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

Rockingham explores shakeup in EMS services

Town officials, unhappy with missed calls from Golden Cross, invite Rescue Inc. to bid on contract for ambulance service

By Kevin O'Connor
VTDigger.org

ROCKINGHAM—Windham County's two largest population centers are poles apart when it comes to their municipal governments' thoughts on how to provide local emergency medical services.

Brattleboro has generated months of headlines for its Selectboard's decision to drop a nearly 60-year contract with the region's largest and longest-serving EMS provider, Rescue Inc., and hire competitor Golden Cross Ambulance to help with a proposed fire department takeover of coverage.

Now Rockingham leaders are considering whether to drop their almost two-decade connection with Golden Cross and switch to Rescue.

"There have been ups and downs with our relationship, and we're trying to figure out if there are other opportunities," Rockingham Municipal Manager Scott Pickup said.

Rockingham pays \$75,000 annually for Golden Cross service. But even before the New Hampshire provider signed a \$112,500 contract with Brattleboro earlier this year, it has left many Rockingham calls

to be picked up by mutual aid from neighboring communities.

The nearby town of Walpole, New Hampshire, for example, has responded to so many Rockingham calls, it has warned it may stop altogether.

"It's almost becoming a daily occurrence and, quite frankly, that's not how mutual aid is supposed to work," Pickup said. "Walpole's primary mission is to serve their residents and if they're out of their jurisdiction, it makes it harder for them to do their job."

As a result, Rockingham has invited both Golden Cross and Rescue to bid on its EMS contract for the coming fiscal year.

"We're trying to encourage some competition," Pickup said.

Golden Cross has not responded to VTDigger requests for comment.

Brattleboro Selectboard primed to receive study

Brattleboro, for its part, is set to receive a feasibility study on its own EMS future. AP Triton, the consulting company, is set to appear at the Selectboard's Dec. 20 meeting to offer its analysis of a partial or full takeover by the fire department or a return to Rescue

■ SEE EMS, A3



LEGISLATORS look ahead to 2023

Brattleboro's lawmakers, clockwise from top left: Rep. Tristan Toleno, Rep. Emilie Kornheiser, incoming senators Nader Hashim and Wendy Harrison, and Rep. Mollie Burke.

Brattleboro's House delegation and two new senators talk about their priorities and about the issues looming for lawmakers in Montpelier in the upcoming biennium

By Randolph T. Holhut
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The town's legislative delegation in Montpelier — its three incumbent House members and its two incoming Senators — talked about priorities for the 2023-24 biennium and heard concerns from constituents during an informal meeting on Dec. 10 at Brooks Memorial Library.

Democratic State Reps. Mollie Burke, Emilie Kornheiser, and Tristan Toleno are returning to the State House, while Wendy Harrison and Nader Hashim will begin

their first terms in the Senate.

While the Democrats in the House and Senate have selected their leadership for the coming session, committee assignments in each chamber have not been made. Kornheiser said that will be done when the Legislature begins its work in the first week of January.

The new senators

Hashim, who previously served one term in the House representing Putney, Westminster, and his hometown of Dummerston, says criminal justice reform, in particular the lack of mental health services for people in crisis, is his hot issue as

he begins his Senate tenure.

He said education is another area of emphasis for him, particularly helping students bounce back from two years of disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He hopes to have a seat on the Education Committee in the 2023-24 biennium.

As the parent of a school-age child, Hashim said he knows Vermont's youth "have been through a lot over the past two years" and recognizes "the struggles that families have had to endure." As schools are seen as "a cultural focal point in all our communities," Hashim said he wants to contribute where ever he can to help

■ SEE LAWMAKERS, A3

'The COMMUNITY we WANT TO BE'

With Beloved Community, two mainstream Protestant denominations come together in an experiment of faith in action, following a vision of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Two churches have joined forces to form Beloved Community, offering combined worship services and spiritual programs as well as working for justice and compassionate service to the broader community.

First Baptist Church of

Brattleboro (FBC) and First United Methodist Church of Brattleboro (FUMC) share space at 18 Town Crier Drive and are "joining hands to share the love they experience together with others," say FBC Pastor Suzanne Andrews and FUMC Pastor Ralph Howe.

Each congregation has maintained its individual deacons, boards, bylaws, and parity, but both come together in worship and a new, social outreach known as Beloved Community.

Andrews — a pastor for 25 years, 17 of them with FBC here — says worshipping together has been well received by both congregations.

"It has opened us to the

treasures in our denominational attics and made us eager to experiment with new ways of praising God, affirming the love of God for all people, and working for a better world together," she says.

Coming together in a time of need has allowed both congregations to flourish and create something new to give to one another and to the community.

Two congregations in transition

The building the two Protestant denominations now share was constructed in 1970 as a United Methodist Church.

The FBC had been at home at 190 Main St. in a "huge,

■ SEE BELOVED COMMUNITY, A2



INGRID LUKAS COURTESY PHOTO

First Baptist Church Pastor Suzanne Andrews and First Methodist Church Pastor Ralph Howe have joined their congregations in the Beloved Community, a new partnership that finds strength in the differences of both faith traditions.

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Recognizing that a vigorous exchange of ideas and information allows democracy to function and is the lifeblood of a community, Vermont Independent Media:

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- promotes local independent journalism,
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SUBMITTING NEWS AND TIPS

We welcome story ideas and news tips. Please contact the newsroom at news@commonnews.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@commonnews.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

Beloved Community

FROM SECTION FRONT

three-story building with a slate roof” built in 1863, Andrews says.

“We just couldn’t afford to maintain it,” she says of the Main Street building, which also served as a winter homeless shelter.

As congregations have diminished in mainstream churches across the nation, so they have here and, as parishioners felt the pressing need to find enough money to keep going, the First Baptist Church found a heaven-sent solution — for a time.

They sold a stained glass window.

Every stained glass church window has a story and, almost always, a certain elegance, but this one was a depiction of St. John the Divine — signed by Louis Comfort Tiffany. FBC sold the window for \$85,000 to a Pennsylvania collector who donated it to a museum.

Given expenses, however, \$55,000 of that windfall went to fix the leaking slate roof and, says Andrews, parishioners realized they “couldn’t maintain” the building with all its aging needs.

They sold it in 2016 to Bob Johnson, who gave the church three years’ grace before starting to charge rent, which they couldn’t afford. The building is now home to Epsilon Spire, an arts nonprofit.

Meanwhile, the Methodist congregation was dwindling as well, and so the two joined forces.

‘It’s really been such a blessing for us’

In the beginning, as each congregation held a separate service, Andrews says, “we were strangers in the same church.”

When Howe came to FUMC in 2021, he suggested combining actual worship, which the two congregations did later that year, sharing Advent services.

“It was an experiment, and we started worshipping together,” Andrews says. “Ralph and I alternated Sundays.”

But, she says, “what it has done is nearly a miracle.”

“It has brought people from different backgrounds together as one Christian family,” Andrews continues. “It’s been a year, and we’ve had fundraisers together, we’ve worshipped together, and laughed together, and cried together, and it’s really been such a blessing for us.”

FBC and FUMC have been worshipping together since November, drawing from both Baptist and Methodist heritage for new worship. They use Methodist and Baptist hymns and liturgy, and they share preaching and weekly communion. Local jazz pianist Dan DeWalt offers music most Sundays.

“We support one another, we divide the expenses, we’re partners,” says Andrews. “We’re still struggling, but we’re going to make it. I just know it. We all do.”

A former lawyer, Howe, who grew up in Wilmington, has been a minister since 1993 and came to Brattleboro after stints in central Vermont and western Massachusetts.

As Howe puts it, “we didn’t start with legal definitions, but

looked at the community we want to be.”

“We wanted to start our relationship with the practice of being in community with one another and living into a relationship we think other people in the area would like to be part of,” he says. “I like that approach because sometimes money becomes an obstacle for some people.”

He calls the combined church “an open door to people of difference.”

Within the Beloved Community framework, the two congregations are still separately known as First Baptist and First Methodist.

“We want to respect our differences, not homogenize them,” says Howe. “Of course, when we work together, we’ve done some blending in terms of how we worship, but we are happy to emphasize some of our differences and teach each other from those differences.”

That’s different, he points out, from some federated churches “that collapse into each other to survive.”

“While we could say that’s part of our story, that emphasizes the diminishment in numbers and finances rather than working from our strengths and gifts,” Howe says. “And that’s proving to be a good tonic for the usual small-church fears.”

Keeping denominational affiliations and politics while using them in community with one another “is making us stronger as Baptists and Methodists, because we are not trying to homogenize, but to engage authentically from our deepest spiritual roots,” Howe says.

“So, we are not a federated church, but two churches living into a Beloved Community together, open to others as well. We have now created structures to reflect this: a joint board of both church councils, and teams for mission, member care, worship, outreach, et cetera.”

Sharing a pulpit

Both pastors are enjoying their shared pulpit experience.

“It’s been a great delight to work with her,” says Howe of Andrews. “She is a very warm and faithful person, so she brings a lot to worship. One of the things she’s good at is movement, sacred dance. Each week she leads part of our prayer time with hand gestures and music so if people wish, they can engage their bodies in prayer.”

“We’re blessed,” adds Andrews. “We’re like a brother and sister, truly, in Christ.”

On average, about 25 people attend Sunday services.

“We’re small, but by focusing on what gives us life and energy and recognizing the diversity of gifts that people bring to the table, we’re trying to do what we’re able to do and feel called to do rather than follow some program, and I think that makes a difference,” Howe says.

“Sometimes in small churches I think you feel you have to run a three-ring circus and, when you can’t do it, you give up,” he says. “And that’s not very helpful. So we’re just moving gently.”

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AROUND THE TOWNS

Public opportunity to learn from community members who are unhoused

BRATTLEBORO — The public is invited to attend a community conversation on Windham County homelessness on Wednesday, Dec. 14, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Brooks Memorial Library.

One part of the event will involve a life-sized Candyland game, designed by Advocacy 4 the Unfortunate (A4U), for the audience to play and engage with, as a visualization of the obstacles they face as individuals without a permanent address and roof over their head. A4U organizers say their intention for the game is to help the audience learn through play and connection.

A4U is a Brattleboro homeless self-advocacy group, many of whom alternate between sleeping in campgrounds, hotel rooms, shelters, and the street. With barriers to full-time employment, they can’t afford housing. Ultimately, they hope to change the culture of homelessness in our communities.

The group has been employed by the Youth Services workforce development arm twice a week since September to collect data, address homeless issues directly with local organizations, and increase dialogue and public awareness of homelessness. A4U members all share past participation in Youth Services’s successful low-barrier day labor pilot program, Work Today, which ended last year due to lack of funding.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, email info@youthservicesinc.org.

Final presentation on 37 Main Street project is Dec. 15

SAXTONS RIVER — Saxtons River hosts the final presentation about 37 Main Street on Thursday, Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. A municipal planning grant submitted by Rockingham has provided a rich three-month discussion of revitalization and economic development for the old building and the west end of Main Street.

Board president Susan Still of Main Street Arts (MSA) will begin the evening with MSA board plans for 37 Main. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst consulting team will review three options for the old Tenney’s Hardware/Dish. The public is invited to come and ask questions in person at Main Street Arts at 35 Main

Beloved Community

From the success of worshipping together, the group decided to form the Beloved Community, which “unified us even more,” Andrews says.

The name and intention was prompted by Martin Luther King Jr., who in a 1957 sermon, “Birth of a New Nation,” said that “the aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community.”

King defined a beloved community as a group of people that could come together to solve any social issue, division, or struggle.

The Beloved Community here is the social mission outreach arm of the congregation that works locally and around the world. Its key values are “deepening spirituality, inclusive hospitality, and compassionate justice.”

Both churches have historically been supportive of the needs of the local community through support of nonprofits for food and shelter, as well as other projects for community well-being and justice.

The churches now have been working together to support refugee resettlement, provide Bible study, and provide health kits for emergency relief programs.

Beloved Community hopes to collaborate with indigenous people on whose land their building

Street or stay home and watch the FACT-TV livestream.

The three community-proposed uses include fire station, green space, and mixed commercial/residential construction. Each use will be outlined with next action steps. The UMass team will deliver a full written report to the Saxtons River trustees later in December, itemizing the choices, maps and ideas contributed during the discussions this fall and winter.

Family circus show returns for the holidays

BRATTLEBORO — *The Flying Nut* is back at the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) on Dec. 16–18 with its first in-person holiday circus show since 2019.

Inspired by *The Nutcracker*, this year’s show, entitled *The Flying Coconut*, veers off course when the opening party is crashed by pirates and an unforgettable evening of high-flying feats, acrobatics, and circus mayhem ensues.

Featuring NECCA’s adult and youth student performers, this year’s theme takes on a nautical twist, complete with mermaids, starfish, and parrots. Legendary acrobatic clown Joel Baker joins the cast as a special professional guest artist, creating mischief and laughter. Tickets are \$12 to \$25 can be purchased at CircusSchool.org. For more information, call 802-254-9780.

Old Firehouse in Wilmington hosts holiday open house

WILMINGTON — The community is invited to attend the first Old Firehouse Holiday Open House, located at 18 Beaver Street, on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Attendees can gather with friends (new and old), neighbors, and visitors to the area to meet the folks who are offering an exciting variety of support and advocacy for substance use harm reduction, recovery and grief support, family and friends support groups, meditation groups for the community, and support for seniors.

They will have free soup, hot beverages, cookies, and more. The event is hosted by Voices of Hope, Senior Solutions, Brattleboro Area Hospice, Turning Point Center of Windham County, SEVCA, and the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont. Their work is supported by the town of Wilmington, the Rotary Club,

sits to honor that culture, language, and history.

The power of storytelling

The next venture of the Beloved Community is the creation of a Center for Story, Spirit and Justice, which will offer programs to the community:

- Storytelling and its history and power
- Work against racism and dehumanizing of others
- Explorations of gender, spirituality, mysticism, and spiritual direction
- Examination of personality and spirituality
- Liturgical dance
- Environmental spirituality
- Classes from the “Bridges Out of Poverty” program, developed by Ruby Payne

“Many people today are seeking a deeper spiritual life, not necessarily specific to a particular religion,” Howe says. “They are really looking to grow their inner life, to make sense of the world, and to get out and do things that have a positive benefit for the planet, the world, and the local community.”

The Center, he says, “is an answer to these yearnings through which we hope to provide for folks of all backgrounds the practices, inner strength, and means to pursue their personal

the Red Door Concert Series, Wilmington Works, Deerfield Valley Community Partnership, and the Vermont Department of Health.

For more information, call 802-490-5645 or 802-275-7232, or email voicesofhopevt@gmail.com. To learn more about Voices of Hope, visit voicesofhopevt.org.

Monthly free produce available

PUTNEY — The Vermont Foodbank and the Putney Foodshelf will co-sponsor the next monthly drop of free produce and some nonperishable items on Thursday, Dec. 22, from 9 to 9:45 a.m. on Alice Holway Drive (in front of Putney Meadows, the white building across from the Putney Co-op and Putney Fire Station.)

All are welcome. Because of COVID-19, participants are asked to remain in their car at pickup, and volunteers will bring out bags.

Catholic Worker calendars now available at Everyone’s Books

BRATTLEBORO — The children of the late graphic artist and printmaker Rita Corbin, who live in the Brattleboro area, continue to publish her Catholic Worker calendar with her original art and hand-lettering, as well as notecards and Christmas cards. Although the calendars are primarily sold by mail order through *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, there will be some for sale at Everyone’s Books in Brattleboro during the holiday season. For more information, visit ritacorbinart.com.

Corbin, who lived in Brattleboro between 1981 and 2011, became involved in the Catholic Worker movement while living in New York City in the 1950s. The founder, Dorothy Day, hired Rita to make illustrations for *The Catholic Worker* newspaper and they became friends. Rita became a lifelong contributor and was one of the three primary Catholic Worker artists, along with Fritz Eichenberg and Ade Bethune.

Her work has appeared in many well-known religious magazines including *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Commonweal*, *Fellowship*, and *Catholic Digest*. Her artwork has been shown at Rockhurst College in Kansas City, the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts, and the Sacketts Brook Gallery in Putney.

development and efforts for compassion and justice.”

First offerings will begin on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023 when, from 10 a.m. to noon, Andrews will offer a multi-week liturgical/sacred dancing workshop followed from noon to 2 p.m. by Howe’s multi-part nonviolence workshop series entitled “Violence and Wholeness.”

Both free programs continue in the weeks that follow and are open to people of any age.

The Beloved Community workshops on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and welcomes all. Communion is offered every Sunday, as is a small Sunday School. Adult Bible study takes place Thursdays with supper at 5 p.m. and study from 6 to 7 p.m. The group is currently reading the book of Luke.

“It’s fun and informative and inquisitive,” says Andrew.

“People have different levels of engagement with the text, and that’s worked well,” adds Howe.

All are welcome to “come and explore their own spirituality and calling to community and to join either church or just participate with us,” Andrew and Howe say. A Christmas Eve candlelight service with special music will be celebrated on Saturday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m. For more information, visit BelovedCommunityVT.org.



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Lawmakers

parents and families.

Harrison, a Brattleboro resident with years of nonprofit and municipal management experience, is starting her first term in the Senate. Climate change concerns are topping her agenda. She spoke of a recent Energy Action Network (EAN) conference she attended that examined how Vermont is doing in achieving its goals on reducing carbon emissions and energy use. EAN's report can be found at www.eanvt.org/2022-ean-report.

She said she hopes to get onto the Senate Transportation Committee, which addresses many climate change issues. She said it was an area "where we can improve people's lives in many ways" with policies that help all Vermonters save money as well as save the environment.

Because of her experience in local government, Harrison said she hopes to also get onto the Senate Operations Committee. "I know a fair amount about what the state does in terms of local government," she said, "but since I've been elected, I've been learning a lot and there is much more to learn about what the state does."

She said her and Hashim's interests don't necessarily overlap, saying that Hashim has more experience with judiciary issues, but that she and her new colleague are "moving a mile a minute" trying to get up to speed on everything they need to know and the issues they will be facing when they get to the Statehouse.

The House team

Toleno is starting his sixth term in the House and said he hopes to return to the Appropriations Committee in the upcoming session. Toleno said he thinks he will probably be back on Appropriations since seven of the 11 members who served in the current biennium have retired. While Toleno said that being part of the committee that helps create the annual budget for state government takes up most of his time, workforce issues will again be his priority this session.

Burke will begin her eighth term in the House and she said she will again be focused on transportation issues, with an emphasis on climate change, as a member of the Transportation Committee. She said 40% of Vermont's carbon emissions come from transportation, but "it's very hard thing to deal with" because of how car-dependent Vermonters are due to the lack of public transportation.

Kornheiser served on the House Ways and Committee, and hopes to continue there in the upcoming biennium. As the committee that deals with taxation, she said she serves there because she believes that "taxes are more than just a necessary evil, they are a reflection of our ultimate decision-making in a democracy and how government really can be a force for good."

In general, she said, the big issues in the upcoming session will be child care, housing, and climate change.

Kornheiser said the Legislature was committed to a proposal that would provide assistance so that no family would spend more than 10% of its income on child care, and that most families would be spending an even higher percentage of their household income.

Unfortunately, Kornheiser said, the problem is that not enough quality child care is available, nor do we have enough child-care workers to staff the facilities that currently exist. She said many women who want to work can't because of the high cost and scarcity of quality child care.

"I don't want to pretend that it's not going to cost money," she said. "It's going to cost money, and I'm hoping we can find a way to tackle that problem so that we can immediately see returns, both in the quality of people's lives and having more people in the workforce."

Addressing the housing crisis, and the drug crisis

Kornheiser talked about the need for "affordable housing with a lower-case 'a,' meaning housing that people can afford and what that means for having communities that work."

She sees the issues of the high cost of housing and the scarcity of housing as two separate, yet connected, issues.

She said that in the 2021-22 session, the influx of federal dollars to help states deal with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic allowed Vermont to make "huge investments in housing, but we did not do a lot of policy-related housing because sometimes money saves us from doing the hard work of [making] policy."

The hope, she said, is that lawmakers in the upcoming session will be able to make good policy

and have the money to implement that policy effectively. Topping the wish list is zoning and regulatory reform to make it easier to build more housing.

George Perides, of Orange, Mass., a landlord in Brattleboro, said his interest in the drug problem and tenant-landlord relationships prompted him to come to the session.

"If people want to do drugs, that is their own prerogative," he said, "but it affects the lives of the other people around them. We have a lot of people doing drugs in our buildings, and that affects the other tenants. Something has to give."

He said that when he bought his first property in Brattleboro "it came straight with its drug dealers and took us six months to get rid of them."

It's not that easy to do, he said, but he fears that the number of drug dealers in Brattleboro "directly affects the quality of life in Brattleboro, and if you want to attract people to live here or new businesses, something has to be done."

Another landlord, Steve Heim of Brattleboro, agreed with Perides and shared his concern that landlords in town might lose the ability to evict known drug dealers if the town adopts a proposal that prevents landlords from evicting tenants without cause.

A petition drive is under way to put on the 2023 Representative Town Meeting warrant an article to enact a "just cause" eviction standard in Brattleboro. Several other municipalities in Vermont are considering a similar measure.

"If you are a landlord like us, and you have a problem tenant that makes the lives of the other tenants unsafe, it's kind of an emergency," said Heim. "For a landlord to try and get the proof that actual drug dealing is taking place could take a year or longer."

Taking away no-cause eviction "is a danger to safety and housing availability because landlords will take fewer chances on people with any kind of blemishes on their record, and that's not what you want," he added.

The need, and the marketplace

Heim also brought up what he called "the supply-side challenges" of owning rental properties.

He said the long "bull market" in housing is coming to end due to rising mortgage rates that are discouraging prospective homebuyers. The other issue is the sometimes contradictory desires to preserve open space while trying to find appropriate places to site new housing.

Selectboard member Elizabeth McLoughlin said that Brattleboro offers enough vacant, non-agricultural land and existing buildings that can be rehabilitated to help meet the needs for more housing as well as for prospective businesses.

What there is a shortage of, she said, "is incentives for people to come here and build."

Heim responded that the biggest incentive for builders and developers is the need to make a profit, "and once we go down the subsidy path, it just leads to more subsidizing. It never ends. You have to let the market take over at some point and be able to sustain a developer or builder."

Some property owners see short-term rentals as being more profitable rather than long-term leases, further reducing rental capacity.

Hashim said in resort towns such as Dover, the proliferation of short-term rentals is having a significant economic impact on the hospitality industry. He supports following the lead of Burlington, which allows only property owners who live in that city to run a short-term rental property and even then limits them to only one rental unit each.

"The hospitality industry is super important to Vermont because we're a tourist-focused state," said Hashim. "If folks are going to buy multiple properties to use for Airbnbs, that's essentially a business, and they should follow the same regulations as a hotel or a bed-and-breakfast."

Amanda Ellis-Thurber, who owns and operates Lilac Ridge Farm in West Brattleboro with her husband, Ross Thurber, said that agritourism has been important to keeping their farm in business during a turbulent time for small dairy operations.

Having such a space to use "saved us," she said.

Ellis-Thurber said that if there is increased regulation for vacation rentals, there should be an agricultural exemption, so family farms can use the income from short-term rentals to support their bottom lines.

Kornheiser said she sponsored a bill in the current session that would have brought vacation rentals back under the same regulations as hotels and inns, with an agricultural exemption for family

FROM SECTION FRONT

farms. The bill did not pass.

She cited a recent report that found Vermont had the highest percentage of vacant homes in the U.S., but vacation-rental use made up a tiny percentage of homes that were not lived in full-time.

She said that she was "more focused on the idea non-primary homes — the second homes, the third homes, the vacation homes — that sit vacant "for large swaths of the year that are being heated when no one's in them."

Heim responded that "it is easy to vilify these people from 'away,'" but said that property taxes in Vermont among the highest in the nation and that the taxes that second-home owners pay help fund a large percentage of education costs.

Other big issues

Brooks Memorial Library Director Starr LaTronica is advocating for the Legislature to change state statute to include libraries on the list of schools and other public facilities where firearms are prohibited.

She said she is concerned about the safety of the library and its patrons in the wake of incidents around the country when armed protesters have stormed into libraries opposing events such as "drag story hours" or attempting to ban certain books with themes they deem offensive.

Hashim said he hoped to focus on getting a "safe harbor law" enacted. Such a law would protect those who come to Vermont seeking reproductive care, including abortions, from being prosecuted by their home states.

Toleno said the House is looking into questions related to the possibility of regionalizing police, fire, and emergency medical services, starting with dispatching these agencies to emergency calls.

Kornheiser said regionalization of police and fire services deserves serious consideration, citing as an example the disparity between a well-staffed, trained, and equipped fire department such as Brattleboro's and the struggles of neighboring towns to keep their volunteer fire departments in operation.

"We have things that work very, very well here that don't work almost anywhere else," she said. "And we have a lot of communities that absolutely do not have the capacity now to govern themselves in the way that our governance is set up."

It not totally the fault of small communities, she said, because there are fewer people who are able to devote time to volunteer



KEVIN O'CONNOR/VTDIGGER.ORG

Golden Cross Ambulance of Claremont, New Hampshire is serving the Windham County towns of Brattleboro and Rockingham.

EMS

FROM SECTION FRONT

or another provider.

The Selectboard initially said money was a major concern when it unanimously voted last April with little public notice or debate to swap a \$285,600 annual contract with Rescue for a lower-priced one-year transition agreement with Golden Cross.

But since the switch took effect in July, Brattleboro has spent enough on unanticipated expenses to eat up the promised savings. Local leaders who argued in the spring that "it's our job to negotiate contracts that are best for the town" now are talking about the need to

consider greater municipal control, even though the only residents speaking out at meetings are questioning the change.

The consultants have acknowledged a division in community opinion as they stress that their review will be independent and impartial.

"We have a very good understanding that it is a polarized issue," senior project manager Rich Buchanan told the Selectboard this fall. "We have to look at many different items and metrics. In the end, you folks will decide what your constituents believe are the priorities."

Many townspeople are skeptical, as the municipal government has squashed public calls to elaborate on the surprise switch and has yet to release any documents explaining the decision.

But Selectboard Chair Ian Goodnow has promised an open process once the consultants release the study.

"The board is going to, in very public, probably multiple meetings and discussions, look at all of the data that's provided to us and ensure that we're moving in the right direction," Goodnow said.

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries

• Beverly Amelia (Eckert)

Bloom, 101, of Townshend, formerly of Brookline. Died Dec. 1, 2022 at Valley Cares Assisted Living in Townshend. She was born on Sept. 9, 1921, to the late Wilmer and Pearl (Love) Eckert. She was the wife of the late Louis R. Bloom, whom she married on March 24, 1940 in Norwalk, Connecticut. Beverly spent her youth in Connecticut where she attended school in Norwalk. In 1950, she and Louis moved to Brookline, where she resided until moving to Valley Cares in 2013. Beverly is survived and will be missed by her daughter Jane Honackie of Jackson, Missouri; her granddaughter Wendy Beattie and her husband Carl of Salida, Colorado; her grandsons Thomas Bloom and his wife Kathryn of Brookline, and Shawn Royal and his wife Jennifer of Gordonville, Missouri; her granddaughters Carrie Brand and husband Keith of Carbondale, Colorado, and Christina Tanner and her husband Michael of Jackson, Missouri; her great-grandchildren Kayla Snow, Thane Beattie, Hayden Beattie, Chloe Brand, Natasha Brand, Kaitlyn Givens, Louis Royal, and Emma Self; and great-great-grandchildren Emerson Snow, Saylor Snow, Kinnley Beattie, Trenton Sides, and Evelyn Sides. In addition to her parents, Beverly was predeceased by her two sons, Radcliffe A. Bloom of Brookline and Daniel E. Bloom of North Troy. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: No formal services will be held at this time. Ker Phaneuf Funeral Home of Brattleboro has been entrusted with arrangements.

• Suzanne Grussing Borichevsky,

63, of Guilford. Died peacefully at her home on Dec. 4, 2022. She was born on June 10, 1959 at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend to the late Robert Grussing III and Nancy (Swenson) Grussing. Suzanne graduated from Leland & Gray Union High School in 1977 and proceeded to attend the University of Vermont. She married her husband of 44 years, John Frappier Borichevsky, on June 9, 1978, in Newfane. Many will fondly remember Suzanne from Vermont National Bank, where she held various positions at the Operations Center throughout 20 years of service. She then went on to work at Vermont Superior Court, Windham Unit, for 21 years, most recently as a Court Operation Manager. When not working, Suzanne enjoyed spending her time going on vacations, taking cruises, quilting, knitting, gardening, and reading. She loved to give back to the community and was a member of the Guilford Planning Commission. Her enjoyment of crafts and camping shined as a Girl Scout troop leader. Above all else, she loved spending her summers at the

family camp on Lake St. Catherine where she enjoyed the sun, water, and company of friends and family. Suzanne is survived and will be dearly missed by her husband John Borichevsky; her daughter Megan Gauthier and her husband Jacob of Putney; her grandson Alex Gauthier; her siblings Robert Grussing IV and his wife Theresa of Nashville, Tennessee, Theodore Grussing and his wife JoAnn of Surry, New Hampshire, and James Grussing and his wife Donna of Manchester, New Hampshire. She also leaves behind her aunt Lynn Williams and her husband Timothy of Arlington; her nieces Katherine, Rachel, Emily, and Margaret Grussing and her nephew Timothy Grussing. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service was held Dec. 10 at Ker Phaneuf Funeral Home in Brattleboro. Interment will be later in the spring. Donations to the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital Development Department, 17 Belmont Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301. Be sure to write "In Memory of Suzanne Borichevsky for Oncology" in the memo line of your check.



• Russell Allen "Buzz"

Buzby, 56, of Newfane. Died unexpectedly on Nov. 18, 2022 in a house fire. Russell resided in Newfane the majority of his life. He attended Leland & Gray Union High School. Buzz was an avid hunter and motorcyclist; he loved Harley-Davidson's especially. He was an excellent small engine mechanic and could fix practically anything. He was a true jack of all trades and worked several odd jobs throughout the years and helped many people. His loss will be felt by an extensive extended family. Russell was predeceased by his father William "Billy" Buzby in 2002. He is survived by his mother, Diane Buzby of Charlestown, New Hampshire, and his sister, Kimberly James and her husband Sean of West Brattleboro. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: There are no services scheduled at this time.



• Lucas Emmett "Luke"

Donahue, 41, of Colrain, Massachusetts. Died Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022 from injuries sustained while working on restoring electric service following an outage caused by trees resting on power lines on Reed Hill Road. Luke was born on April 28, 1981, and had lived in Colrain since the age of 3, first on land on Wilson Hill Road, which was part of his great-grandfather's farm. In 2008, he moved to Ed Clark Road in Colrain to the home he built with the help of family for he and his wife, Lindsay (Herzig) Donahue, where together they have raised their two children, Hunter and Teagan. Following

graduation from Mohawk Trail Regional High School in Buckland, Massachusetts in 1999, Luke began his work life as a carpenter. In 2004, he joined Bemis Line Construction of Jacksonville and performed line construction throughout New England, and beyond — most times far from his family until week's end. In 2014, he became a lineman at Green Mountain Power in Wilmington, so he could be home with his family each night, be close as Hunter and Teagan entered school so he could attend their ball games and activities, and to share more fully in the delights of growing children. He lived full and hard and was "all in" in everything he did. He provided a wonderful home and comfortable life and taught the responsibility and rewards of hard work and dedication. He lived a life of fun and gathering into himself those he loved. He loved hunting, boating and sports, and loved sharing those passions with his family and friends. He enjoyed watching Hunter find pleasure and fulfillment in school and travel sports. And cherished the closeness a father and daughter enjoy. Luke was a passionate outdoorsman where he spent endless hours enjoying a hike in the woods, hunting, and outdistancing many with his sixth sense for honing in on shed deer antlers. His latest project was the purchase of acreage in Colrain where he began restoring the hay fields and stonewalls. Luke had a full heart and a ready smile and lifted up everyone around him. All along the way, he had a knack for making people smile. His smile and laugh were infectious, and he made everyone feel he was focused totally on them. All who know him miss him so much, especially Lindsay, his wife of 18 years, and their children Hunter and Teagan. Luke also left behind his father and mother, Peter and Vicki Donahue of Colrain, his brother Jake Donahue of Colrain, and several aunts, uncles, and cousins. He was also survived by his father- and mother-in-law Mike and Debbie Herzig of Whitingham; his sisters-in-law and spouses Caitlin and Dave Corliss of Ashfield, Massachusetts, Shannon Herzig and her fiancée Jason Kingsbury of Erving, Massachusetts, and Jillian and Trapper Wimmelman of Wilmington; and his nieces McKinley, Leighton, Kendall, and Karsyn who all felt the strength of his love each time he saw them. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A GoFundMe page to support Luke's family can be found at [gofundme.com/f/luke-donahue?utm_campaign=](https://www.gofundme.com/f/luke-donahue?utm_campaign=)

• Ralph A. Eliseo Jr., 73,

of Townshend, formerly of Locust Valley, New York. Died Nov. 29, 2022 at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend. Ralph was born on Dec. 7, 1948, loving son of and Patricia and Ralph Eliseo Sr., and dear brother of

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.

Grace Waryas presented with DAR's Good Citizen Award

BELLOWS FALLS—Grace Waryas has been named the 2022-23 Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen for Bellows Falls Union High School, where she is a member of the senior class.

The DAR Good Citizen Award and Scholarship Contest, created in 1934, is intended to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship and evaluates winners based on criteria set forth by the DAR national organization.

Qualifications include dependability (including truthfulness, loyalty, and punctuality), service (including cooperation, courtesy, and consideration of others), leadership (including personality, self-control, and ability to assume responsibility), and patriotism (including unselfish interest in family, school, community, and nation).

According to the school, Waryas, the daughter of Rebecca Bezanson of Bellows Falls, has "demonstrated dependability through her commitment to her classes, school activities, and her community. She is a dedicated student who works hard in her courses. She completes her work with the quality, attention to due dates, and social consciousness commendable in a high school student."

A member of the Marilee Huntoon/Jesse A. Judd Chapter of the National Honor Society at BFUHS, Waryas was described by the school as "serving as a good role model to others. She is soft-spoken, yet she asserts herself and voices herself with conviction, dignity, self-respect, and an awareness of multiple perspectives."

While at BFUHS, Waryas has participated in a number of activities, including the Concert Band and Drama Club, U-Matter, the Gender & Sexuality Alliance, and the Diversity and Equity Committee.

Waryas has been an active member of the BFUHS Student Council and has served as president this year. In that role, the school said, she "works hard to get everyone involved in activities and makes sure everyone's voice is heard."

As a valued member of *The Howler*, the BFUHS student newspaper, Waryas is dedicated to helping others and "is very interested in activism through her actions, and class assignments," the school said.

Waryas's volunteerism started at a young age when she had the opportunity to serve as a legislative page at the Vermont State House for six weeks.

She has also volunteered on

the Santa Express passenger train and has made bracelets for the seniors in the community who participate in the Meals on Wheels Program.

She has partnered with Vermont Afterschool to advocate for the importance of free and accessible after-school programs for all youth in the state. Her work included an analysis on how to create new programs for people of all interests, how to fund the programs, how much of a factor youth leadership could be, and how to take down barriers to these programs.

This group also launched a project called "Youth Voice," which worked to collect feedback and answers from youth across the state about their interests, their experiences with, and their wishes for after-school programs.

Waryas also served as a member of the Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network, a completely student led group.

"She creatively addresses the social, economic, gender, and racial injustices that too often lie at the heart of human struggle and tension," school officials noted. "Grace's name fits her perfectly; she contributes to the school and community at large in a mature and informed manner."

Carol Minicozzi (Phil), Catherine, James (Cathy), Donna Harvey (John), William (Sandra), Patricia Martin, Eileen Abelson (Joel), and Barbara Weisensell (Jack). Ralph was loved by many nieces and nephews, and by his extended Townshend family of John, Allie, Luke, and Ross Evans. He was predeceased by his brother Thomas. After serving as a sergeant in the Army during the Vietnam War, Ralph embarked on an educational journey across the country to obtain his law degree. Not long after, Ralph made his way back east to ultimately settle on the Evans' property in Townshend, where he remained until his death. Ralph worked for more than 40 years as a postal clerk at the Brattleboro post office, where he will be sorely missed. He loved sports, was an avid reader, and enjoyed a trip to Foxwoods Casino now and then. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial celebration of Ralph's life will occur in the spring of 2023. Donations in Ralph's name to a charity of your choice, in care of Covey-Allen & Shea Funeral Home, P.O. Box 215, Wilmington, VT 05363. To send the family personal condolences, visit [sheafuneralhomes.com](https://www.sheafuneralhomes.com).



• Herbert Azor "Herbie"

Meckle, 57, of East Dummerston. Died Nov. 30, 2022 at Dartmouth-

Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire following an extended period of declining health. He was born in Callicoon, New York on July 31, 1965, the son of Herbert and Lois (Tyler) Meckle. Raised and educated in Narrowsburg, New York, he attended local public schools and graduated from Narrowsburg High School with the Class of 1983. A master electrician, he was working for Long Falls Paperboard in Brattleboro at the time of his death. Previously he worked for Adam LaPointe Electrical and for an Anheuser Busch distributor in Georgia. Extremely proud of his military service and dedication to his nation, he served in the Army during Operation Enduring Freedom and was stationed in Afghanistan. Following his honorable discharge from active service, he returned home and continued his military commitment serving with the Vermont Army National Guard. Several trips were made with his wife, Regina, to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in honor of Regina's son, Kyle Charles Gilbert, a member of the 82nd Airborne Division who was killed in action in Iraq on Aug. 6, 2003. Of his memberships, Herb was a life member of both American Legion Post 5 and VFW Carl M. Dessaint Post 1034 in Brattleboro. Herb also was a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Brattleboro Aerie #2445. He loved animals and was an active volunteer with the Windham County Humane Society. His love of cats gave him the nickname "Crazy Cat Man." Herb loved to cook and barbecue and enjoyed spending time with his family and many friends. Sundays were spent visiting and reminiscing with his Uncle Billy and Aunt Diane, whom he affectionally called "Mom and Dad." On Nov. 29, 2008 in Damascus, New York, he was married to Regina Earp, who survives. Besides his devoted wife of 14 years, he leaves his mother, Lois

Warren and stepfather Wally Warren of Narrowsburg; one brother, Trevor Meckle and wife Lisa of Honesdale, Pennsylvania; and many cousins, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his father, Herbert Royce Meckle Jr., and a stepson, Kyle Gilbert. MEMORIAL INFORMATION:

Graveside committal services with military honors were conducted on Dec. 10 in Locust Ridge Cemetery in Brattleboro. Donations to Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 379, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To share a memory or send condolences to the family, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).



COURTESY PHOTO

Deborah Stephenson, the new president and CEO of Brattleboro Savings & Loan.

Stephenson joins Brattleboro Savings & Loan as president and COO

BRATTLEBORO—After a search that stretched across states and regions, Brattleboro Savings & Loan (BS&L) says it has hired Deborah Stephenson for the position of president and chief operating officer. She will be succeeding current president and CEO Dan Yates, who is retiring at the end of this month after 17 years in that post.

Stephenson comes to BS&L from Berkshire Bank in Massachusetts, where she served as senior vice president for compliance and was instrumental in growing their assets from \$2 billion to \$13 billion during her tenure. Having grown up in Adams, Massachusetts, she took her university degree in economics and finance into public service as a bank examiner for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

Seeing so many banks from the inside helped her to learn the fundamentals of banking as well as to become an expert at risk management and compliance issues. Her first job out of the government was with Woronoco Savings Bank in Westfield, Massachusetts, where they were suffering from compliance issues that wouldn't allow them to grow as they wished. She cleared up the issues in six months and the bank began to thrive. This became a specialty of Stephenson's that has followed her throughout her banking career.

"I love what I do and am proud of all that my teams have achieved," she said in a news release, "however, I'm at a point in my career where my values must align with the bank and community I serve, and that's what brought me [to BS&L]."

She said she sees both the challenge and opportunity of BS&L remaining a mutual bank and a B Corporation — two things that stood out and attracted her to this role.

"BS&L stands out as a mutual bank owned by stakeholders rather than shareholders," she said. "We are the last one standing

against the mighty stock banks and our way forward is clear: to be the bank that builds community."

"It was a really rigorous search for us," said Carmen Derby, BS&L's board Chair. "We expected great candidates, but were a little surprised at just how much interest there was in taking this role at BS&L. Over and over, candidates talked about the values of the bank and the communities it serves, which means we're doing something really right."

For Stephenson, values are at the center of all she's done in her career.

"I have loved my career but every decision I've made has always had to be compatible with my family and their needs," she said. Her two daughters, 21 and 23, play soccer like their mother — the younger currently playing for Merrimack College — and Stephenson said she looks forward to other outdoor opportunities in the area.

"I've always enjoyed being with friends and family as well as hiking. I'm hoping my husband and I will be taking up snowshoeing this winter as well," she said. As for what's at the top of her agenda in her new roles, Stephenson said that meeting with people and listening is her first focus.

"This bank is special and it's not my goal to come in and start changing things," she said. "Unlike many other banks I've joined, I'm not here to 'fix' BS&L, but to grow the things that already make it amazing and a true community bank."

Stephenson is now working with Yates during the leadership transition and said she hopes to glean as much information and institutional knowledge as possible to continue the good things that BS&L has come to represent.

"I'm excited and humbled by this opportunity and I hope that we can maintain who we are in a way that's authentic to this bank and community," she said. "I want us to grow as a vibrant and resilient community bank."



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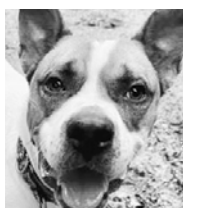
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Hi there, I'm **Sylvester!** I can be a little nervous in new settings but once I settle in I'm outgoing and affectionate. I can be a little feisty at times so I would do best in a cat-savvy home without small children. Other cats should be okay as long as get a chance to meet properly. Dogs would be new to me so introductions should be gradual. I'd love to be your new best friend if you'll be mine!



Hi there, I'm **Gravy!** My purr-fect home would have lots of comfy spots to nap and some nice people to love and spoil me! I'm on the older side so I am set in my ways and like things done my way, I'll be sure to let you know when I'm displeased. I would likely do best in a mellow home without other animals to bug me. I may be able to live with older, respectful kiddos as long as they know how to treat a lady like me. I do have some arthritis and could benefit from losing some weight so my new home should be ready to help me with those things. Come visit me soon and take me home!



Hi, my name is **Bucky!** I am a very sweet dog who loves people and toys, emphasis on toys! Once I bond with you I'm affectionate and have a great personality. I have a good amount of energy but seem to be able to occupy myself with toys and am very happy with a round of fetch in the yard. I would do best in a home without small kids and other animals, so I could be your one and only. I am a happy go lucky boy who is down on my luck and ready to start a new chapter so come meet me soon!



Hi, my name is **Ezekiel!** I have a lot of energy which is perfect because I love being outside and going for a jog. I am sweet and affectionate and will bond in no time. I may be able to live with another dog if they are respectful of my space. Cats would be unknown and would need a very slow introduction. I would do better with older and respectful kids because they can be a bit scary. Please stop by and make my big dreams come true.



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BAJC focuses on social justice for Chanukah

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Area Jewish Community (BAJC) Shine a Light or Social Justice program returns with a mix of in-person and on-line events designed to bring light to eight social justice issues. Every night from Dec. 18 through 25 the BAJC Zoom room will be open for candle lighting at 5:30 p.m. with Rabbi Amita Jarmon. According to a news release, BAJC will kick off its Chanukah celebrations with an LGBTQ+ Dance Party. “If you feel pride about who you are, if you’re an

ally, if you love homemade latkes or jelly donuts or dancing to a curated Chanukah playlist, we’ll see you at Centre Congregational Church on Sunday, Dec. 18, at 5:30 p.m.” On the second night, Monday, Dec. 19, join BAJC at Everyone’s Books to kindle the Chanukah lights for Environmental Justice. On Tuesday, Dec. 20, relax at home and Zoom in for candle lighting and a vibrant discussion of women’s equality. Wednesday, Dec. 21 finds BAJC at the Root Social Justice Center at 28 Williams St. with

programming around the concerns of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). On Thursday, Dec. 22, meet BAJC at the café at the Brattleboro Food Co-op to shine the light on issues of economic security. On the sixth night of Chanukah, Friday, Dec. 23, join BAJC at the synagogue (151 Greenleaf St.) in West Brattleboro for a potluck Shabbat dinner embracing religious freedom. Bring your own chanukiot (menorahs) and candles to add to the light of community. Organizers welcome latkes or other vegetarian dishes

to share. The jelly donuts will be provided. The seventh night of Chanukah on Saturday, Dec. 24, at Yalla Vermont (80 Main St.) will be focused on issues of immigrant justice, and the final night, Sunday, Dec. 25, will be a Zoom event and the topic will be health care. Everyone is welcome to all BAJC Shine a Light events. For more information, visit bajcvermont.org.

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Windham County Humane Society hosts toy drive for homeless pets

BRATTLEBORO — The Windham County Humane Society (WCHS) says it is in desperate need of a variety of new dog and cat toys to keep shelter pets’ spirits bright as they wait for their new families. For dogs, cats, and other pets, toys are not a luxury, but a necessity. “Toys help fight boredom and provide comfort when animals are feeling nervous,” Keri Roberts, director of operations at WCHS, said in a news release. “Toys can even help prevent animals from developing certain problem behaviors.” The shelter houses hundreds of homeless animals each year. While some dogs, cats, or other pets are at the shelter for only a few days, an injured or sick homeless animal may require more time to become well and find their new loving home. “Stress is directly linked to illness,” says Roberts, “so having

enough toys as well as a variety of toys is part of how we keep them mentally (as well as physically) healthy,” adding that a dog or cat that is playing is not stressed. The shelter looks forward to the holiday season for a large influx of new pet toys. People are buying their pets gifts during this time of year and often they buy a couple of extra toys for the shelter animals. “The desperate need to replenish the toy bins now is because of winter,” said WCHS’s executive director Maya Richmond. “The dogs are inside more than they are outside. Colder, short days lead to fewer volunteers walking the dogs or venturing to the shelter to cuddle with the kitties.” It is a slower time of year for adoptions. The winter doldrums set in, and the same chew toy remains entertaining for only so many days. “A toy that a dog or cat isn’t

into doesn’t work. It may look good in their cage, but it isn’t helping them mentally. This is why we need to give each animal options,” Roberts said. The pet toy drive runs from Saturday, Dec. 10 through Tuesday, Dec. 20. Popular toys include Kongs, Nylabone chew toys, plush toys, feather wands, crinkle balls, and catnip mice. (windhamcountyhumane.org). One Stop Country Pet Supply, 648 Putney Road, Brattleboro, is offering 30% off all toys purchased for the shelter at their location. They will collect the toys and bring them to the shelter on Dec. 21. People can drop off toys at the WCHS shelter, located at 916 West River Road (Route 30) in Brattleboro. Monetary donations are also accepted on the website, windhamcountyhumane.org, and at WCHS, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

Free Christmas Breakfast returns for 40th year

BRATTLEBORO — The free Charlie Slate Memorial Christmas Breakfast is set to return this Dec. 25 from a two-year pandemic pause and celebrate its 40th anniversary. Slate began the tradition in 1982 upon noticing most restaurants closed for the holiday. This year, volunteers will arrive at Brattleboro’s American Legion as early as dawn to serve up food from 8 to 11 a.m. under the leadership of Slate’s granddaughter Jadi Flynn and great-granddaughter Megan Walker. Diners and delivery recipients

who call in advance can eat pancakes, eggs, hash browns, sausage, fruit, coffee, and juice. Organizers hope to beat 2019’s record of serving 903 meals by reaching 1,000 this year. The public can participate in several ways. People can bake and bring cookies to the Legion the week before Christmas for distribution to local public safety and health care workers as well as to diners who attend the event. Brattleboro residents who are homebound or working on the holiday can request an in-town Christmas delivery by calling or

texting 802-258-0481 by Friday, Dec. 23. And all can attend the meal in person Sunday, Dec. 25 at the Legion at 32 Linden St., with updates available on the Charlie Slate Memorial Christmas Breakfast’s Facebook event listing (bit.ly/693-slate). The event is supported by donations from diners and contributions from area businesses, local maple sugarhouses, and four generations of Slate’s family who continue the community tradition.

Grand Opening Celebration

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Ribbon-cutting with special guests at 11 am
Door prizes will be given out all day!

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- Major BURNS
- Signs of HEART ATTACK or STROKE
- Heavy uncontrollable BLEEDING
- POISONING
- Severe HEAD INJURY
- Feeling SUICIDAL

For minor illnesses & injuries, BMH encourages you to contact your primary care provider (PCP):

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- We brought you the local sports, milestones, and arts and entertainment coverage you look forward to each week.
- Our Voices section gave the community the space to share their views and discuss issues in a civil manner.

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Maxwell offers month-long Shakespeare scene study class

BRATTLEBORO—Hooker-Dunham Theater and Gallery’s resident acting teacher Jim Maxwell will return to teach a month-long Shakespeare Scene Study class through the month of January.

He will be offering a free introductory workshop on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 1 to 3 p.m., in which students will select scenes and learn what to expect from the classes.

After the introductory workshop, participants will meet twice a week in January on Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m., and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

In a news release, Maxwell said that after the introductory workshop, participants will choose and learn short scenes, then bring them into class.

“We’ll take a run at them. Then we’ll open a window into the structure of the scene,” he said. “We’ll go to the basics without considerations or concerns about the period of the play or the language, without concern for the fact that it’s Shakespeare. We’ll work on a structure common to all dramatic theater: relationship of the characters, circumstances and intentions.”

After exploring the structure, Maxwell said participants will next “pay attention to the language. Words come last, they are loaded with intention but we should first be very clear and specific about what the intention is. When we understand that the words, exactly in the order and in the way they are written, are a means to an end and not the end itself we will have the priorities in the right place.”

In Shakespeare, Maxwell said, “that understanding is very important to effective performance. So the goal is to clarify our approach to a Shakespeare scene so that we’ll be more comfortable and assured in our development of the role. As always, the class will be a safe place where you can explore the material without fear of failure. There is no such thing as failure in an acting class.”

The cost is \$25 per class and participants must show proof of full COVID vaccination. Email info@hookerdunham.org to register. The Hooker-Dunham Theater is located on 139 Main St. in Brattleboro.

Jim Maxwell



“Mr. Slime Blob,” designed by sixth-grader Reagan LaFreniere and created in glass by Jen Violette.

BMAC seeks imaginary creatures

Entries for GLASSTASTIC 2023 — where glass artists turn kids’ art into glass sculptures — are due by Dec. 16

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) invites children in grades K–6 to dream up, draw, and submit imaginary creatures for the 2023 edition of “Glasstastic,” a biennial celebration of youthful imagination and creativity.

Launched in 2011, “Glasstastic” grew from 250 submissions the first year to more than 1,200 in 2018. Each year, professional glass artists from throughout New England give generously of their time and talent to turn a selection of submitted student art into three-dimensional glass sculptures.

The most recent exhibition, in 2021, featured 27 fantastical sculptures, including a

snoogle, a kelpie, a pegamallow, a preying beetis, and Sheila and Neil, “the first non-flightless snails in the world.” Submissions came from schools across Vermont and New Hampshire and as far away as Washington state.

Every drawing submitted for Glasstastic 2023, including those that are not selected to be made into glass, will be included in the exhibit, which will be on view at BMAC from Saturday, April 22, through Monday, Oct. 9, 2023.

“I love turning unique drawings into three-dimensional glass art,” glass artist Randi Solin said in a news release. “I feel it validates the kids’ hard work, inspiring them to stick with their creative endeavors.”

In addition to Solin, the participating artists for Glasstastic 2023 are Josh Bernbaum,

Marta Bernbaum, Jocelyn Brown, Robert Burch, Robert DuGrenier, Zak Grace, Jordana Korsen, Sally Prash, and Jen Violette.

“I can’t think of a better escape from the stresses of daily life than a gallery filled with wonderful, quirky, bizarre, hilarious creatures dreamt up by kids from Vermont and all around the world,” said BMAC Director Danny Lichtenfeld. “Add in the extraordinary ingenuity and craftsmanship of the talented glass artists who ‘bring the creatures to life,’ and you’ve got something really magical to behold.”

Submissions are due by Friday, December 16. Guidelines and entry forms can be found at brattleboromuseum.org or picked up in person at BMAC.

COLUMN | Book Review

‘A carefully crafted combination of MINDFUL ATTENTION TO DETAIL and CAPACITY FOR LOVE’

Arlene Distler’s poetry collection ‘This Earth, This Body’ explores the transitory nature of all things



Arlene Iris Distler

THE TITLE POEM OF Arlene Iris Distler’s *This Earth, This Body* is drawn from “Sisters—A Love Poem,” which appears in the center of this wonderful, beautifully crafted collection by a Brattleboro writer.

The poem is one of a series portraying Distler’s family (the “family/I was born into, a puzzle from the first/as much as I surely puzzled them”), and it deftly juxtaposes tenderness, grief, and difficult adult relationships.

In the opening lines, the poet addresses her younger sister, who professed outrage at not being warned soon enough that the

Wilmington

LAURA C. STEVENSON is an author in Wilmington. Her latest book, *All Men Glad and Wise: A Mystery*, is available now. “*This Earth, This Body*” was published by Kelsay Books in September and is available through the publisher, at *Everyone’s Books in Brattleboro*, and from other local independent bookstores.

eldest sister’s “last breath/was coming.” That was impossible — “the weight of history—yours, hers/weighted on me, measured against her peace—it was no match.”

But the poet is traveling by train from the East to the Rockies, hoping her visit, like the train tracks across the plains, will “stitch/the rift left at our parting.”

Shifting then to memories of the dying eldest sister, she portrays a dramatic adventurer behind whose “Jackie Onassis shades” there lurked “imagined foes at the door.”

Yet when she was “trapped in a hospital room,” the dying woman dropped the pretensions of fancy hotels, room service, and makeup: “In her denouement she allowed herself/finally, this earth, this body.”

Arriving at the Rockies’ Amtrak station, the poet meets the youngest sister, noting

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY 15

Recreation

WATTSBORO Thon in My Side - Hooker Dunham Theatre's Original Game Show: Created by Ben Stockman, Jesse Todd, James Geller, Shannon Ward. Each month, 3 contestants compete in bizarre challenges that fit that month's theme.

- **8 p.m.** Third Thursday of every month. Show is for adult audiences. Check out award-winning episodes on YouTube.
- **Play what you can.**
- **Hooker-Dunham Theatre, 139 Main St.** Information: 802.252.1232; hookerdunham.org

Well-being

WATTSBORO Yoga Locally: Laura Talschick leads today's class. This is not a beginner's class but is accessible to every body.

- **8:30-9:45 a.m.** every Thursday with different teachers. Meet and greet provided.
- **Suggested donation:** \$5 (cash, check or Venmo). December donations benefit Community Action Centers Project.
- **One-Eighth Elliot, 114 Elliot St.** Information: 1184844.com

Community building

From Town Council to the Statehouse: Effective Creative Economy Advocacy in Vermont (Webinar): To help us pride ourselves on Vermont unity, with these values in mind, join the Vermont Creative Economy Network (VCN) and learn how to best engage with your elected officials. We'll review our 2023 local/statewide VCN advocacy agenda, provide key insights into how to best make the creative economy with VT decision makers, share research to support our advocacy efforts. If interested in getting involved with your local VCN, please contact us for more information. This webinar is for you.

- **8-9:30 p.m.** Presenter: Johanna deGroot/President, VT Creative Economy Network Manager, Vermont Arts Council.
- **Webinar Information Register:** <https://www.vtarts.org/learn/2022/12/15/creative-economy-advocacy>

Artist Talk: Climate Change Artists in Residence (Zoom and Facebook Live): BMAC recently launched the Climate Change Artist Residency to support artists seeking time and resources to engage with the profound questions and challenges presented by climate change. The inaugural 2022 BMAC Climate Change Artists in Residence are Elizabeth Billings, Eise Lovett, Andrea Ska Wasserman who talk with Dr. E. Fakhrieh Sarah Freeman about work they created during the residency/answer audience questions.

- **7 p.m.** Coming out of the heat on the podium, Billings makes art in the public realm. Lovett's work encompasses painting, editing, teaching, photography, digital media, community organizing, and activism. Wasserman works in ink, cyanotype, and sound and creates public sculptural art installations.
- **Free.**
- **Room Information:** To participate online, register at bmac.org.
- **Zoom or call:** 802.257.0224 x101.

WATTSBORO Climate Action & Advocacy Tour: Keep Vermont Cool! Join Senator-Elect Rebecca White, Keep Vermont Cool Campaign Manager Jordan Heiden, and Special Guests Rep. Emille Kornheiser, Rep. Mollie Burke, and Rep. Sara Coffey for our next stop on the Climate Action & Advocacy Tour! Get ready for an interactive evening of climate action, including a brief presentation, advocacy training, legislator meet & greet, food, music, giveaways, and more!

- **8:30-10 p.m.**
- **Free.**
- **Brooks Memorial Library, 234 Main St.** Information: Questions: Email: Jose.Stromberg@vt.gov

FRIDAY 16

Classic

WATTSBORO Jafala (Jay Cook): Jafala plays world and electronic influenced originals and covers with synths, bass, percussion, vocals. Go on a unique musical journey—danceable grooves, socially conscious lyrics, world instruments, soulful sound design.

- **8-12 p.m.** Check out Jafala's music on Spotify and other streaming platforms. Website: www.jafala.com
- **No cover.**

FRIDAY 16

Kids and families

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAV): "Nurturing Program for Families" (Virtual): Curriculum-based, parenting education programs for families experiencing stress. Open to any parent/caregiver in VT who wants support or to learn new parenting skills.

- **2-4 p.m. Fridays.** All programs are 2 hours weekly for 12-14 weeks.
- **Free.**
- **Virtual information point:** familysupport@pcav.org.
- **7-8 p.m. Fridays:** www.pcaav.org

WATTSBORO "The Flying Nut" - Family Circus Show Returns for the Holidays: Inspired by "The Nutcracker," this year's show veers off course when the opening party is crashed by pirates and an unforgettable evening of high-flying feats, acrobatics, circus mayhem ensues! Featuring NEC's adult and youth student performers, this year's theme is a nautical twist, complete with mermaids, starfish, parrots. Legendary acrobat clown Joel Baker joins the cast as guest artist, creating mischief and fun.

- **12:30-7 p.m., 12:30-7:30 p.m., and 7 p.m.**
- **Through Sunday, December 18, 199 Main St.** Information: 802.257.2870
- **New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA), 29 Center St.** Information: www.necacircus.org

Visual arts and shows

BELLOWS FALLS 3rd Friday Gallery Walk Holiday Night (12/16) plus Celebrating Six Years of Sharing Art in Bellows Falls: Celebrating six years of sharing art in Bellows Falls, the Vermont Art Gallery Art for All Seasonal Group Show presents: "The Creative Economy." Curated by Adam Adams, Penelope Arms, Jean Cannon, Len Emery, Nancy Fitz-Bishop, Jeff Forman, Karen Fortner, Kim Gull, Lesley Heathcote, Medina Hebert, Yvette Hendler, Deedee Jones, Wyatt R. Kall, Carol Keiser, Nick Jaskic, Marisa Maynard, Joanne McMan, Susan McNulty, Phyllis Odessey, Melissa Rubin, C.A. Santa Maria, Madeline Shaughnessy, Zachary Shaw, Marianne Sutter, Kathleen Zimmerman.

- **12:00-5 p.m.** Gallery Walk. Gallery hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tues. Sat.
- **Through Saturday, January 7, 2023.** **Center Street Art Gallery, 21 Center St.** Information: www.vtarts.org/learn/2022/12/16/creative-economy

WATTSBORO Winter Farmer's Market: Weekly diverse indoor farmer's market. Local farm produce, meats, syrup, fresh baked goods, fruits, color, preserves, handmade jewelry, pottery, soaps, more. SNAP shoppers can use up to \$100 each week!

- **10 a.m.-2 p.m.** Saturdays through 12/23/22 (12th general week).
- **Through Saturday, March 25, 2023.** **Brattleboro Market, 40 Astor Dr.** Information: www.vtarts.org/learn/2022/12/16/winter-farmers-market

Kids and families

WATTSBORO Holiday favorite "Elf": "Elf" is the best Christmas movie ever. This advice comes from Buddy the Elf - the beloved character played by Will Ferrell in the Christmas classic. If you're a cotton-headed ninny mugghead or even if you sit on a throne of lies, you'll be well-served - and who knows? Maybe you'll find yourself moved to join others in singing "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" at movie's end.

- **Through Saturday, December 18, 11 p.m.**
- **By invitation.** Presented by Susan Osgood, and played by steel sculptors by Tom Porter. Plus live theater by two exhibitors: Brian Cannon and Liz Chaffin.
- **Through Sunday, January 29, 2023.**
- **Michelle Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main St.** Information: 802.252.0290; michellegiddingsfinearts.com

SATURDAY 17

Performing arts

WATTSBORO Shakespeare Scene Study with Jim Maxwell: Resident acting teacher Jim Maxwell returns to teach a month-long Shakespeare Scene Study class through January. Today, he's offering a free intro workshop in which students select scenes and learn what to expect from the class.

- **8-9 p.m.** Full Covid vaccination required. Free intro workshop. Free scene study. **12/17 into Workshop: 8 p.m. 12/18 into Scene Study: 8:30-9:30 p.m. 12/20 per class.**
- **Hooker-Dunham Theatre, 139 Main St.** Information: 802.252.1232; hookerdunham.org

WATTSBORO Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present Acoustic Music Relief Solstice Mini-Fest: Featuring multi-instrumentalists Matt Finmer and folk/punks Kilo Low Law. The four award-winning musicians, accompanied by double bassist Steve Roy, will play energetic instrumentalists and songs for the season on guitars, mandolins, fiddle, and banjo, and singing in 3 and 4/4 part harmony.

- **7-9 p.m.**
- **529 in advance, \$24 at door.**

PERFORMANCES

Thursday, Dec. 15 7pm
Friday, Dec. 16 7pm
Saturday, Dec. 17 2pm, 7pm

Based on the DreamWorks Animation Motion Picture and the book by William Steig. Book and Lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire. Music by Johanne Tesson. Originally produced on Broadway by DreamWorks Theatricals and Neal Street Productions.

TICKETS ONLINE NEVT.ORG
\$15 Adult \$13 Senior \$11 Student

SATURDAY 17

Next Stage Arts Project, 12 Kimball Hill: www.nextstagearts.org

Beauty Beneath Electrolysis: www.beautybeneathelectrolysis.com

Well-being

WATTSBORO The Brattleboro Zen Center - Meditation (In-person or wherever you may be): One way to engage with the ecological crisis - use chant briefly and then sit in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action, either in-person or from wherever they are.

- **1-2:30 p.m.** on Saturdays.
- **10th Avenue, South Side, Windham County District Courthouse, 217 Putney Hill, Suite 20.** (Off 265, Information: Allison.Elsamy@zencenter.org)

Ceremonies and observances

WATTSBORO Memorial for Ray McNeil (owner of McNeil's Brewery): The beloved Brattleboro pub-McNeil's Brewery - burned down on 12/7, a Friday night, in a alarm fire. Sadly, Ray McNeil did not survive. Along with being a renowned brewer, Ray was an accomplished classical cellist. He graciously provided a supportive home for the Brattleboro Pub Sing and a number of instrumental folk sessions as well as Morris team gatherings, open mic, and other events.

- **1-3 p.m.** Everyone is welcome.
- **In lieu of donations, the family would appreciate support of a local family-owned business.**
- **The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St.** Information: 802.579.3940; www.stonechurchvt.com

Farmers' markets

WATTSBORO Winter Farmer's Market: Weekly diverse indoor farmer's market. Local farm produce, meats, syrup, fresh baked goods, fruits, color, preserves, handmade jewelry, pottery, soaps, more. SNAP shoppers can use up to \$100 each week!

- **10 a.m.-2 p.m.** Saturdays through 12/23/22 (12th general week).
- **Through Saturday, March 25, 2023.** **Brattleboro Market, 40 Astor Dr.** Information: www.vtarts.org/learn/2022/12/16/winter-farmers-market

Visual arts and shows

BELLOWS FALLS 3rd Friday Gallery Walk Holiday Night (12/16) plus Celebrating Six Years of Sharing Art in Bellows Falls: Celebrating six years of sharing art in Bellows Falls, the Vermont Art Gallery Art for All Seasonal Group Show presents: "The Creative Economy." Curated by Adam Adams, Penelope Arms, Jean Cannon, Len Emery, Nancy Fitz-Bishop, Jeff Forman, Karen Fortner, Kim Gull, Lesley Heathcote, Medina Hebert, Yvette Hendler, Deedee Jones, Wyatt R. Kall, Carol Keiser, Nick Jaskic, Marisa Maynard, Joanne McMan, Susan McNulty, Phyllis Odessey, Melissa Rubin, C.A. Santa Maria, Madeline Shaughnessy, Zachary Shaw, Marianne Sutter, Kathleen Zimmerman.

- **12:00-5 p.m.** Gallery Walk. Gallery hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tues. Sat.
- **Through Saturday, January 7, 2023.** **Center Street Art Gallery, 21 Center St.** Information: www.vtarts.org/learn/2022/12/16/creative-economy

WATTSBORO Winter Farmer's Market: Weekly diverse indoor farmer's market. Local farm produce, meats, syrup, fresh baked goods, fruits, color, preserves, handmade jewelry, pottery, soaps, more. SNAP shoppers can use up to \$100 each week!

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Kids and families

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- **Through Saturday, December 18, 11 p.m.**
- **By invitation.** Presented by Susan Osgood, and played by steel sculptors by Tom Porter. Plus live theater by two exhibitors: Brian Cannon and Liz Chaffin.
- **Through Sunday, January 29, 2023.**
- **Michelle Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main St.** Information: 802.252.0290; michellegiddingsfinearts.com

SATURDAY 17

Performing arts

WATTSBORO Shakespeare Scene Study with Jim Maxwell: Resident acting teacher Jim Maxwell returns to teach a month-long Shakespeare Scene Study class through January. Today, he's offering a free intro workshop in which students select scenes and learn what to expect from the class.

- **8-9 p.m.** Full Covid vaccination required. Free intro workshop. Free scene study. **12/17 into Workshop: 8 p.m. 12/18 into Scene Study: 8:30-9:30 p.m. 12/20 per class.**
- **Hooker-Dunham Theatre, 139 Main St.** Information: 802.252.1232; hookerdunham.org

WATTSBORO Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present Acoustic Music Relief Solstice Mini-Fest: Featuring multi-instrumentalists Matt Finmer and folk/punks Kilo Low Law. The four award-winning musicians, accompanied by double bassist Steve Roy, will play energetic instrumentalists and songs for the season on guitars, mandolins, fiddle, and banjo, and singing in 3 and 4/4 part harmony.

- **7-9 p.m.**
- **529 in advance, \$24 at door.**

PERFORMANCES

Thursday, Dec. 15 7pm
Friday, Dec. 16 7pm
Saturday, Dec. 17 2pm, 7pm

Based on the DreamWorks Animation Motion Picture and the book by William Steig. Book and Lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire. Music by Johanne Tesson. Originally produced on Broadway by DreamWorks Theatricals and Neal Street Productions.

TICKETS ONLINE NEVT.ORG
\$15 Adult \$13 Senior \$11 Student

THURSDAY 15

Recreation

WATTSBORO Thon in My Side - Hooker Dunham Theatre's Original Game Show: Created by Ben Stockman, Jesse Todd, James Geller, Shannon Ward. Each month, 3 contestants compete in bizarre challenges that fit that month's theme.

- **8 p.m.** Third Thursday of every month. Show is for adult audiences. Check out award-winning episodes on YouTube.
- **Play what you can.**
- **Hooker-Dunham Theatre, 139 Main St.** Information: 802.252.1232; hookerdunham.org

Well-being

WATTSBORO Yoga Locally: Laura Talschick leads today's class. This is not a beginner's class but is accessible to every body.

- **8:30-9:45 a.m.** every Thursday with different teachers. Meet and greet provided.
- **Suggested donation:** \$5 (cash, check or Venmo). December donations benefit Community Action Centers Project.
- **One-Eighth Elliot, 114 Elliot St.** Information: 1184844.com

Community building

From Town Council to the Statehouse: Effective Creative Economy Advocacy in Vermont (Webinar): To help us pride ourselves on Vermont unity, with these values in mind, join the Vermont Creative Economy Network (VCN) and learn how to best engage with your elected officials. We'll review our 2023 local/statewide VCN advocacy agenda, provide key insights into how to best make the creative economy with VT decision makers, share research to support our advocacy efforts. If interested in getting involved with your local VCN, please contact us for more information. This webinar is for you.

- **8-9:30 p.m.** Presenter: Johanna deGroot/President, VT Creative Economy Network Manager, Vermont Arts Council.
- **Webinar Information Register:** <https://www.vtarts.org/learn/2022/12/15/creative-economy-advocacy>

Artist Talk: Climate Change Artists in Residence (Zoom and Facebook Live): BMAC recently launched the Climate Change Artist Residency to support artists seeking time and resources to engage with the profound questions and challenges presented by climate change. The inaugural 2022 BMAC Climate Change Artists in Residence are Elizabeth Billings, Eise Lovett, Andrea Ska Wasserman who talk with Dr. E. Fakhrieh Sarah Freeman about work they created during the residency/answer audience questions.

- **7 p.m.** Coming out of the heat on the podium, Billings makes art in the public realm. Lovett's work encompasses painting, editing, teaching, photography, digital media, community organizing, and activism. Wasserman works in ink, cyanotype, and sound and creates public sculptural art installations.
- **Free.**
- **Room Information:** To participate online, register at bmac.org.
- **Zoom or call:** 802.257.0224 x101.

WATTSBORO Climate Action & Advocacy Tour: Keep Vermont Cool! Join Senator-Elect Rebecca White, Keep Vermont Cool Campaign Manager Jordan Heiden, and Special Guests Rep. Emille Kornheiser, Rep. Mollie Burke, and Rep. Sara Coffey for our next stop on the Climate Action & Advocacy Tour! Get ready for an interactive evening of climate action, including a brief presentation, advocacy training, legislator meet & greet, food, music, giveaways, and more!

- **8:30-10 p.m.**
- **Free.**
- **Brooks Memorial Library, 234 Main St.** Information: Questions: Email: Jose.Stromberg@vt.gov

FRIDAY 16

Classic

WATTSBORO Jafala (Jay Cook): Jafala plays world and electronic influenced originals and covers with synths, bass, percussion, vocals. Go on a unique musical journey—danceable grooves, socially conscious lyrics, world instruments, soulful sound design.

- **8-12 p.m.** Check out Jafala's music on Spotify and other streaming platforms. Website: www.jafala.com
- **No cover.**

FRIDAY 16

Kids and families

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAV): "Nurturing Program for Families" (Virtual): Curriculum-based, parenting education programs for families experiencing stress. Open to any parent/caregiver in VT who wants support or to learn new parenting skills.

- **2-4 p.m. Fridays.** All programs are 2 hours weekly for 12-14 weeks.
- **Free.**
- **Virtual information point:** familysupport@pcav.org.
- **7-8 p.m. Fridays:** www.pcaav.org

WATTSBORO "The Flying Nut" - Family Circus Show Returns for the Holidays: Inspired by "The Nutcracker," this year's show veers off course when the opening party is crashed by pirates and an unforgettable evening of high-flying feats, acrobatics, circus mayhem ensues! Featuring NEC's adult and youth student performers, this year's theme is a nautical twist, complete with mermaids, starfish, parrots. Legendary acrobat clown Joel Baker joins the cast as guest artist, creating mischief and fun.

- **12:30-7 p.m., 12:30-7:30 p.m., and 7 p.m.**
- **Through Sunday, December 18, 199 Main St.** Information: 802.257.2870
- **New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA), 29 Center St.** Information: www.necacircus.org

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TICKETS ONLINE NEVT.ORG
\$15 Adult \$13 Senior \$11 Student

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"Wow! A heartwarming Jewish cookbook!"
- Susan Leah Goldberg, So. Cal.

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- Faith Schuster, W. Dover, VT

Inside you will find 100 recipes, some with narratives, illustrations by Dr. Stuart Cooper for various appetizers, soups, salads, soups, chicken, fish entrees, side dishes, breads and rolls, and desserts. Some recipes are of Sephardic, Eastern European and Middle Eastern origin, and some are even suitable for specific holidays.

Also included are gluten free recipes.

Song of the Mountains Vol. 2 - \$28.00 includes shipping.
Pay by check to BAC, P.O. Box 2353, W. Brattleboro, VT 05303.
Paypal is also accepted. Go to www.shoplocalvt.org. Click on DONATE.
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ADVENTURE LIMOUSINE AND TRANSPORTATION
Bright Nights & Yankee Candle Day Trip
December 17th
Departs Adventure's main office at 1pm and returns by 5pm
Join us for a day full of holiday festivities including a stop at Yankee Candle with time to explore, eat, or even do some holiday shopping! The fun is just beginning though, our next stop is the largest drive through lightshow in the state! Bright Nights in Springfield! After the 3 mile long lightshow you will also have time at the gift shop and snack stand before we head back home!
\$55 per person (incl. adm. to Bright Nights)

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SUNDAY
18

Community building

GUILFORD Merriment & Singing: Meet Your Neighbors for this Joyous Gathering: Join your fellow community members for an afternoon of joyful singing and merry-making. This is a time for folks to casually gather and lift up our voices. Neither singing experience or talent necessary. Lyrics available for all attendees as well as copies of songs.
 ▶ 3-5 p.m. One day a month is set aside on the Broad Brook Community Center calendar for free community events hosted by Guilford residents. Only rule is that they are free to attend and open to all. Guilford residents can reach out to our administrative manager with programs and events they would like to host. For more info, or to set up your own event, email broadbrookcc@gmail.com.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. If you would like to submit a song request, email GuilfordSings@gmail.com. More info about community days/other upcoming events: broadbrookcommunitycenter.org.

Celebrations and festivals

BRATTLEBORO "Singing in the Solstice" (In-Person/Zoom): Local musical duo Sharon & Daniel host a singing celebration of the season. This service will focus on spirited carols and songs from a variety of holiday traditions.

SUNDAY CONT.
19

▶ 10 a.m. (Also see 12/21: "A Winter Solstice Ritual").
 ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church West Village Meeting House, 29 South St. Information: Visit ascvt.org on Sunday shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.

MONDAY
19

Music

BRATTLEBORO The Sweetback Sisters Country - Christmas Singalong Spectacular: The Sweetback Sisters deck the halls with their modern take on the golden age of country music. This show delivers a veritable explosion of yuletide splendor, complete with trivia, prizes and the holiday tunes you know and love. For this show, the Queens of Christmas-time put their signature twist on holiday classics and hidden gems that are sure to get even your scroogiest uncle in a festive spirit. Songbooks and warm fuzzy feelings provided.
 ▶ 7 p.m.
 ▶ \$20 in advance, \$25 at door, \$15 for kids under 12.
 ▶ The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: Tickets: stonechurchvt.com.
BRATTLEBORO Open Mic Monday at River Garden Marketplace: Acoustic Open Mic hosted by local music legend Kevin Parry! Whether you have a talent to show off or just want to support local musicians.
 ▶ 6-8 p.m. Sign-up starts 5 p.m. You can also sign up at www.kevinparrymusic.com/openmic.php.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ River Garden Marketplace, 157 Main St. Information: rivergardenmarketplace.com.

The written word

BRATTLEBORO Sci-Fi Reading Group: "This is How You Lose the Time War" by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone: From Goodreads: "Among the ashes of a dying world, an agent of the Commandant finds a letter. It reads: 'Burn before reading. Thus begins an unlikely correspondence between two rival agents hellbent on securing the best possible future for their warring factions. Now, what began as a taunt, a battlefield boast, grows into something more. Something epic. Something romantic. Something that could change the past and the future."
 ▶ 7-8:30 p.m. Sci-Fi Reading Group meets 3rd Fri. of every month in the Quiet Reading Room. Open to readers and dreamers of all ages. Even those who haven't read the book are welcome to join! Suggestions welcome for books for future discussions.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Science fiction frees you to go anywhere and examine anything.
 —OCTAVIA E. BUTLER

TUESDAY
20

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.

Visual arts and shows

NEWFAVE "Face to Face" Portraits by William Dixon: Dixon welcomes you to the world of portraiture, the art of conveyance, the confirmation of existence, and the role of the photographer in connecting subject and viewer. "The appeal of portrait photography is that, for a second, you have created a permanent record of a person at a certain place at a certain time and experience the face to face flow of communication between the 2-dimensional image and the person observing it."
 ▶ For 10 years, Dixon has focused on alternative processes of printing (cyanotype, salt, vandyke, palladium, carbon). One wall of the gallery will be devoted to the portrait prints using these alternative printing methods.
 ▶ Through Friday, December 30.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Crowell Gallery at the Moore Free Library, 23 West St. Information: Gallery hours: Tues., Wed. and Fri: 1-5 p.m., Thurs.: 1-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
21

Ceremonies and memoriams

BRATTLEBORO "A Winter Solstice Ritual" (In-Person/Zoom): Come celebrate the Winter Solstice with a ceremonial evening of magic and transformation. Together, we will celebrate the earthly change of Autumn into Winter, and the time of darkness into the returning light.
 ▶ 10 a.m.
 ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church West Village Meeting House, 29 South St. Information: Visit ascvt.org on Sunday, shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.

The written word

NEWFAVE "Writing to the Light Writing" Circle #6 (In-Person/Zoom): Supportive writing circle for reflection on the darkest day of the year. Writers of all kinds/all experience levels are invited to reflect on the light in their life. Participants will write to illuminate their inner light, honor their inner voice, tell whatever stories rise to be told. Prompts/guidance for automatic writing will be provided. Under Luskin's guidance, the group will create a safe space for those who wish to read their new words.
 ▶ 5:30-8 p.m. For the sixth year in a row, writer/educator Deborah Lee Luskin facilitates the circle.
 ▶ Donations to the Moore Free Library gratefully accepted: Send to <https://moorefreeslibrary.org> or to street address.
 ▶ Moore Free Library, 23 West St. Information: Advance registration required for Zoom link or physical address. Register: deborahlee@luskin.com/contact.

Well-being

GUILFORD Tai Chi (Fall Prevention): Tai Chi is an exercise system combining disciplined, graceful movements with an invigorating sense of the body and surrounding space. Although the movements are

slow, they contain great power. We try to coordinate hand and foot movements, breathing naturally, moving with slow continuous flow. By doing so, we improve strength and balance. Instructor Leah Gessner is certified by Tai Chi Vermont in this Fall Prevention practice.
 ▶ 9:30-10:15 and 10:30-11:15 a.m. (2 Wednesday classes weekly). No registration required.
 ▶ No charge. Donations welcome.
 ▶ Guilford Community Church, 38 Church Dr. off Rte. 5. Information: guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com or 802-579-1350.

Taking Steps Brattleboro: Advance Care Planning Weekly Information Sessions (via Zoom):

Advance Care Planning ensures that your loved ones and health professionals know what you want in a medical emergency if you are unable to speak for yourself. It's a process of creating a written health care plan that tells others what you would want if you couldn't tell them yourself. Includes discussing choices about end-of-life care with your medical provider, family, others, choosing/educating your Health Care Agent, making informed decisions to complete an Advance Directive.
 ▶ 10-11 a.m. on Wednesdays. Find out if adding a COVID-19 or Dementia provision would be beneficial to include or add to a previously completed Advance Directive. This is a program of Brattleboro Area Hospice.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Zoom. Information: Ruth Nangeroni, Advance Care Planning Program Coord.: 802-257-0775 x101, ruth.nangeroni@brattleborohospice.org.

Ideas and education

BRATTLEBORO Buddha's Politics in the 21st Century: "Engaged Buddhism and American Politics Today":

With the global climate crisis and other daunting political issues clearly in their sight, a variety of leading "Engaged Buddhists," such as the Dalai Lama, argue that our search for happiness through consumerism and naked self-interest is leading us down a path of self-destruction. Engaged Buddhism works toward personal and social transformation with the aspiration of creating societies based on compassion and justice.
 ▶ 7 p.m. Main Reading Room. Preceded 6:15-6:40 p.m. by a short Zen meditation in the Community Meeting Room for those interested. Beginners are welcome to arrive at 6 p.m. for brief introduction. "What if Buddhist values of loving-kindness/compassion were at the heart of a political philosophy, what we might call a "Politics of Compassion" in 21st-century America? Explore the Buddha's world, his politics, what "Engaged Buddhism" looks like in the U.S. today. Presenter Rev. Dr. Thomas Redden is professor emeritus of political science/history at Southern VT College and Marlboro College and an ordained Zen Buddhist priest, Zen Peacemaker Order.
 ▶ Free.
 ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Distler

FROM SECTION FRONT

privately that "You have finally traded in high heels for Uggs, though the glamour fur coat still lingers." The fur coat mirrors the lost sister's love of the high life. And, as the warning in the driveway indicates, the younger sister also tends to present her life as an adventure:

*On the road by your home, this sign:
 "If you meet a mountain lion
 make yourself look tall,
 throw something, run."*

The quiet, understated twist subtly portrays two sisters whose sense of the dramatic made them very much alike. And the poet's forgiving, ironic understanding embraces them both.

THE MOODS of the 57 poems in Distler's collection vary greatly, but the carefully crafted combination of mindful attention to detail and capacity for love that appears in "Sisters" characterizes them all.

Though the collection is not a poetic autobiography, one of the pleasures of reading it comes from its brief glimpses into the life of the poet whose voice we hear so unerringly.

In "Metta," the poet and her friend lie in front of a fire, unearthing "memories of men in our childhood." Readers shudder at the image of Uncle's "wayward urges/etched on young bodies," but the two girls refuse to be re-formed by their experiences:

*We did not cauterize the wounds
 but defied them like those fire-eaters
 who swallow flame
 but are not burned by it.*

When the poet is older, she attends a "Debutante Ball" — an event she remembers chiefly from looking at a picture of herself ("in my pink satin gown cornered/by Rorschach-blot wallpaper"). Retrospectively, she realizes hers is the only one of her parents' framed pictures that has faded, "like failure of emulsion to light/the life that didn't take."

The writing is literally artful: the girls "etched" in secret, the debutante "cornered" by wallpaper hint at an unrecognized childhood and adolescence.

BUT THEN — and forever after — comes Vermont.

It begins, as so many Vermont lives began in the 1970s, with the poet and Alan, her husband, escaping corrupt civilization in an aging farmhouse:

*We stalked a poetic life, farmed,
 Foraged star-leaved
 Indian cucumber root,
 Made peace with the spirits.*

We catch only glimpses of this life, with its "isolation, hauling water, cutting, splitting, stacking wood." But the wonderful, retrospective "Going Home Again," recognizes their illusions: "Those days seem like a play—/props assembled, lines read, /children raised, all so urgent then."

The return to civilization was eventually accompanied by tremendous loss. The collection opens with five poems on Alan's "new frailness" and his death in her arms, his last breath "an ascending I could almost see,/like a perfect word, defining as it frees."

If it seems odd to begin a collection with poems so deeply felt and mourning so conscious of the transitory nature of all things, it's not. For the still-young woman who lost her husband and with it a life "built on the rock/of his sure-footed steps" became, over the next three decades, the poet whose works the volume collects.

She found the courage beautifully expressed in "To Begin Again" to join another companion. She found the self-discipline to turn her insights and compassion into poetry, and as the founder of the Brattleboro writing group Write Action, she created a community in which poetry and prose could develop.

Every poem in this collection is a testimony to the woman who, grounded securely in "this earth, this body," has quietly become one of the most perceptive and moving of Vermont's poets.

Matt Flinner, Low Lily featured at Next Stage Winter Solstice Mini-Fest

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present an acoustic music Winter Solstice Mini-Fest featuring multi-instrumentalist Matt Flinner and folk/roots trio Low Lily on Saturday, Dec. 17, at 7:30 p.m.

The four award-winning musicians, accompanied by double bassist Steve Roy, celebrate the winter solstice, playing energetic instrumentals and songs for the season on mandolins, guitars, fiddle, and banjo, and singing in three- and four-part harmony.

Grammy-nominated mandolinist Matt Flinner has made a career out of playing acoustic music in new ways. Whether it's with his eponymous trio or with other musicians. As described by the musician's promotional material, Flinner's "style and

compositional ability have established him as one of the most accomplished and musically diverse mandolinists in the world."

Over the past two decades, Low Lily's Liz Simmons and Flynn Cohen have crafted a signature sound that is contemporary, yet rooted in tradition. Along the way, they have garnered two No. 1 songs on international folk radio and two Independent Music Award wins.

Simmons and Cohen will perform with their newest bandmate, singer and fiddler Natalie Padilla. Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney. Tickets are \$20 advance, \$24 at the door. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For information, call 802-387-0102. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar.

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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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Radio play of Dickens classic to raise funds for food pantry

WILMINGTON—Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* will be presented live as a 1930s-style radio play to help support the Deerfield Valley Food Pantry on Saturday, Dec. 17, at 2 p.m., at Historic Memorial Hall, 14 West Main Street. The inclement weather date is Sunday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m.

Six actors portray 41 characters, from Ebenezer Scrooge to Tiny Tim. Live sound effects will accompany this staged version. Actors Thom Griffin, Joan Haley, Michael Haley, John Reese, Ann Steinhauer, and Brooke Steinhauer, will each play several characters in this 90-minute adaptation of an original play by Michael Haley and John Reese, who is also the director. John Iverson serves as technical director.

All proceeds benefit the Deerfield Valley Food Pantry (DVFP), the mission of which is

to see that no one in the area goes needlessly hungry, or lacks the basics for personal care.

It provides, as well as its resources permit, food and other items to all those who ask for assistance. It does not turn anyone away. DVFP serves Wilmington, Whitingham, Jacksonville, Dover, Readsboro, Marlboro, Halifax and Searsboro. It relies on donations of food items, the financial support of local churches, towns, organizations, and individuals, plus an annual membership drive to make sure the shelves are never empty. DVFP is a 501(c)(3) organization and a member of the Vermont Foodbank.

The play is appropriate for all ages. Requested admission is by cash donation of \$5 or more, or nonperishable food item. For additional information, contact Friends of Historic Memorial Hall Executive Director Joe Levy at whirlygigmusic@gmail.com.

ESSAY

Grief wants to be felt

Holidays tell those coping with loss that while nothing in our lives is the same, the world will continue to act as if it is.

Eureka, Ark.

IN THE FALL of 2004, my friend Kay's husband, the love of her life, left this world after a long illness. Kay decided to keep their tradition, and so, three months later, without her Richard, she went to the annual extended family Christmas weekend celebration they'd always gone to together.

If you're a fellow widow, you will understand how surreal those days were for her, how deeply out of place she felt. How she went through the motions, physically present but not remotely there.

"But you know the really weird part, Crescent?" she asked me later, shaking her head. "I was actually in every single group photograph at the time they were taken. I stood with everyone. I smiled. I saw the flash."

"But I don't show up in any of the photographs. Somehow, photographically, I am literally invisible. It's like I wasn't there." Because she wasn't.

HOLIDAYS: ignore them, adore them, participate in them, or abstain. But there they are, making us take note of time's wheel, ceaselessly spinning in one direction only.

Holidays tell widows what every day after the death of our respective partners tells us: that what is impossible is true, that the wheel will continue turning, even after the person most central to our lives is gone. That while nothing in our lives is the same, the world will continue to act as if it is.

Mail still arrives, with bank statements. The cat still needs to be fed, the dog walked. Dust accumulates under the bed we will never again share with our partner.

But though every day tells us this, holidays do so extra loudly.

Like every aspect of our lives, widowhood shifts our observance of the holidays, cleaving before from after. We used to do the holidays in a certain way with our beloved partner, then he or she died: tectonic alteration, an unacceptable fact we are asked to accept over and over.

Holidays ask us to accept it with additional burdens, specific rituals, behaviors, and expectations.

Our first Thanksgiving without her. Our first Christmas without him. Another Chanukah without her. A third New Year absent him.

No matter how we, as widows, choose to mark or attempt to ignore holidays, these days will almost surely be grief-filled.

We can, however, worsen the grief (by trying to pretend it away). Or, depending on how willing we are to feel and sit with our sorrow, we may take a few baby steps towards integrating loss, love, and life, with our lives as they are now, as they will become.

Although it might not feel like baby steps — or integration.

WHAT MAKES the holidays so hard?

Obviously, we can't do them the way we did when she or he was alive, even if we continue some of the outer forms. And whatever we may eventually find or grow into for future holidays has probably not yet revealed itself. And the future refuses to be hurried.

Obviously, too, enormous pressure bears down on us from many



MARGARET SHIPMAN

CRESCENT DRAGONWAGON, a much-published freelance writer and writing teacher who lived for many years in Westminster West, has posted writings regularly about navigating grief and finding new patterns of life after loss in a series she calls "Widowhood Wednesdays." She writes: "Half of all people in committed relationships will lose their spouse first, will be left to live solo. Almost everyone will be called on to console someone bereaved. This is my attempt to speak the unspeakable, for all of us... to enable others to speak and listen." This piece originated from one such post and was originally published in *Voices* in the Dec. 20, 2017 issue. To read more of her work on widowhood and writing, follow her at Dragonwagon.com.

directions. Pressure to celebrate, to "count your blessings." To be thankful. To be jolly (or "holly-jolly"), happy, merry, bright.

And to consume. We endure pressure to buy, decorate, drink, socialize, give. (The importance of "Christmas shopping" to retail means that we are pressured relentlessly to express love, joy, and peace, ineffable qualities that are not and never can be material, through the purchase, exchange, and consumption of material

objects.)

But underneath these pressures lies the mother of all holiday pressure. The holidays in particular ask us to feel and be something other than what we feel and who we are. At this time.

And our culture, addicted as it is to positivity, self-improvement, fixing things, and feeling good, really doesn't deal with grief well. On many fronts, others find what we are actually feeling unacceptable, so we face an even larger — and usually unstated — pressure to fake it.

This puts the widow or widower on a collision course with her or his world. Grief makes others uncomfortable. Those who are grieving are the ultimate "buzz-killers." (Though, really, it's not us; and it's not even mortality; it's the society-wide inability to look at mortality.)

But, feelings want to be felt. And of all the emotions humans carry, grief is most unyielding on this point. Grief simply insists on being felt.

But during "the most wonderful time of the year" (as the Christmas songs — set on repeat, everywhere from gas stations to beauty salons — ceaselessly remind us), we are asked to not feel our grief.

■ SEE GRIEF AND HOLIDAYS, C2

VIEWPOINT

Foodworks use soars by 40%

It's easy to identify why more and more households are looking for supplemental food resources today than a year ago

THE HIGH COST of food has become a common topic of conversation across the country over the past year or so.

Almost everyone can easily chime in on the topic with lived experience around the rapid increase in the price of household food staples. For individuals, the impact is directly felt.

For organizations like Foodworks

ANDREW COURTNEY is director of Foodworks at Groundworks Collaborative, Brattleboro.

— an entirely free, local grocery store operated by Groundworks Collaborative — the effect of the inflation of food costs imposes a

compounding negative effect. At a time when Foodworks is experiencing record utilization, it is also experiencing greatly increased per-unit costs to keep the shelves stocked.

Foodworks is designed as a neighborhood grocery store where everything is available at no cost and shoppers can access what they need and avoid taking items they don't want or won't use, which can

sometimes be the case with food shelves or emergency food distribution sites.

In the past year, Foodworks has fulfilled more than 18,000 two-week supplies of groceries for area households, representing a 40% increase in combined in-person shopping, curbside pickup, and deliveries since the beginning of 2022.

Since our reopening in June for

in-person shopping, we have experienced new records for utilization, culminating with 68 households shopping with us on the last Friday of October.

THE STORIES ARE predictable. Food costs are higher, housing is unaffordable, utility costs are rising, and wages are not keeping up with these

■ SEE FOODWORKS, C2



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■ Grief and holidays

And if we can't not feel it, we are asked (usually indirectly) to pretend.

THE PRESSURE to not feel what you feel comes from many sources. Some are familial, some societal, some religious. Some come from friends. Some, from within.

Even the impersonal, economically driven pressure to consume has a painful emotional component in widowhood: for many of us, we may well be deep into dealing with questions of our late partner's stuff: what should be given away or thrown out, and when. The thought of accumulating still more material objects at this time might also fill us with horror.

But even if we put our feet down and resist shopping, buying, and giving, widows are also pressured personally — often, by friends.

Such pressure from friends is harder to resist, because most of our friends are well-meaning. Their intentions are kind, mostly.

They are worried about us. They "don't want us to be alone for the holidays." They want to know if we are getting enough sleep or if we are sleeping "too much." They tell us to "take care of [our]selves." (Which means, in this context, exactly what?)

They say, "You have to eat." They say, "He wouldn't want you to feel this way."

They say, "It's been over three years!"

They say, "Just come out for an hour, one hour. If you're not comfortable, I'll drive you home."

None of this lets you just hang out with what you feel, with who you are now. And it trivializes and minimizes your egregious loss.

Could a party to which you wear a red-and-green plaid velvet skirt and drink mulled wine cheer you up? Well, maybe if you lost a set of car keys, even a job — not a life partner.

On the other hand, threaded among the dynamic of changing friendships may also be the perplexing opposite: friends who drop you utterly.

If this happens, it will most often be with "couple friends," dyads you and your partner knew as another pair. So unthinkable are your present circumstances and reality that some such friends vanish — driven away, one supposes, by an atavistic fear that maybe it's catching.

Given the discomfort of the pressure to socialize, you would think this loss would be a relief, and in some ways it is. Yet it is also confusing and hurtful.

Now, some friends do get it, and bless them, bless them, bless them. They neither pressure you to celebrate nor do they drop you. They hang out with you, walk with you a little ways.

But many friends simply are not going to be able to go the distance with us at this time. They might love us, but they find it hard to know how to be with a grieving friend if they themselves have not been bereaved.

In a wholly different way, the death of our partner has befuddled our friends, too.

FAMILY CREATE another tangle of mixed-up, often excruciatingly contradictory, pressures.

Parents of young children feel the pressure to make the holidays both normal and special for their kids. How unbearable this is for the widowed mom-or-dad, bereft and probably not able to even begin to grieve fully solo, too overwhelmed in trying to protect and salve the bereft, bewildered children.

In fact, all who were related to your partner had unique relationships, good or bad, with individual sets of feelings. All of them also are contending with the loss of your partner — the same person, though someone very different to them than to you.

FROM SECTION FRONT

Issues of control, money, and inheritance, of who has the "right" to remember your spouse in what way (and who does indeed remember him or her correctly), matters that were unresolved, arguments over possessions (sometimes, even his or her very ashes!) — all of these issues can surface.

All of these issues on top of whatever scratchiness may have been there all along.

And some of it is frankly crazy.

And most families have one or more self-dramatizing narcissists, who will make their reactions bigger and more important than yours, even if your spouse saw such relatives maybe once a year, inevitably saying later a dozen times, "Well, thank God we don't have to deal with him for another year — what a jerk."

All this as you may still be trying to come to grips with the most basic fact: your partner is gone and not coming back.

Of course, as with friends, there are some family members who do get it, who love and support us respectfully, who do not deny the mysterious, vast, somber terrain we now tread. Some even walk with us part of the way from time to time. Bless them. Bless them.

But, in my experience, again, they are the minority.

And perhaps you and your beloved partner jumped right in and reveled in this season joyfully, either privately or with family or friends. Or perhaps your practice was to ignore the whole thing as much as possible.

Yet even people who don't celebrate the holidays traditionally do "observe" them, in the sense of noticing them. (Going out for Chinese food every Christmas day is as much a tradition as roast goose and plum pudding.)

Your social relationships, as a couple, may have been nourished by familial love and affection, enjoyment and friendship. Or, they may have been driven by duty and toxic obligation, or characterized by distance. This continues to play out, or heighten, after a death.

ESPECIALLY IF you are in early-stage widowhood and the partner who has died is someone you loved deeply and unambivalently, you are in pain. (Ambivalent love has a separate set of burdens and sorrows, but generally, the more joyfully you loved your partner, the tougher grief is.)

Other people may not be able to be honest with you about your pain, but at least you can be honest with yourself. Or you can try to be.

You can't unfeel the pain, nor can you hurry it up. It is going to take its own bitter time, and it will not leave you as it found you.

And it is certainly not going to go on vacation so you can have a nice Christmas.

And while you may feel you owe to the well-meaning ones your presence as reassurance that you are okay, you don't, actually.

You are not okay, and to pretend you are only worsens

Dream, December 30, one month after your fatal accident

We knew you had six months to live. How calm we were! No tumors, amputations, hospitalizations; no burning drips, emaciation. Just fact: the running out of time, but known, a set amount. We moved through the house, sorting. You were wearing that big texture-y white shirt, black jeans. You gave me the Quicken password, the safety deposit box key. You promised, within these confines, that there was nothing to fear. "It won't be unexpected, you'll know. For instance, you won't walk in and find me dead. As for that New Year's Eve party, you should go. I'll be here when you get back." I went. You weren't.

things. You owe yourself only this: whatever is the best way for you to get through the pain. This is rarely big noisy socializing.

The death of both my husband and, later, my partner taught me to think long and hard about accepting invitations. As grief counselor Meghan Devine writes, "Remember that 'no' is a complete sentence."

Though this may sound stark, for most of us it is far more soothing to stay at home, where, if a grief tsunami hits, we can sob unobtrusively and not have to worry about anyone or anything except how the hell we are even going to take one more breath in the face of this enormous pain.

It is a special kind of hell to have to pretend celebratory normalcy, as our well-meaning friends attempt helplessly to comfort us.

We feel doubly or triply bad because we have to fake it or because we cannot fake it.

In comparison, sitting alone with the pain of your loss, even in a dark house, is so much more comfortable.

BUT THE NOISY DENIAL of death and grief does not only come from outside. The trickiest piece: we do it ourselves sometimes.

We are not immune to magical thinking. As we try to come to grips with the unthinkable, we find our unconscious, as well as our conscious, working overtime.

My dreams, after my husband Ned's death, kept coming up with alternative scenarios that collided with reality devastatingly.

I wrote a poem about one such dream, which led me to say "yes" to an invitation my conscious self had said "no" to.


The party, my first public appearance in our small town since his death, was grim for me. People would clam up or burst into tears when they saw me, or they would fling their arms around me.

But coming home was worse. This poem may be hard to read — as it was to live through.

But I share it for two reasons: first, to say again that not all the pressure and denial is external, that some of it comes from within.

And secondly, because living through the agonies — which, for me, included this party — turns out to be part of the process by which we integrate the great loss of our great love into our next life.

For death, and grief, are inseparable from love. All are part of life and loving, and they come only on their own terms.



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■ Foodworks

FROM SECTION FRONT

expenses that all households are facing. It's easy to identify why more and more households are looking for supplemental food resources today than a year ago.

Such a rapid increase in need for supplemental food resources presents one challenge. Addressing this need in a time when the costs to procure food to meet that need have also skyrocketed is a one-two punch that is presenting a real stress-test to programs like Foodworks.

Groundworks Collaborative has four staff dedicated to Foodworks, which is always humming behind the scenes even when the storefront isn't

open for shopping. When Foodworks is not open, our team is out gleaming food for redistribution: either rescuing perfectly good food from local grocery and convenience stores before it can go to waste, or picking up the pallets of items we purchase as a member of the Vermont Foodbank.

Because of all the discounts and purchasing power we have at the Vermont Foodbank and with all of the donations we leverage, Foodworks is able to feed a lot of people for pennies on the dollar compared to what you and I would pay at the grocery store.

Monetary donations truly stretch to meet incredible need — just \$25 allows us to provide a two-week supply of supplemental groceries for a family of five.

AS WE ENTER this holiday season, I would like to encourage anyone looking for a way to help out to support your local food shelf program.

The 2022 Project Feed the Thousands campaign — our community's annual comprehensive food drive supporting nine local food shelves — is underway. At Foodworks, we are leveraging every donation and putting every dollar to really good use — and we can use all the help we can get.

You can donate to Project Feed online (gofundme.com/f/Project-Feed-The-Thousands-2022), or you can mail a check payable to Project Feed to: Project Feed the Thousands, c/o 802 Credit Union, P.O. Box 8366, No. Brattleboro, VT 05304.

To donate to Foodworks directly, visit GroundworksVT.org/donate or mail a check payable to Groundworks Collaborative (with "Foodworks" in the memo) to: Groundworks Collaborative, Attn: Development Office, P.O. Box 370, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Thank you for your support, and happy holidays.

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Goodwill's new Brattleboro store opens Dec. 17

BRATTLEBORO—Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont will hold a grand opening of its new store and donation center in Brattleboro on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Royal Square Shopping Center, 768 Putney Road (Route 5), next to Staples.

A ribbon-cutting celebration with opening remarks and special guests will be held at 11 a.m. Door prizes will be given out all day.

The 23,000-square-foot store and donation center, located in the space formerly occupied first by JCPenney and later by Peebles, features a 10,000-square-foot sales floor. The back room, where donated merchandise is sorted, processed, and priced, and the dock area comprise the remaining 13,000 square feet at the location.

According to a news release, Goodwill "will offer customers a welcoming, department store type of experience. Shopper-friendly features include four cash registers, six fitting rooms, piped-in music, and easily accessible shopping throughout the sales floor" with store merchandise that has been "specially selected by Goodwill employees through donations of top quality, gently-used and new items, including clothing, housewares, furniture, electrical items, and other unique, one-of-a-kind items."

Donations will be accepted at the Brattleboro store beginning on Dec. 17. Goodwill accepts gently used clothing, household goods, books, records, CDs, furniture, computer equipment, electronics, and monetary donations. For a complete list of items that are accepted for donation,

visit goodwill-berkshires.org/donate.

According to Senior Project Manager and Vice President of Territory Expansion Maryam Kamangar, it took "more than four years of searching to find this great location that has plenty of parking and ample sales floor and backroom production spaces. Another bonus is that the shopping center can be easily reached by public transportation."

Brattleboro is the third town in southern Vermont that will be home to a Goodwill store and donation center operated by the Pittsfield, Massachusetts-based nonprofit. Its other Vermont locations are in Bennington and Rutland, and in Pittsfield, North Adams, Great Barrington, and Lee in Massachusetts.

Founded in 1956, Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont is a 501(c)3 nonprofit community enterprise that says it "helps all people in our communities enhance their dignity and the quality of life, gaining confidence, pride, independence, and self-sufficiency through employment training and other support services, in collaboration with local resources."

Kamangar said the organization plans to open a mission services career center within the Brattleboro store in 2023 that will provide job seekers with assistance in writing resumes, employability workshops, and job skills training programs.

The Goodwill Brattleboro store will be open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, see goodwill-berkshires.org or call 802-257-3360.

WESTMINSTER

Conservancy plans dam removal in 2023

WESTMINSTER—The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) recently announced that the organization has received funding for the removal of a dam on the Saxtons River.

The Conservation Alliance, a national organization that awards grants to projects that protect our nation's most vulnerable species and habitats, determined the CRC's work to remove the old Blake Higgins Dam to be a crucial component of restoring the Connecticut River Watershed.

"Many conservancy groups across the U.S. vie for grants such as The Conservation Alliance's, and we are honored to have been nominated by Darn Tough Vermont to receive significant funds needed to see this project through," the CRC said in a news release.

The Saxtons River is a major tributary of the Connecticut

River, flowing into the river just south of Bellows Falls, Vermont. Just 850 feet north of this confluence is the old Blake Higgins Dam, which is owned by the state of Vermont. It is estimated that the 90-foot long concrete structure has held back about 4 feet deep of sediment, extending approximately 280 feet upstream of the dam. Not only that, the Saxtons provides crucial habitat for migratory fish species, specifically the sea lamprey.

Staff at the CRC say they have observed an abundance of potential habitat upstream of the Blake Higgins dam unused by lamprey, "despite the fact that the same habitat just south of the dam has been observed to be heavily populated during the spawning season. The impediment of natural flows of the river, the cycling of sediments and nutrients that that flow provides, and the inability of

migrating species to access crucial habitat were all factors that led CRC and the state of Vermont to identify this project as one of utmost importance in terms of restoring stream health in the watershed."

"CRC's partnership with the State of Vermont, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Vermont River Conservancy, and local entities is a strong indicator of the importance of this restoration project," said Ron Rhodes, CRC's interim executive director. "We are proud to be part of the team and look forward to the eventual removal of this old dam."

"Nominating the CRC to receive funding to remove the dam on the Saxtons River was the easy part," said Courtney Laggner, brand and community marketing manager at Darn Tough Vermont. "The next piece of the puzzle is educating people on the

importance of free-flowing water and the impacts that it has on wildlife and beyond."

The funding provided by the Alliance will allow CRC to address these concerns while also improving public access and recreation in the area. For decades, this portion of the Saxtons has been used for fishing, swimming, and hiking, but poor access has always been an obstacle in providing these benefits to the public.

As part of this project, Connecticut River Conservancy is working with Vermont River Conservancy (VRC), Island Corporation, and regional partners to explore opportunities to improve public access following dam removal. Additional funding and permits are being secured in the months ahead.

Work is estimated to begin in 2023, with dam removal likely in 2024.

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JOON PAKK THE COMMONS CROSSWORD "How Are You?" Across 1. Eye surgery procedure 6. 2008 Will Ferrell sports comedy 13. Acid for a trip 16. Tour grp. 19. Saudi's neighbor 20. Level off 21. Was humbled 23. The perfectionist is... 25. Pesto tidbit 26. Ramadan-ending feast 27. Entertains 28. The dental hygienist is... 30. Wing-related 31. Seeps 32. The bank robber is... 37. Tag for whispery Internet streams that anagrams to a planet 39. Early software release 43. English horn relative 44. "Bubbly" Nestle candy bar 45. Drew of 'Sunday Night Football' 47. Italian fashion hub 48. Painter Uccello 50. Cap 52. The boss is... 54. Dunk 57. Khartoum's country 59. "And here's the best part!" 60. Lil ___ X 61. Sanction 63. Several 65. Unseat 66. With 67-Across, the wallpaperer is... 67. See 66-Across 69. Anti-fur org. 72. Scotch product 73. Wet 74. Fifth scale note 77. Red-hot 79. Stop 81. "No, No, ___" (musical) 83. The hairstylist is... 85. Place for a mic 87. "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" show 88. Improve 89. Barely make it 91. Food pantry supply 94. Soon, poetically 95. Emulate 30-Down 96. "Regrettably" 97. The computer programmer is... 99. Lighting's home 102. Boys 103. With 115-Across, the judge is... 108. Mazda roadsters 111. Tappan ___ Bridge 114. Get the water ready for pasta 115. See 103-Across 118. The one that got away? 119. Glowing 120. Likewiser 121. Mobster's heater 122. Draft org. 123. Grads 124. Plot surprise Down 1. Mine find 2. Mine, in Montréal 3. Aforementioned 4. Traveler's stop 5. Capital of Rwanda 6. Shell out the big bucks 7. Building wings 8. Foal's mother 9. "That's right" 10. Categorize 11. Cheer sounds 12. Result 13. Highest world capital 14. Michael of R.E.M. 15. Beheaded Parisian martyr 16. Sonar sound 17. Chow 18. Bar member: Abbr. 22. TV room 24. Whirlpool subsidiary 29. Composer Ned 30. "Hello" pop star 32. "Need a ride?" 33. "Becoming" author Michelle 34. Is imminent 35. Online address 36. Like many characters in "Hamlet", ultimately 37. Live on 38. Ms., in Monterey 39. Hallux 40. Diplomat Root 41. Egyptian temple site 42. Deep unease 46. Female grouse 47. Welcome site? 49. "Blackfish" creature 51. ___ bean 53. Baseball cap brand 55. "Against Interpretation" author Susan 56. "Have at thee!" 58. Small business? 62. Salsa move, in two senses 64. Triumphant online abbr. 66. Being critical 67. Breakfast chain 68. Cubs great Sandberg 69. Apples and pears 70. As a friend: Fr. 71. Liam Neeson thriller 73. Fixes 74. Scorpion attack 75. First Holy Roman Emperor 76. Inclined 78. Close 80. Tuscan island 82. Jazz pianist Gil 84. Giraffe relative 86. Shohei Ohtani's team, on scoreboards 90. Hyundai compact 92. The Wolfpack of the ACC 93. "Cheers!" 98. Refuse to be denied 99. Sports car roofs 100. First sign 101. Grammy winner Alannah 103. Image file format 104. Bear in the sky 105. Branch 106. "More info later" 107. Soccer success 108. Hurt badly 109. "Persepolis" setting 110. Fashion's Wintour 111. Baked pasta dish 112. Son of Seth 113. Achievement for Jennifer Hudson 116. www.mit. ___ 117. Wedding promise

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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Rebels, Colonels split their season opening games

The winter high school sports season is the longest of the three seasons, stretching from early December to early March. It is also the season that has the least time to prepare. Most local student-athletes barely had two weeks to recover from the rigors of the fall soccer, field hockey, football, and cross-country seasons before heading back into the gym to prepare for the winter season of basketball, ice hockey, and Nordic skiing.

That was the lament of Brattleboro coach Chris Worden and Leland & Gray coach Terry Merrow about the quick turnaround between the fall and winter seasons as their girls' basketball teams split their two games in the Leland & Gray Tip-off Tournament on Dec. 9 and 10 in Townshend.

"We didn't have enough time to prepare," said Worden. "Ten practices isn't a lot, especially with seven new players," referring to what happened in the Colonels' 48-26 loss to the Burr & Burton Bulldogs in the opening game of the tourney on Dec. 9.

Two of those new players are ninth-graders Reese Croutworst and Abby Henry. The young guards showed they were more than ready for significant minutes with the varsity. Croutworst scored a team-high seven points against the Bulldogs, while Henry scored all five of her points in the third quarter.

"They are pretty talented for freshmen," said Worden. "They are both very good athletes. They're fast, they handle the ball well, and they're good shooters."

Unfortunately, while the Colonels have decent outside shooters, they still are a work in progress when it comes to rebounding and inside scoring. The Bulldogs exploited their size advantage in taking an 18-10 lead after one quarter and a 30-15 lead at the half.

Against the Arlington Eagles in the tourney's consolation game on Dec. 10, Brattleboro took an 11-3 lead after one quarter, but struggled to put the Eagles away in a 51-42 win that was a definite grind for the Colonels.

Arlington cut Brattleboro's lead down to 16-12 with 3:29 left in the second quarter, and again got that close in the early in the third quarter before the Colonels managed to keep the Eagles at bay for the remainder of the game.

Junior guard Kaitlyn Pattison was a big reason why the Colonels pulled out the win, with a team-high 15 points, including three three-pointers. Croutworst and Henry contributed 12 and eight points, respectively, and junior forward Mallory Newton added three baskets from inside. Julia Decker led the Eagles with 15 points.

In their first game in the tournament on Dec. 9, Leland & Gray built up a 21-11 lead against Arlington, then watched that lead vanish before righting the ship for a 35-27 win.

Merrow said the key to the win was successfully executing their full-court press defense. "I think the press helps the girls keep their intensity up," he said. "If we play good defense, we get better shots on offense."

When the Rebels got away from that formula in the third



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quarter, that allowed Arlington to get back into the game. An 11-2 run by the Eagles cut the Rebels' lead to 23-22 with 3:14 left in the third, but Arlington would get no closer.

Junior forward Maggie Parker led the Rebels with eight points, four steals, and two blocked shots. Sophomore guard Abigail Emerson also scored eight points and Samantha Morse and Mary Sanderson each added seven points. Sidney Herrington led Arlington with 16 points.

Burr & Burton defeated the Rebels, 43-29, in the tourney's championship game on Dec. 10. The Bulldogs led from start to finish as Leland & Gray struggled on offense.

Parker led the Rebels with 12 points, while Decker and Ainerose Souza scored 12 and 14 points, respectively for Burr & Burton.

Burr & Burton forward Josie Powers was named the tourney's Most Valuable Player. Selected to the All-Tourney Team were Decker, Pattison, Parker, Arlington's Lily Hosley, and Leland & Gray's Hannah Greenwood.

Boys' basketball

Twin Valley opened its season with a pair of losses in the Bob Abrahamson Tournament on Dec. 9 and 10 in Proctor.

In the tourney opener on Dec. 9, the Wildcats were edged by the Poultney Blue Devils, 39-38. Twin Valley's Noah Dornburgh led all scorers with 20 points and Liam Wendel added 10 points, while Marcus Lewis and Brooks Filskov led the Blue Devils with 11 and 10 points, respectively.

Twin Valley lost the Dec. 10 consolation game to the Proctor Phantoms, 56-39.

The Phantoms raced out to a 23-5 lead after one quarter and led 35-20 at halftime. Carter Crossmon scored 18 of his game-high 29 points in the first half to lead Proctor. Wendel led the Wildcats with 13 points while Caleb Dupuis added 10 points and Brian Sullivan chipped in eight points.

Ice hockey

Burr & Burton swept Brattleboro in a varsity double-header to open the season on Dec. 10 in Manchester.

The Colonel girls lost their game, 7-1, as Mai-Liis Edwards had two goals and an assist for the Bulldogs and Katie Brownlee added a pair of goals. Mia Paligo had a goal and three assists and Skylar Smith and Abby Kopeck each added a goal.

Skylar Marshall scored Brattleboro's only goal and goalie Angela Jobin made 26 saves.

The Colonel boys faced a similar fate as they lost to the Bulldogs, 6-1. Jack McCoy scored twice for Burr & Burton and Colin Brady, Brodie Smith, Adam Murnaghan, and Blake Bruce also scored. Goalie Michael Hornby made 38 saves to get the win.

Evan Wright got Brattleboro's only goal, and goalie Matthew Gordon-Macey made 16 saves.

Bowling

Third-seeded Brattleboro made it to the final round of the Holiday Classic at the Rutland



Brattleboro guard Abby Henry (3), one of two ninth-graders in the Colonels' starting rotation, drives on Burr & Burton's Sadie Stefanik (22) during second-half action on the opening night of the Leland & Gray Tip-Off Tournament on Dec. 9 in Townshend.

Bowlerama on Dec. 10 before losing to fourth-seeded Randolph, 2-0.

Fair Haven, the top seed in the season-opening match, beat second-seeded Windsor in the first round, but got upset by Randolph in the second round.

The Colonels will host Hartford, Fair Haven, and Windsor in their first home match of the season this Saturday at 10 a.m. at Brattleboro Bowl.

Johnson again falls short in Frick Award balloting

Once again, the late Ernie Johnson Sr. got passed over for

the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Ford C. Frick Award.

The Brattleboro native and longtime play-by-play announcer for the Atlanta Braves was in the running for the 2023 award. It went instead to Pat Hughes, who has been the Chicago Cubs radio play-by-play announcer for 27 seasons and, before there, spent 11 seasons in the booth with Bob Uecker broadcasting Milwaukee Brewers games.

The other finalists for the award were Dave Campbell, Joe Castiglione, Gary Cohen, Jacques Doucet, Tom Hamilton, Jerry Howarth, Duane Kuiper, and Steve Stone.

The Frick Award recognizes the work of baseball broadcasters. The criteria for the award, according to the Hall of Fame, include the broadcaster's "commitment to excellence, quality of broadcasting capabilities, reverence within the game, popularity with fans, and recognition from peers."

The 12 living Frick Award recipients — including Ken Harrelson, Marty Brennaman, Eric Nadel, Bob Costas, Jaime Jarrin, Tony Kubek, Al Michaels, Jon Miller, Dave Van Horn, and Uecker — and three broadcast historians/columnists made up the selection committee. They had some tough choices to make.

Having listened to his broadcasts over the past few years via the MLB.com audio stream, I would agree with the Frick committee that Hughes is a worthy choice, although Ernie's fans in Brattleboro would probably beg to differ.

Braves fans in Brattleboro got their fix watching games on cable TV called by Johnson, Skip Caray, and Pete Van Wieren during the 1980s. The Braves weren't very good in those years, but since their games were on TV almost every day of the season back then on Superstation WTBS, that trio made a lot of Braves fans out of baseball viewers around the country.

Local baseball historian Dana Sprague said a few weeks ago that it looked like Johnson — who called Braves games on TV and radio from 1962 to 1999 and helped created the vast

Atlanta Braves radio network when the team moved from Milwaukee to Atlanta in 1966 — had a good chance of winning the 2023 Frick Award.

Johnson was on the Frick Award ballot in 2015 and 2020, and was one of the few announcers under consideration who spent their entire broadcast careers with one team. Under the Hall of Fame's current voting criteria, Johnson will not be on the ballot again until 2027. Maybe by then, Ernie will get his due.

Senior bowling roundup

Week 15 of the fall/winter season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League on Dec. 8 saw first place Keglers 4 (48-27) and second place Good Times (42-33) both have a 4-1 week. The Strikers (38-37) are in third, followed by Trash-O-Matic (37.5-37.5), Lucky 7 (36-39), Split Happens (35.5-39.5), Old Farts (35-40), and Slow Movers (28-47).

Nancy Dalzell had the women's high handicap game (250), while Shirley Aiken had the high handicap series (660).

Robert Rigby had the men's high handicap game (264) and series (682). Good Times had the high team handicap game (898), while Old Farts had the high handicap series (2,456).

In scratch scoring, Rigby led the men with a 682 series that featured games of 257, 204, and 200. Chuck Adams had a 629 series with games of 224, 204, and 203, while John Walker had a 598 series with games of 209, 203, and 186. Marty Adams had a 505 series with a 177 game.

Charlie Marchant had a 519 series with a 198 game, and Gary Montgomery and Fred Ashworth each had a 506 series. Other notable games included Duane Schillemat (205), Jerry Dunham (199), and Marty Adams (188).

Dalzell had the women's high scratch game (201), while Aiken had the high scratch series (510) with games of 188, 170, and 155. Debbie Kolpa had games of 162 and 156, Carol Gloski had games of 155 and 152, and Doris Lake rolled a 154.



Leland & Gray forward Maggie Parker (4) guards Arlington's Diana Tafoya during the second half of their Dec. 9 game in the Leland & Gray Tip-off Tournament on Dec. 9 in Townshend. Parker was named to the tournament's all-star team.

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