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## Koffee Kup must pay damages to laid-off employees

### Federal judge finds that the company failed to give sufficient notice of mass layoffs

By Fred Thys  
*VtDigger*

A federal court in Burlington last Thursday found that Koffee Kup, which closed in 2021, violated the federal law when it laid off hundreds of employees without sufficient notice.

On April 26, 2021, Koffee Kup, Vermont Bread Co. and Superior, all bakery facilities owned by Kup Co., a holding company, stopped operations.

Stuart Miller, an attorney representing the employees, estimates that 400 people were laid off.

Koffee Kup employed 156 people at its Burlington facility, and 91 employees worked at the Brattleboro-based Vermont Bread Co., according to a notice filed with the Vermont Department of Labor. Superior operated in

Connecticut.

KK Bakery Investment Co., whose sole owners were Leonard Levie and Jeffrey Sands, had bought a controlling share of Kup Co. on April 1. In turn, KKBIC is an affiliate of American Industrial Acquisition Corp., a company owned and managed by Levie.

Judge William K. Sessions found Thursday that all three entities are liable for the failure to give employees sufficient notice, as required by the WARN Act — the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act.

The plaintiffs are seeking \$3.6 million plus legal fees and interest.

Miller said the receivership will not have enough money to pay the entirety of the employees' claim. He said the receiver has set aside \$700,000, which would pay about

■ SEE KOFFEE KUP, A6



KEVIN O'CONNOR/VTDIGGER.ORG

Employees of Rescue Inc., Windham County's largest and longest-serving EMS provider, listen outside a standing-room-only open house on Aug. 26 at their Brattleboro headquarters.

## Rescue Inc. and its supporters press to restore service to Brattleboro

### As Brattleboro debates a potentially costly fire department takeover of emergency medical services, Windham County's largest and longest-serving ambulance provider is pitching its nearly six-decade ability to do the job

By Kevin O'Connor  
*VtDigger*

**B**RATTLEBORO—Approaching its 60th anniversary, Rescue Inc. — Windham County's largest and longest-serving ambulance provider — is marking an exceptionally healthy year.

The private nonprofit that serves 14 communities has opened Vermont's first training academy for emergency

medical services, signed pioneering support contracts with the town's main health care facilities — Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and the Brattleboro Retreat — and is set to distribute fall COVID-19 and flu vaccines to the uninsured for the state Department of Health.

"The regional model on display at Rescue Inc. could be Vermont's best chance at ensuring there's always an ambulance around when you need

one," *Seven Days* summed up in a March cover story about EMS challenges statewide.

Seemingly the only ones who disagree: municipal leaders in the provider's home base of Brattleboro.

They've spent the past year pursuing a potentially costlier plan to trade Rescue's 130 regional employees and 11 ambulances for their 24-member fire department — a majority of whom lack EMS experience,

records show — and three yet-to-be-obtained vehicles.

Back in February 2022, then-Town Manager Yoshi Manale was just weeks on the job when, behind closed doors, he reopened Brattleboro's nearly six-decade contract with Rescue.

He asked the agency to drop its \$285,600 annual fee and work for free, then a month later falsely stated that Rescue had pulled out of negotiations,

■ SEE RESCUE, A2

## Leland & Gray chosen for farm-to-school participation

### Program expected to help students learn more about what they eat and how it affects them

By Virginia Ray  
*The Commons*

**TOWNSHEND**—Going back to school at Leland & Gray Union Middle and High School this year will mean going back to basics as students focus on learning more about where their food comes from and what healthy eating habits look like.

After a competitive application process, Leland & Gray was among nine Northeastern school teams selected to be part of the Northeast Farm to School Institute in the 2023-24 school year.

Katie Morrison works for Food Connects as a Farm to School coach for Leland & Gray and other area schools. She and others from the school attended an intensive workshop at Shelburne Farms Institute for Sustainable Schools this summer.

"Farm to school is a program that works with students to learn about where their food comes

from and teaches them about healthy eating habits," Morrison says. "Farm to school programs are structured around the three Cs: classroom, cafeteria, and community, which means we try to incorporate nutrition and food systems education into all three of these areas."

She describes the bulk milk program as "a great way to provide students with a healthy, local milk option while also connecting them to a local dairy farm."

"As a coach, I support schools' farm-to-school programs in whatever way they need help — which can look very different at each school," Morrison says.

Support, she says, can include helping write grants to get funding for school gardens or a farm-to-school coordinator, helping farm-to-school teams set goals and stay on task, helping plan community events such as harvest dinners, and more.

Recent Farm to School activities by adult team members include attending the Farm to School Institute, establishing a school garden, participating in the state's Local Foods Incentive Grant, and incorporating farm-to-school concepts into Leland and Gray's project-based learning curriculum.

### In the kitchen and the garden

Food Service Director Jacob "Jake" Gallogly is in his second year at the school in that post, and he's excited about the program.

■ SEE FARM TO SCHOOL, A5

## Local EMS pioneer remembered as steadfast community volunteer



COURTESY PHOTO

Verne Bristol, left, talks with Chuck Cummings during an open house at Rescue Inc. Bristol, who along with Cummings was one of the founders of Rescue Inc., died on Aug. 23 at the age of 91.

### Verne Bristol, 91, a founder of Rescue Inc., was on the forefront of professionalizing emergency services in Vermont

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen  
*The Commons*

**D**UMMERSTON—Verne Bristol, one of the founders of Rescue Inc., died in his sleep on Aug. 23, six days after he celebrated his 91st birthday.

"Of course, we're very sad to see him leave us," says Patty Bristol Higgins, one of Bristol's two daughters. "He always said he wanted to go quickly and didn't want any of us kids hanging around a hospital bed. I'm so glad that he went peacefully in his sleep."

Bristol, one of 17 children, grew up in Dummerston and

attended the one-room schoolhouse that is now the home of the Dummerston Historical Society. After his graduation from Brattleboro High School in 1951, he joined the U.S. Army to fight in the Korean War and served with the 101st Airborne Division.

Fastidious by nature, he so impressed the higher ups, he was asked to serve an additional year in the service to guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C., an honor he declined so that he could come home to Vermont.

Bristol met his future wife, Mary, in 1955 and the pair married a year later. They had five

■ SEE BRISTOL, A2

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

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

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

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

**Bristol**

FROM SECTION FRONT

children, 15 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

**Professionalizing EMS services**

Verne Bristol and 14 other men, all members of the National Ski Patrol and certified in Advanced First Aid, began Rescue Inc., a nonprofit emergency response service, in 1966, well before EMS services were professionalized and such concepts as protocols and certifications were designed.

“We were all skiing Hogback Mountain [in Marlboro] on the weekends,” Bristol noted in an interview last year.

According to Bristol, Brattleboro Fire Chief T. Howard Mattison, then in his 20s, had just become fire chief, around the time that the fire department was reorganizing.

“As a group, we approached him and asked if we could base ourselves at the Fire Station and offer emergency medical care and transportation in Brattleboro, and he agreed to that,” said Bristol. “We bought our own supplies for years.”

Dr. James Miniszek, a doctor at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and Rescue’s first medical director, trained the volunteers, elevating their standard of care. A few years later, Rescue would become the first — and, for a time, the only — organization that could administer intravenous fluids to patients.

“All of us were first aid instructors. We had advanced first aid certification. Of these original 14 members, when the state created a designation for Emergency Medical Technician, 12 of us decided to take the first test offered by the state,” Bristol said.

“All of us passed with flying colors,” he said, making the Brattleboro EMTs charter members of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians in the United States in the 1970s.

“That was quite a thing for our little town and the state of Vermont,” said Bristol with pride.

Bristol said he was proud that Rescue Inc. didn’t charge for their services for several decades. By the 1970s, with more than 100 active volunteers, the organization was constantly raising money with events like the Hunters’ Breakfast so that “the

good, hard-working people of Brattleboro wouldn’t have to pay for our services,” he said.

“We assembled flashlights, we did spaghetti suppers — anything to raise enough funds to keep our services free,” Bristol said.

One older woman used to give Rescue a monthly donation of her change from a Band-Aid box, he said.

“That was the level of support Rescue Inc. garnered,” Bristol said. “I’m proud of that.”

Later, when Bristol became president of Rescue Inc., the nonprofit began offering an ambulance subscription service for \$25 per year.

His family members were always big supporters of what then was a new idea in Vermont.

“We’ve always been a part of the Rescue community,” remembers Bristol’s daughter Patty. “My mother was his favorite ‘call girl,’” she said laughing, referring to the dubious double entendre of the communications system that activated the volunteers in the earliest days of the organization.

In the days before beepers, cell phones, and other devices, five women — all wives of the Rescue volunteers — orchestrated a phone tree to alert their husbands when they received a Rescue call.

“We were also the victims for simulation trainings. All of us kids were on stretchers pretending that we had broken legs, or an illness. I remember once being put on a stretcher with an eye injury. I had a cow eye placed over my real eye so that the Rescue personnel knew where my injury was. That’s something a young girl doesn’t soon forget!”

“My father liked to tell the story of how when they first started spending the night at Rescue quarters on Canal Street, my uncle Bobby and my dad were on duty,” said Higgins, laughing. “A call came in during the middle of the night, and they grabbed each other’s glasses. Apparently, they were on the call for a long while before they realized the problem.”

On another night, Bristol’s widow, Mary, remembered a call in the middle of the night where he went to grab his underwear and run out the door, only to discover after he left the house that he’d grabbed her girdle.

For all the funny stories, there



Verne Bristol, right, in this photo from Rescue Inc.’s archives. Joining him are (left to right): Tom Goddard, Joe Thompson, John Mazzuchi (a vendor), James Bristol, and Ruth Kauffman.

never was a doubt that Bristol took his work at Rescue Inc. in the most serious of ways possible.

“He was a wonderful father — he was strict at home, but he was also a lot of fun,” Higgins said.

Rescue Inc. members past and present remember Verne Bristol the same way.

In an interview in the 1990s, Bristol said that “of all the things

we’ve done at Rescue Inc., I’m most proud of the men and women who have served Rescue over the years. There are many more of them out there than people realize.”

“There are fine people who give up so much of their time to continue the training that allows them the honor of serving their community,” he said.

Services for Verne Bristol will be held on Saturday, Sept. 2. A processional will begin at Rescue Inc. headquarters on Canal Street, which will proceed to the Center Congregational Church on Main Street, where he and his wife were married 67 years ago. An honor guard will stand by.

An obituary appears in the Milestones section, page A4.

**Bristol**

FROM SECTION FRONT

spurring him to suggest a municipal takeover he said would reap a “\$500,000 to \$700,000 net gain in revenue.”

None of Manale’s claims have proven true (a town-commissioned feasibility study found a municipal takeover would cost more), and he went on to abruptly resign eight weeks later.

But local leaders — who haven’t shared any of the background facts and figures — have yet to give up on the proposal, even after residents at this year’s March Town Meeting adopted a nonbinding resolution advocating a “transparent” decision-making process.

**New requirements for EMS proposals**

Rescue nonetheless is set to file paperwork this week seeking its old job back.

“We’re time-tested and proven,” Chief of Operations Drew Hazelton told the public at an Aug. 26 open house. “We have a depth of resources like nobody else.”

A standing-room-only crowd at Rescue headquarters greeted the news with applause. But the provider is anything but sure that municipal leaders will agree.

The town Selectboard, for example, issued a call for EMS proposals on July 27 and gave parties a month to submit bids. Three weeks later, on Aug. 18, board members regrouped behind closed doors and, on Aug. 22, amended the EMS application to add new requirements just seven days before an Aug. 29 filing deadline.

In the past, Rescue paid the town about \$8 per call processed by Brattleboro’s dispatch system, records show. Under the Aug. 22 addendum, municipal leaders said providers should anticipate that figure increasing nearly four times to \$36.37 per call — adding more than \$100,000 to any bid.

Likewise, the town never required Rescue in the past to obtain the financial guarantee of a performance bond but is calling for one now — upping costs even more.

Finally, the Aug. 22 addendum requires outside bidders to share a “complete billing rate fee schedule,” even though municipal leaders acknowledge they won’t be providing the public with the same data for the current interim model.



KEVIN O’CONNOR, VTDIGGER.ORG

**Rescue Inc., Windham County’s largest and longest-serving EMS provider, offers wristbands at an Aug. 26 open house at its Brattleboro headquarters.**

Rescue isn’t contesting the request for its billing rates. Such information could shed light on a larger out-of-state bidder such as American Medical Response, which obtained its current contract for nearby Greenfield, Massachusetts, by promising not to bill the municipality but instead to charge residents through their medical coverage.

But Rescue is questioning the other last-minute changes, as well as the fact that outsiders are required to offer proprietary information the town has yet to generate for a prospective takeover.

“It’s easy to play poker,” Hazelton said, “when you get to see your opponent’s cards.”

In response, municipal leaders say the new requirements are simply part of a “competitive public procurement process.”

“The Selectboard has not yet determined its dispatch fee, and this is subject to negotiations with private companies who submit a proposal,” Town Manager John Potter said.

“My experience with essential and critical contracts for municipalities, like EMS, is that a performance bond is a necessity. Without such protection, the public entity is exposed to the whims of an irresponsible private contractor and oftentimes left with little or no leverage,” he added.

Potter said his office would prepare a “framework” to compare a municipal takeover with an outside provider in an “apples-to-apples” way.

But third parties who must offer specifics aren’t convinced, especially when the town is relying on self-generated takeover estimates that don’t match its commissioned feasibility study or figures provided to VTDigger by the state’s seven largest combined municipal fire-EMS stations.

“Typical Vermont politics,” Clement Roger, director of operations for Amcare Ambulance Services of St. Albans, said about the Brattleboro situation. “An argument over personalities more so than dollars and cents.”

Amcare had considered bidding on the contract, Roger said. Then it calculated the costs and found annual expenses could run as high as \$2 million while insurance reimbursement could reap as little as half that.

Roger, a 33-year EMS veteran, joins a growing list of experts

statewide who question how Brattleboro — with little advanced experience or equipment and an annual fire department turnover rate of 66% — can set up an efficient system amid growing financial and staffing problems everywhere else.

In contrast, the Amcare operations director said Rescue had a well-established base of equipment and employees (its annual turnover rate is 5%) that, used regionally, cut costs for all communities involved.

His conclusion: “The town of Brattleboro would be crazy not to go with Rescue.”

He’s not alone in his assessment. To offer their own information, municipal leaders have launched their own webpage on the issue. In the public feedback section, only one resident — the spouse of a fire department administrator — has called for a municipal takeover. In comparison, more than 30 residents have submitted letters in support of Rescue.

Wrote Sandra Pinger, a bookkeeper: “If your goal is to raise taxes and cause havoc with the residents in the town of Brattleboro by choosing to go local instead of with another provider, then you are on the right track. If you are truly interested in serving our community with the best cost-effective option, then the answer is Rescue.”

And Heidi Fischer, an emergency department nurse: “I have been watching and living the mess the Selectboard and former town manager have made of emergency care in Brattleboro. I implore the Selectboard, please, for the good of Brattleboro residents’ health and well being, do what is right and best for each and every one of us. Find a way to restore the relationship with Rescue.”

Such talk permeated Rescue’s weekend open house, during which supporters distributed cards asking residents to communicate their concerns before the Selectboard holds a public forum scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 12 and votes on a plan Tuesday, Sept. 19.

“Why is the town not disclosing its costs if it’s requiring that of other people?” resident Robert Oeser asked when given the microphone. “I’m not a mathematician, but this doesn’t make any sense. How do we get back to something that resembles sanity?”

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Ann Braden

COURTESY PHOTO

## Gun safety advocacy group to honor its founder

GunSense Vermont celebrates Braden as the first recipient of its Leadership and Courage Award

BRATTLEBORO—GunSense Vermont, a nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy organization for common-sense gun safety measures, will host a public reception to award the inaugural Leadership and Courage Award to Brattleboro resident and author Ann Braden.

Braden founded GunSense Vermont following the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, where 20 children and six educators were killed by a gunman.

The event will take place at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center on Wednesday, Sept. 6, at 6 p.m.

“Ann Braden’s dedication has been instrumental in propelling GunSense Vermont’s mission forward and advocating for the safety and well-being of our community,” said GunSense Vermont Executive Director Conor Casey in a news release.

“As founder, she has been a driving force in shaping the organization’s mission and fostering its impact on reducing gun violence,” he continued. “There is no one more deserving of GunSense Vermont’s inaugural Leadership & Courage Award than Ann.”

The guest speaker at the event will be U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., a strong advocate for progress in implementing common-sense gun safety legislation. While she was majority leader of the Vermont State Senate, Balint led the passage of the first gun safety laws in the state’s history, aimed at keeping Vermont children, communities, and survivors of abuse safe.

Others recognizing Braden from the podium will include Grace Walter, who, along with her hometown of Newtown, was forever changed at the hand of a gun when a man entered Sandy Hook Elementary School. Walter has volunteered with GunSense Vermont on and off since 2018.

Bob Williamson, a GunSense Vermont board member, will present the Leadership and Courage Award to Braden. He became a gun reform activist 35 years ago when a mentally ill woman went on a shooting spree in his children’s elementary school in Winnetka, Illinois. Six youngsters were shot and one killed.

In addition to founding GunSense Vermont, Braden is a former middle school social studies teacher and author of three children’s books. She

co-hosts a podcast, “Lifelines: Books that Bridge the Divide,” with Pakistani American author Saadia Faruqi. She lives in Brattleboro with her husband and two children.

The statewide grass roots organization that Braden founded 10 years ago has played a pivotal role in passing new laws in Vermont, including raising the age to purchase firearms to 21, limiting high-capacity magazines, waiting periods for firearms purchases, and safe storage regulations.

Attending the \$50 event will be elected officials, community leaders, and concerned citizens — including some young folks. The Porch Café will cater hors d’oeuvres and Windham Wines will offer a cash bar.

Parking will be available next door at 28 Vernon St.

For tickets and more information about GunSense Vermont, visit [gunsensevt.org](http://gunsensevt.org). For more about the event, call 802-365-4106.

# Bear-ing down on a new school year at BUHS

Students return to classes this week with a new logo, mascot

By Virginia Ray  
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Some 70 years after the former logo and mascot first appeared, most vestiges of “Colonels” are gone for the start of the new school year at Brattleboro Union High School this week, having been replaced by the “Bears.”

“New [athletic team] uniforms have been ordered and most have come in,” said Kathy Rouleau, administrative assistant to the principal.

In the spring, students began meeting to choose a new mascot after widespread outcry to remove the Colonels name.

Also in contention were the names “Bobcats” and “Badgers,” but students chose the Bears with 47.5% of total votes.

School colors will remain purple and white. The summer re-branding included new uniforms and changing images on scoreboards, badges, signs, and the school website and letterhead.

Student Eva Gould, a member of the mascot screening committee, explained the process and decision to Windham Southeast School District school board members in June.

“At the heart of this committee’s work has been the very delicate task of respecting traditions from the past, while building upon a vision for the future,” she said.

“The challenge for our community as we go forth is to now model the same ability to respect our past, while we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our current student body in embracing their future,” Gould continued.

In seeking the board’s approval of the change to the Brattleboro Bears, she said that the teams would be named for the “fiercely protective animals who have been known to walk upon our very campus, have powerful instincts, high intelligence, highly developed communication skills, and are well known for their self-confidence and strength and therefore

symbolize worthy characteristics for our mascot.”

“Thank you to everyone who participated in the process, and go, Bears!” Gould concluded.

### A contentious name

The BUHS Student Council adopted the Colonels moniker for its sports teams in the 1950s, after the high school had moved to a location that had previously served as a mustering ground and field hospital for Union troops during the Civil War.

According to Brattleboro Area Middle School teacher Joe Rivers, the name also was linked to Col. William Brattle, a Revolutionary War soldier after whom the town was named.

Over time, the mascot image morphed into a Southern-style colonel, apparently a copy of the mascot of the University of Mississippi and used without permission. In 1996, the Colonel was incorporated with a confederate flag in the yearbook.

The image was banned in 2004 — the same year the University of Mississippi dropped the same logo — but the BUHS sports teams continued to use the name despite controversy over the image with an overt connection to slavery and racist roots.

In February, the nonprofit advocacy groups the Rutland Area NAACP and Gedakina filed formal complaints about school mascots across the state, including the BUHS Colonels.

The complaints were prompted by the passage of the Nondiscriminatory School Branding act in 2022, intended to “eliminat[e] the use of discriminatory school branding, which undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities and perpetuates negative stereotypes.”

*Always respect Mother Nature. Especially when she weighs 400 pounds and is guarding her baby.*

—JAMES ROLLINS



COURTESY PHOTO

The new Brattleboro Union High School logo, adopted earlier this year, makes its debut this week as the 2023-24 school year begins.

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# MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

## Obituaries

• **Carol Ellen Bascom, 61**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died unexpectedly, in the comfort of her home, on August 24, 2023 following a brief illness. Carol was born in Southbridge, Massachusetts on Dec. 2, 1961, the daughter of Harold E. and Mary J. (Vallee) Nichols. A long-time resident of Hinsdale, she attended Hinsdale public schools, including Hinsdale High School. Carol worked at Pine Heights Nursing Home, which she retired from this past June due to health issues. Previously during her younger years, she worked with the elderly as a caregiver in a position she thoroughly enjoyed. Carol enjoyed fishing, going to the ocean, and time spent with her mother, husband, and grandkids. On Nov. 15, 1986, in Hinsdale during a small ceremony for family and close friends, she was married to Donald Bascom, who survives. Besides her devoted husband of 36 years, survivors include her mother, Mary Nichols of Hinsdale; her three children, Tammy Stebbins (Jesse) and Lisa Bascom-Crosby (Rachel), all of Hinsdale, and Michael Bascom (Deanna) of Alabama; three brothers, Harold Nichols (Candace) of Hinsdale, Donald Nichols (Nicole) of Chesterfield, New Hampshire, and Timothy Nichols (Janice), also of Hinsdale; and a sister, Mary Nichols (Chet) of Hinsdale. Additionally, she leaves, seven grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her father, and siblings Thomas J. Nichols and Beverly A. Howe. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of her life will be held at a future date and time that will be announced. Donations to the Hinsdale Volunteer Fire Department, 13 Depot St., Hinsdale, NH 03451. If you wish to express condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).

• **Thomas "Gunn" Benson, 40**, of Guilford. Died unexpectedly at his home on Aug. 21, 2023. Tommy was born in Greenfield, Massachusetts on Jan. 23, 1983, the son of Lawrence Benson and Debbie Franklin. He was raised and educated in Guilford and attended Brattleboro Union High School. At the time of his death, he worked as a property manager in Stamford, Vermont and, during the winter months, he was a trail groomer and road supervisor for Mount Snow in West Dover, his favorite job and work place. Previously, he worked at Rashad's Nursery in West Brattleboro and, for several years, was employed at the Marina Restaurant on Putney Road. An ardent outdoorsman, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, chopping wood, and puttering around his home. He had a deep love and profound appreciation for nature and considered the woods his church. Tommy was a devoted Red Sox, Celtics, and Patriots fan. He also liked to follow NASCAR. Active in local sports, he was involved with the Greater Brattleboro Area Men's Softball and Basketball leagues. Survivors include his mother Debbie and step-father Mark Rosner of West Springfield, Massachusetts; one sister, Samantha Franklin Jay of Guilford; his favorite aunt, Diane

Rounds of Guilford; three uncles, Todd Franklin (Charlene) of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Garrett (Debbie) and Kurt Benson, both of Colrain, Massachusetts; his cousin and partner in crime, Eric Rounds; and cousins Joshua Benson of Colrain and Heidi, Keith, and Kristie Franklin of New York. He also leaves a large host of friends and acquaintances. Tommy was predeceased by his father; maternal grandparents, Russell and Joan Franklin; and paternal grandparents, Lawrence and Nancy Benson. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside committal services were conducted on Aug. 26 in Baker Cemetery in Guilford. Donations to Jenna's Promise, P.O. Box 575, Johnson, VT 05656; or Guilford Fair Association, 466 Packers Corners Road, Guilford, VT 05301 in care of David Franklin. If you wish to express condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).



• **Verne Richard Bristol, 91**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Aug. 23, 2023 at his home. He had spent five wonderful days preceding his death celebrating his 91st birthday with family, through visits and telephone conversations. Verne was born on Aug. 17, 1932, in Brattleboro, Vermont, the fifth of 17 children born to the late Elizabeth (Pratt) Bristol and Everett Edwin Bristol of Brattleboro. All of his primary education was in Vermont, attending schools in Townshend, Dummerston, and Brattleboro. He graduated from Brattleboro High School with the Class of 1951, where he excelled as a student-athlete in basketball, cross country, and track and field. His school record for discus throw stayed intact for nearly 25 years after his graduation. During high school, Verne was also a member of the Vermont National Guard. In 1996, Verne served as Grand Marshal of the BUHS alumni parade. Immediately following graduation, he joined the Army and served in the 101st Airborne Division. Promoted to corporal out of leadership school, he spent 19 months in the Far East Command (Korea). He spent the majority of his career as a squad leader early on in the war, then trained as a Morse code radioman during the latter part of the war. He earned 6 service medals as well as the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Verne joined the Brattleboro Ski Patrol in high school and continued his association upon discharge from the military. He led the Brattleboro Ski Patrol for three years and was selected Patrolman of the Year in 1972. He served in the National Ski Patrol system for more than 25 years. His chosen profession was as a printer, as were many of the Bristol men in his family. He worked for Stone Typesetting, The Book Press, and spent the majority of his career as an offset printer for American Stratford, all in Brattleboro. Although his chosen profession as a printer spanned 25 years, his greatest love has always been that of helping people and emergency medicine. In 1966, he and 15 others, all members of the National Ski Patrol, formed what is now Rescue Inc. As a founding member, he worked as a medical volunteer and as a president of the organization. In 1984, he accepted the full-time role of

CEO/Administrator and was able to enact a great deal of change in the organization prior to his retirement in 1997. He wrote the by-laws of Rescue Inc. and designed the basis for the current organizational structure for the squad. This helped to lay the groundwork for what has made Rescue Inc. a premier rescue squad in the region today. During his leadership tenure, Rescue Inc. was honored as the "Best Rescue Squad" in the entire state of Vermont. He was a pioneer in the early days of Emergency Medical Services as he and 14 other members of Rescue Inc. were among the first certified in the state of Vermont as EMTs to give intravenous fluids in the field. As a charter member, he was one of the first nationally-certified EMTs when the program started in the early 1970s. He was appointed to the 9-1-1 committee and was instrumental in helping to bring the 9-1-1 system to the state of Vermont. For this work, he was honored in 1972 by the Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce as its "Man of the Year." Verne also served on the Board of Directors of both Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and Putney Credit Union. He also volunteered as an Auxiliary State Police officer for more than five years. The Rescue family, including past and current leadership, have remained close friends with Verne throughout the years, and he was especially grateful to continue that connection. Upon his retirement from Rescue, a day was set aside as "Verne Bristol Day" in Brattleboro. Verne also received numerous awards from the Vermont State Police, local police, service clubs, the Red Cross, the Heart Association, the March of Dimes and from the membership of Rescue Inc. In 1955, Verne met the love of his life, Mary Graves Bristol. They were married a year later on March 31, 1956 at Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro, where they have been members for the past 67 years. They were blessed with five children. They were always known as "Mary and Verne" or "Verne and Mary." They were a team. He was a loving, compassionate, and loyal family man. They enjoyed their friends and especially the closeness of family. Their home was always open to friends and family. They took many vacation trips with their children when they were younger and many more as they grew older. Throughout their lives they loved going to the beaches of Maine and to visit family throughout Canada. Their favorite beach was Popham Beach, which they shared with their older grandchildren on several trips, still to be known to them as "Pom Pom" beach. The grandchildren remember apple picking, or going to beaches, hiking up a mountain for blueberries to the "old shanty" in Dummerston and setting up for the annual Easter Egg hunt at their house in Guilford. Verne always loved to see the smile on their happy faces! He always had a friendly lap for the great-grandchildren to sit upon. Verne was an avid organic vegetable gardener, and his gardens were beautiful, bountiful, and without weeds. He would spend hours in his gardens and perfected new methods for growing his tomatoes or cucumbers to get the best yield. He wrote a "white paper" on growing tomatoes organically and shared it with family members so everyone could learn from his experience. He was the family expert and the one everyone looked up to. He spent hours reading and researching through books, not computers, different methods and putting his own twist on them. This knowledge has been passed down for generations. Verne also enjoyed skiing, hunting and fishing, collecting war movies, and his beloved Red Sox and Patriots. Verne was predeceased by his parents, and siblings Edwin, Margery, Eugene, George, Barbara, Robert,

Virginia, Shirley, Esther. He is survived by his wife of 67 years and their children Patricia Higgins, John (Janet) Bristol, James Bristol, David Bristol and Wendy Pritting, and Heidi (James) Gray. He leaves behind siblings Betty Jane Wellman, and Neil, Charles, Dean, and Stewart Bristol, along with 17 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Verne touched many lives and will always be known for being a kind, caring, and compassionate man willing to always help someone in need. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services will be on Saturday, Sept. 2, at 11 a.m., at Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro, with an ambulance procession starting at 10:30 a.m. from Rescue Inc. on Canal Street. The service will also be livestreamed on Zoom at [bit.ly/729-verne](http://bit.ly/729-verne). Donations to Rescue, Inc. P.O. Box 593, Brattleboro VT 05302.



• **Wendy Lynn Chadwick (Morissette), 68**, of Hobe Sound, Florida. Died on Aug. 6, 2023, after a lengthy battle with cancer. She was born on Aug. 28, 1954 in North Carolina, and grew up in Brattleboro, graduating from Brattleboro Union High School and then the University of New Hampshire. She worked in the restaurant industry for 30 years before expanding her skills and sharing her talents at Riverwood's retirement community where she was a beloved concierge. Her effervescent personality and positive attitude was well received by the elderly residents. Wendy excelled at connecting with people wherever she went. She was an extrovert who recharged by being with people, and she could light up a room with her larger than life vivacious, friendly personality. She was an excellent cook. Entertaining friends and family was one of the joys of her life. She was always up for company and a game of cards. Wendy loved the ocean. She lived within minutes of the coast for most of her adult life, including New Hampshire, California, South Carolina, and Florida. She loved to travel especially by boat and she took many large and small cruises. In 1993, she married Phil Chadwick, the love of her life. She doted on her three nephews so much that many in the family simply referred to her as "Auntie." Wendy is survived by her loving husband Phil, his brother Kenneth and niece Elisha, mother Elsa, sisters Roxanne, Mikell, and Tara; brother-in-law Bryan Archibald; nephews Nate, Calvin, and Max; and brother-in law Gianni Hohl Rome. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A private service is planned for a future date.

• **James S. "Jim" Chickering, 74**, of Saxtons River. Died peacefully on Aug. 21, 2023 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Jim was born Sept. 19, 1948 to Leslie and Marion (Smith) Chickering and was raised in North Walpole, New Hampshire. He attended schools in Bellows Falls, and went on to work for J & L and Ruger through his adult years. James loved fishing, tending to his yard, playing card games and telling stories about his adventures. Jim was also a trustee and faithful member of the Community Christian Church in Athens. James is survived by his son Patrick (Michelle) and their children Liam and Max Parker and Alanna (Benjamin) Cox, and great-grandson Caleb Cox; his daughter Tracie Shaughnessy and her children Ryan and Jordan Newcomb. He is also survived by his beloved stepchildren: Shawn Bartlett (Maryann) and their children Elizabeth and Maddox; Shane (Nicole) Bartlett and their

children Conner and McKenna, Joshua (Sheena) Bartlett, and their children Caitlin, Alex, Ashley, Gracie, Waylon, and Jenna; Jennifer (Alphonso) Chambers and their children Elizabeth and Kaleb; and Jessica (Tim) Akusis and their children Briana, Kylee and Gracie and Rachel Greenberg. James is also survived by his siblings Robert Chickering, Kathleen Aldrich, and Patricia Paulhus. James was predeceased by his parents, his first wife Anita, his second wife Donna, as well as his son-in-law Micheal Shaughnessy and siblings Elizabeth Lawlor and Ann Robinson. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral service took place Aug. 27 at Community Christian Church in Athens, followed by burial in Saxtons River Cemetery. Donations to the Norris Cotton Cancer Center, One Medical Center Drive, Lebanon, NH 03756.

• **Mary Cota, 76**, of Jamaica. Died at her home, with her family by her side, on Aug. 19, 2023. She was born on Feb. 27, 1947 in Springfield, Vermont to the late Richard and Bernadine (Richmond) Garropy. Mary loved to go hunting, fishing, and camping with her husband Gary and their children. She is survived by her husband, Gary Cota; her children Shawn Howard of Jamaica, Dawn Howard and her companion Scott Johnston and Kelly Howard of Bellows Falls; her grandchildren Dylan, Rhett, Angel, Grant Jr., and Nicole; and four great-grandchildren. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: There will be no services at this time. Donations to Grace Cottage Hospital, P.O. Box 216, Townshend, VT 05353. Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield is assisting the family with the arrangements.



• **Jay Bernard Ginsburg, 82**, of Westmoreland, New Hampshire. Died on Aug. 19, 2023. Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey on May 24, 1941, Jay grew up in nearby Ventnor. He was driven throughout his life by intellectual pursuits, which were sparked at an early age. As a youngster, he listened to opera, read extensively (acquiring a large collection of Heritage Books, many of which have been donated to the Keene Public Library), and was a founding contributor to his high school literary magazine. From his earliest days, he worked in the regionally-renowned Ginsburg's Bakery with his father and uncles. Jay attended St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, where he met the love of his life Susan Liebersohn. They married in 1966, and had five children (four of whom survive), and 12 grandchildren. Jay served in the Army as a clerk during the Vietnam War. This experience was something he grappled with throughout the remainder of his life. After returning home, he worked briefly as a stock broker, and then in the insurance industry. Jay and Susan moved to Keene in 1981 to pursue their dream of promoting healthy living by opening a natural food store. Foodstuffs was the first of several locally well-known health food stores in Keene and, for a time, featured a deli and a sister restaurant, Butternuts. Throughout their lives, Jay and Susan were avid art collectors. They recently donated Japanese prints which Jay started acquiring during his service in the Vietnam War to the University of St. Joseph in Hartford, Connecticut, and the Thorne-Sagendorph Museum at Keene State College. In the last decade Jay wrote and

Susan edited two self-published memoirs, *Post-It's From My Life: Searching for Meaning in the Mundane* and *Post-It's From My Life: Still Searching, Tome 2*. In addition to appreciating intellectual pursuits, healthy living, and the arts, Jay was well known for his love of a good sandwich. He passed this along to his surviving family. Jay will be greatly missed by his children, David and his wife Rivka (Maxwell) of Cleveland, Ohio; David's children Meir, Lindsay, and Adina; and David and Rivka's children Yeshiyahu and Devorah; Nathaniel and his wife Rebecca (Wechter) of East Greenwich Rhode Island, and their twins Esme and Baya; Steven with spouse Shannon (Raider) of New Haven, Connecticut, and their child Lev; Miriam and her husband Matt (Merve) of Springfield, Vermont, and their children Maggie, Maxwell, McCoy, and Maverick; and his dear sister Susan Roman. He was predeceased by his parents Benjamin and Cecilia "Bunny" Laskin, and his daughter Mirra, who died in infancy. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In Jay's last few months, his quality of life was greatly improved by Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services. Donations to them are suggested (P.O. Box 564, Keene, NH, 03431, [hcsservices.org](http://hcsservices.org)). To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](http://atamaniuk.com).

• **Ann Lavalla, 91**, of West Chesterfield and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died at her daughter's home in Winter Garden, Florida on Aug. 8, 2023. She graduated from Brattleboro High School with the Class of 1949, and was a homemaker and secretary, retiring from JCPenney. The daughter of Shirley and Esther (Darling) Bevis, Mrs. Lavalla was the wife of the late Charles Lavalla. She is survived by her brother (George) Steven Bevis; her children, Mark Lavalla, Kevin Lavalla, and Holly Morelli; and five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside services were held Aug. 28 at Pine Grove Cemetery in Hinsdale. Donations to the Peace Ridge Sanctuary, 1111 Littlefield Rd, Brooks, ME 04921 ([peaceridgesanctuary.org](http://peaceridgesanctuary.org)).

• **Earl Ivan "Buster" Whidden, 69**, of VanBuren, Maine. Died on Aug. 17, 2023. He was born in Pennsylvania on Dec. 21, 1953, the son of Roseanna and Elroy Whidden Sr. Earl is survived by brothers Donald Gleason and Elroy Whidden, Jr., both of VanBuren, Maine; a sister, Rosemary (Whidden) Sisto of Brattleboro; his children, Jennifer Powers of Vermont and Jason Eagen of Maine; grandchildren Jordan, Austin, Katie, and Megan of Vermont, Faith of Connecticut, and Willow and Emmett of Maine. He is also survived by several nieces, nephews, and cousins. Earl was predeceased by a sister, Minnie Williams, brothers Harold Gleason and Alan Whidden, his parents, and a son, Earl. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: None provided.

## Services



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

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

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Hi, my name is **Asher!** I came from the South to find my new home. I would do best with a patient owner who will give me some time to settle down. Once I get to know you I will be your best buddy. I would do best in a home without any small kids. Other dogs may be ok with me. Cats are new and I am not sure about them.

Hi, I'm **Nala!** I am a sweet girl who came from a house with lots of cats. Dogs would be new to me so a slow introduction would be best. I would do best as the only cat in the home. I get along well with kids that are respectful of cats. If I sound like the best fit come meet me today!

Hi, I'm **Sarabi!** I am a sweet girl who came from a house with lots of cats. Dogs would be new to me so a slow introduction would be best. I would do best as the only cat in the home. I get along well with kids that are respectful of cats. If I sound like the best fit come meet me today!

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# Makers in the making at BFUHS this year

High school is one of six in the state to launch creative workshops with federal funding

By Virginia Ray  
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—Bellows Falls Union High School has been selected to be part of the VT MakerSchools, a three-year initiative to support selected schools across the state to develop, implement, and sustain makerspace programs.

As defined by makerspaces.com, a makerspace is a “collaborative work space inside a school, library or separate public/private facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high-tech to no-tech tools. These spaces are open to kids, adults, and entrepreneurs and have a variety of maker equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, [computing numerical control] machines, soldering irons, and even sewing machines.”

Generator, Burlington’s premier makerspace, launched the program with a \$365,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education that came as part of former U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy’s congressionally directed spending request in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2022. This funding will support the build-out of makerspaces at BFUHS

and five other rural Vermont secondary schools.

According to VT MakerSchools, the program’s goals include “increasing access to emerging technologies and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education, providing professional development training for Vermont educators on makerspace tech, building pathways to post-secondary opportunities for high school graduates, and providing greater access for rural communities to high-paying jobs in technical fields.”

“The partnership with Generator means that BFUHS will have support developing a new makerspace curriculum, we will get advice for adding and maintaining tools and equipment, and will have professional development for implementation,” says Kate O’Connor, marketing and community relations specialist for the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union.

“The focus on post-secondary opportunities is especially interesting and is a focus at the high school level, for sure,” she says. “We also offered a cross-district — we reached over to neighboring districts to market this

opportunity that was available in our district — with a professional development opportunity this summer through the Create Make Learn Institute.”

### New leadership at BFUHS, BFMS

Administrative teams at Bellows Falls Middle School and Bellows Falls Union High School are ready for the new school year.

“I can already tell that we are a great team and this administrative structure will be a positive and supportive experience for staff and students,” wrote BFMS Principal Henry Bailly on the school website (bfms.wnesu.org).

Joining Bailly at the helm at BFMS this year are Cat Seltzer, dean of students, and Megan McFarland, assistant principal.

Having received her degrees from Keene State College and Antioch University, Seltzer has been in area schools for a number of years, including at Kurn Hattin Homes for Children as a classroom teacher and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) coordinator, and as an academic case manager and special education teacher in Keene, New Hampshire.

McFarland received her

master’s degree in educational leadership from Keene State College and joins the team from Lebanon (New Hampshire) Middle School, where she was a sixth-grade language arts teacher.

At Bellows Falls Union High School, Kelly O’Ryan has assumed the principalship and is joined by Mark Gebo, dean of students, and Alyssa Hamilton, assistant principal.

As they prepared for the opening of school on Aug. 30, O’Ryan said she looked forward to gathering in community with the high school students and staff members

and “amplifying student leadership opportunities” in the coming year.

Gebo served as school counselor at BFUHS for six years before assuming this new role. Hamilton joins the team after receiving her master’s degree in educational leadership and serving in schools, in part, as a literacy coach and language arts teacher.

Hamilton has been assisting with daily operations of the high school, and Gebo has spent time this summer developing a behavioral matrix, a tool it is hoped will provide “clarity about behavior management and support for students regarding safety, engagement, and access to education” for all high school students.

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— NIKOLA TESLA

## Farm to school

He serves free breakfast and lunch daily for every student at Leland & Gray. “We will also be serving supper for any students involved in after-school activities,” he adds.

Gallogly says about 80% of meals are prepared “completely from scratch.”

The other 20% are considered “fast scratch,” in that they contain some pre-made items, such as tater tots, pastries, or chicken tenders.

“At this point, it’s safe to say 20% of our food is locally procured,” says the director. “All of our beef, eggs, potatoes, flour, and dairy come from Vermont. We are making the switch to Miller Farm milk [from Vernon] later this year.”

While students aren’t involved in daily meal preparation or buying products, they are involved in planning and maintaining the garden, where salad bar produce for lunch is grown.

Gallogly says this year he’s planning on holding a Vermont Junior Iron Chef team, too.

The school also plans to launch Journey Away next spring. That’s a semester-long program exploring food and culture in Vermont, Louisiana, Vietnam, and France.

Teacher Jessa Harger is director of the Journey Away program, which she calls “an experiential semester course” wherein students can earn humanities, math,

and science credits “while exploring food system and culture.”

“We will look how food is farmed, distributed, and consumed and learn how landscapes and history shape food culture and systems,” says Harger.

### The program

As described on its website (shelburnefarms.org), Shelburne Farms Institute for Sustainable Schools “is expanding its farm to school professional learning program nationwide, hosting teams from Kansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Rhode Island as they adapt a Vermont-born model — the Northeast Farm to School Institute — to strengthen food systems education and local purchasing in their states.”

Since 2010, the year-long Northeast Farm to School Institute has built enduring farm-to-school programs in more than 130 schools, districts, and early childhood programs, according to a post on the site by Sarah Webb, the nonprofit’s communications manager.

More than half of U.S. children — nearly 30 million students — get daily nutrition from school meals.

Schools spend more than \$6.3 billion on food, and the U.S. Department of Food and Agriculture’s national Farm to School Census estimates \$1.26

FROM SECTION FRONT

billion was spent on local foods in 2019. Since the onset of the pandemic, an increasing number of children are relying on school food for their daily nutritional needs and schools are feeding more students.

The Northeast Farm to School Institute model, created by Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day), helps school and early childhood teams — which include classroom teachers, nutrition staff members, administrators, community partners, and others — create action plans “to build a school culture of wellness,” Webb writes.

She quotes Vermont FEED Project Director Betsy Rosenbluth: “It’s such a great opportunity to make lasting and systemic change in schools, early childhood programs, and food systems, not just in the Northeast, but across the country, so that kids can eat and connect with fresh local foods, farmers can serve their local communities, and those communities can become more resilient.”

“Through hands-on learning, students can connect the dots about where their food comes from and the impacts of their choices on their bodies, the environment, and the local food system and community,” Webb says.

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Wednesday, October 4th



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Former Plant Manager Mike Griswold looks at a recently shuttered Vermont Bread Company in 2021.

JEFF POTTER COMMONS FILE PHOTO

## Koffee Kup

20% to 25% of the claim. The rest, he said, will have to be recovered from the owners.

Federal law requires companies with 100 or more employees to give employees 60 days' notice when it lays off 50 or more people at any given location, provided that those employees represent more than a third of the employees at that location.

The Koffee Kup employees received no advance warning. The layoff notices, dated April 26, said the bakeries were closing that day. Some employees were handed the notices the next day. Notices were mailed to all employees between April 27 and April 29.

On April 29, some of the laid-off employees sued on behalf of all the laid-off employees, claiming they were not given the notice required under the WARN Act.

On May 6, the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor at the time, Michael Harrington, wrote a letter to Sands, who had signed the layoff notices, asking why notice was not given in accordance with Vermont's Notice of Potential Layoffs Act. He received a response from a company attorney claiming that Koffee Kup was a "faltering company" facing "unforeseen business circumstance."

Under the "unforeseen business circumstance" exception, a company does not have to provide 60 days' notice if the layoffs could not have been foreseen. Under the "faltering company" exception, if the company was actively seeking investors to stave off closing and in good faith believed that disclosing layoffs would scare off investors, it is excused from the

60-day notice.

Based on that response, the general counsel for the Vermont Department of Labor determined that Koffee Kup was justified in not meeting the 60-day notice requirement.

But courts have held that, for a company to avail itself of the exceptions to the 60-day rule, it must provide at least some notice. Since Koffee Kup and its owners provided no notice, Judge Sessions found that they could not use that defense.

In addition, he said, the "unforeseen business circumstance" must be from an outside force, and he found none in this case.

As for the "faltering business" exception, Judge Sessions found that Levie and Sands had plenty of funds to save Koffee Kup had they chosen to do so, and they

would not have needed outside investment.

Judge Sessions found Koffee Kup and its owners liable for back pay and benefits for the laid-off employees, with the amount of damages to be determined in future court proceedings.

"The direct employer, Koffee Kup, was liable simply because it was the employer and didn't give 60 days' notice," said Miller, the employees' attorney, explaining the decision.

The owners were liable, Miller explained, because they controlled the company and made all employment decisions, including the one to lay people off.

Attorneys for the receiver and for the owners did not immediately respond to requests for interviews.

FROM SECTION FRONT

## BAPC launches 'Substance Over Substances' campaign

BRATTLEBORO—Windham County Prevention Partnership (WCPP) — a coalition consisting of West River Valley Thrives, Building a Positive Community, and Deerfield Valley Community Partnership — is encouraging everyone to go "Substance Free" during the month of September.

According to WCPP, substances "can be anything we use out of habit to comfort ourselves in times of stress, uncertainty, loneliness, or boredom. Examples include alcohol, cannabis, sugar, or caffeine."

The organization urges people "to join us on a powerful and transforming journey this September prioritizing substance over substances for the full month," adding that "this is a fantastic way to reclaim your mental and physical well-being, boost your energy and attention, discover new loves and activities, and create healthy habits for long-term wellness."

The goal of WCPP's Substance Over Substances campaign is helping people to create "a life full of meaningful experiences (substance) without reliance on things that dilute or distract (substances) from authentic connections."

"We recognize that giving up alcohol, caffeine, cannabis, or sweets can seem intimidating; we absolutely understand! Starting out can be difficult, and breaking free from previous patterns is no easy task! But rest assured — it gets simpler with time, and the benefits are tremendous."

WCPP says participants in this campaign "will become a part of a caring community that understands your challenges, offers encouragement, and celebrates every step along the road."

For additional information, or to sign up for Substance Over Substances September, visit [windhampartnership.com/sos](http://windhampartnership.com/sos).

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**SUNDAY**

9am • Horse Obstacle Challenge

10am • Ox Pull

10am-2pm • Classic Car Show

1pm • Fire Department Muster

**MONDAY**

8am • Horse Show

10am • Horse Pull

10am • Cattle Show

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COLUMN | Creative Conversations

‘Traditional jazz at its best is played live, and it’s social, and there’s dancing’

Tuba Skinny brings its New Orleans band to the Latchis on Aug. 31



Tuba Skinny, shown here performing in the French Quarter, will play at the Latchis on Aug. 31.

DEREK BRIDGES/CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE

**T**uba Skinny brings its world-renowned traditional New Orleans jazz to the Latchis Theatre on Thursday, Aug. 31st at 7 p.m.

“Tuba Skinny came to our attention through a super fan who encouraged us to book them,” says Jon Potter, executive director of Latchis Arts, in an email to *The Commons*. “Since then, I’ve become absolutely hooked on their music. It’s fun, very tuneful, and very rhythmic. They get your toes tapping.”

Potter described Tuba Skinny as “some of the premier players of this style of music in the world today.”

“And I love their story: young players who got their start playing on the streets of New Orleans,

Brattleboro



**VICTORIA CHERTOK** covers arts and entertainment in Vermont for *The Commons*. She is a classically trained harpist and received a B.A. in music at Bucknell University.

often bicycling to their gigs,” he adds.

In 2009, Tuba Skinny began as a street band in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The group has grown in popularity, assisted by more than 500 videos available on YouTube that have collectively garnered hundreds of thousands of views.

Its musicians have become known as

world-class interpreters of traditional jazz of the 1920s and 1930s. Their repertoire includes jug band music, spirituals, country blues, string band music, ragtime, and New Orleans R&B.

In the last 14 years, the band has released 12 albums and has toured the U.S. and around the globe.

Tuba Skinny includes five of the original band members, and all eight musicians live in and around New Orleans: Craig Flory on clarinet, Shaye Cohn on cornet, Barnabus Jones on trombone, Erika Lewis on vocals and bass drum, Max Bien Kahn on resonator guitar and tenor banjo, Greg Sherman on vocals and guitar, Todd Burdick on sousaphone, and Robin Rapuzzi on washboard.

*The Commons* reached Tuba Skinny’s

washboard player Robin Rapuzzi, 35, of New Orleans on tour in Maine recently to talk with him about the origins of the band, the allure of jazz music, and what it takes to be a washboard player. Here’s an excerpt of their conversation.

**VICTORIA CHERTOK:** Where did the name “Tuba Skinny” come from?

**ROBIN RAPUZZI:** It started as a nickname for our tuba player, Todd Burdick, who is very skinny. (Todd doesn’t play tuba anymore; he plays sousaphone.)

Basically, when our band would busk, we would ride our bikes to Royal Street and we would do that so often, the locals would yell out, “Tuba Skinny.” They were referencing Tuba Fats [Anthony Lacen], a great performer and beloved tuba player in New Orleans who fought for street performing back in the 1990s.

**V.C.:** I heard that you play almost every Saturday night at a traditional club in the French Quarter where French President [Emmanuel] Macron visited on a recent trip to New Orleans.

**R.R.:** We play weekly, and it’s a free show. It is outside of the French Quarter in the Marigny neighborhood. It feels like home to us, because we’ve been playing there over a decade. We also play regularly at local yearly festivals such as New Orleans Jazz [and Heritage] Fest [jival] and French Quarter Fest.

**V.C.:** Is Tuba Skinny still busking on the streets in the French Quarter?

**R.R.:** Not as often as we used to, because the main street in the French Quarter had not been available to buskers recently. But the pedestrian mall at Royal [Street] in the French Quarter has just been reinstated. It took a lot of hard work going to lots of city council meetings trying to teach the city about the history of the pedestrian mall.

**V.C.:** Where did the term “busking” come from?

**R.R.:** In medieval times, street poets and street singers would hold baskets while they sang. Once they made enough money at the top of the basket, they would pull a little string and then the money would go to the bottom of the basket and the top half would be empty again. So it might have come from the word “basket.” Today, it means musicians on the street, as well as jugglers and magicians.

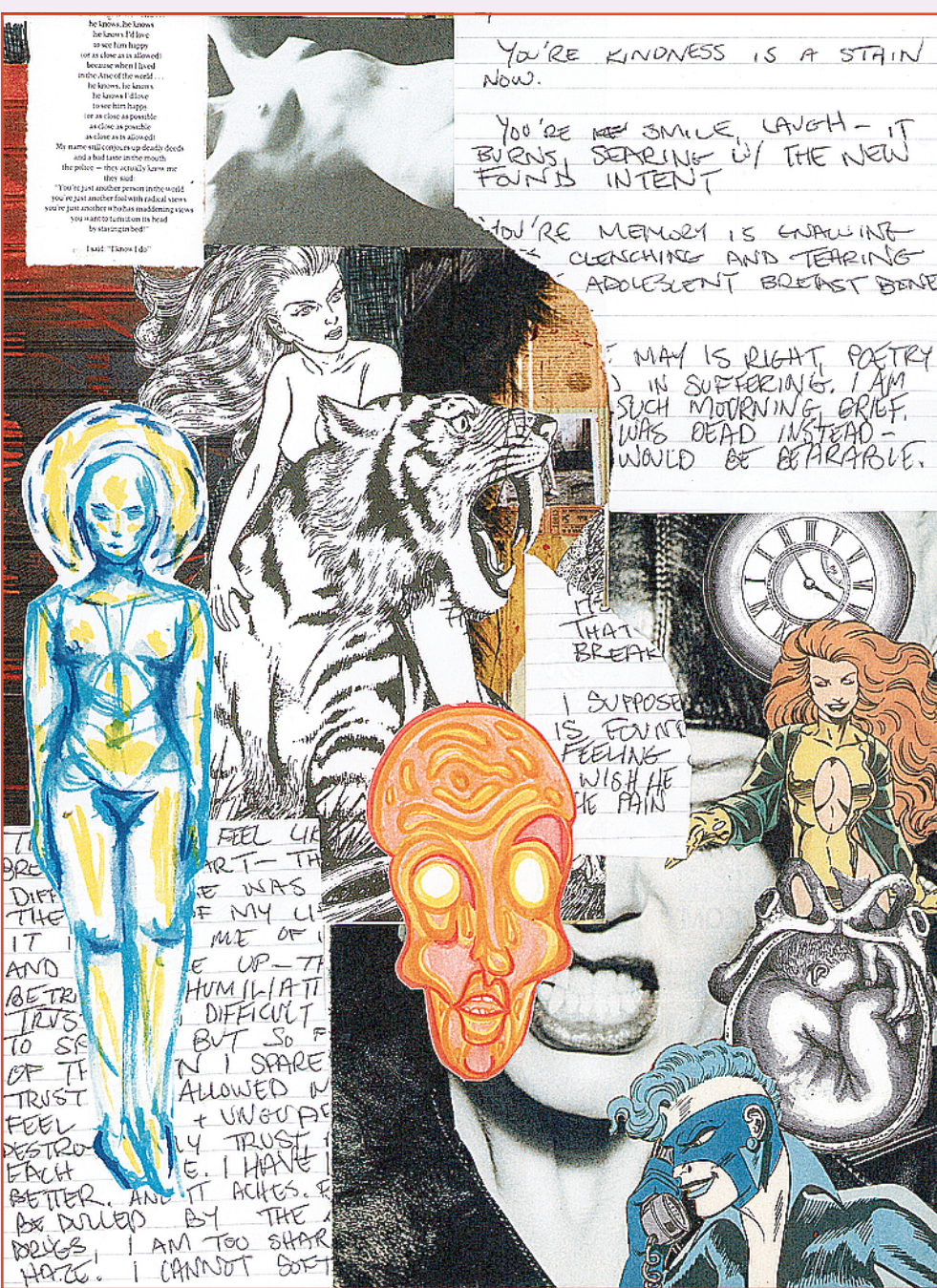
**V.C.:** Your first album of all-original tunes *Magnolia Stroll* was recorded live during the pandemic. What was that like?

**R.R.:** It was very special for the group, since five of us had been writing original tunes for years, but we didn’t really have songs that had a variety of tempos yet. We needed a balance of tempos, since we care about variety, and our fans are mostly dancers. We finally did it!

We recorded at the Tiger Den in New Orleans during the pandemic, so we had to keep doors and windows open while we were recording. People would stand outside and listen and they would leave us tips.

**V.C.:** What keeps you and your band members inspired after 14 years of touring?

**R.R.:** Well, simply put, we all love to travel! Within jazz music, one is always improvising, so it’s always new, and that is very engaging. Traditional jazz at its best is played live, and it’s



One of the “False Idols” collages created by artist Monty Zwickerhill.

COURTESY PHOTO

## Harmony Collective hosts work of Zwickerhill

BRATTLEBORO—The Harmony Collective invites the public to their September installment of Artist of the Month, Monty Zwickerhill’s “False Idols.”

Zwickerhill refers to herself as a “Visual Art Alchemist” based in Cheshire County, New Hampshire. The arts have always touched Zwickerhill’s life, according to a news release, from painting with watercolor as a toddler, being an active member of a theater company for 15 years, writing for her high school literary and poetry magazines, and a continuous obsession with drawing in her sketchbook or in the margins of any given paper.

“False Idols” is a culmination of work investigating the legacy of childhood trauma relating to domestic violence and predation and the false idols worshiped in its wake. Zwickerhill initially began the process with writing poetry and short stories, featured in the show via a small zine titled “Daddy, You Bastard, I’m Through.”

Zwickerhill says she went on to excavating from journals to create collages, examining her interior world throughout the years. The collage pieces became the background for which the False Idols began to appear, the embodiments of what becomes holy in abusive environments: lies, guilt, shame, and so on. She explored the False Idols through assemblage, sculpture, cardboard and canvas.

She invites the public to “enter a temple in observance of those False Idols that the legacy of abuse left behind.”

The opening reception will be at the Harmony Collective at 49 Elliot St. from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 1, during Brattleboro’s Gallery Walk. The show will be up through the month of September.

■ SEE TUBA SKINNY, B5

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# arts & community CALENDAR

## THURSDAY THURSDAY CONT. FRIDAY CONT. SATURDAY CONT. SUNDAY CONT. TUESDAY

# 31

### Music

#### BRATTLEBORO Traditional New Orleans jazz ensemble Tuba Skinny:

While known as world-class interpreters of traditional jazz, Tuba Skinny's approach embraces a true reflection of Americana, encompassing the full genealogy of popular American music from an early 20th century perspective. Not sticking doggedly to a formula, their music contains Caribbean, bluegrass, and rhythm and blues influences and more.

► 7 p.m. These musicians migrated to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and met while busking on the streets. New Orleans has been their base ever since. During the heat of summer they tour in the northern states and all over the world.  
► \$25 general, \$42 premium.  
► Latchis Arts, 60 Main Street. Information: Tickets: [tinyurl.com/yz5b5b99](http://tinyurl.com/yz5b5b99).

#### PUTNEY Sway Wild! Indie Folk-Rock Duo Mandy Fer and Dave McGraw (In-Person/Livestream):

This duo is back with a new sound and a new name. Exceptional vocal harmonies coupled with Fer's pioneering electric guitar work have carried them worldwide, sharing stages with Iron & Wine, Lake Street Dive, Watchhouse. Their infectious sound explores rock/pop/funk/prog/worldbeat/folk, but at its nucleus it's undeniably music full of joy.

► 7 p.m. Perhaps most remarkable is Fer's astonishing electric guitar work. Using her Fender Stratocaster for both lead guitar pyrotechnics and chordal rhythms, often at the same time. She challenges the listener to comprehend how she manages to extract so much. Fer also tours as lead guitarist for Grammy-nominated Allison Russell and recently performed with Brandi Carlile and Jason Isbell.  
► \$20 in advance, \$25 at door, \$10 livestream. Advance ticketing closes two hours before showtime.

► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: 802-387-0102; [nextstagearts.org](http://nextstagearts.org).

#### BRATTLEBORO Tuba Skinny: New Orleans Old-Time Jazz Tunes....:

Jon Potter: "Tuba Skinny got its start as a busking band on the streets of New Orleans. Since then, their reputation has flourished, aided by fan-filmed videos posted on YouTube that have garnered many thousands of views. While holding true to their New Orleans jazz roots, they're not afraid to mix in other styles and influences. I've already fielded inquiries about whether people can get up and dance. My answer: Heck, yes. Find some room in the aisle and move!"

► 7 p.m. Jon Potter: "I didn't know about Tuba Skinny until we booked them here. They are world-class performers of traditional New Orleans jazz, absolute masters of those old-time jazz tunes, the polyphonic improvisations and bouncy rhythms." Check them out: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2sha45>.  
► \$25 (\$42 premium).  
► Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. Information: Tickets: [tinyurl.com/2nnykry](http://tinyurl.com/2nnykry).

### Community building

#### WILMINGTON Voices of Hope and Brattleboro Area Hospice honor

**International Opioid Overdose Day with a Memorial Service:** Non-religious service open to all. We invite everyone whose life has been affected by the loss of a loved one due to substance use and overdose to come and remember loved ones with music, readings, speakers, and a candle ritual. Please bring photos, small mementos, and artwork to be displayed in honor of those who have died. Grief support will be available from Brattleboro Area Hospice.

► 5:30 p.m. Parking available in lot behind library. If weather is inclement, service will be held at Voices of Hope: 18 Beaver St. Wilmington.  
► Free.  
► Buzzy Towne Park, South Main St. (other side of Pettee Library Parking Lot). Information: Lars Hunter, Bereavement Program Coord. at Brattleboro Area Hospice, 802-257-0775 x 104, [lars.hunter@brattleborohospice.org](mailto:lars.hunter@brattleborohospice.org).

### Community meals

**GUILFORD Guilford Cares Food Pantry:** All are welcome to shop curbside from a list of fresh and frozen foods, canned and packaged items, dairy products.  
► 3-4 p.m. every Thursday.  
► Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Questions: call Pat Haine, Pantry Director, 802-257-0626.

## FRIDAY

# 1

### Performing arts

#### BRATTLEBORO Gallery Walk - Brattleboro Museum & Art Center:

BMAC welcomes you to 1st-Friday community celebration of all things artful. At this special Gallery Walk, see stunning acrobatics by performers from the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) presented on freestanding rig - street performance style. NECCA - internationally recognized circus school known for outstanding physical/creative programming, innovative teaching, welcoming/inclusive community, dedication to providing training catered to the individual.

► 5 - 8 p.m.  
► Free admission.  
► Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Information: 802-257-0124; [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org).

### Music

#### BRATTLEBORO The Mahavishnu Project - 50th Anniversary of "Birds on Fire":

Band performs it in its entirety, plus as a Jeff Beck mini-set - a nod to Jan Hammer's connections to both artists. The Mahavishnu Project reaches into jazz-rock music beyond John McLaughlin-led originals to include Jeff Beck songs w/ guitar virtuoso Robbie Mangano (Sean Lennon/Tom Morello), keyboardist Neil Alexander (The Machine/Eric Person), bassist Brian Mooney drummer/bandleader Gregg Bendian - who worked w/ Pat Metheny, Ornette Coleman, Todd Rundgren, Nels Cline, John Zorn.

► 8 p.m.  
► \$20 in advance, \$25 at door.  
► The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: Tickets: [stonechurchvt.com](http://stonechurchvt.com).

#### TOWNSHEND Bard Owl plays at West Townshend Farmers' Market:

Breeze Verdant on guitar, vocals, and stomp box and Annie Landenberger on vocals and percussion. Bard Owl has been playing the region since 2016 offering sweet harmonies, driving rhythms, and an eclectic mix of old tunes, new, and original.

► By 4:30 p.m.: vendors set up. 5-7:30 p.m. Bard Owl and the outdoor wood-fired brick pizza oven will be ready for baking.  
► Townshend Farmers Market, 6573 Rte 30. Information: 802-874-4800; [westtownshend.org](http://westtownshend.org).

#### BRATTLEBORO Nu Mu Tu' Graphic Scores (re-scheduled to Gallery Walk):

All are invited to join Brattleboro Community Improvisational Orchestra to perform Graphic Scores created at the last Gallery Walk. Bring an instrument to use or use one that will be provided.  
► 5 p.m.  
► Free.  
► One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: [118elliott.com](http://118elliott.com).

### GUILFORD Concert with Patty Carpenter & Verandah Porche:

Patty Carpenter and Verandah Porche perform all original songs. During the past 3 pandemic years, they've written over 50 tunes. Lifelong friends/collaborators, they look forward to showcase new material and get feedback on the songs, some of which will be recorded soon. They'll be joined by Draa Hobbs on guitar, Jon Weeks on flute, sax and percussion, Jeremy Gold on violin.

► 6:30-8:30 p.m. Limited event parking in upper meadow at Springs Farm for anyone who needs close access. Come up the driveway! Otherwise, park off Carpenter Hill Rd. at library, lower field, or Playscape and enjoy the short walk up.  
► Rain location: Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd., in Guilford.

► \$15 suggested (Venmo or cash or check at door). No one turned away.  
► Springs Farm, 49 Carpenter Hill Rd.

### Visual arts and shows

#### BRATTLEBORO Fran Bull: "The Art Life" / Helen Schmidt: "Between Worlds":

Bull has pursued a career as painter, sculptor, performance artist, writer, printmaker and has exhibited worldwide. Early photo realistic painting gave way to less representational imagery. She lives, paints and teaches in VT and collaborates with painter Virgili Barbara in Barcelona, Spain. Schmidt is drawn to objects/materials which have been discarded or left behind to be used, repurposed or transformed into sculpture or hand-pulled prints.

► 9/1, 5-8 p.m. Opening and Artist Reception during Gallery Walk.

► Through Sunday, October 15. Free.

► Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main St. View online: <https://mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com/fran-bull-the-art-life/> / <https://mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com/helen-schmidt-between-worlds/> 802-251-8290, [mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com](http://mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com). Open Thurs. - Sat.: 11-5, Sun.: 12-5.

#### BRATTLEBORO Gil Perry: Artist/Painter:

Gil Perry's drawings and paintings have a remarkably delicate and detailed touch allowing one image to unfold in surprising ways over time. From the early '70s till late '80s his main focus was on drawings that were dreamlike images in graphite. After working in b&w for many years, Fran Weston Hoyt taught him the carefully controlled premixed prismatic palette used to capture the effects of light in nature developed by her teacher - American Impressionist Frank Vincent DuMond.

► 9/1, 5-8 p.m.: Opening Reception.

► Through Saturday, September 30. Free.

► Gallery in the Woods, 145 Main St. Information: 802-257-4777; [galleryinthewoods.com](http://galleryinthewoods.com).

#### BRATTLEBORO Julia Sorenson: "Beyond the Bounds":

Julia Sorenson offers abstract pieces for her first solo exhibit - colorful, textured, and created using a variety of nontraditional techniques and shapes. Inspired by abstract artist Ed Clark, "the lost abstract expressionist," this exhibit draws on willingness to break the plane of the canvas, go outside bounds, bold use of color, shaped canvases, strong brush strokes. The work invites viewers to consider their own relationship with the typical or expected.

► 9/1 Opening: 5 - 8 p.m. during Gallery Walk. Artwork is viewable anytime through the gallery's window on Main St.  
► Through Saturday, September 30. Free.  
► Gallery 34: River Gallery School, 34 Main St. Information: 802-257-1577; [rivergalleryschool.org/index.php/gallery34](http://rivergalleryschool.org/index.php/gallery34).

## SATURDAY

# 2

### Music

#### BRATTLEBORO Wolfman Jack:

Wolfman Jack is a live music project of veteran musicians from the New England area performing the psychedelic/electrifying

Live Dead era of The Grateful Dead. A true dance band in the style of such legendary venues as The Fillmore West, Carousel Ballroom and Avalon Ballroom. They recreate those vintage sets from when the Grateful Dead were first cutting their teeth as a live music act.

► 8 p.m.  
► \$12 in advance, \$15 at door.  
► The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; [stonechurchvt.com](http://stonechurchvt.com).

#### GUILFORD Guilford Fair 2023 Music Schedule for Labor Day Weekend:

9/2, Sat., 2-4 p.m.: Pre-fair free music with Kevin Parry and Friends. 9/3, Sun., 10 a.m.-12 noon: Steel Rail. Classic rock with Mike LeHane on guitar and vocals, Lou Trombley on drums and vocals, Doug Morton on bass and vocals. 3:30-5:30 p.m.: Run Mountain: Old-time fiddle, banjo and more with Paula Bradley and Jim Burns.

► 9/4, Mon., 10 a.m.-12 noon: Lord Magnolia: '80s rock with Aria Zarnoski on guitar, bass, vocals and Colby Thompson on banjo and saxophone. 1-3 p.m.: Picket Fence: Eclectic blues and rock with Steve Carmichael on guitar and vocals, Tim Thrasher on bass and vocals, Bill Conley on steel guitar and dobro, Jeremy Holch on drums.

► 3:30-5 p.m.: Vermont's Easy Street: Swing, bluegrass and Zydeco featuring Lisa Brande on fiddle, guitar and vocals and Mark Trichka on mandolin, guitar and vocals.  
► Through Monday, September 4.

► Guilford Fair, Guilford Fairgrounds. Information: [guilfordfairvermont.com](http://guilfordfairvermont.com).

### Farmers' markets

#### BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Area Farmers Market:

BAFM has over 50 vendors, bringing our region's best farmers, makers, and chefs all to one place. Live music 11 a.m.-1 p.m., special events and workshops throughout the season.

► 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays. Rain or shine.

► Through Saturday, October 28.

► Brattleboro Farmers Market, 570 Western Ave., Rt. 9, near covered bridge. Information: 802-490-4371; [brattleborofarmersmarket.com](http://brattleborofarmersmarket.com).

### The written word

#### Brattleboro Poetry Discussion Group (via Zoom):

This month: Discussion about Jori Graham. No experience necessary; copies of the poems provided. Led by Barbara Morrison.  
► 12 noon - 2 p.m.  
► Free.  
► Zoom. Information: Register: [info@timetowrite.us](mailto:info@timetowrite.us).

### Well-being

#### BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Zen Center (In-Person or wherever you are):

One way to engage with the ecological crisis: This group chants briefly and then sits in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action.  
► 1:00 - 1:35 p.m. on Saturdays.  
► Free.  
► Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct. Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30).

## SUNDAY

# 3

### Music

#### BELLOWS FALLS Bandwagon Summer Series: The Slambovian Circus of Dreams sextet: acoustic/ electric, folk-pop/Americana:

For over 25 years, The Slambovians have expanded the borders of the Americana genre with a rootsy rockin' psychedelica, fantastic stories, and electrifying live performances - a mix of Washington Irving, Woodstock, and British Invasion that's "mightily impressive and hugely original rock from the cool end of Americana." (Maverick Magazine).

► 5-7 p.m. Presented by Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for outdoor seating on the lawn. Next Stage provides a beer, wine, cocktail cash bar. Plus Barr Hill cocktails and food by Crossroads Tacos and Vermont Gelato.  
► \$20 in advance, \$25 at door, free for kids under age 12.

► Sustainable Valley Group Multi-Purpose Field, 14 Mill St. Information: Advance tickets: [nextstagearts.org](http://nextstagearts.org). More information: 802-387-0102.

#### GUILFORD Labor Day Weekend Festival Orchestra on the Lawn:

Friends of Music at Guilford present the Guilford Festival Orchestra, conducted by Ken Olsson. "Diverse and Sundry" is a collection of chamber orchestra pieces ranging from Classical to Contemporary, from Mozart to William Grant, Stills to Joni Mitchell. After a COVID hiatus, we're finally resuming the beloved traditional finale of singing Randall Thompson's "Alleluia" together.

► 3 p.m. concert (2 p.m. for picnickers on the lawn - bring blankets, lawn chairs, food and drink). In case of rain, concert moves to Broad Brook Community Center (if so, announcement will be made Sunday morning).  
► By donation.

► Guilford Organ Barn, Packers Corners Rd. Information: 802-254-3600, [office@fomag.org](mailto:office@fomag.org).

### Farmers' markets

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

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

#### PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market - plus Live Music today with Scandi

► 11-3 p.m. on Sundays (until 10/22/2023). Across from Putney Food Co-op.  
► Putney Farmers Market, 17 Carol Brown Way. Information: [putneyfarmersmarket.org](http://putneyfarmersmarket.org).

### Community building

#### W. BRATTLEBORO All Souls Church: "Service Is Our Prayer" (In Person/Zoom):

"Inherent in our identity as a UU church is a deep commitment to social justice. At All Souls, our First Sunday services that highlight 'sharing the plate' with organizations that serve the vulnerable in our community are part of what we strive to do as a congregation and as individuals. With summer ending and a new church year beginning, join us as we recognize some of our other works and look ahead to new opportunities to serve."

► 10 a.m.  
► All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: Join via Zoom: Visit [scvt.org](http://scvt.org) shortly before 10 a.m.

#### GUILFORD Guilford Free Library at the Guilford Fair:

Staff, Trustees, and Volunteers invite fairgoers to help create a Community Story. The Library will be offering books and cold water for donations and inviting children to make bookmarks. E-Bikes will be on display and we'll find out a bit more about our solar system.

► 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
► Through Monday, September 4.  
► Guilford Fair, Guilford Fairgrounds. Information: More information: 802-257-4603.

### Dance

#### GUILFORD The Brattleboro Area Contra Dance:

Birl takes the stage: Tad Dreis, Garrett Cameron, Samuel Foucher. Will Mentor calling. Bring your own water bottle and wear clean, soft soled shoes. Come join us to dance and socialize and enjoy the music, especially on a holiday weekend.

► 6:30-9:30 p.m. dance (short break in middle). COVID precautions: Masks optional but encouraged. Vaccination ► proof optional. Windows will be open. RSVP not required. If you have any symptoms or feel unwell, stay home and rest and we'll see you next dance!

► \$15 to \$20 (cash, check, or Venmo).  
► Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/35ShrHcwlw> Questions? Contact Erich Kruger at [ewkruger@gmail.com](mailto:ewkruger@gmail.com).

# 5

### Kids and families

#### GUILFORD Cathi Wilken presents Program of Songs, Fingerplays, Books and Activities for Babies, Toddlers and Older Siblings

► 2 p.m. on Tuesdays.  
► Free.  
► Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-257-4603.

### 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](http://brattleborowalkinclinic.com).

## WEDNESDAY

# 6

### Community building

#### GUILFORD Guilford Meet-Up:

"The prompt chosen for this month is 'SELF/IDENTITY'. Now, we have a month to take that prompt in our own personal direction. All mediums welcome. Diversity is encouraged. Music, painting, video, poetry, sculpture, photography, more. We will get to share our creations, discuss our creative process and inspiration, choose a new prompt for the next month. This is a casual group for all ages and experience. Come once or join us more regularly."  
► 6 - 7:30 p.m. Meetings are the 1st Wednesday of every month.  
► Free.  
► Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Contact [guilfordfolk@gmail.com](mailto:guilfordfolk@gmail.com) for questions or to sign up for notifications of the monthly prompt.

#### GUILFORD Guilford Art Club:

Share your art in a casual group of neighbors, all are welcome! Bring a sketch, doodle, idea, painting, song, poem, sculpture, photo or even your artist block, maybe nothing sparked - come share that experience with us.  
► 6 - 7:30 p.m.  
► Free.  
► Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: [guilfordfolk@gmail.com](mailto:guilfordfolk@gmail.com).

#### BRATTLEBORO GunSense Vermont honors Ann Braden with inaugural "Leadership & Courage Award":

Ann Braden, Founder of GunSense Vermont following the shooting at Sandy Hook.  
► 6 p.m.  
► \$50 general admission.  
► Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Information: [gunsensevt.org](http://gunsensevt.org).

### Ideas and education


#### BRATTLEBORO "Religious Freedom Discussion Series" with Meg Mott:

Dig deep into an important and often divisive issue in American political discourse in this 3-week Religious Freedom discussion series with Constitutional scholar Meg Mott.  
► 7 p.m. Continues 9/13 and 9/20.  
► Free.  
► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; [brookslibraryvt.org](http://brookslibraryvt.org).

### Submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

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# Artists to share collaborative works at Main Street Arts

SAXTONS RIVER—Three artists will present their collaborative works titled, “Merge Collages: A Show and Tell Experience,” at Main Street Arts (MSA) in Saxtons River, opening Saturday, Sept. 9. They will also offer two workshops on creating Merge Collages.

The art show will display a number of collaborative and individual works of Matthew J. Peake, Gordon Korstange, and Gretchen Abendschein. Individual pieces will be available for purchase, with a portion of the sales going to MSA.

“We have chosen some of our Merge Collages for your viewing pleasure along with the written descriptions. Feel free to ask us any questions as you view them,” said Peake in a news release.

According to Peake, the collaborative works stem from a game the three artists play. “For the past two years on many Thursday mornings, you would find the three of us sitting around a table piled high with magazines and picture cards to play Merge Collage,” he said.

The game begins by each player offering up a rule (like a Surrealist game), such as “each image has to have the color blue somewhere in it.”

Then colored pieces of paper are distributed. Each artist searches the stack of materials for an image that fits the three rules and that they connect to—for reasons each may not know. Then out come the scissors and the rubber cement.

After 10 minutes, a chime rings and they pass the collage and continue looking for images that will interact with what has already been created. They repeat this process for three rounds.

On subsequent rounds, each artist puts a random word on the emerging collage. Then a final image is added. They view the creations and discuss merging process and the resulting pieces.

Finally, they each take one collage home to describe the piece in writing. The prompt could be something such as “make one of the figures or objects speak.” The words in the image must be incorporated into the description.

The two workshops will basically follow the same game in groups of three attendees with guidance from the artists.

Abendschein said of her work, “Alone, I create from an inner landscape of dreamlike images that speak the language of symbolism. Through my paintings I

step into a timeless realm of altered dimensions. My artwork is a meditation inspired by the fertile unknown ground within.

“Together, we suspend investment in the finished product in celebration of the process, relinquishing individual control to the whims of another’s artistic sensibilities. We form three facets of one integrated collage-making entity,” she continued. “Alone, I write about the collages we create together.”

Korstange shared his experience with collages. “As a poet and musician, I’m happy to be making collages one day a week instead of staring all morning at one of my poems that needs... well, something. Or practicing a raga for a gig that exists only in my mind. But every Thursday, I can join my friends around a big table and glue images down on paper like a third grader (I so loved finger painting).”

“This time around, I bring my interests in Dada and Surrealism to the cooperative games we play, plus the challenge of writing an Ekphrastic — Greek for “description” — where at least there are multiple images to tickle the imagination,” Korstange continued. “I wish to thank my mentor, GorMatt StrangePeak of Happenstance, Vermont, for guiding me on the path of Merge Collage.”

Peake said, “I began my professional career in 1982 as a family physician in rural Vermont. After 24 years, I left my practice of medicine to pursue a full-time career in the creative arts. That pursuit has taken me from painting in pastel, acrylic, and oil to composing in collage and assemblage; to inventing some unique ways of exhibiting artwork; to dancing and teaching dance; and to writing in diverse genres.

“Collaboration as a way of creating became a focus of mine from the very beginning of my creative career, and has continued in my art-making with many individuals and groups, the most recent examples being with Merge Collage artists, Gordon and Gretchen,” he continued.

The art exhibit will open with an event on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 5 to 8 p.m., and will run through Oct. 29. The workshops will be on Sundays, Sept. 24 and Oct. 15, at 2 p.m. The fee for the workshop is \$20 per person. For more information or questions, contact MSA at 802-869-2960 or [info@mainstreetarts.org](mailto:info@mainstreetarts.org).



“Purple Strips Stripping,” a merge collage created by artists Matthew J. Peake, Gordon Korstange, and Gretchen Abendschein.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

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**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**SUPERIOR COURT** **PROBATE DIVISION**  
 Windham Unit Docket No.: 23-PR-04054  
 In re ESTATE of: Philip Lehar

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

To the Creditors of: Philip Lehar (Decedent)  
 late of Brookline, Vermont (Decedent's town of residence)

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

Dated: August 23, 2023 c/o Amelia W.L. Darrow, Esq.  
 Carol Schweigert, Executor Secrest & Darrow, PLC  
 209 Austine Dr, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Name of Publication: The Commons 802-251-6598  
 Publication Date: August 30, 2023 [adarrow@secrestdarrow.com](mailto:adarrow@secrestdarrow.com)

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Probate  
 Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

**Public Hearing Notice**

Notice is hereby given that the Brattleboro Development Review Board will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, 9.20.2023 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.

2023-84 G & L Enterprise, LLC Continued from 8.16. 2023; 2023-98 Kurt Daines; RN District; Appeal of a ZA's determination that an 8' fence located on a property boundary is allowed with a zoning permit under the Brattleboro Land Use Regulations at 16 Washington St; TMP#325378.000; 2023-109 Marilyn George; RR District; request for subdivision approval to create a new lot and adjust a boundary at 886, 888 & 890 South St; TMP #110261.100 & 110261.200. 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.

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**SUPERIOR COURT** **PROBATE DIVISION**  
 Windham Unit Docket No.: 23-PR-01264  
 In re the estate of Neil V. Shulga

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

To the Creditors of Neil V. Shulga, late of West Townsend, Vermont.

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

Dated: August 17, 2023 Address: 591 Crane Mountain Road  
 Administrator: Cynthia Shulga Townshend, VT 05353

Name of Publication: The Commons 802-365-7228  
 Publication Date: August 23, 2023 [cshulga591@gmail.com](mailto:cshulga591@gmail.com)

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Probate Division  
 Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

**TOWN OF PUTNEY**  
**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**  
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117, and Putney Zoning Regulations, Section 110.4, notice is hereby given that the Putney Development Review Board will meet at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 19, 2023 for the purpose of considering one application.

Application #23-08-20 Conditional Use & Site Plan Review: Change of Use from a restaurant to a community center with childcare. Katherine Emond (Applicant) and Tridha, LLC (Owner). Property location is 27 Patel Way, Tax Map 11-01-31. Application will be reviewed under Section 220 Conditional Use Review, Section 240 Site Plan Review; Section 320.5 Village District; Section 505 Child Care Facilities; Section 509 Landscaping, Screening and Site Lighting; Section 510 Off-Street Parking Space Requirements; and Section 830 Adverse Effect.

A copy of the application and additional information can be obtained at the Putney Town Office upon request or on the town website. The meeting is open to the public in a hybrid Zoom platform or in person at town hall, 127 Main Street. Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464 (a)(1)(C) and 4471 (a), participation in this local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

Dated at Putney, Vermont, this 28th day of August, 2023.

Karen M. Astley  
 Zoning Administrator

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**SUPERIOR COURT** **PROBATE DIVISION**  
 Windham Unit Docket No.: 23-PR-03342  
 In re ESTATE of: Barbara S. LeVan

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

To the Creditors of: Barbara S. LeVan (Decedent)  
 late of Wilmington, Vermont (Decedent's town of residence)

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

Dated: August 25, 2023 c/o Amelia W.L. Darrow, Esq.  
 James Allhusen, Executor Secrest & Darrow, PLC  
 209 Austine Dr, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Name of Publication: The Commons 802-251-6598  
 Publication Date: August 30, 2023 [adarrow@secrestdarrow.com](mailto:adarrow@secrestdarrow.com)

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Probate  
 Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**SUPERIOR COURT** **PROBATE DIVISION**  
 Windham Unit Docket No.: 23-PR-02914  
 In re ESTATE of: Mary Jane Kuhn

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

To the Creditors of: Mary Jane Kuhn (Decedent)  
 late of Westport, Connecticut (Decedent's town of residence)

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

Dated: August 23, 2023 147 Western Ave.  
 Julie MacDonald, Executor Brattleboro, VT 05301  
 c/o Molly Ladner, Attorney 802-257-7244

Name of Publication: The Commons [mladner@pdsclaw.com](mailto:mladner@pdsclaw.com)  
 Publication Date: August 30, 2023

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Unit, Probate Division.  
 Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, 2nd Floor, Brattleboro, VT 05301

**NOTICE OF ABANDONMENT**  
**June 15, 2023 (Notice 1 of 3)**

The Brooks Memorial Library wishes to resolve ownership issues with the items described below, which are listed in more detail on the library website and are available in print on the premise upon request. Please be advised that the following described property is hereby considered abandoned by its prior owners and will become the property of the Brooks Memorial Library, if no person can prove ownership of the property, pursuant to the provisions of Vermont Statutes Title 27: Chapter 12 – Museum Property.

171 items, including 6 clothing and other accessories (handkerchiefs, fans, spectacles, etc.), 35 household items (decorative, cooking, eating, textiles, etc.), 37 dolls, 13 paintings (drawings, sketches, etc.), 37 photographs (stereographs, tintypes, daguerreotype, postcard collection, etc.), 5 sculptures, 12 documents (letters, legal contracts, articles of association, etc.), 8 map collections, 18 other miscellaneous items.

As provided for in the Vermont statute, anyone intending to claim ownership or presents information about the whereabouts of an owner, has until February 24, 2024 to notify the Brooks Memorial Library in writing. If written assertion of title is not presented by February 24, 2024, the property will be considered abandoned or donated and default to the ownership of Brooks Memorial Library.

Please visit [brookslibraryvt.org](http://brookslibraryvt.org) or the library's circulation desk for a detailed printed description of the items listed above or contact the Library Director, Starr Latronica, for more information or to make a claim.

Contact information:  
 Email: [trustees@brookslibraryvt.org](mailto:trustees@brookslibraryvt.org)  
 Phone: 802-254-5290  
 Address: 224 Main St., Brattleboro, VT 05301

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**  
**DUMMERSTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**

The Dummerston Development Review Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, beginning at 6:00 pm, at the Dummerston Town Offices, 1523 Middle Road, Dummerston Center and via Zoom video teleconference, for the purpose of reviewing the following applications:

- A review of application #3732; Gerald Alvarez, for Conditional Use and Site Plan Review for Short Term Rental, under Sections 715 – 726 of the Dummerston Zoning Bylaw, at parcel #192, 627 Hague Rd., Dummerston, VT, a Rural Residential District.
- The hearing will be preceded by a site visit on September 19, 2023, beginning at or about 5:00 pm.
- A review of application #3731; Susan Leslie Powers (Ellie's Pet Care Services), for Variances (2) Section 728(5) and section 605(C) pursuant to Conditional Use and Site Plan Review for Home Business, under Sections 210, 715 – 727 of the Dummerston Zoning Bylaw, at parcel #644, 2002 Black Mountain Rd., Dummerston, VT, a Productive Lands District.
- The hearing will be preceded by a site visit on September 19, 2023, beginning at or about 5:30 pm.

The hearings and site visit are open to the public. Participation in these proceedings is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal. Persons wishing to appear and be heard may do so in person, by a representative or by video teleconference, or through written comment.

A copy of the applications is available for public review at the Dummerston Town Office during normal business hours or by email to: [zoning@dummerston.org](mailto:zoning@dummerston.org). To receive the Zoom video teleconference link email to: [zoning@dummerston.org](mailto:zoning@dummerston.org), or call: 802-275-5739.

Dated: August 30, 2023  
 Roger Vincent Jasaitis  
 Dummerston Zoning Administrator

What you're always trying to achieve in a creative relationship is one that is egless... ideas belong to the collective. If you can disassociate your own ego from your idea, then, almost always, everybody will arrive at the same decision as to what is best.

—DAVE GENN

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AROUND THE TOWNS

Take a walk along the Whetstone

BRATTLEBORO — The Southeast Vermont Cooperative Species Management Association's Whetstone Brook Community Project invites everyone in the community to share their plant observations along the Whetstone Brook. The organization's goal is to create maps of invasive plant hotspots in the area.

On Friday, Sept. 1, at 3:30 p.m., a walk will start at The Root Social Justice Center on Williams Street and finish downtown during Gallery Walk.

Can't make this event? You can still get involved by making observations for the project on iNaturalist ([bit.ly/729-whetstone](https://bit.ly/729-whetstone)), a social media website for people to identify plants and animals in their world and connect with others with like interests.

Have questions about this event or the project? Email [sevtcisma@gmail.com](mailto:sevtcisma@gmail.com).

Ice Cream Social at Gallery Walk

BRATTLEBORO — The Friends of the Brooks Memorial Library invite everyone to the organization's annual Ice Cream Social, which will take place downtown this year as part of Gallery Walk.

Stop by the Harmony Lot on Friday, Sept. 1, from 5 to 7 p.m. A

\$2 donation per cone is suggested, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. The Friends promise an evening of "scooping, hula hooping, and playing with circus toys."

Fall mending bee at Putney library

PUTNEY — The mending bee is back for fall at the Putney Public Library, 55 Main St., on Sunday, Sept. 10, 1 to 4 p.m.

Do you have a pile of nice wool socks with holes, favorite jeans that would be perfect if not for a rip in the knee, or sweaters with moth holes? Bring your ailing fabric items to this free program so you can work on them in the company of others.

Advice and support are always available, but you'll be the mender of your own items. Sewing machines and darning tools will be available.

Senior walk at Fort Dummer State Park

BRATTLEBORO — On Tuesday, Sept. 12, at 10:30 a.m., Guilford Cares will host a senior walk at Fort Dummer State Park, named for Fort Dummer, which was constructed along the Connecticut River by the British in 1724.

Anne Montgomery will provide walkers with details of the rich history of the site, point

out views of interest, and help identify some hardwood species of white, red, and chestnut oak that are more characteristic of forests in the mid-Atlantic than in Vermont.

There are three trails in the 217-acre park.

The Sunrise Trail is a nearly 1-mile loop of level-to-gently-sloping terrain crossing into Vernon, including the Old Fort Vista at about its midpoint. The Sunset Trail is a 0.5-mile loop of gently sloping ground and old town road. "We can make a short diversion to a dramatic abandoned rock quarry," the walk organizers suggest in a news release. The Broad Brook Trail, 0.5 mile with some steeper, more strenuous sections, ends at a popular swimming hole on the Broad Brook.

Parking is available near the entrance at 517 Old Guilford Rd. Carpooling is recommended. The day-use fee at Fort Dummer is \$5; however, if you apply for a Green Mountain Passport discount program for seniors and veterans at the Guilford Town Office before the walk, Guilford Cares will cover the cost of the pass.

The Green Mountain Passport program gives seniors unlimited free admission to state parks, historic sites, concerts, and museums. For more information, or to request a ride, contact Guilford Cares at 802-579-1350 or [guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com](mailto:guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com).

NAMI Vt. offers virtual support group

BELLOWS FALLS—The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Vermont (NAMI Vermont) is forming a new Connection Recovery Support Group offered virtually via Zoom.

Connection Recovery is a peer support program intended for individuals living with mental health challenges. The new support group will begin Sept. 11 and meet the second and fourth Monday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Information about the Zoom login is available at [namivt.org/csg](https://namivt.org/csg).

Group meetings follow a structured, peer-led model. Trained facilitators who have their own lived experience with mental illness lead the meetings based on the NAMI model used for peer support groups nationwide. The structured, yet

flexible format allows all participants the opportunity to be heard, to receive support, and to form meaningful connections within their community.

In May 2023, NAMI Vermont held a two-day, in-person training for individuals to become Connection Support Group facilitators. One of the newly trained facilitators will co-facilitate the Bellows Falls Connection Support Group with a previously trained co-facilitator.

Facilitators will guide group discussions to create a safe, respectful environment to share lived experience stories and serve as a resource for any individual looking for community resources. Those interested in becoming a facilitator may contact NAMI Vermont's Program Coordinator at [program@namivt.org](mailto:program@namivt.org).

NAMI Vermont provides several free programs and training opportunities, including educational presentations, shared stories from peers with lived experience, classes, and workshops.

In addition to free peer support groups, the organization offers support groups for family members and close friends of individuals with mental health conditions. NAMI Vermont also maintains an active presence at the state legislature to advocate for better mental health systems at the state level.

Meetings are free and do not require any registration. For more information about this support group, call 802-876-7949, ext. 102. To learn more about other NAMI Vermont offerings, go to [namivt.org](https://namivt.org).

Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market seeks vendors for 2023-24 season

BRATTLEBORO—Vendor applications are now being accepted for the 18th season of the Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market, who says its mission is "to support sustainable agriculture by providing a viable winter-season direct market outlet for local community-based farms while building community and promoting regional sustainability."

The Winter Market will open for the 2023-24 season on Saturday, Nov. 4, and will operate through March 30. Weekly market hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A wide array of products are typically offered, including locally grown and produced fruits, vegetables, meats, eggs, baked goods, handcrafted items such as

clothing, jewelry, pottery, soaps, and more. Food booths are typical as well.

Preference is given to regional agricultural vendors, particularly those bringing new unduplicated products to market. This is a juried market. New vendors or returning vendors with new craft, prepared-food, or value-added products will need to complete a jury process.

The market's sustainability mission places an emphasis on local sourcing for prepared foods sold at the market, meaning that prepared food vendors are expected to feature ingredients sourced from local and regional growers and producers.

The Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market is a project of

Post Oil Solutions, a grassroots citizen sustainability group based in Windham County whose goal is "to raise awareness about sustainable practices for our homes, neighborhoods, and larger communities, and help create the infrastructure needed in our region as we deal with our changing climate. The creation of a community-based food system is a critical component of that infrastructure."

If you are interested in the upcoming Winter Farmers' Market season, the application and market policy information can be found at [brattleborowinterfarmersmarket.org](https://brattleborowinterfarmersmarket.org). For more information, contact Sherry Maher at 802-275-2835 or [farmersmarket@postoilutions.org](mailto:farmersmarket@postoilutions.org).

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center now open in Wardsboro

WARDSBORO—The FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Jamaica has been relocated to the Wardsboro Town Hall, 99 Main St. It will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and closed on Sundays.

Another Disaster Recovery Center is located at Springfield Health Center, 100 River St., to serve homeowners and renters in Windsor County and is also open Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

FEMA assistance is available to homeowners and renters in Windham and Windsor counties with underinsured or uninsured disaster-related loss from the July 7 - 17 floods, landslides, and severe storms. Affected residents in the declared counties can apply for FEMA assistance online

at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov), through the FEMA app, by calling the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362, and in person at Disaster Recovery Centers.

Some types of FEMA grant assistance may include temporary hotel reimbursement, rental assistance, home repair or replacement, and coverage for other disaster-related expenses, such as moving and storage, vehicle repair or replacement, childcare, or medical and dental costs.

For the latest information on Vermont's recovery, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4720](https://fema.gov/disaster/4720). Follow the FEMA Region 1 account on Twitter at [twitter.com/FEMARegion1](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion1), the FEMA Facebook page at [facebook.com/FEMA](https://facebook.com/FEMA), or Vermont Emergency Management Agency on Twitter

at [twitter.com/vemt](https://twitter.com/vemt) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/VermontEmergencyManagement](https://facebook.com/VermontEmergencyManagement).

SEVCA recruits local tax prep volunteers

WESTMINSTER—Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) will provide free tax preparation for lower income taxpayers for the 2023-24 tax filing season through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

SEVCA is now recruiting volunteers to help as many families as possible claim the tax credits and refunds available to them. A volunteer orientation meeting will be held in the late fall at SEVCA's

main office at 91 Buck Drive in Westminster.

VITA offers free tax help to people who are low to moderate income, persons with disabilities, elderly, and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free federal and state income tax return preparation with electronic filing.

SEVCA is looking for individuals who are willing and able to

commit three to four hours per week, or even preferably a full day or more as necessary, from the last week in January until the April filing deadline. Although prior tax preparation experience is not necessary, a commitment to training and certification is required.

Training sessions with a certified VITA instructor will be held in Westminster beginning in early November. Online IRS self-study training materials will also be available. On-site training


and supervision is provided once or twice a week during the tax preparation season by the SEVCA Tax Site Coordinator. If you do not wish to prepare taxes, there are other VITA volunteer roles available as well.

To learn more about becoming a VITA volunteer, contact Leslie Wood at [lwood@sevca.org](mailto:lwood@sevca.org) or 802-722-4575, ext. 1603.

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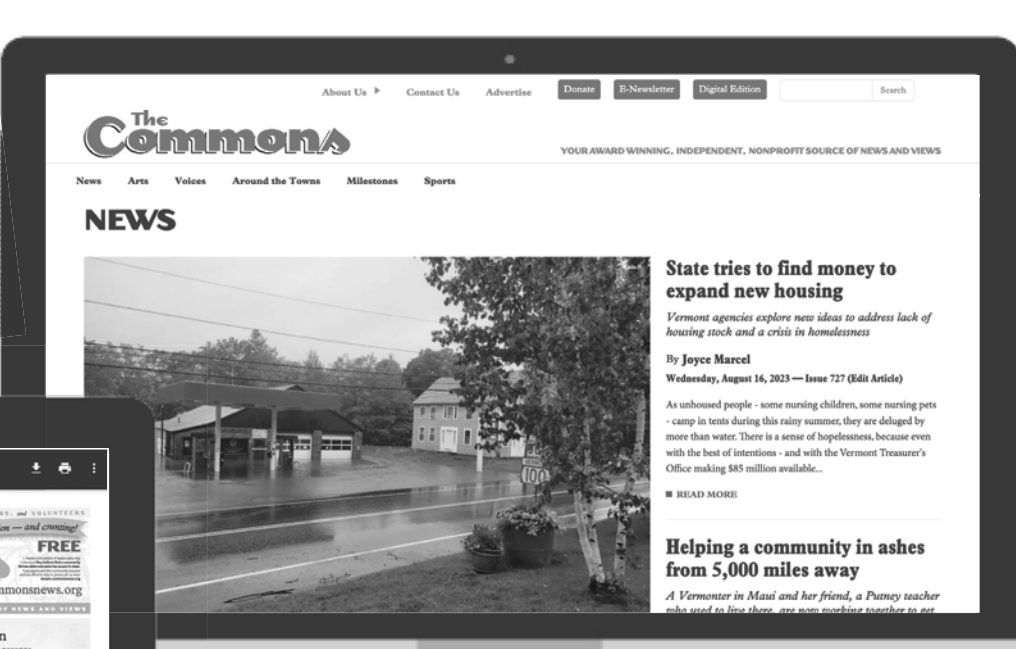
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## Tuba Skinny FROM SECTION FRONT

social and there's dancing. The dancing really inspires us!

**V.C.:** Tell me more about the different musical genres you perform.

**R.R.:** We explore other genres like jug band or country blues, delta blues. It's soulful, simple, with easy-to-learn chord progressions, written by original artists back in the day, really unique numbers we wanted to tackle. We also play string band music as a jazz band. In a sense, traditional jazz can also be interpreted as a form of folk music.

**V.C.:** Which instruments did you play growing up? How did you start playing the washboard?

**R.R.:** I grew up in Lake Forest Park, Washington. When I was 9 years old, my dad turned me on to guitar as well as drums. I learned basic chords and rhythm. In high school I got into folk music and punk rock.

At 18 years, I was at a folk festival in Seattle, which made me want to learn a new instrument. Someone handed me a washboard, and it seemed to work.

I hit the road and moved to New Orleans and moved into an artist studio in the French Quarter with eight people who were in a jug band. The week I moved in, the washboard player was sick, and I said, "Oh, I have a little experience with that." The reason I took over from the washboard player was so that I could pay rent.

I kept with it, and I was making some money on the street — and ever since then I've been studying the washboard by listening to old recordings of 78 records. I was able to research on YouTube and checked out a few groups, and I'd imitate sounds until I found my own voice.

The original recording that inspired me was Blind Boy Fuller and Bull City Red playing the song "Step It Up and Go."

The washboard was made popular by vaudeville and the medicine show performers, as well as traveling novelty jazz bands.

**V.C.:** How do you actually play the washboard?

**R.R.:** I use thumb and two fingers on each hand, and I wear sewing thimbles on each of them. Those are the strongest

fingers, so I thought I might as well use them. I teach this style to several washboard students every month when I'm back in New Orleans.

**V.C.:** Who were some of your early music influences?

**R.R.:** My early influences were Woody Guthrie, Tom Petty, Bob Dylan, and Barenaked Ladies. Then, in middle school and high school, I listened to punk rock and metal.

One of my favorite composers is Louis Moreau Gottschalk, from the city of New Orleans. He was inspired by Afro Latin rhythms and combined them with European classical music. The slaves were playing banjos and hand drums in Congo Square.

**V.C.:** Tell me about the Glo Worm Trio.

**R.R.:** I've been obsessed with classical music and Italian mandolin music for the last seven years. I run an Italian string band called the Glo Worm Trio. We play very early dance music from Italy called ballo liscio, which includes waltzes, mazurkas, polkas, and tarantellas.

**V.C.:** You consider Tuba Skinny a real "dance band."

**R.R.:** One hundred percent, it's dance music. Jazz was born with swing dancing. People always like to dance, and it's social dance music. It is community dancing; you can dance by yourself or with someone you don't know.

We want to get rid of stereotype that you can only dance if it's with a partner. When we see people dancing, it inspires us and we play better.

**V.C.:** Despite a lack of interest in social media and limited release of your music online, you've amassed a devoted digital following. Why haven't you promoted your music?

**R.R.:** We never had the intention to promote ourselves that much until recently. It always came from fans filming us and putting it on the internet, and we've been so lucky.

We would love to give our music away, so we put our older albums on Spotify, and we have dedicated fans that download our music from Bandcamp ([tubaskinny.bandcamp.com](http://tubaskinny.bandcamp.com)), or they go to Louisiana Music Factory ([louisianamusicfactory.com](http://louisianamusicfactory.com)) to buy our CDs.

**V.C.:** Lastly, I heard you had



NOË CUGNY/COURTESY PHOTO

Tuba Skinny will perform at the Latchis. Standing (left to right): Barnabus Jones, Todd Burdick, Max Bien-Kahn, Erika Lewis, Shaye Cohn, Robin Rapuzzi. Seated: Craig Flory and Greg Sherman.

a funny story at the Telluride Jazz Festival. Tell me more....

**R.R.:** We've been touring a lot this summer all over the U.S.A., and we played at the Telluride Jazz Festival in Colorado last week. It was at 10,000 feet up with thin air, and it was hard to breathe.

When we went to the green-room, they had a sort of oxygen machine because some musicians might need oxygen. A few people tried to use it but we couldn't figure [it out]. I told the crowd, "I'm feeling it! We've come from under the sea in New Orleans to 10,000 feet above sea level — this is so different!"

**V.C.:** Any closing thoughts?

**R.R.:** I love this band so much. We're really like a family.

We've been through so much great hardships and great celebrations, all over the U.S., Europe, and Australia, and I look forward to another 10 years of travel with these great friends.

And please dance at the Latchis Theatre! It means so much to the band.

*Tuba Skinny brings its world-renowned traditional New Orleans jazz to the Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St., Brattleboro on Thursday, Aug. 31 at 7 p.m.*

Tickets (\$25 for general admission and \$42 for premium seating) are available at [latchis.com](http://latchis.com).

For more information, contact Jon Potter at [jon@latchisarts.org](mailto:jon@latchisarts.org), or call 802-254-1109.

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## Balla Kouyaté, Mike Block Band to play on Bandwagon Summer Stage

PUTNEY—The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series presents the Balla Kouyaté & Mike Block Band on Saturday, Sept. 9, at 5 p.m., at Cooper Field, 41 Sand Hill Rd.

Balla Kouyaté and Mike Block have been collaborating for over a decade, bonding over their shared interest in music from across the world, and their commitment to innovating on their instruments. Kouyaté, a balafon player and singer coming out of the Djeli tradition of Mali, was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship from the NEA. Block is an American cellist/singer/composer originally trained in Western Classical music.

They have teamed up with friends from America and West Africa to create a fusion of musical styles in a six-piece band that features Sekou Dembele (djembe/vocals), Idrissa Kone (talking drum/calabash/percussion/vocals), Luke Okerlund (electric guitar) and Mike Rivard (bass/sintir).

"African vibes synthesized with Western traditions is at the root of this music — creating a sound that's wildly original and danceable," says Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, in a news release. "Balla Kouyaté is a World Heritage Fellow named by The National Endowment for the Arts. Mike and Balla both play with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. The musicians they're

bringing with them are world-class talent. It's going to be an exciting day of music."

To say that Kouyaté was born into a musical family is an understatement. His family lineage goes back over 800 years to Balla Faséké, the first of an unbroken line of djelis in the Kouyaté clan. Djelis are the oral historians, musicians, and performers who keep alive and celebrate the history of the Mandé people of Mali, Guinea, and other West African countries. Balla explains that the word "Djeli" derives from his Mandinka language, "It means blood and speaks to the central role we play in our society."

Block is a pioneering cello player, singer, composer, and educator, hailed by Yo-Yo Ma as the "ideal musician of the 21st Century." Mike is a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble (SRE), having joined in 2005 while a student at The Juilliard School. Touring extensively throughout the world with SRE, he has been featured as cello and vocal soloist, contributed arrangements and compositions, and along with the ensemble, earned a Grammy Award in 2017 for their album, *Sing Me Home*.

As an innovator, Mike is among the first wave of cellists to adopt a strap in order to stand and move while playing. With The Block Strap, Mike was the first standing cellist to perform at Carnegie Hall. As an educator, Mike is

passionate about creativity and collaboration, and is the founding director of Silkroad's Global Musician Workshop, and the Mike Block String Camp.

Tickets are \$20 in advance,

\$25 at the gate, with children under 12 admitted free. Next Stage will provide a cash bar. Advance tickets are available at [nextstagearts.org](http://nextstagearts.org). For information, call 802-387-0102.

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<b>Here We Are - Steve Faure, Cravitate - Pinball Gallery:</b> Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 10:45a, Thurs 1:15p & 9:15p, Fri 12:15p, Sun 5:15p	<b>Rescue Inc. Presents - Open House 8/26/23:</b> Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a, Sun 6a
<b>The World Fusion Show - Ep# 159 - Sylvain Leroux:</b> Mon 5:30p, Tues 10a, Wed 11:30a, Thurs 5:30p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 11:30a & 6:30p, Sun 9:30a	<b>Brattleboro Development Review Board - Training for Board Members 8/16/23:</b> Mon 6p, Tues 8a, Wed 12p, Sun 8:30a
<b>Stained Glass Windows of St. Michaels - Week 3: Mary, Holy Mother of God:</b> Mon 12:15p & 8:30p, Tues 6a, Thurs 12:15p, Fri 7:15a, Sat 8p, Sun 6:15a	<b>River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 8/23/23:</b> Mon 7:15p, Tues 7:45a, Wed 1p, Sun 9:25a
<b>Town of Brattleboro - Meet Brattleboro's Animal Control Officer:</b> Mon 4:25p, Tues 4:55p, Wed 11:25a, Thurs 1:55p & 5:25p, Fri 6:05a & 5:55p, Sat 12:55p & 5:25p, Sun 7:55p	<b>Windham Elementary School Board Special Mtg. 8/23/23:</b> Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p, Sun 9:30a
<b>Around Town With Maria - Jonas Emmanuel Blanchet-Fricke - Memorial Festival 7/29/23:</b> Mon 1p, Tues 8p, Thurs 2p, Fri 2:30p	<b>Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 8/28/23:</b> Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p, Sun 12p
<b>Brattleboro Literary Festival - Joyce Maynard: The Bird Hotel:</b> Tues 3:45p, Wed 12:15p, Thurs 9:45p, Fri 6a, Sun 5:55p	<b>Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 8/28/23:</b> Thurs 8:30, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p, Sun 2:30p
<b>Brattleboro Historical Society Presents - East Dummerston School History:</b> Mon 6:30p, Tues 6:30p, Wed 6:30p, Thurs 6:30p, Fri 6:30p, Sat 5p	<b>Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 8/15/23:</b> Mon 9a, Tues 6p, Thurs 3p, Fri 6p, Sat 9a, Sun 6p
<b>At BMAC - Conversation: Anina Major and Sadaf Padder:</b> Wed 3:30p, Fri 12:45p, Sun 7p	<b>Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg. 8/16/23:</b> Wed 1p
<b>Energy Week with George Harvey &amp; Tom Finnell:</b> Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	<b>Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 8/21/23:</b> Wed 9a
<b>Vermontitude - Weekly Episode:</b> Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	<b>Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 8/22/23:</b> Wed 10:30a, Thurs 1:30p, Sat 5:30a
<b>News Block: WTSN News:</b> Mon-Fri 12p & 6p <b>Reformer News Break:</b> Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	<b>Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 8/22/23:</b> Tues 3:25p, Thurs 11:5a, Sat 5:15p
<b>St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	<b>Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 8/23/23:</b> Tues 11:45a, Sat 7:30p
<b>Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service:</b> Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	<b>Putney Selectboard Mtg. 8/23/23:</b> Mon 6a, Tues 1:30p, Sat 7a
<b>Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	<b>Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 8/16/23:</b> Mon 12p, Wed 2p
<b>Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	<b>Town Matters - Weekly Episode:</b> Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
<b>St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass:</b> Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	<b>The David Pakman Show:</b> Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

**Note: Schedule subject to change.**  
View full schedule and watch online at [brattleborotv.org](http://brattleborotv.org)  
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## After more than a decade's absence, Southern Vermont Art and Craft Festival returns to Manchester

MANCHESTER — Craftproducers will ring in a new era of the Southern Vermont Art and Craft Festival: 125 tented art and craft boutiques will grace the lawns at Hunter Park (Riley Rink Field, 410 Hunter Park Rd.) Friday and Saturday, Sept. 8 and 9, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Sept. 10, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

After twenty-seven years, Hildene decided to no longer host this festival, and the peregrination of the Southern Vermont Art and Craft Festival began. After a 27-year run, the show wandered to Bennington and Camelot Village for six years. Eventually the festival simply ceased due to Covid.

"What was once an institution at Hildene left a void in the soul of Manchester," state organizers in a news release.

"When the craft show comes to town, that's when the summer season really begins" was a common saying in Manchester back in the mid-eighties, Ron Mancini of Mother Myrick's remembers. "People scheduled their summer vacations around

the Southern Vermont Art and Craft Festival, restaurants jammed, shoppers abounded as the first outlet malls opened in town, and the town complained of traffic. Success will do that, and when the men's tennis tournament and then the women's golf tournament joined the craft show the same weekend, Manchester really rocked."

Organizers say they've planned for a festive ambience, with a different band playing music each day, craft demonstrations, food vendors cooking up a storm, and a craft beer and wine tent serving local libations daily. Specialty food and Vermont spirit makers will display in individual tents and offer their products for sale as well.

The festival will be held rain or shine. Admission is \$10 for adults and free for children (no pets allowed). Parking is free. For more information, including a listing of exhibitors, entertainment, and food trucks, visit [southernvtartcraftfest.com](http://southernvtartcraftfest.com).

## Entry deadline extended for In-Sight's Youth Photo Contest & Fair

BRATTLEBORO—In-Sight's first Youth Photo Contest & Fair is off to a good start, say organizers, with 19 youths submitting more than 50 images so far, but the Contest & Fair planning committee says many potential entrants have asked for more time, so they have extended the entry deadline to Sept. 17 at midnight.

Youths (ages 11 to 18) living within an hour of Brattleboro are invited to submit images. Entrants do not have to be In-Sight students, and it is free to submit work. Submissions will be on display in the Latchis Theatre during the Photo Fair on Sept. 30, and a jury of local and national photographers will award prizes to images in each category.

Youth photographers can submit one image per category — Analog film, Artistic, People, Places, or the New England Experience.

For help choosing images or with the submission process, reach out to [info@insight-photography.org](mailto:info@insight-photography.org) or 802-251-9960.

*You don't make a photograph just with a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved.*

—ANSEL ADAMS



One of Julia Sorensen's "Beyond the Bounds" paintings. COURTESY PHOTO

## Works by Julia Sorensen on display at Gallery 34

BRATTLEBORO—"Beyond the Bounds," the first solo exhibit by Julia Sorensen will open at Gallery 34 at 34 Main St. near the Latchis Theatre on Friday, Sept. 1, from 5 to 8 p.m., during Gallery Walk.

Sorensen's exhibit features abstract pieces created using a variety of non-traditional techniques and inspired by abstract artist Ed Clark, who is sometimes referred to as "the lost abstract expressionist."

After seeing his work in Chicago's Art Institute, Sorensen said, she wondered

what would happen if she started going beyond the bounds of traditional shapes, colors, and techniques, as Clark had done. She draws on his willingness to break the plane of the canvas, to go outside the bounds.

She has experimented with constructing pieces rather than being confined to a traditional canvas and has used brooms to apply paint in addition to brushes, blades, and other implements, as Clark did. She also often works with her pieces on the ground, not an easel or wall. This allows her to apply paint differently and work

in all directions at once.

"The work invites viewers to consider their own relationship with the typical or expected and to go Beyond the Bounds," notes Gallery staff.

Gallery 34 is a contemporary venue, and is associated with the River Gallery School of Art. A new show opens on the first Friday of every month in time for Brattleboro's Gallery Walk. Artwork is viewable anytime through the gallery's window on Main Street. For more information, visit [rivergalleryschool.org](http://rivergalleryschool.org).

## Celebration Brass Band plays a concert on the lawn at Christ Church in Guilford

GUILFORD — The Celebration Brass Band of Southern Vermont and the Christ Church Guilford Society invite everyone to a concert on the lawn of Christ Church on Route 5 in the Village of Algiers. The concert, which will honor those lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10.

The band, with its New Orleans Brass Band sound, was founded and is directed by Peter Simoneaux and features many local musicians. Brattleboro area

audiences will recognize the band through their performances at Gallery Walk, the Strolling of the Heifers, and Fourth of July parades.

Christ Church Guilford Society, Inc., is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded to conserve and make use of historic Christ Church. Concertgoers will hear about the reconstruction work being done on the classic 1817 building and will be able to peek inside the sanctuary while the building is closed for repairs. The audience is invited to

bring blankets and chairs; light refreshments will be available, and children are welcome. For more information, contact Simoneaux at 603-477-1596 or [peter.simoneaux@gmail.com](mailto:peter.simoneaux@gmail.com), or check out the website at [cbbvt.com](http://cbbvt.com). For more

information on Christ Church's history, mission, and news, go to [christchurchguilfordsociety.org](http://christchurchguilfordsociety.org).

Admission to this event is free, but donations will be gratefully received to support the Celebration Brass Band and Christ Church Guilford.

## Indie folk-rock duo to perform at Next Stage Arts

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts presents indie folk-rock duo Sway Wild on Thursday, Aug. 31, at 7 p.m., at 15 Kimball Hill.

Sway Wild was born on a small island in the Salish Sea. Following a two-month sailing voyage through the remote anchorages of British Columbia, indie-folk duo Dave McGraw & Mandy Fer returned to their San Juan Island, Washington, home still hungry to explore.

"The result was nothing short of an artistic epiphany; an evolution of sound that called out loudly for a new name," says the artists' website. Sway Wild released its self-titled debut album worldwide in 2019.

Sway Wild's sound explores the corners of rock, pop, funk, and folk, "but at its nucleus it is undeniably a music full of joy," continues the About page of their website. "It can squeeze the heart in your chest, it can draw tears from your eyes, and it can force you to get up and move your body; over and over, it somehow manages to do all three at once."

Fer and McGraw say their "gorgeous harmonies and lyrics serve to both process and share their jubilation, grief, and frustration with a complex and deeply imperfect society."

Fer plays a Fender Stratocaster for both lead guitar and chordal rhythms, often at the same time.

Fer also tours as the lead guitarist for Grammy-nominated Allison Russell and recently performed with Brandi Carlile and Jason Isbell.

For Fer and McGraw, the sailing expedition served as a kind of sabbatical from seven years of heavy international touring, sharing stages with the likes of Iron & Wine, Gregory Alan Isakov, and Mandolin Orange.

With Fer refocused on electric guitar, McGraw behind a drum kit for the first time in over a decade, they say, they followed themselves to rediscover everything they loved about making music.

The new material was honed on tours across the U.S. and in Europe, performing alongside Lake Street Dive, Rising Appalachia, Charlie Hunter Trio, and others.

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PRIMARY SOURCES

# ‘We cannot consider this petition’

Amid rancor over the proposed Windham-Windsor Housing Trust project and a petition for the Putney Selectboard to rescind the zoning permit, the board chair reflects on property rights, the permitting process, and the end of the appeals journey. And about civility and public discourse.

IT HAS RECENTLY come to our attention that a petition has been submitted asking that this board rescind the zoning permit issued to Windham-Windsor Housing Trust to construct affordable housing on the land adjacent to the Putney Community Garden.

Let’s just get that part out of the way before I continue: The Selectboard does not have the authority to rescind zoning permits and, consequently, we cannot consider this petition. Our town attorney has confirmed this. For those who enjoy reading statute, the relevant citation is 24 V.S.A. §4472.

Now, let’s talk about land rights in Vermont. The parcels currently owned by Gateway Associates are private land. Let me say that again: This is private land. Owning land comes with a bundle of rights. Those are: the right of possession, the right of control, the right of exclusion, the right of enjoyment, and the right of disposition, also called “fee simple ownership.”

In other words, landowners can do whatever they want with their land, with two exceptions: One, the town can levy taxes on it, and two, it is subject to federal and state statutes and,

**AILEEN CHUTE**, chair of the Putney Selectboard, read this statement at the Aug. 23 board meeting. “Keep in mind that a) I wrote it to be spoken and b) it’s obviously only from me, and not from the entire Selectboard,” she cautions. Editor’s note: A Commons reader suggested publication of this statement. We welcome and appreciate such suggestions; please get in touch at [voices@commonsnews.org](mailto:voices@commonsnews.org) if you come across something you think inspires good food for thought.

and not allowed anyone on it. They could have planted it with trees, or hayed it, or put animals to graze on it. They could have put a fence around it or built a private residence or put up solar panels or a Dollar General or a parking lot, as long as they continued to pay their property taxes and those uses conformed with federal and state law and our town’s zoning regulations. They didn’t. They decided to sell it to a housing trust. That was their right as private landowners. You, the public, and we, the Selectboard, do not have a say on who private land owners sell their land to, or for how much. They do not have to sell it to you or someone of your choosing because you think you have a better use for the land. It’s not your land. It’s theirs.

more locally, our town zoning regulations. There is no community process to check landowner’s rights. This parcel does not belong to the town, nor does it belong to the community, and while the current landowners have very generously allowed the public the freedom to walk on it and enjoy it — and even to have a community garden and a farmers market on it — it remains private land, with the landowners retaining the full bundle of rights as any other landowner in town. Like any other landowner in town, they could have posted it

and not allowed anyone on it. They could have planted it with trees, or hayed it, or put animals to graze on it. They could have put a fence around it or built a private residence or put up solar panels or a Dollar General or a parking lot, as long as they continued to pay their property taxes and those uses conformed with federal and state law and our town’s zoning regulations. They didn’t. They decided to sell it to a housing trust. That was their right as private landowners. You, the public, and we, the Selectboard, do not have a say on who private land owners sell their land to, or for how much. They do not have to sell it to you or someone of your choosing because you think you have a better use for the land. It’s not your land. It’s theirs.

Now, LET’S TALK about the permitting process. Windham & Windsor Housing Trust, which will soon be the new landowners entitled to all the same bundle of rights as all other landowners in the state of Vermont, decided that when they finally own these parcels, they want to place housing on it — go figure. So they went through the process of obtaining a

■ SEE PUTNEY HOUSING, C2

VIEWPOINT

## Bad move

New and clear policies are needed in the international tournament chess arena. But barring trans girls and women from competition only increases the feelings of exclusion and discouragement they are already likely to face.

**Brattleboro**  
A SA TRANS WOMAN who has been a tournament chess player for five decades, I find myself targeted by the recent ruling about transgender chess players by FIDE (a French acronym for an organization that translates as “International Chess Federation”) and the news cycle surrounding it.

Given the relatively large number of people in our community (as well as the chess-playing community of the region) who are aware that I am in this position, I feel compelled to share my perspective.

When, in 2015, I became legally female in Vermont, I also changed my gender marker with the United States Chess Federation (USCF). This immediately made me the top-rated female player in the state, and shortly thereafter, I received an invitation to participate in a national women’s event.

I declined, mostly because I did not want to be embroiled in exactly the sort of controversy addressed by the FIDE ruling.

However, in 2018, USCF officially adopted a welcoming and inclusive policy toward trans players, and consequently I may decide to participate in such tournaments.

FIRST, LET ME provide some background for readers unfamiliar with the chess world.

Originally founded as a players’ union in 1924, it has evolved into the organization responsible for international ratings, the granting of certain titles such as international master and grandmaster, and the world championship cycle, including procedures for determining challengers as well as the format and conditions of world championship matches.

It is worth noting that FIDE’s evolution has included quite a few schisms, political controversies, and corruption scandals, some of them quite recent.

**KIRAJ J. STORM** started playing tournament chess as a child in Massachusetts in 1973. She has lived, worked, and parented in Brattleboro since 1997.

What was FIDE’s ruling regarding transgender players? The gist is twofold. First, new and clear policies are needed, which the organization has committed to formulating within the next two years.

Second, in the interim, trans girls and women are barred from playing in women’s events, and trans boys and men are stripped of any women’s titles they may hold.

As with any well-publicized trans-related news story in the current political climate, reactions from all sides have been histrionic. I hope to provide a more nuanced view.

AS A PARENT, I have some empathy for the frustration of feeling that your child is being squeezed out of opportunities by those who, according to the gender they were assigned at birth, would neither have had nor have needed such opportunities. The fact that chess is not primarily a test of physical capability does not fully mitigate this concern.

It is true that, at the international level with which FIDE is concerned, the very need for women-only events and titles has been frequently called into question, most notably by some strong female players themselves.

Others argue, however, that given the disproportionately small number of tournament-level girls and women in chess, it is important to encourage them and provide opportunities that many of them would not have were they to compete against the much larger pool of

■ SEE CHESS, C2

VIEWPOINT

The clipping features a bar chart titled "H.U.D. Cites Steady Rental Production Since 1974" showing housing starts in millions (Figures in bars are percent rental). The chart shows a general upward trend from 1974 to 2022, with a notable dip around 2020. The text discusses the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (H.U.D.) proposals for deep cuts in two main subsidy programs: Section 8 rental housing assistance and public housing. It also mentions the Reagan Administration's shift in housing policy and the impact of the current administration's budget cuts.

## No housing bargains today. Or housing.

In every other developed country, there is social housing for those in need. Not here.

**Guilford**  
RECENTLY, I read a story about a family of four — granted, two were very young — who were so excited about all the money they were saving living in a tiny house.

I read another story about a young man who had no cash, so he has tricked out a semi-trucked interior. The previous week, it was a renovated shipping container from Lowe’s; the week before, it was a fully fixed-up ancient school bus.

Some of these projects look like they might be OK places to live, especially if you live in a climate where you can be outdoors much of the time — but that’s a very quickly shrinking portion of the world.

This is the wealthiest country in the history of the world, as Noam Chomsky reminds us. What is going on?

I AM 69 years old. The people in my generation — and, even more so, the generation older than I am — were able to purchase homes at prices that haven’t been seen for decades, at sweet mortgage interest rates that made it possible in many cases for one parent to work and the family to prosper.

This mostly applies to white Americans, as the G.I. Bill mainly helped almost all white soldiers returning from World War II become homeowners.

When I was starting to look for my own housing, amazing deals on land and fixer-uppers, as well as reasonably priced starter homes, existed — and, in fact, were still abundant in some cities and states.

Even for Black homebuyers, who in

**NANCY BRAUS**, an independent bookseller, is a longtime activist.

many cases were blocked by redlining (policies created by banks to keep the suburbs white) 40 years ago, homes were more affordable, and many Black families took advantage of these relatively low prices.

Today, there are no housing bargains. In fact, in many states and cities, there is no housing at all for anyone except the most affluent.

With no real incentives from the government to build workforce housing, developers build to make the largest profit — and they find the large profits in luxury housing.

In Vermont, not only is the great housing deal a thing of the past, but there are also no rentals available.

Some friends recently applied for a rental in my small town, Brattleboro, and when the landlord told them he would rent to them, he informed them that he had received 119 applications, and the place was listed publicly for about a week — if that.

WHAT APPEARS to be happening is that, like so many other long-term failures, the housing crisis can be laid at the dead, unmourned feet of Ronald Reagan.

Before 1980, the federal government built housing. During Reagan’s transformational eight years as president, he essentially disposed of this concept.

Reagan sponsored a completely

inadequate supposed substitute for building the housing desperately needed by a fast-growing country. The population has grown by a full third from 1980 until today, yet the federal government has not built any housing for the 105 million more people who now live here.

Instead, the failed Reagan plan called for tax breaks to developers to build a small number of market-rate apartments in their upscale projects.

Reagan said in 1981 that every church and synagogue should take in “10 welfare families” and — voilà! — no more homelessness.

He also turned his back on a scandal in which money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development was given to Republican consultants to confer on how to stop building housing altogether instead of using it as intended: building and repairing low-income housing.

It seems to some that the housing crisis has happened quickly, but I would argue that it has been four decades in the making.

IN EVERY OTHER developed country, there is social housing for those in need.

In Vienna, Austria, the social housing is so desirable that 78% are renters, many by choice. The rentals are mixed income, and are a major social network in the city.

How social housing is viewed in Europe varies by country, but there is nothing like the problems poor people face in the United States.

There is no developed country in the

■ SEE HOUSING, C2



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## COLUMN

## Relishing every moment

‘Travel, if it’s possible, can be simply a pleasurable experience or a profound life-altering event. For me, it was both, and I view it as a great blessing.’

Brattleboro

ALL MY LIFE I have disagreed with Henry David Thoreau:

Unlike him, I think it is “worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar.” That’s why inveterate travelers find the return to post-pandemic travel an exhilarating experience.

This spring, my husband and I were excited to resurrect an aborted trip abroad that was planned almost four years ago. We were so excited, you might have thought it was something we’d never done before. The truth is, travel is in our DNA, so having to stay close to home for so long was hard.

THE JOY OF TRAVEL began when I was a child, and the high point of summer would be a family trip to Toronto to visit my father’s relatives.

On the eve of the journey, my sister and I would lay out new shorts, T-shirts, and sandals to be ready when the alarm would ring at 6 a.m. Teeth brushed and hair combed, we’d skip to the back of the black Buick and wouldn’t argue with our brother for the window seat. We would be too busy savoring breakfast at Howard Johnson’s, part of



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

the annual ritual that always began our trip to another country.

Every year we would take a different route to enjoy the scenery. In this pre-interstate and Holiday Inn era, we would drive through Pennsylvania Dutch country or New England or New York state, where we visited Ithaca’s gorges, the Thousand Islands, and of course, Niagara Falls.

Every night, we’d look for AAA-approved cabins in which to sleep, with their worn linoleum floors, chenille bedspreads, and inevitable spiders. We thought it was pure heaven (except for the spiders).

Crossing the border was like going to a forbidden country. We had to answer questions about where we were going, why, and for how long, and we’d reassure customs officials that we had nothing illegal with us. Once cleared to proceed, we

headed to the Falls to ride in the Maid of the Mist boat that went behind the Falls spraying us with water.

In Toronto, we’d check into the Royal York Hotel, where a little man in a maroon uniform roamed the lobby every day calling out, “Call for Mr. Smith! Call for Mr. Jones!”

The next morning, before heading to my grandfather’s cottage, we’d eat breakfast in The Honey Dew Restaurant. Only then would we be ready for the obligatory visits that would lie ahead.

LATER, IN MY early 20s, I took my first solo trip to Europe. I thought I’d died and gone to heaven as I experienced Amsterdam, London, Paris, Rome, and the Swiss landscape, relying on travel books that promised that you could do this kind of thing economically.

Relishing every moment and every conversation with fellow travelers from different cultures, I thought I’d go mad with the pleasure of it all. I marveled at the sight of Michelangelo’s David, wept in San Marco Square, thrilled at the pageantry of the Changing of the Guard, sat in cafés on the Champs-Élysées and smiled back at



JUMPSTORY

Mona Lisa.

I even fell in love twice. More importantly, I knew that my life had changed and that I would never stop traveling.

LUCKILY, I MARRIED a Brit who loves traveling as much as I do and with whom I was able to travel internationally because of his work, then mine.

We even lived for a year in Thailand when I got a teaching gig there. We scurried around Southeast Asia, discovering new foods, new art and music, new friends, beautiful rituals, and other ways of living.

Travel also offers a diverse and sometimes dramatic education. History, art, literature, religious beliefs all come alive as we are exposed to other cultures, rituals, and norms. We become more curious, learn new ways of thinking or expressing ourselves, and we grow

in ways we never imagined.

Traveling also offers challenges.

Before there was a single currency in Europe, I had to learn how to convert currencies. I had to communicate without a common language and know the difference between the Alps and the Pyrenees. It was instructive and fun.

I also had to develop bargaining skills and to know how to deal with dangerous situations. Luckily, in my experience, there is always someone to help.

Travel, if it’s possible, can be simply a pleasurable experience or a profound life-altering event. For me, it was both, and I view it as a great blessing.

That’s why I continue to agree with Mark Twain, who claimed that travel is enticing, not least because it is “fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness.” Like Twain,

whose account of one trip gave us *Imocents Abroad*, I think “it would be well if such an excursion could be gotten up every year and the system regularly inaugurated.”

Traveling may have seemed a thing of the past during the pandemic. Now we may find ourselves changing venues because of the climate crisis or different opportunities. We may prefer more café crawls and fewer cathedral and museum visits, along with more chatting with the locals.

But I am among those travelers who are not ready to let a passport expire, because I never know when I might have a fierce urge to weep again in Venice, to learn something new, to make new friends, or to count cats in Zanzibar.

## Putney housing

permit to allow them to do so. Again, you, the public, and we, the Selectboard, do not have a say on what kind of structures a private landowner may put up on their land. That would be a very different permitting model. That would be “permits by popular opinion.”

Imagine wanting to add a deck to your house and having to go to Town Meeting to seek permission from your fellow citizens to do so. What if they didn’t like you? What if they decided it wasn’t anything personal — they’re not against decks per se, but they felt you already had enough decks? What if they think decks are bad for the environment? What if they think you haven’t lived in Putney for long enough?

Fortunately, to build a deck, or any other structure on your land, your project just has to conform to the rules in our zoning bylaws to get approval to build it.

That process doesn’t question what kind of people might set foot on your new structure or if your new structure will bring in the right amount of taxes. It’s based on a set of standard rules, no matter what your name is or where you came from. It’s a process that tries to balance land rights with town goals in the most objective way possible, with a robust appeals process that goes all the way up to the Vermont Supreme Court.

Our zoning bylaws apply to every landowner equally and do not bend to the opinions of a vocal minority. They are applied in a statutorily defined process, by appropriate municipal panels.

In our case, that process goes through our zoning administrator and our Development Review Board. The Selectboard and the voters have no role in this process.

NOW, LET’S TALK about this petition.

Regarding the unsubstantiated — and, frankly, malicious — allegations that members of the DRB, the Planning Commission, and the Selectboard variously engaged in underhanded tactics in order to “push this project through,” I’d like to address some specific pieces of misinformation that continue to circulate and are vaguely referenced in this petition.

One is that the DRB and/or the Selectboard reduced the size of the DRB shortly before the WWHT permit was issued. This is false.

On Feb. 26, 2014, the Selectboard voted to reduce the DRB from a nine-member board to a seven-member board.

On March 9, 2022, the DRB — with a vote of four out of a possible seven, five of whom were present, with one recusal — unanimously approved the Project.

On March 23, 2022, the Selectboard reduced the size of the DRB from seven to five, because of issues with recruitment and known and ongoing issues with recusals due to conflicts of interest.

March 23 is after March 9. Let’s repeat that: *March 23 is after March 9*. Every single year. The year 2014, likewise, is eight years before 2022, which was way before this permit was a twinkle in anyone’s eye. There is no narrative that can make this timeline work in any other way.

Another is that there were multiple and ongoing conflicts of interest among members of these boards. This is also false. While one member of the Selectboard and one member on the DRB did have a vested financial interest in the sale of the property in question, each time this subject came up, these members properly disclosed their conflict and recused themselves.

Every time. I know. I was there. Another is that the Planning Commission changed zoning bylaws in order to accommodate this project shortly before the permit was issued. Specifically, that the parcel was “zoned

commercial and then re-zoned residential.”

The town did not “rezone the Gateway project land from commercial to residential.” Putney does not have commercial-only zoning. The parcel in question has always been zoned Village Residential.

What the Planning Commission recommended, and what the Selectboard voted for after a duly warned public hearing, was to reduce the minimum lot size from 15,000 sq. ft. to 10,000 sq. ft. for public water and sewer lots to support the potential of the Neighborhood Development Area designation.

The proposed Gateway project fit within the existing minimum lot size before these changes were made, so the conspiracy theory that the Planning Commission and the Selectboard voted to change these rules to make the project conform is untrue.

Also, those changes were voted on in April of 2021. The permit was not applied for until December of 2021 and wasn’t granted until March of the following year.

In other words, the project was designed to conform to our zoning bylaws, not the other way around. Again, if we follow the generally accepted view of how time works, this narrative cannot be construed in any other way.

FURTHERMORE, WHILE investigating what missteps there might have been in an effort to improve our processes going forward is a good idea, the remedy for any missteps in the original process has already been taken.

That remedy was appealing the DRB’s decision to Vermont Environmental Court and then the Vermont Supreme Court. Both courts reviewed the permit de novo (as new) and found it to conform to the Town of Putney’s zoning bylaws.

When a court hears a case de novo, it is deciding the issues without reference to any legal conclusion or assumption made by the previous body to hear the case (in this case, our Development Review Board). This appeals process is designed to cure any issues that may have arisen in the original process.

In other words, the courts upheld the permit approval objectively on its merits based on their legal interpretation of our zoning bylaws without considering the DRB’s reasoning for coming to the same conclusion.

The Vermont Supreme Court was the last stop for this appeal. There are no other avenues left to appeal or rescind this permit. The court has spoken. Windham & Windsor Housing Trust has won the right to build the housing they’ve been permitted for on the land that they will soon own.

NOW, LET’S TALK about civility and public discourse.

A recent post on Facebook directly targeted the members

FROM SECTION FRONT

of our DRB in a sexist and ageist way, and many other commentaries and false narratives both on and off of social media for the past two years have continued to paint the entire town leadership as an evil cabal that is secretly in the pocket of a large, wealthy monopoly.

The subsequent inevitable comments target certain areas of town in denigrating terms, using coded language and dog whistles that disrespect and stereotype the people — our friends and neighbors — who call those areas home.

I have also heard of former and current members of our boards and commissions being verbally accosted while going about their daily personal lives in Putney, and accused of making out financially or personally on this project.

One individual told me they have received hate mail. Another told me it’s just “par for the course.” But it should not be par for the course. Healthy disagreement and discourse is one thing. Threatening and bullying is another.

That is not OK. I expect

## Housing

FROM SECTION FRONT

world besides the United States where so many vulnerable people are unhoused: the very ill, the mothers who have just given birth, the elderly people who worked all their lives, the veterans who fought for their country.

We will continue to see the youth, and the not-so-young, of America creatively housing themselves, whether in the shed set up in Mom and Dad’s backyard, in the

ubiquitous garage and basement apartments for the more fortunate, in the old used RVs, or possibly in a re-growth of house shares, communes, and other methods of keeping a roof over one’s head.

What is highly unlikely is that we will see a time in the near future when the current younger generation is heading to the local savings and loan for a mortgage.

better of Putney. Those comments and that sentiment and that downright disrespect for fellow town members and hard-working volunteers is not the Putney I know and love.

Furthermore, when false allegations are publicly made against individuals and organizations on social media and elsewhere in order to tarnish their reputation, it is defamation and libel, neither of which is protected speech under the First Amendment.

We are all members of this town, no matter where we live,

or how long we’ve lived here, or who we rent from, or what positions we hold.

I will say again: this particular issue has been arbitrated by our highest court, and they have spoken. It is over. It is time to move on. We have other issues we need to work on.

I see a lot of energy and engagement right now around housing, which is great, but it is not being applied in a constructive way, and it is not looking forward. Please begin to use your energy in a way that truly helps form our future in Putney.

## Chess

FROM SECTION FRONT

male players. Whatever the various reasons are for the historical underrepresentation of girls and women in chess, the disparity remains quite pronounced.

I also understand the gut reaction of those who fear that male players will “game the system” by pretending to be trans in order to steal prizes and titles. Again, USCF’s 2018 policy, which has been reaffirmed in the wake of FIDE’s ruling, welcomes and includes trans players while providing specific protections against fraud.

The first part of FIDE’s statement, calling for the development of clear policies, makes perfect sense, and I do not agree with those who deride the ruling’s two-year window for accomplishing this. For an entity as large, complex, and multinational as FIDE, two years seems fairly reasonable.

The rest of the ruling, however, is more than a little problematic.

REGARDING THE potential impact of trans players on opportunities for cis girls and women, please consider that, until quite recently, the very existence of trans people was essentially erased from public policy and discourse.

When I took my first tentative steps out of the closet in 1997, the only resource I could easily find online was a memorial site dedicated to trans girls and women known to have been murdered. It was not a short list.

I believe there are some important differences between cis women and trans women, and I’m open to a range of views and approaches to respecting those differences, but it is vital

that we argue in good faith.

This means, first and foremost, letting go of the often-unspoken assumption that trans people are either lying or deluded. Of course, a few of us are, but those who seize on and trumpet such examples never seem to ask themselves how prevalent dishonesty and delusion are among cis people — or, indeed, any reasonably large group of humans, however categorized.

Failure to ask this sort of question is called “default thinking,” and I believe it to be at the root of most forms of prejudice.

For any readers who don’t “believe” in trans people, I strongly encourage you to talk to some and get to know us. If you engage in such conversations in good faith, you will find that we are just people.

If we can accept that most trans people, like most people in general, are doing the best they can to understand and express their lived experience, then we can perhaps consider the frustration of the parents of trans children upon seeing them squeezed out of numerous opportunities, while also being used as political footballs in the media.

Also, such children face increased risk of various forms of violence and bullying, as well as (not coincidentally) a higher risk of suicide.

THIS BRINGS US BACK to FIDE’s ruling.

The number of trans girls and women who play tournament chess is much smaller even than the number of cis girls and women who do so, and barring them from events only increases

the feelings of exclusion and discouragement they are already likely to face.

Why, during this two-year window, does it make more sense to bar them than to leave them be?

And in what universe does it make sense to say, on the one hand, that during this time trans women who play are, in effect, not to be considered to be women, while at the same time asserting that trans men who play (of whom I was able to find no specific examples whatsoever on the internet) are also not considered to be or have been women and thus must be stripped of their titles? This part of FIDE’s ruling is puzzling, pointless, and punitive.

Many of the countries within which FIDE operates are, to put it mildly, socially conservative, and I suspect this statement may have been as much about appeasing them as anything else.

If, within the time frame they’ve established, FIDE creates a clear set of guidelines that affirm and include trans players while providing protections against gaming the system, I will applaud them. Their handling of this ruling, however, does not inspire confidence.

The pool of female tournament chess players, trans and cis combined, is small enough that all such players ought to be encouraged rather than discouraged.

There’s room enough for all of us, and perhaps one good thing that will come from FIDE’s ruling is that the internet is abuzz with the idea of girls playing chess.

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COLUMN | Compassion Story

Exploring justice through creating art

Amid political division and acrimony, creating murals together lets us focus on how to be inclusive and compassionate with each other — in school and in life

Brattleboro AS A PROJECT of the Greater Falls Community Justice Center (GFCJC), based in Bellows Falls and Springfield, we have brought Afghan woman muralist Negina Azimi to paint murals with students in area schools.

We focus on the theme of justice. In restorative style circles, students discuss what justice means to them and generate themes, words, and mostly images that Negina can incorporate into a mural.

We have completed murals in two schools so far, at Bellows Falls Union High School with Laura Tabachnick's social studies class and at Dummerston School with Nicole Thomas's student leadership group. We plan to start another in the fall at Bellows Falls Middle School along with Student Council sponsor Chris Kelley,

JOHN UNGERLEIDER, Ed.D., is director of the Greater Falls Community Justice Center in Bellows Falls and Springfield.

who served in the military in Afghanistan and Iraq.

THE PROCESS OF generating ideas for these murals helps students reflect and analyze key components of justice, which leads to assessments of fairness, inclusion, and compassion.

Informed by practices and principles of restorative justice, students sit in a circle and speak one by one, sharing what is comfortable openly and honestly — from the heart. They listen to and seek to understand everyone in turn around the circle.

Young people have a strong sense of what is fair and unfair. Teens struggle with feeling included as they are developing their own unique and shared

sense of identity. They know intuitively the importance of compassion and kindness, and how badly they can feel when disrespected and devalued.

At a time pained by chasms of political division and acrimony, creating murals together, after speaking honestly in restorative circles about meaningful issues, facilitates a shared focus on how we can be more inclusive and compassionate with each other — in school and in life.

Students also build a sense of compassion for the refugee experience by hearing the story of Negina fleeing Afghanistan, as well as the challenges and oppressive living conditions of the family she has left behind, especially the women.

GFCJC ALSO SPONSORED a mural with the Rockingham Arts and Museum Project (RAMP), designed by Bellows Falls muralist Mark Ragonese. This mural was painted with fathers who took GFCJC's Parenting with Respect course and their children, as well as Negina and her sister Marwa, also an artist.

We are waiting for permission to put up the finished mural,

made out of wood pieces that fit like a puzzle, in a boarded-up window on the old fire station in downtown Bellows Falls.

Through these fun and creative arts projects, we applied reflective dialogue to allow

middle and high school students to assess their own definitions of justice and express various meanings of compassion — for refugees, and for themselves as young people in challenging times.

Compassion Story of the Month: With Brattleboro voting overwhelmingly to become part of the international Charter for Compassion, the Reformer and The Commons have agreed to publish a "Compassion Story of the Month." Submissions, from Brattleboro area residents, for future publication, not to exceed 650 words, should be emailed to: compassionstory@gmail.com or mailed to: Compassion Story of the Month, PO Box 50, Marlboro, VT 05344. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. Earlier submitted stories will automatically be considered in subsequent months.

LETTERS

Don't blame opponents of Putney project for rise in costs

RE: "New housing in the works for an area starved for options" [News, Aug. 23]:

The article was very interesting and informative. However, I take issue with Elizabeth Bridgewater's insinuation that those who oppose the Windham-Windsor Housing Trust's proposed building project in Putney are responsible for the increase in costs for the project.

Once again, it seems that citizens who have every civil and legal right to oppose this building project in the only green space in downtown Putney are being shamed into silence. Why doesn't WWHT do what it has historically been so good at doing — which is to redevelop an existing building to provide the 25 housing units in Windham County?

According to Craig Miskovich — as quoted earlier in the article — it costs something like four or five times more to put up a new structure than to redevelop an existing building.

WWHT decided to fight this battle regardless of the opposition of the many residents of Putney who object to this project. There have been alternate sites suggested, but they are apparently doggedly inflexible and dismissive about what those many residents want for the future of their town.

So who is to blame for the increased costs?

Maureen Tadlock Putney

Putney Landing: A community functioning as a really wonderful place

I wanted to drop a note of appreciation to the team at Windham-Windsor Housing Trust, the residents at Putney Landing, and the Putney Foodshelf.

On Aug. 3, Barbara Carey (Support and Services at Home wellness nurse) and I were at Putney Landing for the Putney Foodshelf's food drop. It was beautiful. In every way.

The little community gardens were busting at the seams, almost every entrance way was decorated in inviting and colorful ways (lights, chairs, decorations), and the buildings fit the site so nicely.

But the best part was just being in the community functioning as a really wonderful place.

Neighbors were making sure everyone knew about the food. They were packing food bags for neighbors who were at work. They stored the frozen meats in their freezers until folks got

home. They were also driving each other to doctor appointments. Kids were engaging.

In light of the negative narratives that circulate the internet, it's empowering to be validated, once again, that good work that matters happens across this entire organization.

Thanks for creating, maintaining, and supporting this little community — and all the others!

WINDHAM AND WINDSOR HOUSING TRUST Brattleboro

Marion Major, outreach and marketing coordinator

Honoring GunSense Vermont founder as 'beacon of leadership and courage'

As our community continues to seek positive change, it's vital that we take a moment to celebrate the outstanding individuals who have propelled us forward.

Brattleboro resident Ann Braden, the founder of GunSense Vermont, stands as a beacon of leadership and courage, inspiring us to work towards a safer and more responsible approach to firearms.

Following the heart-wrenching events of the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012, she founded GunSense Vermont, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocating for responsible gun safety measures. Her efforts have led to significant legislative achievements that prioritize safety and well-being throughout our state.

GunSense Vermont has played a pivotal role in raising the age to purchase firearms to 21, limiting high-capacity magazines, and passing waiting periods and safe-storage laws. These accomplishments reflect the organization's unwavering commitment to creating a safer Vermont for everyone.

Please join us, along with guest speaker, U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, to honor Ann Braden's legacy with our inaugural "Leadership & Courage Award" presentation at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center on Wednesday, Sept. 6 at 6 p.m.

This celebratory event is an opportunity for elected officials, community leaders, concerned citizens — including young folks — to express their collective support and commitment to creating a safer Vermont for everyone while acknowledging the significant strides that have been taken in advancing gun safety measures across the state.

For tickets, visit gunsensevt.org. For more information, call 802-365-4106.

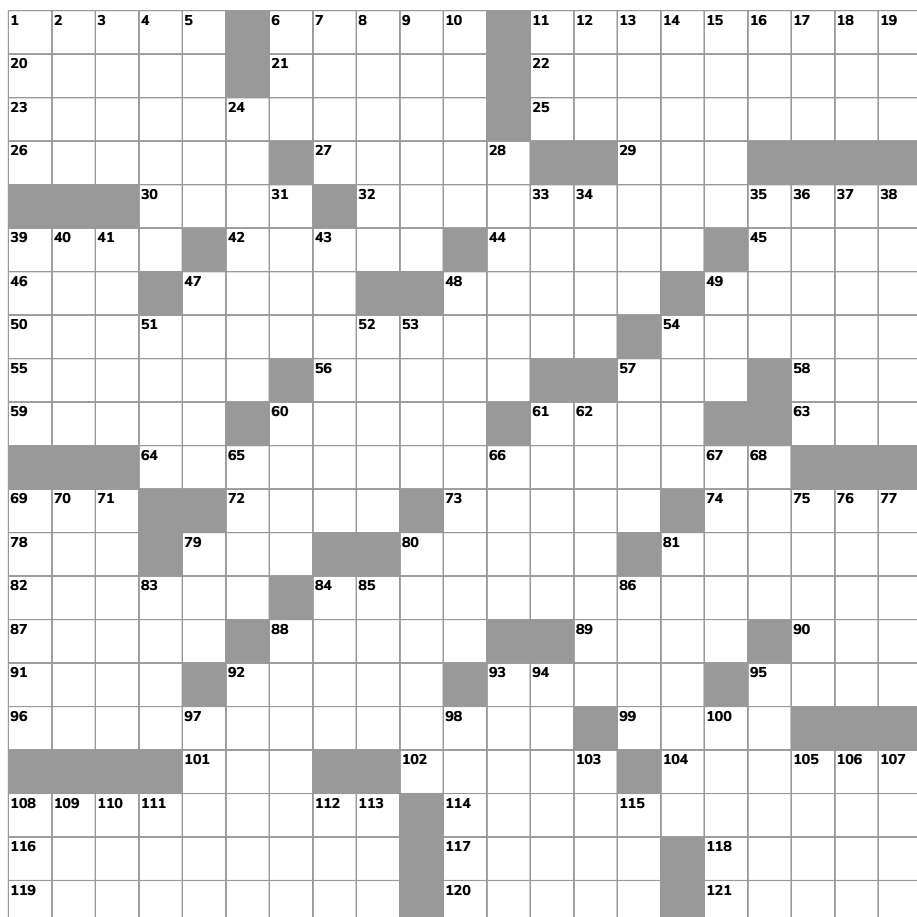
GUNSENSE VERMONT Montpelier Conor Casey, executive director

BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"The Joy of Lex"

Across

- 1. Skewered meat dish
6. Fashion designer Bill
11. Activity for young Anakin Skywalker
20. "West Side Story" role
21. Hairy-chested
22. 1956 Jim Lowe hit about the entrance to a party
23. Geologists' lingo?
25. Escapade
26. Court help
27. Put on again
29. Apple saleswoman?
30. Indian bread
32. Emphasize a certain printer?
39. Droops
42. "What number am I thinking of?"
44. Road runners
45. Actor Wilson
46. Student that might rep Yale Rep
47. 3-Down, e.g.
48. Purse handle
49. Slow, on scores
50. Place where the staff sleep?
54. Zine pictures
55. Unique from
56. Home products company
57. Tissue thickness
58. "Offensive" holiday?
59. Green pasta sauce
60. Asparagus unit
61. Tiger's woods home
63. Farm structure
64. Prayer to save a luxury car company?
69. "Lingo" network
72. Hive builders
73. Needle droppers
74. Assail
78. Colorful tint
79. Psaki of MSNBC
80. In bundles, as cotton
81. "Wheel of Fortune" category
82. Turkey's highest peak
84. Reaction to nuptials?
87. Pass-the-baton race
88. Vermont cheese company
89. At any time
90. Granola morsel
91. Hawaiian island that hosts a taro festival
92. Sound startled toward
93. Bit of parsley
95. Farm builders?
96. Perform a wrestling move in tandem?
99. Mowing spot
101. Shredding sound
102. Horse fathers
104. They're not certain
108. Ali's boxing technique
114. Confuse a stroll?
116. Doesn't quit
117. Perfume bottle name
118. \_\_ adopter
119. Fancy oil used in cooking
120. Vermont ski resort
121. Comedian Wanda



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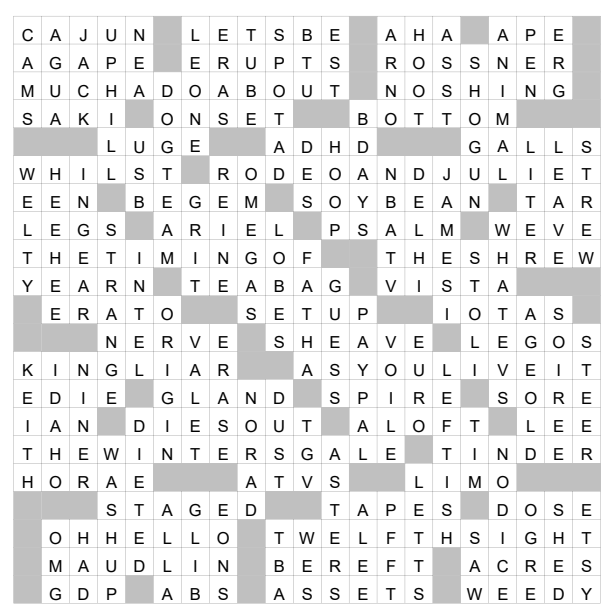
- 6. Extreme-sport bike
7. Den
8. Admission
9. Bermuda \_\_
10. Submarine detector
11. Links letters
12. Former California fort
13. Slowly unfold
14. Guitarist \_\_ Gabrels
15. Building wing
16. Kansas City summer setting
17. Marker letters
18. Hide-hair link
19. 340 is its max score
24. Knickknack stand
28. With precision
31. They have major habits
33. "You betcha!"
34. Soul record label
35. Disgruntled sound
36. "Blast it!"
37. Wind undone
38. Difficult to understand
39. Clinch, as victory
40. All by oneself
41. Little women
43. The one that got away?
47. Sri Lankan tea
48. Garage replacement
49. Put (down)
51. Friends and neighbors
52. Signs of the future
53. Air kiss sound
54. Linen plant
57. Pizzeria output
60. Norse boy's name that means "boy"
61. Breathing problem
62. One in a strip mine
65. Further in criminal activities
66. Actress \_\_ Taylor
67. Wedding assistant
68. Lowly toiler
69. Lucky \_\_ (cereal)
70. News office
71. Close tightly

- 75. Eagle's gripper
76. "Take \_\_" ("Get comfortable")
77. Messages that might include photos
79. Blue bird
80. Soup fluids
81. Tailgate party time
83. Commuter line
84. Luau fish, briefly
85. Blind as \_\_
86. Apt anagram of "vile"
88. Yoga move also known as bitilasana
92. Rust compounds
93. Most offended
94. \_\_ Vallarta
95. "Moving on ..."
97. Change the plot, maybe?

- 98. [Gulp!]
100. Puts a shine on
103. Gush forth
105. Pound sound
106. Magazine whose name is a pronoun
107. "The \_\_ the limit!"
108. D&D, e.g., for short
109. Benjamin of Boston's The Cars
110. Green veggie
111. "I know what you're thinking" skill
112. "The Gold Bug" author
113. Wrap things up
115. Tennessee governor Bill

Last issue's solution

"No Holds Bard"



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GOT AN OPINION?

(Of course you do! You're from Windham County!)

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





**COLUMN** | *Sports Roundup*

# High school football season begins Friday for Bears, Terriers

The 2023 Vermont high school football season begins this weekend with Brattleboro and Bellows Falls both opening at home on Sept. 1.

The newly-renamed Brattleboro Bears host the Middlebury Tigers at Natowich Field, while one of the oldest rivalries in Vermont football — the Bellows Falls Terriers versus the Springfield Cosmos — is renewed at Hadley Field. Both games begin at 7 p.m.

This season features some significant changes in Vermont high school football with divisional shifts and the introduction of leagues, which breaks the state's 31 teams into five different leagues. Under this new system, teams play each team in their league and then fill out their schedule with non-league opponents.

Brattleboro is now in the Southern Vermont League with Burr & Burton, Hartford, Middlebury, Mount Anthony, and Rutland. Bellows Falls now plays in the Mountain League with Fair Haven, Lyndon Institute, Mount Mansfield, North Country, and U-32.

It's been about a decade since Brattleboro has played Middlebury on the gridiron. It's the first big test of the season for the Bears after moving up to Division I this season. Last season, Middlebury lost to Champlain Valley in the Division I championship game, 24-19, while Brattleboro lost to Bellows Falls, 28-14, in the Division II semifinals.

In addition to the annual Elwell Trophy game against Mount Anthony, the Bears will see the revival of a dormant rivalry with a local foe, the Keene Blackbirds. Brattleboro and Keene first faced each other in football in 1894, but haven't played each other during the regular season since 2010. The Darrell Sawyer/KHS Boosters Trophy will be dusted off and go to the winner of this game, which will be played at Keene's Alumni Field on Friday, Sept. 22, at 6:30 p.m.

The new league alignment gives Brattleboro the opportunity to avoid a couple of long road games up north while playing strong opponents that are closer to Exit 1, such as Bellows Falls and Hartford. The Bellows Falls game will be at Hadley Field this year on Friday, Oct. 6, at 7 p.m.

"It's an opportunity to re-establish some of those rivalries, I would say, or games that were important to our school, and will become important to our school," Brattleboro Coach Chad Pacheco told the *Brattleboro Reformer* earlier this year. "This is a huge challenge and I'm excited for it. If we can go and beat some of these teams, that speaks volumes about our football program. Again, we've got to put in the work and we've got to do it, but we're excited about the challenge."

Normally Bellows Falls, the Division II runner-up last season, plays Springfield toward the end of the season in the annual game for "The Trophy." This will be the 110th meeting between these two teams in a series that started in 1894. With the new divisional system, this game got pushed up to the season opener.

Springfield — which lost in the first round of the Division III playoffs to last season's eventual champions, Windsor — has a good quarterback in junior



**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](mailto:news@commonsnews.org).

Carson Clark. He ran the offense last season and hopes to lead the Cosmos to their first state title since 2008.

Senior tight end/linebacker Cole Moore, and senior running backs Walker James and Jesse Darrell are the team captains this season for coach Bob Lockerby's Terriers. After losing 12 players to graduation from last season's team, which lost to Mount Anthony in overtime in the 2022 title game, this year's team is said to be younger and faster, but the loss of so many veteran linemen from last year's team might have an affect on the BF running attack.

## A plea for sportsmanship

Topic A at the Vermont Principals' Association's (VPA) annual Media Day on Aug. 17 was the shortage of game officials for high school sports around the state.

How bad is it? There are only 35 people in Vermont currently certified to officiate varsity football games. This means that some games are getting moved to Thursday nights, including three games this week in northern Vermont. Also being discussed is having officiating crews work doubleheaders on Saturdays, with an afternoon game followed by a night game under the lights.

Being a football official is a demanding job. Most can put up with the low pay, the travel, and the time commitment it takes to do it, but putting up with the increased incidence of unruly and abusive behavior by spectators has become a big reason why there are fewer officials for high school games.

It's become enough of a problem that the VPA's Activities and Standards Committee, which oversees high school sports, said at the meeting that it will make the upholding of sportsmanship a point of emphasis in the coming school year.

For the past couple of seasons, a VPA code of conduct is read to coaches, players, and spectators before the start of every game to remind everyone of the requirement to behave in a positive and respectful manner, and that any violation of this code on the field or in the stands can result in game stoppages, ejection of offenders, and/or forfeits.

That it has come to the point where this code, which can be boiled down to a simple admonition to not be a jerk, has to be read before every game is not a good thing. But that's where we're now at as a society, where jerky behavior is not just tolerated, but celebrated in popular culture.

*Seven Days* reported that the VPA recently released a 5 1/2-minute video on what sportsmanship means and encouraging better behavior by everyone involved in school sports. It was distributed to athletic directors to all 79 of the VPA's member schools and it

has in turn been shared on social media.

The video can be viewed at [vermontthirdspace.org/video-page](http://vermontthirdspace.org/video-page), and I highly recommend that anyone associated with high school athletics — especially the adults — watch it and take to heart the words of VPA Assistant Director Lauren Thomas, who says in the video that "our adults need to be better and model good behavior, or we're just not going to have sports."

## Koch wins Southern Vermont Decathlon

A pair of Bates College graduates finished first and second in the men's competition at the 13th annual Southern Vermont Decathlon in Weathersfield on Aug. 20.

Brattleboro's Evan Koch, who became the youngest Southern Vermont Decathlon champion in 2017 at 16 years old, won all six of the running and jumping events to set the total score record of 8,805 points and capture his second title.

Koch, an honor student who graduated from Bates this year with a degree in neuroscience, broke the old scoring mark of 8,755 points set by former University of Vermont decathlete D.J. Snide of Grafton in 2019.

Koch's former teammate at Bates, Liam Evans, nearly broke Snide's scoring record as well by finishing second with 8,705 points.

Evans, an honor student from Sauquoit, New York who graduated from Bates in 2022, was the decathlon champion at the 2022 New England Division III College Championships. He set an event record in discus with a throw of 149 feet, 5 inches and also won shot put and the vortex football throw.

Three-time defending champion Brian Lashway of Charlestown, New Hampshire finished in third with 7,404 points. It was the 12th time that Lashway, who went into the Southern Vermont Decathlon Hall of Fame last year, finished in the top three.

On the women's side, Jess Curtis of Springfield was the only competitor in winning her third championship. She also broke her own record in discus with a throw of 89 feet, 9 inches.

The top five in the overall men's standings was rounded out by Shane Mas (6,382) and Dan Barile (4,484).

The closest finish was in the 100-meter dash, as Koch finished in 12.22 seconds, just 0.11 seconds ahead of Evans. Lashway came in third at 13.88 seconds. Koch also took first in the 110-meter low hurdles in 14.46 seconds. Evans was second in 15.83 seconds and Lashway finished in 17.53.

In the 400, Koch won in 56.06, beating out Evans' time of 57.57. Lashway was third in 1:06.77. The mile run saw Koch finishing in 5:33.23. Evans came second in 5:57.81 and Lashway was third in 6:11.92.

In the field events, Koch won the long jump with a jump of 19 feet, 10 inches. Evans was second at 17 feet and Lashway was third at 15-06. Koch took first in the vertical jump with a mark of 28 feet, 5 inches. Evans was second at 24 feet and Mas was third at 22-05.

Evans won the shot put with a toss of 46-08 with Koch second at 43-05.5 and Lashway



Chad Pacheco, center, is back as head coach of the Brattleboro Union High School football team. The Bears were promoted from Division II to Division I this season.

third at 39-05. Evans was tops in discus with his toss of 149-05. Lashway was second at 124-08 and Koch was third at 108-05. Evans won the vortex football throw with a toss of 192 feet. Mas was second at 171-01 and Koch was third at 165-10. Lashway's only win came in the keg toss with a throw of 28-11. Koch was second at 28-05.5 and Evans was third at 28-01.

## Tickets still available for BHS/BUHS Hall of Fame banquet

The induction banquet for the Class of 2023 Inductees to the Brattleboro High School/Brattleboro Union High School Athletic Hall of Fame will be held on Oct. 28, at 6 p.m., at American Legion Post 5 on Linden Street.

Tickets are \$35 per person. There will be tables of 8 or 6 if you want to come in a group to support an inductee. Mail ticket requests, along with payment, to: BHS/BUHS Athletic Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 8018, Brattleboro, VT 05304-8018. Include the following

information with your request — whether you want to reserve a table(s), names the people who will be sitting at your table(s), and the names of the student, athlete, or team you are supporting.

Be sure to put an email address in your ticket request so the Hall of Fame can notify you via email to confirm your ticket payment/reservation request. Inductees are given three complimentary tickets to be used at the inductees' discretion. Ticket payments and reservations must be submitted by Oct. 1.

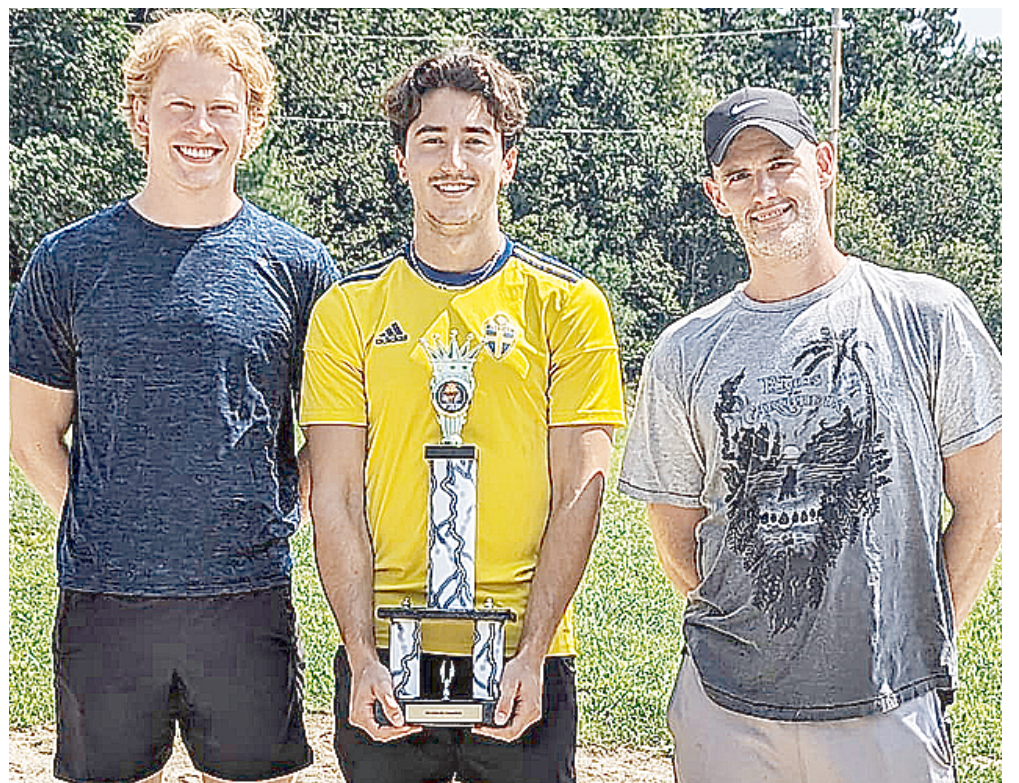
## Senior bowling roundup

With one week left in the spring/summer season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl, Five Pins (57-28) remains in first place after a 4-1 week on Aug. 24. Skippers (51.5-33.5) also went 4-1 to move into second place, followed by Turkeys (51-34), No Splits (49.5-35.5), Slo Movers (48-37), Wrecking Crew (41.5-43.5), High Rollers (39-46), The Bowlers (38-47),

and Stayin' Alive (37.5-47.5). Debbie Kolpa had the women's high handicap game (233), while Diane Cooke had the high handicap series (635). Ron Cargill had the men's high handicap game (246), while Chuck Adams had the high handicap series (696). No Splits had the high team handicap game (863), while Five Pins had the high handicap series (2,494).

Adams again led the men's scratch scoring with a 696 series with games of 246, 245, and 205, while Robert Rigby had a 615 series with games of 222, 213, and 180. Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 566 series that featured games of 216 and 181, John Walker had a 536 series with a 184 game, Fred Ashworth had a 520 series with games of 193 and 181, and Gary Montgomery had a 511 series with a 204 game.

Nancy Dalzell had the women's high scratch series (447) and game (174). Kolpa had a 162 game, Cooke rolled a 159 and a 158, and Carol Gloski had a 155 game.



Liam Evans, left, Evan Koch, center, and Brian Lashway were the top three male finishers in the 13th annual Southern Vermont Decathlon on Aug. 20.

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