Eleni Sikelianos, "Your Kingdom" (Coffee House, 2023).
 ▶ 4 p.m. (3 p.m. doors open to the public).
 ▶ No cover charge.
 ▶ Antidote Books (Brattleboro), 15 Putney Rd. Information: hell@antidotebooks.com.

W. MARLBORO Spring Reading Series: "The Genius of Birds" by Jennifer Ackerman: Led by Mary Wright, the group will discuss "The Genius of Birds," a 2017 bestselling nonfiction book that celebrates a ton of revolutionary new research into "these feisty and intelligent beings."
 ▶ 4 p.m. discussion. Whittingham Free Library has copies of the "The Genius of Birds."
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Southern Vermont Natural History Museum, 7599 VT Route 9. Information: 802-464-0048; vermontmuseum.org.

Kids and families
MONTAGUE Join Musica Franklin for our 5th Annual Fun Fest: Festival features musical performances, entertainment, crafts for the whole family! Listen to world-class music, try your hand at an instrument in our "petting zoo," make-and-take a craft project, get your face painted, play with giant bubbles, take a Latin dance workshop, step on our giant piano mat, shop local craft vendors, grab a bite from the nearby food trucks.
 ▶ 10:30-11:15 a.m.: Pre-festival song circle workshop with Abena Koomson-Davis at the LAJA Center, 324 Main St. in Greenfield. 12:30-1:00 p.m.: Expandable Brass Band. 1-1:40 p.m.: Abena Koomson-Davis. 2:00-2:45 p.m.: Musica Franklin students. 2:45-3:15 p.m.: Storyweaving with Djeli Farahon.
 ▶ 3:00-5:30 p.m.: Wandering Mime with "Sir Mimealot." 3:15-4:00 p.m.: Isabella Mendes. 4:00-4:30 p.m.: Latin dance workshop with Elsa Borrero. 4:30-5:20: Viva Quetzal. (Rain date: 5/21). Supported by MCC, NEFA, CFWM, River Culture, Franklin First Credit Union, and Greenfield Savings Bank.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Unity Park, 56 First Street. Information: Full schedule and details at musicafranklin.org/fun-fest.

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).

Dance
WINCHESTER Monadnock Tri-State Dance Club: Dance with Live Music by "Playin' Possum": Nonalcoholic beverages will be available, plus 50/50 Raffle.
 ▶ 7-10:30 p.m.
 ▶ \$10 members, \$12 non-members.
 ▶ Elm Community Center, 21 Durkee St. Information: More info: Tom: 978-249-6917 / 978-790-9322 or Barbara: 802-722-9205 / 802-376-0317.
Community meals
E. DUMMERSTON Vintage Camper BBQ Party: Benefit for the West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department.
 ▶ 11 a.m.-3 p.m. rain or shine.
 ▶ Brattleboro North KOA Campground, 1238 US Rte 5. Information: Larry Pratt: lpratt@wdfd@gmail.com, 802-579-9494.

Visual arts and shows
BRATTLEBORO River Gallery School of Art Promotes Local Artists with "Off the Wall" Fundraiser (In Person/Remote): Available works can be viewed starting May 5 at 118 Elliot. Participants purchase a lottery ticket from River Gallery School and choose a number. When their number is pulled from the tumbler, the participant gets to pick their favorite piece of art from available works on the wall. Everyone who purchases a ticket goes home with a piece of art.
 ▶ 8 p.m. Paintings, pastels, mixed media, original prints, photos, more. Donors: Petria Mitchell, Malory Lake, Margaret Shipman, Doug Trump, Helen Schmidt, Nathaniel Moody, Cameron Schmitz, Kate Pollett, Julia Jensen, Brian Cohen, many more.
 ▶ \$200 Participant ticket, \$30 Non-participant ticket.
 ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Tickets: River Gallery School website or at the school (32 Main St.), 802-257-1577, office@rivergalleryschool.org. Images and details of artwork/artists are on the River Gallery School website: rivergalleryschool.org/otw.

SUNDAY 21

Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance.
 ▶ 5-6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.
 ▶ Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; brattleborowalkinclinic.com.

Music
BELLOWS FALLS Singer-songwriter Erin Ash Sullivan and folk-pop-Celtic-blues duo Meadowlark: From warm ballads to lively up-tempo tunes, their songs are inspiring and uplifting.
 ▶ 3 p.m. Limited seating. Event will be recorded and filmed.
 ▶ Tickets are \$15 in advance / \$20 at door. All proceeds benefit the musicians.
 ▶ Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge St. Information: Tickets and more information: stage33live.com.

PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market announces Live Music by Bard Owl
 ▶ 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Sundays.
 ▶ Putney Farmers Market, 17 Carol Brown Way. Information: putneyfarmersmarket.org.

The written word
NEWFARE Afternoon with Local Authors: Archer Mayor and Castle Freeman: Join Archer Mayor and Castle Freeman as they reflect on their lives as authors and entertain us with stories and their unique banter. Archer and Castle will read selections from their books and have a lively conversation with the audience.
 ▶ 3 p.m.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Moore Free Library, 23 West St. Information: moorefreelibrary@gmail.com, 802-365-7948.

Well-being
W. BRATTLEBORO "Resistance is Futile - Try This Instead" (In-Person/Zoom): All Souls Church member Gary Graff presents a talk on ways

SUNDAY CONT.
 we can work with resistance in our own lives; how to get "unstuck" and move forward to live our values in the context of the barriers that can slow us down or stop us cold. Expect elements of Buddhist and 12 Step theories and attempts at self-deprecating humor.
 ▶ 10 a.m.
 ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Go to our website, www.ascvt.org. Sunday shortly before 10 a.m., to join via Zoom: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.

Community building
GUILDFORD Guilford Community Church: Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the death of The Rev. Shirley Harris Crockett: Rev. Shirley Harris Crockett was Guilford Community Church pastor from 1976-1997. This extravaganza of story-telling, music, archival videos shines light on her ministry/pays tribute to her legacy. Her husband Rev. Larriamore Crockett is organizing the event, w/ help from Andy Davis, and serves as emcee/story-teller. Guilford Church Choir, a quartet of women singing music of Hildegard of Bingen, and other friends, will testify to the enduring influence of her pastoral ministry.
 ▶ 2:30 p.m.
 ▶ Donations can be made at the door toward the work and mission of the GCC.
 ▶ Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Dr. off Rte. 5. Information: Questions: Call Rev. Crockett at (224) 348-0818.

BELLOWS FALLS Get to Know Members of Our Community: "All are welcome to attend - no matter who you are or where you come from. We host a time of refreshments where you can get to know other members of our community. We offer many other services throughout the week, so there's something for everyone!"
 ▶ 10 a.m. Service every Sunday followed by refreshments.
 ▶ United Church of Bellows Falls, 8 School St. Information: Questions/Learn More: Call us at 802-463-4323 or visit us.

Ideas and education
MARLBORO Hogback Mountain Conservation Association hosts Birding Walk: Join naturalist Cherie Corey for a morning walk to meet the season's songbird wave and other harbingers of spring. Hikers will encounter a variety of returning and migrating warblers, ovenbird, hermit thrush, winter wren, rose-breasted grosbeak, raven, more. Woodland wildflowers will be in their glory and vernal pools will be teaming with life. Stop at bird banding station to see how today's rally is coming/watch Eric Slayton and his team in action.
 ▶ 7:30-9:30 a.m. Meet at the Tower Trail trailhead kiosk behind the VT Distillers building. Lots of parking across Rte. 9 in the large parking lot.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Vermont Distillers, 7755 VT-9. Information: Registration required and limited to 20; email hmca@hogbackvt.org.

MONDAY 22

Dance
MARLBORO Learn the "Fundamentals of Tap" in this 4-Class Series: Learn the basic building blocks of tap dance and then put those blocks together in one of the most popular and traditional tap pieces: The Shim Sham. Classes will be led by Victoria Osborne who has an extensive tap dance background and is excited to share her love of this truly American art form with the community.
 ▶ 6-7 p.m. "If there is interest, we can continue on our tap journey together in the following months! Tap shoes are NOT necessary for this introductory class."
 ▶ Donations appreciated. All proceeds benefit the Marlboro Community Center.
 ▶ Marlboro Community Center, 524 South Rd. Information: Email Victoria@thecolonewilliamsinn.com if you would like to attend or just want more information.

TUESDAY 23

Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Argentine Tango: Beginners and all levels welcome! Stop by to check it out or join in. No partner needed. Guest instructor, Laura Grandi, from Argentina!
 ▶ 7-8 p.m. Class, 8-10 p.m. Practica. Continues 5/30.
 ▶ First class is free of charge! \$12 Additional Classes, \$5 Practica, \$15 for Both Classes.
 ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Facebook page: [facebook.com/groups/122170897820578](https://www.facebook.com/groups/122170897820578).

WEDNESDAY 24

Instruction
BRATTLEBORO Finding Vocal Harmonies: "Ear Training workshop mini-series for singers and curious listeners to sharpen the musical ears and help us invent and sing vocal harmonies. We'll take songs that are easy to pick up and/or well-known (folk songs, popular songs, pub-style singalongs, etc.), and sing our way into the mysteries of what makes their harmonies tick. Some 'music theory'!"

Hey Windham County Business Owner...

Want to Grow Your Business? Compete for \$20,000!

TWO EASY STEPS:
 1. Registration (Starts May 1st)
 2. Come pitch your idea at one of the 2023 events

June 1st Bar 580 Brattleboro 4 - 5:15 pm	June 6th Great Falls Chamber Bellows Falls 4:30pm
June 7th The White House Wilmington 4:30 - 6:30pm	June 8th New American Grill Londonderry 2 - 3:15 pm

Register at: <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/competition/>

CLARK / CANAL STREET BRATTLEBORO, VT

We are accepting applications for Studio, 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments that have been newly renovated and are currently available. Rent includes heat, hot water, snow and trash removal. Off street parking and laundry on site.

For more information call 802-464-9700, or download an application at www.stewartproperty.net. Applicants must be income eligible.

Stewart Property Management, Inc.
 50 Westgate Drive, Suite 101
 Brattleboro VT 05301
www.stewartproperty.net

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For the full list of the towns we reach, email ads@commonsnews.org, or see our Media Kit at commonsnews.org.

PETS AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION

WINDHAM COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY
 916 West River Rd, Brattleboro, VT
 802-254-2232 • wchs4pets.org

Hi, my name is **Khaleesi!** I am an Argentine Dogo. I would do best in a home who is knowledgeable of my breed. I am very strong and would need to be the only animal in the home. I would do best in a home where there are not many dogs around because I am not a fan of them. I love, love people and will greet you with a lot of doggy kisses.

Hi, my name is **Rebel!** I am a sweet and outgoing guy looking for a loving outgoing family. I haven't been around a lot of dogs and should do a dog intro here if you have any doggy companions. I would do best in a home without any cats. I also really love food and can be protective of my food and shouldn't live with any small kids. I really love being outside and active.

Hey there, I'm **Frank!** I'm a sweet and shy boy who came all the way from Oklahoma after being rescued from a hoarding situation with 130 other pets. I seem to like the company of other cats my age so I could go home with one of my buddies here or to a home with other felines. Dogs and children might be a lot for me so everyone should be mellow and cat-savvy.

Hello friends! I'm **Raven**, the sweetest little black kitty you'll ever meet. I came to WCHS with some of my friends (Nacho and Salem) after our owner passed away. All the changes in life have been a little scary but just give me some time to settle in and we'll get along great! I am used to living with other cats so I could probably be a feline friend in my new home with a proper intro. And even respectful kids would have fun with me!

Ad graciously sponsored by Trust Company of Vermont
www.tcvermont.com
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Theatre Adventure plans spring production

WEST BRATTLEBORO—Theatre Adventure’s Wednesday Troupe has created a new spring production, *The Seeking Traveler and the Cloudworld*, written for them by Maia Gilmour. From last year’s show, the Curious Child character has grown up and, through great courage and with the aid of many magical characters, searches the oceanwide world for “the most beautiful art for all to enjoy.”

The troupe sums up the plot: “Up in the clouds, the world is bright with sunshine and dew. The air feels soft and misty, and though it is slightly chilled, the temperature feels comfortable. Noticing dancing and laughter a few paces ahead, the Seeking Traveler sees what must be the Mistmakers. Reaching their hands high into the misty air, the Seeking Travelers wave. The Mistmakers provide a warm greeting of giggles and lead the Seeking Traveler to a doorway in the clouds.”

This fairytale has called upon the Wednesday Troupe to utilize a

breadth of expressive arts for developing such unique characters as: Thunderfriends, Waterbirds, Selkies, Flying Horses, the Whirling Winds, Mistmakers, and the Goddess of the Clouds.

“The inclusive troupe has woven together with originality and artistry a beautiful spring production,” notes a news release. “All of the actors are passionate performers with a diversity of talents and disabilities.” Movement and dance will be included, as the actors have developed specific movements that bring to life their different characters. Their artwork is being used for scenic design.

Original songs written by Rich Nethercott help to tell the tale of the Seeking Travelers’ journey, while movement/sound artist Sher Levesque created original soundscapes to support the movement work of the actors.

Theatre Adventure’s mission is “to provide a caring and creative community for artists with disabilities

to claim the stage with distinction.” They are committed to accessibility. ASL interpreters are provided for all of their shows, whether online or in-person. Their productions are sensory-friendly and appropriate for all ages.

They request in-person audience members wear a mask to protect the health of their actors. In-person performances will take place Wednesday through Friday, May 17–19, at 10:30 a.m. at the wheelchair-accessible West Village Meeting House, 29 South Street. An online streaming performance will be presented on Saturday, May 20, at 6 p.m.

Tickets are sold on a sliding scale, beginning at \$10, and are available online (theatretheadventure.org) or at the door the day of the performance. School groups are welcome. Group rates are available. For more information, contact them at info@theatretheadventure.org or 802-387-0765.



Jenny and Brady are The Seeking Travelers in Theatre Adventure’s new spring production, “The Seeking Traveler and the Cloudworld.”

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WEDNESDAY CONT.

but we'll keep it to a homeopathic dose concentrating on ears, voices, intuition.”

► 1:30-3 p.m. *Continues 5/31 and 6/7. Participants do not need to read music/have musical training. Patton is a versatile composer, arranger, clarinetist, singer, educator driven by musical curiosity.*

► \$55 for all sessions of \$20 per class for walk-ins.

► One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Register, ask about scholarship assistance, questions about the class, email Anna Patton: annameryl@gmail.com.

Community building

VERNON Opening Day: Vernon Community Market: This new Market features J&B's Curbside Cafe, handmade crafts, farm produce, baked goods, flowers, and more.

► 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. Open every other Wednesday through Oct. 4.

► Vernon Community Market, Vernon Recreation Area, 607 Pond Rd. Information: 802-254-9251, vernonVTCommunityMarket@gmail.com.

BRATTLEBORO Community Conversations with Brattleboro State Representatives: Representatives Emilie Kornheiser, Mollie Burke, and Tristan Toleno, along with State Senators Wendy Harrison and Nader Hashim, discuss legislative opportunities and community priorities. All are welcome to come join the conversation.

► 6 - 9 p.m. in the Community Room.

► Free.

► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

BRATTLEBORO The Power of Dignity: Community Conversation on Substance Use: Community conversations grounded in mutual respect can help identify dignified solutions to substance abuse challenges. Potential topics for group exploration: Substance use, Substance use disorders, Addiction, Prevention, Treatment, Harm reduction, Crime/homelessness, Accountability with compassion without judgment. Panel of Community Substance Use Response (CSUR) members will participate, but their principal interest is to hear diverse experiences of community members.

► 6-7:30 p.m. *Community Substance Use Response represents local organizations such as Voices of Hope in Wilmington and Grace Cottage Hospital. In Brattleboro: Turning Point, AIDS Project of Southern VT; Building a Positive Community, Meetinghouse Solutions.*

► Free.

► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: More information: Geoff Kane, gpkane108@gmail.com.

BAJC screens film on solar energy in Africa

WEST BRATTLEBORO—On Friday, May 19, the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community will show the film, *Green Rebel*, a documentary about an Israeli-American doing large-scale solar energy work in Africa. Leaders in 12 African nations and Belize have nominated him for the Nobel Prize.

Green Rebel is an Israel/Africa story. The film follows the struggles of solar energy visionary and businessman, Yosef Abramowitz, and his African partners to provide solutions to both global climate change and to inequality in Africa.

Working together, they try to close successful business deals on solar fields costing upwards of \$25 million each. The story is shot primarily in Israel, Rwanda, and Burundi.

After immigrating from Boston to Israel in 2006, Abramowitz struggled for five years before he succeeded in building Israel’s first commercial-scale solar field to be connected to its national grid. “The Israelis thought I was crazy,

a naive American,” he said. “We had to do battle with no fewer than 24 government agencies.”

The main story follows the very difficult struggles over the last six years to complete negotiations for, then to finally build, his second African solar field in Burundi, one of Africa’s poorest nations.

On Abramowitz’s trips to Africa, he builds cultural and personal bridges to help seal deals, meeting with African religious leaders, Christian or Moslem, to find a common ecological language.

Abramowitz asks, “can the African continent one day be powered exclusively by renewable energy?” In 2020, it boasts 11 out of the 20 fastest-growing economies on the planet, has 700 million cell phones, and its billion-plus population will double by 2050. Abramowitz and his small company want to be a pivotal force there.

A brief Shabbat service at 7 p.m. will be followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. and then excerpts

of the film and a question-and-answer session starting at 8 p.m. with director Harvey Stein. Contributions of \$10–\$36 will go toward completion of the film. RSVP to Rabbi Amita at ravamita@bajcvermont.org or leave a voicemail at 802-257-1959.

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Hooker-Dunham Theater presents 'Year of the Rooster'

BRATTLEBORO—The Hooker-Dunham Theater and Gallery presents *Year of the Rooster*, by Olivia Dufault, directed by Ben Stockman. This play is described in a news release as “a fiercely dark comedy about cockfighting, connections, and clawing your way to the top.” Its main character, Gil, is a loser. He works at McDonald’s, lives with his ailing mother, and hasn’t had a girlfriend since—ever. But that’s all about to change. He’s been secretly training, and drugging, a rooster to fight. And Odysseus Rex, a.k.a. “Odie,” is the baddest barnyard

bird there is. Gil has so much faith in Odie’s abilities that he bets everything on him, but victory and revenge may not yield the delicious spoils he anticipates. This performance, for mature audiences only, features Isaiah LaPierre, Cassidy Majer, Harral Hamilton, Gale Allen, and Cameron Cobane. Performance dates and times are May 19–21 and 26–28, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at p.m. Tickets are \$15, cash or check only. Make a reservation at hookerdunhamtheater@gmail.com.

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Village Square Booksellers features Maureen Clancy Thibodeau for BF3F event

BELLOWS FALLS—Village Square Booksellers, 33 The Square, welcomes New Hampshire author Maureen Clancy Thibodeau on Friday, May 19, at 6 p.m. Clancy will read from and discuss her book, *The Trophy Hunters*. This is a Bellows Falls 3rd Friday (BF3F) event. Thibodeau lives in southwestern New Hampshire with her husband, dog, and cats in a very small town. She enjoys

many outdoor activities, sports and hobbies, and is also a certified aromatherapist and an estate sale planner. She says the idea for *The Trophy Hunter* came to her from a dream. She then spent two years formulating the plot, characters, and other book details in her head before writing a single word. “A monstrous evil is lurking in the back country of Pittsburg, New Hampshire. Born of the hatred he feels toward his dad

for forcing him along on hunting trips, Thomas Nagazona begins to slowly go insane at the tender young age of five,” according to a synopsis of the book. “Sinister creativity leads Thomas on a course that will culminate in horrific changes for the Nagazona family 16 years later. Thomas will spiral down a dark, complete collapse of his mental condition, which will set him off on a violent killing spree. “Kammy Jones is the

tenacious FBI agent pursuing Thomas. She has a personal stake in finding the perpetrator.” Readers are invited to follow Kammy on her “harrowing search for truth and justice.” Books will be available at the event. Call 802-463-9404 for event reservations and to reserve a book. Books can also be reserved online at bit.ly/715-trophy.

EOS Project explores 'Undreamed Shores' at BMC

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Music Center’s EOS (Educate, Open, Strengthen) Project explores “Undreamed Shores” at the BMC on Thursday, May 25. The 7 p.m. concert will include Michi Wiancko’s *To Unpathed Waters*, *Undreamed Shores*, as well as Dr. Etan Nasreddin-Longo’s String Quartet for Benzaiten and Yoshi Campbell, and Jose Lezcano’s *Tango Overture* for String Quartet. This EOS concert features and celebrates the talent and artistry of BIPOC composers from the tri-state region of southern Vermont, western New Hampshire, and western Massachusetts. Performing will be Kathy Andrew and

Heather Sommerlad, violin; Emily Packard, viola; and Zon Eastes, cello. As Andrew explains: “The program created by Heather Sommerlad is a wonderful mixture of the interesting, the beautiful, the challenging, and ultimately, the very satisfying.” Wiancko, a resident of Gill, Massachusetts, is an internationally acclaimed violinist and composer whose work spans an impressively wide spectrum of style and influence. As artistic director of Antenna Cloud Farm, a grassroots arts organization and music festival, she is focused on “the power of music as a catalyst for societal change and community resilience.” Nasreddin-Longo is a

composer and ethnomusicologist raised in Newfane. He is currently a co-director of Fair and Impartial Policing and Community Affairs for the Vermont State Police, and also serves as the Chair of the Vermont Attorney General’s Advisory Panel on Racial Disparities in the Criminal Juvenile Justice Systems. His *String Quartet for Benzaiten* and *Yoshi Campbell* rethink traditional forms from several different music-cultures, in this case, Euro-American art music, and Central Javanese Gamelan. Lezcano, a professor of music at Keene State College, is a twice Grammy-Nominated Cuban American Guitarist and Composer. *Fanfare* magazine describes *Tango-Overture* for

String Orchestra (performed as a string quartet for this concert) as “a dance in a dream that sweeps away restrictions and sweeps away the dreamer.” Created at the BMC in the spring of 2020, the EOS Project seeks “to open new doors and allow our community to explore what and who we’ve been missing—namely, composers who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as well as those who identify as anything other than cis male,” according to the BMC website. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door, and are available online at bmcvt.org, by calling the BMC at 802-257-4523, or emailing info@bmcvt.org.

NXT Gallery presents exhibit of works by artist Karen Becker

PUTNEY—The NXT Gallery presents an art exhibit by Karen Becker, titled “Bearing Witness, Part 2,” from Sunday, May 21, to Aug. 13, 2023 at the NXT Gallery, 15 Kimball Hill. The opening reception for the exhibit will be held on May 21 from 3 to 5 p.m. The majority of the exhibition is devoted to Becker’s love of nature and the threat of the climate crisis. The animals and trees represented all bear witness to the devastation that is unfolding due to industrialization and war. The exhibit is dedicated to Becker’s parents, Marianne and George Becker, for their lifelong courage, generosity, kindness, and devotion to the arts in southern Vermont. Her parents instilled in

her a deep appreciation of nature and beauty and the courage to express her inner world. Becker states they fully and lovingly supported her art. This is a retrospective of artworks made during the past 40 years. In addition to images of animals, the exhibit includes “The Sphere Series,” paintings and drawings based in fantasy that have been in her private collection, as well as imaginary canyons and Becker’s favorite maple, which inspired her paintings for decades. She uses many media, including watercolors, pastels, charcoal, and gouache. Becker has exhibited her artwork in New York City, Boston, Maine, and Vermont. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in

Graphic Design from the Pratt Institute. Her journey from Brooklyn to Brattleboro has been varied and has included creating on-air graphics and photography for public television in New York City, designing typography layouts on Madison Avenue, and working for *Rolling Stone* magazine in San Francisco. In Vermont, Becker became part of the Vermont Arts Council’s Artists-in-Education Program. For 25 years, she led more than 150 mural-painting workshops for children and adults. She was, for a time, a professional wedding photographer, and was voted “Best Local Wedding Photographer.”

To see more of Becker’s artwork, contact her at kb4art@earthlink.net. This exhibit runs concurrently with a show of her work at the West Village Meeting House, in West Brattleboro, titled “Bearing Witness, Part 1,” on view from Sunday, May 14, to June 30.

Garden tour highlights Main Street Arts' new Garden Arts program

SAXTONS RIVER—Three gardens in the Saxtons River/Rockingham area are open for the Main Street Arts Garden Tour on the weekend of June 10 and 11. The Garden Tour is part of a larger program on the art of gardening that MSA is launching this year. Participants may enjoy different arts as they tour the gardens: live music, a plein air painting demonstration, and sculpture. Instruction will be given on how to make a garden arch from saplings, and visitors can peruse a flea market of used garden tools, books, and accessories at the Main Street Arts building where refreshments will also be available for purchase. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 on the days of the tour. The Garden Tour ticket price includes one raffle ticket for gift certificates generously donated by Gardener’s Supply Company and local nurseries, including Harlow’s, Allen Brothers, Walker’s, and Morningstar Nurseries. Additional tickets will increase the odds of winning and are available online and at MSA on the tour days. For more information about the Garden Tour, visit mainstreetarts.org.

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VIEWPOINT

I could not vote to send thousands back to the streets

With a budget of \$8.5 billion to support a myriad of important issues, how could we not include adequate funding to secure a gradual, compassionate transition out of the hotel pandemic housing program?



ON MAY 12, I cast my final vote of the 2023 legislative session. I did so in the Vermont State House, in what is often called “the People’s House.” It felt to this legislator like those who work in the “People’s House” had not done enough to ensure that vulnerable people would have a house. The vote was for the state budget, which passed 90 yes to 53 no, sealing the fate of 1,800 households whose members will be forced to leave their current housing on either May 31 or July 1. The huge majority do not know where their new homes will be. By the time the governor gave his final remarks in the State House on May 12, the clock was approaching midnight. That made me think about how time would be running out for individuals currently sheltered in hotels around Vermont, including 500 to 600 children.

I HAVE BEEN a member of the Democratic party for over 25 years. I am the chair of the Westminster Democratic Town Committee. I have always thought Democrats looked out for the poor and the marginalized.

But despite an overwhelming majority of us in the State House, the Democrats are not collectively prioritizing the fate of the disadvantaged who lack permanent housing in the budget that was just passed.

For the past couple of weeks, I have been waking in the middle of the night with my heart pounding. I didn’t want to vote against months of work from all committees designating funding for so many important programs. Yet, if I were to vote yes, it would mean approving a plan that sacrifices those living in hotels.

A yes vote would send a message that I was OK with this omission.

I wasn’t. I made the almost-unthinkable decision to vote no.

I WAS TOLD as a new legislator that, when deciding a vote, we should consider conscience first, constituents second, and party third.

On this issue, my conscience compelled me to vote as I did. As a former case manager working with homeless youth in Brattleboro, I could not vote to end a program that would send thousands back to the streets.

With a budget of \$8.5 billion to support a myriad of important issues, how could we not include adequate funding to secure a gradual, compassionate transition out of the hotel pandemic

MICHELLE BOS-LUN is a second-term Democrat representing the Windham-3 district of Westminster, Rockingham and Brookline. Prior to election to the Vermont General Assembly, she worked in restorative justice at the Brattleboro Community Justice Center, taught high school social studies, and before that worked at Youth Services, first as a case manager for homeless youth, and later in a career mentoring program for youth in Windham County.

housing program?

I could not support a budget destined to cause imminent human suffering for individuals leaving the hotels: to move into the woods, into their cars (if they have a car), or onto the streets.

I could not vote yes for a budget that would exit 700 households by May 31, including 78 from Brattleboro, a budget that would require the exit of an additional 1,000-plus households by July 1 (more than 110 of them from Brattleboro).

The second exit group includes people living with disabilities and at least 500 children statewide.

Where will these people go? No one seems to know.

I HAVE TALKED TO and met with directors of emergency housing programs in both Brattleboro and Montpelier, received over a hundred emails from individuals living in the hotels, spoken with advocates and front-line workers. They know the dates the programs are ending. They don’t know where people will go.

They all agree that ending the housing program with evictions on June 1 and July 1 will have devastating impacts on the impacted individuals and also for the communities and emergency services that would be affected by a mass exodus without adequate transition plans. There is not time to prepare individuals or communities

by July 1, let alone May 31.

How will a town like Brattleboro be impacted by close to 200 individuals losing housing? What will downtown, parks, libraries, and other public spaces be like after these dates?

It will be devastating for the individuals moved to the streets and devastating for the social service providers. It will be devastating for emergency response teams and devastating for hospitals that will be struggling to address the needs of so many people.

Josh Davis, executive director of Groundworks Collaborative, has advocated to slow the transition as much as possible.

“The harm will not only be experienced by the people being pushed out of the motel program but also by communities at large throughout the state,” he says. “For everyone’s sake, we strongly urge that the program be wound down more gradually, reducing the number of people coming out of the program at any given time.”

The Agency of Human Services has been sending staff weekly to help with case management needs at some sites. Unfortunately, there is not enough time (and there are not enough case managers) to match residents with limited available placements before the exit dates.

Davis said that having case managers come in three to four times a week to help with assessment and planning would be ideal, but that has not been possible. Flexible funding that has been added to the budget to support transition needs will help, but not in time for the announced exit dates.

Some of the additional funding will be partly used to set up mass shelters (big rooms with cots, as we do in bad weather) in four to seven locations around the state. Only some individuals will qualify for these new shelters. An enormous amount of staff time and funds will be questionably redirected into creating an inadequate alternative shelter model instead of focusing on finding stable placements for individuals as they become available.

■ SEE BUDGET VOTE, C2

VIEWPOINT

A mass unsheltering of almost all of our most vulnerable

This is one of the most cruel acts that our state government could perpetrate among those who struggle the most with poverty

THE COMMITTEE of Conference has reached an agreement on the budget as it affects people using the General Assistance Motel Program. This agreement creates a preventable humanitarian crisis caused by a state-sponsored unsheltering of nearly 3,000 people, including 500 to 600 children.

This is a deliberate and abject failure of our state legislature and governor to care for those who are most vulnerable in our state.

In the past couple of months, nearly 200 people using the program have written to their legislators as well as the Senate pro tempore and the speaker of the House, telling their personal stories and pleading with them to treat their lives with the same value that they give their own.

BRENDA SIEGEL, the 2022 Vermont Democratic nominee for governor, is a drug policy and housing advocate.

I can’t imagine any other constituency who would be ignored in such an overt and overwhelming way.

PEOPLE IN POWER have a responsibility to treat the lives of fellow human beings with dignity, and that has not been achieved in the proposed state budget.

According to recent data, 10% to 30% of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness will die as a result of this decision. That is 300 to 700 of these individuals.

We are trading the lives and well-being of fellow humans for “other priorities,” because “the

program just has to end sometime.” We should instead be creating a responsible transition — one that does not leave people unsheltered.

This legislative session, I joined other advocates in offering multiple proposals and plans that would create that transition. Those plans received very little or no consideration.

Vermont has the second highest rate of homelessness in the country, and we are responding to it by orchestrating an unsheltering of almost all of our most vulnerable.

I have visited 16 hotels and spoken to 1,000 of these individuals. Those who will be exited from the program will include people on oxygen, people who have just had surgery, people in recovery, people with mental illness that has finally been stabilized, 500 to 600 children, single moms, people with medical devices that need to be plugged in, and more.

This is one of the most cruel acts that our state government could perpetrate among those who struggle the most with poverty.

WHEN THESE families are sent outside with nowhere to go, they will be exited to our downtowns, to our communities. Our communities do not have the resources to support a mass unsheltering of people across the state. This will not be a few people who do not have what they need, this will be thousands of individuals who are desperate for survival.

And our state government will have put them there.

There is no excuse for the suffering and pain that will be caused by this inhumane budget.



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LETTERS FROM READERS

Easing the burden of addiction, one person at a time

With the 2022 Vermont rate of 37 opioid deaths per 100,000 people, who among us is asking themselves this question: "Why does Windham County have the distinction of having the highest rate in the state at 56.4 deaths per 100,000?"

No stranger to the long-term effects of the family disease of addiction, we escaped death by opioid overdose — barely.

I am writing today not because I have the answer or even an answer. I am, however, writing because I have the experience to say that one way to work toward that "why" is to consider the family as a whole.

One certain way families can help a loved one challenged by a substance-use disorder is by taking care of one's self. Only then can you learn how to set the boundaries to love them from afar if that is the best healthy option. Always let them know you love them and that you care; be angry at the disease, but not at your loved one.

It's hard, but you can do this.

If you are a family member or a friend of someone struggling with a substance-use disorder, consider reaching out for that support for yourself.

Our Brattleboro community is compassionate and amazing and has supported NarAnon Family Groups locally since

1998. I know this to be true as my commitment to facilitating these meetings continues today. Even through Covid, we have continued to meet via Zoom every other Thursday at 7 p.m.

You only need to reach out and contact me for further information: sueavery1@comcast.net or 802-345-4145.

Communities are responsible to supporting their own, and awareness is essential. People, consider this by asking, "What can I do to ease the burden of addiction in the town I love, one person at a time?"

Susan Avery
Brattleboro

Noble thoughts from a Supreme Court justice of yore

Thanks to the wonders of interlibrary loan, I'm reading *The Place No One Knew*, a 1963 Sierra Club book by photographer Eliot Porter, about the incomparable Glen Canyon in Utah just before it was flooded and lost forever, thanks to U.S. Department of the Interior and the thirst of white people in the southwest and California.

The book is a series of magnificent photographs opposite memorable quotations. One of these, by famed Supreme Court justice William O. Douglas, particularly struck me:

"Man is whole when he is in tune with the winds, the stars, and the hills as well as with his

neighbors. Being in tune with the apartment or the community is part of the secret. Being in tune with the universe is the entire secret. Man's greatest mission is to preserve life, not to destroy it. When the land becomes the symbol of sterility and poverty, when the wonders of creation have been destroyed, youth has no place to go but the alleys, and a blight lies across the land."

He meant, of course, *all* life, not simply a single species of the millions that share the Earth.

Imagine the disgustingly greedy, morally stunted inhabitants of today's Supreme Court writing or thinking such noble thoughts. Inconceivable!

The youth are indeed in alleys, shooting fentanyl if they're not purchasing AK-47s, and there is indeed blight across the land: the blight of militarism, of big ag that is steadily, relentlessly depleting the aquifers and destroying the fertile bounty that was once ours, of the mass, demented fascination with big cars and tiny screens....

We have to organize, and we have to vote. But sometimes it's hard, damned hard.

Richard Evers
Brattleboro

A corny solution

RE: "BUHS team name sparks Civil War of opinion" [News, May 10]:

The recent conflict over the Brattleboro Union High School team names is a healthy one, and the WSESD board's decision to change the image is necessary and proper given society's evolving concepts of equality. Removing the blinders of white privilege benefits us all.

Here's a recommendation that came from a venerable colleague many years ago, when the issue first emerged.

Gary Blomgren, chair of the art department, presented the faculty with a sculpture — a golden ear of corn — as our new logo.

He said we could designate it the "Kernels."

Tim Kipp
Brattleboro

The writer is a retired longtime BUHS social studies teacher.

Push back on transphobic thinking

A wave of legislation being proposed by states in our country intentionally discriminates against and harms transgender people.

For thousands of years, indigenous people, including our own Native Americans,

Deciding not to decide is, of course, among the most important things done by the Supreme Court. It takes a lot of doing, but it can be done

—THURGOOD MARSHALL

recognized "two-spirit" people as possessing special gifts. They were honored, not bashed and feared. How did we regress from this thoughtful and decent way of treating people who are unique?

Now, this fear has impacted sports. Regardless of gender identity, there has always been a vast difference between individuals and their natural and developed athletic abilities. Contributing to this difference is wealth and privilege: those kids from wealth often get the special coaching and the privilege of not having to work after school. Of course, there are exceptions, like the kids who struggle to rise from poverty using their athleticism, but that is not the norm.

Today, due to tremendous advances in ways to develop athletes' abilities, some are acquiring almost superhuman power and skill. Yes, much of this is due to hard work and dedication, but some is due to heredity and to being "in the right place at the right time."

Where do we draw the line in deciding who is eligible to compete in athletic competitions? Should we exclude from competition those people who have acquired these superhuman powers, thus making it fairer for the vast majority?

Transgender people do not necessarily possess great athletic ability, so why are they being chosen to discriminate against?

I like to consider myself an open-minded and compassionate person, but transphobic thinking and actions cross the line into being intentionally hurtful, unjust and inhumane.

Please join me in pushing back on the people who are displaying such hate-based use of power.

Michael H. Szostak
Guilford

How about an oath of poverty for the U.S. Supreme Court?

Following is an open letter to U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont):

While the debate rages over whether the U.S. legislature has the right and responsibility to impose the code of ethics that binds other government institutions on Supreme Court appointees, I have come up with a simple solution that has the privilege of being uniquely designed for the highest-court-in-the-land officers, so venerated that we appoint them for life with no legally structured accountability other than the embarrassing and energy-intensive process of impeachment.

Why not impose an oath of poverty at the time of their appointment? Such would state that in addition to their salaries (about which I am ignorant — and, I assume, the general public is as well) they shall not accept any gifts of significant monetary value, although when not in session they may feel free to supplement that amount by temporary employment, say at McDonalds or another enterprise that may hire seasonally available employees.

Such an oath would reinforce the venerable posture they have long represented in the judiciary and remove any possibility of their being distracted by debatable ethical arguments, thereby fostering the proper work environment appropriate to their exalted role in our government.

Helen Neswald
Saxtons River

Viewpoint illustrates everything that's wrong with our politics

RE: "Family values are not expressed by what type of genitals you were born with" [Viewpoint, May 10]:

Dan DeWalt's Viewpoint exposes everything that is wrong with politics up to the current day in 21st-century America.

The logic of this politics is well-engrained by now: Blame everything that is wrong with America on white men.

Think about that for a minute. Do you really find the Mickey Mouse and simplistic nature of this politics actually appealing?

If our politics is to be dominated by a war on white men, is it any surprise that white men are exploring more radical right-wing politics?

Mr. DeWalt brings up a series of oppressions against women and gays and transgender people that have been driving our politics. I don't have time in this response to put these matters into context, but there is something very important to note about the issues he seeks to engage with and condemn white men over. These are all social and identity issues that have little to do with the struggles most people face.

Not long ago I got a more than \$3,000 bill for a simple trip to the emergency room here in Brattleboro. Given my experience, I would say it is likely a lot more people are concerned with affordable health care, which neither political party is addressing.

I am not diabetic, but for those of you who are, it ought to outrage you that if you are under 65 years old, the politicians have chosen not to regulate the price of insulin on your behalf.

It is commonly said that we must vote Democrat to protect democracy, and the Democrats in Congress have indeed put forward bills to allegedly do that.

The fatal flaw with these bills, however, is that they do not protect transparency so that we know the vote is fair, and they seek to hamper third parties that dare challenge the two-party system. It is clear to me that the Democrat's concern for democracy is fraudulent, and our "democracy" is junk until we overturn the two-party system.

The constant harping on social issues and identity politics is simply an effort put on by both parties to avoid issues that would actually transform people's lives because these issues offend the sensibilities of the oligarchs that fund both parties. If we had a politics that mattered instead of getting hung up on trans issues and drag queens, we might be looking to end our status as police officer of the world and cut funds to the military so that the residents of Jackson, Mississippi and Flint, Michigan have clean water.

A politics that matters would worry more about transparent elections and elections where

more than two parties can participate via instant runoff voting than about getting more voter participation in a clearly fraudulent "democracy."

As for myself I will not be voting with social justice or marginalized peoples in mind. I will not be seeking to punish white men with my vote. I will likely be voting for third-party or independent candidates with innovative ideas and who are not captured by corporate or oligarchical money.

Edward C. Morris
Brattleboro

Funding road work and not emergency housing: shameful

Every time we drive or bike on Route 30, the \$27 million dollar pricetag for rebuilding a functional road shows off the state's priorities. Many commuters on Route 30 have expressed the sentiment that the road was perfectly adequate, as were the replaced guardrails. Cars rule.

At the same moment, the state has decided that thousands of the poorest and least able Vermonters are to be tossed onto the curb like yesterday's trash. The lack of funding for emergency housing while the road expenditures seem unlimited is shameful.

While homeless Vermonters freeze to death next winter, you can lean on the gas and zoom up Route 30 in self-absorbed bliss.

If human needs were prioritized, we would think maybe we could slow down upon occasion if there was a dip in the road, knowing that our neighbors had a place to go at night.

And some of us would even feel good about that.

Nancy Braus
Guilford

Public tax dollars belong in public schools

RE: "Bill undermines independent schools and hurts children" [Viewpoint, Apr. 26]:

The dignity and rights of Vermont's special education student population deserve more than a throwaway line at the end of a lengthy commentary that asks this same population of children to continue to stand back as private and independent schools deny their admittance despite accepting our public tax dollars. It's clear this practice is immoral. It should soon be illegal.

At a time when adults in other parts of the country are working through their schools boards and legislatures to segregate our students based on their identities, self-described lifelong liberals, like Mr. Gordon, are seeking to maintain that hurtful system here. We can and should do better.

Public tax dollars belong in schools that do not discriminate based on disability. My family is under no misperception about H.483. Fairness to our disabled children is long overdue.

Judy Robinson
Marlboro

Budget vote

FROM SECTION FRONT

Rick Deangelis, director of the Good Samaritan housing program in Barre, said on a visit with the Progressive caucus recently that very little transition planning has happened. People have no idea where they will go. He said it is looking like what he can do to support people will be to "help people get tents and sleeping bags before they go."

But where will they go? Deangelis was glad to see some transition funding added back into the budget to provide for some additional options. It's not enough.

I voted no on the state budget because I could not support a plan that will cause two waves of a profound humanitarian crisis, beginning in two weeks, at the end of May.

I voted no on the state budget because it did not support appropriate transition plans that would prevent crises both for individuals and our communities.

Please consider calling Gov. Scott at 802-828-2228 and let him know that rapid unhousing of people without transition plans is not what we want for Vermonters.

I will keep working on this. We must do better.

I DID NOT RUN for office to see state government turn its back on some of our most vulnerable

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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
May 15-21
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Gordon Hayward, Garden Designer, Writer. Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 12:30p, Sat 6:20p, Sun 6:30a	Landmark College Spring 2023 Commencement. Thurs 4p, Sun 6p
The World Fusion Show - Ep # 152 - Kevin Nathaniel. Tues 8p, Wed 9p, Thurs 12:30p, Sat 12:30p, Sun 9:30a	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 5/2/23: Tues 6:15p (LIVE), Thurs 1p
Landmark College Presents - Cary Supalo, Ph. D. Becoming a Blind Chemist. Wed 9a, Fri 1p, Sat 8p, Sun 4p	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 5/15/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8a, Fri 11:30a
New England Center for Circus Arts - 2023 Circus Spectacular. Mon 1p, Tues 10a, Thurs 3:15p, Fri 9:30p, Sun 7:15p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 5/15/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 5:30a, Fri 2p
Around Town with Maria - Earth Day Celebration 4/22/23: Mon 2:45p, Tues 8:30p, Thurs 1:30p, Fri 10a, Sat 9a, Sun 5:30p	River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 5/15/23: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30a
Brattleboro Gallery Walk 2023: Mon 12:30p, Tues 6:15a, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 6:30p, Fri 5:30p, Sat 5p, Sun 12:30p	Windham Elementary School Board Mtg. 5/16/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
At BMAC - Artist Talk: Daniel Callahan. Mon 6:45a, Tues 3:45p, Wed 12:30p, Sat 10:45a, Sun 9p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 5/16/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
Around Town with Maria - Celebrating the Life of Jonas Emmanuel Blanchet-Fricke. Mon 10a, Wed 4p, Fri 2p, Sat 9:30p, Sun 1p	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 5/17/23: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell. Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 5/17/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	River Valleys Unified School District Special Mtg. 5/17/23: Sun 8p
WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 5/17/23: Sat 8:30p, Sun 6a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	VT Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel 5/8/23: Mon 12p, Tues 9:30p, Wed 8a, Thurs 10:30a
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service: Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	West River Education District Board Mtg. 5/8/23: Mon 9a, Tues 4:15p, Wed 10:15a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Newfane Planning Commission Mtg. 4/27/23: Mon 2:15p, Tues 3:30p, Wed 7:15a, Sun 11a
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 4/27/23: Mon 4p, Tues 7:45a, Wed 12p, Fri 4:30p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

Note: Schedule subject to change.
View full schedule and watch online at brattleborotv.org

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

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AROUND THE TOWNS

Town of Brattleboro launches 'Town Matters' podcast

BRATTLEBORO — The town of Brattleboro has begun a new podcast series, "Town Matters," hosted by Town Manager John Potter. This new series will provide listeners with brief updates about town government. The show aims to inform the public and encourage active participation in local affairs. "Town Matters" will be published during the week between Selectboard meetings and provide a brief overview of the previous meeting along with a preview of the next one. As the show develops, staff hope to incorporate other updates from around town and feature guest hosts, all while delivering the news in under 10 minutes.

"This podcast was put together to communicate in a different format — really, in a different way — about what is going on in town government," Potter explained during the debut episode.

The show is recorded at the Municipal Center in Brattleboro Community Television's third floor studio. Listeners can expect a fresh episode to be released bi-weekly, available for streaming on all major podcast platforms.

For now, listeners can follow the show on Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Additionally, the show will be published on the homepage of brattleboro.org, and on Brattleboro Community Television. To send feedback or suggestions to the show, email townmatters@brattleboro.org.

Friends of Brooks host 'Novels, Non-Fiction & Nosh'

BRATTLEBORO — On Friday, May 19, from 6 to 8 p.m., the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library will host a "Novels, Non-Fiction & Nosh" fundraiser in the library's main reading room.

At this special after-hours event, guests will enjoy an array of sweet and savory treats and get their choice of a fiction or nonfiction wrapped book to take home. Tickets are \$10 and are available in advance at the library or at the door the night of the event.

Putney Library to hold Garden Fundraiser Book Sale

PUTNEY — Putney Public Library's Garden Fundraiser Book Sale will take place on Saturday, May 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Sunday, May 21, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Come browse an eclectic assemblage of pre-loved hardcovers, paperbacks, and children's books. Prices range from 50 cents to \$4 on Saturday and by donation on Sunday. All funds raised will benefit the library's new garden and tree planting project. The library will not be open for regular library functions during this special event.

Community plant, bake sale at Westminster West Library

WESTMINSTER WEST — A community plant and bake

sale will be held Saturday, May 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Westminster West Library, 3409 Westminster West Road.

This year, they will have a variety of plants for your gardens. All plants are carefully sourced to be pest-free. They are field-grown, hardy, weed-free specimens, potted with love and care. They will also have a few selected herbs and shrubs. People are encouraged to come early for the best selection and to get homemade baked goods, too.

Pots range from \$5 to \$15 each, and there will be a discount for volume — buy more, save more. Sales are by cash or check only, and all proceeds go to the Westminster West Library.

Spring Sale, cookout at Westminster church

WESTMINSTER — On Saturday, May 20, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Westminster First Congregational Church Women's Fellowship will hold their Spring Sale on the church lawn, 3470 U.S. Route 5. There will be all kinds of plants for sale — annuals, perennials, bushes, and garden starts. Also for sale will be baked goods, garden crafts, and puzzles.

The cookout lunch will include hot dogs, hamburgers, sausages, peppers and onions, and chili. Take it to go, or sit and visit in the outside cafe, or buy a chance at the Bow-Tie twin-sized quilt raffle, which will be drawn at the end of the day.

Geranium Festival fundraiser benefits Lydia Taft Pratt Library

WEST DUMMERSTON — Lydia's Friends, the friends-of-the-library organization that supports the Lydia Taft Pratt Library, will host a Geranium Festival and Silent Auction fundraiser on Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. outside the library at 150 West Street, rain or shine.

According to Dummerston resident Catherine O'Callaghan, who is helping to organize this event, the Geranium Festival was an annual event for the library until it was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Proceeds from the Geranium Festival will go to support a new website for Lydia Taft Pratt Library.

Geraniums for the event are being supplied by Walker Farm, while area craftspeople, artisans, and businesses have donated art, crafts, gift certificates, and food to this effort. There will be refreshments, music, and activities for the whole family. Local duo Hazelnuts will perform live music and a tent will prevent both people and flowers from succumbing to the elements, whether they be rain or sun. For more information, contact the library at 802-258-9878, dummerstonvlibrary@gmail.com, or call O'Callaghan at 802-380-7935.

Senior lunch served in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON — Evening Star Grange and Senior Solutions will present their second May

luncheon on Wednesday, May 24. Reservations are strongly suggested so that they know how much food to prepare. Those wishing to reserve meals should call the Grange at 802-254-1138 and leave their name, telephone number, the number of meals requested and whether they are for eating in or taking out. Takeout meals may be picked up between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., with indoor dining starting at noon.

The menu includes meatloaf (or vegetarian meatloaf), mashed potatoes and gravy, and summer squash casserole, with cottage pudding with lemon sauce for dessert. All are invited to the meal; a donation of \$3 for those 60 and above or \$4 for those 59 and under is suggested.

Vernon Community Market debuts on May 24

VERNON — The new Vernon Community Market, a program of the Vernon Recreation Department, will hold its opening day on Wednesday, May 24. It will then be held the first and third Wednesdays of each month beginning in June and running through Oct. 4.

The market's hours are 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Vernon Rec Area, 607 Pond Road, and will feature J & B's Curbside Café, handmade crafts, farm produce, baked goods, flowers, and more.

For more information, contact the Vernon Recreation Department (recreation@vernonvt.org or 802-254-9251) or email the market at VernonVTCommunityMarket@gmail.com.

Monthly produce distribution

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

All are welcome. Because of covid, it is a drive-up service. Bags provided. The next monthly food drop is Thursday, May 25.

Annual Edie Fenton plant and seed swap in Halifax

HALIFAX — On Saturday, May 27, the Halifax Community Club will host a community plant swap from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Club is jointly celebrating spring with the Halifax Historical Society's Open House, which will be across the street at the same time and date.

The plant swap honors the memory of our friend, neighbor, gardener, and club member Edie Fenton, who died in early 2020, just before the first spring bulbs emerged from her well-tended plant beds. Edie was generous in sharing her plants, so people are invited to bring plants or seeds to share, take some annuals, perennials, or seeds for your garden, or do both.

The Halifax Community Hall is located at 20 Brook Road in West Halifax. The hall is wheelchair-accessible, including its bathroom. The event is free, though donations to support the maintenance of the historic hall are welcome. For more information, contact Laurel Copeland at LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or 210-488-1701.

BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

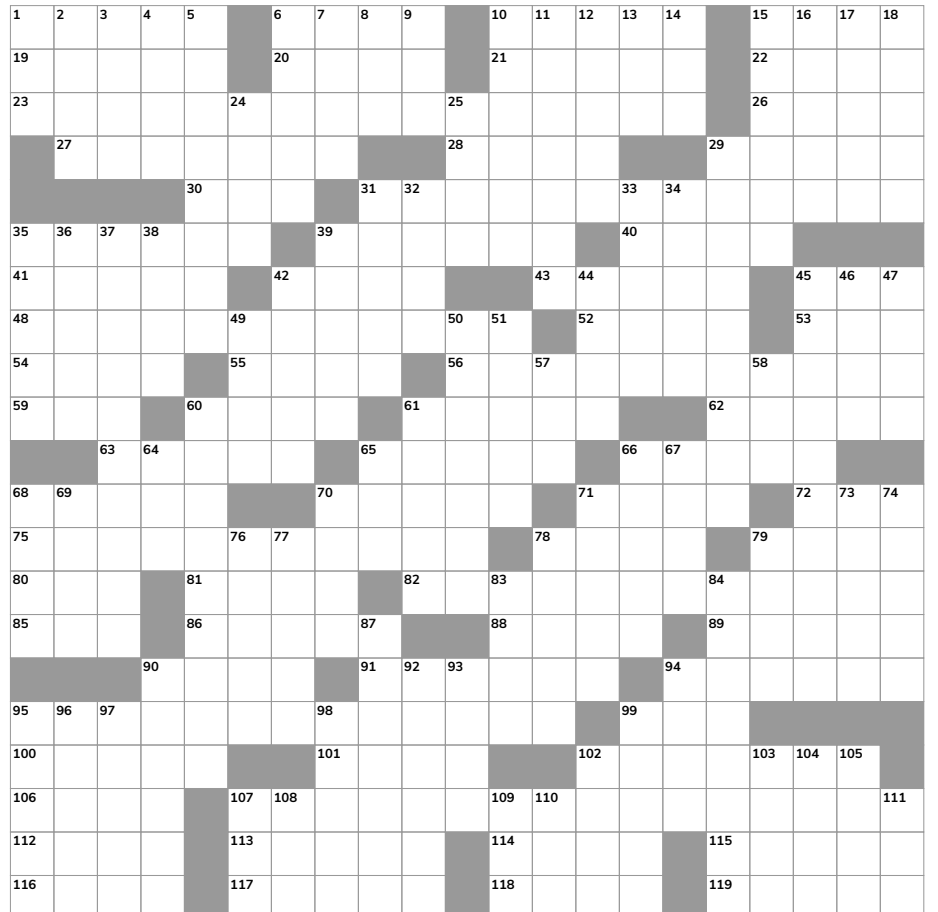
"Taking the L"

Across

1. Mount Fuji's land
6. Some workstations
10. In a lather?
15. Sand ___ (course obstacle)
19. Mideasterner in a port
20. Cereal go-with
21. Small singing groups
22. Took an Uber
23. Nascent and rubbery skin irritation?
26. Group of troops
27. Came down hard?
28. Man's name that's a garnish backward
29. 7" half
30. Unprepared
31. Declare you're not listening to Motown?
35. Learning center
39. "Try me later"
40. Salon option
41. Roberts's benchmate
42. Spot for tools
43. Big fund-raiser
45. J. Edgar Hoover Building agcy.
48. "Gotta ring up somebody immediately!"?
52. Square footage
53. Dorm overseers
54. Russian news agency
55. Holes
56. Falsify a hill?
59. Letters preceding an alias
60. "The Great British ___ Off"
61. ___-Hawley Tariff Act
62. Asia Minor district
63. Relief from the sun
65. Cookie coating
66. Refine, as ore
68. Infant's woe
70. Nature calls?
71. "If I Could Turn Back Time" singer
72. Fried-fish fish
75. Reliving Christmas forever?
78. Get the wrinkles out
79. Great rating
80. ___ de plume
81. "My Heart Will Go On" singer
82. Expensive gas?
85. "Sure thang"
86. Adjust
88. Play the same riff over and over
89. Sunny lobbies
90. News bit
91. Useful
94. In a monotonous way
95. Bun for a contract killer?
99. Little fox
100. Sedate
101. "___, Caesar!"
102. Rival of 'Bama
106. Roaring Twenties look
107. Words said before a Hamilton-Burr-es que event?
112. Provo neighbor
113. "Hawaii Five-0" cop
114. Seattle forecast
115. Opposite of sur
116. Titles for V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie
117. Hemmes furniture sellers
118. Bendable joint
119. Like a sprite

Down

1. Nine-to-five
2. Old Testament prophet
3. Actor Bettany
4. "___ Rice's Mayfair Witches"
5. "Sweet pad!"
6. "Just got here!"
7. Dallas, for short
8. Roberto Clemente Award org.
9. The Specials specialty
10. Frustrate
11. Traveled around the world?
12. Garlicky sauce
13. Luau fare
14. French fashion inits.
15. Popular saying
16. Sonata section
17. "Farewell, Françoise"
18. Flower feature
24. Biased type: Abbr.
25. Old Turkish rulers
29. Less consistent
31. Some drivers wear gloves on these
32. Wegmans rival
33. VP Agnew
34. "Keep dreaming!"
35. He uses many chimneys
36. Hide
37. Gets cold at the plate
38. Singer Redding
39. "Please, please, please!"
42. Vampire killer
44. "Round and Round" band
45. Where dunks are made
46. "___ Ha!" ("South Pacific" song)
47. Land in el mar
49. "I say, guv!"
50. Secret ___
51. Fruitcakes
57. Minor player
58. Cambodian dictator Lon
60. Returned to the past?
61. Implant's spot
64. Boozer's sound
65. Return marker
66. 1993 Salt-N-Pepa hit
67. Pub reading

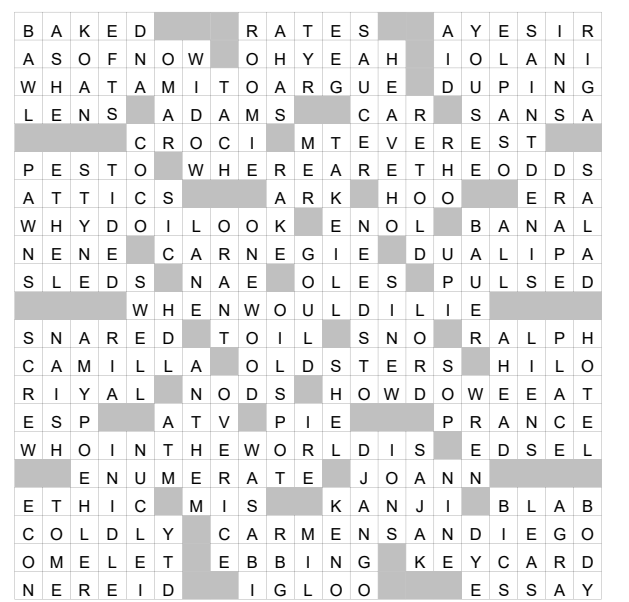


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68. "Woodstock" band, initially
69. Oklahoma tribe
70. Second baseman Sandberg
71. Pinch into folds
73. WWE star Titus ___
74. Internet lag
76. Edmonton skater
77. "Find somebody else"
78. "Show me what you've got"
79. Mennen aftershave
83. Daredevil Knievel
84. Hard labor spot
87. Toto hit song of '82
90. Many long crossword answers
92. Snack chips
93. Ian of "Alien"
94. Feudal land
95. Early PC platform
96. What ultrasounds scan
97. One with a lead foot
98. River of Lyon
99. "A Fish Called Wanda" actor Kevin
102. Comics pooch with a giant tongue
103. False god
104. Hang ten
105. UFO-tracking org.
107. Despot Amin
108. QB Prescott
109. Be a pain
110. Bread with korma: Var.
111. Dancer Goodman

Last issue's solution

"Asking the Wrong Questions"



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PUBLICATION OF THE COMMONS CROSSWORD IS UNDERWRITTEN BY

Guilford Community Church pays tribute to Shirley Crockett

GUILFORD—An event commemorating the 25th anniversary of the death of The Rev. Shirley Harris Crockett, pastor of the Guilford Community Church, U. C. C., from 1976 to 1997, will be held at the church Sunday, May 21, starting at 2:30 p.m.

Her husband, the Rev. Larrimore Crockett, is organizing the event, with the help of Andy Davis, and will serve as emcee and storyteller. They say it will be "an extravaganza of storytelling, music and archival videos, all shining light on Shirley's ministry and paying tribute to her enduring legacy."

The afternoon will also include contributions by the Guilford Church Choir, led by Andy Davis; and Robin Davis; Stefan Amidon; John and Carolyn Wesley; Michael Mario; Katherine Breunig; a

quartet of women singing the music of Hildegard of Bingen; and other friends who can testify personally to the influence of Shirley's pastoral ministry.

A special moment will be the showing of a video made in 1991 of the debut performance of the song "Shirley of Guilford," with Tony Barrand (the composer of the song) and a band which included Margaret Dale Barrand, Andy Davis, Peter and Mary Alice Amidon, Lucy Spahr-Blazej and Richard Blazej. The program will end with everyone singing "Shirley of Guilford."

Guilford Community Church is located at 38 Church Drive. If you have questions, call Rev. Crockett at 224-348-0818. All are welcome to attend; donations toward the work and mission of the GCC may be made at the door.

GOT AN OPINION?
(Of course you do! You're from Windham County!)

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

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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

BUHS Unified wins opening playoff game

The Brattleboro Union High School Unified basketball team opened the 2023 playoffs on May 11 with a stress-free 72-39 win over the Otter Valley Otters.

Despite it being an 11 a.m. start, and despite having to play the game in the Brattleboro Area Middle School gym, the BUHS players rolled with the changes and led from start to finish.

Head coach Tyler Boone was beaming at the end of the game, not just because his team set a season-high for points scored or that every Brattleboro player scored at least one basket, but that his players were doing the little things that don't always make the headlines.

Silvia Galdamez played defense. Tyler Bolduc had a steal and a fast break opportunity. These are things that didn't happen last year and it's because everybody is so into Unified basketball that they are working so hard on things that I've never seen before. I've never seen Ashley [Cleveland] go for her own rebound or Tyler go for a steal and fast break opportunity. These are things that we didn't have. So, all of those little things really matter."

Brattleboro's top four scorers this season — Ben Stauffer and Ashley Cleveland (14 points each) and Thomas Bell and Austin Pinette (six points each) — got help from Galdamez, Bobby Petrie, and Mario Day, all of whom also scored six points each. Jaymeson Crochetiere and Jeff White added four points each, Bolduc scored a basket, and Devon Rabideau got her first two baskets of her career.

Despite it being a playoff game, both teams went out of their way to give everyone a chance to shine. It's this spirit of kindness and compassion that makes Unified basketball so much fun to watch.

Brattleboro, the top seed in the South with an 8-0 record, will now face fourth-seeded Springfield in a second-round game on May 17 at 2:15 p.m. at the BUHS gym. Springfield advanced with a 32-22 win over Mill River on May 11.

Boone said his biggest worry is that his team might be feeling a little too good about its chances of winning a second



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Unified basketball title. While Brattleboro beat Springfield by 10 points in their regular season game, Boone wants his players to forget about that and "come out strong and not be overconfident" against the Cosmos in their playoff game.

Baseball

Cody Hescocock threw a one-hitter as Leland & Gray shut out West Rutland, 10-0, on May 9 in a five-inning game in Townshend. Hescocock needed just 65 pitches to get the win and struck out nine batters.

Leland & Gray then rode the emotions that came with the annual "Dingers for Dylan" game in Townshend on May 14, a fundraiser that honors the memory of Dylan Landers, who died in a motor vehicle crash in 2021. The Rebels rallied for an 8-7 win over Mill River on a walk-off RBI single in the bottom of the seventh by Spencer Claussen to score Garrett Cutts for the victory.

Landers, an outfielder for the Rebels, would have graduated with the Class of 2023 next month. Since his untimely death, his classmates have carried him in their hearts for the past two years, and his No. 12 jersey has been given a place of honor at all the Rebels' games.

His memory will live on through this game, which was a fundraiser for the Dylan Landers Forever a Rebel Award, which will be given annually to a graduating senior, as well as to help pay for a new backstop for the baseball field.

Bellows Falls opened a week of three road games with a 9-5 win over Windsor on May 8 and losses to Rutland (5-1 on May 11) and Hartford (2-0 on May 12), leaving the Terriers with a 6-6 record heading into the final two weeks of the season.

Against Windsor, Jamison Nystrom went 2-for-4 with a

double, scored three runs, and stole three bases, while Cole Moore went 3-for-4 and drove in two runs. Jesse Darrell, Eli Allbee, and Jaxson Clark shared the pitching chores.

Brattleboro improved to 5-2 with a 12-6 road win over Fair Haven on May 11.

Twin Valley lost to Proctor, 14-4, in a six-inning game on May 9. The next day, the Wildcats lost a 44-4 game in five innings to Mount St. Joseph at Baker Field in Wilmington.

Softball

It's been a tough season for BUHS softball. While this year will be only the second losing season for Brattleboro since 2009, the 11-time state champions will avoid the ignominy of a winless season after they defeated the Fair Haven Slaters, 18-5, in six innings on May 12.

Coach Erin Cooke and her assistant Hailey Derosia had only nine players for this game. Even with no available substitutes, Brattleboro had one of its best offensive performances of the season as they rapped out 14 hits, including a 4-for-5 day by Kayli Speno.

Brattleboro pitcher Marina Wilson struck out seven batters and held the Slaters without a hit, but walked six batters. Jasmine Thibault threw an inning of relief after Wilson was hurt and had to leave the game, leaving BUHS with only eight players in the field for an inning.

The victory gave Brattleboro a 1-9 record, and it was a nice rebound from a wild and ultimately disappointing 29-17 loss in six innings to Burr & Burton on May 8. Brattleboro was in contention for most of the game before giving up 10 runs in the final inning.

Leland & Gray had a pair of tough losses last week. On May 8, the Rebels lost a 16-14 slugfest to West Rutland in an eight-inning game in Townshend. The Rebels pounded out 13 hits, but losing pitcher Kristen Lowe gave up 16 hits. Lowe walked six and struck out eight batters. She also had three hits and scored two runs. Makaila Morse, Molly Bingham, and Ainsley Meyer each had two hits and Savannah Cadrin drove in three runs.

The Rebels then fell to Proctor, 13-9, on May 10. Proctor scored five runs in the



Brattleboro's Ashley Cleveland (4) and Silvia Galdamez (13) lead the offense up the floor during the second half of their Unified basketball playoff game against Otter Valley on May 12.

first inning and never trailed after that as they got 13 hits off Lowe. The Rebels made it interesting by scoring five runs in the seventh inning, but were held to just three hits by winning pitcher Cadence Goodwin.

However, the outlook improved for the Rebels in the "Dingers for Dylan" game in Townshend on May 13 as they rolled to a 16-2 win over Mill River in five innings to improve their record to 5-3. Hannah Greenwood hit a grand slam home run in the victory.

Bellows Falls lost to Green Mountain, 12-4, on May 9. Losing pitcher Izzy Stoodley had a rough game, as she allowed 12 runs with 12 hits, eight walks, and seven strikeouts.

On May 12, West Rutland cruised to a 22-10 win in five innings over Twin Valley.

Girls' tennis

Brattleboro broke a losing streak that stretched back to 2019 with a pair of wins against Bellows Falls at the BUHS courts on May 8. BF had to play a doubleheader against Brattleboro because their courts are unplayable this season.

In the first match, Brattleboro got singles wins from No. 1 Elena Hannigan, No. 2 Ava Rosenzweig-Davidovits, No. 4 Lily Bingham and No. 5 Anna Cummings, and doubles wins from the No. 1 tandem of Amelia Laffland and Ava Bark and the No. 2 duo of Emma Lafayette and Amelia Newton. BF's only win came from Mary Wallace, who defeated Evie Kiehl at No. 3 singles.

The second match was equally one-sided as Hannigan, Cummings, and Kiehl won their singles matches and Brattleboro swept the doubles matches. Wallace and Avery Dole had singles victories for the Terriers.

Those wins were followed by a pair of road losses as Brattleboro lost 6-1 to Hartford on May 9 and got swept 7-0 by Burr & Burton on May 11.

Girls' lacrosse

Brattleboro shut out Lyndon Institute, 13-0, at Natowich Field on May 9 for their second win of the season. Willow Romo led BUHS with five goals, while Mallory Newton and Abby Henry scored two goals each. Ally Foard, Ava Ferencz, Charlie Miller, Sophie Albright and Rosalie Smith each contributed one goal, and goalie Maren Sawyer made two saves to earn the win.

Two nights later, Mount Anthony rolled to an 18-1 win over Brattleboro at Natowich Field to drop the BUHS girls to 2-7 on the season.

Boys' lacrosse

Brattleboro was on the road last week for three games. The laxmen defeated Lyndon Institute, 9-4, on May 9, but lost a 10-5 match to Keene on May 11, and fell to Woodstock, 11-5, on May 13, to bring their season record to 3-7.

Track & Field

The Connecticut Valley Championships were held at Keene High School on May 13. In the boys' meet, Bellows Falls finished eighth and Brattleboro finished 10th, while in the girls' meet, Bellows Falls finished fifth and Brattleboro was ninth. Hanover, New Hampshire won the boys' meet, while Thetford edged Hanover by a single point to finish as the girls' winner.

The next big meet for Bellows Falls and Brattleboro is the Southern Vermont League Championships in Fair Haven on May 23, which will be the regular season finale for the Terriers. Brattleboro finishes the regular season with the Essex Invitational on May 27, the last tune-up before the state championship meet on June 3.

Senior bowling roundup

Week 2 of the spring/summer season of the Brattleboro

Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on May 11 saw Five Pins (10-0) have a 5-0 to move into sole possession of first place. Turkeys and No Splits (both 9-1) are tied for second, followed by Stayin' Alive (5.5-4.5), The Bowlers (5-5), High Rollers and Slo Movers (both 4-6), Wrecking Crew (both 2-8), and Skippers (1.5-8.5).

Sally Perry again had the women's high handicap game (241), while Vikki Butynski had the high handicap series (672). Wayne Randall had the men's high handicap game (251), while Bill Uccello had the high handicap series (675). Five Pins had the high team handicap game (861) and series (2,548).

Chuck Adams again led the men's scratch scoring with a 639 series with games of 237, 203, and 199. Robert Rigby had a 574 series with a 214 game, Gary Montgomery had a 557 series with games of 210 and 194, Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 536 series with a 221 game, Skip Shine had a 523 series with a 190 game, and Randall rolled a 198 game.

Carol Gloski had the women's high scratch series (496) and game (194). Diane Cooke had a 176 game.

Popping the Colonels

For the first time since I started writing about the BUHS sports teams in 1989, I have not used the word "Colonels" in a story. That moniker was officially consigned to the dustbin of history by the Windham Southeast District School Board last week, and students will be voting later this month for a replacement mascot.

I'll leave the discussion about this development to the news section and the Voices section of this newspaper, but I do hope the Brattleboro students come up with a suitable substitute that will fit neatly into a headline.

Brattleboro pitcher Marina Wilson struck out seven batters in an 18-5 win over Fair Haven on May 12. It was Brattleboro's first softball victory of the season.



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