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New housing in the works for an area starved for options

Hundreds of units 'in the pipeline' from local developers, but demand still outstrips supply

By Ellen Pratt
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—If plans come to fruition, more than 600 mixed-income units would be added to the area's housing stock, which comes as welcome news to those working to address the urgent need for more housing in Windham County and throughout the state.

With the end of the state's pandemic-era temporary shelter

program, 113 households living in local motels have until April 1, 2024 to find housing or face eviction. An unknown number of households are sheltering in tents in the area.

Employers can't attract and retain workers due to a lack of housing. Brattleboro Housing Partnerships reports a five-year wait for low-income housing. There's a loss of housing due to conversions to short-term rentals like Airbnb. And market

■ SEE HOUSING, A2

Brattleboro forum will discuss EMS options

Selectboard plans to make a final decision on future of fire-based EMS on Sept. 19 after months of study

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—As the Selectboard continues to unpack and scrutinize the myriad details involved in deciding upon a new emergency services (EMS) delivery plan, the next big date is Aug. 29.

That's when requests for proposals (RFPs) from potential interested third-party providers are due.

"We have been moving through a process over many months," said board Chair Ian Goodnow during a fire/EMS transition update at the Aug. 15 board meeting.

"I see the discussion tonight as an opportunity for us to set the table and make sure everybody's on the same page for what's going to be happening in the next 35 days," he said.

Revenue and cost information pertaining to a fully municipal EMS alternative has been publicly shared over the past several board meetings.

Town Manager John Potter went on to note that the town continues to maintain and update the project website (brattleboro.org/emsproject) and to post and answer public commentary.

Those with questions or comments can continue to weigh

in via email to emsfeedback@brattleboro.org.

Currently, town staff members are preparing a "framework," said Potter, so that board members and the public will be able to compare a municipal scenario with third-party possibilities in an "apples-to-apples" way "that's consistent."

The framework will also include "the intangibles" that the community and Selectboard may want to think about — for example, customer satisfaction,

■ SEE EMS, A5



JEFF POTTER/THE COMMONS

A cryptic announcement forbids the public from entering portions of Bellows Falls Union High School after state-mandated testing revealed high levels of PCBs in the air. Use of the building's gym and auditorium is now restricted.

High levels of PCBs put BFUHS gym, auditorium off limits

District joins lawsuit against manufacturer after state-mandated tests reveal hazardous chemicals, but cleanup costs and payment options are still far from clear

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—A mandatory test for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) revealed the presence of the toxic carcinogen at Bellows Falls Union High School.

The building's gym and auditorium tested highest for contamination and have limited use at this point.

The state law enacted in 2021 — the first in the nation — requires indoor air quality tests

for PCBs for all schools built or renovated in the decades prior to 1980 in Vermont.

PCBs — a group of organic compounds made from carbon, hydrogen, and chlorine atoms — were banned in 1979. BFUHS was completed in 1973, and currently has approximately 310 students.

Schools all over the state have tested positive for various levels of PCBs, which prompted some 93 Vermont school districts to file a joint lawsuit against manufacturer Monsanto.

WNESU Superintendent

Andy Haas had the district become party to the lawsuit in July. Burlington High School has filed a separate lawsuit against Monsanto, as has the Vermont Attorney General's Office.

The test results, how to address the toxins in the school, and Haas's joining the lawsuit without consulting his local school boards has raised a number of questions and concerns among citizens and board members.

Some of the questions began to be addressed at public meetings and meetings with experts

all last week in the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU).

PCBs' long history

According to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, exposure to PCBs can affect the nervous, immune, reproductive, and endocrine systems. PCBs can be found in electronics, fluorescent light ballasts, paint, caulking, glue, plastics, capacitors, transformers, and even foods such as meat, dairy, and seafood.

■ SEE BFUHS PCB LEVELS, A3

A very untranquil summer for Becca Balint

Despite crises in Vermont and Washington — and amid an environment that is 'off the rails' and 'beyond the pale' — the first-year U.S. representative continues to be hopeful

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Most people don't get six weeks of summer vacation, but as a member of Congress, U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vermont, does.

Unfortunately for Balint, of Brattleboro, her time away from the Capitol coincided with a major natural disaster in Vermont, four big indictments in four major cities for former president Donald Trump, and a looming budget crisis when she returns to Washington.

It was keeping her busy almost around the clock, but she

managed to find time last week for an emotional Aug. 16 interview with *The Commons*.

Balint is often asked by her constituents how she deals with the anger and cruelty represented at every turn by extremist Republicans in Congress right now.

"People stop me and say, 'How do you do the job?'" Balint said. "I'm able to do it because of my colleagues. Some of them are just so inspiring to me that it gives me hope."

Balint had made news even before Congress recessed for the summer.

At the end of July, Balint introduced a censure of Rep. Marjorie

Taylor Greene, R-Georgia, in the House of Representatives for fanning "the flames of racism, anti-semitism, LGBTQ hate speech, Islamophobia, anti-Asian hate, xenophobia, and other forms of hatred."

According to the U.S. House website, "Censure registers the House's deep disapproval of Member misconduct that, nevertheless, does not meet the threshold for expulsion."

Balint, whose trademark way of describing herself is "Scrappy Little Dyke," embodies two of the constituencies Taylor Greene finds hateful, as she also identifies as Jewish.

■ SEE BALINT, A6



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., speaks during an Aug. 16 interview with *The Commons* in Brattleboro.

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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

Housing

FROM SECTION FRONT

pressures have priced people out of rentals and homeownership.

In Brattleboro alone, there's a pressing need for more than 500 units, according to the town's 2021 Housing Action Plan, with 60% of those needed for those with incomes under \$50,000.

"That's a very conservative estimate," says Sue Fillion, Brattleboro's planning director, who worked on the development of the plan. "And that's not even looking at the future."

Private and nonprofit developers highlighted their efforts to create housing at a recent meeting of the Housing Coalition of Southeastern Vermont, a cross-sector planning body focused on housing and homelessness in the region.

Development is redevelopment

M&S Development LLC of Brattleboro is planning to create up to 150 primarily market-rate apartments in its redevelopment of the eight slate-sided buildings that were once home to the Estey Organ Company on Birge Street in Brattleboro.

"It's a truism that Vermont development is redevelopment," Craig Miskovich, a principal of M & S Development, said to meeting participants. "It often only makes sense to redevelop existing structures with existing water, sewer, and public way access."

The Estey Organ complex, which housed the headquarters of the leading manufacturer of reed organs from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, fits this description.

The project will use historic preservation tax credits as part of its financing strategy. According to Miskovich, the buildings will not all come online at once due to the constraints on construction labor and the unique nature of the campus.

Miskovich cited high construction costs relative to the value of final projects as a challenge for developers.

"I used to say we had a 300:100 problem in Vermont — that it cost \$300 a square foot to build something that was only worth \$100 when you were done. Bridging that gap was always very difficult," he said.

"But now we have a 450:150 problem, and I'm not sure we're closing the gap," Miskovich added.

"We need to build more efficiently," he said. "And we need to have a higher asset value for developers so that we can borrow more money and rely less on the largesse of the state. We want

to be able to expand the number of units in the community and drive down the cost of those units through old-fashioned supply and demand."

"Folks who care about housing need to care even a little more," Miskovich said when asked how housing advocates can help ease the housing crisis. "We need to populate development review boards, district environmental commissions, and Selectboards in our communities."

Another M & S Development project at 47 Flat St. in Brattleboro is nearing completion.

"We're super excited to get heads in beds this fall," said Skye Morse, vice president and principal at M & S. The former Sanel building on Flat Street will become 15 apartments, priced for access by households making \$20,000 to \$40,000 a year.

M & S also brought 35 housing units online earlier this year through the redevelopment of Holton Home in Brattleboro. The apartments house nurses who work at the Brattleboro Retreat.

"Those are 35 workers in our community who would otherwise be taking housing away from other folks," Morse said. "Our philosophy is that every little bit helps."

New funding sources needed to create affordable housing

Morse described challenges to building housing in the area.

"We're using the same building materials as you would in Chittenden County or New York City, but our labor costs are actually more expensive because we have to truck in our labor here," he said.

One concept that comes into play is that federal subsidies for housing are based on a county's median family income.

In a clarification after the meeting, Morse gave *The Commons* a more detailed crash course in this conundrum from a developer's perspective.

The math involved in getting housing built will be tough to swallow for those who have long asserted that rents in the area are rising without direct relation to the capacity of the workforce to pay them. From the perspective of the developer, they're low.

"The reality is that while rents may feel high compared to our in-come, they are in fact quite low compared to rents in other more prosperous places, and they're certainly far too low compared to the cost of construction in



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS
A flood plain sits where housing once stood at Melrose Terrace in West Brattleboro. Created after the destructive flooding by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, it has proven its value during recent deluges that struck southern Vermont.

2023, and thus we have nearly zero market-rate housing units being created despite the overwhelming demand," Morse told *The Commons*.

He asserts that "because we don't have enough well-paying jobs in our area, we don't have enough well-paid people who can pay rents that are high enough to justify the cost of construction in today's construction cost environment."

"If we look at two identical projects (same size, construction cost, operating cost, etc.), except one is in Brattleboro and one is in Burlington, the one in Burlington would be able to be funded and built much more easily because they can borrow enough to cover the cost of construction not already covered by tax credits and grants," Morse said.

This is because the rents in Chittenden County are higher than those in Windham County, and because "debt is a function of net income (to the project) and their net income is higher because they have higher rents," he continued.

"Our rents, on the other hand, and thus the net income to a building built in Brattleboro, are so much lower that the project in Brattleboro would likely not be able to borrow enough money to fully fund the cost of construction, and thus would not be built," he said.

"And there you have it," he said. "We have a housing crisis because we don't have well-paying jobs, and as a result, our rents (which are a function of median family income) are too low to cover the cost of construction in the 21st century."

"I would love to see the state of Vermont do something for rural communities to even that out," Morse told the meeting participants when discussing these same economic dynamics. "There's no offsetting funding source to build housing here."

High property taxes — usually the biggest cost in a project's budget — "are another challenge," Morse said.

"We already have property tax benefits for low-income housing," Morse said. "But if we want to build housing other than just low-income housing, some property tax relief could actually go a long way, even if it's just temporary, towards incentivizing housing. That's very common elsewhere in the country."

One example: the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, offers a 10-to-15-year tax abatement that allows property owners to invest in new

construction and other improvements while paying taxes on the pre-improvement property value. Further tax discounts provide incentives for construction that complies with standards for environmentally sensitive building.

Morse praised the state for its ability to create housing. "There's such a groundswell of support for getting things done," he said. "Funders are creative, and we have a great group of housing creators in Vermont. In such a small state it's easy to know everybody or to get to know them. And that moves things along quickly."

Putney project gets the green light

Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT) will be adding 25 apartments to the area's housing stock through its development project on a vacant lot across from the Putney Food Co-op.

After a year-and-a-half appeals process, the Vermont Supreme Court affirmed that the project's permit was in good standing, rejecting a local resident's request for a five-judge panel re-review of the three-judge panel's decision.

Opposition to the project has not abated, with petitions still circulating.

"We expect to start construction in the spring," Elizabeth Bridgewater, WWHT's executive director, said at the Housing Coalition meeting. "There will be two buildings with a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, and a couple of studios, trending towards the smaller household size that we're seeing in the region."

Several units, she said, "will be set aside for folks exiting homelessness."

"We're also developing an office for us there because we've got some other presence in Putney and no office space," Bridgewater said. "It'll be great to have some ability to be on site more often, and I think it'll be really good for the residents who live there."

Thirty-two more affordable housing units are in the pipeline in Windham County, Bridgewater reported. These units are funded through the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP), which WWHT manages in the area.

VHIP offers grants of up to \$50,000 per unit for repairs needed to bring vacant rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines, add new units to an existing building, or create an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on an owner-occupied property.

"The new ADU grant program is an exciting development," Bridgewater said, "but it's also a challenging one because homeowners often don't have any experience being landlords and need a little bit more hand holding than some other property owners who might have more experience in that space."

Bridgewater referenced three additional projects in the feasibility stage in Windham County. These projects could add up to 100 more housing units to the area's stock.

'An awful waste of public resources'

When asked about the challenges to building housing in the area, Bridgewater stressed the importance of being vocal about supporting housing development.

"I'm passionate about people raising their voices in support of new homes in the community," she said. "Opponents of affordable housing are getting more organized and savvy about using the legal system to delay development."

"One resident with a \$250 application fee and no legal argument was able to delay our Putney project for a year and a half," she asserted.

The battle — which opponents have insisted was primarily about the project's location on open space at the edge of downtown Putney on Route 5 — added \$50,000 of legal costs to the project's bottom line, and while the project was delayed, construction costs were escalating. When the WWHT updated the budget

a year and a half later, the bricks-and-mortar costs increased by more than \$1 million.

"Not to mention the opportunity costs for the folks who didn't have housing in that time," Bridgewater said.

"This is an awful waste of public resources which could have been used for the creation of housing here in Windham County or somewhere else in Vermont," she continued.

"If this money had been allocated to a program like VHIP, for example, it would have funded the rehab of over 33 apartments and we'd already have the 25 new homes in Putney built," Bridgewater said.

The consequences of this ultimately failed effort are very real.

"What's most dismaying is that the rental households who desperately need a home didn't have a voice at the table," she said.

Such potential residents, Bridgewater added, "either live in Putney and can't afford to stay, or live elsewhere in Windham County and would like to live in Putney. They may be the retail clerk, the custodian, the administrative assistant, the home health care worker, or a retired senior on a fixed income. Some may not even have a place to call home right now."

Josh Hanford, commissioner of housing and community development, told meeting participants that current statutes doesn't require a burden of proof that a party is harmed by a decision before filing an appeal.

"I think that's an area that needs more discussion," he said, noting updates by the Legislature of Act 250, the state's notoriously strict planning and environmental laws.

"But the appeals process didn't get enough attention," Hanford said.

"There are some minor things we can do that still allow individuals to have access to the process and aren't overly burdensome, but that require a little more burden of proof," he said.

Flood mitigation leads to redevelopment

Brattleboro Housing Partnerships (BHP), which owns Melrose Terrace in West Brattleboro, is looking to redevelop five buildings that remain on the property after 60 apartments were badly damaged in the flooding during Tropical Storm Irene.

"We have the capacity for 26 one-bedroom units," reported Christine Hazard, BHP's executive director. "The BHP is now looking to redevelop housing on the remaining acreage which is out of the flood plain."

After Irene, the nonprofit relocated former residents of Melrose Terrace, built in 1962 and predating either the town's or the federal government's flood plain maps.

Ultimately, two new housing complexes took form as Red Clover Commons on Fairground Road. Eleven Melrose Terrace structures that were built in the flood plain were demolished.

"Now we're completing a large flood mitigation project along the Whetstone Brook," Hazard continued. "We got to try it out last month during the rains, and it was extremely successful."

That project retained 4.5 acres of water in Brattleboro, "which really helped to eliminate a lot of flooding upstream and downstream," she said.

That flood control, in turn, "prevented some people from losing some of their housing," Hazard said.

Thinking big

With a proposal to build 350 mixed-income housing units, commercial space, indoor recreation facilities, and a community center on its Brattleboro campus, the Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development is thinking big.

The 180-acre campus, which formerly housed the Austine School for the Deaf, is now home to 45 individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations.

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS
The long-vacant former site of Sanel Auto Parts on Flat Street in downtown Brattleboro will soon be turned into apartments.

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“We want to build an inclusive neighborhood for our community,” Chloe Learey, director of the Winston Prouty Center, told meeting participants. “A lot of people ask, ‘Is this going to be affordable housing? Is it going to be for seniors? Is it going to be for families?’ And the answer is yes. It’s going to be a neighborhood that reflects our community,” she said. “Nobody’s going to be excluded because they don’t make enough money,” Learey said. “The research shows that truly

mixed-income development is really best for community building.” “We’re stewarding this property that’s been around for years,” she added. “It’s really our community’s asset, and we’re happy to take the lead on it, but we need all of our community behind us cheering us on.” Winston Prouty Center has hired a development consultant to help determine project costs. “In really broad brushstrokes, we’re estimating the cost to be about \$275 million,” Learey

said. “There will be some redevelopment and some new construction.” Brattleboro Planning Director Sue Fillion reflected on all of the local housing development initiatives reported at the meeting. “We’re encouraged that there are several large housing projects being planned in Brattleboro, and we’re excited that all price points are being planned for,” she said. “But it’s going to take some time for the housing to come online,” she warned. “So we’re still very much in a housing crunch.”

BFUHS PCB levels

Nearly everyone has some level of PCBs in their body, and while testing can tell how much and whether the levels constitute a danger, tests cannot reveal the source of the toxin or toxins.

The state set aside \$4.5 million for testing schools statewide. The DEC hired consultants to do the testing, while the schools themselves are responsible for fixing any issues found, thus motivating the lawsuits against Monsanto.

Toxin levels are evaluated on a sliding scale, depending on the age of students using the buildings, into various categories, depending on the grade levels of the children using the building. These School Action Levels (SAL) are broken down into preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to sixth grade, and seventh-grade through high school. Schools with areas that exceed these thresholds will need to work with the state on temporary occupancy options while the contaminants are removed from the building.

But if the air tests exceed three times the school’s SAL, the situation is upgraded to Immediate Action Level, and the space will be unusable in any form until the PCBs are remediated.

The actions required to protect the students vary depending on the level of contamination. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends the first basic step of removing all the fluorescent light ballasts, a common source of the chemicals.

Contaminated paint, caulk, and building materials can be removed or in some cases encapsulated, and decisions about how to proceed are being overseen by the EPA’s regional PCB coordinator.

Epoxy coatings have so far been found to be most effective in encapsulating the PCB source. Cleaning by wet and damp mopping as opposed to dry sweeping, and using vacuum cleaners with HEPA air filters are also recommended.

In extreme cases of contamination, buildings may have to be torn down and replaced, adding the considerable cost of disposing of the PCB contaminated materials safely to the considerable expense of removing them.

Lots of questions, some answers

Early last week, school officials met with the Agency of

Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Environmental Conservation, and BFUHS facilities and maintenance personnel.

At an Aug. 10 public meeting with the school board and officials at the Bellows Falls Middle School.

Haas spoke at the meeting, acknowledging that there is “a large cost involved in all of this.”

The superintendent explained that the mitigation efforts are “100% reimbursable.” Where the funding to cover those costs would come from was a major concern of the meeting.

Attorney Pietro Lynn of the Burlington law firm Lynn, Lynn, Blackman & Manitsky spoke to the meeting via Zoom. Lynn’s firm is responsible for the lawsuit against Monsanto and is working with the injury law firms OnderLaw of St. Louis, Missouri and Frazer Law of Nashville, Tennessee in pursuing the litigation.

Lynn said that when the Vermont Legislature passed the law requiring school testing for PCBs, he realized this would be “incredibly expensive.” He said that he knew the schools would want the toxins safely mitigated, but that neither the schools nor the state would have the money to do that.

The state is allocating \$32 million toward the mitigation, but Lynn noted that the sum would be split with \$16 million for Burlington — currently employed in PCB cleanup — and the other \$16 million divided among the schools in the rest of the state.

“That’s just a drop in the bucket,” Lynn said.

The law firms involved in the suit have “experience suing Monsanto,” Lynn said, and would pursue the case in federal court on a contingency basis. He said he “was satisfied that this was favorable and desirable for your district.”

All sides acknowledge that the lawsuit is seeking a settlement that will easily reach hundreds of millions of dollars, if not over \$1 billion.

Lynn said that they could lose the lawsuit and end up with nothing.

“But if we have a settlement,” he said, each district would get a pro rated share based on the actual harm and expenses incurred. “Hopefully, that would cover

FROM SECTION FRONT

the damages 100%,” Lynn said.

Who works for whom?

The fact that Haas had committed the supervisory union to join the lawsuit without first consulting the school boards has developed into a major issue.

BFUHS board member David Clark questioned several aspects of the lawsuit at the Thursday board meeting as well as in a commentary for *The Commons* [“Of course, the PCB lawsuit is a conflict,” *Voices*, page D1].

Lynn addressed that issue, stating that the school superintendent, as essentially the “CEO of the district,” had the authority to sign on to the lawsuit.

But “the board can rescind that,” Lynn said, if they disagreed with the decision.

He noted that the school board would have no exposure unless it waited to withdraw from the suit at the end of litigation, after expenses had been incurred. Under those circumstances, they might be liable for 1/93rd of the expenses.

Clark has questioned Haas’s authority to sign onto the lawsuit since July, and he has also expressed concern that the money involved might present a conflict of interest for the attorneys.

The lawsuit alleges that damages could run into the millions or even a billion dollars, Clark commented. “That’s a pretty fat payday for the lawyers,” he said, noting in his letter that the attorneys will get about 35% of any settlement.

To make his point, Clark said that “some buildings may, in fact, have to be torn down.” But with regard to BFUHS, he said that he feels that that solution “way, way, way overstates the building’s condition as currently known.”

He said he was concerned that the potential money involved might “prejudice the board to move students totally out of the

BFUHS to reopen as planned Aug. 30

School to take the state’s most lenient option, exclusively using rooms that tested safely, for a ‘five-day, full-time schedule with no disruption to learning and no remote learning’

By Megan Applegate
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—It’s all hands on deck for returning students to Bellows Falls Union High School next week.

In a unanimous vote Tuesday night, the Bellows Falls Union High School (BFUHS) Board of Directors granted Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU) Superintendent Andy Haas and BFUHS Principal Kelly O’Ryan operational authority to reopen the high school next week for the 2023-24 academic year after elevated PCB levels were found in the building earlier this month [story, page A1].

The motion, originally presented by board member David Clark, gave the authority to select an option provided to the board by the state Department of Environmental Conservation which allows for unrestricted use of rooms not above the immediate action threshold.

O’Ryan said the goal is to attempt to keep students and staff as close to the proposed 26 hours of exposure per week mandated in a more stringent option. The preferred option provides the highest risk to students and staff but also the most freedom to open and operate the school.

“Our intention is to run a

five-day, full-time schedule with no disruption to learning and no remote learning,” O’Ryan said.

As part of mitigation efforts, 80 carbon filtration units are en route to the school to be placed throughout the C and D wings to maintain safe air quality levels for students and staff.

In addition, a number of Supervisory Union and support offices, like transportation and occupational and physical therapies, will move to trailers when they become available, opening up more space inside the school building for instructional activities in areas where the PCBs tested below action levels.

“The recommendation for us is an air handler that will change air every six hours per cubic foot,” Haas said. “So, second rounds of testing won’t begin until we’re doing the six air changes an hour. School will be well underway before we get that second round of testing.”

O’Ryan said that it’s highly likely that given the high levels of PCBs found in the school’s gymnasium and auditorium, those spaces will not be back online for the foreseeable future and work continues to secure alternative sites for athletics and other co-curricular activities in an effort to keep things as normal as possible for the school community.

“We’re working to be able to

pivot and make slight modifications to minimize disruptions,” she said.

O’Ryan also said the administration team is looking into options for students and families not comfortable returning to school now that PCBs have been detected at high levels.

Options include full-time Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC) enrollment and school choice options for surrounding schools. More details will be available in coming days as the research continues.

“Some families are not comfortable coming back to the building regardless and so it’s important to center that reality in this plan,” she said.

A second amendment requiring the administration to share all communications from state agencies with the chair of the BFUHS board was given by board member June Streeter and passed 5-1 with two abstentions.

“Stuff changes daily,” Streeter said. “We’ve learned stuff today from last Thursday or Friday and we need to be up to date on current information being provided.”

The BFUHS School Board will meet again Aug. 28 at 6:30 p.m.

building.”

Lynn acknowledged that Burlington did decide to tear its school down, and that that might also be true of other schools, depending on their respective test results. He noted that the cost of getting rid of the removed PCBs is going to be “tremendously expensive.”

“We feel that is a recoverable damage for your district,” Lynn said.

BFUHS board member June Streeter pursued the question of whether attorneys representing school districts feel they “would have a conflict because if you win

you make a lot of money.” She said that possibility might motivate them to encourage schools to sue.

Lynn said that the law firms “want what is good for your districts,” and added that at this point they represent about 90% of the supervisory unions in Vermont. He said it was the attorneys’ responsibility to “solve issues in favor of the district. Never what would be better for me but worse for you. That’s malpractice, and I could lose my license. And I should, if I ever do that.”

With the first day of school on Aug. 30 fast approaching, one

other big question at the meeting was how to proceed and whether it would be safe to bring students back into the school. [On Tuesday, Aug. 22, the board voted unanimously to keep the school open and permit unlimited access to the rooms whose PCB levels fell below the state immediate action threshold. See story, A3.]

Lynn said it’s reasonable to be concerned about any liability for bringing students back in to the school.

“Follow the advice of the experts,” he encouraged the board, noting that it should be “very safe” to return.

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• **Kharisma Boyd**, an exercise science major from Brattleboro, was named to the spring 2023 Dean's List at Monclair (N.J.) State University.

Obituaries



• **Kenneth Vincent Deuso, 85**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died at his home, surrounded by loved ones, on Aug. 10,

2023. Kenneth was born on Sept. 26, 1937 in Montgomery, Vermont to the late John A. and Stella M. (Vincent) Deuso. Kenneth attended Enosburg Falls High School, after which he served in the Army. He married the love of his life and lifelong best friend, Emily (Shover) Deuso, in 1956. They spent nearly 66 happy years together, before Emily died in August 2022. Many will fondly remember Kenneth from the many years he spent working at The Book Press in Brattleboro. Kenneth had many interests, including riding motorcycles, camping, hiking, and spending time with his family. Kenneth is survived by daughters Peggy Deuso and Ellen (Henry) Gero, both of Hinsdale, and Julia Deuso (Blessed) and Bonnie (Brian) Miller, both of Keene, New Hampshire; son-in-law Chris Reynolds of Hinsdale; grandchildren Janet (Gerren), Hank (Cassie), Thomas, Mikelle, Lauren, Sofia, Scarlett, and Alyssa; great-grandchildren Olivia, Noah, Myeligha, Elijah, Cheyenne, and Lilyan; his sister Verna (Roger) Peck; his brothers Clifford Deuso and Raymond (Jeanne) Deuso; brothers-in-law Gilbert Shover, Alexander Shover, and John (Eleanor) Shover; and sister-in-law Gloria Gagnon. In addition to his parents and his wife, Kenneth was predeceased by his sister, Wanda Deuso. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life will be held privately by the family. Donations to Meals on Wheels, P.O. Box 564, Keene, NH, 03431. To view an online tribute, leave a message of condolence, or for more information visit phaneuf.net.



• **Susan Margaret Dumas, 72**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, on Aug. 12,

2023 after her struggles with heart disease. Daughter of the late

Marie Frances (Pellerin) and John Stewart Dumas, she leaves behind her spouse of nearly 26 years, Kathleen (Jackson) Dumas. She also leaves her daughter Elizabeth Marie (Sulham) Pitts, her husband, Eli, and their daughter Aubrey Marie Pitts. Also left behind are stepsons Geoffrey Mark Moore and his wife Laura, and their daughter Lyra Jane Moore, and Kevin Andrew Moore and his wife Kristy Caminoli. Susan also leaves her brother Steven Dumas and his wife Suzi. Her many friends will also miss her dearly. Susan had many things she loved and enjoyed. Her greatest love was her family, especially her granddaughter Aubrey with whom she shared adventures and much music and mischief. She enjoyed modern music and dancing as well as traveling. Her favorite place to travel was Italy. She had a green thumb both indoors and out. Animals were an important part of Susan's life too, her own pets as well as a few stray cats. She was a strong advocate for justice and fairness for all and would stand up for what she thought was right. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A committal service was held Aug. 17 at Morningside Cemetery in Brattleboro. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society (windhamcountyhmane.org) or Groundworks Collaborative. (groundworksvt.org). To send condolences, visit phaneuf.net.



• **Colleen Joy Jacobs, 65**, of Brattleboro. Died Aug. 9, 2023 at Pine Heights, following a long illness.

Colleen was born June 11, 1958, at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital to Thelma (Facemire) and Arthur F. Jacobs Jr. She attended Academy School and graduated from Brattleboro Union High School with the Class of 1976. Following high school, she enlisted in the Vermont National Guard. Her working career included American Stratford Printing, NK Graphics, and HCRS. She also was a private home health care attendant for several Brattleboro families. She is survived by her mother Thelma Sharlow, of Guilford, her sister Betty McGinn (Dominique Perroud) of Virginia, her brother Randy Jacobs Sr. (Biz Dana) of Hinsdale, New Hampshire, sister-in-law Katrina Jacobs of Brattleboro, and son Aaron Jacobs of Brattleboro. She will be deeply missed by all, especially her grandchildren Derek, Ayden, Allura, Arius, Atayos and Aluna Jacobs, and her great-grandson Grayson Jacobs, all of Brattleboro, and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

She was predeceased by her father Arthur F. Jacobs Jr., and her brother Arthur F. Jacobs III. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Calling hours for Colleen will be held on Friday, Aug. 25, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Ker Phaneuf Funeral Home, 57 High St., Brattleboro. Donations to the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org) or The Gathering Place (gatheringplacevt.org).



• **Paulene Sibley Lawrence (Patrick) Lawrence** of Townshend died peacefully at home on Aug. 9, 2023 after a

brief illness. She was a graduate of Leland & Gray Seminary, and was married to her high school sweetheart, Curtis Lawrence, for 61 years. Mrs. Lawrence was well-known in the West River Valley community. She worked for the Jamaica Bank for 38 years, where she rose to the position of branch manager. She was a member of the Townshend Church and volunteered at Grace Cottage Hospital, as well as their Hospital Fair Day, for many years. She and her husband were also well-loved members of the Acecapaders Park in Lithia, Florida, for the past 20 years, where they enjoyed being snowbirds. She is survived by her devoted and loving husband; their daughters Sandra Lawrence-Clarke of Las Vegas, Nevada and Sherri Lawrence of Sun City, Arizona; sons-in-law Tygh Lawrence-Clarke and Jim Bumgardner; and her beloved grandchildren Elena, Adam, Kasey, and Ben. She is also survived by her sisters Marlene Thibault and Sally Wadsworth, and their husbands Francis and John, with whom she enjoyed many international trips. In addition, she is survived by several nieces and nephews, and many friends. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life will take place on Saturday, Aug. 26, at 11 a.m., at the Townshend Church. A brief burial service will follow at the Oakwood Cemetery. Donations to Grace Cottage Hospital, P.O. Box 216, Townshend, VT 05353. To share a memory or offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Paul Craig Leavitt, 66**, of Williamsville. Died on July 19, 2023 at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital fol-

lowing a period of declining health. He was born in New Haven, Connecticut on June 30, 1957 to Robert and Anne (Riley) Leavitt. He was raised and educated in Guilford, Connecticut, graduating from Guilford High School in 1975. He was a lift operator at C&S Wholesale Grocers in Brattleboro for more than 20 years. On May 15, 1976, in New Haven, he married Cindy L. Thompson, who survives. In 1987, he moved the family to Vermont, where he happily adapted to rural life. Paul was hardworking, clever, practical, and always willing to tow friends and strangers alike out of a ditch or snowbank. He took a great interest in military history, and was an avid New England Patriots and Boston Red Sox fan. He often expressed himself by quoting song lyrics and funny movie lines. He was dedicated to his family and kept in close touch with his friends, many of whom he has known since high school. He loved his pets beyond measure, as well as the variety of wildlife in the forest surrounding

his home. He enjoyed going on day trips with his wife, often to historical sites, natural attractions, and the coast for fried clams. He was equally content to stay close to home and work on various home projects with her, take leisurely drives along back roads together, watch their favorite shows, and sit by the firepit at night. He enjoyed spending time in the workshop with his son, keeping him company while encouraging his woodwork and other artistic endeavors. He always helped his daughter move frogs and toads out of harm's way before mowing the lawn, a ritual he continued even after she left home. He had a great sense of humor and a deep appreciation of music, which he instilled in his children. Besides his wife of 47 years, he leaves behind his son Todd Leavitt and his wife Mary; his daughter Kirsten Leavitt and her partner Jeremy Cote; his mother Anne Leavitt; his sister Cathy Leavitt LaPointe; and two brothers, Robert Leavitt and Gary Leavitt. Paul was predeceased by his father, Robert Leavitt Sr. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In accordance with Paul's wishes, there will be no funeral services. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To share condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Michael S. Robert, 69**, of Westminster West. Died at his home on August 10, 2023 of cancer. Michael was born on

November 22, 1953 in Norco, Louisiana, the son of the late Curtis Robert Sr. and Milda Huertin Robert. He was predeceased by his brothers Mark "Porky" and Barry Robert. Michael leaves his partner of 16 years, Leslie Hall of Westminster West, his son Benjamin of Oakland, California, and daughter Monique of Londonderry, New Hampshire, as well as his brother Curtis Robert Jr. of Norco. His early work career was spent at the Shell Oil Refinery in Norco before moving north to work at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant for 33 years. It was a job that he loved and looked forward to every day. He would always say it was the people he worked with that made it so enjoyable. After retirement, Michael maintained contact with his old co-workers and was thankful to be able to see many of them before he died. Michael loved the outdoors; his early years were spent in the fields and waterways of the Mississippi River hunting and fishing. He especially loved the coast of Maine for its diversity of seafood. East Grand Lake in northern Maine was a special place, where he spent countless hours at Leslie's family camp, watching and listening to the loons, kayaking and traveling the back roads in hopes of seeing bears and moose. In his later years, he traded in his guns for a camera and loved to take photos of wildlife, flowers, and especially the bear that came through the yard every year. When asked what his "spirit" animal might be, he said either a deer or an owl. So if you should see the flash of a white tail or the call of an owl, think of Michael. A devoted pet owner, he had many dogs and cats over the years. It started with a dog named Mo, and has ended now with his Gordon Setter, Gypsy, who he was often seen driving around town as she hung her head out the truck window. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Michael asked that there be no services. Instead, he asked that you consider making a donation on his behalf to your local hospice or animal shelter. Michael chose to be cremated. When asked where he would like to have his ashes spread, his answer was always the same, "Surprise me." To leave condolences, visit csnh.com.

• **Nancy Jane (Tyler) Scranton, 86**, formerly of Dummerston. Died on Aug. 1, 2023. She was born in Brattleboro to Agnes Jean (Allen) and Wallace Tyler on April 14, 1937 and grew

up in Dummerston. She attended Brattleboro High School before going to work for the H. Margolin pocketbook factory in Brattleboro. Nancy married Duane Scranton on Oct. 29, 1955 and they moved to Colrain, Massachusetts in 1963 where they purchased Windswept Valley Farm and raised a family. Nancy ran the farm, including milking more than 100 cows daily. She ceased daily operations of the farm when she took time to help raise her grandchildren. She often joked she was grateful they got her out of the barn. She was an avid snowmobiler, and loved boating, crosswords, reading, Westerns, and collecting dolls. She was accomplished at needlepoint, embroidery, and knitting. Nancy was the most kind and loving person. She opened her heart and home to family, friends, and neighbors. The farm was a welcoming place to all. She is survived by two sons, Michael Scranton and Mark Scranton and his wife Katie; her loving grandchildren Brian Scranton, Liza (Drew) Pantermehl, Kelsey Scranton, Rebecca Scranton, Jamie Hunkler and his family, and Jillian Jacques and her family; great-grandchildren Jane and Nelson Pantermehl and Mila Nancy Scranton. She is also survived by her brother Paul Lincoln and his wife Dawn of New York, sisters-in-laws Mary Tyler of Vermont and Rhonda Tyler of Texas, and many nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her parents, her husband, her son Timothy, and brothers Terry and Wayne. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services were held Aug. 19 at Smith-Kelleher Funeral Home in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. Burial will be at the convenience of her family. Donations may be made to the Colrain Volunteer Ambulance or the UMass Extension Service's 4-H program. To send condolences, visit smithkelleherfuneralhome.com.

• **Robert Howard "Bob" Sherwood, 70**, of Dummerston. Died Aug. 10, 2023. He was a brilliant mind and a sensitive soul who felt totally unsuited for the culture in which he found himself. He was born Oct. 8, 1952 to Loyd Sherwood and Helen Jeanne Marshall at Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto, California. He lived there until college and was an enthusiastic attendee of concerts at the Fillmore in its early days. Bob gained proficiency in ancient Greek at Vassar College and graduated in 1976 with a degree in anthropology. After Vassar, a job conducting hearing tests enabled him to travel often to Europe. An avid student of Carl Jung, Eric Neumann, and Eric Voeglin, he enrolled in the California Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in 1983. He graduated with an M.A. in 1985. He went to work in Silicon Valley writing documentation for computer programs. Later, Bob accepted a logistics position with an AIDS organization in India. He stayed in India for eight years where he spent time at the ashram at Tiruvannamalai. Returning to the States, he settled in Palo Alto where he served as a Red Cross volunteer locally and in hurricane disasters including Hurricane Andrew in 1992. In 2000, he moved east, having been priced out of his hometown. He reconnected with college friends, including Annamaria Pluhar. In 2006, Bob and Annamaria moved to Dummerston. It was there that he wrote, edited, translated, analyzed, and annotated chess tournaments from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For Caissa Editions he produced eight books: *Avro 1938*, *Morphy, Karlsbad 1907*, *Saint Petersburg 1895/96*, *San Remo 1930*, *Pasadena 1932*, and *Chicago 1926/Lake Hopatcong 1926*. His pet project, *Cambridge Springs 1904*, became a book in 2022 through Russell Enterprises. He completed *Moscow* two weeks before his death. He was a loyal, caring friend and family member. He is survived by his 23-year-partner Annamaria; her siblings Karel and Stephanie, Andrea, Madeleine, Stephanie, and Brian; and nephews Jefferson, Christopher, Pavel, David, Mikael,

Brian, and Christian; his sister Joan Sherwood Zallee; brothers Larry, John, and Loyd; his niece, Sarah, nephews Galen and Devon, and his great-niece, Sophie. He also is survived by Sasha (dog) and Minka (cat). They all loved him more than he knew.

• **Jeanette Eva Shield, 84**, of Guilford. Died Aug. 14, 2023 at Pine Heights nursing home. Jeanette was born at home in Guilford on Dec. 30, 1938, the daughter of Perley and Marjorie (Baker) Squires. She attended Guilford schools and Brattleboro Union High School. Prior to retiring, she was employed at the former Appropriate Technology in Brattleboro, and the former H. Margolin Pocketbook Shop on Canal Street. Jeanette enjoyed sewing, music, dancing, and time shared with her family. On Feb. 17, 1962, in Guilford, she was married to Kenneth Shield, who predeceased her in 1989. Survivors include grandsons Christopher Wasserlein (Christina) of Guilford and Matthew Belanger (Leah) of Marlboro; sisters Beverly Beckwith of Bernardston, Massachusetts and Irene Fisher of Guilford; and great-grandsons Andrew and Michael Wasserlein and Emerson Belanger. Additionally, she leaves many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. She was predeceased by her two children, Kendra Rafus and Kenneth Shield Jr.; a great granddaughter, Clara Belanger; and siblings Adela Squires, Jason Squires, Maynard Squires, Marie Gaines, Lyndon Squires, and Doris Griswold. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside committal services were conducted Aug. 19 in the family lot in Baker Cemetery in Guilford. Donations to Guilford Volunteer Fire Department, 108 Guilford Center Rd., Guilford, VT 05301. To send messages of condolence to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Evelyn (Carpenter) Zinn, 82**, of Brattleboro. Died August 14, 2023 after a short battle with cancer. She was born in Brattleboro to Rose (Blanchette) and Fred Carpenter on Sept. 17, 1940. She graduated from St. Michael's School in 1958 and went on to attend Castleton State College. In 1977, she married William Zinn, who predeceased her in 1999. She is survived by her sister June Severance and husband Tink of Brattleboro, and her brother Wayne Carpenter and wife Debbie of Dummerston. She also leaves her nephews Stephen and Shawn Severance and Todd and Travis Carpenter, in addition to many great-nieces and nephews, cousins, and many lifelong friends. Evelyn worked for DJ Lumber for 18 years then went to work for Dr. Robert Tortolani as his office manager for 27 dedicated years until his practice closed. She volunteered for the Vernon Advent Christian Church food bank. Of her pastimes, she enjoyed crafting, reading, watching movies and time spent with family and friends. She was a huge Boston Red Sox fan and religiously watched all their games. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service will be held at noon on Saturday, Aug. 26, at Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery on Orchard Street in Brattleboro. Donations to Vernon Advent Christian Church, 4554 Fort Bridgman Rd., Vernon, VT 05354, or the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

Services



• Due to weather issues on July 15, the funeral service for **Steven Rogers** has been rescheduled to Saturday, Sept. 2, at the West Wardsboro cemetery at 1 p.m., with a reception to follow at the Stratton Town Hall. Mr. Rogers, 69, formerly of West Wardsboro, died peacefully on June 18, 2023 in Reading, Pennsylvania.

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

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Brattleboro Savings & Loan celebrates Community Appreciation Day

BRATTLEBORO — Brattleboro Savings & Loan (BS&L) will celebrate its annual Community Appreciation Day on Friday, Aug. 25, at the Main Street branch in Brattleboro, and on Thursday, Aug. 31, at the Wilmington branch.

Starting at 11 a.m. and going until around 2 p.m., BS&L will serve free hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, summer slaw, and other cookout standards on the front lawn of the Main Street branch. On Aug. 31, they'll offer Vermont Gelato at the Wilmington branch from 2 to 4 p.m.

BS&L President Deb

Stephenson said in a news release these events are opportunities for the bank and their employees "to connect in a very simple and human way with the people in our community — by breaking bread together."

To help BS&L celebrate, WTSA will be doing a live broadcast from Main Street. Local vendors contributing to these community events include Hannaford, River Valley Market, Leader Distribution, Gouger's Market, Cota & Cota, DBC Rentals, and Vermont Gelato. Any leftovers will go right to the folks at Brigid's Kitchen and Groundworks Collaborative to

further give back to the community. All are invited to join the bank personnel in celebrating their communities.

While these are offered as free events, BS&L welcomes donations that are added to the funds they have established to create their Commitment to Community scholarship. This scholarship is offered to local high school seniors at Leland & Gray, Twin Valley, and Brattleboro Union high schools who are involved in making the community better and brighter. For more information, contact Cassie Kelley at ckelley@brattbank.com.

BIPOC Hair Clinic set for Aug. 28

BRATTLEBORO—The Root Social Justice Center will hold a free BIPOC hair clinic for all ages on Monday, Aug. 28, originally scheduled earlier this year.

As explained in a Facebook post from the racial justice organizing and community group, Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color “have a variety of hair types and textures that require hair care that just isn’t centered when we live and exist in predominantly white spaces.”

With hair stylists versed in working with BIPOC clients unavailable in the Brattleboro area, “we have to travel far to be seen,” says Shela Linton, the organization’s executive director.

“It’s past time we center our hair needs where we live, and we’re doing that, one BIPOC Hair Clinic at a time,” she said. “We’re excited and honored to be providing a community-centered space, featuring skilled Braiders, Locticians, and more, all dedicated to providing the care our hair deserves.”

“Various members of the youth program Youth 4 Change mentioned having to travel to Springfield, Massachusetts, for their hair needs, and while they can make a fun day out of it, they’d love to be seen closer to their Vermont homes,” says Gillian Lucero-Love, that program’s coordinator.

The hair clinic will assemble a team of locticians (hair stylists who work on dreadlocks), braiders, barbers, and designers from Euphoric Hair Experience of Rutland; Sheelah’s Mobile Braiding LLC, based in Bennington but serving customers in their homes in southern Vermont; and Sarah Kaneby, who moved to southern Vermont in 2020 with two decades of experience as a braider.

“I really do believe that we all deserve access to specialized and knowledgeable hair care which this state lacks for brown and black folk,” said Gloria Sheelah owner of Sheelah’s Mobile Hair Braiding. “And hair is an important part of our identity. So being a part of this clinic helps me to help others look and feel their best.”

The clinic is part of The Root’s BIPOC Affinity Healing Series, which draws together “those wanting to be more connected to the people who look like us and the gifts we provide” and “recognizes the different needs, desires and ways we can heal when we are able to come together in a safer space, connect and learn from folks who may share a similar cultural background,” according to the organization’s website (therootsjc.org).

“We are almost full for locs and braids, but have barber and designer spots still available,” Linton says. “Walk-ins are welcome, but there is no guarantee that we will be able to take you.” The clinic, organized with the support of the United Way Community Resilience Grant and The Vermont Department of Health, takes place from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at The Root, at 28 Williams St.

To register, visit tinyurl.com/3kmvmmw3.

Special flood clean-up day Saturday

To combat the lingering effects of this summer’s devastating flooding, Green Up Vermont is offering a statewide clean up day on Saturday, Aug. 26.

Operating very similarly to the annual May Green Up Day, this new event will use orange bags instead of the iconic green bags.

Two Windham County towns — Londonderry and Grafton — are among those around the state that are asking volunteers to help with specific projects.

In Grafton, volunteers can pick up bags and gloves at the Town Office at 117 Main St. anytime during regular hours until Friday, Aug. 25.

Volunteers should bring full bags to the special recovery clean-up dumpster at the Town Highway Garage at 220 Bell Rd. on Saturday, Aug. 26.

For more information, contact Town Administrator Morgan

Wilbur during normal business hours at 802-843-2552 or townadmin@grafftonvt.org.

Details for Londonderry’s efforts were unavailable at press time.

Volunteers should use safety precautions when working in and around water and roadsides.

For up-to-date information, visit greenupvermont.org/flood-recovery-clean-up.



Brooks Memorial Library marks 60th anniversary of historic March on Washington

BRATTLEBORO—Sixty years after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28, 1963, poet and performer David Mills will present an hour-long dramatic presentation this Monday, Aug. 28, portraying Dr. King’s transformation from his early uncertainties about Civil Rights into the iconic figure he became.

This event, which is free and is accessible to people using wheelchairs, takes place at 7 p.m. in the Brooks Memorial Library’s Main Reading Room, 224 Main St.

The show highlights Dr. King’s, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” “I Have a Dream,” “Promised Land,” “If I had Sneezed,” and “Early Days.” Mills’s presentation explores the public figure and the private man.

Community members who attended the original event 60 years ago are encouraged to share their stories by sending them to starr@brookslibraryvt.org.

David Mills

EMS

procurement overhead, town/staff integration, and billing rate policy.

A factor in the comparison will be the town’s ability to maintain a fire-EMS “effective response force,” which the board has discussed several times.

The town needs adequate numbers of firefighters to safely respond to a large fire event but must balance that need with what resources are needed for emergency response and what taxpayers can afford.

Board member Franz Reichsman said the effective response force “really means having enough firefighters to put out a fire even if they’re doing something else at a given moment” and effectively managing “what they are doing when they’re not putting out a fire.”

Key dates coming up

Some important milestones in the project are coming soon:

- Saturday, Aug. 26: RFPs are due, and proposals from potential providers, if received, will be made public.
- Tuesday, Sept. 5: That information will be shared at the Selectboard meeting, where it will be discussed.
- Tuesday, Sept. 12: A public forum is tentatively set for 6 p.m. at Brooks Memorial Library to review in detail any viable EMS alternatives, compare them, and ask for public input.
- Tuesday, Sept. 19: The Selectboard will meet and, if the current timeline has held up, make a decision regarding the future of EMS services in town.

Earlier in the spring, the town decided on the parallel tracks of investigating the pros and cons of an EMS service provider versus a municipal EMS service by Sept. 19.

The plan allows the preferred model to be selected in time to incorporate the fiscal impact into the fiscal year 2025 General Fund budget. It would also allow a chosen provider, if that is the board’s decision, time to prepare for a July 1, 2024 start date.

Reichsman also noted that while he has heard from many residents, he finds the “exact scope of the decision” is still “not completely clear in people’s minds.”

“We don’t even yet know exactly what our choices will be,” he said.

“Please understand we’re not just looking at making isolated decisions about EMS, we’re integrating that with what our effective response force for fire-fighting has to be as well, and all those numbers change depending on which assumptions you make at any given time under any given service model,” he said.

Although assured the town has spoken to outside officials, resident Kate O’Connor spoke, advocating for outside presenters to be invited to speak to help clarify what’s going on in the “bigger context” of EMS, “instead of us all spitballing.”

She noted issues around EMS are a big topic of discussion and involve two pathways: municipal and regional.

Rescue will apply; AmCare will not

Two responses to a June 1 request for information (RFI) were returned to the town. The purpose of the RFI was to begin to identify EMS providers that may be interested in serving Brattleboro.

The RFI was given to a list of 82 EMS providers along with notification to the state health/EMS departments in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York. Notice was sent to a variety of EMS trade journals, posted on the town website, and published as a public notice in the newspaper of record.

The Commons learned independently that the two firms responding to the RFI were Rescue Inc. and AmCare Medical Systems, Inc., of St. Albans, which is part of AmCare WLRC Medical, a regional East Coast organization.

This week, Rescue Inc. Chief of Operations Drew Hazelton told The Commons that Rescue is moving forward with the next step.

“We will be submitting a proposal,” he said.

The town broke ties with Rescue Inc. in 2022 after many years of service, but Hazelton expressed optimism for a new, future relationship.

“There were certainly challenges with the relationship prior to Brattleboro’s sudden departure from Rescue Inc. and, although we haven’t had any conversations about that as of now, I believe we can get those challenges resolved going forward,” Hazelton said.

“I think the key pieces of the proposal are that Rescue has a history of providing extremely high quality of EMS to the region,” he said, describing the nonprofit’s model as “time-tested and proven.”

“We continue to serve the citizens in Brattleboro through other programs we run, and we think it’s important to at least give the Selectboard the opportunity to look at the services we provide and give the citizens of Brattleboro the ability to benefit from the services we provide,” Hazelton said.

Rescue will host a public open house on Saturday, Aug. 26, from 4 to 6 p.m., which will conclude with an informational meeting for officials to answer questions. That portion of the open house will be recorded and available to the public through Brattleboro Community Television after the meeting.

On the other hand, AmCare Medical Systems Director of Operations Clement Roger said his company will not be replying to the RFP because he doesn’t feel AmCare can come close to matching whatever cost Rescue might determine.

“From what we’re seeing in Brattleboro and in our research, it looks like Brattleboro is looking for the best deal for them, and there’s no way we can come anywhere near what Rescue Inc. came in at,” Roger said this week.

“For us to come there and purchase a building, new ambulances, and the reimbursement rates being as they are in

FROM SECTION FRONT

Vermont, it would probably cost anywhere from [\$750,000] to \$1 million, and we know they don’t want to pay that much,” he added.

“My payroll here in St. Albans is about \$1.6 million a year and that’s for three, 24-hour-a-day crews,” Roger continued. “To properly cover the volume in Brattleboro, we’d have to have two, so [...] you can sum it up: It would cost too much.”

Saying AmCare wouldn’t be able to compete with any potential cost projection from Rescue Inc. is still a bit of a guess, as Hazelton clarified.

“We have not done projections for this proposal yet,” Hazelton said when asked.

He went on to explain that at the time Brattleboro left Rescue, it was considered a “member town” for EMS coverage with Rescue. That meant all costs and revenues for 15 towns, including Brattleboro, were aggregated and shared.

“We’ve never separated the cost or revenue of one individual town, and that’s an exercise we’ll have to do now to provide that information to the town,” Hazelton said.

“We paid for dispatching services in Brattleboro, so we charged about \$280,000 annually,” he said. “We paid them back just over \$50,000 in a dispatch assessment annually.”

Hazelton said the actual cost to the taxpayers in Brattleboro — prior to the town leaving — was about \$230,000.



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802-380-9240

Balint

FROM SECTION FRONT

“Essentially, the censure is a message to her,” Balint said. “But will that really land? No, right? Because we’ve seen that there is no bottom there.”

Balint launched the censure after Taylor Greene brought embarrassing nude pictures — what Balint called “pure pornography” — of President Joseph Biden’s son, Hunter Biden, into a House Committee on Oversight and Accountability meeting.

Balint sits on that committee and was devastated.

“I had a conversation with [ranking Democrat on the committee Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Maryland] about that, and how it was just so far beyond any kind of decorum,” Balint said.

“I was also back here in Vermont, meeting with people who’d lost everything in the floods,” she said. “And it was the moment to shine a light on this, which is preventing us from doing the work that we were sent there to do.”

Balint insists that since Taylor Greene appears to be essentially impervious to shame, Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy might be more of a target.

“It’s actually much more embarrassing for him,” Balint said. “He has said publicly, ‘I will never leave this woman. I will always stand by her.’ And so this is also about explaining who is running the train here in the Republican conference — and it’s extremists.”

Taylor Greene has already envisioned herself as Donald Trump’s running mate in the next presidential election. Balint says that her Republican colleague has been seen on the phone with Trump, mapping out strategy, while Congress is still in session.

“Remember during that 15 rounds of votes when McCarthy was selling his office to become speaker?” Balint said. “You had cameras in the House chamber focusing in on the fact that Marjorie Taylor Greene had Trump on the phone. They could zero in and see who she was talking to in real time. It’s astounding.”

Committee changes

Balint began the session on the Oversight and Judiciary committees. She resigned from the Oversight committee at the end of June, because she had also been assigned to the Budget Committee, and representatives can only serve on two committees.

“I wanted to stay on Oversight,” Balint said. “It is seen as a plum committee assignment, and so is Judiciary.”

She called her hiatus from the Oversight Committee “a formality.”

“I’m actually working behind the scenes to get me back on there,” she said. “Jamie Raskin didn’t want me to go. But they were trying to give it to somebody else who wanted to move to a better committee. What they didn’t know is that the person didn’t want to be on Oversight.”

Consequently, there’s still an open seat.

“I don’t know if I’ll be able to get back on, but I’d very much like to,” Balint said. “Working

with Jamie Raskin is really exciting. He’s so good at what he does. I feel like I learned a lot from him.”

In the meantime, “I’m accruing seniority on Budget and Judiciary. I’m not allowed to accrue seniority on a third committee. That’s why I resigned.”

Normalizing hatred

Balint said she is “astounded every day” by what she has been seeing in the House.

“Truly, it’s not just that there is no bottom,” Balint said. “It’s that there are a significant number of people within the Republican conference who know that this is off the rails. They know that it is beyond the pale. And they will not do anything. That is more terrifying to me.”

Talking about the Republicans’ constant attack on the trans community almost brought Balint to tears.

“It’s disgusting,” Balint said. “I want to tell you about this experience I had in Judiciary, where the extremists decided they needed to have a hearing solely on the horrors of the trans community. And they brought to the committee witnesses who were just so hateful, and so hurtful.”

To counter, the Democrats brought as witnesses a trans man with a prominent position at a national organization supporting trans rights and also a mother of a trans child.

“She was a Republican,” Balint said. “She was an evangelical Christian. She was a phenomenal witness because she essentially was saying, ‘Do you have any idea what it feels like to me and my child to have you here, telling me that I’m a groomer, that I’m a pedophile? You don’t care about my own kid, and all I’m trying to do is do right.’ She was phenomenal.”

Balint congratulated the witness on her bravery after the testimony.

“I said, ‘I know you’re going to be attacked on social media,’” Balint said. “I said, ‘You were so brave to come and put a face to this, because we need people speaking from the heart on the other side, to point out just how cruel the Republicans are being.’”

The attacks on gays and trans people are constant, Balint said.

“They have decided that the trans community in this country is at the root of all that is wrong with the American family,” Balint said. “But it’s perverse, what they’re doing. And it doesn’t make it on the news, as much as I wish, so people could just see the cruelty.”

“Maybe it would move some people — people who maybe don’t understand the issue, but at least we can say, ‘This is what happens when you demonize people and dehumanize people.’”

Many Republicans are acting out of fear, Balint suggested.

“We all know that Trump has no qualms about attacking private citizens,” Balint said. “The more moderate Republicans will tell us privately, ‘Well, if you want me to stick my neck out, then I’m gonna lose my seat. And you’re gonna get somebody worse.’ That’s what

they always say.”

The answer to that, of course, is that since they always vote with the Republican extremists, what could something worse even look like?

“They’re saying, ‘This is a terrible thing, I’m wringing my hands,’” Balint said. “But in the end, if you vote for it, then what’s the difference?”

Balint remembered a moment a few weeks ago when a co-chair of the Equality Caucus, the caucus that supports LGBTQ+ rights in Congress, was in an appropriations markup with people that he has served with for years.

“He said, ‘These people on this committee know me. They know my husband. We have friendly relationships,’” Balint said. “But, he said they were supporting outrageous anti-gay, anti-trans riders to the appropriations bill. They knew they were wrong.”

Balint said the co-chair told her, “I knew they knew because they wouldn’t look at me. They were ashamed that they were voting with their conference, but they didn’t have the courage to stand up to it.”

There is no hope for this session of Congress, Balint said. The Republican moderates who would normally work across the aisle on legislation are afraid.

This, she said, does not bode well for the session when it returns from vacation, because members need to pass several major appropriations bills to keep the government running.

“The extremists have already threatened to crash the government,” Balint said. “They are really interested in another government shutdown. They feel like that’s a winning strategy for them. So it’s much worse than anyone has ever seen.”

Balint blames the mainstream media for some of the problems.

“When I introduced the censure, I sat down with a reporter from *The New York Times*,” Balint said. “And he said, ‘Don’t you worry that it’s just tit for tat?’ And I said, ‘Did you read the censure? Look at all of the instances on which this woman is completely and totally beyond the pale. Have you ever seen it this bad? You’ve covered Congress



Rep. Becca Balint speaks to witnesses at a House Judiciary subcommittee hearing about gender-affirming care, held July 27.

for somewhere between 30 and 40 years. Have you ever seen it this bad?”

“He said, ‘Well, no. This is next level.’”

“I said, ‘So when are you going to start talking about it that way?’ Because we’re all normalizing it. And a big fear that I have is it’s all being normalized, because there’s so much of it all the time.”

Flood relief for Vermont

The entire Vermont Congressional delegation — which means Sens. Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch, along with Balint — are hard at work covering the state and trying to funnel federal money to help the many people who lost their jobs, their businesses, their farms, or their homes during the recent flooding.

“This has been a concern of all three of us,” Balint said. “The problem, actually, is the way that FEMA [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] is categorizing the emergency. Anything that didn’t happen in a 36-hour period is disqualified. But of course it’s all related, because the water table is so high from all the other rain. So it’s very disconcerting.”

“There were sections of Vermont that were absolutely devastated a week or two later. Mudslides. Rock slides in Middlebury. And they may not qualify for any FEMA support. We don’t know yet.”

It may take a separate declaration of disaster to bring in a second round of FEMA money. Balint said the Congressional delegation is working with Gov. Phil Scott on that issue.

“We’re talking to him,” Balint said. “I’ve never seen a summer so wet that lichen, mold, and moss are growing on my wood fence. It looks like I’m in England.”

Another concern of Balint’s is Vermont’s agricultural sector, which has been struggling long before the flooding because an early May frost killed much of the state’s fruit crop.

“I’m very concerned about our agricultural lands,” Balint said. “The flood hit when you had our

farmers already suffering from that freeze in May.”

The thought of going back to Congress “when we’ve got something like 11 days to pass all of these funding bills” is “very concerning.”

“I was reading yesterday about what’s happening on the farm bill, and you’ve got the chair of the committee basically saying we’ve got to get a bipartisan deal. This is going to impact billions of people across the country.”

“And you’ve got this extreme right flank saying, ‘No, we’re gonna go after SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, often called “food stamps” and branded as 3SquaresVT in the state] benefits again. We haven’t beat up on the poor enough. We got to do it some more.’”

Although the weather has not been kind to Vermont this summer, nothing compares to the devastation and loss of life that recently happened on Maui. At least 114 people have been confirmed dead as of this week, and officials say an estimated 1,000 more are still unaccounted for.

“One of my good friends in Congress right now is [Democrat] Jill Tokuda, who represents Hawaii,” Balint said. “And so we’ve been texting this morning. She is saying they had no idea of the extent to which people were not able to get out.”

“Now,” she said, “it’s becoming clearer.”

“So obviously, climate change is very real,” Balint said. “As if we didn’t know that already.”

A leadership role

Balint appears to be following in the footsteps of her predecessor, Peter Welch, in taking a leadership position in the House.

“Peter has such a great reputation within the caucus as being someone who could work well anyone,” Balint said. “He was always trying to find ways to collaborate — not just within the caucus, but across the caucus.”

She said it helps that she came in with “a lot of goodwill that people felt towards Vermont generally.”

“And I feel like I learned from Peter and Bernie,” Balint continued. “They’ve been great about working with me on how to navigate certain things. Our teams are working really well together.”

After clearing the censure with the Democratic leadership, introducing the resolution, and attracting some media attention, Balint moved on to other things. The Democratic leadership is holding the censure in reserve.

But it is clear that Balint is already strategizing for the next election; she has the courage to step into a leadership role to protect the things she believes in.

“I am in a relatively safe seat in terms of being a Democrat,” Balint said. “Whether it’s me or somebody else, a Democrat

is probably going to be in this seat. We don’t want to lose more seats.”

So she’s trying to figure out strategy.

“It’s a much bigger playing field now for me, and I want to be effective,” she said. “I want to shine a light on things. But I don’t want to put some of my colleagues at risk who are not going to sail to reelection.”

If Congress is to do anything about the U.S. Supreme Court’s *struckdown of Roe v. Wade*, if it is to protect LGBTQ+ rights, if it is to take the heat off the trans population, or even if it is to stop the Republicans from defunding FEMA, then the Democrats need more seats in the House, she said.

“I’m learning,” Balint said. “I’m seven months into the job, and I’m trying to be effective and not have some unforced errors. I want to take leadership roles in a way that I don’t become a caricature.”

She said that she wishes that “people could just see the fishbowl that is Congress. You’re sitting on the floor, and of course, the C-SPAN cameras are going all the time. Watch people on the floor — who they talk to and how they talk and how they position. A lot of it is about where the cameras are.”

Then, when the legislators leave the House floor, they are met with gangs of television cameras and reporters.

“And if you’ve done something on the floor that was meant to catch the eye of CNN or MSNBC or Fox News, you’re going to have a scrum of reporters literally falling down the steps following you across the street,” Balint said. “It’s absurd, and what I’ve realized is that very, very few times is it actually [about] anything substantive.”

And so the question: “How do you cut through that?”

“That’s my challenge,” she said.

The extremist Republicans are making it impossible to govern, Balint said.

“They were saying, ‘We want a speaker who never compromises with the Democrats,’” Balint said. “And so how are you going to pass anything?”

Balint said she has little time for reflection in D.C.

“You feel like you’re carried on these waves of fear and anger,” Balint said. “And before you know it, you could become the thing that you don’t want to be.”

Sometimes, she said, “I just shake my head when I watch these little scums following people. What is it that we’re doing here? You’ve got me on a morning when I’m just feeling sad that I don’t have more time to reflect.”

Balint says she doesn’t want to become bitter.

“I don’t want to become someone who dehumanizes,” she said. “It’s hard, but I want to be a thoughtful leader.”

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Sixty years of addressing 'the urgency of the day'

Bread and Puppet Theater will perform 'The Heart of the Matter Circus,' an 'outdoor spectacle of puppetry and performance'

By Victoria Chertok

The Commons

PUTNEY—Bread and Puppet Theater Cofounder and Director Peter Schumann, 89, bakes bread for each performance ahead of time, using a sourdough starter that is 150 years old.

Think of all the loaves he's baked in the last 59 years as the company celebrates its 60th anniversary this summer, and how much history each loaf represents.

"It's a type of bread that you can't find in the grocery store; it uses an old way of baking. People are usually pleasantly surprised by its flavor, and it requires you to chew," says Ziggy Bird, 25, a resident company puppeteer who lives and works on the farm in Glover where Bread and Puppet has been in residence since 1974.

"The bread is related to much of the art which the theater produces," Bird says. "We want you to chew on and to think about it and consider it. The serving of bread after a performance says that art is just as important as food is in our lives," she notes.

Local performance

Bring a picnic blanket and folding chairs to see the show

■ SEE BREAD AND PUPPET, B3



Bread and Puppet's iconic Washer Women and Garbagemen (both large and small) find reason to celebrate in the Circus. PHILL LEHAN COURTESY PHOTO



Works of Leonard Ragouzeos are currently on display at the Crowell Gallery. COURTESY PHOTO

Art in all sizes

Works of Leonard Ragouzeos on display through Aug. 31 at Crowell Gallery in Newfane

By Annie Landenberger

The Commons

NEWFANE—Leonard Ragouzeos's art rivets attention to detail, exposing the essence of his subjects from a graceful kohlrabi plant — "that I grew," he says — to an intricately stitched baseball to a dark-eyed, bearded fellow.

The artist's black ink drawings, on display through Friday, Aug. 31, in the Crowell Gallery at Moore Free Library, employ a technique he's been honing for a few decades.

Using brushes, pens, rollers,

and other tools, he applies India ink to Yupo paper — an archival synthetic paper with a smooth, non-absorbent, vellum-like surface.

"My expectation," he puts forth in an artist's statement, "is for the viewer to see and understand the image from afar, but also to be drawn in for closer inspection to view, on a purely abstract level, the surface texture of marks, ink splatters, and drips, allowing the viewer to engage with the process of making."

Along with the human form and face, Ragouzeos is attracted

■ SEE LEONARD RAGOZEOS, B3

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY

24

Performing arts

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

- ▶ 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays. Featuring Kenzie Yelin, Wendy Almeida, Dakota Benedetto, James Duffy.
- ▶ Directed by Burt Tepler. Brilliantly adapted for the stage by Nia Vardalos, Academy Award-nominated writer of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding".
- ▶ Through Saturday, September 2.
- ▶ \$17.
- ▶ Actors Theatre Playhouse, Corner Brook & Main St. Information: Reserve tickets. atplayhouse.org.

BRATTLEBORO Late Night Comedy Talk Show: "Free Satan" - Theme: "What is existence anyway?": If you've wondered what could happen when two brother robots (bro-bots), who've existed since before dawn of space and time, host a comedy talk show holographically, you're not alone. The Blip Blap Brothers are taking a break from Bot Talk Radio to beam in holographically and host this existential crisis. Half comedy/half meltdown, show's content will mostly cater to fans of weird, dark (no topic is off the table), silly and cringe comedy.

▶ 7:30 p.m.

▶ Free. (Donations appreciated and go straight to feeding the performers).

▶ Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: 802-281-3232; hookerdunham.org.

Music

BRATTLEBORO Summer Salon Explores the Method and Magic Behind the Music - "Mozart's Ciola Quintets in depth": A "deep dive" into Mozart's Viola quintets with special guest Robbie Merfeld. Study materials for this will be available in advance.

- ▶ 6:30 p.m. RSVP's are encouraged and refreshments provided.
- ▶ \$25 suggested donation.
- ▶ Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moysse Way. Information: More information and to register for one or all salons, contact BMC at 802-257-4523 or email info@bmcvt.org.

Kids and families

PUTNEY Bread & Puppet Theater (part of the Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series): Audiences will delight as Bread and Puppet celebrates their 60th anniversary with The Mother Dirt Circus! and draws on its distinctive iconography to call attention to urgent issues of the day. All ages will thrill to see stilt dancers and paper mache beasts of all sizes accompanied by riotous Bread and Puppet Circus Brass Band. A colorful spectacle of protest and celebration performed under the VT summer sky.

- ▶ 6 p.m. Sourdough rye with aioli offered after the performance and The Bread and Puppet Press and Cheap Art Emporium will be open for your perusal.
- ▶ \$20 in advance, \$25 at door, free for kids 12 and under.
- ▶ The Grammar School, 69 Hickory Ridge Rd. S. Information: 802-387-0102, nextstagearts.org.

Dance

SAXTONS RIVER Summer Swing Dances at Main Street Arts: Hosted by Matt Peake and Friends with guest DJ. No partner necessary.

- ▶ 7-9 p.m. Please wear dry soft-soled shoes.
- ▶ \$5 per person. All proceeds benefit community art center Main Street Arts.
- ▶ Main Street Arts, 37 Main St. Information: 802-869-2960; mainstreetarts.org.

Community meals

PUTNEY Monthly Food Drop co-sponsored by The Vermont Foodbank and Putney Foodshelf: Free produce and some non-perishables. All are welcome. This is a drive-up service. Bags provided.

- ▶ 9-9:45 a.m. Front of Putney Meadows, in white building across

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from Putney Coop and Putney Fire Station.

- ▶ Free.
 - ▶ Putney Foodshelf, 10 Christian Sq. Information: 802-387-8551.
- GUILFORD** Guilford Cares Food Pantry: All are welcome to shop curbside from a list of fresh and frozen foods, canned and packaged items, dairy products.

- ▶ 3-4 p.m. every Thursday.
 - ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Questions: call Pat Haine, Pantry Director, 802-257-0626.
- WILLIAMSVILLE** Monthly Breakfast: Open to everyone. Enjoy homemade pastries, tea, coffee, and orange juice. If the weather is good, seating will be outside; if the weather is poor, seating will be inside.

- ▶ 8-10:30 a.m. The Hall is ADA compliant.
- ▶ Free (donations for the Hall are appreciated).
- ▶ Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: williamsvillehall.com.

FRIDAY

25

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO Great Music/Great Art: Last Weekend of Nu Mu Tu Festival (Interactive Video/Live Music - Performances/Opportunities for Public Participation): 8/25: Interactive video/live music. Dave Seidel/Greg Kowalski; solo performance by Andrew Neumann. Opening: Bonnie Kane, John Loggia, Vance Provey, David Peck perform live soundtrack to abstract drama "Her Mind's Eye." 8/26: Northfield Country Club Albert Ayler Benefit Golf Outing: Jeff Lederer's golf tribute to Jazz Great Albert Ayler. 8/27: Community Improvisational Orchestra "Sounds and Signs" led by Lederer interprets graphic scores created by community members.

- ▶ 8/24: To participate in "Sounds and Signs" orchestra, go to 118 Elliot on 8/24 at 7 p.m. to prepare for final performance. 8/25: 7 p.m., 8/26: 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., 8/27: 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.: Dance Party/Community Celebration featuring Freakucency.
- ▶ Through Sunday, August 27.
- ▶ 8/25 and 8/27: Free (donations accepted). \$15 suggested donation for each concert goes to musicians. Visit website for 8/26.
- ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Full schedule: 118elliott.com.

Music

BELLOWS FALLS Stone & Snow with Luminous Crush: Karen and Clint (Stone & Snow) are passionate about elevating women in music - hosting performances for women artists, their work collecting data on the gender balance in their local scene, and Karen's involvement in the "Girls Rock!" franchise. Regional favorites Laura Molinelli and Ben Campbell of Luminous Crush open in acoustic duo configuration with highly developed fusion of bluegrass, outlaw country, dream pop, and indie rock.

- ▶ 7 p.m. Stone & Snow's latest album, "Delicate and Wild," released this year, was recorded with Grammy-nominated producer David Mayfield.
- ▶ \$10 (generously reduced ticket price from \$25).
- ▶ Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge St. Information: 802-289-0148; stage33live.com.

Community building

NEWFARE Historical Society of Windham County's Annual Pot-Luck and Jail Tales: Sit back and listen to stories and recollections about the Windham County Jail and share your own stories during the Open Mic! Do you remember Mrs. Mabel Whitney? Sheriff Norman Robinson? The Jail escape in the late 1950s? Be sure your stories go down in history as the Historical Society renovates the historic landmark, the Windham County Jail building, to become the main Windham County Museum.

- ▶ 6 p.m.: Bring a dish to share and catch up with your neighbors and friends (drinks provided.) 6:45 p.m.: Sit back and listen to stories and recollections about the Windham County Jail.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ NewBrook Fire Station, Rte.30. Information: historicalsocietyofwindhamcounty.org.

Film and video

WILLIAMSVILLE Friday Night Movie: "Saving Grace": Brenda Blethyn stars in this 2000 comedy about a

FRIDAY CONT.

new widow who finds herself in peril of losing her manor on the Cornish coast to debt collectors. She and the manor's caretaker, played by Craig Ferguson, hatch a plan to grow a profitable but illegal cash crop.

- ▶ 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Hall is ADA compliant.
- ▶ By donation.
- ▶ Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: williamsvillehall.com.

SATURDAY

26

Music

WINCHESTER Monadnock Tri-State Dance Club and Live Music by "Champagne Jam": Potluck supper. Non-alcoholic beverages available. 50/50 raffle.

- ▶ 5:30 p.m.: Potluck supper (bring a dish to share).
- ▶ Everyone is welcome: \$10 members, \$12 non-members.
- ▶ Elmm Community Center, 21 Durkee St. Information: Tom: 978-249-6917 / 978-790-9322 or Barbara: 802-722-9205 / 802-376-0317.

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.

Kids and families

BRATTLEBORO The Drawing Studio Re-opening Day: join us to celebrate the re-opening of The Drawing Studio as a non-profit community art center. From a one-person effort, we've grown into a community cooperative, supported by 19 working and financially contributing members. We'll have be food, drink, art materials, activities for children, and conversation. Learn about our drawing sessions for adults and children, community open studio times, art and music workshops, membership opportunities, much more.

- ▶ 4-7 p.m. Enjoy food, drink, art materials, activities for children, conversation at our studio by the Whetstone Brook. Feel free to contact us with any questions.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ The Drawing Studio, 28 Williams St. Information: 802-380-4997; drawingstudio.org.

Well-being

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

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

Arts and crafts

BRATTLEBORO "Brattleboro in Stitches" - The place to be for Knitters, Sewers, Needlepointers, Fiber Crafters: Crafters of every kind, age, and skill level are welcome. Stop in to use a sewing machine, show off your latest masterpiece, get advice, or just work on your projects with a lively group of like-minded people!

- ▶ 11 a.m.-2 p.m. every Saturday.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Tag sales, auctions, bazaars

W. BRATTLEBORO Tag-less Sale at All Souls Universalist Church: Featuring clothing, household items, toys, books, and more. No tags, everything by donation.

- ▶ 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Located up the driveway from the Fire Station.
- ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.

Film and video

WEST DUMMERSTON Cinema Beneath the Stars (PG movie)

- ▶ 8 p.m. Call the library for the actual title.

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▶ Lydia Taft Pratt Library, 150 West St. Information: 802-258-9878; dummerstonvlibrary@gmail.com.

SUNDAY

27

Music

BRATTLEBORO Join the Brattleboro Concert Choir and Brattleboro Camerata - lift up your voice!: Music Director Jonathan Harvey is holding placement hearings, and we are currently seeking new members of every voice part for the upcoming season. All are welcome - we especially invite BIPOC singers and singers of all gender identities to participate!

- ▶ Choose 8/27 or 8/30: The Brattleboro Concert Choir rehearses 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday evenings in the BMC Auditorium. We anticipate that 2023-24 will be mask-optional for all singers.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moysse Way. Information: To schedule your low-pressure placement hearing with Jonathan Harvey, or to ask questions, contact BMC at info@bmcvt.org.

GUILFORD Luke Concannon, Stephanie Hollenberg, and Hannah Meloy: Renowned for his magnetic live performances and 'direct-from-the-heart' songs, #1 UK chart artist (and Guilford resident), Luke Concannon has something special. Performing with his wife - classically trained singer Stephanie Hollenberg - and guest singer Hannah Meloy, the trio offer musical passion and audience participation that will live long in the memory.

- ▶ 6:30 p.m. Bring blanket, folding chair, picnic, friends. All welcome including children at outdoor concert under maple trees - no one turned away. Parking in upper meadow at the Farm for anyone needing close access. Come up driveway! Otherwise, park off Carpenter Hill Rd. at library, lower field, or Playscape and enjoy short walk up.
- ▶ \$10 to \$20 suggested donation.
- ▶ Springs Farm, 49 Carpenter Hill Rd.

Farmers' markets

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

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

PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market - plus Live Music today with Keyboardist Sarr Sheffer

- ▶ 11-3 p.m. on Sundays. Across from the Putney Food Coop.
- ▶ Putney Farmers Market, 17 Carol Brown Way. Information: putneyfarmersmarket.org.

Community building

VERNON Vernon Historical Mums & More Sale: Featuring a selection of chrysanthemum and perennial plants, pottery, jewelry, photo cards, cut flowers, honey, and more. Plus - back by popular demand - an Ice Cream Social with homemade and hand-cranked ice cream and a variety of toppings.

- ▶ 1-4 p.m.
- ▶ Proceeds from the sale help pay for the work of the Vernon Historians in preserving/presenting our local history.
- ▶ Vernon Historical Museum, 4201 Fort Bridgman Rd. Information: More information: Carol Hammond at 802-257-0207. 257-2143, cjhammond8@gmail.com.

W. BRATTLEBORO "All Creatures Great and Small" (In Person/Zoom): Celebrate the Unitarian Universalist principle of respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Guest speaker Turner Lewis will talk about his experiences as a volunteer veterinarian for 30 years at the Iditarod - the dog sled race in Alaska. The prelude by Handel will be played by Jerry Levy, Peter Gibbons, Wendy Redlinger.

- ▶ 10 a.m.
- ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: Go to ascvt.org shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.

Visual arts and shows

PUTNEY Vermont Center for Photography and NXT Gallery present "Four Perspectives": Karevy,

SUNDAY CONT.

Carta, Farr, Trachtman: This small group exhibition represents the work of four local artists who are members of the Vermont Center for Photography: Al Karevy, Davida Carta, Joshua Farr, Vaune Trachtman. Each creates photographic work covering diverse range of style and subject matter but are unified via a shared passion for photographic arts and its many expressive possibilities. Each artist displays a small selection from a body of work, giving a greater context to their creative vision and process.

- ▶ 8/27: 3-5 p.m. Opening Reception.
- ▶ Through Sunday, November 12.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ NXTGallery at Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102.

GREENFIELD Willow Vermont Retreat hosts "Atelier: Exhibit of Contemporary Classical Realism": Over 75 works by 20 artists from the renowned Grand Central Atelier in Brooklyn, NY. Meet the artists - see their figures, portraits, landscapes, and florals created from life. Each museum-quality work of art is available for purchase.

- ▶ 1-6 p.m. Open to the public. Light refreshments served. (Willow Vermont Retreat is an arts and yoga retreat center and a guest house.)
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ 10 Forward Venue, 10 Fiske Avenue. Information: On-line catalogue and more information: willowvt.com/events/atelier.

MONDAY

28

Pets

BRATTLEBORO Windham County Humane Society's 2nd Annual Pet Remembrance Night & Luminary Ceremony: Don't miss an opportunity to honor the pets you have loved in your lifetime. Each luminary dedication features your pet's name along with a short, custom message. Bring a photo for the Memory Wall, enter for a chance to win a basket from our raffle, swap favorite stories about your beloved pets before Luminary Ceremony lights up Pliny Park.

- ▶ 7 p.m.: Light bites and drinks. 8 p.m.: Luminary Ceremony lights up Pliny Park.
- ▶ Your 1st luminary (\$25) includes 2 tickets to Reception w/ 2 drink tokens and finger foods. More luminaries: \$10 each.
- ▶ River Garden Marketplace, 157 Main St. Information: windhamcountyhunane.org/events/pet-remembrance-night.

Community building

BRATTLEBORO Dare to Dream: Community Commemoration of the March on Washington: Sixty years after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on 8/28/1963, poet/performer David Mills presents a presentation portraying Dr. King's transformation from his early uncertainties about Civil Rights into the iconic figure he became. Be roused, be inspired, be transported as Mr. Mills delivers Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech 60 years to the day after Dr. King did so.

- ▶ 7-8 p.m. Library Dir. Starr LaTronica: "Community members who attended the original event 60 years ago are encouraged to share their stories: send them to starr@brookslibraryvt.org."
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Community meals

BRATTLEBORO Blackberry Blitz: Join Edible Brattleboro for a fun, hands on, and interactive blackberry blitz cooking event. Together, we'll make a late summer charcuterie board featuring a tomato blackberry salsa and enjoy a blackberry themed dessert! Learn where to find late season berries (raspberries, blackberries, blueberries) locally in August, how to use them, how to store them, and share our favorite berry recipes!

- ▶ 5-7 p.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op Cooking Classroom, 7 Canal St. Information: Register: ediblebrattleboro.org/event/blueberry-bonanza/. Questions: cooking@ediblebrattleboro.org.

TUESDAY

29

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

PUTNEY Kat Vello: "We Should Get Together!": Join us for an interactive fireside chat with Kat Vello about friendship in adulthood. What are the biggest challenges of adult friendship/how can we overcome them? How do we make new friends and keep the old? What is social wellness/how does it factor into our overall health/well-being? How can we create more meaningful connections with coworkers who are often the primary source of new friends in adulthood? Dig into all this and more. Chat followed by a Q&A so come with questions.

- ▶ 7 p.m. Connect with Kat online: Kat's books, newsletter, shop, events: weshouldgettogether.com. Discussion is co-presented by Putney Community Cares, Putney Community Center, Putney Foodshelf, Putney Public Library, Senior Solutions.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org.

WEDNESDAY

30

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. outdoors. 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

BRATTLEBORO Latchis Pub hosts Blue Moon Psychic Dinner: Embrace an opportunity to connect with your departed loved ones at our Spirit Gallery with Brandie Wells, a medium who will bridge the gap between worlds, channeling messages of love, healing, and guidance from the spirit realm. Opening is Jacqueline Burns, a musician from Massachusetts whose alternative blues sound is influenced by the Dixie Chicks, Etta James, classic rock and alternative '90s.

- ▶ 5:30 p.m. doors open. 6-7 p.m. buffet-style Italian dinner. 7 p.m.: Music and the Spirit Gallery. For ages 21 and up.
- ▶ Tickets start at \$44. Use code [VPSAVE] for 15% off your tickets.
- ▶ Latchis Pub, 6 Flat St. Information: Tickets.tinyurl.com/35x6bf5.

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

■ Bread and Puppet

FROM SECTION FRONT

as the Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series presents Bread and Puppet Theater's "The Heart of the Matter Circus" on Thursday, Aug. 24, at 6 p.m., at the Grammar School.

The Commons caught up with Bird, 25, who moved to the Bread & Puppet farm in Glover two years ago from Philadelphia, to discuss the art of baking sourdough, the company's 60th anniversary, and the lasting impact its artists have made right here in Vermont and all over the country. "I moved here two years ago to work with Bread and Puppet. It's a fantastic place! I studied theater at Temple University in Pennsylvania, and with B&P I was drawn to a very transformative vision about how theater could be made," she says.

"Bread and Puppet exposed me to a different kind of art making. I became interested in the communal nature of the farm and how we make art out of reclaimed materials. How an old piece of cardboard and donated paint is really powerful," adds Bird.

'Nonsensical, somber, and joyful'

"The Heart of the Matter Circus" includes stilt dancers, puppetry, 15-foot-tall puppets, and papier-mâché beasts of all sizes accompanied by the riotous Bread and Puppet Circus Brass Band, which plays all of their music in what Bird describes as "a joyful expression of art making."

She explains that its collection of New Orleans-inspired music by various musicians has grown over a long span of time.

"Bread and Puppet tackles many different topics of the day. There is poetry, no words on some vignettes, and dance. It's nonsensical, somber, and joyful," Bird notes.

Each show is about one hour long and features 20 vignettes, each running from 2 to 5 minutes.

Glover Farm and a legacy

Bread and Puppet Theater was founded in 1963 by Peter and Elka Schumann — on the lower east side of Manhattan.

"They moved to Glover, Vermont in 1974 and have been located there ever since," says Bird.

On their campus in Glover, there is a museum, a press, a "cheap art emporium," and an enormous barn that houses all of the company's 15-foot-tall puppets and assorted gear from 60 years of continuous live

shows and performances all over the United States. Hundreds of performers and puppeteers call themselves Bread and Puppet alumni.

The 30 members of the troupe, including puppeteers, musicians, and tech crew, pack onto "a very special old school bus" that has been "painted wildly" by Peter Schumann, Bird says.

"We take it all over the country," she continues, calling the bus "an outdoor spectacle of puppetry and performance where we set up a circus ring in each outdoor location and use the bus as a backdrop."

"Cofounder Elka Schumann passed away on Aug. 1, 2021 but we've continued performing and making many things in her honor and continue to think of her in our work," Bird adds.

She describes the Bread and Puppet museum as "Elka's vision and idea."

"She saw the need to create a space where all the things of the theater could be housed when not being performed," Bird says. "We took over an old dairy farm which her parents purchased and passed down to her. A large hand-made barn constructed in 1863 is completely full to the brim with puppets."

At the Bread and Puppet press, they make all of the posters, books, postcards, pamphlets, and banners. Any Bread and Puppet image on a poster or banner was hand-carved in Masonite by cofounder Peter Schumann. "They are relief printed onto paper or fabric and painted by hand by many volunteers. We sell our press at all of our shows," Bird notes.

Bread and Puppet co-founder Peter Schumann no longer does interviews because of his advancing age, but his remarks on the occasion of the company's 50th anniversary in 2012 are captured on its website.

The puppet show, Schumann said, "is not only a puppet show, but an eating-bread-together event."

"We ask our hosts not only for performing space, but also for 400 bricks, firewood, and fire permits to build and use itinerant bread ovens as part of our productions," Schumann said.

"From the beginning of the Bread and Puppet enterprises, we decided to make two types of shows: inside shows meant for the viewer's inside, and outside shows for the unrelenting political street," she continued.

Both types of shows, he said,



COURTESY PHOTO

The Drawing Studio, located on Williams Street in Brattleboro, will hold a grand re-opening event on Aug. 26.

The Drawing Studio hosts its re-opening day on Aug. 26

BRATTLEBORO—The Drawing Studio, a nonprofit community art center at 28 Williams St., will hold a celebratory Re-Opening Day on Saturday, Aug. 26, from 4 to 7 p.m.

From a one-person effort, it

has grown into a community cooperative, supported by 19 working and financially contributing members.

There will be food, drink, art materials, activities for children, and conversation. Visitors can learn about drawing sessions for

adults and children, community open studio times, art and music workshops, membership opportunities, and much more.

For more information, contact founder Jason Alden at 802-380-4997, or visit drawingstudio.org.

"address the urgencies of the day as they come upon us."

"During these five decades of puppetry, thousands of dancing and music-making puppet operators have assisted in the invasion of streets and plazas all over the globe, or they've come to Vermont to be part of Our Domestic Resurrection Circus and other summer shows," Schumann continued.

"By the grace of the Whatever ¾ Almighty [sic], we have survived and even sometimes thrived, doing hundreds of sculpture happenings and esoteric musicals with activist ingredients, and we hope to continue for a few minutes longer."

'Over the moon with joy'

Bread and Puppet Theater's "The Heart of the Matter Circus" is on Thursday, August 24 at 6 p.m. at the Grammar School, 159 Grammar School Lane, in Putney.

Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts Project, says in an email to *The Commons*, hailed Bread and Puppet for exhibiting "decades worth of

artistic integrity, sharing their messages through the use of large scale puppetry."

He said the nonprofit performing arts venue "is over the moon with joy" to present Heart of the Matter Circus as part of its Bandwagon Summer Series, "an opportunity to present cultural offerings from around the world, including highlighting the incredible talent existing right around the corner."

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Kids 12 and under are free. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar, and food by Crossroads Tacos will be available for purchase. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for outdoor seating on the field.

As always, sourdough rye with aioli will be offered after the performance, and The Bread and Puppet Press and Cheap Art Emporium will be open.

For more information and advance tickets, visit nextstagearts.org or call 802-387-0102. For more information about Bread and Puppet, visit breadandpuppet.org.

Flags soar high over the audience in the finale act of the Heart of the Matter Circus.



PHILL LEHAN COURTESY PHOTO

■ Leonard Ragouzeos

FROM SECTION FRONT

to the complexity of simple subjects: tools, vegetables, and "food, functional things," he says, "everyday things you'd find around the house."

He renders objects in isolation — out of any context — and presents them in uberscale, working in dimensions that range from 1 foot square to supersized.

"I try to take something mundane and put it in a sort of gothic or baroque light," he says.

While Ragouzeos has done many works in color over the years, he is drawn "to the power of the black-and-white image."

"I don't speak the language of color as well as I do black and white, with its high contrasts, subtleties, dramatic values," he says. "I have an eye for that."

And he favors large scale because "it's more fun."

"I like the physicality," he says. "The drawings are made on a wall, so I must move quickly to control the flowing ink [...] to build layers of grays into deep blacks with subtle or dramatic value shifts."

The overbearing power of poles

The Crowell exhibit includes several pieces from Ragouzeos's recent "Poles" series.

"I was doing crows at the time"

— one of which can be seen looming over the dining floor in Newfane's Fat Crow eatery. "I heard a crow [on a utility pole], and I took a picture, but the crow had flown away, so I was left with a picture of a pole."

That grabbed him as he dug into what role such poles, usually overlooked, play in our lives "with their overbearing power that we don't even recognize." *Who's in control? Who are the senders? the receivers? What do these transmissions and their conduits add to our stress?*

He has come to view these poles, with the dynamism in their structure and adornments of wires, cables, and hardware, "as symbols in a long ancient history of tall structures identifying that culture's reigning faith or power," he says.

"From Stonehenge and the cycles of the sun, to pyramids honoring the pharaohs, to the temples and cathedrals of religions and gods and as in today's giant skyscrapers of commerce and capitalism, they represent power," Ragouzeos continues.

From science to art

Ragouzeos was born in Manhattan and raised in the Bronx. His father, an immigrant from Cyprus, worked as a grocer

in Astoria, Queens. His mother, whose parents were from Greece, was eager to see their son flourish under America's ideology, and so young Leonard's penchant for art was recognized but not taken seriously.

His parents encouraged him to go to Bronx High School of Science, one of New York's public specialized schools, rather than to the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan, an option that he would have preferred.

It was not until two years into college when his architecture professor urged Ragouzeos to switch to a fine arts focus.

"That's when I began to grow as an artist," he says.

A graphic designer before he became a fine artist, Ragouzeos was influenced in that work by Chuck Close, Jackson Pollock, Jim Dine, and Franz Kline. He cites the work of Sean Scully, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, and Brice Marden as influences on his paintings in color.

With bachelor's and master's degrees in fine art earned through the City University of New York system, Ragouzeos is an advocate for public education.

He taught studio art for 31 years at state institutions in Iowa and Pennsylvania.

And, he says in an artist's

statement, he "loved every day in which there wasn't a faculty meeting."

'The place to be'

Working out of a studio in Dummerston, Ragouzeos's work is in collections throughout the country from New York to Des Moines to San Diego and has been featured in a host of solo exhibitions at a range of venues nationwide, including at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and at galleries in Brattleboro and Bennington.

Having first moved to southern Vermont in 2005, Ragouzeos and his wife BobbeKay live bicoastally now, spending five months each year in California, where they have family, and the remaining time in Newfane.

Wrestling a 70-something dilemma of where to alight, he adds, "I like the East Coast, especially Vermont. It seems like the place to be."

The Crowell Gallery, 23 West St., Newfane, is open during the Moore Free Library's operating hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 1 to 5 p.m.; Thursday, from 1 to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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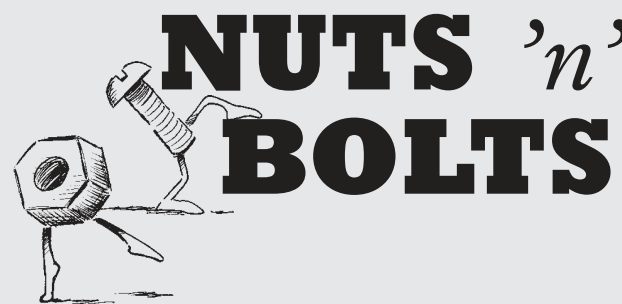
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MGFA presents works of Fran Bull, Helen Schmidt

BRATTLEBORO—Mitchell Giddings Fine Arts, 181-183 Main St., is presenting side-by-side exhibits of paintings, prints, and sculpture: “Fran Bull: The Art Life” and “Helen Schmidt: Between Worlds.” An opening and artists’ reception is scheduled for Gallery Walk on Friday, Sept. 1, 5 to 8 p.m.

The exhibitions continue through Oct. 15, and all are welcome to enjoy an Artist Talk with Fran Bull on Saturday, Sept. 30, at 5 p.m.

Bull’s solo exhibit of etchings and acrylic paintings with sharpies and ink represents several series of work, curated from her studio. Since graduating from Bennington College and New York University, Bull has pursued an active and fruitful professional career as painter, sculptor, performance artist, writer, and printmaker.

An internationally acclaimed artist, she has exhibited extensively worldwide, including at the Venice Biennale, and her work resides in the collections of the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Modern Art and the Brooklyn Museum in New York, and Guilin Museum in China.

Bull’s early photo-realistic painting has gradually given way to a less representational imagery. She lives, paints and teaches in Vermont, and works in collaboration with master printer Virgili Barbarà in Barcelona, Spain.

Considering the effect of art in our lives in her 2022 essay, “A Deeper Look,” Bull writes: “we humans have the capacity to be moved. Being moved is nothing less than transformative. You leave the experience changed in some way.”

Longtime Putney artist and teacher Schmidt attended Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier, The Lacoste School for the Arts in France, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

She began her career in 1989 in New York’s South Bronx as an advocate for unhoused women and children. Upon moving to Vermont, she worked as a legal advocate at the Women’s Freedom Center, began teaching art to at-risk teenage girls, and later taught art to women on furlough at the Brattleboro Retreat. Schmidt has taught locally for nearly 30 years and, since 2019, has been the Printmaking Teacher at The Putney School.

Schmidt is drawn to objects and materials which have been discarded or left behind, to be used, repurposed or transformed into sculpture or hand-pulled prints. Says the artist, “I often use the materials I find as surfaces to print on. I ink them up and print them onto handmade papers, then adhere them onto my intaglio prints.”

For more information about the exhibit, visit mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com.



“And We Will Live This Life,” (2004), an acrylic and ink on canvas painting by Fran Bull.

“Radiant Form 1” (2023), by Helen Schmidt.



COURTESY PHOTO

New works from Gil Perry on display at Gallery in the Woods

BRATTLEBORO—A new body of paintings by visionary artist Gil Perry is on exhibit at Gallery in the Woods throughout the month of September with an opening reception on Friday, Sept. 1, from 5 to 8 p.m., during Gallery Walk.

Perry is an artist-painter currently living and working in Springfield, Vermont. Exhibit organizers say his drawings and paintings have “a remarkably delicate and detailed touch that allows one image to unfold in surprising ways over time.”

“Through my drawings and paintings, I hope to awaken the imagination, an emotion, or sense of wonder in the viewer,” Perry wrote in a news release.

From the early 1970s until the late 1980s, his main focus was on drawings that he describes as dreamlike images in graphite. These were collected by John D.

Merriam, whose acquisitions of fantasy and visionary drawings are now a part of the Boston Public Library collection.

After working in black and white for many years, Perry wanted to investigate color, and studied with Fran Weston Hoyt. From her, he learned a premixed prismatic palette technique used to capture the effects of light in nature, which had been developed by her teacher, the American impressionist Frank Vincent DuMond.

A native of Connecticut, Perry studied art at the New England School of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Colby Sawyer College. He is a longtime exhibitor at Gallery in the Woods.

For more information, visit galleryinthewoods.com or call 802-257-4777.



COURTESY PHOTO

New paintings by Gil Perry will be on display in September at Gallery in the Woods in Brattleboro.

Alvarez, Nied to co-headline Stage 33 Live

BELLOWS FALLS—Doctora Xingona Diana Alvarez and Olivia Nied will co-headline Stage 33 Live at 33 Bridge St. on Sunday, Aug. 27, in a 3 p.m. matinee.

Multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter Nied has been performing as a soloist, ensemble leader, and side person since she was 9 years old in styles ranging from edgy pop to jazz fusion to hip-hop and straight up rock-and-roll. Her solo performances often incorporate looping and multiple instruments.

As a transgender/queer musician, Nied often includes LGBTQ+ lyrical themes in her work and “believes in creating safe spaces at her shows for gender diverse individuals.” She

was awarded a merit scholarship to Berklee College of Music’s Summer Jazz Program, where she received honors.

Nied has studied at the Vermont Jazz Center and studied music and film at Hampshire College, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in 2020. While at Hampshire College, Nied studied music at Goldsmiths, University of London, and filmmaking in Paris.

Alvarez’s ancestors “bloom in her/their voice,” states the artist’s website, “roaring an otherworldly fire against oppression, exalting queer love and liberation, and creating a gripping atmosphere for healing in poetic songs that live in-between, where borders are a myth.”

An expansive multimedia artist and educator, Alvarez’s music, poetry, performances, films, and gatherings center transcendence, kinship, and the co-liberation and nourishment of queer and trans artists of color. Alvarez is the composer and filmmaker behind the award-winning *Quiero Volver: A Xicanx Ritual Opera*, a multimedia performance altar for queer and trans BIPOC artists to convene and manifest futures, described in the press as an “acoustically stunning performance.”

Alvarez’s new album, *Ser Artista*, is “a genderqueer, extraterrestrial, Xicanx collection.” Alvarez earned her doctorate in electronic arts at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, mentored by composer Pauline Oliveros,

and is an invited performer, guest lecturer, workshop facilitator, and keynote speaker at venues and schools across the U.S. and worldwide.

Masks are required at this event, as one of the performers is immunocompromised. The venue will have disposable masks available. The performers will remove their masks while performing. A pair of high-capacity air purifiers will be placed between the stage and the audience. All seating will be a minimum of 10 feet from the stage. Do not attend if feeling ill.

Tickets for this special co-bill are \$10 in advance through stage33live.com or \$15 at the door. Seating is limited, and the event will be recorded and filmed.

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Windham school, one of smallest in state, prepares for new year amid turmoil

Six families whose children attend the school have filed a lawsuit seeking public tuition for their children to attend schools elsewhere

By Peter D'Auria
ViDigger

WINDHAM—Windham Elementary School ended the 2022-23 school year this spring with three staff members resigning.

With high turnover rates for educators nationwide, the departure of three employees might not be cause for concern at most schools. But at the tiny Windham Elementary, those three employees — a principal, a teacher, and an administrative assistant — represented 100% of the school's staff.

The school has since hired a principal and teacher, and it has made an offer to an administrative assistant candidate. But the resignations have added fuel to a longstanding debate over the future of the tiny K-6 school, which educated 19 students in the spring semester, according to state data. In Windham — population 449, as of 2020 — roughly half of voters want to close the school. Last month, six families filed a lawsuit against the town and the state of Vermont, alleging that the education provided by the school was so inadequate that the district should instead have to send its children elsewhere. "The Windham school children are substantially disadvantaged by the legal requirement that they attend the public school in their town," the lawsuit reads.

'An amazing orchestra of collaboration'

In 2015, facing declining enrollment and rising educational costs, Vermont lawmakers passed legislation to consolidate school districts. Over the next few years, the state offered both carrots and sticks to convince school districts to merge with their neighbors.

But, in 2019, Windham voters rejected a plan to merge into a district with neighboring towns, instead opting to remain independent. The school now has a standalone district under the umbrella of the Windham Central Supervisory Union, meaning it receives some services from the central office but operates its own school board.

In 2021, the town held two divisive, back-to-back votes on whether to close the school. In September of that year, by a margin of two votes, residents opted to close it; two months later, they reversed that earlier decision by a margin of three. That second election sparked an ongoing legal challenge accusing three non-residents of voting fraudulently.

Advocates for keeping Windham Elementary open say that its intimacy and rural setting offers a uniquely Vermont education — one that includes cross-country skiing, field trips to local farms, and personalized instruction.

Having a school in town means young children do not have to endure long bus rides on treacherous winter roads, they assert. And they say it helps attract much-needed younger families to Windham, where residents say much of the housing stock is made up of second homes.

But, critics say, the school is lacking many of the basics, such as dedicated teachers for each grade level, extracurriculars, and a full-time counselor.

Parents have also raised concerns that having 6th graders and kindergartners in such close proximity could lead to uncomfortable interactions, if not bullying. And, some say, maintaining such a small school is a strain on local tax dollars.

Bob Thibault, the Windham Central Supervisory Union superintendent, pointed out in an interview that Windham Elementary is not the only school of its size in the state.

In 2020, Windham Elementary was one of half a dozen schools across the state with fewer than 30 students, and one of only two with fewer than 20 students, according to state data.

"I think that small schools in general have challenges due to

their size," Thibault said. "And yet also, at the same time, small schools can really individualize a student's learning experience in a way that a big school cannot."

School officials say the staffing crisis this summer — during which the longtime chair of the three-person school board also resigned — will be resolved by the beginning of the fall semester on Aug. 30.

"We have new staff, a whole new board, and it is an amazing orchestra of collaboration that's going on right now," Abby Pelton, the newly elevated chair of the Windham Elementary board, said in an interview.

'I have concerns'

But that has not quashed parents' skepticism about the education offered by the school.

This summer, eight families petitioned the school board to pay tuition for their children to attend school elsewhere. Those children would represent a significant proportion of Windham Elementary's student body, although it's not clear how many expect to enroll this fall.

"Fifty percent or more of the parents have put in tuition requests," Bridgette Blanchard, a district parent, said at a July 27 board meeting. "What are we going to do about this?"

Officials admitted that the school was in a tough spot.

"I try to be an optimist and believe that with the right people in place that this little school can be an incredibly powerful educational experience for kids," Thibault, the superintendent, said at that meeting. "I have concerns, as well, around some of it."

He said that he had earlier proposed temporarily suspending class at the school for one year while it worked to rehire staff. Officials ultimately decided against that proposal.

At that meeting, the board rejected the tuition requests. In an interview, Pelton, the chair, declined to discuss the reasons for the rejections, citing student privacy, but acknowledged parents' concerns.

"I'm not going to downplay anything," she said. "Everybody's feelings are valid, whoever stands on whatever side of [the] argument. If a family had a bad experience, that's valid, and they have every right to advocate for their students."

After those rejections, Deborah Bucknam, an attorney representing six families, filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn those rejections — and to force the district to pay tuition for the children to attend other schools.

Even fully staffed, the lawsuit argues, Windham Elementary provided an inadequate education: The school has no full-time counselor, and children often have no peers of the same age and grade, according to the complaint.

And because of the small staff, instances in which a teacher is sick, absent, or called away for another reason could lead to "chaos" in a classroom.

"Upon information and belief, quite often 'all hell broke loose' during those times," the complaint reads.

'Substantially equal educational opportunity'

The case raises thorny questions about one of the most cherished tenets of Vermont's educational establishment: the concept of "local control," whereby communities are able to make decisions about their own governance.

Windham chose — albeit narrowly — to keep its public school open. But what happens when a substantial portion of the school's families don't want their children to attend?

Bucknam's lawsuit follows in the wake of a Vermont Supreme Court decision in another lawsuit, *Vitale v. Bellows Falls Union High School* or *Vitale v. Vermont*, which sought to create a statewide school choice program. Bucknam, a former Republican candidate



JEFF POTTER COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Windham Elementary School will open this fall with an expected enrollment of 19 students in kindergarten through grade 6 and strained relations in the town over a fundamental question: Is a small school a positive attribute or an educational liability?

for attorney general, also filed that case.

In March, the Vermont Supreme Court rejected that bid but did leave the door open for other such challenges. The decision "does not foreclose the possibility that a plaintiff could bring a challenge that satisfies the legal standards stated in this opinion," the court ruled.

"In order to state a claim [...] the allegations in parents' complaint must demonstrate that having school choice results in substantially better educational opportunities for Vermont children," the decision reads.

In the Windham complaint, Bucknam explicitly cited those prerequisites.

"The Plaintiffs will demonstrate that the factors set forth in

the Supreme Court's *Vitale* decision are met here, and denying Windham school children town tuitioning violates their constitutional right to substantially equal educational opportunity," the complaint reads.

"We're hopeful that the court will agree with us that *Vitale* requires the court to at least look at the evidence to see whether or not children are receiving a substantially equal educational opportunity, as compared to students who have school choice," Bucknam said in an interview.

The lawsuit names the town of Windham and the state of Vermont as defendants.

The chair of the Windham Selectboard declined to comment on the litigation, and

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Town of Brattleboro Recreation and Park Department Architectural Services Living Memorial Park Generational Improvements

The Town of Brattleboro, VT seeks Proposals for complete Architectural Services including Civil, Structural, PHVAC and Electrical engineering for the Skating Rink new roof system, new refrigeration and dehumidification systems, fire alarm and lighting. The Town further seeks proposals for the design of a new Maintenance Building to replace the existing building along with a small separate gravel parking lot and softball field lighting. Services shall include state and local permitting and construction administrative services. Project Location Living Memorial Park, Memorial Park Drive Brattleboro, VT.

Please Send your proposals to the Town Manager's Office, 230 Main Street, Suite 208, by 10:00 am on Wednesday, Sept.13, 2023. **Please mark your package LMP Generational Improvements.**

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

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT PROBATE DIVISION
Windham Unit Docket No.: 23-PR-03260
In re the estate of Kolleen Dodge
Late of Brattleboro, Vermont

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of the estate of Kolleen Dodge late of Brattleboro, Vermont.

I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**

Dated: August 16, 2023 Address: 5 Woodvale Road
Administrator: Tyler John Dodge Harrison W. Brattleboro, VT 05301
Name of Publication: The Commons 802-579-8617
Publication Date: August 23, 2023 Harrison1130@gmail.com
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Probate Division
Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE DISCONTINUANCE OF TOWN HIGHWAY 40, POTASH ROAD

Interested persons and persons owning or interested in lands through which Town Highway 40, known as Potash Road, from its intersection with Sweet Pond Road to its terminus approximately 0.2 miles south, may pass or abut are hereby warned of a public hearing to be held by the Selectboard of the Town of Guilford to consider the discontinuance of the aforementioned road in its entirety. Pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 709, the proceedings will commence with an examination of the premises, convening at the intersection of Potash with Sweet Pond Road promptly at 5:30 p.m. No testimony shall be accepted at the site visit. Immediately following the examination of the premises, the Selectboard of the Town of Guilford will meet at the Guilford Town Office to receive testimony from any interested parties. The Selectboard shall issue a written decision within 60 days of the hearing.

Date of Hearing: Wednesday, September 6, 2023.
Time of Hearing: 5:30 p.m.
Location of Hearing: Site visit at the intersection of Sweet Pond Road and Potash Road; immediately followed by a public hearing at the Guilford Town Office, 236 School Road, Guilford, VT 05301-8319.
Description of Highway: Town Highway 40, known as Potash Road, in its entirety, from its intersection with Sweet Pond Road to its terminus approximately 0.2 miles south.
Zoom meeting info at www.guilfordvt.gov

Hey!

Where are the bus schedules?

The Windham Southeast School District was unable to finalize district bus schedules for publication by press time.

You should eventually find them at the district's website, on its Caregiver/Community Resources page, at wesu.org/parent-community-resources.

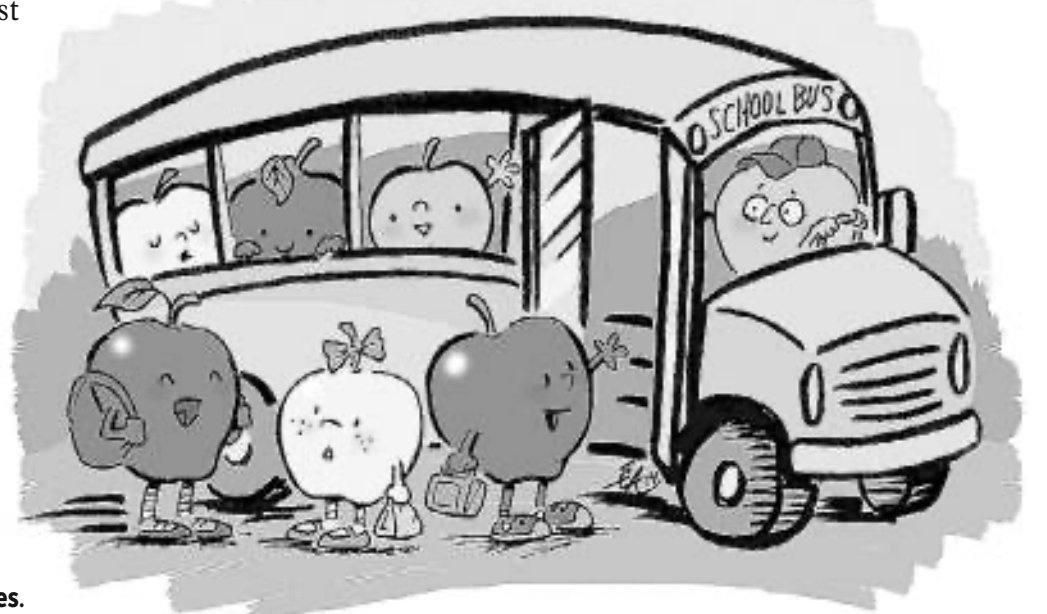


PHOTO BY SARAH ADAM (MADSAHARA.COM)/THE COMMONS

VSAC receives \$50,000 to support Afghan refugees

WINOOSKI—The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) has been awarded \$50,000 from the State Refugee Office of the Vermont Agency of Human Services to serve people from Afghanistan who immigrate to Vermont.

The funding, which will run through VSAC's Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), will enable VSAC to counsel Afghans on education and careers, as well as travel, materials, translation, and interpretation.

Hundreds of Afghans moved to Vermont in 2022 and 2023. "Vermont continues to welcome refugees from across the

globe who have become valued members of our communities. Vermont has had a vibrant refugee resettlement community and infrastructure for decades. With this grant, we will be able to deepen our work with the Afghan community to help them define a path to their continuing education, training interests, or career aspirations," said VSAC President Scott Giles in a news release.

Many of the people from Afghanistan who arrive in Vermont have a strong academic background and have worked closely with the United States military while in their home country. Others' educational

journeys have been interrupted due to ongoing violence or because they identify as women. The grant will enable VSAC to further support Afghans in charting a course to leverage the opportunities here. Examples of these opportunities are career counseling, learning to drive, and passing prerequisites necessary for a medical career.

VSAC's EOC program helps adults access learning opportunities, including classes, certification, career training, and college programs. Whether new to the process, returning to school, or avid, lifelong learners, many people may receive help in planning

their career paths and exploring education options, getting financial aid to pay for college or career training, or setting themselves up for success in school.

"I would definitely encourage students to use VSAC's programs. I have helped connect a number of friends to VSAC's EOC. It's super helpful; it's a great thing to do," said Wazir Hashimi, co-founder and board president of the Vermont Afghan Alliance.

Afghans who are interested in meeting with an VSAC EOC Counselor may call 877-961-4369 to schedule a free appointment.

Windham Elementary

FROM SECTION FRONT

spokespeople for the Agency of Education and the Attorney General's Office declined to comment, citing the pending litigation.

Under Vermont statute, the state's secretary of education is responsible for ensuring that schools are providing "substantially equal" educational opportunities. To do this, the secretary is

empowered to rearrange districts, close a school, or take "administrative control" of a school.

A spokesperson for the Agency of Education did not reply to phone calls or emailed questions, and it's unclear whether the agency might take any action regarding the school.

Meanwhile, Jenna Cramer, Windham Elementary's newly

hired principal, expressed excitement about the upcoming year.

In previous years, one teacher would teach all subjects for a particular grade level. But in the upcoming year, Cramer plans to divide classes by subject rather than grade level, meaning all students will have two teachers.

She acknowledged the division over the school but said it would

not impact students' learning. "I think people's emotions are high, and I 100% honestly understand that," she said.

But, she added, "we're going to make [decisions] based on what's best for kids. I'm not here for the drama."

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The Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (WSESU) and Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) welcome all new and returning students and their families. Parents, guardians, and family members are encouraged to call their child's school to arrange for a tour or classroom visit. In addition, there are many volunteer opportunities for adults of all ages in our schools. Please contact your local school for more information.

REGISTRATION FOR NEW STUDENTS

Registration for students entering the Brattleboro Schools (Academy, Green Street, Oak Grove) is ongoing and takes place by appointment at the WSESU Central Office, 53 Green Street during the summer months. Please call 802-254-3730 to arrange a convenient time. Early Education Services Head Start and Early Head Start applications are taken year-round at 130 Birge Street. Applications are also available at earlyeducationservices.org under the Contacts section. In Dummerston, please call 802-254-2733, ext. 101 beginning August 14, to arrange a registration appointment. Guilford Central School will be staffed between 9:00

a.m. and 2:00 p.m. starting on August 15 for registration. Putney Central School will be staffed starting the week of August 15. Please call ahead (802-387-5521 ext. 130) to make an appointment with Marisa Lazarus-Miner, School Counselor. Vernon Elementary School will be staffed the week of August 21 between 9:00 a.m. and noon, and from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for new families to register, or you can email mross@wseus.org to set up an appointment. Brattleboro Union High School (BUHS) will generally be staffed all summer between 8:00-3:00. Please call ahead (802-451-3424) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., if you would like to

make an appointment with the high school's Registrar. The BUHS school counselors are available starting August 19 for any returning student schedule changes. The Windham Regional Career Center (WRCC) registration process starts at each student's home school. See your guidance counselor about registering for WRCC programs. The Brattleboro Area Middle School (BAMS) will generally be staffed all summer between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Please call ahead at 802-451-3500 if you would like to make an appointment for registration paperwork or a tour. The BAMS counselors are available starting August 21st.

IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, August 30:
 • Early Education Services (EES) classes begin.
 • School for students in grades K-8 begins for Dummerston, PreK-8 in Putney, PreK-6 Oak Grove, PreK-6 in Guilford, and K-6 for Green Street, Academy, and Vernon schools. School for students PreK-8 begins in Putney with an 11:45 dismissal.
 • School for BAMS 7th graders will begin on Wednesday, August 30. Students and their families are invited to a "welcome-onboard meeting" at 8:30 a.m. on August 30.
 • Brattleboro Union High School - grade 9 only - attend at 8:45 a.m.

• PreK - Kindergarten dismissal information will be distributed to families before the start of school. The complete kindergarten schedule is listed below.
Thursday, August 31:
 • All 9-12 grade classes start at BUHS and WRCC.
 • BAMS 8th grade students' first day at BAMS.
 • Windham Regional Career Center open for grades 9-12.
Friday, September 1: Early Childhood Special Education Services(ECSE) begin.

Monday, September 4: Labor Day - No School.
Tuesday, September 5: 1st full day of Kindergarten. 1st day for Dummerston PreK.
Monday, September 11: 1st Full day of PreK for Guilford and Oak Grove.

SCHOOL HOURS

Academy School	Drop-Off: 7:50-8:10 a.m. Grades K-6: 8:10 a.m. (breakfast for all) Kindergarten: 8:20 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Grades 1-6: 8:20 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.	Oak Grove School.....8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. (PreK-6) Early Education Services.....8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (with before/after school care 7:30-8:00 a.m. and 3:00-4:30 p.m.) Brattleboro Union High School.....8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Brattleboro Area Middle School.....8:40 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Windham Regional Career Center.....8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Dummerston School8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. (PreK-8) Guilford Central School8:00 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. (PreK-6). Putney Central School.8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Vernon Elementary School.8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
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KINDERGARTEN / PRE-K HOURS

Academy School.....8:10 to 2:40 (11:30 a.m. 8/30 thru 9/1)	Dummerston.....8:15 to 2:45 (11:45 a.m. K 8/30 thru 9/1)	Putney.....8:15 to 2:45 (11:45 a.m. 8/30 thru 9/1 includes PreK)
Green Street School.....8:15 to 2:45 (11:30 a.m. 8/30 thru 9/1)	Guilford.....8:00 to 2:40 (12:00 p.m. K 8/30 thru 9/1 PreK 8/30 thru 9/8)	Vernon.....8:15 to 2:45 (11:45 a.m. 8/30 thru 9/1)
Oak Grove School.....8:15 to 2:45 (11:30 a.m. K 8/30 thru 9/1 PreK 8/30 thru 9/8)		

NUTRITION PROGRAMS AT SCHOOLS

Breakfast and lunch are provided at all district sites on a daily basis. Please check school newsletters in your district for serving times. School lunches and breakfast begin on the first day of school.

	Brattleboro	Dummerston	Guilford	Putney	Vernon	BUHS/BAMS
Breakfast	Free *	Free *	Free *	Free *	Free *	Free *
Lunch	Free *	Free *	Free *	Free *	Free *	Free *
Ala Carte Milk	\$0.65	\$0.65	\$0.65	\$0.65	\$0.65	\$0.65
Adult Breakfast	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Adult Lunch	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25

*USDA and State Funded - breakfast and lunch are free in 2023-2024
 NOTE: THESE PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Children need healthy meals to learn. In School Year 2023-2024, all children will receive a free breakfast and lunch regardless of household income eligibility. A la Carte items will have a fee due at time of purchase. It is still very important for families with students at **Brattleboro Union High School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Dummerston Elementary School, Guilford Central School, and Vernon Elementary School to submit the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals.** Even though school meals are free, these applications help us to track our community's Free and Reduced Percentage, which is important as it allows us to maximize our reimbursement from the state and federal government for school meals. Filling out and returning the application may help your family, your school, and community at large, qualify for important financial assistance. Grant funds for the school for more staff and telecom reimbursements for the community are just a few examples of the benefits of having higher free and reduced percentages. Free and Reduced Applications will be available through a link to Mealtime (mymealtime.com/apps) and a link to **Mealtime** will also be available on the WSESU website. A paper copy of the Free and Reduced Meal Application with instructions will be sent out to families with students attending the Provision 2 schools in August.

Academy School, Green Street School, Oak Grove School, and Putney Central School are Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools and will need parents/caregivers to complete the Household Income Form. Schools will send out these forms to be completed and returned to the school(s) your child/children are attending. Filling out and returning this information may help your family, the school, and community at large qualify for other financial assistance. Grant funds for the school and telecom reimbursements for the community are just a few examples of the benefits of having higher free and reduced percentages. Household Income Forms with instructions will be sent out to families with children attending CEP schools in August.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
 2. Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
 3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.
- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

SCHOOL - PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATIONS

Please direct any questions you might have regarding school registration, schedules, programs, transportation, or lunch to the following administrators.
 Academy School.....Kelly Dias 802-254-3743 Ext. 102
 Brattleboro Area Middle School.....Keith Lyman 802-451-3500
 Brattleboro Union High School.....Hannah Parker 802-451-3409
 Dummerston School.....Julianne Eagan 802-254-2733 Ext. 101
 Early Education Services.....Debra Gass 802-254-3742 Ext. 110
 Green Street School.....Kate Margaitis 802-254-3737

Guilford Central School.....John Gagnon 802-254-2271
 Putney Central School.....Jon Sessions 802-387-5521
 Vernon Elementary School.....Mary Ross 802-254-5373
 Windham Regional Career Center.....Nancy Wiese 802-451-3911
 Special Education Services.....Tate Erickson 802-254-3748
 Please make note of your child's school phone number so that you can report their absence during the school year. The schools require that parents/guardians phone to report each absence. Please phone your child's school within 30 minutes of

your school's start time. Please check your school's handbook for specific calling deadlines. When the school cannot confirm that the child is at home or excused, the absence will be reported to the police in the interest of student safety. Parent/guardian communication is important. During the school day the expectation is that our teachers are teaching and working with students. Therefore, during the work-week teachers will do their best to return most emails and phone calls within 24 hours.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

School cancellations due to weather are announced through School Messenger and on local radio stations WTSR 96.7 FM/WKVT 92.7 FM/WKNE 103.7 FM. We make every effort to announce school closings by 6:00 a.m. Early Education Services also provides school cancellation announcements on its face book page. The school calendar includes 4 snow days. If we use more than the 4 days allotted for snow cancellations, then the scheduled closing day of the school year will be moved accordingly. Example: If we have 5 snow days then the last day of school will be Thursday, June 20, instead of Tuesday, June 18 (keeping in mind that there would

not be school on June 19th, the observed holiday of Juneteenth). Similarly, if only 3 snow days are used, then the last scheduled day of school will be on Monday, June 17. Parents/guardians are encouraged not to schedule vacations or their children's summer activities within a day or two of the proposed closing date. Early school closings due to inclement weather occur when the district is advised that a storm's intensity will result in late delivery of children to their homes. On these days Brattleboro Union High School/Brattleboro Area Middle School/ Windham Regional Career Center is generally dismissed earlier than scheduled so

that the elementary school bus runs can be made to get all children home in a safe and timely manner (i.e., prior to severe road conditions and prior to dark). Early school closings due to weather are announced through School Messenger, and the local radio stations. It is essential that the schools have current telephone contact information.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is critical to the academic success of your child. Absences are the responsibility of the parents/guardians and will be pursued aggressively as truancy by the school district and State's Attorney's office. For more information, please see the district attendance policy contained in individual school handbooks.

WSESU SEEKS TO IDENTIFY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Windham Southeast Supervisory Union is required by federal law to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities. The process of locating, identifying and evaluating children with disabilities is known as Child Find. Windham Southeast Supervisory Union schools conduct Kindergarten screening each spring, but parents/guardians may call to make an appointment to discuss their concerns at any time. As the school district of residence, WSESU has the responsibility to identify and provide services to any child with special needs who may require special education and related services in order to access and benefit from public education.

If you have, or know of any WSESU resident who has a child with a disability under the age of 21 or a child who attends a private school located in Brattleboro, Dummerston, Guilford, Putney or Vernon, we would like to hear from you. This includes individuals who are homeless, migrant, home schooled and/or individuals attending private schools. Sometimes parents/guardians are unaware that special education services are available to their children. Please contact the School Principal at any of our WSESU Schools or the Director of Special Education, Tate Erickson, at 802-254-3748 or terickson@wseusvt.org.

Brattleboro Area Middle School	802-451-3500
Brattleboro Union High School	802-451-3400
Academy School	802-254-3743
Green Street School	802-254-3737
Oak Grove School	802-254-3740
Dummerston School	802-254-2733
Guilford School	802-254-2271
Putney Central School	802-387-5521
Vernon Elementary School	802-254-5373
Early Childhood Special Education	802-254-3765

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM (ESS)

ACT 117 requires that every local school district have an educational support system for children who require additional assistance in order to succeed in the general education environment. The Educational Support System is designed to meet the needs of those students who are at risk of not meeting the Vermont Standards and consists of a range of services, supports, resources, and skilled staff. It includes, but is not limited to, remedial and specialized reading programs, services geared toward students with challenging behaviors, support for students with limited English proficiency, health and nutrition needs, special education, Title I and other academic and non-academic supports. Please refer to your school's principal for further information.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF DESIGNATION OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION AND RIGHT OF REFUSAL

TO: All parents/guardians of students and to eligible students* currently attending schools in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District (including Brattleboro Union High School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Windham Regional Career Center, Dummerston School, Guilford Central School, Putney Central School, Vernon Elementary School, Academy School, Early Education Services, Green Street School, Oak Grove School, and the WSESU Early Childhood Special Education Program).
 Schools in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union / Windham Southeast School District may disclose designated directory information on students without the prior consent of the parent/guardian or eligible students and without any record of such disclosure. The following types of personally identifiable information have

been designated directory information:
 • Student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth;
 • Major field of study;
 • Participation in officially recognized activities or sports;
 • Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
 • Dates of attendance, degrees/awards received;
 • Most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.
 Disclosure may include such personally identifiable information contained or reflected in photographs.
 If you are an eligible student and are currently attending any of the above-named

schools, or if you are the parent/guardian of a student currently attending school in any of the above-named schools, you have a right to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of these types of information as directory information concerning your child or (if you are an eligible student) yourself, by providing written notice of your refusal, listing the type(s) of information which you refuse to have so designated, to the principal of the school your child attends (or the school you attend, if you are an eligible student), on or before the close of business on September 9, 2022.
 *You are an eligible student if you are at least 18 years of age or are attending an institution of post-secondary education.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS OF PARENTS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS CONCERNING EDUCATION RECORDS

TO: All parents/guardians of students and to eligible students* currently attending schools in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District (including Brattleboro Union High School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Windham Regional Career Center, Dummerston School, Guilford Central School, Putney Central School, Vernon Elementary School, Academy School, Early Education Services, Green Street School, Oak Grove School, and the WSESU Early Childhood Special Education Program).
 1. As the parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union / Windham Southeast School District, or as an eligible student, you have the following rights with respect to your child's (or, if an eligible student, your own) education records:
 a. To inspect and review the student's education records.
 b. To seek amendment of the student's education records if you believe that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
 c. To provide consent prior to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the law allows disclosure without your consent;
 d. To file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of law with respect to your rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). A complaint may be made in writing to the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 4512 Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-4605.
 2. The procedure for exercising your right to inspect and review education records is as follows:
 Parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible students may review a student's education records with an authorized member of the school staff by scheduling an appointment through the school principal (or, if the record is maintained in the supervisory union office, through the superintendent). Requests for a review or inspection of education records will be complied with no later than 45 days from receipt of a written request by the parent/guardian/eligible student. Requests for review of records in preparation for a meeting regarding an IEP or hearing relating to special education matters shall be complied with before the meeting. The school will respond to reasonable requests for explanations or interpretations of part(s) of the education records.
 The district will provide copies of education records, or otherwise arrange for access for inspection and review, to parents/guardians or eligible students where failure to do so would effectively prevent them from exercising their right to inspect and review the records. Charges for copies of educational records kept at the Central Office of the supervisory union will be based on the actual cost of copying as determined by the

superintendent. No charge shall be made for search or retrieval of records. At no time shall the copying fee effectively prevent exercise of the right to inspect and review the records. The district will not provide copies of standardized test questions or answers, nor will it provide copies of copyrighted materials. Where such materials contain personally identifiable information, the parents/guardians/eligible student shall be allowed to inspect and review the item.
 3. The procedure for seeking amendment of education records is as follows:
 a. If a parent/guardian or eligible student believes that the education records of the student are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights, they may request amendment of the record.
 The request should identify the part of the record they want changed, and should specify why it is believed to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. The request should be addressed to the school principal, in writing, who will make a decision, or refer it to an appropriate staff member for decision. The decision whether to comply shall be made within a reasonable time after receipt of the request.
 b. If the decision is made to comply with the requested amendment, the request shall be carried out promptly, with notice to the requesting party. If it is decided not to comply in whole or in part, the district shall notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision in writing and advise them of their right to request a hearing.
 c. Upon request, the school district shall arrange for a hearing, and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student, reasonably in advance, of the date, place and time of the hearing. The hearing shall be held within a reasonable time after receipt of the hearing request.
 d. The hearing will be conducted by the superintendent or designee (the "hearing officer"). The hearing officer may be a school district official, but may not be a person with a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing. The parents/guardians or eligible student will be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence showing that the record is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's privacy rights. The parents/guardians or eligible student may be assisted by one or more individuals, including an attorney, at their own expense.
 e. Within a reasonable time after the close of the hearing, the hearing officer shall prepare a written decision based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. The decision will include a summary of the evidence presented and the reason for the decision, and/or commenting on the disputed information.
 f. If the hearing officer decides that the challenged information is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right of privacy, the hearing officer

shall notify the parents/guardians or eligible student that they have a right to place in the record a statement setting forth reasons for disagreeing with the decision.
 g. The statement will be maintained as part of the student's education records as long as the contested portion is maintained. Thereafter, whenever the district discloses the contested portion of the record, it shall also disclose the statement.
 h. If the hearing officer decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right of privacy, the district will amend the record and notify the parents/guardians or eligible student, in writing, that the record has been amended.
 4. The supervisory union/school district and its member towns have a policy of disclosing education records to school officials with a legitimate educational interest without prior consent. A "school official with a legitimate educational interest" is defined as follows:
 "School official with a legitimate educational interest" means any teacher, administrator, other professional or service provider employed by or contracted with the district to provide educationally-related service (including, but not limited to, consultants, attorneys, auditors, insurers, evaluators, support staff, substitutes, assigned student teachers, interns, volunteers, teacher's paraeducators), or school board member who needs information relating to a particular student in order to carry out their official duties for the district. Where an issue is raised, the principal (or superintendent) shall decide whether an individual has a legitimate educational interest in the information or record.
 5. The supervisory union/school district and its member towns forward education records to other agencies or institutions that have requested records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, or has enrolled. Upon your request, copies of the records forwarded will be provided to you. You may request a hearing for the purpose of amending records.
 This Annual Notification of Rights is only a summary of rights. Your rights to inspect and review education records, and the school district's duty to have your written consent prior to disclosure of personally identifiable information, are subject to limitations. Further details are contained in the school district's detailed student record policy and procedure (F6), and in state and federal law.
 *You are an eligible student if you are at least 18 years of age or are attending an institution of post-secondary education.

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NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS ABOUT PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS

Students and the parents/guardians of students attending the schools of the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (WSESU) and Windham Southeast School District (WSESD), including Academy School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro Union High School, Dummerston School, Early Education Services, Green Street School, Guilford Central School, Oak Grove School, Putney Central School, Vernon Elementary School, Windham Regional Career Center, and the WSESU Early Childhood Special Education Program are hereby given notice of their rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, which provides protections where students participate in surveys, analyses, or evaluations funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

By law, the WSESU/WSESD and its member towns must make available for inspection by parents/guardians of such students all instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any such survey, analysis or evaluation.

No student will be required, without the prior consent of the student (if the student is 18 or is an emancipated minor) or their parent/guardian (for a minor student), to submit to any US Department of Education funded survey, analysis or evaluation which

seeks to reveal information concerning:

1. political affiliations;
2. mental and psychological problems embarrassing to student or the student's family;
3. sex behavior and attitudes;
4. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom they have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those with lawyers, physicians and ministers, or
7. income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such a program).

Parents/guardians have the right to inspect third party surveys of students before they are administered. Parents/guardians may opt the students out of participation in the collection or use of personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing that information (except for the development of educational products or

services), and the administration of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is not otherwise permitted or required by State law, including those without parental notification. [ESSA]

Questions or issues concerning this notice and/or the rights it describes should be addressed to the appropriate school administrator listed below:

Academy School	Kelly Dias 802-254-3743 Ext. 102
Brattleboro Area Middle School	Keith Lyman 802-451-3500
Brattleboro Union High School	Hannah Parker 802-451-3409
Dummerston School	Julianne Eagan 802-254-2733 Ext. 101
Early Education Services	Debra Gass 802-254-3742 Ext. 110
Green Street School	Kate Margaitis 802-254-3737
Guilford Central School	John Gagnon 802-254-2271
Oak Grove School	Mary Kaufmann 802-254-3740
Putney Central School	Jon Sessions 802-387-5521
Vernon Elementary School	Mary Ross 802-254-5373
Windham Regional Career Center	Nancy Wiese 802-451-3911
Special Education Services	Tate Erickson 802-254-3748

CERTIFICATION OF DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District, including Academy School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro Union High School, Dummerston School, Early Education Services, Green Street School, Guilford Central School, Oak Grove School, Putney Central School, Vernon Elementary School, Windham Regional Career Center, and the WSESU Early Childhood Special Education Program, certify compliance with the Safe Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Students and parents/guardians are informed that:

- Age-appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs are provided for all children.
- The use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol is wrong and harmful.
- The unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students on school premises is strictly prohibited.
- Disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion, prosecution and rehabilitation may be imposed by the district.

• Copies of the policies and counseling re-entry programs are made available by request, through the building administrators. Please also note that effective July 1, 1995, *the use of tobacco products by any person on school grounds is in violation of Vermont law.*

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

WSESU School Nurses follow the guidance of the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education through a set of Standards of Practice to provide health services for all students. WSESU Nurses use the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model to achieve goals outlined in school continuous improvement plans, wellness policies, and multi-tiered system of support.

Please keep your child home if they are sick. Symptoms of COVID or other illnesses that may keep your child home include: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea or vomiting, stomachache, and diarrhea. Stay in touch with your medical provider. If your child has a chronic condition that includes these symptoms, a note from the medical provider is recommended. During the school day students may be sent home with any of these symptoms and/or if they are unable to participate in their learning. COVID testing may be indicated at school with permission of the parent/guardian. The school nurse will review the need for a return to school plan after any illness. Students must be fever free without fever reducing medicine for 24 hours in order to return to school. Students

with the above symptoms must be markedly improved before returning to school.

Immunization Requirements and Periodic Hearing and Vision Screening

The WSESU PreK-12 programs will collect proof of immunization or exemption from students prior to entry and while enrolled in accordance with the 18 V.S.A. § 1121. These regulations seek to prevent the introduction and/or transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases within childcare facilities and schools.

Vermont State Statute 16 V.S.A. § 1422 states that school districts shall conduct periodic hearing and vision screenings of school-aged children that are aligned with current research and best practice recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Hearing and vision screenings will be conducted for PreK, Kindergarten, the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth and twelfth grade. In accordance with federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) regulations, parents/guardians are permitted to opt their children out of such tests. This request should be made in writing and sent to your child's school nurse.

Concussion Guidelines

WSESU schools follow the Vermont State Statute 16 V.S.A. § 1431 to develop guidelines, in consultation with the AOE, Vermont Department of Health, the Vermont Principals' Association, and the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust, to ensure WSESU schools take reasonable steps to prevent and to minimize the effects of concussions. WSESU schools follow this guidance to educate their coaches, faculty, students, and parents/guardians regarding the prevention and mitigation of concussion-related injuries.

Condom and Menstrual Products Availability

WSESU Nurses follow the Vermont State Statute 16 V.S.A. § 132 that states "In order to prevent or reduce unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, each school district shall make condoms available to all students in its secondary schools, free of charge." Condoms are placed in locations that are safe and readily accessible to students, including the school nurse's office. WSESU School Nurses also follow Vermont State Statute 16 V.S.A. § 1432 in order to ensure that all students attending a public school or an approved independent school have access to menstrual products at no cost and without having to request them.

WSESU / WSESD SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

All schools within the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union / Windham Southeast School District maintain the necessary policies of the operation of the school district. The policies may be reviewed and copies obtained from the individual school principals, from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 53 Green Street, Brattleboro, or on the district's website www.wsesu.org.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the intent of the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District, including Academy School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro Union High School, Dummerston School, Early Education Services, Green Street School, Guilford Central School, Oak Grove School, Putney Central School, Vernon Elementary School, Windham Regional Career Center, and the WSESU Early Childhood Special Education Program that the Boards and its employees will not discriminate against any intended beneficiaries of statutory protection (including but not limited to students, employees, parents, guardians, other members of the community or applicants

for employment or admission, and unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the school district) on the basis of race, creed, color, marital status, national origin, sex, age, handicap, sexual orientation, and gender identity in admission and access to, or treatment or employment in, any of the supervisory union/school district programs and activities, policies, procedures and practices, as and to the extent provided by law. (*Also refer to WSESU / WSESD School District Policy F23 – Policy on Prevention of Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying of Students, F34 – Transgender and Gender Creative Students.*)

Any person having inquiries concerning the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union District's or Windham Southeast School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or Section 504 is directed to contact Michael Kelliher, Equity Coordinator, WSESU Central Office, 53 Green Street, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301, tel. 802-254-3730, who has been designated by the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

In accordance with this federal law, the school district is required to keep you informed regarding specific information pertaining to your child's education. Your school will be sharing this information with you throughout the year. You also have the right to obtain information on your child's achievement level in state-wide assessments.

Right to Review Teacher and Paraeducator Qualifications: As a parent/guardian of a student within the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union / Windham Southeast School District, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires us to give you this information in a timely manner if you ask for it. You have the right to know the level of achievement of any paraeducator that works with your child. [ESSA]

ASBESTOS COMPLIANCE

The Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District, including Academy School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro Union High School, Dummerston School, Early Education Services, Green Street School, Guilford Central School, Oak Grove School, Putney Central School, Vernon Elementary School, Windham Regional Career Center, and the WSESU Early Childhood Special Education Program, have complied with the Environmental Protection Agency Regulations (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act) contained in CFR Part 763, which pertains to the requirements for having all school buildings owned, rented, or leased inspected for asbestos-containing materials and the preparation of Asbestos Management Plans, based upon the results of the inspections. These plans are available for inspection by the public, parents, guardians, teachers, and all other school personnel and they may be viewed at individual sites.

PESTICIDES

Due to the public concern about health and environmental risks associated with pesticides, each school will provide public notification prior to the application and use of pesticides in the building. If your child has a specific health problem that could be affected through the use of pesticides, please notify the school health office at your earliest convenience.

ANIMAL DISSECTION

It is the intent of the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District to comply with the requirements of Act 154 of 2008 regarding the right of students to be excused from participating in or observing activities involving the dissection or vivisection of animals. Students enrolled in District schools shall have the right to be excused from participating in any lesson, exercise or assessment requiring the student to dissect, vivisect or otherwise harm or destroy an animal or any part of an animal, or to observe any of these activities, as part of a course of instruction. A student who is excused from participating in such lesson, exercise or assessment shall be provided with alternative methods through which he or she can learn and be assessed on material required by the course.

SAFETY

The schools in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District regard any threats or actions taken or made that endanger the lives and property of our educational community seriously. Each school has in place safety procedures designed to help keep the school site a safe learning environment for all. The school system will involve local law enforcement agencies to the extent necessary to provide a swift response, proper punishment and prosecution. Students and parents/guardians should be aware that under Vermont State law, a person who initiates a false public alarm may be subject to imprisonment for not more than two years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both for the first offense. For the second or subsequent offense, the person shall be imprisoned for not more than five years or fined not more than \$10,000.00. In addition, if the offender is enrolled in a public school and has a motor vehicle operator's license, the license shall be suspended for 180 days to two years. If the offender is underage and does not qualify for a license, the person's eligibility to obtain a motor vehicle operator's license will be delayed for between 180 days and two years. [13 VSA § 1753].

VOLUNTEERS

TITLE: Volunteers and Work Study Students CODE D7 REQUIRED

The Windham Southeast School District Board recognizes the valuable contributions made to the schools by volunteers and work study students. Appropriate supervision of volunteers and work study students will enhance their contributions as well as fulfill the responsibility that the school district has for the education and safety of its students.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy and administrative rules and procedures developed pursuant to this policy:

1. Volunteer means an individual not employed by the school district who works on an occasional or regular basis in the school setting to assist the staff. A volunteer works without compensation or economic benefits.

2. Work Study Student means a post-secondary student who receives compensation for work performed at a school operated by the district as part of a work experience program sponsored or provided by the college or university at which they are enrolled. A student working toward a teaching credential who is placed as a student teacher at a district school is not a work study student.

Implementation

The Superintendent shall develop administrative rules and procedures to ensure that volunteers and work study students are appropriately screened prior to entering into service in the school district, and that only volunteers and work study students who have been screened and approved by the superintendent or their designee have extended unsupervised contact with students. The screening process utilized by the school

district shall minimally include an electronic check of the Vermont Agency of Human Services Adult Protective Services Registry and Child Abuse Registry Unit, a name and birth date check with the Vermont Internet Sex Abuse Registry for any person being considered for service as a volunteer or work study student, (as referenced in procedures D7-P attached). A person who is on the Vermont Internet Sex Offender Registry shall not be eligible to be a volunteer or work study student.

Date Warned:	July 22, 2019
Date Adopted:	August 7, 2019
Date Warned for Re-adoption:	October 27, 2022
Date Re-adopted:	November 8, 2022
Legal Reference(s):	16 V.S.A. §260

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. Recruitment: The Principal is authorized to recruit and approve volunteers and work study students to work in the school. It is the Principal's responsibility to be reasonably sure that the volunteer or work-study student is a person of good character with the ability to make significant contributions to the school. The Principal will require all volunteers and work study students to complete an electronic check of the Vermont Agency of Human Services Adult Protective Services Registry and Child Abuse Registry unit. The Principal may require volunteers and work-study students to complete information forms providing background information including, but not limited to, whether the individual is currently a defendant in a criminal proceeding, the dates, locations and dispositions of any convictions, including findings of guilt, pleas of guilty, or nolo contendere, for criminal violations. A person who fails to provide full and accurate background information in response to the Principal's request will not be permitted to work with students.

If the position for which a volunteer is being recruited involves regular unsupervised contact with students, the Principal will carry out a criminal records check on the final candidate in accordance with the District's employment policy (D1). The District will

CODE: D7-P

pay the fees associated with criminal records checks.

Commencing on February 1, 2023, transportation of students within a 35-mile radius of the school may be provided by a volunteer, provided that (a) the volunteer can show intent to complete a full Vermont Crime Investigation Center (VCIC) background check (i.e., has picked up the necessary paperwork from the District Human Resource Office and has a fingerprinting appointment scheduled with the Windham County Sheriff's Department) or (b) a second adult traveling in the vehicle has undergone the VCIC background check; i.e., a school employee. Transportation beyond the 35-mile radius must be provided via a contracted service. In the event of extenuating circumstances any adjustments to the travel radius must have approval of the Superintendent.

The vehicle owned by the volunteer driver must be insured under an insurance policy to indemnify against liability for damages for personal injuries of a minimum of \$300,000. Note: This does not change existing school procedures regarding a parent/guardian transporting their own child to a school sponsored event. However, if they transport any other children to a school-sponsored event, they are now a volunteer.

2. Placement: Placement and replacement of volunteers and work-study students will be made by the Principal or the Principal's designee.

3. Conditions of Work: Volunteers and work-study students will be informed by the Principal of the extent to which School District insurance policies protect them from personal liability resulting from claims against them based on negligence or other injurious conduct while acting in a volunteer or work-study capacity.

4. Supervision: Generally, volunteers and work-study students who work directly with students will be under the immediate supervision of a licensed professional employee and will not have unsupervised contact with students, except when that contact is of short duration and necessary in the context of activities planned by and under the direction of professional school staff or contractors employed by the school.

5. Policies and Procedures: The Principal will assure that all volunteers and work study students are familiar with the School District's Policies and procedures.

MANDATORY REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

It is the policy of the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and Windham Southeast School District to ensure that all school district employees report suspected child abuse and/or neglect as outlined in 33 V.S.A. §4911 et seq. Please refer to WSESU / WSESD Policy F10 "Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect" which may be reviewed or copies obtained from the individual school principals, from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 53 Green Street, Brattleboro, or on the district's website www.wsesu/wsed-policies/

TITLE: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect CODE: F10

Policy

It is the policy of the Windham Southeast School District to ensure that all School District employees report suspected child abuse and/or neglect as outlined in 33 V.S.A. §4911 et seq.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children whose health and welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect. It is further the purpose of this policy to make clear to all School District employees and school officials that it is not their role to be investigator, judge and jury in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. Rather, it is the role of School District employees to be faithful and timely reporters of suspected abuse or neglect so that allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators.

Definitions

1. Immediately means as soon as the abuse or neglect is suspected but in no case later than 24 hours after such abuse or neglect is suspected.

2. Suspected means the School District employee has reasonable cause to believe such abuse or neglect occurred. This does not mean that the employee must be convinced the abuse or neglect occurred. Doubts the employee may have shall be resolved in favor of reporting the suspicion. Further, the employee shall not refrain from making a report under this policy for the reason that there may be retaliation against the child because the employee has a confidential relationship with the child, or for any other reason no matter how well-intentioned.

3. Report means an oral or written description of the suspected abuse or neglect. If the report is made orally, the reporter should note in writing the person to whom the report was made and when the report was made. A report made to DCF shall contain the following:

- the name and address of the reporter
- the name and address, if known, of the child and the child's parents/guardians or other persons responsible for the child's care
- the age of the child
- the nature and extent of the child's injuries together with any evidence of previous abuse or neglect of the child or the child's siblings
- any other information the reporter believes might be helpful

4. Abused or neglected child means a child under the age of eighteen whose physical health, psychological growth and development or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of harm by the acts or omissions of the child's parent or other individual who may be responsible for the child's welfare (e.g. guardian, foster parent, stepparent, teacher, etc.), or in the case of sexual abuse, of any individual. Harm can be caused by the actual infliction of harm, including physical injury or emotional maltreatment, by allowing such harm to occur, by failing to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care, or by abandonment of the child.

5. Sexual abuse means any act by a person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child including but not limited to incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child. Sexual abuse also includes the aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring, or procuring of a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child.

NOTE: THE LAW PROVIDES THAT SEXUAL ABUSE MAY ALSO BE SEXUAL HARASSMENT. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING THIS SCHOOL DISTRICT'S POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT DOES NOT FULFILL A MANDATORY REPORTER'S LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE DCF REPORTING LAW. SUSPECTED SEXUAL ABUSE MUST BE REPORTED TO DCF

Implementation

Any School District employee or school official, regardless of whether they are a "mandated reporter," under Vermont law (33 V.S.A. §4913), shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to DCF, to the building principal /designated employee, and the Superintendent. If guidance is needed for reporting, one of the designated employees should be consulted. For the listing of designated employees please refer to Appendix A with this policy. If the building Principal or designee is the person suspected of child abuse or the person who suspects the abuse or neglect, the report shall be made to the Superintendent of Schools and another designated employee. If the Superintendent is the person suspected of child abuse or neglect, the report shall be made to DCF and the chairpersons of the WSESD and WSESU boards. The mandatory reporter, in addition to the school administrator receiving the report; i.e., the Principal, Principal's designee or the Superintendent, as the case may be, shall report the incident immediately to the Department for Children and Families (DCF).

Training

All staff shall receive training once each school year in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Such training shall include assistance in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

Availability of Policy

This policy shall be provided each year to the parents of students in attendance and to each employee of the School District including substitute teachers. Further, this policy shall be posted in at least three prominent places within the school building.

Date Warned:	July 22, 2019
Date Adopted:	August 7, 2019
Date Warned for Re-adoption:	January 11, 2023
Date Readopted:	February 28, 2023

Legal Reference(s): 33 V.S.A. §§4911 et seq. (*Reporting abuse of children*)
Cross Reference: *Prevention of Harassment of Students (F23)*

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USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

TITLE: Policy on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion

CODE: F21 Recommended

Section 1. Statement of Purpose

Windham Southeast Supervisory Union/Windham Southeast School District staff ensure safety for self and others at all times by prioritizing the use of de-escalation supports and only using restraint and/or seclusion as a last resort. It is the policy of the Windham Southeast School District that students not be subjected to inappropriate restraint or seclusion as defined by Vermont State Board of Education Rule 4500. It is the School District's intent to create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment, and promote positive behavioral interventions and supports in district schools. This policy is further intended to assist in creating a common understanding within the School District of appropriate interventions by district staff.

Section 2. Definitions

The following terms, as defined in State Board Rule 4500.3, shall apply to this policy.

2.1 Behavioral Intervention Plan means a plan that details strategies to address behaviors that impede learning, or are ongoing, and do not readily respond to general intervention or classroom management techniques, by teaching pro-social skills and other positive replacement behaviors. The plan may include positive strategies, program or curricular modifications, and supplementary aids and supports required to address problem behaviors.

2.2 Chemical Restraint means a drug, medication or chemical used on a student to control behavior or restrict movement that is not:
i. Prescribed by a student's licensed physician for the standard treatment of a student's medical or psychiatric condition; and
ii. Administered as prescribed by the licensed physician.

2.3 Functional Behavioral Assessment means the analysis of a student's behavior patterns before, during, and after rule-breaking or other inappropriate behavior for the purpose of guiding the development of a behavioral intervention plan.

2.4 Mechanical Restraint means the use of any device or object that restricts a student's movement or limits a student's sensory or motor functions unless under the direction of a healthcare professional for medical or therapeutic purposes. The term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student for the specific and approved therapeutic and safety purposes for which such devices were designed including:
i. Restraints for medical immobilization,
ii. Adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance or alignment;
iii. Vehicle safety restraints including a seat belt or harness used for balance or safety on a car or bus; or
iv. Seat belts in wheelchairs or on toilets.

2.5 Parent means:
i. A biological or adoptive parent of the child;
ii. A legal guardian of the child;
iii. A person acting in place of a biological or adoptive parent, including a grandparent, stepparent or other relative with whom the child lives, or a person legally responsible for the child's welfare;
iv. A foster parent or developmental home provider who has been appointed the educational surrogate parent by the Educational Surrogate Parent Program; or
v. An educational surrogate parent.

2.6 Physical Escort means the temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, or back of a student who is exhibiting minimal resistance for the purpose of directing movement from one place to another.

2.7 Physical Restraint means the use of physical force to prevent an imminent and substantial risk of bodily harm to the student or others. Physical restraint does not include:
i. Momentary periods of physical restriction by direct person-to-person contact, accomplished with limited force and designed either
• to prevent a student from completing an act that would result in potential physical harm to himself/herself or another person; or
• to remove a disruptive student who is unwilling to leave the area voluntarily;
ii. The minimum contact necessary to physically escort a student from one place to another;
iii. Hand-over-hand assistance with feeding or task completion; or
iv. Techniques prescribed by a qualified medical professional for reason of safety or for therapeutic or medical treatment.

2.8 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports means an approach to preventing and responding to targeted behavior that:
i. Is based on evidence-based practices;
ii. Is proactive and instructional, rather than reactive; Can operate on individual, group, classroom, or school wide levels;
iii. Includes a system of continual data collection; and
iv. Relies on data-driven decisions.

2.9 Prone Physical Restraint means holding a student face down on their stomach using physical force for the purpose of controlling the student's movement.

2.10 School means a learning environment receiving public funds or over which the Vermont Department of Education has regulatory authority.

2.11 School Personnel means individuals working in schools as defined in 4500.3(10) who are employed by the school or who perform services for the school on a contractual basis, and school resource officers, while acting in that capacity.

2.12 Seclusion means the confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is prevented or reasonably believes they will be prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include time-out where a student is not left alone and is under adult supervision. In accordance with 4502.2 (f), seclusion may only be used when the student is visually monitored at all times by an adult.

2.13 Substantial Risk means an imminent threat of bodily harm where there is an ability to enact such harm. Substantial risk shall exist only if all other less restrictive alternatives to defuse the situation have been exhausted or failed or the level of risk prohibits exhausting other means.

2.14 Supine Physical Restraint means holding a student on their back using physical force for the purpose of controlling the student's movement.

2.15 Student means a student enrolled in a school as defined in paragraph J above.

Section 3. Policy

The superintendent or their designee shall develop administrative procedures to ensure district/School District compliance with the requirements of Vermont State Board of Education Rule 4500. The administrative procedures shall include at least the following components.

3.1 Prohibitions against the imposition on students of mechanical or chemical restraints by school personnel and contract service providers.

3.2 Prohibitions against the imposition on students of physical restraint in circumstances designated as impermissible by State Board of Education rules.

3.3 Restrictions on the use of physical restraint and seclusion to circumstances allowed by State Board of Education rules, including provisions that allow the inclusion of restraint or seclusion as part of a student's individual safety plan only when that plan meets the conditions set forth in State Board of Education rules, and provisions that require the termination of restraint or seclusion, and the monitoring of students subjected to restraint or seclusion, as established by State Board of Education rules.

3.4 Procedures to ensure that only school personnel or contract service providers who are trained in the use of restraint and seclusion are authorized to impose restraint or seclusion unless, due to the unforeseeable nature of the danger of a particular circumstance, trained personnel are not immediately available.

3.5 Processes to ensure that impositions of restraint or seclusion are reported to school administrators, parents, superintendents and the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Education under circumstances and within the time limitations required by State Board of Education rules.

3.6 Processes to ensure that each school in the district/School District maintains written records of each use of restraint and seclusion in accordance with the requirements of State Board of Education rules.

3.7 Procedures to ensure that each school in the district/School District implements follow-up procedures that are consistent with the requirements of State Board of Education rules.

3.8 Annual notification procedures to ensure that each school in the district/School District informs school personnel and parents of students enrolled in the school of the policies and procedures pertaining to the use of physical restraint and seclusion, and the intent of the school to emphasize the use of positive behavioral interventions as well as supports and its intention to avoid the use of physical restraint or seclusion to address targeted student behavior.

3.9 Processes for the filing, investigation and resolution of complaints by school personnel or parents regarding the use of restraint or seclusion, including the designation of school officials who are authorized to receive complaints. The procedures for resolving complaints shall require that any complaint regarding the use of restraint or seclusion is investigated and written findings are issued within thirty (30) days of the complaint's receipt. If a complaint regarding the use of restraint or seclusion is unresolved at the school building level, it shall be directed to the superintendent in accordance with the complaint processes established by the Board in Policy C9, Public Complaints About Personnel.

Section 4. Implementation

The superintendent shall ensure that appropriate staff are provided training by programs recommended by the Vermont Agency of Education unless a plan is submitted to the Secretary of Education demonstrating how a training program not recommended by the Agency of Education contains the elements required of recommended programs and meets the purposes of the State Board of Education rules on restraint and seclusion. The superintendent shall report annually to the Board on the implementation of the administrative procedures required by this policy, and shall include any recommendations for changes, if any, to related school district/School District policies or procedures.

Date Warned: July 22, 2019
Date Adopted: August 7, 2019
Date Warned for Redoption: January 11, 2023
Date Redopted: January 24, 2023
Legal References: VT State Board of Education Rule 4500-4510 16 VSA § 563
Cross References: Policy F6 Education Records, Policy F41 Section 504 and ADA Grievances Protocol for Students and Staff.

SECTION 504 AND ADA GRIEVANCE PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF TITLE:

Policy on Section 504 and ADA Grievance Protocol for Students & Staff
CODE: F41 Mandatory

It is the policy of Windham Southeast School District not to discriminate on the basis of disability. The District has adopted this internal protocol for prompt handling and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Section 504 and the ADA prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. The District further provides assurance that strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against persons who utilize this Protocol. To the extent possible, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation of a complaint of unlawful discrimination. Nevertheless, a person is not required to use this protocol and may instead file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office: U.S. Department of Education, 8th Floor 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3921

The following protocol is available and shall be distributed to all third parties for their use in filing complaints of discrimination based on disability. This protocol will be distributed by the Building 504 Coordinators or their designees to all employees prior to the start of co-curricular activities every school year, preferably during the August In-Service, and again with the commencement of co-curricular activities immediately following the December vacation. It will also be distributed by Building 504 Coordinators, or their designees, to all third parties, at the time of their engagement for services.

Step 1: A person (an employee, student, or third party) who believes that they have been discriminated against by the District is encouraged, but is not required, to discuss the matter informally with the appropriate building principal (when the person is a student) or with their immediate supervisor (when the person is an employee). NOTE: If the building principal or the immediate supervisor is the subject of the complaint, or the grievant is not a student or employee, the grievant may, instead, contact the District Section 504 Coordinator, Rebecca Olmstead, 802-451-3423 rolmstead@wsesdvt.org. The person receiving the complaint, or their designee, shall investigate and then ver-

bally convey their findings to both the person who alleged the violation and the person who is the subject of the complaint within 10 business days.

Step 2: If the informal Step 1 process does not resolve the matter, OR if the grievant does not wish to use the informal procedures set forth in Step 1, a written complaint may be submitted to the either the District Section 504 Coordinator, Rebecca Olmstead, 802-451-3423 rolmstead@wsesdvt.org or the appropriate school specific Building 504 Coordinator (see list at the end of this document for contact information) who will investigate the complaint. [NOTE: If the Section 504 Coordinator is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should be submitted to the Superintendent who will appoint another administrator (or third party) to conduct the investigation. If both the Section 504 Coordinator and the Superintendent have involvement with the complaint, the written complaint may be submitted to the Director of Human Resources, Michael Kelliher 802-254-3730 / smousseau@wsesdvt.org. The complaint shall be in writing and signed by the grievant and include:

1. the grievant's name and contact information;
2. the facts of the incident or action complained about;
3. the date of the incident or action giving rise to the complaint;
4. the type of discrimination alleged to have occurred;
5. and the specific relief sought;

Or, alternatively, the grievant may use the 504 Complaint Form (attached). Names of witnesses and other evidence as deemed appropriate by the grievant may also be submitted. An investigation of the complaint will begin within 10 business days following the submission of the written complaint. The investigation may be informal, but it must be thorough and shall include an interview of the parties and witnesses, a review of relevant evidence, and any other steps necessary to ensure a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint. A written disposition of the complaint shall be issued within 10 business days of completion of the investigation, unless a specific written extension of time is provided to the parties. Copies of the disposition, subject to FERPA confidentiality, will be given to both the grievant and the person who is the subject of the complaint. If discrimination was found to have occurred, the disposition will include the steps that the District will take to prevent recurrence of any discrimination

and to correct its discriminatory effects on the grievant and others, if appropriate.

Step 3: If the grievant wishes to appeal the decision in Step 2, they may submit a signed, written appeal to the Superintendent (or Board if the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint) within 15 business days after receipt of the written disposition. The Superintendent/Board or their designee shall respond to the complaint, in writing, within 30 business days of the date of the appeal. Copies of the response shall be provided to both the grievant and the person who is the subject of the complaint. The ADA/504 Coordinator(s) will maintain the files and records related to any complaints filed under this protocol.

The District hereby provides assurance that it strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against persons who utilize this Protocol. The District will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided other accommodations, if needed, to participate in this grievance process. Such arrangements may include but are not limited to, providing interpreters for the deaf, providing taped cassettes of material for the blind, or assuring a barrier-free location for the proceedings. The Section 504 Coordinator will be responsible for such arrangements.

If you have questions regarding these procedures or desire to file a complaint, please contact either the District 504 Coordinator or Building Section 504 Coordinator (information attached).

Date Warned: August 24, 2022
Date Adopted: September 13, 2022
Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232f
28 C.F.R. § 35.101
28 C.F.R. § 35.107(b)
29 U.S.C. § 794
34 C.F.R. § 99.1
34 C.F.R. § 104.4
34 C.F.R. § 104.7(b), 104.61
34 C.F.R. § 100.6(d)
42 U.S.C. § 12132

NEW AMERICANS

We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our students feel safe and supported. This occurs when we create school cultures that are responsive to the needs of the children in our care, and our families. Under Federal Law, undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. [Plyler vs. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)]. And, under state law, all Vermont children, including undocumented children are required to attend school until the mandated age of 16. Meeting this obligation means going beyond telling families to enroll their student(s). It includes working proactively to ensure they feel safe, supported, and welcomed.

SCHOOL HANDBOOKS

Each school will send home with students, very early in the school year, a handbook that pertains to the rules and regulations for that school. Included in these handbooks are sections that cover attendance requirements, grading, discipline, extra-curricular activities and other pertinent topics. Parents/guardians are to review the handbook with their child, so that parents/guardians and students alike will be familiar with school policies. The BUHS Student Handbook is posted online at buhs.wsesu.org/student-handbook.html and paper copies of the handbook are available upon request. The BAMS Student Handbook is online at bams.wsesdvt.org. The WRCC Student Handbook will be sent electronically and is posted on the WRCC website. The Windham Southeast School District Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook may be distributed at individual school sites and is posted online at www.wsesu.org and the individual school websites.

TUITION

Students, according to Vermont law, must attend the school in the community where the student and their parents reside. Residence of a minor, for school purposes, is determined by where their parents reside according to Title 16, V.S.A., Subsection 1075. A few school districts in the area, such as Dover and Marlboro have no single designated high school. Taxpayers in those towns raise sufficient funds to pay for students who reside there to attend the high school of their choice. Vernon has no designated grade 7-12 school. Taxpayers in Vernon raise sufficient funds to pay for students who reside there to attend the middle/high school of their choice.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class in which they are enrolled at Brattleboro Union High School. Further, the BUHS faculty and administration believe it is the individual student's responsibility to get to classes on time. Students may lose the option of a numerical grade for a course if they are absent for more than 10 classes in a semester course that meets every day or for 5 classes in a semester course that meets every other day. Students may lose the option of a numerical passing grade for a full year course if they are absent for more than 20 classes. In the event that the student passes the course after exceeding 10 absences, their course grade is recorded as an S and a grade of 60% is used for the purpose of GPA calculation. School sponsored activities are not included in the total. The requirements for graduation are as follows. These may change in subsequent years. Ninety-seven credits are required to graduate from BUHS. Each course that meets daily for one block for one semester carries a value of four (4 credits). Specific requirements are listed below:

English		16 credits
Mathematics	12 credits	
Science		12 credits
Social Studies		12 credits
Physical Education		4 credits
Health Education		2 credits
Fine Arts (Music or Art)		4 credits
Keyboarding		1 credit (test out)
Diversity Education *		2 credits
Community Service		25 hours class of 2023 / 30 hours class of 2024
		40 hours class of 2025

* Required for Class of 2025 and future classes

The additional thirty-two (32) credits can be taken as elective courses in such areas as foreign language, business education, mathematics, science, social studies, Career Center courses, etc. The Windham Regional Career Center provides quality state-of-the-art training to secondary students and adults from Bellows Falls Union High School, Brattleboro Union High School, Leland and Gray Union High School, Twin Valley

High School, and Hinsdale High School. All students in grades 9-11 are required to be scheduled in all four blocks of classes each semester. Students in grade 12 are required to schedule three blocks of classes. Any exception to these provisions must be approved by an administrator. Brattleboro Union High School is transitioning to a proficiency based graduation requirement. In addition to passing a course with a numerical grade of 60% or higher, students must also demonstrate proficiency in course-specific performance indicators.

WRCC ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION
[As required by the 1979 Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination in Vocational Education Programs (34 CFR part 100, App. B, IV-O)]

Windham Regional Career Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or age in its programs or activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Kate Margaitis, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Green Street School, 164 Green Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301 / 802-254-3737 / kmargaitis@wsesdvt.org.

THE WINDHAM REGIONAL CAREER CENTER (WRCC) PATHWAYS 2023-2024

Introductory Programs

- Foundations in Career Development 80 minutes, one semester

Business Management

- Business Management Level I 120 minutes, year long
- Business Management Level II 120 minutes, year long

Early Childhood Education

- Early Childhood Education Level I 120 minutes, year long
- Early Childhood Education Level II 120 minutes, year long

Health Careers

- Health Careers 120 minutes, yearlong, includes Human Growth and Development and Nutrition
- Health Careers 120 minutes, yearlong, includes LNA Program and Medical Terminology
- Health Careers 120 minutes, yearlong, Anatomy and Physiology I

Protective Services

- Protective Services Level I 120 minutes, year long
- Protective Services Level II 120 minutes, year long
- Covers Criminal Justice

Automotive

- Automotive Technology I 120 minutes, year long
- Automotive Technology II 120 minutes, year long

Construction

- Construction and Architecture I 120 minutes, year long
- Construction and Architecture II 120 minutes, year long

Culinary Arts

- Culinary Arts I 120 minutes, year long
- Culinary Arts II 120 minutes, year long

Electrical

- Electrical I 120 minutes, year long
- Electrical II 120 minutes, year long

Engineering and Manufacturing

- Engineering and Manufacturing I, 120 minutes, year long
- Engineering and Manufacturing II, 120 minutes, year long

Forestry and Natural Resources

- Forestry and Natural Resources I, 240 minutes, year long
- Forestry and Natural Resources II, 120 minutes, year long

Aviation

- Aviation I, 120 minutes, yearlong (New 2023 - 2024)
- Aviation II, 120 minutes, yearlong (starting 2024 - 2025)

Academic Offerings

- WRCC Algebra II 80 minutes, semester or 40 minutes, year long
- WRCC Professional Writing and Communications, 80 minutes, semester long
- WRCC English Composition, 80 minutes, semester long

Career and Technical Student Organizations

WRCC sponsors a number of organizations and activities that provide WRCC students with opportunities to build upon and practice the knowledge and skills that they learn in technical programs:

- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- FFA (Formerly known as Future Farmers of America)
- SkillsUSA

- NTHS (National Technical Honor Society)
- HOSA (Future Health Professionals)

The WINDHAM REGIONAL CAREER CENTER does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and marital/civil union status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. The WINDHAM REGIONAL CAREER CENTER provides equal access to other community groups.

The WINDHAM REGIONAL CAREER CENTER offers additional services to students with limited English language skills or with disabilities so that they may benefit from these programs. Individuals wishing to obtain information about the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities should contact:

Kristin Vicere, Special Needs Coordinator
Windham Regional Career Center
80 Atwood Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301
Tel. 802-451-3927

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

WSESU Title IX
Michael Kelliher Human Resources Director
Windham Southeast Supervisory Union
53 Green Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301 802-254-3730
WRCC Designated Contact
Nancy Wiese, WRCC Director
Windham Regional Career Center
80 Atwood Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301 802-451-3586

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TITLE: PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS PROHIBITED BY TITLE IX**I. Statement of Policy.**

A. Prohibiting Title IX Sexual Harassment. Per Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 ("Title IX") the Supervisory Union does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities, including employment and admissions. All forms of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, are prohibited in the Supervisory Union. A Supervisory Union with actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an educational program or activity of the Supervisory Union against a person in the United States must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. A Supervisory Union is deliberately indifferent only if its response to sexual harassment is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. A Supervisory Union may be deemed to have been deliberately indifferent based on its restriction of rights protected under the U.S. Constitution, including the First, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.

B. Retaliation. Retaliation as defined by this Policy is expressly prohibited. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the Title IX Grievance Procedures set forth in Section IV.

C. Concurrent Statutory Obligations. While all forms of sex-based discrimination are prohibited in the Supervisory Union, the purpose of this policy is to address, and only address, sexual harassment as defined in Title IX and Section II.M. below. For conduct which satisfies that definition, a school's response is governed by this policy, and in those cases for which they have received a filing of a formal complaint of same, as set forth under the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV below. For other forms of inappropriate conduct, or conduct which may satisfy the definition of harassment on the basis of sex under Vermont law, including student misconduct and employment based statutes prohibiting unlawful harassment and other forms of misconduct, the Supervisory Union may have the separate obligation to address those behaviors as required by other school policies and applicable laws.

D. Covered Parties. This Policy shall apply to all students, employees and any third party who contracts with the Supervisory Union to provide services to Supervisory Union students or employees, upon Supervisory Union property or during any school program or activity. A third party under supervision and control of the school system will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from access to school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

II. Definitions

As used in this Policy and during the Title IX Grievance Process, the terms below shall have the meaning ascribed.

A. "Actual Knowledge" means "notice" of "sexual harassment" or allegations of "sexual harassment" to either (a) a recipient's Title IX Coordinator; or (b) any official of the recipient who has the authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the recipient; or (c) to any employee of an elementary and secondary school.

For purposes of this paragraph "sexual harassment" refers to the definition as contained within this policy. For other forms of inappropriate conduct, or conduct which may satisfy the definition of harassment on the basis of sex as recognized under Vermont law, schools retain the option and in some cases the obligation, to address those behaviors as required by policy and law.

Actual knowledge shall not be deemed to exist when the only official of the recipient with actual knowledge is the respondent.

"Notice" as used in this paragraph includes, but is not limited to, a Report of Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator as described Section IV.B.

Notice sufficient to trigger an obligation under this policy only shall exist where any employee has sufficient personal knowledge of alleged facts to be aware that if such facts were found to be true it would constitute a violation of this policy. Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability OR constructive notice shall be insufficient to establish or constitute actual knowledge.

B. "Complainant" is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute "sexual harassment" under this Policy. In order for an individual to be considered to be a Complainant they need not file Report of Sexual Harassment, nor a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator is not considered a "Complainant."

C. "Days" shall mean calendar days, but shall exclude non-weekend days on which the Supervisory Union office is closed (e.g. holidays, office-wide vacations), or any weekday during the school year on which school is closed (e.g. snow days).

D. "Decision-Maker" means persons tasked with either the responsibility of making determinations of responsibility (referred to as "Initial Decision-Maker"); or the responsibility to decide any appeal (referred to as "Appellate Decision-Maker") with respect to Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment in accordance with the Title IX Grievance Process.

E. "Determination of Responsibility" is the formal finding by the decision-maker on each allegation of Sexual Harassment contained in a Formal complaint that the Respondent did or did not engage in conduct constituting Sexual Harassment under Title IX.

F. "Disciplinary sanctions" are consequences imposed on a Respondent when s/he is determined responsible for sexual harassment prohibited under this Policy.

G. "Emergency Removal" for purposes of this Policy shall mean removing a respondent from the Supervisory Union's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the Supervisory Union undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. Emergency Removals as permitted by this Policy shall not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

H. "Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment" means a document filed by either (a) a complainant (or complainant's parent/guardian); or (b) the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment against a respondent AND requesting that the Supervisory Union investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. The issuance or receipt of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment formally triggers the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV of this Policy.

I. "Investigation of Title IX Sexual Harassment" Before the Supervisory Union can conduct an Investigation of Sexual Harassment under this Policy, against a Respondent, a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment that contains an allegation of sexual harassment and a request that the Supervisory Union investigate the allegations is required. Such investigation is a part of the Title IX Grievance Process, as set forth in Section IV.E.

J. "Remedial actions" are actions intended to restore or preserve a complainant's equal access to the educational programs and activities of the Supervisory Union.

K. "Report of Sexual Harassment" is any report which provides the Supervisory Union with actual knowledge of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment. Such a report may or may not be accompanied by a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. Without such a Complaint, the Title IX Grievance Process is not triggered. See Section IV.A and IV.B. regarding the process for initiating that process.

L. "Respondent" means an individual who has been reported to be the individual accused (i.e. perpetrator) of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment as defined under this policy.

M. "Retaliation" means intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination by either the Supervisory Union or any other person, against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX and/or this Policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with this Policy. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sexual discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this policy, constitutes retaliation.

Limitation in Scope.

i. Material False Statements. Actions taken in response to materially false statements made in bad faith, or to submitting materially false information in bad faith, as part of a report or during the Title IX Grievance Process do not constitute retaliation. A determination of responsibility alone is insufficient to conclude that a person made a materially false statement in bad faith.

ii. 1st Amendment Protections. The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation prohibited by this Policy.

N. "Sexual harassment" prohibited under Title IX and by this Policy is conduct on the basis of sex, occurring in an education program or activity of the Supervisory Union, against a person in the United States, which satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A Supervisory Union employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the Supervisory Union on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; OR
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, AND objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Supervisory Union's education program or activity; OR
3. Or any conduct which satisfies one or more of the following definitions:
 - a. Sexual assault: Any sexual act(s) directed at another person without consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is unable to lawfully give consent because of age or cognitive ability. Consent to a sexual act exists where words, actions or other non-verbal conduct objectively communicates a desire to participate in the sexual act(s). Consent to some sexual act(s) does not indicate consent to all sexual acts. Consent may be withdrawn at any time by objectively communicating through words, actions or other non-verbal conduct. AND/OR
 - b. Dating Violence: Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or an intimate nature with the victim. The existence of the relationship shall be considered with reference to the length of the relationship, the type of relationship and the frequency of the interactions between the persons involved in the relationship. AND/OR
 - c. Domestic violence: Felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom

the victim shares a child, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner or any other persons protected under 15 V.S.A. section 1101 from domestic abuse. AND/OR

d. Stalking: A course of conduct by a person directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

Limitation in Scope. For purposes of this policy conduct shall not be deemed to satisfy Title IX's definition of "sexual harassment" if the conduct occurred either (1) outside of the United States and/or (2) includes locations, events or circumstances over which the Supervisory Union did not exercise substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the harassment occurred.

O. "Supportive Measures" are non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services, offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Supervisory Union's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the Supervisory Union's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. These measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. counseling;
2. extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments;
3. modifications of work or class schedules;
4. campus escort services;
5. mutual restrictions on contact between the parties;
6. changes in work or housing locations;
7. leaves of absence;
8. increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the Supervisory Union campus;
9. and other similar measures.

III. Duties**A. Reports of Sexual Harassment**

1. Any Person May Make a "Report of Sexual Harassment." Any person may report sexual harassment whether relating to themselves or another person. A Report of Sexual Harassment may be made at any time, in person, by mail, by telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.

a. Any Staff Member May Receive Reports. Additionally, while the Supervisory Union strongly encourages Reports of Sexual Harassment to be made directly to the Title IX Coordinator, the report may be made to any Supervisory Union staff member, including, for instance, a counselor, teacher or principal.

b. In Cases where Title IX Coordinator is Alleged Respondent. If the Title IX Coordinator is the alleged respondent, in such cases either the Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment may be made directly to the Superintendent, who shall thereafter fulfill the functions of the Title IX Coordinator regarding that Report/Complaint, or delegate the function to another person.

B. Supervisory Union Response to Report of Sexual Harassment.

1. Duty to respond. The Supervisory Union will promptly respond when there is Actual Knowledge of sexual harassment, even if a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment has not been filed.

a. Supervisory Union Response Must Be Equitable. In its response the Supervisory Union shall treat Complainants and Respondents equitably by providing supportive measures to the Complainant and by following the Title IX Grievance Process prior to imposing any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a Respondent.

b. Reports of Harassment Received by Supervisory Union Employees Shall Be Referred to Title IX Coordinator. Where any Supervisory Union employee – other than the employee harasser, or the Title IX Coordinator – receives information of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment under this Policy, s/he shall, without delay, inform the Title IX Coordinator of the alleged sexual harassment. Failure to report will subject the employee to discipline up to and including dismissal.

c. Complainant Contact. As soon as reasonably possible after receiving a Report of Sexual Harassment from another Supervisory Union employee or after receiving a report directly through any means, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact the Complainant [and parent/guardian in cases where the complainant is a student under the age of 18] to:

- i. discuss the availability of and offer supportive measures;
- ii. consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- iii. inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint; and
- iv. explain to the complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

2. Formal Investigation of Sexual Harassment. Before the Supervisory Union may conduct a formal investigation of sexual harassment or take any action (other than supportive measures) against a Respondent, a Formal Complaint that contains an allegation of sexual harassment and a request that the Supervisory Union investigate the allegations is required and must be filed by either the Complainant, the Complainant's Parent/Guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator, as set forth under Section IV.B. below.

3. Initiating the Title IX Grievance Process. A Report of Sexual Harassment alone does not initiate a Title IX Grievance Process. Before the Supervisory Union may initiate that process, a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment must be filed under the procedures set out in IV.A. ("Title IX Grievance Process").

C. Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.

1. Process for Filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. The process for filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is set forth in Section IV.A. ("Title IX Grievance Process").

2. Supervisory Union Response to Receipt of Formal Complaint.

a. Investigation of Sexual Harassment. The Supervisory Union must investigate the allegations of a Formal Complaint unless both parties voluntarily consent to engage in Informal Resolution, or Dismissal otherwise occurs under Section IV. G. below.

3. Supervisory Union Written Notification to Parties in Response to Receipt of Formal Complaint. Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the Supervisory Union must provide written notice as set forth in Section IV.C. below of the Title IX Grievance Process. In response to a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Supervisory Union must follow the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV.

D. Supervisory Union Duty to Respond When Determination of Responsibility For Sexual Harassment Has Been Made Against a Respondent.

The Supervisory Union must provide remedies to a Complainant where a determination of responsibility for sexual harassment has been made against a Respondent designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Supervisory Union's education program or activity. Such remedies may include "supportive measures" but also need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the Respondent.

E. Reporting to Other Agencies.

1. Reports to Department of Children and Families. When a report made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4491, et seq. must report the allegation to the Commission or DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901 et seq.

2. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a report of sexual harassment is made to the Supervisory Union about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal shall report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Secretary. [If a report of sexual harassment is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the head of school is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.]

3. Reporting Incidents to Police.

a. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student conduct that may constitute sexual harassment may constitute an "educational record" regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent/guardian approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

b. First Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.

4. Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Reports made to DCF, AOE or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy, or other school policies where appropriate, to respond, and when appropriate to investigate and follow the Title IX Grievance Process.

F. Disseminating Information and Notice.

1. Notice of Title IX Policy. The Supervisory Union will make this Policy publicly available on the Supervisory Union's website (OR if the Supervisory Union does not maintain a website, available upon request for inspection by members of the public).

2. Notice of Title IX Obligations and Coordinator Information. The Supervisory Union shall include in all student and employee handbooks, and shall make publicly available on the Supervisory Union's website (OR if the Supervisory Union does not maintain a website, available for inspection to members of the public upon request) the following information:

- a. The Supervisory Union's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, that it is required by Title IX not to discriminate in such a manner, and that such requirement not to discriminate in the education program or activity of the Supervisory Union extends to admission and employment (all to be prominently displayed on both the website and in publications);
- b. The title, name, office address, email address, and telephone number of the Supervisory Union's Title IX Coordinator (all to be prominently displayed on both the website and in publications);
- c. A statement that Title IX inquiries may be referred to either the Supervisory Union's Title IX Coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. The same information shall be otherwise provided to students, employees, unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Supervisory Union, and all persons seeking employment with the Supervisory Union, or seeking to enroll or participate in the Supervisory Union's educational programs or activities. Those persons shall also be informed of the grievance procedures and process provided for under Section IV. of this Policy, including how to file either a Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Harassment, and the response the Supervisory Union will take in response to such

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filing.

3. Training Materials. Additionally, the Supervisory Union will make any materials used to train personnel as required under Sec. V.F. publicly available on the Supervisory Union's website (OR if the Supervisory Union does not maintain a website, available upon request for inspection by members of the public).

G. Record Keeping

The Supervisory Union shall maintain for a period of seven years records of **1. Sexual Harassment Investigations.** The Supervisory Union shall maintain records of any:

- a. determination regarding responsibility;
- b. any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent;
- c. any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal d. access to the recipient's education program or activity; and
- e. any appeal and result therefrom.

2. Any informal resolution and the result therefrom.

3. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.

4. For each response required of the Supervisory Union by this Policy to Actual Knowledge of Sexual Harassment, the Supervisory Union must create and maintain for a period of seven years the following:

- a) Records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Harassment. In each instance the Supervisory Union must document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Supervisory Union's educational program or activity. Where a Supervisory Union does not provide a Complainant with supportive measures, then the Supervisory Union must document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit the Supervisory Union in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

H. Confidentiality**1. Duty to Maintain Confidentiality.**

The Supervisory Union must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment under this Policy, any Complainant, Respondent, and any witness, except either:

- a) As may be permitted by the FERPA statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 C.F.R. part 99;
- b) or as required by law, such as reports to DCF, law enforcement or the Agency of Education as set forth in Section III.E above;
- c) or to carry out the purposes of 34 C.F.R. part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing or judicial proceeding arising thereunder, as set forth in this policy (Section IV.C.2, IV.E.7,8, and 10, IV.F.5., IV.G.3., and IV.H.7.);
- d) where maintaining confidentiality with respect to supportive measures offered to the Complainant or Respondent would impair the ability of the Supervisory Union to provide the supportive measures;

IV. TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCESS.**A. General Provisions.**

1. Triggers for Implementation. The Title IX Grievance Process is used only upon the filing of a Formal Complaint of sexual harassment as described below. This process must be followed before any discipline of a Respondent to allegations of Sexual Harassment may be imposed by the Supervisory Union.

2. Protections for Equitable Treatment in the Handling of Formal Complaints by Supervisory Union. The Supervisory Union response to a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment shall treat Complainant and Respondents equitably. In particular, this Title IX Grievance Process shall require:

- a) **"Presumption of Non Responsibility"** presumption that the Respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process;
- b) **"Objectivity"** an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence - including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence - and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or Witness;
- c) **"Conflict and Bias Free Personnel"** that individuals designated by the Supervisory Union to act as Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-makers, or to facilitate an informal resolution process, shall have no conflict of interest nor bias for or against a Complainant or Respondent individually, or complainants or respondents generally;
- d) **"No Interference with Legal Privileges"** such that at no point in the grievance process will the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, any decision maker, or any other person participating on behalf of the Supervisory Union, require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitutes, or seeks disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege (e.g., doctor/patient, attorney/client, clergy, etc.), unless the person holding such privilege (parent/guardian for minor student) has waived the privilege in writing to use the information with respect to the Title IX Grievance Process;
- e) **"Proof of Responsibility for Sexual Harassment by a Preponderance of the Evidence,"** which is only met when the party with the burden convinces the fact finder (the Initial Decision-Maker) that there is a greater than 50% chance that the claim is true (i.e., more likely than not). This standard shall be applied to all Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment, whether they involve students or faculty; and
- f) **"Reasonably Prompt Time Frames for Conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process."** The Supervisory Union shall make a good faith effort to conduct a fair, impartial grievance process in a reasonably prompt manner designed to provide all parties with a prompt and equitable resolution. It is expected that in most cases, the grievance process will be concluded - through at least the determination of responsibility decision - within 80 days after filing the Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. However, more complex cases or other case specific circumstances, may require additional time beyond that timeframe. In such cases, good cause must be shown and written notice provided.

1. Grievance Process Timeline.

- a. Investigation 20 +/- days (as the complexity of the case demands);
- b. 10 days for reviewing information prior to conclusion of investigation;
- c. 10 days after receiving investigative report -by either- party to respond;
- d. 10 days for decision maker to allow initial questions;
- e. 10 days for responses to questions;
- f. 10 days for questions and responses to follow-up questions;
- f. 10 days for determination of responsibility decision;
- g. 10 days for appeal (6 additional days for administrative steps);
- h. 10 days for argument/statement challenging or supporting determination;
- i. 10 days for decision on appeal.

2. Delays and Extensions of Time. At any stage of the grievance process, the Supervisory Union (through the Superintendent, or if the Superintendent is the respondent, the Title IX Coordinator or designee) may for good cause allow for temporary delays or extensions of time upon request of either party, or on their own initiative. Examples of good cause may include such things as availability of parties, party advisors, witnesses, school or school administrative office holidays or vacations, referral back to an earlier stage of the grievance process, concurrent law enforcement or other agency activity, or need to obtain language interpreters or accommodation of disabilities. For any such delay or extension of time, the Superintendent or the Title IX Coordinator will provide simultaneous written notice to the parties of the delay/extension and the reason(s).

3. Delivery of Copies and Notices. Except as specifically stated elsewhere in this Policy, for any document, information or material required to be delivered to a party or to a person assigned with responsibility under the Title IX Grievance Process, the manner of transmittal may be by electronic mail, regular mail or such other manner reasonably calculated to assure prompt delivery with evidence thereof (such as a commercial carrier or other receipted delivery). Hand delivery will only be permitted if made to the Supervisory Union official charged with the specific function under this Policy (e.g., Title IX Coordinator, Superintendent, investigator, decision maker(s), etc.). Any document required to be delivered to a minor or other non-eligible student, must also be delivered to the minor's parent/guardian. Copies should also be sent to a party's advisor if the information for the advisor has been previously communicated to the sending party. Under federal regulations, copies of the investigative evidence, as well as the investigative report, must be forwarded to a party's advisor.

4. Notice of Range of Disciplinary Sanctions and Remedial Actions Upon Final Determination of Responsibility.

a. Employee Respondents. "Disciplinary sanctions" against an employee respondent may include any available sanction available for the discipline of employees, up to and including dismissal or non-renewal for any other violation of Board policy, applicable individual or collective bargaining contract, or state or federal laws or regulations.

b. Student Respondents. "Disciplinary sanctions" against a student may include any available discipline or sanction, up to and including expulsion, permitted by Supervisory Union policies, and any other Supervisory Union rules and procedures or student code of conduct.

c. Remedial Actions. Remedial actions as to a Respondent after a Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision, whether employee or student, may include the imposition upon a responsible respondent of any additional non-disciplinary measures appropriate to effecting a remedy for sexual harassment, and may include such measures as no-contact requirements, scheduling adjustments, removal or exclusion from extracurricular activities, class reassignments, limits on future class registrations, restrictions on access to various spaces in the school buildings, reassignment of attendance, and similar measures fine-tuned to respond appropriately to the circumstances surrounding a successful complainant's right to access the Supervisory Union's program and activity. Additional remedial actions may include recommendations that a school-wide or system-wide response is needed in order to respond to the sexual harassment in a way that is not clearly unreasonable under the circumstances. In such cases, the Superintendent shall provide additional staff training, harassment prevention programs, or such other measures as determined appropriate to protect the safety of the educational environment and/or to deter sexual harassment.

5. Emergency Removal. Nothing in this Policy, or Title IX Grievance Process, precludes a Supervisory Union from removing a Respondent from the Supervisory Union's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the Supervisory Union undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the Respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act. Such removal shall not be disciplinary.

6. Administrative Leave. Nothing in this Policy precludes a recipient from placing a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of the Title IX Grievance Process. This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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B. Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment. The Title IX Grievance Process is initiated by way of a Formal Complaint ("complaint" or "formal complaint") filed by the Complainant, the Complainant's parent/guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator.

1. **Complainant Options.** In cases of Actual Knowledge (and/OR) Reports of Sexual Harassment, the Complainant retains the option to either file a Complaint of Sexual Harassment or choose not to and instead simply receive the supportive measures, except as set forth below.

a. **Filings by Title IX Coordinator.** In cases where the Complainant does not file a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator may nevertheless choose to sign and thus initiate a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, but only if:

- initiating the grievance process against the respondent is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances;
- in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment and in consultation with the Supervisory Union's attorney as appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator determines that a grievance process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to Actual Knowledge of sexual harassment.
- If the Complaint is filed by the Title IX Coordinator, he/she is not a party to the action, and the Supervisory Union must comply with all of the provisions of the Title IX Grievance Process relative to respondents and complainants.

b. **Supportive Measures.** The Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to discuss and offer supportive measures.

2. **Respondent Rights.** In cases where no Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is either filed by the Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator **no disciplinary action may be taken** against the Respondent based upon conduct that would constitute sexual harassment under this policy. Nevertheless, the Title IX Coordinator may contact the respondent to discuss, and/or impose, non-disciplinary supportive measures.

3. **Timeliness of Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.** Although the Supervisory Union will initiate the Title IX Grievance Process regardless of when the Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is submitted, delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to the allegations.

4. **Jurisdiction Over Parties.** Although there is no time limit per se to filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, Complaints may be dismissed if either the Complainant or Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the Supervisory Union.

5. **Manner of Filing and Content of Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.** Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by email and must be in writing. While forms may be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator or on the Supervisory Union or school website, at a minimum, a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment must:

- contain the name and address of the Complainant and the student's parent or guardian if the complainant is a minor student;
- describe the alleged sexual harassment;
- request an investigation of the matter;
- when filed by the Complainant be signed by the Complainant or otherwise indicate that the complainant is the person filing the complaint, or if not filed by the Complainant be signed by the Title IX Coordinator.

6. **Consolidation of Complaints.** The Supervisory Union may consolidate formal complaints of allegations of sexual harassment where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances and the formal complaints are against more than one respondent; or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents; or by one party against the other party. When the Supervisory Union has consolidated formal complaints so that the grievance process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references to the singular "party," "complainant," or "respondent" include the plural, as applicable.

C. Notification of Formal Complaint to Parties ("Notification"). Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Supervisory Union must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

- Notice of the Supervisory Union's Title IX Grievance Process (Section IV), including any informal resolution process.
- Notice of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment as defined by Section II.M., including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment as defined by Section II.M., and the date and location of the alleged conduct, if known.

a. **Supplemental Notice Required Upon Change in Investigative Scope.** If, in the course of an investigation the Supervisory Union decides to investigate allegations about the Complainant or Respondent that are not included in the original Notification, the Supervisory Union must provide simultaneous notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

3. The written notice must include a statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV. of the Policy.

4. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney (who may be present during any Grievance proceeding, including any related meeting or proceeding). The Supervisory Union may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.

5. The written notice must inform the parties of any provision in the Supervisory Union's code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

D. Informal Resolution. At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility (but only after the filing of a formal complaint), the Supervisory Union may offer an optional informal resolution process (e.g., mediation, arbitration), provided that the Supervisory Union:

- May not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to a Sexual Harassment Investigation of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, such as may occur through Informal Resolution;
- May not offer an informal resolution process unless a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is filed;
- Provides written notice to the parties disclosing:
 - The allegations of the Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment;
 - The requirements of the information resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to an informal final resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint; and
 - Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
- Obtains the parties' voluntary written consent to the informal resolution process; and
- Does not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

E. Sexual Harassment Investigation.

The Title IX Coordinator shall designate a qualified, trained, person to investigate. The investigation must:

- Include objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. (Evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the evidence concerns specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and is offered to prove consent.)
- Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the Supervisory Union and not on either of the parties;
- Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence;
- Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;
- Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any interview or other part of the investigation, including the opportunity to be accompanied by any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice. The Supervisory Union may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties;
- Provide, to a party (e.g., Respondent or Complainant – and parent/guardian as appropriate) whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;
- Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to the conclusion of the investigation;
- PRIOR to completion of the Sexual Harassment Investigative Report, the Supervisory Union, through the Title IX Coordinator, must send to each party and party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report;
- Prepare a written Sexual Harassment Investigative Report that fairly summarizes

REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS STUDENTS

All students riding school buses within the Districts served by E.M. Kuzmeskus, Inc. are expected to follow a few basic guidelines while riding the bus. These guidelines are put in place to assist the school bus driver with the safest possible transportation to and from school each day. E.M. Kuzmeskus wants to ensure that students are transported in school bus environments that are safe and as comfortable as possible. To this end, all students are expected to follow "school rules" whenever they are on the bus, and the following simple rules must be adhered to:

- The school bus driver is in complete charge of the school bus and the pupils and shall have the same authority in maintaining discipline as a teacher in the classroom. Pupils shall observe classroom conduct and obey the driver promptly and respectfully.
- Pupils must arrive on time (5 minutes before pick-up time) at the designated bus stops. When the school bus is operating on an established schedule, it cannot wait for children who are not within sight of the stop when the bus arrives. Pupils are prohibited from leaving or boarding the bus at locations other than their assigned bus stop. Parents/guardians must provide advance permission (co-signed by a school official) for pupils to be let off at any stop other than their usual destination.
- Pupils shall wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and at least 10 feet away from the bus until it stops, and should walk quickly to, from, and in front of the bus.
- Students must walk 10 paces in front of the bus before crossing and stop and cross at the driver's signal (thumb up).
- Pupils shall wait in an orderly line and avoid horseplay at the bus stop.
- Any unnecessary talking with the school bus operator is prohibited.

relevant evidence, including, without limitation, witness credibility, discrepancies, inculpatory and exculpatory information, and relevant Supervisory Union policies, rules and regulations, and the manner in which the same were made known to the pertinent school populations or specific parties. The investigative report shall include a description of the procedural steps taken, starting with the receipt of the formal complaint, and continuing through the preparation of the investigative report, including any notifications to the parties, interview with parties and witnesses, site visit, and methods used to gather evidence.

10. The investigator shall provide the Investigative Report in hard copy or electronic format to the Title IX Coordinator, to each party and each party's advisor, if any. Each party will have 10 days from receipt to provide the Title IX Coordinator a written response to the Investigative Report.

F. Initial Determination of Responsibility. The initial determination of responsibility of the respondent shall be made by the Initial Decision-Maker.

1. **Initial Decision-Maker.** The Initial Decision-Maker cannot be the same person(s) as the IX Coordinator or the Investigator(s).

2. **Opportunity for Relevant Party Questions.** After the Investigator Report has been sent to the parties pursuant to Section IV.E.10 (above), and PRIOR to making a determination of responsibility, the Initial Decision-Maker will afford each party 10 days to submit written, relevant questions to the Initial Decision-Maker that the party wants asked of any party or witness. Only relevant questions may be posed. The Initial Decision-Maker shall explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as deemed "not relevant."

a. **Irrelevant Questions and Evidence.** Questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the question and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.

b. **Written Responses to Questions.** The Initial Decision-Maker will provide the questions to the party/witness, with copies to each party, and provide no less than 10 days for written responses, likewise to be provided to each party.

c. **Opportunity for Limited Supplemental Questions.** The Initial Decision-Maker will provide 5 days each for supplementary, limited follow-up questions and 5 days for answers, and may provide for additional rounds of follow-up questions, as long as the provision is extended to both parties equally.

3. **Prohibition on Negative Inferences.** The Initial Decision-Maker may not make any credibility determinations based on the person's status as a complainant, respondent or witness.

4. **Presumption of Non-Responsibility.** The Respondent must be deemed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process.

5. **Written Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility.** Within 10 days following the close of the period set for responses to the last round of follow-up questions, the Initial Decision-Maker must issue a **Written Initial Determination to the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent and the parties simultaneously**, which, while applying the preponderance of the evidence standard, must include:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting Sexual Harassment as defined in this Policy, section II.M.;
 - A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather evidence, and hearings held;
 - Findings of fact supporting the Written Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility;
 - Conclusions regarding the application of the Supervisory Union's applicable codes of conduct, policies, administrative regulations or rules to the facts;
 - A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility (i.e., whether or not the respondent is responsible for sexual harassment), any disciplinary sanctions the Supervisory Union imposes on the Respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Supervisory Union's education program or activity will be provided by the Supervisory Union to the Complainant; and
 - The Supervisory Union's procedures and permissible bases for the Complainant and Respondent to appeal (as set forth in Section IV.H, below).
6. **Finality of Decision.** The Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility becomes final, and identified as the Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision either: On the date that Supervisory Union provides the parties with Written Determination of the Appeal, if an appeal is taken as set forth in Section IV.H, (below); OR Where no appeal is taken, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

7. **Duty to Effectuate Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision.**

- Supervisory Union Response to Sexual Harassment.** Once a **Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision** is issued, the Supervisory Union may implement remedies as set forth in Section III.D. above, and action as necessary to respond in a manner not deliberately indifferent in light of the known circumstances in cases of a Determination of Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision concluding responsibility for Sexual Harassment. The issue of responsibility for the conduct at issue shall not be subject to further review or appeal within the Supervisory Union (except as provided by Supervisory Union policy or collective bargaining agreement or applicable law). Appeals of disciplinary sanctions may be made pursuant to the Supervisory Union's ordinary review process for discipline, or to the extent applicable through any statutory or other processes provided under collective bargaining agreements or individual contracts.
- Responsibility for Response.** The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of remedies.
- Other Actions Pursuant to Applicable Code of Conduct, Policies, Agreements, Contracts.** The Supervisory Union may also proceed against the Respondent or Complainant pursuant to the Supervisory Union's applicable code of conduct or other Board policies, collective bargaining agreement, individual contract or administrative rules/regulations/ procedures.

G. Dismissal of a Formal Complaint.

1. The Supervisory Union must dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if the alleged conduct:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;
 - Did not occur in the Supervisory Union's education program or activity; or
 - Did not occur against a person in the United States.
2. The Supervisory Union may dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if at any time during the investigation or determination of responsibility stage(s):

- a complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
 - The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the Supervisory Union; or
 - Specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.
3. Upon dismissal of a formal complaint, the Supervisory Union must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the reason(s) therefore simultaneously to the parties.
4. The dismissal of a formal complaint under Title IX does not preclude the Supervisory Union from continuing any investigation or taking action under other Supervisory Union policies, code of conduct or administrative rules/regulations. In some cases, the Supervisory Union may have an obligation to continue an investigation and proceed under a different policy or mandated process.

H. Appeals. The Supervisory Union must offer both parties an appeal from an Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility, and from a Dismissal of a Formal Complaint, or any allegations therein.

1. **Method of Filing.** Either party may appeal the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment (or any allegations therein) by notifying the Superintendent in writing ("written appeal"), with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator. If there are multiple determinations of responsibility, the written appeal shall specify which ones are included in the appeal.

2. **Deadline for Notice of Appeal.** The Notice of Appeal must be in writing and received by the Superintendent, with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator, within 10 days of either the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the written Notice of Dismissal being communicated to the parties, as appropriate.

3. **Grounds For Appeal.** Either party may only appeal the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the Dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment (or any allegations therein) based upon one or more of the following grounds, which must be stated specifically in the party's written appeal:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; or
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

4. **Appellate Decision-Maker.** The Appellate Decision-Maker shall not be the same person as the Initial Decision-Maker that reached the determination regarding responsibility or the Dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Investigator(s) or the Title IX Coordinator. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall be trained as set forth in section V.E.2. and 3.

5. **Supervisory Union Notification of Appeal and Duty to Equitable Treatment of Parties During Appeal.** The Supervisory Union must notify the both parties in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.

6. **Opportunity to Brief Appellate Decision-Maker.**

a. **Deadline In Cases Other than Newly Available Evidence.** Except in cases of newly available evidence, each party shall have 10 days "reasonable and equal opportunity" from the date of the Notification of Appeal under section H.5. above,

to submit to the Appellate Decision-Maker a written statement in support of, or challenging, the Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility.

b. **Deadline in Cases of Newly Available Evidence.** In cases where the basis of the appeal is newly available evidence affecting the outcome, the party relying upon such evidence shall submit to the Appellate Decision-Maker such evidence or a summary of such evidence along with the party's appeal statement first and within 7 days from the date of the Notification of the Appeal. In such instances the Appellate Decision-Maker shall then forward such documentation on to the opposing party, whereupon the opposing party shall thereafter have 7 days to review and submit their Brief to the Appellate Decision-Maker.

7. **Written Determination of the Appeal**

a. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall provide a Written Determination of the Appeal after considering the record and the parties' appeal statements, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale of the result. The appeals decision maker will only overturn the Initial Determination of Responsibility upon a conclusion that it was clearly erroneous (i.e., either made on unreasonable grounds, or without any proper consideration of the circumstances). If the basis or one of the bases for the appeal was new evidence, the appeals decision maker may either make a determination of responsibility regarding that evidence or refer it back to the appropriate stage of the Title IX Grievance Process. The Appellate Decision shall be provided simultaneously to both parties, with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator and the Superintendent of Schools.

b. Upon issuance of the Written Determination of the Appeal, it becomes a Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision, as set forth in Section IV.F.6, with commensurate Title IX obligations for the Supervisory Union to act as set forth in Section IV.F.7.

V. Responsible Personnel.

A. Bias or Conflicts of Interest.

No person designated as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, nor any person designated by the Supervisory Union to facilitate an informal resolution process, may have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

B. Title IX Coordinator.

The Supervisory Union must designate and authorize at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with its responsibilities under this Policy, which employee must be referred to as the "Title IX Coordinator." Any individual designated by the Supervisory Union as a Title IX Coordinator shall be free of conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

1. **Notice of Title IX Coordinator Contact Information.** The name or title, office address, electronic mail address, and telephone number of the employee(s) designated as the Title IX Coordinator shall be provided to the following:

- all applicants for admission and employment;
- parents or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students;
- employees; and
- all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient.

2. **Duties of Title IX Coordinator** In addition to coordinating the Supervisory Union's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under this Policy, and any other duties assigned, the Title IX Coordinator shall be responsible for:

a. **Receipt of Reports of Sexual Harassment.** Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or electronic mail address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

i. **Responding to general reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment.** (a). The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the Complainant (or where Complainant is a minor their parent/guardian) (regardless of whether a formal complaint has been received) to discuss:

- Supportive Measures:** the availability of supportive measures (as defined in section II.N. above); to consider Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; to inform of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment;
- Formal Complaint** and explain the process for filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

ii. **Signing and/or receiving Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment and in such cases commencing the Title IX Grievance Process set out in Section IV. above;**

iii. **Coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures; and**

iv. **Coordinating the Supervisory Union's efforts to comply with its responsibilities related to the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV of this policy,** including any other specific duties as assigned by the Superintendent to fulfill the Supervisory Union's obligations under this policy.

3. **Conflict of Interest or Bias/Unavailability.** In cases where the Title IX Coordinator is unavailable, including unavailability due to a conflict of interest or other disqualifying reason, the Superintendent shall assure that another person with the appropriate training and qualifications is appointed as acting Title IX Coordinator for that case, in such instances "Title IX Coordinator" shall include the acting Title IX Coordinators.

C. Investigators.

1. **Conflict of Interest or Bias.** Any individual assigned to investigate a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

2. **Responsibilities.** Investigators shall be responsible for conducting Sexual Harassment Investigations as set forth in Section IV.E. above.

D. Decision-Makers.

1. **Conflict of Interest or Bias.** Any individual assigned as a Decision-Maker in the case of a Sexual Harassment under this Policy shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

2. Responsibilities.

Initial Decision-Makers shall be responsible for issuing an Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility following a Sexual Harassment Investigation and other duties set forth in Section IV.F. above.

Appellate Decision-Makers shall be responsible for issuing a Written Determination of the Appeal, and other duties set forth in Section IV.H. above.

E. Informal Resolution Process Facilitators ("Facilitators").

1. **Conflict of Interest or Bias.** Any individual assigned to facilitate an informal resolution process shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

2. **Responsibilities.** Facilitators shall be responsible for facilitating a process of informal resolution as permitted in section IV. D. above.

F. Training. The Supervisory Union shall ensure that training of the following personnel occur:

1. **All Supervisory Union Employees.** Training of Supervisory Union Employees shall occur relative to mandatory reporting obligations, and any other responsibilities they may have relative to this Policy.

2. **Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.** These individuals must be trained on the following topics:

- the definition of sexual harassment as contained within this Policy;
- the scope of the recipient's education program or activity;
- how to conduct an investigation, appeals, and informal resolution process;
- how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue; and
- conflicts of interest and bias.

3. **Decision-makers.** In addition to the topics set forth in II.D.2. above, decision-makers shall be trained on the following topics:

- issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant as set forth in Section IV.E.1. and IV.E.2.a.

4. **Investigators.** In addition to the topics set forth in II.D.2. above, investigators shall be trained on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, as set forth in Section IV.E.9 above.

5. **Training Materials.** Any materials used for trainings of Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must:

- Not rely on sex stereotypes; and
 - Promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.
- c. Be made available to the public either on its website, or if the Supervisory Union does not maintain a website, must make those materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

Date Warned: December 7, 2020

Date Adopted: December 21, 2020

Date Warned for Re-adoption: December 14, 2022

Date Readopted: January 10, 2023

Legal References:

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C 1681, et seq* 20 U.S.C. §1232g, *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*
- 34 CFR, Part 99, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations*
- 34 CFR 106.8, Designation of responsible employee and adoption of grievance procedures.*
- 34 CFR 106.30, Definitions*
- 34 CFR 106.44, Recipient's response to sexual harassment*
- 34 CFR 106.4, Grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment*
- 34 CFR 106.71, Retaliation*

17. The driver has the right to refuse students or any other person with any non-lap or potentially dangerous items. If transportation of non-lap items is necessary for school, parents should make arrangements to transport the items. **Exceptions may be prearranged, for school sponsored activities that require some of the above items; for example, band tryouts, band concerts, winter sports.** They cannot be transported on a home-to-school run.

Additional items NOT PERMITTED on the school bus: Footwear with cleats and/or spikes (must be in a bag), Skateboards / Scooters, Large instruments (other instruments must be able to fit safely on the student's lap or alongside the student and not obstructing the aisle), Hockey sticks, golf clubs, Skis/poles (exception for teams sports, but must be out of the aisles and secured), Large school projects that will not rest easily on the student's lap, Pets, live animals, reptiles, bugs, etc. Plants, flowers, Water guns, Any type of ball (basketballs, footballs, baseballs, soccer balls, hand balls, etc.)

18. Pupils are prohibited from hitching rides via the rear bumper or other parts of the bus.

19. Students are not allowed to cross behind the bus or walk along the sides of the bus. Students must wait for the bus to drive away before attempting to retrieve objects that fall underneath the bus.

20. Any violation of the above regulations will be reported to the appropriate building principal and disciplinary action will be taken.

We envision *The Commons* as the print equivalent of our own town common, a meeting place to exchange diverse views, a weekly gathering in which each of us can discuss the issues that affect our lives. Every town deserves to experience freedom of the press; it is now time for Brattleboro to do so.

We've earned a reputation as an active and engaged public that blends the Vermont legacy of independent thinking, strong commitment to community, and a willingness to take the lead on social issues. Our diverse population is worthy of a world-class print outlet that is responsive to our needs.

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—From an editorial in a preview issue of *The Commons*, published in 2005.

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Our SUMMER of CLIMATE RECKONING

VIEWPOINT

Misplaced public spending, from outer space to Putney Road

We spend 500 times more money to explore cold, dead space than to understand our wildly beautiful oceans. And we're paying for unnecessary repaving while we suffer from heat waves, droughts, and floods around the world — including, of course, here in Vermont.

Brattleboro
I DON'T KNOW about you, but I'm feeling overwhelmed by the cascade of bleak news this year from around the world.

Incomprehensibly huge forest wildfires in Canada (like the ones in California, or Australia a few years back, remember?). Heat waves, droughts, and floods around the world — including, of course, here in Vermont. The relentlessly destructive war in Ukraine, week after terrible week, that shows no signs of ending.

Add to that President Joe Biden's stubbornly low approval ratings despite his principled defense of democracy,

RICHARD EVERS
participates in environmental and peace activism.

inflation coming down, low unemployment, and now... the possibility of a third-party candidate who, pundits agree, will take votes away from Biden (the way Ralph Nader did with Al Gore in 2000) and thereby increase the chances of, for most of us here, the unthinkable: a second Trump victory.

My brother-in-law, a retired lawyer and high school history teacher, emailed me recently that he's cut back on reading about and watching the news



Lahaina burns during the night of Aug. 8.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

and events he "can do nothing about."

That reminded me of an adage I once read: "What's the only thing worse than knowing you have cancer? Not knowing."

I'll grant my brother-in-law this, however: Without a doubt, the more you know, particularly about what's happening to the world's natural systems, the worse you'll feel.

LATELY, I CONFESS, the image of Edvard Munch's famous painting *The Scream* has several

times come unbidden to my mind. And what's so terrifying about that image is the profound isolation of the screamer, on that bridge under a lurid, orange sky, while two other figures beyond him walk, unconcerned, about their business.

Yet, unlike that screamer, I know that many people I run into around town or at the farmers' market probably feel something similar to what I do. But the trouble is that outside of a program at the library or at 118 Elliott, the people I exchange pleasantries with rarely

talk about what's going on.

By way of contrast, in 2002–2003, shortly after I moved here, President George W. Bush began giving clear signals that he was going to direct the U.S. to invade Iraq.

A large group of people in the Brattleboro area spontaneously formed and starting meeting at the River Garden. There were no leaders, but there sure was a lot of energy as we tried to figure out how we might participate in some larger, nationwide effort to prevent that ghastly prospect from

becoming reality.

We obviously failed — utterly — but for a few months there we met and brainstormed.

In short, we really tried. As far as I can see, from reading the papers and listening to Vermont Public, that's not happening here with climate change — and certainly not among the young, whose energy and idealism are needed most.

IN THESE perilous times,
■ SEE UNCONCERNED, D2



Downtown Montpelier under water on July 11 following record heavy rains.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD SENIOR MASTER SGT. MICHAEL DAVIS VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

VIEWPOINT

A bill of goods that turned out to be a lie

We do actually have the ability to save life on our troubled planet. We need a strong enough movement to overtake the power and money, and doubt and denial sown by the enemy.

Putney
FOR THE LAST century or so, we Americans have been taught that we can live better lives by relying on a fossil fuel economy. We were sold a bill of goods, but it turned out to be a lie — and now rapid changes in the climate are, in a very real way, hitting us back with the actual truth.

The truth is, we have all

GINO PALMERI of Putney runs a small organic orchard, works as a bus driver, and serves on his local Conservation Commission. This piece comes to us via *ViDigger (ViDigger.org)*, where it was originally published.

become addicted to the mined fuel commodities known as oil, gas, and coal. This has been a kind of open secret in public discourse, and the companies that deal in these fuels continue

trying to hide the truth from us.

They will never stop willingly. It's a dangerous predicament, surprisingly analogous to
■ SEE BILL OF GOODS, D2

VIEWPOINT

Of course, the PCB lawsuit is a conflict

Can an attorney provide unbiased advice to school boards in matters involving PCBs, of which there will be many, when he is orchestrating a lawsuit that can yield a seven- or eight-figure contingency?

Westminster
EARLY IN APRIL, Attorney Pietro Lynn of the Burlington Law firm Lynn, Lynn, Blackman & Manitsky made an overture to superintendents of schools all across Vermont to join him in a suit against the chemical giant Monsanto over the widespread PCB contamination that is emerging as a significant health threat in a large number of the public schools in Vermont.

And furthermore, he had the firepower to do it, too, having teamed

DAVID M. CLARK is a member of the Bellows Falls Union High School board and former member and chair of the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union board.

up with a couple of giants of the national tort bar, the OnderLaw firm of St. Louis and Frazer Law out of Nashville, Tennessee.

It was certainly a noble gesture

toward those schools — 93 of them, in fact, which are signed on now, whether they know it or not — as well as a gargantuan potential payday for Lynn.

The attorney stands to see a personal windfall, which — based on his estimate of damages to Vermont schools running into the billions of dollars — could easily run into a seven- or eight-figure remuneration, based on his 35% take of the potential settlement after "expenses" are deducted.

Of course, the Vermont attorney general has also filed suit against

Monsanto, but as Lynn has pointed out, there's no guarantee that any portion of that potential settlement would flow back to the schools.

But then again, there's no guarantee it won't.

RECENTLY, the Bellows Falls Union High School board held a discussion about two small kerfuffles that this suit raises.

First, there's the small matter of the superintendent of schools' operational authority to sign the boards onto this

suit without their knowledge.

The other small matter concerns whether the enormous size of any fees potentially accruing to Lynn from this settlement would present a conflict of interest in any form with regard to his ability to provide unbiased advice to the boards in matters involving PCBs, of which there will be many.

After I made the argument to the boards that the superintendent lacks that operational authority and that attorney Lynn is, in fact, conflicted,
■ SEE CONFLICT OF INTEREST, D2



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VIEWPOINT

Time for Bernie to act on Yemen

Vermonters urged Sen. Bernie Sanders to lead on ending the Yemen War, and he agreed. Now he must do it.

ON Aug. 10, as Sen. Bernie Sanders met with seniors in Brattleboro, Action Corps Vermont members submitted questions from Vermonters, he recommitted to taking action in the Senate to reclaim congressional constitutional responsibility over war, including in Yemen.

Now is the time for Bernie to make good on that commitment. He needs to introduce and support legislation to stop U.S. complicity in the ongoing Yemen crisis.

During the recent discussion in Brattleboro, constituents reminded him of his Dec. 13, 2022 promise, when he withdrew his Yemen War Powers Resolution due to pressure from the Biden administration.

Sen. Sanders said in December, “I look forward to working with the administration which is opposed to this resolution, and see if we can come up with something that is strong and effective. If we do not, I will be back.”

“We’re not giving up on that issue,” he said on Aug. 10 in Brattleboro.

That’s good to hear.

SINCE April 1, 2022, Saudi Arabia has stopped bombing Yemen — a victory that U.S. peace

ISAAC EVANS-FRANTZ, of Brattleboro, is the executive director of Action Corps, an organization with volunteers in 30 states who campaign for U.S. policies to save lives around the world. He notes that people can still sign a petition (bit.ly/728-yemen) calling on Sanders to reintroduce his Yemen War Powers Resolution and to sign on to the Murphy-Lee 502b Saudi resolution, by next month.

advocates who lobbied Congress helped achieve.

But the Saudi blockade continues to strangle Yemen, and this blockade is an act of war. Without congressional action to prohibit U.S. participation, Saudi Arabia could resume its airstrikes with U.S. bombs and U.S.-serviced fighter jets at any time.

As the senator acknowledged in Brattleboro, “Some food is getting in, some medical equipment is getting in.” But the devastating blockade continues to kill. Saudi Arabia prevents medicine, medical equipment, and other basic goods from entering the country, blocks most flights to and from Yemen’s capital city, and is withholding Yemen’s oil and gas revenues from the Yemeni

people.

Meanwhile, the Biden State Department this past spring offered more weapons sales to Saudi Arabia to use against Yemenis — at a time when Saudis and Yemenis were holding historic peace talks. The Biden State Department now appears to be an impediment to peace in Yemen, as it seems to care more now about “containing Iranian influence” in the Middle East than in encouraging Saudi Arabia to fully exit the war.

In pushing for the Saudi-Israel “normalization” deal, the U.S. is offering increased military support for Saudi Arabia, while the Saudi government continues to wage a brutal air and sea blockade against its neighbor Yemen.

IN THIS CONTEXT, it is time for Sen. Sanders to reintroduce his Yemen War Powers Resolution and cosponsor the bipartisan 502b resolution to hold the Saudi government and the Biden State Department accountable to the values and interests of the majority of Americans.

When he takes action in the Senate, he will not be alone.

In announcing his support for Bernie’s bill in December, Sen. Chris Murphy affirmed that unconstitutional U.S. military participation in the Saudi war in Yemen continues.

In May, Sen. Peter Welch released a tweet in support of the Yemen peace talks: “I’m encouraged by the progress toward ending Yemen’s civil war. This is a humanitarian crisis. We should end U.S. military support to this Saudi-led war and help relieve the suffering of the Yemeni people.”

Most Senate Democrats will stand with Bernie to end the war, including the blockade.

Similarly, Rep. Becca Balint was one of 39 House members who signed a letter in May calling for the lifting of the Saudi blockade of Yemen and threatening the introduction of a Yemen War Powers Resolution in the House in the absence of executive action. When the House has been allowed to vote, its members have voted to end the Yemen war on a bipartisan basis.

Vermonters have been calling on Sen. Sanders to follow through on his leadership to help end U.S. participation in the war in Yemen at multiple rallies this year. The Vermont Progressive Party and Libertarian Party of Vermont released statements in March calling on Sen. Sanders to reintroduce his Yemen War Powers Resolution.

In May I spoke both privately and publicly to Bernie about doing just that.

Now he just needs to do it. Vermonters will be with him.

Bill of goods

asking the heroin distributor to please stop selling that harmful stuff. It can’t work without major political action: Laws need to be written and enforced.

Drug gangs simply use guns, street terror, and just plain desperation to keep their piece of the drug profits. In comparison, fossil fuel companies’ profitable exploits have historically been funded by government subsidies and military support.

Then they pour a huge chunk of their profits into public relations, lobbying, and advertising — an arsenal of misinformation — used to suppress solar power and other sustainable technologies and promote an enormous set of lies.

So goes the story of how our economy, our whole society, became dependent on the fossil fuels they sell. After more than a century of being subject to Big Fossil Fuel’s enormous set of lies, our population is now dependent upon a massively

unsustainable lifestyle, one based on the appealing idea of “limitless individual freedom” of burning cheap gas, oil, and coal.

BY THE NEW millennium, the U.S. and other wealthier countries had gotten stuck in a deadly trap.

Our dependence, and the day-to-day climate denial that goes along with it, has suddenly become the biggest existential challenge of human history. Climate scientists have shown unquestionably what rapid changes must occur in how we live. How we grow food, heat our homes, travel, and produce power all must be radically altered to shrink carbon emissions.

“Must”? We can count on the skeptics to sow doubt about the science. Will they continue to question the increasing heat waves, forest fires, and mega-storms? Doubt

feeds the climate denial, even when the evidence of human-fueled “natural” disasters has become a daily news event.

Even worse, now denial is clogging our own lungs and flooding our own basements.

THE FIRST STEP toward healing ourselves and our planet is simply admitting that we are all a part of the problem. It’s the same first step as in recovery from drug addiction, but so far this is not going well at all.

Next will come the many steps to transform the whole economy so that people no longer will need the stuff called fossil fuels.

The sustainable, appropriate technology for achieving these complex changes has been coming along great. We already have the advanced solar, wind, battery, and other technologies we need in order to convert from the fossil fuel economy.

So, why aren’t our leaders

FROM SECTION FRONT

— except the most progressive ones — willing to take us to this new, greener future?

SO MUCH FOR the demand side. Imagine if regulations could be put into place internationally to squeeze the supply side of our huge fossil fuel economy.

In other words, in a world based on free-market capitalism, is it even possible to rein in the oil companies’ continued exploration and extraction of the oil, gas, and coal that we know we need to quit?

We do actually have the ability to save life on our troubled planet. We need a strong enough movement to overtake the power and money, and doubt and denial sown by the enemy.

What we are sorely lacking is the political will (and individual will) to do it — starting now, before it’s too late.

VIEWPOINT

Our wildlife board won’t act in wildlife’s interests

Vermont’s Fish & Wildlife Board is entirely made up of hunters, trappers, and anglers — the regulated regulating themselves. What could possibly go wrong?

WHO’S IN on bludgeoning animals? Do you support the inhumane treatment of wildlife? Gov. Phil Scott wants you to apply to the Fish & Wildlife Board!

During a recent Fish & Wildlife Board meeting where the board was required by the Legislature to come up with regulations on how to humanely trap and kill animals, one of Gov. Scott’s board-appointed members representing Chittenden County recommended “bludgeoning” trapped animals.

Some of you might recall those anti-fur commercials from the 1980s showing baby seals being clubbed to death. Can you believe that that is happening right now in Vermont to trapped foxes, raccoons, bobcats, and other wildlife?

Not bad enough?

That same board appointee at the same meeting suggested, “Remove the word ‘humane’” from the proposed trapping recommendations.

Not enough?

OK, one more. This same appointee ultimately said, “I’ll make a motion to amend 4.16 to dispatch trapped animals to include [...] manually applied blunt force.”

What do the good people of Chittenden County think of their board representative talking about our cherished wildlife in such a callous, coldhearted way?

THIS VOLUNTEER Fish & Wildlife Board is entirely made up of hunters, trappers, and anglers who don’t represent most Vermonters who care deeply about animal welfare. It is the regulated regulating themselves. What could possibly go wrong?

For people who care about the humane treatment of animals, beware when listening to the board’s discussions during the meetings. It can be hard to hear them talk about living,

ANNIE SMITH has described herself in legislative testimony as an animal activist. “We do this all in our free time and push other things aside because it is so important to us, others, and the planet as a whole,” she said to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife.

feeling animals in such an uncaring manner.

It’s also hard witnessing their total disregard — I’d even say disdain — for those who care about humane treatment of animals. It’s no wonder Vermonters are taking their concerns to the Legislature. This board cannot be trusted to act in the best interest of wildlife.

It’s solely due to wildlife advocates bringing these issues to the Legislature that Fish & Wildlife is finally being tasked with addressing the inherent cruelties of trapping.

BUT THE PROBLEMS don’t end with the Fish & Wildlife Board. Gov. Scott also appointed a commissioner of the Department of Fish and Wildlife who has no — repeat, no — credentials in wildlife sciences or biology.

Clearly, the governor believes that Vermont Fish and Wildlife is so unimportant that the personnel, and the mission, do not deserve a wildlife professional calling the shots.

Gov. Scott has polished his image as a guy you want to have a beer with. However, his choice of Fish and Wildlife board members and commissioner reveal a person who is out of touch with most Vermonters’ view of wildlife.

When his hand-picked representatives advocate for bludgeoning and the inhumane treatment of wild animals, it shows a dark and ugly trait or monstrous blind spot that should worry all of us.

Unconcerned

Vermont’s environmental priorities might be exemplified locally by the two hugely expensive but unnecessary repaving projects of Route 30 and, soon, Putney Road.

I’ve traveled Putney Road at all times of the day (except morning rush hour) for years and have never experienced a delay unless there was an accident. Imagine (as John Lennon might have asked) if just a tiny fraction of those construction costs were used to buy a fleet of electric buses and other vehicles.

Meanwhile, there’s no

available community solar project anywhere in the state that one can buy into. I’ve tried, and was told they don’t exist.

The recently passed Affordable Heat Act — which won’t go into effect for two years — is noteworthy, but the expected amount of fossil fuel reduction and biofuels increase (the reason 350 Vermont did not support it) is questionable, along with whether the workforce is available to install thousands of electric heat pumps.

Windmills? Forget it. Local communities veto them whenever they’re proposed.

In 2022, electricity generated from solar and wind in Vermont amounted to a whopping 2% to 3%. Weatherization is definitely the biggest bang for the buck? Not on any game-changing scale.

On the national level, there’s obviously so much that needs to be done and done fast, but I want here to bring to readers’ attention one obscure statistic that has nagged at me constantly and exacerbated my pessimism. It comes from an op-ed in the July 1 *New York Times* by Fabien Cousteau.

The grandson of the famed oceanographer, Cousteau talks about the vital (to put it mildly) importance of healthy oceans to both human and, of course, non-human survival.

To take just one of many examples, 50% or more of Earth’s oxygen comes from ocean phytoplankton. And yet — get this — Cousteau writes, “in 2022, NASA received more than 500 times as much funding as NOAA [National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration] did for ocean exploration and research.”

Five hundred times more money to explore cold, dead space than to understand our wildly beautiful oceans from whence all life evolved, and where most still lives. That just blows my already troubled mind!

And it’s a glaring example — to me, at least — of the frightening insanity of the United States of America’s non-response to the crisis at hand.

ONE OF THE GREAT environmental books of the 20th century (along with Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, and Bill McKibben’s *The End of Nature*) is *The Dream of the Earth*, by Thomas Berry, a Jesuit theologian who outgrew Catholicism, in the conventional sense.

In talks I have of his, he sometimes quips that what the world needs nowadays are not more theologians but more geologists.

One of Berry’s most original and important ideas was that we as humans — the vast majority of us, at least, in this time of ecological peril and mass species extinction — are autistic vis-à-vis any meaningful relationship to Earth. That is, we’re walled

off into ourselves, and therefore profoundly cut off from and bereft of a deep connection to the natural world.

Case in point, to return to Cousteau: We’re spiritually incapable of love for the oceans and all the abundant life therein. And it inexorably follows that one will sacrifice little or nothing to protect that which one doesn’t or can’t love.

For me, the supremely gross disparity between funding for space adventures (Aw, but what about all the pretty, computer-enhanced pictures?) versus vitally needed exploration and study of our vast but imperiled oceans — a disparity enabled by an apparently bipartisan consensus — shines a very harsh light on the fact that we’re nowhere near being able to meaningfully connect to that which so desperately needs our love, protection, and preservation.

Would it help change consciousness to just admit the truth — that we’re all numbed and addicted to fossil and biofuels?

Damned if I know.

POSTSCRIPT: As a very small step in a different direction, if you’re looking for a summer read (or even if you’re not), I can’t recommend highly enough Rachel Carson’s first book, *Under the Sea Wind*, a supremely imaginative (but grounded in science) hymn to the ocean and all its avian and marine life, published in 1941. It’s so beautiful! The greatest work of nature writing I’ve ever read.

Conflict of interest

FROM SECTION FRONT

he was invited down (via Zoom) to address these issues to the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union board at its meeting on Aug. 16.

As you might suppose, he expressed the opinion that the superintendent possessed that operational authority, and also that he was not conflicted.

I WILL BE the first to admit that Pietro Lynn was quite eloquent in expressing that guidance — helped, no doubt, by the fact that the questions I raised on

those topics and as a courtesy shared with the Supervisory Union board chair ahead of the meeting were immediately communicated by the chair to Lynn for him to prepare to preemptively address these topics.

Notice should also be taken that the chair has herself unequivocally concurred in that interpretation of the law and ethical standards since early July, when I first outed the apparent subterfuge around our board’s involvement in a lawsuit we knew nothing about.

It’s sort of an irony that her school, Westminster Center, which has tested completely free of PCB contamination, is also listed as a plaintiff on the suit brought by Lynn, Lynn, Blackman & Manitsky.

So there you have it: the biggest health crisis to hit the schools since the Covid pandemic, and a superintendent of schools and an attorney who seem to have forgotten under whose authority — which, of course, is the board’s — they operate.

If you can’t be in awe of Mother Nature, there’s something wrong with you.

—ALEX TREBEK

PETER HAVENS



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AROUND THE TOWNS

Route 142 detour extended until Sept. 8

BRATTLEBORO — Due to the run of bad weather this summer that is affecting the contractor working on the Brattleboro-Hinsdale bridge project, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) says that the closure period of Vermont Route 142 has been extended until the end of the day Friday, Sept. 8.

VTrans says that the active detours for cars and trucks will remain as configured. Uniformed traffic officers will be present as needed to assist with peak periods of traffic through the high school.

The truck detour route from Route 142 goes up Cotton Mill Hill Road, left onto South Main Street, continuing onto Fairground Road, and finally back to Canal Street. For drivers of cars following the detour from Route 142, proceed up Cotton Mill Hill and make a right hand turn onto South Main Street. A turnaround has been constructed south of Cotton Mill Hill on Route 142 to allow vehicles to safely navigate this corridor. A three-way stop configuration has been implemented at the Cotton Mill Hill/Route 142 intersection.

If there are questions, contact Bethany Oprendeck at 802-267-4044 or bethany@bboenterprises.com.

Manitou hosts healing walk

WILLIAMSVILLE — The Manitou Project will hold a healing walk on Friday, Aug. 25, rain or shine, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. The walk will be led by Mike Mayer and will include poems or other readings and chances to share about the experience.

Healing walks will be held every second and fourth Friday of each month until October. For more information, contact Mayer at 802-258-8598.

'Jail Tales' featured at Historical Society of Windham County's annual pot-luck

NEWFANE — The Historical Society of Windham County invites everyone to its annual Pot-Luck and Storytelling Program on

Friday, August 25, at NewBrook Fire Station on Route 30.

The pot-luck begins at 6 p.m., and attendees should bring a dish to share; drinks will be provided. At 6:45 p.m., the floor will open for an Open Mic period, and participants may share stories — perhaps about Mrs. Mabel Whitney, Sheriff Norman Robinson, or the routed jail escape in the late 1950s. Maybe these tales will go down in history, as the Historical Society renovates the landmark-Windham County Jail building to become the main Windham County Museum.

Admission is free. The pot-luck will be preceded by a brief business meeting at 5:30 p.m. See the Historical Society of Windham County's website for the latest news and current events at historicalsocietyofwindhamcounty.org.

Vernon Historians hosts 'Mums & More' sale

VERNON — On Sunday, Aug. 27, from 1 to 4 p.m., the Vernon Historians will hold their annual "Mums & More" fundraiser. Proceeds of the sale will help support the work of the Vernon Historians in preserving and presenting local history. The sale will feature a selection of chrysanthemum and perennial plants, cut flowers, honey, pottery, jewelry, photo cards, and more. It will also include an ice cream social with homemade, hand-cranked ice cream and a variety of toppings.

The event will take place at the Vernon Historical Museum at 4201 Fort Bridgman Rd. (intersection of Route 142 and Pond Road South) in Vernon. For further information, contact Carol Hammond at 802-257-0207 or 802-257-2143 or email cjhammond8@gmail.com.

Historical Society presents 'Artisans of Dummerston' exhibit

DUMMERSTON — The Dummerston Historical Society invites all to view the "Artisans of Dummerston" art exhibit at the society's schoolhouse in Dummerston Center. With so much creative talent in town, the society wanted to showcase the artwork of residents, whether in photography, oil

painting, watercolor, fiber, pottery, wood working, or mixed media. Twenty-eight residents ranging in age from high school retirees are showing their work.

They invite everyone to celebrate their friends and neighbors exhibiting their works and see the wonderful talent in this community. The exhibit is open every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 p.m. through Oct. 8. Events at the Dummerston Historical Society are free, all are welcome, and the building is accessible. For more information, contact Gail Sorenson at gailsvt@gmail.com.

Voices of Hope, Brattleboro Area Hospice to honor International Opioid Overdose Day

WILMINGTON — Voices of Hope (VOH) and Brattleboro Area Hospice will be honoring

"International Opioid Overdose Day" with a memorial service to be held Thursday, Aug. 31, at 5:30 p.m., at Buzzy Towne Park on South Main Street (parking is available in the lot behind the library).

If the weather is inclement, the service will be held at the VOH building at 18 Beaver St. This is a nonreligious service open to all, and there will be grief support available from Brattleboro Area Hospice.

In a news release, organizers said that they invite "everyone whose life has been affected by the loss of a loved one due to substance use and overdose to come and remember loved ones with music, readings, speakers, and a candle ritual. Please bring photos, small mementos, and artwork to be displayed in honor of those who have died."

Voices of Hope says its mission "is to inspire hope and actively support people affected by

substance use/misuse. We advocate to increase local resources and raise awareness about substance use/misuse and the importance of compassion in the Deerfield Valley. Our vision is to create a community that fosters connection, acceptance, creativity, recreation, health and safety." Learn more at voicesofhopevt.org.

Landmark College forms collaboration with Equinix to help neurodivergent students with careers

PUTNEY — Landmark College, a global leader in educating neurodivergent students, recently began a collaboration with Equinix, the Silicon Valley-based digital infrastructure company.

According to a news release, the primary purpose of this 12-month agreement "is to build a mutually beneficial program

that includes internship opportunities for Landmark College students where possible, and professional development opportunities for Equinix staff who are serving as mentors."

Landmark College Senior Director of Employer Relations and Career Connections Jan Coplan said the two parties will be meeting as necessary to plan and evaluate the various aspects of the program in order to "create a roadmap for best practices to promote a successful partnership."

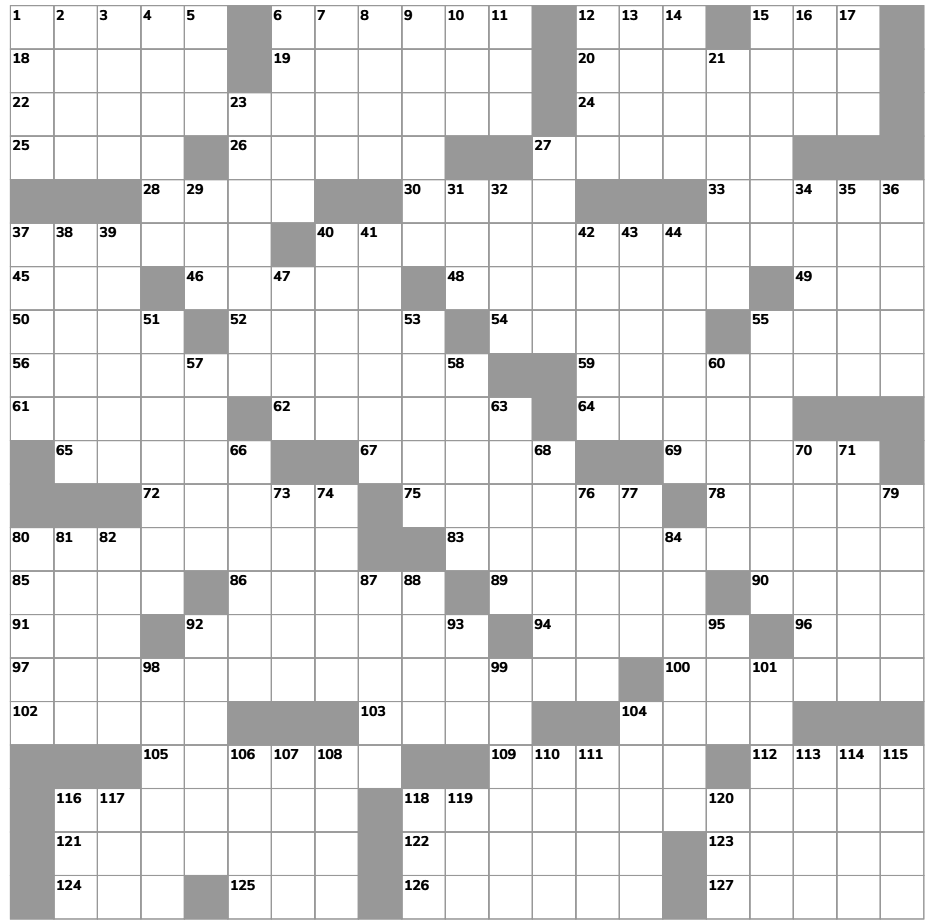
Equinix Vice President of Talent Acquisition Nicholas Mailey said the collaboration is part of a new pathway of focus for people with learning differences. "Our company has a long-standing commitment to diversity and helping close the digital divide. Through this collaboration, we are taking additional and deliberate steps aimed to attract, support, and retain neurodivergent workers."

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"No Holds Bard"

Across

1. Louisiana cuisine
6. Leaves alone
12. "Eureka!"
15. Gibbon or chimp
18. Wide open
19. Blows
20. "Looking for Mr. Goodbar" author Judith
22. With 24-Across, play with controversial snacking?
24. See 22-Across
25. "The Open Window" writer
26. Start
27. Character with an ass's head in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"
28. Sliding sport
30. What many take Ritalin for
33. Miffs
37. "And never, ___ I live, deceive men so": "Titus Andronicus"
40. Play about two horses, both alike in dignity?
45. "I think it be no other but ___ so": "Hamlet"
46. Adorn with jewels
48. Tofu source
49. Paving goo
50. Journey segments
52. "The Tempest" spirit
54. Biblical song
55. "___ all been there"
56. With 59-Across, play about when an insectivore does things?
59. See 56-Across
61. Long
62. Earl Grey packet
64. Windows 7 precursor
65. Bard's muse
67. Establish
69. Whits
72. Moxie
75. Gather, as wheat
78. Interlocking bricks
80. Play about a mendacious monarch?
83. Play about what the audience experiences in real time?
85. New Bohemians singer Brickell
86. Endocrine organ
89. Skyscraper topper
90. Still feeling yesterday's workout
91. Author McEwan
92. Gradually vanishes
94. In the sky
96. "Pachinko" author Min Jin
97. Play about a cold wind?
100. Dating app with a flame icon
102. Greek goddesses of the seasons
103. Off-roaders, for short
104. Long way home from the airport?
105. Put on an act?
109. Cassettes
112. Medication amount
116. Play about meeting someone unexpectedly?
118. Play about someone who's very, very clairvoyant?
121. Too sentimental
122. Deprived (of)
123. Vast expanse
124. Econ. measure
125. Core muscles
126. Liabilities' opposites
127. Like an unmaintained lawn



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Down

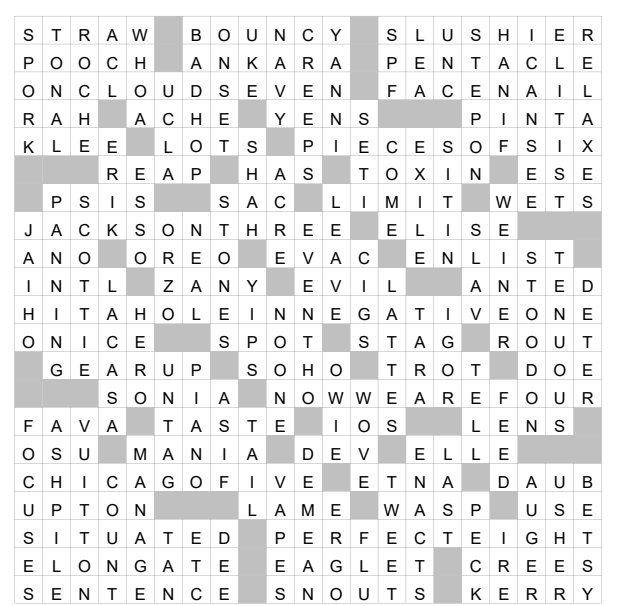
1. Zoom accessories, informally
2. ___ fresca
3. It's worth one high-card point in bridge
4. Toward the top
5. Largest labor union in the USA
6. Director Sergio
7. Taylor Swift's 2023 ___ Tour
8. Toothpaste unit
9. Commercial plug
10. AC unit
11. Superlative ending
12. Tuscan river
13. Sound owlsh
14. Helper: Abbr.
15. Fish or fowl
16. Write, as a play
17. Rowing machine, informally
21. Japanese feudal chief
23. Huskies pulling together
27. Party occasions, for short
29. Tablet port
31. ___ Moines
32. Play basketball
34. Water bottle size
35. Permission
36. Scatter
37. Author Eudora
38. Giggling sound
39. Ready to roll
40. Roi's wife
41. OOO
42. "Hardwood Classics" sports network
43. India's largest metro area
44. Monarch who was Shakespeare's patron
47. Mettle
51. Weird
53. Brain sections
55. "Eh, don't care"
57. Recon gathering
58. Nickname for Earl Hines of jazz
60. Vodka brand, informally

63. Shot in the dark
66. Genesis
68. Former eBay subsidiary
70. Time-honored
71. Evening party
73. Park employee?
74. Clear the board
76. Sheer fabric 77
79. Take the wheel
80. "Countdown with ___ Olbermann"
81. Shoshone Falls state
82. Ram's rival, informally
84. Progressive-leaning
87. Santa-tracking org.
88. Attic accumulation
92. Counted calories
93. French high-speed rail: Abbr.

95. EGOT-winning lyricist Rice
98. Hit the beach?
99. Star-shaped blooms
101. "Not happening, sorry"
104. Playwright/actor Tracy
106. ___ breve
107. Too slick
108. Loong spans
110. Nautical direction
111. Fizzling-out sound
113. Cruel sort
114. Lose fur
115. Crafts marketplace
116. Texter's "wow"
117. Owned
118. Placeholder abbr.
119. "The French Dispatch" director Anderson
120. Toothy tool

Last issue's solution

"It Takes Two"



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bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Aug. 21-27

CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Nye Ffarrabas. Artist. Writer: Mon 9p, Tues 12:30p, Wed 9:30a, Thurs 10:30a, Sat 5p, Sun 6p	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg. 8/16/23: Mon 6p, Tues 10a, Wed 10a
The World Fusion Show - Ep# 159 - Sylvain Leroux: Mon 5:30p, Tues 9p, Wed 9a, Thurs 6:30a, Fri 4:30p, Sat 6:30p, Sun 9:30a	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 8/21/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
Brattleboro Literary Festival - Joyce Maynard: The Bird Hotel: Mon 12:30p, Tues 10a, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 7a, Sat 2p, Sun 6:30p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 8/22/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
Brattleboro Historical Society Presents - East Dummerston School History: Mon 6:30p, Tues 11a & 6:30p, Wed 6:30p, Thurs 6:30p, Fri 6:30p, Sun 5:30p	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 8/22/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
At BMAC - Conversation: Anina Major and Sadaf Padder: Mon 11a, Tues 8p, Wed 11a, Thurs 1:15p, Fri 5p, Sat 3p, Sun 6a	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 8/23/23: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Stained Glass Windows of St. Michaels - Week 1: St. Joseph: Mon 1:30p, Tues 6a, Sat 8p	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 8/23/23: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:50p
Stained Glass Windows of St. Michaels - Week 2: St. Patrick: Mon 10a, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 5p, Fri 10a, Sun 7:35p	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 8/15/23: Mon 9a, Tues 8:45p, Wed 1p, Thurs 3p, Fri 2:15p, Sat 5:15p, Sun 9a
Couch Potatoe Productions - Twilight on the Tavern Lawn presents The Woodpeckers: Mon 6a, Thurs 2:10p, Fri 12:30p, Sat 9a & 8:45p, Sun 12:50p	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 8/14/23: Mon 12p, Tues 4p, Thurs 6:30a, Sat 8:15p, Sun 7a
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 8/14/23: Monday 4:15p, Tues 2:15p, Wed 5:30a, Sun 6p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	West River Education District Board Mtg. 8/14/23: Wed 10:45a, Sat 11a
News Block: WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	Windham Elementary School Board Mtg. 8/15/23: Tues 10:45a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 8/15/23: Mon 3:30p, Tues 1:30p, Wed 4p, Thurs 11:15a, Fri 5:15p, Sun 7:45p
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service: Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 8/10/23: Mon 6:45a, Sun 5:45a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	River Valley Unified School District Board Mtg. 8/7/23: Mon 2p, Tues 12p, Wed 8:30p, Sun 8:30p
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.commonsnws.org.

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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Fossils win third straight CRVBL title

The Putney Fossils defeated the Connecticut River Iron Men, 6-3, on Sunday, August 13, to retain the Richard W. Bissell Cup as champions of the Connecticut River Valley Baseball League (CRVBL). The victory marked the Fossils' third CRVBL championship in a row and fifth in the past six years.

Fossils starting pitcher Peter Wagner capped a stellar season with a complete-game gem for Putney, allowing only five hits while striking out 10 and walking one. Wagner went 4-0 with a 0.84 ERA, 0.91 WHIP, and 43 strikeouts in 32 innings pitched.

The Fossils got on the scoreboard first in the bottom of the second inning. With one out, designated hitter Keith Lyman drew a walk. Wagner and third baseman John Peloso followed with singles to load the bases. Right fielder Ryan Lawley hit a sharp ground ball to shortstop, forcing Peloso out at second as Lyman scored the game's first run. Attempting to race home from second, Wagner was thrown out at the plate by second baseman Dan Felicetti.

In the third inning, the Fossils loaded the bases again, with three straight singles by shortstop Andrew Peloso, second baseman Brandon Reilly, and center fielder Ryan Smith. Iron Men pitcher Tyler Kerr retired the next two Fossils on a line out to second and a strikeout, but then Lyman laced a two-out single to right, driving in both Peloso and Reilly to give the Fossils a 3-0 lead.

The Iron Men answered in dramatic fashion in the top of the fourth. After Wagner recorded two quick outs, third baseman Andrew Robbins singled, and first baseman Kris Keilty walked. Right fielder Brendan Mayhew then blasted a home run to deep center field, tying the game at 3-3.

Although the Fossils would load the bases again in the bottom of the fourth, they could not push across a run, and the score remained deadlocked until the bottom of the seventh. With one out, Smith reached on an error and advanced to second on an errant pickoff attempt by Kerr. First baseman Alex Gauthier also reached on an error and stole second, placing runners at second and third. Kerr recorded the second out of the inning before issuing a full-count walk to Lyman and loading the bases with Fossils for the fourth time in the game. Wagner then walked to force in the go-ahead run.

Armed with a one-run lead, Wagner retired the side in order in the top of the eighth. In the bottom of the inning, the Fossils' bats came to life. Andrew Peloso hit a one-out double to right and Reilly drove him in with a double to the right-center gap. Smith followed with a single to drive in Reilly, making the score 6-3.

The Iron Men did not go quietly in the ninth. Center fielder Jed St. Pierre led off with a single, and Kerr followed with a screaming line drive to center that Smith managed to snag for an out. After St. Pierre stole second, Wagner induced two ground balls to end the inning, the game, and the 2023 CRVBL season.

"We put in a great team effort today," Fossils manager Danny Lichtenfeld said in a news release, "just like we have all season long."

Lichtenfeld noted that although the Fossils may have been the presumptive favorite coming into the season, he wasn't so sure.

"Just before the season started, we lost two of our best players, Kyle Whitworth and Chayse Cuniff, to

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.

season-ending injuries," Lichtenfeld said. "But as it turned out, our newest additions, the Peloso brothers and outfielder Blake MacLellan, along with Steve Stanley and Keith Lyman, both of whom came out of retirement to play again this year, made sure we didn't miss a beat."

Information about the Connecticut River Valley Baseball League, including box scores, stats, photos, and more for the 2023 season, is available at www.crvbl.com. Players or teams interested in joining for the 2024 season should fill out the inquiry form on the website.

Avard competes at second U.S. Masters national swim meet

Christian Avard, a frequent contributor to *The Commons*, competed at the U.S. Masters Swimming Summer National Championship on Aug. 5-6 at the Selby Aquatic Center in Sarasota, Florida. This is the second time Avard competed at the national championship. Like last year, he qualified in four events: 50 meter freestyle, 100 meter freestyle, 50 meter breaststroke, and 200 meter backstroke.

Avard placed eighth in the nation in the Men's 50-54 50 breaststroke with a time of 40:36 seconds, and ninth in the nation in the Men's 50-54 200 backstroke in 2 minutes, 59.84 seconds. The other highlight for Avard was competing in two relays. His Men's 200 meter freestyle relay finished eighth overall in the 200+ age group (the aggregate age of the four swimmers) with a time of 1:57.21 and fifth overall in the mixed medley relay 240+ age group with a time of 2:23.90.

Avard was a member of the Team New England Masters Swim Team, which was comprised of masters



The Putney Fossils won their third straight Connecticut River Valley Baseball League championship on Aug. 13 at Gouin Field in Dummerston. Back row, from left, Blake MacLellan, Keith Lyman, Ryan Lawley, Peter Wagner, and John Peloso. Front row from left, Danny Lichtenfeld, Ryan Smith, Steve Stanley, Alex Gauthier, Brandon Reilly, and Andrew Peloso. Not pictured: Kyle Blais, Ethan Blum, and Hunter Smith.

swimmers from Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Team New England also finished second in the regional teams division behind North Carolina Masters.

A former Dummerston resident, Avard swam competitively growing up in Nashua, New Hampshire and got back into competitive swimming in 2011 at the Colonial Pool and Spa in Brattleboro. He now lives in Unity, N.H., and swims for the Upper Valley Rays Masters Swim Team at the Upper Valley Aquatic Club in White River Junction.

After a brief break, Avard said he will return to swimming in mid-September, and hopes to be at the next U.S. Masters Swimming Summer National Championships in August 2024 at the Marguerite Aquatic Complex in Mission Viejo, California.

Still time to get out and paddle with BOC

This summer has flown by, but there are still a few more weeks to get out on the water and paddle with the Brattleboro Outing Club. Except for the sunrise paddle

trip on Aug. 26, all these outings are all-day paddles, and require lunch, water, and snacks. More information is available at BrattleboroOutingClub.org; just click on "Summer Paddling." Here are the upcoming excursions:

- On Saturday, Aug. 26, there will be a sunrise paddle and potluck breakfast at Harriman Reservoir in Wilmington. This is the rescheduled paddle trip from June 24, which was rained out. Meet at 6 a.m. at the Royal Diner on Route 9 in West Brattleboro, or at the Coffee House at the junction of Route 9 West and Route 100 South, at 6:30 a.m. Participants will paddle out to an island for a potluck breakfast.

- The center section of Harriman Reservoir in Wilmington will be the destination on Wednesday, Aug. 30. Meet at the Coffee House in Wilmington at 8:30 a.m., or at Great River Hydro's Ward's Cove picnic area, off Route 100 South (turn right, at the stables) at 9 a.m. This is a large body of water, subject to strong wind, big waves, and motorboat wakes. It is not a trip for small boats.

- On Wednesday, Sept. 20, the BOC Paddlers will go to Somerset Reservoir. Meet at the Coffee House in Wilmington at 8:30 a.m., or at the car-top launch area, at the end of the road in Somerset, at 9:30 a.m. This is a trip requiring long-distance paddling and is subject to strong winds and big waves. It is definitely not for small boats.

- Grout Pond in Stratton will be the destination on Saturday, Sept. 30. Meet at the Coffee House in Wilmington at 9 a.m., or at 10 a.m. at the pond, which is located off Route 100 North and Kelly Stand/West Wardsboro-Arlington roads.

- A "Leader's Choice" trip is set for Sunday, Oct. 1, to wherever the fall colors are peaking. Meet at 9 a.m. at the south end of the Hannaford parking lot on Putney Road in Brattleboro.

- The season wraps up on Wednesday, Oct. 4 with a trip to Sunset Lake and South Pond in Marlboro. Meet at the Royal Diner in West Brattleboro at 9 a.m.

Sign-up for hunter safety classes

If you or someone you know would like to go hunting this fall but have never taken a hunter education course, this is the time to act. Vermont's volunteer hunter education instructors are now holding a limited number of courses

throughout the state.

A person must pass the basic hunter education course before they can purchase their first hunting license. Courses are available in basic hunter education, bowhunter education, trapper education, and combination hunter-bowhunter education. A Vermont hunter education card entitles you to hunt in all 50 states, as well as some international locations.

Classes will be posted on the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's website in the coming weeks. The courses will be listed as they become available at vtfishandwildlife.com. On the Home page, click on "Hunt" and then "Hunter Education" and "Find the Right Class for You."

Rec. Dept. offers flag football this fall

The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department will be working with BUHS varsity football coach Chad Pacheco and BUHS football players to offer NFL Flag Football for those in grades 1-6.

Players will need a mouth-guard (required) and cleats or sneakers. NFL Flag Jerseys and flags/belts are included in the program fee and will be provided. The fee is \$50 for Brattleboro residents and \$65 for non-residents. This program will begin on Sept. 11 and will run on Mondays from 6 to 7:15 p.m. until Oct. 23, with the exception of Oct. 9.

This is a no-contact football program that is open to non-experienced and experienced football players in grades 1-6. Players will work on basic skills, drills, and agility for both offense and defense and play flag football games. Participants will be taught techniques and skills to play football safely. Bring your own flags if you have them, otherwise, they will be loaned out each day.

Register online at register1.vermontsystems.com/wbws/vtbrattleboro.wsc/splash.html. In-person registration at the Gibson-Aiken Center main office is available Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. There is a \$10 fee for late registration, beginning Sept. 1. Anyone registering on or after Sept. 8 will be added to a wait list and will be permitted to register for the program only if space allows. For more information, call the Gibson-Aiken office at 802-254-5808 or visit the Recreation & Parks page at brattleboro.org.

Senior bowling roundup

Last week's roundup got squeezed out due to the Hall of Fame coverage, so let's catch up with what's happening with the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl.

With two weeks left in the spring/summer season, Five Pins (53-27) remains in first place, followed by Turkeys (49-31), No Splits (48.5-31.5), Skippers (47.5-32.5), Slo Movers (44-36), The Bowlers (38-42), Wrecking Crew (37.5-42.5), Stayin' Alive (36.5-43.5), and High Rollers (36-44).

In Week 15 action on Aug. 10, Doris Lake had the women's high handicap game (232), while Carol Gloski had the high handicap series (631). Robert Rigby had the men's high handicap game (263) and series (695), while High Rollers had the high team handicap game (871) and series (2,511).

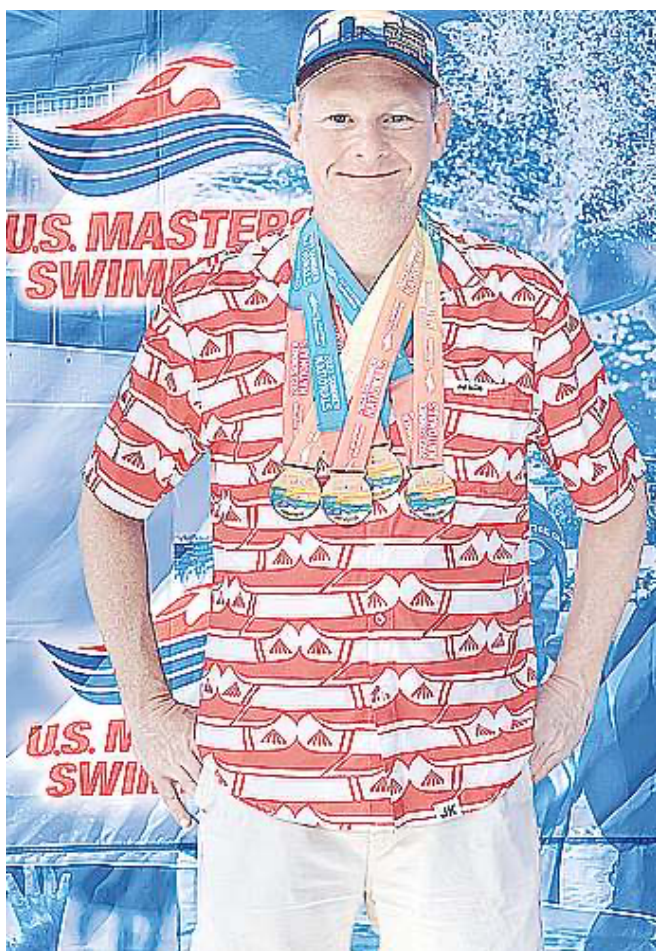
Rigby led the men's scratch scoring with a 662 series that featured games of 252, 231, and 179, while Chuck Adams had a 646 series with games of 231, 215, and 200. Milt Sherman had a 571 series with games of 234 and 172. Duane Schillemat had a 515 series with a 205 game, Skip Shine had a 503 series with a 193 game, and Jerry Dunham had a 500 series with a 191 game. John Walker had a 178 game and Charlie Marchant rolled a 170.

Gloski had the women's high scratch series (451) that featured games of 173 and 167, while Debbi Kolpa rolled a 161.

In Week 16 action on Aug. 17, Nancy Dalzell had the women's high handicap game (252), while Roberta Parsons had the high handicap series (651). Chuck Adams had the men's high handicap game (275) and series (680), while High Rollers again had the high team handicap game (895) and series (2,537).

Chuck Adams led the men's scratch scoring with a 680 series that featured games of 275, 221, and 184, while Rigby had a 650 series with games of 223, 220, and 207. Milt Sherman had a 536 series with a 200 game, Gary Montgomery had a 532 series with a 198 game, John Walker had a 525 series with a 185 game, and Wayne Randall had a 521 series with a 198 game. Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 202 game, and Rick Westcott rolled a 170.

Dalzell had the women's high scratch series (466) and game (196). Carol Gloski had games of 168 and 166, while Shirley Aiken rolled a 162.



Christian Avard won four medals at the U.S. Masters Swimming Summer National Championship in Sarasota, Florida. He placed eighth in the nation in the Men's 50-54 50 meter breaststroke, ninth in the 200 meter backstroke, and medaled in two relays as well.

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