

The *Brandon • Pittsford • Proctor • West Rutland • Lake Dunmore • Leicester • Whiting • Sudbury • Goshen*
REPORTER

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\$1



SHE DIDN'T STOP IN VERMONT
 Miss VT Earth 2023, Isabella Williams of Orwell, discusses her work helping girls in South Africa.

PG. 2



NESHOBE, OR NESHOBE?
 James Peck shares his research on the history of golf courses in Brandon, beginning with the Neshobe Golf Club, which opened in 1900. Part one of three.

PG. 2

RE-THINKING JUSTICE
 Mitch Pearl of BRAVO explains the organization's approach to restorative justice.

PG. 4

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
 State Rep. Stephanie Jerome of Brandon brings her constituents up to date with her work in Montpelier.

PG. 8



GARDENING CORNER
 Lyn Desmarais shares advice on creating the best conditions for raising flowers to cut for home use.

PG. 19



Let there be light

IT'S BEEN A relentlessly gray winter. Here, a bit of sun breaks through the cloud cover over Pittsford.

Photo by Steven Jupiter

Brandon SB discusses Town Plan and appropriations

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—In its brief regular meeting on Monday evening, the Brandon Selectboard approved the Town Plan prepared by the Brandon Planning

Commission.

The Plan lays out a broad vision for the next several years in Brandon. It must be updated every 8 years in order to keep Brandon eligible for certain

grants at the state level. None of what it proposes is binding or indicative of any current or future projects. Instead, it acknowledges areas in which the town seeks to make improve-

ments and/or changes.

The Plan that was approved on Monday was the result of over a year of work by the Planning Commission, including several
(See Brandon SB, Page 14)

Trivial pursuit: Brandon is home to multiple former Jeopardy! contestants

BY HARRY MCENERNY

BRANDON—And the answer is: Three.

Question: What is the number of Brandon residents who have appeared on the television quiz show Jeopardy?

Cecil Reniche-Smith, Steven Jupiter, and Jeff Haylon all appeared as contestants on the iconic show. Cecil's episode aired in 1989, Steven's in 1997, and Jeff's in 2012. Cecil and

Steven were standard contestants, while Jeff was a 15-year-old competing in that year's Teen Tournament.

Jeopardy in its current format premiered in 1984 with Alex Trebek as host and Johnny Gilbert as announcer. Trebek hosted the show until his death in 2020. Gilbert serves as the show's announcer to this day. (He is currently 95 years old.) Until 2002, second- and third-

place contestants were awarded consolation prizes, while first-place finishers kept their winnings and returned to defend their title. Today, a cash stipend is the consolation prize.

And by the way, you cannot simply wander up and appear on Jeopardy. To be clear, you are selected to appear on Jeopardy through a rigorous screening process. You must take a test and achieve a minimum

score. If you pass, you are invited to and must perform to some unknown standard at a mock version of the show. You are perhaps evaluated on camera readiness, wit, reflexes, intelligence, style, grace under pressure... Who's to say? Only the producers know the precise combination they're seeking that will ensure a competitive match as well as good television.
(See Jeopardy! contestants, Page 9)



BELLA WILLIAMS, WHO grew up in Orwell and was crowned Miss Vermont Earth in 2023, has raised hundreds of dollars to purchase and donate sanitary pads for girls at schools in South Africa, including here at Hindle High School in Cape Town. Photos provided

What is Miss VT Earth up to?

BY ELSIE LYNN PARINI/
ADDISON INDEPENDENT

There's so much most of us don't know about pageant life. What we see — the nails, the skin, the makeup, the wardrobes, the glamour — is just surface... The girls and women who compete in these competitions are there for more than just the beauty; each one of them has a mission. Take for example, Isabella Williams from Orwell.

Did you know, Orwellian "Bella" Williams, was crowned Miss Vermont Earth in 2023? Yep, that's a thing. It leads to national and international competitions. "I took every little bit of Vermont I could," said Williams on an Instagram post last month. "I showed our country just what we believe in: We believe in protecting our planet. We believe in staying authentic to ourselves. We believe in educating our children. And with these beliefs, and my community, and most importantly my family, I had a national platform to highlight these concepts before our peers. Showing them there is hope for a greener tomorrow. There is hope to be your real self. There is hope that education will stop coming with such a high price."

Following her victory, Williams was "empowered to start an interview series about strong girls around the world," which became the inspiration for her book "Strong Girls" (self-published on Amazon in November 2023).

"My first interview was with a local farmer in South Africa,"

Williams said in a recent conversation with the Independent, adding that South Africa has become a home away from home for her. "This farmer learned how to farm to keep her township alive." After that interview, Williams was invited to help a group of nonprofit leaders speak to school-age girls about menstruation and access to sanitary pads. "Most girls here don't have access to pads, which is a

huge problem because they stay home and skip school to avoid free bleeding; and they are using newspaper," Williams explained.

Using her social media platform, Williams put this message out to her nearly 13,000 followers and found an "uproar of responses." So, she started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to purchase pads for the local girls. With the money (See *Miss Vermont Earth*, Page 6)



"I BELIEVE CONFIDENCE is the first step in any change. Kids need to find the confidence to speak up for what they believe in and when they speak up, they will change the world," said Williams.

Before Neshobe, there was...Neshobe

The first in a 3-part series on Brandon's golf courses

BY JAMES PECK

BRANDON—Most people in Brandon are well aware of our beautiful 18-hole Neshobe Golf Course that seems to have been around forever. But, as some may know, the course has been where it currently is, off Town Farm Road in Forest Dale, since only 1959. Not to say that 65 years of continuous operation isn't impressive!

A few other Brandon residents, mostly those in their 70s or older, even remember the predecessor course called the Brandon Country Club, which operated from 1927 through the mid-1940s. That 9-hole course was located north of High Street and its entrance was at the old Dr. Phillipsen House (now owned by Courtney and Devon Fuller) at 83 Park Street Extension. It's doubtful that anyone alive today ever played that course.

Two future Reporter articles will cover those two better-known courses. This article reveals a first course that I'm betting that virtually no one knew existed, way back in 1900.

That course was named-drum roll! - the Neshobe Golf Club!

Recent research into local newspaper clippings has brought this to light. It's possible others have previously stumbled across the same clippings, but no one seems to have shared it with the public.

As the 20th century began, golf was getting very popular as more people had the leisure time on their hands, especially the richest class in town, those with big houses on Park Street, Conant Square, and Pearl Street.

Early in 1900, a group in town formed with the desire to start a golf club and build a course. Soon they had forty very interested residents. On May 1 of that year, the Brandon Union published an editorial lauding the effort, saying "an up-to-date golf links" was the best way to turn the town into a real summer resort. A links was the missing piece to add to the lakes and streams and the modern hotels here. In a real sense, it was the proverbial "missing link" (apologies!).

The Union implored: "Let the cow pastures make room for the golf links!"

They went on to announce that "the lot bordering on High

LADIES' GOLF TOURNAMENT.	
The first ladies' handicap golf tournament was held last Saturday. A great deal of interest in the tournament was shown by the ladies. A large number of spectators were present and great enthusiasm was shown by them at many of the fine shots of the playeas. Owing to the excessive heat many were unable to finish the nine holes and consequently did not complete their scores.	
Miss N. A. Brown made the best gross score and many of her holes were made in very low figures. The winner of the tournament, Miss M. Thayer, showed some excellent stick work and will undoubtedly figure among the leaders in the state championship. The following cards were handed in:	
Miss M. Thayer	6 10 11 7 8 6 7 9 8-72 Handicap 15
	Net score 57
Mrs. Huntley	6 8 9 8 9 8 9 8 9-74 Handicap 15
	Net score 59
	Strokes Hand'p
Miss N. A. Brown	65 0-65
Miss B. Robinson	77 10-67
Miss E. G. Page	97 20-77
Miss R. Claggett	94 15-79
Miss L. Brown	104 22-82

GOLF TOURNAMENT.	
At the tournament of the Neshobe Golf Club of Brandon held last Tuesday, Dr. C. W. Peck took the first prize, making the 18 holes with a score of 116 and having a handicap of 32. Edgar J. Bliss of New York, a scratch man, made the best score, playing the 18 holes in 92 strokes. Charles Dana of New York came next with a score of 97. Walter Scott, who also received a handicap of 32, won the second prize with a net score of 88.	
THE SCORE.	
Dr. Peck	Out 6 6 7 6 7 8 7 5 5-57 In 6 8 7 10 4 6 6 7 5-59
	Gross score 116 Handicap 32
	Net score 84
Mr. Scott	Out 7 6 9 5 5 7 8 8 9-64 In 5 7 9 3 7 5 6 8 6-56
	Gross score 120 Handicap 32
	Net score 88
	Strokes Hand'p
F. C. Bliss	92 0 - 92
J. S. Robinson	114 22 - 92
C. A. Dana	97 0 - 97
F. W. Williams	136 32 -104
W. Canfield	140 36 -104
R. Watts	131 24 -107
C. I. Button	130 16 -114
E. D. Thayer	125 6 -119

RESULTS FROM EARLY golf tournaments at the Neshobe Golf Club, which opened in 1900 off of High Street in Brandon.

Street is well adapted to this purpose, and an organization has been started in Brandon who have leased this lot. The lot consists of 48 acres of tablelands and elevations in about the right proportion to make an ideal field in which to lay out a links." Called Winslow's Field, the land was owned by local (See *Neshobe golf*, Page 6)

Officer resigns after hot mic moment disparaging migrant worker in criminal justice council meeting

BY AUDITI GUHA/
VTDIGGER

A police officer resigned from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council and the Bristol Police Department on Wednesday after saying “you’re f***ing here illegally” as a migrant worker testified before the council that morning.

Michael Major, who represented the Vermont Police Association on the 24-member council, interrupted the migrant worker, who was speaking in support of a revised fair and impartial policing policy.

The worker, who identified himself as Eduardo, spoke about the urgency of approving the policy, which immigrant rights advocates have long pushed for. The council had

planned to vote on it Wednesday but postponed the decision due to new concerns raised by the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police.

“To many of you, waiting a long time might feel normal, but for us it’s very different. You know this plays into our everyday lives, the reality of dealing with the police is different (for us),” Eduardo said through a translator. He added that migrant workers, many of whom are undocumented, are often reluctant to go to the doctor when they are sick, for instance, because they fear being reported to immigration authorities.

A speaker appearing at the meeting remotely with their camera turned off then interrupted, saying, “You’re f***ing here illegally and you’re worried about being safe. Oh yeah.”

Bill Sorrell, the governor-appointed chair of the council, intervened to say, “Who’s ever stating that opinion, it’s not welcome, and

wait your turn and don’t interrupt please.”

After participants asked for the person to be identified, Major named himself and apologized for his remark. He also claimed that he had not been addressing Eduardo.

“It wasn’t directed towards the discussion. I was having a discussion with my daughter. I apologize ... extremely,” he said. “And it should not be reflected on the person that was talking at the time.”

After council members spoke up to criticize the comments —

and question his explanation — Major apologized again and announced his resignation from the council. Later that day, he resigned from his part-time patrol officer position with the Bristol

Police Department, according to Police Chief Bruce Nason.

“Mike called me earlier today, I have accepted his resignation,” Nason said in an email.

“Major’s comments do not reflect the views of the Bristol Police Department or the officers that seek to make the Bristol Community safe and welcoming to all.”

Major was hired by the Bristol department in March 2020.

He remains employed as a part-time deputy with the Chittenden County Sheriff’s Office, Sheriff Daniel Gamelin told VTDigger by email Wednesday evening. Major, who previously worked in the department but left in 2018 after making an unsuccessful bid for sheriff, was re-hired by Gamelin in February 2023.

Later Wednesday, the criminal justice council issued a written statement condemning Major’s remarks, saying “the impact of his words was devastating.”

“The Council wishes to reiter-

ate that Mr. Major’s words are not representative of the Council nor of law enforcement in the State of Vermont,” it said in the statement.

After Major made his remarks and before he announced his resignation, several council members interjected to express their dismay. Erin Jacobsen, who represents the Office of the Attorney General on the council, was the first to do so.

“I feel just really discouraged, disturbed, saddened by that comment, Mike Major,” Jacobsen said, calling herself “outraged” and saying she did not find his explanation credible. “Those kinds of comments have no place in this kind of forum. It’s especially damaging when we are here discussing a fair and impartial policing policy. The point of view that you just raised calls into question community trust of law enforcement.”

Another council member, Karim Chapman from the Life Intervention Team, said, “This feels like racial profiling.” Identifying himself as “a Black man in America feeling the fear of being pulled over,” Chapman continued, “this really hits home for me.”

Tim Lueders-Dumont, who represents the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs on the council, jumped into the conversation to say that his department believed that Major should consider resigning from the council. He said that if he were serving as a prosecutor and heard an officer utter such a remark, he would consider issuing a “Brady” or “Giglio” letter, often considered the scarlet letter of policing.

Later in the meeting, Kelly Price, a vice president of the Vermont Police Association, said the organization’s president had asked him to “express our extreme disapproval of the statement that was made earlier.” Price said the VPA planned to address the matter internally.

Shortly thereafter, Major spoke up again.

“I just wanted to apologize again to the council,” he said. “And I’ve heard everything the council has said, and I will be resigning my position with the council effective immediately. I cannot apologize enough that it was not directed at the speaker or any member on the council, and I just wanted to apol-

ogize again. And sorry.”

To that, Sorrell responded, “All right. Well, perhaps this has all been a teaching moment for any number of council members and others.”

Major’s remarks continued to hang over the council’s gathering. (See *Officer resigns*, Page 18)

*“You’re f***ing here illegally and you’re worried about being safe. Oh yeah.”*

—Michael Major, (now former)Vermont Police Association represented

Spotlight On Business LAURIE BERTRAND- CPA



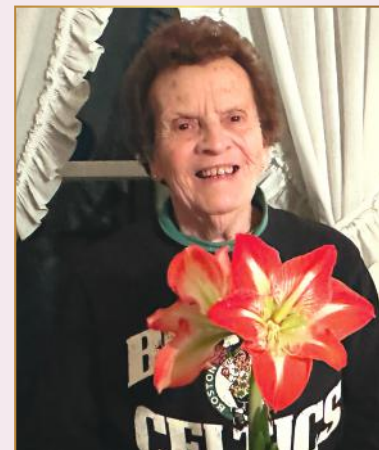
Laurie Bertrand CPA has been serving the tax and accounting needs of businesses and individuals in Rutland and Addison County since 1999.

Licensed and insured, with more than 20 years of experience in individual and business tax returns, as well as bookkeeping and payroll services. I have the

Laurie L. Bertrand CPA office

knowledge and expertise you can count on to get the job done right the first time. Call me today for all your tax and business accounting service needs. Free consultation!

Happy 90th Birthday February 25, 2024



Card Shower
Barbara Ketcham
483 Barnard Road
Pittsford, Vermont 05763

Environmentalists and developers say they’re ready to compromise on Act 250

BY EMMA COTTON
/VTDIGGER

Gov. Phil Scott took direct aim last Wednesday at two bills being discussed by the Legislature’s environment committees, calling one an “economic disaster” and saying the other would “put Vermonters in jeopardy of violating laws they don’t even know exist.”

The approach was a surprise

to housing developers and environmentalists, they told VTDigger, as they are more united now than any time in recent memory after months of seeking a compromise on the direction of regulatory reform.

Scott criticized H.687, which would expand Act 250’s automatic jurisdiction to a majority of the state, and S.213, a bill that proposes setting up a new

statewide program to oversee river systems in response to the summer’s flooding, at his weekly press briefing.

He “won’t accept a housing bill that fails to meet the moment,” he said, indicating that he would likely veto a bill that increases the law’s environmental protections.

But state lawmakers, devel- (See *Act 250*, Page 20)

BRAVO brings Restorative Justice to Brandon

BY MITCH PEARL

Restorative Justice is a growing movement which offers some offenders and the community an alternative path to the criminal justice system. In the court system, the focus is on adjudicating guilt or innocence and punishing offenders. By contrast, the restorative-justice model seeks to identify the harms caused by wrongdoing—to individuals and to the community—and to put right those harms as best as possible.

Restorative justice is not something new—it has been practiced around the world and by indigenous communities here for as long as anyone can remember. And at its best, our American criminal-justice system can function much like a restorative-justice system. Nowadays, the courts often require restitution and pay much greater concern to the victims of crime. But the court system can be impersonal and slow, and its emphasis on determining guilt and punishing the wrongdoer can neglect the real needs of victims and the community. Often, as well, the genuine needs of the offender are overlooked, which may only set the stage for further wrongdoing.

BRAVO (Brandon Restorative Action for Victims and Offenders) was founded a number of years ago by Art Doty, Lance Mead, and Debbie Boyce. Currently, BRAVO consists of a small group of volunteers trained to participate in a restorative-justice panel. The Brandon Chief of Police, David Kachajian, may refer appropriate cases by contacting the BRAVO Coordinator. The coordinator then contacts all the involved parties and assembles a panel of available volunteers to meet at a convenient time and location.

Three panel members then meet with offenders, harmed parties, representatives of the community, and with parents or guardians of juvenile offenders. Together, they create a plan to address the harm done, the needs of parties harmed,

and the needs of the community at large. The offender's participation is entirely voluntary; indeed, to participate the offender must accept responsibility for his or her actions. Restorative-justice plans often involve restitution, letters of apology, and community service. The process of listening, discussing the harms done, and crafting a fitting outcome can be healing for the people involved.

In a recent case (facts changed somewhat to protect confidentiality), a student had set off a fire extinguisher inside the high school. This caused damage to parts of the building but also interrupted student programming. It also required teachers, administrators, and custodians to expend time and effort rectifying the situation. While the cost of the cleanup may have been covered by insurance, the disruption to normal programming and the stress and effort required to bring things back to "normal" caused real harm to numerous individuals. By bringing everyone together in a restorative-justice panel, the responsible party was able to understand the consequences of their actions and the real harm this caused to other people. It was no longer just a "joke" or "prank." And the people affected were able to "vent" their frustrations and annoyance in a receptive setting. A restorative-justice plan would involve the responsible party "owning" the situation, giving heart-felt apologies to the teachers, staff, and students affected, and performing community service with the school's custodial service to an extent that would correlate with the time and effort needed for the cleanup—since the actual cleanup had to be done professionally.

The restorative-justice process in Brandon is similar to the county diversion program but happens even earlier in the progress of a case. In a diversion case, formal charges are filed and the offender is summoned

(See BRAVO, Page 6)



Florida dreamin'

NATURE'S PALETTE: THE painted bunting is one of the beautiful birds to be found in Florida.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

The REPORTER

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Community Forums

A reminder from Fish & Wildlife to remove Ice Shanties to avoid fines

MONTPELIER – Vermont state law requires that ice fishing shanties be removed from the ice before the ice weakens, according the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

The shanty must be removed before the ice becomes unsafe

or loses its ability to support the shanty out of the water, or before the last Sunday in March -- the 31st this year -- whichever comes first. All contents, debris, wood, and supports must also be removed so they do not become a hazard to navigation

in the spring.

Leaving your ice fishing shanty on the ice can result in a fine and points on your license, and shanties may not be left at state fishing access areas.

Letters to the Editor

Are the Brandon Energy Committee members solar advocates or profiteers?

Lately the town of Brandon Selectboard (SB), in conjunction with the Select Board appointed Brandon Energy Committee (BEC), have requested the taxpayers of Brandon to financially support the lease/purchase of electronic vehicles (EVS) for use by our local police department. However, not all the SB members are approving this direction. This proposal is under the Town Municipal budget and not in the bond. This is what caused the significant increase in your tax bills. The BEC and several members of the Selectboard have been promoting this endeavor to taxpayers as the be all and end all for green transportation. Several members of the Brandon Energy Committee have quoted posted thoughts which support this direction regardless of contrary information published by alternate sources which do

not support the use of EVS at this time for law enforcement patrol vehicles based on equally viable concerns.

The BEC has also recommended the development of a "solar array" and use, where promotion of the array is discussed as 'the' positive direction for the town, contrary to other objective sources stating this is not an appropriate avenue for the town to take. The array would be funded by a self-funding bond that would increase the town's debt by up to \$500K. Projected payback of the array has varied as widely as the sun and the moon in discussions (and spreadsheets) on FPF and elsewhere. And one has to wonder what the BEC is up to. In the agenda for the 2/5/24 meeting at 4:30 p.m. (a meeting that may or may not have been properly warned) under Education, there is a topic HOW TO

PROMOTE SOLAR BOND SO IT'S APPROVED EVEN IF THE TOWN BUDGET IS REJECTED. At 5:15 p.m., the SOLAR ARRAY BOND and INDUSTRIAL PARK LEASE UPDATE are also on this committee's agenda. This direction comes during a time of financial strain for many Brandon taxpayers when town AND state taxes are proposed to be raised substantially. Remember our town slogan...Brandon - Unhurried. Unspoiled. Unforgettable.? Maybe we should add "Unaffordable??" The solar array special project (why is it always a 'special project?') smells like special interests and personal agendas. And we have just as much right to say NO as to say YES. Contrary data doesn't make their view right and ours disregarded as wrong. We do and should have the right to say how our tax dollars

are used.

Brandon has historically been a town with a diverse set of perspectives, income levels, and interests. If we vote in a budget with over 13% increase (of which approximately 9% will hit our tax bills on the Town line on your tax bill), as well as a risky, special interest/agenda solar array special project, there are townspeople who will not be able to afford their bills. Gentrification and profiteering

appear to be alive and active in Brandon Vermont. Please look at who you vote for and who is buttering whose bread before supporting the proposed budget and these projects. Maybe we should vote in a SB we trust to consider ALL of the town's interest and let them come up with a better budget proposal by voting this one down.

Karen Rhodes
Brandon

In a crowded race, we see a clear choice

There are many choices in the one-year Selectboard race this year. I would like to ask the voters to consider giving one of their votes to Heather Fjeld Nelson. Since her appointment to the board, she has become well versed on the issues that small town select boards are

responsible for and gets information on items in advance of meetings. She listens to comments and suggestions so that she has a good basis to make her vote. As a lifetime Brandon resident and her connection to our younger generation she is able to represent a segment of

our population that is often not heard.

Please cast your vote for Heather.

Thank you,
Doug and Dawn Bailey
Brandon

Brandon Town Manager's Report to the Selectboard on 2.12.24

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

On behalf of the Selectboard, I submitted a letter of support for State acquisition of the swamp parcel discussed at the 22 January board meeting, which was acknowledged with thanks.

Following authorization by the Selectboard, I engaged Royal Group to act upon their quote to replace the three large plate-glass windows at the clerk's office.

Following authorization by the Selectboard, I engaged Lafayette for four guardrail replacements.

FOCUS AREAS DURING REPORTING PERIOD:

Collaborative work with FEMA and town staff is ongoing to recover from July 2023 floods. FEMA has advised that our July 2023 Kennedy Park emergency repairs (boom truck,

concrete, wall and walk repair) will not qualify as the total repair cost was below the threshold and this is an isolated project which is not part of a larger series of similar responses.

Collective bargaining with NEPBA (police union) is ongoing with a team from the Selectboard.

The Town Report book was sent to the printer ahead of due date and posted to the town website.

I answered some follow-up questions from the grant agency for the historic preservation grant we've applied for gap funding the Town Hall roof.

I had many meetings with town officers, staff, and townspeople. Of note:

- BIC and GEE to make progress on proposed self-funding solar array plans
- Board chair & HWY fore- (See Town Manager, Page 14)

AMAZING FEBRUARY SALE!



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2018 JEEP WRANGLER
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\$29,500



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Obituary

Douglas Lee Graham, 57, Goshen

Douglas Lee Graham, 57, passed away on January 30, 2024, at his home in Goshen.

Doug was born in Rutland on September 5, 1966, the son of James D. and Nancy (Pettersen) Graham. Doug was a graduate of Otter Valley Union High School, Class of 1984. He afterwards received his bachelor's degree from

Franklin Pierce College and his master's degree in wildlife biology from the University of West Virginia. He had worked as a biologist for the state of Vermont and taught for a while. More recently he had cared for his parents at their home in Goshen.

Douglas was well known for his vegetable and plant garden-

ing. He also was an avid hunter & fisherman.

Surviving is his mother, Nancy Graham. He was predeceased by his father, James.

Private services will be held at a later date.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home, Brandon.

BRAVO

(Continued from Page 4)

to go to court for arraignment. The county prosecutor then offers the accused the choice of diversion before a judge has found grounds for the case to continue. That way, if the offender completes diversion, he or she will avoid any formal court record. With the BRAVO process, Brandon's police chief—in consultation with the county prosecuting attorney—will refer the matter for restorative justice before filing formal charges. This means that the parties do not have to travel to Rutland at all, and the matter can be resolved “closer to home,” more quickly, and with whatever local insight or wisdom that might be ap-

propriate.

The cases suitable for restorative justice in Brandon are typically minor property offenses: theft, bad checks, vandalism, malicious mischief, and the like. BRAVO does not handle cases involving personal violence, abuse, or felony-level theft. Thus, the number of cases appropriate for referral to BRAVO can vary widely from year to year, and recently BRAVO has handled only a few cases. Panel members have kept busy attending training approved by the Vermont Department of Corrections and making connections with other restorative justice organizations in the state. BRAVO is now collaborating with Rutland

County's restorative justice (diversion) panel and some members are now sitting on panels in Rutland.

The BRAVO volunteers believe that they help to support a safe community by listening to and addressing the needs of victims, offenders, and the community at the earliest possible time. If you are interested in participating in BRAVO's work, please consider joining. For more information, please see <https://www.townofbrandon.com/towncommittees/bravo/>.

Mitch Pearl is the current chair of the BRAVO Advisory Board. He acknowledges the contributions to this article from other members of the panel.

Miss Vermont Earth

(Continued from Page 2)

raised she has been able to distribute “huge packages of pads.” But that's really only the first step...

Williams hopes that the change can be more systemic. She is registering Strong Girls as a nonprofit, and aims to “help young girls around the globe get access to the encouragement, education and healthcare they deserve. “We need to get the government's attention, and make them responsible,” Williams championed.

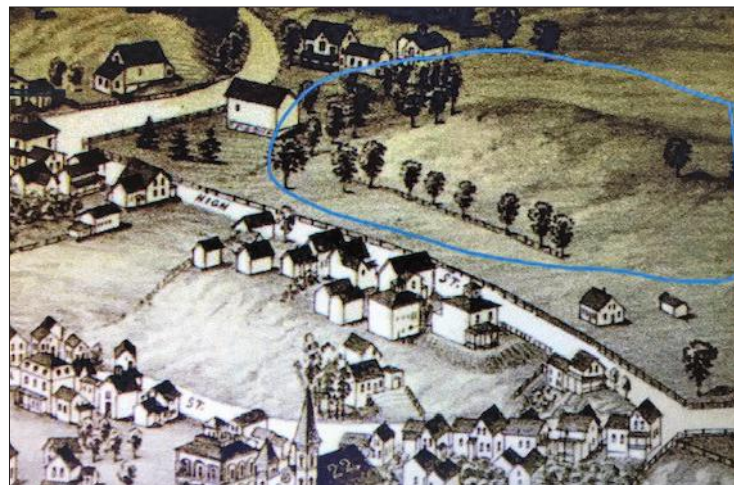
With fervent passion and excellent stage presence (thank you pageant days), Williams has visited many townships in South Africa and led motivational assemblies for girls and young women at primary, secondary and high schools, as well as other public venues.

“We are the future, and we are going to change the world!” she excitedly shouts into crowds. “What started with donating basic necessities to girls who need them has completely transformed,” she wrote in a recent

post. “That contribution you gave opened up a door for me to walk in and empower every single one of these young women and men to believe in themselves.

“I believe confidence is the first step in any change,” Williams continued. “Kids need to find the confidence to speak up for what they believe in and when they speak up, they will change the world.”

Such a nice message. But how does it sound to hundreds of low-income, black, South African girls and women coming from a white, 24-year-old pageant queen? “In America, (See *Miss Vermont Earth*, Page 14)



THE NESHOBE GOLF Club was located in the fields between High Street and Park Street Extension (circled in blue). The club, which opened in 1900 and closed just a few years later, maintained the first golf course in Brandon. Subsequent articles by the author will cover the history of Brandon's later golf courses.

Neshobe golf

(Continued from Page 2)

farmer C. W. Winslow, who was a principal in the Ayrshire Breeders. Anyone interested could sign up at the Brandon Inn.

Work on the field commenced and on June 1 the Neshobe Golf Club (NGC) members met at the Inn and elected officers, all prominent men in town: Reverend W. F. Weeks, President; Frank Farrington, Secretary; and Edward S. Marsh, Treasurer. Five other local businessmen were on the Executive Committee.

It didn't take long before the course was ready, opening for practice on June 15. The Union again crowded: “Experts who have examined the links say they are among the best in the state.”

At that time, there weren't really any nearby golf courses. The Rutland Golf Club started in 1897 on a small course, but the Rutland Country Club wouldn't open until 1902, and links at Middlebury and Proctor-Pittsford opened later in 1920 and 1928 respectively. Soon, the course became popular not only for residents, but also for the summer people staying at the Brandon Inn, the Middlebury Inn, and the Mountain Spring Hotel on Lake Dunmore.

In August 1900, three tournaments were held on the course, the first two for men, then one for women. Doctor C. W. Peck (no relation to this author) won the two men's matches, thanks to his high handicap, scoring a gross of 116 less a 32 handicap on August 17, then a 110 less a 22 handicap on August 24. Edgar Bliss from New York, a “scratch man,” actually scored the lowest gross of 92.

On August 31, on a very hot

day, the women played only nine holes, with Madge Thayer, a local girl who lived at 69 Park Street, taking first prize with a gross of 72 and a net of 57.

Looking at the scores compared to those at the modern day Neshobe, it looks like this was a real tough course!

Men's and women's tournaments were held in mid-September in cooler weather. This time Dr. Peck was absent and W. T. Wright, who “exhibited great skill in the way he handled his wooden clubs,” won with a 94 net.

In September, members of the NGC played the Rutland Country Club on the Rutland course, losing badly. A rematch was held in Brandon in 1901, but the winner is unknown.

That fall also, “one of the champion players in America” according to the Union, R. C. Watson, Jr., played the nine holes in Brandon with a score of 38. In October, the amateur record was set by local Dick Leatch at 40.

The first Neshobe golf course apparently continued in operation only two more years. Not much can be found in the local papers in 1901 and 1902. Then it must have closed because no further mention is made of a Brandon course until 1926, when the Brandon Country Club (BCC) was formed and Brandon's second golf course went into operation for the next seventeen years.

The story of the BCC will be the subject of part 2 of this Reporter series.

Postscript: “Winslow's Field” was used for the baseball and football games of Brandon High School through 1920. After that, we expect the lots along High Street were sold and houses built there.

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For five generations the Barnard family has assisted families in Pittsford, Proctor, Chittenden and the surrounding area getting through one of life's most difficult times.

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Brandon Energy Committee

Solar project projections questioned



I have been working on determining if a solar project was feasible for the Town of Brandon for the past three years. I have gone through quite a learning curve, made some mistakes, and hopefully have gotten my “feet on the ground” during this process.

The assumptions I have relied upon in making projections for the proposed Brandon Solar Project have been questioned of late. This is very fitting. I write to offer my perspective on the projections and to welcome any questions.

For the most part, I have relied on the perspective of Acorn Solar, who has developed and managed four community so-

lar projects in Addison County. They offered shares in their community solar projects, which is the way they provided ownership to individuals, towns, and businesses who wished to buy into and benefit from their projects. Thus, they were required to provide a prospectus with projections that passed the scrutiny of the Vermont Financial Relations Department. Any substantial misleading projections subject them to investor claims.

Their projections are the most conservative I have seen.

Their projections suggest about 32% of the solar credits generated must be paid to cover the costs of overhead and operations. As a town-owned project, it will have several advantages with respect to

costs we avoid. We do not need to pay for management of the allocation of solar credits and project-management fees or tax-reporting fees. We have a favorable relationship with the land owner, thus have a very modest lease payment. The town will not tax its own asset. These costs represent over 15% of their projected overhead.

Thus, their conservative figures suggest that we should expect about 17% (32% - 15%) of the solar credits generated to be used for maintenance, monitoring, insuring, and inverter replacement. My projections assume 20% go to these costs.

I have a friend who owns part of a community solar project in Bennington and who shared this

Their projections suggest about 32% of the solar credits generated must be paid to cover the costs of overhead and operations. As a town-owned project, it will have several advantages with respect to costs we avoid.

past week that their costs over the past 6 years are less than, but consistent with, Acorn’s projections. Having said that, he shared that their insurance costs have shot up a lot in the past few years. Their insurance costs used to be in line with the indications I got from a local solar developer and a contractor who has built numerous town solar projects like ours. Now they are higher than the 20% added buffer I had used in my assumptions. My insurance-cost assumption may be low, making the overall buffer I used a bit less favorable.

Solar credits generated, including degradation of panel productivity, is the other concern. First of all, panels are rated based upon factors that are site specific. Acorn Energy has found these projections to be quite reliable, with one of their projects producing 10% more than originally projected. Others of theirs have been “pretty satisfactorily on track.” My friend in Bennington indicates projections they got from their contractor have been accurate. Likewise, the solar developer in Pittsford who has relied on Green Earth Energy (GEE) for several of his solar projects indicates that GEE’s projections have been comfortably reasonable. (GEE is the contractor who

will be awarded the contract for this project subject to voter approval of the bond.)

Secondly, the benefits of the solar credits grow as electric rates increase. Rates in the state overall have gone up an average of 3% a year over the past ten years. GMP is the largest utility by far and has the largest impact on these numbers. Their Regulatory Plan filing (FY24 Annual base Rate Filing) calls for rate increases of over 5% in the coming three years. In my projections, I used 2% as the basis of solar-credit growth to be consistent with Acorn Energy’s practices.

Finally, with respect to degradation of panel productivity, the industry standard is to assume about 0.5% reduction in productivity each year. There are numerous claims that degradation is far less than the “industry standard” based upon years of observation. A survey of solar projects by a Midwest nonprofit claimed that was their constituents’ experience. Acorn Energy indicates they have seen “no noticeable degradation” of panel productivity in the past 6+ years.

Panels are starting to be warranted to produce 85% of their rated capacity after 25 years. Such warranties are generally (See Energy Committee, Page 9)

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Legislative Report

BY STEPHANIE JEROME

Redefining "first responders"

Since I last wrote my column, I have participated in a wide variety of legislative duties. I introduced H.678 (an act relating to utilization of first responders in emergency management), which would make water and wastewater workers classified as first responders, to the Government Operations Committee. I also did a floor report on H.666 (an act relating to escrow deposit bonds) to the full House of Representatives, a bill that would allow residential developers to utilize escrow deposits in their construction project. In addition, I attended Bystander Training, House Leadership Meetings, Rutland County Delegation meetings with speakers from Rutland Regional

Medical Center and Building and General Services Agency, UVM Board of Trustees meeting, and Senator Leahy's photography exhibit at the Superior Court building. I also gave talks at the Women's Caucus and the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region Legislative Breakfast. This is all in addition to my work in Committee, meeting with advocates, attorneys, and conducting research on the bills.

The Legislature has been in session for six weeks, and all the committees are at work trying to solve issues both large and small including, homelessness, housing, education funding, property taxes and more. My work in the Commerce

and Economic Development Committee has focused on consumer protections, and the economy.

Economic Development:

H.666 – this ominously numbered bill changes how escrow deposits can be used for residential developments. This bill makes it possible for a developer to use deposits put on a residential unit by the future owner, in the actual building projects, instead of staying in an individual escrow account. This would allow construction firms to use deposits for building projects as long as they are backed 100% by surety bonds.

For example, if a developer wants to withdraw \$50K in deposits for construction costs, the developer would be required to get a \$50K surety bond. The idea is to maintain protections for the future

resident, while granting developers increased financial flexibility. This will most likely be put into use in large residential construction projects. It provides another method of financing for residential building projects and more flexibility in our much-needed housing sector. The bill passed unanimously and is onto the Senate for their approval.

Consumer Protection:

I am currently working on H.121, an act relating to enhancing consumer privacy (a data privacy bill). Data privacy legislation is a consumer protection, it is not political, and it cuts across party lines. Protecting our personal information – our faces, our fingerprints, our gaits, social security numbers, addresses, shopping habits, running routes, and travel – our biometric and personal data – this information belongs to us. Is it right that data brokers, large social media platforms, search engines, and online shopping companies can sell the information that belongs to us, without our knowledge? How much of this data can be sold and used? What kind of permissions do we give? How can we opt out of providing this information? Who benefits and what are our safeguards?

Fourteen states have passed data privacy legislations to protect consumer privacy, our personal identification, and most importantly our children's data. Another ten states, including Vermont, are working on data-privacy bills. Nationally, this a vitally important topic and should be a federal law. That is not happening, and it has become a state responsibility. In the Commerce Committee we are building on the work done in states across the country, like Connecticut and California, to create a data privacy bill that works for Vermonters, is right sized for Vermont businesses, and one that meshes with the states in our region. I am confident that we can get it done right.

Thanks to all the constituents that have reached out to me with your thoughts on bills that are being worked on in the legislature. I value your opinions! Feel free to contact me with questions or concerns about legislation at sjerome@leg.state.vt.us.

*Take care,
Rep. Stephanie Zak Jerome
(Brandon)
Committee on Commerce and
Economic Development
(vice-chair)*

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Brandon Artists Guild presents the 2024 RNESU Student Art Show

February 2 - February 25

Join us for a Reception Friday 2/2/24, 5-7 pm

Hours: Closed Mondays
Tues. - Sat. 10am - 5pm Sun. 10am - 4pm

7 Center St, Brandon, VT
(802) 247-4956
brandonartistsguild.org



Lani Heitmann



Jeopardy! contestants

(Continued from Page 1)

sion. Then, you will be notified by a representative from the show that you have been selected to appear. Or you won't be notified at all ever.

Show biz, am I right?

All three of our Brandonites experienced a version of that process. When Cecil and Steven decided to give it a shot, tests were in person, periodic, and sporadically located. Steven, because of timing, paid to fly from New York to Los Angeles just to take the test. Cecil, however, lived in California at the time, and drove 15 minutes to the studio in order to take the test. Currently, one can take a Jeopardy online test at one's own convenience, as Jeff did, then wait and hope for an invitation to a next-level gathering of potential candidates. When his invitation came, Jeff traveled to New York to take another test and do that mock version of the show. He recalled, "I got a question wrong and made some pun about it, and everyone laughed. Even the parents. That's when I knew I had clinched it."

What motivates someone to audition for Jeopardy? The only common denominator for all three is that they were fans of the show. Cecil had a self-proclaimed "garbage-can mind" and lived near the studio, so why not? At Jeff's house, Jeopardy was a regular family event. He had seen many, many episodes and knew he wanted to appear on it. And Steven's mother, who was terminally ill, was an enormous fan of the show.

"And I thought, well, what more could I do to cheer her up than to go on her favorite show?" he said.

But notification that you have

actually been selected for the show may take some time. For Cecil and Jeff, test day to tape day was a full year. Steven's experience was shorter: his episode taped only three months after the test.

Our contestants' preparation methods varied.

"I didn't prep," recalled Cecil. "I mean, other than just watching a lot of Jeopardy."

Steven was in his final year of law school at the time and was receiving help from his classmates there. He said, "I was really good with the hard stuff, and the more arcane and obscure the better." His game plan was to focus more deeply on the stuff he already knew, and not clutter his mind with lots of new information.

Jeff employed a similar strategy, although with the help of his family he drilled for hours a day for several weeks on actual past questions from the show, even using a clicky pen as the "buzzer."

And then you go to California. Because five episodes are taped on the same day, you must bring five changes of clothes in case you win. You pay for your own flight and put yourself up in a hotel. Except for Jeff, who, because he was invited to participate in the teen tournament, was flown out with his parents on the show's expense. And except for Cecil, who, because she lived close by, simply drove to the studio again.

Game day! Everyone played well, remaining competitive until the absolute end. Each person had an opportunity on a Daily Double question. Jeff answered his question correctly, concerning Russian Czars, but unfortunately it came so early in the game that he couldn't really



(L TO R) Steven Jupiter, Cecil Reniche-Smith, and Jeff Haylon hail from different places and all competed on Jeopardy! at different times and somehow found themselves in the same small town in Vermont. Though none of them won the game, they enjoyed reminiscing about the experience. Trivia still plays a central role in Haylon's life: he hosts Friday trivia night at Red Clover in Brandon and competes in the Rec Department/Library's Sunday trivia contests as well.

capitalize on it. Both Cecil and Steven correctly answered their questions in the second round ("What are the Hanging Gardens of Babylon?" and "What is A River Runs Through It?," respectively), and both answers propelled them in momentum and put them in good positions at the end of the game.

By Final Jeopardy, Jeff was too far behind to win the game. Had he answered his question correctly, though, he may have amassed enough to propel him into the semifinals of the tournament. Cecil missed hers as well. All three contestants did so on her episode. If she had answered correctly, she would have won. Steven did answer correctly but didn't wa-

ger enough on Final Jeopardy or his Daily Double. Had he been more aggressive with his wagers, he would have won as well.

The show goes by so fast, the stage is as vast as we see it on television, breaks in play are timed exactly to coincide with commercials, a light in the studio indicates when contestants can buzz in after a question is read, and when you lose you are quickly shown the door.

And Alex Trebek? Apparently, he was not the warmest of people, but Jeff contextualized by saying, "For anyone going on that show, it's one of the most significant days of their lives. For him, it's Tuesday."

Steven won a trip to Barba-

dos, which he wasn't ever able to take but had to pay taxes on. Cecil won "the world's ugliest watch." Jeff's consolation prize was \$5,000. Minus taxes, of course.

And then you go home. Though your high school classmates seem to understand you a little more, or at least tolerate you a little more. You regret the green dress you wore, but looking back, it was fun. And then one day you're on the subway going home after law school and some guy cannot stop staring at you. Thankfully, his stop arrives before yours and he exits the train. But then he suddenly turns, points, looks you squarely in the eye and shouts, "Jeopardy!"

Energy Committee

(Continued from Page 7)

not offered without ample confidence on the part of the manufacturer that the panels will outperform their guarantee.

There are some uncertainties. The PUC could alter the playing field by discontinuing its practice of not grandfathering in existing systems and change rules that will make the returns less attractive. Insurance costs for everything are climbing rapidly. Perhaps our climate will continue to change so dramatically that we seldom see the sun again.

On the other hand, the cost of

panels and inverters has been dropping dramatically in the past decades and are expected to continue to decline, making repair costs more affordable. We have been offered to have sheep graze the solar field (a common and desirable practice) at low to no cost.

The assumptions I have used lead to results that sound too good to be believable—close to \$1,300,000 in cash savings over the life of the project. Due to the unknowns, I suggest that \$1,000,000 is a comfortable expectation. Even if the cash benefit is half of the \$1,300,000, the

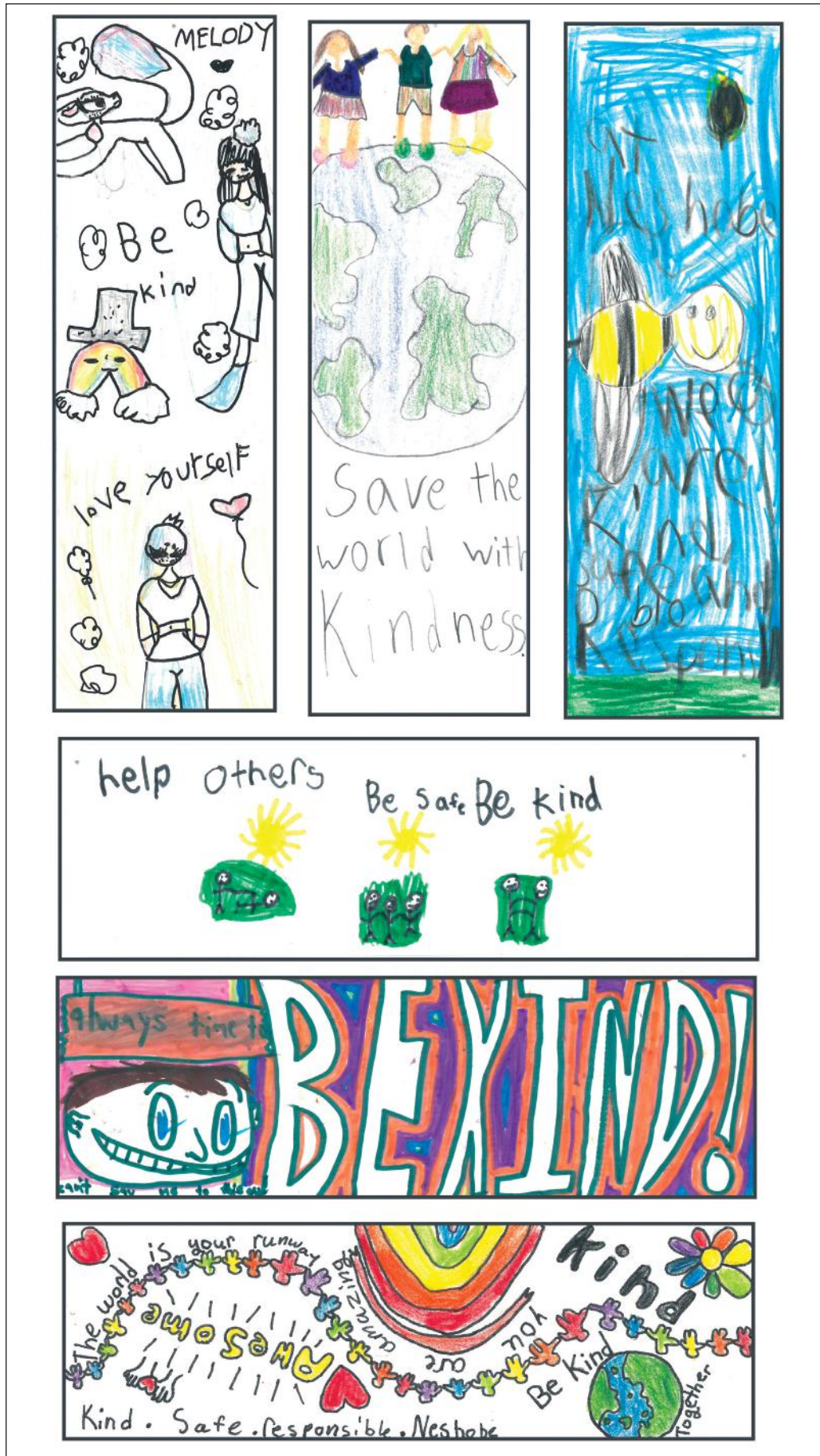
project should be very beneficial. Feel free to send me your questions at sirjimes@gmail.com.

As I have mentioned before, about 18 towns have undertaken solar projects of this magnitude, almost all before the 30% federal cash rebate and 2% funding options were available. I will provide a report on some of these projects in the near future.

Jim Emerson
Chair, Brandon Energy
Committee



OUR CREATIVE KIDS



ARTISTS: Moe LaRock, Sigourney Brodowski, Melody Foley, Addyson Stacey, Christian Markowski, and Theo Rose

GRADE: 1-6

SCHOOL: Neshobe

TITLE: Kindness Bookmarks

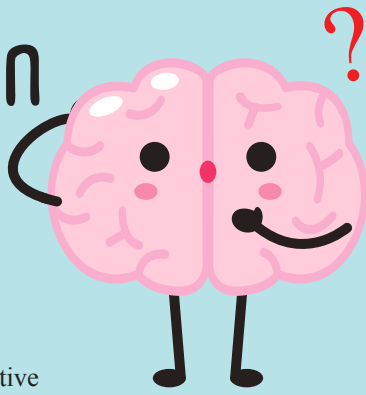
MEDIUM: Paper, markers, pencil

TEACHER: John Brodowski

Statement from Mr. Brodowski:

Our whole school celebrated kindness and gratitude during the month of November. As part of this celebration students were given the opportunity to create a kindness themed bookmark. Nearly two hundred finished bookmarks were displayed in the lobby. Three bookmarks were chosen to receive a gift certificate to The Bookstore in Brandon and another three were chosen as runner-ups. Those are the six awesome bookmarks you see here! It was great to see so many kind words and thoughts shared by our students!

Brandon Brain Buster



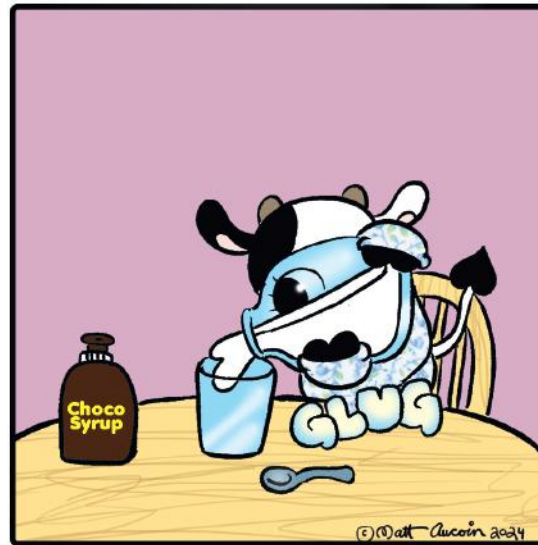
A and B are positive whole numbers, where $B = A + 1$. If 1000 is divisible by A and by B, which of the following must be true?

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) I and II only
- D) II and III only
- E) I, II, and III

- I) 10 is divisible by A
- II) 10 is divisible by B
- III) 100 is divisible by B^2

Answer on pg. 21

MAPLE^{the} COWTM by Matt Aucoin



Mim's Photos



Like all things vintage?

are on page 16!



Pittsford's Hot Potato!

THE PITTSFORD CONGREGATIONAL Church hosted a potato bar supper on Saturday, February 10. The dinner fed over 80 people and generated \$800 in a freewill offering. Proceeds will benefit the church's community initiatives. Pictured: Shana (Davenport) Halliday and her grandson, Oliver. Photos provided

Calendar of events

February

Mondays

Brandon Rec offers Aikido classes

Come to Brandon Town Hall for Youth classes at 5 p.m., and adult classes at 6 p.m. Beginners and spectators welcome. Visit www.aikidovermont.org for more information, including fees.

Tuesdays

Maclure Library Story Time Playgroup

Looking for a fun, educational playgroup for your 2–5 year old? Look no further! From 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. join Miss Allie, a certified teacher, for a weekly FREE literacy-based playgroup. Light snacks will be provided, along with stories, crafts, songs, games, and more. To register, please email allie.griffiths@rcpcc.org with your child's name, age, and contact information for your family.



your projects to work on.

Wednesdays

Ping Pong

The Green Mountain Table Tennis Club would like to announce the beginning of its new season!

The club has begun playing on Wednesday evenings starting at 7 p.m. It will meet nearly every Wednesday year-round in the gym at the Rutland Area Christian School in Rutland, located at the corner of Melrose Ave. and Lincoln Ave. in Rutland, a block from the intersection of Route 7 and Melrose Ave. (110 Lincoln Ave., Rutland, VT 05701).

Being a part of this unique and exciting club offers a variety of activities, including regular practice, a challenge board, clinics for beginner and advanced play, singles and doubles, inter-club events with other table tennis clubs, and even tournaments.

If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or athletic activity, we're interested in you! There is a modest membership fee of only \$30, although you can come twice free as our guest. Bring your sneakers and paddle (or use ours) and have some fun playing a great game of "Pong!" For further information about the Green Mountain Table Tennis Club, visit our club's website at www.gmttc.com.

Facebook and get on our email list.
\$15/class

Thursdays

Ukulele Group

Free at the Chaffee Art Center from 12–1 p.m., for adults & 12+. This is not a class but a group enjoying playing the ukulele together. Must pre-register. There are a limited amount of in-house instruments to reserve.

Attendees will be led through specific sheet music by musician Steven Wilson. All levels are welcome.

Open Mic at Red Clover in Brandon

Join us starting at 6 p.m. for a rousing good time!

Fridays

Chaffee Art Center All About the Arts Free Class for kids 3–5

From 11am–Noon...FREE! Students will have fun creating and doing activities with art, music, literature, and more!

One free book per student will be given weekly (while supplies last) thanks to our partners at Rutland Free Library. Adult must accompany children under age 4. Must pre-register by Wednesday each week.

Instructor: Lori Sullivan; Minimum 3.

Maclure Library Knitting Circle

Come join us weekly to share projects from noon – 2:00 p.m.

Corn Hole at the Godnick Adult Center

By request, we will have drop-in cornhole in the Rec Hall on Fridays from 2–4 p.m.

Play with whomever shows up each time or just practice your cornhole skills!

Saturdays

Bingo at the Brandon Senior Center

First Saturday of each month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Bring lunch, and the Center will provide beverages, desserts, and a good time. A great way to pass a Saturday afternoon. Please direct any questions to Kathy Mathis at 247-3121.

Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library

Join us every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. for picture book storytime. All ages welcome.

Sundays

Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal
Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event!

Yes, you CAN paint! More info,

Homeward Bound announces 2024 low-cost rabies clinics schedule

The clinics are open to both dogs and cats and are offered at 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. on the following Saturdays:

February 24
March 16
April 20

The clinics take place at the shelter, which is located at 236 Boardman Street in Middlebury. Pre-registration is highly recommended and can be completed through the shelter's website, homewardbound-animals.org. The cost is \$20.

All animals must be 12 weeks of age or older to receive the rabies vaccine. In order to receive a 3-year rabies vaccine, pet owners must provide proof of prior vaccination. No physical exams will be performed. This is a drive-through style vaccine clinic. All dogs are required to be on leash and cats in carriers for this event.



Rabies is a deadly viral disease of the brain that infects mammals. In Vermont, rabies is most commonly found in wild animals, however the state requires that dogs and cats be vaccinated by a veterinarian. The owner of a dog must provide evidence of current rabies vaccination status to obtain the required municipal license by April 1 of each year.

Friends Zone

The Friends Zone will be initially open 3 hours per week at the Brandon United Methodist Church on Tuesdays from 12-3 p.m. at 1 Franklin Street, Brandon. Socialize with old friends, make new ones. Sip some soup while you sip a drink. Be puzzled for a bit, sorting out a puzzle, or hold an Ace in the hole until the right moment to play it. If so inclined, you can bring to the table a struggle of your own to work on or your thoughts on developing the Friends Zone or improving our lives.

The door is open. Our minds are open. Our hearts are open.

All are welcome in.

For more information contact pastors Reverend John Hardman-Zimmerman (hzfm@hotmail.com or (802) 282-7532) or Vicki Disorda (vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com or (802) 345-4125).

Pins & Needles Craft Club at the Brandon Free Public Library

Drop in from 5:30–7:00 p.m., and bring



Yoga Prana Shakti Zoom & Studio Chair Yoga, Gentle, Wednesdays

From 10:30–11:30 a.m. at 155 Woodstock Avenue in Rutland, Lina Cloffe Hanson (Parvati) offers an Earth Conscious, Spiritual, Gentle Physical Yoga Practice. We meet on Mondays via zoom. Contact for Zoom link. (There is also a Monday Zoom only class)

Not everyone can get up and down off of the floor easily, making traditional yoga classes difficult. If you have physical limitation or a health issue this might be the ideal class for you. With the help of a chair most people can practice yoga and reap the benefits of increased circulation, balance, flexibility, mobility, strength and more.

We spend a fair amount of the time exercising in a seated position in the chairs but if possible, we also do exercises standing, using the chairs for support. The exercises can be adjusted for individual needs and we move at a comfortable pace. I think you will soon notice a difference once you start. Looking forward to seeing you in class!

Lina (Parvati) has 20 plus years of experience teaching and a lifelong personal practice.

To stay tuned if there are any cancellations, follow on

The Brandon

Where the S

Bone Builders
Monday & Thursday
Tuesday & Friday
Strength for health!
Bone Builders is an exercise program to prevent (and even reverse) effects of osteoporosis. Strengthen bones twice a week dramatically reduce fracture risk. Gain bone density and improve balance. The program significantly reduce the incidence of falls.

Christian Based Book Studies
Tuesdays 10:30

SANDY'S SOUP BOWL AT NOON
FREE COMMUNITY MEAL PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY
ENJOY A HOMEMADE BOWL OF SOUP WITH WARM BREAD
THURSDAYS 12 - 1:30

Homeward Bound Lunch 'N Learn: Animal Reiki

February 15, 12:00–1:00 p.m.

Hosted by Maria Farnsworth and Judy Holmes. Location: Homeward Bound, 236 Boardman Street, Middlebury. RSVPs required as there is limited seating. Please register by contacting Hannah Manley at hmanley@homewardboundanimals.org or 802-388-1100 ext. 101. This is a free event. Bring your own lunch, beverages provided! Animal Reiki is a noninvasive and stress-free energy exchange between human and animal. Much like humans, when animals are stressed, sick or injured they can become "imbalanced". When Reiki is shared by a practitioner, the practitioner is offering a



support system for the animal to become more relaxed which can lead to self-healing and thus the animal can "rebalance" itself.

contact Crystal at ceastman88@gmail.com

"The study of art is the most important study a garden designer can pursue."

Thursday, 15th

Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce Candidates Forum

Come to the Brandon Town Hall Main Floor at 7:00pm.

Please enter from the lower level and use the stairs or lift if needed.

The Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a forum for the candidates running for the contested seats on the Brandon Selectboard.

3-year term, one open seat

Candidates: Doug Bailey, David Snow

1-year terms, two open seats

Candidates: David Atherton, Ralph Ethier, Ray Marcoux, Heather Nelson, Aida Nielsen

Candidates will have an opportunity to introduce themselves, share their ideas, and answer questions from the public.

For more information, contact the Chamber at 802-247-6401 or email info@brandon.org

Brandon Rec Winter Carnival

Wait- it's winter in Brandon. It's even winter vacation for RNESU schools. Doesn't that mean it's time for Winter Carnival?

It used to be, but this winter, the snow has been hard to find, so Brandon Rec is moving Carnival to the Town Hall!

Starting off with the **Creepy Carnival on Fri Feb 16!**

Wear your costumes or not, come and trunk or treat in the spooky Town Hall of Terror! Think Spooksville but inside!

6:30–7:30 p.m., Trunk or Treat and Carnival Games

8:00–8:30 p.m., The Amazing Arturo performs magic tricks!

Plus food by Dallas, music and lights, fun stuff for adults and kids! Rumor is that Splat the Rat, Plinko and Pong will be on site!

It will be a creepy cool night for everyone! Where else can you see a 12 ft skeleton up close?

Sat Feb 17 Family Game Night

Tues Feb 20 Swifty Party

Friday Feb 23 Brandon Idol Country

Sat Feb 24 4H Talent Show



Doors: 7:00 // Show: 7:30, BYOB

Join us on February 16th for our second annual Valentine's event, this year in collaboration with PoemTown Randolph, featuring music and poetry by Partridge Boswell and Nat Williams of Los Lorcas as well as our audience! Oum Kamar will start the show off with a 30 minute set. Then Partridge and Nat will take the stage and entertain with poetry and music, as well as invite you up to share your favorite love poems. Please sign up for the open mic component when purchasing your ticket.

You will receive a complimentary cupcake from Randolph's own Windy Lane Bakehouse at the box office.

Los Lorcas: Troubadouring widely in the US and abroad (Ireland, Canada and Slovenia), Los Lorcas have performed everywhere from farmhouse kitchens to pubs, coffeehouses, schools, theaters and 1,000+ book festival crowds attesting to the broad appeal of their lyrical tapestries and innovative vision of how poetry and music are two sides of the same spinning coin and together can attain a mesmerizing symbiosis.

Partridge Boswell: Author of the Grolier Poetry Prize-winning collection *Some Far Country*, Partridge Boswell is co-founder of Bookstock Literary Festival and teaches at Vallum Society for Education in Arts & Letters in Montreal. He lives with his family in Vermont and troubadours widely with the poetry/music group Los Lorcas, whose debut release *Last Night in America* is available on Thunder Ridge Records. His Saguro Prize-winning chapbook *Not Yet a Jedi* is also now a thing.

Oum Kamar: Jennifer Grout shot to fame in the Arab world in 2013 when she was a finalist on *Arabs Got Talent* television contest in the 2013 competition. She grew up locally and attended the Longly School of Music, and recently has returned to the area and is a singer songwriter focusing on the creation of her own music under the name Oum Kamar.

Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, Sons of Mystro

Prepare to be transported into a musical realm like never before as the Sons of Mystro, the dynamic violin-playing brothers, Malcom and Umoja, grace the stage.

Heralded as a force to be reckoned with in the music industry, the Sons of Mystro are redefining genres with their unparalleled performances. Critics have hailed them as "Innovators of sound" and "Masters of musical fusion." The Black Violin protégé brothers seamlessly weave reggae classics, American pop hits, and their own unique compositions into a harmonious arrangement that transcends boundaries.

From 7:00–9:00 p.m., ticket from \$35.00–\$55.00

Craft Swap at the Brandon Free Public Library

Saturday, February 17, 12–3 p.m.

Have leftover or unused crafting items? Looking to add to your crafting stash?

Join us at the library for a free craft supply swap! Drop off items to donate during library hours Feb. 10-15, come browse Sat. Feb. 17th noon-3pm.



More info at brandonpubliclibrary.org

Friday, 16th

Neshobe Cafe, Brandon

Live music by Scarlet Annie from 5:30–7:00 p.m.

The Underground - Listening Room, Valentine's Poetry and Music with Partridge Boswell, Nat Williams and Oum Kamar

Advance: \$17 (+fees) // Day of show: \$20 (+fees) Tickets include a complimentary cupcake from Windy Lane Bakehouse (<https://www.windylanebakehouse.com/>)

Saturday 24th

Neshobe Cafe, Brandon

Karaoke starting at 7:00 p.m.

Brandon United Methodist Community

Secular Meets the Sacred

Friends Zone
Tuesdays from 12-3
Socialize with old friends, make new ones. Be puzzled for a bit, sorting out a puzzle, or hold an Ace in the hole until the right moment to play it. If so inclined, you can bring to the table a struggle of your own to work on or your thoughts on developing the Friends Zone or improving our lives.

Brandon Forestdale Lions Club

Diaper Drive
Donations accepted during Food Shelf Hours

Food Shelf
Sunday 12:30-2
Tuesday 12-3

Sunday Worship Service
11:15
All Welcome
1 Franklin Street

Town Manager

(Continued from Page 5)

man to address citizen concern re: road weights / no truck signs

- Brandon Essential Care Network to facilitate resident access to resources

- Administrators at VT Emergency Management to integrate Brandon into VT-ALERT

- Friends of the Town Hall to accept their donation totaling \$18,000 toward the new floor

- Police Department quarterly training to interact with the officers on shared concerns

- Site visit with Tim Guiles to Pine Grove Organics at the owners' invitation

FOR AWARENESS OF THE SELECTBOARD

The inside wastewater line at the police station failed on January 23, resulting in considerable damage. It appears the line was not pitched sufficiently when installed and, further, that it was punctured by fastening a bracket for a handrail directly into it when the building was first renovated for use as a police station. Tim Kingston from our Public Works Department responded for immediate remedy to prevent further damage and to make repairs sufficient for the line to flow, as did Dundon's Plumbing & Heating.

Disaster Recovery was in Brandon cleaning up after the sandstorm inside the Town Hall and was engaged to replace sheet-rock, ceiling tiles, and carpet and ensure no health hazards going forward. Dundon's P&H advises the pitch cannot be corrected without structural alterations to the building; they will install jetted toilets as a next-best solution.

The Town of Brandon received a Recognition Award from HireAbility Vermont for participating in the 2023 Summer Career Exploration Program. Their intern, Dylan, was a pleasure to work with and ac-

complished much good for the Town while he completed his HireAbility program with us. The trophy will be brought to the Selectboard meeting.

Deputy Town Manager Bill Moore successfully secured energy resilience assessment grants for several Town-owned buildings through the State's MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program): The Town Office, the Town Hall, the Highway Barn, and the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Implementation grant applications will open later this Spring.

Tree Warden Neil Silins successfully secured a Communities Caring for Canopy grant of "full funding in the amount of \$10,800" for removal and replacement of deficient trees, as presented to the Selectboard on November 13, 2023.

Our skilled Highway Foreman Shawn Erickson achieved retired status as of February 1st. The whole community is grateful for his service. We are confident in the abilities and prospects for success with our new crew chief, Jeremy Disorda.

Miss Vermont Earth

(Continued from Page 6)

I'm poor, from a small town, and went through a lot of personal hardships growing up," Williams said. "But here in South Africa, I'm a rich, white woman with a platform... When I speak to the girls and women here, they listen; they get pumped... After I'm finished talking to them, I notice they flock to be close to me. Everyone just wants to feel understood and supported."

"Bella, what you have done here in South Africa — I am speechless," said Buntu Rael Joseph, a member of a non-profit group dedicated to helping youths. "You took from your empty pockets and you made sure our girls are smiling... you restored whatever was taken away from these young girls... Thank you, my friend. You are an angel sent from above."

What's next for Miss Vermont Earth 2023? Well, she'll be traveling to the Dominican Republic in March, back to South Africa in June and then onto Nigeria after that — spreading the message that "strong girls change the world!"

Editor's Note: Support and follow Bella Williams @missisabel-lawilliams or @stronggirlschangetheworld. Find her GoFundMe campaign at gofundme.com and search "Healthier Futures for South African Strong Girls."

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT (as of 2 February 2024)	
Operating Expenses (does not include tonight's warrant)	59.67% thru funds / 58% thru year
Unrestricted / Unassigned Fund Balance	\$718,865
1% (Local Option) Tax Fund Available / Undesignated Unobligated ARPA (will report only until fully obligated)	\$178,903 FULLY OBLIGATED
Known Grant Matches Not Yet Designated	UNION STREET
Delinquent property taxes (prior years)	\$341,417 (was \$339,809)
Delinquent wastewater (prior years ['over 120 days'])	\$190,009 (was \$199,958)
Number of payment plans for delinquent accounts	23 active; 3 await taxpayer signature

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 1)

public workshops and hearings during which the Commission took comments and suggestions, many of which were incorporated into the final version. The last hearing was held on January 29 and, according to Planning Commission Chair Cecil Reniche-Smith (who is also on the Brandon Selectboard), there were no substantive changes that necessitated further hearings.

Some attendees, however, still held that the Plan failed to address the needs of the town's disabled residents and those living in poverty. Of particular concern was the Plan's omission of any proposal for a laundromat in town. The last

operating laundromat in Brandon closed during the pandemic.

While the Board acknowledged the call for a laundromat, with Board Chair Tracy Wyman expressing a need for two facilities (one in downtown Brandon and one in Forest Dale), Ms. Reniche-Smith emphasized that the Town Plan was a "macro" document that focused on the "big picture" rather than on specific details. Board member Tim Guiles and Town Manager Seth Hopkins also noted the difficulty already encountered in trying to get someone to open a new laundromat. Some attendees suggested offering financial incentives, such as discounted water and sewer fees.

Ultimately, the Plan was adopted without the inclusion of any specific plans for a laundromat. The document will now be forwarded to the state.

APPROPRIATIONS

After Mr. Hopkins finished his report (the text of which is reprinted in this issue of The Reporter), Board member Brian Coolidge noted that if all of the appropriations on the town ballot were approved by voters, the amount needed to be raised by taxes would exceed \$250K, in addition to the \$3,271,510 already proposed in the town budget. Mr. Coolidge said he simply wanted the public to be aware.

If approved by voters, the total amount requested in appropriations would represent

approximately \$92 per voter in additional tax liability for the 2024-25 budget year. (The Town Office mailed out 2,700 ballots to voters this year.)

The appropriations on the ballot are meant to give voters control over spending for services and organizations such as the American Legion, the Brandon Area Rescue Squad, and the Brandon Library, among others. All the organizations seeking appropriations this year also sought and received appropriations last year.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board unanimously approved the appointment of David Martin to the Energy Committee. Mr. Martin will take the seat being vacated by

Claire Babyak Shick.

The Board unanimously voted to grant the Highway Foreman the discretion to decide when to post road closures due to impassability. The warm winter is creating early mud conditions on roads in many areas of town.

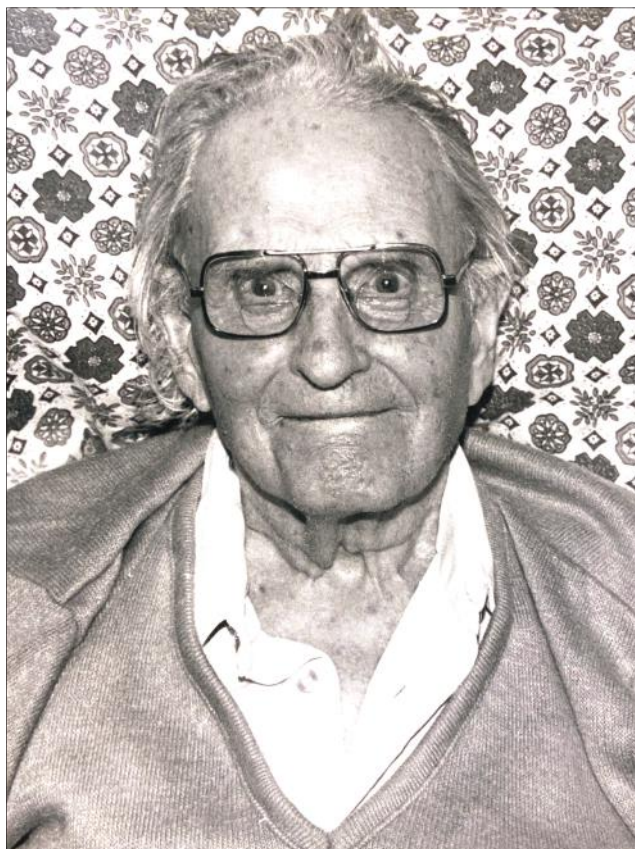
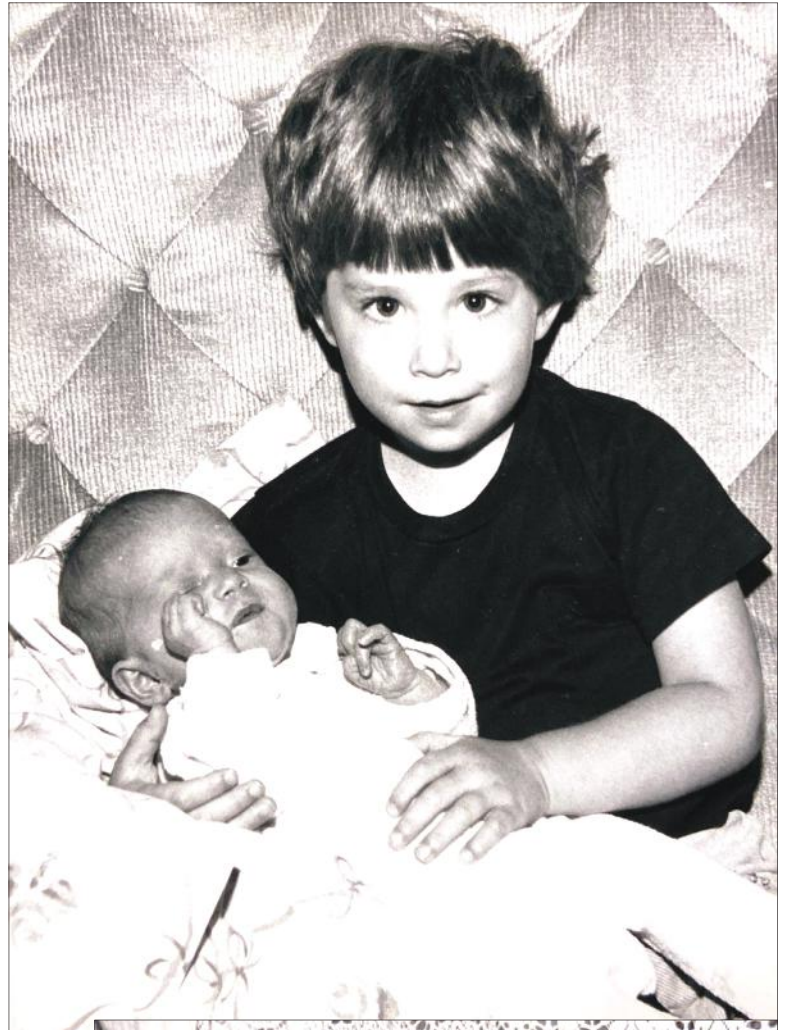
The Board's final piece of business for the evening was the unanimous approval of two warrants, one in the amount of \$494,874.21, to cover town expenses and obligations, and one in the amount of \$1,885,000. The second warrant represents the town's operating fund, which is being moved from Bar Harbor Bank to the National Bank of Middlebury to take advantage of superior interest rates.



Mim's Photos



Can you identify any of the people in these vintage photos from Mim Welton's Dateline Brandon newspaper archives? Let us know!



E-mail
kate@brandonreporter.com
if you can identify someone in
these photos.

Or call us at 247-8080

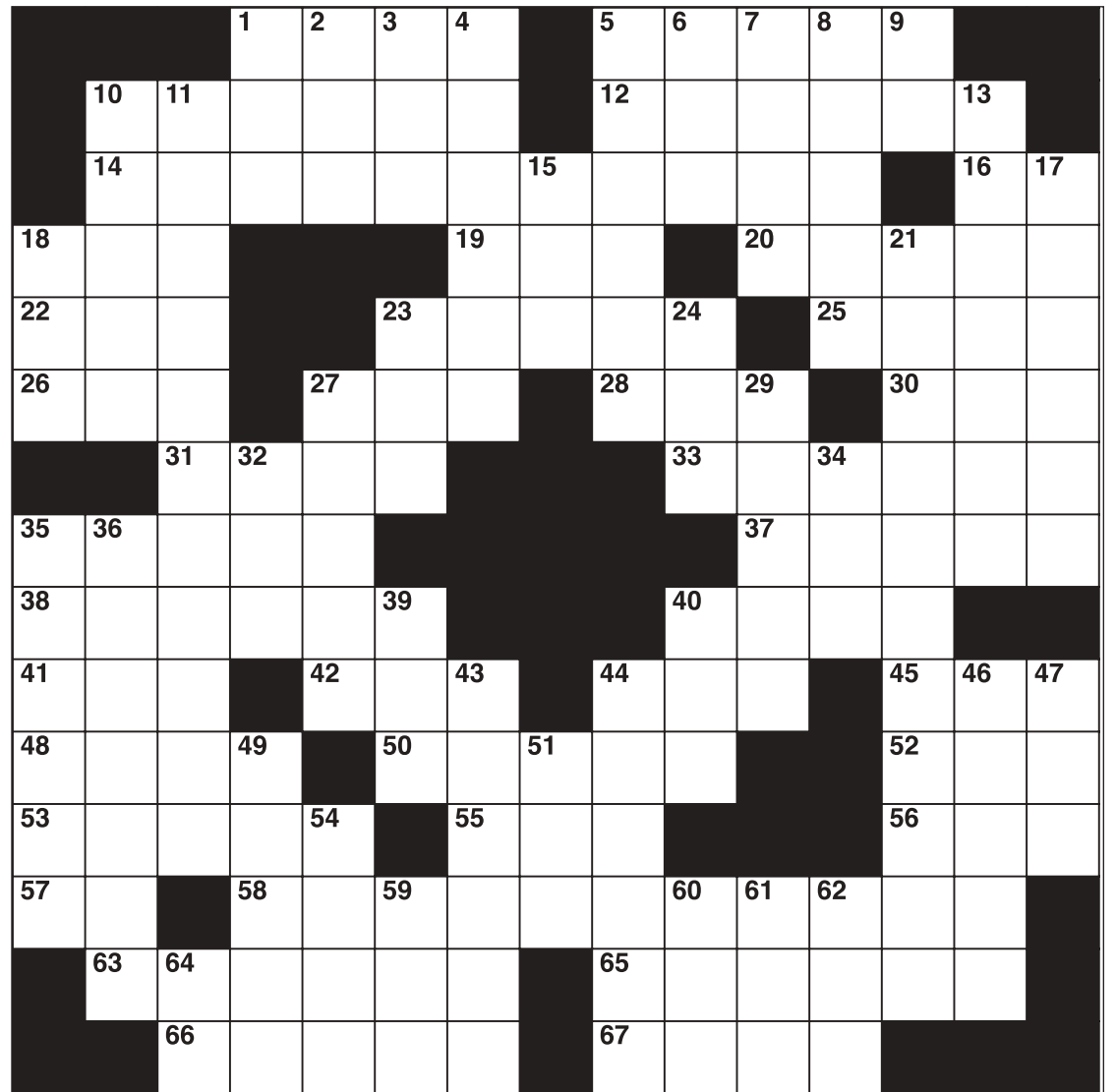
Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1. Gene type
5. Persian male given name
10. Type of protection
12. Cloud
14. One who returns to life
16. Gym class
18. General's assistant (abbr.)
19. Baby's dining accessory
20. Enchantress
22. Prefix denoting "in a"
23. Spiritual leader
25. Cavities
26. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
27. Foot (Latin)
28. Sweet potato
30. Pharaoh of Lower Egypt
31. Land
33. More inquisitive
35. Dog breed: ___ Apso
37. Stood up
38. Direct and uninhibited
40. Authorless
41. Blocking type of drug (abbr.)
42. Retrospective analysis (abbr.)
44. Root mean square (abbr.)
45. Macaws
48. Actress Remini
50. Polynesian wrapped skirt
52. City of Angels hoops team (abbr.)
53. Fitzgerald and Baker are two
55. Bowling alley must-have
56. A way to cool down
57. Ethnic group in Asia
58. A way to alter
63. Set of five
65. Removes from the record
66. Dummies
67. Set period in office

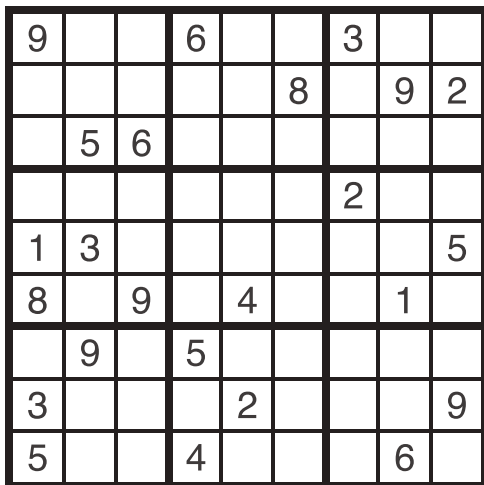
CLUES DOWN

1. DC Comics superhero
2. Brew
3. Play
4. Single-celled animals
5. Rough to the touch
6. Small island (British)
7. Often noted alongside cons
8. Preparation of rootstock
9. Atomic #44
10. Egyptian unit of capacity
11. About secretary
13. Particular groups
15. Poke fun at
17. Make certain that something occurs
18. Financial term
21. Justify
23. Arbiter
24. 007's creato
27. Czech name for Prague
29. Groans
32. American time
34. No seats available
35. ___ Stahl, journalist
36. Cleft lip
39. Talk incessantly
40. Expresses atomic and molecular weights (abbr.)
43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
44. Curdled milk
46. Running competitions
47. A team's best pitcher
49. Carthaginian explorer
51. World-renowned city
54. Most common Japanese surname
59. The bill in a restaurant
60. They ___
61. City of Angels football team (abbr.)
62. Distinctive practice
64. One quintillion bytes



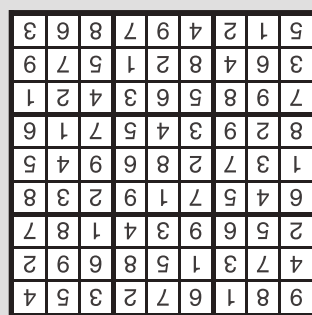
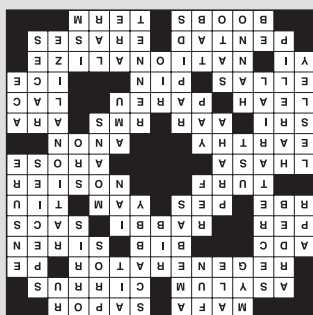
Sudoku

Here's how a sudoku puzzle works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku every row, every column and every box must contain the numbers 1 through 9. Each number must appear only once in each row, column and box. Figure out where to fill in the missing numbers by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers that are filled in, the easier it gets to solve.



Level: Intermediate

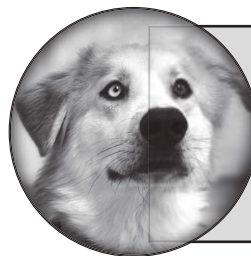
PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



February is National Pet Dental Health Month!

The Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) would like to remind you that February is National Pet Dental Health Month. An astonishing 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats show signs of oral disease by age 3. Symptoms of gum disease in dogs and cats include yellow and brown build-up of tartar along the gum line, red and swollen gums, persistent bad breath, or pain or bleeding when you touch the gums or mouth. Watch for a change in eating or chewing habits, pawing at the face or mouth, and depression. If you notice any of these symptoms, please seek veterinary care. Pet owners should have a regular dental care regimen at home, which includes brushing the pet's teeth with specially formulated toothpastes. Make sure your veterinarian checks your pet's teeth at their annual visit, and talk to your vet about a plan for good oral health for your pet. Left untreated, periodontal disease can cause oral pain, tooth loss, and potentially other complications. Talk to your vet to create a plan for your pet so you can stay ahead of any potential dental issues.

I COULD BE THE NEW FRIEND YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!



MEET MALAKAI - 1-2 YEAR-OLD. NEUTERED MALE. HUSKY MIX. TAN/WHITE.

Malakai is a unique looking dog with an active personality. Malakai just moved up from Texas, and is loving the Vermont snow. He's very good on the leash, and always looking for his people. Malakai is always up for a walk, play session, or a cuddle. We do not have specific restrictions in regards to Malakai, but aren't sure of how he will respond to cats, and have found he does best with medium energy dog friends! If you think this handsome fella' may fit your family, please stop by to visit him! The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am to 4pm.

MEET SQUID - 10 MONTH-OLD, NEUTERED-MALE. MIXED BREED. RED.

Squid and his friend Chico were recently brought to us from South Korea. He's been hanging out with our staff in the laundry room and offices, just learning how to be a dog. Squid is sweet and gentle; and is learning to love attention, treats and time with people, but approaches new situations with cautious curiosity. Squid is a fast learner and has never been a family pet, these qualities make him a bit of an escape artist and adopters should be aware and ready to monitor him any time he is not in a secured enclosure. If you would like to meet Squid, please stop by to visit him! The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am to 4pm. You can read all about Squid and Chico's journey on our website.



RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

802-483-6700 • WWW.RCHSVT.ORG
765 STEVENS RD. • PITTSFORD



OUR ADOPTION CENTER IS OPEN
TUESDAY-SATURDAY FROM
11AM-4PM.
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED.

OFF THE SHELF



DID YOU KNOW?

School is out next week, but we are still open with regular hours!

The following Large Print books were donated by Brenda Whittaker

The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride, donated in memory of Charles H. Whittaker

Random in Death by J.D. Robb, donated in memory of Hilda Crosby

The Missing Witness by Alison Brennan, donated in memory of Meryl Sawyer

The Friendship Club by Robyn Carr, donated in memory of Marie Butterfield

The Ghost Orchid by Jonathan Kellerman, donated in memory of John Trimmer

New graphic novel

Zodiac, Ai Weiwei, Elettra Stamboulis (Editor), Gianluca Costantini (Illustrator)

In this beautifully illustrated and deeply philosophical graphic memoir, legendary artist Ai Weiwei explores the connection between artistic expression and intellectual freedom through the lens of the Chinese zodiac.

New Fiction

Acts of Forgiveness by Maura Cheeks

In this big-hearted debut about ambition, race, and class, a family grapples with how much of their lineage they're willing to unearth in order to participate in the nation's first federal reparations program.

The Book of Love by Kelly Link

In the long-awaited first novel from short-story virtuoso and Pulitzer Prize finalist Kelly Link, three teenagers become pawns in a supernatural power struggle.

Burma Sahib by Paul Theroux

From the acclaimed author of *The Mosquito Coast* and *The Bad Angel Brothers* comes a riveting new novel exploring one of English literature's most beloved and controversial figures: George Orwell. The novel follows his early years as an officer in colonial Burma that transformed him from Eric Blair, the British Raj policeman, into Orwell the anticolonial writer.

Held by Anne Michaels

A novel of love and loyalty across generations...1917. On a battlefield near the River Aisne, John lies in the aftermath of a blast, unable to move or feel his legs. Struggling to focus his thoughts, he is lost to memory as the snow falls—a chance encounter in a pub by a railway, a hot bath with his lover on a winter

night. 1920...John has returned from war to North Yorkshire, near a different river. He is alive but still not whole. Reunited with Helena, an artist, he reopens his photography business and tries to keep on living. But the past erupts insistently into the present, as ghosts begin to surface in his pictures—ghosts with messages he cannot understand. So begins a narrative that spans four generations of connections and consequences that ignite and re-ignite as the century unfolds.

No One Dies Yet by Kobby Ben Ben

2019. The Year of the Return. It has been exactly 400 years since the first slave ships left Ghana for America. Ghana has now opened its doors to Black diasporans, encouraging them to return and get to know the land of their ancestors. Elton, Vincent, and Scott arrive from America to visit preserved sites from the transatlantic slave route, and to explore the country's underground queer scene. Their activities are narrated by their two combative guides: Kobby, their guide to Accra's privileged circles; and Nana, the voice of tradition and religious principle. The pair's tense relationship sets the tone for what becomes a shocking and unsettling tale of murder that is at times funny, at times erotic, yet always outspoken and iconoclastic.

Officer resigns

(Continued from Page 3)

Heather Simons, executive director of the Criminal Justice Council, responded later to apologize to the community and to tell Major he was no longer welcome at the Vermont Police Academy.

"I would imagine that you are mortified and if you're not then you have even more work to do," she said. "But the extent of the damage you have caused today I'm certain that you don't understand."

She said that all of Major's colleagues in law enforcement would have to help repair the harm that he had caused, adding, "This is a really kind of a tragic day for process and for showcasing the prog-

ress we are making."

Will Lambek of Migrant Justice, a nonprofit representing immigrant farmworkers statewide, told VTDigger after the meeting that the organization believed Major's comment was "a clear and painful reflection of the racism that still exists in this state." It points to the importance of passing the fair and impartial policing policy, Lambek added in a message.

"How can any immigrant in Vermont hear those words and not fear that the police will turn them over to [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement] or Border Patrol if given the chance?" he wrote.

Several council members who

represent advocacy groups also reached out to VTDigger to comment on the matter.

Cassandra Burdyslaw, who represents the Vermont Human Rights Commission on the council, denounced the "derogatory" comment as "wholly inappropriate" and said it underscores the urgency of revisiting the fair and impartial policing policy, which the commission is committed to advance.

"No person is illegal; each deserves respect, whether voicing their opinion at a meeting or interacting with law enforcement in Vermont's communities," she said in an emailed statement.

Brandon Police Report

February 5

- Took fingerprints for employment.
- Directed traffic around a disabled Casella's truck that had broken down on Franklin Street, just before High Street. The vehicle was towed and the roadway was reopened to normal traffic flow.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for defective equipment. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street. Ticket issued for cell phone violation.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for failure to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Conant Square at Pearl Street for numerous violations. Ticket issued for operating with a civilly suspended driver's license, and warnings issued for several other offenses.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for failing to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.
- Responded to the area around Pine Grove Organics on Grove Street for a report of a suspicious individual walking around a business during closed hours. The subject was located and it was determined that the individual was just walking through the area and no criminal activity had taken place.

February 6

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street at Nickerson Road for following too closely. Warning issued.
- Responded to a residence on Hollow Road for a report of a man trespassing on the property. The man was located and advised that he had been on property that was posted as "No Trespassing." The man explained that he was bird watching and that he could cut through the property because there was a former town road/trail that ran through the complainant's property. The individual was advised about returning to the property, and he indicated that he would not return in the future.
- Deployed the K9 Unit to track a potential trespasser on a property located on Hollow Road. During the track, illegal tree stands were located on the complainant's property.
- Responded to Neshobe Elementary School for a bomb threat made by a student. The

threat was not found to be credible. One juvenile was charged.

- Responded to a residence for a domestic disturbance between a father and step-daughter. No arrests were made as the incident was found to be a verbal altercation with no physical assaults.
- Served in-hand a relief from abuse order.
- Served an active arrest warrant on a woman located on Center Street.
- Responded to a residence on River Street for a report of a violent domestic disturbance in which a woman had allegedly strangled her husband. Upon arrival, the responding officers conducted an investigation and placed the woman under arrest. The suspect was brought to the police department where she was processed and released on a citation to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court for arraignment on 2/7/2024 at 12:30 p.m. on the charge of Domestic Assault.

February 7

- Assisted an individual at a residence for a court ordered civil standby to pick up personal belongings.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for following too closely. Ticket issued.
- Conducted a patrol on Grove Street.
- Vehicle stop on High Street for an expired registration. Warning issued.
- Responded to Grove Street for a possible violation of conditions of release. Upon investigation, it was determined that the individual had lied about the violation and was having some mental health issues. The individual was warned about filing false reports and told that if he made another, he would be criminally charged.

February 8

- Assisted Brandon Fire Department (BFD) and Brandon Area Rescue Squad (BARS) with a man having a possible heart attack. He was transported to Rutland Regional Medical Center.
- Conducted a death investigation, along with the State of Vermont Office of the Medical Examiner, at the Rutland Regional Medical Center resulting from a medical emergency that had occurred earlier in Brandon. *(See Police report, Page 19)*

Police report

(Continued from Page 18)

- don. Investigation is ongoing.
- Assisted EMS on a routine medical call.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street by NAPA Auto Parts for speeding. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Park Street for defective equipment. Warning issued.
- Responded to a juvenile problem involving an 8-year-old who was out of control, assaulting family members, and throwing things around the residence. The juvenile was transported to the hospital.
- Conducted traffic enforcement at the intersection of Champlain Street and Grove Street. Two vehicles were stopped for violations.
- Vehicle stop on Park Street for failure to stop at a stop sign. Warning issued.
- Conducted another vehicle stop on Park Street for failure to stop at a stop sign. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for defective headlight. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for defective equipment. Warning issued.

February 9

- Responded to the Wintergreen Residential Care Home on Court Drive for a report of a suspicious vehicle that had been parked next to the facility for several hours. Officers checked the vehicle but did not locate anyone inside or in the area.
- Responded to the area of Downtown Brandon for a motorist who had accidentally struck a light post while parking her vehicle, causing damage to the post.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for failure to stop at a stop sign. Warning issued.

February 10

- Responded with BFD, EMS, and the Pittsford Fire Department to a structure fire on Spellman Way. It was found that no one was inside the residence and the fire was extinguished. The fire is not believed to be suspicious.
- Assisted an elderly individual with getting back on their feet after a fall from some porch steps on Grove Street. The individual was helped up and did not need any medical attention.
- Responded to the area of Grove Street near Champlain Farms for a report of a person outside their vehicle with their pants hanging down. The re-

sponding officer located the individual, who was elderly and had allegedly fallen earlier. The officer assisted the man back into his vehicle. No medical attention was required.

- Vehicle stop on High Street at Park Street for a stop sign violation. Warning issued.
- Responded to Conant Square for two individuals causing a disturbance. Upon investigation, the woman involved was charged with Disorderly Conduct, Criminal Threatening, and Stalking.
- Attempted to serve a restraining order on an individual on Mulcahy Drive. No contact was made.
- Vehicle stop on Mulcahy Drive for having an unregistered vehicle. Tickets issued for operating an unregistered vehicle and for not having their license in-possession.

February 11

- Received a report of an erratic operator on Center Street who was having trouble maintaining their travel lane. The responding officer located the vehicle and spoke with the driver about the complaint. It was determined that the operator was not impaired or having a medical issue and was released from the scene after being advised about her driving.
- Received a report of a landlord/tenant issue on Forest Dale Road.
- Received a complaint of a white Kia, with temporary license plates, passing vehicles in the break down lane on Route 7 at speeds reported to be over 100 miles per hour. The responding officer checked the length of Route 7 in Brandon but could not locate the vehicle.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street at Larch Lane for a cell phone violation. Warning issued.
- Assisted Shelburne Police in serving a citation to an individual on West Seminary Street.
- Received a report of a threatening complaint on Forest Dale Road.
- Responded to a residence for a domestic disturbance regarding custody of a child. The involved parties were advised about seeking relief for the issue in court.
- Vehicle stop on Park Street at Marble Street for a stop sign violation. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on McConnell Road for failure to use turn signal. Warning issued.



BY LYN DESMARAIS

Many who garden do so in order to have a ready source of beautiful flowers to cut. I've asked two local friends to contribute and comment on my advice because I feel they are experts, and I am not.

How do I grow a cut-flower garden and is it a lot of work? What's involved? I feel that all gardening does involve a lot of work so, I say, start small. The goal is to have cut flowers throughout our growing season and to have them last for a week inside a house in a vase. Therefore earmark 4-6 large containers now for your Dahlias and earmark a sunny piece of

your garden that is 2 feet by 5 feet for your cutting garden. Make sure you have a hose that can reach both. As soon as the ground is bare, even in winter, cover that 2-by-5 spot with cardboard or a tarp, weighed down so they stay put. This will, I say hopefully, kill any weeds or grasses or at least make the ground easier for you to work in May.

Look around your garden even now. What do you have for perennials? Write down their color, size, and when they bloom. For example, you may have lilacs, hydrangeas, peonies, and irises. You may also have wild flowers, such as daisies, Queen Anne's lace, red clover, golden rod, chicory, and wild phlox. Your color palette would be mainly purple, white, and pink. Most of the flower blooms are large, other than the clover, but there's a good variation of flat, round, and cone shapes. Your bloom times will be May, June,

August, and September. Do you have greenery in your garden—grasses and hostas, for example? They add wonderful variation to a bouquet.

My "experts" agree that three easy flowers to grow your first time, which are reliable and will give you great summer into autumn color and size, are sunflowers, zinnias and dahlias. For the dahlias (bulbs), my first expert says it's a great idea to have some of your smaller dahlias in pots, but the "dinner plate Dahlias" need to be planted directly into the ground. The experts also recommended that you read the seed and bulb packets carefully. Are you buying the flowers that grow 3-5 feet high or the 1-2-foot-high ones? Look at the days to germination. Choose colors you love. Dahlias and zinnias come in a riot of colors. Charlie Nardoizzi was just on the radio extolling the virtues of zinnias. He talked about all of the following being good choices for Vermont.

(See Gardening Corner, Page 21)



WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



ARIES March 21–April 20

Aries, a measure of controversy has found its way into your life, but you may want to avoid letting others know your feelings. Keep conversations to trivial topics this week.

TAURUS April 21–May 21

Advice about how to handle a confusing financial matter may not be resonating right now, Taurus. You may need to review the data a few different times.

GEMINI May 22–June 21

Gemini, consider another's perspective more closely in the days to come. A different point of view may help you to more clearly define your own outlook.

CANCER June 22–July 22

Setting boundaries right now could be difficult for you, Cancer. You are always caring for others and that may affect how involved you get in another person's issues.

LEO July 23–Aug. 23

Share your light and vitality with another person this week, Leo. You can boost this person's mood or even change his or her perspective dramatically if you so desire.

VIRGO Aug. 24–Sept. 22

Virgo, heated emotions between you and a family member could drive a wedge in your relationship for some time. It is best to carefully weigh your words before speaking.

LIBRA Sept. 23–Oct. 23

Libra, pursuing the truth about a situation may seem very important to you and even urgent. But will having all of the answers really change much right now?

SCORPIO Oct. 24–Nov. 22

Scorpio, be careful not to take everything that people say to you at face value right now. You need to vet all information for yourself before you make decisions about anything.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23–Dec. 21

You may be feeling sorry for someone even if they didn't ask you to weigh in on a situation, Sagittarius. You simply can't help getting involved, but remember to listen.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22–Jan. 20

Capricorn, a quiet and practical approach is the way to sort through a confusing situation that arises this week. Your detailed-oriented nature will help you go through all the facts.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21–Feb. 18

You may not be happy with the direction a family member, friend or even your larger community is moving at the current moment, Aquarius. Consider ways you can help.

PISCES Feb. 19–March 20

You may be feeling pulled by the demands of a few different people in your life right now, Pisces. It's probably best to give things more thought before making any decisions.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- Feb. 16 The Weeknd, singer (34)
- Feb. 17 Michael Jordan, basketball player (61)
- Feb. 18 Toni Morrison, novelist, Nobel-laureate (d)
- Feb. 19 Constantin Brancusi, sculptor (d)
- Feb. 20 Trevor Noah, comedian (40)
- Feb. 21 Nina Simone, singer, musician (d)
- Feb. 22 Edward Gorey, writer and artist (d)

Act 250

(Continued from Page 3)

operators and members of environmental groups say this legislative session holds unique potential to strike a compromise on Act 250 reform that would satisfy both housing developers and environmentalists.

Efforts to reform Act 250 — Vermont's sweeping land use law — have been ongoing for years.

Historically, developers have argued that Act 250 can cause expensive delays that prevent them from building housing

with speed needed for profitability or simply to meet the broadening demand. Environmentalists respond that, in fact, the law should be strengthened in certain areas to protect critical resources, such as forests, from rapidly becoming developed.

Optimism about a potential agreement stems from a working group that met throughout the summer and fall and included a wide range of stakeholders, including housing developers and environmental groups.

“The feeling coming out of those summer study committees is that this compromise is the biggest compromise we’ve seen on Act 250 at this point,” said Megan Sullivan, a lobbyist for the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. The organization is pushing for the construction of more housing to help expand Vermont’s workforce.

By its conclusions, members of the working group agreed on a framework for Act 250 reform that would relax the law in certain areas, with the goal of making it easier to build housing, and tighten it in others, which would preserve pieces of Vermont’s natural environment.

That said, the working group did not iron out all of the details. There are currently four bills circulating in various committees that propose different versions of that framework: H.687, H.719 (which Scott supports), S.308 and the “BE Home Act,” a bill in the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs that does not yet have a number.

But the principle of give-and-take was clear.

“Facilitating the development of new housing while ensuring that we are maintaining our rural working lands and ecologically important natural resources are not mutually exclusive goals,” the group’s report reads.

On Wednesday, the governor suggested that was not a statement with which he would agree.

“We cannot let a couple special interests and a couple committees block the progress we need to make,” he said.

When asked to name special interest groups, Scott pointed to the Vermont Natural Resources Council, an environmental nonprofit that has historically argued for strengthening Act 250.

Their mission, he said, “is to protect the environment as best they possibly can.”

“My mission is to make Vermont more affordable, create more housing and make Vermont safer,” he said. “So we have two different missions.”

Scott’s message came with

props. During his remarks, he presented two large maps: one that showed dots representing Act 250 permits and the other that showed the state mostly colored red, representing the areas that would have Act 250 jurisdiction under the new bill.

The Act 250 bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Amy Sheldon, D- Middlebury, and Rep. Seth Bongartz, D-Manchester, is in the House Environment and Energy Committee, which Sheldon chairs.

On Thursday, at another press event, Sheldon responded to Scott, noting that he “distanced himself from the environment, which was sort of heartbreaking for me.”

“I think, for a Vermont governor to say that the environment was sort of spearheaded by a special interest group — yeah, wow,” she said. “You

know, all Vermonters understand that, really, the environment is the heart and soul of who we are.”

Sheldon said she had not closely examined the maps but called them a “firebomb of fear-mongering” and said that her proposed expansion is not set in stone six weeks into the session. She said her committee is just beginning to have a conversation about Act 250 and that H.687, while not a housing bill, eliminates Act 250 review in downtown areas and allows towns to alter Act 250’s jurisdiction to accommodate for growth.

She referred to the working group’s consensus. The group agreed that any reform should support development in compact areas, help grow rural areas in appropriate ways, increase protections for key natural resources, make the permitting process clearer and minimize redundancies with other regulations, according to the report.

The report noted that “the consensus would not remain intact if any individual recommendations were removed from the package.”

Brian Shupe, executive director of the Vermont Natural Resources Council, said Sheldon’s bill would bring “a lot of land

under Act 250 jurisdiction,” but that “the process is still playing out. No one has voted on that bill yet.”

Shupe said he was surprised by the governor’s characterization of his organization after its staff spent the summer working with officials from Scott’s administration “on what really became a consensus framework for Act 250 reform.”

Asked about the governor’s comments, Sullivan, with the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, said it’s too early in the session for her to deeply criticize a single bill while “there are a lot of conversations that are happening and getting hampered out.”

There are bills that have been introduced “that aren’t where we would see the compromise being,” she said, but she intends to “continue to have those conversations about what the compromise looks like and how the bills can move to do that.”

Kathy Beyer, senior vice president at Evernorth, a nonprofit affordable housing development company, served on the working group that met over the summer and serves as a board member on the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

She said there is no question that Act 250 can make the development process longer, more challenging and more expensive. When an Act 250 permit gets appealed, that process can take between 12 and 24 months, she said.

“It’s largely a matter of time, but time adds cost,” she said.

Because many of Evernorth’s projects fall under the category of priority housing, Beyer said 80% of them are already exempt from Act 250.

The working group, she said, had some challenging conversations.

“When we started, I wasn’t sure we were going to get to a report,” she said.

Now, she stands behind the consensus and said the agreement makes it impossible for developers or environmentalists to cherry-pick the types of reform that benefit their interests.

“I think one of the most important things you can do for Vermont’s landscape is to answer the question, ‘Where should our housing be built?’ at the same time we’re talking about conserving land or the working landscape,” Beyer said. “You have to answer those questions together.”

“I think one of the most important things you can do for Vermont’s landscape is to answer the question, ‘Where should our housing be built?’ at the same time we’re talking about conserving land or the working landscape.”

—Kathy Beyer
senior VP at Evernorth

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Gardening Corner

(Continued from Page 19)

“Most seeds here will be for zinnia elegans,” Nardozzi said. “The State Fair mix grow to five feet. The shorter varieties are called profusion series and grow 1-2 feet, and there’s a variety called Zahara, which online claims to be disease resistant.”

Charlie spoke of a variety called haageana (Persian carpet), which is very pretty, and another red spider, but I couldn’t locate seeds for it. The color choices online seem endless. Zinnias can have issues with fungi, powdery mildew, and botrytis. My experts said to pay attention to what the seed packets aren’t telling you, like disease resistance, and pay attention to size. Today you also have the option of googling

varieties before you buy them. My experts said once you’ve bought the seeds and bulbs, follow the planting instructions to the letter. They also recommend cutting back and pinching the zinnias before flowering in June. Zinnias will send out more flowers on side stems. Once they are flowering keep cutting them. You’ll get more flowers that way. You may also want to stake your sunflowers if they aren’t up against a structure. Your large Dahlias may need staking too.

It’s hard to wait for May 31 to put your seeds in the ground, but as we saw last year, we got a killing frost in the last weeks of May. Seeds need warmth to germinate. Be patient. If you want to start seeds in your house, don’t start them too early. Try to

wait until mid-April or the beginning of May, so they are just germinated and have two leaves by the time it is safe to put them in the ground. Transplanting tender plants is more difficult than it seems. You truly can wait. All three of these plants will grow when planted directly into the ground.

Now it’s mid to late summer and you have beautiful annual flowers to add to your perennials to cut and make bouquets. What next? Both experts recommend cutting flowers in late afternoon and putting them directly into cold water and a flower preservative, if you have it. When you cut your flowers, they recommend that you cut your flowers on the longest stems possible, strip them of most leaves, and cut the stems

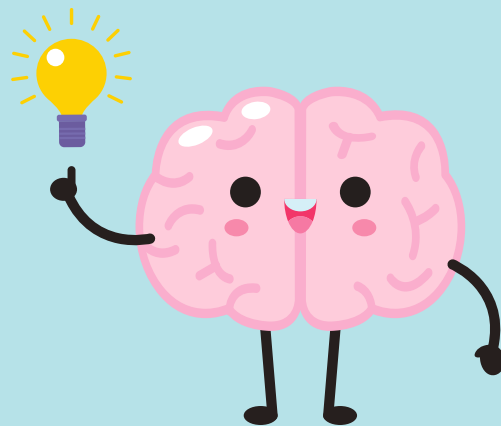
at an angle so that they can soak up the most water.

At the end of the day these are for you: grow what you want and cut what you want. Or plant them where you can see them from the house and don’t cut them at all and enjoy looking at them in your garden. The world is truly your oyster. Did Shakespeare really coin that phrase, and does it actually work when you parse it? The British show about Shakespeare, *Upstart Crow*, has me thinking about things like this.



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Brandon Brain Buster Answered



Answer: D

If $B = A + 1$, then A and B are consecutive whole numbers. And if we know that 1000 is divisible by both A and B, then we need to figure out which pairs of consecutive whole numbers will divide into 1000. We can express 1000 as $1 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$, which can be expressed as $1 \times 2 \times 5 \times 2 \times 5 \times 2 \times 5$ or $1 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 5 \times 5$. So, right away we can see that 1000 is divisible by any of these individually or multiplied together. For example, 1000 is divisible by 1, 2, and 5, but also by 2×2 (which is 4) and 2×5 (which is 10) and $2 \times 2 \times 5$ (which is 20). But how many of these various divisors of 1000 are consecutive numbers? Well, we have 1 and 2. And we have 4 (which is 2×2) and 5. No other combinations

of these numbers will multiply out to give us a pair of consecutive numbers that will divide into 1000. So, A must be either 1 or 4 and B must be either 2 or 5. Keeping this in mind, we know that option I does not need to be true, because 10 is divisible by 1 but not by 4. So, we can eliminate choices A, C, and E. We know that option II must be true, because 10 is divisible by both 2 and 5, the only possibilities for B. But does option III have to be true as well? If B is either 2 or 5, then $22 = 4$ and $52 = 25$, both of which will divide into 100. So, yes, option III must be true. The answer, then, is D, II and III only.

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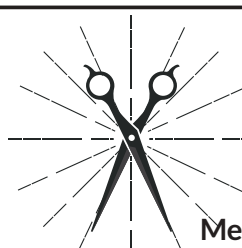
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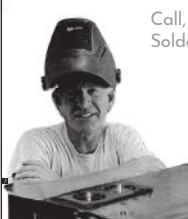


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A SCARY MOMENT at the Mac's on Route 7 south of Brandon village on Monday afternoon: a car driven by Zachary Stone combusted while at the gas pump. Nicki Racine shut off the pumps and Bryton Fontaine held off the flames with a fire extinguisher until the Brandon Fire Department arrived and contained the fire. Quick responses all around kept things from getting much worse!

Photo provided



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PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWN OF BRANDON, VERMONT

Notice to Property Taxpayers— 3rd Qtr Payment Due

Notice is hereby given that payment for the property taxes assessed upon the grand list of the Town of Brandon for the 3rd quarter of the fiscal year July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 is due February 15, 2024. Please furnish the remittance slip with your payment. Payments may be made by mail or by dropping in either of the two drop boxes located in front of the Town Office and at the Neshobe School or electronically through our online payment service which can be found on our website. Thank you.

Susan Gage,
Town Treasurer

FORM OF TOWN OF PITTSFORD, VERMONT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AUSTRALIAN BALLOTING OFFICIAL WARNING MARCH 5, 2024

The legal voters of the Town of Pittsford, Vermont, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Pittsford Municipal Offices located at 426 Plains Road in the Town of Pittsford on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, between the hours of seven o'clock (7:00) in the forenoon (a.m.), at which time the polls will open, and seven o'clock (7:00) in the afternoon (p.m.), at which time the polls will close, to vote by Australian ballot upon the following Article of business:

ARTICLE 24

Shall the voters authorize the removal, replacement, and installation of a new watermain along the easterly side of the VT Route 7 Bridge #108 over Furnace Brook and the issuance of general obligation bonds of the Town in an amount not to exceed Four Hundred Thousand, and 00/100 Dollars (\$400,000.00), subject to reduction by grants in aid and other state and federal funds then available to the Town, to pay the capital costs and related other costs of the project?

The legal voters of the Town of Pittsford are further notified that voter qualification, registration, and absentee voting relative to said special meeting shall be as provided in Chapters 43, 51 and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated. The legal voters of the Town of Pittsford are further notified that an informational meeting for the purpose of explaining the Project and the financing thereof will be held on Monday, March 4, 2024, at Lothrop School Gymnasium in the Town of Pittsford following the

conclusion of Town Meeting (floor voting) which begins at six-thirty o'clock in the afternoon (6:30 P.M.).

Adopted and approved at a meeting of the Selectboard of the Town of Pittsford duly called, noticed, and held January 24 2024.

TOWN OF PITTSFORD SELECTBOARD

Alicia Malay, Chair

David Mills, Vice Chair

Thomas Hooker

Mark Winslow

W. Joseph Gagnon

Received for record and recorded in the records of the Town of Pittsford on January 24, 2024.

Helen McKinlay, Town Clerk



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Sports

Isaac Whitney wins his 100th wrestling match



BY ANDY KIRKALDY

BRANDON — Otter Valley Union High School junior wrestler Isaac Whitney recently won his 100th match, reaching the milestone at a Feb. 3 tournament hosted by Monument Mountain High School in Great Barrington, Mass.

Whitney went 4-0 at the tournament, a five-team dual meet, on the way to winning his 175-pound

weight class.

Whitney's 100th win was a 6-2 decision over Noah Poirier of Taconic High School in Pittsfield, Mass. The victory was particularly notable because the weekend before Poirier had claimed his third straight Western Massachusetts Sectional Championship.

So far this winter Whitney has compiled a 43-7 record, pushing his

career mark to 105-38 in less than three years of varsity competition. He will be a high seed at the upcoming Vermont high school championship tournament, which Otter Valley will host on Feb. 23 and 24.

Whitney is the third OV wrestler to reach the 100-win plateau in the past two seasons, joining Tucker Babcock and Caleb Whitney from this past winter.



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