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Power will be out for days for some after a Nor'easter slams Windham County with wet, heavy snow — snapping trees, downing utility lines, closing roads, and slowing life to a crawl



CHRISTOPHER DENETTE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Digging out

Some of the deepest accumulations of snow were recorded in Newfane.

By Jeff Potter
The Commons

Hours after the snow stopped falling, Windham County continued to dig out from a late-winter nor'easter that dumped 3 feet of snow — or more — in many spots in higher elevations.

The storm knocked out power, telephone, cable, and internet for thousands. In the process, residents found themselves stranded in cold, dark homes as their roads were rendered impassible by downed trees, live wires, disabled vehicles, accidents, and — everywhere — thick, heavy snow.

With his southern Vermont readers reporting accumulations ranging from a foot to 40 in. at Mount Snow, regional weather watcher Dave Hayes, based in Northampton, Massachusetts, described the event as “a memorable late-season elevation-dependent snowstorm.”

Emergency personnel and local officials are caught in a contradictory role of issuing appeals for residents' patience, yet also urging those needing assistance not to hesitate to call on their towns' emergency personnel if they are in need of help.

All told, businesses, schools, municipal offices, and most every aspect of life in the county ended up with at least one snow day for the record books.

Power outages affect 32,405 in county

“The peak number of customers out was at 11:15 a.m. on March 14, 2023 — 12,845 customers were without power and another 19,560 had been restored in Windham County at that time,” Kristin Carlson, a spokesperson for Green Mountain Power, told *The Commons* on Wednesday afternoon, 18 hours after the newspaper was unable to meet its normal Wednesday morning press schedule for this week's issue because of snow-bound personnel and utility outages throughout the region.

■ SEE SNOW, A7



AMANDA DELCONTE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

One way to gauge the snowfall in Wardsboro: “My son is 38 inches tall,” writes Amanda DelConte.



DAVE ROSS GRAFTON FIRE & RESCUE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Grafton Fire and Rescue, with the assistance of a visiting electric utility crew and mutual aid from the Rockingham Volunteer Fire Department, were on the scene at a garage fire on Route 121.

WSESD chair foreshadows an update on abuse probe

More a year has passed since the WSESD board engaged an independent investigation into decades-long sexual abuse allegations

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—As has been the case for about a year, the Tuesday, Feb. 28 Windham Southeast School District school board agenda included “sexual abuse investigation update” under the heading of “unfinished business.”

Until that meeting, there has been virtually no update as board members say they are taking their cues from legal counsel.

Several people, including Brattleboro Union High School alum Mindy Haskins Rogers,

who broke the story of a history and culture of sexual abuse in the district in her August 2021 essay in *The Commons*, have asked for information at meetings.

Those requests, notably from Haskins Rogers, included asking for simple statistics, such as how many people have reported abuse to attorney Aimee Goddard of Annis & Goddard, who was hired to independently investigate abuse claims in December 2021.

No one asked for names, although Justice Law Collaborative (JLC), whom some survivors

have also contacted, has named names.

JLC has put the district on notice of potential legal action to come, naming some former teachers, including Robert “Zeke” Hecker and Thomas Haskins, along with Hecker's wife, Linda Hecker.

But on Feb. 28, after board student representative Ben Berg asked and Haskins read a statement, the response from the board was somewhat different.

Chair Kelly Young said she would try to have an update at the board's March 14 meeting, which was cancelled due

to the Nor'easter. On that day, *The Commons* asked Young if there would have been an actual update.

“As with many previous WSESD board meeting agendas, the agenda for the meeting previously scheduled for this evening includes an opportunity for an update on the sexual abuse investigation,” she answered.

Student rep submits questions

At the Feb. 28 meeting, Berg presented “a few questions in talking to some students about the status of the update.”

Those questions include: “Where's the investigation at, do we know where it's going, and what the continuing goal of the investigation is,” he said.

“Is there progress that can be shared, and what are the next steps of the process?” Berg also asked.

“Those are some of the concerns from students, and I definitely wanted to convey those in the open meeting,” he said.

In the past almost year, Young has replied to any such questions by thanking the asker and moving on, but this time

■ SEE INVESTIGATION UPDATE, A5

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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 Montpelier, climate change meets public policy

Two Windham County legislators have a large influence on state transportation policy in a state where ‘we need cars to get around’

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—This is the 15th year that Rep. Mollie S. Burke, P/D-Brattleboro, has been on the front lines in the state’s fight against climate change.

“I really think Mollie’s a bit of an unsung hero in the work that she’s been doing in transportation,” said House Transportation Committee Chair Sara Coffey, D-Guilford. “She’s always seen opportunities to address climate change through the transportation sector.”

Burke says she was inspired to initially run for the House because she wanted to serve on the Transportation Committee.

“Prior to that, in 2005 and 2006, I had organized several exhibitions of poster art with the title ‘The End of the Romance: Cutting Dependence on our Automobiles,’” she said. “This has been a longstanding concern of mine. I’m so terribly interested in transportation because it’s the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Another concern: “How can we make better communities with better bike and pedestrian opportunities and not have our lives just dependent on roads and everything just built for cars?” Burke said.

“Creating livable, walkable communities is a very big economic benefit to towns as well,” she added. For her, “trains, buses, and things” — transportation — is “a really fascinating topic.”

Between 30% and 40% of Vermont’s carbon emissions come from the transportation sector, according to Burke and Coffey.

Burke has served on the Transportation Committee since she entered the House in 2009; this is Coffey’s first year on the committee, as well as her first as chair. Together, they give Windham County a large voice in addressing one of the most pressing issues of our time.

“The transportation sector is doing a lot of work to address climate change,” Coffey said. “And not just address climate change, but think in a more comprehensive way about how to make communities in Vermont more bikable, more pedestrian-friendly, more accessible for people with physical disabilities or challenges.”

“There’s a lot of innovation happening in this this area,” she said.

Carbon complications

Burke has been spearheading much of this innovation while facing a reality: In Vermont, “people live apart from each



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT COMMONS FILE PHOTO

The House Transportation Committee has set its sights on asking the Agency of Transportation to work with Amtrak, “and other entities, on certain modifications to Amtrak service in Vermont” — namely, a long effort to extend the Vermonter’s route to Montreal.

other, and we need cars to get around,” she said.

“So it’s a complicated thing to figure out how to cut carbon emissions from transportation,” said Burke, who has been trying to do so over the past 15 years. But “it has been difficult to enact policies that can actually make a difference in our emissions.”

For one thing, Burke sponsored an anti-idling bill, which became law and took effect in 2014.

By law, “A person shall not cause or permit operation of the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle for more than five minutes in any 60-minute period while the vehicle is stationary,” with 11 exceptions (including one’s car in a private driveway or parking area).

Idling is certainly one part of the problem, although it is one that is not easy to enforce.

“It’s all very difficult,” Burke said.

“We have, in the past few years, put in a good amount of money to help people buy electric vehicles, for example,” she said. “And we’ve put in money for low-income people to buy used fuel-efficient vehicles.”

Those two measures now align with the state’s Climate Action Plan, developed after the Legislature passed the Global Warming Solutions Act in 2020, overriding a veto from Gov. Phil Scott.

“It mandated that we actually meet the emissions goals in our comprehensive energy plan,” Burke said. “This led to the formulation of the Vermont Climate Action Plan, which was completed in December of 2021. This has given us a road map.”

Building the ‘T-Bill’

One central result of the Transportation Committee’s work will be an omnibus transportation bill — called the “T-Bill.” What they call a “money bill,” it funds the state’s highway programs and the related infrastructure.

The transportation budget this year runs to about \$885 million, Coffey said. Among other things, it funds the Department of Motor Vehicles, the various programs that are paving interstate bridges,

state highway bridges, roadways, park-and-rides, bike and pedestrian facilities, transportation alternatives, multimodal facilities, public transit, aviation, and rail.

Writing transportation legislation begins with the governor’s budget.

“Then the Agency of Transportation comes in and says, ‘Well, this is what we’d like,’” Burke said. “So a few years ago, we started putting out a bill ahead of that, saying, ‘Hey, this is what we’d like to put into this.’ Because our job is not just to take what the agency says and do it or tinker around the edges. We’re a separate branch of government.”

So Burke and Montpelier Democrat Rep. Gabrielle Stebbins wrote a separate bill, H.101, parts of which will eventually be folded into the T-Bill.

The bill — “An act relating to transportation initiatives to reduce carbon emissions” — searches for creative ways to reduce Vermont’s greenhouse gases. It is co-sponsored by 44 legislators, including six from Windham County.

“There are a number of proposals designed to cut carbon emissions and make transportation solutions that are more affordable,” Burke said. “Like incentives for electric vehicles for low and moderate income Vermonter. We’re trying to get people into lower-cost transportation options.”

Transportation priorities proposed in bill

Among the 12 measures included in the bill:

- The Agency of Transportation would be required to create a written plan with recommendations on how to fund state efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase access to higher-efficiency, lower-cost transportation options.

- A new Legislative Regional Transportation Climate Initiative Working Group would study regional climate initiatives.

- A “feebate” program would collect taxes on carbon-emitting cars and use the revenue to fund a corresponding program: a tax credit for purchasers of low-emissions vehicles. Such a program was studied in a 2019 report to the Legislature from the AOT.

- AOT would be required to assess “motor vehicle fuel use in Vermont in order to identify the most effective actions to transition operators to plug-in electric vehicles.”

Supporting electric vehicle purchases is important, Burke said. The state’s goal is to have 26,000 electric vehicles on the road by 2025 and 126,000 by 2030. Right now, approximately 9,000 electric vehicles are registered in the state.

- Funding for the Mobility and Transportation Innovation Grant Program, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, and eBike Incentive Program.

The MTI grants provide funds “that organizations and communities can use for innovative projects,” Burke said. “We are hoping to put extra money into these grants.”

The 2023 MTI grant program funded 14 projects totalling approximately \$985,000.

Six of those projects are feasibility studies for “microtransit,” a type of bus service that runs on demand, reminiscent of Uber and other ride-sharing services. Instead of running along a fixed route, the bus would come whenever it is called and would take the passenger anywhere within the range that it operates. Pilot programs are now running

in Montpelier, Manchester, Morrisville, Windsor, and Barre.

- Asking the AOT to work with Amtrak, “and other entities, on certain modifications to Amtrak service in Vermont.”

Burke says the state pays Amtrak approximately \$8 million per year to run two passenger trains — the Vermonter and the Ethan Allen Express — into the state.

“They don’t pay us. We pay them. So we have purview over that money,” she said.

“The committee could say, ‘Oh, forget it, Amtrak. We’re not going to pay any more.’ And that would be the end of it. They wouldn’t come.”

But Amtrak service to Vermont has proven to be immensely popular. Right now, the push is to extend the Vermonter’s route north of its northern terminus in St. Albans to Montreal. The plan is stalling, however.

“Canadians need to build a secure immigration facility in Montreal,” Burke said. “And there are a lot of complications. They’ve been going on for years. But I think it’ll eventually happen, because everybody wants it to happen.”

- Asking the state to appropriate money to keep the public transit buses running fare-free.

“We’ve made all the rural transit routes to be zero fare last year,” Burke said. “And I think that’s going to continue this year.”

Burke said the MOOVer, operating in Windham County from Rockingham and Wilmington, is doing a feasibility study to see what else might be possible in Brattleboro — like extending the hours of service, for example, she said.

- Requiring the AOT to update the Vermont State Standards. “The Vermont State Standards are design standards that are very out of date in terms of being very vehicle-centric,” Burke said. “Hopefully, this will help communities with better solutions for sidewalks, bike paths, and slower traffic patterns through towns and village centers.”

The version of the Vermont State Standards available on the AOT’s website is dated 1997.

Winnowing the priorities

The Transportation Committee is currently working to fold pieces of H.101 into the T-Bill.

“Right now, we’re in the process of figuring out what the committee is going to accept and what parts of this bill are going to make it into the final,” Burke said.

Midway through each session, bills that originate in the House are picked up by the Senate, and vice-versa. In the halls of the statehouse, that milestone is called the “crossover.”

This year, March 17 is the policy bill crossover date. On March 20, the process repeats for legislation requiring expenditures of state money.

“By the third week of March, we will have a bill that will come out of our committee,” Burke said.

“We’ll go over to the House floor, and then look at the Senate bill,” she said of the process, which, she notes, has been described as “sausage making.”

“Then there’ll be a lot of haggling over what they like and don’t like and what we like and don’t like,” Burke said. “We are deep in the process now.”

What might come of that process?

“I’m just hoping that we can get a really strong bill that will make some kind of difference,” she said.

It said that if an alien came to tell them that we fight wars to pull fossil fuels out of the ground to run our transportation. They’d be like, ‘What?’

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Vermonters turn fight to the financiers of climate change

A nationwide protest, including an action in Burlington, will call on major U.S. banks to end investments in fossil fuels

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The transportation sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gases in Vermont, producing approximately 40 percent of our carbon emissions. That's why Rep. Mollie S. Burke, D-Brattleboro, has spent her 15 years in the Legislature on the Transportation Committee, working to fight climate change by lowering dependency on fossil fuels. And that is why she joined Vermont's new climate change organization, Third Act Vermont.

A little over a year ago, climate activist and Middlebury College Distinguished Scholar Bill McKibben decided that Baby Boom-age Americans — people age 60 or older — need to reorganize and reenter the political fray. He and a group of like-minded activists founded the rapidly growing **Third Act**, a national organization of people over 60 who want to protect the planet and democracy. Third Act Vermont is one of many "working groups" that have formed all over the country.

McKibben reasoned that the older members of the Baby Boom generation, born between 1946 and 1964, had marched through the 1960s and 1970s and brought about significant changes to the country. He cited the civil rights movement, the fight to end the Vietnam War, and the women's rights movement as examples.

Boomers mostly left politics after that. Now retiring or retired, they collectively control great reserves of retirement funds, and they also have a lot of free time. McKibben believed Boomers like himself would need to make more change as the planet heats up, inequality grows, and democracy flounders.

Third Act is calling for a National Day of Action on Tuesday, March 21 to demand that the country's four largest banks — Chase, Citibank, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America — stop their massive funding of the fossil fuel industry.

The organization is asking people to sign a pledge (bit.ly/705pledge): "If Bank of America, Chase, Citibank, and Wells Fargo



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, COMMONS FILE PHOTO
Bill McKibben

are still funding climate-destroying fossil fuel projects in March 2023, I pledge to close my account and cut up my credit card. If I don't bank at these institutions now, I pledge I won't do so in the future."

Burke said she is researching new credit cards before she cuts up her old one.

"I plan to do that, but I need to get a new card first," she said. "There are some things like websites that are supported by my credit card, and I need to change all that."

Shame the banks

Burke, who has served as a member of the Transportation Committee for 14 years, sees her membership in Third Act Vermont — an organization she describes as "a really cool idea" — as a continuing part of her committee's mission to cut fossil fuel emissions.

"We've got electric vehicles and other projects, and we're doing a huge amount of work to make a difference. Our committee is making these seemingly little steps to cut transportation emissions in Vermont. And meanwhile, the banks are investing in fossil fuels," the representative says. "Then what kind of a difference are we making?"

Since the whole is often bigger than the sum of its parts, Third Act's idea is to shame the banks

into divesting by staging this one big protest, with actions in California, Oregon, Washington State, and Nevada, as well as up and down the East Coast regional corridor from Vermont to Florida.

Climate change activist and transportation expert Jud Lawrie of Essex Junction is leading Third Act Vermont's response.

"I believe the planet is facing an accelerating climate catastrophe," Lawrie told *The Commons*. "It's already happening in many parts of the world and is most affecting those least able to cope with it."

"Further, I believe as an elder that we have a responsibility to be Earth stewards, to leave to our children, grandchildren, and all those who follow a better world than we received," he continued. "So far it looks like we are doing quite the opposite."

"We need to recognize this is happening — not just to us but [to] all the creatures we share our beloved planet with. Continued dependence on fossil fuels will destroy the biodiversity and ecosystems upon which all human life depends," Lawrie said.

One small catch to the protest: Other than Chase's two small brick-and-mortar branches in Burlington and Williston, none of the Big Four banks has a presence in Vermont.

But in the larger scheme of

things, it doesn't matter, Lawrie said — the "real audience" for the action is the public.

"We want the public to become very aware of the close connection between the banks' continued massive funding of the fossil fuel industry and the climate crisis," he said. "The nexus between climate and carbon."

And despite the small corporate footprint in Vermont, "The National Day of Action will take place all over the country," Lawrie said. "The goal is to make it clear to the American public the close connection between the climate crisis and the funding of fossil fuels and the nexus between climate and carbon."

Burke supports the action because it will draw attention to the fact that U.S. banks support and prolong the life of the fossil fuel industry.

The National Day of Action is "a way to get a lot of attention," Burke said. "Last year, there were some shareholder meetings at the banks, and some shareholders really wanted to divest. It didn't really move then, but if there were enough people who who want to protest, they may have to bring it up again. And that would be a huge thing."

Burke pointed out that in Europe, banks are responding to the pressure to end dependence on fossil fuels.

For example, in 2019, according to *The Guardian*, "the European Investment Bank has agreed to phase out its multibillion-euro financing for fossil fuels within the next two years to become the world's first 'climate bank'" In 2020, Deutsche Bank recognized the need to divest but "failed to halt finance for fossil expansion."

In 2022, London-based HSBC, "the largest bank in Europe and the eighth largest bank in the world, has announced that it will stop funding any new oil and gas developments globally," according to **Electrek.co**, a news site covering the electric vehicle industry.

Unfortunately, it continued, "The bank's new policy applies specifically to new oil and gas field projects and any related infrastructure meant to support those new fields." HSBC would "continue to provide consulting

and financing to energy companies at the corporate level, even if they are in the oil business."

And according to S&P Global, "Large European banks cut financing to fossil fuel companies by 27.6% in 2021 amid mounting shareholder pressure and the publication of new funding policies, while U.S. and Canadian peers increased their financing, according to new research."

The March 21 Third Act Vermont Action will take place from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Chase Bank at 1 Church Street Marketplace in Burlington. All Vermonters, no matter how young or old, are welcome to join in the protest.

"Please join us and bring your signs," Lawrie said. "We will

march down Church Street and back, then gather in front of the bank for skits, a credit card cutting ceremony, and music."

Burke said she will be at work that day and won't be able to participate, "but I will be there in spirit."

"We may not have the big four banks, but Vermont is being an example to others by looking at electric vehicles and other ways of cutting down on fossil fuels," Burke said. "We would spark a movement that would support people getting rid of their credit cards from the big banks."

"If we're doing all this interesting stuff to cut carbon emissions, let's try to cut it at the source," she said.

PETS AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION

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Hi, name is **Chloe!** I am a very sweet outgoing dog who loves to be outdoors with my people. I seem to like other dogs and may be able to live with one. I do have a high prey drive and shouldn't live with cats. I do like to jump up on people which can be scary to young kids but if they're older I think I will be ok with them. I am a dog who likes to be active and wouldn't do well being a couch potato. I was diagnosed with Lyme disease. I am not symptomatic of it but I am being treated. The staff can tell you more.

Hi, my name is **Tara!** I was surrendered my owner could no longer care for me. I am about 70 pounds. I am a sweet girl who takes a little time to warm up. I have lived with kids previously and may be able to live with respectful kids again. I am dog selective and should do a meet and greet here first if you have any. I haven't had any experience with cats and I think I would do best in a home without any.

Hi there, I'm **Raven!** I'm a sweet little bun-bun who is looking for a new home. My previous owner spent lots of time socializing me so I like to be pet and held. I'm still young and impressionable so I will make a great house bunny and may even be able to learn to share my space with another rabbit. I am too young to be fixed, but WCHS will spay me for free in the future!

Hi there, I'm **Sammy!** I'm a sweet little bunbun who is looking for a new home. I'm still young and impressionable so I will make a great house bunny and may even be able to learn to share my space with another rabbit.

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*Subject to availability and eligibility.

Brattleboro Area Farmers' Market seeks new vendors

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Area Farmers' Market (BAFM), which operates on Western Avenue each Saturday from May through October, is seeking applications from new vendors.

Farmers, crafters, chefs, bodyworkers, and others who live in Southern Vermont or Cheshire County, New Hampshire, are welcome to apply.

Applications are due Saturday, March 18, for new full season, half-season, and daily vendors, and can be found by going to brattleboroareafarmersmarket.com.

or emailing the market manager at farmersmarket05301@gmail.com.

The market is also seeking people who would like to set up a one-time educational demonstration in the center circle. Examples include sheep-shearing, pickling, or basket-making. Interested parties are advised to reach out soon to the market manager.

Additionally, acoustic musicians who would like to perform at the market may email the market manager with a sample of their original or open-source music.

According to a *Brattleboro Reformer* article from that time, the first BAFM opened in July of 1974, making it one of the oldest open-air farmers markets in the state.

Any questions or comments can be directed to the contact form on the BAFM website.

Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the corn field.

—DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

HELP WANTED

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Greater Falls CONNECTIONS

Looking to hire a **Prevention Coordinator** (30 hrs. + benefits)
Direct support not involved.

Apply online at: greaterfallsconnections.org

The Grammar School in Putney, VT seeks an EXPERIENCED CAMP DIRECTOR for the summer!

Four one-week sessions from June 26 - July 21.
PT beginning immediately; FT for June 26 - July 21.

For complete job description: www.thegrammarschool.org

Town of Townshend Highway Road Crew Job Opening

Current CDL required. Heavy Equipment experience preferred. Competitive salary and benefits. E.O.E.

Applications can be picked up at Town Hall located at 2006 Rte. 30 in Townshend
Or call the Town Clerk's office at 802-365-7300.

Applications are due by Friday, March 31st.

Drop off application or mail it to: Road Crew
Town of Townshend
PO Box 223, Townshend, VT 05353

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West River Valley Thrives
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Are you ready for an amazing opportunity to lead an innovative program and make positive changes in your community?

Coalition Director Job Description

Hours and Compensation: This is a flexible 40-hour per week position eligible for generous benefits including paid time-off, health and dental insurance, and 403(b) retirement benefits. Starting rate, \$25 per hour.

Job Summary: The Coalition Director supports the efforts of community members and organizations working together to reduce substance use. The Director will provide leadership, continuity, and coordination for the continued capacity building and oversight of the West River Valley Thrives Coalition and its activities, resources, and staff. This will include coalition and board development, management of grants, as well as planning for the sustainability of the coalition and its work. Coalition operation will be guided by the Strategic Prevention Framework (SFP) process, which includes assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The position will also include some direct programming responsibilities.

For full job announcement and how to apply go to:
wrthrives.org/careers-and-internships

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
Position will remain open until filled.

Annual Town Meeting roundup, round two

More news and notes from Town Meeting Day from around Windham County

Here are some other results that did not make it into our Town Meeting Roundup in the March 8 edition:

- After a lengthy debate, Rockingham voters approved spending \$6,000 for a part-time contract with the Windham County Sheriff's Department to patrol Bartonville and other rural sections of the town.

- Voters in Jamaica and Londonderry both approved 1% local option taxes, while Halifax opted to pass on making a decision.

According to the Department of Taxes, 49 Vermont municipalities have imposed a 1% local-option tax on meals and alcohol, rooms, or sales. In fiscal year 2022, the 44 municipalities that had such taxes raised \$39.91 million from them.

Brattleboro and Wilmington assess the 1% tax on rooms, meals, alcohol, and retail sales,

excluding shoes and clothing. Towns with a local option tax keep 70% of the revenue, while the state gets the remainder.

In Jamaica, voters chose by a floor vote to impose 1% taxes on rooms, meals and alcohol. Selectboard Chair Greg Meulemans estimated that the new taxes would raise about \$25,000 a year. Despite an estimate that a 1% general sales tax would have raised an additional \$30,000, voters turned down that option by 47-23 vote.

- In Londonderry, voters, by a floor vote in the old Town Hall, chose to impose a 1% local tax on rooms. Voters also approved an initiative to join Winhall, Landgrove, Weston, and Peru in sharing the \$95,386 cost for the salary and benefits of a Mountain Towns Recreation Director. The participating towns agreed to pay assessments proportional to their respective populations.

- In Putney, Nate Snell defeated Bryce Hodson, 233-70, for a two-year seat on the Selectboard. Snell replaces Josh Laughlin, who stepped down after 17 years on the board.

Peg Alden was unopposed for a three-year seat on the board; she received 290 votes.

- Voters in the Bellows Falls Union High School towns of Athens, Grafton, Rockingham, and Westminster all approved a \$7.6 million budget for the 2023-24 school year, and OK'ed two special bond issues totaling \$4 million.

- Newfane passed its budgets and re-elected incumbent Selectboard members Jeff Chevalier and Katy Johnson-Aplin.

- Townshend voters gave pay raises to Town Hall assistants but declined to raise the salary of the town treasurer.

- Vernon approved a \$2,214,819 town budget and

elected Jean Carr and Brandon Bucossi to the Selectboard.

- Darcie Sprague was the winner of the write-in vote for Grafton's representative on the BFUHS board. It was the only contest on the ballot.

Grafton's voters will be reconvening for a Special Town Meeting on April 3 at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall to discuss tax exemption status for parcels of land belonging to the Grafton Museum of Natural History and Grafton Firefighters Association.

- In Dummerston, Alex Wilson defeated Mark Kracum, 329-82, for a two-year seat on the Selectboard.

Incumbent Maria Glabach was unopposed for the three-year seat.

With additional reporting from *VT Digger.com*.

AROUND THE TOWNS

Representative Town Meeting info sessions, district caucuses scheduled

BRATTLEBORO — The Selectboard is expected to combine what has traditionally been two pre-Representative Town Meeting (RTM) informational meetings, in light of the cancellation of the first meeting because of the nor'easter.

According to an announcement from Town Clerk Hilary Francis, the new, single meeting will likely take place Wednesday, March 22, at Academy School, beginning at 7 p.m. with district caucuses.

An expanded information session to cover both the FY24 budget and the bond articles would begin at 6 p.m. at the Academy School gym.

Child care will be available. Town Meeting members and members of the public are invited to attend and ask questions.

"Everyone's patience and understanding are requested as town staff work to finalize these alternate plans," the Town Manager's Office wrote in a news release.

Guilford Church Sugar-on-Snow supper set for March 18

GUILFORD — The Sugar-on-Snow supper at Guilford Community Church will be held on Saturday, March 18. There are three seatings to choose from, at 4, 5:30, and 7 p.m. Prices are \$15 adults, \$7 children age 11 and under, and \$3 for preschoolers. For reservations, call 802-254-9019 or email guilfordchurchsupper@gmail.com.

The menu features baked ham, baked beans, deviled eggs, potato salad, cole slaw, freshly-made baked rolls and doughnuts, sugar on snow, dill pickles, and coffee, tea, or milk. A half-gallon of maple syrup will be raffled off during each seating. Must be vaccinated and boosted against Covid and wear a mask except when eating. If symptomatic, please stay home.

From Interstate 91 Exit 1 in Brattleboro, go south on Route 5 just past Guilford Country Store, but before the bridge, make a left on Bee Barn Road,

then left again to 38 Church Drive to the Guilford Community Church. Money raised at the Sugar Supper helps support the church's outreach in the community. Visit guilfordchurch.org for more information.

Cub Scout Pack 447 holds seed fundraiser

BRATTLEBORO — Cub Scout Pack 447 will hold a Packs for Pack 447 seed fundraiser, selling and taking orders for High Mowing Organic seeds, on Saturday, March 18, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Vermont Marketplace (580 Canal Street). They will have seed packets, gift boxes, and homemade goodies for sale at their table located near the Tavern sign.

Packet prices range from \$4 to \$25 and will be shipped in early April. From noon to 1 p.m., the Bonnyvale Environmental Educational Center will demonstrate how to start pumpkin seedlings.

Proceeds support Pack 447's Mt. Norris Scout Reservation summer camp week, where local youths will spend a week building character and confidence in the great outdoors.

Rec. Dept. hosts youth chess tournament

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department will hold its 14th annual Youth Chess Tournament at the Gibson-Aiken Center Senior Center on Saturday, March 18, from 1 to 4 p.m.

This program is for participants in kindergarten through Grade 8, and all skill levels are welcome. The cost of this tournament is \$5. Eric Strickland will be running the tournament. Depending on the number of entrants, contestants will be divided into appropriate groups and the Swiss System will be used, so no players are ever eliminated. Game boards will be provided. For more information, call 802-254-5808.

Libraries celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Celtic humor

JACKSONVILLE — On Sunday, March 19, at 2 p.m., the

Whitingham Free Public Library and Pettee Memorial Library of Wilmington invite everyone to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with British storyteller, humorist, and author, Simon Brooks, for "Tales of Celtic Rogues & Rascals."

"You will find that scamps, scallywags and scoundrels abound," according to the organizers of this event. Simon's mission is to spread and share the art of traditional storytelling to a wider audience and to show the power of (and need for) the ancient stories of folk and fairy tales, myths, and legends."

This event is free and takes place at the Whitingham Municipal Center in the village of Jacksonville. The material is recommended for mature audiences. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call 802-368-7506.

Senior Lunch served in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON — Senior Solutions and Evening Star Grange will hold its annual Corned Beef and Cabbage Senior Lunch on Wednesday, March 22 with in-house seating at noon and take-outs available from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Reservations are strongly suggested for this meal and can be made by calling the Grange at 802-254-1138 and leave name, telephone number, number of meals, vegetarian or meat, and whether for eating in or taking out. Reservations should be made by March 21 at 5 p.m. if at all possible, so they can better plan for enough food.

The menu will include corned beef and cabbage, carrots, boiled potatoes, with Irish soda bread and pistachio breeze for dessert. A vegetarian option of spinach and onion quiche will also be available. A donation of \$3 for those 60 and above and \$4 for those 59 and younger is suggested.

Monthly food distribution in Putney

PUTNEY — The Vermont Foodbank and the Putney Foodshelf co-sponsor a monthly food drop of free produce and nonperishables on the fourth Thursday of every month,

from 9 to 9:45 a.m., on Alice Holloway Drive (in front of Putney Meadows, the white building across from the Putney Coop and Putney Fire Station).

All are welcome. Because of Covid, it is a drive-up service. Bags are provided. The next monthly food drop is Thursday, March 24.

Art by Ann Coleman on display at Dover Library

EAST DOVER — The Dover Free Library, 22 Holland Road, is exhibiting a collection of artist Ann Coleman's original pastels on paper through April.

Coleman has been a part of the Deerfield Valley since 1978, where her limited edition giclée prints can be found at numerous locations. She said she gravitated back to pastels as her primary medium in the early 1980s for their vivid color and layering ability. She enjoys creating local landscapes.

To learn more, go to AnnColemanGallery.com. For library hours, visit doverfreelibrary1913.org.

Children's Chorus returns to Main Street Arts

SAXTONS RIVER — The Main Street Arts Children's Chorus is coming back! After a hiatus of several years, MSA chorus founder and director Valerie Kosednar is bringing back this musical tradition. Children seven years of age and older can join a charismatic group of kids who love to sing! They will feature seasonal songs from a variety of styles and traditions.

Chorus will be held for a six-week session on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., April 3 to May 15 (no class on April 17). Price for the six-week session for one child is \$60. Additional siblings are half-price. Register online at mainstreetarts.org or in person at the first class.

Curriculum-building workshop 'Teaching Reconstruction' explores Black history

BRATTLEBORO—Amidst growing attacks on teaching Black history in American schools, Epsilon Spires will host a day-long workshop exploring the period after the Civil War known as Reconstruction, when slavery was abolished and formerly enslaved people were legally integrated into the United States.

The workshop will be held Saturday, March 25, and will be led by facilitators from the Zinn Education Project, who have previously presented a sold-out workshop at Epsilon Spires on teaching climate justice in 2019.

"One reads the truer deeper facts of Reconstruction with a great despair. It is at once so simple and human, and yet so futile," wrote the famous Black historian W.E.B. Du Bois in his 1935 book *Black Reconstruction in America*

1860-1880.

And while the Reconstruction era is rife with rescinded promises of property, protection, and equal rights for formerly enslaved people, it also contains stories and examples that can help us see the possibility of a future defined by racial equity.

This workshop is designed for educators working with middle and high school students, but is open to anyone who would like to learn more about teaching the complex history of the Reconstruction era.

Participants will engage in a series of classroom-friendly activities that both explore the neglected history of this period and ask how the unfulfilled promises of Reconstruction might shape our politics and American history education moving forward.

Workshop activities will be modeled from the Rethinking Schools book *Teaching A People's History of Abolition and the Civil War*, which was edited by the late Howard Zinn, the author of the groundbreaking social studies text *A People's History of the United States*.

Every participant will receive a copy of the book to take home, as well as lunch catered by a local farm-to-table restaurant.

"Sharing methods for teaching this pivotal moment in our national history is vitally important," say organizers, as states are moving to restrict what can be included in classroom curricula and what books are available in libraries.

As Du Bois wrote in *Black Reconstruction in America* nearly a century ago, "One is astonished in

the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over. The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history loses its value as an incentive and example; it paints perfect men and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth."

The workshop begins at 9:30 a.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m.

Tickets, which include lunch and a copy of *Teaching A People's History of Abolition and the Civil War*, are \$35 per person and can be purchased at epsilonspires.org. This workshop is made possible through with support by The Sparkplug Foundation.

For more information, contact Executive Director Jamie Mohr at jamie.mohr78@gmail.com.

WSESD to propose \$62.7 million for next school year budget

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) will hold a public hearing about the proposed fiscal year 2024 school operating/capital budgets on Tuesday, March 21 in the Brattleboro Union High School gymnasium.

A public informational hearing was to have taken place on March 14 but was cancelled due to the nor'easter. Meetings are rescheduled to Monday, March 20 at 6 p.m.

Business Manager Frank Rucker says he believes the board "supports this budget as a fiscally responsible plan to respond to our school's student and community needs."

The proposed \$62,704,054 general operating budget represents a \$1,620,583, or 2.7%, increase to this year's operating budget.

However, the budget as approved by the WSESD board will use \$950,000 in-hand from prior years — the "fund balance" — to offset the total. State law requires school districts to retain 5% of the budget in this educational fund. Rucker said using \$950,000 will leave \$3,319,481 in the fund balance.

While the budget as proposed includes an estimated tax rate change that is reduced by 6.5% and the anticipated income cap percent for income sensitivity adjustment is down 4.3%, individual tax rates by town are dependent on the common level of appraisal adjustment for each town.

Rucker said all indications show there will be "almost no change" to the tax rate compared to this year's rate in Brattleboro, while Dummerston homeowners will see "a modest change."

Putney residents will see a tax rate that could be "up quite a bit"

due to the current real estate market there "having indicated sales are much higher than the tax-assessed values," he said, adding that the rate in Guilford is "as yet unknown" as the town undertakes a property reappraisal.

Major drivers contributing to the budget increase include \$1,070,194 to add 10 new positions and salary increases, \$746,664 in health insurance costs, and a \$712,679 increase in special education costs — a combined total of \$2,529,537.

On the other hand, reductions in the proposed budget compared to this year's include \$1,093,555 less in capital improvements and \$109,749 less in bond interest debt as loans are being paid down.

According to the November preliminary census, the WSESD has 1,328 students in pre-K through elementary grades and 1,074 in secondary schools (Brattleboro Union High School and Brattleboro Area Middle

School) for a total of 2,402 students district-wide. The district has 435 employees.

The WSESD capital plan in fiscal year '24 calls for 38 projects that are generally aligned with HVAC system improvements, various building thermal improvements (for example, energy-efficient window replacements and insulation), roofing projects, and campus facility improvements. The total estimated cost of the those projects is \$3.6 million.

The current year capital plan was \$3.4 million and has been expended on similar types of improvements, including finishing the Academy School addition and renovation project.

Annual district reports and proposed budgets are available at Brattleboro, Dummerston, Guilford, and Putney town offices; all WSESD school sites; the WSESU central office; and at wsesu.org.

Investigation update

she appeared to be taking a step further.

"Those are really good questions and they are worded in a good way in order to help us focus where this is going in the future and, if you would not mind forwarding me that wording as much as you can, I will try to have an update for you at the next meeting [...] which is March 14," Young said.

'Ongoing lack of information'

Haskins Rogers also spoke about the investigation and lack of an update of any kind.

"I'm very concerned about the ongoing lack of information, even data, and I have a brief thing I'd like to read, it just takes a couple of minutes," she said. "This is the information that I have, just based on people who have come to me."

Haskins Rogers said, "Over the past year and a half since I published my article, I have heard from more people who were affected by Zeke Hecker's behavior, but also from people who say they were subjected to sexual misconduct by seven other educators in the district.

"For almost all of the educators that were named to me, more than one person has come forward and most of them did not know about each other. The accounts span decades," she said.

Haskins Rogers said those accounts are in addition to the high-profile cases of Eric Achenbach, Robert Dykes, and David Rynnion. All were apprehended and charged with crimes

while working at district schools from 2008 to 2011.

"The only one of those who was reported by an employee was Dykes," she said. "And David Rynnion, who was a BUHS student in the late 1970s, lured kids online in 2008 using the handle 'thepurpleandthewhite.' During his court case, Zeke and Linda Hecker submitted a character reference on his behalf.

"This is not ancient history — that's one thing I've heard a lot, of course — and they weren't just 'different times.' I wanted to cite that in July 1979, the *Brattleboro Reformer* ran a [wire service] article titled, 'Sexual Abuse of Students by Teachers Outlined,' which raised alarms about high school girls being harassed and abused by their educators and coaches."

Haskins Rogers said beginning in the early 1980s, Prevent Child Abuse Vermont and the Women's Crisis Center, now the Women's Freedom Center, "launched endless educational campaigns about sexual abuse of children and teens in local newspapers and schools."

"One two-part session in 1983 was attended by more than 100 people, including all of the WSESD principals," she said. "So there was awareness of this as a problem and [that] it wasn't accepted behavior.

"When I ask the district for disclosure, I am not asking them to reveal survivors or to tell abuse stories that survivors do not want retold. I am asking them to explain the nature and the scope of what has happened in their

schools and to release the names of educators who have been 'credibly accused.'

"This kind of disclosure could help survivors gain context for what was done to them and may help protect kids now. I have researched and found more than one named perpetrator working in other schools, or with other organizations that serve youth even when they have surrendered their licenses."

Creating 'new norms'

Haskins Rogers went on to say she believes the district "is trying to establish new norms."

"But relying on the kids to report their own abuse after it has occurred is not enough, and identifying 'trusted adults' is a questionable tactic, given that perpetrators are so adept at ingratiating themselves to their victims," she said, noting she believed Zeke Hecker "cared more about me than other teachers did because of the extra attention he gave to me."

Haskins Rogers emphasized not "a single person came to me with their story and told me they wanted the secrecy to continue."

"The secrecy protects only the institution and the perpetrators, it doesn't protect students or survivors," she said.

She added her hopes that with a newly constituted board after Town Meeting Day elections, "all stakeholders will join me in calling for real disclosure and accountability and, hopefully, this will change this pattern."

FROM SECTION FRONT

Young responded to say that she hopes anyone will feel confident in speaking with Goddard.

"She is really the conduit through which we are educated as to who or what and it helps us to move forward as to what steps need to happen," Young said.

"If it is in current administration, that certainly is a concern, and we don't know about it if we don't hear from either students or parents or community members or other administration who may know of something — we have to learn about it.

"Truly, it's an unfair burden to put on someone to have to report something that they may have been victimized and may have caused them trauma, but in order for us to know about these things, we have to have some sort of a report by someone, so I would encourage you and anyone else who may have experiences or know of something to please contact Aimee Goddard.

"I know it sounds like a record playing over and over again to say that, but that's really how we will find out about things," Young said.

Goddard's office did not return phone calls from *The Commons*.

To report any knowledge of sexual abuse in the WSESD, call 802-451-0905, send an email to report@wsepd.info, or visit the WSESD Investigation page on the Annis & Goddard website (southernvermontlaw.com/wsepd).

Event celebrates Women's History Month, women-owned businesses

BRATTLEBORO—The inaugural edition of She Means Business will take place on Thursday, March 23, at The Stone Church, 210 Main Street. The event will provide opportunities to learn, connect, and celebrate Vermont's women-owned businesses as part of Women's History Month.

According to organizers, attendees will have the option to plan their day, selecting from two workshops, a QuickConnect networking session with lenders and resource providers, a business hop to select downtown businesses, and an evening reception.

The event is open to anyone who owns a business, is thinking of starting one, or just wants to see what Vermont's small business community has to offer.

The schedule for the day includes:

- 10 to 11:30 a.m.: Business Planning Basics Workshop
- Noon to 1:30 p.m.: Nine Steps to Increasing Awareness for Your Business Workshop
- 3 to 4 p.m.: Brattleboro Business Hop: using the map provided, participants

visit the area's small business community

• 4 to 5:30 p.m.: QuickConnect — to connect with lenders and statewide service providers offering insights and materials to help small business owners

• 5:30 to 7 p.m.: Reception and Networking, hosted by the Vermont Women's Fund: a celebrate of the day with food, fun, and continued networking conversations

She Means Business is hosted by Small Business Administration Vermont District Office, Vermont Women's Fund, Downtown Brattleboro Alliance, The Stone Church, Center for Women & Enterprise, and Vermont Small Business Development Center.

All activities are free. Walk-ins are welcome, but guests are asked to register in advance at bit.ly/706-biz for planning purposes. This event is in partnership with the Community Navigator Pilot Program, funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud.

— COCO CHANEL

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www.HomeMattersHere.org

Elwell joins Groundworks staff as interim deputy executive director

BRATTLEBORO—Executive Director Josh Davis and the Groundworks Collaborative board of directors recently announced that former Brattleboro Town Manager Peter Elwell has joined the Groundworks staff as interim deputy executive director.

According to a news release, the organization said that Elwell's appointment "is timely, as he will assist Davis and the Groundworks team as they continue to navigate a period of significant transition coming out of the pandemic. Additionally, Davis will be taking intermittent leave over the next few months to support his family through a significant health issue."

"Personally, it's clear that I need to take some time to support my family; and we are grateful to have Peter stepping into active Groundworks staff work during this critically important time for the organization," said Davis. He noted the substantive upcoming changes to the emergency motel program converging with Groundworks' continued

innovation to address basic needs in the community.

He says in addition to Elwell's experience with management, he's committed to Groundworks' mission, services, and community partners.

Elwell joined the Groundworks board of directors in October 2022. He will take a leave of absence from the board during his service as a member of Groundworks' staff.

Both Davis and Elwell emphasized that, as his title suggests, Elwell's new role will be temporary, albeit for an as yet undetermined period of time.

"I'll serve in this role for as long as I am useful to Josh and the Groundworks team during this transitional time," said Elwell, "and then I'll be happy to shift back into serving on the board."

Davis said that in addition to assisting him and the Groundworks leadership team on matters related to Groundworks' daily operations, Elwell's work will focus primarily on planning and communications.

MEDIA MENTORING PROJECT

What you need to know:
How Social Media is Changing our World for Better or Worse
Wednesday, March 29
6:30pm via Zoom

Join us for a panel discussion that goes behind the scenes of the mass media world and explores how, as a citizen, good critical media literacy can lead to intelligent civic engagement.

Topics:

- How to think critically and interpret messages from social media, mass media or pop culture.
- How to protect yourself and young people from negative aspects of social media.
- How social media platforms curate information for the reader/viewer.
- How social media is regulated v. mainstream media.

Panelists:



Gyuri Kepes



Susanna Strothman



Ben Boyington



Moderator: Joyce Marcel



Email ziagulazimi9@gmail.com for the Zoom link.



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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• **Rio Coursen** of Putney was named to the President's List for the fall 2022 semester at Vermont Technical College.

• **Lia Clark** of Saxtons River, **Kathleen Dole** of Bellows Falls, and **Alex Shriver** and **Will Taggard** of Brattleboro were all named to the Dean's List for the fall 2022 semester at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

• **Kiera Noble** of Guilford was named to the fall 2022 semester Dean's List at Adelphi University in Garden City, New York.

• **Ella Vilozny** of Brattleboro has made the Dean's List for the fall 2022 semester at Emmanuel College in Boston.

Transitions

• **Michael Delpriore** has been elected to the Board of Directors at Members 1st Credit Union in North Brattleboro for a three-year term. Delpriore graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 1981 and, in 2003, he started Amity Alarm & Security, named after his daughter Amity. He can be seen walking the stairs at Harris Hill Ski Jump, at the gym, or riding his bicycle during the warmer months. He plays several musical instruments including the guitar, bass guitar, and drums.

• Multimedia arts organization Epsilon Spire of Brattleboro added two people to its board of directors: **Rob Forman**, who will take over as Board Secretary, and **George W. Meyers** of Deerfield, Massachusetts. Meyers has been the General Manager at Amherst Cinema for 13 years, where he currently co-curates the Bellweather Film Series, while Forman has been a writer, curator, and facilitator in providing forums for experimental musicians and sound artists for over 30 years.

Obituaries



• **Gary Lee Carrier, 81**, formerly of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Feb. 10, 2023 in Orono, Maine after a long illness. A beloved son, nephew, husband, father, grandfather, and friend, Gary was a proud Vermonter. Born in Burlington on Sept. 4, 1941, he was the son of Clayton and Estella (Moore) Carrier. Raised in Jacksonville and Brattleboro, Gary graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 1959 along with several treasured lifelong friends. He went on to earn a B.A. in history from the University of Vermont in 1963 and an M.Ed. from Keene State College in 1969. In 1965, Gary married Alice Lacoss of Hanover, New Hampshire, in the chapel of Brattleboro's Centre Congregational Church. Gary adored Alice, and they raised their family in Brattleboro, eventually celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with family and friends in the church parlor. The Carrier

Education Play Area was named in recognition of their many years of dedicated service to the church and the Brattleboro Centre for Children. Gary loved his community and the people in it. Even after moving to Maine to be closer to family, he always thought of Brattleboro as home. He worked for decades at Cersosimo Lumber Company in various roles, from lumber stacker during school vacations to vice president, and he had many fond memories of his coworkers and the Cersosimo family. Outside of his professional life, Gary gave generously of his time and talents. He was active in local government, serving as a Town Meeting Representative and Finance Committee member, and as a member of the Board of Listers. Dedicated throughout his life to his own, his family's, and others' education, Gary was also a longtime member and chairman of the Brattleboro Union High School Board, an Incorporator and Trustee of the Austine School, and a Trustee of Kurn Hattin Homes for Children. He took pride in helping others through his work as a Guardian ad Litem and as a member of the Diversion Board for Youth Services of Windham County. He was involved with many other organizations, including the Windham County Humane Society, Kiwanis, and the Masonic Lodge. Gary loved his friends, downhill and cross-country skiing, Alice's dinner parties, vacations in Rangeley and on Bailey Island, Maine, hunting camp, and the University of Vermont; hiking in the woods, playing golf, riding horses, long exercise walks, and reading mystery novels; following Red Sox baseball, Patriots football, and his daughters' and grandchildren's field hockey, football, basketball, track, and lacrosse teams; and, above all, spending time with his family. He was charming and able to strike up a conversation with anyone, which he often did. He will be remembered by all who knew him for his integrity, work ethic, practicality, and wit, and by his family for the remarkable example that he set for his daughters and grandchildren. Gary is survived by his two devoted daughters, Allison Lucy and her husband John of Orono and Christine Hume of South Portland, Maine; and by five adoring grandchildren: Jack and his fiancée Christine, Thomas, Mark, Erin, and Paige. He is also survived by his sisters Patricia and Pamela, many nieces and nephews, and his orange tabby cat, Buddy. He was predeceased by his wonderful parents, loving wife, sister Penny, brother Peter, dear Patricia (Denton) MacMurtry, and many other loved ones. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services will be held on Saturday, May 13, at 11 a.m., at Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro, with a reception and private burial to follow. Donations in Gary's memory may be sent to Centre Congregational Church or the Windham County Humane Society.

• **Catherine (Kay) Goulet Champoli, 91**, of Vernon. Died Feb. 25, 2023 at the Jack Byrne Center For Palliative and Hospice Care at Dartmouth-Hitchcock



Memorial Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Catherine was born Nov. 16, 1931, in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, the oldest of eight children born to Emma (Nason) Goulet and Louis H. Goulet. Catherine grew up in Woonsocket and left school at an early age to work in a rubber factory to help support her family. In 1952, at age 19, she married the brother of her best friend Joan, and the love of her life, Donald Robert "Don" Champoli, who predeceased her in 2007 in Springfield, Vermont. They raised four children in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. Catherine was a stay-at-home mom. An amazing cook and homemaker, during the early years of child-raising she volunteered as a Brownie leader and Catholic catechism teacher, and she belonged to the Ladies Canasta League. She later worked in a number of retail stores. She and her husband loved to dance, entertain friends, travel together, and they especially enjoyed time at the beach. They also enjoyed a summer home in Sandwich, Massachusetts, while living the rest of the year in Port Charlotte, Florida. They lost their home during Hurricane Charlie and returned to New England, primarily living in Vermont and Maine. After her husband's death, Catherine lived in Putney and Bridgton, Maine with her children. She also lived in Dunn, North Carolina, before spending her final years at Holton Home in Brattleboro and Vernon Green nursing home. "Everything" was her "favorite." She enjoyed her life to the fullest, taking great delight in the beauty of nature, reading, music, volunteering, food, and family and friends, which she made easily with her outgoing personality. She is survived by her eldest son Carl H. Champoli and his wife Joyce L. Champoli (Pilcher) of North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, D. Gemma Champoli and her partner Karen Zamojski of Brattleboro, Tina Champoli Kelsey and her husband Tom Kelsey of Biloxi, Mississippi, and daughter Sarah Snow Champoli of Bridgton. She also leaves her grandchildren: Aaron Champoli and his wife Nancy of Stedman, North Carolina, Jason Champoli of North Myrtle Beach, Emma C. Champoli and her partner Cote of Brattleboro, Ali Champoli and her husband Yiming of Quincy, Massachusetts, and Anthony Champoli and Angelica Champoli of Bridgton; great-grandchildren Kayla and Colin Champoli of Stedman; her sister Connie Walsh of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania and her youngest brother Donald Goulet of Southington, Connecticut. She was predeceased by her son Dale A. Champoli and her great-grandson Casey Champoli, as well as her brothers Louis (Sonny), Arthur, John, and Billy Goulet, and her youngest sister Betty Colvin. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Kay's name to Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal St., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To share a memory or send condolences to Kay's family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Luella Louise "Lue" French-Stevens, 92**, of Westminister. Died Feb. 27, 2023, following a sudden illness. Lue was born on November 4, 1930, in Cambridgeport to Edward (Ned) and Florence (Huntoon) McQuaide; she was the youngest of five children. Lue was a devout Christian and a cornerstone of the Cambridgeport/Athens church. In 1948, Lue married the love of her life, Robert (Bob) French. Lue and Bob went on to have two children, Daniel and Gary. Lue was known as a hard worker, taking on several jobs as life wasn't always easy or kind. She was most proud of her work as a nurse's aide at Rockingham Memorial and Grace Cottage hospitals. She was a mother of two and beloved "Auntie Lue" to many and a friend to all. She loved the Lord, her family, friends, and small children, and especially her beloved pets. In 2016, Lue married Rev. Sherman Stevens of Jacksonville, Florida, where she resided for part of her marriage. She moved back to Vermont following Sherman's death in 2021. Lue was predeceased by her parents, her husbands, her two sons, her sister, Millie, and brothers, Bob, Don and Bill. Lue is survived by many nieces, nephews and dear

friends who loved and adored her. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral service was held at the Community Christian Church in Athens on March 15. Donations to the Community Christian Church, which Lue loved dearly.



• **Grace E. Gunnip, 85**, of Brattleboro. Died on March 6, 2023 at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. She was born Aug. 2, 1937, in Lunenburg, Vermont, the daughter of Abner and Ellen (Greeley) Howland. In 1957, she married Donald Gunnip at the Roxbury Community Church in Stamford, Connecticut. Grace and her family moved to Brattleboro in 1964 and lived on South Main Street for many years. They attended the United Methodist Church on Elliot Street. Grace started a day care called "Babes & Toddlers" out of her home and took care of many local children. She also worked at the Austine School, Brattleboro Day Care, and Ames Department Store. Grace was a founding member of Windham Child Care Association in 1981, along with Carol Lynch, Cathi Wilkin, Bunny Johnson and Barbara Reed. She has been a member of the United Methodist Church since 1964 and the Fraternal Order of the Eagles Auxiliary, Brattleboro Aerie 2445, since 1985. Grace was also a "Red Hat" member, an RSVP volunteer, and served on the board of the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center. She enjoyed attending church, organizing tag sales, baking and visiting with her family and friends. Grace was an avid reader. She collected and read many books about John F. Kennedy and his family. Surviving family members include her five children: Betty Lindhal and her husband Carl, of Manchester, New Hampshire, Steven Gunnip and his wife, Deborah, of Rutland, Dennis Gunnip and his wife Joy, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Kathy Patenaude and her husband Brian of Brattleboro, and Rick Gunnip and his partner Cheryl of Guilford. She leaves eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. She also leaves many nieces and nephews from the Brattleboro area and northern Vermont. Her niece Carol Lane and family visited her often. Grace was especially close with her first grandson, Robert Shaw. She also leaves many good friends from all over the U.S. She was predeceased by her parents, her brother Herbert, her sisters Alyce and Mary Ellen, and her ex-husband, Donald. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life will be held in the spring. She will be laid to rest with her beloved husband Donald at Meeting House Hill Cemetery. Donations to United Methodist Church, 18 Town Crier Drive, Brattleboro, VT 05301, or Project Feed the Thousands, P.O. Box 8366, North Brattleboro, VT 05304. To share a memory or send condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Phillip Joseph "Phil" Haskins, 83**, of Brattleboro. Died Tuesday morning, February 28, 2023 at the Jack Byrne Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, following a lengthy period of declining health. A lifelong resident of the area, Phil was born at home in Guilford, one of 16 children, to Carroll and Adella (Goodell) Haskins. He was raised in Brattleboro where he attended public schools, including Brattleboro High School. He enlisted in the Navy in 1957, proudly serving his country until his honorable discharge from active service in 1961. Phil was employed at Cersosimo Lumber Company as a multi-talented mechanic working on any and all types of motors and large equipment. He was known to be able to fix or repair just about anything mechanical. For many years he was independently contracted as a Star Route carrier for the U.S. Postal Service. Phil was a hard worker, whether it was working on his home or cars, and he was very clever and talented with his hands. He was a quiet person but with a sharp sense of humor, and much love for his family. Of his leisure time activities, he enjoyed hunting, fishing with his son, Andy, all forms of racing, and especially playing and camping with his grandchildren. On Jan. 28, 1963, at the West Brattleboro Baptist Church, he was married to Carole "Susie" Foley who survives. Besides his wife of 60 years, he leaves his four children: Andrew Haskins of Bellows Falls, Audrey Garfield and Melissa Haskins, both of Brattleboro, and Mindy Haskins Rogers and husband Otis of Northampton, Massachusetts; brothers Howard Haskins and wife Bernadette, Davin Haskins

and wife Jerri, Stephen Haskins and partner Gail, Samuel Haskins and wife Verna, and Gary Haskins and partner Lee; sisters June Haskins Doucette and husband Joe, Rachel Haskins, and Rebecca Haskins Edson; grandchildren Adam Haskins Norcia and wife Jenn, Marla Haskins and partner Tim, Alexandra Haskins, Avery Garfield and partner Johan, Madison Garfield, Atticus Rogers, Aiden Haskins and Asher Haskins; and great-grandchildren Emma Norcia, Roselynn Haskins and Addison Garfield. Additionally, Phil leaves many other relatives. He was predeceased by four brothers: Stuart, James, David, and Daniel Haskins; and two sisters, Shirley Scarborough and Jean Haskins Goddard. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In keeping with Phil's wishes, there are no calling hours or funeral services scheduled. Burial with full military honors will be conducted later in the springtime in the family lot in Morningside Cemetery in Brattleboro when the cemetery reopens. In consideration for Phil's love for animals, donations may be made to Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To send condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Judith Anne "Judy" (Reason) Ingison, 89**, of Brattleboro. Died on July 17, 2022, leaving a legacy of love, great works, inclusivity, lending a helping hand, giving honest feedback, having adventures, and living life to its fullest with an open heart. There was always room at her table, wisdom and wit in her words, and friends became family. She was born June 27, 1933 in Syracuse, New York, and is an alumna of Nottingham High School, where she was a member of Delta Kappa sorority. She became a student at Syracuse University in the College of Home Economics and continued her sorority affiliation while there with Delta Delta Delta. Judy A. Reason and Malcolm S. Ingison were married Dec. 5, 1953 at the Betts Memorial Universalist Church in Syracuse. Judy worked a variety of jobs that provided the flexibility she wanted to remain an active part of the lives of their four children, and to contribute to her church and community projects. She careered in the travel industry, taking her to many corners of the world, until later in life, when she worked for *The Wall Street Journal*. Judy enjoyed her grandchildren Kamon (Laura), Heather (Pete), Kia (Raymond), Christina "Tina" (Joseph), Amanda (Mark), Kegan (Thomas), Dillon, Devon, Maxwell "Maxx" and Emma. She also delighted in her great-grandchildren Madysin, William "Liam", Gibson, Noah, Lucas, Evelyn, Malcolm, Corinne and Memphis. Judy served churches wherever she lived in many capacities, locally, within the district and nationally with the Unitarian Universalist Association. Additional interests included travel, sailing, singing, baseball (go New York Yankees!), tennis, concerts (music), gardening, bird watching, antiquing, reading, doing *New York Times* crossword puzzles, and cooking. Judy was known for creative recipes and was generous with cooking advice. Judy came to enjoy camping, and she enjoyed family and friends, eating lobster rolls, and creating beautiful pine cone wreaths and flower arrangements. She had a beautiful collection of cobalt blue bottles and scarves. Judy was a lifelong learner and was knowledgeable on most topics. She is survived by her children and their spouse/partner: Karen and Kirby Sams, Stanley Ingison and Suzanne Snyder, David Ingison and Deb German and Jennifer and Bill Bowes, as well as brother-in-law Walter McMahon, nieces and nephews Lynn & Mike Hanson, Vicki & Marshall Groves, Chris and Trina McMahon, Jenny and Jon Ellis, Deb and John Cardoni, Carol and Bill Chenard, Colin and Patti Burns and their children, grandchildren, and extended family. Friends who became family included Elizabeth and Paul Boyer, and Heather and Tiffany Gibson-Rael and their children. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life ceremony is planned for Saturday, April 8, at 11 a.m., at All Souls Church in West Brattleboro, with a reception following the service.

• **Dolores Klaich, 86**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on March 8, 2023, International Women's Day, in her Brattleboro home where she had lived since 2004 after a long residency in East Hampton, New York. Dolores was a retired journalist, editor, and educator who worked as a reporter for *Life* magazine in the 1960s. Later, she developed and implemented an HIV-AIDS curriculum that was used for much of

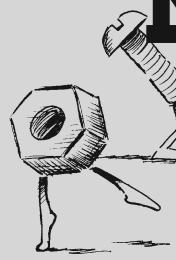
the 1980s by health care professionals and communities alike during the first decades of that epidemic. Thereafter, she did freelance work, publishing books and articles, with an emphasis on gay, lesbian, and feminist issues. Her book *Woman Plus Woman: Attitudes Toward Lesbianism* (1974) was widely used in some of the first Women's Studies programs. Throughout her life, Dolores participated in citizen activism for various social, environmental, and anti-war efforts. This was a natural pathway for a "pink diaper baby" inspired by her Socialist parents. In her last years, she supported the Death with Dignity movement, choosing for herself, after a long period of declining health, Medical Aid in Dying under Vermont's legislative Act 39 permitting this kind of care. Dolores devoted her professional and personal life to the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam*: work done to repair the world. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: None provided.

• **Lorraine Cote Miller, 80**, of Westminister. Died Feb 24, 2023, in the home she loved so much, surrounded by the family she loved so much. She was born Nov. 20, 1942, in Concord, Vermont. She graduated from Concord High School in 1960 and from Sheldon Academy of Beauty Culture in 1961. She began her career in North Walpole and Bellows Falls, where she met her husband, Dick Miller. They were married in 1965 and remained happily together for 57 years. While working as a hairdresser and helping thousands of people look and feel their best, she raised her family and became deeply involved in her community. She belonged to the Greater Falls Women's Club, volunteered at Park Place and Westminister Cares, and served on the board of the Westminister Institute. In 2021, she and Dick were awarded Westminister Citizens of the Year. She loved spending time outdoors with friends and family. She especially loved skiing, kayaking, and hiking, and there is a well worn track on the roads and trails around their home from daily walking and snowshoeing. Lori and Dick traveled around the US and Canada by motorcycle and found adventure and friends around the globe. Lori expressed her creative gifts in her oil and watercolor paintings, handicrafts, and gardens. She earned the title of Vermont Master Gardener and was a member of the Saxtons River Art Guild. She attended Saint Charles Church, singing in the choir, and she spent many mornings tending the gardens there. Lori leaves behind her husband, Dick; her sons, Todd (Cathy) and Troy (Christina); her brother, Paul; her sisters, Priscilla, and Linda; and her grandchildren, Apollo and Nyx. She was predeceased by her parents, Louise and Raymond Cote, and her brother, Richard Cote. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was held March 11 at St. Charles Church in Bellows Falls. Donations to Westminister Cares, 3534 US 5, Westminister, VT 05158 (westministercares.org) or to Visiting Nurse and Hospice for Vermont and New Hampshire, 88 Prospect St., White River Jct, VT 05001 (vnhcare.org).

• **Kenneth Clay Unwin Sr., 64**, of Athens. Died unexpectedly at home on Jan. 26, 2023, where he lived for many years with his life partner, Pamela Amidon. He was born April 15, 1958, in Brattleboro to the late Anna Belle Moffitt and the late Carol Dennis Unwin. Kenneth worked for many years as a logger, retiring from Independent Partners of Williamsville. His hobbies included hunting and fishing. He also loved spending time with his family and his beloved dog, Duke, his cat, Buddy, and many other pets throughout his life. Kenneth was always humble and kind, and always willing to lend a hand in any way he could. He was a friend to many and all loved him. He will be dearly missed. Besides his lifelong partner, he is survived by his children Kenneth Clay Unwin Jr., and his wife Shannon Unwin of Wilmington, Jesse Earl Unwin of Athens, Krystal Ann Unwin of Athens, and Sarah Jean Euber of Dummerston, along with several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Kenneth is also survived by his lifelong best friend, James Johnson and his wife, Susan Johnson of Coventry. He leaves behind three sisters, Carol Williams of Brookfield, Massachusetts, Pauline Hubbard, of Ware, Massachusetts, and Diane King of Brattleboro, along with many nieces, nephews and extended family and friends. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 18, from 4 to 5 p.m., at Community Christian Church in Athens.

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Snow

By midday on Wednesday, the utility had restored power to more than 59,000 customers. In Brattleboro, Brattleboro Fire Chief Leonard Howard III said in a news release issued later that afternoon that 16% of the town remained without power.

GMP's interactive outage website reported 9,622 customers in the county without power due to 489 "active incidents" on Wednesday evening.

Carlson said that the power company had called out reinforcements, tripling its field force in advance of the storm. She said that more than 500 utility and tree workers from utilities based outside the contours of the snowstorm — including Quebec, New Brunswick, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island — have swarmed to Vermont as part of the industry's mutual aid arrangements.

But even with that added oomph, GMP and local officials are all cautioning the public that some residents might have to wait four to five days for electricity to be restored.

"Actual power restoration work is intentionally limited today, due to the amount of work required to open up the roads," Putney Fire and Rescue wrote in a message posted to a public Putney group on Facebook at noon on Wednesday.

Clearing the roads

"GMP crews have been working very hard throughout town, with the primary focus of getting roads open and free of utility obstruction," the post continued. "All wires that are down in roadways will be relocated (if not re-attached to poles) and grounded to make them safe."

The Putney road crew has been "concentrating heavily on the Holland Hill and Putney Mountain Road areas this morning, working to open the roads up to the extent we are all accustomed to," the post continued. "This has been a very difficult process, due to the 4 feet of snow we received in these areas."

Grafton Fire & Rescue reported "a large tree and wires across Route 121E which stymied the Rescue Squad headed west on a call this morning," the volunteers wrote on Tuesday after trying to respond to a garage fire. A visiting power crew "arrived after having to cut their way into Grafton and open the road for us, and then cut power at the fire scene." Rockingham firefighters assisted on the call.

In Brattleboro, after seven crews with the Department of Public Works worked all night on Tuesday, they reported 48 roads obstructed, mostly trees and wires down.

The town is maintaining an interactive map of roads that are impassable at bit.ly/706-bratt-roads.

On Wednesday, the Dummerston Selectboard issued an announcement that a number of roads in town were still blocked by trees and wires, including East-West Road (from the Covered Bridge to the town center), Middle Road, Knapp Road, Kipling Road, Dutton Farm Road, Black Mountain Road, Howland Road, Rice Farm Road, Park Laughton Road, Spaulding Road, Miller Road, Bunker Road, Stickney Brook Road, and Wicopee Hill Road.

On Wednesday afternoon, the accumulated mounds of snow narrowed Main Street in Brattleboro as drivers were forced to park their cars outside of the markings.

"DPW has both sidewalk tractors out and working and will continue to until completed," Howard wrote. "Crews will be going out tomorrow to open all the storm drains to prepare for the rain forecasted for Friday. Downtown snow removal will be delayed until they achieve getting all the roads open for thru travel."

Lots of accidents, few injuries

Vermont State Police started logging accidents almost as soon as the snow began falling on Monday night.

Between 12:01 a.m. Tuesday and 7 a.m. Wednesday, their records show 169 weather-related crashes throughout the state. Of these accidents, 87 took place in southern Vermont, and eight resulted in injuries.

At 2 a.m. Tuesday, the Agency of Transportation invoked the state's chain-up law for operators of trucks and other large vehicles traveling Route 9 between Wilmington and Bennington.

The state closed multiple roads made impassible by trees entangled in power lines, including Route 112 in Halifax, U.S. Route 5 in Guilford, and Route 100 in Wardsboro. Drivers heading north on Route 100 past the intersection of Route 11 in Londonderry also encountered a jackknifed tractor-trailer on Tuesday morning. Various points on Interstate 91 through

FROM SECTION FRONT

Windham County were closed during the storm.

IAFF Local 4439, the union representing Brattleboro's firefighters, announced that personnel on duty on Tuesday "responded to 36 emergencies in 24 hours."

In Brattleboro, "the Department of Public Works (DPW) is advising many roads are closed or are down to one lane, because of trees and wires down in the roadways," Howard said, in a public appeal that was echoed throughout the county by other towns' fire and emergency personnel. "Please use caution traveling."

Shelters and support

In Putney, Fire Department members, with the support of Putney Cares and other organizations, have performed "a third round of door-to-door citizen wellness checks," the fire and rescue team wrote in their Facebook post.

Emergency personnel have found ways to help vulnerable people in the region get to Brattleboro Union High School, which was closed for two days because of the snow.

The school has served as a regional congregate shelter, as a "safe place to take cover, warm up, rest and a place to charge cell phones and computers," Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Superintendent Mark Speno said in a note to district families.

"The efforts of the Red Cross and their many volunteers is a great benefit to Brattleboro and surrounding towns," Brattleboro Town Manager John Potter said in a news release.

Jennifer Costa, the regional communications director for the Red Cross, told *The Commons* that approximately 20 people have been making use of the shelter on Wednesday during the day and into the evening.

In Bellows Falls, Chroma Technology opened a warming shelter for the community. According to the company's Facebook page, it will remain open until further notice.

A warming shelter was also established at the Putney Central School for Wednesday evening, and in Newfane, where some of the highest accumulations were recorded, Newbrook Fire & Rescue opened its station to the public for warmth and coffee. ("We don't have food but you can bring your own," they posted on their Facebook page.)

Officials urge patience and caution

Local officials and EMS personnel are issuing updates that celebrate progress in restoring roads and utilities — albeit not as quickly as anyone wants.

"Many roads are blocked with vehicles that have been stuck, and there are power lines down in places blocking access for the machinery," wrote Molly Welch, a member of the Marlboro Selectboard, on Wednesday morning in a plea for patience.

In an update on Wednesday afternoon, Putney Fire and Rescue described "significant frustration and definite safety hazards for our municipal crews, as well as for GMP crews" in the long slog to restore power.

Local and state emergency responders have issued a number of requests to area residents:

- Slow down for trucks and crews working in and along the roads. "None of us need our personnel, fire apparatus, highway trucks/equipment, or line trucks hit by someone who is not driving in a safe or appropriate manner," Putney Fire and Rescue wrote.

- "Though it may seem fun and exciting to drive recklessly on roads that have yet to be fully plowed or open, a few folks found the result of such actions to not be so much fun," the Putney team added. "We ask drivers, again, to slow down, drive responsibly, and encourage them to not use our roads as off-road courses."

- Be patient. "We understand the stress levels and the fact that humans can only take so much of being inconvenienced, but the road crews, utility crews, and fire department members all have jobs to do, and are working toward a common goal," Putney Fire and Rescue wrote. "Please let them do their work, and be respectful of their work. Yelling and screaming at these workers will not improve things at all."

- If you see an electrical or phone line down, please treat the line as electrified and report it to 911.

- Report an outage at greenmountainpower.com/report-outage, call at 888-835-4672, or text "OUT" to 46788.

- Though main roads have generally been cleared, avoid travel unless necessary.
- Exercise caution and use proper ventilation when using equipment such as generators and



NICKI STEEL PHOTOGRAPHY/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

"Here come the plows!"



COREY HALE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Somewhere under there is a truck.

portable heaters.

- Check on your neighbors to make sure they are all right.
- "One of the most important reminders we put out there for every snowstorm: clear your heating vents and check carbon monoxide alarms," advised Vermont Emergency Management.
- While local officials have asked for patience, residents who truly need help should not

hesitate to call 911. "Please do not delay in notifying the fire department," the Putney firefighters wrote in their Wednesday update. "Now is not the time to worry about disturbing folks, or creating a nuisance."

Editor's note: Thanks to the dozens of readers who responded to our invitation to contribute photos for this story.



KAREN NELSON MANGOLD/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Mr. Blue has second thoughts.

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CHRISTOPHER DENETTE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

At a staging area in the Hannaford shopping plaza on Putney Road in Brattleboro, some of the more than 500 workers from utilities not affected by this storm came to the aid of Green Mountain Power prepared to be called into service.



GARY SWINDLER/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

The view from one house in Guilford.



LYNN BARRETT/THE COMMONS

Looking out the door in Dummerston.



ANDREE COLLIER ZALESKA/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

These cats enjoyed the snow "for a little while," their owner reports.

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DEBBIE GROSSMAN/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

"It even snowed on our front porch, where our lawn flamingos were hiding out," writes Debbie Grossman.

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ESSAY

Three years later, moving forward gently

'I'm not feeling functionally traumatized about Covid. But I am feeling a deep well of sadness that I didn't realize was still there'

THREE YEARS AGO — March 10, 2020 — I sent my girls off to their dad's, knowing it would likely be the last easygoing, normal visit they would have with him for a while.

Brattleboro

I was right.

The next day, I made the rounds: co-op, grocery stores, other errands. The town was out doing the same, almost as if we were expecting a major blizzard.

Stock up on the basics. Toilet paper, bleach, hand sanitizer. Rice, beans, eggs. Cocoa, baking supplies, comfort foods. Whatever you can think of. Who knows; maybe we'll be stuck at home for a whole week or two. Get some marshmallows for the cocoa, just in case.

Saturday, March 14, 2020. Waiting in line at the very crowded co-op, surrounded by people who were no doubt "stocking up" just like me, I was struck by the din of the background noise, the loud hum of people's voices and the bustle of their movements. Something led me to press record on the voice memos app on my phone. *Capture that sound; it might be a while before we hear it again.*

AMANDA WITMAN, an administrative consultant, helps run the Vermont Everyone Eats program, locally and at the state level.

And it was.

I was reminded of this moment today. I had mentioned it to someone a year ago, and he asked if I would share the sound file with him. I had forgotten about it, but there it was, still on my phone. It brought me right back to that moment, on the cusp of Covid lockdown, none of us having any idea what was to come.

Sunday, March 15, 2020. My kids came home from their dad's that night. I reluctantly informed them that they would not be going to classes (or anywhere else) on Monday morning. "OK, fine; we're not happy about it," they said, "but we'll stay home if we have to."

And then Tuesday morning rolled around, and I got some angry pushback from my youngest.

"We stayed home all day yesterday already! I want to see my friends!"

Sorry, kid. The governor has ordered everyone to stay home. Let's pretend it's a snow day, make some cocoa, quarantine the mail, watch a movie, try to make the best of it....

TODAY, IT HIT ME just how much grief I've buried from those times. To survive it, we had to normalize it to a great extent. I'm not feeling functionally traumatized. But I am feeling a deep well of sadness that I didn't realize was still there.

For the past 2.5 years, I've focused on helping others through a couple of pandemic-funding-driven programs, including Vermont Everyone Eats, which is ending on March 31, at the same time as several other programs that have collectively offered a lifeline to tens of thousands of Vermonters. The cliff they (and, by extension, we) are facing is steep and unforgiving.

It felt good to help people; it gave me purpose, a sense of utility, and hope.

But now I feel like I'm back where I was three years ago, without a clue how we will collectively move forward from this moment.

■ SEE THREE YEARS LATER, B2

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mid-session update: justice, education, and more

'Serving in Montpelier has been an incredibly rewarding experience (aside from getting Covid), and I am enjoying each opportunity I get to support local communities'

Dummerston

Although I had prepared speeches and paper handouts for folks around our county on Town Meeting Day, I unfortunately tested positive for Covid the day before and had to cancel my plans to visit different towns.

It is especially disappointing because I was excited about the prospect of revisiting our old Town Meeting traditions and talking with folks to present my updates, hear their various issues, and listen in on the hearty town debates about different articles.

But there's always a silver lining! Since I can't go out in person, I realized I can make the most of this isolation time to write a letter containing some legislative updates for folks to read.

THIS BIENNIAL has been packed with learning lots of new information. The Legislature has seen its highest count of new members in the state's history; of the 180 members of the General Assembly, 80 of us are new in our positions. Although this can create some challenges, it also creates room for educating and learning about the context surrounding current state laws.

In my first year, I am serving as vice chair of the Judiciary Committee and as a member of the Education Committee. Outside of these standing committees, I also serve as a member of the Senate Panel on Ethics and as a member of the

NADER HASHIM is one of the two state senators representing Windham County in the Vermont Senate.

Joint Legislative Management Committee.

One of my top priorities before entering the Judiciary Committee was to help address the backlog of court cases, both in the criminal and civil divisions. We're still doing the work within two bills to reduce the number of hearings that arise.

This will shorten the amount of time that people spend detained or litigating their cases — especially within the youthful offender program, which is an important program but has led to an increase in the court backlog.

Our committee's primary focus has turned to a bill that establishes a forensic mental health facility specifically for high acuity patients, while also revisiting and reconsidering the current criteria and process for admission into a mental health facility.

We also voted out bills that would prohibit straw man purchases (when an individual who is disqualified from purchasing a firearm convinces someone else to purchase a firearm for them, typically in exchange for drugs) and defacing firearm serial numbers, prohibit law enforcement from using deception on juveniles in custody, and ban paramilitary training camps.

■ SEE SENATOR'S UPDATE, B2

VIEWPOINT



VERMONT CENTER FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The Winston Prouty campus in Brattleboro.

Safe, stable housing is a critical part of child development

A child develops in the context of family and community. An ample supply of affordable places to live fosters a host of benefits for families — and communities.

Brattleboro

SINCE 1968, the Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development has provided inclusive education and family support to promote the success of children and families. For the past two years, we have been talking about developing housing.

One of the questions we keep being asked is: Why?

The first response is because we can. We own a property that has been a residential site,

CHLOE LEAREY is the executive director of Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development and serves as the steering committee chair of the Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance, as well as on the boards of the Vermont Community Loan Fund and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

that is connected to town water and sewer infrastructure, and that is less than a mile from the hospital and physician offices, a grocery store, two pharmacies, the high school, and other amenities.

The second response is because it is our responsibility to explore possible solutions to a local and statewide crisis if we have a resource that can help.

The third reason is that safe, stable housing is a critical part

of child development.

A FAMILY THAT IS living in uncertain or unsafe housing diverts precious energy and resources toward navigating that challenge, energy that could be used to focus on a most important goal: supporting a child to be happy and healthy.

A child develops in the context of family and community. Families can thrive in a community that has adequate

■ SEE WINSTON PROUTY HOUSING, B2



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LETTERS FROM READERS

'Wild and inaccurate accusations' against Peter Case

RE: "People have the right to exist in the public sphere" [Response, March 8]:

When I saw this piece written about Peter Case, I was appalled.

Could GennaRose Nethercott be referring to the same Peter Case who has volunteered robust amounts of time and energy for Groundworks?

Or perhaps she's addressing the fact that he spearheaded "Load the Latchis" for so many years?

Is she really talking about the same guy, who serves as president of Black Mountain Assisted Family Living, once again dedicating his time and energy in service to our most vulnerable citizens?

This feels like an alternate universe, but here I am, reading wild and inaccurate accusations.

Ma'am, you are quite mistaken. At no time did Peter speak against panhandling.

Loitering is not the same, no matter how much one wants to conflate the two. At no time did Peter say he wanted to banish homeless folks from downtown.

Have you met him? I would have to imagine the answer is no, because Peter is so very human-focused and kind. You may find him having conversations with panhandlers to try to suss out what community supports could be helpful to them.

There is no crime in stating the fact that business owners are suffering and that we should care about that. No person, housed or unhoused, should be sitting on a stoop downtown ag-gressing anyone.

I would personally also say that they should not be doing drugs in public, or urinating and defecating in public, either. Of course they are doing these things because their personal situation must be awful. I just don't think that discouraging folks from trying to help stop this is the answer. We do need a plan to address this.

"God forbid we, a supposedly progressive community, be forced to witness poverty."

Again, you seem to be deliberately conflating these issues to fit your agenda. But you are making false accusations here, and you should give this one a little more thought.

I am absolutely thrilled that you have never been ag-gressed downtown. I sure have. My children have. Never by a panhandler. Always by someone in a dark doorstep yelling

profanities and sometimes by someone following me to the parking garage because they have watched me vend at an event and they assume I am carrying cash. I have a right to expect this to stop happening because it does feel unsafe.

"Fish, why do I get the feeling that your definition of 'all' excludes the most vulnerable members of our community?"

I would highly recommend that you have an actual conversation with Peter so you can quickly realize how wrong your "feeling" is.

Jaci Reynolds
Brattleboro

Putney group wants residents to add housing in their own backyard — literally

RE: "With friends like these..." [Response, March 8]:

I find Mike Mrowicki's piece quite clever and disingenuous.

The Friends of Putney group he tries hard to smear by accusing them of supporting Republicans who in turn support the Right to Life movement is a gross distortion, because Friends of Putney include Democrats, Republicans, Independents, women of all ages, people of color, poor folks and not-so-poor folks, radicals, hippies, and even Jane Fonda's daughter — whose mom, as Mr. Mrowicki well knows, is America's foremost radical — light years to the left of the picture he's trying hard to paint.

The main issue the Friends group is supporting is the opportunity for Putney residents to build or convert housing literally in their own backyard, as a community-based, sensible and viable alternative to inviting big-money landlords to come in and lump at-risk folks together in one housing project in a town with no pharmacy, no low-cost accessible food, and poor mass transit.

It's laughable when Mrowicki raises his tar brush to accuse this rainbow coalition of concerned citizens of not wanting undesirable folks in their own backyard, when that's precisely what they are wanting!

It almost makes me wonder if, like many politicians who can't practice what they preach, Mr. Mrowicki is the one who doesn't want low-income folks in his backyard.

Mark Borax
Putney

We need affordable units, but there must be a better site

RE: "With friends like these..." [Response, March 8]:

This is kind of a response to a response, but I just wanted to say that I am not pleased at the location of the new Windham & Windsor Housing Trust project. I do, however, support the goals and think that most of their projects are well done.

I moved up to Putney in 1976 and for many years often lived in substandard housing, because as a low-wage worker that was all I could afford.

When my son was born in 1983, we lived in an uninsulated two-room cabin, where the pipes froze all the time. (I blew in insulation that spring.)

When I was new in my building career, I was working renovating an old house in the village and creating apartments that I couldn't afford to live in. When I asked the owner where

people in my income bracket were supposed to live, his reply was, "They should move to Bellows Falls!"

So I definitely understand the need for affordable units.

I just feel that having the entry to the village guarded on one side by the fire station and on the other side of the road by a housing development detracts from the overall eclectic charm of the village, as well as taking away some of the last green space in town.

There is an ugly, unused area where Basketville had some factory shops, as well as an unused old orchard on Old Route 5. Those would seem like better locations to me. There may be others I'm not aware of.

I generally read posters about community events and such, and I read *The Commons* every week, but I somehow missed hearing about this whole process, until it's essentially a done deal.

I have no idea who Friends of Putney are, and I'm about as right wing as Karl Marx, so

I don't necessarily think everyone who has concerns about this project is a NIMBY racist. I'm certainly not.

Joseph A. Valaske
Putney

It is important to celebrate the mothers here at home

RE: "The least we can do is pause, reflect, and honor the lives of women" [Column, March 1]:

After reflecting on Elayne Cliff's recent column celebrating women, I would like to emphasize the nurturing role of mothers.

Growing up in what was considered a "nuclear family," we kids generally had many reasons to love, and eventually respect, our mother daily.

She'd greet us when we'd come home from school and listen to our triumphs and setbacks without too much prying. She'd give us the autonomy to walk over to a friend's house or

ride our bikes crosstown to the beach.

Our mother stopped working for a bank while my father held two jobs that, fortunately, he liked. She had an open mind, and we had people over who were not always welcomed elsewhere in our town. Mom just acted on her own sense of what was right. Looking back, she was pretty cool.

Fast forward to now. While my partner was not a mom, she gave the gift of art through 30 years of teaching whoever walked into her classroom studio. In many respects, she was a surrogate mother to her students.

While there have been, and will continue to be, hardships experienced by women across our country and across the world, it is important to celebrate the mothers here at home and appreciate their role in forming, through little minds and little hearts, the world of tomorrow.

Bill Morse
Bellows Falls

■ Senator's update

IN THE Education Committee, we've been covering a wide range of topics. Two of my top priorities include legislation to address school construction (including PCB remediation), and universal school meals.

We have not built a new school in this state in over 20 years, and a number of our facilities across the state are in disrepair.

To reverse that trend, we are planning to repeal a construction moratorium put in place back in 2007. We have held conversations with other states, such as Rhode Island, that have successfully addressed their infrastructure issues. We have also had conversations with our new state treasurer, Mike Pieciak, about bonding for municipalities and different pathways we can take to fund school construction and renovation.

Our federal delegation also has had conversations with our committee about this topic. Our committee has communicated an urgent need for assistance from the federal government in the area of school construction. We are drafting an official joint letter from both the Senate and House education committees to be sent to all three members of our federal delegation.

The bill involving school construction creates a strategic plan and an additional group in the Agency of Education to address the construction issue; this bill will take up a majority of the Education Committee's time. There is strong bipartisan support for investing heavily in school construction as well as PCB remediation.

Regarding universal school meals, I have learned that there is a significant positive impact on students in Vermont who

have access to this service. This was reinforced when I went to Bellows Falls Union High School and spoke with students and faculty about the benefits of universal school meals and the effects the program had on academics and overall morale throughout the school day.

Universal school meals have also bolstered farm- to-school programming, which is a great benefit to our local farmers, as the schools they work with provide them with a reliable source of income. The committee is largely in agreement about universal school meals, but we are exploring the different ways in which we can pay for it.

Another topic: declining test scores in Vermont and across the country. Statistically, our students perform better than those in many other states. However, these scores have been declining since before Covid.

One of the points I regularly interject into conversations about test scores is that instead of trying to pick apart the nuances of curriculum or test administration, we really should be focusing more on basic needs.

What I mean by that is that we cannot expect our children to perform well in the first place in our schools if they are hungry, coming from unsafe homes, or if their schools are deteriorating. Additionally, we also have to consider the support we provide for both our teachers and school staff — we cannot reasonably expect them to do their jobs if they are feeling unsafe, overworked, and underpaid.

BEYOND MY committee work, I've also introduced and co-sponsored a number of bills,

including these three out of the many other bills I have either introduced or co-sponsored. The full list is available on my legislative biography page.

• *An act relating to qualifications for a public defender (S.7)*: Currently, about 5% of the population cannot get access to a public defender even if they meet the financial requirements. By law, if the punishment for the crime is a fine of less than \$1,000, the defendant may not receive a public defender. I believe strongly in fairness and balance in the courtroom, and that all indigent defendants should have access to a public defender.

• *An act relating to access to legally protected health care activity and regulation of health care providers (S.37)*: This is the Senate's version of a "shield law" that is meant to protect individuals who seek reproductive health care and health-care workers who provide reproductive health care in Vermont. Its purpose is to protect both the patient and service provider from prosecution by other states for legally protected health-care activities in our state.

• *An act relating to prohibiting business entities from making contributions in state elections (S.121)*: This bill will prohibit businesses and corporations from providing donations to state candidates, parties, or PACs. I do not believe that businesses should be able to sway and influence election outcomes simply because they have more capital than an average Vermonter. I believe that all parties and individual candidates should seek their campaign donations from the actual people who they will represent rather than from business

FROM SECTION FRONT

entities.

I am also working on other bills that have not yet been introduced, but serve to strengthen labor union laws, create more transparency in the judicial nominating process, and invest in harm reduction and rehabilitation approaches to drug usage.

SERVING IN Montpelier has been an incredibly rewarding experience (aside from getting Covid) and I am enjoying each opportunity I get to support local communities.

Introducing bills and amending existing laws is not the only opportunity for me to get work done, though. I am also available to help individuals or communities connect with government to correct issues or address concerns.

I recently connected a Windham County town with multiple Agency of Transportation resources to support their highway goals, and I connected a resident with the Department of Motor Vehicles commissioner to resolve a car title issue that had been lingering for months.

These are just a few examples, and if you need help, I am here to provide it. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any concerns, requests for assistance, or questions at nhashim@leg.state.vt.us or naderhashim.vt@gmail.com. You can also reach out to me if you'd like to get put on my email list for a monthly update.

Thank you all again for the opportunity to serve Windham County. It is a true honor, and I am learning something new each day.

FROM SECTION FRONT

favorite café)? Surely, I can't be the only one who continues to order toilet paper in bulk? Surely, I can't be the only one who continues to marvel when I get to meet someone "in 3D" that I've only ever known on Zoom?

Let's not be afraid to talk about what we've been through and how it has shaped us. I'm feeling it this weekend. Be gentle with yourself if you are feeling it, too. We are still in this together.


FROM SECTION FRONT

to build a healthier housing ecosystem.

HAVING AN ample supply of affordable places to live fosters a host of economic benefits for communities and serves to heighten civic participation, increase public safety, and create a greater sense of community pride. It can fuel community-wide economic growth by bolstering local businesses and the local workforce.

All these benefits can have a particularly positive impact on those working in child care, in services that support society's most vulnerable populations, and in other fields where modest wages can impede access to housing.

So why is an early childhood organization exploring housing? It is because we are building for a future where all children and families have what they need to succeed.



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■ Three years later

Faith is not so hard to call on once, but it can be challenging to call on it again and again and again and again and again.

The federal state of emergency has already been declared "over" as of May 11. For some, it's very easy to forget about the pandemic. For others, it still impacts everyday life.

Processing and living with the aftermath of collective trauma takes a very long time. It will be decades before we can comprehensively understand and interpret how this experience has shaped us as a society,

as communities, as individuals.

I hope we will continue to be kind to our neighbors. I hope we will continue to find innovative ways to help each other out, through the ordinary hard times as well as the extraordinary ones.

WHAT STRANGE TIMES we have lived through! What strange times we continue to live through! I want to acknowledge this unusual three-year anniversary, and remind myself — and all of us — that anniversaries can and often do bring up

unexpected echoes of sadness and grief.

For me, gratitude feels like a partial antidote; the passing of time, another. Sometimes I need some extra sleep and a walk in the woods and a chance to sing with a friend (or, truth be told, a crowd). Sometimes I need some extra-long hugs or a fun social event that feels "safe" by my personal definition, even when that definition is a moving target.

Surely, I can't be the only one who still wears a mask in the grocery store (but not in my

■ Winston Prouty housing

housing, a diversity of employment opportunities, strong early care and learning programs and schools, robust physical and mental health care and other supportive services, and a healthy overall economy.

When examining that list, it becomes clear that housing is the most foundational piece of the puzzle. If there is not enough housing, all the other pieces will eventually crumble.

There is not enough housing stock and we are headed for an economic death spiral if we don't do something about it. There are not fast, easy answers, making it even more imperative to take action as soon as possible.

VERMONT HAS ended up in this situation for many reasons, some of which are self-imposed policies and regulations that have discouraged development and largely supported building out just one part of the housing

continuum.

The fact is that the entire housing continuum — from deeply subsidized to market-rate, from studio to 3-plus bedroom, from rental to ownership — needs to be robust in order for us to break out of this box.

Consider a recent college graduate who finds a studio (exorbitantly priced in this market) and ends up living there for years because they cannot find a 1- or 2-bedroom that they can afford, likely because the person living in that apartment cannot find their first home to buy. And the person who might be ready to downsize and sell their home to a first-time homebuyer cannot find anything to suit their needs.

There is not enough supply to free up the system so that people can move naturally along the continuum, and if we don't build a diversity of housing, we will continue to re-create the problem.

Something must change.

THE HOUSING we are considering on the Winston Prouty campus is mixed by income and type, representing options for everyone in our community.

One of our organizational values is inclusion: We believe people benefit from participating in an environment where everyone feels they belong, where individual differences and needs are embraced, and where everyone's uniqueness is celebrated.

We often think of diverse housing as "mixed-income," and while this is certainly one lens to look through, we should consider many other dimensions of diversity, such as age, family structure, and race.

Segregating ourselves by income or age does not contribute to a healthier community. We can be expansive in our understanding of what constitutes a diverse neighborhood and start

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Let's fix this wedge between kids and their mentors

A House bill would eliminate prohibitions and penalties on the purchase, use, and possession of tobacco products, replacing a law that we're not enforcing — and leading to potential conversations

Halifax
EVERY HIGH SCHOOL in the United States has a spot where kids go to try out being themselves outside of spaces defined by adult expectations.

When I went to boarding school in 10th grade, it wasn't long before someone said they were going to go hang out at "The Spool." Did I want to come?

I played sports and did theater and got good grades. I wasn't the kid to be seen somewhere sketchy. But classes and extracurriculars and hanging out in the clean, brightly lit student center were all inside the pressure cooker of adolescence.

The school had some woods behind the dorms called the Sanctuary. It was an apt name for acreage set aside for bird watchers, or for teenagers to exercise some agency.

Some students had taken a discarded wooden spool from a power cable and rolled it out there. A ragtag bunch of lawn chairs and milk crates showed up. The path to the Spool, which took a shortcut through the chain-link fence where someone cut a flap, became well-worn by my feet, among many others.

I was welcomed, like everyone. If this were a screenplay about the real, gritty lives of teenagers, I would write in some dialogue about the pressure of figuring out our lives before joining "the real world."

But I don't want this to be a movie. It's not a pretty story. I don't like seeing kids become drug addicts.

THE SPOOL was a space we all needed, but what brought kids out there several times a day was tobacco addiction. Some smoked Camels. Some smoked Luckies. Some rolled their own. If vape pens had existed then, some would have vaped. Some used chewing tobacco.

Sometimes, someone would get caught for smoking or cannabis use and would be expelled. Some are now alcoholics. Some of those are in recovery, some not.

Some are dead. But not many, now that I mention it. Compared to today, not many of us 1990s teens died of drug overdoses. Now, black-market cannabis might come laced with fentanyl, which is 100 times stronger than morphine. Places like the Spool are where kids with nicotine habits get hooked on fentanyl — or worse.

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT the Spool since around the start of the legislative session, when I learned that removing legal penalties to minors for underage tobacco possession, use, and purchase (PUP) is a priority of the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Lung Association.

To learn that these organizations favor decriminalizing youth tobacco use — that got my attention. To be clear, the "PUP bill," H.253, which these organizations support (and that I introduced with 54 other representatives) would retain and even strengthen the tough "Tobacco 21" laws against retail sales to minors—including minors selling to minors, a.k.a.

TRISTAN ROBERTS represents the Windham-6 district in the Vermont House of Representatives, where he serves on the House Corrections and Institutions committee. He welcomes correspondence through his website (tristanroberts.org) and at troberts@leg.state.vt.us.

drug dealers. This is "decrim" for kids with tobacco addictions, not legalization. It surprised me for those organizations to support such a policy, but it also spoke to me.

WE ALL KNOW those out-of-the-way places where kids smoke cigarettes — and that's the weird thing. Sometimes I'd look around and wonder why we weren't getting busted. We were sneaky, but we knew that nothing was hiding the path. Any sensible public safety officer, guidance counselor, and dorm parent knew we were there, especially when we came back. They have noses, after all.

If they had thought that writing dozens of tickets for \$25 fines, a court date, and a sure expulsion from school would be in our best interests and in the best interests of society — and a good use of limited resources — they could have been all over it.

But these laws, which have a disproportionate impact on BIPOC folks, aren't even being enforced in Vermont. They're just out there, making kids feel scared of getting caught, adults afraid to get involved, and many Vermont high schoolers afraid to go to the bathroom, lest they walk into a vape cloud or a drug deal.

These laws are doing nothing but putting a wedge between kids and their mentors.

FOR MENTAL HEALTH counseling in high school I went to Cilla Bonney-Smith, the associate dean of students.

Cilla had long gray hair and striking cloud-colored eyes and a lot of wisdom. I loved how well she listened to me while I enjoyed an hour of respite in her cushy chair in her quiet office, looking at a painting on the wall. I loved her because her words brought me calm when I would feel in crisis in the evening and come over to her house. There, we would speak outside as the trees made shadows in fresh snow.

But one thing we never spoke about, and one place Cilla never went, was the Spool.

When a death by suicide or overdose or something else alarming occurs around a youth, and some of the people around that person say, "We had no idea they were feeling that bad," these outdated laws are part of the reason.

Our society pushes youth tobacco use underground, and kids go out of view.

TO THIS DAY, I've never smoked tobacco, even once. I've never put a cigarette to my lips.

The reason I didn't smoke is that my mom and dad considered smokers stupid and filthy, and I was terrified to do anything they disapproved of. It's spooky how little I did wrong as a kid, compared to everyone else around me.

I'm not a War-on-Drugs success story. It was just my luck

that I coped with adverse childhood experiences by becoming a perfectionist. It was just my lot in life to feel relaxed hanging out with smokers who got my depression and angst (I love smokers — a humble lot), but not to break a law.

But as much as I trusted Cilla, I shared only a fraction of what was going on with me. There was too much crossover with sketchy stuff and other

kids I didn't want to implicate. It's not OK anymore to tolerate intergenerational secrets and distances. They're harmful, and too-often fatal.

H.253 — "An act relating to eliminating prohibitions and penalties on the purchase, use, and possession of tobacco products" — would replace a law that we're not enforcing with more potential for a conversation.

If enacted, tobacco sold to kids would still be considered contraband. A conversation with a guidance counselor or a public safety officer might still include "Where did you get that?"

But without the PUP laws that create a wedge between mentors and kids, that conversation could also include, "How are you doing?" and "Do you need help?"

I hope my colleagues in the Legislature will consider this bill. While we're working to prevent kids from getting hooked, let's also pass H.204, to ban the retail sale of flavored tobacco products.

A third bill takes us back to Mexico, over 7,000 years ago. That's where tobacco was first cultivated, long before Native Americans gave some to Christopher Columbus.

Tobacco has been a part of the cultural practices of the

Indigenous people of Vermont for centuries and remains a sacred plant to Abenaki here.

H.212 would recognize the traditional use of tobacco for ceremonial purposes as a protected religious practice, distinct from commercial and recreational usages. The Abenaki people I have spoken with about this bill indicate that this is simply a matter of religious freedom.

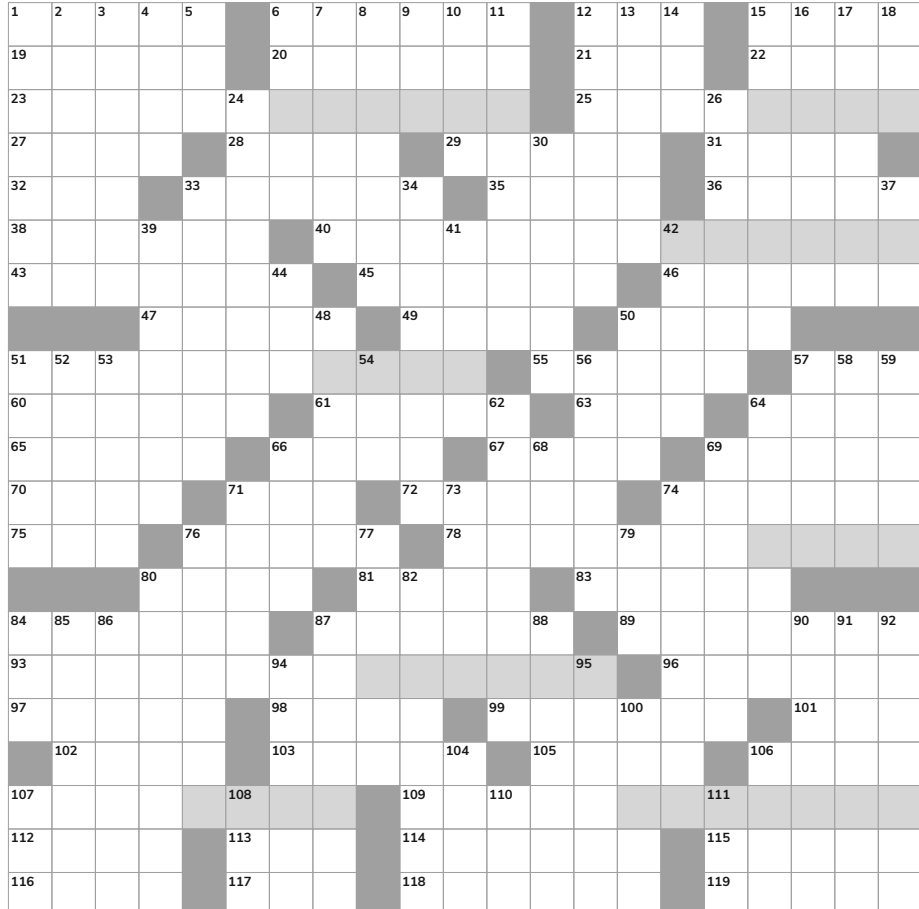
I don't know, but I imagine there's more to it than that. To save our kids from substance-use issues, we may find that the most effective laws are those that hold space for support and connection within our communities.

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Fall Back"

Across

- 1. Get clean
6. "Also ___ Zarathustra"
12. Place for gloss
15. Common teen malady
19. Tour de France stage
20. Manger scene
21. Poké bowl selection
22. Complain
23. Two games in a day
25. Thorough study
27. Fangorn Forest creatures
28. Turns, as a ship
29. Author Cather
31. Turow memoir
32. Great service that's not tipped?
33. Changes, as keyboard bindings
35. Israel's Golda
36. Canal boat
38. Cracks up
40. Disorderly brawl
43. Like some sunscreens
45. Aligning
46. Singer Ritchie
47. 2022 AL champs, informally
49. ___-en-scène
50. Rider's fistful, perhaps
51. Place for dirty dishes, perhaps
55. Clog-clearing brand
57. Scoreboard units: Abbr.
60. Stacey of Georgia politics
61. Surprise outcome
63. Switchback shape
64. University near Newark
65. Rider's fistful, perhaps
66. Memo starter
67. Book after Judges
69. A Marx brother
70. Wilander of tennis
71. Pan for stir-fry
72. Frilly mat
74. Affirmative from a mate
75. ___ Zion Church
76. Belarus's capital
78. In-tents journey?
80. NHL impossibilities
81. German auto
83. Mathematician Paul
84. Fixate (on)
87. Prickly shrubs
89. Gives back
93. Weds
96. Do over
97. Travis of country
98. Coup d'___
99. Surprisingly enough
101. Compete
102. Name that sounds like a cheese
103. Girls, in Guadalajara
105. Rooftop spinner
106. Microloan nonprofit
107. Common pendant shape
109. Like energy-inefficient bulbs
112. 72-Across material
113. Bar or bakery order
114. High school assignment?
115. Set of classical pieces
116. Signaled
117. Walgreens rival
118. Trendy surf/skate wear brand of the 1980s and '90s
119. Chose



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Down

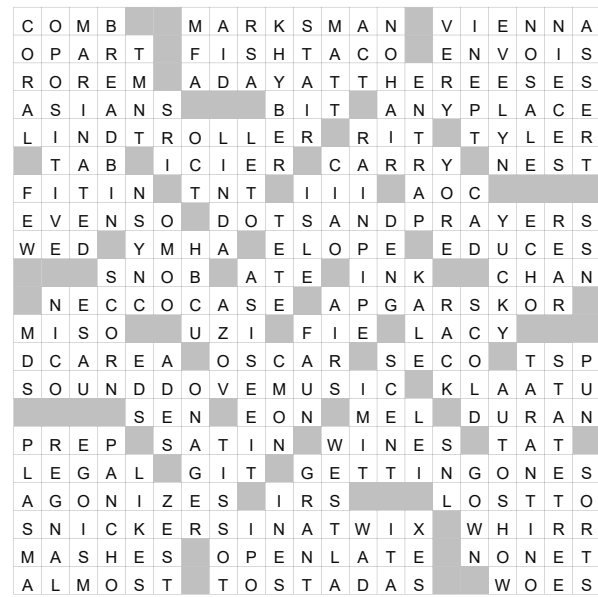
- 1. Gives out new hands
2. Short-visored hat
3. Arrogance
4. Police alerts: Abbr.
5. "___-Air" (2022 reboot of "The Fresh Prince")
6. "Get outta here!"
7. Antebellum
8. "Great" Jupiter feature
9. Landmark 2010 health law: Abbr.
10. Make easier to swallow
11. Common pronoun trio
12. Scooping soup
13. "This is not news to me"
14. Thanksgiving dessert
15. Open, in a way
16. Dramatic words before "I'm going in"
17. Carpenter's power tool
18. Close
24. Visual blights
26. Ancho, before drying
30. Had an inclination
33. Beats
34. Conjectured
37. SAT administrator
39. Fuel holders
41. Appearance
42. Chris of "Lightyear"
44. Nantes negative
48. Mephitic mammals
50. Press repeatedly, as a button
51. Cosmic payback
52. Steel girder
53. Overused
54. Network with Tiny Desk Concerts
56. Confirm, as a password
57. Soda with "Crystal" and "Nitro" variants
58. Herbivore with a prehensile snout
59. Sound of incredulity

- 62. Product test
64. Doesn't fall behind
66. Electrolyte particles
68. Einstein's birth city
69. Fertilized egg cells
71. Actress Dianne
73. Massachusetts : Bay :: Rhode Island : ___
74. "The Little Mermaid" author
76. Wrong move
77. Cuisine with galbi
79. Sale rack abbr.
80. Was unbalanced
82. Hairstyle for Dorothy Gale
84. MLB great Mel
85. "The Fog" actress

- Adrienne
86. Super-G or slalom
87. Happens to, poetically
88. Austrians' neighbors
90. Come back to
91. Opposite of worldliness
92. Aailed
94. Prince Hal, later
95. High way vehicles?
100. Dictionary listing
104. Impertinent sort
106. Single-serving coffee pod
107. "No Scrubs" group
108. Middle-earth baddie
110. Hosp. area for heart patients
111. That: Sp.

Last issue's solution

"Candy Corn"



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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Five local players selected for Shrine team

Roosters were announced last week for the Vermont squad that will play in the 70th annual Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl on Aug. 5 at Castleton University's Dave Wolk Stadium, with four Bellows Falls players and one Brattleboro player making the team.

Bellows Falls is sending running back Caden Haskell, center Jake Moore, quarterback Jamison Nystrom, and guard Dillon Perry, while Brattleboro is sending wide receiver Tristan Evans.

In all, seniors from 31 high schools will be part of the Vermont team, which will be led by Windsor's Greg Balch. They will face their football counterparts in this game played for the benefit of the Shriners Children's facilities in the Northeast. In its first 69 years, the Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl has raised millions of dollars for the Shriners hospitals.

Rebel boys fall in quarterfinals

First, an apology to "Rebel Nation" for leaving this out of last week's roundup, but in a rare Sunday playoff game, seventh-seeded Leland & Gray was knocked out of the Division IV boys' basketball playoffs with a 65-45 loss to the second-seeded Rivendell Raptors in a quarterfinal game on March 5 in Orford, N.H.

The loss overshadowed a significant milestone for the Rebel boys — hosting their first home playoff game in a decade. On Feb. 28, they beat 10th-seeded Poultney, 62-49. Free throw shooting clinched this opening round win, as the Rebels went 12-for-12 in the final quarter. Parker Jennings led the Rebels in that game with 26 points, while Cody Hescocock added 14 points.

Leland & Gray finished the season with an 11-11 record, while Rivendell went on to defeat Mid Vermont Christian School for the state championship on March 11 at the Barre Auditorium.

Rec. Dept. begins spring sports sign-ups

The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department is now accepting registrations for these spring youth sports programs:

- Youth Softball is for those in grades 3-6. The fee is \$45 for Brattleboro residents and \$60 for non-residents. Youth will learn the fundamentals of softball in an appropriate way, stressing safety, skills, and fun. Players will be assigned to a team and will have 2-3 games and practices a week at Living Memorial Park or away against neighboring towns such as Vernon, Hinsdale, N.H., and Erving, Northfield, and Greenfield, Mass. Participants will need to bring their own gloves, water bottles, and appropriate footwear (sneakers or cleats) to each practice and game. Practices will begin the week of April 17 (weather permitting). Games will begin the week of May 1 and continue until early June.

- Small Fry baseball is for those born between Sept. 1, 2013 and Aug. 31, 2016. The fee is \$40 for Brattleboro residents and \$55 for non-residents. Youths will learn the fundamentals of baseball in an appropriate way, stressing safety, skills, and fun. Players will be

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.

assigned a team and will have 2-3 practices and games a week. Participants will need to bring their own gloves, water bottles, and appropriate footwear (sneakers or cleats) to each practice and game. Please note that gray pants are required, the Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department has pants available upon request. Each player will be assigned to a team as well as a practice location. Practices will begin the week of April 17 (weather permitting). Games will begin the week of May 1 and continue until early June.

- T-Ball is for those born between Sept. 1, 2016 and August 31, 2018. The fee is \$35 for Brattleboro residents and \$50 for non-residents. During the T-ball season, youths will learn the fundamentals of baseball in an appropriate way, stressing safety, skills, and fun. Players will be assigned a team and will have one practice and one game per week. Participants will need to bring their own gloves, water bottles, and appropriate footwear (sneakers or cleats) to each practice and game. Each player will be assigned to a team as well as a practice location. Practices will begin the week of April 17 (weather permitting). Games will begin the week of May 1 and continue until early June.

- Girls' and boys' youth lacrosse for those in grades 3-6. The fee is \$20 for Brattleboro residents and \$35 for non-residents. There will be 1-2 practices a week focusing on fundamentals and skill building. A minimum of 10 participants are required to run each age group. Participants should provide their own equipment. This includes mouth guards, cleats or sneakers, a water bottle, a stick, and goggles. Please contact the Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department office at 802-254-5808 if you need equipment. We have a very limited supply available. At this time this group is strictly skills and drills based and will not play any games against other towns. Practices will begin the week of April 17 (weather permitting) and will continue until early June.

Registration for these programs can be done in person at the Gibson-Aiken Center Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m., or online at register1.vermontsystems.com/wbws/vtbrattleboro.wsc/splash.html. There is a \$10 fee for late registration beginning March 27. For more information call the Rec. Dept. at 802-254-5808.

Little League sign-ups begin

- Brattleboro Little League baseball will be holding sign-ups for the upcoming 2023 season on March 15, 16, 21, 22, and 23 at American Legion Post 5 on Linden Street. Sign-ups will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. on those dates.

Youths from Brattleboro,



Bellows Falls forward Caden Haskell (5) consoles teammate Walker James following their team's 71-51 loss to Winooski in the Division III state boys' basketball semifinal on March 9 at the Barre Auditorium.



Bellows Falls point guard Jamison Nystrom (2) sits on the bench late in the fourth quarter of their Division III semifinal game against Winooski on March 9 at the Barre Auditorium. Nystrom was hobbled by a high ankle sprain as the Terriers lost, 71-51.

Winooski's second-half surge ends BF boys' title run

By Christian Avard
Special to The Commons

BARRE—The fifth-seeded Bellows Falls Terriers smelled an upset against the top-seeded and undefeated Winooski Spartans in the Division III boys' basketball semifinal on March 9 at the Barre Auditorium.

The Terriers had them. They really did. But an injury to one of Bellows Falls' key players along with a spectacular second half by the Spartans resulted in 20-point defeat to Winooski, 71-51.

The Spartans looked vulnerable in the early going. They coughed up four turnovers while Bellows Falls dominated the boards (six defensive and six offensive rebounds in the first quarter). Cole Moore hit a basket at the buzzer and the Terriers led 16-14.

But Bellows Falls' Achilles' heel was trying to contain Spartans forward Daniel Surma (18 points) and guard Hassan Hassan (16 points). Winooski led, 26-18, but Bellows Falls hung with them. Jamison Nystrom hit a three-pointer, Walker James scored four points (nine total), and the Terriers pulled down seven more defensive rebounds and five more offensive rebounds than the Spartans.

Winooski led by three points at halftime (28-25), but the momentum shifted dramatically when Nystrom went down with a high ankle sprain. Nystrom courageously played the rest of the game — limping.

After the game, Winooski Head Coach Sam Jackson praised Nystrom, who finished with nine points, for his efforts.

"[Jamison] is a tough ball player," Jackson said. "He's worked hard all-year-long and I think for the southern half [of the state], he is one of the best."

Winooski got rid of the "Aud Jitters" with a dominating second half. Bellows Falls turned the ball over five times in the third quarter and the Spartans picked up the pieces to outscore the Terriers, 18-9. Hassan scored nine points in the second half while teammates Trevon Bradley scored six (14 total) and Kellen Bourgeois chipped in with eight.

Bellows Falls went down 46-34 and got into late foul trouble. Winooski went 7-for-10 at the free throw line. The Spartans outscored the Terriers in the final quarter, 25-17 and the ball game was over.

Jake Moore led the Terriers in scoring (10 points). Cole Moore scored nine points, Colby Dearborn scored six, and Jesse Darrell, Caden Haskell, Peter Kamel, and Eli Allbee all chipped in with two points each.

"We weren't hitting shots like we were in the first half," Nystrom said. "Transition-wise, we made a lot of easy fast-break points. I also thought we did well rebounding-wise, but (Winooski) was much taller than us."

The Terriers finished the season with a 17-6 record. Bellows Falls coach Evan Chadwick fought back tears after the team's gutsy performance.

"The game was right there, but it wasn't there," Chadwick said. "We're not that big, but we got heart. We didn't stop, we kept coming, and we never gave up. That's what Bellows Falls basketball is all about."

Meanwhile, the 22-0 Spartans completed a perfect season by defeating the second-seeded Hazen Wildcats, 57-52, in the Division III championship on March 11.

It's been 23 years since Bellows Falls' last trip to the Aud. That was in 2000 when Bellows Falls won the Division II championship in overtime against Montpelier 65-61.

The Terriers will lose Nystrom, Jake Moore, Kamel, and Haskell to graduation, but will bring back a strong core of players that had their first taste of what it's like to play at The Aud and have the talent to make a return trip next season.

Guilford, Vernon, Dummerston, Putney, Newfane, Marlboro, Townshend, Dover, Wilmington, Halifax, Wardsboro, and Hinsdale and Chesterfield, N.H., are eligible to play.

Senior bowling roundup

- Week 8 of the winter/spring season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro

Bowl on March 9 saw Slo Movers (29-11) have a 5-0 week to take over first place. The Markers (27-13) had a 1-4 week to slide back into second place, followed by Fab Four (22-18), Split Happens (18-22), The Strikers and The A-1's (both 17-23), Trash-O-Matic (16-24), and 10 Pins (14-26).

Roberta Parsons had the women's high handicap game (233) and series (665). Fred Bump had the men's high handicap game (264) and Duane

Schillemat had the high handicap series (704). The Markers had the high team handicap game (910), while Fab Four had the high handicap series (2,538).

In scratch scoring, Schillemat led the men with a 593 series that featured games of 222 and 193. Other bowlers with 500-plus series included Chuck Adams (576), Milt Sherman (546), John Walker (544), Warren Corriveau Sr. (540), Gary Montgomery (535),

Robert Rigby (525), Jon Peters (515), and Wayne Randall (506).

Bowlers with 200-plus games included Marty Adams (224), Chuck Adams (206), and Sherman (206). Bump had a 199 game and Robert Rigby rolled a 193.

Shirley Aiken had the women's high scratch series (448), while Carol Gloski had the high scratch game (166). Aiken also rolled a 161 game.

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY

16

Music

PUTNEY Bluegrass/Traditional Folk Music by The Foreign Landers: Guitar/banjo/mandolin duo David Benedict and Tabitha Benedict with bassist Nate Sabat and fiddler Julian Pinelli. Tabitha and David are award-winning multi-instrumentalists who have put together an amazing band that re-works/blends elements of traditional folk/bluegrass/Celtic music from both sides of the Atlantic and features instrumental fireworks/soaring vocals anchored by Tabitha's Aoife O'Donovan-esque voice. 2023 tour celebrates CD release: "Traveler's Rest."

- ▶ 7 p.m. Presented by Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music. Next Stage provides a beer, wine, cocktail cash bar.
- ▶ \$18 in advance, \$22 at door.
- ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org.

BRATTLEBORO Join the Brattleboro Women's Chorus: Come sing with us! Rehearsals are open to anyone who wants to "try chorus out" with no obligation to join.

- ▶ Two rehearsal options 3/16 or 3/23: 10 a.m.-noon: Brattleboro Music Center or 6:30-8:30 p.m. at All Souls Church, 20 South St., W. Brattleboro.
- ▶ Those who decide to join, cost for spring session is \$85-\$160 sliding scale per adult w/ discounts for students and family pairs. Financial aid available.
- ▶ Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moyle Way. All singers must contact Brattleboro Music Center in advance: www.brattleborowomenschorus.org 802-257-4523; bmcvt.org.

Recreation

BRATTLEBORO Thorn in My Side - Hooker Dunham Theater's Original Game Show: "Each month, three contestants compete in bizarre challenges that fit that month's theme. All of our award-winning episodes are filmed for BCTV. Recently named Brattleboro Community Television's 2022 'Series of the Year', Thorn In My Side is written by Ben Stockman, James Gelter, Jesse Tidd, and Shannon Ward.

- ▶ 8 p.m. Third Thursday of every month. Show is for adult audiences.
- ▶ Pay what you can.
- ▶ Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. See past episodes: www.brattleborotv.org/thorn-my-side 802-281-3232; hookerdunham.org.

The written word

BRATTLEBORO Andrew Boyd: "I Want a Better Catastrophe: Navigating the Climate Crisis with Grief, Hope, and Gallows Humor" (New Society Publishers 2/2023): Author/climate activist Andrew Boyd - founder of creative protests Climate Clock and Climate Ribbon - says humanity is on a "path of profound grief." To cope with an "impossible new reality" we need wisdom/rituals/stories that literature/spiritual teachers offer. Book features 8 leading climate thinkers - collapse-psychologist Jamey Hecht to grassroots strategist adrienne maree brown, eco-philosopher Joanna Macy, Indigenous botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer.

- ▶ 3/16: 6:30 p.m. (doors open 6 p.m.) "Is it really the end of the world? And if so, now what?" Series continues 4/20 and 5/11.
- ▶ Events are free but donations are appreciated.
- ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Pre-register for 3/16 event: tinyurl.com/yhh77s8k.

Dance

GUILFORD Brattleboro Bal Folk (French Dancing): Fun and easy. Live music by Eloise & Co. (rach-elbellmusic.com). No experience or partner necessary. All dances taught.

- ▶ 7-9:30 p.m. N95 or similar quality masks and vaccination required (show vax card at door). Bivalent booster recommended. Bring shoes to change into - floor may be slippery side - footwear that works on newly refinished surface.
- ▶ Donation (\$10 to \$20 suggested).
- ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-451-0405; broadbrookcommunitycenter.org.

FRIDAY

17

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO "Cabaret" - Book by Joe Masteroff based on the play by John Van Druten and Stories by Christopher Isherwood: Captivating musical theater experi-

FRIDAY CONT.

ence directed by Rebecca Waxman working alongside choreographer Shoshana Bass and Music Dir. Bob Theis. This production contains mature themes questioning ideas of freedom, morality, prejudice, survival, self-delusion. Trailblazing book/score create a world intended to push against boundaries/comfort zones of performers and audiences. Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb. Based on play by John Van Druten and stories by Christopher Isherwood.

- ▶ 3/17: 7 p.m., 3/18: 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., 3/19: 2 p.m., 3/23: 7 p.m., 3/24: 7 p.m., 3/25: 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- ▶ \$11 student, \$13 senior, \$15 adult (plus 65-cent service fee per ticket).
- ▶ New England Youth Theatre, 100 Flat St. Information: Tickets: tinyurl.com/tdcfw5ww.

BRATTLEBORO "The 39 Steps": Based on a 1935 British thriller film, with the same title, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. It concerns a Canadian civilian in London, Richard Hannay, who tries to stop an organization of spies from stealing British military secrets. Mistakenly accused of the murder of a counter-espionage agent, Hannay goes on the run to Scotland and becomes tangled up with an attractive woman while hoping to stop the spy ring and clear his name.

- ▶ 6 p.m.
- ▶ Through Saturday, March 18.
- ▶ Free; donations benefit drama program.
- ▶ St. Michaels School, 48 Walnut St. Information: 802-254-6320, lindsayoneil@smsvt.info.

Music

W. BRATTLEBORO "Love's Gonna Carry Us" - A Singalong Concert with Annie Patterson and Peter Blood: Audience invited to sing songs of joy, resilience, and justice from songbooks "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again." Bring copies or buy or borrow during the concert.

- ▶ 7 p.m. Masks required.
- ▶ Free; donation (\$20 for adults suggested) to benefit Community Asylum Seekers Project.
- ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: Information/Tickets: riseupandsing.org/events/loves-gonna-carry-us-brattleboro.

WESTMINSTER WEST Mary Cay and Magda play Mostly Macedonian: Inspired by their upcoming trip to Macedonia.

- ▶ 7-8 p.m.
- ▶ Donations welcome.
- ▶ Westminster West Church, 44 Church St. Information: Mary Cay Brass: mcbrass@vermontel.net.

SATURDAY

18

Music

BRATTLEBORO Sarasa Ensemble: "All About My Mother": A musical reflection on the many facets of motherhood and the impact of a mother's presence during life's various celebrations, rituals, trials. Zenas Hsu and Amy Galluzzo, violins; Ute Gfrerer, soprano; Jason Fisher, viola; Jennifer Morsches, cello.

- ▶ 7 p.m.
- ▶ \$20 (\$25 at door).
- ▶ Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moyle Way. Information: 802-257-4523; bmcvt.org.

BRATTLEBORO Linda May Han Oh Quartet (In-Person/Livestream/ Facebook Live): A Grammy Award-winning bassist, Linda May Han Oh's music is complex and beautiful, filled with unexpected compositional elements - sometimes combining electronics with acoustic instruments, always demonstrating a deft understanding of polyrhythms and harmonic sophistication. She's a renaissance woman carrying the torch of her generation.

- ▶ 7:30 p.m. Accessibility questions: ginger@vtjazz.org.
- ▶ In-Person: \$20-\$50 sliding scale (tickets available online at www.vtjazz.org or email ginger@vtjazz.org).
- ▶ Vermont Jazz Center, 72 Cotton Mill Hill, #222. Simultaneous: Livestream (donations accepted): www.vtjazz.org / Facebook: https://tinyurl.com/4yje2t53 802-254-9088; vtjazz.org.

Recreation

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Recreation and Parks announces 14th Annual Youth Chess Tournament: For Kindergarten through 8th grade. All skill levels welcome. Depending on number of entrants, contestants will be divided into appropriate groups. Swiss System, no players eliminated. Game boards provided. Eric Strickland runs the tournament.

- ▶ 1-4 p.m.
- ▶ \$5.
- ▶ Gibson-Aiken Center, 207 Main St. Information: 802-254-5808; brattleboro.org.

Farmers' markets

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market: Weekly

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diverse indoor farmers market. Local farm produce, meats, syrup, fresh baked goods, fruits, cider, preserves, handmade jewelry, pottery, soaps, more. SNAP shoppers turn \$10 into \$40 each week.

- ▶ 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays through 3/25 in the gymnasium.
- ▶ Through Saturday, March 25.
- ▶ Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market, 60 Austine Dr. Information: 802-275-2835; farmersmarket@postilsolutions.org.

The written word

PETERBOROUGH Speaker Series: Talk by Bestselling Author Abbi Glines - Writing about Relationships and Romance: Hosted by Monadnock Writers' Group, this event should interest readers/writers who enjoy stories with emotional impact. Glines has written over 40 novels since self-publishing her first one in 2011. Regardless of genre and setting, Gline consistently delivers novels with realistic characters, drama, action/heartfelt moments. Her writing spans contemporary and paranormal romance, new adult, young adult novels, plus recently released historical romance.

- ▶ 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Peterborough Town Library, 2 Concord St. Information: More info: monadnockwriters.org, monadnockwriters@gmail.com.

Well-being

WEST TOWNSHEND Breathing Workshop: Looking for more energy? More relaxation? Better sleep? Would you like to unlock the secret of drug-free management of anxiety, fear, pain, stress? Betsy Thompson teaches the basics of the BreatheOutDynamic system (BODs) and coaches as you practice BODs sitting, standing, walking. She's been teaching/using BODs for over 30 years, helping folks with a variety of health issues because breathing affects every organ in your body including your autonomic nervous system.

- ▶ 10 a.m.-12 noon. To get a jump-start on the workshop, explore outbreathinstitute.com and watch Betsy's 10-minute YouTube video located in the media section. Video is visual version of Chapter 3 - how to chapter in Betsy's book "Just Breathe Out-Using Your Breath to Create a New, Healthier You" (you can purchase it at the workshop, Blaire Books & More in Chester, Village Square Booksellers in Bellows Falls, Book Nook in Ludlow).
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: 802-874-4800; info@westtownshend.org.

BRATTLEBORO Free Workshops on Saturdays: Classes are for all-levels. "Stretching," "Sacred Dance," "Active Non-Violence."

- ▶ 11-11:30 a.m. every Sat.: Stretching Exercise. 11:30 a.m.-12 noon: Beginners Sacred Dance. 12:30-2:30 p.m.: Active Non-Violence. Offered by the Methodist/Baptist Beloved Community.
- ▶ Free-will donations are welcome and appreciated. Lunch is free as well.
- ▶ First United Methodist Church, 18 Town Crier Dr. Information: For more information contact Pastor Ralph Howe or Pastor Sue Andrews: 802-254-1234.

Community building

BELLOWS FALLS Monthly Conversation with Your Legislators: Chat with your Windham County Senators Nader Hashim and Wendy Harrison and your Windham-3 (Brookline, Rockingham, Westminster) House Reps Michelle Bos-Lun and Leslie Goldman. Come for an informal conversation about current issues and bring your questions!

- ▶ 10:30-11:30 a.m., top floor meeting room.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org.

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro in Stitches: Drop-in Fiber Arts Makerspace: Keep Brattleboro in Stitches! Do you sew? Knit? Crochet? Embroider? Want to learn? Come and share your expertise and enthusiasm. Stitch together friendships while working on projects old and new in our fiber arts makerspace. Sewing machines and some supplies available, plus lots of books for inspiration! All ages and experience levels welcome.

- ▶ 12 noon - 2 p.m. every Saturday.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: brookslibraryvt.org.

Visual arts and shows

BRATTLEBORO Latchis Gallery hosts work by Patti Newton: "Dreamland Circus Tarot": Festive installation features large color images from "The Dreamland Circus Tarot" - a 100-card artisan deck and book. The artwork is a combination of vintage photographs from the 1800s/early 1900s, and Patti's photos taken at a nearby contemporary amusement park originally known as 'Gallup's Cove' circa 1840 located in Agawam, MA.

Visual arts and shows

▶ 11 a.m.-1 p.m. are the Saturday hours Newton will personally be on site. She looks forward to meeting you. The Gallery will be fully lit so the exhibit can be viewed from the outside window 24/7 through 3/31. To purchase a deck or book or for more information visit www.silvermoonvt.com.

- ▶ Through Friday, March 31.
- ▶ Latchis 4 Gallery, 50 Main St.

SUNDAY

19

Music

BRATTLEBORO Dutch Experts Album Release Show with Orange Peel Mystic & Roost.World: Debut EP from Dutch Experts is inspired by gothic landscape of The Cure and melodic choices informed by Kate Bush and Cocteau Twins. Capturing a uniquely modern sound with an 80s sonic sensibility. Born out of the pandemic, Dutch Experts is the project of southern VT local Hannah Hoffman, formerly of Dune Hunter. Her debut EP, "Bound by This," came out 2/24/23 with a vinyl release to follow. Orange Peel Mystic and Roost.World open up the night.

- ▶ 7 p.m.
- ▶ \$15 in advance, \$20 at door.
- ▶ The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.

Government

PUTNEY Osher Lecture Series: Can We Trust the People When It Comes to Reproductive Rights?: Presented by Meg Mott, "Constitution Wrangler." The third and final part of this series considers the judicial history of reproductive rights, the best arguments on both sides, and the work we need to do to govern ourselves in a pluralist society.

- ▶ 2-4 p.m. Note: All attendees/members must register prior to the start of the program. No payments at door.
- ▶ \$8.
- ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information and registration (required): 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org/events.

The written word

JACKSONVILLE Libraries Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Celtic Humor: British storyteller/humorist/author Simon Brooks reads from his book "Tales of Celtic Rogues & Rascals" offers the art of traditional storytelling and demonstrates the power (and need) of ancient stories of folk and fairy tales, myths, legends.

- ▶ 2 p.m. Presented by The Whitingham Free Public Library and Petee Memorial Library. Recommended for mature audiences. Refreshments served.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Whitingham Municipal Center, 2948 Vt. Rte. 100. Information: 802-368-7506.

Well-being

W. BRATTLEBORO "The Promise of Balance" (In-Person/Zoom): "What wonder is this greening, this promise from the Universe that the Earth is balanced, that renewal is more than possible! A service filled with the words of the poets and wise ones, traditions from native peoples who trusted that the rivers would swell, that the meadows and berries would give forth. Yet again we prepare to tip towards the light."

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

Community building

BRATTLEBORO Forum for Residents of District 3 (Windham 9): For the second year in a row, two Representative Town Meeting members - Robert Oeser and David Levenbach - are organizing a forum for residents of District 3 to ask questions and express their views about Town business. District 3 RTM members are encouraged to attend to hear from their constituents prior to this year's RTM which will be held on Saturday, 3/25.

- ▶ 3 p.m. in the Parlor.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St. Information: 802-254-4730; centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org.

Dance

PUTNEY Contra Dance at Pierce's Hall: Ruth Holleran will be calling and Amy and Laurie will be playing.

- ▶ 3 p.m. Participants are required to show vaccination and bi-valent booster status and wear a K95 mask. We highly recommend a rapid test on day of dance.
- ▶ Free (donation benefits upkeep of hall).
- ▶ Pierce's Hall, 121 E. Putney Falls Rd. Information and Covid requirements: 802-387-5875, 703-994-8936.

MONDAY

20

Visual arts and shows

PUTNEY Simi Berman: "Other Worlds": When Simi Berman begins a painting, she consciously avoids having an idea in mind. Now, in this latter period of her life, she allows spontaneous gestures to lead her where they will on a path of discovery and surprise, walking a tightrope between the conscious and unconscious mind. In the process, there is the need to relate and balance alternating with the desire to throw things off a predictable course.

- ▶ 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Meet Simi Berman in person today and view her artwork. Working with collage, she uses a myriad of forgotten bits and pieces from the point of view of graphics or texture. She is particularly inspired by fragments of old posters ripped off ancient walls that she comes upon during trips to Italy. The urge is to create new life for these old fragments.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Exhibit runs through 5/14/2023. 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org.

TUESDAY

21

Music

WEST TOWNSHEND Bard Owl plays West Townshend Store's Pizza Night: T. Breeze Verdant on guitar, vocals, stomp box, and Annie Landenberger on vocals and percussion. Bard Owl has been playing in the region since 2016 offering sweet harmonies, driving rhythms, and an eclectic mix of old tunes, new, and original.

- ▶ 5-7 p.m.: Outdoor wood-fired brick pizza oven will be ready for baking.
- ▶ West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: bardowlmusic.com.

The written word

BRATTLEBORO Sci-Fi Reading Group - Discussion of "Riot Baby" by Tochi Onyebuchi: "Ella sees a classmate grow up to become a caring nurse. A neighbor's son murdered in a drive-by shooting. Things that haven't happened yet. Kev, born while Los Angeles burned around them, wants to protect his sister from a power that could destroy her. But when Kev is incarcerated, Ella must decide what it means to watch her brother suffer while holding the ability to wreck cities in her hands."

- ▶ 7-8:30 p.m. 3rd Thursday of every month. Rooted in the hope that can live in anger, "Riot Baby" is as much an intimate family story as a global dystopian narrative. It burns fearlessly toward revolution and has quietly devastating things to say about love, fury, and the black American experience.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Kids and families

BRATTLEBORO Sing & Dance with Robin: This lovely class is an enriching musical experience for toddlers and preschoolers and designed to support healthy cognitive, physical, social development. Children (ages 5 and under) will sing, clap, stomp, dance, play along with a curriculum of traditional and modern folk songs. Parents are encouraged to sing and fully participate with their child.

- ▶ 10:30-11:30 a.m. every Tuesday through 4/25 in the Community Meeting Room.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

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 Putney Library hosts "The Most Costly Journey": Migrant farm laborers, asylum seekers, and immigration to Vermont: Join former immigration attorney Susan Mills and Kate Paarlberg-Kvam, exec. dir. of Community Asylum Seeker's Project, to learn about realities of immigrants in Vermont through the lens of 2023 Vermont Reads selection "The Most Costly Journey" as part of

TUESDAY CONT.

El Viaje Mas Caro project: health care outreach aimed at addressing immigrants' overlooked mental health needs.

- ▶ 6:30 p.m.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: 802-387-4407; putneylibrary.org/events.

Multimedia

PUTNEY "In the Course of Human Events": Multimedia Art Exhibit about Social Justice and Injustice: Gallery visitors will see themes related to human rights, socio-political critique and protest, and the lived experiences of artists and people where culture and society intersect through the works of Lani Asuncion, Nima Nikaklagh, Vick Quezada, and William Ransom.

- ▶ 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily.
- ▶ Through Friday, April 21.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Landmark College Fine Arts Center, 1 River Rd. So. Read more about each artist: www.landmark.edu/calendar/event/in-the-course-of-human-events-art-exhibit 802-387-6738; humbertoramirez@landmark.edu.

WEDNESDAY

22

The written word

WESTMINSTER Jessie Haas talk at Butterfield Library: Jessie Haas speaks on writing the different types of books she has authored: from picture books to young adult books, nonfiction, and a history of Westminster.

- ▶ 7 p.m. Jessie will have books for purchase (cash or check). They're also available to check out at Butterfield Library. Proceeds from sales of "Westminster, Vermont 1735-2000" go to the Westminster Historical Society. Refreshments served. Please wear a mask.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Westminster Institute, 3534 Route 5. Information: 802-387-2781; westminstervtconservation@gmail.com.

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Medicaid & Health Resource Drop-in Hours: All are welcome to stop in to find out if they'll be affected by the upcoming Medicaid cut-backs, what their rights are in this process, how to be sure that they're not cut off for bureaucratic reasons. People who are not on Medicaid and have questions about health care access are also welcome, as there will be other health care resources available. Hosted by Vermont Workers' Center.

- ▶ 2-4 p.m. in the Meeting Room.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: More information: windham@workerscenter.org.

Community building

BRATTLEBORO Windham World Affairs Council - Members & Friends March Salon: Local Journalism: The Backbone of Democracy: Paul Belogour, owner Vermont News & Media LLC (Brattleboro Reformer) discusses the importance of local journalism and objectivity on reporting current events. How do we protect access to opposing points of view on topics that divide us like climate change, pandemic, war in Ukraine and its impact on international business?

- ▶ 6 p.m. RSVP appreciated.
- ▶ Free.
- ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: windhamworldaffairsCouncil@gmail.com.

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

Visit commonsnews.org for more listings with more details

Early silent films to screen in Brattleboro

Works from Alfred Hitchcock and groundbreaking woman director Lois Weber come to Epsilon Spires

BRATTLEBORO—Two examples of early cinema will be shown at Epsilon Spires on Saturday, March 18, starting at 8 P.M.: Alfred Hitchcock's last silent film, *Blackmail!* (1929, 76 minutes), and Lois Weber's *Suspense!* (1913, 10 minutes). This event kicks off the spring 2023 series of silent films screened with live musical accompaniment in Epsilon Spires' converted historic chapel.

Blackmail! follows the travails of a young woman who kills a man while defending herself from assault and is then blackmailed by an opportunistic witness to the act.

Event organizers say in this early Hitchcock film, "many of the auteur's signatures are already evident: a young blond woman in peril, a climactic chase scene in a culturally significant location, and a penchant for innovation and experimentation."

Hitchcock studied the work of German Expressionist filmmakers, including F. W. Murnau as he worked on *The Last Laugh*, and this influence is evident here. The original master of manipulating perspective, Murnau taught him how to achieve the maximum effect of storytelling with very few resources.

Blackmail! has achieved

widespread acclaim, including being preserved by the British Film Institute. Viewers should be on the lookout for Hitchcock's longest cameo.

In the spirit of Women's History Month, the evening opens with the short thriller *Suspense!* Early feminist film pioneer Weber uses innovative split screen, inventive point-of-view shots, and a high-speed car chase to tell the story of a young husband trying desperately to save his wife and child from a home invasion.

Weber directed more than 135 films and was the first American woman to direct a feature-length film and one of the first to own her own film studio. *Suspense!* has been preserved by both the British Film Institute and the United States National Film Registry.

Live musical accompaniment will be provided by organist Dennis James on Epsilon Spires' historic Estey pipe organ. James has been performing alongside silent films since 1969 and has played a pivotal role in the international revival of silent films paired with live music.

In the 1980s, James toured with silent film stars Lillian Gish and Charles "Buddy" Rogers, providing musical accompaniment. His



COURTESY PHOTO

An early use of split screen technology in Lois Weber's 1913 silent film, "Suspense."

research and experiences have led him to develop performance practices using the surviving source materials from the silent film era with unwavering commitment to stylistic integrity.

His production company, Silent Film Concerts, has amassed one of the largest private libraries of

authentic silent film music in existence today, acquired from film musicians, film music collectors, and historic theaters throughout the world. It includes complete original film scores plus hundreds of published generic silent film music compositions that are used to create historically accurate new

musical scores where the originals do not survive.

This will be James's third appearance at Epsilon Spires, having previously scored *Nosferatu* and *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Tickets for this event start at \$5 on a sliding scale and go up to \$20. Tickets are available

for purchase at (epsilonspires.com) epsilonspires.org. \$2 from every ticket goes directly toward the historic preservation of the venue. Refreshments will be provided.

Next Stage hosts The Foreign Landers on March 16



THEFOREIGNLANDERS.COM

Trans-atlantic and multi-instrumental duo Tabitha Agnew Benedict and David Benedic perform as The Foreign Landers.

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present an evening of bluegrass and folk music by The Foreign Landers on Thursday, March 16, at 7 p.m.

In a news release, Next Stage Production Director Barry Stockwell notes that The Foreign Landers' first concert at Next Stage "will be a highlight of our winter lineup of Twilight Music shows that feature young, up-and-coming, acoustic music artists from around the world."

Drawing from the musical styles of their homelands, transatlantic, multi-instrumentalist duo David Benedict (from South Carolina) and Tabitha Agnew Benedict (from Northern Ireland) join with

Nate Sabat on acoustic bass and Julian Pinelli on fiddle for their 2023 tour to celebrate the release of the CD *Traveler's Rest*.

The Benedicts' authenticity and originality in songwriting, instrumental prowess on guitar, banjo, and mandolin, evocative vocals, and unique transatlantic touch all combine to create a unique sound that is inexpressibly foreign and yet familiar.

The Benedicts are also no foreigners to music. Before forming their duo, Tabitha performed with BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award finalists Cup O'Joe from Northern Ireland, and Island Records-signed British bluegrass band Midnight Skyracer. While in Nashville, David toured with

Grammy-nominated, 10-time International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Bass Player of the Year Award recipient Missy Raines, and later, in Boston, with 2020 IBMA New Artist of the Year Award recipient Mile Twelve.

These opportunities led to both Tabitha and David receiving Instrumentalists of the Year Momentum Awards from the IBMA as well.

Find Next Stage at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney. Tickets are \$18 in advance, \$22 at the door. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For information, call 802-387-0102. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar.



COURTESY PHOTO

Gay Maxwell, Jim Maxwell, and Christopher Coutant will perform in *The Children*, a play by Lucy Kirkwood directed by Karla Baldwin.

'The Children' explores generational responsibility

BRATTLEBORO—Over the last two weekends in March, the Apron Theater Company will present *The Children*, a play by Lucy Kirkwood, at the Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main Street.

The Apron Theater Company has produced important plays, modern and classic, including *Top Girls*, *Other Desert Cities*, and *Mother Courage* for more than a decade. Directed by Karla Baldwin, *The Children* brings actors Christopher Coutant, Gay Maxwell, and Jim Maxwell back on stage for the first time since Apron's 2019 production of *Tartuffe*.

Tony-nominated and winner of the U.K. Writer's Guild Award for Best Play, *The Children* is a provocative piece asking

challenging questions well suited for our cultural moment and timeless in its meditations on aging and responsibility.

In a small cottage on a seacoast of England, three retired nuclear engineers grapple with the personal and societal consequences of a deadly accident that has occurred at the nearby nuclear power station where they worked together for years.

Rose (played by Coutant) has returned from abroad to visit Hazel and Robin (Gay and Jim Maxwell), a married couple who have chosen to remain close to the power station despite the dangers. Their pasts intimately linked, these three grapple with the tangled knot of responsibility presented by the accident and its consequences for the next

generation. Who should clean up this mess?

"With humor and pathos, Kirkwood deftly braids the personal and the political as her characters struggle through their fierce convictions, old wounds, and love for one another," say event organizers.

Performances are scheduled for Thursdays through Saturdays, March 23 through 25 and March 30 through April 1, at 7:30 p.m., with one matinee on Sunday, March 26, at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$15, cash or check only, at the door. Masks are to be worn in the theater. To reserve tickets, call 802-490-3959 or email aprontheatercompany@gmail.com. Walk-ins are welcome.

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Arts, humanities curators speak at Next Stage Arts

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts announces the NXT Curators series, supported in part by Vermont Humanities, offering an opportunity for audiences to hear from curators in various arts/humanities fields. The intent is to shine a light on lesser-known styles and genres, providing a behind-the-scenes look at what curators need to consider when working with their medium.

“For most, the arts are something we interact with as a finished product. We love the musicians we love, but we don’t understand the inner workings,” Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said in a news release. This series will make it possible for audience members to “hear from the people who help facilitate the vast body of work, how it gets made, what goes into making it, and how to make sense of it,” he says. “I hope this series helps people appreciate all forms of art at a deeper level.”

On Thursday, March 23, Angelina Lippert, chief curator and director of content at Poster House in New York City, will initiate the series.

What is a poster and how is it different from a print, a handbill, or a flyer? What makes a poster valuable? Lippert will discuss how this ephemeral medium marries the worlds of art and commerce and cover the birth of posters in the mid-1800s, major stylistic movements, important moments in printing history, and a glimpse into the array of poster exhibitions she has curated. This talk is co-presented



Angelina Lippert

with the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

The following Thursday, March 30, Singer-Songwriter and Musicologist Miriam Elhajli interviews Association for Cultural Equity’s (ACE) President Anna Lomax Wood, the daughter of the organization’s founder, Musicologist Alan Lomax.

The talk will focus on ACE and the Global Jukebox, an online database and interactive website that

allows users to listen to and learn about more than 6,000 songs from 1,000 cultures — including many from Lomax’s personal collection. Elhajli will perform a few songs to lead off the presentation.

The series concludes on Thursday, April 6, with Melanie George, a jazz dance artist, dramaturg, and scholar. She is an associate curator & scholar-in-residence at Jacob’s Pillow in Lenox, Massachusetts. Named

one of Dance Magazine’s “30 over 30” in 2021, George aims to deconstruct traditional hierarchies in dance.

Next Stage, at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney, offers all talks for free, but donations are appreciated. Advance registration is available at nextstagearts.org. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

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CHAMPIONS PG-13
DAILY 4 PM
NIGHTLY 7 PM

65 PG-13
DAILY 4:15 PM
NIGHTLY 6:55 PM

COCAINE BEAR R
DAILY 4 PM
NIGHTLY 7 PM

Putney Library hosts talk on ‘The Most Costly Journey’

PUTNEY—Putney Public Library, at 55 Main Street, hosts “The Most Costly Journey: Migrant Farm Laborers, Asylum Seekers, and Immigration to Vermont,” on Tuesday, March 21, at 6:30 p.m. This event is free and open to all.

Who are the immigrants in Vermont? How did they get here, and what do they do? What specific hardships do they face in Vermont?

Former immigration attorney, Susan Mills, and Kate Paarlberg-Kvam, executive director of the Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP) will discuss the realities of immigrants in Vermont through the lens of 2023’s Vermont Reads selection, *The Most Costly Journey* (El viaje más caro).

Vermont Reads brings communities together around stories, ideas, and activities that are important to the life of towns of all sizes. As a recipient of Vermont Humanities Council’s Vermont Reads grant, Putney Public Library is circulating copies of *The Most Costly Journey* to encourage as many people as possible in the Putney community to read on the same topic.

The book is a nonfiction comics anthology, presenting stories of survival and healing told by Latin American migrant farmworkers and drawn by New England cartoonists as part of the El Viaje Más Caro project — a health-care outreach effort aimed at addressing the overlooked mental health needs of these vulnerable immigrants.

Originally distributed to farm workers as individual Spanish language comic books, this collected edition brings the lives and voices — as well as the challenges and hardships — of these workers to an English-language audience, granting insight into the experiences and lives of the people vital to producing the food we eat.

Mills moved to Vermont a couple of years ago, after 20+ years as a Spanish-speaking attorney at an immigration law firm in Providence and the Boston area. She prepared asylum cases for thousands of immigrants from Central America with a focus on unaccompanied teenagers.

She attributes her work, her family life with Central Americans, and her lesbian feminism and community activism

over many years as inspirational for her 2022 novel, *On the Wings of a Hummingbird*.

Paarlberg-Kvam holds a doctorate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and is a former postdoctoral fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, where she conducted research on gender, displacement, and postwar reconciliation efforts.

Prior to joining the staff team at the Community Asylum Seekers Project, she spent 10 years teaching courses in Latin American history, social movements, gender studies, and political economy. At CASP she serves as executive director and legal liaison, as well as working with a statewide coalition of asylum advocates to build a welcoming state.

Podcast explores creative minds in the region

SAXTONS RIVER—Creativity, connections, and curiosity are the hallmarks of a weekly video podcast called “Eager To Know.” Saxtons River artist Ricky McEachern will debut the program on public access television in Bellows Falls and Keene, N.H., Wednesday, March 15, at 9 p.m. and Thursday, March 16, at 4 p.m., as well as through podcasting platforms.

“I’m an extremely curious person and I love to connect with creative people,” said McEachern, who has produced 104 podcast episodes featuring interviews with creative people — among them a famous novelist, an astrologer, a tattoo artist, a mind reader, a photographer, a muralist, and a garden designer. Episode 105 will be the first one produced at FACT-TV in Bellows Falls.

Each 29-minute podcast will connect with a person working in the arts or another arena.

“People are curious about the world and want to see inside the minds of people who are doing things they don’t do,” McEachern said. “I want people to be inspired and see themselves in a new way.”

He himself has gone through changes that have helped him view himself in new ways.

Originally from the Boston area, McEachern’s curiosity about the world was spiked by fifth-grade science, which led to a career in plastic engineering. His science brain battled with his art brain until, in 2010 and with the help of meditation and yoga, he embraced the latter.

After exploring art in Chicago, he moved to Saxtons River last year, bought a house, and set up a studio. He was familiar with the area from being part of a group that came to Jamaica regularly to ski.

“I was drawn to Vermont because it’s so beautiful,” he said,

“but also because the people are so open and present.”

McEachern has found no lack of interesting people to interview, including Bellows Falls-based artist Charlie Hunter and a couple who have set up Willow Vermont, an art, meditation and yoga retreat in South Newfane.

He is hoping others will share his curiosity and find inspiration in the lives of those he interviews.

The podcast will air Mondays after midnight on podcast platforms, and Wednesdays at 9 p.m. and Thursdays at 4 p.m. on Falls Area Community Television (FACT8.com), serving the Bellows Falls and Keene areas.

It will also be available on Apple podcasts, Spotify, and YouTube. More details can be found at McEachern’s website, rickymeachernartist.com.

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

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

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Here We Are with guest Norma Hardy, Chief of Police, Brattleboro: Mon 8p, Tues 6:10a, Wed 1:25p, Fri 6p, Sat 9p, Sun 6:15a	Meet the Candidates - Brattleboro Selectboard Candidate Forum 2/16/23: Mon 8:30p, Tues 6a
Harris Hill Ski Jump 2023 - Saturday: Mon 9a, Wed 3:30p, Sat 6:30p	Guilford Town Meeting - Pre-Town Meeting 2/23/23: Monday 10a
Harris Hill Ski Jump 2023 - Sunday: Mon 12p, Thurs 3:30p, Sun 6:30p	Meet the Candidates - Putney Selectboard Candidate Forum 3/4/23: Monday 12p, Tues 1p
The World Fusion Show - Ep 147 - Issa Ndour: Mon 11:30a, Tues 8p, Wed 6:25p, Thurs 6:30a, Fri 1:25p, Sat 12:30p, Sun 9p	Dummerston Town Meeting - Pre-Town Meeting 3/1/23: Mon 6p
Media Mentoring Project - A Photo is Worth a Thousand Words: Wed 9p, Thurs 9a, Fri 12p	Meet the Candidates - WSESD Board Candidate Forum 2/27/23: Mon 6:30a, Tues 3:30p
Thorn in My Side - THE GREAT OUTDOORS! - June 23rd, 2022. Tues 8:30p, Wed 12p, Thurs 10:30a	Vernon Town Meeting 2023 - 3/6/23: Tues 6p, Thurs 12p
Rock River Players Present - The Importance of Being Earnest: Fri 2:30p, Sat 9:30a, Sun 1:30p	Newfane Town Meeting 2023 - 3/7/23: Wed 5a
At BMAC - Conversation: Alison Moritsugu, Erin Shigaki, and Sarah Freeman: Mon 6:55a, Wed 9a, Thurs 1:30p, Fri 5p, Sun 7a	Jamaica Town Meeting 2023 - 3/7/23: Wed 9a, Sat 6a
Windham Solid Waste Management District Presents: Where is Away for Recyclables: Mon 4:15p, Tues 5:45p, Wed 6:05p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 6:45p, Sat 3:45p	Townshend Town Meeting 2023 - 3/7/23: Tues 9a (LIVE), Wed 1p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Dummerston Town Meeting 2023 - 3/7/23: Wed 6p, Sun 8a
WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p	Guilford Town Meeting 2032 - 3/7/23: Thurs 7a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Putney Town Meeting 2023 - 3/7/23: Tues 10a (LIVE), Thurs 7p
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service: Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 3/6/23: Fri 2p & 8:30p, Sat 11:30a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	River Valleys Unified School District Bd Mtg. 3/6/23: Thurs 3:30p, Fri 8a, Sat 8p, Sun 1p
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tue 5p, Wed 12p, Thu 10:30a & 6p, Sat 7p, Sun 11a
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 4:30p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 7:45a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

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

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

Brattleboro Community Television - 257-0888

Annie Patterson and Peter Blood perform in benefit for CASP

WEST BRATTLEBORO—Songs of joy, resilience, and justice will be the focus on St. Patrick's Day, Friday, March 17, at All Souls Church in a benefit concert with Annie Patterson and Peter Blood.

The concert is a benefit for CASP, the Community Asylum Seekers Project, to support people fleeing violence and repression to find a new life in southeastern Vermont.

CASP offers those seeking

asylum resources for basic needs and accompanies them on their journey toward building a new life in the United States. The organization continues to sponsor and support many people in the Windham County area.

Annie Patterson and Peter Blood developed and edited *Rise Up Singing*, the group singing songbook, (1988), and its sequel, *Rise Again* (2015). They have led hundreds of singalong concerts and workshops across North America, New Zealand, and the UK.

Pete Seeger, who was actively involved in working both on *Rise Up Singing* and *Rise Again*, said their work has "made a qualitative difference in music in this country."

Patterson is an accomplished folk performer, recording artist, and jazz vocalist. She was the art director of both songbooks and was producer and primary vocalist for the *Rise Up Singing Teaching Discs*. She accompanies herself on banjo, guitar, and cajon. Patterson sings with the bands Big Yellow Taxi, Dear Ella, and Girls from Mars.

Blood edited Seeger's autobiography, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone: A Singalong Memoir*. He accompanies Patterson on fiddle and guitar.

This is a rare opportunity to hear Patterson and Blood together performing, songleading, and telling stories about creating their books and working closely with Seeger.

Tickets are \$20, but attendees may pay whatever they can afford. Refugees and folks under 18 attend free. More information and ticket purchasing is available at bit.ly/706-sing.



"N-400 Hustle" by Vick Quezada.

COURTESY PHOTO

THE COLONIAL
BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN
JUKEBOX 3.16
RUMOURS
Fleetwood Mac Tribute 3.24
JAZZ AT LINCOLN
CENTER *Songs We Love 3.31*
MARCIA BALL and
TINSLEY ELLIS BLUES! 4.1
TAPE FACE 4.14
MUTTS GONE NUTS 4.16
SHOWROOM
CHASTITY BROWN and
SAWYER FREDERICKS 3.17
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CABARET
 Book by Joe Masteroff
 Based on the play by John Van Druten and
 Stories by Christopher Isherwood
 Music by John Kander Lyrics by Fred Ebb
 CABARET is presented by arrangement with
 Concord Theatricals on behalf of Tams-Witmark LLC.
PERFORMANCES
 7pm - March 17, 18, 23, 24, 25
 2pm - March 18, 19, 25
 Tickets available at neyt.org

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HIRING CARPENTERS
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We are hiring several Carpenters for our projects in Brattleboro, VT and Keene, NH. Applicants are required to have reliable transportation and their own tools. We offer market competitive rates of pay. Pay is dependent on experience and skill level. The typical schedule is Monday - Friday (overtime as needed) 7am - 3:30pm
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 • Paid training
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Multimedia art exhibit about social justice on display at Landmark College

PUTNEY—A new exhibit in The Fine Arts Gallery at Landmark College explores issues of social justice and injustice through the multimedia works of Lani Asunción, Nima Nikakhlagh, Vick Quezada, and William Ransom.

Curated by Landmark College Associate Professor of Arts Samuel Rowlett, "In the Course of Human Events" will be on display through Friday, April 21, in the Fine Arts Gallery, which is open to the public daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Rowlett says the exhibition title, taken from the first line of the Declaration of Independence, offers a reminder of the deeply human complexities, tragedies, and hypocrisies inherent in the ongoing formation of our "more perfect union."

"Gallery visitors will see themes related to human rights, socio-political critique and protest, and the lived experiences of artists and people where culture and society intersect," says Rowlett.

Asunción (they/she) is an interdisciplinary multimedia artist creating socially engaged art in both private and public spaces, independently and collaboratively. According to the artist's website, Asunción's art "weaves

together a visual language guided by historical research, community engagement, and experimental performance connected to their identity as a queer multiracial Filipinx-American."

Asunción integrates new media technologies and transmedia storytelling through ritualized performance to promote healing in the face of cultural violence, oppression, and ancestral intergenerational trauma narratives. Find out more at laniasuncion.com/about.

Nikakhlagh is a multidisciplinary artist, native to Iran, who arrived in the United States in 2014. Often using interactive live performance and the written word, his practice concerns itself with socio-political power dynamics, political resistance, and non-violent action approached in a poetic manner. "I choose to use my body as both subject and object in the work, as a catalyst for action, and generator of potential outcomes," the artist says on his website. More about his work can be found at nimanikakhlagh.com.

Quezada (they/them) is an interdisciplinary artist who explores hybrid forms in Indigenous-Latinx history and the function of these histories in contested lands, primarily along the U.S.-Mexico border. Quezada categorically

is a Rascuache Chicanx artist, one who repurposes and stylizes found objects. Their work explores liberation through an approach that is rooted in queer and Aztec Indigenous knowledge, histories, and aesthetics. Learn more at vickquezada.com/about.html.

Ransom was born and raised on a Vermont dairy farm as the son of a white father and African American mother. He says balance has always played an important role in his life and work, including the balance between Black and white. Ransom's work often suggests "flux, movement, things in a state of becoming or diminishing — a transitory provisional state, rife with an inherent unease and uncertainty," say organizers.

His material is described as presenting the tensions and underlying instabilities and stresses of the world's current state and the potential for flare-up or collapse. More information can be found at williamransom.art.

The Landmark College Fine Arts Gallery is in the Fine Arts Building on the Landmark College campus. For directions and a campus map, visit landmark.edu and click the "Map and Directions" link at the bottom of the page.

Wendy's Soiree Series returns with concert by Su Terry

GUILFORD—Su Terry brings her one-woman show, *Samurai: Their Secret Life*, to Vermont on Saturday, March 25, at 7 p.m., as part of Wendy's Soiree Series, co-presented with Temple of Artists.

The show is a unique presentation of projected images with live narration and *shakuhachi* (Japanese flute) music.

Known as a woodwind virtuoso, as well as a nine-time USKSF gold medalist in taijiquan, Su Terry has combined her passions for both music and martial arts in

this first U.S. performance for one night only.

"The legendary samurai warriors of Japan never disappeared," organizers say in a news release. "They still exist in movies, books, and websites. The image of the samurai is so powerful it's even used to sell popular products."

Terry will explain the secrets that not only made the samurai fierce warriors, but also enabled them to transform themselves after the Shogun effectively

eliminated them from society for political reasons.

The haunting sound of the shakuhachi has been described as "nature whispering her secrets," and even as an entry into Nirvana.

Suggested donation is \$15-\$20. The performance takes place at 2596 Tater Lane in Guilford. For directions and further information, call Wendy Redlinger at 802-254-6189 or email wendy@asteriamusica.com.



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