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a **BEAR** in the **AIR**



Pilot Ben Burg up in the air with his passenger and girlfriend Caeden Green. COURTESY PHOTO

BUHS senior Ben Burg, a licensed pilot at age 17, does a flyover for the football team's season opener and wags wings of hello and support

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—When the Brattleboro Union High School Bears football team took the field in the season opener against Middlebury on Sept. 1 at Natowich Field, and voices singing the national anthem rose to the line “and the rockets’ red glare,” in the sky appeared a small Cessna 182.

Perfectly poised, the plane, piloted by 17-year-old BUHS senior Ben Burg, saluted the team and celebrated the first varsity sports event at the school with its new mascot, the Bears.

“It was awesome,” Burg says of his successful flyover.

He had carefully planned the surprise for days in advance with Athletic Director Chris Sawyer and Interim Principal Hannah Parker.

“It was super cool,” says Parker of the flyover. “Every school should have a Ben Burg in it. Not just because he’s such a good student, but because he cares about the community.”

Burg piloted the plane in which he received his pilot’s license in June and was accompanied by his girlfriend, Caeden Green, who Burg calls “a rock star” who has flown with him numerous times in gliders and

airplanes.

The young couple took off from Hartness State Airport in Springfield at 6:20 p.m. for the anticipated 6:50 p.m. flyover.

“One thing about this kind of flying is it’s very comprehensively planned,” says Burg. “A lot of safety and coordination efforts happen way in advance to make sure we’re being safe and following all the rules and can mitigate any risks, so we can also have fun.

“My thought process for the whole flight was, ‘I’m going to do whatever I need to do to be safe, that’s what I’m going to do, and if it works out for the flyover, that’s great.’ But I planned

for it to work out.”

To help execute the perfect flyover, Burg’s father Tim was on the ground at the game with a hand-held airplane radio. Singing.

“My cue to turn from my holding pattern was ‘the rock-ets’ red glare,’ to set me up to be over the field at the end,” Burg says. “He was singing me through the anthem [...] and we made it happen.”

At about 1,300 feet above the field, maintaining the mandated altitude for optimal safety, Burg said he and Green could see the field and players, although they couldn’t hear the crowd.

■ SEE PILOT, A2

Housing, drug crises spill into downtown Brattleboro

For merchants, a range of emotion from compassion to frustration over a complex set of problems with no easy solutions

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Sometimes it feels like Brattleboro is under siege, but it’s a siege that is hard to define.

Is it drug addiction? Is it homelessness? Is it panhandling? Is it theft? Is it a mental health issue? Is it all of the above? Just one or two of the above?

No one can say exactly what is happening, but it’s a conundrum that exists all over the United States.

“Homelessness and other signs

of disorder, like public drug use and disturbing behavior, are rising in cities across the United States with high housing costs, regardless of their drug policies,” said *The New York Times* on Aug. 29.

Drugs are a huge problem all over the country; rural Brattleboro is no exception.

“The number of Vermonters dying by opioid overdose this year was higher in January, February, and April than in previous years,” the Vermont Department of Health announced in its latest Monthly Opioid Morbidity and

■ SEE DOWNTOWN, A6

Flood plain will be restored by Whetstone River

Post-Irene efforts to return contours of the landscape to its pre-industrial state has a big goal: to reduce the ravages from future extreme weather

By Ellen Pratt
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—It might seem crazy to buy land with the hope that it will flood, but that’s exactly what the Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) has done through its purchase of 12 acres along the Whetstone Brook.

With permits in place, VRC and the town of Brattleboro are jointly cleaning up and restoring the land to its former flood plain status in an effort to reduce future

flood damage downtown.

VRC, whose mission is to permanently protect special lands along Vermont’s rivers, purchased the land at 250 Birge St. in 2017 from Cerosimo Industries, which had used the site for lumber storage.

Over the next 10 weeks, 41,400 cubic yards of soil and gravel will be removed from the site, and a 100-foot-wide riparian buffer will be planted with native trees and grasses. The resulting green

■ SEE FLOOD PLAIN, A5

Bellows Falls Rotary celebrates its 100th anniversary

Members of the international service club chapter highlight their service to community, honoring the past and looking to the future as they seek new members

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—The Bellows Falls Rotary Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, having been chartered on Nov. 9, 1923. The community service organization has included many of the community’s leading business people during its century-long history and has been

involved with numerous projects to benefit the local region.

Rotary’s motto is “Service Above Self.” Its main focus has been to fight disease, provide clean water and sanitation, support women and children, promote local economies, and support environmental protection.

The organization has a Vermont connection, as the founder, Paul Harris, grew up in Wallingford, went to school there, and is a graduate of the University of Vermont.

Bill Stevens, a financial advisor with the Edward Jones office in Bellows Falls, is a past Rotary president and is involved with Rotary at the district level. He said that the Bellows Falls chapter when it was founded was sponsored by the Claremont, New Hampshire club.

Membership has gone up and down over the years, he said, with participation much larger than its

current 20 members at various times in its history.

In its first 50 years, the chapter quietly sponsored and completed over \$37,000 worth of community projects by 1973.

“Our main focus is service to the community,” Stevens said, “both hands-on work and raising money for projects.”

Among the many recent Rotary efforts listed by Stevens are projects that have benefited the Our Place Drop In Center, the Parks Place Community Center, the Saxtons River Recreation Area, and the Rockingham Free Public Library.

“We provide the labor and the money,” he said. “For example, we did a kitchen renovation, [an] access ramp, and painting at Parks Place, and put in new flooring at Our Place.”

Rotary’s history

Rotary is an international organization found in more than 200

countries, Stevens explained, with more than 1.4 million members in 46,000 clubs.

It was started in Chicago in 1905 as a social club for businessmen, but it spread rapidly following World War I as it developed into a service organization. In keeping with its focus on clean water and sanitation, one of its first projects was putting public toilets on the streets of Chicago.

Though it had a female contingent known as the “Rotary Anns,” and the Inner Circle Club was a version of Rotary for women, the Rotary was a men’s-only organization for about 65 years. In 1976, a Rotary Club in Duarte, California admitted three women members and, when it refused to remove them, found its club charter revoked in 1978.

The club sued the organization for discrimination, and Rotary International appealed the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme

■ SEE ROTARY, A3



ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

Several historic Rotary ID buttons with the names of many well-known Bellows Falls citizens of past years.

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

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

VOICES

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

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

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

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

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



Ben Burg with the 1946 Piper Cub, in which he made his first solo flight in 2022.

Pilot

FROM SECTION FRONT

But not unlike the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, Burg came over the field and offered “a little wing rock” salute and hello.

“It’s a pretty benign maneuver, about a 15- to 20-degree bank,” says the modest senior.

After the flyover, the couple returned to the airport, put the plane away, and “were at the game for the fourth quarter.”

What was the reaction on the ground?

“The people who knew about it were excited and pleased, and those who didn’t were amazed and happy to have that special thing happen,” Burg says.

An early start in the sky

A flying aficionado since he was a young boy, Burg takes flying seriously. And joyfully.

“It’s been quite a process,” says Burg of his learning to fly.

“My dad was an aviation enthusiast. He never flew planes, but some of his friends did,” he says.

After attending a Rhode Island air show when he was 8 years old, Burg was awestruck by the Blue Angels.

“Seeing fighter jets fly super fast and low and display their capabilities really inspired me and started a real passion for aviation,” he says.

After that show, Burg watched YouTube videos and flight simulations and “tried to absorb how it all works.”

“I played around with basic computer flight simulation, and that taught me about systems and procedures and where to look and not be completely clueless in the front seat of an airplane,” says Burg.

Journey to the cockpit

Burg’s devotion to flying led him to Hartness State Airport and an Aviation Careers Education (ACE) summer camp of young teenagers hosted by the New England Soaring Association

(NESA) when he was 13 years old.

The young pilot has a real fondness for Hartness, established in 1919 in just two weeks by James Hartness — who had served as president of Jones & Lamson Machine Company and would go on to become Vermont governor — after he was inspired by the Wright brothers’ Kitty Hawk flight.

Hartness bought three farms, and the airport was officially certified as the first landing field in Vermont. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh stopped here after his successful Atlantic crossing — the first transatlantic flight — to 30,000 fans awaiting him.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation has recently made a video about Hartness — [youtube.com/VTransTV](https://www.youtube.com/VTransTV) — in which Burg appears.

“It’s a very cool spot, nestled in the eastern range of the Green Mountains,” he says. “There’s a lot of topical diversity. It’s a great spot to fly and learn how to fly.”

At the week-long ACE day camp, Burg was exposed to myriad aspects of aviation, from maintenance to operations, to air traffic control, and to flying.

“That camp gives you an exposure and lets you explore,” he says. “They also give the campers flights in gliders with instructors in the back, and they show you how to go soaring.”

Admittedly, Burg “didn’t even know what gliders were.”

“The cool thing is they don’t have engines, so you’re relying on weather and thermals,” he says. “I was immediately enthralled and addicted to that feeling at the age of 13. The cool thing is also you can start flying them at a super-young age.”

One can fly solo at age 14 in a glider and be licensed to do so at age 16.

So Burg did. “I was dedicated to that process,” he says. “I could fly now and start what I knew were my aviation goals. That was a really special experience.”

Around the Towns

Annual Westminster West Community Fair to be held on Sept. 9

WESTMINSTER WEST — The Westminster West Community Fair will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, and includes the popular adults 5K road race, a grilled chicken lunch, an on-line silent auction, and Golden Elephant sale.

The fair, which started in 1988, runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is a popular community event and fundraiser for the Congregational Church of Westminster West.

Race registration starts at 8:30 a.m., with the race starting at 9 a.m., which is also when the Golden Elephant sale opens.

There will be a parade, starting at 10:30 a.m., with the theme “Whistle While You Serve,” in honor of longtime Westminster West resident Alison Latham, who has written and published *The West Parish Whistler* community newsletter for 30 years.

A community raffle that is part of the fair features a weekend in York, Maine, two nights in the Brattleboro Holiday Inn, or a painting by Ric Campman. There are also two different ways to bid on the silent auction.

Other activities include a kids’ fun run, a talent show, live music from George Ainley and his musician friends, a garden contest, fairy house building, and face painting. The chicken lunch (with a vegetarian option) and hot dogs will be available for purchase.

Landmark College science professor discusses new book

PUTNEY — The first presentation of the fall 2023 Landmark College Academic Speaker Series will feature a

Gliding flying led to Burg’s joining the NESA. Then the pandemic came, in the winter of 2020, and he wasn’t able to get back to gliding until July, when he started training in earnest.

He soloed in early September 2020.

“Then it was like, ‘All right, I’m soloing gliding and I’m 14 and I have to wait two years to get my license, but I can still solo,’” he says. “So that left a whole season where I could build time and experience. That really taught me how to fly. Instead of adding energy with an engine, you’re adding energy through the conditions of the atmosphere.”

Burg found engine-free soaring “very pure, and it instilled a deep connection to the environment and a humbling relationship, because when you’re flying a little tiny airplane, the atmosphere is very strong.”

Even at age 14, he was “really dedicated to doing it safely and working hard.”

“It’s not something inherently dangerous, but it’s something you have to be aware of,” he says of flying.

“Flying airplanes is statistically super, super safe,” Burg says. “Making sure you’re dedicated to that safety and situational

familiar face for local nature walk enthusiasts.

Rich Grumbine, an associate professor of natural science at Landmark College, will share his journey creating a field guide for the identification of local wildflowers in a talk entitled “Which Plant Is That? Discovering the Wildflowers of Putney, Vermont” on Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 5 p.m., in the Brooks M. O’Brien Auditorium/Lewis Academic Building.

Grumbine’s talk will include statistics about the town’s wildflower flora, stories about the process of developing the guide, and a chance for the audience to learn basic botanical terminology and apply that knowledge in identifying one or two local wildflower specimens.

This event is a public event. For additional information or questions about venue accessibility, contact Solvejg Shmulysky at sshmulysky@landmark.edu. Driving directions, a campus map, and more information about the Landmark College Academic Speaker Series are available at landmark.edu.

Tim Stevenson discusses new book at Putney Library

PUTNEY — Tim Stevenson, founder of Brattleboro-based Post-Oil Solutions, will give a free book talk and signing at Putney Public Library, 55 Main St., on Thursday, Sept. 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Stevenson’s new book, *Transformative Activism*, is described as “a guide to growing into the spiritual maturity we need to be effective agents of transformative change in a collapsing world.” According to a news release, the book “invites us into practices that foster the human liberation we seek

through the perspective of his lifelong experience as an activist and community organizer around issues of peace, social justice, feminism, and the climate crisis, as well as the 40 years he has been a practitioner of Buddhist values and a daily meditator.”

Stevenson is also the author of *Resilience and Resistance: Building Sustainable Communities for a Post Oil Age*, and writes a bi-weekly column in the *Brattleboro Reformer*. He’s been involved with such projects as draft resistance and welfare rights, the fights against Brattleboro’s Home Depot and Vermont Yankee, a feminist day care center, and creating a progressive community newspaper.

Free trees offered

BRATTLEBORO — Town residents are eligible for trees to plant in their yard through Community Canopy, an Arbor Day Foundation program.

Residents can register for up to two free trees at vtcommunityforestry.org/trees. The online sign-up process guides participants to the best locations to plant trees to help cool their homes, reduce energy usage, and save money. Residents can also sign up by calling the Arbor Day Foundation at 855-234-3801.

The trees must be reserved in advance and will be available for pick-up on Saturday, Sept. 23, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Brattleboro Department of Public Works, 211 Fairground Rd. The tree giveaway is being coordinated by the Brattleboro Tree Advisory Committee and the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program, a partnership between the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and University of Vermont Extension.

Back on terra firma

Back on the ground, Burg, now 17, was one of the last school year’s student representatives to the Windham Southeast District School Board.

“It was a great opportunity to try and represent my community and constituents with Kaiya Colby, the other rep,” he says. “We worked very well together as a team and were able to be at the meetings and give input and report back to our people and make things happen.”

He says his proudest accomplishment was a group effort — the establishment of the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) — mentored by board members Deborah Stanford and Tim Maciel.

Of that group of “passionate students who are voluntarily dedicating a lot of time to the improvement of their school communities,” he says, the biggest and “most special accomplishment” for him is that “we pulled off a three-hour professional development session for faculty.”

About 100 staff members attended the session, which tackled “the expectations of community and student support in a classroom and damage of racial slurs and unaddressed racial aggression.”

“We had some great conversations and workshoping,” Berg said. “I was super impressed with the attentiveness and dedication of the faculty and staff. It just felt like not only the right thing to do, but also a good thing to do. I’m very proud to be part of that team.”

Future flying

What’s next for Burg? “I love the whole flying industry; I’m fascinated by the aerospace engineering world,” he says. “I’m also very interested in the service, military academies and the kind of integrity and leadership and service they offer. I’m a big community person, so [post-high school] might look like a university, or a military academy [...] there are a lot of opportunities.”

Berg says he plans to “synthesize those — when and if they come — and make my decision based on where I think I can succeed and help my community and country and world succeed.”

“The community of Brattleboro and of Hartness and the values of my family have pushed me to pursue my passions and do good by whomever I can,” the senior says.

As to actual flying, Burg clearly plans to continue his love affair in the sky as a lens to contribute to his much-loved world below.

“The perspective is unlike any other,” he says of a pilot’s capacity for “appreciating and admiring and exploring the world.”

“But really,” he says, “Vermont, where I’ve been and grown up forever, is exciting and beautiful, and really just cool.”

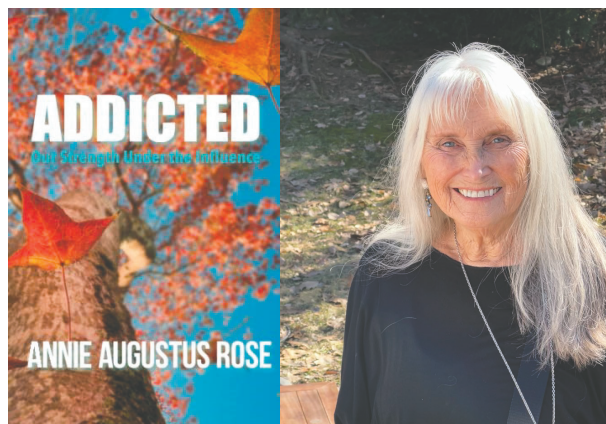
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Brooks Memorial Library Annie Augustus Rose Monday, September 11 at 7pm

ADDICTED: Our Strength Under the Influence



Get ready for a bumpy ride. *ADDICTED: Our Strength Under the Influence* is the story of a family crashing head on into the life-altering reality of addiction, told by the mother who is trying to keep it all together for her addicted adult children and her grandchildren. Annie admits that life was not easy and she wasn’t always successful in her approach to handling a given situation. But she was committed to face each challenge that came along. So buckle up for a brutal emotional roller coaster that Annie and her family were forced to ride for decades.

Annie Augustus Rose writes, “my unconditional love is here to stay.” The experiences in this memoir could have taken her down, yet Annie, an ovarian cancer survivor, says “divine intervention was no mistake—failure was not an option.” She and her family members are no strangers to the long-term effects of substance abuse and are acutely aware of the destruction illicit drug use can bring to any community. Well respected for her commitment as a facilitator of Nar-Anon Family Groups, Ms. Rose has guided countless families through the challenges of substance use and addiction. She has been frequently applauded for the educational value of her published articles and local presentations.

Brattleboro Food Co-op manager leaves after 15 months on the job

Bradford says he wants to pursue an undisclosed ‘unforeseen’ opportunity; board chair praises his work

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO — Brattleboro Food Co-op General Manager Lee Bradford is leaving after 15 months.

Bradford came here to the job from Fresno, California with 26 years of business management expertise in a variety of industries. He previously served as general manager for FreshKO Produce Services, Inc., a \$100 million produce sales and distribution company with more than 150 employees.

Co-op Board President Jerelyn Wilson addressed Bradford's leaving, which was not explained in a press release from the cooperative, other than his saying he was not motivated by this job.

“He left because he was asked

to consider a job [from an employer] that he worked for in the past,” she said, describing a special connection that has remained meaningful to his career.

“He probably found it harder than he probably anticipated [to leave],” said Wilson on Tuesday.

She said that Bradford leaves a strong operation.

“He really built a very strong team, empowered and coached people, and gave agency to them,” she said.

“He really shifted the culture, and we really want to make the Co-op one of the sought-after places to work. And we're well on our way to that,” Wilson added.

In his message, Bradford wrote that he leaves with “mixed emotions,” calling his opportunity to work at the Co-op “an honor and a privilege.”

“I have had the pleasure of working with an exceptional team, dedicated board members, and passionate shareholders who are committed to the values and mission of our cooperative,” he wrote.

He says the Co-op, with all their help, has “re-engaged our community in a number of key ways.”

“It has been an incredible journey, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been part of our Co-op's story,” Bradford wrote. “I am certain that the Brattleboro Food Co-op will continue to inspire and advance the health and well-being of all people by nurturing a sustainable, resilient, and just food system for many years to come.”



BRATTLEBOROFOODCOOP
Lee Bradford

FROM SECTION FRONT

Rotary

Court, losing the case in 1987.

After that ruling, Rotary removed the gender requirements for membership, and today many women have leadership roles in the organization.

“Rotary has been inclusive of women,” said Marty Gallagher, a Rotary member since 2016 and a recent past Bellows Falls chapter president. “A lot of women now have leadership roles in a lot of clubs. There are no barriers to that.”

A place to get things done

Several members echoed Gallagher's reasons for getting involved in Rotary.

“I liked the idea of doing good work in the community, in a club that has connections to a bigger community,” she said. “This is an international group. There is power behind it.”

Current President David Stern has been involved with the local Rotary for a decade. He said he enjoys the group and the community, and he added that he loves “how it puts a structure in my life” that helps him “put some care around” and connects him with a lot of other people.

“Networking creates opportunities for connections,” he said, which is important to Stern as the director of The Wild Goose Players, a local theater group. “Lots of times I have no idea how to help, and this gives me a way.”

The major flooding this past July was an example, he said.

“Through Rotary, we were able to give direct help to people in less than a week,” Stern said. “It gives you a better place to put your energy than you might have

otherwise.”

Sam Howard, the Rockingham library's children's and youth services librarian for the past 23 years, has been a Rotary member for a year. She said she was invited to a meeting, liked what she saw, and decided to become a member.

“I wanted to be able to do things and be part of a social group like this,” she said. “I can use my skills. Rotary has come a long way, and not just by including women. I feel that they support my values. Their literacy program is huge to me, and I support that.”

Howard said that she felt it was a “really nice group,” and a place where she feels she can put her energy to good effect.

“I'm really glad I joined them,” she said.

Gallagher said she liked the combination of fellowship with like-minded people and community service. Rotary strives to be non-denominational and not politically affiliated. Stevens said that even in today's highly polarized political culture in the U.S., Rotary Clubs do a good job maintaining that ideal.

“Members work to keep politics out,” Stevens said. “Some clubs have bigger problems with it, but most of them do a very good job of staying above the fray.”

“If you want to go do things in the community,” said Gallagher, “Rotary gives you a way to do these good things.”

That can be on an international level, or very local. The Bellows Falls club has funded washing machines and chickens for a school for autistic children in Kenya, both of which became

revenue streams for the school.

Or it can be as local as replacing rotted benches at the Saxtons River Recreation Area or in front of the Rockingham Free Public Library, or building an outdoor shelter where Compass School students could wait for the bus shielded from the weather.

“I think there is a general misconception that Rotary is older businessmen that sit and have breakfast together,” Gallagher said. “But it's really about the mindset of doing good works for your community with like-minded people.”

Stern described it as members seeing a need in the community, then working together to address it.

Community events drive fundraising

In addition to funding projects, the Bellows Falls Rotary raises money for scholarships. Each year, the chapter gives out \$3,500 in the form of four scholarships to Bellows Falls Union High School graduates. Both the financial needs and the accomplishments of the students are taken into consideration.

The Rotary funds a Free to Read literacy project, where they give a bag of seven books to fourth-grade students. The local Rotary district that comprises the Bellows Falls group contributed a sizable grant for the Parks Place diaper drive, which provides diapers free to families who need them.

Earlier this year, Rotary was one of the sponsors for the inaugural Bellows Falls Festival, a day-long music event at the Waypoint Center. Covid ended a

long-running and popular fundraising yearly Rotary penny sale.

Rotary also sponsors a community dinner around the holidays, a holiday movie at the Bellows Falls Opera House, and a holiday Parade of Lights around the village, and the club works with the Wild Goose Players to present the Holly Jolly Bellows Follies fundraising event.

Rotary's future

Stern said that the local group has changed, with older members moving on or dying, and new ones coming in.

“Some of the formalities have faded,” he said, “but, to me, the mission has continued to progress.”

Stern said he wants to do his part during his time as president to “keep the ball rolling.” He noted that the chapter would like more members and seeks to grow.

Rotary meets Thursday mornings for breakfast at Cafe Loco in Westminster. There is a process for gaining membership, but “most anyone can join,” Stevens said.

To that end, the Bellows Falls Rotary has launched a “100 Acts of Service” project to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

Doing things quietly and without fanfare has been a Rotary theme since it started. Gallagher noted that the group has become more public about its projects, so community members can both see what it does and perhaps be inspired to join.

“If you want to do things in the community,” she said, “Rotary gives you a way to do good things. If your interests are local or global, this gives you a resource to get things done.”

Gallagher and community FACT-TV's Mike Smith are creating a half-hour film exploring the local chapter, its history, and its accomplishments. A 10-minute version is scheduled to be shown publicly in December.

“Membership and sustaining the mission are my focus,” Stern said, adding that the club has had “dynamic, strong leadership for me to work from.”

“Rotary has grown to be more diverse, egalitarian, and forward thinking,” he said. “I want to continue that.”

St. Michael's Episcopal launches new season of programs, events

BRATTLEBORO — St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 16 Bradley Ave., begins a new program year this month with the start of Sunday School, teen groups, and weekly choir participation in the 10:15 service.

“Back to school means back to formation programs for children and youth,” says St. Michael's rector, the Rev. Mary Lindquist. “On Sunday, Sept. 10, please come at 9:30 a.m. for games and food, to register for Sunday School, and to get inspired for this new year in the life of our church.”

Sunday School offerings include Nursery Care (to age 3); Godly Play (ages 3-9); a Montessori-inspired Christian formation program; Upper El, a Christian formation program for grades 4-6 (second and fourth Sundays of each month); and Youth Group for grades 6-12. Youth Group will gather Sept. 10 to brainstorm ideas for the group that usually meets the third Sunday of each month.

In addition, Brattleboro area's Interfaith Youth Group for ages 13-18 will relaunch on Sept. 10, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the Guilford Pavilion, 24 Church Drive.

According to St. Michael's recent newsletter, “past groups have tackled community service projects and social justice issues; they've learned about different faith traditions, canoed and camped together, held overnight

‘Lock-Ins’ locally, attended youth leadership conferences, and explored New York City's diversity and rich traditions.

“The goal for this group is to build leadership skills and friendships among young people who care about and want to make a difference in their communities.”

Also in Guilford on September 10 at 2 p.m., the Celebration Brass Band offers a benefit concert at Christ Church on Route 5 to raise funds to save that historic gem, the first Episcopal Church in Vermont. Built in 1817, it's the mother church of St Michael's.

St. Michael's Choir, led by the church's new music director, Keane Southard, begins rehearsals on Sept. 10 and will begin singing together in the morning service on Sunday, Sept. 17. In addition to regular Sunday morning rehearsals, Southard is planning to offer an optional weeknight choir rehearsal that will focus on developing singing and musicianship skills as well as on rehearsing each Sunday's music.

This fall, St. Michael's Episcopal joins millions of Christians around the world to celebrate the Season of Creation. The movement, which began in the Eastern Orthodox Church and spread widely among Protestant, Catholic, and Anglican congregations, is observed every year from Sept. 1 to the celebration of St. Francis's feast day, which will be Oct. 8 this year at St. Michael's.

“With the devastating floods, fires, and storms of this last summer, the call to engage directly with the reality of climate change and our place in God's creation is more urgent than ever,” said Lindquist, adding that each service this season “will integrate prayers, readings, music, sermons and a Eucharistic Prayer that reflect sorrow and repentance for the ways we participate in the exploitation and destruction of the earth, a renewed commitment to the transformation of our own relationship with God's creation, and a pledge, with God's grace, to work for the healing and restoration of the earth.”

All are welcome at St. Michael's Episcopal Church. Services are Sundays, in-person at 8 and 10:15 a.m. (the latter is also livestreamed), Wednesdays at noon, and Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. for contemplative prayer. Morning prayer at 8 a.m. and evening prayer at 5 p.m. are celebrated on zoom every weekday. For more information, visit stmichaels-vt.org.

Stewart Property Management

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Volunteers needed for annual Source to Sea Cleanup

GREENFIELD, Mass.— What began as a group of volunteers organizing to remove trash from local rivers nearly three decades ago has become an annual event that brings communities together in support of clean water and healthy habitats throughout the Connecticut River Watershed in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Connecticut River Conservancy's (CRC) 27th annual Source to Sea Cleanup is back on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 22 and 23, with opportunities for individual groups to set their own specific cleanup days around this time.

The objective is clear: safely collect as much trash as possible to reduce the impact of pollution across all four states of the 410-mile Connecticut River basin, including the tributaries that feed the main river.

Volunteers are organized into groups with Group Leaders coordinating details at different trash sites. Trash tallies are also gathered after each cleanup, contributing to CRC's longstanding database, which is used to inform the nonprofit's work in advocacy to reduce future pollution, support river restoration, and inform the public and policymakers of issues affecting the environment.

In last year's cleanup, CRC says that more than 1,300 volunteers reported hauling 37 tons of trash from riverbanks and waterways across the four watershed states. Volunteers removed everything from recyclable bottles and cans to fishing equipment, food packaging, tires, televisions, and refrigerators.

More than 12,000 beverage containers were tallied in 2022 alone.

Registration is now open for both Group Leaders and Volunteers to participate. Businesses and community groups are also encouraged

to register, and entities able to support cleanup efforts through in-kind or monetary donations are greatly appreciated.

“There are lots of ways to get involved” says CRC's Source to Sea Cleanup Coordinator Stacey Lennard. “Volunteers can report a trash site in need of cleaning, organize and register your own local cleanup group, or be a #RiverWitness on social media.”

“It is always great to support an environmental organization, but this is an opportunity for everyone to actually dig in, get their gloves a little dirty, have fun, and make this a better river system for everyone.” said Jim Perry, president of the Deerfield River Watershed Association.

CRC promotes #RiverWitness to help people connect with each other online through their shared concern for and appreciation of our rivers. They advise participants to take a photo or video when they are cleaning up the river, or enjoying time outside, or making art inspired by river beauty or river pollution.

“Share it on Instagram,” they say, “and be sure to include #RiverWitness and tag @ctriverconservancy.”

Group leaders who need help finding a cleanup site can check out CRC's map of reported trash sites in need of adoption. Or they can choose a site of their own. Removing litter from parks, city streets, and neighborhoods contributes to cleaner rivers.

Leaders are encouraged to scout the site out beforehand to determine if it's suitable for their group.

For more information, visit ctriver.org/our-work/source-to-sea-cleanup. To sign up as a Volunteer or Group Leader, register at bit.ly/730-cleanup. For any questions about getting involved, contact Lennard at cleanup@ctriver.org.

JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

Vermont Independent Media, publisher of The Commons newspaper and founder of the Media Mentoring Project, is seeking volunteer leaders to join its board of directors.

Board members are actively involved in organizational governance, and are expected to attend monthly board meetings on Zoom and participate on at least one board committee.

The board needs a variety of skills, including non-profit financial expertise, non-profit management, digital communications, strategic thinking, and marketing.

A commitment to strong local news and media literacy is a must!

For more information contact Lynn Barrett, Board President, at vermontartsliving@gmail.com

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries



• **Irma U. Bartlett, 86**, of Winchester, New Hampshire. Died Aug. 29, 2023 at Applewood Nursing Home in Winchester.

Irma was born in Warwick, Massachusetts on Sept. 12, 1936, the daughter of the late Warren and Edith (Hescock) Underwood. She attended local schools, graduating from Wilmington High School. Irma worked as a postal clerk for the U.S. Postal Service for 30 years. She enjoyed gardening, knitting, reading, bowling, church activities, baking, and the 1955 Group. She cherished times spent with her family, especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Irma is survived by her daughters Wendy Brown and her significant other Gary Sanderson of Keene, New Hampshire and Tammy Brown of Brattleboro; her son Kelly Bartlett and his significant other Angel Estep of Berry, Kentucky; her sister Eleanor Wager of Springfield, Vermont; her brothers Stewart Underwood (Carolyn) of Jamaica, Clyde Underwood (Glenice) and Ronald Underwood (Emily), both of South Londonderry, and Greg Underwood (Jeanette) of Wardsboro; grandchildren Josh (Kate), David (Elicia), Brian (Amy), Susan (Kris), Lisa (Brandon), and Ryan (Alex); and 15 great-grandchildren and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her husband Howard Bartlett, whom she married June 25, 1955, and her brother Leland Underwood. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside funeral services for Irma will be held Saturday, Sept. 16, at 11 a.m., in Sadawga Cemetery in Whitingham. There are no visiting hours. Donations to the Jacksonville Church, in care of Covey-Allen & Shea Funeral Home, P.O. Box 215, Wilmington, VT 05363. To send condolences, visit sheafuneralhomes.com.

• **Thomas Patrick Brennan, 37**, died Aug. 21, 2023 of cancer in New Jersey after



a time of being homeless in Brattleboro and New York City. Born April 19, 1986, Thomas (Tomas Pádraig Ó Braonáin) was named after his great-great-grandfather and grew up in Rumson, N.J. "in the shadow of Gotham," a.k.a. New York City. His father, George Brennan, died when he was 12, and his mother, Grace Brennan, when he was 21. He often said that losing his parents when he was so young defined and shaped him. His son, George Aloysius Brennan was named after his grandfather. It was very important to him to remember his parents in all that he did. He loved being a father. Thomas was very proud of his ancestry and family history — his ancestors include Nathan Hale, John Adams, Calvin Coolidge, and Ethan Allen — and passionately spent a lot of time researching and visiting sites of his ancestry. He shared the tales and trials of his family members with the world, and wanted his family to be remembered. As a Catholic, he would honor his parents by lighting votive candles at church. Thomas was a fierce advocate for the homeless, wanting to change the relationship that people have with the homeless population. He battled against stereotypes and tried to remind people that the homeless are part of the community, too. People did not always agree with him, but he was known for making people think and reconsider the things they think they know. It was his dream to help other homeless people through his writings. He was a weaver of words who wished to write a survival guide to being homeless in New York City. Thomas loved comic books and *Star Wars*. He loved talking and making friends wherever he went. He had a smile and a tale for everyone he met. He also leaves the many friends and acquaintances he would make wherever he went. In addition to his son, he is survived by his "adopted big sister" Joanne Neilson and her daughter, Bianca. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services will take place

at the Winston Prouty Center's Thomas Hall in Brattleboro on Sunday, Sept. 10, at 1 p.m. In lieu of flowers, Thomas would have preferred that you support people who are homeless through donating to Groundworks Collaborative in Brattleboro and other organizations supporting people who are unhoused.

• **Eileen Mary Churchill, 79**, of Brattleboro. Died Aug. 25, 2023, in the loving arms of her daughter Dawn, following a long illness at home. Eileen was born on Nov. 13, 1943, in Brattleboro. She attended St. Michael's School in Brattleboro and Mount St. Mary's Academy in Burlington. On June 13, 1959, she married Francis J. Eckels and resided in Ellington, Connecticut. She returned to Brattleboro in 1979 and bought her home in West Brattleboro. Eileen worked in many restaurants in both Connecticut and Vermont. Eileen also owned her own craft business in West Brattleboro. Eileen was briefly married to Thomas Churchill of Vernon. Eileen was preceded in death by her son Dennis J. Eckels, also of West Brattleboro, on Aug. 9, 2023. Eileen leaves her daughters Deborah and her husband Samuel Henderson of Fortson, Georgia, Denise and her husband Michael Meyer of Townshend, and Dawn Eckels of Guilford; her son Daniel and his wife Cynthia Eckels of Ellington, Connecticut; and nine beloved grandchildren and eight cherished great-grandchildren, especially her granddaughter Amanda, as they shared a very special relationship. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services will be private and held at a later date with Dennis. To view Eileen's online tribute, send condolences to the family, or for more information, visit csnh.com.



• **Pastor Matthew John Farkas, 63**, died suddenly on Aug. 27, 2023, after church. While he will be greatly missed and the hearts of his friends and family ache, they say they are extremely grateful he is with his heavenly Father. He was born on Aug. 21, 1960 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania to Mary (Huffman) and Victor Francis Farkas. In his youth, his passion was athletics, particularly bowling, swimming, and baseball. He was on his way to the minor league baseball when he was tragically hit by a car. After being told he was never going to walk again, Matthew was determined that he would — and walk he did! When he was about 16, a Presbyterian minister started "harrasing" the family, and eventually he attended a Baptist school where he came to know the Lord. Afterwards, he attended Rhema Bible Training College in Tulsa, Oklahoma, leaving the love of his life in Pennsylvania, but not for long. Matthew and Brenda Prange of Avondale were married on Dec. 26, 1981. Matthew devoted his life to serving the Lord and others. His greatest desire was for people to know God deeply and personally and to see those trapped in addictions set free, like God had done for him. During his time in ministry, he obtained a B.A. in biblical studies, cum laude; a Bachelor of Ministry from Central Bible College; and a Master of Ministry with honors from Rhema, with Greek as his passion of study. At the time of his death, he was pastor of Living Hope Fellowship (formerly Faith Christian Church) in Bellows Falls. He published a book titled *You Can Make it to the Other Side*, and had been working on a book about faith. He and Brenda were co-producers of the shows *Say What?* on Falls Area Community Television and *Doing Life* on Springfield Area Public Access Television. His children will always cherish the fact that, even during his busiest seasons of life, he made sure he was at every sporting and school event, cheering them on. Some of his hobbies included hunting, gardening, studying the Bible and writing, jigsaw puzzles, watching the Pittsburgh Steelers and having "pizza time," and spending time

with his wife, children, and grandchildren. Matthew Farkas was a loving father with a heart of compassion who loved people greatly. He is survived by his wife Brenda Farkas; parents Victor and Mary Farkas of Oxford, Pennsylvania; brothers Victor Farkas of Oxford, and Timothy Farkas of Emlenton, Pennsylvania; sister Melissa Carlis of Philadelphia; his wonderful children Laura Lynn (Farkas) Lewis of Chester, Rebecca Lynn (Farkas) Willis of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Sarah Lynn Farkas of Charlestown, New Hampshire, and Matthew John Farkas II of Bridgewater, Maine, as well as eight grandchildren. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life service took place at Living Hope Fellowship in Bellows Falls, followed by the burial at Rockingham Meeting House. Donations to Living Hope Fellowship, 582 Rockingham Rd., Bellows Falls, VT 05101, or to Brenda Farkas at the same address to aid in this time of loss and transition.

• **Richard "Ric" W. Marsh, 75**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died unexpectedly at home on Aug. 25, 2023. Ric was born in Brattleboro on Jan. 24, 1948, the son of the late Howard Marsh and late Eleanor Donnell, and attended Hinsdale schools. He served in the Army and Army Reserve and was honorably discharged in January 1974. Ric returned to Hinsdale, where he resided most of his life. He married Lona on Oct. 20, 1979. Ric worked in area paper mills for 40 years. He also spent the last 20 years running a cleaning business, servicing many clients in the surrounding towns. When not working, he enjoyed many hours of fishing over the years and was an avid weather buff. Ric loved watching old TV shows, especially those from the 1960s through the 1980s. In addition to his parents, Ric was predeceased by his infant son, Ricky, and three half-brothers. Ric is survived by his dog and best friend Charlie; his wife, Lona of Hinsdale; daughter Crystal Marsh of Austin, Texas; sister Linda Kearney of Maine, half-sister Leslie Henson of Florida; and three sisters-in-law. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Per Ric's request, no formal services will be held. The Cremation Society of New Hampshire has been entrusted with arrangements. To send condolences, visit csnh.com.

• **Althea Goodwin McBean, 97**, of Dummerston. Died on Aug. 24, 2023 at Thompson House in Brattleboro, where she had been a resident. She was born Althea Kendrick Goodwin on Feb. 16, 1926 in Boston to David and Hilda Goodwin. She had one brother, David, who was four years her junior. She grew up in Newton Center, Massachusetts, graduating from Newton High School and Smith College. She married David Seaton McBean on September 20, 1947, at Second Church in Newton Center. In 1960, Althea and David and their four children moved to Dummerston, where she lived until her death. Her last seven years were spent at Thompson House in Brattleboro, where she was loved and cared for by the staff with great kindness and attention. Her favorite places remained the fireplace and the patio at the family home. She had many talents. She was an accomplished pianist, artist, and archer. She was a close and treasured friend to many. She had a great talent for empathetic listening, and many called her "Mom." She loved knitting, sewing and needlework, crafts, BBC television, crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, and bridge. She was a voracious reader. She was hilariously funny up until the end. She had many jobs: vet technician, office manager, school bus driver, and treasurer for Dummerston Congregational Church and the local chapter of the American Association of University Women for many years. She volunteered at the front desk at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital,

as Dummerston Congregational Church's choir director, as a Sunday school teacher and as a room mother. She was always happy to assist others. She was a co-founder of the renowned Dummerston Apple Pie Festival, spending at least two weeks every fall constructing pies with other community members. Her great love in her later years was genealogy, and she traveled with her cousin Trish to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick several times to research family history, producing volumes of well-organized data. She enjoyed stints of living in London and Scotland. In 2011, she was reunited with her dear friend Chuck Larson and they enjoyed four years of love and companionship until his death in 2015. She is survived by children Jean Koenig (Steve), David McBean, Alison Kitchen (Steve), and Alan McBean (Judith), as well as nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. She will be greatly missed. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service is planned for Saturday, Oct. 21, at 1 p.m. at Dummerston Congregational Church. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. To express condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Christopher Allen Monroe, 54**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died at his home on Aug. 23, 2023. He was born on Aug. 26, 1968 in Brattleboro to Stuart and Judith (Seppala) Monroe. Christopher graduated from Hinsdale High School in 1986. Many will fondly remember Christopher from New Chapter in Brattleboro, where he worked for more than 30 years. When not working, Christopher enjoyed watching his beloved San Francisco 49ers. He also enjoyed wrestling, NASCAR, baseball, and miniature golf. Above all else, he enjoyed spending time with his family and friends. In addition to his parents, he is survived by his sister Pamela Sylvia, his nephew Gregory LeClaire, his niece Sarah LeClaire, and his grandmother Violet Seppala. Christopher was predeceased by his grandfathers Carlton Monroe and William Seppala. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Interment took place on Sept. 1 at Morningside Cemetery in Brattleboro. To leave a message of condolence, visit phaneuf.net.

• **Stuart Johnson Thurber Jr., 84**, of West Brattleboro. Died peacefully in his home, surrounded by his family with Zinnias waving in a light breeze outside his window and the milking cows grazing in a nearby pasture, on Aug. 27, 2023. An astute farmer, a respected conservationist, and a civic leader, Stuart was an anchor to the Windham County community, stewarding Lilac Ridge Farm, his home for 84 years. Born in Brattleboro on Nov. 5, 1938, he attended the original Academy School in West Brattleboro. Involved in agriculture at an early age, Stuart participated in 4-H and practiced his craft early on at the home farm. A popular story accounts for when he burned his first sugaring pan because he was called in for dinner. He was 10 years old. He graduated from Brattleboro Union High School, where he was an officer in the Future Farmers of America. He supported his family's dairy farm by dropping milk off at the Hillside Dairy Creamery on the way to school. Stuart attended the University of Vermont and received a degree in animal science. While at UVM, he was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho, played cornet in the band, and made lifelong friends and colleagues in the Vermont agricultural community. He returned to the farm in 1960, and served in the National Guard while endeavoring to make Lilac Ridge Farm a modern diversified dairy farm. On Aug. 7, 1965, he married Beverley Evans from Guilford and forged a partnership that made for a successful farm and family. Over the course of his agricultural career, Stuart's impact was found in the many organizations he was

involved in. He served as a director for the Agway cooperative, as well as the Northampton (Mass.) Cooperative Auction, but perhaps he is most remembered for his contribution to land conservation in the town of Brattleboro and to the state of Vermont. He worked as a member of the Brattleboro Agricultural Advisory Board to help create local tax stabilization on farm land in Brattleboro — an effort that continues today to protect and maintain working farmland in the community. In 1987 he was appointed by then-Gov. Madeleine Kunin to serve on the first Vermont Housing and Conservation board. The task to create affordable housing and protect farmland around the state was a fulfilling mission for him and his insight and forward thinking still has a lasting impact on how Vermont looks today. He cherished the relationships that he made with fellow board members. Alongside his civic commitment, Stuart was also a devoted member of his faith community. He served as a Sunday school superintendent and Elder for many years at the West Brattleboro Baptist Church. In his later years, Stuart continued to be involved in Lilac Ridge Farm's transition into organic production. He heartily embraced new technology to manage grass based dairy and enjoyed time working in the woods and helping in the sugar house during the early spring. He also enjoyed serving on the Windham Regional Woodlands Association and continued to take an interest in learning about forestry practices. If there was any version of "retirement" that he adopted, it was to make time to attend the many athletic events that his grandchildren participated in. From high school games to nordic ski races, college track to middle school field hockey, he rooted heartily for all of his grandchildren to compete at their highest level. Stuart leaves his wife, Beverley Evans Thurber, his partner in farming and life, to whom he was married for 58 years; his children Sara Thurber Cobb (and her husband Ed) of Maynard, Massachusetts, Hanna Thurber (and her husband Shabir Kamal) of Brattleboro, Ross Thurber (and his wife Amanda Ellis-Thurber) of Brattleboro and daughter Jessica Thurber Gould (and her husband Eli) of Brattleboro. Stuart was a beloved "Papa" to nine grandchildren: Madeline Cobb Mueller (and her husband Zach Mueller), Rosemary Cobb, Violet Cobb, Isabella Thurber, Henry Thurber, Willem Thurber, Calvin Gould, Eva Gould, and Delia Gould. Of special note, Stuart met and held his first great-grandchild, Colette Thurber Mueller, who was just born in July in Portland, Maine. Stuart leaves his sister Helen Robb (Charles Robb, Sr.) of West Brattleboro and a number of nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Burial will be private. A memorial service and gathering will be held Sunday, Sept. 10, at 1 p.m. at the home of Beverley and Stuart at 30 Covey Road in West Brattleboro, with parking at Lilac Ridge Farm. If you wish, please bring a favorite dessert to share, in honor of Stuart. Donations to Vermont Land Trust, 54 Linden St., Brattleboro, VT 05301 and Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal St, Brattleboro, VT 05301. To express condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

Services

• There will be a celebration of life service for **Steve Napoli** on Saturday, Sept. 9, at 1 p.m., at the VFW, 40 Black Mountain Rd., Brattleboro. Mr. Napoli, 49, of Dummerston, died on July 3, 2023.

The fear of loss is a path to the dark side. Death is a natural part of life. Rejoice for those around you who transform into the Force. Mourn them do not. Miss them do not. Attachment leads to jealousy.

—YODA
(for Thomas Brennan)

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.

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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
Aug. 28-Sept. 3
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Steve Faure, Gravitate - Pimball Gallery , Mon 8p, Tues 12:15p, Wed 10:45a, Thurs 1:15p, Sat 8p, Sun 5:15p	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 9/5/23: Tues 6:15p (LIVE), Thurs 1p, Fri 2p, Sat 8:30p, Sun 6p
The World Fusion Show - Ep# 160 Mathieu Borgne , Mon 9p, Tues 10a, Wed 1:30p, Thurs 6a & 5:30p, Fri 3:30p, Sat 6:30p, Sun 9:15p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 9/5/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
Thorn in My Side - Tournament of Champions 8/6/22 , Mon 12:15p, Tues 12:45p, Wed 9p, Thurs 1:45p, Fri 6:45a, Sat 8:30p, Sun 5:45a	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 9/5/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
Brattleboro Gallery Walk - August 4, 2023 , Mon 6:35p, Tues 6:35p, Wed 6:35p, Thurs 6:35p, Fri 5:45p & 6:35p, Sat 12:15p, Sun 5:55p	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 9/6/23: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30a
Couch Potatoe Productions - Independence Day Fireworks at Living Memorial Park 2023 , Mon 1:25p & 5:25p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 11:15a, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 6:15a, Sat 9:45p, Sun 6p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 9/6/23: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Around Town with Maria - The Morris Dancers 5/29/23 , Wed 4p, Thurs 9a, Fri 9:30p, Sat 2p, Sun 6:45p	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 9/6/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
BCTV Open Studio - FEMA and SBA Disaster Relief Resources 8/31/23 , Thur 6:30a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p, Sun 9:30a & 8:45p	Rescue Inc. Presents - Open House 8/26/23 , Mon 1:15p, Tues 2:55p, Wed 9:40p, Sun 7a
Vermont Skate Broadcasts - Fall 2023 Promo , Mon 4:25p & 6:55p, Tues 11:50a, Wed 1:25p, Thurs 6:55p, Fri 4:55p & 6:55p, Sun 6:55a & 4:55p	Brattleboro Development Review Board - Training for Board Members 8/16/23 , Tues 10p, Wed 9:30a, Thurs 5p, Sun 6a
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell , Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 8/23/23: Mon 11a, Tues 9:30p, Thurs 7a, Fri 11:40a
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode , Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Windham Elementary School Board Special Mtg. 8/28/23: Mon 11:5a & 6:10p, Tues 9:45p, Wed 4:55p, Thurs 7:10a, Fri 1:55p, Sun 8:25a
News Block: WUSA News , Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break , Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 8/28/23: Tues 11p, Wed 8:30a, Sat 11a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service , Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 8/28/23: Wed 7:30a, Sun 11a
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service , Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 8/22/23: Mon 9a, Wed 5:15a, Fri 11:45a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service , Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg. 8/16/23: Wed 10:25a, Sat 5:10p
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service , Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Town Matters - Weekly Episode , Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass , Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show , Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

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

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

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Brattleboro Housing Partnerships

Brattleboro Housing Partnerships is seeking proposals for 2023-2026, snow plowing/removal and sand/salt application for its residential housing communities.

Two separate RFPs are issued. When responding please refer to the RFP number. SR-RAD 2023 covers Melrose Terrace, Moore Court, Samuel Elliot Apartments, Ledgewood Heights and Hayes Court. SR-TC 2023 covers Red Clover Commons I, Red Clover Commons II and A W Richards Building.

The RFPs are available on BHPs website brattleborohousing.org and at the Melrose Terrace office at 224 Melrose Street.

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Flood plain

space will include public access to the brook, a hiking trail, and viewing area.

Once the work is complete, the town will take over ownership of the land.

Re-creating what was natural

The project site, which runs west along the southern bank of the Whetstone Brook from the terminus of Birge Street, did not flood during Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 because the land had been built up over its 120-year history as a sawmill and lumberyard. A berm along the brook further ensured that the site stayed dry. Instead, flood waters were channeled across Williams Street, resulting in flooding along Frost and Flat streets.

"Before industry filled in this site, there would have been a naturally occurring sandbar here where the brook curves," said VRC Development and Operations Director Kassia Randzio during an Aug. 30 tour of the site.

"We're now standing about 6 feet above the waterline, so there's no way this can be the kind of natural floodplain that it wants to be," she pointed out.

Restoration of the flood plain will involve removing the berm and creating two flood-plain benches — think wide steps carved from the bank of the brook — that lower the grade of the land to the brook. During storms, these measures will allow water to flow over the land, slowing and reducing its force and allowing it to soak into the ground, thus protecting properties downstream.

Building for resilience

Brian Bannon, the town's hazard mitigation coordinator and zoning administrator, is overseeing the site work.

"Over the past 150 years, we've 'harvested' the energy from our rivers for industry by straightening, channeling, and deepening them," Bannon said.

"The result is that these rivers and brooks don't act like normal rivers," he said. "They flow much faster and erode their banks much more explosively and disastrously."

As a result, Bannon said, the goal is to "reestablish a more natural channel and allow space for the river to meander."

"We've had three storms this year [of a magnitude] that used to only occur every 10 years," Bannon said. "As the climate changes, these storms are going to occur more frequently. We need to embrace our changing future and build for resilience."

Hayley Kolding, VRC's conservation manager for southern Vermont, described the natural diversity at the site: towering canopies of sycamores, elm trees, and silver maples.

"These flood-plain species not only help to stabilize the banks, but also provide nesting-bird habitat and food for wildlife," she said. "They give us shade, and keep the waters cooler."

"You can go out into the forest right now and find wild ginger and lobelia and a fern with the most beautiful name — silvery glade fern," Kolding said.

"Once the site is restored to its natural state, you will see lush green sedges, rushes, grasses, and different mosses in the little nooks between the cobble on the shore," she said.

Kolding pointed out that there is "such diversity of life" at the site, despite its industrial heritage.

"Restoration is going to 'rock it' into a much more beautiful place," she said. "It's so important to have the enduring spaces

for wildlife and plant life to exist as part of our experience in Brattleboro."

When complete, the flood plain will become "a place for community members to experience nature and have a breath of peace amidst all that is happening in the world," Kolding said.

An idea hatched from destruction

The 250 Birge Street Floodplain Restoration Project started as an idea 11 years ago as Vermont was recovering from Tropical Storm Irene. After the flooding, then-Gov. Peter Shumlin challenged communities to "build back stronger than Irene found us."

Heading this charge, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Agency of Natural Resources, the Agency of Transportation, and the regional planning commissions from around the state, including the Windham Regional Commission, created the Vermont Economic Resiliency Initiative (VERI) to better understand Vermont's flood risk and to identify and implement projects that protect lives, help businesses remain open, and reduce costs to taxpayers for repetitive repair to infrastructure.

Brattleboro was one of five communities selected by VERI for more in-depth analysis, where citizens and experts identified the restoration of the Whetstone floodplain as a top-priority project.

Funded largely through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the project is one of several high-priority flood mitigation projects identified in Brattleboro's 2022 All Hazard Mitigation Plan (bit.ly/730-allhazard).

"We hope our Birge Street floodplain restoration is a model for other communities," Bannon

FROM SECTION FRONT

said. "Climate change can be a series of disasters, but it can also be a way to rethink how we relate to our waterways and the natural world. We're embracing this opportunity and we hope everybody else does as well."

Additional funding for the Birge St. floodplain restoration came from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Other flood plain restoration efforts

The recently completed restoration of the flood plain at Melrose Terrace in West Brattleboro was another high-priority project identified in the town's hazard mitigation plan.

Tropical Storm Irene badly damaged 60 housing units at the site, resulting in the relocation of 85 households to new housing complexes at Red Clover Commons on Fairground Road.

That floodplain successfully held 4.5 acres of water in July's heavy rains, thus preventing downstream flooding of homes and businesses. Brattleboro Housing Partnerships, which owns Melrose Terrace, is hoping to redevelop affordable housing nearby, on land that is outside of the floodplain.

In Guilford, community members worked closely with VRC to purchase and restore a 17-acre former flood plain along the Green River.

The purchase of the property, now known as Green River Meadows, will prevent future development on the property that could threaten flood plain functions and increase the probability of flood damage to downstream infrastructure.

Formerly a junkyard, the site is now a community resource, with hiking trails and access to the river. The VRC and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS

Kassia Randzio, Erin De Vries, and Hayley Kolding of the Vermont River Conservancy are joined by Jeremy Roberts of KAS Engineering and Brattleboro Zoning Administrator Brian Bannon to explain the Birge Street floodplain restoration project during an Aug. 30 public tour of the Brattleboro site.

hold conservation easements on the land, and a local nonprofit, the Green River Village Preservation Trust, maintains the land.

Linda and Steve Lembke have been involved with the project since its inception in 2018.

"This project has been a perfect marriage of local people, state organizations, and conservation agencies. Everyone recognized the importance of this project," said Steve Lembke, who serves as a trust board member.

For more information on VRC, including information on a free, local, workshop on how we relate to the river, visit vermontriverconservancy.org.

Undaunted by May freeze, Scott Farm will be open for business this fall

DUMMERSTON—Scott Farm, a source for more than 130 varieties of heirloom apples and other fruit, recently opened their Farm Market and Pippin's Café for the season and is hosting a number of events this fall.

Following a devastating freeze in May, 90% of the farm's apple crop was lost. The surviving 10%, however, are being offered for sale exclusively at the Scott Farm Market and for use in the farm's handmade baked goods, French-style hard cider, and sweet cider.

"They may look a little different this year, but many of the heirloom apple varieties our customers love — like Baldwin, Roxbury Russet, and Bramley's Seedling — have survived, and

we're proud to be able to offer them direct to the community at our Farm Market," Scott Farm Orchardist Erin Robinson said in a news release. "Thankfully, the trees themselves remain in great shape, and I have no doubt they will once again produce to capacity next year. It's all about the perspective of abundance."

"This year is all about the Market, Café, and events," said Scott Farm General Manager Simon Renault. "The bulk of our business typically comes from wholesale to stores throughout New England, but we will not have that avenue this year. Our local community now has exclusive access to our fruits and cider on site, and we have a number of great events coming up as well."

Upcoming events at the farm include a Bal Folk traditional social dance on Sunday, Sept. 17; Crêpe Night on Wednesday, Sept. 20; an Orchard Aid benefit concert on Sunday, Oct. 1 (at Retreat Farm); the annual Heirloom Apple Day celebration on Sunday, Oct. 8; and Harvest Dinner & Silent Auction catered by A Vermont Table on Saturday, Oct. 21.

The Farm Market is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pippin's Café is open Thursdays to Sundays, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Both will remain open for the season through late November. For more information on the market, café, and events, visit scottfarmvermont.com (<https://www.scottfarmvermont.com>).

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Hi, my name is **Buddy!** I was a very spunky cool dude. I seem to like everyone. I do have quite the personality and loves to snuggle. I love going for walks and being around my peeps. I may be able to live with another dog. Cats are a complete unknown to me. Please come and make my sweet dreams come true.

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

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Downtown

Mortality Report.

Windham County has had only 13 overdose deaths from January to May of this year, compared to 23 in Chittenden County. But that northwestern Vermont county, home to Burlington, the state's largest city, has a much higher population. Statistically, at 28.2 deaths per 100,000 Vermont residents, Windham County has the highest death rate by opioid overdose in the state.

Last month, *The Commons* sat down with Brattleboro Police Chief Norma Hardy to discuss homelessness, panhandling and, concurrently, the drug problem.

"We don't want to use a broad brush," Hardy said. "I've talked to people who are unhoused. And they work. And they're not addicted to drugs."

Hardy pointed to the well-documented housing crunch.

"There's a housing shortage, of course, in Vermont, just like there's a housing shortage everywhere. Brattleboro is no different," she said. "Prices are up, the upkeep of houses is up."

But Hardy emphasized that "it's very, very important to point out that every person who is homeless is not addicted to drugs, and is not committing crimes."

People experiencing homelessness are not necessarily addicted to drugs, Hardy said. And, conversely, "we have many, many people in this town who are addicted to drugs who have homes."

"We are fighting the drug epidemic here," she continued, adding that "drug dealers don't really care if you're homeless or not as long as you can buy their product."

"We have a major opioid epidemic right here in this town," Hardy said. "And that is what we are fighting against."

One Friday afternoon in Brattleboro

For a long time, Greg Worden has owned and operated Vermont Artisan Designs, at 106 Main St., since the late 1980s. The back of his store opens onto the Harmony Lot, which is besieged by people asking for money, and the front windows open onto Main Street, giving him a panoramic view of downtown.

Business is fine, Worden said. But "customers come in and say, 'What's happening to Brattleboro?'" he said.

Worden's wife, Susan Worden, owns Kitchen Sync next door. "I can't tell who is homeless

and who is a drug addict," she said. "But I have great compassion for them. How do you help them?"

The homelessness problem manifests itself in Brattleboro in as many ways as there are people who have no shelter. It is easy to stereotype and stigmatize a diverse population of people who share in common the lack of one basic human need.

According to some downtown merchants, the behavior of some visibly homeless people in town has not, in general, been good for business.

On Main Street on a recent Friday afternoon, window shoppers sipping coffee were competing for sidewalk space with young parents, tourists, and locals shopping for art supplies, books, and hardware. Storekeepers were setting up for Gallery Walk. In the sunshine, the town seemed to be buzzing and booming.

Against this backdrop, pockets of homelessness were everywhere to be seen, from the now-infamous Transportation Center on Flat Street, the site of several deaths this summer, to the park outside the Brattleboro Food Co-op. At Pliny Park, a young homeless man blew his nose onto the sidewalk.

The police have posted serious signs at the parking garage prohibiting "intoxicating beverages," "illegal drugs," "public urination and defecation," "blocking the walkway or entrance," and "use of profane, loud, or abusive language."

Seven or eight people were sitting in a line on the sidewalk in front of the Transportation Center. Two buses came and left as the group stayed put, passing the time of day.

There was a strong smell of cigarette smoke there, but no sign — or smell — of any of the prohibited behaviors mentioned in the sign.

The town this year could not provide port-a-potties for the various parking areas. According to Town Manager John Potter, all of the potential vendors declined to bid on the contract.

The only public toilet in town now is the one provided courtesy of the Centre Congregational Church, on the lawn of its Main Street sanctuary, far from the transportation center.

'They don't want to be hassled'

According to Paul Faust of Trillium Home & Garden at

FROM SECTION FRONT

119 Main St., this has not been a good summer for business — but more because of rain than homelessness.

"The media made it sound as if the whole state of Vermont was underwater," Faust said. "We were getting calls asking if we were open and if they can get here. If people think the whole state is flooded, they won't come here. And we [ordinarily] get a lot of customers who stop off here on their way to a holiday somewhere else, and they're not coming at all."

Still, Faust says that the state of urgent need downtown is bad for business.

For one thing, he sees his regular customers in the supermarkets, and they apologize for not coming to the store any more.

"They say they don't go downtown any more," he said. "They don't want to be hassled."

Faust said that people eat dinner on his stoop and leave the bags and wrappings for him to clean up in the morning.

"Almost every day there is garbage," Faust said. "And I see it all over town. We have trash containers at the corners, but we also need them spaced along the middle of the street."

Trillium is one of many downtown stores that has been broken into; Faust puts a "No Cash Left Here" sign on the front window every night when he closes up. He and his husband, Chef Ken Flutie, also own and run the Blue Moose restaurant farther down the street. Business has been good there, Faust said, but the restaurant has also been robbed.

"There was no cash, so they took the cash register," Faust said. "And they took a vacuum cleaner. They didn't take any booze, and we had beer and wine. When they broke into A Vermont Table, they took booze. Maybe [those thieves] have a fancier palate."

Despite two high-profile vacancies, active storefronts

The good news is that in downtown Brattleboro, very few Main Street storefronts are empty — vacant storefronts are a sure sign of a decaying economy.

However, the two highest-profile Main Street storefronts are endangered.

On the corner of Main Street and Elliot Street, M&T Bank — which sports a sign that reads "Together we can move Brattleboro forward" — will



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Greg Worden, co-owner of Vermont Artisan Designs, has a panoramic view of downtown.

close its downtown branch in mid-September. The building is not for sale because the Windham County State's Attorney has a lease for offices in the building that runs until 2026, according to the *Brattleboro Reformer*.

"Our decision to close the Main Street branch was influenced in part by our customers' preference for the Canal Street location and our ability to accommodate more customers there via abundant parking, multiple drive-through lanes, and an accessibility ramp for the mobility-impaired," said Frank Lentini, senior communication director for M&T in an email response to the *Reformer*.

And on the other corner of the block, at Main and High streets, another high-profile business, Tine, an upscale restaurant, has also closed its doors.

Jim Callaghan was sweeping up construction debris from his new store, Ray Gun Comics at 125 Main St., the former home of Delectable Mountain, which closed in 2019. At the shop, which he hopes to have ready to open by the end of October, he will sell comics, action figures, collectibles, board games, snacks, and soda. He will have a gaming room in the back.

He does not think homelessness is an issue in opening a new business in downtown Brattleboro.

"I don't think that homeless people are inherently a problem," he said. "The conditions out there are the problem."

On his website, Callaghan writes, "We're looking forward to being a part of the vibrant downtown community and can't wait to welcome you to our new store."

A few display windows down the street, next to ZPods, a relatively new store that sells ceramic products crafted in Brookline,

Logic Building Systems was busy building a new salesroom. The company offers a new way of simplifying home construction by merging kitchen, bathroom, and utility rooms in an off-site pod construction that can then be imported to home sites.

"The revolution in construction is here," the company says on its website. "Replace outdated building methods with Off-Site Fabrication feeding On-Site Assembly. Save money, time & frustration."

There really is no way to escape thinking about the housing shortage.

A right to free speech

Panhandling is a protected part of free speech, according to precedents decided in court cases filed mainly by the American Civil Liberties Union. Courts have decided that towns cannot create ordinances forbidding people from asking others for money on public property.

But for many, it has been an especially frustrating part of life on the street.

As of Sept. 3, a petition circulated at change.org had collected just shy of 1,000 signatures to make "panhandling illegal in Brattleboro."

"The increasing presence of panhandlers on our streets has begun to impact the quality of life for both residents and visitors alike," the petition reads in part. "While it is important to acknowledge that some individuals may be facing difficult circumstances, allowing unrestricted panhandling poses significant challenges that cannot be ignored."

Faust said that his former customers tell him that they have been avoiding downtown

because panhandlers stake out begging sites next to the parking pay-and-display machines in the Harmony Lot.

"If you're an older woman, for example, and you've got your wallet open to pay for parking, you feel vulnerable," he said.

Chief Hardy understands the problem.

"We're trying to at least come up with some ideas, to make it less stressful for people," she said. "Make it less stressful for the homeowners, the people that are shopping, the people that are trying to go downtown and walk in peace."

But, she added, "we still follow the rules and restrictions that have been put out for us."

"Basically, if it's more than someone saying, 'Hey, Buddy, can I have a dime?' If it's more aggressive than that, it becomes harassment. We're working on that."

Hardy described a recent safety fair, where people talked about their concerns. "If they feel fearful, they won't go to the area anymore," she said.

Many downtown merchants describe the panhandling as organized. Faust described a scenario where those seeking money "are dropped off in the morning and when they're done with their shift they hand their cardboard sign to someone else."

Hardy said she had heard the rumors, too.

"But I could not in my position say that it's true at this time," she said. "We are looking into all the points that we get of this kind of activity."

In 2018, *The Commons* attempted to follow similar rumors and despite multiple merchants conveying that information, reporters could not find any evidence of such orchestrated activity.

"Clearly, there is a homeless problem in the U.S.," merchant Penelope Wurr said.

She described local shopkeepers like her as "bullied by the fact that there are a lot of itinerants on the street who are taking advantage of the lack of police and the length of time it takes to go through the courts."

"Crime might be a factor of the drug problem and not the homeless problem," Wurr acknowledged.

"But they are deterring our customers," she said. "These are two concurrent problems."

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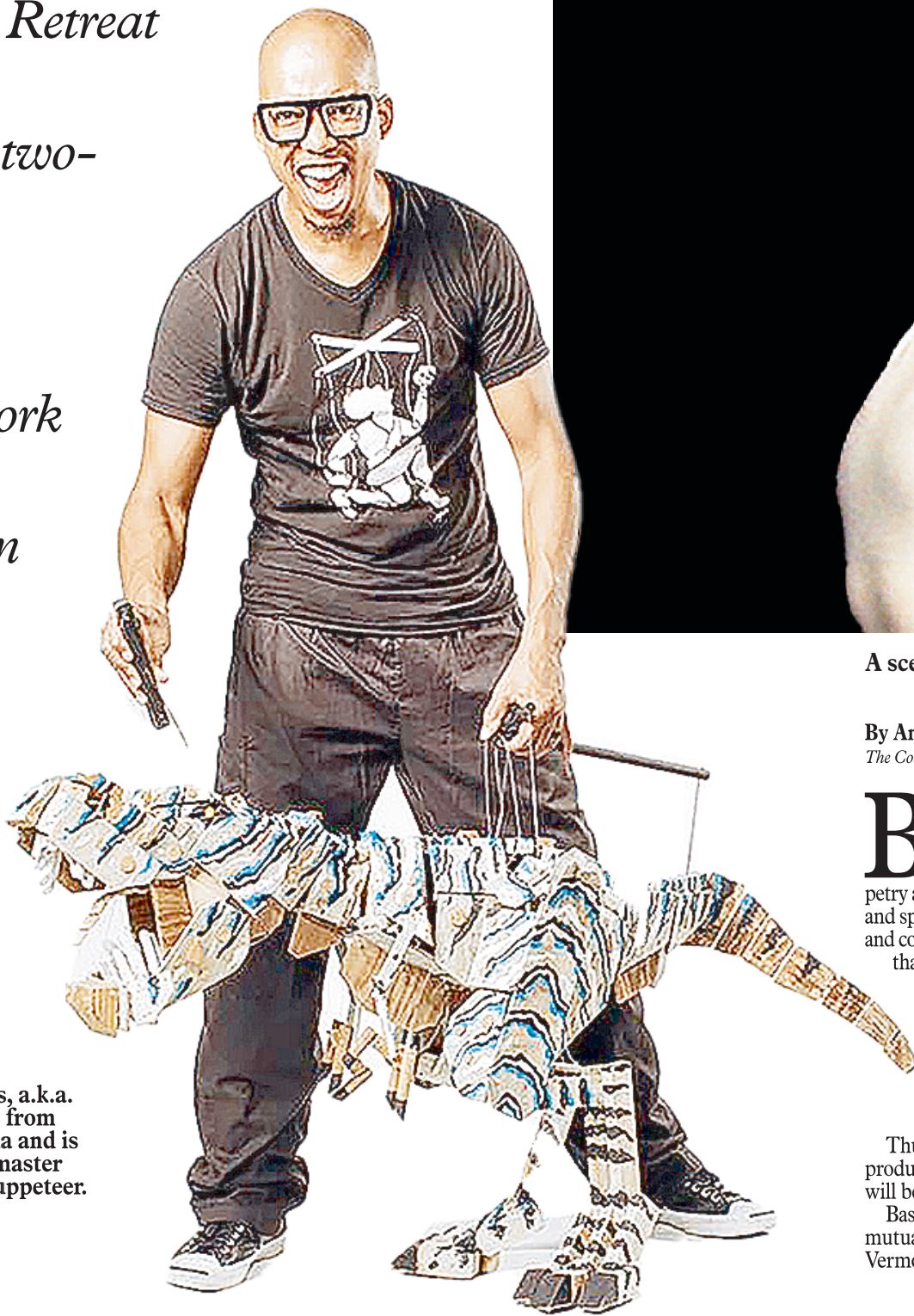
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by artists from

near and far



Tarish Pipkins, a.k.a. Jeghetto, hails from North Carolina and is a self-taught master builder and puppeteer.

A scene from "Fly" by Break-Fast Puppets.

COURTESY PHOTO

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Sandglass Theater, founded in 1982 by Eric Bass and Ines Zeller Bass, has a mission that’s clearly manifest in all they offer.

The nonprofit is “dedicated to the arts of theater and puppetry as a means of exploring contemporary issues, inspiring dialogue, and sparking wonder — by creating original ensemble performances and collaborations, presenting diverse theater artists, producing events that serve our communities, and teaching our art.”

Living up to it all, this venerable player on the area’s lively arts scene presents the 10th Puppets in Paradise (PiP), a biennial tradition, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9 and 10 at Retreat Farm on Route 30.

Earlier iterations of PiP were held at Mary and Gordon Hayward’s gardens in Westminster, but “the event outgrew the gardens,” says Sandglass Artistic Director Shoshana Bass.

Thus, in 2019, they partnered with Retreat Farm in Brattleboro to produce the festival there. Interrupted by the Covid pandemic, this will be the third PiP at that locale.

Bass says the appeal of the collaboration with Retreat Farm is the mutual benefit. “We’re reaching toward the agricultural sector in Vermont, and they’re reaching into the arts sector with the spirit of

■ SEE PUPPETS IN PARADISE, B5

Coming full circle

Kimberly Carmody, one of the art school’s first students in 1976, becomes River Gallery School’s new executive director

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Kimberly Carmody became the new executive director of the River Gallery School on Sept. 1, carrying on a nearly half-century legacy of community art and creativity.

Board President Judith Darrow Freed called Carmody “a grand choice for our school. We count ourselves lucky to include her. Her thoughtful and caring energies are indeed inspirational and valuable for the school’s vision and mission.”

Nearly 48 years ago,

teaching artists Ric Campman and Barbara Merfeld Campman founded the school, offering after-school classes at a site on Putney Road. They envisioned a space where, according to the RGS website (rivergalleryschool.org), “people could connect to their innate creativity and express themselves through art making.”

With Ric Campman’s passing in 2006, Lydia Thomson took the reins in various roles. Carmody succeeds Donna Hawes, who has retired as interim executive director and whom Thomson described as having “held the reins of the administration at RGS for

many years, during which time the school grew, flourished, made new connections, and held its center through many challenges.”

Carmody grew up in Brattleboro, where her father, John, was a surgeon engaged in the community. She started taking classes at RGS at age 7, the first year the School opened.

In an open letter of introduction on the RGS website, Carmody writes: “I walked up the stairs into the River Gallery and met Ric and Barbara for the first time in 1976 [...] With Pachelbel’s Canon playing in the background and a vibrant bouquet of freshly picked flowers

waiting to be painted, I felt seen as an artist for the very first time.”

Over the decades, the school expanded both its offerings and its footprint — always maintaining its vision, though, of “a world where creativity and its expression are important parts of one’s life, and where societies value the arts and the diversity of cultures and experiences they represent,” as the website says.

Carmody recalls her experiences at the school as both a student and a teacher.

“[I] have traversed the Putney Road and two Main Street locations, witnessed and

■ SEE NEW RGS LEADERSHIP, B5



Kimberly Carmody is the next executive director of the River Gallery School in Brattleboro.

COURTESY PHOTO

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY **FRIDAY** **FRIDAY** CONT. **SATURDAY** CONT. **SUNDAY** CONT. **TUESDAY** CONT.

7

Music

BRATTLEBORO 1000mods and Freedom Hawk: 1000mods has become one of the most promising European rock acts. Their latest record "Youth of Dissent" breaks the spacetime continuum and performs time travel to the glorious '90s. Emanating from coastal dunes of Virginia, Freedom Hawk's heavy riffs, rolling groove, soulful guitar melodies, harmonic metal packaging produce a sound distinctly their own. The quartet's brand of heavy rock captures the best of the heavy '70s with touches of early '80s heavy metal

- ▶ 8 p.m.
- ▶ \$18 in advance, \$20 at door.
- ▶ The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: Tickets: Stonechurchvt.com.

BRATTLEBORO Join the Brattleboro Women's Chorus - 9/7 or 9/14: Come sing with us! Our first two rehearsals are open to anyone who wants to "try chorus out" with no obligation to join.

- ▶ 10 a.m.-12 noon at Brattleboro Music Center or 6:30-8:30 p.m. at All Souls Church.
- ▶ Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moyses Way. Information: All singers must contact us in advance to attend: brattleborowomenschorus.org.

Community building

Learn about "Atlas of Disaster: Vermont" presented by Rebuild by Design and VPIRG (Webinar): From toxic wildfire smoke to intense flooding, we've dealt with a lot this summer. Climate change has hit us hard and we need to do more to ensure a resilient, safe future for all who call this Green Mountain State home. Report identifies impacts of climate disasters across VR from 2011-2021. We'll delve into: Recent climate disasters/associated costs; Energy reliability; Underlying social vulnerabilities; Solutions to build climate resilience; Audience questions.

- ▶ 10-11 a.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Webinar. Questions, email Vermont Public Interest Research Group Jordan Heiden: jheiden@vpirg.org Webinar link: tinyurl.com/39nc34dj.

Community meals

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

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

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

8

Music

GUILFORD Outdoor Concert: Erin Harpe Blues Duo at Springs Farm: Erin gets back to her roots in acoustic blues for her Country Blues Duo with partner/bassist Jim Countryman. They create a full sound as a down-home duo: Erin on acoustic guitar, vocals, kazoo, foot percussion and Jim on ukulele bass and backing vocals. Their energetic performances transport audiences to the Delta with vintage classics elevated by Erin's interpretations mixed with original compositions/country blues takes on other popular songs.

- ▶ 6:30 a.m. Come early, stay late. Limited event parking at Springs Farm for anyone who needs close access. Otherwise, park off Carpenter Hill Rd. at library, community center, lower field, or Playscape and enjoy the short walk up.
- ▶ \$10 to \$20 suggested admission (no charge for children). All proceeds go to the band.
- ▶ Springs Farm, 49 Carpenter Hill Rd.

Well-being

WILLIAMSVILLE Manitou Healing Walk: This walk led by Fred Taylor include poems or other readings and chances to share about the experience. The Manitou Project seeks to foster community with Nature on its 235-acre land preserve.

- ▶ 4 p.m. Meet at parking lot: Go 1.4 miles up Sunset Lake Rd. from Williamsville Village, sign on right. Or approx. 5.6 miles over top of Sunset Lake Rd. from Rt. 9. Walk ends 5:30 p.m. rain or shine and are held 2nd and 4th Friday each month until October.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Manitou Project, 300 Sunset Lake Rd. Information: More information, contact Fred at 802-254-2675.

Dance

MARLBORO Community Contra Dance: New England Dancing Masters: Mary Cay Brass, Mary Alice Amidon Andy Davis, Peter Amidon will lead family-friendly dances from their repertoire of contras, squares, singing games, play party dances, more. All dances taught; all ages and abilities welcome.

- ▶ 7:30-9:30 p.m. Park in visitor lot at Potash Hill (formerly Marlboro College). Second visitor lot on the left is the lot closest to the Dining Hall. Cross the street, go up the stairs, listen for the music and you'll find us!
- ▶ Cash or check at door. Adults: \$10-\$25 sliding scale, Children/Teens: \$5. Family: \$30. Additional donations welcome.
- ▶ Potash Hill (formerly Marlboro College) Dining Hall, 2582 South Rd. Information: amidonpeter@gmail.com.

Community meals

BRATTLEBORO Dosa Fridays! Visit Dosa Kitchen's new location and new Friday night dinner service at Winston Prouty. "We've got shady trees, picnic tables, woods walks, and views! It's where you want to be on Friday night for dinner!" Dosa Kitchen food truck has been offering the Authentic Dosa

Experience since 2014. The dosa - South India's version of the crepe - has a seductively sour, tangy flavor, and airy, crisp texture. It's gluten-free and vegan.

- ▶ 4:30-7:30 p.m. Dosa Kitchen is also on site Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., and holiday Mondays.
- ▶ Winston Prouty Campus, 209 Austine Dr. Information: If you're a musician who wants to jam on a Friday night, be in touch: 802-246-7592, dosakitchen@gmail.com..

9

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO Sandglass Theater presents Puppets in Paradise 2023: A celebration of theater arts and agrarian traditions of Southern VT: short-form puppet performances, theater artists and musicians amidst the fields, historic barns, animals. Plus, we're welcoming performers including Stoph Scheer, Sam and Friends, CactusHead Puppets, Jeghetto's Entertainment, Sova Puppet and Dance Theater, Break-Fast Puppets, Sandglass Theater, among others. This year also features a community project involving a field of dancing sheep.

- ▶ 9/9 and 9/10: 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m. Food/refreshments from local vendors add to the delight of a beautiful day.
- ▶ Through Sunday, September 10.
- ▶ Equity Ticket 1: \$24, Equity Ticket 2: \$18, Equity Ticket 3: \$12 students/seniors, \$10 EBT/Medicaid cardholders, \$8 children (free up to age 3).
- ▶ Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Sq. Equity tickets help you determine your ability to support the community - they are general adult admission. tinyurl.com/4enpbw4d, Shoshana Bass: 802-387-4051.

Music

PUTNEY Bandwagon Summer Series presents Balla Kouyate & Mike Block Band: Balla Kouyate and Mike Block have collaborated over a decade, bonding over shared interest in music world-wide/commitment to innovating on instruments. They've teamed up with friends from America and West Africa to create fusion of musical styles in a 6-piece band featuring Sekou Dembele (djembe/vocals), Idrissa Kone (talking drum/calabash/vocals/percussion/vocals), Luke Okerlund (electric guitar), Mike Rivard (bass/sintir).

- ▶ 5 p.m. Kouyate, balafo player/singer coming out of Djeli tradition of Mali received a National Heritage Fellowship from the NEA. Mike Block, American cellist/singer/composer and Grammy Award-winning musician w/ the Silkroad Ensemble, originally trained in Western Classical music. Next Stage provides beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar, ice cream from Vermont Gelato available for purchase. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for outdoor seating on lawn.
- ▶ \$20 in advance, \$25 at door, free for kids under age 12.
- ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Advance ticketing (closes two hours before showtime): tinyurl.com/43947t49.

Fundraising and awareness events

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Area Hospice hosts its 2nd "Hospice Amazing Hunt": A black cat, woman in a Hawaiian shirt, license plate from Nevada - some possible search items in upcoming fundraiser. Teams compete to score the most points while navigating downtown Brattleboro, learning its history, having fun with family, friends, coworkers while raising money to support the mission of Brattleboro Area Hospice.

- ▶ 12:30-4 p.m. "Brattleboro Area Hospice provides broad range of volunteer-based services for living and dying well, focusing on end-of-life, bereavement, advance care planning. Our programs reflect our community's values of kindness, decency, and dignity. Founded in 1979 on the belief that no one should die alone, we're dedicated to offering all services free of charge."
- ▶ Fee to participate is \$200 per team (we encourage teams of four). Raise funds through sponsorship from friends/family or team donation.
- ▶ Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal St. Information: Register: brattleborohospice.org. More info: Ellen Smith, Development Dir., ellen.smith@brattleborohospice.org.

Farmers' markets

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Area Farmers Market: BAFM has over 50 vendors, bringing our region's

best farmers, makers, and chefs all to one place. Live music 11 a.m.-1 p.m., special events and workshops throughout the season.

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

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Farmers' markets

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

- ▶ 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on Sundays (corner Frost and Elm). (Gardeners may drop off surplus from their gardens from 10:30-closing: before noon preferred).
- ▶ Through Sunday, October 29.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Turning Point, 39 Elm St. (corner of Frost and Elm St.). Information: EdibleBrattleboro@gmail.com.

Community building

SO. NEWFARE Old Ways Herbal: Herb Garden Days: Join us on the farm to grow your knowledge and be in herbal community. Connect with nature in community: tend the gardens, harvest herbs, and ask your herb-growing and wild-crafting questions in a casual, small group setting. Guests take home freshly harvested herbs, divisions of plants, seeds, or stay late to do some wild-crafting on their own, depending on the season.

- ▶ 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Old Ways Herbal School of Plant Medicine, 569 Dover Rd. Information: Space is limited to keep group small. RSVP required: tinyurl.com/y66s98te.

GUILFORD Brattleboro Area Service-Focused Youth Group: This is a relaunch of this interfaith group for ages 13 to 18 living in the greater Brattleboro area. During this kick-off, individuals will get to know each other through games, share a pizza meal, explore which activities they'd be interested in pursuing one Sunday afternoon a month this coming year. Goal for this group is to build leadership skills and friendships among young people who care and want to make a difference in their communities.

- ▶ 5-7 p.m. If weather is inclement, we'll move indoors.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Guilford Community Park Pavilion, 24 Church Dr. (behind Country Store, next to Guilford Community Church). Information: For more information, get in touch with Nanci at 802-258-8348 or email guilfordchurch@gmail.com.

Arts and crafts

PUTNEY Fall Mending Bee at Putney Library: Do you have a pile of nice wool socks with holes, favorite jeans that would be perfect if not for a rip in the knee, or sweaters with moth holes? Bring your ailing fabric items to work on them in the company of others. Advice and support are always available but you'll be the mender of your own items. Sewing machines and darning tools are available to use during the Bee.

- ▶ 1-4 p.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: 802-387-4407; putneylibrary.org/events.

Dance

BRATTLEBORO Argentine Tango Tea Milonga: o partner needed. Stop by to check it out or join in.

- ▶ 3-4 p.m. Class, 4-7 p.m. Milonga.
- ▶ Class \$10, Milonga \$15, both \$20.
- ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: More information: visit Brattleboro Tango Facebook page.

Ideas and education

DUMMERSTON Hidden in the Hills: The Stone Trust: Join master dry stone waller Jared Flynn for a tour of Stone Wall Park at historic Scott Farm. Established as a venue for dry stone walling training and certification testing, the park includes required features such as sloped walls, arches, and pillars built by wallers testing for Level III Dry Stone Waller and Master Craftsman certification. Along with these permanent features, Flynn and others have created a sampler of walling methods using various types of stone.

- ▶ 3 p.m. Learn about the art and craft of dry stone walling and take a stroll among the beautifully crafted stone structures.

▶ \$10 (free for Brattleboro Museum of Art members).

- ▶ Scott Farm, 707 Kipling Rd. Information: Space is limited; registration required. Register at tinyurl.com/mpkzryew or call 802-257-0124 x101.

WESTMINSTER WEST A Beaver Year: Presentation and Field Trip: Join Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center naturalist Patti Smith to learn about the seasons of beavers' lives. Patti has spent 15 years studying a beaver colony and will share photos, videos, and stories about the beavers and other animals she has met along the way. Presentation followed by a field trip to a local beaver pond.

- ▶ 2-4 p.m. Event is part of a series of beaver-related events happening in Westminster.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Westminster West Church, 44 Church St.

BRATTLEBORO Mushroom Mini-course: This summer's rains led to a profusion of fungi and Justin Garner has been finding mushrooms that appear rarely. Learn more about the strange and wonderful diversity of mushrooms as we walk in the field looking for and collecting them. Then, gather around the tables to admire and learn about the harvest. If good edibles are available, we'll prepare some to sample.

- ▶ 9-11:30 a.m. (also 10/8: 1-3:30 p.m.). Justin has a long-standing interest in these often neglected and misunderstood life forms. He studied botany, plant chemistry, plus human physiology and biochemistry. He teaches about the medicinal nourishing, and toxic properties of our diverse fungi. Bring bag or basket for collecting mushrooms and mushroom knife or small pocketknife. Be prepared for off-trail hiking in wooded terrain.
- ▶ \$35 per outing (\$25 per outing for Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center members).
- ▶ Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. Information: Register: tinyurl.com/2p8fyra.

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Community building

BRATTLEBORO Vermont River Conservancy hosts: "Face the River Workshop": "We are hosting a public workshop on river conservation and river access. Plus a field walk in Brattleboro with educator, conservationist, and Abenaki activist Judy Dow, as well as a mindfulness workshop with local author Peter Gould. Rivers cover a lot of ground and in this multigenerational workshop, so will we. We'll share and compare our personal experiences of rivers and floods and take a field trip to a nearby brook and learn the fundamentals of river science."

- ▶ 4-5:45 p.m. "Putting it all together, we'll propose river access and conservation strategies that build on the strengths and meet the needs of southern Vermonters of all ages." Brattleboro locations: 9/12: Judy Dow, "In Relationship with Rivers" and 9/14: "Mindfulness with Peter Gould".
- ▶ Through Friday, September 15.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: Link includes sign-ups for all 3 events with dates/details. tinyurl.com/3mvm9z58.

12

Recreation

BRATTLEBORO Senior Walk Fort Dummer State Park sponsored by Guilford Cares: Fort Dummer, wconstructed by the British in 1724, became an early European settlement in the Mass Bay Colony, which would later be part of Vermont. Initially the fort was manned by 55 men of English and Mohawk descent. It played a prominent role in King George's War and in the French and Indian War. Two loop trails through woods, 1 mile and 0.5 mile level and gently sloping.

- ▶ 10:30 a.m. 1.6 miles from Canal Street traffic light to Park entrance.
- ▶ \$5 day use parking fee. Green Mountain Passport free for Guilford residents at Guilford Town Office or \$2 other town offices.
- ▶ Fort Dummer State Park, 517 Old Guilford Rd. Information: Guilford Cares, 802-579-1350 or guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com.

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.

Community building

Public Forum: Fair & Impartial Policing in Windham County w/ Discussion of Proposed Changes around Immigration (Zoom or Phone): Forum includes brief presentations about our work, proposed reforms, perspectives of the Sheriff's Office, and the No Mas Polimigra campaign about these proposals. After this, residents of Windham County will be invited to participate with questions or comments. Moderators: Betsy Williams and Debbie Lynangale.

- ▶ 5:30-7:30 p.m. Spanish interpretation provided.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Zoom. Information: Zoom link: tinyurl.com/3v943t4p. Meeting ID: 88139405029. Passcode: 921040. Instructions to join by phone: info@caspsvt.org.

Dance

BRATTLEBORO Argentine Tango: Beginners and all levels welcome. Check it out or join in. No partner needed.

- ▶ Class 7-8 p.m., Practica 8-10 p.m. Continues 9/19 and 9/26.
- ▶ Class: \$12, Practica: \$5, Both \$15. First class is free of charge.
- ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: More information: visit Brattleboro Tango Facebook page.

13

The written word

PUTNEY Rich Grumbine discusses his new book: "Which Plant is That? Discovering the Wildflowers of Putney, Vermont" : First presentation of Fall 2023 Academic Speaker Series features a familiar face for local nature walk enthusiasts, Grumbine, Assoc. Prof. of Natural Science, shares his journey creating a field guide to identify local wildflowers. He'll include statistics about town's wildflower flora, stories about process of developing the guide, offer the audience some basic botanical terminology and how to apply that in identifying one or two local wildflower specimens.

- ▶ 5 p.m. in the Brooks M. O'Brien/Lewis Academic Building.
- ▶ Free and open to the public.
- ▶ Landmark College, Lewis Academic Bldg., OBrien Auditorium, 1 River Road South. Info/questions about venue accessibility, contact Solvegi Shmulsky at sshmulsky@landmark.edu. Driving directions, campus map, more info about Landmark College Academic Speaker Series: landmark.edu.

Community building

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

- ▶ 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. Open every other Wednesday through Oct. 4.
- ▶ Vernon Community Market, Vernon Recreation Area, 607 Pond Rd. Information: 802-254-9251, VernonVTCommunityMarket@gmail.com.

Beyond Description

JACKSONVILLE "Visiting The Beyond" - An Interactive Paranormal Presentation with Curt Strutz: Interactive presentation takes you through the nation's most haunted locations via original photography, deep history, haunted experiences! Walk room thru room during this photographic journey into the unknown - abandoned hospitals, asylums, murder sites, homes. Curt has been to each building showcased and digs deep into the history and haunted stories behind each one with a fun mix of history, storytelling, photography.

- ▶ 6 p.m. Presentation is not only for those who enjoy ghost hunting stories but also those into photography and history! Curt's given these lectures at hundreds of libraries and museums, was guest speaker at Troy Taylor's Haunted America Conference, headline speaker - Illinoise Paranormal Conference.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Whitingham Free Public Library, 2948 VT Rte. 100. Information: 802-368-7506.

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ERIC VAN NIEUWLAND

Windborne will be at the Brattleboro Music Center on Sept. 23.

Windborne returns to its roots in concert at BMC

BRATTLEBORO—After touring internationally and attracting an enthusiastic following on social media, Windborne performs at the Brattleboro Music Center Saturday, Sept. 23 at 7 p.m.

Old songs and bold harmony combine for a profound vocal experience. This captivating show will draw on the singers' deep roots in traditions of vocal harmony, while the absolute uniqueness of the group's artistic approach brings old songs into the present. Known for the innovation of their arrangements, Windborne's harmonies are anything but predictable.

With deep local roots and a 20-year background studying polyphonic music around the world,

Lauren Breunig, Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Lynn Rowan, and Will Rowan "share a vibrant energy onstage with a blending of voices that can only come from decades of friendship alongside dedicated practice," said organizers in a news release.

"The ensemble shifts effortlessly between drastically different styles of music, drawing their audience along on a journey that spans continents and centuries, illuminating and expanding on the profound power and variation of the human voice." The singers educate as they entertain, sharing stories about their songs and explaining the context and characteristics of the styles in which they sing.

BBC *Traveling Folk* describes

Windborne as "subverting expectations and redefining the genre [...] just absolutely phenomenal!" The group is known for their technical mastery, "for the passion, engagement, and connection with each other and the audience that imbues each performance with a rare power."

But there's another, crucial dimension to Windborne that guides and roots their artistry, organizers say. They are adherents to folk music's longtime alliance with social activism, labor and civil rights, and other movements that champion the oppressed, the poor, and the disenfranchised. Their latest project, *Of Hard Times & Harmony*, explores themes of social consciousness, singing in four languages and

showcasing the depth of emotion their voices can evoke, as well as moments of true hilarity and wit.

The group is committed to bringing vocal traditions to a younger audience, and over the past year has found viral success on TikTok for such unusual genres as Corsican polyphony or early 20th-century labor anthems. Learn more at WindborneSingers.com or @Windbornesingers.

The concert is expected to sell out, so those interested are encouraged to get tickets as soon as possible. Tickets are \$20 general admission, and \$25 at the door. For tickets or more information, contact the BMC at 802-257-4523, email info@bmcvt.org, or visit the BMC website at bmcvt.org.

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Erin Harpe Blues Duo at Springs Farm in Guilford



Erin Harpe and Jim Countryman

COURTESY PHOTO

GUILFORD—The Erin Harpe Country Blues Duo with Jim Countryman will perform at Springs Farm, 49 Carpenter Hill Rd., on Friday, Sept. 8, at 6:30 p.m. In case of rain, the concert will be moved inside to the Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Road.

Harpe has been called “one of the most dynamic, talented and exciting roots rocking blues women on the scene,” by *Living Blues* magazine. The singer, songwriter, guitarist, and band leader was recently named New

England’s “Blues Artist of the Year.”

Once described as “Bonnie Raitt on modern performance-enhancing drugs” for her work with her award-winning electric blues band Erin Harpe & the Delta Swingers, more recently she has been gaining attention as an acoustic guitarist and purveyor of 1920s and ’30s finger-style country blues.

Harpe grew up learning the style from her dad, Neil Harpe, and watching local Piedmont blues luminaries such as Cephas

& Wiggins, Archie Edwards, Eleanor Ellis, and Warner Williams at Washington, D.C.’s famed Archie’s Barbershop.

Her recent album with the Country Blues Duo (a.k.a. “CBD”), recorded with long-time partner/bassist Countryman, features Harpe on acoustic guitar, vocals, kazoo, and foot percussion, with Countryman on ukulele bass and backing vocals.

Their performances include vintage classics — by the likes of Memphis Minnie, Mississippi John Hurt, Tommy Johnson, and

Blind Blake — interpreted by Harpe, and mixed with original compositions and country blues takes on other popular songs.

There is a \$10-\$20 suggested admission, but no one will be turned away. All proceeds go to the band, and children are always admitted free. Parking at Springs Farm is limited to anyone who needs close access. Otherwise, park off Carpenter Hill Road at the town library, community center, lower field, or Playscape and enjoy the short walk up.

Bandwagon Summer Series presents genre-bending Orchestre Tout Puissant Marcel Duchamp

PUTNEY—The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series presents Orchestre Tout Puissant Marcel Duchamp (OTPM) on Saturday, Sept. 16, at 5 p.m., at the Putney Inn, 57 Putney Landing Rd.

OTPM’s sound integrates free jazz, post-punk, highlife, brass band, symphonic mixtures and kraut rock.

“Of all the concerts we’re hosting this summer for the Bandwagon Series, Orchestre Tout Puissant Marcel Duchamp’s music is easily the most adventurous, daring, and worth listening to. We hope this is the beginning

of being able to host them when they tour the U.S.,” Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said in a news release.

Founded in 2006 by Vincent Bertholet (also of Hyperculte), OTPMD is a large-scale project. Designed as a real orchestra, the size of the ensemble has varied over time and now has 12 members.

Whether in prestigious festivals (Paléo Festival de Nyon, Womad, Bad Bonn Kilbi, Jazz à la Vilette) or on the four albums released since its launch, “the group shows an incredible fluidity,” say organizers.

OTPM (a title in homage to traditional African groups such as Orchestre Tout Puissant Konono N°1 and Orchestre Tout Puissant Polyrytmo) “embraces the forms of its musicians while pushing them to their limits. The result is a powerful, experimental, unstable and terribly alive, organic sound,” say organizers.

These characteristics can be found on *We’re OK But We’re Lost Anyway*, the fifth opus of the band. “It develops a repetitive musicality which, deployed in successive waves, creates a feeling of trance.”

Their music has been described

as “transcendental, hypnotic, almost ritualistic,” and “somewhere between Hugo Ball’s phonetic psalms, a Sufi procession that turns into a brawl and a voodoo ritual.”

Tickets are \$20 advance, \$25 at the door, and kids 12 and under are free. Advance tickets are available online at nextstagearts.org. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar, and food from Crossroads Tacos and Vermont Gelato will be available. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for outdoor seating on the lawn. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

VCP hosts artist talk, book signing with Malakoff



Sarah Malakoff

BRATTLEBORO—Join the Vermont Center for Photography (VCP), 10 Green St., for an artist talk and book signing with Sarah Malakoff on Friday, Sept. 8, at 6 p.m.

Malakoff’s large-scale color photographs “are examinations of the home and its psychologically charged, uncanny spaces and objects. Her long-term photographic projects explore private space as a realm where the things with which we surround ourselves, both consciously and unconsciously, express our identity, aspirations, desires, and fears,” according to a VCP news release.

In her new book, *Personal History*, she turns her attention

to objects displayed within American homes that reference culture, history, and ideology.

“Whether representations of historical figures, events, or monuments, the possessions point to a longing for connection to the past and an engagement with the world at large,” continues the news release. “Often the collections of objects underscore the privilege and power implicit in the act of collecting. These souvenirs resonate — sometimes humorously, sometimes disturbingly — with the other possessions and architecture that surround them, uneasily vacillating between heroism and kitsch, patriotism and colonialism.”

Malakoff is a Boston-based photographer. Her work has been widely exhibited in both solo and group shows nationally and are included in several public and private collections. “Untitled Interiors,” a 16-page Artist’s Project, was published in *Esopus* magazine in 2007. She has been awarded Fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council in 2001 and 2011 and a Traveling Fellowship from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 2011. She is an associate professor of photography at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.

This event is free and open to all. For information about VCP, visit vcphoto.org.

Percussionist Ayano Kataoka to perform at BMAC on Sep. 14

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) presents percussionist Ayano Kataoka on Thursday, September 14, at 7 p.m. in a performance of “Eternity,” a work for solo vibraphone by Vermont composer Stuart Saunders Smith.

Kataoka is a professor of percussion at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a performer with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She gave the world premiere of Smith’s “Eternity” in 2022. She is known for infusing her performances with remarkable physical energy. “Her dynamic yet controlled technique is well suited to the theatrical and improvisational aspects of Smith’s work as well as his colorful, atonal, and rhythmically complex musical language,” say organizers.

Kataoka performs and gives master classes around the world. She has played with cellist Yo-Yo Ma; premiered compositions by George Crumb, Paul Lansky, and Alejandro Viñao, and has been featured at Lincoln Center.

A native of Japan, Kataoka began studying the marimba at age 5 and percussion at 15. She holds degrees from Tokyo University

of the Arts and the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University, and an Artist Diploma from Yale School of Music.

Composer Stuart Saunders Smith of Sharon, Vermont, has created a body of musical and literary compositions. Many of his works are theatrical, asking the performers to speak, sing, act, and perform pantomime in addition to playing their instruments. His music is recorded on O.O.

Discs, Capstone Records, New World, and on labels in Austria, France, and Germany.

Of his approach to musical composition, Smith has said, “I never use pre-compositional engineering plans [...] I want a music which can contradict itself and go off on tangents. I am not interested in consistency [...] I am in search of magic, and like a magic trick, I want my hand to turn into a bird that flies away!”

The performance will take place in the museum’s Wolf Kahn & Emily Mason Gallery, amidst the exhibition “Aurora Robson: Human Nature Walk.”

Admission is free for BMAC members, and \$5 for all others. Purchase tickets at brattleboromuseum.org, at the door, or call 802-257-0124, ext. 101.

Robert Kuhn, Jaded Ravins co-headline Stage 33 Live

BELLOWS FALLS—Robert Kuhn and Jaded Ravins will co-headline at Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge St., on Sunday, Sept. 17, at 7 p.m.

Kuhn was born in Houston, Texas, then bounced around from North America to Australia and Central and South America for a dozen years before returning home. He’s been everything from an Academic All-American linebacker to a vagabond fisherman-farmer writing critically acclaimed songs.

He finished his latest album, *Persevere*, after a near-fatal van wreck in Colorado while on tour. His 2014 debut album, *Everybody Knows*, was recognized as one of Houston’s Top Releases of the year.

Jaded Ravins are Kelly Ravin and Halle Jade, bringing original soulful Americana and country rock to the stage “with tasty harmonies and an engaging presence,” say organizers.

After Jade joined Ravin in the recording of his fifth acclaimed

album, *Engine*, they began performing together. Ravin is the lean and tattooed former lead singer and guitarist of Waylon Speed. Ravin and Jade “pour their hearts out in backcountry bars and big city clubs from New England to Nashville, say organizers.

Tickets are \$15 in advance through stage33live.com or \$20 at the door. Seating is limited, and the event will be recorded and filmed.

Puppets in Paradise

FROM SECTION FRONT

partnership,” she said.

Being “such a central and beautiful location,” Bass says, the Retreat Farm presence offers expansion into other audiences beyond Sandglass’s valued loyal following.

At this all-family festival, audiences stroll the farm choosing one of three performance circuits that weave through the grounds to enjoy “short-form puppet performances, theater artists, and musicians amidst the fields, historic barns, and animals,” according to a Sandglass media release.

Returning to the Retreat’s common, festivalgoers will be invited to participate in a collective Sheep Dance.

The aim, according to Bass, is to give audience to “our regional artists, to what we have here in our region in terms of puppetry abundance.” Because each piece is short-form puppetry — eight minutes maximum per piece, according to Bass, PiP gives artists a choice opportunity to try new material.

Some highlights

• **Jeghetto:** While most PiP puppet artists come from around New England, Tarish Pipkins, a.k.a. Jeghetto, hails from North Carolina. A self-taught master builder and puppeteer, according to a news release, “his puppets are abstract moving sculptures made of mostly found and recycled materials.”

Recipient of grants from the Jim Henson Foundation, Pipkins’s credits include performing puppetry on NBC’s *The Voice* and on HBO’s *Random Acts of Flyness*. Jeghetto’s Pop Up Variety Show and his unique style of puppetry will yield “a magical experience for children of all ages.”

Pipkins will stay on after PiP to lead a two-day workshop for puppetry and performance at Theatre Adventure of Brattleboro and will join some of the participating students in their primary public schools for a series of additional classroom workshops.

• **Sova Dance & Puppet Theater:** Returning to PiP with “Bee Resilient,” part of a new piece in progress, is Connecticut-based internationally acclaimed mask and puppet performer Adelka Polak, whose company, Sova Dance & Puppet Theater, according to the Sandglass release, “celebrates humanity and the environment by engaging audiences through live performance, communicating that which cannot easily be described in words alone, making art accessible to

communities around the globe.”

Her new work is an “exploration of life connections and cycles,” and Sova “seeks to highlight the relationship between their ancestral Slovak cultural representative, the busy bee, and the sunflower, the symbol of neighboring Ukraine.”

“Each relies on the other as neighbors, cousins, and further yet as a global community, so when the safety of one is threatened we all are,” Sandglass writes.

• **CactusHead** of western Massachusetts will present an excerpt from its “Magnificent Monster Circus.” The group’s website proclaims that viewers will “encounter magnificent creatures from the wilds of your imagination as their quirky human caretaker tries to teach them new tricks.”

• **New England Youth Theatre,** based in Brattleboro, will also be featured in an excerpt from “A Conference of the Birds,” directed last spring by Sandglass co-founder Eric Bass, assisted by Mackenzie Doss.

“It was so beautiful,” Shoshana Bass recalls, “and it had only a one-weekend run, so I asked if they could reassemble the cast and perform an excerpt. I’m amazed and excited that the company will gather again.”

Students from the only puppetry master’s degree program in the country at the University of Connecticut are also in the PiP lineup.

• **Break-Fast Puppets,** directed by Anthony Sellitto and Joanie Papillon, is a movement- and puppet-based duo which, according to the Sandglass release, “seeks to tell compelling stories that process the non-material world through sculptural techniques, choreographic vocabulary, and visual storytelling.”

Their performance, “Fly,” will feature the Swan and the Flamingo, “two giant birds built entirely from garbage and obsolete items, who live between two worlds and remind us of times when we were perhaps more in tune with nature around us.”

• **Stoph Scheer,** having just earned her master’s in the UConn puppet arts program and having worked with the Jim Henson Company, the Muppets, and Banksy, will present “King’s Justice,” a “very interactive piece,” says Bass, with whom Scheer is collaborating on a new work.

“She’s awesome, very funny,” Bass adds.

• **Jana Zeller** will perform “Bug,” a new piece for PiP. As



Hugo and Claude, a pair of foam and gauze gargoyles, will be brought to life by Shoshana Bass and Kirk Murphy.

described by Sandglass: “An unsuspecting scientist peering through a microscope beholds a bug that opens its wings and reveals a series of mysterious transformations that are entirely unscientific.”

A working artist, Zeller is a painter and scenic designer, as well as a puppeteer. She’s been performing and teaching puppetry in New England and abroad for almost three decades.

• **Samantha Sing:** Also on the PiP program is 2022 Sandglass summer-intensive puppetry program participant Sing, who “will be coming from New York City with New York flavor in a story about subway creatures,” Bass says.

• **Shoshana Bass and Kirk Murphy:** Bass and Murphy have resurrected puppets that have been in boxes for years — Hugo and Claude, shaped from foam and gauze. Murphy, long associated with Sandglass, is a local puppeteer and musician who has toured exclusively with the company.

As he and Bass bring these two favorites back to life, they tell this story, according to the Sandglass release: “High on a French cathedral sit this gargoyle duo. Alike in stone only, one delights in the daily visits from pigeon friends and dreams of flying freely with them, while the other can’t stand them and can only grumble about those pesky little birds. One day,

a miracle happens.”

• **Gabriel Pasculli and Virginia Scholl:** Pasculli, Sandglass’s creative director, is just completing his first year — a year that began with his jumping into the theater’s biennial Puppets in the Green Mountains, an international puppet festival that alternates with PiP.

Putney choreographer and dance educator Scholl joined Pasculli, an interdisciplinary performance artist, theater director, and educator, to resurrect a sheep dance that Scholl choreographed 20 years ago for the 250th anniversary of Putney’s incorporation as a town.

According to the Sandglass release, Scholl is “delighted to be reimagining it for Puppets in Paradise.”

“We are but sheep in the wild, and so we dance,” she says. “Perhaps for fun, maybe for hope, or even a bit for protection, we build a dance one step, one body, one gathering at a time.”

Play: essential to change, growth, and community

“Puppetry necessitates intersectionality,” Bass says — an embracing of all the arts. And, she adds, “with a lot of Sandglass’s work,” at least, puppetry centers on engagement with certain social issues.

“With organizations and initiatives that are not arts based but

are justice based or humanities based, puppetry is such a good tool for responding to the things we see in the world and to finding joy,” she adds. “At the core of puppetry is play — play, whether we use it as joy, wonder, dialogue, conflict transformation, community building, or activism.”

Bass emphasizes that play is an essential component of change, growth, and community.

Puppetry is an art form that dates to ancient Asia and Greece — even, it’s believed, to ancient Egypt — and that’s evolved worldwide over generations. It boasts a vast range of materials and techniques — even in the U.S., she says, where puppetry has grown in production and popularity in myriad directions in recent decades.

A puppeteer’s work, Bass adds, “is an invitation for an audience to participate with their own imagination.” Moreover, “the audience is an essential part of a puppet’s life.”

Puppets in Paradise will take place rain or shine, thanks to an increasing array of covered spaces at Retreat Farm, on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9 and 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with last performances beginning at 3:45 p.m. Golf carts will be available for increased accessibility to most performance locations.

Sandglass estimates that the full festival experience takes at least two hours. Tickets can be purchased at the entrance or at sandglasstheater.org on an as-able-to-pay scale from a \$24 Equity Ticket to an \$8 EBT and Medicaid cardholder ticket. Children under 3 are free. Food and refreshments from local vendors will be available.

And, for just a bit of symbolism for the weaving-arts-and-agriculture idea, visitors will find, in the midst of all the puppet art, the gentle giant from Retreat Farm, Carlos the Bull, to whom they’re welcome to say “hi.”

New RGS leadership

FROM SECTION FRONT

embraced Sequencing painting [a technique developed by Ric Campman] as an incredibly useful approach to making, and seen the school survive and thrive over the past four decades,” she writes.

Carmody studied at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, then moved to New York City to attend the New York Studio School in Greenwich Village.

“That’s where I studied drawing, painting, and sculpture,” she says — “old-school style,” from real-life models.

“I did that for many years, then I thought I was going to be a studio artist,” Carmody continues. “I got myself a studio in Long Island City. I went out there, and I was all alone and didn’t know what was going on.”

Having been a teaching assistant at the Studio School and working and teaching in an art program for men in a city homeless shelter who were recovering from drug dependency, Carmody said that she “realized teaching is something I really loved.”

She began working as an elementary arts school teacher and enrolled at Columbia University Teachers College, where she earned a master’s degree in art education.

Carmody conducted research for her master’s thesis on the role of art and art education in post-apartheid South Africa while volunteering at Imbali Visual Literacy Project in Johannesburg, guiding students in making a mural representing their township.

Back in New York, she was struck by the inaccessibility of art in underserved areas of New York City and soon thereafter founded Urban River Arts, a community based nonprofit, in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn.

In her letter, Carmody writes: “Through individual and group activities, in partnership with museums and cultural organizations all over NYC, our curriculum engaged people of all ages from diverse backgrounds and was primarily centered around facilitating large-scale, interactive art installations inspired by Tibetan sand mandalas.”

There, she “did rounds of teaching, administrating, making,” she says. Her career has found her running arts entities and teaching visual art to students of all ages in host of settings from New York City to the Hudson River Valley, and in Brattleboro, where Carmody had returned for various stints over the years, primarily to both take and lead classes at RGS.

Carmody revels in the “aligning of stars” that made “all this to come together for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to really come back home and be the director at River Gallery.”

“Who I am as an artist and as an educator has been truly shaped by Ric and Barbara,” she says, so joining RGS in her new capacity is “coming full circle for me.”

Connecting to the creative process

Carmody tells *The Commons* that she is “from that same cloth [as the Campmans] — fiercely believing that creativity is a birthright and that it’s crucial to provide opportunities for everyone to have access” to modes of self expression.

“That’s what sets RGS apart,” she says. “We are not product oriented. Of course, there are products. The product is an essential and important part of process, but the pursuit at RGS is an internal one: to really provide people, sometimes through simplest

means, all these different ways to be able to shut the brain off a little bit — and judgment and expectations — and to ground ourselves in other senses, to experience visceral connectedness to the creative process.”

Carmody is looking forward to being with the people of RGS.

Whenever she has come back to the area to visit friends and family, “the visit almost always involves RGS,” she says. She has always been drawn to “so many people making the choice to live their lives with art at the center” — no matter what art — “and really figuring out how to make that work. RGS is at center of that. I’m so excited.”

Carmody hopes “to be able to further that and be part of the community that already has such a strong foundation built on people valuing those creative parts of themselves.”

No big changes in the offing

RGS offers a wide range of classes for all ages and abilities. Core classes include adult, child, and teen studios, as well as painting, drawing, printmaking, encaustics, ink, pastels, sculpture, plein air painting, portraiture, and watercolor.

Upcoming technique-specific workshops include “Abstracting the Landscape,” “Build an Italian Long-Stitch Mini-Journal,” “Painting Many Shades of Grey

on Yupo Paper,” and “Making and Painting with Walnut Ink.”

A Sequencing painting workshop, using techniques developed by Ric Campman, will also be offered this fall.

Carmody envisions no big changes in RGS programming for the immediate future.

“River Gallery is committed to providing rich programming that reaches and inspires people and that’s affordable,” she says, describing the school as “still in a rebuilding stage post-pandemic.”

“I think RGS offers a solid foundation of being able to support local teaching artists as we continue to offer programs for all ages — and specialized classes using specific materials, genres, and the like,” Carmody says.

River Gallery School is at 32 Main St., Brattleboro. Classes, taught by some 30 artists of note, are open to all; tuition assistance is available. For a full course catalogue and to register, visit rivergalleryschool.org. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (limited during vacation weeks and between semesters). Its Gallery 34, which boasts a new exhibit every month, is open during monthly Brattleboro Gallery Walks or by checking in at the office during regular business hours. A few of Carmody’s works are in the current faculty show there. The school is wheelchair accessible by elevator.



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SUNDAY 2 / 7

ARISTOTLE & DANTE

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Ray Massucco Concert Series continues with Chris Smither at BF Opera House

BELLOWS FALLS—American acoustic blues artist Chris Smither burst onto the singer-songwriter scene in the late 1960s with a distinctive finger-picking style and voice.

Originally from New Orleans but now a Bay State resident as well, Smither “amassed major fans, folks like Lowell George, the late founder of Little Feat; Townes Van Zandt, who always credited Smither with saving his life in a Florida swimming pool one hazy night; and Bonnie Raitt, whose recording of Smither’s ‘Love You Like A Man’ entered the pantheon of stone-cold classics any number of years ago,” say promoters.

With 18 albums under his belt, Smither returns to Vermont for the third Ray Massucco Concert Series show on Saturday, Sept. 23, at the Bellows Falls Opera House.

Opening the show is Matt Lorenz, a.k.a. The Suitcase Junket, who builds his own instruments from scrap and salvage, and homesteads in Western Massachusetts.

Lorenz has collaborated with Smither on several albums, laying down rhythms behind

Smither’s steadily tapping toe and Mississippi John Hurt guitar figures.

“I’ve known The Suitcase Junket a few years now and am really glad he’s on the bill with me,” says Smither. “I am looking forward to returning to the beautiful Bellows Falls Opera House. It’s been way too long. It’s good to see it’s so well-loved. If only all historic old concert halls were so lucky.”

Massucco, for whom the series is named, was a local lawyer and music supporter and died unexpectedly in September, 2022.

The final concert of the 2023 series is scheduled for November 5, featuring the Vermont Symphony Orchestra with vocalist Kat Wright.

Next Stage Arts of Putney is co-presenting the series with Ray’s The Roof Productions. The media sponsor is Great Eastern Radio. The Bellows Falls Opera House is located at 7 Village Square. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., showtime is 7:30 p.m. For tickets and information, visit BellowsFallsOperaHouse.com or call 802-387-0102.



“Sand Hill Marsh II” by Nancy Calicchio.

COURTESY PHOTO

Landscapes by Nancy Calicchio at Crowell Art Gallery this month

NEWFANE—For the month of September, Nancy Calicchio returns to the Crowell Gallery, 23 West St., with her new collection of 24 paintings appropriately titled “Reflection.”

“This timely body of work seeks to evoke introspection and appreciation for the delicate balance between Vermont’s changing landscapes and the timeless beauty of nature’s reflections,” say organizers. While there are paintings of hills, and fields, Vermont rivers dominate the canvases.

Calicchio says she starts her paintings plein air; “I’m drawn to the illusive quality of reflected light on streams and ponds. I believe the greatest challenge for a landscape artist is to capture the ineffable beauty of our natural world in flux, for me rivers offer the greatest challenge.”

Four of the paintings feature the site of the old mill in the center of Putney village. “It is easy to imagine this same mill pond when it was the vibrant center of a community,”

she said. “Reflecting on change over time leads me to consider a future landscape which can provoke a strange ‘future’ nostalgia for the natural world we now enjoy in Vermont.”

Calicchio moved to Vermont in 1963. She enjoyed work as an independent school educator until she retired and embraced painting as a second career. Calicchio is primarily a self-taught artist who began to paint in workshops with Diane Rath at the Putney Village Arts in 2007. Following her work with Rath,

she continued to participate in workshops, most recently with George Van Hook in 2023 at the Bryan Gallery in Jeffersonville, Vermont.

A public reception with Calicchio will take place Saturday, Sept. 9, from 4 to 6 p.m. The gallery is located within the Moore Free Library and is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1 to 5 p.m., Thursdays 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Taylor Swift concert film coming to Greenfield’s Garden Cinema

GREENFIELD, Mass.—The Greenfield Garden Cinema has penned a deal with Variance Films to bring *Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour* to Greenfield. The recorded concert will play with limited shows starting Friday, Oct. 13, through Sunday, Nov. 5.

Except for Halloween, all shows will be Thursday through Sunday nights.

“You will have a better view than you would from the nose-bleeds at Gillette [Stadium],” said Garden co-owner Angela Mass in a news release. The concert film includes music spanning a 17-year award-winning musical career. This concert film features a view of the tour that Ben Sisario of *The New York Times* called “A cultural juggernaut.” Taylor Swift Eras attire and friendship bracelets are strongly encouraged.

Garden co-owner Isaac Mass said he is “so excited” to offer an opportunity to let people from Franklin County see this show at an affordable rate. “I remember listening over the summer as people were paying \$2,500 per ticket

to see this show,” he said. “Music should be accessible to everyone.”

The theater will have a limited quantity of free mini one-sheet posters to distribute, starting opening night for ticket holders, and they will be distributed on a first come, first-served basis. The theater also anticipates having Taylor Swift branded cups and popcorn buckets for sale at the concession stand.

In her announcement on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, Swift said that “The Eras Tour has been the most meaningful, electric experience of my life so far and I’m overjoyed to tell you that it’ll be coming to the big screen soon.”

The film is 165 minutes in length, and tickets are available at bit.ly/730-swift or at the Garden Cinemas Box Office. Ticket prices are \$19.89 as a homage to Swift’s breakout 1989 album, with a special price for seniors, students and veterans of \$13.13 so that the public will remember the opening night of Friday the 13th. No passes may be used for this show.

If they don’t like you for being yourself, be yourself even more.

—TAYLOR SWIFT



Jared Flynn

COURTESY PHOTO

Flynn to lead tour of Stone Wall Park on Sept. 10

DUMMERSTON—Master dry stone waller Jared Flynn, founder of The Stone Trust, will lead a tour of notable stone walls and other dry-stone structures in Stone Wall Park at historic Scott Farm in Dummerston on Sunday, Sept. 10, at 3 p.m.

Established as a venue for dry stone walling training and certification testing, Stone Wall Park includes features built by wallers testing for Level III Dry Stone

Waller and Master Craftsman certification, such as sloped walls, arches, and pillars.

It also includes a variety of stone walls and other structures created by Flynn and other master dry stone wallers using various techniques and types of stone.

During this event, Flynn will speak about the structures on view and the art and craft of dry-stone walling.

This event is presented by BMAC as part of its “Hidden in the Hills” series of occasional excursions to artist studios and other

interesting art and craft venues in the greater Brattleboro area.

Admission is \$10, free for Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) members. Space is limited. Register at brattleboromuseum.org or call 802-257-0124, ext. 101.

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Brattleboro Women’s Chorus seeks new members

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Women’s Chorus (BWC) welcomes new singers in four opportunities to try out the Chorus before committing to the semester: morning or evening on both Sept. 7 and 14.

Thursday morning rehearsals will be at the Brattleboro Music Center from 10 a.m. to noon. Thursday evening sessions are at All Souls Church from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Masks are optional for singers at these sessions.

Zoom rehearsals will take place weekly on Fridays only in October from 10:30 a.m. to noon

and will be recorded.

Advance registration is required for all singers. All abilities are welcome, and no auditions are required.

The chorus welcomes anyone age 10 and up who identifies as female or non-binary and whose vocal range comfortably includes the A in the middle of the treble staff.

Musical Director Becky Graber chooses an eclectic mix of music from around the world that is spirited, uplifting and easy to learn. The chorus learns through the oral tradition, so most of their

music is taught by ear, though this semester they may refer to written music at times.

Word sheets and part recordings are available to practice with between rehearsals.

For those who decide to join, the cost for the fall session is on a sliding scale of \$85–\$170 per adult. The October Zoom session is \$50–\$100. Financial assistance is available.

Links to online registration and much more can be found at brattleborowomenschorus.org.

Swing and tango dance classes begin at MSA

SAXTONS RIVER—Dancers of all levels are invited to pivot into autumn with swing and tango dance lessons with Matt Peake and Friends at Main Street Arts. The lessons will be held on Thursday evenings from Sept. 7 to Oct. 12, starting at 6:30 p.m.

“Because the interest continues to be high for swing dancing and tango dancing,” says Peake

in a news release, “(we) will be offering another series of back-to-back lessons.” They will use a format of a short lesson to begin each hour of dance.

This will be a mixed-levels series. Those with no swing or tango experience will meet from 6:30 to 7 p.m. to learn some basics ahead of the lesson. Likewise, for tango, the lesson will begin at 8

p.m. Those who want to stay longer can help catch up new tango dancers from 9 p.m. to whenever.

The cost is \$5 for one lesson, \$10 for two. No experience is necessary and a partner is not required. Bring dance shoes or wear clean shoes you can pivot in.

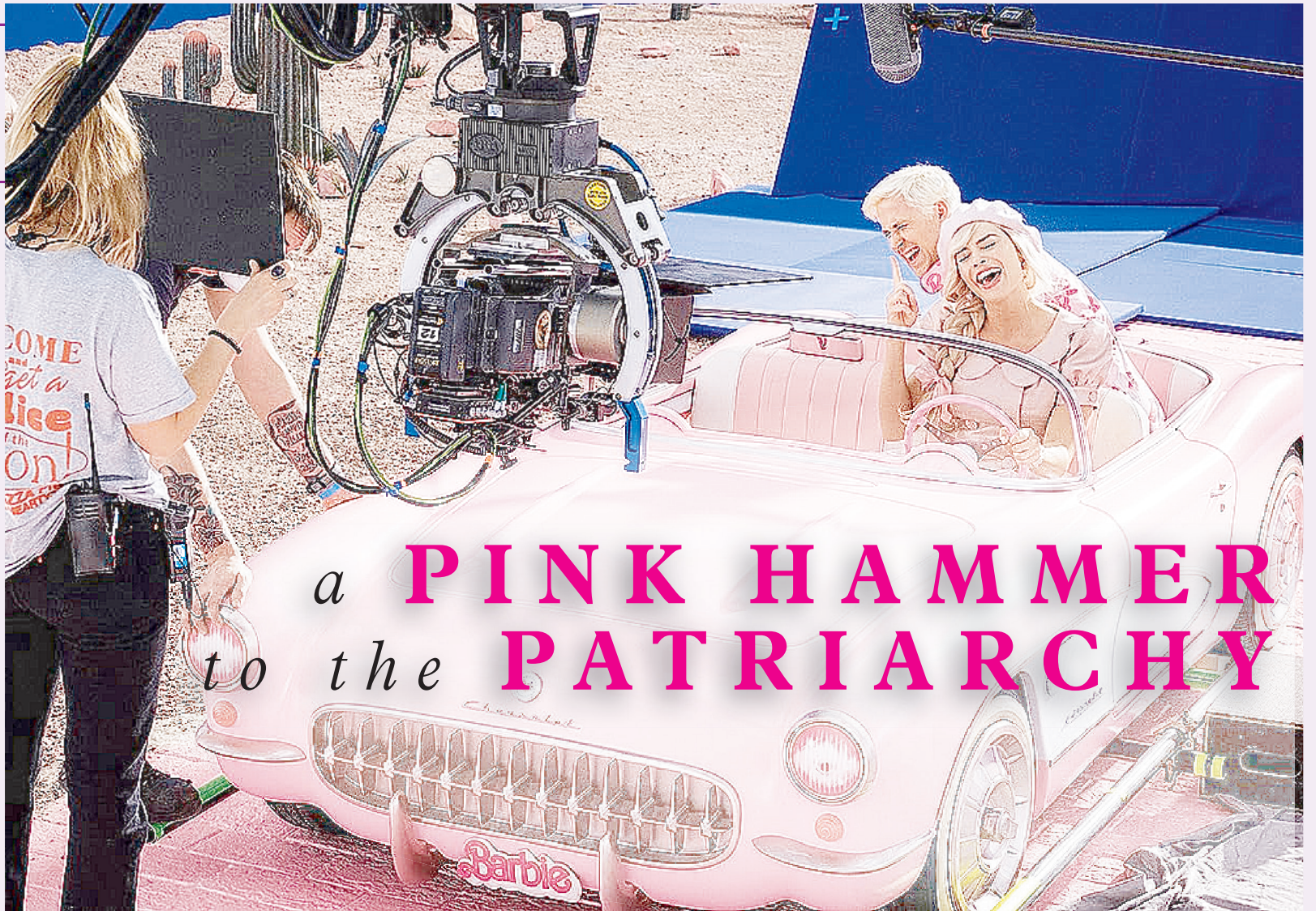
For more information or questions, contact MSA at 802-869-2960 or info@mainstreetarts.org.

Hard times require furious dancing.
—ALICE WALKER

ESSAY

Ryan Gosling and Margot Robbie in *Barbie*, a film directed by Greta Gerwig.

A mom and a teen son reflect on the multiple messages of Barbie on the big screen. It's so much more than a story about a doll.



a **PINK HAMMER**
to the **PATRIARCHY**

NO FILTERS, no makeup, no pink, no costumes — just an impromptu trip to see the *Barbie* movie. It almost felt like we were breaking some unspoken rule based on all the fanfare I've seen, but we both needed to know what the hubbub was and had a rare evening of no scheduled work or meetings. So my son James and I made a last-minute decision to ditch all the have-tos on our lists and trek to Brattleboro's historic Latchis Theatre.

After finding on-street parking and a lovely walk through town in the evening drizzle, we went through the small-but-grand entrance of the theater. Stunning in the way only really old buildings can be. An entryway of granite, wood, and glass. A rainbow hand stuck to the middle glass door stands out. It is a sticker signing "I love you" with "Youth are Welcome Here" written above. A sign that means the theater has been

Putney

LAURA CHAPMAN is a civic volunteer, activist, and an employee for human-services nonprofits that help neighbors in need.

endorsed by our youth council's Quality Youth Development Project Credentialing Committee as a youth-friendly business. A badge that signals a place where youth can be treated inclusively, one that fosters safety.

James is a part of the council that researched and brought this initiative to Brattleboro. I couldn't help but feel the momma's pride and point to it, which he quickly shrugged off, as most 14-year-olds would.

He then went on to pay for both of our tickets, drinks, and popcorn. This is not the first time James has insisted on paying

for something we do, but it still always catches me off guard, and I couldn't help but say aloud to the gentleman selling tickets, "My 14-year-old son just paid for me to see *Barbie*."

I was beaming in only the way a parent can when they feel like maybe they are getting this parenting thing right.

AS WE SETTLED in to our seats, I thought back to a pretty deep conversation I had with his older brother. Neither of us had seen the movie, and he was confused by the widely held excitement for a doll he had been taught in school was an overly sexualized, unattainable stereotype.

He's not wrong — and, as I shared, she was so much more to me.

I loved that I could imagine myself as anything through Barbie: a ballerina, a cowgirl, a business woman by day and a

■ SEE *BARBIE*, C2

VIEWPOINT

'The socioeconomic divide in Brattleboro could not be starker'

'The moneyed interests in this town would rather see the homeless and working class population disappear. Why? It's gentrification, plain and simple.'

THERE IS immense prejudice in Brattleboro regarding the growing homeless population here. I have experienced it firsthand, and so have many others.

This town likes to bill itself as an all-welcoming community, but those of us who have lived and worked in this town (as I have) rather than merely recreating here know better.

There is a dark side to Brattleboro. The moneyed interests in this town would rather see the homeless and working class population disappear. Why? It's gentrification, plain and simple.

Landlords have already begun to increase their rents, attracting out-of-staters and pushing out locals who can't afford to live in, shop in, or thrive in their own hometown.

For all its craft beer and maple syrup and farm-to-table goodness, there isn't a lot separating Brattleboro from certain trendy parts of Brooklyn or Manhattan, where the locals who can't afford the skyrocketing rents and lack well-paying jobs are damned.



THOMAS PATRICK BRENNAN was a long-time resident of Brattleboro and the West River Valley, as well as New York City. Shortly after writing this piece, he died of sudden complications from melanoma. He was 37 years old. "His chronic homelessness, leading to lack of access to consistent medical care, contributed to his death," writes GennaRose Nethercott, who facilitated a Media Mentoring Project writing workshop for unhoused people and was helping him shape and edit the piece and who submitted it posthumously. "He was a poet, a Catholic, a Vermonter, a friend, and a valued member of our community."

in Brattleboro, just the same as in New York City. I would love to take a handful of Brattleboro residents who loathe the homeless and drop them off into the middle of Manhattan with a \$10



SHANTA LEE COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Unhoused people and their allies hold signs at a 2019 rally in downtown Brattleboro.

bill in their pocket and watch them scramble to survive on the street for a day, let alone a week or a month or over half a year, as I have done.

Many in Brattleboro wouldn't be able to survive on the streets of New York without financial resources, but

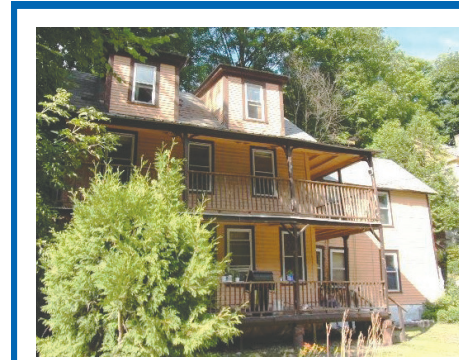
they snub the panhandlers in their own backyard.

Vermont has become a place for second-home owners who have made life unaffordable for those born here. They came here in droves, leaving the density of Manhattan's grid plan

to indulge in the privilege of locking themselves away in a cabin in the middle of the woods during COVID-19. Locals have not been afforded that luxury.

All of this has led to a spike in

■ SEE *HOMELESSNESS*, C2



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Barbie

FROM SECTION FRONT

nightclub diva by night. (Did anyone else have Day-to-Night Barbie?)

I also loved the connection she created for me with my mom's childhood even when my mom was barely in my life. I hold memories of playing with her old Barbies at my grandma's.

THE MOVIE SCREEN IS NOW flashing advertisements for local businesses and organizations. A big old ad for the Brattleboro Area Youth Council pops up with James's face on the screen among the group of teens. As he watches, he's making the exact happy face he did for this selfie.

"You're famous!" I exclaim. "I'm really not. No one pays attention to those," he responds, trying to shrug me off. "Well, I do, and you are on the big screen for every movie shown here!"

It plays a second time. "I bet you're getting more screen time than some of the people in the movie," I say. He rolls his eyes and, with a little smile, accepts my over-the-top antics without encouraging me.

I need a selfie with the famous person. He begrudgingly allows it, but approves of the picture.

THE MOVIE BEGINS, and we go quiet, except to laugh. I'm not going to lie; I also teared up a couple of times.

The story was so much more than its surface level. Yes, it was about the patriarchy, but also about growing up and the disappearing world of imagination.

When it's over, we talk. All the way home.

There are so many layers to the story and how it was told that we both struggle to start, but once we do, it just rolls out.

"I feel like I didn't understand some things because I haven't lived through what women do," James says.

We agree it can be enjoyed on multiple levels — not just for the story but also for its cinematography, music, choreography, and acting. It's really quite brilliant.

Allan, played perfectly by Michael Cera, is a genius character. James likes him most as the guy character who was funny, who seemingly didn't embody the patriarchy, and who was an ally to women.

Weird Barbie, played by Kate McKinnon, could not have been cast better and is who adult Laura identifies most with. She is outspoken, she knows how to bring the awkward, she is kind of punk rock, and she just wants to help others — no matter how they treat her.

Both were independent

thinkers and unashamedly themselves, even in a Barbie world where everything is supposed to be perfect. I loved that.

I also love how all the Barbies had rock solid confidence until outside forces were introduced. I recognized my internalized patriarchy when I felt discomfort with Stereotypical Barbie's boundaries with Ken. I had to unpack my sense that her behavior, which was actually very healthy, felt a bit mean to me.

JAMES AND I also agreed that though the movie clearly took on patriarchy, it failed at addressing patriarchy's BFF, capitalism. It also could have done better at diversity and inclusion.

But before going too far down the critical road, we recognized that this was a movie made by a woman, Greta Gerwig. And as America Ferrera's character demonstrated in her wake-up speech, women cannot feel — nor should they feel — that they must be everything society mandates.

We should not ask that of this movie or of its director. Do we ask this of movies made by men?

And, while at its most shallow the movie may have inspired a run on pink paint and pink convertibles, it also inspired deep conversation — not just between us, but between friends and colleagues, between parents and children, and between people who have and who have not seen the movie.

THE *Barbie* movie, like my mom's Barbies and my own, is so much more than a story about a doll. It's an opportunity to look at our world as it is and imagine it differently.

And as one character in the movie says: "Being a human can be pretty uncomfortable. Humans make up things like patriarchy and Barbie, just to deal with how uncomfortable it is."

What is made up can be unmade.

So here's to smashing the patriarchy.

Here's to the kids creating safer community by endorsing youth-friendly places with rainbow I-love-yous.

Here's to my sons, to me, and to all of you for engaging in self-reflective conversations that might change the way we think and act.

Here's to a world with ordinary Barbie. Maybe she shows up to her own movie like me — no filters, no makeup, no pink, no costume, with leggings and a comfy hoodie. Or maybe she wears pink. I really do love me some pink.

And here's to Greta Gerwig for so brilliantly bringing her to our imaginations.

VIEWPOINT

Why in God's name do we not want Rescue?

It would be fiscally irresponsible, and a grave disservice to the citizens of our town, for the Selectboard to choose a municipal fire-EMS system

THE RESOLUTION that we passed at Representative Town Meeting this year directed the Selectboard to "set up a process to determine the future of emergency medical services in Brattleboro that is transparent and takes into account the opinions of town residents." The process should be fair and unbiased.

The genesis of this resolution was the town's abrupt announcement on April 11, 2022 of its intent to sever a five-decade relationship with Rescue Inc. This strategy was made in secret, with scant notice to town residents prior to a vote eight days later, and without affording us an opportunity to be heard.

An important decision like this, made in darkness, is a threat to our representative democracy. Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants.

According to the press release, the decision was based, in part, on the premise that the town could realize "a \$500,000.00 to \$700,000.00 net gain in revenue" if the Fire Department took over EMS. We now know that this premise, allegedly made after "a careful internal analysis," was patently false. Most folks believe that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The town inexplicably refused to communicate with Rescue. No effort was made to negotiate in good faith for a three-year contract with

WILLIAM E. KRAHAM is an attorney and counselor at law. This piece is adapted from a letter he has sent to the town of Brattleboro in support of reinstating Rescue Inc. as the town's EMS provider.

Rescue commencing on July 1, 2022. We have been waiting over 16 months for the town to explain its rationale for severing ties with Rescue. The town has never come clean about what happened and why.

All we hear are crickets.

I HAVE REVIEWED the town's EMS request for proposals dated July 27, and the Addendum #1 dated Aug. 22. The addendum was issued at the last minute, one week before the deadline for the submission of bids, after AmCare Medical Systems backed out of the process.

This gives the impression that Rescue is being targeted and disadvantaged in the process. Is a decision in favor of a fire-EMS system preordained? The town has had a relationship with Rescue, Inc. since 1966, yet it is insisting, for the first time, that Rescue obtain a "performance bond" to insure the faithful discharge of its contractual obligations. Why? Does any other town with whom Rescue contracts for EMS require a performance bond?

Golden Cross, an entity which had no prior relationship with the town, was not required to obtain a "performance bond" when it began

providing EMS beginning on July 1, 2022, or when its contract was renewed for another year in 2023.

I also question the rationale for the anticipated fourfold increase in dispatch service fees, from approximately \$8 per call to \$36.37 per call, with a 3% increase every year for the next four years.

Is this meant to increase Rescue's costs and handicap it in the bidding process?

WOULD a fire-EMS system be under consideration at all if not for the existence of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which are burning a hole in the town's pocket?

Would that money not be better spent on pre-existing needs, such as infrastructure, instead of trying to reinvent the EMS wheel?

If we had a police substation downtown, with cruisers parked on the street as a deterrent, our shopkeepers might not need to post signs in their windows which read, "No cash left on premises overnight."

Surely there are worthwhile uses for the ARPA funds other than wasting the money purchasing ambulances and equipment for the fire department that we do not need.

RESCUE INC. provides services beyond EMS, not only to individual towns but to the entire state. The organization responded when the need arose during the COVID-19 pandemic — it administered vaccines and boosters. It also performed water rescues during our recent floods.

Rescue has 11 ambulances and 130 employees, and has been waiting 18 months for the delivery of two new ambulances. Why in God's name do we not want Rescue Inc. to be our EMS provider?

It is common knowledge that EMS systems around the state and the country are on life support, particularly in rural areas, due to workforce shortages, skyrocketing costs, supply chain disruptions, and insufficient insurance reimbursement.

Rescue Inc., on the other hand, is thriving.

In my view, it would be fiscally irresponsible, and a grave disservice to the citizens of our town, for the Selectboard to choose a municipal fire-EMS system. I am not alone in believing that Rescue Inc. is a paradigm regional EMS provider in New England. We ought to get the most bang for our buck.

Don't town officials realize how lucky we are to have them — ready, willing, and able to once again serve our community?

LETTERS FROM READERS

Brattleboro: Admit huge mistake of dropping Rescue Inc.

I ask our new town manager to carefully investigate our EMS situation and, after making an informed decision, to speak with all Selectboard members, encouraging them to vote yes to bringing back Rescue Inc.

I encourage the Selectboard to make amends for the secret decision of the previous town manager to sack Rescue Inc. by signing a new contract with Rescue Inc.

The cost of enhancing our fire department to include EMS services is irresponsibly expensive.

Admit you made a huge mistake, stop adding new requirements to the proposal contract, and get reasonable.

Rescue Inc. is the best deal you will ever find.

Board members, do your job in a responsible manner. Get Rescue Inc. back for Brattleboro.

Scott Surgner
Brattleboro

Concern over trans people competing in chess is misplaced

"Bad move" [Viewpoint, Aug. 30]:

Thank you to Kira Storm for taking the time to share her perspective. I had heard passing reference to the policy change of FIDE (the International Chess Federation), but knowing nothing about that world, I didn't have any context.

I especially appreciate her raising the double standard in the decision around trans women versus trans men — stripping prizes won by trans men when they were living as girls or women does seem punitive indeed (just cruelty for its own sake, I guess).

I don't have any lived experience as a person transitioning, but my gut tells me that anytime we worry that people will change their gender identity in hopes of winning some competition or another, that's a misplaced fear.

Being trans in this world is so heavily penalized as to be dangerous. I genuinely doubt that anyone would enter into the danger and hate which transfolk face to win a coveted trophy.

Susie Webster-Toleno
Brattleboro

A valuable lesson in civility

"We cannot consider this petition" [Primary Sources, Aug. 30]:

You published a statement from the Aug. 23 Putney Selectboard meeting by Chair Aileen Chute. I can't think of a better example of a highly competent leader in local government explaining to people that their behavior cannot change the way town policies work. By simply reading her statement, I learned a lot about how good town planning protects people.

While strong housing trusts and land trusts are far from perfect, I am grateful that we have them providing alternatives to for-profit slumlords or to people having to live in tents.

I, too, have some fears about public housing, but fear shouldn't power public discourse.

Thank you to all the town Selectboard members and others who donate their time to make government work — and especially to you, Aileen, for your valuable lesson in civility.

Gino Palmeri
Putney

Democrats have had opportunities to affect housing since Reagan era

"No housing bargains today. Or housing." [Viewpoint, Aug. 30]:

Nancy Braus seeks to blame Ronald Reagan for the current housing situation, from unaffordability to lack of options.

Haven't we had some Democratic party presidents since Reagan? Haven't Democrats had control of the House and Senate at times since Reagan was president? Don't Democrats run any states, or cities, where, presumably, they have "fixed" the housing problem?

In Vermont, the Democratic Party has complete control of the Legislature, yet Vermont has the second-highest homeless

population per capita, second only to California, also controlled by Democrats.

This clearly isn't a problem that will be solved by either political party.

Sandy Golden
Hinsdale, N.H.

Republicans calling anti-racists racist is dishonest

Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy recently characterized U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley as being like a modern-day grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Of course, she took offense to this, but it's more offensive to the American people.

Ramaswamy's message was confusing. The KKK is still very much with us and has been joined by many other hate groups which have a strong influence in today's Republican Party. The KKK is dedicated to maintaining the supremacy of white people who share their version of Christianity over everyone else.

Their focus on keeping Black people oppressed and subjugated by restricting access to voting, enforcing segregation, using the police and criminal justice system to unfairly prosecute Black people while protecting white people and police who kill people of color, and restricting access to adequate education and good-paying jobs for Black people.

Historically, their repertoire included inciting terror by burning crosses in people's yards and lynchings. These days it is more likely to take the form of arbitrarily killing black people in public settings. The KKK has also targeted French Canadians, Jews, and non-white immigrants.

Pressley and other progressives are calling for a correction in the pattern of oppression of minority groups in the United States in order to move toward a just society. This is the opposite of the KKK agenda — not racism.

Recent Republican policies often support the KKK agenda. Republicans calling anti-racists racist is dishonest.

Vivek's advertising signs say "Truth." Vivek. Even his signs lie.

June Goodband
Springfield

Homelessness

FROM SECTION FRONT

homelessness — and with it, an overwhelming disdain for those very same people whose stability has been stripped away from them.

There is a real disconnect between Brattleboro's self image and what it actually is: a bourgeois community for those whose steady diet of kombucha and kale has blinded them to the inequalities in their own town.

HOW MANY panhandlers at the Brattleboro Food Co-op are met with prejudice and disdain? I myself, in the last month alone,

have had two separate individuals say to me that the homeless belong in tents — unaware that I am homeless myself.

The socioeconomic divide in Brattleboro could not be starker. Go ahead, keep buying your artisan bread and cheese and wine while the poor stand outside begging for money, love, and respect.

The prejudice in this community is sickening. This town should be ashamed of its attitude toward the indigent and the poor.

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

Got something on your mind? Send contributions to our Letters to 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.

FORECLOSURE AUCTION
USDA Foreclosure: 2BR/1BA Ranch Home in West Townshend
OPEN HOUSE: THURS., SEPT. 7 FROM 11AM-1PM

28 Sugar Maple Village Drive, West Townshend, VT
USDA Foreclosure: 2BR/1BA Ranch Home on 0.09± Acres (and 1/5 interest in common land). Just outside the village center, and part of a secluded community. Newer (2009) constructed one level ranch with open concept kitchen and one car garage. 1,170± SF!

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ESSAY

'My empathy tank hath run dry'

Why would tailgaters risk trading body parts for two seconds? What do they do with all that extra time?

ABOUT 2,000 TAILGATERS ago, I wrote a commentary about tailgating. I was open to hinking that tailgaters' ideas about tailgating could be something altogether different from mine.

JIMMY KARLAN is professor emeritus at Antioch University in Keene, N.H. For 25 years he commuted from Guilford to Keene, never closer than four seconds behind.

Connecticut and New York respectively, I say unapologetically: I donot forgive tailgaters! Proceed with caution, tailgaters. My empathy tank hath run dry.

I HAD BEEN traveling 5 mph above the speed limit when I started seeing my tailgaters' lips in my rear-view, close enough to read them. This is not easy, safe, or recommended. I swear under oath that one of them was yelling: "WTF does that Vermonter think they're doing going the friggin' speed limit on my road!?"

I used tailgating as a vehicle of caution readers that our incredible rate of unsustainable consumption will rear-end us over the edge of the very systems we depend on.

VIEWPOINT

Can I help?

We need to think expansively and creatively to find solutions to our most pressing issues

Brattleboro

SOUTHEAST VERMONT is a place full of well-intentioned, compassionate people. The officially sanctioned infrastructure here for helping vulnerable individuals and families is impressive.

But outside of the accepted conduits for helping — like volunteering and donating to government recognized nonprofits — how are we each empowered (or not) to make the change we want to see in our community?

It can be easy to let the government and nonprofits be in control and set the tone of the conversation, but it can also deprive us of taking personal responsibility for our community and being active citizenry.

Lately, I have been wondering what systems slow down or discourage us from bravely imagining creative solutions. And, furthermore, from whose perspective are our local problems being defined, and how does that 1) create a narrative with a distinct point of view and 2) determine the solutions?

ONE ISSUE (of many) we could look at is housing. There has been a lot of discussion lately about the lack of housing in our area. We are short many hundreds of units, and there are countless anecdotal stories of individuals who cannot find places to live.

Through my window I see one possible solution: my driveway is empty.

Zoning regulations in many communities would allow me to park my own empty RV in my driveway but typically would not allow me to let someone live there even if I arranged for infrastructure support, such as septic hauling.

If this was a solution a person wanted to pursue, they might feel disempowered from doing so.

You may agree or disagree with this possible solution, but the point is to illustrate how we each are impacted by existing systems when we try to engage in solving pressing issues.

It is important that we recognize and call out systems that often go unexamined and acknowledge that we created them and therefore can reimagine new ways of being and recreate new systems that function better for our circumstances.

KEEPING WITH the issue of housing, I have been struck by how often the problem is

LINDSEY BRITT is a baker, traveler, and needleworker. She has a background in planning/zoning regulation, and her activist work centers on animal rights, constructive non-violence, and climate justice. She is a member of Compassionate Brattleboro.

framed from the perspective of those — like me — who are comfortably housed.

I get the impression that it is generally considered important to maintain the status quo for those of us who are already housed and to expect sacrifice, such as waiting years for an apartment, to come from those who are already being injured by the lack of housing.

This nonsensical approach reminds me of trickle-down economic theory and the promise that if poor people would just wait long enough eventually the wealth would get to them — after they just suffer a little (or a lot) longer. Of course, in truth, the wealth never makes it all the way down.

If we truly have a crisis, then it makes both practical and moral sense to take from those who have more and give to those who have less. In the case of housing, a very minor taking could be the temporary relinquishment of town-owned spaces, such as picnic shelters, to provide people living in tents with locations that are less susceptible to the weather (like the recent flooding) and access to bathrooms.

Is my ability to access recreation space more valid than someone else's access to a place to sleep out of the elements? It is difficult for me to imagine how I could justify that position.

AGAIN, THE ISSUE of housing is only an illustration, but we need to engage in these thought experiments — which we could do with any number of issues, from the opioid epidemic to climate change.

We need to ask how we can care for each other and examine whether the systems that prevent care are valid and valued enough to trump the crisis at hand. We can step outside the confines of problematic existing systems, embrace experimentation, and get creative to make our place in the world better.

out of my way!" And then, bam! I am blindsided out of nowhere by a realization: Most tailgaters are likely not thinking about me at all. Go figure. I base this on tailgaters 27 and 42, who were singing along to love songs like "Too Close" and "Don't Leave Me Behind."

WHAT I HAVEN'T figured out is

what tailgaters think about their tailgaters. Do they see a reflection of themselves: good-looking, self-assured, worry-free? Do they feel the excitement of maneuvering in synchronicity with a fellow member of their flock? Do they think they're at risk of being smashed into 4,000 pounds of metal?

I am asking all tailgaters to stay four Mississippi (or more) behind. Follow this real close: the difference between my request and the two seconds of many tailgaters is two seconds.

Which raises the question: Why would tailgaters risk trading body parts for two seconds?

Did their boss threaten to fire them the next time they're two seconds late? Would their fiancée call off the wedding when they showed up two seconds late?

What do they do with all that extra time?

Tailgaters, consider this basic principle: you will always take longer to stop than the car ahead of you. Imagine tailgating me and I slam on my brakes to avoid a deer. If I am going 65 mph, it's going to take about 200 feet (two-thirds of a football field) to stop. But it's going to take you longer because there's a lag time between when

you notice my brake lights and when you decide to brake but haven't yet!

At 65 mph, you'll have gone about 140 feet before you even begin to touch your brake. There's only one possible outcome: a system out of control. Bam!

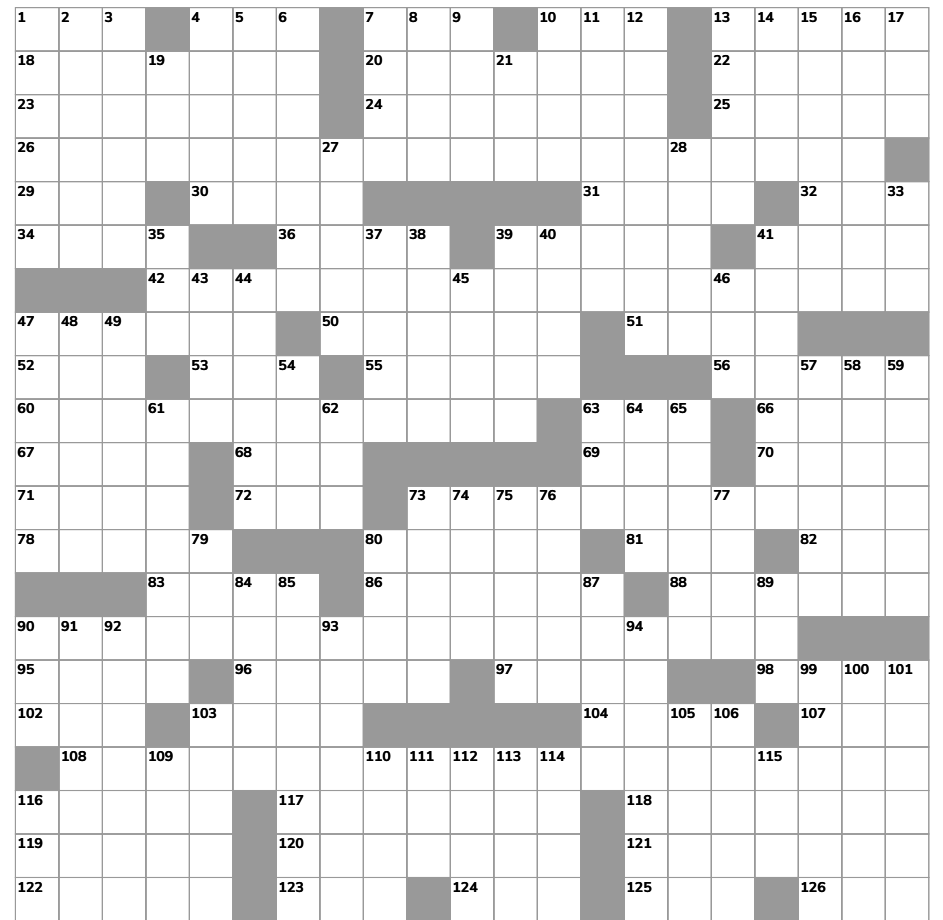
Before exiting this car-thartic rant, I have one small request: count one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi, four Mississippi.

You did it. That's all I'm asking. Good "carma" doesn't have to be an accident.

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- 1. Programmer Lovelace
4. Once around
7. "Then what?"
10. Menu general
13. Invigorate
18. Experiment assistant
20. Iowa basketball star Clark
22. Operative
23. Country surrounded by 123-Across
24. Loom pedal
25. "Top Chef" host Lakshmi
26. Pixar, because of "Inside Out"?
29. "___ blimey" (mild British oath)
30. "Nightcrawler" genre
31. Frozen Four org.
32. Vineyard, on French wine bottles
34. Gender identity that's short for "non-binary"
36. "___ la vie"
39. Songwriter Hoyt
41. Brand of Easter egg dye (anagram of ASAP)
42. Clean vehicle engineer's motto?
47. High winds?
50. Organ's connective tissue
51. Funerary blaze
52. Frozen Wasser
53. Skier's coat?
55. Buenos ___
56. Killer whales
60. When discrimination will be conquered?
63. Ruin
66. Went by bike
67. Dang-blasted
68. R, in a text
69. Night before
70. "Fire" gemstone
71. Big name in champagne
72. Hem and ___
73. Acting advice that goes beyond "Chew the scenery"?
78. Went wrong
80. Wing it
81. Performing pair
82. Kyoto currency
83. Mononymous singer with the Velvet Underground
86. Go quietly, in a way
88. Frothy dessert
90. Charismatic antelope?
95. "Livin' la ___ Loca"
96. Otherwise
97. Classic soda
98. Sportswriter Lowe
102. Core group?
103. How music was often sold in the 1990s
104. Elemental unit
107. Paid player
108. "I need to see the long-form poetic evidence"?
116. Byzantine empress of 792-802
117. Technophobe
118. Screw with a hole
119. Ornamental crown
120. Without assistance
121. Singer Aaron who often duetted with Linda Ronstadt
122. Already spoken for
123. Nat. that surrounds 23-Across
124. Sneaky
125. Dir. opposite NNW
126. Played the first card



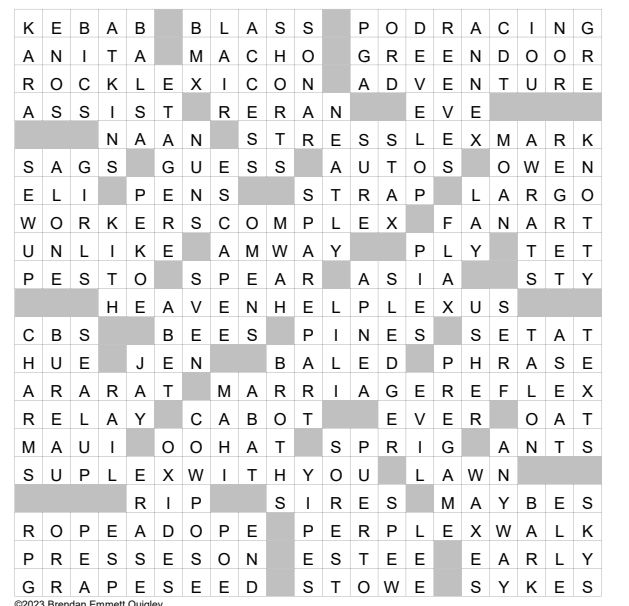
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Down

- 1. Claim
2. Guardian spirit
3. Soak up
4. Allow entrance
5. Sternutation sound
6. Sound-based literacy training method
7. Dramatic beginning
8. Traffic cop?
9. Intake plan
10. "Here's the short version," for short
11. Intro to psychology?
12. Small ice cream parlor order
13. ___ New Guinea
14. "I say!"
15. Cycle rickshaw
16. Not concerned with ethics
17. Sch. support group
19. Young tyke
21. Letter after sigma
27. Media coverage
28. Daisy relative
33. "___ as directed"
35. So far
37. Occupy, as a table
38. Former outfielder Hunter
39. Singer Mann
40. 12/25, for short
41. Sad clown of commedia dell'arte
43. Whimper
44. Source material for much of Handel's "Messiah"
45. Standard
46. Sold-out sign
47. "Little Shop of Horrors" request
48. The sauce
49. Unscrupulous lender
54. Additional, in 92-Down
57. Doctor's appointment fees
58. Maxims
59. Moon goddess
61. Reception aid
62. Wood for longbows
63. Unimpressed utterance
64. Eager
65. Come back to
73. Decree
74. "Kubla Khan" river
75. Saturn's largest moon
76. Skirt alternative
77. Any minute now
79. Pulled off
80. ___ time (never)
84. Change
85. A little risqué
87. Joel Coen's brother
89. Brand of cheese balls
90. Actress Longoria
91. President George
92. Marketing parlance
93. Evasive maneuvers
94. Hand warmers
99. 31-Across rankings source
100. Hybrid language
101. Tooted one's own horn?
103. Spot for a liner
105. "You better believe it!"
106. Irish author ___ Binchy
109. Memo phrase
110. Notion
111. NFL scores
112. Runs out of battery
113. "___ cost ya"
114. Refuse to obey
115. ___ Beta Kappa
116. Hairy Addams cousin

Last issue's solution

"The Joy of Lex"



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COLUMN | *Sports Roundup*

Terriers blank Cosmos, Tigers maul Bears in football openers

The local high school football season began on Sept. 1 with a 34-0 rout by Bellows Falls over the Springfield Cosmos at Hadley Field in the 110th meeting between those two teams, and a 35-6 loss by Brattleboro to the Middlebury Tigers in the Bears' home opener at Natowich Field.

• Springfield hasn't won a game over their rivals in Bellows Falls since 2009. The Terriers retained "The Trophy" and upped their all-time record against the Cosmos in this gridiron rivalry that began in 1894 to 62-45-3. It's the second-oldest rivalry game in Vermont; while the annual clash between St. Johnsbury and Lyndon also began in 1984, those Northeast Kingdom rivals played more games in their series.

The Cosmos had hopes of being competitive this year against BF, but even with a sloppy and mistake-filled game by the Terriers, they could not break through.

BF, the runner-up in Division II last season, showed that they have plenty of talent on this year's squad. The defense held Springfield to just one first down for the entire game and the offense moved the ball at will. The biggest problem for BF was penalties, which kept the final outcome from being even more lopsided.

A 53-yard touchdown romp by BF running back Walker James and a point-after kick by Colby Dearborn made it 7-0 with 9:10 left in the first quarter, but another scoring drive was thwarted by an interception thrown by BF quarterback Eli Allbee with 3:06 left in the quarter. Allbee soon atoned for the interception with a 2-yard touchdown run, but a bad snap spoiled the point-after kick for a 13-0 lead with 5:11 left in the second half.

James made a spectacular play on defense on the ensuing Springfield drive with a one-handed interception catch of a pass thrown by Cosmos quarterback Carson Clark with 3:48 left in the first half. However, a series of penalties on the ensuing drive, including one that wiped out a touchdown run by Allbee, left the Terriers empty-handed and clinging to a 13-0 lead at intermission.

"It wasn't pretty in the first half," BF coach Bob Lockerby said. "We're still green at some positions and it showed in how sloppy we played. We talked about it at halftime and they played much better in the second half. We ran hard and blocked well."

That was evident in the Terriers first drive of the second half, where they methodically moved the ball downfield in the patented BF way — run, run, and run some more. The drive culminated with a 6-yard touchdown run by James for a 20-0 lead with 7:41 left in the third quarter.

The next time BF got the ball, it was more of the same as running back Jesse Darrell was stopped just short of the goal line after a 22-yard sideline run and then he finished the job with a 1-yard scoring plunge for a 27-0 lead with 3:28 left in the third.

Tempers were starting to rise between the two teams and after

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

a hard tackle by a Springfield player led to an exchange of some X-rated words at the end of the third quarter, the coaching staffs of both teams huddled up and agreed to finish the game with a running clock. Allbee scored on a 34-yard run in the fourth quarter with 8:36 left in the game for the final BF touchdown.

After celebrating another year of The Trophy staying at BFUHS, Lockerby reminded his players after the game that they needed to get ready for what will be a considerably tougher test, playing the Hartford Hurricanes on the road in a Thursday night game on Sept. 7.

"It will be a short week for us, with less time to prepare against a really tough Division I team," said Lockerby.

• Middlebury, who were the runners-up in Division I last season, gave Brattleboro a less-than-warm welcome back to the top football division in Vermont with a dominating performance.

The Tigers led 14-6 at halftime, and shut out the Bears the rest of the way while scoring three more touchdowns as turnovers and penalties doomed Brattleboro's chances for a comeback.

Middlebury running back Jackson Gillett provided much of the offense for the Tigers as he ran for 90 yards and two touchdowns and had three catches for 43 yards and another touchdown. Gavin McNulty was a standout on defense with seven tackles.

The Bears will host Mount Mansfield this Friday at 7 p.m.



Bellows Falls defensive back Walker James, left, intercepts a pass intended for Springfield receiver Dylan Priestley during the second quarter of their Sept. 1 football game at Hadley Field in Westminster. Bellows Falls won their season opener, 34-0.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Girls' soccer

• Twin Valley knew it had a big task taking on the defending Division IV champion Leland & Gray Rebels on Sept. 2 in Townshend. And while the Wildcats lost, 8-1, they played well and did something they hadn't done since 2021 — score a goal in a game.

The Wildcats were winless and goalless last season, but Scarlett Cimino — one of five eighth-graders playing for Twin Valley this season — ended the scoreless streak when she found the back of the net with 13:56 left in the first half.

"I feel really good about our performance," said Twin Valley coach Taryn Lawrence. "We took more shots and showed more courage on the pitch. It was a good effort against the defending champs."

As for the Rebels, coach Joe Towle started the preseason with the tall task of replacing seven seniors from last year's champs, including the Rebels' all-time leading scorer Abby Towle, and Mary McDonald and Cat Shine, who combined for 11 goals last season.

But the Rebels have a good returning core, including midfielders Maggie Parker, Mary Sanderson, and Abigail Emerson. Against the Wildcats, Parker had three goals in the first half and assisted on two others, Sanderson scored two goals and added an assist, and Emerson got a goal. Samantha Morse and Ava LeCours each scored goals in the second half.

"Maggie and Mary are exceptional players," coach Towle said. "We're going to be leaning on them to distribute the ball and score when they need to."

The Rebels had a 5-1 lead at the half, and used their reserves for most of the second half. Twin Valley had two spare players, and Lawrence did what she could to rotate people to give them a brief rest and a drink of water before going back into the game.

Twin Valley will be on the road on Sept. 6 against Long Trail School in Dorset, while Leland & Gray will take on Green Mountain in the Green Mountain Tournament on Sept. 8 at 8 p.m. under the lights at Dorsey Park in Ludlow.

• Brattleboro opens its season on Sept. 7 in Bennington when the Bears play in the Mount Anthony Tournament, while Bellows Falls begins its season with a trip to Springfield on Sept. 6.

Boys' soccer

• A goal in the final minute was the margin of victory as Twin Valley beat Leland & Gray, 3-2, in Townshend on Sept. 1. The Wildcats took a 2-0 lead into halftime on goals by Hunter Roth and Brayden Brown, but the Rebels rallied to tie the game in the second half with goals from Finch Holmes and Cody Hescocock before Twin Valley got the game-winning goal from Roth as regulation time was winding down.

• Brattleboro will open its season on Sept. 8 in Dalton, Massachusetts when the Bears will play in the Wahconah Regional High School tournament. At press time, Bellows Falls was at Windsor for its season opener on Sept. 5. Their first home game is on Sept. 8, when the Terriers host Leland & Gray.

Field hockey

• Brattleboro opened its season Sept. 2 at Fair Haven with



Twin Valley's Scarlett Cimino is embraced by teammate Bianca Place as Leanne Crafts, left, looks on after Cimino scored the Wildcats' first goal since 2021 in the first half of their game against Leland & Gray on Sept. 2 in Townshend. Leland & Gray went on to win the game, 8-1.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

a 1-0 loss to the Slaters. Jaylena Haley scored the only goal of the game for the Slaters in the second quarter. Next up for the Bears is a trip to Woodstock on Sept. 6 to take on the Wasps.

• Bellows Falls gets its season started on Sept. 6, with a road game in Windsor.

Senior bowling roundup

• The spring/summer season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl concluded on Aug. 31 with Five Pins (62-28) as the league champion. Skippers (55.5-34.5) had a 4-1 week to finish in second place, just a half-game ahead of the third place Turkeys (55-35). No Splits (53.5-36.5) was fourth, followed by Slo Movers (46-41), Wrecking Crew (42.5-47.5), Stayin' Alive (41.5-48.5), and High Rollers and The Bowlers (both 40-50).

Carol Gloski had the women's high handicap game (246) and

series (685), while Skip Shine had the men's high handicap game (285) and Bob Uccello had the high handicap series (740). Stayin' Alive had the high team handicap game (912) and series (2,545).

Robert Rigby had the men's scratch series (574) with a 229 game. Shine had the men's high scratch game (234) as part of his 512 series. Uccello had a 572 series with a 192 game, while Milt Sherman had a 557 series with a 206 game. Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 554 series that featured games of 204 and 180, while John Walker and Chuck Adams both had a 526 series with Walker rolling a 206 game and Adams posting a 192 game. Duane Schillemat had a 512 series, Jerry Dunham had a 185 game, and Fred Ashworth had a 181 game.

Gloski had the women's high scratch series (538), with games of 197, 178, and 163. Notable games included Shirley Aiken (176), Nancy Dalzell (169 and 161), and Deb Kolpa (165).



Twin Valley forward Barrett Cunningham (14) and Leland & Gray midfielder Will O'Brien (7) tangle for control of the ball during the first half of their boys' soccer game in Townshend on Sept. 1.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

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