



What voters in the towns of Windham County will debate this week • Pages A3–A4

Town Meeting Day is Tuesday, March 7

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Brattleboro, Vermont • Wednesday, March 1, 2023 • Vol. XVIII, No. 9 • Issue No. 704

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BUHS principal's firing upheld after hearing

Victim frustrated with the process but thanks WSESD board for sticking by 2022 decision to fire Steve Perrin

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) Board of Directors has upheld its decision to fire former Brattleboro Union High School (BUHS) Principal Steven Perrin following a two-week hearing that ended Jan. 30.

The hearing took place in executive session, with the results announced publicly at the board meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

“Pursuant to a hearing, the board has affirmed the decision to dismiss Mr. Perrin as BUHS principal,” WSESD board Chair Kelly Young said. She took no questions, and there was no further conversation.

The board fired Perrin on Nov. 8 in a unanimous vote.

Perrin had not been on the job since before spring break in 2022. The day school resumed, April 25, Young communicated via memo that Superintendent Mark Speno had placed Perrin on a paid leave of absence. Perrin continued to collect his \$120,000 annual salary until being fired.

Cassie Damkoehler has served as principal since Perrin's firing.

In October 2022, *The Commons* broke the story of “Jane Doe,” who alleges that when she was a sophomore at BUHS in 2010, Perrin started to make unwanted and inappropriate sexual and romantic advances toward her and found other ways to make her life difficult, including trying to prevent her from graduating [“Former BUHS student says principal took ‘sexual and romantic’ interest in her,” *News*, Oct. 5, 2022].

Friends and classmates have corroborated the former student's story, having witnessed Perrin's treatment of her.

Doe has also said that she has reason to believe the former principal did not report her rape by a fellow student to the authorities, as he was mandated to do as an educator.

She filed reports with the Brattleboro Police Department and attorney Aimee Goddard of Buehler & Annis, PLC of

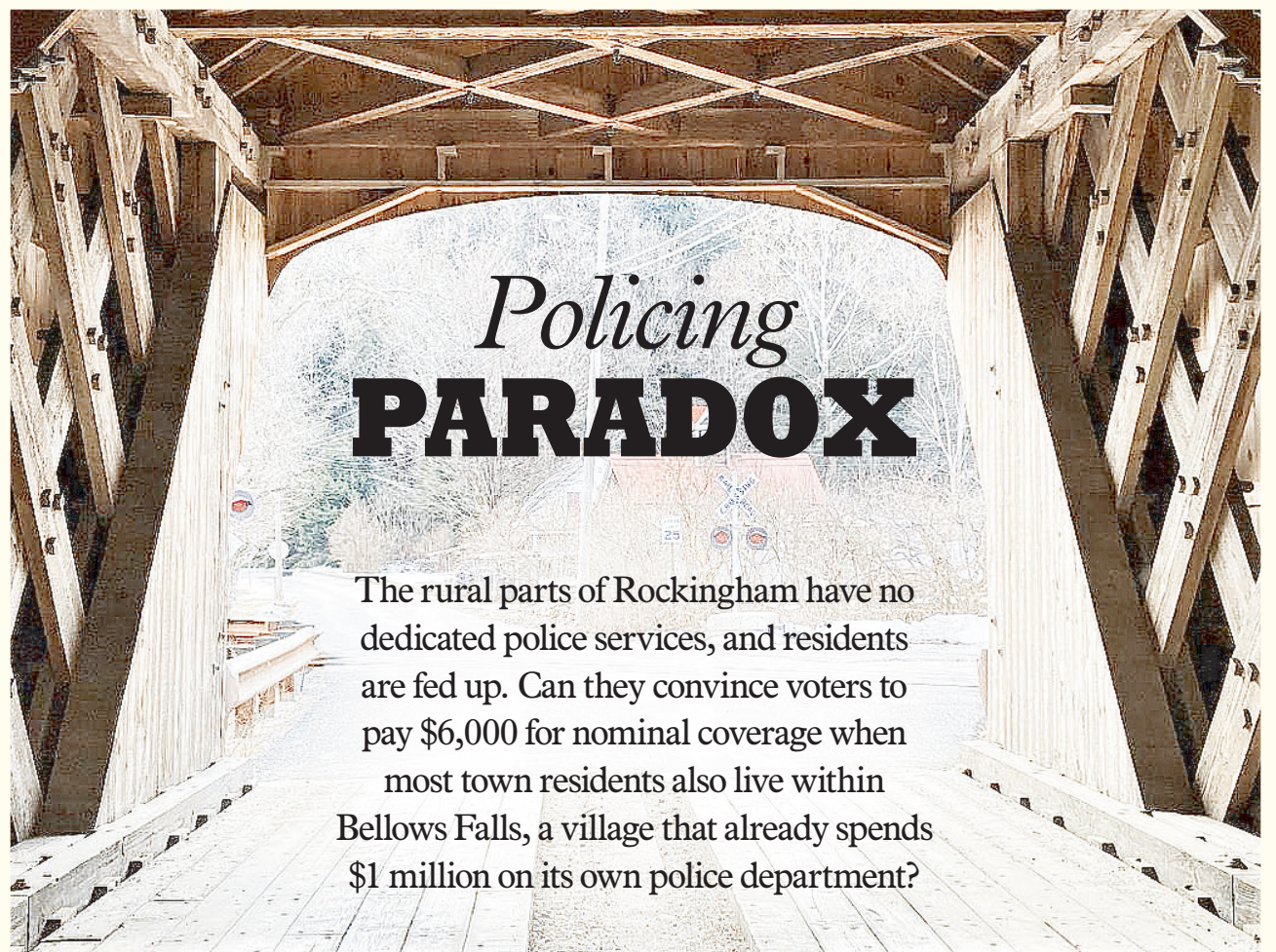


RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT COMMONS FILE PHOTO
Steve Perrin

Brattleboro, who was hired by the WSESD board in January 2022 to investigate myriad reports of sexual abuse at the school over the years.

No timeline or further information has been forthcoming regarding that investigation despite many queries from community members. But at the Feb. 28 meeting, Young told WSESD board student representative Ben Berg that if he put his questions about what is going on, the

■ SEE PERRIN FIRING UPHELD, A6



Policing PARADOX

The rural parts of Rockingham have no dedicated police services, and residents are fed up. Can they convince voters to pay \$6,000 for nominal coverage when most town residents also live within Bellows Falls, a village that already spends \$1 million on its own police department?

ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

The Bartonsville Covered Bridge accommodates one lane of traffic. Residents say motorists drive too fast, and too recklessly, through the narrow span.

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

ROCKINGHAM—The village of Lower Bartonsville has been the driving force in getting an article on the upcoming Annual Town Meeting agenda to try to get some nominal funding for a police presence in rural parts of the town.

This year, voters in Rockingham will consider spending \$6,000 in taxpayer money to fund a contract with the Windham County Sheriff's Office.

But opposition to the contract is emerging from the village of Bellows Falls, which funds its own police department, and

where some residents and local officials vocally oppose funding additional policing beyond the village borders.

The article is the result of residents in rural parts of Rockingham—including its unincorporated villages of Upper and Lower Bartonsville and Cambridgeport—and nearby towns growing increasingly concerned about speeding cars on narrow back roads, side-by-side drag racing, reckless driving, road rage incidents, increasing burglaries, drug sales, and drug use.

Roadside litter often includes used hypodermic needles and other drug paraphernalia.

Recent local construction projects in the town, which

have detoured traffic onto less used secondary roads, have exacerbated the issues and have resulted in a rash of new complaints.

Complaints about the temporary detour of traffic from Route 121 between Saxtons River and Bellows Falls to the Back Westminister Road in recent months have flooded social media with complaints of speeding by adult and teenage drivers, unsafe passing, tailgating and road rage incidents.

Resident concerns

“We’ve been seeing a lot more traffic in general,” said Bartonsville resident Sarah Massucco. “We have older people, children, people walking,

running, biking. It’s a neighborhood with a lot of diversity.”

The addition of 25 mph speed limit signs and a temporary electronic speed sign has done little to alleviate the situation, said Massucco and her husband, Steve Chipman.

Resident David Quilty noted that “when your road is being used as a drag strip at all times of the day and night, we’re trying to put something out there that may be a deterrent. What we’re trying to get to is for people to think twice, that there may be a cop on the road.”

Teacher Laura Rounds lives in the neighborhood and ran an in-home day care there for seven years.

■ SEE POLICE PATROLS, A2

COLUMN | Reporter's Notebook

Her choice of guest spoke volumes

Balint makes her way into a divisive Congress and quietly stands firm on her principles as she looks to represent her state as part of an unhinged legislative body.

Brattleboro

U.S. REP. BECCA BALINT, D-Vt., is in a difficult position.

On the one hand, she wants to work hard for her constituents, who have serious and pressing needs. On the other hand, she serves in one of the most divisive Houses in history—and she is in the minority party.

“It does get demoralizing when I sit in a committee and what is happening on the other side of the aisle is a lot of misinformation and disinformation,” she said recently at a Brattleboro press conference outside the Multicultural Community Center of Southern Vermont on Birge Street. She was there



JOYCE MARCEL, a longtime contributor to *The Commons*, covers Windham County's connections to state and national politics and the political forces shaping the lives and livelihoods of the people here.

to hear the concerns of recent refugees and immigrants to Brattleboro.

It is discouraging as well as demoralizing, she said.

“It is discouraging when I see the leadership in the Republican Conference



KEVIN O'CONNOR/VTDIGGER.ORG

U.S. Rep. Becca Balint talks with a newly resettled refugee family from the African country of Eritrea during a Feb. 13 visit to the Multicultural Community Center of Southern Vermont in Brattleboro.

not asking [Rep.] George Santos [R-N.Y.] to resign,” she continued. “It is discouraging when I sit in President Joseph Biden's State of the Union address and hear [Rep.] Marjorie Taylor Greene [R-Ga.], call the president a liar eight or nine times, and other people

speaking profanities out loud. “And the speaker [Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.] is standing there not gaveling back to order, not holding those people to the rules that he passed. Yes, it is absolutely discouraging.”

■ SEE BALINT, A2

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A publication of Vermont Independent Media
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Deadline for the March 8 issue March 3



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The Commons is a nonprofit community newspaper published since 2006 by Vermont Independent Media, Inc., a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code. The newspaper is free, but it is supported by readers like you through tax-deductible donations, through advertising support, and through support of charitable foundations. The paper is published weekly, with early production schedules scheduled for most fifth Wednesdays of the month.

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

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The Commons presents a broad range of essays, memoirs, and other subjective material in Voices, our editorial and commentary section. We want the paper to provide an unpredictable variety of food for thought from all points on the political spectrum. We especially invite responses to material that appears in the paper. We do not publish unsigned or anonymous letters, and we only very rarely withhold names for other pieces. When space is an issue, our priority is to run contributions that have not yet appeared in other publications. Please check with the editor before writing essays or other original submissions of substance. Email: voices@commonsnews.org.

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Without our volunteers, this newspaper would exist only in our imaginations.

Special thanks to: Simi and Mark Berman, Diana Bingham, Jim Maxwell, Rob Bertsche, Barbara Evans, Cameron Cobane, Shannon Ward, and Hooker-Dunham Theater & Gallery; Clay Turnbull and NEC; Brendan Emmett Quigley and Joon Pakh

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

Police patrols

FROM SECTION FRONT

“It really bothered me that, if you saw a group of little kids walking along the road, why didn’t people slow down,” she said.

The road runs over the Williams River through the Bartonville Covered Bridge, a narrow, one-lane bridge that replaced one destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. Several residents spoke of impatient drivers angrily following pedestrians, including groups of small children, onto the bridge.

“It’s important to feel safe in your own neighborhood,” Rounds said. “I’ve lived here about 10 years. I had no idea when we moved here that the Bellows Falls Police Department doesn’t police rural Rockingham. It would be great if we had a police presence out here.”

A statewide problem

The situation is hardly unique to Rockingham and its rural environs. It’s part of a much larger statewide problem: that for many police departments, their personnel is inadequate to meet policing demands. The same is true among firefighting and emergency response personnel as well, adding to the seriousness of the problem.

What Bartonville is experiencing is true across most rural areas of Vermont. Larger villages can often fund their own police departments — among them, Bellows Falls. But that department’s policing is limited to the village of Bellows Falls.

Smaller incorporated villages, like Saxtons River, may be able to raise enough tax revenue to pay for separate contracts with the Windham County Sheriff’s Department for very limited hours of police patrolling.

But villages around the state with perhaps just a few hundred occupants — like Lower Bartonville — are left with sporadic police patrolling, if any at all.

Rockingham’s Article 11

Thus, Article 11 with its \$6,000 funding request. The big question, as usual, is: Who is going to pay for it?

Spread across the entire town, the \$6,000 amounts to less than \$2 per household per year in property taxes.

“Some of the Bellows Falls Trustees don’t feel that Bellows Falls residents should be helping pick up the cost of rural Rockingham policing,” said Rockingham Selectboard member Rick Cowan.

That sentiment is shared by many Bellows Falls residents.

“The Bellows Falls Police Department budget is around \$1 million,” Cowan said. “There are about 3,000 people in the village. Rural Rockingham has about 2,200 people, with no official policing.”

But Quilty noted that all residents in any town pay taxes for things they don’t personally utilize. “It’s for the good of everybody in the community,” he said. “I spend thousands of dollars in taxes for schools I don’t have any kids in,” Quilty noted. “I’m really fine doing that. It’s for the good of all of us.”

But with little support from local officials and Bellows Falls residents — the town’s main voting bloc, with 60% of the population — folks living in rural parts of Rockingham hold out little hope that anything will change as far as increasing a local police presence on the town’s secondary and back roads.

Even if passed, at a cost of over \$60 an hour, the \$6,000 wouldn’t pay for even two hours a week of extra routine patrolling on Rockingham’s 100-plus miles of roads.

Massucco acknowledged that “\$6,000 doesn’t buy sufficient manpower.” The town would need nearly twice that amount “to get enough patrolling to begin to make a difference,” she said.

Law enforcement staffing at ‘a crisis level’

The situation also reveals an underlying truth. Though it varies from department to department around the state, said Cowan, “law enforcement staffing has reached crisis levels in Vermont.”

Windham County Sheriff Mark Anderson agreed, noting that “statewide, staffing is a problem.”

More rural villages and sections of towns have to depend on a state police force that is already stretched beyond capacity and is focused on more serious crime.

The Vermont State Police headquarters in Westminster covers both Windham and Windsor counties and is responsible for patrolling 60 miles of Interstate 91 from the Massachusetts border north to Hartland.

In recent meetings with town officials and concerned citizens, the state police acknowledged that they respond to burglaries, assaults, and other serious crime but are highly unlikely to assign officers to regularly patrol rural roads looking for reckless drivers, speeders, or illegal drug transactions. There are simply not enough officers, they contend.

The fact of the matter is that unless a community can afford a dedicated police force or a contract with the Sheriff’s Department, it will lack a consistent police presence.

People willing to drive recklessly on narrow secondary roads, drive 50 mph in a 25 mph zone, or search for a spot to carry out illegal drug sales are well aware of rural areas where police have a very limited presence and do not patrol regularly.

“People know they can blast through here and go to Springfield, and no one will bother them,” Massucco said.

The Windham County Sheriff’s Office has contracts to patrol Athens, Grafton, Putney, Saxtons River, and Westminster, but not Rockingham in general.

Anderson agreed that, while staffing is a problem, with a sufficient number of new contracts from towns around the county, he could expand his department’s staffing to meet the need.

He said some grant money has already supported this sort of rural patrolling and that he is looking to extend that program.

“This is not a new conversation,” Anderson said. “The model that we’re working toward is adequate regional, county-wide policing that we can afford. This conversation is very much in the beginning stages, and I understand that it’s frustrating.”

Anderson said that he is interested in his department doing more to support state and local police departments, and that there “are more people interested now in having that conversation.”

He noted that Covid has added to the policing problems. “There is a shift from before the pandemic until now,” Anderson said. “We have more unreported crime. Violence has increased. Housing programs put into effect when the pandemic hit are now being shut down or reduced, so we have more homeless [people].”

Sheriff departments have also been contracted to provide security for unstable patients in emergency rooms waiting for psychiatric hospital beds to become available. During the pandemic, wait periods for getting a bed in a psychiatric facility in Vermont could take days or even weeks, especially for teenagers.

“The Vermont sheriffs were a short-term solution to emergency room services,” Anderson explained. “It’s not what we should be doing, or what we are doing now. It was a temporary solution that ran years too long.”

Anderson noted that troubled teenagers are showing a “level of violence more than we are used to dealing with.”

“The stressors on the social fabric are increasing,” he said.

Balint

FROM SECTION FRONT

BUT IT TURNS OUT that Balint can give as good as she gets.

One aspect of American life currently disturbing the right wing is the emergence of gay, lesbian, and transgender people into the mainstream.

“Probably in four or five generations, no one will be straight anymore,” a worried Taylor Greene said in a broadcast last May. “Everyone will be either gay or trans or nonconforming.”

So for her first State of the Union Address, Balint — a proud and out lesbian mother of two — brought Bill Lippert with her as her guest.

Another openly gay former Vermont legislator, Lippert has been a steadfast champion of LGBTQ rights throughout his 30-year career.

In the 1980s, he helped organize the first Pride parade in Burlington, and he was a founding board member of Outright Vermont, Vermont’s queer-youth-serving organization.

As the only openly gay member of his era in the Vermont General Assembly, Lippert was instrumental in making Vermont the first state to grant civil union status to same-sex couples in 2000.

Nearly a decade later, he played a critical role in guaranteeing full marriage rights through the state’s Legislature.

His work made Vermont a trailblazer as the first state to legalize same-sex marriage without a court order.

“I am thrilled Vermont is getting to share Becca’s courage, kindness, and her full authentic self as an out LGBTQ woman with Washington and Congress,” Lippert said before the address.

“Becca is such a hopeful role model for all Vermont young people, but especially of our Vermont queer youth,” he said.

Was Lippert’s invitation Balint’s way of thumbing her nose at her Republican colleagues?

“In addition to being inspired by Bill and his career, Rep. Balint felt it was important to highlight LGBTQ leaders as we continue to see a rise of anti-LGBTQ hate and violence,” said her spokesperson, Sophie Pollack.

“She is concerned by the anti-trans and more broadly anti-LGBTQ legislation coming out of statehouses across the country,” Pollack continued. “Bill’s historic and impactful work in Vermont’s statehouse is a powerful statement against threats to LGBTQ rights.”

SUPPORTING HER constituents, any of her constituents, is going to be a hard pull this year, Balint admitted during the event at the Multicultural Community Center.

But first, the empathetic Balint was moved to tears as she sat in a room of about 46 people, including some refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Guatemala, and Eritrea. Others were their supporters, translators, and English teachers. Others were from the Vermont media.

“People are having greater difficulty coping with stressful situations.”

Sympathy and frustration

Rural Rockingham residents have expressed support for the issues faced by area police, who they referred to as “underpaid,” “overworked,” and “stretched too thin.”

Several who have had concerns told *The Commons* that they’ve appreciated the sheriff’s department and state police



U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., and her guest, Bill Lippert, at the State of the Union address Feb. 7.

Southern Vermont has welcomed almost 120 refugees in the past year.

Some of the refugees telling their stories to Balint were old. Some were mothers with babies in their arms. Some women had their head covered; others did not. Children played on the floor as men and women described the difficulties they are encountering while trying to make new lives for themselves and their families in the United States.

One difficulty is learning to operate in a new culture and a new language. Another is the heartache of living apart from loved ones who had to remain behind.

“Speaking from my heart, I promise to do everything we can,” Balint told them. “It’s so hard to live your life when you don’t have your family with you.”

She talked about her immigrant father who was a refugee after World War II, how he was called “stupid” because he didn’t know the language.

“When you can’t be your whole self, it has an intense impact on your well-being,” Balint said.

“To be promised that they would be reunited, and still a year later not reunited with their children is absolutely devastating and unacceptable,” she said. “We have a broken system of immigration. It’s one of the things that I’m very concerned about.”

“I WANT YOU TO KNOW I have heard you,” Balint told the audience at the Multicultural Center — but later, when she talked to the press, she admitted how difficult it will be to help them because of the House’s divided nature.

Balint sits on the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, along with Taylor Greene and a group of other far-righters.

“We have sham hearings about issues related to the border,” Balint said. “We’re not doing the hard work of really passing comprehensive

immigration and migration and asylum policy. And you see it directly on the ground here in Brattleboro.

“I certainly don’t want to overpromise,” she said. “But this is an issue that’s incredibly important to me and my staff. We’re going to be working closely with the U.S. senators from Vermont; I know they care deeply as well. And we’re going to have to push the State Department on this.”

Balint said that she knows some Republicans who want immigration reform but are too afraid to speak up.

“I keep saying they need to jump together, because their voices aren’t being heard within their own conference,” Balint said. “I’m just going to keep doing what I can to try to bring together more reasonable minds around this.”

It is the unreasonable ones who have taken control of the party, Balint said.

“Fundamentally, what I see among this extreme wing of the party is that they have hijacked the people who would like to be getting work done,” she said.

“They’re afraid of their own base. And that is what’s holding us back right now. So I’m going to continue to build relationships, seeing people as people first, politicians second.

“And if we can’t get work done in these two years, at least we will build the groundwork so that we can get some work done two years from now,” she said. “But it’s incredibly challenging.”

“I won’t lie,” Balint said. “Vermonters sent me [to the House of Representatives] because they’re worried about the democracy. They’re deeply worried, and I can’t lose hope. I’m their voice in Congress.”

And that is why she invited Lippert as her guest for her first State of the Union.

It made a definite statement.

responses, which they categorized as friendly, sympathetic, and straightforwardly open.

“We totally understand the constraints the police are under,” Chipman said. “But we’d like to work with the town to get better results.”

The negative response of some on the Selectboard has been especially frustrating to residents. One resident said that a board member told them that maybe “they should hold a bake sale” to pay for policing.

Board member Elijah Zimmer said he understands the frustration.

While several residents said that when they do call the police they “don’t expect a response,” Zimmer said it remains important to call and report problems no matter what the response.

Even if there is no response, he said, it helps create a permanent record for the future, helping pinpoint where the more severe issues and problems are.

“When people see something,” Zimmer said, “the best thing they can do is report it to the State Police.”

He confirmed that some board members have had concerns about whether residents of Bellows Falls should bear the responsibility to pay for rural policing.

Zimmer said passing Article 11 is “just a step toward general public safety,” which is important to rural parts of the town as well as the larger villages.

“We’re trying to make a start here,” he said. “It’s not enough, but it is a starting point.”

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Town Meeting Day is Tuesday, March 7

Most, but not all, Windham County towns plan a return to in-person discussion, debate, and community

Voters throughout Windham County will conduct Town Meeting Day on Tuesday, March 7, unless otherwise specified. The 21 Windham County towns are listed here with the information that was available at press time. This roundup was prepared by Woody Laidlaw of the University of Vermont's Community News Service.

Athens

- **Annual Town Meeting on Monday, voting Tuesday:** In-person Town Meeting will be held Monday, March 6 at the Athens Community Center (former elementary school) at 6 p.m. All voting for town officers will occur on Tuesday, March 7 by Australian ballot. Polls will be open between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the Athens Town Office.
- **Budget:** Voters will be asked to vote on a budget of \$632,621.95 general budget.
- **Financial contributions:** Voters will be asked whether the town will raise and appropriate a total of \$6,476 in support to 10 organizations.
- **More information:** athensvt.com.

Brattleboro

- **Annual Representative Town Meeting on March 25:** Representative Town Meeting members will gather Saturday, March 25 and, if necessary, Sunday, March 26, at 8:30 a.m. in the gymnasium of the Brattleboro Union High School. (Articles not acted upon by 5 p.m. on Saturday will be moved to Sunday at 8:30 a.m. unless the meeting votes to continue.)
- Two informational meetings for voting representatives are tentatively scheduled for March 15 and March 22 at the Academy School campus at 6 p.m.
- The Commons will cover some key items on the agenda in the weeks preceding the meeting.
- **Election:** Election of town officers, Representative Town Meeting members, and members of Windham Southeast School District will take place on Tuesday, March 7, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at American Legion Post 5, 32 Linden St. Absentee ballots are by request only this year.
- **More information:** brattleboro.org.

Brookline

- **Annual Town Meeting March 6:** Town Meeting will be held in the multipurpose room at the former Brookline School building (624 Grassy Brook Rd.) on Monday, March 6, at 6 p.m.
- **Elections:** Voters will elect town officers on the meeting floor.
- **Financial:** Voters will consider the allocation of \$179,262 to the general fund and \$409,520 for the highway fund, for a total of \$588,782.
- **More information:** brooklinevt.com.

Dover

- **Annual Town Meeting** will be held Tuesday, March 7 at 10 a.m. at the Dover Town Hall, 189 Taft Brook Rd.
- **An informational pre-town meeting** (only in person) will take place on Wednesday, March 1 at Dover Town Hall, 189 Taft Brook Rd. Polls will open for Australian ballot voting at 10 a.m. and remain open until 7 p.m. Voters are asked to bring the 2023 Annual Town Report.
- **Elections:** Elections will take place, with no contests.
- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to authorize a general fund expenditure of \$2,819,284.41 and an expected \$1,619,759.03 from the highway fund for a total of \$4,439,043.44.
- **More information:** doververmont.com.

Dummerston

- **Town Meeting by ballot this year:** Annual town meeting will take place by Australian ballot — not in person — at the Town Office (1523 Middle Rd.) on Tuesday, March 7. Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. There will be an informational zoom session on Wednesday, March 1 at 7 p.m.
- **Elections:** Contested elections this year: a two-year term on the Selectboard (Mark Kracum and Alex Wilson), WSESSED director from Dummerston (Michelle Luetjen Green and Eva Nolan). Other WSESSED director positions are on the ballot. Candidate statements appear in the current issue of *Views of Dummerston* (viewsofdummerston.org).
- **Financial:** Voters will vote on a general fund of \$536,120 and a highway fund of \$661,693 for a total of \$1,197,813.
- **Fire truck:** Voters will consider authorizing up to \$500,000 for the purchase of a fire truck, with payment of debt service from the Capital Fund commencing in FY 2025-26.
- **Diversity, equity, inclusion:** Voters will be asked whether to adopt a non-binding declaration of inclusion as proposed on the ballot. Nearly 100 other Vermont communities have signed a similar "Declaration of Inclusion."
- **More information:** dummerston.org.

Grafton

- **Annual Town Meeting** will take place Tuesday, March 7 at Grafton Elementary School (58 School St.) at 10 a.m.
- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to approve a budget of \$233,894 for the Selectboard and \$607,080 for the maintenance of highways and bridges.
- **Public safety:** Voters will decide whether to raise \$43,450 for emergency and public safety services (ambulance service, fire department, rescue squad).
- **Humanitarian expenses:** Voters will consider \$9,181 for 14 local and regional organizations, plus separate appropriations for Grace Cottage Hospital, the Gathering Place, and SeVEDS.
- **More information:** graffontvt.org.

Guilford

- **Annual Town Meeting** will take place Tuesday, March 7 at Guilford Central School gymnasium (374 School Rd.) between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Polls will be open by Australian ballot. A pre-Town Meeting information session took place on Feb. 23. The video from BCTV can be streamed at bit.ly/704-guilford-info.
- Incumbent Verandah Porche and Jason Herron are competing for the three-year Selectboard term, while Tara Cheney and Jason Herron face off for the two-year position. While Jamie Dunham is listed on the ballot for the two-year seat, she withdrew from the race after the ballots were printed.



The view from the balcony at Union Hall in Newfane Village during the 2018 Annual Town Meeting.



Town Meeting Day is traditionally a time to work on one's knitting, as these voters in Dummerston are doing.

- **Financials:** Voters will consider operating expenses of \$659,201 for general fund expenditures and \$1,041,439 for highway fund expenditures for a total of \$1,700,640.
- **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will consider spending \$27,393 on human services organizations.
- **More information:** guilfordvt.gov.

Halifax

- **Annual Town Meeting** will be held Tuesday, March 7 starting at 10 a.m. at Halifax Elementary School (246 Branch Rd.).
- **Elections:** Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The only contested election this year is between incumbent Patricia Dow and Bob Teree for the three-year term as town treasurer.
- **Financial:** Voters will consider \$1,250,626 in Selectboard and highway expenditures.
- **School budget:** Voters will debate a school budget of \$2,084,485.
- **Humanitarian spending:** Town Meeting will be asked to consider \$15,890 in spending to organizations such as the Halifax Fire Company and the Women's Freedom Center.
- **More information:** halifaxvt.com.

Jamaica

- **Annual Town Meeting** will occur on March 7 when the meeting starts at 10 a.m. at the Jamaica Town Hall.
- **Elections:** Voters will elect town officers on the meeting floor.
- **1% local-option taxes:** In three articles, voters will consider separately whether to adopt the state's 1% local-option taxes for sales, meals and alcoholic beverages, and rooms. The additional tax is administered by the Department of Taxes and a portion returned to the towns.
- In Windham County, Brattleboro, Wilmington, Stratton, and Dover have adopted all three 1% local sales tax options.
- **Financial:** Voters will discuss the proposed General Fund of \$730,920 and a highway fund of \$1,126,910 for a total of \$1,857,830 between the highway and general funds.
- **More information:** jamaicavermont.org.

Londonderry

- **Annual Town Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, March 7, at the Town Hall, 139 Middletown Rd., South Londonderry, starting at 9:30 a.m.
- **Elections:** Polls will be open at the Town Hall from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- **Town Office renovations:** The town will consider, by Australian ballot, whether to issue a bond of up to \$1.3 million for the purpose of renovating the town office building.
- "Given the current state of the building, and evolving needs of Town administrative staff and various boards and committees, and the wish to improve accommodations for the use as Londonderry's Emergency Operations Center, the intent of this project is to address and improve the building," according to a project narrative from Brattleboro-based

- JA Saccoccio Architectural Workshop.
- The project calls for the first floor to be "selectively demolished and upgraded," and will include a new staircase to the basement and an elevator to meet accessibility requirements.
- The basement will be "extensively overhauled" to create offices, a meeting room, a bathroom, and a storage area.
- Repairs will also include exterior work, including a new paint job and repair of rotted trim, a ramp to the first floor, repair and refurbishment of historic windows, and new lighting. The project also calls for new electrical, data, heating, ventilation, and plumbing, as well as enhancements of building security.
- **Financial:** Voters will determine the necessary size of the general fund for the upcoming year. Town Meeting will also consider \$70,500 for fire and rescue organizations and the South Londonderry Library Association.
- **Humanitarian and nonprofit spending:** Voters will consider \$47,500 to support more than 20 local and regional organizations.
- **Minute taker:** An article seeks voter approval for \$3,500 to hire a part-timer to take minutes for the Selectboard and other municipal boards.
- **Fire truck:** Voters will determine whether to authorize the purchase of a new pumper fire truck at an estimated \$500,000, of which \$120,000 would be raised through taxes. Voters will be asked to authorize the Selectboard to finance \$280,000 for up to five years.
- **Williams Dam:** Voters will consider \$20,000 for engineering costs related to the Williams Dam. The dam, originally constructed in 1883, was inspected in 2015 by the state Dam Safety Program, which graded its condition as poor, and the fate of the structure is still under consideration.
- **Local option tax:** Voters will consider whether to add or alter a 1% local option tax on such items as sales, rooms, meals, and alcohol.
- **Shared recreation director:** Voters will consider joining four neighboring towns in pooling resources to employ a shared recreation director, with Londonderry paying up to \$95,386, Winhall \$25,000, Peru \$13,000, Weston \$7,500, and Landgrove \$3,900.
- **More information:** londonderryvt.org.

Marlboro

- **Town Meeting by ballot this year:** There will be no in-person Annual Town Meeting this year. Australian balloting takes place on Tuesday, March 7; ballots have already been mailed out to voters.
- Ballots for Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town School District Meeting can be returned through the mail, in the drop box outside the Town Office, or hand-delivered to the office (call ahead to make sure there's an attendant).
- Polls will also be open for in-person voting from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Marlboro Town House, 13 Town Hill Rd. ("Please bring your mailed ballot[s]," town officials implore.)
- **Elections:** Rachel Boyden and Celena Romo are facing off for the one-year term as school director.
- **Closing grades 7 and 8:** On the school district ballot, voters are asked to consider removing grades 7 and 8 from Marlboro School and

■ STORY CONTINUES

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tuitioning students to a public high school or an approved independent high school.

• **Financial:** Voters will consider a general fund of \$420,000, in addition to \$624,000 for the maintenance of town roads, for a total town budget of \$1,044,000.

Voters will also be asked to approve a school budget of \$3,920,171.

• **Future ballot measures:** Voters will be asked to consider whether the town should continue holding Annual Town Meeting via Australian ballot, one option permitted by a new state law enacted in January. • **More information:** marlborovt.us.

Newfane

• **Annual Town Meeting** takes place on March 7 at Williamsville Hall (Dover Rd.) in Williamsville, starting at 9 a.m.

• **Elections:** Australian ballot elections will take place at the Williamsville Hall from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters will decide between Jeffrey Chevalier, Katy Johnson-Aplin and Cristine White for the two vacant one-year positions on the Selectboard.

• **Financial:** Voters will authorize a proposed general fund expenditure of \$1,605,485.80.

• **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will consider approximately \$43,000 in appropriations for 28 local and regional organizations.

• **Nonprofit property tax exemption:** Voters will be asked to consider exempting the South Newfane Community Association from property taxes for the former South Newfane Baptist Church (380 Dover Rd., South Newfane).

• **More information:** newfanevt.com.

Putney

• **Annual Town Meeting** takes place on Tuesday, March 7 at the Putney Central School, 182 Westminster Rd., starting at 10 a.m.

• **Elections:** Polls are open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

• **Financial:** Voters will be asked to consider highway fund expenditures of \$1,653,419 and general fund expenditures of \$1,668,226 for a total of \$3,321,645.

• **Road equipment:** Town voters will also consider appropriating up to \$60,000 toward the purchase of a new highway truck and accessories.

• **Non-binding articles on Cooper Field, proposed recreation board:** Two non-binding articles appear on the ballot this year. One would see if voters are in favor of the town spending up to \$147,900 to buy Cooper Field from the Putney Community Center.

Voters would also weigh in on whether the Selectboard should form a town recreation board to be governed by a board of trustees of five to seven members.

• **More information:** putneyvt.org.

Rockingham

• **Annual Town Meeting begins March 6:** Town Meeting will take place this year in person for all articles for the expenditure of public funds.

The meeting takes place on Monday, March 6, at Town Hall Lower Theater (Bellows Falls Opera House, 7 Square), and it starts at 7 p.m. The meeting will be broadcast on Zoom, but voting is not permitted via remote access.

• **Elections:** Polls are open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, at the Masonic Temple (61 Westminster St.).

• **Rockingham Meeting House:** Voters will consider whether to raise and appropriate \$103,000 toward structural repairs of the historic Rockingham Meeting House. Grants have been allocated to the project on the condition that they be matched with municipal funding.

• **Financial:** Voters will be asked to approve \$6,314,959 combined general and highway fund for the upcoming year.

• **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will also consider \$93,978 in contributions to humanitarian and community organizations.

• **Future ballot measures:** Voters will also decide whether the town will adopt the Australian ballot format for future articles of public spending.

• **Policing for Rockingham:** Voters will consider spending \$6,000 to contract with the Windham County Sheriff's Office to provide patrols in rural areas of town. Story, A1.

• **More information:** rockinghamvt.org.

Stratton

• **Annual Town Meeting** on Tuesday, March 7 will begin at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall (9 West Jamaica Rd.).

• **Elections:** Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

• **Financial:** Voters will decide whether to raise and appropriate \$988,794 for the general fund and \$1.179 million to cover highway and road maintenance.

• **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will consider allocating \$41,883 to 37 local and regional organizations.

• **Property tax exemption:** Voters will consider a request to exempt the Stratton Mountain Volunteer Fire Company from municipal and education taxes on land and buildings at 5 Brazers Way.

• **School budget:** Voters will also consider the proposed school budget of \$1.383 million, which would result in a 6.16% increase in per-pupil spending over the current year.

• **Reorganizing school board:** Voters will decide whether to reduce the number of directors for the Stratton School District from five to three.

• **Appointed positions:** The town has open positions to be filled by members of the community. Call the Town Office at 802-896-6184 if you're interested in filling any of the positions. More information: townofstrattonvt.com.

Townshend

• **Annual Town Meeting** starts at 9 a.m. at Leland & Gray Union Middle School and High School's Dutton Gymnasium (2030 VT Route 30, next to Town Hall) on Tuesday, March 7.

• **Elections:** There are town offices to be filled, but ballots will only be issued in the case of contested races.

• **Financial:** Voters will be asked to consider the amounts of \$581,199 for general expenditures and liabilities and \$723,214 for the maintenance of town roads. The combined ask for voters is \$1,304,413.

• **Back Windham Road:** Voters will consider raising and appropriating \$50,000 to be held in a reserve account for the repair of the stone arch bridge on Back Windham Road contingent upon successful award of grant funds.

As described in a news release from 2022 from the Townshend Historical Society, the bridge "carries Back Windham Road across Tannery Brook at the east edge of West Townshend village. Local farmer and self-taught stone mason James Otis Follett constructed the bridge in 1910. With its span of 37 feet, it holds the distinction of being the longest dry stone arch bridge built by Follett in Townshend and the last bridge that he built before his death in 1911."

"While its arch remains structurally sound and it continues to carry local traffic, erosion over the years caused by runoff, freezing and thawing, and, more recently, use by heavy vehicles, has caused serious structural damage to its foundation and walls.

"The restoration process will be carried out by a team of certified dry stone masons using the same techniques as the original builder. The project's goals are to restore one of the town's historic treasures and to give the bridge another hundred years of useful life. The total cost of the project, slated to begin in spring of 2024, is estimated at \$800,000."

The Townshend Historical Society has been awarded a \$221,000 Save America's Treasures grant from the national Historic Preservation Fund. The grant, administered by the National Park Service, requires a matching sum raised by the Historical Society and the town.

• **Municipal forest:** Voters will consider whether to authorize the Selectboard to acquire land "by gift or purchase for municipal forest to promote reforestation water conservation and good forestry practices."

Putney parliamentarian offers new 'grassroots guide' to Town Meeting

PUTNEY—"Emerging from the pandemic hiatus, contemporary relevance questioned, in-person Vermont Town Meeting is at risk, as some people advocate abolishing it," says Howard Fairman, who has written and created a concise and comprehensive downloadable guide to the venerable Vermont institution.

Fairman, who has served as parliamentarian at Putney's Town Meeting, says he is making the four-page "Grassroots Vermonter's Guide to Vermont Town Meeting" available "in the spirit of 'knowing what we've got before it's gone.'"

Despite Town Meeting's long tradition and its role in making New England town government the purest form of democracy, Fairman acknowledges that "learning, and remembering once or twice a year, how constitution, statutes, rules of order, moderator

and voters work together during a town meeting can be challenging."

He notes that Town Meeting is guided by the Vermont Constitution, state law, and Robert's Rules of Order, "implemented by an elected moderator [and] possibly advised by an appointed parliamentarian."

"Grassroots Vermonter's Guide to Vermont Town Meeting" advises voters about placing, discussing, amending, and voting on warning articles and other motions, as well as thornier parliamentary examples.

"I have quoted and cited each statute and rule of order so that you can know and share exactly what they say and where — beforehand and 'on the floor,' Fairman says.

For more information, and to download the guide, visit vtownmeetingguide.wordpress.com.

• **More information:** unofficialtownshendvt.net.

Vernon

• **Annual Town Meeting** this year takes place on Monday, March 6, at 6:30 p.m., at the Vernon Elementary School gymnasium. Free child care will be available in the school cafeteria.

• **Election:** Polls will be open on Tuesday, March 7, downstairs at the Town Office from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Voters will consider Ken Bloom, Brandon Bucossi and Susan Miller for a two-year term on the Selectboard. Community members will also vote to fill two seats for library trustees, one of which is an unexpired term.

Also on the ballot: consideration of a \$7.65 million school budget.

• **Financial:** The town proposes a general budget of \$2,214,819 through the fiscal year.

• **Annual Town Report:** Voters will be asked to consider a change in the method of distribution of the Annual Town Report and Auditor's Report by "postcard, mailed to all registered voters" at least 30 days prior to Town Meeting, "in lieu of mailing or otherwise distributing the Town Report and Auditor's Report," as authorized by state law.

• **More information:** vernonvt.org.

Wardsboro

• **Annual Town Meeting in May:** This year's Annual Town Meeting will take place on Saturday, May 13.

Westminster

• **Annual Town Meeting on March 4:** This year's Annual Town Meeting starts at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, at the Bellows Falls Union High School auditorium. Voters will reconvene at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7 if necessary.

• **Elections:** Polls at the Westminster Fire Station are open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7.

• **Financial:** Voters will consider a general fund of \$2,632,577 for town expenses through the year.

• **School budget:** Will the electorate approve a budget of \$5,149,731 for the upcoming school year? The proposed budget results in an increase of 14.4% per student spending.

• **School building improvements:** Voters will consider use of up to \$245,000 "to enhance indoor and outdoor learning environments, as well as community engagement," improvements that include outdoor learning and play areas for the pre-kindergarten-to-grade-six students at Westminster Central School and Westminster West School.

The article also lists "additional shelter, outdoor classroom spaces, tools for hands-on learning, supplies and accommodations for children with special needs, enhancing landscapes and garden areas for outdoor learning, providing musical instruments, arts and sports or recreational equipment for qualifying students, and providing for transportation and related costs for field trips and/or mentoring opportunities for students" within the region.

• **Catamount Library Network:** Voters will consider raising and appropriating \$7,000 for the Westminster West Library, for additional staff time and other expenses associated with joining the Catamount Library Network.

The nonprofit library network offers a shared catalog and integrated online library system and serves a consortium of participating Vermont libraries. It is built on Koha, free and open-source web-based library software.

• **More information:** westminstervt.org.

Whitingham

• **Annual Town Meeting** occurs at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 7 at the Twin Valley Middle/High School Auditorium (4299 Vt. Route 100) to act on town articles from the floor.

• **Elections:** Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Twin Valley Middle/High School. All financial articles for the Twin Valley Unified School District meeting — including a \$9,974,057 budget for the Twin Valley Unified Union School District for the next school year — appear on the ballot.

There are no contested elections for town offices.

• **Financial:** Voters will be asked to consider general fund operating expenses of \$740,771 for the upcoming year.

• **Picnic pavilion:** Voters will take up the question of renovations totaling \$46,000 for the pavilion at Town Hill Common.

• **More information:** whitinghamvt.org.

Wilmington

• **Annual Town Meeting** will take place at the Old School Community Center (OSEC), 1 School St., at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 7 for discussion of articles that don't require Australian ballot.

• **Elections:** Polls will open at the OSEC at 7 a.m. and run through 7 p.m. All financial articles for the Twin Valley Unified School District meeting — including a \$9,974,057 budget for the Twin Valley Unified Union School District for the next school year — appear on the ballot. There are no contested elections for town offices.

• **Financial:** Voters will decide whether to approve a general fund of \$2,626,218 and \$1,499,549 to cover the town road budget for a total of \$4,125,767.

• **Fate of town lister:** Voters will determine whether to keep the position of town lister or replace it with a professionally qualified assessor with the same duties and responsibilities.

• **More information:** wilmingtonvermont.us.

• **Future decisions by Australian ballot?:** Voters will consider two articles that will require all budget items and public questions in subsequent Town Meetings to be decided by Australian ballot rather than floor discussion and vote, as permitted by a new law signed this January.

Windham

• **Annual Town Meeting in May:** Windham has postponed its Annual Town Meeting until Saturday, May 20.

• **More information:** townofwindhamvt.com.

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Monday, June 26th – Friday, June 30th
Monday, July 10th – Friday, July 14th

Sign up for one, two, or all three weeks

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bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
Feb. 13-19
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are with guest Norma Hardy - Mon 8p, Tues 10a, Thurs 9a, Fri 12:05p, Sat 5p, Sun 7:30p	Meet the Candidates - Brattleboro Selectboard Candidate Forum 2/16/23: Mon 6p, Tues 7:15a & 12:30p, Thurs 10p
Harris Hill Ski Jump 2023 - Saturday: Tues 8p, Thurs 1:30p, Fri 2p, Sat 9a, Sun 4:30a	Guilford Pre-Town Mtg 2/23/23: Tues 6:30p, Wed 1p, Thurs 2:30p
Harris Hill Ski Jump 2023 - Sunday: Thurs 9:15p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 9p, Sun 12:30p	Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg 2/27/23: Wed 9p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 2:30p
The World Fusion Show - Ep 146 - Yulia Musayelyan: Mon 9a & 5:30p, Sat 12:30p, Sun 9:30a	Guilford Selectboard Mtg 2/27/23: Wed 4:30, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:30p, Sun 2:30p
Media Mentoring Project - A Photo is Worth a Thousand Words: Wed 7p (LIVE)	Meet the Candidates - Windham Southeast School District Board Candidate Forum 2/17/23: Tues 3:30p, Wed 8:30a, Thurs 12p, Sat 5p, Sun 8:30a
Thorn in My Side - THE GREAT OUTDOORS! - June 23rd, 2022: Mon 12:05p, Wed 9p, Thurs 4:30p, Fri 12:35p, Sun 6p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg 2/27/23: Thurs 7p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p, Sun 6a
Rock River Players Present - The Importance of Being Earnest: Mon 9:30a, Tues 3:15p, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 9:30a, Sat 6:30p, Sun 6p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg 2/28/23: Fri 5:30a & 5p, Sat 8p, Sun 8:30p
Landmark College Presents - Taylor Dunne & Eric Stewart - Resisting Nuclear Armament: Mon 1:30p, Wed 12:05p	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg 2/28/23: Fri 7:30p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Windham County's Got Talent 1/26/23: Fri 10a, Sat 2p	Dummerston Pre-Town Mtg Info Session 3/1/23: Wed 7p (LIVE), Sat 6a, Sun 6p
Vermontwide - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Newfane Planning Commission Mtg 2/9/23: Mon 7:45p, Tues 10a
WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg 2/15/23: Mon 10a, Tues 9p
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Brattleboro Selectboard - Public Hearing on Amendments to the Town Charter 2/3/23: Mon 11:35a & 9p, Tues 5:30a, Sat 12:0a
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service: Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Bd Mtg 2/8/23: Mon 1:15p, Sat 3a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Rescue Inc Presents - Rescue Inc Consortium Mtg 1/17/23: Mon 4p, Tues 11:15a
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Energy Finkell with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Wed 12p, Thu 10:30a & 6p, Sat 7p, Sun 11a
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at brattleborotv.org

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

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Public Hearing Notice

Notice is hereby given that the Brattleboro Development Review Board will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, 3.15.2023 at 7:00 PM in the Selectboard Meeting Room, Municipal Center, 230 Main St., Brattleboro, VT; the meeting will also be held on Zoom. Meeting ID: 881 4045 1917 Passcode: 190450. 2023-7 JMD Hospitality, LLC; SC District; request for Subdivision, Waiver of Dimensional Standards and Local Act 250 approval to create a new lot containing the barn residences at 1382 Putney Rd; TMP 80003.000; 2023-11 Sheena Rashed; RN District; request for Home Business Approval to operate a single-chair saton in a renovated existing outbuilding at 525 Guilford St; TMP 110228.130; 2023-13 Kurt Daims; RN District; appeal of a zoning violation, establishing 3 RVs as living space without a permit at 16 Washington St; TMP 325378.000.

Pursuant to 24 VSA §§ 4464(a)(1)(C) and 4471(a), participation in this local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal. NOTE: Meetings are open to the public. For specific accommodations please call the Planning Services Department at 802-251-8154. Application materials are available at <https://tinyurl.com/DRB-Applications>.

Additional materials may be submitted up to the time of the meeting and will be uploaded to the above address.

TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT
Amendment to the Code of Ordinances
February 21, 2023

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Selectboard of the Town of Brattleboro on February 21, 2023 at a duly warned meeting adopted the following AMENDMENTS to Chapter 14, Article V, Section 14.20-14.39 of the Brattleboro Code of Ordinances, viz:

Chapter 14 (Streets and Sidewalks), Article V (Regulation of Public Trees), Sections 14.20-14.39

A copy of this Amendment may be obtained from the Brattleboro Town Manager's Office, John R. Potter, Brattleboro Town Manager, 230 Main Street, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301, telephone number 251-8151 is a person with knowledge of this Amendment and who is available to answer questions in connection therewith.

This amendment shall be posted in five conspicuous places within the Town and published in the Brattleboro Reformer on the 28th day of February, 2023, and shall become effective on the 25th day of April, 2021, unless a petition for a vote to disapprove the ordinance at a special or regular town meeting is signed by not less than five (5%) percent of the qualified voters of the Town of Brattleboro and filed with the Town Clerk within 44 days of the date of adoption stated above.

BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD Ian Goodnow, Chair
Daniel Quipp, Vice-Chair Jessica Gelter, Clerk
Elizabeth McLoughlin
Tim Wessel

■ Perrin firing upheld

FROM SECTION FRONT

process, and next steps in writing, she will endeavor to offer a report on March 14.

Justice Law Collaborative, LLC (JLC), of North Easton, Massachusetts, which represents several survivors, has put the school district on notice of potential legal action regarding several former teachers alleged to be abusers.

JLC associate attorney Martha Carol represented Doe at the hearing. The organization has received multiple reports of abuse from both male and female students dating from the 1970s on.

The Commons has learned that during the hearing, another witness also came forward, testifying that Perrin did not report another case of sexual assault just a couple of years ago and is alleged to have obstructed someone else reporting the assault by pressuring that person.

Perrin, who lives in New Hampshire, worked at BUHS since 1995. Prior to becoming principal, he served four years as assistant principal. He taught chemistry and biology at the school prior to becoming an administrator.

He also taught high school science for several years in Camden, New York, before moving to the Brattleboro area. He has retained his administrator's and teacher's licenses from the Vermont Agency of Education. Both expire in 2024.

After being fired, Perrin exercised his right to an appeal, and the WSESU board heard the hearing and heard testimony over two weeks from about a dozen witnesses, ending Monday, Jan. 30.

The hearing, according to statute, was held in executive session. Attorney Sean Toohey of Lynn, Lynn, Blackman & Manitsky, P.C., the district's legal team, moderated the proceedings.

From a survivor, appreciation — and frustration

Jane Doe spoke again with *The Commons* after the board upheld its decision Tuesday, expressing thanks as well as frustration with the process.

While she noted that

perpetrators past and present should be held primarily accountable for the culture of abuse throughout the school district, she also believes “the time has come for a transparent look at the past and how administrators and the board can help create a safe environment moving forward.”

“I appreciate the school board's action to uphold their decision to fire former Principal Perrin after reviewing his misconduct,” Doe said. “I am relieved that the board has reaffirmed that he engaged in conduct that is not appropriate for a school leader or an individual working with minors.”

“The process of coming forward to speak about the harassment I experienced at BUHS has been incredibly stressful and opaque. Due to the lack of transparency, the community, myself, and other survivors have been left in the dark as WSESU leadership continues to cobble together a plan behind closed doors.”

“This secrecy and lack of transparency does nothing but protect abusers, confuse survivors, and allow perpetrators — those we know about and those still in the shadows — to act with impunity.”

“It has been nearly a year since I initially reported former Principal Perrin for his inappropriate and horrific behavior. It took over seven months from my report to terminate him while whispers flew around the community and anxieties grew.”

“My opportunity to tell my own story to the board only came when former Principal Perrin attempted to appeal his firing, leading to weeks of private hearings marked by hours of painful witness testimony and cross-examination that the community deserves to know about. We are still waiting for the district's [sexual abuse] investigation report, and every day that passes is another day that my trust in the body meant to keep our kids safe is eroded.”

“The school board's inaction is causing harm to survivors. In order to address the harm that has already been done, to make sure it does not happen again, and to minimize any further

harm by the school system's response, sharing information with the people who are directly impacted and the community-at-large is vital. In any way I can, I will continue to advocate for the safety of our community and for those survivors who have yet to come forward.”

“And to all the Jane and John Does out there: thank you,” Doe said. “Your bravery inspires me every day and has kept me hanging on through the darkest days of this investigation. I know we cannot change our past but together, I know we will change our future.”

School must 'build safe opportunities,' lawyer says

Carol, speaking on behalf of Justice Law Collaborative, spoke after she attended the Feb. 28 board meeting.

“We are encouraged that the WSESU school board upheld their decision to terminate Mr. Perrin for his inappropriate conduct toward students,” she said.

“BUHS and the school district must build safe opportunities for survivors and witnesses to report concerns that maximize their choice and safety. Survivors need the opportunity to receive resources for healing and care.”

She said the board “must prioritize accountability and safety over avoiding liability.”

“Over a year and a half after the district promised investigation into the history of sexual harassment and abuse of school children, the board has failed to release the investigative report or take action to address survivors' harm,” Carol continued.

“Timely doing so and providing survivors necessary reparations for the harms they have suffered is vital to give them the necessary space to heal and end these systemic problems,” she said.

It is not known whether Perrin will appeal the local board's decision to Superior Court, as neither he nor his lawyer, Theodore C. Kramer, responded to queries from *The Commons* by press time.



Amber Arnold, co-director of the SUSU community farm, tends some veggies growing for the BIPOC CSA.

Two county initiatives receive state agriculture grant money

SUSU community Farm receives \$50,000; Retreat Farm's Community Food Project gets \$19,700

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets has announced grant awards from a new competitive round of Local Food Purchase Assistance funding, and two Windham County organizations are among the recipients of the total \$200,000 awarded.

SUSU community Farm in Newfane will receive \$50,000 to launch an expanded, free CSA (community supported agriculture) program to provide “locally grown, culturally-relevant” vegetables for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) families and new refugees.

Retreat Farm's Community Food Project in Brattleboro has been awarded \$19,700 to provide 25 free CSA shares to families in need through its farm share and other food distribution efforts.

“We are really excited to receive this support,” says founder

and Collaborative Director Amber Arnold. “SUSU is deeply grateful to receive this impactful funding alongside some of our incredible friends and comrades like Conscious Homestead [a BIPOC-centered urban homestead in Winooski, which received \$37,319].”

Initiatives funded with the new round of grant money include “diverse projects to purchase from socially disadvantaged Vermont farmers and producers and distribute to underserved community members across the state.”

Projects will focus on “increasing equity and cultivating new relationships between local growers and entities providing food to their neighbors” and will start this spring and run for one year.

Arnold explains that SUSU's Box of Resilience Program provides BIPOC, new refugee, and migrant farmworker families “20 weeks of free, culturally-relevant, and locally grown fruits,

vegetables, herbs, medicinals, flowers, and other beautifully curated items from local small businesses in our community.”

After three seasons building the program, 2023 will be the first full year on the dedicated SUSU community Farm in Newfane. Arnold credits “significant grassroots support from our community [that] got us to where we are today and continues to make our work possible.”

She says the grant will contribute to SUSU's ability to set up operations to grow more free food on the farm as well as to offer new items while expanding the program to include Food as Medicine classes for participants.

“We are excited to work with our community members and volunteers to offer nourishing, culturally-affirming foods, along with classes, workshops, and opportunities that support our people in reconnecting with their ability to thrive through collective determination,” she says.

“There are so many incredible BIPOC organizations and people doing deeply needed work in Vermont. We are grateful to be one amongst many, part of a larger and interconnected web.”

“We hope this funding inspires more people in our community with access to abundant resources and generational wealth to join us in making Vermont a thriving, safe, and beautiful place for people of the global majority to grow healthy nourished families for now and the next seven generations beyond.”

Retreat Farm's Community Food Project Director Lu Neuse is also grateful for the state support.

“We are very honored and excited to be recipients of the Local Food Purchase Assistance Award,” she says. “We are excited to be working with Edible Brattleboro and the ECDC Multicultural Community Center to make these shares available to refugee families in Brattleboro.”

“This money will support several important collaborative relationships aimed at strengthening farm viability, food access, and food sovereignty in our community,” Neuse says.

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NECCA Youth Troupe will perform in this weekend Circus Spectacular.



Jan Damm, an international circus performer and clown who makes his home in Brattleboro, will be the Circus Spectacular's guest ringmaster.

NECCA's Circus Spectacular returns to the Latchis

Annual performance raises funds to make the circus school's classes, camps, and school programs affordable to area youth

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—You don't have to leave home to join the circus because it's right here.

The New England Center for Circus Arts 13th annual Circus Spectacular returns to the Latchis Theatre on Saturday, March 4 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 5 at 1 p.m.

This annual flagship event offers world-class entertainment for the entire family, with high-flying aerialists, acrobats, and jugglers—all to raise money to make the nonprofit circus school's offerings available to those who otherwise could not afford it.

"The NECCA Circus Spectacular is one of our favorites," said Jon Potter, executive

director of the Latchis. "It's such an exciting event, and it's something that folks of all ages enjoy."

Jan Damm, a circus performer and clown who lives in Brattleboro and tours the U.S. and internationally, will be the guest ringmaster this year.

When reached by phone, Damm called NECCA "a gem of an institution for both Southern Vermont and the U.S. circus scene at large. We are all so lucky to have this resource for arts and education right here in Brattleboro."

At this year's Spectacular, "I'll be hosting the show in the guise of my illustrious German alter-ego, variety sensation 'Hans Leibedich from Dusseldorf, Deutschland,'" said Damm, who will also appear as a main

■ SEE LADIES, B3



Serenity Smith Forchion, NECCA co-founder and producing director, will perform in the Circus Spectacular.



Cherish the Ladies

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day (a bit early) with Cherish the Ladies at the Latchis

BRATTLEBORO—Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Cherish the Ladies on Friday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the Latchis Theatre, 50 Main Street.

For more than 35 years, Cherish the Ladies, an American Irish music ensemble, has toured worldwide with their blend of traditional music, vocals, and step dancing. To quote *The Boston Globe*: "It is simply impossible to imagine an audience that wouldn't enjoy what they do."

This Grammy-nominated Irish-American super group formed in New York City in 1985 to celebrate the rise of women in what had been a male-dominated Irish music scene. Since

their inception, they have toured from the White House to the Olympics, recorded 18 critically acclaimed albums, and appeared in an Emmy award-winning PBS television program featuring 26 performers recorded live at Bucknell University.

Under the leadership of Joanie Madden, the 2021 National Heritage Fellowship Award winner and All-Ireland flute and whistle champion, "these extremely gifted women create an incredible moving experience brimming with sheer talent and exuberant entertainment," says their website.

Their group includes All-Ireland champions Mirella Murray (accordion) and Nollaig

Casey (fiddle) along with the nimble finger-work of Mary Coogan (guitar), the vocals of County Clare songstress Kate Purcell (lead vocals, guitar) and County Galway native, Catherine McHugh on piano. World champion Irish step-dancers will add their footwork to the performances.

The New York Times calls their music "passionate, tender, and rambunctious," and *The Washington Post* praises their "astounding array of virtuosity." They won recognition as the BBC's Best Musical Group of the Year and were named Top North American Celtic Group at the Irish Music Awards.

■ SEE LADIES, B4

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY SATURDAY SATURDAY CONT. SUNDAY CONT. MONDAY WEDNESDAY

2

Music

PUTNEY Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present singer/songwriter Karan Casey: Singing songs charged with a sense of social responsibility in a career spanning over 25 years, Casey was among the vanguard of the Irish music revival's "third wave" of the early '90s and founding member of Irish American band "Solras" before launching her solo career in 1999. Casey is accompanied by fiddler Sheila Falls and guitarist Matt Heaton.

- 7 p.m. Beer, wine, cocktail cash bar.
- \$22 in advance, \$25 at door.
- Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Tickets: 802-387-0102, nextstagearts.org.

Well-being

GUILFORD Beginning Tai Chi Classes for Fall Prevention (New offering from Guilford Cares): For total beginners or those who wish to brush up on previous experience. Tai chi is an exercise system combining graceful, disciplined movements with an invigorating sense of the body/surrounding space. Movements are slow but contain great power. We try to coordinate hand and foot movements, breathing naturally, moving with slow continuous flow to improve strength and balance. Instructor Leah Gessner is certified by Tai Chi Vermont in this Fall Prevention practice.

- 9:30 a.m. on Thursdays.
- No charge (donations welcome).
- Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: No registration required. More information: guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com, 802-579-1350.

Community building

BRATTLEBORO The Stone Church: "GRRRLS TO THE FRONT" - Month-long Celebration/Call to Action in honor of Women's History Month: Funk Night w/ Elise Testone. "The Stone Church is turning the spotlight on women (inclusive of cis and trans women and nonbinary people affected by gender oppression). We've booked almost entirely women-fronted bands and are fundraising throughout March to benefit two presenting partners - Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and The Women's Freedom Center. For every dollar you donate when purchasing a ticket, The Stone Church matches it! (up to \$1,000)."

- 3/3: *Weakened Friends*, 3/4: *Ida Mae Specker w/ Heavy Nettles* and w/s/g *Mamas Marmalade*, 3/5: *Lissa Schneckenberger*, 3/10: *Kat Wright & Zara Bode*, 3/11: *Big Takeover & Lush Honey*, 3/17: *Ruby the Hatchet*, 3/19: *Dutch Experts EP Release w/ Mystic Orange Peel*, 3/24: *Gaslight Tinkers, Chocolat & The Worm-dogs*, 3/30: *Robber Robber*.
- Free (donations welcome).
- The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.

Multimedia

PUTNEY Art Exhibit about Social Justice: "In the Course of Human Events": Artists: Lani Asuncion, Nima Nikakhlagh, Vick Quezada, William Ransom. Curated by Assoc. Prof. of Arts Samuel Rowlett. "Exhibition title, taken from 1st line of the Declaration of Independence, offers a reminder of deeply human complexities, tragedies, hypocrisies inherent in ongoing formation of our 'more perfect union'. Visitors will see themes related to human rights, socio-political critique/protest, experiences of artists/people where culture and society intersect."

- 10 a.m.-6 p.m. daily in the Gallery. More info about artists: <https://laniasuncion.com/about>, www.nimaniakhlagh.com, vickquezada.com/about.html, www.williamransom.art.
- Through Thursday, March 23.
- Free.
- Landmark College Fine Arts Center, 1 River Rd. So. Information: landmark.edu.

FRIDAY

3

Visual arts and shows

BRATTLEBORO "Bloom": Art Show Opening and Reception: Exhibit of 17 bright, bold, watercolor flowers by local group Art Among Friends. These 6 artists - Connie Evans, Alice Freeman, Kathy Greve, Laurie Klenkel, Louise Zak and Lynn Zimmerman - gathered online during the pandemic to create, support, encourage one another on their artistic journeys. They continue to meet twice weekly to practice techniques, share ideas, and offer constructive advice.

- 3/3: 4 p.m. Opening Reception in Main Reading Room. Library is open 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Wed.; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thurs., Fri.; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. (Story: 2/22/23 The Commons, page B3).
- Through Thursday, April 27.
- Free.
- Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

4

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO NECCA's Circus Spectacular Star-Studded Fundraiser (In-Person/Livestream): Renowned high flying aerialists, acrobats, jugglers include ringmaster Jan Damm, a rising national star with the rebooted Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus. Troy Wunderle, Bellows Falls native/Circus Smirkus director for 26 years, joins the cast for a zany act. Handbalancer and contortionist Fleeky Flanko shares what he learned from Chinese acrobatic masters, and NECCA grad/cruise ship entertainer Joel Herzfeld performs an LED Cyr Wheel act!

- 3/4: 7:30-9 p.m. 3/5: 1-2:30 p.m. (3/5 in-person only). Ticket sales benefit financial aid student fund/circus programming for all ages.
- Through Sunday, March 5.
- \$15 to \$50.
- Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. Information: Tickets: CircusSchool.org. More information: 802-254-9780.

Music

BRATTLEBORO Rachel Bell & Andrew VanNorstrand - Original and traditional folk / roots music from VT: Andrew and Rachel have been performing together in different configurations for nearly twenty years. Their repertoire has Celtic and French influences as well as dance music from New England and Quebec. They dig in on tunes with energetic drive but they also embrace beautiful melodies that have lots of space and sweetness/build rich instrumental arrangements around songs and pulling diverse repertoire into coherent set lists.

- 7 p.m. in the Community Room in the Farm Store. Masking required, vaccinations encouraged. No smoking, no dogs. Carpool if possible - parking is limited. Hear their music: <https://tinyurl.com/35k7tnd>, <https://tinyurl.com/3k6t7e54>, <https://tinyurl.com/2vsydhun>.
- \$10 to \$20 sliding scale.
- Rebob Farm, 1320 Sunset Lake Rd. Information: RSVP@rebobfarm@gmail.com.

Farmers' markets

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Winter Farmer's Market: Weekly 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: farmersmarket@posttoilsolutions.org, 802-275-2835.

The written word

Brattleboro Poetry Discussion Group (Online): This month we discuss A. E. Stallings. No experience necessary; copies of the poems provided. Led by Barbara Morrison.

- 12 noon - 2 p.m.
- Free.
- Zoom. Information: Register: info@timetowrite.us.

"Writing to Prompts" (Online): "In this workshop, appropriate for beginning and experienced writers, we'll share what we've written in response to the prompts provided." Led by Barbara Morrison.

- 4 - 5 p.m.
- \$10 suggested donation.
- Zoom. Information: Register: info@timetowrite.us.

Kids and families

BRATTLEBORO 2023 Vermont Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Ceremony (In-Person/Zoom): Brattleboro Museum & Art Center serves as Vermont affiliate for the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a prestigious national program that offers exhibition opportunities and scholarships to young artists and writers. Exhibit culminates with an awards ceremony today featuring keynote speaker Will Kasso Condry.

- 12 noon (doors open 10 a.m.).
- Free and open to the public.
- Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/mrtdsjvz> / Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/brattmuseum> 802-257-0124; brattleboromuseum.org.

Well-being

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

- 11-11:30 a.m.: *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

WEST TOWNSEND Winter Tree Identification Walk: Join Michael Longo, Sally Newton and other folks for a walk in the woods. Share your knowledge, and/or become familiar with the local tree species. Learn how to tell them apart when they have no leaves. We're tentatively planning to walk near the old air strip on Ball Mountain in Jamaica.

- 2 p.m. Meet at West Townshend Country Store to carpool or caravan to location. If weather is bad on Sat., we'll go Sun. 3/5 instead, same time. Depending on the weather, snow shoes or micro spikes might be a good idea. This event is part of West River Community Project - a nonprofit community center promoting local agricultural, economic, social activities. Through participation/contribution, we seek to improve lives and strengthen our community as a whole.
- Free.

► West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: Call Sally if you have questions: 802-884-7141.

BRATTLEBORO Make Gift Bags for Women's Freedom Center: Give the gift of self-care to someone in crisis while earning shareholder hours at BFC! Brattleboro Food Co-op's Team Work Opportunity volunteers will create gift bags full of toiletries for the Women's Freedom Center. They provide shelter and many other services to folks in Windham and Southern Windsor Counties who are moving forward after experiencing domestic violence.

- 3-4 p.m. Register by 3/3.
- Free.
- Brattleboro Food Co-op Community Room, 7 Canal St. Information: 802-246-2821; shareholders@brattleborofoodcoop.coop.

BRATTLEBORO Ethnographic Interview Workshop: Exploring Newcomer Experiences from Past to Present: Learn about the "Finding Vermont" Research Project. In this workshop, you will learn about ethnography and ethnographic interviewing - a qualitative research approach that values lived experience. The Vermont Folklife Center is facilitating a day-long training to teach ethnographic interview techniques and best practices. This initial training hopes to encourage applicants for the "Finding Vermont" research project fellows. Lunch included for those registered for the workshop

- 10 a.m.-3 p.m. "Are you curious/want to learn more about the experiences of immigration and resettlement, past/present in Brattleboro or greater Windham county? Are you a newcomer from outside the US wanting to share your perspective/experiences? 'Finding Vermont' is a community-driven, collaborative research project focused on understanding immigrant and newcomer experiences in Brattleboro/Windham County. Trained community members can become research fellows, design a project that honors the theme of 'Finding Vermont,' and conduct ethnographic research. Stipends available for both research fellows and selected project interviewees. Hosted by VT Folklife Center and Brattleboro Development Credit Corp."
- Free.
- One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Alex Beck: abeck@brattleborodevelopment.com, 802-257-7731 ext. 214 for more info or to get involved.

Community meals

GUILFORD Guilford Sugar on Snow Supper: Meal features ham and the following homemade items: baked beans, deviled eggs, mashed potatoes, coleslaw, rolls, donuts, and Guilford maple sugar on Guilford snow. Pickles accompany the snow. This event returns after a two-year hiatus during which the Community Center, with which the Grange is a partner, has undergone a full renovation.

- Three seatings: 5, 6, 7 p.m. At each seating, a half-gallon of Guilford maple syrup will be raffled. This longtime annual fundraiser helps support Grange activities: this supper, brunches, community Thanksgiving dinner, pre-town meeting, community Guilford Center Stage productions. Grange organization also provides Christmas stockings for seniors and a college scholarship.
- Tickets for Supper: \$15 adults; \$5 children ages 5-12, \$2 for kids age 4 and under.
- Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Reservations: Email Thayer, thayerotomlinson@hotmail.com (you'll get confirmation) or text 202-247-5251, call: 802-257-5359. Waiting list kept - those with reservations who can't make it should phone their cancellation. Usually unreserved seats are left for 7 pm for those showing w/o a reservation.

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 own photos taken at a nearby contemporary amusement park originally known as 'Gallup's Cove' circa 1840 located in Agawam, MA.

- 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.

Visual arts and shows

BRATTLEBORO Vermont Center for Photography announces Artist Talk: April M. Frazier in conjunction with her Solo Exhibition: "Frame of Reference" is the pictorial representation of familial influences and experiences which shaped Frazier's life. Using images/genealogical research, this exhibit serves to present an alternate narrative of the African American experience in Texas (where Frazier is from) and beyond. Images of accomplishment, celebration, love are shown from as early as 1890 to present day including selected portraits from her family collection.

- 6 p.m.
- Free and open to the public.
- Vermont Center for Photography, 10 Green St., (right side of the 22 High St. building). Information: 802-251-6051; vphoto.org.

Ideas and education

BRATTLEBORO Vermont Folklife Center and the Southern VT Working Communities: Learn about Ethnography and Ethnographic Interviewing: This qualitative research approach values lived experience. Professionals from the VT Folklife Center facilitate this training which teaches ethnographic interview techniques and best practices. This initial training hopes to encourage applicants to become involved in the "Finding Vermont" Research Project: Learn about experiences of immigration (past and present) in Brattleboro and greater Windham County. Lunch included for workshop registrants.

► 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

- Stipends available for research fellows and selected project interviewees.
- One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: Alex Beck: abeck@brattleborodevelopment.com, 802-257-7731 ext. 214.

BRATTLEBORO Windham County Genealogy Interest Group: Finding Your Ancestors in Immigration Records (In-Person/Zoom): Jerry Carbone and Wayne Blanchard explore how to find ancestors in immigration records using ship manifests, border crossings, naturalization records, census records that asked citizenship questions. Except for those of Native American heritage, everyone in the U.S. had ancestors who arrived from other places. By understanding how to access immigration records, attendees can uncover stories of their forebears and learn more about their family history.

- 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Free.
- Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. More information: windhamcounty@gmail.com Register: bit.ly/WCGIMARA. Zoom link will be sent shortly before the event.

SUNDAY

5

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO Audition for Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night": Disguises, love triangles, and mischief make this one of Shakespeare's greatest comedies. Offered through the collaboration of The Vermont Theatre Company and Retreat Farm.

- Auditions: 3/5: 11 a.m., 3/6: 5 p.m. Enter through BAMS main entrance. Performances: 6/30-7/9, Fri.-Sun., at Retreat Farm.
- Through Monday, March 6.
- Brattleboro Area Middle School, 109 Sunny Acres Dr. Information: For further information or to set up alternate audition time, email director Michelle Page: vttheatreco@gmail.com.

Music

BRATTLEBORO Album Release Show: Lissa Schneckenburger: "Falling Forward" is a new collection of Schneckenburger's original fiddle tunes and two traditional New England songs.

- 3 p.m. In the spirit of Women's History Month, for all of March, The Stone Church has booked almost entirely women-fronted bands.
- \$15 at door and in advance.
- The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.
- **BRATTLEBORO Mamma's Marmalade: Ida Mae Specker:** Mamma's Marmalade draws from acoustic traditions spanning Appalachia and the Ozarks to craft a sound that manages to be at once familiar and definitively fresh. Honeyed harmonies buoy the classic high-lonesome croom of lead vocalist Lily Sexton on fiddle, sailing above a whirling reel of steel string sonics and pop melody. Mitch Bordage (mandolin) and flatpicker Sean Davis Sexton (fiddle).
- 9 p.m. In the spirit of Women's History Month, for all of March, The Stone Church has booked almost entirely women-fronted bands.
- \$15 in advance, \$20 at door.
- The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.
- **BELLOWS FALLS Jesse Peters plus Seven Short Sets:** Jesse Peters will play a full set following micro-performances (12-minute-or-less) by Brian Dade, Carl Beverly, Charlie & Emma, Gillis Mills, Ian Galipeau, Josh Cummings, and Will Stahl.
- 3 p.m. Limited seating. Performances are recorded and filmed.
- \$5 suggested donation at door (no one will be turned away).
- Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge St. Information: 802-289-0148; stage33live.com.

Government

PUTNEY Osher Lecture Series: Part 1: Can We Trust the People When It Comes to Reproductive Rights? Part 1: The Supreme Court's role in reproductive freedom: The rulings in Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey may have delivered victories to the pro-choice movement but the decisions themselves galvanized the opposition. We'll consider the pros and cons of using the federal courts to enact progressive legislation and what 50 years of judicial rule did to our democratic muscles. Presented by Meg Mott.

- 2-4 p.m.
- Free.
- Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org.

Community building

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Community Television: Informing, Promoting, Empowering our Community (In-Person/Zoom): Join Janis Chaillou, longtime volunteer and field producer at BCTV, for an uplifting multimedia presentation of BCTV. Includes photos, video clips, and personal stories about being part of this amazing, dedicated public access center.

- 10 a.m.
- Free.
- All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church West Village Meeting House, 29 South St. Information: Visit.ascvt.org Sunday shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.

Dance

GUILFORD Brattleboro Dance - Contra Dancing: Series resumes its 1st Sunday series at a new time and location. Will Mentor will be calling, with music by Rachel Bell, Ethan Hazzard-Watkins, Guillaume Sparrow-Pepin.

- 6-9 p.m. Proof of vaccination, recent booster, and N95 mask required.
- Sliding scale: \$15 - \$20.

► Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-451-0405; broadbrookcommunitycenter.org.

MONDAY

6

Music

TURNERS FALLS Musica Franklin Community Concert: Staff and Student Performance in honor of Women's History Month: Family-friendly concert features music by Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Natalie Cole, Ruth Schontal, Camila Cabello. Event is sponsored in part by the Montague and Gill Local Cultural Councils.

- 5:45 - 6:45 p.m.
- Free and open to the public.
- Sheffield Elementary School, 43 Crocker Ave. Information: annierose@musicafranklin.org.

Community building

Meeting: VT Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel Federal Nuclear Waste Policy Committee (Online/Phone): Two legal experts (Jay Silberg, Partner at Pillsbury, Winthrop, Shaw, Pittman, LLP and Diane Curran, Partner at Harmon, Curran, Spielberg and Eisenberg, LLP) discuss distinct interpretations of current U.S. law as expressed primarily in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) of 1982 and its 1986 Amendments. Changes to NWPA have been proposed in the past several US Congresses and are expected to be reintroduced in the current Congress.

- 12 noon-2 p.m. Questions: 802-272-1714, Anthony.Leshinskie@vermont.gov.
- Free.
- Online. Join by phone: 802-552-8456 / 802-828-7228, Conference ID # 269355434# Join online: tinyurl.com/4n59r27w or tinyurl.com/4n59r27w.

TUESDAY

7

Instruction

BRATTLEBORO Women's History Month: "GRRRLS to the Front" - Women Belong in the Booth Production Workshops: "Spotlight on women (inclusive of cis and trans women and girls plus non-binary people affected by gender oppression)." For March, we've booked women-fronted bands and created a curriculum and workshop for women about the production side of live music. In the music industry, women have historically been grossly under-represented. We are passionate and committed to keeping a lens on inclusion and representation."

- 6-8 p.m. Four-week course on Tuesdays. No experience or registration required. Week 1: Fundamentals. What is sound, really? How do microphones and speakers work? And the most important skill, how do you correctly wrap a microphone cable? Week 2: Meet the mixing desk. Gain structure, EQ, stage monitors, feedback. Week 3: Hands-on, mix a band. Mic a drum set, vocals, electric and acoustic guitars. Week 4: Advanced topics i.e. recording, mic types, iPad remote mixing, room acoustics, or anything else people want to touch on. Lead engineer Dan Richardson leads classes. Light refreshments. Sponsored by the Vermont Women's Fund - supporting structural change to advance gender equity and justice in VT.
- Through Tuesday, March 28.
- Free.
- The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; stonechurchvt.com.

Kids and families

BRATTLEBORO Sing & Dance with Robin: Enriching musical experience for toddlers and preschoolers (ages 5 and under). Designed to support healthy cognitive, physical, and social development, children will sing, clap, stomp, dance, and play along with the curriculum of traditional and modern folk songs. Parents encouraged to sing and participate with their child.

- 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays in the Community Room.
- Through Tuesday, April 25.
- Free.
- Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.
- **BRATTLEBORO Read to a Dog - "Paws to Read":** Read out loud to Kelso the Dog (and his human, Everett) to celebrate. Kelso is specially trained to read with kids and loves to be petted and cuddled. Give him a treat when you're done and you'll have a buddy for life. All ages welcome.
- 3:30-5 p.m. Come to the Children's Room for a date with Kelso - dates experienced on a first come first serve basis. Bring your own books or come early to pick some of ours!
- 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.
- 6-9 p.m. Proof of vaccination, recent booster, and N95 mask required.
- Sliding scale: \$15 - \$20.

8

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Medicaid & Health Resource Drop-in Hours: All are welcome to stop in to find out whether they will be affected by the upcoming Medicaid cut-backs, what their rights are in this process, and how to be sure that they aren't 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: For more information, email windham@workerscenter.org.
- **BRATTLEBORO Healthcare Resource Info Hours:** Members of VT Worker's Center will provide information about the Medicaid re-determinations that will be starting on 4/1. Members of the public are invited to drop in to find out about the re-determinations, how they're impacted, and what you can do if you are cut off. There will also be resources answering other questions about healthcare - not only Medicaid - and the opportunity to participate in a healthcare survey.
- 2-4 p.m. Additional days (same time): March 8, March 22, April 5, April 19.
- Free.
- Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Community building

BRATTLEBORO Parenting 4 Justice - Monthly Book Group: Dive deep into the topics of Social Justice, Parenting for Social Justice, Parenting for Racial Justice, Parenting for Economic Justice, Parenting for Disability Justice, Parenting for Gender Justice, and Parenting for Collective Liberation. Facilitated by Abby Mnookin. Snacks provided; we also hope to offer childcare.

- 6-8 p.m. monthly, 2nd Wednesday. To sign up/have questions, email Abby at asmnookin@gmail.com. Some copies of "Parenting 4 Social Justice" by Abby Mnookin are available for loan from the library, can be purchased at Everyone's Books, or online. Hosted by Brooks Memorial Library and Parenting for Social Justice.
- Free.
- Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.

Ideas and education

"A Photo is Worth a Thousand Words" - Sponsored by Vermont Independent Media's Media Mentoring Project (via Zoom): Want to take engaging and/or newsworthy photos or video? Learn tips and tricks about the art of imagery and storytelling from photo journalism experts: Kris Radder, photographer and videographer for Brattleboro Reformer; Kelly Fletcher, documentary photographer; Ziagul Azimi, journalist/executive for Afghan Women News Agency (AWNA).

- 7 p.m. Workshop leaders coach participants in crafting images/video that tell a captivating story but also bring more likes on social media/YouTube and may help bring change. Subject matter includes: choosing a compelling topic, angles/framing, light, color, subject, composition, capturing images in volatile situations. This is the first of MMP's spring programs that will continue on Zoom/Facebook Live with assistance from BCTV. Joyce Marcel, writer of cover stories for Vermont Business Magazine, moderates.
- Free.
- Zoom. Information: Register: geoffburgess2@gmail.com.

Film and video

PUTNEY NXT Rockumentary Film Series: "Searching for Sugar Man" (2012): Documentary about a South African cultural phenomenon, written and directed by Malik Bendjelloul, details efforts in the late 1990s of two Cape Town fans, Stephen "Sugar" Segerman and Craig Bartholomew Strydom, to find out if the rumored death of American musician Sixto Rodriguez was true and, if not, to discover what had become of him. Rodriguez's music, which had never achieved success in the U.S., had become very popular in So. Africa, though little was known about him there.

- 7 p.m. The film won the 2013 BAFTA Award for Best Documentary at the 66th British Academy Film Awards in London. Two weeks later, it won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 85th Academy Awards in Hollywood.
- \$10 suggested donation.
- Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102; nextstagearts.org.

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

Visit commonsnews.org for more listings with more details

Happiness held is the seed; Happiness shared is the flower.

—JOHN HARRIGAN

Climate Book Series at 118 Elliot offers distinct perspectives on climate emergency

BRATTLEBORO—118 Elliot, Everyone's Books, and other local groups are collaborating on a new Climate Book Series, in which authors discuss three brand new and very different books using humor, economics, and literature to grapple with the reality of climate emergency.

The March to May series will be held Thursday evenings at 118 Elliot, at 118 Elliot Street. Doors open at 6 p.m. and authors will begin at 6:30 p.m. Books will be available for purchase/signing. Events are free but donations are appreciated and pre-registration at Eventbrite is advised.

Thursday, March 9, *I Want a Better Catastrophe: Navigating the Climate Crisis with Grief, Hope, and Gallotus Humor* (New Society Publishers, 2023) will be featured

with climate activist and prankster Andrew Boyd.

The founder of creative protest measures including the Climate Clock and Climate Ribbon, Boyd says humanity is on a "path of profound grief" and to cope with this "impossible new reality" people will need the wisdom, rituals, and stories that literature and spiritual teachers offer.

His book does just that, featuring eight leading climate thinkers — from collapse-psychologist Jamey Hecht to grassroots strategist adrienne maree brown, ecophilosopher Joanna Macy, and Indigenous botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer — asking them: "Is it really the end of the world? And if so, now what?"

The Eventbrite registration link for the in-person book talk

is (eventbrite.com/e/navigating-climate-change-with-grief-hope-humor-w-author-andrew-boyd-tickets-546487036437) bit.ly/704-boyd.

The series continues on Thursday, April 20, with economist and author Jon D. Erickson, who will speak about his newest book *The Progress Illusion: Reclaiming Our Future From the Fairytales of Economics* (Island Press, 2022)

"Given that the Arctic has mostly melted, it seems axiomatic that our planet's economic system is not working very well," writes Bill McKibben. "But Jon Erickson explains — in simple and powerful terms — just why that is, and just what would need to change if we were to actually build a world that worked much

better."

Erickson is the Blittersdorf Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy at the University of Vermont and on the faculty at the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, a Fellow of the Gund Institute for the Environment, author/editor of five other books, and an Emmy-award winning director and producer of documentary films. He lives in Ferrisburgh.

Epsilon Spires joins 118 Elliot and Everyone's Books in sponsoring this event.

"I wrote the *Progress Illusion* because I'm convinced that economics as currently taught and practiced will ensure a planetary path to ruin," Erickson said. "The mainstream of my field tells

a story centered on a very narrow caricature of humanity as greedy and independent. It's a story that assumes the Earth is limitless and at our disposal. It's a fairy tale detached from biophysical reality and lacking a moral compass."

On Thursday, May 11, Chuck Collins will speak about his debut novel *Altar to an Erupting Sun* (Green Writers Press, expected publication May 2023), a near-future story of people in the Brattleboro area facing climate disruption in the critical decade ahead.

Collins is the director of the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies where he co-edits *Inequality.org*. His most recent book, *The Wealth Hoarders: How Billionaires Pay Millions to Hide Trillions*, is about the wealth-hiding industry (Polity, 2021). His bestseller *Born on Third Base* (Chelsea Green, 2016), relating to wealth and inequality, introduced him as a leader who "walks the walk." He lives in Guilford.

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WEEKDAYS	4:15 PM
SAT. & SUN.	2 / 4:15 PM
NIGHTLY	6:50 PM
COCAINE BEAR	R
WEEKDAYS	4 PM
SAT. & SUN.	2 / 4 PM
NIGHTLY	7 PM
LIVING	PG-13
WEEKDAYS	4:10 PM
FRIDAY & SUNDAY	7:10 PM
MON. / TUE. / TH.	7:10 PM

Circus Spectacular

FROM SECTION FRONT

character in the new Ringling arena tour starting this fall, a modernized, animal-act-free revival of the venerable Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus, which shut down five years ago.

Local talent will perform

Many local circus artists will take the stage at this year's Spectacular, including Elizabeth Wohl, who lives in Brattleboro and, when not flying through the air, works as a health care attorney.

"My specialty is combining opera and aeriels," she said. "I trained as an opera singer in college and wanted to combine my singing experience with circus."

Separately, the skills are difficult enough. Doing both together? "They take different sets of muscles; sometimes they need the same muscles at the same time to do different things," Wohl said.

She will perform "Je Veux Vivre," from Charles Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at this year's Spectacular.

"When you are performing to a piece of music, the aeriels have to compliment the music," Wohl said. "The two questions are: Who is the character that you are embodying, and what is she trying to say? The music amplifies the story."

She hopes the audience will enjoy "the magic of live performance" which she calls "the interactive alchemy."

"For me, the goal of that exchange is always wonder, inspiration, and delight — and sometimes awe," Wohl said. "I truly believe it's magic."

Other local circus artists include Bellows Falls native and director for Circus Smirkus, Troy Wunderle, who will join the cast again this year for "a zany act."

Wunderle spent six years as director of clowning for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus and is the 2022 recipient of the American Circus Educators Association's Excellence in Circus Education award.

Hand balancer and contortionist Fleeky Flanco will share what he learned from Chinese acrobatic masters, and NECCA graduate and cruise ship entertainer Joel Herzfeld performs an LED Cyr wheel act.

The opening number, "Charivari," is named for an old circus term for a high-energy opening act. This year it will be performed by a dozen students in NECCA's youth troupe, ages 7 to 18. These students are from Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

"They focus on team building, and working together helps young people learn about life skills, like how to communicate, how to be kind to each other. A lot of work on consent and permissions and challenging yourself to do something that is scary," noted Producing Director and NECCA Co-founder Serenity Smith Forchion.

NECCA in the community

"We rely on funds raised by Circus Spectacular and the generosity of our donors to support and ensure equal access to circus arts," NECCA Executive Director Jenna Struble said. "Ticket sales, support from local businesses, and donors help us provide student financial aid and free performances to the community, as well as discounts and free programming for youth with winter sports and programming for the Boys & Girls Club."

Struble said that rising costs and increasing community make NECCA's financial aid offerings more urgent, "so that we can make good on our commitment to be inclusive of every body and ability as they utilize circus arts to

realize their potential."

"The proceeds from the Circus Spectacular enable us to bring circus to those who otherwise wouldn't have this opportunity," Katie Schmidt, NECCA outreach director, added.

The funds are "an integral part" of NECCA's capacity to offer scholarships to youth and teen students in the school's weekly session classes, its summer camps, and its outreach to schools.

In those programs, children and teens can participate in "accessible circus activities such as aerial fabric and trapeze, juggling, acrobatics, and more," she said.

Schmidt noted that the professional performers participating in the show are donating their talents. A number of businesses have also underwritten production of the event.

Last year, NECCA served nearly 3,000 students, awarded nearly \$53,000 in financial aid to students of all ages across numerous programs, and performed seven free community shows valued at \$36,000 in ticket sales, along with free tickets to groups in need, she noted.

When asked about the origin of the Spectacular, Forchion said that NECCA has become increasingly connected to the community.

"As the years progressed and NECCA has grown, many of the world class artists have moved to Brattleboro because they use NECCA as a training ground," she said, estimating that 30 to 40 people international circus stars now call Brattleboro home.

According to Forchion, NECCA enrolls students from 18 months to 70 years old. ("We embrace mature students and we feel they have a lot to offer artistically," she said.)

"The interaction between our local students and the visiting performers is really valuable,"



Fleeky Flanco, hand balancer and contortionist.

she added, calling that connection "community building at its best."

Forchion said she takes pleasure in "bringing inspiring and talented people to town, where they energize us all during a low time at the end of the winter."

"Laughter is good medicine," she observed.

The Circus Spectacular shows

take place on Saturday, March 4 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 5 at 1 p.m. at prices that range from \$15 to \$50 for both in-person seats and access to stream it from NECCA. BCTV will also livestream the March 4 show. For tickets and more information — including how you can attend for free by volunteering — visit circusschool.org or call 802-254-9780.



JEFF LEWIS COURTESY PHOTO

Circus pro Troy Wunderle of Bellows Falls will join the cast again this year for "a zany act."

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Fiddler Lissa Scheckenburger to perform March 5

BRATTLEBORO—In the spirit of Women’s History Month, Stone Church organizers say they are turning their spotlight on women (their definition of women is inclusive of cisgender and trans women, as well as nonbinary people affected by gender oppression), and they have booked almost entirely women-fronted bands for the month of March.

As part of this month of music by women, Stone Church is hosting an album release concert with Vermont-based fiddler and singer Lissa Scheckenburger on Sunday, March 5, at 3 p.m.

Over the last several decades, Scheckenburger has made music that showcased everything from traditional New England dance tunes to original songs inspired by her experience as a foster and adoptive parent. Her newest release, *Falling Forward*, blends her love of traditional music with her love of writing. This is her first fiddle-forward album in over a decade.

She will be performing throughout New England in support of the new release with pianist Rachel Aucoin and accordion player Emily Troll.

The first year of the pandemic was a deeply creative time for Scheckenburger. She said in a news release that when everything shut down (including her touring schedule) and there was so much struggle and tragedy worldwide along with so much difficulty at home, writing music became

an essential outlet.

“I had to write music to process my experience of living through such a difficult time,” Scheckenburger said. “It was my lifeline.” The result was what Scheckenburger jokingly calls “overflowing bucketfuls of music” and enough new material for several albums.

The first in the queue, *Falling Forward* is a collection of Scheckenburger’s original fiddle tunes and two traditional New England songs, scheduled for release on March 3.

“I have a modest home studio and do a lot of remote recording and engineering myself,” Scheckenburger said, “but after the isolation of living through a global pandemic, I knew that recording in person was the only way to bring this new music to life.”

Falling Forward was recorded in Springfield, Massachusetts, with some of the most influential musicians in traditional music today, including Aucoin, producer/fiddler Katie McNally, bass player Mali Obomsawin, cellist Natalie Haas, and accordion player Karen Tweed.

“These women are my heroes,” Scheckenburger gushes, “they are leaders in the acoustic music world, and it was such an honor to record with them.”

Tickets are \$15 and are available at StoneChurchVT.com. For more information about Scheckenburger and her music, visit lissafiddle.com.



April M. Frazier

COURTESY PHOTO

VCP displays works by April M. Frazier

BRATTLEBORO—The Vermont Center for Photography (VCP), 10 Green Street, presents a solo exhibition, “Frame of Reference,” by photographer April M. Frazier, which will be on display in VCP’s Main Gallery through March and April. An opening reception will be held Friday, March 3, from 5 to 8 p.m., with an Artist Talk on Saturday, March 4, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

“Frame of Reference” is the pictorial representation of familial influences and experiences that shaped Frazier’s life. Using images and genealogical research, it presents an alternate narrative of the African American experience in Texas and beyond. Images of accomplishment, celebration, and love are shown from as early as 1890 to present day, including selected portraits from her family collection.

The collages detail those lives and highlight certain triumphs, including Emanuel Roberts, Frazier’s second great-grandfather, and his acquisition of 207 acres of land in Wharton County, Texas, in 1893 and Henry Cox, her third great-grandfather, whose parents married as people freed from slavery in Fayette County in January 1866.

Portraits from “The Missing Chapter: Black Chronicles,” on loan from Autograph ABP, London, are displayed parallel to Frazier’s collection of portraits to demonstrate similarities in features, style of dress, and strong presence through time of Afro-Descendent people across the globe.

According to VCP, Frazier’s exhibit “demonstrates the growth, breadth, and interconnectedness in tradition and experiences over many generations.”

Frazier says in an artist’s statement she wants to evoke the experience of viewing pages of a family photo album in a relative’s living room. She hopes the viewer will see similarities to their lived experience. The portraits appear in their less-than-pristine condition to serve as tangible evidence that “this was family known and loved then, now, and into the

future.”

Frazier is an artist and photographer from Houston, Texas.

She worked in oil and gas for 15 years in various information technology roles before transitioning to photographing professionally in all genres. She specializes in creatively collaborating with minority- and women-owned businesses in her Houston community. Her projects include architectural and documentary images from her travels across Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean.

Her most prized and ongoing work involves research and documentation of her ancestral roots in Texas through the creation of imagery on lands with familial connection from the time of enslavement to present day.

Frazier’s art has been exhibited in galleries and museums across Texas, New York, Oregon, and Vermont, including a group exhibition in London. She is also a launch partner for the Getty Images Black History and Culture Collection and uses the robust archive to bring light to the stories of African Americans and others of the Black diaspora.

VCP’s gallery is open free of charge to the public from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.

BMC Season Guest Concert Series presents In Stile Moderno

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Music Center (BMC) welcomes the return of In Stile Moderno Friday, March 3, as part of its Season Guest Concert Series.

The 7:30 p.m. performance at the BMC, titled “The English Orpheus,” derives its name from the moniker for Henry Purcell, a Baroque composer of the late 1600s. “If Orpheus charmed humans, animals, and even the gods of the Underworld with his lyre, then Purcell,” writes the BMC in a news release, “did the same for kings, queens, and commoners alike with his compositions.”

In his short 36 years, he created 850 works of music or more, “and they still captivate and enchant centuries later,” say organizers. In Stile Moderno’s spring concert will be an intimate evening of songs that journey from the sublime to the irreverent and back again.

Performers include Agnes Coakley-Cox, Sophie Michaux, Corey Dalton-Hart, and Adam Jacob Simon, voices; and

Nathaniel Cox, theorbo.

In Stile Moderno is an ensemble for early music, founded in Basel, Switzerland, in 2012 by soprano Agnes Coakley and lutenist/cornettist Nathaniel Cox. Named after the then-modern style of music which emerged in Italy around 1600, the ensemble “is dedicated to music of the 17th century, and combines fidelity to historical performance practice with a drive to make early music accessible and relevant to modern audiences,” according to the group’s website.

Both as a lute and voice duo and in larger formations with cornetto, organ, voice, and plucked instruments, In Stile Moderno has performed in Boston, Vermont, and New York, as well as in concert series in Switzerland, Germany, and France.

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door; students and seniors pay \$10. Tickets are available on the Brattleboro Music Center website — bmcvt.org — or by calling 802-257-4523.

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WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SUPERVISORY UNION
BRATTLEBORO UNION HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - ANTICIPATED OPENING

The Windham Southeast School District (WSESD)/Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (WSESU) is an increasingly diverse community with an ongoing commitment to social justice and anti-racism. We are looking for enthusiastic professionals to join us in furthering this work.

The Windham Southeast School District is seeking an enthusiastic instructional leader for the 2023/2024 School Year for the Brattleboro Union High School located in picturesque Brattleboro, Vermont. The Brattleboro Union High School Principal will facilitate the development of strong systems and structures which support the growth and achievement of all BUHS students and staff.

Qualifications:
 Master’s degree from an accredited college or university;
 Must be licensed or eligible for an administrator license in the State of Vermont;
 Previous experience as a principal, headmaster, or equivalent;
 Proven track record of supporting and actively engaging instructional leadership teams;
 At least five (5) years of classroom teaching experience at the secondary level; high school preferred.

Those interested should apply through SchoolSpring or submit a letter of interest, resume, statement of philosophy and 3 current letters of reference to:

BUHS Principal Search
 c/o Mark Speno, Superintendent of Schools
 53 Green Street
 Brattleboro, VT 05301

Application question: Please describe your background (if any) with teaching or working with historically marginalized people. What did you learn from the experience that you can use to benefit our school community?

Closing Date: March 16, 2023 Contract Start Date: July 1, 2023

Jesse Peters plus Seven Short Sets at Stage 33 Live

BELLOWS FALLS—Jesse Peters will play a full set following micro-performances by local and regional performers Brian Dade, Carl Beverly, Charlie & Emma, Gillis Mills, Ian Galipeau, Josh Cummings, and Will Stahl (performance order to be determined) in a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday, March 5, at Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge Street.

Peters returned to the Southern Vermont music scene in 2001, after graduating with a bachelor’s in jazz guitar and a master’s in music teaching from The University of The Arts in Philadelphia. “His styles run the gamut while remaining focused and accessible,” say organizers.

Seven 12-minute-or-less slots will precede his set — some familiar players, some new ones. Micro-sets are an engaging and effective way for an audience to discover performers with impressive talents often materializing out of left field.

With the backlog of Covid-postponed shows to reschedule and a growing list of artists waiting for future dates, Stage 33 Live hasn’t run many open mics since 2020. When the featured act scheduled for this date needed to withdraw, opportunity opened a door.

Peters, who had been on tap to open, was elevated to the feature slot, and a call was put out for half a dozen performers interested in playing short slots. There were seven responses within 24 hours.

Entry will be by donation at the door (\$5 suggested) for the featured performer. Nobody will be turned away for lack of money. More info about the nonprofit, all-volunteer project, and this and other upcoming events, can be found online at stage33live.com.

Ladies

FROM SECTION FRONT

They have collaborated with such musicians as Vince Gill, Nanci Griffith, The Boston Pops Orchestra, Pete Seeger, and The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. They have appeared in more than 300 performances with leading symphony orchestras.

Madden and her band have amassed a long list of awards at home and in Ireland, including being forever immortalized with a street named in their honor on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, New York.

“No matter how far from home, their continued success as one of the best-loved Irish groups rests on their blend of virtuoso instrumentals, beautiful vocals, traditional and original arrangements along with stunning step dancing — all presented with extraordinary talent, creativity, and humor,” say organizers.

Tickets start at \$30. Purchase tickets at latchis.com or by calling 802-254-1109, ext. 3.



LETTERS FROM READERS | *Town Meetings and Elections*

Correcting an error: Keeping grades 7 and 8 at Marlboro will cost more

RE: “Marlboro voters: keep grades 7 and 8 in town” [Letters, Feb. 15]:

To my fellow members of the Marlboro community: I write this to accept responsibility and to make a correction.

I was a co-signer of a letter that was mailed to the residents of Marlboro which contained an incorrect statement, and I alone am responsible for this.

The letter mentioned Principal Wayne Kermenski as agreeing that the costs of keeping grades 7 and 8 at Marlboro compared to paying tuition for them to attend other schools would essentially be a wash. This was true when the letter was drafted.

But Wayne sent me a note after the January school board meeting to remind me that the board had added some funds to the budget which would increase the cost of keeping grades 7 and 8 at Marlboro.

Through my oversight I did not relay this information to the other co-signer of the letter, Nelli Sargsyan, so Nelli was not aware that the draft letter should have been corrected.

Because of this blunder, I misquoted Wayne, misled Nelli, and misinformed the readers of the letter. This is my attempt to correct the information and take responsibility for the error.

The correction: If the budget that the school board has proposed is approved by the voters in March, the cost of educating grades 7 and 8 at Marlboro will be higher than paying tuition for them to attend other schools by \$65,000. This translates into an increase in the school budget of 1.7% and a tax impact of the same amount.

Please share this with other members of the community.

Dan MacArthur
Marlboro

Wilmington would lose so much by ending in-person Town Meetings

I see on the Wilmington Annual Town Meeting warning two articles related to going to Australian ballot and doing away with Town Meetings.

It is important that Wilmington voters know that this means that Annual Town

Meetings would cease to exist. Our form of town government would change, drastically. Voters would go in on a given day, with no discussion, and just vote the articles. No questions, no debate, no direct involvement.

I know that some voters are unable to get to Town Meetings and some choose not to come. To me, Town Meeting is at the core of small town government, and if we were to go to exclusive use of Australian ballots we would lose so much.

Over the years I have learned a lot about our town government and the important issues by the questions and opinions offered by townspeople from the floor. Many times those discussions have helped me decide how to vote. That would be lost if we eliminate in-person gatherings.

In fact, these very articles show clearly why we need to keep Town Meetings. I will bet that during the discussion we will all hear valid arguments on both sides. Townspeople’s opinions will be valuable tools for others to decide how to vote, and together we might even come up with ideas for increasing participation. If Town Meeting is gone, those opportunities will also be gone and an important part of local democracy will disappear.

As a small town we absolutely depend on times such as Town Meeting to get to know and interact with other residents and those who work for the town. We get to know people’s interests, what they support, and how much they care about our community.

I appreciate the heads of Town Departments when they explain their spending. When I first moved here, I learned so much from listening to Porter Farwell and Phil Ware share their wisdom.

As the years have gone by, others have stepped forward to speak up, and I admire the time they have taken examining the Town Report and then asking their thoughtful questions.

Do I always agree with them? No, but I make better, more informed decisions after listening to the questions and answers.

So, please come to Town Meeting, bring a friend or two, and weigh in. It could be your last time, although I truly hope not. Know, too, that the relevant articles will be discussed toward the end of the meeting.

Whether you are a first-timer

Town Meeting Bingo

Moderator calls someone out of order	Crowd corrects moderator, who is out of order	Someone comments on article already passed; quickly and loudly corrected by crowd	Inside joke between moderator and person making comment	Doughnuts
Quiet speaker says, “I don’t need the mic.”	Impassioned speech relying on emotion to sway favorable response	Seemingly innocuous article in warning results in 45+ minute debate	Screaming child	Problem with mic; someone under the age of 15 fixes it
Citizen points out clerical error in value less than \$1.00	Reminder of Robert’s Rules	NAPPING (Free Space)	Speaker too far from mic	Minority opinion, anticipating being the minority during voice vote, say Aye/Nay in LOUD voice
Mention of national politics	Knitting	Malcontent grumbling from minority opinion in back of auditorium	Speaker includes number of years in residence as if to lend more credibility to opinion	Person next to you has brought very noisily wrapped/smelly/crunchy food
Mud boots	You say AYE without realizing what you’re voting on	You say NAY without realizing what you’re voting on	You are so confused you don’t know what AYE or NAY means relative to the article	Virtues of democracy extolled

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or an old timer, I hope you vote to keep this important part of our democracy. You can participate and vote, or you can sit back and let others do it for you. It’s your choice.

Nicki Steel
Wilmington

Nolan: The right person for these times

I support Eva Nolan, from Dummerston, for the three-year position on the WSESD School Board.

Eva has the education and qualifications to be of great assistance with the ongoing issues the board has been facing. She would bring a calm and collaborative approach, which I believe would be a great addition. Eva would like students to feel empowered to speak and be heard and would like them to have a safe and welcoming environment in which to learn.

Eva graduated from Eastern Nazarene College with a B.A. in criminal justice. She spent 10 years as a community educator with the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center. She has also received special training from the FBI to identify and report trafficking victims, as well as additional training in domestic violence prevention. Eva is very familiar with the process of investigation that happens when a sexual assault allegation has been made.

While working with BARCC’s Survivor Speakers Bureau, she facilitated discussions with schools and community centers around these issues.

Eva lives in Dummerston with her husband and two school-aged children. Her home life is such that she feels she has the time to serve while using her training to help navigate present issues. I am supporting her candidacy for the School Board because I believe her

background would be a great addition.

Please join me in voting for Eva Nolan for the Dummerston position. Don’t forget that we all vote for every town’s candidate.

Sometimes we might not know the people running from another town, but both the *Reformer* and *The Commons* have had excellent articles on all the candidates, which you should read if you haven’t already. You can also ask about other candidates from a friend who knows them.

Whatever you do — vote!
Jody Normandeau
Dummerston

DeGray, Case, Reichsman: thorough, dedicated, and unafraid

Tip O’Neil said that “all politics is local.” Brattleboro

has a very important local election coming up on Tuesday, March 7 regarding the Selectboard.

I am writing to show my support for Dick DeGray, Peter “Fish” Case, and Franz Reichsman.

All three are longtime residents who will demonstrate allegiance to Brattleboro practices and traditions. They are thorough and not afraid to ask the tough financial questions to insure fiscal responsibility. Finally, they are involved in the community in many ways which show their support and dedication to this town.

Becoming a Selectboard member would be a logical extension of these unselfish gentlemen’s existing volunteer efforts.

I urge you all to vote Tuesday, March 7 and show your support for Dick, Peter, and Franz.

Hugh W. Barber
Brattleboro

McLoughlin: an agenda to simply do the best for Brattleboro

We support Liz McLoughlin, who is seeking a second three-year term on the Selectboard.

Those of us who know Liz as a friend, neighbor, or Selectboard member appreciate her intelligence, dedication, and hard work. Her agenda is simply to do the best for Brattleboro. Her experience and her record of straightforward thinking and action demonstrate that she has been a successful steward of our resources and values.

Given the issues that we are facing and attending to what remains from the lack of a town manager, keeping a thoughtful and intelligent individual like Liz on our Selectboard is good common sense.

We hope you agree and support Liz in her ongoing efforts to work for all of us.

Peter Albert and Joyce Sullivan
Brattleboro

McLoughlin: It was a delight working with her

Brattleboro voters are in the enviable position of having a slate of excellent candidates from which to choose for Selectboard. All of the

■ SEE LETTERS, C2

COLUMN

The least we can do is pause, reflect, and honor the lives of women

‘How insufficient one month or one day a year are to remember the world’s women, to see them as human beings worthy of dignity, purpose, meaning, and respect for the unimaginable burdens they carry’

Brattleboro

IN THIS Women’s History Month — especially on March 8, International Women’s Day — my mind and heart fill with thoughts of women and girls around the world.

Having worked globally, I have witnessed women’s lives, heard their stories, seen their grief, abuse, and abject poverty. I have been at the side of women when they gave birth or lost a baby, strong and stoic, and watched more fortunate women advocate for, educate,



ELAYNE CLIFT (elayne-clift.com) has written about women, politics, and social issues from the earliest days of this newspaper.

and comfort their poorer village friends.

Whether nurses, NGO workers, politicians, or change agents within their communities, they do what they can. It’s never

easy, especially when women’s lives are so devalued in so many places.

Among the women I’ve had the opportunity to share time with or whose lives I’ve witnessed in their impoverished homes and inadequate health centers (if they have one), I recall the patience of African mothers, babies on their backs, in the marketplace, where they eke out a subsistence life selling fruits and handicrafts. I’ve heard their stories of violent abuse by husbands, their wishes that their children could be



MARIUS ARNESEN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Women and children in Herat, Afghanistan.

educated, their genital cutting, the fistulas that isolate them.

I’ve marveled at the places they live — slum houses with dirt floors swept clean every day in Bangladesh, and Somali tent shacks made of rags and tarps.

I’ve wept to see young women — girls, really — on the arms of old foreign men in Thailand so they can send money back to their village

families.

I’ve heard the stories of trafficked women and girls who made it to a Greek refugee camp.

And still the images keep coming, along with knowing what is happening in countries I’ve not been to.

I think of the courageous women in Iran, incarcerated and tortured in Evin Prison,

so willing to die for freedom; Kurdish women who fight on the battlefield; Rohingya women who suffer unimaginable abuse.

I think of Palestinian women who bury their children and watch as their houses are torn down, and Ukrainian women who risk rape or death by staying in their demolished

■ SEE WOMEN’S MONTH, C2



Pleasant and comfortable! Situated on the one way lane on the circle end of the pleasant Country Hill neighborhood in West Brattleboro, this comfortable six room, 1568 square foot, well cared for home was built in 2004 and offers three bedrooms and two and a half baths. On the first floor you will find a cheerful eat in kitchen with a tile floor and handy access to the 16’ x 16’ deck, a large living room with hard wood floors that opens to the light filled dining room and a half bath. Upstairs the primary bedroom has its own three quarter shower ensuite bath. Two bedrooms and a full bathroom are down the hall. The spacious 22’ x 19’ finished basement has a laundry area. There is a two car garage and a paved driveway. Mature trees and a stone wall ramble along the back border.

EXCLUSIVE \$357,000



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Letters

candidates are fine people, eager to serve the town, and brimming with ideas. It is comforting to know that all who are elected on March 7 will be good choices.

I have personal experience with one of the candidates, incumbent Elizabeth (Liz) McLoughlin. She was my main contact on the board late last summer when I was advancing the proposal that Brattleboro adopt the Declaration of Inclusion (vtdeclarationofinclusion.org).

She was responsive to communications, both by email and phone. She was interested to learn about the initiative, and she was supportive of the final proposal.

It passed unanimously. It was a delight working with her.

Her willingness and desire to continue on the Selectboard are admirable — she wants to follow through on the work the board has started during her tenure, especially in the areas of social justice/equity, climate change, and community safety.

Please join me in voting for Liz on March 7.

Fred Breunig
Brattleboro

McLoughlin: clearheaded, compassionate, collegial, no-nonsense attitude

I support Elizabeth McLoughlin's candidacy for a three-year seat on the Selectboard, and I urge readers to do the same.

Liz has been engaged deeply in a wide range of roles supporting our community since she first moved here. With her degrees and experience in the areas of town planning, environmental planning, and housing, she has brought a wealth of relevant knowledge to her work on the board over the past four years, and she is clearly well-versed regarding the range of challenges that face our town.

Equally importantly, she is familiar with the current resources — both structural and human — available to address these challenges, and she has excellent ideas about how they can best be coordinated and developed.

The breadth of institutional knowledge Liz has accumulated over her years of service are a valuable resource for our town,

and that makes her an ideal person to help address the often-interrelated issues of homelessness, mental health, crime, and drug abuse that confront Brattleboro today. She will continue to bring a clearheaded, compassionate, collegial, no-nonsense attitude to her work on the Selectboard.

So vote for her.

Steve Carmichael
Brattleboro

McLoughlin: an in-depth understanding of how our town works

I support Elizabeth McLoughlin's election to the Brattleboro Selectboard.

Liz came to Brattleboro more than 15 years ago as a professional environmental town planner. She quickly immersed herself in town issues, joining the Planning Commission and working with the Drop-In Center (now Groundworks). She has also been an active member of multiple town committees and commissions.

Three years ago, the Brattleboro Outing Club was required to apply for an Act 250 permit to establish its current cross-country ski hut. Liz spent countless hours helping the club successfully wade through the permit process. Her help was indispensable.

For the past four years, Liz has served Brattleboro as a member of the Selectboard, as clerk, vice chair, and chair. During this time, she has developed an in-depth understanding of how our town works.

Her re-election will allow her to continue to apply her wisdom and energy in tackling the complex issues facing Brattleboro.

Bill Jahn
Brattleboro

Gelter: reaches out to bring multiple perspectives to the table

I urge voters to re-elect Jessica Gelter to the Brattleboro Selectboard.

Jess has been a compassionate, curious, and thoughtful presence on the board since she was elected two years ago. She doesn't come to the board with any ego or agenda, but simply a commitment to listen deeply

FROM SECTION FRONT

to the needs of the community and work to address them.

I know very well the challenge of serving on a municipal board while also parenting school-aged children, so I really appreciate that about Jess. Being involved in the world of children and teens gives her a window into how children are bearing some of the heaviest burdens from issues our community is facing.

As a board member, she actively seeks community feedback about issues the board is considering, interviewing business owners and surveying other community members about their needs and experiences.

She always thinks about whose voice is not being heard in meetings and works to reach out and bring those perspectives to the table. She consistently centers the most vulnerable and marginalized members and how they are impacted by issues the board is working on.

I have appreciated how Jess has continued to place priority on safety in our community and has pushed the board to utilize the Community Safety Fund to broaden our approach to making Brattleboro a safer community for all.

Please vote for Jessica Gelter on March 7!

Robin Morgan
Brattleboro

Dummerston voters: vote yes on declaration of inclusion article

Focusing on citizens' democracy, the business of town meeting is vital to civic engagement.

Since 2021, more than 95 towns in Vermont, plus Gov. Phil Scott, have adopted Declarations of Inclusion to remind the citizenry that equity and inclusion are essential to the civic, social, and economic well-being of our state.

Dummerston Cares is a volunteer organization that serves the health and safety of the people of Dummerston. We sponsor the Declaration of Inclusion that appears on the ballot to conduct the town's business on March 7. We urge the voters of Dummerston to vote yes to adopt this resolution:

"WHEREAS Dummerston Cares supports equity in social engagement and in governance, its Board of Trustees calls for the voters of Dummerston to adopt a Declaration of Inclusion.

"THEREFORE, "We resolve that the people of Dummerston include all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, differing ability, economic status, and education.

"We commit to fair and equal treatment of people in Dummerston.

"We value respectful civic engagement in all forums."

With care,
DUMMERSTON CARES
Dummerston

Bill Schmidt, Meg Lyons, Catie G. Berg, Rev. Shawn Bracebridge, Pam McFadden, Norris Evans, Phyllis Emery, and Steve Mindel

Women's Month

FROM SECTION FRONT

apartments.

I think of American women who are losing their right to bodily autonomy, privacy and agency over their own lives. I think of Black women who suffer maternal mortality and poor health outcomes at shockingly higher rates than white women. I think of how afraid transgender women and LGBTQ women must be.

I TRY TO IMAGINE what it would be like to be a 20-year-old young woman in Afghanistan. She never knew what living under Taliban rule would mean and now has no job (unless she is a rare exception in the health sector), no chance of higher education, no right to walk outdoors freely. She must fear retaliation if she inadvertently shows a bit of ankle.

I think of this young woman's mother, who did know Taliban rule and is now being smothered again in blue burqas, stripped of meaningful employment. And I think of the grief those mothers feel knowing that their young daughters will never get past sixth grade.

For all of them, the future is bleak, lonely, and frightening. These kinds of restrictions are the stuff of suicide. It's understandable. Women

in Kabul have endured beatings for protesting their ban from schools, work, and even walking in parks on certain days. They are restricted from traveling alone, and they suffer deeply from the isolation of gender segregation, boredom, and being rendered invisible by Taliban rules.

As a story in *a story in The New Yorker* pointed out in 2021, "Women are hidden in their homes from puberty until they are grandmothers, concealed from the world at large, and especially from journalists."

In a news report from the United Nations, one woman who remembered the previous Taliban rule recalled that a child she knew had been married off when she was 11 years old. On Aug. 15, 2021, the day the Taliban came back into power, "Something died inside me," she said. "Something died inside me on 15 August 2021, or at least that is how I felt: my hopes crushed, my education irrelevant, my investment in Afghanistan gone."

"Thousands of women used to work for ministries across the country," she continued. "Now, some of them have to line up for a bag of flour to feed their children." "Violence at home is now

normalized and some women are committing suicide — the last resort when their situation becomes unbearable," she said.

WHO AMONG US living in affluent countries and not in nations run by deranged dictators or regimes can imagine this kind of torment, or the consequences of living an entire life in abject poverty and exclusion, with all the attendant deprivations and abuses? How do we begin to understand such punishing patriarchies and their cruelty?

How insufficient one month or one day a year are to remember the world's women, to see them as human beings worthy of dignity, purpose, meaning, and respect for the unimaginable burdens they carry.

And yet there is that — a month, a day every year to recognize that nearly 400 million women globally were living in poverty last year, according to *UN Women*, and that figure is expected to rise.

Add to that staggering figure the political repression women all over the world are suffering.

The least we can do is pause, reflect, and honor the lives of women everywhere.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Jessica Gelter: Empathy, compassion, and patience

I love Brattleboro and have always thought of it as a big-hearted community. I'm sure many of you have as well. We've thought it, we've said it, but we have more work to do on it.

When I first joined the Selectboard, a previous member told me, "it takes too long to get anything done. I didn't have the patience."

But I'm patient. Before my time on the Selectboard, I served on the Brattleboro Planning Commission, where we worked on a 10-year master plan, a downtown plan, began the housing study, and where we developed a set of guidelines to help us make decisions based in equity. That town committee is a place where long-term vision and patience thrive.

I then had the honor of being elected to the Selectboard, with the goal of putting that long-term visioning into policy and action. This work also takes tremendous patience — not only because there are always issues that require research, thought, and deliberation, but because there is the risk of these issues being put on the back burner by the unpredictable.

In the last two years, Brattleboro has dealt with vacancies in town management, unforeseen changes to our vital services, and deepening challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and our local housing crisis. The path forward on these issues is clear, and we have work to do on those items that were pushed

aside.

Our country and our world face big challenges, but I believe in the power of local. No one up for election to the Selectboard is affiliated with a party — they won't be tipping some greater power balance. No one who gets elected locally will be able to singlehandedly change the country's systems of oppression. No one who serves here will be able to address our country's disastrously stratified income inequality.

So why does a local election matter?

Because we are a town of only 12,000 people. There are very real problems we can fix locally because they are small scale. There are actions we can take to change our small impact on the climate, to give shelter to people with none in our community, to take a stand against systemic oppression by requesting acknowledgement of harm, transparency, and communication on the local level, to help people feel more safe in spaces that feel unsafe.

We can build the solutions we need — together. And we can care for each other.

Some of my fellow candidates have talked about the importance of listening. I am learning that leadership is not just about listening, but about doing so with compassion and integrity. That's why I prioritize empathy and compassion in all of my interactions, whether it's with fellow board members, town staff, or community members who approach me or the board with their needs and their ideas.

The best way to wield any kind of power in our community is to open doors for others to share their voices, their stories, and their brilliance. That sharing helps us as leaders deploy town resources in the right direction.

One job of the Selectboard is to use taxpayer money, grants, buildings, equipment, and the time of town staff to address needs in our community. Another is to set policies and ordinances that support the functioning of the community as a whole — setting a joint understanding of what our values are and what our agreements are with each other. The last is to model the behavior that represents the town well — to our neighbors, to our residents, and to our children.

Your vote for me says: "I trust Jess to hold space for me, my voice, my ideas."

"I trust Jess to navigate and balance the complexity of the stories she hears and to act with integrity."

"I trust Jess to care about our town."

I'm asking for your trust and your support as someone with a big heart who would like to continue to lead by example in this big-hearted community.

Jessica Gelter
Brattleboro

Jessica Gelter is seeking re-election to a one-year Selectboard seat in Brattleboro on Tuesday, March 7.

Wendy M. Levy: Libraries match my ethics and values'

Hello, neighbors. I am excited to be on this year's Town Meeting ballot as a library trustee. I believe my leadership skills, my love for libraries, and my knowledge of how crucial they are to a community make me an excellent addition to the Rockingham Free Public Library's Board of Trustees.

I moved to Bellows Falls from Brattleboro in April, 2022, and I am so glad I did. One of my favorite things about living here is the Rockingham Free Public Library (RFPL). It's a beautiful building inside and out, and the librarians are helpful and dedicated.

While most of my interaction with the library is borrowing books, DVDs, and magazines, I also go there to read the newspaper, use the printer, do the communal jigsaw puzzle, attend events, and learn about local resources from the librarians. It's a nice quiet to be when I need some quiet but I want to get out of the house.

From the age of 5, when my mom got me a library card, I've been a fan of libraries. I love to read. My first after-school job was at the Dover (N.J.) Public Library. I am currently enrolled in the state's Certificate of Public Librarianship program, so some day I might even be a librarian.

I've been a long-time supporter of local, independent media. Some of you may recognize my name from *The Commons*, where I was a reporter for many years. A lot of my work there was covering municipal government; thus, I know how boards and budgets work. In 1998 I helped start a community radio station, and since then I've served in various leadership and volunteer roles at other non-commercial radio stations.

Libraries match my ethics and values. I am lucky enough to have a life that allows me some time for service, and RFPL is where I want to do it. Public libraries serve all visitors, whether or not they live in the town, and they provide free access to information, art, and entertainment. They are not owned by any profit-making entity. We all own them, thus we are responsible for them; their quality reflects our dedication to our community.

As a trustee, I will bring my love for collaborating on projects that maintain and improve my surroundings, and my attentive and inquisitive nature. I look forward to working with the director, the staff, the other trustees, the Friends of the Library (of which I am a member), and the community to ensure the library remains viable, accessible, and loved by you: the Rockingham community and our visitors.

I hope you'll vote for me on March 7. See you at the polls.

Wendy M. Levy
Bellows Falls

Wendy M. Levy is seeking a three-year seat on the Rockingham Free Public Library Board of Trustees on Tuesday, March 7.

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First Wednesday lecture explores biodiversity

BRATTLEBORO — Vermont Humanities 2022-23 season of First Wednesdays lectures at Brooks Memorial Library continues with a virtual event on March 1 at 7 p.m.

Cristian Fretes Ojeda, technical trainer for Peace Corps Paraguay, will present "Biodiversity, Conservation, and Civic Participation in Paraguay."

South America's Atlantic Forest is one of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet. Ojeda will discuss how civic participation is leading the effort to conserve crucial natural areas like the Atlantic Forest and the Gran Chaco, which span several South American countries.

To participate in this free event, register on the Vermont Humanities website at bit.ly/704-ojeda.

First Wednesday lectures in Brattleboro are funded through the generous support of the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library. For more information visit brookslibraryvt.org or call 802-254-5290.

Genealogy group offers tips on searching immigration records

BRATTLEBORO — The Windham County Genealogy Interest Group will hold its next meeting on Saturday, March 4, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Brooks Memorial Library and on Zoom at bit.ly/WCGigMAR4.

Jerry Carbone and Wayne Blanchard will explore how to find ancestors in immigration records using ship manifests, border crossings, naturalization records, and census records that asked citizenship questions.

The presentations will show attendees how to use websites, such as stevemorse.org and ancestry.com to find records from Ellis Island and other U.S. ports of entry to include Boston, Baltimore, Galveston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. For those with ancestors who immigrated earlier than the Ellis Island era, other methods must be used.

Using journals and court records, for example, it is possible to learn how English ancestors came to New England during the Great Migration of the 1630s.

This workshop is for anyone interested in finding their ancestors and learning more about their family history. For more information, email windhamcountygig@gmail.com.

Wardsboro Yoked Parish moves worship services to West Wardsboro

WARDSBORO — Worship services of the Wardsboro Yoked Parish will move to the Baptist Church at 101 Cross Road in West Wardsboro beginning Sunday, March 5.

Service each Sunday starts at 9 a.m., and will continue through Sunday, May 28. Communion is served on the first Sunday of each month. All are welcome.

Vermont Theatre Company plans auditions for 'Twelfth Night'

BRATTLEBORO — The Vermont Theatre Company and Retreat Farm announce auditions for their upcoming collaborative production of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Auditions will be held on Sunday, March 5, at 11 a.m. and Monday, March 6, at 5 p.m., at the Brattleboro Area Middle School (BAMS) Multi Purpose Room. Enter through the BAMS main entrance.

"Disguises, love triangles, and mischief make this one of Shakespeare's greatest comedies," said organizers in a news release. Performances will be

Well, God give them wisdom that have it. | And those that are fools, let them use their talents.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

AROUND THE TOWNS

held Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from June 30 — July 9 at the Retreat Farm in Brattleboro. For further information, or to set up an alternate audition time, email director Michelle Page at vttheatreco@gmail.com.

Senior lunch served in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON — Senior Solutions and Evening Star Grange #154 will hold their first March Senior Lunch on Wednesday, March 8, at the Grange Hall in Dummerston Center. In-house dining begins at noon, with takeout meals available for pick-up between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. The meal on March 8 includes shepherd's pie, vegetarian shepherd's pie, squash medley, and four-bean salad, with banana cake for dessert.

Reservations for this highly attended meal are strongly encouraged and should be made by March 7 to help organizers gauge how much food to prepare. Call

the Grange hall at 802-254-1138 and leave name, phone number, total number of meals, whether for eating in or taking out, and if vegetarian or gluten-free options are requested. A donation of \$3 for those 60 and above and \$4 for those 59 and under is suggested.

Sunrise Rotary launches annual dinner raffle

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Sunrise Rotary Club is now selling tickets for their annual Dinner Raffle to raise funds for Project Feed the Thousands and other Rotary projects. This year, there are five chances to win, including the first prize of five (5) \$100 gift certificates to the following Brattleboro area restaurants: Panda North, Whetstone Station, Peter Havens, Echo Restaurant & Lounge, and The Marina.

Second place prize is a \$100 certificate each to the Putney Diner and Grafton Village Cheese, plus \$50 each to Tine,

T. J. Buckley's, and The Four Columns Inn.

Additional third- and fourth-place prizes include \$50 certificates to Ramunto's Brick Oven Pizza, Terrazza at the Country Club of Greenfield, the New England House, Vermont Country Deli, Vermont Shepherd, Saxtons River Distillery, Bar 580, and Sam's Outdoor Outfitters.

Tickets are five for \$20 and may be purchased from any Brattleboro Sunrise Rotarian or by calling Toni Ciampaglione 802-338-6286. The raffle drawing will be held on Wednesday, March 15. Members of the public can also purchase tickets on Wednesday mornings, from 7:15 to 8:30 a.m., at Ramunto's on Putney Road during the Brattleboro Sunrise Rotary Club's weekly meeting.

MedQuest Program returns this summer

SPRINGFIELD — Southern Vermont Area Health

Education Center (AHEC) is offering two sessions of their MedQuest Program this summer at Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC), Springfield Hospital, and North Star Health. This hands-on career exploration day camp will take place Monday through Wednesday, July 24-26, 2023, at Springfield Hospital & North Star Health, and Wednesday through Friday, Aug. 2-4, 2023, at RRMC.

There will be job shadows with health professionals, team activities, mentoring from medical students with the Robert Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont, and clinical skill building.

Tuition is \$175, and scholarships are available. Register by Wednesday, March 15, by calling 802-885-2126, ext. 102, emailing cknight@svtahec.org or visiting svtahec.org/middle-high-school.

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

JOON PAHK

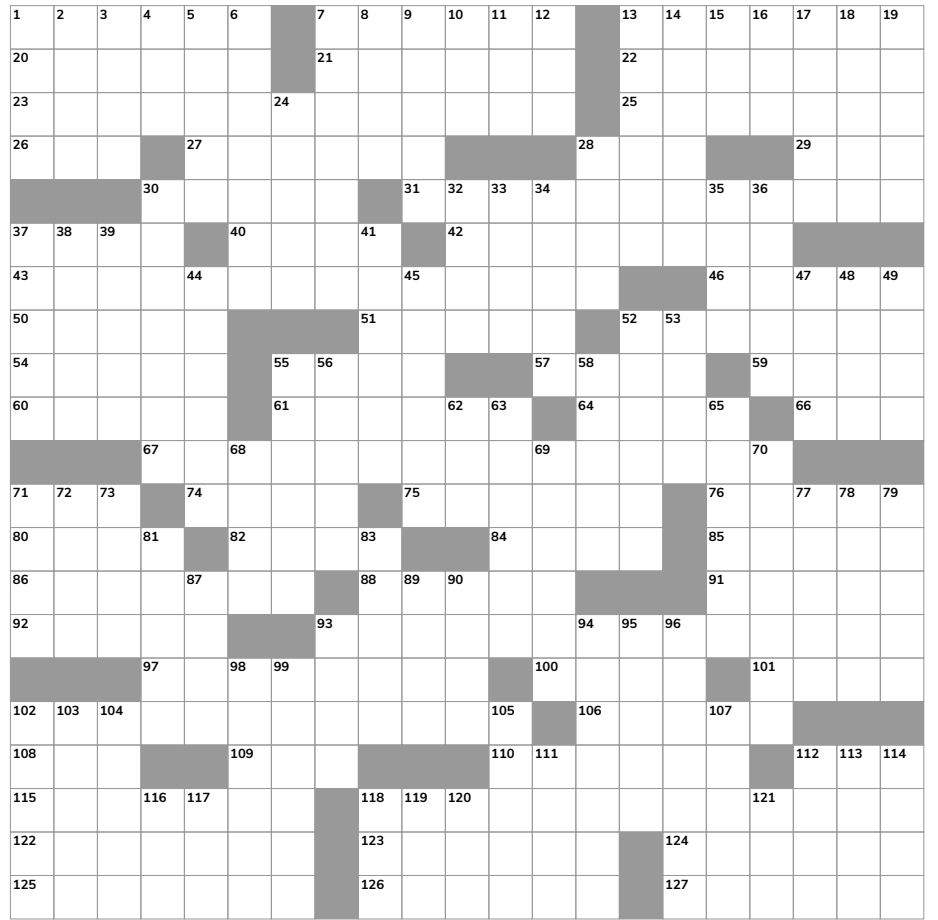
"Let Me In"

Across

- Pinch pennies
- Kid-lit boy with a purple crayon
- Fire station chief
- Season
- Visionary?
- Hog call?
- Citrus-whacking implements?
- Come back with a vengeance
- Driller's deg.
- Pile up, as charges
- Oil brand
- Help out
- Title judge of a 2012 sci-fi film
- The feather in Peter Pan's cap, etc.?
- Plains people
- Host
- Coconut cookie
- Most emphatic "no"?
- What 92-Across means in several Polynesian languages
- Used for sustenance
- Aristotle's A
- Ash's Pokémon companion
- Wiped out
- Penne ___ vodka
- "Now!" in the E.R.
- Stroller, to Brits
- TV exec Michaels
- "Roger"
- Opinion piece
- Charging cable connector
- "Name That Plant" and "Soil Taste Test"?
- Risk or Pandemic board, essentially
- Long, arduous task
- Take-home wages
- Some pears
- Surrounded by
- Voting contingent
- Painter Bonheur
- Run-of-the-mill
- "Grr!"
- Director Doug
- Like Almond Joy
- "How Far I'll Go" singer
- Fish that's not much to look at?
- Pointer on a recruiting poster
- Traditional tale
- Assumption figure
- Football players in need of a shower?
- Kid
- Single-stranded genetic molecule
- Conditionals
- Corrections list
- Look back on sheepishly
- Draw
- "Have fun at work!" to an editor?
- Eggy roll
- Little-known material
- Slow movement
- Relieved
- Laptop alternative
- Like the ninth hitter in a batting order

Down

- Dirty Harry's org.
- Lump of dirt
- Super Bowl LVI champs
- "___ seen worse"



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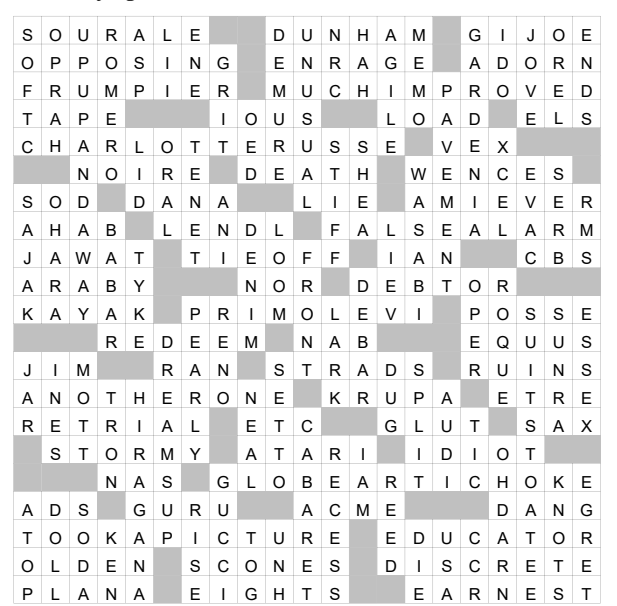
- Grinding tooth
- Make sense of
- Pack rat
- Rights advocacy org.
- Handed down a decision
- Cheer for a matador
- Back muscle, informally
- Hosp. workers
- One killed for a cause
- Syrian city
- "Kidnapped" monogram
- Dallas sch.
- Ulysses S. Grant's first name at birth
- "The Hate U Give" author ___ Thomas
- West Yorkshire city
- Whopper competitor in the late 1980s
- Shut securely
- Showing off, as a product
- "My turn now"
- Window part
- March Madness, with "the"
- "Here's the thing..."
- Open, as a bottle
- Organs as food
- Connect with
- Primates, for humans
- Affluence
- Logs, as data
- Perfume bottle
- Hosiery color
- Escape room cries
- Unfeeling
- Oblong orange fruit
- Object
- Not at all new
- "Owe," phonetically
- Low-effort costumes
- Color property
- On a higher plane
- Prove to be false
- Idris of "Sonic the Hedgehog 2"
- Namesake
- "Sorry not sorry"

- Seriously injure
- Food, in a food fight
- Whence Galileo
- Sanskrit text
- Work a wedding, say
- With a mischievous grin
- Dunkin' purchase
- "Almost!"
- More than a few
- Prayer leader
- Viral image
- Brooding moms
- "I've got this"
- Starters
- Word in fancy French wine names
- Stock locution
- Picked up
- Olive ___ (Army uniforms)

- Opening remarks
- 1:10, e.g.
- Country with a non-rectangular flag
- ___ 500 (stock index)
- Cubs great Sandberg
- Capital on the Baltic
- Les États-___
- Entertainment "grand slam"
- Nonsense
- "___ so" (German's "Oh, I see!")
- Paddington feature
- Altar constellation
- Banned chlorine compound
- Lentil stew

Last issue's solution

"Camouflaged Animals"



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COLUMN | *Sports Roundup*

Rebel girls reach Division IV semis

BF, Colonels get home games as boys' playoffs begin

The Leland & Gray Rebels girls' basketball team is going to Barre. After dominant wins in the first two rounds of the Division IV playoffs, the Rebels will face No. 2 Blue Mountain in a semifinal game at the Barre Auditorium on March 1.

Leland & Gray's success this season has been built on good defense and rebounding, the ability to control the tempo of the game, and lots of points from junior forward Maggie Parker.

- In the first-round game against the No. 14 Rivendell Raptors on Feb. 22 in Townshend, Parker scored 19 points in the first half as the Rebels rolled to a 40-13 win.

- Leland & Gray led 30-0 at the half, as the overmatched Raptors had no chance against the strong rebounding of the Rebels that gave them multiple chances to score on offense.

- The going was slightly tougher against the sixth-seeded Poultney Blue Devils on Feb. 25 in Townshend, but the Rebels ultimately prevailed, 55-31.

- In this game, Parker had plenty of help from guards Samantha Morse and Mary Sanderson in keeping the Blue Devils at bay. The Rebels opened with a 10-1 run in the first three minutes and led 18-5 by the end of the first quarter.

- Poultney buckled down on defense and chipped away at the lead in the second quarter. They outscored the Rebels, 15-8, to close the gap to 26-20 with two minutes to play in the first half. The Rebels' offense then got back in gear as Parker hit a pair of three pointers and Sanderson sank a pair of free throws. The half ended with Leland & Gray in front, 34-22.

- Despite having four of their five starters in foul trouble in the third quarter, the Rebels maintained their lead and were



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.

in front, 40-30, heading into the final quarter. The fourth was all Rebels, as they held the Blue Devils to a single free throw as they slowed down the pace of the game and turned up the defensive pressure.

Parker led the Rebels with 18 points, Morse finished with 17 points, and Sanderson got nine of her 11 points from the free throw line.

The Rebels are now two wins away from a Division IV championship, and will have to beat the top two teams — Blue Mountain and West Rutland — to do it. It's a big task, but considering how many players on this team were on the team that won a state championship in soccer back in November, these girls know what playoff pressure is like and what is needed to overcome it.

- The Burr & Burton Bulldogs avenged their 36-32 loss to Brattleboro in the regular season finale on Feb. 16 with a 45-34 win over the Colonels in a Division I first-round playoff game on Feb. 21 in Manchester.

- The teams were tied 21-21 at halftime, but fifth-seeded Burr & Burton pulled away from No. 11 Brattleboro with a 12-3 burst in the third quarter and a 9-0 run in the fourth quarter. Nevaeh Camp led the Bulldogs with 11 points, while Reese Croutworst scored 16 points and Abby Henry added eight points for the Colonels.

Brattleboro finished the year

at 6-15. They will only lose one player to graduation, senior guard Emily Worden.

- Bellows Falls, the 10th seed in the Division III playoffs, fell to the seventh-seeded Oxbow Olympians, 68-38, in a first-round game on Feb. 21.

- Tella Harty led the Terriers in scoring with 13 points off the bench, while Laura Kamel and Delaney Lockerby added nine and six points, respectively. Libby Swift led the Olympians with 26 points.

- BF trailed 14-12 after the first quarter, but Oxbow turned up the defensive pressure and raced out to a 34-19 lead by halftime. The Terriers would get no closer as they ended their season with a 6-15 record.

Boys' basketball

- The boys' basketball playoffs begin this week, with two of the four local teams getting a home game in the first round.

- Brattleboro wrapped up the regular season with a 68-49 win over the Mount Anthony Patriots in Bennington on Feb. 20. Unlike the overtime thriller at the BUHS gym on Feb. 9, the Colonels led from start to finish in a dominating performance over their Route 9 rivals.

- The Colonels had a balanced scoring attack as Paul McGillion (16 points), Cam Frost (14 points, with four three-pointers), Tristan Evans (13 points), and Tate Chamberlin (12 points) all in double-figures. These four will need to duplicate this effort in the playoffs. MAU's Carter Thompson led all scorers with 20 points.

- Brattleboro finished the regular season at 12-8 and earned the sixth seed in the Division I playoffs. At press time, the Colonels were scheduled to host No. 11 Burr & Burton in a first-round game on Feb. 28.

- Alex Parker-Jennings scored 20 points as Leland & Gray beat Mill River, 67-30, on Feb. 20



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Brattleboro guard Reese Croutworst scored 16 points in the Colonels' 45-31 loss to Burr & Burton in a Division I girls' basketball first-round playoff game on Feb. 21 in Manchester.

in North Clarendon. Parker-Jennings also had a great night against Arlington as he scored 27 points to lead the Rebels to a 53-52 win on Feb. 22.

- Leland & Gray closed out the regular season on Feb. 25 in Townshend with a 50-48 loss to Bellows Falls to finish with a 10-10 record and the seventh seed in the Division IV playoffs. At press time, the Rebels were scheduled to host No. 10 Poultney in a first-round game on Feb. 28.

- With the win over Leland & Gray, Bellows Falls finished 15-5 with the No. 5 seed in Division III. They will host No. 12 Windsor in a first-round game at Holland Gymnasium on March 1.

- Twin Valley stayed close for three quarters, but Green Mountain used five three-pointers in the fourth quarter to pull away for a 33-19 win in Chester on Feb. 20. With a 60-24 loss to White River Valley on Feb. 24, the Wildcats finished the regular season with a 4-16 record and the 13th seed in Division IV. At press time, the Wildcats were scheduled to be in White River Junction to face No. 4 Mid-Vermont Christian in a first-round game on Feb. 28.

Ice hockey

- The Brattleboro boys started the final week of the regular season with a 4-2 loss to Rutland on Feb. 20 at Withington Rink. The Colonels had a 2-1 lead heading into the final period before Rutland scored three unanswered goals to win it. Evan Wright and Alex Dick were the Colonels' goal scorers and goaltender Darek Harvey made 32 saves.

- Brattleboro finished the regular season at 6-13-1 and ended up with the 11th seed in the Division II playoffs. On Feb. 25, the Colonels headed north to play the sixth-seeded Burlington Seahorses in a first-round playoff game and lost in heartbreaking fashion, 1-0, in overtime.

- The winning goal came with 1:20 left in the first overtime. Burlington's Jack Tomlinson scooped up a loose puck and dished it off to Sayre Fisher, who beat Brattleboro goaltender Darek Harvey to give the Seahorses their first home playoff win since 2010.

- The Brattleboro girls are

sitting out the Division II playoffs after finishing the regular season with a 2-18 record.

Nordic skiing

- The Brattleboro boys were in fifth place, while the Brattleboro girls were in sixth place, after the opening day of the Division I state championships on Feb. 23 at Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

- In the 5-kilometer classic races, the Mount Anthony boys continued their dominance as they placed three skiers in the top 10, including a first-place finish by Luke Rizio in 11 minutes, 37.7 seconds, to lead the Division I field. Mount Mansfield finished second and Champlain Valley was third.

- Brattleboro's top five boys were Gabe Jeppesen-Belleci (18th, 13:37.4), Nico Conathan-Leach (19th, 13:37.6), Oliver Herrick (32nd, 14:44.3), Desmond Longsmith (41st, 15:05.7), and Eben Wagner (43rd, 15:24.5). The Colonels foursome of Jeppesen-Belleci, Herrick, Longsmith, and Conathan-Leach finished fifth in the 4x2K relay race.

- Ava Whitney led the Brattleboro girls with an eighth-place finish in 15:26.8. Middlebury's Beth McIntosh won the race in a time of 13:32.9.

- The rest of the Colonels top five included Katherine Normadeau (15th, 16:17.2), Maeve Bald (30th, 17:48.3), Anna Cummings (39th, 19:21.1) and Addison DeVault (44th in 19:54.4). The Colonels quartet of Whitney, Bald, Cummings, and Normadeau finished sixth in the 4x2K relay. Burlington ended the first day of competition in first place, followed by Mount Anthony and Champlain Valley.

- At press time, the Colonels teams were scheduled to compete in the skate race on Feb. 28 at Rikert Nordic Center in Ripton.

Joe Shield named to VPA Hall of Fame

- One of Brattleboro Union High School's most versatile and accomplished student-athletes was selected to the Class of 2023 for the Vermont Principals' Association's Hall of Fame.

Joe Shield, who now lives in

Avon, Connecticut, was a member of the BUHS Class of 1980 and is considered one of the best three-sport student-athletes in school history.

- Shield played basketball, was a standout quarterback when Brattleboro went to the Vermont Division I football championship in 1978, and was a .400 career hitter in baseball. He was the Vermont Shrine football co-captain in 1980 in the team's victory over New Hampshire that year.

- After high school, Shield was a multi-sport athlete in college, where he threw for over 6,600 yards at Trinity College in Connecticut, and was a member of the NFL's Green Bay Packers in 1985 and 1986.

- Shield and the rest of the 2023 class will be formally inducted on Friday, May 12 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Montpelier. More information can be found at vpaonline.org/athletics/vpa-hall-of-fame.

CRVBL seeks new players and teams for 2023 season

- The Connecticut River Valley Baseball League (CRVBL), an amateur baseball league for players age 20 and up, is seeking individuals or teams to join the league for its upcoming 2023 season.

- Founded in 2002, the CRVBL consists of 4-8 teams based in the Connecticut River Valley, between Brattleboro and White River Junction. The season begins in mid-May and runs through mid-August. Teams play one nine-inning game per week, usually on Sunday mornings. There are usually 12 regular-season games followed by single-elimination playoffs.

- To be eligible to play in 2023, players must have a birth date of Dec. 31, 2003, or earlier.

- The level of play is competitive but with an emphasis on having fun. Some players played baseball in college, and a very small number have had low-level professional experience. The majority of players played in high school. Most are now in their 20s and 30s, with a few in their 40s or 50s. To learn more about the league and to inquire about joining, visit crvbl.com.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Leland & Gray forward Maggie Parker was the team's top scorer in the Rebels' first two Division IV girls' basketball playoff games. The Rebels will play Blue Mountain on March 1 in a semifinal game at the Barre Auditorium.

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