

# PICKING UP THE PIECES

Windham County spared from brunt of damage, but cleanup from flash flooding continues in hard-hit Londonderry and throughout the state

By Randolph T. Holhut  
The Commons

A week after massive rains in Vermont led to flash flooding that caused devastation from Londonderry to the Northeast Kingdom, cleanup efforts continue and federal aid is on its way for hard-hit towns.

Most of Windham County was spared the worst from the July 9-10 storm, and subsequent storm systems had little effect on water levels on the West

and Connecticut rivers.

But relief efforts in Londonderry, and the Windsor county towns of Weston and Ludlow, continue. Much hard work remains to be done.

On July 14, President Joseph Biden approved Gov. Phil Scott's request for a major disaster declaration for Vermont.

## Federal funding kicks in

The declaration provides funding under the federal Public Assistance (PA) and Individual

Assistance (IA) programs.

A Public Assistance disaster declaration allows communities to receive up to 75% reimbursement for emergency storm repairs to public infrastructure. A further declaration for recovery repairs is pending an official Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA).

Residents in six counties — Chittenden, Lamoille, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor — have already been approved for such aid. State officials said people who applied from counties that

have not yet been approved would be denied and that they should reapply if their county is approved.

The Individual Assistance program helps individuals impacted by the disaster seek reimbursement for necessary expenses and serious needs that cannot be met through insurance or other forms of assistance.

Eligible expenses include rental assistance, home repair, home replacement, and lodging, among other expenses. Pending a formal assessment, counties

SEE RECOVERY, A2

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## Brattleboro eyes land-use changes to help housing crisis

Residents will get one more chance to weigh in on proposed bylaw changes

By Virginia Ray  
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—How the town can help reduce housing barriers and create more options to help the housing crisis is on the docket for July 25, when the Selectboard will host a second of two public hearings about proposed land use amendments.

The board adopted “advancing housing initiatives” as one of five overall primary goals for fiscal 2024 at its first-ever June retreat to identify top priorities in town. Selectboard members hosted the first hearing on July 11.

“This is innovative and very thorough,” said board member Elizabeth McLoughlin, a land-use planner, of the Planning Commission’s work to date and its proposal.

“It’s inclusionary and it reduces the barriers to housing and I think that, if this came to pass, it would allow Brattleboro to be a leader in the state in innovative and inclusionary housing,” she said.

The next and last hearing regarding proposed land use amendments will be July 25.

### Changes to stimulate housing creation

Planning Director Sue Fillion presented the amendments, noting study money came through a state Department of Housing and Community Development grant to study reducing housing barriers, which allowed the town to contract with a planning and land-use consulting firm, PlaceSense, based in Windsor.

The goal, the planners said, is to make the regulations more contemporary by reducing barriers to housing creation and to lower development costs.

Proposed is to:

- Eliminate the

owner-occupancy requirement for accessory-dwelling units (ADUs) so both units could be rentals.

- Remove restrictions on the number of bedrooms in an ADU.
- Revise the definition of “story” so buildings with floors partially below grade or under the roof gable would not count toward building height.

• Limit the area downtown where ground-floor residential use is prohibited to Main Street and Elliot Street between Main and Church street, and within storefront buildings.

- Revise planned unit development provisions to align with other changes in zoning regulations.

• Allow for rooming and boarding houses in all districts where other types of housing are allowed

In developed districts — those serviced by town water and sewer — the proposal includes adjusting the rules for building in the Village Center, Service Center, Neighborhood Center, and Mixed Use neighborhood districts.

These changes would allow more compact development and new residential construction (apartment spaces within houses) with smaller lots, narrower lots, and narrower setbacks; increasing the allowed height and size of buildings; and revising standards for attached housing, multi-unit housing, single-room occupancy, and rooming/boarding house.

The proposal also includes: • Rezoning the current Rural Business District in West Brattleboro to a Neighborhood Center to support a higher density of housing and neighborhood-serving businesses

- Rezoning the lower portion of the Winston Prouty campus from Institutional to Mixed Use Neighborhood to facilitate residential infill
- Minor expansion of the Village Center District in West Brattleboro to support redevelopment of the Melrose and Chalet properties

In addition, the plan proposes creating a “missing middle housing” district — a district to overlay the developed districts — to help create a range of residential building types between detached, single-unit home and large apartment buildings to include duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes, townhouses with 5

SEE LAND USE CHANGES, A8



For homeless people, a **HUMAN CONNECTION**

The main room of Brooks Memorial Library, a public resource that welcomes all — and one that its director, Starr LaTronica, is finding is playing an increasing role in the well-being of patrons who have no place to live.

‘Libraries have a really strong position of supporting and strengthening the spirit of the underserved,’ says Starr LaTronica, director of Brooks Memorial Library, which welcomes an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness

By Joyce Marcel  
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Brooks Memorial Library is on the front line of the town’s and region’s homelessness conundrum.

With the exception of Groundworks Collaborative, the library is the one place in town where people who are unhoused can find shelter from the weather, have access to the internet, write a letter to a family member, get help finding the services they need, get a few books to take out, use a clean bathroom, drink some cool, clean water, and find a kind word when they really need one.

“We try to know everybody by name,” said Library Director Starr LaTronica. “There’s some people that don’t want to tell us their name, and that’s fine. But we try and

sort of keep an eye on people.”

The library prides itself on offering homeless people a human connection.

“We help people with a connection that’s not judgmental,” LaTronica said. “Come in. We’re nice. We treat people as human beings. What I keep hearing is that people just walk by the homeless. They don’t even see people. They don’t want to see people because it’s so hard on a person’s soul to know that homelessness is going on.”

Homeless people, she said, “feel invisible.”

“They feel or they’re treated as an annoyance, as a detraction from town, as somebody to be scared of,” LaTronica continued. “I’ve never been scared of any of our homeless folks. Not ever. Even from all the folks downtown. I’ve never felt danger from them in any way. They make me feel sad, because I wish I could help them more than I do.”



Starr LaTronica

Studies show that people need to have a certain amount of positive personal interaction every day, LaTronica said, describing that policy as the library staff try to provide as much of it as “the most basic and maybe one of the most important things we can do for folks.”

“So when you come into the library, everybody’s treated with respect,” she said. “And

we demand that people who come in to treat one another with respect, and they need to treat us with respect. And when that doesn’t happen, then we ask that they leave.”

LaTronica told a story about one person in town who was “very, very troubled, very distraught, and obviously in a lot of pain.” That person had been yelling on the street

SEE HOMELESSNESS, A4

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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.

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

# Recovery

FROM SECTION FRONT

included under this declaration are also pending a PDA.

You can get more information and register at DisasterAssistance.gov, or call 800-621-3362.

Individuals who suffered losses in the storm should continue clean-up and repairs, taking photos and documenting expenses. They should also report that damage to Vermont 211, either by dialing 211 or by visiting vermont211.org. Vermonters who can't access the website can call 866-652-4636 or 802-652-4636 and leave a message.

This data informs the disaster assessment and allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reach out to applicants directly.

### Bringing help to the flood weary

FEMA "is currently assessing storm damages," state officials said in a message posted to the VT-Alert system on July 15. The inspectors' assessments will help determine which Vermont counties' residents will qualify for direct "individual assistance" aid.

David Mace, a spokesperson for FEMA, said the agency had "disaster survivor assistance" teams in the field on July 15. Such teams assess damage "and report critical and emerging disaster needs to FEMA leadership for decision-making purposes," according to FEMA's website.

"All FEMA personnel and contractors carry official identification," according to the site. This is important, because reports have surfaced of scammers pretending to be FEMA workers.

In the VT-Alert message, state officials warned that reporting damage to Vermont 211 is not a guarantee of resources. They advised residents to "reach out to your insurance company as well."

State officials opened an in-person "multi-agency resource

center" in Londonderry on July 17 to help people affected by last week's flooding. According to Secretary of Human Services Jenney Samuelson, the Londonderry site at Neighborhood Connections, 5700 Route 100, will be open until the end of this week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a news release, the centers are open to all residents in the region and will host several state and nonprofit disaster recovery agencies that can answer visitors' questions and guide them to appropriate services.

The American Red Cross will provide hot meals, drinking water, muck-out supplies, basic health care, spiritual care, and mental health services. The center will also offer information on how to request any available financial assistance from the organization.

### Congressional delegation assesses damage

On July 15, the state's three-member congressional delegation toured the area to see damage in Weston, Londonderry, and Ludlow.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., and Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., got an in-depth look at how local homes, businesses, and roads fared in the flooding. And residents, business owners, and town officials got a chance to quiz the three about the likelihood and timing of federal disaster aid.

Balint noted that Vermont is still waiting for federal aid to help growers deal with a freeze this spring that hammered fruit crops particularly hard — and a Londonderry official said the town had just finished up a project related to Tropical Storm Irene, which hit Vermont in 2011. Sanders, meanwhile, expressed



Perry and Freda Hollyer, left, speak with U.S. Transportation secretary Pete Buttigieg, Vermont senator Peter Welch and Governor Phil Scott on Monday, July 17, 2023 in Hardwick. The Hollyers' Inn by the River hotel was severely damaged in last week's flooding.

concern about the limitations of homeowners insurance.

Municipal officials described local responses to the flooding emergency. Town road crews worked overtime to deal with the worst problems, they said. Londonderry's highway crew was able to haul 60 truckloads of fill out of the town-owned quarry in a single day.

On July 17, Welch and Balint joined Scott and federal Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to survey to infrastructure damage in Hardwick, in the Northeast Kingdom. The group assessed damage to the Lamolle Valley Rail Trail Bridge, which was split in half by floodwaters, and visited the site of the Inn by the River, a local hotel that was completely destroyed by floodwaters during the storm.

"Vermonters are resilient. We will make it through this challenge, as we have so many times before. But we can't do it alone. We need help from the federal government," said Welch. "I'm grateful for Secretary Buttigieg's presence here today, and for the commitment he and the Biden administration have made to assist Vermont's recovery."

### Fixing the transportation network

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has made progress in reopening the 87 state highways that were damaged by the flooding.

As of July 17, VTrans said that only 12 state roads remained



In Jamaica, a pile of rocks nearly covers a Volkswagen owned by Diana DeMarsico on July 12.

closed and that another 12 were partially open to one lane of traffic.

This week, VTrans has inspected 211 bridges in damaged areas. Four state bridges and four town structures remain closed, according to the agency.

"The Agency's focus in recent years on resiliency planning and implementing lessons learned from Tropical Storm Irene has enabled us to work on recovery efforts more effectively, wisely, and quickly than ever before," Transportation Secretary Joe Flynn said on July 15.

Rail lines throughout Vermont were also damaged by the rain and flooding. VTrans has reopened 57

miles of state-owned rail lines, while 64 miles remain closed.

The first freight on the Vermont Rail System (VRS) since the rail closures moved from Rutland to Hoosick, New York.

Two of VRS's lines are still under repair. Freight service on the Green Mountain Railroad between Bellows Falls and Rutland is suspended indefinitely due to major track and roadbed washouts in Ludlow and East Wallingford. The Washington County Railroad between Barre and Montpelier also suffered extensive damage.

Service on Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express and Vermonter was suspended earlier last week.

The Ethan Allen Express resumed southbound service to New York City on July 14, as well as northbound service to Rutland. Service between Rutland and Burlington is still disrupted.

There is no estimate yet for when Amtrak's Vermonter service will be restored. All service north of New Haven, Connecticut has been halted since the storm, due to flood damage to the New England Central in the White River Valley. For now, buses are substituting for the train between St. Albans and New Haven. For further information, contact Amtrak at 800-USA-RAIL (800-872-7845).

### Impacts to farming

Vermont's agriculture industry was hard hit by the catastrophic flooding.

"The season is over for some people," Grace Oedel, executive director of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), told VTDigger.org. "And the season is drastically affected for many, many others."

Where flooding was heavy, vegetable fields turned into murky lakes topped with debris. Fast-flowing rivers ripped out soil across the state and took crops along with it, leaving some freshly planted fields unrecognizable just days later.

"It will be some weeks, really, before we know the full extent of the impact," Oedel said. "But people are starting to assess how bad it is, and we think that it will have a real Irene-like impact, if not more intense, for a lot of farms."

She's been talking regularly to people from both University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets about how to best meet farmers' needs. She said listening to people, checking in with lawmakers, and trying to find patterns in damages are all part of the effort to ensure federal, state, and local organizations can efficiently deploy resources to farmers.

### 'The climate catastrophe is really increasing'

Between hot weather in early spring, a frost in May, and poor air quality stemming from northern wildfires, the growing season has already been a tumultuous one for Vermont farmers. Throw historic flooding into the mix, and it makes sense why Oedel

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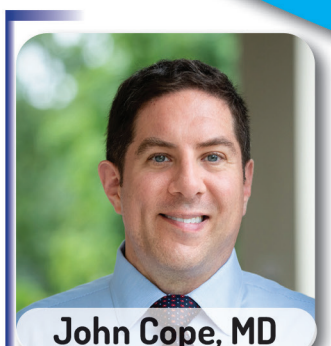
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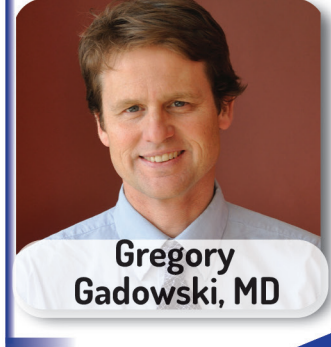
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acknowledged growing concerns about “climate catastrophe” in Vermont’s agricultural community.

“Last week, we were out dealing with people breathing in smoke from Canadian wildfires as they were working in their fields,” she said. “And this week, we’re dealing with catastrophic, 100-year floods that have completely ended the season.”

“We need to act like there’s a climate crisis and like we are going to deal with it effectively,” Oedel said.

Ironically, farmers do work to help mitigate the effects of climate change. They sequester carbon in healthy soils, foster biodiverse ecosystems, and help feed vulnerable community members.

But the difficulty in making farms more extreme-weather-resistant is that there will always be something they just cannot prepare for, Oedel said. Even in the days leading up to this week’s flood, it wasn’t anticipated to be as bad as it turned out.

“Like, nobody was talking about catastrophic flooding. We didn’t really know that was coming before it came,” she said. “I think what it shows me is that it’s really hard to predict all of the climate weirdness that’s going to happen.”

On the one hand, farmers will want to have systems in place to prevent worst-case effects, but resilience will remain a big part of the culture because the unexpected is sure to strike again, she said.

This is the second 100-to-500-year flooding event in the last 12 years. Tropical Storm Irene was the first. Oedel said that, because of lessons learned from Irene, the agriculture industry was more prepared and organized.

“While the damage is really intense, we have done this before, so we have some practice about how to handle it,” she said.

**Helping furry friends**

In recent years, the Windham County Humane Society (WCHS) on Route 30 has helped out animal shelters on the East Coast after weather disasters. One of those shelters, St. Hubert’s Animal Welfare Center of Madison, New Jersey, decided to return the favor last week.

Flooding concerns prompted by the rising West River across the street from WCHS led the staff to make the decision to evacuate three dogs and 15 cats and kittens. St. Hubert’s sent a team on July 12 to bring the animals to safety in New Jersey.

According to St. Hubert’s, the WCHS animals arrived safely, and its staff members are busy finding foster or adoptive homes for them.

“With the shelter animals safely transported out of the area, WCHS now has capacity to receive displaced animals,” they wrote in an email last week. “In the days and weeks to come, we anticipate that more animals will be coming through our doors in need of safe shelter, food, and other resources. While we aren’t 100% certain what the impact on pets in our community will be, we want to be prepared to help in any way we can.”

For more information about the Vermont arrivals, visit [sthuberts.org](http://sthuberts.org) or their Facebook page at [facebook.com/StHubertsAnimal](http://facebook.com/StHubertsAnimal). To help WCHS’s relief efforts, visit [windhamcountyhumane.org](http://windhamcountyhumane.org).

With additional reporting by Maggie Cassidy, Zachary P. Stephens, Paige Fisher, and Max Scheinblum of VT Digger.org.

# Amid trauma, messages of hope and community

Some social media vignettes from Londonderry, one of the hardest hit towns

By Virginia Ray  
The Commons

LONDONDERRY—The town has been among the hardest hit by rain and flooding on July 9 and 10, and then a heat wave, but community members are pulling together in myriad ways to help one another.

A few posts on the Londonderry Vermont Community Forum Facebook group create a mosaic of recent flood recovery efforts and community support through the trauma.

Geoff Hatheway, founder and president of Ski Magic LLC, says the resort’s Black Line Tavern will host a free dinner on Sunday, July 23 from 2 to 6 p.m.

Chefs John and Andre will prepare ham, corn, beans, and side salads for families of “all first responders, volunteers, road crews, and any community members in need.”

“It’s been a tough week — that’s for damned sure. But Londonderry has shined with its resilience and commitment to its fellow neighbors in need. We are thankful for all those putting the town back together,” Hatheway writes. “Just a little time to catch a breath and not have to cook... with the bigger extended family. Please feel free to join in if you have also been helping our surrounding mountain towns that were devastated as well. It is truly appreciated.”

In addition to feeding human beings, resident Maya Drummond of South Londonderry is remembering that wildlife has been displaced or — at least — distressed.

“If anyone has wildlife looking stressed, hot, and dehydrated right now, all of the activity at the river may be keeping them away from their usual water source,” she says. “We just put a big tub of water out where we have seen stressed wildlife and if anyone is able to do the same on their property, it may save some of our furry friends during this heat wave.”

On Tuesday, Drummond shared with *The Commons* photos of two “very thirsty and overheated bears [that] came to us for help” the previous Saturday — perhaps a mother bear and her 2-year-old cub — just prior to a visit from Vermont’s congressional delegation.

“Mama bear laid down under the apple tree, panting and dehydrated,” she said.

Also stepping to the forefront is the Stratton Community Foundation, a nonprofit charity whose Relief Fund has already raised \$200,000 “so we can support individuals, businesses, and community,” says Executive Director Tammy Mosher, adding the Foundation hopes to “make a big, direct, and powerful impact in ways that are not otherwise possible.”

“The Stratton Community Foundation has learned that our most important role is to identify families in need and facilitate critical services of food, basic necessities, and emergency assistance,” reads a message on the Foundation’s website.

“As we did during Tropical Storm Irene and the pandemic, we will work closely with families, town officials, and human services organizations to ensure that the distribution of funds is



U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, who visited the flood-scarred regions of Vermont on July 15 with U.S. Sen. Peter Welch and U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, is flanked by Donna and Andy Chambers in front of their flooded home in South Londonderry.

MAYA DRUMMOND SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

deliberate and time-sensitive. Our initial step is to identify those needing resources for aid, food, goods and services, clothing, furniture, and repair.”

Donations are tax-deductible and 100 percent of money donated will go “into the community.”

“We are leveraging social media platforms and major resources to support you,” Mosher says. “We are deploying teams on the ground to assess needs to provide immediate and long-term aid.”

For help or to make a donation, email [tammy@strattonfoundation.org](mailto:tammy@strattonfoundation.org) or visit [strattonfoundation.org](http://strattonfoundation.org).

While some are raising money, resident Natalie Boston is helping organize the Tri-Mountain Area Clean Up Volunteer Effort to help people clear out water-damaged belongings.

In her post earlier in the week, she mentioned four residences in

Weston that “could use 2-3 people to assist in hauling items from basements today.”

Boston told *The Commons* on Tuesday that 157 people had signed up to get help or give help via the Google form that she posted to Facebook during the flood.

“That is the best way to connect people who want to help with people who need help!” she said. To complete the form, visit [bit.ly/trimountain](http://bit.ly/trimountain).

And while folks are mobilizing to feed people and raise money and clear out water-sodden households, the folks at Tarply Farm in Landgrove and Full Moon Blooms in Londonderry are bringing a different kind of cheer. Flowers to brighten hearts just a little.

“We’re both cut flower farms and fortunate enough to be on hilltops so as so many Vermont farmers have, we haven’t lost



MAYA DRUMMOND SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

**Thirsty bears also came to visit Londonderry.**

any crops. So we brought flowers to volunteers who were cleaning up in Londonderry,” Tarply Farm owner Sara Greenfield wrote. “We had the flowers, and there are people who have lost

everything. It’s nothing, really, but hopefully it helps people feel a little better.”

Additional reporting by Jeff Potter.

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for Windham Elementary School, a K6 school located in Windham, VT.

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## Homelessness

FROM SECTION FRONT

before coming into the library. LaTronica tried to calm the person down.

But it was one of her staff members who saved the day. “And I’m so proud of him,” LaTronica said.

“One of our circulation staff members had observed this person in the past, and noticed that they’d like to sit and look at books about dogs,” she said. “So when I got up, he came over with the *American Kennel Club Dog Book*.”

The library staffer “just opened it up and gently slid it onto the table in front of them.”

“That’s what we do,” LaTronica said. “What’s more important than that?”

### A librarian’s take on a crisis unfolding

It is exhausting to live your private life in public, LaTronica said.

“Imagine not having a minute of privacy,” she said. “Imagine having to carry everything you own with you. And then the skies open suddenly, and it pours rain and everything is lost. I can’t imagine how exhausting it is being homeless. It’s also expensive, because you can’t buy food and prepare it. You have to buy processed items.”

Laundry is another challenge. “If all you own is what you’re wearing, and maybe something in a bag, you can wash the clothes in the bag,” LaTronica said. “But then you’ve got another bag full of dirty clothes once you take yours off.”

“I know people that struggle to maintain their hygiene and to maintain their appearance,” she continued.

“You’re constantly having to somehow come by a clean pair of underwear or a clean shirt,” LaTronica said. “Now Groundworks has laundry facilities, but there have been past summers where I’ve gone to the laundromat and bought laundry cards for people to go and wash their clothes.”

The lack of mental health services accounts for a large portion of the problem.

“Who would have good mental health if you’re worried about where you’re going to sleep, and especially where your kids are going to sleep that night?” LaTronica said. “Who could possibly maintain their mental health?”

When many people think of homelessness, they think about people on the street asking for money, they think about those involved in the buying and selling of illegal drugs, and they think about thieves.

Those stereotypes make it easy for people to criminalize those experiencing homelessness, to believe that they deserve or caused their circumstances. It makes it easy to walk by a homeless person without acknowledging them, or to refuse to put a few quarters into a panhandler’s hand.

“There are so many broken systems, overtaxed systems, or

[simply] injustices that have created homelessness,” LaTronica said.

“We observe this and think, ‘What can I do?’” she said.

### The people’s palaces

Historically, libraries have always played a significant role in serving the unfortunate. How many Americans have heard stories from their immigrant grandparents about how they learned English at a library, or learned how to read there, or who got their papers in order there, or found social services there in a time of need, or got their first job through newspapers they read for free there?

That may have been decades ago, but nothing has really changed.

“Libraries are still palaces for the people,” LaTronica said. “Libraries have a really strong position of supporting and strengthening the spirit of the underserved.”

She described libraries as “the universities of the immigrants that came here and lived in tenements.”

“They have always been in the business of lifting people up,” LaTronica said. “The annals of library history are filled with people that came there and found salvation there and found the help they needed to move forward. I’m really proud to be part of that tradition.”

Four months ago, Groundworks was forced to close for six weeks after one of its clients murdered one of its caseworkers.

The library took over the responsibility of handling the mail. It allowed LaTronica to see even more closely how homelessness works — or doesn’t work — in Brattleboro.

“People get their mail at Groundworks,” LaTronica said. “And that includes checks. Some people who are homeless actually have jobs, and they need their checks mailed to them.”

LaTronica said that the alternative for homeless people is to use the U.S. Postal Service’s General Delivery program.

Once the library temporarily took over distribution of mail to Groundworks’ clients, a number of new people came in.

“We saw folks [who] we had no idea that they were homeless,” LaTronica said. “We had folks come in who were well dressed, well groomed, and [didn’t] fit the stereotype of someone who is unhoused.”

She said there’s “a fair amount” of people who “are just finding someone’s couch to sleep on or finding a nook somewhere that they can camp. As well as living rough.”

The library offers homeless people temporary library cards.

“It entitles them to check out two books at a time,” LaTronica said. “And it and it allows them online access to all of our downloadable books and databases. We

## Property tax assessments now due in Brattleboro

BRATTEBORO — Real estate and personal property taxes assessed upon the Grand List of 2023 in Brattleboro are now due and payable to the Town Treasurer at the Treasurer’s Office in the Municipal Center, 230 Main St., Suite 111, in four equal installments as follows: first installment, due Tuesday, Aug. 15; second installment, due Wednesday, Nov. 15; third installment, due Thursday, Feb. 15; fourth installment, due Wednesday, May 15.

Real estate and personal property taxes will be charged interest at the rate of 1% per month on any overdue payment of tax installment, together with any other charges provided by law. Any tax remaining unpaid at 5 p.m., Wednesday, May 15, will be charged an 8% penalty together with any other charges provided by law.

In the event of a default in the payment of any one installment, the entire amount then due under such tax becomes at once payable, and a tax lien may be filed with the Town Clerk against any personal property upon which there are overdue taxes unpaid in whole or in part.

## Art exhibit opens at All Souls Church

WEST BRATTLEBORO — A new art exhibit opens this week at All Souls Church in the West Village Meeting House, 29 South St., and the public is invited to a reception for the artists on Sunday, July 23, from noon to 2 p.m.

The multimedia exhibit features original work from the artful lives of All Souls’ members and friends. Area artists, including Maisie Crowther, Marie Gorst, Linda Hay, Suzann Jones, Ann Newsmith, Lois Reynolds, and Marty Shaw, present paintings, photographs, fabric arts, and writing.

The show will be on view

have a little mini DVD player so folks can come in when they’re at their wit’s end, and they can put on headphones and sit and watch a movie.”

The library even offers a public phone, because there are no more public phones out on the street.

“Say you’re trying to get on employment, and you get put on hold, and you get put on hold, and you get put on hold,” LaTronica said. “So meanwhile somebody else needs to call.”

The library may need more of them soon. “That courtesy phone is constantly in use,” she noted. “And there’s no place else to make a phone call in town.”

The library sees a tremendous need for access to technology. It has good Wi-Fi and freely makes laptops and computers available for patrons.

Not surprisingly, librarians also need to help people with little or no tech literacy.

“You have to file everything online,” LaTronica said. “You have to fill out a form that needs to be submitted. And not only do they not have the technology skills, but they don’t have the literacy skills to type it in. And so somebody needs to sit there with them and help them fill it out.”

And so, “we’re doing that kind of work,” she said, noting that “libraries have always been involved in literacy and supporting people that have low literacy skills.”

Many people have cell phones, LaTronica said, “because that is their only connection,” she said. “However, you can’t fill out a form to submit for benefits or for anything else on a cell phone, so we help people with that.”

## AROUND THE TOWNS

Sundays from 12 noon to 2 p.m., and Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon by appointment. For more information, visit [ascvt.org](http://ascvt.org) or call 802-254-9377.

## Works sought for ‘Artisans of Dummerston’ exhibit

DUMMERSTON — The Dummerston Historical Society invites artisans to exhibit artwork at the Historical Society Schoolhouse in Dummerston Center during its “Artisans of Dummerston” exhibit from Sunday, Aug. 13 to Sunday, Oct. 8 (Indigenous Peoples Day — Apple Pie Festival weekend).

This exhibit is open to all artists residing in Dummerston. All media are acceptable. All work must be created by artists residing in Dummerston. Artwork may be oil and water color, jewelry, wood carvings, weavings, furniture, photographs, fiber art, leather works, sculptures, pottery and more. Whether one is a regular exhibitor or a closet artist, all are invited to consider being part of this exciting venture. This is not a juried exhibit.

If the interest in participation exceeds the space available, the steering committee may consider showing work by category or theme and schedule additional exhibits. The guidelines for exhibition, information form, and liability release are available by contacting Gail at 802-254-9311, or [gailsvt@gmail.com](mailto:gailsvt@gmail.com), or go to [dummerstonhistoricalsociety.org](http://dummerstonhistoricalsociety.org) to download the forms.

## ‘Christmas in July’ at Hinsdale Farmers’ Market

HINSDALE, N.H. — The Hinsdale Area Farmers Market, which operates on Main Street in Millstream Riverfront Park in downtown Hinsdale each Saturday through October, hosts a “Christmas in July” market on Saturday, July 22. A collaboration event with the Hinsdale Community Recreation Center,

this event will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Featured will be multiple farm, craft, food, and flea market vendors as well as activities for all, games for kids, Christmas music, and more. Come judge their Vendor Booth Decorating Contest and get your picture taken with Summer Santa. For more information, contact the Market Manager at [farmersmarketofhinsdalenh@gmail.com](mailto:farmersmarketofhinsdalenh@gmail.com).

## Senior meal served in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON — Evening Star Grange and Senior Solutions will serve their fourth Wednesday luncheon on July 24, with take-outs available from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and eat-in meals served at noon in Dummerston Center.

On the menu is roast pork, mashed potatoes, and corn on the cob with strawberry-rhubarb crisp for dessert. Reservations are strongly suggested and can be made by calling the Grange at 802-254-1138. Leave name, phone number, the number of meals, and whether eating in or taking out. A donation of \$3 for those 60 and older and \$4 for the younger folks is suggested.

## The Wonderful World of Bats at the RFPL

BELLOWS FALLS — The Rockingham Free Public Library’s summer program events continue with “The Wonderful World of Bats,” a presentation by bat enthusiast Jerry Schneider at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 26.

Visitors will enter the amazing world of bats using exciting photos by Merlin D. Tuttle, former president of Bat Conservation International. This program features the echolocation calls of bats and the science surrounding them. The bat program introduces audiences to local and tropical bats, the vampire bat, and many more of the flying mammals.

Via slides and taped bat calls, audiences move beyond stereotypes to understand the vital roles of bats in our environment. They will see slide photos of Vermont’s big brown bat, the silver-haired bat, the desert red bat, Townsend’s big-eared bat, and the pallid bat.

After the slide show, children can create their own bat t-shirts (heavy, 100% cotton) using a combination of fabric dye sprays, plants, and cut outs. Children may purchase heavy cotton shirts for \$5 or bring their own. This all-ages program is free and open to the public. For more information call 802-463-4270, email [youthservices@rockinghamlibrary.org](mailto:youthservices@rockinghamlibrary.org), go to [rockinghamlibrary.org](http://rockinghamlibrary.org), or stop by the library at 65 Westminster St.

## Forestry talk with Pieter Van Loon

WEST DUMMERSTON — The Dummerston Conservation Commission is excited to have Vermont Land Trust (VLT) lead forester Pieter Van Loon speak at 6 p.m. on Thursday, July 27, at the Dummerston Community Center on West Street.

Van Loon will discuss his work over the past 23 years helping owners of conserved land care for their land. This will be an open and interactive conversation about such issues as rogue ATV use, invasive insects and plants, managing forests for carbon, overabundance of deer, promoting old forest characteristics in second growth forests, and any other issues participants may have an interest in.

Attendees may bring questions about managing their land, and Van Loon will try to answer them. Van Loon was a consulting forester in Windham County prior to taking the job with VLT. When not working, he enjoys biking, birding, and being out on the water in a kayak or canoe.

A \$5 donation is suggested, which will be split equally between the Community Center and the Conservation Commission.

## Opioids add to the crisis

Housed people can live their lives with drug dependency invisible to the general public. Unhoused people cannot.

And while it’s unfair to presume that anyone using drugs at the library has no home, “we have a number of people that don’t have a place where they can go privately and deal with their substance use issues,” LaTronica said.

The library holds a stash of naloxone (Narcan), an antidote to treat opioid overdoses, and several librarians have chosen to be trained in the drug’s administration.

Luckily, LaTronica said, the staff has never had to use its Narcan stash. But that doesn’t mean it hasn’t seen overdoses. Just recently, the staff heard someone choking, coughing, and making unusual noises in the bathroom. It sounded like an overdose. The door was locked, but the librarians have a key.

“By the time we got the bathroom door open, [the occupant] was conscious,” LaTronica said. “And he refused Narcan. We had it in our hand. So we did not need to use it. And so let’s hope we never have to.”

But LaTronica has recently bought some sharps containers to hold the needles she sometimes finds.

“We were finding them out in the alleyway,” LaTronica said. “And we have on occasion found them in the restroom here.”

## It’s not just Brattleboro

Homelessness is not just a Brattleboro problem; it is a significant national one. Estimates are that about 6 million people — roughly 1.8% of the total population in the United States — are homeless.

In Brattleboro, approximately 220 households — some with children — were housed in six local motels during the pandemic. The program was scheduled to end at the beginning of summer, but due to a last-minute deal, legislators and Gov. Phil Scott were able to maintain a certain number in the motels for a while longer.

But that figure does not begin to cover the number of homeless people in Brattleboro. There are as many as six “tent cities” hidden in cemeteries and along riverbanks. There are people sleeping in cars, on the couches of friends and family members, and in doorways or on park benches.

For a small town, that makes for a large and frequently visible unhoused population.

The causes of homelessness are many and complex. It starts with the cuts to the social safety net and to federal assistance for low-income housing (from \$32 billion in 1981 to \$7.5 billion in 1988).

When mental hospitals were closed en masse in the 1980s without providing the former patients with adequate services or places to live, that movement created a surge in homelessness.

LaTronica said the whole country is under siege from homelessness.

“We have not seen this kind of income inequality and wealth inequality since the Gilded Age,” she said of the economic boom that preceded the Great Depression. “And look where that led us.”

“It’s just becoming worse and worse,” LaTronica observed. “People are literally one paycheck away from losing their housing.”

Meanwhile, “people have gotten so incredibly selfish. They’re hoarding their own wealth and resources. This is Andrew Carnegie and the robber barons all over again.”

This upward shift of wealth is not just a Brattleboro problem, LaTronica emphasized.

When visiting Los Angeles a couple of years ago, she saw “just miles and miles and miles of tents,” she said. “I was in Halifax, Nova Scotia, last November, and the big boulevard downtown was filled with tents. It was a big tent city.”

The reason was that real estate prices had skyrocketed.

“During the pandemic, lots of people moved in from other parts of Canada,” LaTronica said. “They discovered Halifax. They said, ‘Let’s just move there from Toronto or Ontario.’ And we’ll pay the real estate prices. Somebody told me they increased

400%. That just pushes everybody else out.”

Through no fault of their own and with no change in their circumstances, people are increasingly finding themselves without a place to live.

“It’s not like people are not working, or they’re losing their jobs,” LaTronica said. “They’re getting pushed out of their apartments because other people can pay more.”

The same story can be told about Brattleboro.

“There’s just not housing stock, and if you can find a place, it’s very, very expensive,” she said. “We are a small community. So we’re seeing everything that’s happening. It’s everywhere.”

## Adding a social worker?

It would help the library to have a social worker, LaTronica said.

“We need somebody that we can call, because we do see people on regular basis,” she said — someone staff could call and say, “You know, we’re concerned about this person, can you check on them?”

“Mental illness is so devastating,” LaTronica continued. “We’ve got a lot of folks in here who are struggling, and have every reason to be struggling.”

When LaTronica was in Halifax, she met with the social worker at the library there.

“They have a full-time social worker on staff, and, and she’s called the community navigator,” LaTronica said. “And part of what she does is train staff. It would be great to train staff in de-escalation tactics and in identifying people in crisis. And I think there are a lot of community members that would appreciate hearing from a social worker about the best approach to helping people. I could keep a full-time social worker pretty darn busy, I think.”

Brattleboro is a caring and compassionate community, LaTronica said.

“We really do care about people,” she said. “We don’t want them to just disappear. We want them to be OK. We want them to have someplace where they could close the door and go to sleep and not worry if it rains.”

So many people are in desperate straits — a situation that LaTronica finds “so heartbreaking” and “so exhausting about the world right now.”

“Even if we’re not the one in desperate straits, it wears on everybody,” she said. “It takes a toll on every body.”

And, LaTronica said, “We want them to be OK.”

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### STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT

Windham Unit

In re ESTATE of: Sally Payne

PROBATE DIVISION

Docket No.: 23-PR-03912

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Sally Payne (Decedent)  
late of Rockingham, 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: July 14, 2023 c/o Marchica Law Office, LLC  
Tammy Westney, Executor 83 Main Street  
Springfield, VT 05156

Name of Publication: The Commons

Publication Date: July 19, 2023

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Unit, Probate Division

Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

### STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT

Windham Unit

In re ESTATE of: Anne Bolte

PROBATE DIVISION

Docket No.: 23-PR-03951

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Anne Bolte (Decedent)  
late of Brattleboro, 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: July 10, 2023 c/o Jonathan D. Secrest, Esq.  
Robert Bolte, Executor Secrest & Darrow, PLC  
209 Austine Dr, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Name of Publication: The Commons 802-251-6598  
Publication Date: July 19, 2023 [jsecrest@secrestdarrow.com](mailto:jsecrest@secrestdarrow.com)

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Probate

Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301

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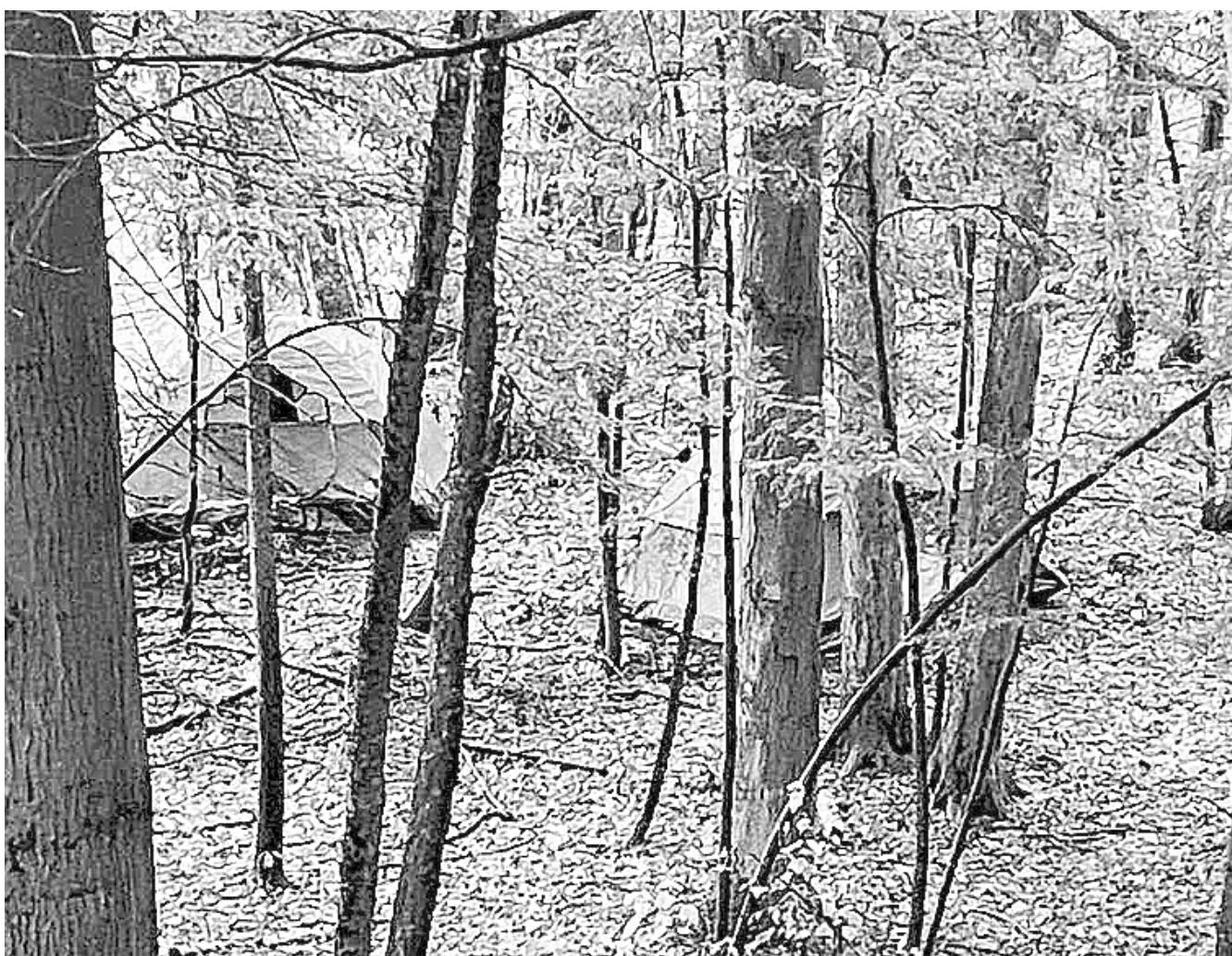
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BRATTLEBORO



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS

A group of tents is hidden from passing traffic at an encampment in the outskirts of Brattleboro.

# ‘You see the situation we’re in now’

*Keeping track of how many people are living on the streets of Brattleboro is a difficult task. For each one of them, there’s a story.*

By Ellen Pratt  
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—After a summer afternoon’s torrential downpour, Lisa Marie makes her way gingerly down a slick, muddy trail, through a forested area on the outskirts of town.

The trail leads to a temporary shelter: a big blue tarp anchored to four trees and nailed into the ground. A folding camp chair, a bike, and a quilted cloth sleeping bag, laid out to dry on a log, are the only possessions in sight. Down the hill, three blue tents are pitched among the trees that buffer the landscape from the traffic of Interstate 91.

This is one of six encampments in the area, according to Lisa Marie, who describes herself as “a random homeless” person.

Lisa Marie, who asked that her last name not be published, serves as an informal liaison between Brattleboro’s unhoused population and the Homelessness Strategy Team, a group of local organizations and service providers that have been meeting weekly since early May to address the consequences of the end of the pandemic-era motel housing program.

Approximately 800 people statewide lost access to the program on June 1.

The program was originally scheduled to end fully on July 1 for the remaining 2,000 people, who meet eligibility criteria, including families with children, the elderly, domestic abuse survivors, and those on federal disability.

However, with Gov. Phil Scott signing a new bill on June 29, the program has been extended until April 1, 2024.

In the Brattleboro area, 117 families remain housed in six motels, but hundreds of other people have no shelter.

“My guesstimate is that there are about 125 to 150 people camping now, and [that] 75 to 80 people out there need tents,” Lisa Marie told members of the Homelessness Strategy Team at a recent meeting.

Some of those camping left the motels on June 1, as they became ineligible for the motel program. Others, according to Lisa Marie, are afraid of the system and therefore don’t ask for help.

### Measuring the problem

Keeping track of how many people are unsheltered is a difficult task.

“We don’t believe we have an accurate count of unsheltered people in Brattleboro,” says Peter Elwell, Groundworks Collaborative’s interim deputy executive director.

“We know we served 123 people between May 1 and July 2 through a variety of day services, and 52 people have used our overnight shelter between May 2 and June 30, with an average length of stay of 14 nights for overnight services,” he added.

And Groundworks case

managers, he said, are “supporting dozens of people who are experiencing homelessness or are in precarious housing situations.”

According to Elwell, a complete count of those who are unsheltered would have to include dozens of additional unsheltered people who are working with other organizations — such as Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), the Winston Prouty Center, and Pathways Vermont — or who are not currently receiving social services support.

“We and other nonprofit providers across Vermont are working with state officials to develop better ways of tracking and sharing information so that together we can better support unsheltered people and help them move into sustainable housing,” Elwell said.

The new emergency housing transition legislation requires the Agency of Human Services to report monthly on a range of data, including the number of households remaining in motels, the number of alternative housing placements made, the number of beds available for emergency housing, and beds available in nursing homes and residential care homes for qualifying individuals.

### Every number is a story

Ashleigh and Arnold Lawrence and their four children — ages 4, 5, 9, and 10 — have been living in two rooms at the Quality Inn on Putney Road for over a year. Without a car, Arnold walks to work at a café on Putney Road, and Ashleigh watches the children, one of whom is autistic and “needs a lot of supervision,” she said.

“We’ve been in the motel system for almost two years now,” Ashleigh said. “Before coming here, we were at the Econo Lodge, which we found after our rental in Dummerston got condemned.”

Asked about their plan, Ashleigh sighed.

“We’ve filled out all the applications we can. We’ve used all the resources we know of. But landlords see ‘eviction’ on our paperwork. They don’t see the fact that our landlord didn’t fix our electricity for a year, that our house was infested with rats — and they won’t rent to us.”

Even if they could find a landlord willing to rent to them, Ashleigh said that the cost to rent a three-bedroom unit is out of reach.

“We have a Section 8 housing voucher and can pay 30% of a place that’s \$1,200 a month, including utilities,” Ashleigh said — but it’s impossible to find anything.

“With the way Covid’s gone, people who have apartments have raised rents so much,” she said. “A one-bedroom that should be only \$500 is now almost \$1,000.”

She said that she and Arnold are “doing what we’re supposed to do and nothing is happening.”

The Lawrences are grateful that the program has been extended, Ashleigh said. “But once it ends, if we don’t have a place by then, we have no idea what we’re going to do. We don’t have family to live with.”

### Bad luck

Pablo Rodriguez, 62, panhandling at the traffic light at the entrance to the Hannaford shopping plaza on Putney Road, says he and his girlfriend came to Vermont from New York a few years ago.

“And then we ran into some bad luck,” he said. “You see the situation we’re in now.”

Rodriguez, who lives at the Quality Inn on Putney Road, can’t work because of chronic pulmonary disease. “I walk a block and I can’t breathe,” he said. “I’m always coughing and coughing. I wake up like that.”

He panhandles to supplement his federal Social Security disability benefits.

“On a good day, I might make \$20 out here,” he said. “I get money just to eat, buy my dogs food, and go home. I’m not standing here to get rich, I’m just trying to survive.”

Some people in Brattleboro

persistently claim that the panhandlers are brought in from out of state. What does he make of those stories?

“I have heard people say that,” Rodriguez said. “That this is organized. That people come in buses. Not over here at least. [...] You could park out here all day and watch and see that’s a lie.”

“People can’t always assume the money goes for drugs or alcohol,” she said. “A lot of the times it goes for prescription co-pay, soap, shampoo, laundry cards, batteries for flashlights the list could go on forever— just like anyone who’s housed, the list goes on.”

Rodriguez, who claims to know “every single one” of the people who ask for money in public at the strip mall, said that “most of them are from the Quality Inn. Some are homeless.”

He smiled. “I always say ‘God Bless’ to everybody,” Rodriguez said. “I always do, whether they give me anything or not. I try to be nice and stay positive.”

### It’s the law

Elwell — who previously worked as Brattleboro’s town



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS

Pablo Rodriguez asks for spare change at the entrance to the Hannaford shopping plaza in Brattleboro.

manager from 2015 to 2021 — told *The Commons* that measures to curb or control panhandling could lead to a “slippery slope to try to differentiate between an individual person self-identifying as homeless and hungry, a possibly organized group of people self-identifying as homeless and hungry, and a definitely organized group of people not self-identifying as homeless and hungry (such as a non-profit organization or a school group, for instance).”

“The law equally protects the right of any of these individuals or groups to ask for money in public spaces,” he said. “We should be very careful to recognize and respect the protected free speech element of this and

not conflate it with other actions that might cause unsafe situations.”

In his personal and professional experience “observing how this has evolved over the past decade in Brattleboro, most people who are asking for money in public spaces are doing only that,” Elwell said.

“No one should feel compelled to give them money; that is an individual decision. Give if it feels right to you; don’t if it doesn’t feel right to you,” he said.

“But everyone should understand that the people asking for money are not violating the law and that it would be unconstitutional to pass and enforce a law saying otherwise,” Elwell said.

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**bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**  
July 17-23  
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

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<b>Here We Are - Kathy Urfer, River Steward, CT. River Conservancy:</b> Mon 8p, Tues 12:20p, Wed 11a, Thurs 12:25p & 9:15p, Sat 8p, Sun 5:15p	<b>Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg. 7/18/23:</b> Tues 5:15p (LIVE), Thurs 1p, Fri 8:30p, Sun 6p
<b>The World Fusion Show - Ep # 156 - Yehuda Glantz:</b> Mon 5:30p, Tues 8p, Wed 11:30a, Fri 9:30p, Sat 5p, Sun 9:30a	<b>River Valleys Unified School District Board Special Mtg. 7/13/23:</b> Mon 3p, Tues 10a & 8p, Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p
<b>Next Stage Arts - Bandwagon Summer Series 2023 Featuring Underground System:</b> Mon 12:20p, Tues 12:55p & 4:55p, Thurs 7:55a & 12:20p, Fri 7:55a & 4:25p, Sat 6:55p & 9:55p	<b>Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 7/17/23:</b> Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
<b>Windham Solid Waste Management District - Outreach Success Webinar 6/28/23:</b> Tues 1p, Wed 9a, Sat 6a, Sun 4p	<b>Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg. 7/11/23:</b> Tues 12:30p, Wed 10:30a
<b>The Lost Century and How to Reclaim It:</b> Mon 10p	<b>Townshend Selectboard Special Mtg. 7/18/23:</b> Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
<b>Veterans Events - Brattleboro Memorial Day 2023:</b> Mon 12:25p, Tues 10a, Thurs 12:20p, Fri 12:20p, Sat 8:35p, Sun 5:55p	<b>Windham Elementary School Board Mtg. 7/10/23:</b> Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
<b>Community Conversations on Compassion - Unsung Hero Award Ceremony 2023:</b> Mon 8:35p, Tues 6a, Wed 12:20p, Thurs 9:45p, Sat 12:20p, Sun 7:15p	<b>Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 7/18/23:</b> Fri 6p, Sat 9:30a, Sun 12p
<b>Windham County Genealogy Interest Group - Dipping Your Toe in Irish Genealogy Research:</b> Tues 3:15p, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 2:40p, Sat 9a, Sun 7:55p	<b>Guilford Conservation and Planning Commissions Special Joint Mtg. 6/15/23:</b> Mon 9a, Wed 7:30a, Sat 5:15p, Sun 8:30a
<b>Energy Week with George Harvey &amp; Tom Finnell:</b> Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	<b>West River Education District Board Mtg. 7/10/23:</b> Mon 2:30p, Sat 6:45, Sun 4:30p
<b>Vermontitude - Weekly Episode:</b> Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	<b>Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 7/12/23:</b> Tues 4:15p, Thurs 4:45p, Sat 7p
<b>News Block:</b> WTSA News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p, Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p	<b>Brattleboro Planning Commission Special Mtg. 7/5/23:</b> Mon 10:15p, Sat 8:15p
<b>St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	<b>Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg. 6/26/23:</b> Wed 3:30p, Fri 4:45p
<b>Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley - Weekly Service:</b> Tue 9a, Sat 5:30p, Sun 10a	<b>Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 6/27/23:</b> Sat 7:30a, Sun 2:30p
<b>Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service:</b> Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	<b>Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 6/21/23:</b> Sat 10p, Sun 6a
<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**  
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## MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

## College news

The following local students received bachelor's degrees from the University of Vermont during its recent 222nd Commencement: **Hannah Balda** of Londonderry (microbiology), **Allura Cameron** of Londonderry (medical laboratory sciences), **Kristina Harmon** of Londonderry (microbiology), **Madeleine Blanchard** of South Londonderry (neuroscience), **Bella Bonneau** of Brattleboro (community entrepreneurship), **Kiki Carasi-Schwartz** of Brattleboro (global studies), **Emily Crespo** of Brattleboro (dietetics, nutrition, and food sciences), **Natalie Gadowski** of Brattleboro (dietetics, nutrition, and food sciences), **Janet Hawthorne** of Brattleboro (religion), **Benish Nabeel** of Brattleboro (neuroscience), **Katharine Taggard** of Brattleboro (public communication), **Addison Worsman** of Brattleboro (psychological science), **Joslynn Wright** of Brattleboro (English), **Forest Zabriskie** of Brattleboro (music), **Bianca Labuschagne** of East Dover (molecular genetics), **Stevie Roberts** of Jamaica (magna cum laude, psychological science), **Niklas Johnson** of Newfane (environmental sciences), **Aiden McCormack** of Newfane (computer science), **Nina Singleton-Spencer** of Newfane (psychological science and studio art), **Evelyn Williams** of Brookline (psychological science), **Tyler Altemberg** of East Dummerston (computer science), **Emmett Dews** of East Dummerston (microbiology), **Mason Redfield** of South Newfane (mechanical engineering), **Evan Bernard** of Townshend (environmental studies), **Maris Linder** of Townshend (food systems), **Lucas Newton** of Townshend (cum laude, history), **Karson Petty** of Townshend (English), **Matt Young** of Townshend (civil engineering), **Dareen Abdallah** of Vernon (sociology), **Emma Allen** of Vernon (cum laude, political science), **Nathan McKenney** of Vernon (economics), **Jennifer Hill** of West Dover (mechanical engineering), **Isabella Nick** of West Dover (sociology and political science), **Brandi Butler** of Halifax (animal sciences), **Olivia Geissler** of West Townshend (chemistry), **Olin Ruppert-Bousquet** of Windham (computer science), **Alissa Walkowiak** of Whitingham (art education), **Codie Wershoven** of Whitingham (psychological science), **Molly Wrathall** of Whitingham (early childhood preschool), and **Olivia Genella** of Wilmington (molecular genetics).

**Addison Kujovsky** of South Londonderry was named to the Dean's List for the spring 2023 semester at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

**Gabrielle Beal**, a member of the Class of 2024 from Wilmington, was named to the spring 2023 Dean's List at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.

**William Frank** of South Londonderry, **Owen Rounds** of Westminster, **Caroline Mehner** of West Wardsboro, and **Samuel Thibault** of Williamsville were all named to the President's Honors List for the spring 2023 semester at the University of Hartford (Conn.).

## Obituaries



**Patrick Edward Elmore, 51**, of Bellows Falls. Died peacefully on July 3, 2023, surrounded by his beloved wife Kimberly (LaBarge) Elmore, his loving family, and his very best friend, Pastor Brian Cook. Patrick often told people, "I'm living to live, I'm not living to die." He fought to live until the very end but was completely at peace with the Lord's ultimate will. Patrick and Kimberly met online and immediately fell in love. Patrick often noted his dating app criteria was 50 miles, but God had something else in mind with 90 miles. They made the distance work for over a year, seeing each other every weekend or day off. The love birds were married July 16, 2005 in Lake George, New York. Patrick officially made Nathan his son just before their marriage, often joking Nathan got his last name before Kim did. Patrick was born July 9, 1971, on his sister's third birthday, making him forever her birthday buddy. He was born the youngest of three children to Robert and Caroline (Paddock) Elmore of Queensbury, New York. In 1989, he graduated from Queensbury High School and attended Warren County Vo-Tech, learning small engine repair. He then went to serve as a hospital corpsman in the Navy from 1989 to 1994. Later, Patrick found a career in the office furniture industry, first at GBI in upstate NY, then in Vermont at Red Thread, formerly Business Interiors. Living in Bellows Falls, they raised their son and enjoyed being part of the BFUHS football family and seeing as many movies as possible. Family was important to Patrick. If family or children couldn't go somewhere, he had little interest in going. The couple attended church in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, leading a youth group for more than 10 years. Patrick thoroughly enjoyed working with the youth and sharing his faith with them. Hundreds of teens over the years spent their Wednesday nights learning about Jesus, having fun, praying, and playing crazy games with names like, "Egg Splat" and "Sardine Sliders." Patrick even purchased a guitar and signed up for weekly lessons from Pastor David Berman in an attempt to bring live worship music to the teens. The couple ultimately found their church home in 2016 at Christian Life Fellowship (CLF) in Swanzey, New Hampshire. The two continued to be a part of the lives of the youth at CLF on Monday nights. In 2017, the Lord blessed Patrick and Kim with their daughter Chloe Ann. He loved being a father again. Holding her in his arms during worship was one of his most favorite things. Patrick continued in youth ministry until his treatment forced him to step back. As a family they frequently camped on the Battenkill River in Salem, New York. Boating and fishing became a favorite family pastime. Patrick was predeceased by his beloved mother and father-in-law David LaBarge. Surviving are his wife Kimberly, son Nathan, daughter Chloe, father Robert, sister Robyn (Myron) Gates, brother Michael Elmore, mother-in-law Elizabeth LaBarge, brother-in-law Lawrence (Sandy) LaBarge, nieces Stacya, Tiffany, Alycia, Hayley,

and Alexis, nephew Nathaniel, and grandnephews Dylan, Joseph, Thomas, and Robert. Patrick will be remembered as a true man of God. He would go where Jesus called him to go. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service was held at Christian Life Fellowship on July 16. A GoFundMe has been set up for his family at [gofund.me/2b876c12](https://www.gofundme.com/2b876c12). To share a memory or offer condolences to his family, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).



**Alan A. Heller, 92**, of Brattleboro. Died June 28, 2023 at Thompson House after a brief illness and a long life. He had been a resident there for just over two years after his wife of more than 60 years died from Covid. He was surrounded by his son, his daughter-in-law, and his grandson. He was most proud of his family and his service to his country. He was born Aug. 14, 1925 and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. He went to Boys High, graduated, and was drafted into the army and served in Europe. As a combat World War II veteran, he took a renewed pride in his service later in his life. Growing up in Brooklyn, he was an avid baseball fan. He saw many of the greats, went to the first night games, and was sad his Brooklyn Dodgers moved to the West Coast. When the Mets came, he entered into what can only be described as a love/hate relationship with the team. This lasted until his last day. In the end, though, he just loved the game of baseball. Upon being honorably discharged from the Army, Alan went into advertising. He met the love of his life, Madeline, and they were married in 1951. They had two children, Marjorie and Richard. They loved their family, traveling, friends, sports, bridge, theater, the ballet, and sports but, most of all, their grandson Jackson whom they couldn't get enough of. As New Yorkers, they were deeply involved in the various cultural opportunities the city had to offer. They were always eager to share this with their grandson who became a lover of the city as well. Alan was predeceased by his wife and daughter as well as most of his friends, all of whom he missed dearly. He will be missed by his nieces Debra and Susan, and his nephew Evan, along with his sister-in-law Joan Rosenwald. He will be greatly missed by his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson, which is an understatement. Those that knew him described him as a nice man, attentive to the interests of others and always willing to share the history he was fortunate and perhaps in some cases unfortunate to be a part of and witness. Alan lived a full, long life, exemplified kindness and caring, and was a great father and friend. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Donations to the Wounded Warrior Project, National Processing Center, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675; or Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).



**Barbara R. (Potter) Johnson, 88**, of Chesterfield, New Hampshire. Died on July 11, 2023, following a brief illness. She was born in Dummerston on March 21, 1935 to Perley

Potter and Bernice (Dodge) Potter. Barbara was educated in Brattleboro area public schools and graduated from Brattleboro High School in 1953. During and after high school, Barbara worked at Estey Organ, and then at a local book press. Barbara was known for her self-taught expertise of crocheting, crafting, and quilting. Barbara always spoke her mind, and did so, with little to no room for misunderstanding. She enjoyed country music, square dancing, playing Bingo at local halls and last, but not least, spending time with her family. Barbara is survived by one sister, Doris Bascomb of Guilford; six children: Leroy Hescocock, of Arlington, Randi LaFrance of Chesterfield, Shirley Kohler of Brattleboro, Andrew Kohler of Sandpoint, Idaho, Kurt Kohler of Winnemucca, Nevada, and Eric Kohler of Dummerston; and 17 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandson. Barbara was predeceased by her brothers Clayton, Earl, Bernard, and Frederick Potter. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of life will be held at the VFW, 40 Black Mountain Road, Brattleboro, on Saturday, July 22, from 1 to 5 p.m. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. She loved animals, especially her many cats over the years.



**Tamsyn A. "Tami" Maskell, 48**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died unexpectedly July 10, 2023 at her home. She was born in Brattleboro on June 11, 1975, the daughter of Burnett and Shannon (Saari) Butler. She was raised and educated in Hinsdale, graduating from Hinsdale High School with the Class of 1993. She had been employed as a store clerk at the T-Bird Mini Mart on Brattleboro Road for several years and previously had worked at PlumPak in Winchester, New Hampshire. Tami had been a member of the North Hinsdale Community Church and more recently attended Agape Christian Fellowship in Brattleboro. She enjoyed the outdoors and liked camping, fishing, hiking, and spending time with her family. She was a talented artist and painted with both water colors and oils. She was also very crafty and was an accomplished creator of unique jewelry. Tami was married to Todd Maskell, who predeceased her. Survivors include her mother, Shannon Dube of Claremont, New Hampshire; her father, Burnett Butler and wife, Gayle, of Hinsdale; three children, Marcus Pratt and Shyann Pratt, both of Newfane, and Kelsey Kingsbury of Claremont; siblings Troy Butler and Cassie Butler-Wright, both of Hinsdale; two half-sisters, Tara Lafferty of Seattle and Tina Butler of Portland, Oregon; a half-brother, Clifford Butler of Oregon; two step-sisters, April Anderson and Cynthia Stage, of Hinsdale; and a stepbrother, Dennis LaFlam of Ohio. Additionally, she leaves eight grandchildren and several aunts, uncles and cousins. She was also predeceased by a son, Tyler Butler, and a granddaughter, Bethann Marie. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside committal services will be conducted Saturday, July 22, at 1 p.m., in Oaklawn Cemetery on Meetinghouse Road in Hinsdale. A reception will follow the services to be held at the family home on Meetinghouse Road. Donations to the Monadnock Humane Society,

101 West Swanzey Road, Swanzey, NH 03446. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).



**Donna Lucia (Garland) Radcliffe, 78**, of Marlboro. Died June 23, 2023, surrounded by her loving family, at her home. She lived her life to its fullest up to her death, enjoying every moment. She was an explorer of life, hardly ever saying no to an opportunity and a chance to see or learn something new. Donna was born Sept. 4, 1944, the daughter of Everett and Priscilla (Cullinane) of Bellows Falls and Westminster. She was raised in Westminster and was a graduate of Bellows Falls High School, Class of 1962, where she was both a basketball player and cheerleader. She married Richard Radcliffe of Marlboro at the Westminster Congregational Church on Jan. 31, 1964. They were in their 59th year of marriage. They made their home in Marlboro, where Donna focused on raising her two daughters, Tisha and Susie, and was their enthusiastic cheerleader at sports events and in life. She started her career working for Arnold White and managed his Marlboro gift shop location for many years. In the second half of her life, she became a partner and office manager of Business and Tax Consultants, Inc. of Brattleboro. She loved her work, colleagues, and clients and the word "retirement" was not in her vocabulary. Donna formed so many wonderful relationships and memories through her work that her family is grateful for. Donna loved her pets and owned many dachshunds over the years. She and her husband were avid gardeners. Donna thoroughly enjoyed many trips throughout the years, especially those with her family. She liked all kinds of music and enthusiastically attended concerts with family and friends. Happily, she achieved items on her bucket list — Graceland (she was a huge Elvis fan), seeing Roy Orbison, The Eagles, and Emmylou Harris (three times), in concert, going to Farm Aid, and more. She is terribly missed, with her love continuing on in her survivors — her husband, Richard; daughters Tisha Radcliffe and husband Robert Michaels and Susie Radcliffe and husband Patrick Higgins; brother Nelson Garland (Susan), and sister-in-law Jane McCormick, along with many nieces, nephews, and friends near and far. When we all wish to see her again, we will look for her in the many cardinals, hummingbirds, pheasants, and other winged creatures who constantly visit her yard. We will look for the bears to come and say goodbye. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside services were held July 15 at Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery in Brattleboro. Donations to Susan G. Komen for the Cure ([komen.org](https://www.komen.org)); Brattleboro Memorial Hospital Oncology Gas Card Program in care of Gina Pattison, BMH Development Office, 17 Belmont Ave., Brattleboro VT, 05301; or The Hospice Foundation of America, 1707 L St. NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036.

**Shirley Merling Walsh, 93**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully, in the comfort of her home with her family and caregivers by her side, on June 27, 2023, following a period of declining health. Shirley was born at home in Putney on Nov. 16, 1929, the daughter of Robert and



**Phyllis Luane Young, 94**, of Rockingham. Died on July 6, 2023, after a period of declining health from a bad fall in January. She was surrounded by her family and under the extraordinary care of Hospice through VNA of Vermont and New Hampshire. Born on Jan. 6, 1929 to Harriet and Joseph LaClaire, she was one of 10 children. Phyllis graduated from Thompson School of Nursing in 1947. For more than 40 years, she worked primarily at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital as well as the Brattleboro Retreat, local nursing homes, and private duty nursing. She resided for many years in West Brattleboro before moving to Jamaica and, finally, Rockingham, where she spent her last 20-plus years in retirement. In her later years, she immersed herself in her artwork and gardening and took great pleasure in her flower beds in addition to sharing her flowers while flower arranging at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Park in Cornish, New Hampshire. She was predeceased by her husband, Sheridan; and siblings Alden, Marion, Joseph, Oliver, James, Ellie, and Roy. She is survived by siblings June and Leonard; her son, Sheridan (Terry) Young and daughter, Carol Young; and granddaughters Hilary Seifer and Margo LaFland and their families. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Per her request, there will be no services. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

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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The interior of the Miss Bellows Falls Diner.

COURTESY PHOTO

BELLOWS FALLS

# RFPL hosts meetings on rebirth of Miss Bellows Falls Diner

BELLOWS FALLS—Born during World War II, a beloved hometown Vermont institution, Worcester Lunch Car #771, a.k.a., the Miss Bellows Falls Diner, is coming back to life. Diners have been a New England fixture for more than a century. Many of these were manufactured by the Worcester Lunch Car Company. In early 1942, the 32-seat Miss Bellows Falls arrived in town, replacing a smaller diner on site. It is a classic example of a World War II-era diner, with a porcelain enamel facade proudly proclaiming its name between iconic panels advertising “booth service.” On the inside, oak booths with Formica tabletops provide seating for families, along with stools running the length of a marble countertop.

In 1983, the National Trust for Historic Preservation recognized the importance of The Miss Bellows Falls by making it only the second diner to be listed on the National Register. After 40 more years of nearly continual use, the diner retains almost all of its original fixtures and furnishings.

A succession of owners kept the diner alive until the COVID-19 pandemic began. In 2020, the building was shuttered and three years later, had fallen into disrepair. Enter Rockingham for Progress, a nonprofit formed in 2016 to promote progressive economic development, an appreciation of the historic and cultural value of Bellows Falls, and citizen participation in our local democratic processes.

Undertaking the challenge of restoring The Miss Bellows Falls Diner to its original working condition is being done in consultation with historic diner expert, Richard J. S. Gutman, and with the support of a \$100,000 Paul Bruhn grant from the Preservation Trust of Vermont. Now that the diner purchase by Rockingham for Progress has been completed, a series of informational programs about the project will be held at the

Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St., beginning Thursday, July 27. The 7 p.m. public events are free and will be held in the third-floor function room.

Registration is not necessary, and the room is accessible via elevator. Programs will be recorded and made available for later viewing. The program schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, July 27 – Rockingham for Progress and the Miss Bellows Falls Diner: Why has a local volunteer group taken on the project of renovating and restoring an historic 32-seat diner? How do we plan to keep Miss Bellows Falls on the tax rolls and able to survive the challenges of the modern food service industry? Meet the team, swap ideas, and help us envision the future.
- Tuesday, Sept. 19 – Diner History and the history of the Miss Bellows Falls Diner: A presentation and slide show by diner expert Gutman on the history of the lunch cart, how it evolved into the diner, and how the Miss Bellows Falls fits into that larger history.
- Thursday, Nov. 9 – Tales from the Diner: Charlie Jarras, host of *Travels With Charlie* on FACT-TV, owned the Miss Bellows Falls Diner from 1990 to 2003. He will bring an evening of stories and anecdotes from employees and customers alike. Come to hear, and share, a story.

For more information, visit [rockinghamforprogress.org](http://rockinghamforprogress.org).

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ATHENS



A view of some of the newly-created Raymond Bemis Community Forest in Athens.

COURTESY PHOTO

# Raymond Bemis Community Forest created in Athens

ATHENS—In collaboration with the Vermont Land Trust, Bull Creek Common Lands (BCCL), a new nonprofit organization, will conserve 36 acres along the Bull Creek to be used as a community forest. After two years of planning, the land is being acquired this August from David Bemis and will be named after his late uncle Raymond Bemis who served his community in many roles during his long lifetime and operated a fish farm on the property in the 1950s and 1960s.

BCCL intends to maintain the network of trails that are on the property and to protect the diverse landscape and ecological communities along the brook, including wetlands, a vernal pool, glacial fluvial landforms, rock ledges, and a floodplain forest.

The community forest will be permanently open to the public for various low impact, non-motorized uses. A section of trail may be developed to be accessible for people with mobility limitations. Additional input from the local community will guide how the land is used.

Currently, the organization is fundraising for the final \$15,000 needed to acquire and manage the community forest land. A public event to introduce the Raymond

Bemis Community Forest will be held at the Athens Community Center on Saturday, July 22, at 2 p.m.

There will be a presentation including stories from members of the community about the land’s natural and human history and a discussion about the community’s current interests, followed by carpooling to the trailhead site and taking a short walk. More information can be found at [bullcreekcommonlands.org](http://bullcreekcommonlands.org) and email inquiries can be directed to [hello@bullcreekcommonlands.org](mailto:hello@bullcreekcommonlands.org).

BCCL is a community-based nonprofit organization that promotes the protection of wild spaces and wilderness restoration, emphasizing relationship with the land and long-term benefits for ecosystems and human communities. Its primary mission is to conserve land in and adjacent to the Bull Creek and Grassy Brook watersheds of southeastern Vermont.

Major funders of the acquisition and conservation of the Raymond Bemis Community Forest property include the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), Davis Conservation Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation and Windham Foundation.

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# Land use changes

to 9 attached units, cottage court developments with 3 to 9 homes, and small apartment buildings with 5 to 9 units.

Under these new standards, permit requests would need less review, and it would "help reduce NIMBY complaints, actually," Fillion said, noting there's always the appeal process.

Fric Spruyt, a local landlord, commended the proposal as "reasonable and allows for more flexibility and more creativity, and I think that's fantastic."

He also asked for consideration of solar access in the mix.

Community member landscape architect Adam Hubbard also gave the amendments a thumbs-up.

"Nice job — I'm happy to see a lot of these changes," he said. "We've been talking about these changes for a long time and it's nice to see zoning evolving [...]" he said.

Hubbard did suggest changing Canal Street from mixed use/residential to a strip of mixed use from the downtown to the hospital and onto the next district, noting "small section of residential on Horton Place that fronts Canal Street [...] that should have the flexibility to be mixed use."

"The beauty of a mixed use district is it gives you more ability to build more densely," he said, adding to the accolades for the town planners.

He also said he believes the town could foster more housing

units in other ways.

"Keep police on the street, keep the sidewalks fixed, make places more livable, and it will draw more investment," Hubbard said. "But private investment follows public investment, in my opinion."

He urged the Selectboard to "keep doing what you're doing" and to let the town planners "do what they're doing [...] after they make that change to the zoning."

### Background

The town's Housing Action Plan, endorsed by the Selectboard in March 2022, "conservatively estimated a need for 518 units," Fillion said in an update of planners' work before the hearing.

From June 2022 to June 2023, she said, the Planning Department issued permits "for what should be 51 housing units" in various stages of construction.

The TD Bank building is being redeveloped for 11 units and the DeWitt Building on Flat Street is being developed for 15 units.

"It can take some time," she said, with a wry smile.

In the meantime, to meet the town's need for housing stock, "We have about 467 units to go [...] and that's still a conservative estimate," she said.

Fillion reported town planners have been looking into state tax credits and new funding, adding that the difficulties are not unique to Brattleboro and that the state is offering some initiatives to

stimulate housing creation.

The group is also trying to educate residents by organizing walks through neighborhoods to note and possibly encourage potential new housing — as in, what might look like a single-family house may hold the potential to offer multiple units, even in their present state.

"We need all types of housing," Fillion said, noting she and town planners are working on the supply and quality of diverse housing and how to pay for it with all available resources.

"Why is it so expensive to build housing?" asked Selectboard Vice-Chair Franz Reichsman. "Wherever I turn, costs are phenomenal and I'm not sure what anybody can do about that."

Reichsman said that the town's economy "just won't let people afford what it takes to build a house these days."

"I keep hearing \$300 a square foot, and maybe that's on the low end," he said, a cost that makes him wonder "what kind of an impact we can have."

"There are a lot of factors that are out of our control," Fillion answered, noting material costs, workforce issues, and state permitting costs, among others.

"We're not going to solve everything," she said. "I think what we can do as a town is make sure our regulations are in a good place."



COURTESY PHOTO

This 200-year old Ash tree in Dummerston is the third largest Ash in Vermont.

# Champion ash tree gets help to preserve it for future

DUMMERSTON—On Tuesday, July 25, Kevin Brewer, Northeast regional technical manager for Arborjet/Ecologel, and Pete Butler of Strategic Vegetation Management will be providing a special treatment for an iconic ash tree located on Putney Mountain Association's Missing Link trail.

According to a news release, this event "presents a valuable opportunity for local arborists and nature lovers to learn more about preservation and treatment for this magnificent ash tree. Research shows that environmentally sound trunk injections not only help save trees, but are far more cost-effective than removal and replacement. Saving mature trees also helps to reduce CO2 production, energy costs, and stormwater runoff while maintaining property values."

This 200-year old ash tree

holds significant importance. According to the county forester, it has been classified as the third largest ash tree in Vermont, measuring 94 feet tall, 71 inches wide, and 65.5 inches in diameter. This tree has been nominated as part of Arborjet/Ecologel's Saving America's Iconic Trees initiative, which aims to ensure the health and longevity of the country's most beloved trees that live in public parks, gardens, and other historic sites.

As part of the program, this tree will continue to receive complementary treatments for the next 10 years. "Designed to protect against invasive insects, disease, and bolster the overall health of the tree, treatment will help maintain its historic status for generations to come," according to Arborjet.

Beyond the Iconic Tree Program, Arborjet/Ecologel

provides numerous educational opportunities by funding university research and student scholarships in arboriculture, horticulture, entomology, and environmental science. The company has been helping to mitigate the devastation of invasive species, saving trees in over 150 municipalities across the country.

Anyone interested is encouraged to attend to learn more about the significance of preserving trees as well as facts and insights about the trunk-injection process. The meeting point will be at the northern terminus of the Missing Link trail at noon. Park at the trailhead on 645 Hague Rd. (close to the end of Hague Road). Be prepared for an hour-long hike up the trail with spectacular views of Black Mountain and the West River Valley.

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COLUMN | Arts Notebook

# Writer tackles a fashion culture that's TOXIC—literally

In her new book 'To Dye For,' author Alden Wicker looks at the dangerous chemicals lurking in nearly every piece of clothing



**S**ITTING IN Alden Wicker's kitchen in the antique home where she and her husband, architect Illich Garcia, live half-time when not in Brooklyn, New York, we sip green tea and banter about the benefits of Windham County, about the challenges and joys of country living and, most potentially, about sustainability.

"I've always been into sustainability," Wicker says, relaxed in loose, broken-in jeans. "I started saying no to plastic bags when I was in middle school." Having grown up on 180 acres in rural North Carolina before moving to suburban Maryland, she says she has always been comfortable in nature.

Recipient of the 2021 American Society of Journalists and Authors Award for business reporting for a piece in *Wired* scrutinizing the reselling website Poshmark, Wicker's investigative reporting — also published in *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *Well*, and *Good*, among others — has broken stories from wide-scale organic cotton industry fraud to TerraCycle's shortcomings.

Her 2017 piece "Conscious Consumerism is a Lie" went viral, she recalls. A sustainable-fashion expert, she's been interviewed for the BBC, NPR, Reuters, Fortune, CBC, and other venues. She'll take any opportunity to write and talk about sustainable fashion to stem the insistent demand for fast fashion, defined on [goodonyou.eco](http://goodonyou.eco) as "a relatively new phenomenon in the industry that causes extensive



**ANNIE LANDEMBERGER** is a freelance writer who is contributing to these pages; she also is founder and artistic director of Rock River Players and is one half of the musical duo Bard Owl with partner T. Breeze Verdant.

damage to the planet, exploits workers, and harms animals."

Wicker says her quest started when, "as many women in my generation did, I started blogging out of college in 2009 about sustainability." The casual blog caught on, and in spring 2013, she relaunched it as [EcoCult.com](http://EcoCult.com), a full sustainable lifestyle blog of which she is editor in chief.

EcoCult is sustained by banner ads, sponsorships, and affiliate revenues: Wicker works half-time at the helm there and half-time as freelance journalist.

Within a month of EcoCult's relaunch, "Rana Plaza in Bangladesh had collapsed," Wicker recalls.

As described by CNN, "authorities had permitted the building, originally planned for commercial purposes, to be converted to industrial use and additionally occupied by five garment factories. It collapsed because [...] warnings were ignored or dismissed." "That changed the conversation," Wicker says. "Nobody at the time was writing about sustainable fashion; it

Alden Wicker

JUSTIN N. LANE

was 'uncool' to write about it. The glossies [magazines] didn't want to hear about it. They wanted it all to be fashionable, beautiful."

Since the Rana Plaza disaster, a sacrifice to fast fashion, "sustainable fashion is all anyone will talk about," Wicker says.

If any brands aren't talking about it, she adds, it is because the brand ownership doesn't seem to care about anything beyond profits — much less the environment. Rana Plaza factory safety has improved somewhat in Bangladesh because of work of advocates and labor organizations; worldwide, though, safety remains a troubling issue.

"Brands are willing to pay less and less" so that consumers can keep buying for less, Wicker notes, pointing out that fashion is the one industry that has not succumbed significantly to inflation.

"Think about it," Wicker notes.

WICKER'S BOOK *To Dye For: How Toxic Fashion Is Making Us Sick* has just been released by Penguin Random House, which describes the title as a "Silent Spring for your wardrobe" and "a jolting exposé that reveals the true cost of the toxic, largely unregulated chemicals found on most clothing today."

■ SEE 'TO DYE FOR,' B3



## Newly-launched 'Brattleboro Words Trail Podcast' releases new episode on author Saul Bellow

**BRATTLEBORO**—The Brattleboro Words Project announced that a special July episode of the newly launched Brattleboro Words Trail Podcast features insights into author Saul Bellow and his connection to Vermont, including exclusive interviews with his biographer and editor, to honor the famed writer's birthday and the love he had for Green Mountain summers.

Bellow lived and wrote for nearly the last third of his life near Brattleboro part-time and is buried in the town cemetery. Nobel Literature laureate, Pulitzer Prize winner, and the only writer to win three National Book Awards for fiction, Bellow helped launch the first Brattleboro Literary Festival in 2002 and generally enhanced the strong literary identity of

southeastern Vermont.

The episode, "Saul Bellow's Good Place," features exclusive interviews with Bellow biographer Professor Emeritus Zachary Leader of Roehampton University in London, observations of local friend Larry Simons, and a special 15-minute bonus episode with Beena Kumlani, Bellow's longtime editor at Viking Penguin Press on working with Bellow in Vermont. The best part is hearing Bellow himself comment on the writing process and reading from his work.

"One of the things that I was always persuaded of as a writer, was that you had to give some happiness to the people who were reading your books. It didn't have to be frivolous happiness, you

might be writing about a murder, but still some kind of delight. And I took it as an obligation." Bellow says in archival tape from a 1986 talk at Howard Community College (used by permission of HoCoPoLitSo, the Howard County Poetry and Literature Society, in the episode).

The podcast is free on Apple, Google, Spotify, Amazon, and other places people typically find podcasts.

*Saul Bellow's Good Place* can be listened to at [bit.ly/723-words](http://bit.ly/723-words), and Bellow editor Beena Kumlani's *A Race Against Time* bonus audio can be heard at [bit.ly/723-race](http://bit.ly/723-race).

The Brattleboro Words Trail Podcast launched on May 1, 2023, to enhance the reach of the community-created audio

stories currently available in place-tagged segments on the GPS-triggered Brattleboro Words Trail.

Visitors can download the free Brattleboro Words Trail app, grab a free map at locations downtown, and walk, bike, or drive to the sites associated with the people, writing and "all things words" that makes Brattleboro a unique literary destination.

Organizers say while use of the app is growing, they want to highlight the wealth of story content on the Trail to a worldwide audience by creating a podcast.

"Some of the people and stories on the Trail really stand out as of interest to a much wider audience only a podcast format can provide," host and Executive

■ SEE BELLOW, B3



Saul Bellow

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## arts &amp; community CALENDAR

THURSDAY	THURSDAY CONT.	FRIDAY CONT.	SATURDAY CONT.	SUNDAY CONT.	TUESDAY CONT.					
13	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>WEST CHESTERFIELD "The 39 Steps" (based on Alfred Hitchcock's cinematic 1935 masterpiece):</b> Cast of 4 actors, with costume changes/dialects, play over 100 characters in this fast-paced comic tale of an ordinary man mistakenly forced to take to his feet and begin a dangerous and entertaining escapade. Falsely accused of being a spy, follow him on a wild chase across England and Scotland. Along the way he encounters dastardly murders, double-crossing secret agents and, of course, devastatingly beautiful women.</p> <p>► 7:30 p.m. <i>Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays. Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of old time Music Hall Vaudeville, toss in circus tricks, theatrical mime and stage trickery, including a trot across top of a fast moving train, and you have the makings for a riotous, intriguing, thrilling, unmissable comedy.</i></p> <p>► Through Saturday, July 29.</p> <p>► \$17.</p> <p>► Actors Theatre Playhouse, Corner Brook &amp; Main St. Information: Tickets/more information: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/5c3a9k6p">tinyurl.com/5c3a9k6p</a>.</p> <p><b>Music</b></p> <p><b>PUTNEY Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series Presents Ukrainian "Ethno-chaos" Band DakhaBrakha:</b> The band has added rhythms of the surrounding world into their music, creating a unique, unforgettable sound. They open up the potential of Ukrainian melodies and bring it to the hearts/consciousness of the younger Ukraine generation and the rest of the world. Accompanied by Indian, Arabic, African, Ukrainian traditional instrumentation, the quartet's astonishingly powerful/uncompromising vocal range creates a trans-national sound rooted in Ukrainian culture.</p> <p>► 6 p.m. <i>Bring a picnic, blanket or fold-up chair to enjoy our concerts. Cash bar available. In 2010, DakhaBrakha won the prestigious Grand Prix prize named after Sergey Kuryokhin, in the contemporary art sphere and confirmed its place in the culture once again. In 2011, DakhaBrakha was discovered by Australian Womadelaide and began their international music scene ascent. They've since played over 300 concerts and performances and taken part in major international festivals throughout Eastern/Western Europe, Russia, Asia, Australia, North America. Marko Halanevych: vocals, darbuka, tabla, accordion; Iryna Kovalenko: vocals, djembe, bass drums, accordion, percussion, bugay, zgalayka, piano; Olena Tsybulska: vocals, bass drums, percussion, garmoshka; Nina Garenetska: vocals, cello, bass drum.</i></p> <p>► \$20 in advance, \$25 at gate, free for children under age 12.</p> <p>► Putney Inn, 57 Putney Landing Rd. Information: <a href="http://advance.tickets/information:nextstagearts.org">advance.tickets/information:nextstagearts.org</a>, 802-387-0102.</p> <p><b>PUTNEY Yellow Barn Concert in Memory of Eva Mondon:</b> Tonight's concert is offered in loving memory of Eva Mondon, who died on July 7. A pillar of the Putney community for over 50 years, and an inspiring audience member since our very first years, Eva embodied the spirit of Yellow Barn. Without fail, she listened acutely and then challenged us to make connections, to take care of others, wherever and whenever possible.</p> <p>► 8 p.m. <i>Franco Donatoni Lumen Levke Schulte-Ostermann, piccolo; Anoush Pogossian, clarinet; Itamar Prag, celeste; Jessie Chiang, vibraphone; Hanna Burnett, viola; Nina Kiva, cello. Kaija Saariaho, New Gates; Levke Schulte-Ostermann, flute; Charles Overton, harp; Anuschka Cidlinsky, viola. Georges Lentz Caeli Enarrant (The Heavens Tell) IV. Maria Wioszczowska, Astrid Nakamura, violins; Edgar Francis, viola; Eliza Millett, cello; Jessie Chiang, Zoey Cobb, Eduardo Leandro, Matthew Overbay, percussion. Intermission.</i></p> <p>► Thomas Ades <i>Les eaux (Water) from Lieux retrouvés (Rediscovered places)</i>, Op.26. <i>Macintyre Taback, cello; Dominic Cheli, piano. Gerard Grisey Stele. Lei Liang New Ice from Six Seasons. Rebecca Saunders Blue and Gray. Lei Liang Migration from Six Seasons. Hans Abrahamsen "Light and Airy" from String Quartet No. 4. Lei Liang Earth from Garden Eight. Lei Liang Darkness from Six Seasons. Lei Liang Heaven from Garden Eight. Jessie Chiang, Matthew Overbay, percussion. Sam Suggs, Cecile-Laure Kouassi, double basses.</i></p> <p>► Katherine Yoon, Julia Mirzoev, violins; Alexander McFarlane, viola; Jakyong Huh, cello. Charles Overton, harp. Kaija Saariaho, New Gates. Levke Schulte-Ostermann, flute; Charles Overton, harp; Anuschka Cidlinsky, viola. Georges Lentz Caeli Enarrant (The Heavens Tell) IV. Maria Wioszczowska, Astrid Nakamura, violins; Edgar Francis, viola; Eliza Millett, cello; Jessie Chiang, Zoey Cobb, Eduardo Leandro, Matthew Overbay, percussion. Intermission.</p> <p>► Thomas Ades <i>Les eaux (Water) from Lieux retrouvés (Rediscovered places)</i>, Op.26. <i>Macintyre Taback, cello; Dominic Cheli, piano. Gerard Grisey Stele, Lei Liang New Ice from Six Seasons, Rebecca Saunders Blue and Gray, Lei Liang Migration from Six Seasons, Hans Abrahamsen "Light and Airy" from String Quartet No. 4, Lei Liang Earth from Garden Eight, Lei Liang Darkness from Six Seasons,</i></p>	<p><b>Le Liang Heaven from Garden Eight.</b> Jessie Chiang, Matthew Overbay, percussion; Sam Suggs, Cecile-Laure Kouassi, double basses; Katherine Yoon, Julia Mirzoev, violins; Alexander McFarlane, viola; Jakyong Huh, cello; Charles Overton, harp.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Yellow Barn, 49 Main St. Reserve tickets. 802-387-6637; <a href="http://yellowbarn.org">yellowbarn.org</a>.</p> <p><b>MARLBORO The 72nd Marlboro Music Season</b></p> <p>► Through Sunday, August 13.</p> <p>► \$5 to \$40.</p> <p>► Marlboro College Persons Hall/Auditorium, 2582 South Rd. Information: More info: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/4wvxkdw6">tinyurl.com/4wvxkdw6</a>. Questions? Contact us anytime: 802-254-2394 or <a href="mailto:boxoffice@marlboromusic.org">boxoffice@marlboromusic.org</a>.</p> <p><b>Local history</b></p> <p><b>NEWFANE Stories in Stitches - What Samplers Have to Tell Us:</b> Needlework samplers are pieces of fabric used to showcase embroidery stitches, patterns, techniques often as a way for women to learn/practice their skills. They are visual records of the education of young girls from the past - giving insight into their lives, families, communities. Michele Pagan and Ellen Thompson of the VT Sampler Initiative (VSI) share the long history behind embroidery samplers.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>Pagan and Thompson share the work of the VSI with museums countrywide to create an online/accessible database of 18th/19th Century samplers (samplerarchive.org) for scholars and practitioners. The Vermont Sampler Initiative aims to document all American made samplers and related embroideries in VT. The Historical Society of Windham County recently joined them and the nationally recognized Sampler Archive Project to make all of its American needlework samplers available to the public online. "We are excited to be a part of this initiative, not only will we learn more about the samplers and embroideries in our collection, our curators and educators will have access to information about related samplers in other collections."</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Union Hall, 2 Church St. Information: <i>To make an appointment, volunteer, or learn more email: <a href="mailto:samplersvt@gmail.com">samplersvt@gmail.com</a>.</i></p> <p><b>Kids and families</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Storytime at Retreat Farm:</b> Join us for an outdoor Storytime - then visit with the Retreat Farm goats. Bring a blanket or chair and enjoy! This Storytime is for all ages. Presented by Retreat Farm and the Children's Room at Brooks Memorial Library, this program is part of the "All Together Now" summer library program.</p> <p>► 10:30 a.m. on <i>Thursdays through 8/3/2023. In case of rain, Storytime will be held inside at Retreat Farm.</i></p> <p>► Free and open to the public.</p> <p>► Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Sq. Information: 802-490-2270; <a href="http://retreatfarm.org">retreatfarm.org</a>.</p> <p><b>Community meals</b></p> <p><b>NEWFANE Newfane Senior Lunch:</b> Appetizer: Cheese &amp; Crackers followed by Coleslaw, Baked Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Corn, Cornbread, Dessert: a Trifle!</p> <p>► 12 noon.</p> <p>► Suggested donation for meal: \$3.50.</p> <p>► Newfane Congregational Church, 11 Church St. Information: Questions: <a href="mailto:Call Winnie Dolan at 802-365-7870">Call Winnie Dolan at 802-365-7870</a>.</p> <p><b>WILLIAMSVILLE Breakfast at Williams Hall:</b> Open to everyone. Enjoy homemade pastries, tea, coffee, and orange juice. If the weather is good, seating will be outside; if the weather is poor, seating will be inside.</p> <p>► 8-10:30 a.m. <i>Hall is ADA compliant.</i></p> <p>► This monthly breakfast is complimentary (donations for the Hall are appreciated).</p> <p>► Williams Hall, Dover Rd. Information: <a href="mailto:williamsvillehall@gmail.com">williamsvillehall@gmail.com</a>, <a href="http://williamsvillehall.org">williamsvillehall.org</a>.</p>	<p><b>Kids and families</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO TGIF Morning Matinee: The Puppet People - "Puppet Potpourri":</b></p> <p>► 10 a.m. <i>T.G.I.F. is offered through Brattleboro Rec. and Parks in the Rotary Outdoor Theater. If special needs are required, let us know by 5 days in advance. If it rains, show moves indoors to Living Memorial Park-Withington Skating Facility.</i></p> <p>► Free to the public and daycares.</p> <p>► Living Memorial Park, Guilford St. Ext. Information: More info: <a href="http://Call Gibson Aiken Office at 802-254-5808">Call Gibson Aiken Office at 802-254-5808</a>.</p> <p><b>Well-being</b></p> <p><b>WILLIAMSVILLE Manitou Healing Walk:</b> Walk led by Mike Mayer includes poems or other readings and chances to share about the experience.</p> <p>► 4-5 p.m. <i>4 p.m.: Meet at parking lot. Go 1.4 miles up Sunset Lake Rd. from Williamsville Village, sign on right. Or approx. 5.6 miles over the top of Sunset Lake Rd. from Rt. 9. Healing walks are held every 2nd and 4th Friday of each month until October - rain or shine.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Manitou Project, 300 Sunset Lake Rd. Information: More information: <a href="http://Call Mike at 802-258-8598">Call Mike at 802-258-8598</a>.</p> <p><b>Film and video</b></p> <p><b>WILLIAMSVILLE "The Birdcage" (Rated R):</b> This 1996 comedy, directed by Mike Nichols and adapted by Elaine May, stars Robin Williams, Nathan Lane, Gene Hackman, Dianne Wiest. It's an English language remake of the 1978 Franco-Italian film, "La Cage aux Folles".</p> <p>► Film runs 7:30-9:30 p.m. <i>Refreshments served. The Hall is ADA compliant.</i></p> <p>► Admission is by donation and will raise funds for the Williamsville Hall.</p> <p>► Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: More information: <a href="mailto:williamsvillehall@gmail.com">williamsvillehall@gmail.com</a> or <a href="http://williamsvillehall.org">williamsvillehall.org</a>.</p>	15	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>SAXTONS RIVER Main Street Arts Presents "Ondine" - a Mermaid Play:</b> French playwright Jean Giraudoux's "Ondine" is the tragicomic love story of Hans, a wandering knight, and Ondine, a spirit of the sea Hans has been sent on a quest by his betrothed. In the forest he meets and falls in love with Ondine, who is attracted to the world of mortals and has been raised by an older couple deep in the woods by a lake. Their marriage is wonderful and catastrophic, like ours with Nature.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays (runs weekends only). By turns satirical, enchanting and tragic, Ondine, written as the Nazis were getting ready to occupy Paris, is considered to be Giraudoux's finest work. Featuring Sean Roberts and Kimm Johnson as the lovers. Directed by John Hadden.</i></p> <p>► Through Sunday, July 30.</p> <p>► \$20 adults, \$15 under age 18.</p> <p>► Main Street Arts, 37 Main St. Information: Tickets: <a href="http://mainstreetarts.org">mainstreetarts.org</a> or at door.</p> <p><b>Music</b></p> <p><b>WARDSBORO Hungrytown Returns:</b> Folk music returns as Wardsboro Curtain Call presents Rebecca Hall and Ken Anderson - husband-and-wife duo from Townshend VT, better known as Hungrytown. They'll perform new songs from the upcoming album "Circus for Sale." Through many years of worldwide touring, they've crafted Hungrytown into an "artistic hybrid" - Celtic/ Americana, sunshine/ darkness, ballads/psychodelia, joy/despair within same album and same song."</p> <p>► 6:30 p.m. <i>doors open, 7 p.m. music. Their albums include: "Further West," "Any Forgotten Thing," "Hungrytown 2008," "Sunday Afternoon," "Rebecca Hall Sings." Bring refreshments/ beverages to enjoy in cafe setting.</i></p> <p>► \$10 at door.</p> <p>► Wardsboro Town Hall, 71 Main St. Information: More information: <a href="mailto:kukmdavis@yahoo.com">kukmdavis@yahoo.com</a>, 802-896-6810.</p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Grateful Dead Tribute Bank Wolfman Jack:</b> Join us for two rippin' sets of electric primal dead covers and one set of intimate acoustic dead tunes! Wolfman Jack is a live music project of veteran musicians 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, Avalon Ballroom - recreating those vintage sets from when the Grateful Dead were cutting their teeth as a live music act.</p> <p>► 8 p.m.</p> <p>► \$12 in advance, \$15 at door.</p> <p>► The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-579-9960; <a href="http://stonechurchvt.com">stonechurchvt.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Recreation</b></p> <p><b>Vernon: Hike around Fox Hill Lot forest of the Roaring Brook:</b> Windham Regional Woodlands Assn. hosts this tour of the seldom seen Roaring Brook Wildlife Management Area. It's notable for many different wildlife habitats including a dry oak forest with many varieties of oak - Red, Black, White, Chestnut and Scarlet Oak plus Dogwood and Sassafras and a large vernal pool of statewide significance.</p>	<p>Walk led by Martin Langeveld and joined by Bob Zaino - Natural Community Ecologist with VT Fish and Wildlife Dept.</p> <p>► 9 a.m. <i>We'll leave from the Langeveld home at 131 Woodland Rd. in Vernon - which abuts area we'll visit. Parking available at his home (4-5 cars) - others can park along Woodland Road. We recommend wearing sturdy shoes, bringing water and hiking poles if you like, being prepared for some light uphill and downhill, with a few 100 ft. of elevation change altogether.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Windham Regional Woodlands Association. Information: <a href="http://windhamwoodlands.org/current-programs">windhamwoodlands.org/current-programs</a>.</p> <p><b>Farmers' markets</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Area Farmers Market:</b> 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.</p> <p>► 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on <i>Saturdays. Rain or shine.</i></p> <p>► Through Saturday, October 28.</p> <p>► Brattleboro Farmers Market, 570 Western Ave., Rt. 9, near covered bridge. Information: 802-490-4371; <a href="http://brattleborofarmersmarket.com">brattleborofarmersmarket.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Well-being</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Vermont Workers Center offers Information about Medicaid Eligibility and Your other Health Concerns:</b> We'll celebrate summer with grilled food and answer your questions about healthcare coverage. Are you concerned about losing your Medicaid, avoid seeing the doctor, or skip prescriptions because of the cost? We hope to meet and talk with you. We use our healthcare stories to advocate for a sustainable healthcare system that supports all of us.</p> <p>► 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Parking Lot, 134 - 138 Elliot St. (across from the hi-rise). Karen Hoover: 917-304-1217, <a href="mailto:fourcatshoover@gmail.com">fourcatshoover@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Dance</b></p> <p><b>WINCHESTER Monadnock Tri-State Dance Club:</b> Hawaiian Night. Live music by Champagne Jam.</p> <p>► 7-10:30 p.m. <i>Everyone is welcome. Non-alcoholic beverages available, 50/50 Raffle.</i></p> <p>► \$10 members, \$12 non-members.</p> <p>► Elm Community Center, 21 Durkee St. Information: More info, call Tom: 978-249-6917, 978-790-9322 or Barbara: 802-722-9205, 802-376-0317.</p> <p><b>Visual arts and shows</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Inner Landscapes: Three Views (Erika Radich, Jessie Pollock, Maggie Cahoon):</b> Maggie Cahoon: "My paintings hint at something quite beyond our ordinary reality and flow into a realm that speaks in color, fluidity, sensing. This language, while unorthodox, is strangely familiar to me, beyond measure." Jessie Pollock: "Nature has always been my inspiration, especially the beauty of moss and stones." Erika Radich: "This work evokes stability and a sense of lightness and hope. Elements are playful and irreverent, falling over and into each other."</p> <p>► 7/15, 5-7 p.m.: <i>Opening Reception. 8/6, 5 p.m.: Artists Forum. Open Thur.-Sat. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 12 noon-5 p.m.</i></p> <p>► Through Sunday, August 27.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main St. Information: 802-251-8290; <a href="http://mitchelkgiddingsfinearts.com">mitchelkgiddingsfinearts.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Ideas and education</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO River Cleanup and Cyanotype Workshop - Presented in connection with Aurora Robson: Human Nature Walk:</b> Join educator, gardener, visual artist Madge Evers for a river cleanup and workshop in which participants will use the items they collect to create camera-less photographic images known as cyanotypes. This magical and simple technique, developed in 1842, requires only 3 materials: an object, light-sensitive paper, and the ultraviolet rays of the sun. The result? Striking blue-and-white prints. Evers' work celebrates decomposition and regeneration.</p> <p>► 2 p.m. <i>In 2015, Evers began making mushroom spore print art. Her practice involves foraging for mushrooms/plants and sometimes the cyanotype process and paint. Her images often reference important mechanisms of fungi survival including photosynthesis and symbiosis.</i></p> <p>► \$45, \$35 BMAC (Brattleboro Museum &amp; Art Center) members. Space is limited/registration required.</p> <p>► Brattleboro Museum &amp; Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Information: More info/ Register: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/38nkt6b">tinyurl.com/38nkt6b</a> or 802-257-0124 x 101.</p>	17	<p><b>Well-being</b></p> <p><b>Spiritual Practices: The Basics of Meditation (via Zoom):</b> We'll explore the basics of meditation as taught by Paramahansa Yogananda and the Self Realization Fellowship which he founded.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>Offered through Halcyon Arts New England.</i></p> <p>► \$9 suggested donation or write in a price.</p> <p>► Zoom. Information: Link: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/3m745wyn">tinyurl.com/3m745wyn</a>.</p> <p><b>Community building</b></p> <p><b>MARLBORO Joy Sandwich World Tour comes to Marlboro:</b> British contemporary artist Stuart Semple offers spontaneous art Happenings in over 30 locations around the globe this July These 'Joy Sandwich' Happenings wrestle with recurring themes in Semple's work - ideas of technological isolation, physical community, connection, and impact of art on societal mental health. In the spirit of the golden age of happenings, these works will erupt and be led entirely by participants.</p> <p>► 6 p.m. <i>(doors open 5:30 p.m.) Snacks/non-alcoholic beverages are provided. The artist used his online community to meet a diverse global group of participants and so far orchestrated organization of these Happenings only via email and video chat. Each group wishing to host a happening was included. From people wanting to host one in their house or back garden, to major museums and cities. Right now, the exact nature of the happenings is secret to allow for spontaneity. The groups don't even know what the action will be - but the artist is set to send them instructions shortly before their performance.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Colonel Williams Inn, 111 Staver Rd. Information: <a href="http://StuartSemple.com/Happenings">StuartSemple.com/Happenings</a>.</p>	<p>► 11-3 p.m. on <i>Sundays. Across from the Putney Food Coop.</i></p> <p>► Putney Farmers Market, 17 Carol Brown Way. Information: <a href="http://putneyfarmersmarket.org">putneyfarmersmarket.org</a>.</p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro's Share the Harvest Stand: Free Fresh Produce for All!</b></p> <p>► 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on <i>Sundays - corner of Frost and Elm. (Gardeners may drop off surplus from their gardens from 10:30-closing: before noon preferred).</i></p> <p>► Through Sunday, October 29.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Turning Point, 39 Elm St. Information: 802-257-5600.</p> <p><b>Local history</b></p> <p><b>DUMMERSTON Photography Exhibit: "Faces of Dummerston-A Work in Progress":</b> Curated by Charles Fish, display features over 150 photographs of town residents. Some images are ancient; more were taken within living memory. Teachers, farmers, firemen, bankers, truckers, writers, engineers - here they are, some posed, many captured at public events such the Apple Pie Festival. Project is a work in progress. Some photos are yet to be identified. Visitors are invited to add names and catch errors.</p> <p>► 2-4 p.m. on <i>Sundays. Other times by appointment. Schoolhouse is handicap accessible. When pictures come off the walls, they'll be preserved in albums to which new faces will be added over time. Also on display is Fish's collection of cameras/other gear representing photographic practices of past and present.</i></p> <p>► Through Sunday, August 6.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Dummerston Historical Society Schoolhouse, Dummerston Center. Information: <a href="mailto:gailsvt@gmail.com">gailsvt@gmail.com</a> or 802-254-9311.</p> <p><b>Community building</b></p> <p><b>so. NEWFANE Herb Garden Days:</b> Join us on the farm this summer to grow your knowledge and be in herbal community. Connect with nature in community: Tend the gardens, harvest herbs, ask your herb-growing and wild-crafting questions in a casual, small group setting. Guests often take home divisions of plants, seeds, or stay late to do some wild-crafting on their own, depending on the season.</p> <p>► Repeats 8/13 and 9/10. <i>Join one or all of these days, but RSVP is required.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Old Ways Herbal School of Plant Medicine, 569 Dover Rd. Information: <i>Contact us to sign up - spaces are limited to keep the group small: <a href="http://oldwaysherbal.com/contact/">oldwaysherbal.com/contact/</a>.</i></p>	<p>► Free.</p> <p>► The Common, Rte.10 North.</p> <p><b>GUILFORD Storytime:</b> Cathi Wilken presents a program of songs, finger-plays, books and activities for babies, toddlers and older siblings.</p> <p>► 2 p.m. on <i>Tuesdays.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-257-4603.</p> <p><b>GUILFORD Stuffed Campout:</b> Bring your stuffed toy and share a snack as you prepare him/her/it to spend the night camping out with other Stuffedies at the Library.</p> <p>► 2-4 p.m.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: More information: 802-257-4603.</p> <p><b>Well-being</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic:</b> 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.</p> <p>► 5-6:30 p.m. on <i>Tuesdays.</i></p> <p>► Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; <a href="http://brattleborowalkinclinic.com">brattleborowalkinclinic.com</a>.</p>
WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY CONT.	THURSDAY CONT.	FRIDAY CONT.	SATURDAY CONT.	SUNDAY CONT.					
19	<p><b>Music</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO L'Eclair with Sunking and DJ Rec:</b> Secret Planet Western Mass co-presents this journey with the Stone Church and Urgent Message Music. L'Eclair is back with more of their madly psychedelic grooves - reminiscent of CAN, Tangerine Dream, early Tortoise. Sunking is the collective experimental sights/sounds of Seattle natives Rob Granfelt and Antoine Martel. The duo criss-crosses between avant, hip-hop, jazz, and experimental sounds with hazy abandon.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>Doors open with opening set of selections courtesy of Peace &amp; Rhythm's DJ Rec. 8 p.m. Live music commences.</i></p> <p>► \$17.50 in advance, \$20 at door.</p> <p>► The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: Tickets: <a href="http://Stonechurchvt.com">Stonechurchvt.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Well-being</b></p> <p><b>S. NEWFANE Yoga Classes:</b> All levels fluid yoga.</p> <p>► 5:15-6:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday classes Rain or shine: in the gardens on nice days and inside studio when it rains. (Also 9-10 a.m. Saturdays.)</i></p> <p>► \$15.</p> <p>► Olallie Daylily Garden, 129 Auger Hole Rd. Information: Wendy Johnson: <a href="mailto:bkjohnson@gmail.com">bkjohnson@gmail.com</a>, 802-380-4988.</p> <p><b>Community building</b></p> <p><b>VERNON Vernon Community Market:</b> This new Market features J&amp;B's Curbside Cafe, handmade crafts, farm produce, baked goods, flowers, and more.</p> <p>► 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. <i>Open every other Wednesday through Oct. 4.</i></p> <p>► Vernon Community Market, Vernon Recreation Area, 607 Pond Rd. Information: 802-254-9251, <a href="mailto:VernonVTCommunityMarket@gmail.com">VernonVTCommunityMarket@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Ideas and education</b></p> <p><b>DOVER "Pilgrimage": Book Discussion Series hosted by Dover Free Library:</b> Human beings have undertaken pilgrimages of all kinds for thousands of years. Discover a variety of journeys - and whether the seekers find what they are looking for - in these varied writings. "Pilgrimage" is a Vermont Humanities program hosted by Dover Free Library and supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>Discussions take place on: 7/19, 8/2, 8/16. These sessions are open to the public and accessible to those with disabilities. Books available on loan in advance.</i></p> <p>► Through Wednesday, August 2.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Dover Free Library, 22 Holland Rd. Information: More information: John Flores: 802-348-7488 or <a href="mailto:john@dovertfreelibrary1913.org">john@dovertfreelibrary1913.org</a>.</p>	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Baker Street Readers present "A Month of Mystery":</b> Join James Gelter as Sherlock Holmes, Tony Grobe as Dr. Watson, and special guest stars as they read two spellbinding mysteries back-to-back. Each Friday night features a canonical Holmes tale by Arthur Conan Doyle and a new adventure by James Gelter.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>(intermission between stories). Performances continue on Fridays: 7/21, 7/28.</i></p> <p>► Through Friday, July 28.</p> <p>► \$10 suggested donation - cash at door.</p> <p>► Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: For reservations email: <a href="mailto:bakerstreetreaders@gmail.com">bakerstreetreaders@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p><b>Music</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Delicate Steve with Ruth Garbus and Mythless (Solo)</b></p> <p>► 8 p.m.</p> <p>► \$16 in advance, \$20 at door.</p> <p>► The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: <a href="http://Stonechurchvt.com">Stonechurchvt.com</a>.</p>	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>BRATTLEBORO Baker Street Readers present "A Month of Mystery":</b> Join James Gelter as Sherlock Holmes, Tony Grobe as Dr. Watson, and special guest stars as they read two spellbinding mysteries back-to-back. Each Friday night features a canonical Holmes tale by Arthur Conan Doyle and a new adventure by James Gelter.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>(intermission between stories). 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MONDAY	MONDAY CONT.	TUESDAY CONT.	WEDNESDAY CONT.	THURSDAY CONT.	FRIDAY CONT.					
16	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market with Live Music by The Thunderballs:</b> The Thunderballs, a roots Reggae band led by one of Jamaica's finest singer songwriters - NL Dennis - joins us today.</p>	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market with Live Music by The Thunderballs:</b> The Thunderballs, a roots Reggae band led by one of Jamaica's finest singer songwriters - NL Dennis - joins us today.</p>	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market with Live Music by The Thunderballs:</b> The Thunderballs, a roots Reggae band led by one of Jamaica's finest singer songwriters - NL Dennis - joins us today.</p>	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market with Live Music by The Thunderballs:</b> The Thunderballs, a roots Reggae band led by one of Jamaica's finest singer songwriters - NL Dennis - joins us today.</p>	<p><b>Performing arts</b></p> <p><b>PUTNEY Putney Farmers Market with Live Music by The Thunderballs:</b> The Thunderballs, a roots Reggae band led by one of Jamaica's finest singer songwriters - NL Dennis - joins us today.</p>					
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To submit your event: [calendar@commonsnews.org](mailto:calendar@commonsnews.org)  
Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

## BMC Music Under the Stars series at Retreat Farm continues with Vermont Jazz Center Big Band July 22

BRATTLEBORO—The Music Under the Stars concert series presented by the Brattleboro Music Center (BMC) and Retreat Farm continues Saturday, July 22, with a performance by the Vermont Jazz Center Big Band.

The Vermont Jazz Center (VJC) Big Band was conceived by former VJC Board President Dr. Howard Brofsky and Sherm Fox. They put together a reading band that enabled area professional musicians to come together to sample big band repertoire. More than 20 years later, it has evolved into a top-notch ensemble that draws on the talent of professional musicians from within an hour's drive of Brattleboro.

The final Music Under the Stars series concert will feature Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy

with special guests Saturday, Aug. 19 (rain date August 20).

Music Under the Stars series sponsors include Guilford Sound and other generous donors, and is also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Vermont Arts Council.

Admission is free. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. at Retreat Farm, with the concert at 6:30 p.m. The rain date is Sunday, July 23. All are welcome to bring lawn chairs and a picnic, and to enjoy food truck fare and craft beers at The Thirsty Goat bar, and cool treats from Vermont Gelato.

For more information about Music Under the Stars, contact the BMC at 802-257-4523 or email [info@bmcvt.org](mailto:info@bmcvt.org).

## 'To Dye For'

Wicker, the publisher continues, “breaks open a story hiding in plain sight: the unregulated toxic chemicals that are likely in your wardrobe right now, how they’re harming you, and what you can do about it.”

Fact-filled, *To Dye For* interprets data and delivers insight, establishing context in a way a lay person can relate to. Wicker covers the history of chemical use in the fashion industry with anecdotes from the Renaissance to hair-raising cases of deadly arsenic being used to capture a just-right green on faux flowers ornamenting Victorian gowns.

She gives a window to the international manufacturing scene, details the impact of chemicals on our systems, digs into industry testing practices (or lack thereof), and introduces us to real victims of fashion’s toxins.

Wicker describes victims from Gloversville, New York — once called the Glove Capital of the World — where entire families were wiped out by toxin-triggered cancer.

She also recounts how Chingy Wong, a flight attendant for Delta, asked for a new standard-issue uniform to replace one that had faded after she’d tried to expunge its offensive smells and sensory triggers. The uniform supplier sent her, in response, one that, she told Wicker, “was worse than my first one. It smelled so bad.” The book describes Wong’s subsequent symptoms: skin conditions, shaking hands, and failing memory.

On a Facebook group for attendants at four airlines affected by toxins in their uniforms, Wong saw “pictures of rashes so bad the spots were purple and bleeding, and of bald spots

on female attendants’ heads. There were tales of severe sinus infections, nosebleeds, swollen eyes, fainting spells, and blood in urine. One mother reported that her baby developed a rash on his cheek after he had nursed while she was wearing the skirt. The menace wasn’t completely invisible — the Barney-purple Delta uniforms had a tendency to bleed and stain attendants’ skin (and sheets, and bras, and bathtubs) purple.”

After 250 pages, including a thorough chunk of tips — “What All of Us Can Do for a Cleaner Closet — and World” — Wicker offers endnotes and a 15-page glossary defining all we need to know — from dichloroethane to genotoxic, aniline dyes to plasticizers — to be safe and savvy consumers of modern fashion.

A keen investigator, Wicker shares information gleaned on fashion industry chemicals developed and persistently used. Moreover, she demonstrates that the testing in the industry is weak sauce. She describes how a chemical that was tested, banned, and tossed was quickly followed by a close cousin sporting a different polysyllabic handle and equally as offensive, if not potentially deadly.

THUS FAR, Wicker has not received much feedback from clothing manufacturers. Knowing her penchant for digging, PR people are wary, guarded in her presence. In an industry that’s less regulated than just about any other, the less said the better.

Will there ever be adequate legislation to protect consumers from chemicals? “I hope so,” Wicker says, citing that more attention has been placed on

packaging, cleaning products, and personal care products, especially since last February’s freight train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

Twenty of the 50 cars derailed that night “contained hazardous materials, including vinyl chloride, ethylene glycol, ethylhexyl acrylate, butyl acrylate, and isobutylene. The near-catastrophe was a wake up to the many toxins involved in our day-to-day living, according to the EPA,” she says.

“Fashion was my way in, but this is not just about fashion,” Wicker observes. “It’s about all chemicals in all consumer products and how we’re being failed. We’re not protected.”

She’s eager, she says, to raise awareness around toxins in cleaning products, homewares, beauty products, and all food — as well as in fashion.

“What you purchase can really have an effect on your life,” she says.

She believes “change can come: there was a lot of movement 10 years ago around chemicals in kids’ products,” but we need more, she insists, to protect not only children, but those who are pregnant, too.

Needed protection is particularly tough with clothing, she explains, “because clothes don’t come with an ingredient list.”

“I want this book to reach women in rural and suburban areas, [...] women to whom it never occurred [that chemicals in clothing] might be a problem while they’re struggling with chronic health issues and not believed by their doctor, family, friends.

She wants the book “to get passed around.”

“I don’t want this book to end up creating yet another way in which people with resources can protect their health when people without cannot,” she writes.

To mothers shopping for their children’s clothing she’d add, “if there are no health problems, don’t stress”; if a child develops eczema, rashes, allergies, though, be aware.

What can one do here and

## jKlezperanto! — a Klezmer re-groove ensemble — will perform

BRATTLEBORO—The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series presents klezmer re-groove ensemble jKlezperanto! on Saturday, July 22, at 6 p.m. at West River Park, 333 West River Rd. (Route 30).

“Klezmer and dancing go hand-in-hand, and jKlezperanto! delivers on that promise,” Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said in a news release. “The Boston-based klezmer all-star lineup includes members of the Klezmer Conservatory Band — they know this idiom. With jKlezperanto! they expand its power and impact, and we’re excited to bring that energy to the region.”

According to the band,

jKlezperanto! “presents Eastern European melodies as you’ve never heard them before, from Bogota to the Black Sea.”

With solid klezmer roots, technical virtuosity, and a wry sense of humor, Ilene Stahl and an all-star lineup of Boston musicians “re-groove traditional klezmer and Mediterranean melodies, celebrate the golden age of Colombian big bands, rip up Romanian surf tunes, slay a few standards, and blow past every posted limit to bring you irresistible dance music from everywhere except your cousin’s friend’s bar mitzvah.”

Food from Crossroads Tacos will be available for purchase at this concert. This concert is funded in part by the New England States Touring program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Regional Touring Program and the six New England state arts agencies.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate. Children under 12 attend free. Next Stage will provide a cash bar. Advance tickets are available at [nextstagearts.org](http://nextstagearts.org). For information, call 802-387-0102.

FROM SECTION FRONT

now on a personal scale? I’ve jotted down Wicker’s Chapter 10 tips, “Cleanup Time” to post on my fridge. In the end, Wicker suggests: “focusing on community is a much richer, more nourishing, honest way to be sustainable — and it just feels great.”

About shopping sustainably she cautions: it’s a fool’s errand. “On one hand, ‘it’s hard to get people to pay more for what they can’t see’ — i.e., an absence of toxins. On the other hand, ‘It’s hard to know, if you’re paying more, that you’re getting what you were promised and if that extra money paid makes a difference.’”

Overall, Wicker highly recommends buying second hand, seeking out natural fibers, tapping one’s community for hand-me-downs, and looking at more affordable brands like H&M “that really do care about safe chemistry.”

She cautions, too, not to overuse scented laundry products given the chemicals therein. A Spanish clothing recycler, Wicker relates, won’t take clothes from the U.S. because we use such toxic laundry detergents that our recycled wear would fail testing.

Wicker’s book tour is shaping up, targeting sites from Jacksonville to Phoenix, where, she notes, many people have moved to soften chronic health issues’ impact.

This fall, she’ll be part of an environmental book series at 118 Elliot in Brattleboro sponsored by Everyone’s Books. For more information about her writing, visit [aldenwicker.com](http://aldenwicker.com).

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**OPPENHEIMER** R  
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## Bellow

FROM SECTION FRONT

Producer Lissa Weinmann explained. “Some of these longer stories were separated on the Brattleboro Words Trail app as five-to seven-minute segments to facilitate listening on the go. We’ve re-assembled and updated them to create a longer form listening experience.”

Weinmann, who lives in Brattleboro, works with engineering support from Alec Pombriant and original mixes mastered by Guilford Sound. The Bellow episode was produced and narrated by Donna Blackney with help from Sandy Rouse of the Brattleboro Literary Festival.

The first of the monthly episodes focused on the story of Brattleboro’s own Nobel Peace

Laureate Jody Williams. In June, Guilford-based author and inequality activist Chuck Collins was featured. Others expected to be featured in the months ahead include area personalities Andrew Kopkind (first openly gay syndicated radio show), Clarina Howard Nichols (early newspaper editor and feminist), Rudyard Kipling (famed author of *The Jungle Book*), John Kenneth Galbraith (author and economist), John Humphrey Noyes (founder of the Oneida Community) and others.

Organizers plan to feature visiting hosts and guests associated with the different stories in the months ahead as new content is created.

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# A Gen-X touchstone comes to Brattleboro

## Epsilon Spires to screen 'Slacker'; Putney resident reflects on his role in the film

BRATTLEBORO—Epsilon Spires, the downtown Brattleboro arts organization housed in a repurposed Baptist church, is screening the 1991 film, *Slacker*, directed by Richard Linklater, on Friday, July 21, as part of its summertime Backlot Cinema series.

*Slacker*, set and filmed in Austin, Texas, in the late 1980s, has no plot, no narrative arc, no antagonist-protagonist tension, no main character, definitely no hero, and there is no feel-good ending. Instead, the camera roams through the neighborhood, connecting character to character, most of whom have marginal jobs, no money, no spouses or children, and no place in the yuppie hustle.

One memorable character — played by the late Teresa Taylor (also known as Teresa Nervosa), who was also one of the drummers of the Austin band, Butthole Surfers — does have a hustle: she was trying to sell Madonna's pap smear.

Although they existed on the margins, what the characters in *Slacker* did have is each other: a community of creative weirdos living in cheap apartments, spontaneously meeting up in cafes and on the street, forming bands, and trading conspiracy theories to try to make sense of a confusing, alienating, dog-eat-dog world that offered them no satisfying future.

Putney resident Keith Fletcher

worked on the film running errands and making food, and on three of Linklater's subsequent films as costume designer, location scout, and associate producer. "There was no costuming on *Slacker*," explained Fletcher's wife, Melanie. "It was 'come as you are.'"

Keith Fletcher also played a very brief, non-speaking role as "Card Player #1," in the cafe scene where one of the characters tells his friend that Smurfs are part of a conspiracy to get children accustomed to "blue people."

In Fletcher's scene, Bruce Hughes of the bands Poi Dog Pondering and The Resentments played the "card-playing waiter." "He was our waiter, and he actually had a hand going in the card game," said Fletcher. Eric Buehman, part of Poi Dog's road crew, was "Card Player #2."

"Most people working on the movie were in the movie. That's the culture of a low-budget movie," said Fletcher. Melanie, whom Fletcher met after *Slacker*, but before the couple began working on Linklater's next film, *Dazed and Confused*, explained her husband's appeal: "Keith had a great look at the time. He looked like a slacker."

Fletcher described the scene in Austin, which, while technically a city, had a small-town feel in the neighborhood where and when

*Slacker* took place.

"Les Amis was the cafe where the card-playing scene took place," he said. "It was on 24th and Nueces. That cafe was unlike any other I'd ever been to. It was outdoors, there was no A/C, there was music, and art being made at the tables."

He explained that Les Amis was in an area technically on the University of Texas campus, but it was not really a part of college life. "The cafe was near a record store, the bike shop... Anyone who was there in Austin in the 1970s, '80s, or '90s..." Fletcher then paused into a long sigh filled with sadness and loss, before he resumed speaking, lamenting the commercialization and homogenization of Austin as a whole, and especially in that neighborhood.

As is often the case with cultural-watershed artifacts, when

*Slacker* was released, it was not a box-office smash. The critics loved it, though, and it became a cult classic, inspiring other filmmakers such as Kevin Smith, who credits *Slacker* with inspiring his 1994 movie, *Clerks*. In addition, *Slacker* was seen as a major benchmark in the development of the ethos of Generation X: the 90s kids who were born between the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations.

While for some, it seemed like *Slacker* was inventing a genre — a movie about nothing, featuring characters who seemed to care little about working for wages and a lot about hanging out — the film exists on a continuum of collective, anti-capitalist movements and creative projects.

One could start with the Diggers and Levellers of the mid-1600s, reacting against

taking agricultural lands out of common-use for the profit of a few. In the late 19th-Century: the Oneida free love Community, the Paris Commune, the Situationist International movement, and the flâneurs and flâneuses who strolled through cities and towns with no destination or intention other than to interact with the people they meet.

In the 20th century, think of the 1960s hippies in rural communes. Or 1970s freaks, such as The Cockettes, living in San Francisco communes. The Black Panthers' free breakfast program. The films of Jim Jarmusch, which sometimes have no plot and follow disparate characters from one mini-story to the next. The Seinfeld television episodes "about nothing."

*Slacker* follows Keith Fletcher's continuum, too, all the way from

Austin to Putney. "I get a check for \$9 every once in a while in residuals," he said. "For playing cards."

Epsilon Spires will screen the 1991 film, *Slacker*, directed by Richard Linklater, as part of its Backlot Cinema series, on Friday, July 21. Doors open at 8 p.m., and the film begins at sundown, at approximately 8:23 p.m. This film is rated R, and its run-time is 1 hour, 37 minutes. Epsilon Spires offers this note about seating in The Backlot Cinema: "We encourage our guests to come as if to a picnic — so please bring your own blankets, cushions or folding chairs — you want to be comfortable so bring all the coziness you need! Restrooms provided. In the case of rain this event will be moved indoors into our Sanctuary." For tickets and more information, visit [epsilonspires.org](http://epsilonspires.org).

## Windham World Affairs Council presents talk on a 'New Left surge' in Latin America

BRATTLEBORO — Independent journalist and scholar Linda Farthing will share her analysis of Latin America's New Left surge with the Windham World Affairs Council on Wednesday, July 26, at 6:30 p.m., at 118 Elliot.

Her talk, "The Pink Tide 2.0? A New Left Surge in Latin America," is based on the Spring 2023 issue of *NACLA* (North American Congress on Latin America) *Report on the Americas*, which she edited.

In that issue, Farthing examined the past two decades of Latin American politics. With a wave of progressive leaders taking office in Latin America, many have

heralded the rise of a "new pink tide," a term used to describe the rise of elected non-Communist, left-wing governments.

However, since the height of the first pink tide during the first 15 years of the 21st century, the commodity bubble has burst causing economic distress, the impacts of climate change have intensified, an emboldened far right has emerged, the Covid-19 pandemic has devastated communities, and a new wave of popular protests have broken out across the southern hemisphere.

Farthing maintains the current left-wing governments in the region are, in significant ways, different from their predecessors,

and they must govern in a very different socio-political environment, with constant threats and backlash from the right.

How is this latest resurgence of the left faring, whether in the presidential palaces or on the streets? Farthing's talk will consider key issues, including Indigenous rights, environmental issues, reproductive rights, the war on drugs, the rise of the right, and a new generation of progressive Latin American leaders.

Farthing is a writer and educator with 25 years of experience in Latin America as a study abroad director, film field producer, journalist, and independent scholar.

She is co-author of four books: *Impasse in Bolivia: Neoliberal Hegemony and Social Resistance* (2006), *From the Mines to the Streets: A Bolivian Activist's Life* (2011), *Evo's Bolivia: Continuity and Change* (2014), and her latest, *Coup: A Story of Violence and Resistance* (2021). She has written for *The Guardian*, *Ms. magazine*, *Jacobin*, *Al Jazeera*, and *The Nation*.

This is an in-person event with a Zoom option. Suggested donation is \$10 but no one is ever turned away for lack of funds. Reserve your space at [bit.ly/723-farthing](http://bit.ly/723-farthing).

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## Artist Roberley Bell will discuss her work at BMAC

BRATTLEBORO—Artist Roberley Bell will take part in a conversation about her work at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) on Thursday, July 20, at 7 p.m.

Bell and BMAC Director of Exhibitions Sarah Freeman will discuss the relationship between Bell's drawings and sculptures and her interest in the distinct physical and emotive qualities of each.

"As a sculptor working with the language of abstraction, I am continuously in search of form. I refer to this process as

'finding form'—inventing form where it did not previously exist," said Bell in a news release.

"I work with wood, plaster, ceramic, found and altered parts, exploring both the combination of materials and each material's inherent properties. I try to reveal the essence of materiality and the ability of distinct materials to elicit emotions."

"Bell's drawings help her find her way to three-dimensional forms. Bell creates organic forms that seem familiar yet resist identification," Freeman wrote in an essay accompanying the

exhibition. "The sculptural works are amalgams—hybrid forms made from fabricated elements and found materials. Splashes of vivid, saturated color enhance their idiosyncrasy."

Bell's work has been exhibited internationally, including at Alan Istanbul, Medea Lab Gallery, Malmö University, Sweden; de Cordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Massachusetts; The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; and Black & White Gallery, New York. She has had numerous residencies, including at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris,

the Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria; and The International Studio & Curatorial Program in Brooklyn.

Bell lives in western Massachusetts and maintains a studio in Easthampton.

This in-person event is presented in connection with the exhibition "Where Things Set," which is on view at BMAC through Oct. 9. Admission is free, and walk-ins are welcome. Registration is optional. To register, visit [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org) or call 802-257-0124, ext 101.

## NECCA hosts outdoor dance by Loom Ensemble

BRATTLEBORO—For more than a decade, Loom Ensemble has been devising interdisciplinary theater for culture shift, using their performances to open difficult conversations, and then facilitating community discussion to unpack the emotional vulnerability and cultural taboos of each show.

In that shared space, "the social value of art made from a place of deep integrity becomes clear: Our actions matter, new ways of living are possible; together we can build a more loving world." As a direct response to broken patriarchy, lonely individualism,

and shame-inducing capitalism, Loom says their performances call audiences home to themselves and their communities.

The New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) is working to support developing companies, and in 2022, one of their professional graduates toured with Loom Ensemble, establishing a friendship that NECCA continues by hosting the company's 2023 summer tour.

On Saturday and Sunday, July 22 and 23, Loom Ensemble will perform their newest piece, *Tell Me How You Breathe*, in NECCA's backyard, featuring a racially diverse team of professional dancers, musicians, and theatermakers.

Loom calls its work "an outdoor experience of Dance Theater for Collective Liberation, bringing audiences into a world where climate crisis has progressed slightly more than our present day, to play out the interrelationship of institutional

power structures and ancestral healing practices. Playful humor, live music, and beautiful storytelling help us lean in to meet these pressing issues."

Artistic Director Neva Cockrell says, "Our work is to reconnect with the earth, with emotional integrity, and with each other. Come, let art remind you of your inherent goodness and our collective ability to heal and create change."

The story centers on the lungs as the site of interconnectedness and the organ of grief. "Who gets to breathe freely, fully, with ease?" is a necessary question for this time, right at the intersection of eco-activism, social justice, and public health.

Organizers say with the nourishment of participatory ceremony and song, Loom grounds this political conversation in the physical body, to incite the radical act of collectively imagining a more just and beautiful world. The creative team includes

artists Hanna Satterlee (Animal Dance), Raphael Sacks (Sandglass), directed by Neva Cockrell (Pilobolus), along with a team of New York City professionals and Vermont dancers. Organizers say "BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and people of color] audiences are especially invited to attend this explicitly anti-racist event."

All ages are welcome. The audience is invited to bring picnic blankets or chairs. Some folding chairs are provided for those in need. The venue is wheelchair-accessible from the parking lot to the performance location.

Performances at NECCA are Saturday, July 22, and Sunday, July 23, (rain date, Monday, July 24), at 6 p.m. Tickets and additional tour location at [LoomEnsemble.com](http://LoomEnsemble.com) or 845-379-1851. Tickets are \$20 general admission and "pay what you want" for BIPOC audience members.

## ART AROUND BOOKS

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## Mitsuko Uchida plays Brahms during Marlboro Music's second concert weekend

MARLBORO—Organizers at Marlboro Music said in a news release while they "are saddened by the extensive damage we are seeing in communities around the state" from the recent rainstorms and flooding, they are "grateful to report that the Potash Hill campus is fine, and the Marlboro season is progressing as usual."

They added that "the abundance of rainy days this summer has not dampened our musicians' spirits. The music has continued unabated, and Marlboro's resident artists have chosen six wonderful works to share with audiences next weekend from the more than 70 pieces being rehearsed."

On Saturday, July 22, patrons will enjoy a first half of music by Robert Schumann, followed

by Brahms's Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34. Artistic Director Mitsuko Uchida and Elias Quartet cellist Marie Bitloch will be joined in this group by three young string players: violinists Rubén Rengel and Julian Rhee and violist Natalie Loughran.

The program on Sunday, July 23, opens with Britten's Phantasy Quartet, Op. 2, followed by Ravel's String Quartet in F major. Concluding the weekend is Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-flat major, Op. 70, No. 2, with cellist Peter Stumpf (Johannes Quartet), violinist Isabelle Durrenberger, and pianist and 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient Evren Ozel.

Some tickets are available for Saturday's concert. Tickets are \$20-40 and may be purchased

at [marlboromusic.org](http://marlboromusic.org) or by calling the Marlboro box office at 802-254-2394.

Sunday's performance is sold out; but there is a wait list for returned tickets. Audience members may contact the reception desk for more information at 802-254-2394 or [reception@marlboromusic.org](mailto:reception@marlboromusic.org).

One should never forget that by actually perfecting one piece one gains and learns more than by starting or half-finish-ing a dozen.

—JOHANNES BRAHMS

COLUMN | *The Vermont Political Observer*



Elm Street in Montpelier, after the flooding in recent days.

## Our huge and largely unspoken climate justice issue

### The poor and working-class people live in low-lying areas prone to flooding because that's where the affordable housing is

Montpelier ONE LOW-LYING stretch of Elm Street in Montpelier, one block over from Main, runs parallel to the North Branch of the Winooski River. It's one of thousands of similar city and town streets where poor and working-class people live. Or used to, anyway. Where they live now, I have no idea. Vermont's cities and towns were largely built along waterways, which were used as open sewers for industries of all

**JOHN WALTERS** writes about Vermont politics at *The Vermont Political Observer* ([thevpo.org](http://thevpo.org)), where this piece first appeared. The blog offers "[a]nalysis and observation of Vermont politics from a liberal viewpoint."

kinds. That's why your typical Vermont town has its back to the river. Nobody wanted to be anywhere near it. So, of course, that's where the poor and working class people lived while their bosses took the high ground. And still today, the poor and

working-class people live in low-lying areas prone to flooding because that's where the affordable housing is. Those areas are more and more flood-prone as climate change bears its fangs. It's a huge and largely unspoken climate justice issue that we have

yet to address in any comprehensive or meaningful way. In the meantime, how many of those people have just joined the ranks of the unhoused — just as Our Betters have shut down eligibility to the motel voucher program except in rare circumstances? We already had the second-highest homelessness rate in the country. We'd evicted hundreds of households in June. Our Betters just created restrictive new rules for voucher

■ SEE FLOODING, C2

VIEWPOINT

## Preserving the best of Guilford while planning for the future

After 20 years, nonprofits eye much-needed affordable housing at the edge of Algiers village

Guilford AS ONE DRIVES SOUTH ON Canal Street, rounds the corner, and enters Guilford, perhaps it's easy to take for granted the change from the commercial development in Brattleboro to the pastoral scene in Algiers Village, but if it weren't for the extraordinary efforts of a group of our residents more than 20 years ago, it could be a very different scene.

In 2002, when the 24-acre piece of land at the entrance of Guilford on Route 5 — the gateway to our town — went up for sale and was in danger of being commercially developed, a group of concerned citizens formed Guilford Preservation Inc. With the Vermont Land Trust as an active partner, GPI raised \$182,500 to purchase the parcel.

GPI immediately conveyed a conservation easement to the Vermont Land Trust on the parcel, thus ensuring its conservation in perpetuity, with a 5.5-acre exception for future development of affordable housing (later reduced to 3.5 acres to prevent intrusion into wetlands).

The 8-acre meadow along the highway will forever be maintained as pasture and agriculture.

Recreational use includes the vast snowmobile trail that crosses the property. In an exciting development this spring, 2 acres have been leased to a local resident for growing organic cut flowers. The parcel also offers the possibility for community gardens as well as other agricultural and recreational uses to benefit Guilford residents.

IN THE MEANTIME, after a long

**JEAN EASTMAN** is board president of Guilford Preservation Inc.

wait, GPI is fulfilling the other promise to those individuals and grantors who made the purchase possible — the development of new homes to be built up on the knoll, well beyond the meadow, and accessed from Partridge Road.

To fulfill that promise, GPI has partnered with Windham-Windsor Housing Trust, which for 35 years has developed high-quality homes for Vermonters with modest incomes.

WWHT, which paid half the expense of bringing the Brattleboro water line into Algiers when that housing was built, has shown itself to be a great partner in providing and maintaining the other homes they've developed in Algiers — projects that revitalized that area and have proven a significant asset for our town.

These existing buildings are fully occupied with waiting lists. This new development, located in the village center of Algiers, can help provide critically needed housing in Guilford, reducing scattered housing throughout our farmlands which changes the rural landscape that so many Guilford residents treasure.

Existing water and sewer lines can accommodate the project, and its proximity to the Guilford Country Store and bus lines make its location ideal.

We also recognize that there are current residents who would like to downsize but who want to remain in town, and the availability of these new apartments may provide that opportunity.

■ SEE HOUSING, C2

VIEWPOINT



RANDOLPH T. HOLMUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO; ANNBRADENBOOKS.COM (INSET)  
**The Flight of the Puffin**, by Brattleboro author Ann Braden, was recently the target of an anti-diversity controversy library board in Sterling, Kansas.

## A book ban backlash

Far-right attempts to ban books for youth in schools and libraries have unleashed a serious revival in the importance of books and reading

Guilford ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO, many of us bookstore owners wondered if we were still relevant. The behemoth Amazon was attempting to recreate the destruction of the record shop.

Some independent booksellers even closed preemptively. Some stores actually joined in the e-book "revolution," trying to sell an alternative to the big bully's product, but Amazon retained a firm grip on e-books.

I made up my mind early: We would not be a digital portal. We would be there for our community as a physical space with real

**NANCY BRAUS** is the owner and new book buyer for *Everyone's Books* in Brattleboro.

books, or we would not continue to exist.

But a funny thing happened. In the face of the massive, hugely financed tech industry, readers fought back, refusing to take the bait and eliminate paper books from their lives. People continue to want to read beautiful picture books to their kids in bed at night.

SO NOW IT IS 2023, and we are dealing with a totally different — and, to most of us, thoroughly unexpected — role for books.

Everyone in the independent bookstore community has had occasional deep concerns that youth are not reading books, not thinking that books are relevant in their otherwise-digital lives.

Thanks to the Hitler-loving Moms for Liberty ([bit.ly/723-moms](http://bit.ly/723-moms)), we are seeing a true renaissance in how books are perceived. When this well-funded group of far-right Christians began pressing for bans of books under the pretext

that they were just moms looking out for their kids' rights in school, they unleashed a serious revival in the importance of reading.

Like so much of the far-right culture wars, their activism is a double-edged sword.

Youth in most Southern states and some Rocky Mountain states have had their possible reading options seriously limited. We have all seen photos of empty library shelves in Florida. In a high school English class, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, and so many other writers of both classic and contemporary

■ SEE BOOK BAN BACKLASH, C2



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## VIEWPOINT

# Will Brattleboro elected officials honor their oaths of office?

*The Vermont Constitution establishes a minimum voting age of 18. A new law permits the town flout that.*

**V**ERMONT BILL H. 386 — which reduces the Vermont Constitutional requirements of the voting age in Brattleboro — is now law.

So we ask: Will Brattleboro elected officials enable Vermont's lawless lawmakers?

We especially direct this question to Hilary Francis. As the town clerk, she is the main person who is responsible to organize and preside over elections. Will she keep her oath of office to uphold the Vermont Constitution as the foundational and supreme law of Vermont? Or will she enable the lawlessness of the Vermont lawmakers who are betraying their constituents and ignoring their oaths of office?

We are also directing this same important question to the present Brattleboro Selectboard members, Ian Goodnow, Peter Case, Franz Reichsman, Daniel Quipp, and Elizabeth McLoughlin. As the elected leaders of the town of Brattleboro, will you keep your oaths of office? Or will you enable the tyrannical, lawless law?

Vermont voters elect persons at all levels of government to serve their best interests as Vermont taxpayers, voters, and citizens. They expect their elected representatives will act to protect their individual and unalienable freedoms, rights, and privileges.

BEING A United States citizen and attaining the age of 18 years are the requirements declared in both the Vermont and United States Constitutions. These requirements cannot be changed by tyrannical legislators who abuse their authority by handing down an illicit act from the state legislature.

A legal change of the voting age requires following the process to amend either document. This law is an illegal end run around both. Vermont voters would need to be engaged and participate if the legal process was rightly followed.

The Vermont legislators who supported this law are counting on those in other elected government positions to silently and submissively accept their wielding of false authority.

Voters and taxpayers should be asking: How did such a blatantly unconstitutional bill such as H.386 get past the Vermont Legislative Counsel's office staff, who are paid with our state tax dollars? Many of us who follow Vermont Legislative activities and bills have asked this same question many times previously.

EVERY ELECTED official in Vermont is required to take an

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## VIEWPOINT

# Misguided irrelevance

*Bill McKibben calls for a standard activist approach to the climate catastrophe — an approach that demands the state and corporation do the right thing*

**I**HAVE ALWAYS found Bill McKibben to be an inspiring and committed climate activist, as well as just one of those special people in the world, a truly decent human being. What I have especially appreciated about him, however, is his ability to present a credible balance between realistic possibilities for change while at the same time offering a no-bull assessment of our current climate situation.

But in his otherwise-fine and aptly entitled essay "Global Temps Not Just Off the Chart, But Off the Wall the Chart Is Tacked To ([bit.ly/723-climate](https://bit.ly/723-climate)), which he recently penned for CommonDreams.org, that skill seems to have momentarily deserted him as evidenced by what he suggests we need to be doing in the face of the dire climate circumstances that he clearly presents in the same piece.

I particularly fear that he, too, may be suffering from an affliction that seems to characterize so many of his fellow citizens: knowing in our heads just how bad our climate situation has become, while at the same time being unable and/or unwilling to translate this knowledge into a heartfelt acceptance of our world so that we begin to respond in creative, imaginative, adaptive, and resilient life-affirming ways that are appropriate to our collapsing civilization.

MCKIBBEN BEGINS by laying out our current climate situation. After noting that "a rapid increase in global warming was underway," he goes on to state, "It seems increasingly likely that 2023 will turn out

**TIM STEVENSON** ([bereal@vermontel.net](mailto:bereal@vermontel.net)), a community organizer with *Post Oil Solutions*, is author of "Resilience and Resistance: Building Sustainable Communities for a Post Oil Age" (*Green Writers Press*) and the recently published *Transformative Activism: A Values Revolution in Everyday Life in a Time of Societal Collapse* (*Apocryphile Press*).

to be the hottest year yet, even though a true El Niño won't be fully underway till late summer or autumn."

"All of this is terrifying," he states, "but far, far worse is the fact that the world isn't reacting rationally to it. The fossil fuel industry and its financial backers are, if anything, backsliding: tearing up their modest promises to make some kind of actual change."

Underscoring just how bleak our situation is, he notes that "Shell Oil this week made clear that it was not going to stick with its pledge to dramatically shrink its oil and gas production over this decade." Rather, "now it plans to stabilize or increase production of hydrocarbons; it's reducing its investments in renewables because they don't generate as high a profit margin."

The final blow, McKibben writes, "in what's quickly becoming the darkest of dark comedies, Big Oil is trying to completely take over the [United Nations] climate talks" by having the head of the Emirates oil company, Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, serve as the head of this November's Conference of the Parties (COP) gathering.

The Sultan insists that he has a "game-changing" approach by welcoming oil and gas companies from around the world to participate more fully in the talks. "In other words,"

as McKibben sardonically observes, "invite the producers of the fuels that cause the majority of global warming as key players in developing a plan to slow the warming."

"These instances make clear that Big Oil, on the sugar high from the record profits in the last year, has no intention of shifting their business model. They are going to burn baby burn." (My emphasis.)

MCKIBBEN THEN turns to how we should respond to this very dark picture, and his presentation becomes troublesome.

He calls for the latest version of the kind of activism that he and his nonprofit organization, 350, have long represented: participating in a "March to End Fossil Fuels" in Manhattan this September, and supporting UN Secretary General António Guterres' call for an "acceleration agenda" in which "fossil fuel industry transition plans must be transformation plans that chart a company's move to clean energy — and away from a product incompatible with human survival."

In doing so, McKibben strikes me as being out of sync with the collapsing world he has otherwise so accurately presented.

With all due respect, does he really believe that an action of this kind will have the desired effect of its intentions in light

of the oil industry he has just described and a climate that is already collapsing (think record-breaking temperatures, rapid ice melt at both poles, uncontrollable fires and smoke, increasing food and water insecurity)?

THE MISGUIDED irrelevance of his call is inadvertently emphasized when he reminds us of "the world's first huge climate march in 2014 in New York, when 400,000 people turned out, that helped pave the way for the Paris climate accords."

For McKibben, this is an unfortunate analogy, for most of the 186 signatories to the 2015 Paris Accord (including, of course, the U.S.) have failed to live up to their commitments.

By making this comparison, he unintentionally underscores the futility of the standard activist approach to the climate catastrophe he is once again promoting — an approach that demands the state and corporation do the right thing when both past history and present experience convincingly demonstrate they have no interest in doing so.

Like so many of us as we go about our daily lives, Bill McKibben appears to have become at least momentarily lost in the past, unable to respond to our current unprecedented reality and its cataclysmic import with an activism, however tentative and exploratory, that is at least grounded in an acceptance of our collapsing world — and is an appropriate response, emphasizing community adaptation, resilience, and preparation.

## Book ban backlash

books are now prohibited.

Many of the banned books were written specifically to help young people who do not identify as white, Christian, or heterosexual, who are dealing with differences in learning, in ethnic background, in religion, in sexual orientation, in physical abilities. Books can help kids learn that kids live with a parent in prison, or with two dads, or with autism. They can help kids learn how to build healthy relationships.

THESE BOOKS ARE all being erased by these white supremacists.

Last year, Florida's Department of Education, following the lead of their governor, Ron DeSantis, a Republican presidential candidate, banned 54 math textbooks ([npr.org/2022/04/18/1093277449/florida-mathematics-textbooks](https://npr.org/2022/04/18/1093277449/florida-mathematics-textbooks)) that included such concepts as SEL (social-emotional learning).

One banned textbook had cute little drawings encouraging kids who were nervous about math. In Florida, math textbooks are to teach *only* math, and for those many kids with math anxiety — well, tough. (And let's also keep the students guessing about why their cities are getting hotter, dryer, and more prone to fire.)

Some of the books the right

have attacked are expected; others are absolutely ludicrous.

We love *Everywhere Babies*, a lovely book with watercolor illustrations showing the amazing accomplishments of a baby in the first year of life. It's a popular baby shower gift. I often cry at the end — it is so beautiful.

Yet some fascist book banner decided that the watercolor picture of two men pushing a stroller or the image of babies of different racial backgrounds lying together on a blanket — or something else equally trivial — makes it unacceptable.

PRETEENS AND TEENS are smart and likely can get around the book bans by many different means, but the teachers who are forced to teach from a severely

limited curriculum, and the students who do not choose to go outside of the many limits imposed in their school districts, will be poorly prepared citizens of the 21st century.

As much as the MAGA fascists are eager to turn back the clock on the past 60 years, it is doubtful that they can keep the truth hidden for too long.

Kids are still finding ways to read books like *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, *All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto*, *The Hate U Give*, and so many more.

I wonder how many will be angry when they discover that the Republican party dominating their states has forced them to learn from a banquet of lies — that they are being taught bogus and incomplete history,

FROM SECTION FRONT

science, and literature.

In 2016, I was fortunate to travel to Berlin, where one major tourist stop is a place where books were burned.

When I stood on that plaza, I could never have predicted that we in the United States would soon be dealing with a serious threat to the freedom to learn, to write, to read a true account of history.

In 50 years, will we create a similar monument to the shame of book banning?

Will this period in history, where terrible people briefly tried and failed to impose their attempt to create a Christian republic?

Or will we let them win by refusing to resist?

## Housing

That will make more houses available for families who desperately need them.

When completed, the housing development will pay significant annual property taxes to the town. Funding will include a mix of private equity, state, and federal funds and rebates that incentivize energy efficiency in the building's operations.

AT THIS EARLY STAGE, there are no designs, no specific number of new homes determined, no specific income targeting, no clear understanding of the impacts.

All of these questions — and many more — get worked out during the development process, which hasn't begun and will be done with engagement with the

FROM SECTION FRONT

community. This process will take at least a year, maybe several, before construction can begin.

GPI is currently working on creating a website to provide the latest information as it becomes available.

## Flooding

eligibility designed to get people the hell out of the motels as quickly as possible.

How much of our completely inadequate rental stock is now unlivable? How much is unsalvageable? Do we know?

MAYBE IT'S TOO SOON to expect that kind of comprehensive survey. But I do know this: There are thousands of Vermonters, or tens of thousands, who had stable housing arrangements on Sunday, July 9, and lost them on Monday or Tuesday.

Our Betters told us over and over again that they simply couldn't afford to keep the voucher program open until better arrangements could be made. They enacted a restrictive and punitive extension of the program — and *didn't* appropriate any funds to pay for even that inadequate measure. Until the flooding last week, we could reasonably expect

that there'd be enough money around to keep the vouchers coming. But now?

I know that federal disaster aid will pay for a lot of the recovery. But it will take time. Will we get money to reopen the voucher system? Will we get FEMA trailers? Will we get tents from the National Guard? Possibly. Meanwhile, there's a whole lot of unmitigated misery out there.

Oh, but what about Vermont Strong? Neighbors helping neighbors? Truckloads of emergency supplies being donated? People just showing up to work all day in punishing heat?

All true. But an inadequate substitute for a systematic approach, no matter how noble and selfless we True Vermonters might be.

And in all the brave posturing at press conferences, we have yet to see how our government will respond to a massive

exacerbation of a housing/homelessness problem that was already a stain on our carefully tended image.

SOONER OR LATER, I suspect, we're going to get a shrug of the collective shoulders. We're doing what we can, Our Betters will say. We simply can't afford to do more.

OK, fine. But three things. First, please take the same approach to restoring infrastructure and helping businesses.

Second, stop with the platitudes about Protecting the Most Vulnerable. Because you haven't been, and I doubt you're going to start now that the scope of the problem has broadened significantly.

And third, devise a program to create abundant low-income housing that's *not* in flood plains.

FROM SECTION FRONT



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Twilight on the Tavern Lawn presents The Gaslight Tinkers on July 23

PUTNEY—Twilight Music continues its 20th Twilight On The Tavern Lawn series of folk, world beat, jazz, Americana, rock, and bluegrass summer concerts on Sunday, July 23, with roots and world music quintet The Gaslight Tinkers.

The Gaslight Tinkers' blend of global rhythms "creates a joyous world beat sound around a core of traditional New England old time and celtic fiddle music, merging boundless positive energy with melody and song," organizers say.

Since its formation in 2012, the band has performed throughout the nation as well as the

Caribbean, headlining clubs, dances, and major festivals. The Gaslight Tinkers have performed at the Green River Festival, Iron Horse Music Hall, The Parlor Room, Old Songs Festival, Cafe Lena, Strange Creek, Rock and Roll Resort, Old Songs, the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, and the Wormtown festival.

The seven-concert Twilight on the Tavern series continues every other Sunday through Aug. 20. All concerts begin at 6 p.m. in downtown Putney on the Putney Tavern lawn (bring a lawn chair or blanket) or at Next Stage in case of rain.

The concerts are free to the public (donations are accepted) and food will be available. For more information, call 802-387-5772 or visit twilightmusic.org.

Next Stage Arts Project presents Rainbow Girls plus Pete Muller & The Kindred Souls on July 26

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts presents The Feeble Fantastical, a Vermont Suitcase Company (VSC) production, at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill Rd., Putney, on Friday, July 21, at 7 p.m.

"Partnering with [VSC] to bring theater to our community is exactly the type of collaboration we envision as we create a thriving, cultural ecosystem in the region," Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said in a news release.

According to a description of the show, "Argan is very ill. (He's not). Thankfully, his doctors take wonderful care of him. (They exploit him). His loving second wife dotes upon him and protects him from those trying to swindle him out of his fortune. (It's her). Maybe he could finally get some rest if his maid and his brother would just stop meddling in his affairs.



The Rainbow Girls

(They're actually trying to help). No worries, Argan will make everyone happy once he marries his daughter to a brilliant young doctor! (He's not brilliant

and she's in love with someone else)." Audiences are invited to come see what's real and what's imagined in this VSC-style take on

Moliere's Le Malade Imaginaire. Tickets are free for kids, \$12 for adults. For information, call 802-387-0102 or visit nextstagearts.org.

Next Stage Arts, Vermont Suitcase Company bring 'The Feeble Fantastical' to Putney

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present an evening of folk, roots, and Americana music by California-based trio Rainbow Girls and quartet Pete Muller & The Kindred Souls at Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill Rd., Putney on Wednesday, July 26, at 7 p.m.

Rainbow Girls are an eclectic folk trio hailing from the golden countryside just north of California's Bay Area. Vanessa May, Erin Chapin, and Caitlin Gowdey combine harmonies, varitextured instrumentals, and lyrical content into a sonic tapestry. Throughout their performance, voices are paired with an ever-changing amalgamation of acoustic and slide guitar, keys, upright bass, harmonica, and an array of vocal techniques creating what organizers describe as "an

engaging and emotionally moving live show."

Originally formed in Santa Barbara, California, in 2010, the Rainbow Girls have spread their musical wings both internationally and domestically, from busking on the streets of Europe to playing pubs and theaters in the U.K., to house concerts, festivals, and shows in the U.S. They've released four albums of music that delves deeply into themes of the human experience: hopeful love, honest self-reflection, and pursuits of social justice.

Tickets are \$22 in advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for access to a livestream of the concert. For information, call 802-387-0102. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar.

MARLBORO MUSIC advertisement for Saturday, July 22 at 8 pm and Sunday, July 23 at 2:30 pm. Works by Schumann and Brahms on Saturday, and Britten, Ravel, and Beethoven on Sunday. Includes a QR code to scan for tickets and event info.

Classic Rock Band drummer seeking a lead guitarist, and a male lead vocalist to play at small parties, events, etc. for fun! Interested? Call for info. (802) 258-7056. Includes an image of a drum set.

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BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY THE COMMONS CROSSWORD 'Right of Center' crossword puzzle grid and clues. Clues include: Across: 1. Detergent powder, 6. Do the butterfly, 10. 'Tulsa King' star, 18. Mozart's 'Idomeneo,' e.g., 19. 'The Palace Papers' author Brown, 20. Notices, 21. Start living?, 23. Change bulletin?, 24. Underwire underwear, 25. Rapping Dr., 26. Big mess, 28. Understanding, 29. Model T rival, 30. Back muscle, briefly, 31. Janet Yellen's alma mater, 33. Cold front pusher, 35. :) , 36. Singers James or Jones, 38. Pop guitarist Lofgren, 40. Campus science buildings, 41. Riyadh resident, 42. Gave actress Burke a hand?, 45. Implies a big IQ org?, 48. Supervillain Luthor, 49. Fuse metals, 51. German automaker, 52. Invitation info, 54. Elevator pioneer, 55. It's about a foot, 56. Bird call, 59. 'Glass' vowel sound, 61. Dutch export, 62. Worm on a hook, 63. Canada Day mo., 64. Early September baby's strength?, 66. Christmas devil?, 68. Crafts-selling website, 69. 'Time waits for no man!', 70. Eyelid problem, 71. Enter with enthusiasm, 72. Previously called, 73. Range in the Tour de France, 74. Worsted fabric, 75. Owl building, 76. 'Damn right!', 77. Like missiles and feed, 79. Spinning room?, 80. Dreary 'Jerusalem' poet?, 84. Sizable beer?, 89. Pre-Easter periods, 90. 'Mission: Impossible' spy Ethan, 92. Uber rider, 93. Inadvisable action, 94. Give a creepy look, 95. Georgia's largest city, 98. See stars?, 100. Like every other number, 101. Kimono closer, 102. Manhattan's location?, 103. 'Hyperion' poet, 105. In the know, 106. Enjoyed thoroughly, 107. Rap entourage does some yoga?, 110. Pierce fifth tire?, 113. Boarded an Acela, 114. Provo neighbor, 115. Edmonton hockey player, 116. Natural gas or water, e.g., 117. 49ers coach Shanahan, 118. Becomes one, 62. Stew seasoning, 63. Early Homo erectus fossil, 65. Press on, 66. Island perch?, 67. Female fortune teller, 70. Fa follower, 73. Synagogue chests, 74. Franks, 76. London art gallery, 77. Crept around, 78. Pull behind, 79. Oldster, 80. Filming faux pas, 81. Fibula or femur, 82. Signs up for, 83. Yellowfin tuna, 85. 'Wind in the Willows' author, 86. Primateologist Jane, 87. Lasted, 88. Four-time NFL MVP Aaron, 91. Wand wavers: Abbr., 95. Snouted animal, 96. Rodeo beast, 97. 'Don't worry!', 99. Kind of bath salts, 102. Loverboy, 104. Peppy, 108. B'way posting, 109. Take it all in, 111. Long swimmer, 112. Dessert served à la mode.

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**COLUMN** | *Sports Roundup*

# Brattleboro Little Leaguers advance to state finals

The steady parade of showers and thunderstorms that have marched across Vermont has made the summer baseball season a challenge. But it delivered one unexpected bonus — it allowed the Brattleboro 12-U and 10-U Little League All-Stars to clinch their respective District 2 titles on July 15 at South Main Street Field.

On a rare rain-free day, Brattleboro fans were treated to a tripleheader with six hours of playoff baseball that saw the 10-U team take two games from Rutland County to win their best-of-three series, while the 12-U team closed out the day with a 7-1 win over Bennington to win their best-of-three series.

With the 11-U team getting an automatic berth into the state tournament, this means all three Brattleboro Little League All-Star teams will be playing in state tournaments this weekend.

The July 15 tripleheader marked the first time that anyone can remember having two district championship banners handed out on the same field in the same afternoon.

For the 10-U team, that scheduling fluke started on July 14, when the first game of the series in Brattleboro was postponed, despite it being a rainless afternoon. Fears of a second round of flash flooding, coming on the heels of the horrendous deluge of July 9-10 that caused so much damage around the state, prompted Rutland to choose to stay put rather than be caught out during a bad storm.

That decision came at high price for Rutland, for they would forfeit their home game and instead play a doubleheader in Brattleboro. Rutland would need to win one of the two games to get a deciding game in Rutland, and Brattleboro made sure that did not happen.

In game 1, Brattleboro



**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).

pitcher Simon Potter and Rutland pitcher Lane Lubaszewski faced off in a game that started as a pitching duel and turned into a Brattleboro rout starting in the third inning. Brattleboro broke a scoreless tie with six runs in that inning, Gavin Carpenter hit a two-run double and Cole Systo followed with a three-run triple as Brattleboro sent 10 batters to the plate, with five batters reaching base on walks.

While Rutland broke up the shutout when Eli Masse scored thanks to a pair of errors in the fourth inning, Brattleboro kept piling up the runs.

In the fourth, Cooper Deyo walked and scored on a base hit by Owen Malouin. In the fifth, walks by Jack Bennett and Zealand Wentworth and a bloop single by Louie Renault loaded the bases for Systo, who drove in one run, and Dawson Newton, whose misplayed groundball got two more runs in. Brayson George followed with a RBI single for the 11th Brattleboro run that ended the game via the mercy rule, 11-1.

Tempers heated up as the thermometer rose in the second game as the teams traded runs in the first two innings. George got the start on the mound for Brattleboro and got immediately into trouble in the top of the first inning as Rutland's Brayden Sabotka and Owen Brady both walked and ultimately scored on passed balls for a 2-0 lead.



Brattleboro left fielder Teddy McKay stretches out to catch a fly ball hit by Rutland's Lane Lubaszewski in the fifth inning of the first game of their Little League 10-U District 2 championship series on July 15 at South Main Street Field.

Brattleboro responded with three runs in the bottom half of the inning. Wentworth led off with a single and scored on an RBI double by Renault. Newton drove in a run with a fielder's choice and Systo walked and scored on a passed ball.

The second inning saw the Rutland side getting a little too wound up in trying to rattle George. Warnings were issued, but not before Cruz Boudreau tied the game with a bases-loaded walk.

Then it all came tumbling down for Rutland as Brattleboro responded by scoring 15 runs in the bottom half of the inning. Brattleboro sent 20 batters to the plate, with nine hits, five walks, and one hit batter. Potter, George, and Renault had RBI singles, Wentworth hit a two-run double, and Systo drew a bases-loaded walk to chase Rutland starting pitcher Asher Galusha.

Sabotka took over, but the runs kept coming. Newton greeted Sabotka with a two-run double and later scored on a passed ball. Deyo drove in another run with a ground out, Potter hit another RBI single, Malouin was hit by a pitch and scored on a passed ball, and Niko Papadimitriou and Wentworth added RBI singles to make it 18-3 after two innings.

Sabotka walked and scored on an error in the Rutland third, but Brattleboro ended the game via the mercy rule in the bottom half of the inning with Systo doubled and scored on a base hit by Newton to complete a 19-4 victory and win the District 2 title.

"We got 12 guys who are starters who can all hit the ball really well," said Brattleboro manager Seth Deyo. "After playing with each other for three weeks, you'd think it's been three years. They cheer each other on. If one kid is down, they pick him up and encourage him. It's really kind of impressive as a coach and as a parent to see young guys do that."

For the Brattleboro 12-U team, there was little drama in their best-of-three series with Bennington, just steady play with plenty of pitching, defense, and timely hitting in sweeping their Route 9 rivals.

Game 1 at Hogan Field in Bennington on July 14 saw Brattleboro's Axton Crowley throw five shutout innings in a 5-0 win. He allowed just two hits, with three strikeouts and two walks. Nolan Domanski pitched in the sixth in a

non-save situation.

Losing pitcher Addison Dwyer pitched well, but was betrayed by seven Bennington errors in the field. He finished with two hits and a walk in his five innings of work.

Azyi Crews got Brattleboro's first run in the first inning when he reached on an error, got to third on a delayed steal and scored on an errant pick-off throw by Dwyer. Crews repeated that performance in the fourth inning, again reaching base on an error and again scoring. Brattleboro picked up another run in that inning for a 3-0 lead, and scored twice more in the sixth.

It was more of the same the next day at South Main Street field as Brattleboro benefitted from numerous Bennington errors in the 7-1 win.

Brattleboro pitcher Shaun Emery-Greene scattered five hits and walked one batter in the complete game victory. He also helped his cause with a three-run double to center field in the third inning to break a 1-1 tie. He later added an RBI double in the fifth.

Carson Depue got Brattleboro's first run in the second inning when he singled and scored on an error on a ball hit by Cooper Christensen. Dominic McKay, Spencer Jones, and Crews all drew walks in the third inning to set the table for Emery-Greene, and Jones and Crews both scored runs in the fifth inning.

Jones was outstanding at shortstop, scooping up every ball hit to him. He got the final out of the game when he fielded catcher Brody Page's throw down to second and tagged out Nolan Sherman. Jones would be honored after the game with the Jim Watters Sportsmanship Award.

Brattleboro won the 12-U state title last year with a power hitting team and a pitching staff anchored by fireballing Senji Kimura. Manager Seth Gundry said that while this year's team is different, there is a common thread.

"We are trying to build a winning culture here in Brattleboro at every age level that prides itself in playing the game the right way," Gundry said. "I think we played really solid defense this past week and had quality at bats up and down the lineup. And we put the ball in play a lot, forcing the other teams to make the play. We are excited for this opportunity to win a state title, but we know we are down to the best of the best here in the state and it won't be easy to accomplish."

**Brattleboro shortstop Spencer celebrates after he tagged out Bennington baserunner Nolan Sherman on a stolen base attempt for the final out in a 7-1 victory on July 15 clinched the Little League Baseball 12-U District 2 title.**



## Post 5 clinches top spot in state tourney

Brattleboro Post 5 coach Eric Libardoni likes his team's chances in the upcoming American Legion Baseball state tournament. His team clinched first place in the Southern Division, thanks to plenty of quality pitching and a steady defense. Scoring runs has been a concern, however.

In a July 15 doubleheader at Rutland Post 31, Brattleboro pitcher Jayke Glidden outdueled Rutland's Cameron Rider in a 1-0 victory.

Post 5 only managed two hits in the game, and its only run came in the fourth inning, when Rider committed a balk that allowed Sam Bogart to score from third. Glidden held Rutland to just three hits over six innings, with Aidan Davis getting the save with a scoreless seventh.

The missing offense showed up in the second game, as Post 5 rolled to a 13-2 win in six innings. Brattleboro got five runs in the second inning on just one hit as Post 5 sent nine batters to the plate and took advantage of two walks, two hit batters, and an error.

Post 5 added four more runs in the third inning on more walks and errors, and cruised from there. Alex Bingham was the winning pitcher.

The sweep of Rutland, together with a 16-1 win over White River Junction Post 84 on July 17, improved Brattleboro's league record to 16-2, which locked up the top seed from the South in the state tournament which begins this weekend in Castleton.

## Towle, Romo play in Twin State Soccer Cup

Brattleboro's Willow Romo and Leland & Gray's Abby Towle played on the Vermont women's squad on July 15 in the Lions Twin State Soccer Cup at Hanover (N.H.) High School.

The all-star game pit the best seniors in the Green Mountain State against their Granite State counterparts. This year, New Hampshire swept the two games.

Towle, who holds the Leland & Gray scoring record with 73 goals and led the Rebels to a Division IV championship in 2022, scored one goal for the Vermont squad, which lost to the New Hampshire women, 5-2.

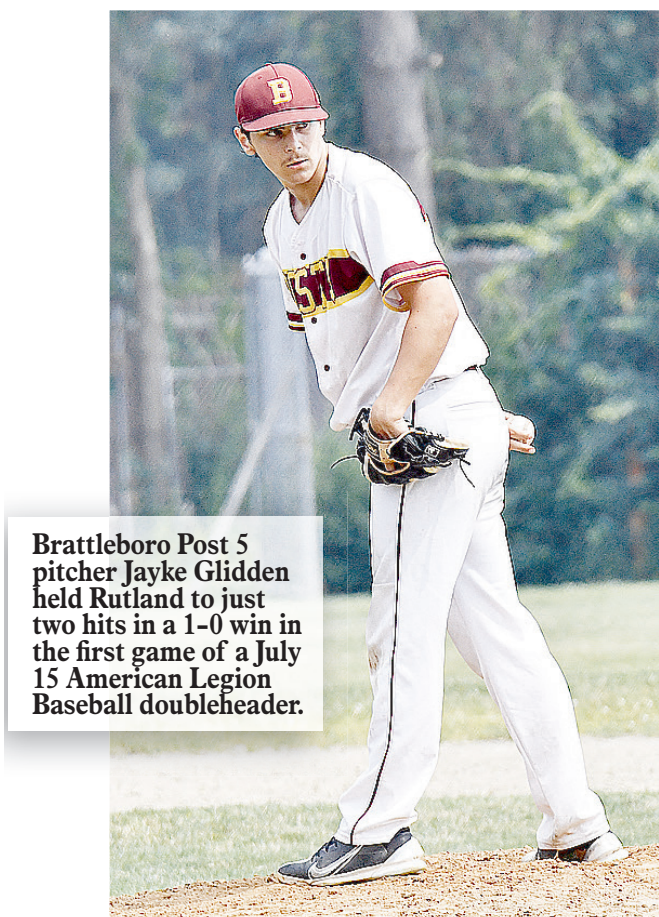
## Senior bowling roundup

Week 11 of the spring/summer season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on July 19 saw Turkeys (39-16) move into first place, a game ahead of Slo Movers (both 38-17), No Splits (35.5-19.5) in third, followed by Five Pins (35-20), Skippers (32.5-22.5), The Bowlers (26-29), Stayin' Alive (24.5-30.5), High Rollers (21-34), and Wrecking Crew (16-36).

Vicki Butynski had the women's high handicap game (238) and series (651). Milt Sherman had the men's high handicap game (275), while John Laamen had the high handicap series (678), while Turkeys had the high team handicap game (923) and series (2,565).

Chuck Adams led the men's scratch scoring with a 607 series that featured games of 221 and 215. Milt Sherman had a 575 series with a 255 game, while John Walker had a 543 series with games of 209 and 181. Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 540 series with games of 196 and 186, Robert Rigby had a 514 series, with a 200 game, and Gary Montgomery had a 511 series. Fred Ashworth had a 192 game and Laamen rolled a 188.

Nancy Dalzell had the women's high scratch series (442), while Shirley Aiken had the high scratch game (168). Butynski had a 164 game and Dalzell rolled a 163.



Brattleboro Post 5 pitcher Jayke Glidden held Rutland to just two hits in a 1-0 win in the first game of a July 15 American Legion Baseball doubleheader.

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