

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

A community supported newspaper

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\$1

Brandon voters say no to OVUU budget and solar; Bailey, Ethier, & Nelson win seats on SB

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—After a tense election season in which Brandon residents expressed extreme frustration with budget increases and rising taxes, voters in the town rejected the proposed FY25 budget (\$3,796,180), which had increased by more than 13% over the current year's, and the proposed town-owned solar array, which would have required a \$500K bond.

With 1,377 ballots submitted, the town budget received 610 votes (45%) in favor and 741 votes (55%) against.

The FY25 proposed budget included a \$300K line item for road paving, without which the budget would've increased by less than 5%. In past years, paving had been placed as a standalone appropriation on the ballot, a maneuver that some Selectboard members had
(See Brandon results, Page 16)



JOE GAGNON STANDS among the hundreds of logs stacked up at Gagnon Lumber in Pittsford, a business he founded in 1958 on land that had been in his family for generations. At 86, Mr. Gagnon did not seek re-election to the Pittsford Selectboard.
Photo by Steven Jupiter

Otter Valley budget rejected

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—In what's shaping up to be a season of "nay" in the area, the proposed OVUU FY25 school budget (\$27,247,823) was rejected by district voters on Tuesday, with 891 votes (40%) in favor and 1325 votes (60%) against.

Though Governor Scott had recently signed a law (H.850) allowing school boards to re-examine their budgets and postpone their votes, the OVUU Board believed its budget was

already tight and decided to present it as planned. Voters, however, made clear to the OVUU Board and the RNESU district that they were unhappy with the budget's size and its implications for the district's property taxes.

The Board will now have to review and revise its budget and present a new proposal to the district's voters.

Natalie Steen of Brandon and Fernanda Canales of Gos-
(See OV budget, Page 16)

Pittsford's Joe Gagnon leaves SB but plans to stay involved in town

BY STEVEN JUPITER

PITTSFORD—Joe Gagnon's scarred face and wiry frame tell a tale of a man who's labored hard his entire life. Now 87, he's still working in the lum-

ber yard that bears his name on land that his French-Canadian grandfather bought back in 1880.

And after 20 years on Pittsford's Selectboard, he's step-

ping down but not bowing out.

"I hate to quit, but I've come upon some health issues," he said in his office recently. "I have to devote a little more
(See Joe Gagnon, Page 10)

Town Meeting results

See page 14 for details of town meetings around the area.

Four local residents arrested for counterfeit bills & drugs

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—On Friday, March 1 at 10 p.m., four local residents were arrested in Brandon after police found 33 counterfeit \$100 bills, 6.3 grams (packaged) of crack cocaine, and a loaded gun in

the car they were driving. The four men—Bryden Alger (23, Brandon), Joseph Brown (49, Leicester), Jeremiah Cole (30, Leicester), and Cale Quenneville (30, Brandon)—were charged with forgery/counterfeiting and possession of

crack cocaine, among other offenses.

According to Brandon Police Chief David Kachajian, the Brandon Police Department (BPD) had been investigating the production and distribution of counterfeit

bills in the region when an officer pulled the men over on Arnold District Road for an expired registration and recognized them as suspects in the probe. Also according to Kachajian, the investiga-
(See Counterfeit and drugs, Page 10)



Conversation with an Artist: Michell Leftheris

BY SEPI ALAVI

Michell Leftheris is an artist working across the disciplines of photography, video and new media. Her work has been exhibited at galleries and institutions both nationally and globally. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Studio Art at Middlebury College in Vermont. I met with her at a café and asked her the following questions:

1. What job would you have if you weren't a photographer?

I'd be an elementary school art teacher. Right now, I volunteer at Mary Hogan, and it's exhausting, but fun and exciting!

2. What conversation would you like to have with any dead artist?

I'd want to talk to Eva Hesse. She made a series of drawings where she drew circles over and over. I want to know about her process and her connection to materials. Does she know what a conservation nightmare she left behind? Does she even care? I suspect not.

3. If you could collaborate/work with any living artist who would it be, and what sort of sort of project would you like to undertake?

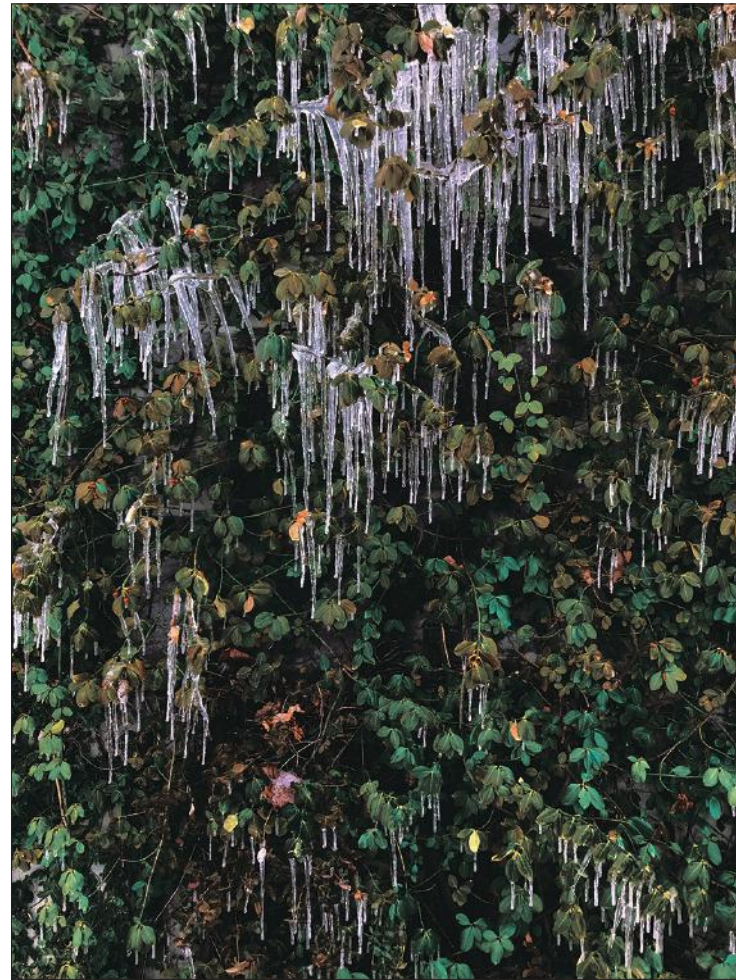
I would love to work on a book of visual correspondence with Rinko Kawauchi.

4. Describe the experience that led you to become a photographer?

As a kid I really liked drawing and painting, and even through college I worked in many mediums. But it was serendipity that led me to photography. When I was 12 my step-grandfather gave me a Cannon A1 with no instructions, which started me off. I've just always really liked cameras, but I really came back to photography in college. My interest in drawing and painting is why I still don't do "straight photography."

5. Why live in Vermont?

We moved here because we



Pleading with children to get ready to get to their respective places—a.k.a., parenting. Then

tigue collection, Equivalents by Alfred Stieglitz, and the serial photographs by Masanao Abe of

want to connect with the environment in a real way. Vermont has helped reshape my ideas around time and space. It's humbling to be an artist here.

6. What's your favorite smell?

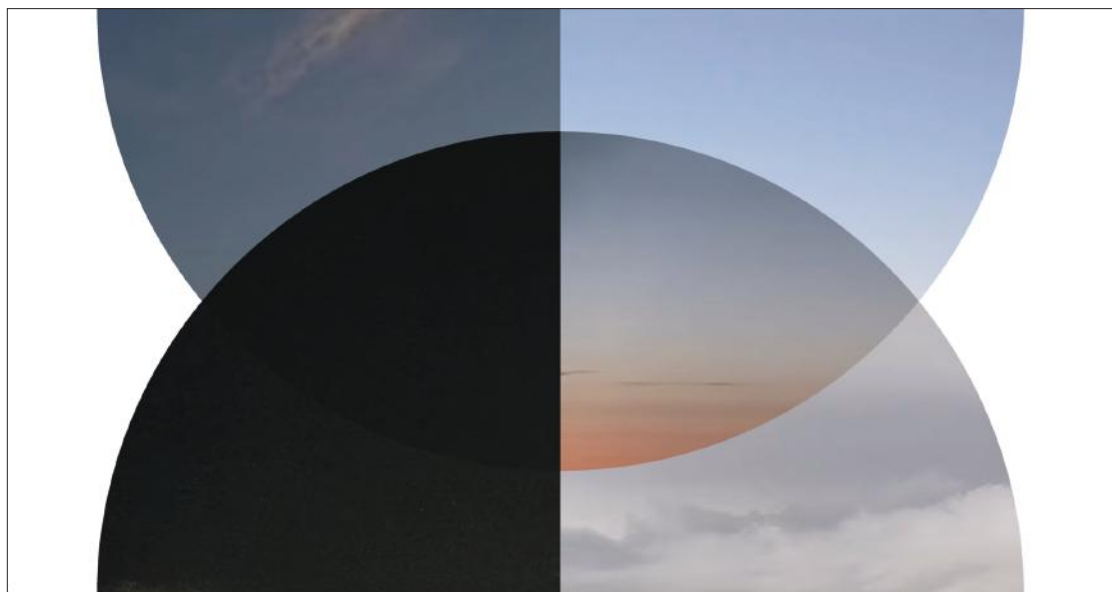
Orange and clove.

7. What book(s) are you reading right now?

To Photograph Is to Learn How to Die: An Essay with Digressions by Tim Carpenter.

8. Are there any photographers that you wish had a wider audience?

Marlo Pascual. She achieved a lot of success in her career, which was cut short when she died from ovarian cancer in 2020. I've loved her work since



EVA HESSE, ENNEAD, 1966. Acrylic, papier-mâché, plastic, plywood, and string.

Photo from the Estate of Eva Hesse



MARLO PASCUAL, UNTITLED, 2009.

Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan

the moment I saw it. The work is smart, hilarious, and bold. She picked up where John Stezaker began and pushed into the realm of sculpture, using scale and object in ways that I hadn't before seen intersect with the photographic image.

9. What does your daily routine look like?

I teach (at Middlebury College), then back to parenting, then late at night I get to do my own work.

10. How you think about your work locally versus your national presence?

It's only been recently that there has been much of a local showing of my work. Most of the interest in my work seems to come from other places.

11. Given that your work is a capture of a single moment in time, is there a work of art that is time based (play, movie, song, etc.) that you draw inspiration from?

Camille Henrot's Grosse Fa-

Mt. Fuji have inspired my newest piece that is web/time based! It's a video collage of live streaming videos titled "Now Space."

12. Is there a childhood object that you still have? (If not, is there one that you wish you still had?)

LeMutt. He's my stuffed dog that I've had since birth.

13. What's your ideal dinner—food, company, & location?

My grandmother's stuffed grape leaves. They're PERFECT.

Names lost in Vermont, Part 19: Wisell and Welcome

BY MICHAEL F. DWYER

Five Wisell brothers all bore decidedly Yankee names: Clayton (1879–1964), Otis (1882–1949), Thaddeus (1888–1967), Fordyce (1889–1975), and Noble (1895–1969). Neither their first nor last names give a clue as to their heritage. Second generation Vermonters, they were the sons of Charles Wisell (1851–1921) and Lucy Welcome (1854–1933). Fordyce and Thaddeus worked for a time at the Brandon Training School. A small stone at the northern edge of St. Mary’s Cemetery marks the final resting place of Fordyce and his wife Nellie. Raised Protestant like his brothers, Fordyce chose to be baptized as a Catholic when he was 23 and later married Nellie Walsh at St. John’s Church in Castleton.

In the days when an Orwell correspondent sent news of social visits and parties to The Rutland Herald, the column occasionally featured snippets when the Wisell brothers, their wives, and children visited the farm where their parents, Charles and Lucy, had moved in 1882 from Shoreham. Charles Wisell was the third child of Québec-born Joseph Wisell and his wife Mary Sears. They were married in the Shoreham Congregational Church on December 15, 1846. A Protestant marriage, of course, would have resulted in de facto ex-communication from the Catholic Church. One page from Shoreham’s 1850 census reveals that two of Joseph’s brothers, Peter and Oliver Wisell, had also made their homes there.

Joseph, Pierre, and Olivier, three of the fourteen children of Pierre Loisel and Marie Joseph Demers, were baptized in Marieville, Québec, on the east side of the Richelieu River. In making the trek of about 100 miles to Shoreham, they left their original name behind them. Many Wisell families today live throughout New England, the spelling and pronunciation coming from hearing the French as Lwa-zell.

When Charles Wisell died on November 21, 1921, his funeral service was held from his home, with a Masonic burial service from the Mount Independence Lodge, of which he was a member. His fraternal affiliations represent yet another step in forging a new American identity, and that ethos is undoubtedly reflected in the unusual names Charles and Lucy chose for their sons.

Now, let us turn our attention to Charles’s wife, Lucy Welcome. She was born in Hinesburg in 1854 to French-Canadian immigrant Levi Welcome, who certainly was not born Welcome. Rev. Israel Keach, a Baptist minister, married her parents, Levi Welcome and Minerva Sears, in Addison, on February 26, 1843. They had three daughters born before the 1850 census: Julia, Mary, and Amelia, their only children to be baptized as Catholics. Julia and Mary were baptized in Williston on the same day in 1847, with their father identified as Levi Welcome. Four years later, Amelia was baptized by a French priest at St. Joseph’s in Burlington, her name recorded as Appoline Bienvenue, daughter of Olivier Bienvenue!

Once again, a French Catholic record disclosed the true name. Think of those highway signs: bienvenue in French means “welcome.” That explains the last name, but how did we get Levi? From the French pronunciation of Olivier: “Oh-leev-vee-ay.” No doubt Olivier Bienvenue wanted to become naturalized American citizen Levi Welcome. Not finding Olivier Bienvenue in Québec took me on one more serpentine turn—Bienvenue was a dit name with Fontaine. Accordingly, I found the baptism of Olivier Fontaine dit Bienvenue, son of Louis Fontaine dit Bienvenue and Magdeleine Dancereau, on February 25, 1816, at Varennes, on the south shore of Montréal to Dancereau. Indeed, among Olivier/Levi’s brothers who stayed in Canada, one went by Fontaine the other by Bienvenue. Levi had no siblings who moved to Vermont. A few other Welcome families in Vermont were not closely related.

Tragedy marked Levi’s last two years: He gave testimony in Chittenden County Court, quoted in The Burlington Free Press on April 22, 1869, in the arraignment of his son Henry Welcome, age 17, accused of the brutal murder of a seventy-four-year old neighbor, Perry Russell, in October 1868: “I reside in Hinesburgh; Henry Welcome is my son; he was 17 last September; Henry was born in Monkton; I have 10 other children, four of whom are older than he; my son Philip is on the ocean, and was last October. I have a daughter living with Lyman Partch in Hinesburgh



CLAYTON, NOBLE, AND Thaddeus Wisell, 1957.

Family photos provided courtesy of Dottie (Wisell) Wheeler, former Assistant Town Clerk of Pittsford and granddaughter of Noble Wisell.

and another with Wm. Partch Thursday afternoon before the murder.”
when the murder was committed. Henry was at my house (See Name lost, Page 13)

Spotlight On Business CAFÉ PROVENCE



Café Provence

It seems unbelievable, but this July we will be celebrating 20 years in beautiful downtown Brandon! We could not have done it without our wonderful employees over the years and the welcoming Brandon community, and we are very

grateful to all! We’ve enjoyed sharing the joy of our French cuisine heritage. Here’s to another 20 years of delicious food and delightful patrons!

Bon Appetit!
Robert and Line Barral



NELLIE (WALSH) WISELL, son Charles; Edith (Newton) Wisell, son Bobbie. At the Wisell farm in Orwell, ca. 1921.



2024 Area RABIES CLINICS

All Clinics are open to all residents of any town. Dogs and cats only. For the safety of all, dogs should be leashed and cats in carriers. You should bring paper proof of previous rabies vaccination(s).

\$20 per vaccine **CASH only** - exact change appreciated.

Whiting Fire Station
Brandon Fire Station
Leicester Town office
Salisbury Town office

Mon. March 11, 5:00 - 6:00 PM
Fri. March 15, 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Tues. March 19, 5:00 - 6:00 PM
Tues. March 19, 6:15 - 7:15 PM

Sponsored by Bristol Animal Hospital, and Valleywide Veterinary Services
Please bring cash - cards and checks will not be accepted.

BRANDON REPORTER

Editorial

The 'Season of Nay'

BY STEVEN JUPITER

The people have spoken, and we have said “nay.” With our rejection of the Otter Valley school budget, the Brandon budget, and the Pittsford 1% Local Option Tax, local residents are letting our town and school leaders know that we’ve reached a breaking point and are not willing, or even able, to absorb the tax increases that were proposed this year.

And so the budgets will be reviewed, revised, and re-submitted until they pass.

But voters will now need to keep in mind that budgets are not “sticker prices” that can be negotiated down while the “product” remains unchanged. A reduction in a municipal or school budget means a reduction in services

provided. We will have to make some tough choices about what we’re willing to sacrifice for what we’re determined to keep.

This is a process that requires broad participation. It should not, and cannot, be carried out by our municipal and school leaders alone. Residents need to attend meetings, educate themselves about the true costs of the services they wish to retain and those they wish to cut, and take responsibility for the consequences of the reductions they demand.

We can’t have our cake and

eat it, too.

But it’s also important to remember that the pressures we’re facing here in our community are not unique. All across the country, Americans are reeling from sharp increases in the cost of living. We’ve got to be realistic about what things actually cost now compared to what they cost a few years ago. We’re in a very different landscape. Materials are more expensive. Labor is more

expensive. We will not be able in every case to find a cheaper alternative.

Part of the process will involve listening to each other and respecting differing perspectives. We will not all agree about what’s essential and what’s expendable, and we can’t demon-

ize each other for having different perspectives. What seems like a reasonable expense to some may seem exorbitant to others. We do not all have the same resources, but we all have a say. Ultimately, we need to give one another the benefit of the doubt: we all want our community to thrive.

The school budget presents a particular set of challenges in that the costs are shared by the entire community while the services appear to be used by only a portion. But we need to

(See 'Season of Nay' Page 11)

So, as we launch into this messy, exasperating process yet again, let's roll up our sleeves, listen when necessary, speak up when needed, and be civil to one another because we all want this place to succeed



At last!

THIS IS ONE of Florida's unusual species, a Smooth-billed ani. It is a member of the cuckoo family. Took me 10 years of searching to locate one.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

Community Forums Ninth annual Vermont Animation Festival brings talent to NEK March 22

Lyndonville— The Vermont Animation Festival welcomes notable creators Dustin Grella and Dan Bandit (a.k.a. Ghostshrimp) to the ninth annual festival March 22-23, 2024, hosted by Vermont State University Lyndon in partnership with Catamount Arts.

An animator and documentary filmmaker, Dustin Grella's films have screened at the Cannes Film Festival and Sundance Film Festival, he's won the Walt Disney Award at the Ottawa International Ani-

mation Festival, and his film "Prayers for Peace" screened at almost two hundred festivals worldwide and won more than forty awards.

Dan Bandit was just nominated for a Grammy for the album art/package design for the Gravity Falls soundtrack. His work appears on a variety of animated shows on the Cartoon Network, including Adventure Time, Disney, Netflix, and Nickelodeon, including SpongeBob and Midnight Gospel.

“The VAF was originally created to give our own students a venue to show their work to the VTSU community,” said Kate Renner, Vermont Animation Festival director and VTSU Assistant Professor in the Department of Visual Art. “We are thrilled that our students now have the opportunity to learn from legends like Dustin Grella and Dan Bandit on our own campus through the VAF. This year's workshops are especially friendly to participants of all (See Animation Festival, Page 6)

The REPORTER

The Reporter is a nonprofit, community-supported newspaper managed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

Current board members are Steven Jupiter, president; Dr. George Fjeld, treasurer; Barbara Ebling, secretary. Graphic design by Sepi Alavi

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Letters to the Editor

People should be nicer to each other if we want to change our town

What I think we should change for people in general is how they treat people: at work, school, in town, at the

store, and people walking/biking. I think it's messed up how people get treated. People want to get treated with respect: they

won't get treated with respect if they don't treat people right. At work, people are there to get money to pay bills, to buy food,

to get things they need, but it's hard when they have people coming in and being mean to them for no reason. At school,

people come to get work done so they can graduate and go to college.

(See *Messed up*, Page 7)

Brandon Free Public Library thanks the town for your support this voting cycle

On behalf of the board of trustees and staff of the Brandon Free Public Library, I extend our most sincere thanks for the approval of our appro-

priation request, and we are grateful for all the ways our community supports the library throughout the year.

I appreciate our many dedi-

cated patrons and the wonderful communities that support our library. This year it was especially humbling to read your kind words on social media

and in the paper. Your enduring love and support for our library is always evident, and I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in library

advocacy this year. We do not take your support for granted. Public libraries equalize the playing field for people across

(See *Library*, Page 6)

St. Thomas/Grace Church's food drive was a HUGE success

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Brandon Area Food Shelf, I would like to thank St. Thomas/Grace Church for holding a food/cash drive on March 2, 2024. It netted \$800 and close to 300 pounds of non-perishable items!! This will help to restock the shelves and assist so many individuals, who just can't make ends meet. Special thanks goes out to Cassie Root and George

Howard for spearheading this project; along with Erin Van Auken, Francie Farnsworth, Rena McDonough, Jeff Laba, Wyatt Waterman, Ken & Barb Brown, Judy Doell, the "Gibbs/Ebling" girls for all the artwork, and Sister Nancy Ludwig. Also, thanks to all those who gave so generously to help their neighbors.

Kathy Mathis, Director

Thank you for making our bake sale a smash

The Brandon Senior Center would like to thank everyone who dropped by for our bake sale.

It was a huge success! Thanks to the Board for baking all the goodies and manning the sale.

Couldn't have done it without all of you! Thanks!

Kathy Mathis
Director

Community Forums

Training course for new hunter education instructors

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is offering a New Instructor Training Course for people interested in volunteering to teach Hunter Education courses in Vermont.

The training will take place Saturday, April 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the at R.E.C. Zone, 94 Harvest Lane, Williston, VT

(See *Hunter education*, Page 9)

168th Bridal Show is coming

Come join the fun as the Vermont Wedding Association presents its 168th bridal show! Raise your glasses and CELEBRATE your ENGAGEMENT with your girls, your fiancé or the whole wedding party

at the Hampton by Hilton Burlington-Colchester located at 42 Lower Mountain View Drive in Colchester. This Hampton is the only one in all of Vermont and New England with

(See *Bridal Show*, Page 9)

Pi Day at Shoreham Congregational Church, March 14

Celebrate the arrival of spring by coming to Pi Day at the Shoreham Congregational Church on Thursday, March 14 from 5 to 7 PM. You can buy a slice of pie for \$4 and add a scoop of ice cream for another \$1. Beverages (coffee, tea, cocoa, or water) are free. Small potted plants to remind you of spring will also be on sale for \$5 each.

There will also be a special raffle — A Pie a Month for 6

Months. The winner will take home the first pie that night, and then will be able to have one pie a month of their choosing for each of the next 5 months, date and variety of pie to be determined by mutual agreement between the winner and the baker. This has a value of \$100. Raffle tickets are \$5 each of 3 tickets for \$10.

The winner will be drawn that evening, but you do not need to be present to win.

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4-Cyl Turbo, Auto, AWD, 82k miles
\$15,995



2021 SUBARU FORESTER LIMITED,
4-CYL, Auto, AWD, W/Nav., 14k miles
\$28,995



2017 TOYOTA SIENNA
V6, Auto, AWD, Loaded, 99k miles
\$20,995



2019 TOYOTA TACOMA
DB/LB, V6, Auto, 4x4, 160k miles
\$24,995

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Obituaries

Christian David Martin, 31, Sudbury

Christian David Martin passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early morning hours of March 2, 2024, after a short, courageous battle with Stage 4 Melanoma. Chris, as he preferred to be called, was born on Christmas 1992 and is the son of David and Dale Martin of Sudbury, VT.

He attended Sudbury Country School and was a 2011 graduate of Otter Valley. While at OV, he completed and excelled in Stafford Technical Center's Information Technology program. Chris was on the lacrosse and football teams, did a lot of fishing, and was most proud of being a founding member of the Rutland Area First Robotics team: iBots 2370. It was his love of technology and desire to become a pilot that led him to further his education at the Aviation Institute of Maintenance in Duluth, GA. Chris graduated in 2015, Summa Cum Laude, as an Aviation Maintenance Technician and was inducted into the



CHRISTIAN DAVID MARTIN

National Honor Society- Alpha Beta Kappa.

While in Georgia, he fell in love with the climate, especially the lack of cold weather. He was awaiting job openings at airports in warmer climates, when he stumbled on a job that he absolutely loved at Asset Recovery Associates. Here he retrieved heavy equipment, ex-

pensive cars, motorcycles, and an occasional yacht. The warm climate also allowed Chris many glorious hours of riding his motorcycle.

Chris is survived by his parents of Sudbury; 2 sisters, Sue Martin and Leanna Martin (Lenny) of Sudbury; 2 brothers, Luke Martin of Sudbury and Steven Rooney (Stephanie) of Rutland Town. He is survived by many aunts, uncles, cousins, 6 nieces and nephews, and by his lifelong best friend Danielle Hadley. Chris will also be missed by his southern family at Asset Recovery Associates. He was predeceased by his sister, Melanie Rooney.

There will be services to honor Chris's life on March 16th at Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon, at 11:00 AM.

In lieu of flowers, Chris would love it if you contributed to Rutland Area First Robotics c/o Dan Roswell, 8 Stratton Road, Rutland, VT 05701.

Animation Festival

(Continued from Page 4)

ages and experience levels, and we look forward to welcoming a large turnout from the NEK and beyond."

The Vermont Animation Festival, held on the Vermont State Lyndon campus, offers a full slate of activities for beginner and experienced animators, including workshops, a film screening, and artist talks with Grella and Bandit.

Animated films of all lengths may be submitted for viewing and judging as part of the festival. Submissions close at 5 p.m. on March 15. Films from students and emerging anima-

tors are especially welcome. Complete festival information, including submission guidelines, is available at VTAnimationFestival.org.

The Vermont Animation Festival was created in 2015 by former Lyndon faculty member Robby Gilbert to showcase the unique voices of artists in New England working in animation and moving images. The festival provides a forum for regional artists, including Vermont State's Animation and Illustration students, to showcase their work and workshops to engage the community.

Library

(Continued from Page 5)

the economic spectrum and offer connection, entertainment, and information. Thank you again for supporting this im-

portant community institution!

Molly Kennedy
Director,

Brandon Free Public Library

Counterfeit & drugs

(Continued from Page 1)

tion was triggered by the dissemination of counterfeit bills at local businesses that alerted BPD. No other suspects are known at this time.

BPD's K-9 unit assisted in the arrest, alerting officers to the presence of the crack cocaine.

Chief Kachajian issued the following statement on Monday:

"On March 1, 2024, as part of an ongoing investigation by the Brandon Police Department into the production and dissemination of counterfeit money being used in and around Rutland and Addison Counties, a motor vehicle stop was conducted at Arnold District Road and Adams Road on a suspect vehicle that had an expired registration. The investigating officer immediately recognized the occupants of the vehicle as being the suspects involved in the counterfeiting investigation and requested back-up as one of the suspects had a history of gun violence as well as fleeing from law enforcement. A felony stop was conducted on the vehicle and evidence of drug activity was later observed in the truck. The Brandon Police K-9 Unit was brought in with

K-9 Guinness making a positive open air hit on the vehicle for the presence of drugs. The vehicle was later seized and a search warrant was applied for and granted on the truck.

A subsequent search of the vehicle found 33-counterfeit \$100 bills for a total amount of \$3,300, 6.3 packaged weight grams of Crack Cocaine, drug paraphernalia, and a loaded handgun. As a result of this investigation, Jeremiah Cole (30 of Leicester, VT) and Joseph Brown (49 of Leicester, VT) are facing pending charges for the crimes of Forgery/Counterfeiting and Possession of Crack Cocaine. Bryden Alger (23 of Brandon, VT), and Cale Quenneville (30 of Brandon, VT) were taken into custody prior to the vehicle being searched and later lodged at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility in Rutland. Cale Quenneville was flash cited to appear in the Rutland County Superior Court-Criminal Division on March 4, 2024 for arraignment on the charges of Counterfeiting/Forgery, and from a previous investigation being conducted by the Brandon Police Department; for Eluding a Police Officer in a Grossly Negligent Manner,



BRANDON'S K-9 OFFICER Guinness sits next to \$3,300 in counterfeit \$100 bills and over 6 grams of crack cocaine he detected in a car that had been pulled over for an expired registration. The human officer involved recognized the driver and passengers as suspects in an investigation into counterfeiting and was able to detain them while a search warrant was obtained.

Driving With a Criminally Suspended Drivers License, Reckless Endangerment, Excessive Speed, and Grossly Negligent Operation. Bryden Alger was also flash cited to appear in the Rutland County Superior Court-Criminal Division on March 4, 2024 for arraignment

on the charges of Counterfeiting/Forgery. Quenneville and Alger are also facing pending charges of Possession of Crack Cocaine. The Brandon Police were assisted on the motor vehicle stop by the Royalton Police Department, Pittsford Police Department, and the

Rutland County Sheriff's Department.

Investigation is still ongoing."

The Reporter will continue to provide information on the case as it becomes available.



Legislative Report

BY STEPHANIE JEROME

Town Meeting 2024 Report

We are halfway through the 2024 legislative session and have already passed some significant legislation. Meanwhile, work on our key priorities will continue, across the House and in collaboration with the Senate, as we debate bills and consider important investments prior to our May adjournment.

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The legislature continues to tackle a wide range of issues. Our priorities include:

- Passing a fiscally responsible, balanced state budget that reflects our values and supports all Vermonters.
- Tackling the complex and interconnected challenges of housing and workforce development.
- Enacting forward-looking, inclusive strategies to combat climate change.
- Creating affordable housing stock for working families and combatting homelessness.
- Supporting businesses and economic growth in all corners of Vermont.

With 150 members and 13 standing committees, the House can accomplish a lot during our five months in Montpelier. In all of this work, we look forward to enacting legislation that protects the most vulnerable, boosts economic vitality, and leaves no

Vermonters behind.

BUDGETING FOR VERMONTERS

During the pandemic, we received an enormous amount of federal money. That funding is now spent or obligated, and the House is making sure every dollar is used effectively. The budget process is shaped by three realities. First, we no longer have pandemic federal funds to rely on. Second, we are still trying to help our neighbors in flood-stricken communities. Third, the review of proposed state agency budgets reveals underfunded and fragile organizations in need of critical support. This includes state workforce shortages, upward pressure on wages, and outdated IT systems.

Despite these problems, there are successes: expanded high-speed internet access, infrastructure investments (Brandon is noted statewide for the work that it has done on resiliency), and historic investments in childcare. The House budget will make sound investments to enhance the stability and effectiveness of state government, while making sure we fund strategic priorities like housing, public safety, and climate resilience.

PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL DATA

Every day we disclose, inten-

tionally or not, a tremendous amount of personal information. This personal and biometric data belongs to us, yet it is harvested, packaged, and sold by these data brokers without our knowledge or permission. The federal government has failed to act on this issue, so 14 states have passed legislation. Another ten states, including Vermont, are working on data privacy bills. Building on the work done in states across the country, like Connecticut and California, the House is creating H.121—a data privacy bill that works for Vermonters. I am very proud of the work done in my committee on this bill to protect Vermonters.

BOOSTING VERMONT'S SKILLED WORKFORCE

Vermont continues to have a significant workforce shortage, especially when it comes to skilled workers. The legislature has taken steps to upskill our current workforce and encourage workers from other states to work and live in Vermont. We have significant ongoing needs in the areas of healthcare, construction, and education. In response, the legislature recently created and funded multiple grant programs and initiatives aimed at our workforce needs.

BENDING THE EDUCATION COST CURVE

The House Education Com-

mittee is taking exhaustive testimony from educators, researchers, and school boards about the future of Vermont education. How can we provide a high-quality education while controlling costs? The end of federal pandemic-era funding—coupled with increased student needs, rising healthcare expenses, and employee contracts that reflect inflation—have all contributed to spiraling costs and tax-rate increases not seen in recent history. We are looking at long-term strategies to tackle the cost of education and our complex funding formula.

See Part Two of my Town Meeting Report in next week's Reporter!

It's an honor to serve as Brandon's state representative

and please reach out anytime with ideas, questions, and concerns.

HOW TO CONTACT ME

Rep. Stephanie Zak Jerome
Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (Vice Chair)

University of Vermont Board of Trustees (legislative member)

Vermont Economic Progress Council (legislative member)
sjerome@leg.state.vt.us,
www.stephaniejeromevt.com
https://legislature.vermont.gov/

To see my voting record, read bills, and watch floor debates and committee hearings, go to: legislature.vermont.gov

Messed up

(Continued from Page 5)

People in town are mean to people for no reason and it just is messed up. The way they treat homeless people is sad because homeless people have feelings like the rest of us. Yes, they may have not showered in a while, or changed their clothes, so what? They are human, like the rest of us and you should not judge them right away.

People shouldn't judge peo-

ple at all until you get to know that person what they went through or what they are going through. I think you should make it where if they are being mean to people, you give them a warning and if they do it again then give them a fine, because I really think this is sad and messed up. People want people to treat them with respect but they don't treat people with respect. If they want to be treated nicely then treat people

the way you want to be treated. If you have nothing nice to say then keep it inside because you don't know what people are going through. I think this should change really badly and it's really sad to see.

Eliza Freegard
Grade 9
Otter Valley Union
High School

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WE NEED YOU THE BRANDON REPORTER

Maclure Library in Pittsford hosts joyful Open Mic night

BY JIM HALEY

PITTSFORD — It was a rare day, Leap Day, February 29th, 2024, and it was the day that was chosen for the second open mic hosted recently by Maclure Library. The first one was held several months ago on October 26, 2023. The Thursday Leap Day event featured seven unique acts and drew an audience of about thirty.

Master of ceremonies, library director Shelly Williams, proved to be a masterful facilitator, and local musician Steve Spensley skillfully managed the sound. Jim Haley opened the show with an original poem. Local college professor and writer David Mook entertained with original poetry and animated personal storytelling. Vermont author Beth Brown Limmer read from

her just-published book Witness Mark. In the genre of local historical fiction, the novel is based on true events. Appropriate to the season, she read a passage about the female protagonist falling in love with the process of maple sugaring. 13-year-old Adeline White wowed the audience with several beautifully sung show tunes sourced from Broadway and movie musicals. Ann Bay-

lock read three meaningful poems by women poets. Mark Munzert was captivating as the “Cowboy Poet.” You might ask “cowboy poet?” - what the heck is that about? Well, pardner, you would have had to have been there. From the audience reaction, Mark’s brand of cowboy poetry and storytelling was a hit. Jim Haley (yours truly), who opened the show with a poem,

closed the show with an original song self-accompanied on acoustic guitar.

All in all, the open mic was a terrific success. Shelly Williams is in favor of the library hosting four of these events per year, perhaps one for each of Vermont’s four seasons, with a Summer Open Mic being held outside.



(L TO R) : Adeline White, Mark Munzert “the Cowboy Poet,” Jim Haley, and Beth Brown. The Maclure hopes to host an open mic once every season. Photos provided

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Wanted: Someone to take pictures at OVUHS basketball games or wrestling matches for Winter 2024 season, so we can include more pictures of local high school students in the paper. If you’re attending the games in any case to watch your own kid or you love high school sports, take a few pics for us and help the team gain recognition for their hard work! Give us a call if you’re interested; we’d love to be able to publish more high school sports photos! Call George at 802 236-4662 or email george@brandonreporter.com

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Hunter education

(Continued from Page 5)

All applicants must complete their instructor paperwork and online homework before attending the course. Instructor application paperwork can be found at: www.tinyurl.com/2pfr7c44

or call 802-828-1193 prior to

the course date.

Policies and procedures, field techniques and teaching methods will be covered to give instructors the tools to teach future hunters how to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Lunch will be provided. Be prepared to be outside for at

least part of the day.

Applicants are required to pass a background check with a Vermont State Game Warden and apprentice-teach with a chief instructor before they will receive their full State of Vermont Hunter Education Instructor certification.

“Our hunter education instructors are all volunteers, donating their time to pass on a cherished Vermont tradition,” said Hunter Education Training Coordinator Nathan Lafont. “The hours our instructors put in will leverage federal dollars that enable the Hunter Educa-

tion Program to function.”

Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities are available for free upon request. Requests should be made as early as possible. Please call the office staff at 802-828-1193 (voice) or 1-800-253-0191 (TTY).

Bridal Show

(Continued from Page 5)

an Event Center! Notably referred to as Vermont Event Center, the beautiful Champlain Ballroom can accommodate 200+ people, and with 187 rooms for lodging and 10 suites, everyone gets to call it a weekend! The attentive, professional and dedicated staff is on hand to

assist with all the details of your event. Could be sit down plated, buffet gathering or mingling at food stations your guests can enjoy top shelf food and service. Close to Lake Champlain, UVM and Winooski Mill District offering a multitude of daytime and evening activities!

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from John J Entertainment, \$250 Wedding Flowers Certificate from Anaphora Flowers, \$250 Wedding Photography Certificate from Gray Ricker Photography, \$250 Wedding Services Certificate from Hitched Caravan and more! Visit Burlingtonbridalshow.com Grand Prizes as we receive them.

The Vermont Wedding Association Bridal Shows have been

VOTED the TOP Bridal Shows in the industry by Brides, Grooms and Wedding Professionals. When you attend our bridal shows you'll meet

the TOP Vermont Wedding Pros who are ready to share ideas and suggestions to help make your day magical! Our most recent brides/couples have also told us that they go to shows for ideas, to explore, to be inspired, and to find a DJ, photographer, baker, florist and a venue! Some have shared that they wanted to meet a specific vendor one more time before they hire them!

Everyday approximately 6000 patients who need life-saving Marrow are searching for a Donor Match. The Vermont Wedding Association is celebrating 14 years partnering with Kerry Ellis and the Marrow Donor Program at Rutland Regional Medical Center donating a table at each of our bridal shows to welcome couples and their families to find a match. We are pleased to share that we have found a match at 5 of our shows and some have gone on to become donors! We are very grateful and so pleased to be part of making that connection to save a life!

The Vermont Wedding Association is celebrating 14 years partnering with Kerry Ellis and the Marrow Donor Program at Rutland Regional Medical Center donating a table at each of our bridal shows to welcome couples and their families to find a match.

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Brandon Brain Buster

A certain hotel has 100 rooms and is 30% occupied on a particular weekend. A jewel thief learns that one of the guests has a suitcase full of gems. The thief must break into a room in order to determine whether the suitcase is in it. If the thief knows which rooms are occupied, but not which guest has the suitcase, how many rooms must the thief break into over the weekend with

out finding the suitcase in order to have a 50/50 chance of finding the suitcase on his next break-in?

A) 99
B) 50
C) 30
D) 28
E) 15

Answer on pg. 22

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Joe Gagnon

(Continued from Page 1)
time to that.”

As Joe slows down a bit to focus on his health, his son Ken, in his mid-60s, has taken on increasingly more responsibility for the family sawmill, situated on 170 acres between Routes 3 and 7 in Pittsford. Regardless of any limitations his body may be facing, Joe still does what he can, such as making deliveries, to keep the mill going.

“If I hated what I was doing, I would’ve quit a long time ago,” he laughed.

Joe grew up on the farm that would eventually become Gagnon Lumber, attending a one-room schoolhouse in Florence before moving on to Pittsford High School. But his entrepreneurial spirit refused to sit still and at 14, after only two weeks in high school, he started hitching rides to the Goodnow Orchard in Brandon,

where he made \$70-\$75 per week picking apples, a considerable amount of money in the 1950s (and roughly equivalent to \$850 today).

“I’m not sorry I left school,” Joe said. “I missed out on some of the social stuff, but kids today don’t know a real day’s work. I wish kids today had to go through what I went through for a couple months. All my children have had to hold a wrench for me at one time or another.”

When he turned 16, Joe got his driver’s license and bought a chainsaw for \$365 (approximately \$4,000 today), a huge investment for someone his age.

“Not everyone had chainsaws back then,” he explained. A neighbor was doing some logging and it looked like a good way to make some money. After a few years cutting wood for other people, Joe decided



AT PITTSFORD TOWN Meeting on Monday, the crowd was invited to enjoy a thank-you cake for Joe Gagnon, who was attending his final town meeting as a member of the Selectboard after 20 years of service. Mr. Gagnon will remain town fence viewer, a post with much less responsibility, as a way to stay involved.

to give it a go on his own. His father had been renting out the family farm and took the property back when the tenant left.

“I plowed everything I made back into this business. Maybe I could’ve done more at the beginning if I’d taken out a loan, but I never felt good about borrowing money,” Joe recalled.

Watching his father once lose a herd of cattle to foreclosure soured him on loans for good. Frugality is a trait he carried into his work on the Selectboard. Even at his last Town Meeting as a Selectboard member on Monday, he spoke up against what he saw as an excessive appropriations request from the Maclure Library.

“I’ve got a reputation as an ‘old Scrooge,’” he laughed. “A penny pincher. I was in the minority on a lot of issues.”

He had four children with his first wife, Betty: Ken (66), Joe, Jr. (64), Sharon (61), and Kathy, who passed away 10 years ago while living in Maine. Neither Joe, Jr. nor Sharon is involved in the family lumber yard, though they both live nearby.

“I’m not sure what’s going to happen to the business when Ken retires,” he said with some regret. “It’s a nice dream to have it continue in the family,

but it’s not likely to happen.”

The lumber business itself has changed a lot over the years. It’s getting harder and harder to get quality logs, Joe says. A colleague, A. Johnson in Bristol, recently closed its mill for good. Joe likens the plight of Vermont logging to

Joe likens the plight of Vermont logging to that of Vermont dairy. But, with 6 employees plus Ken and his wife, Gagnon Lumber is still cutting 2,000,000 board feet per year.

that of Vermont dairy. But, with 6 employees plus Ken and his wife, Gagnon Lumber is still cutting 2,000,000 board feet per year, a number which seems enormous but which Joe insists is still on the modest side.

“There are fewer and fewer mills that offer a range of products,” he said. “Not a lot of mills that will do custom lengths.”

The yard itself is filled with piles of logs, grouped by species: pine, spruce, oak, maple., even locust (notable for its resistance to rot). Not a few local houses were built with wood that Gagnon milled. And he donated “every last stick of wood” used to build the pavilion at the Pittsford Rec Center.

Again, the conversation turned toward Joe’s decision not to seek re-election to the Selectboard.

“We’ve got a good board right now,” he said. “We don’t always agree, but we can talk about things.”

Joe is still passionate about certain things: keeping Pittsford’s taxes as low as possible, for example. It’s for that reason that he opposed the 1% Local Option Tax that Pittsford residents rejected at the ballot box on Tuesday.

“We’re taxed enough,” he insisted.

And he’s very proud of the work he did to get the town to capitalize on the lumber on its lands. The town has had two profitable lumber sales under his guidance and implemented a long-term management plan.

His frugality often saved the town money, as when he’d insist on getting competing quotes on projects. The town saved \$3,500 on an improvement project on West Creek Road because of his insistence on “shopping around,” he said.

As for Pittsford’s future, he hopes the town will be able to attract businesses and not just promote itself as a bedroom community for Rutland or a recreational destination.

“It’s a big problem. Not easy to solve.”

As the conversation began to wrap up, Joe revealed how he lost his right eye.

He was out harvesting wood with his son and was using a chainsaw on a fallen log. The blade kicked back, right into his face. He was able to get to his son, who drove him to the hospital. The doctors weren’t able to save his eye and it now seems symbolic of the sacrifices he’s made for the business he built and loves.



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Hard Tellin'

BY DAVE PRAAMSMA

Of false springs, cabin fever and cheese contests

BY DAVE PRAAMSMA

I may be practicing anthropology without a license, but I would submit that if you really want to understand Northerners, you need to take a hard look at their springtime behavior. I don't mean to get too clinical, but take any folks coming out of 5 or 6 months of long winter and I think there's some post-hibernation rituals in need of some frank discussions on the couch, so to speak.

Take, for example, the good folks in Zurich, Switzerland. 'Round about springtime, the Swiss, I've learned, like to gather to burn a "snowman-like effigy" they like to call the "Boogg." Yes, on a stake. Over a large flaming pyre! I don't have a lot of Swiss friends who could really unpack this ceremony for me, but part of the tradition, it seems, includes stuffing the head with explosives in the hopes of a good and timely explosion to portend a warm and sunny summer. (We might remind groundhog Punxsutawney Phil of these details should he ever ask for a raise.) Behavior like this might prompt a good neighbor to delicately ask if everything is OK.

My inner researcher got a bit of an itch on this subject when, years ago, I happened to be in Bulgaria in early spring (late winter). The good people there were beginning to hang strange red and white dolls in their trees. Actually, they were everywhere. Of course, need-

ing a little enlightenment, we asked our translator and quickly learned that these were likenesses of the infamous "Baba Marta" – the Grouchy Grandmother of March. Far from exploding her head, the more diplomatic Bulgarians felt that by appeasing the old crank with ubiquitous voodoo ornaments she might consider powering down winter a little sooner.

But if anyone has any doubts over the primal effects of springtime, you really need to take a hard look at what this season does to the otherwise buttoned-down British. Each spring, it seems, the folks in Gloucester, England unleash their wintertime caginess to join in the century-old "Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling Race." I'll admit that the idea of chasing a rolling round of cheddar down a hill did not immediately impress me until I learned the high stakes of this pastime. Able to reach speeds of 70 miles per hour, the race was actually shut down one year - not because of injury just to cheese racers, but also to the spectators. (Apparently a high velocity 9-pound hunk of curd can really do some damage.)

If that's not evidence of the judgment-addling condition of spring, I don't know what is.

I must admit that I had always assumed that stoic Vermonters were above the fray when it came to this sort of thing. Granted, you might make a case for a slight uptick in shopping-cart aggression in the grocery aisle. Or maybe even a slight decrease in that courtesy left turn we Vermonters afford to the first in line at green lights. But overall, I assumed a more year-round, even-keeled behavior - until my wife

reminded me of our family's springtime paper boat tradition.

For reasons I can't remember, our clan has, for a number of years, been in habit of engaging in a paper boat race in the thawing creek behind our house to usher in the season. I hesitate to say that our tradition is anything as exciting as cheese rolling. But what has always perplexed me a little is the extent to which this pastime has summoned such barbarity from our children. In fact, I don't think I can recall a time when things have not gotten ugly. Bombing each other's boats with rocks, sac-

rificing bodies to the muck to push boats over the finish line, raucous battle speeches (all of which might be perfectly acceptable behavior in Switzerland in springtime, it should be noted.)

I suppose if there is a serviceable excuse for our bipolar springtime behavior, maybe it's because we northerners live through a bipolar season. The time of year sees about as much constancy as my old '73 Volkswagen Beetle. Take any sun-starved population and then subject them to cruel pendulum-like weather and maybe we should be glad that we're not bowling rounds of cheese at each other.

In practical terms, I guess this means maybe we shouldn't get too swoony about that springtime weather we've been getting of late. But of course, most Vermonters know this. In our more rational moments, we know deep down that those winter tires really shouldn't come off until May. And we certainly don't stop stacking wood on the porch just because of an early spring teaser. I guess that's why they call it March – a time for soldiering on. One foot in front of the other.

Hang tight, Vermont – spring is on the way.

But if anyone has any doubts over the primal effects of springtime, you really need to take a hard look at what this season does to the otherwise buttoned-down British.

'Season of Nay'

(Continued from Page 4)

tread carefully when trimming services whose purpose is to prepare the next generation for successful lives. Cutting a few dollars now can have outsize impacts later. And whatever cuts are made must be borne equitably across the school community.

All that said, a widespread criticism of the Brandon town budget process was the feeling that residents were not being heard and that the Budget Committee was forging ahead with a plan that lacked broad community support. Hopefully

the defeat of the Committee's proposed budget will present a new opportunity for the Selectboard to connect with residents.

In the long run, however, our tax woes will not abate unless we manage to attract more people to the state. Vermont taxes are high because our costs are shared by relatively few taxpayers. The true key to tax reduction is population. And we will not be able to attract more people to the state, or even to our local community, if we've whittled ourselves to the bone. As we move forward, we should

be thinking about whether what we're cutting makes us more or less attractive to newcomers. It's certainly not our only concern, or even our immediate priority, but it's an issue that has to remain on our radar.

So, as we launch into this messy, exasperating process yet again, let's roll up our sleeves, listen when necessary, speak up when needed, and be civil to one another because we all want this place to succeed.

And remember that we have to help come up with alternatives. We can't just say no, even if it's the Season of Nay.

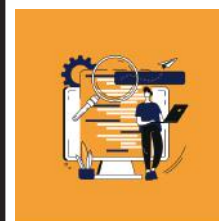
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MEDICINE BOTTLES FROM AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

MEDICINE BOTTLES FROM circa 1900. The two on the left were found in the house where Dr. Swift had his practice, now the Pittsford Village Farm. Hundreds of such bottles were disposed of on the property back in the 1920s. The two bottles on the right are for historical comparison.

A snapshot of *Pittsford Village Farm's* historic legacy

BY SAMANTHA STONE

Recently, out of the blue, Francis Timbers contacted me from Las Vegas to say he had some Dr. Swift medicine bottles he'd like to share with Pittsford Village Farm. A brief phone call about old bottles turned into one man's oral history of a property that spans several generations.

The closer you look at the history of Pittsford Village Farm (the 22-acre property across the street from Kamuda's in downtown Pittsford), the more you see that the connections to this property run deep and far. Just about every-

one in Pittsford has a memory of the house or land, but such connections span much further afield than you would think! Francis (Frank) Timbers, who grew up in Rutland but spent summers at his aunt Margaret (Keith) Fallon's farm, recently contacted me from Las Vegas to share some photos and stories.

In 1798, Steven Avery built the House and rented it to four Pittsford physicians. Dr. William Frisbie bought it in 1807, and Dr. Freeman Mott in 1819. Dr. Abiel Caverly bought the house in 1866 and remodeled it in Italianate Revival style. He also published Pittsford's first written history in 1872. After his death in 1897, Dr. Henry Haven Swift, who had married Dr. Caverly's daughter, took over the practice and bought the house. Around 1880, the couple added the large, two-story wing on the west side,

with the intent of starting a hospital, but this never happened. In 1928, Raymond Fallon acquired the property and was the first to begin farming the land.

Frank Timbers emailed us through our website after visiting the area for a wedding, wondering if we would be interested in some of Dr. Swift's medicine bottles, which he's had since childhood. Now retired and living in Las Vegas, Frank has fond memories of spending time with his brothers at his Aunt Margaret and Uncle Raymond's farm, including rounding up and milking the cows in the summer and putting up hay and silage in the fall. He also recalls community-wide corn roasts after the harvest.

Frank says when his uncle acquired the property, there was a room full of medicine bottles and Uncle Raymond brought over 20 wagonloads of glass bottles to a "dump" pile on the land (remember, this was the late 1920's). Interested in the history of the property, however, the children saved some of the bottles to leave on display for years to come. Frank sent us these photos.

MEMORIES OF MARGARET (PEG/PEGGY) FALLON

After posting a photo of Margaret and Raymond's farm on Pittsford Village Farm's social

media, there were several comments from people who knew Peg. We heard from family members, former students, and others who remember visiting the farm for various reasons, all sharing praises of this woman who was so important to Pittsford. Peg Fallon was a first-grade teacher and principal in Pittsford for over 50 years. Many who wrote in remembered her as a remarkable teacher and woman.

One man wrote that she was his 1st-grade teacher in her 50th year of teaching! Everyone remembers her as a wonderful person, teacher, and administrator.

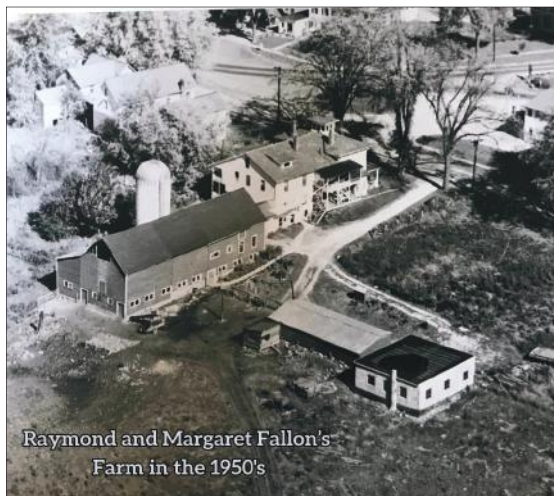
Frank says his Aunt Margaret



MRS. FALLON

MARGARET "PEGGY" FALLON, past owner of the property that is now the Pittsford Village Farm.

would be proud and honored that the building that was once her home is the future site of an early childhood education program, as well as a community center and affordable housing. We are thrilled to know that her legacy lives on.



Raymond and Margaret Fallon's Farm in the 1950's

AN AERIAL VIEW of what is now Pittsford Village Farm, when it was owned by Peggy Fallon in the 1950s.



CHARLES WISELL AT farm, holding grandsons.

THE GALLOWES.

Justice Vindicated in Vermont—Hanging a Lad 19 Years of Age.

Henry Welcome, a young man but nineteen years old, paid the awful penalty of death at Windsor, Vt., yesterday, for the murder of a man named Perry Russell in September last. From a report in the N. Y. Herald we make the following extract:—

THE CULPRIT'S LAST WORDS.

A moment of silence, and Welcome began:—
I cannot say much. Words are inadequate to express my feelings. I hope my situation and fate will be an example to others to keep out of bad company and low-bred places, and obey their parents and stay at home. Disobedience to my good parents has brought me here. I hope God will have mercy on my soul, for Christ's sake. I have made my peace with God, and I want to caution young men, before these witnesses, not to touch liquor, for if they take one glass they will want another. I cannot say any more, my heart is too full.

These words were delivered in a trembling voice and with tearful eyes. After being placed on the drop, his hands and feet were strapped by Deputy Sheriff Amsden, and the noose adjusted around his neck.

A PRAYER FOR MERCY.

He then shook hands with the superintendent, Sheriff, and deputies; then he broke forth into a most fervent, touching, and heartfelt prayer, his accents being quite distinct, although his

CLIPPING FROM FRONT page of Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, 21 Jan. 1871.

Names lost

(Continued from Page 3)

Following Henry's conviction, newspapers moralized on the notoriety of a teenage murderer: "But that a lad of that age, of honest and humble parentage, not reared in the slums

of a great city, no graduate of the Five Points, but born and brought up in as orderly, quiet and moral village as there is in New England or in the world should be the perpetrator of one of the most atrocious and

brutal murders known in this state, committed solely for plunder, is strange indeed."

Levi sat through his son's sentencing to death by hanging. As Vermont only had nine executions to that time, some

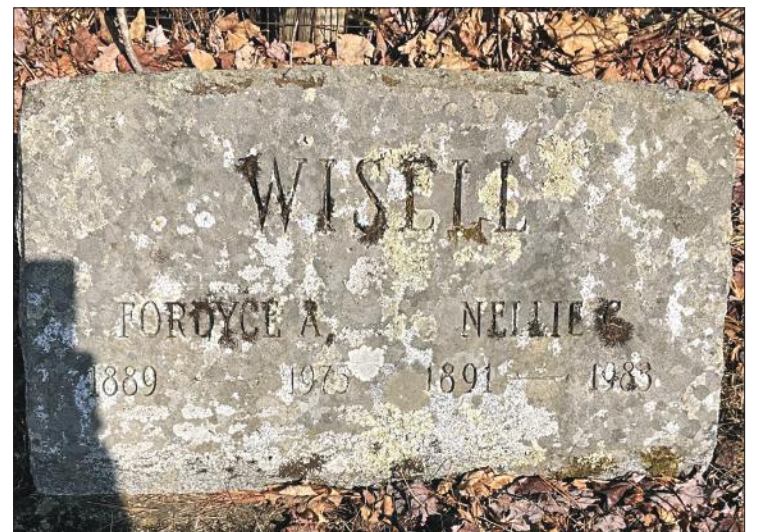
debate ensued about the appropriateness of the death sentence for a teen. Nonetheless, Henry was hanged at Windsor Prison on January 20, 1871—reports of final moments and address to the crowd made headlines across the country. Henry's family declined to accept the body, and he is buried in the prison cemetery. Levi followed son Henry in death later that

year—I think he died of a broken heart.

*Five Points was a notoriously dangerous neighborhood in New York City at the time, so named for the intersection of five streets in lower Manhattan. The neighborhood was the setting of the 2002 film Gangs of New York by Martin Scorsese.

1850 United States Federal Census for Mary Wissell				
Vermont > Addison > Shoreham				
Peter Wissell	33	m	Sabon	v Canada
Alexander	20	m	"	v "
Merrilla Lemison	59	f		500 Vermont
Ruth	29	f		"
Sarah	25	f		"
Laura	20	f		"
Ruth Tomer	40	f		"
Lavinia La Morder	16	m	Sabon	"
Joseph Wissell	36	m	Yancey	v Canada
Mary	26	f		Vermont
Mary	2	f		"
Ellen	1	f		"
Mahilda Master	20	f		v Canada
Oliner Wissel	18	m	Sabon	v "

WISELL IN 1850 census, Shoreham.



FORDYCE WISELL GRAVESTONE, St. Mary's Cemetery, Brandon.

Town Meeting and election results

Voters made their voices heard, now it's back to the drawing board for OVUU and Brandon

Pittsford Town Meeting 2024 report

BY STEVEN JUPITER

PITTSFORD—Pittsford’s 2024 Town Meeting followed widespread trends, with residents voicing concerns about rising costs and questioning particular expenditures, even in a town whose proposed FY25 budget is not significantly different from its current one.

The meeting began with Town Moderator Rob Spensley laying out the format of the evening and then a short address by State Representative Butch Shaw (R Pittsford-Proctor).

“We’ve got some serious problems in the state,” said Mr. Shaw, noting that public safety and middle-income/workforce housing top the list of Vermonters’ concerns. Mr. Shaw expressed frustration that of the 4 tripartisan housing bills currently under legislative review, 2 were stalled in the Environment Committee.

Mr. Shaw also noted a few new public-safety provisions that were passed this year. Of particular interest is a law that allows prosecutors to “stack” individual offenses into a crime of a higher grade. For example, multiple misdemeanor larcenies can now be “stacked” into a felony charge.

But Mr. Shaw also stated that the amount budgeted for education, which is always the

state’s largest expense, has increased by \$245 million this year, compared to the usual yearly increase of \$60 million. The state does not have the money to make up this difference, according to Mr. Shaw, and property taxes will have to fill the gap. Mr. Shaw ended his address by reminding attendees that they control their property and school taxes through their votes.

Selectboard member Mark Winslow read the dedications of the Town Report, which honored the late Rebecca Davenport and Selectboard member Joe Gagnon, who is stepping down off the Board after 20 years [see the article on Mr. Gagnon in this week’s issue].

After a short exchange between an attendee and the Selectboard regarding the new 25-mph speed limit in Pittsford village, Mr. Spensley opened the floor to discussion of Article 2 on the ballot: the town budget.

One attendee questioned

whether the current town manager’s salary was too high, especially in comparison to other town employees. The Selectboard defended the salary, noting that Town Manager David Atherton’s compensation was in line with the profession’s current rates and that Mr. Atherton has brought in a significant amount of grant money to offset the expense of his position.

The attendees ultimately approved the proposed budget unanimously.

As Mr. Spensley continued to move through the articles on the warning, attendees appeared to grow restless and, after the approval of Article 7, requested that the approval of

Articles 8 through 21 be condensed into a single motion. In the end, these articles were approved unanimously in a single motion, except for Articles 12, 13, and 16, which had been reserved for individual discussion and approval.

Article 12 was an appropriation

to the Pittsford Food Shelf of \$1,000. An attendee asked whether the amount was too low. A brief discussion ensued in which an increase to \$5,000 was considered, but in the end the article was unanimously approved as it was written after attendees and Selectboard members pointed out that it would be inappropriate to approve an amount that had not been warned and that the Food Shelf received contributions from Proctor and Chittenden and had received thousands of dollars from fundraisers.

Article 13 was an appropriation to the Regional Ambulance Service of Rutland of \$11,964. Attendees questioned what the town received for its contribution. Betsy Morgan, who sits on Regional’s board, was in attendance and defended the appropriation by noting that it was calculated purely on a per capita basis that was the same in all the towns that used the service. The article passed unanimously.

Article 16 was an appropriation to the Maclure Library of \$125,000. An attendee noted that this request was roughly 25% more than the library had requested for FY24 and questioned whether the increase could be justified. A debate ensued in which much support was voiced for the library and

for Library Director Shelly William’s management, including from Library President Stephen Belcher and Alicia Malay, who sits on the library’s board in addition to her position as Chair of the Selectboard. However, there remained some opposition to the size of the appropriation and Article 16 was the only one to be passed without unanimous support.

The meeting wrapped up with non-binding business. One attendee expressed frustration with trucks that attempt to cross the Cooley covered bridge and get stuck trying to turn around. And another attendee questioned whether the town’s ARPA funds had all been obligated and, if so, to what projects. The Selectboard informed the room that all of the town’s ARPA funds had been allocated and would be spent by the end of the current year.

The meeting then adjourned to allow for Australian ballot voting on the following day to elect town officers, to approve a \$400K bond for Bridge 108, and to approve a 1% Local Option Tax. See the accompanying article to see the results of all voted articles.

Of particular interest is a law that allows prosecutors to “stack” individual offenses into a crime of a higher grade. For example, multiple misdemeanor larcenies can now be “stacked” into a felony charge.



Pittsford votes yes on bridge bond, no on 1% tax

BY STEVEN JUPITER

PITTSFORD—Pittsford voters approved the \$400K bond for the Route 7 Bridge #108 water main project on Tuesday. They also rejected the proposed 1% Local Option Tax that many other Vermont towns have adopted.

The bond vote was 459 (69%) in favor and 210 (31%) opposed.

The vote against the 1% Local Options Tax was 261 (38%) in favor and 422 (62%) opposed.

Selectboard member Tom Hooker ran unopposed to retain his 3-year seat and new Board member Dan Adams ran unopposed for the 2-year seat vacated by departing member Joe Gagnon. Mr. Hooker also ran unopposed to retain his 3-year seat as Trustee of Public Funds. And Judi Tompkins ran unopposed to retain her 3-year seat as Trustee of Maclure Library.

At Town Meeting on Monday, Pittsford voters unanimously approved the town budget of \$1,822,999, highway fund ex-

penditures of \$1,192,980, and Village District Expenses of \$17,000.

Voters also approved the property-tax exemption of the Pittsford Historical Society’s building and land, in addition to a \$7,500 appropriation to the Society.

Voters approved the following appropriations as well:

- \$5,000 to the Marble Valley Regional Transportation District “The Bus”
- \$1,000 to the Pittsford Cemetery Association

- \$1,500 to the Bowen-Walker Fund
- \$1,000 to the Pittsford Food Shelf
- \$11,964 to Regional Ambulance Service
- \$3,600 to the Rutland County Restorative Justice Center
- \$4,931 to the Visiting Nurses Association and Hospice of the Southwest Region
- \$125,000 to the Maclure Library
- \$1,400 to ARC Rutland Area
- \$427 to RSVP/VC

- \$1,100 to the Southern Vermont Council on Aging
- \$200 to Green Up Day
- \$1,000 to Rutland County Humane Society

Pittsford voters also chose President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump as their Democratic and Republican nominees, respectively. President Biden received 179 votes and former President Trump received 273 votes.

Leicester Town Meeting report 2024

BY JOHN MCCRIGHT

LEICESTER — Of the 39 Leicester residents at Monday night's Town Meeting, 20 were feeling pretty generous, while 19 not so much. That reality was reflected in a 20-19 paper ballot vote considering a measure from the floor to add a one-time payment of \$25,000 to the Brandon Free Public Library's renovation project.

The proposal was moved by Doug Perkins, which followed a brief discussion to cut \$2,500 from the general budget that has been included as an annual town contribution to Brandon library for numerous years. A motion to that effect did not receive a second, and the motion was dead.

Perkins's motion to gift the Brandon Library, on the other hand, received a second and spawned several comments by residents leading up to a call for the paper vote, and the one-vote margin for passage. The library is undergoing a \$3 million renovation and has yet to raise the full amount needed.

The addition brought the town's total expenditures for the year to \$834,685.72; of that amount, \$468,190 is dedicated to the town's highway expenses.

Rep. Peter Conlon opened the meeting with a 20-minute overview of legislative action on key bills, as well as an insightful review of the education tax dilemma facing the state, and the "perfect storm" of factors driving historically high school tax rates. He noted that the state was eyeing a \$250 million increase in school spending statewide, with average school budgets seeing double-digit spending increases — just one of the main factors leading to what are expected to be record-high tax rates for the upcoming year.

Conlon, who chairs the House Education Committee, explained the three primary contributing factors to the rise in school spending was the end of federal pandemic-related money (which had been significant these past two budget cycles) that financed extra teacher-aids, mental health and behavior-related positions; a 16% increase in health care insurance, along with inflation in building-related costs; and the increased need to meet mental health issues

at school. He said that while costs are high, the Legislature is having to say "no" to numerous new proposals and are trying to rein in costs going forward.

No other issues were debated during the hour-long meeting, though selectboard chair Diane Benware praised the work of several town employees and promoted a Green Up Day event this coming May that will seek to get the most pledges to clean up in a 24-hour period starting Friday, May 3, at 4 p.m. If successful,

those who participate may make it into the Guinness Book of Records. More information can be found on the state's Green Up Day website, and locals can sign-up via the town's webpage.

During Australian ballot voting on Tuesday, the town elected Richard Reed as moderator for a one-year

term, incumbent Brad Lawes for a three-year term to the selectboard and incumbent Diane Randall to a two-year term to the selectboard.

Leicester residents joined voters in the six-town Otter Valley Unified Union School District to weigh in on the proposed FY2025 budget of \$27,247,823, which would've increased spending by \$3,073,428 or 12.71%. Voters soundly defeated the proposed OVUU spending proposal. The tally was 1,325 votes opposed, 891 in favor.

In January, the district estimate that this level of spending would drive up education property taxes in the six towns between 17% and 28% for those who paid based on their income (two-thirds of Vermonters pay less for their school taxes because of state support).

Leicester residents cast ballots for two OVUU board seats: Fernanda Canales of Goshen (1,633 votes) and Natalie Steen of Brandon (1,745) both were returned to their seats. Five more OVUU board seats were on the ballot with no nominees. Anyone who wanted them, could have waged a campaign for write-in votes, but Superintendent Kristin Hubert reported on Tuesday evening that there were a few scattered votes for these open seats, nevertheless, no one received a sufficient number of write-ins to prevail in the election. So town selectboards can appoint school board members.

If successful, those who participate may make it into the Guinness Book of Records. More information can be found on the state's Green Up Day website, and locals can sign-up via the town's webpage.



A VIEW OF the assembly at Brandon Town Meeting at Brandon Town Hall on Monday. In the foreground are Town Clerk/Treasurer Sue Gage (left) and Town Manager Seth Hopkins (right).

2024 Brandon Town Meeting report

BY GEORGE FJELD

BRANDON- A \$500,000 bond for a solar array was debated at the Brandon Town Meeting on Monday night. Selectperson Tim Guiles presented the case for the bond to build a 150 kW net metered solar array in the industrial park off Arnold District road. It is sited next to the present Green Lantern solar array on land the town would lease for 40 years at \$100 a year. The array, in combination with the \$100,000 worth of electricity from the Green Lantern project, would make the town capable of producing all their electricity needs and then some. Excess electricity would be sold to the Fire District at a 10% reduced price. The savings from the electricity generated would pay off the bond in approximately 10 years. No tax dollars would be used. Sam Glaser wondered if the tax credits would be applied to lower the bond. Seth Hopkins, town manager, stated that the selectboard could do that or use the credits for any other purpose they chose.

Karen Rhodes argued that the selectboard should not be presenting this as it would violate Title 17 prohibiting any opinion on a warning. Mitch Pearl opined that was not applicable at a presentation, only on the warning. Steve Douglass asked if the board had considered other options such as wind, hydro, or 5th-generation nuclear power. There was some consideration but the tax credits are for solar energy. Karen Farwell asked how the Selectboard voted on this issue. Tracy Wyman and Brian Coolidge voted nay and Cecil Reniche-

Smith, Heather Nelson, and Tim Guiles voted yea. Wyman was concerned about unknown maintenance costs. The 3 proponents of the array wanted the voters to look at the proposal and decide.

Vicki Disorda asked how much it will cost to dismantle the array in 40 years. Jim Emerson, chair of the Brandon Energy Committee said it would cost \$5,000 today and would be more expensive in 40 years due to inflation. Most of the metals would be recycled. Emerson also related that there are 18 municipal solar projects in Vermont and Colchester is building their third.

The impetus for the projects is a 30% federal tax credit. Sandy Mayo wanted to know if the profits from the electricity generated would go to the townspeople. Guiles stated there were no profits and the benefit would be tax reduction because the electricity costs would be much lower.

Board chair Tracy Wyman introduced member Heather Nelson, who presented the 2024-2025 budget, starting with the definition of a budget versus an appropriation. Paving, which has sometimes been a budget item and sometimes an independent appropriation, is now included

in the budget. This made the proposed FY25 budget increase 13.45% over FY24, but the increase would be only 4.5% if the \$300,000 paving line item were removed. Nelson reviewed the process of determining the budget with 4 meetings of the board and the budget committee. Distribution of ARPA funds and the 1% local options tax were also reviewed.

Voters approved the continued property-tax exemptions for the land and buildings owned by the Brandon Area Rescue Squad and the Brandon Masonic Association. Sharon Stearns clarified what it means

to be a charitable organization. Mason Roy Murdock reviewed the more than \$7,000 in charitable giving to the town of Brandon. Taxes on the Masonic property would be around \$6,000 if not for the exemption.

Stephanie Jerome, Brandon's state representative, reviewed her work in the current legis-

The array, in combination with the \$100,000 worth of electricity from the Green Lantern project, would make the town capable of producing all their electricity needs and then some. Excess electricity would be sold to the Fire District at a 10% reduced price.

lative session. Jerome is the vice chair of the Economic Development Committee. She is proud that the Rutland County legislators meet together weekly during the session. Members of all parties participate cooperatively. Rutland county is the

(See Legislative report, Page 16)

Brandon results

(Continued from Page 1)
called “smoke and mirrors” because it allowed the Board to claim a smaller budget increase.

Brandon voters also rejected the proposed \$500K bond for a town-owned solar array. The array had been the center of controversy for months, with the Brandon Energy Committee expending a good deal of time and energy promoting the idea and numerous residents vociferously arguing against it at Selectboard meetings and on social media.

The tally on the solar array was 351 votes (34%) in favor and 890 votes (66%) against.

New Selectboard

Voters returned three experienced members to the Brandon Selectboard: Doug Bailey, Ralph Ethier, and Heather Fjeld Nelson. Mr. Bailey has won a three-year term, taking the seat vacated by Tracy Wyman. Mr. Ethier and Ms. Fjeld have won single-year terms.

All three already had experience on the Board, with Mr. Bailey having once served on the Board for several years and Mr. Ethier and Ms. Nelson having both been appointed to

partial terms after departures of members from the Board. Ms. Nelson was serving on the Board at the time of the election and will retain her seat.

Mr. Bailey said in an email to The Reporter:

“I would like to thank the 1,200-plus residents on taking the time to vote. Our first challenge will be to set a new budget that we can get passed with input from our taxpayers. I appreciate all the candidates for getting involved in our town.”

Ms. Nelson wrote:

“Thank you to everyone who gave me their support. I am excited to continue working for our town as a Selectboard member. While it is disappointing that the proposed budget didn’t pass, I look forward to working with a great group of Selectboard members to make changes and present voters with another proposed budget.”

We did not receive a response from Mr. Ethier before we went to press.

Other Votes

Bill Moore was re-elected to a one-year term as Town Moderator.

Laura Miner was re-elected to a three-year term as Trustee

of Public Funds.

David Roberts was re-elected to a 2-year term as Trustee of the Brandon Free Public Library.

Appropriations

Voters approved all the appropriations requested by local organizations:

\$4,000 for ARC-Rutland

\$7,000 for the Brandon Independence Day Celebration Committee

\$25,000 for the Brandon American Legion Post #55

\$1,000 for the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce

\$82,580 for the Brandon Area Rescue Squad

\$92,000 for the Brandon Free Public Library

\$5,000 for the Brandon Museum at the Stephen A. Douglas Birthplace

\$15,000 for the Brandon Senior Center

\$3,000 for the Charter House Coalition

\$1,000 for the Open Door Clinic of Addison County

\$550 for RSVP & The Volun-



(L TO R) Brandon Town Manager Seth Hopkins, Selectboard members Heather Fjeld, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Tracy Wyman, Brian Coolidge, and Tim Guiles at Brandon Town Meeting on Monday.

teer Center

\$1,500 for the Rutland County Humane Society

\$2,900 for the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging

\$10,200 for the VNA Hospice of the Southwest Region

Other Articles

Voters voted yes on two other articles:

The town will now implement a 30-day grace period for those who miss the May 15 tax-payment deadline before the 8% late-payment penalty is assessed.

“Yes” votes narrowly outnumbered “no” votes (719 to 622) on the non-binding advisory question as to whether the town should hire additional police officers to ensure 24-hour on-duty police coverage.

Presidential Primary

Brandon voters chose President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump as their Democratic nominee and Republican nominee, respectively. President Biden received 355 votes and former President Trump received 354.

OV budget

(Continued from Page 1)
hen will both retain their seats. Both ran unopposed.

Several board seats remain open, with no write-in candidates earning enough votes to clinch a spot.

RNESU Superintendent Kristin Hubert said in an email to The Reporter:

“Administration will begin meeting as soon as possible and will work with our boards to both create a timeline for the next budget vote and also craft a new budget to put before the voters. Although it would be premature to discuss where the cuts may come from without meeting with my team and the board, as we did not ‘pad’ or inflate our budget, the reductions are likely to impact people and/or programs and will have an effect on all of our schools. I certainly respect

the message we heard from our voters by receiving a no vote and will go back to the drawing board in our planning, but

I certainly respect the message we heard from our voters by receiving a no vote and will go back to the drawing board in our planning, but admit that my team is disheartened and also frustrated by the timing and messaging of VT’s Act 127 and H.850, which undoubtedly created mixed messaging across the state and put schools and leaders in very challenging situations.”

—Kristin Huber
RNESU Superintendent

admit that my team is disheartened and also frustrated by the timing and messaging of VT’s Act 127 and H.850, which undoubtedly created mixed messaging across the state and put schools and leaders in very

challenging situations.”

Act 127 altered the formula by which school districts in Vermont calculate their per-pupil spending by taking into account the types of services each district’s students require, with more “weight” given to students who require additional supports. The idea was to ensure that each district had the resources it needed for its specific student population.

The Act also placed a 5% cap on property-tax increases if districts kept their budget increases under 10%. However, the state legislature came to believe that this provision encouraged districts to inflate their budgets without fear of increased taxpayer liabilities.

H.850, which Governor Scott signed into law in February, removed the 5% cap and allowed school boards to

Brandon TM

(Continued from Page 15)

2024 and spent prior to the end of 2026. Scouts BSA members Jon Carrara from Pack 110 and Lucia Carrara from troop 2019 opened the meeting by presenting the colors and leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Renata Hopkins helped out during the question and answer sessions by passing the microphone to audience members who wanted to speak. The meeting was called to order at 7:12 pm and recessed to the following day’s Australian ballot at 9:07 pm.

ARPA funds will have to be appropriated by the end of

reopen their budgets and make cuts, all in the hope that without the protection of the cap, boards would be more sensitive to the financial impact of their

budgets.

The OVUU Board opted not to revisit its budget in light of H.850, believing it already to be delivering the minimum needed for the district.



Goshen Town Meeting 2024 report

BY JOHN MCCRIGHT
GOSHEN — After a couple tumultuous meetings in recent years, the Goshen town meeting on Monday night was called “productive.”

“It was a positive meeting,” observed Martin Fjeld, who was appointed town clerk last summer. “It was viewed by all as productive.”

All warned items voted on at Monday’s meeting passed. That included a road budget for \$747,150, which represented an astounding 323% increase over the amount approved for roads last year. But with \$200,000 in state aid for paving Town Hill Road, plus some other funding, the proposed amount raised by taxes — \$155,150 — represents an increase of \$11,850, or about 8.3%

Goshen residents also approved municipal spending of \$269,761, which is an increase

of \$21,598, or 8.7%, over last year.

Fjeld explained that during the Monday evening meeting the municipal budget was amended to add \$10,000 for a special town-wide property reappraisal. This was needed because the town’s Common Level of Appraisal, or CLA, was so out of whack that the state required it to be updated.

The reappraisal is expected to begin in September and could take a year. Since the process will cross over into next year, Fjeld expected more money to be added to next year’s budget to

pay a second installment on the reappraisal.

There was an animated discussion — on both sides — over whether the town should do away with the two town constables, according to observer Carolyn Van Vleck. The idea was that constables come and go, and training up new ones periodically is an expenditure that could instead be put toward public safety work from the county sheriff or state police. The vote to abolish the constable positions prevailed.

At town meeting, Goshen residents decided to replace

the elected local auditors and instead hire an outside professional auditor, as many Vermont towns have done.

When asked if the elected position of town treasurer become one that is appointed by the selectboard and could be hired from out of town, Goshen voters said yes. That change won’t take place for a year. In the meantime, Goshen elected Vickie Whiting to be town treasurer for the next 12 months.

Goshen folks re-elected Bill Mathis to a three-year term on the selectboard and elected incumbent Martin Fjeld town clerk for one year.

Goshen residents saw the proposed school budget go down to defeat on Tuesday. The six member towns in the Otter Valley Unified Union (OVUU) soundly defeated the proposed 2024-2025 spending proposal of \$27,247,823. The tally was

1,325 votes opposed, 891 in favor. Proposed spending represented a 12.71% increase over the current year’s spending.

Goshen residents cast ballots for two OVUU board seats: Fernanda Canales of Goshen (1,633 votes) and Natalie Steen of Brandon (1,745) both were returned to their seats. Five more OVUU board seats were on the ballot with no nominees. Anyone who wanted them, could have waged a campaign for write-in votes, but Superintendent Kristin Hubert reported on Tuesday evening that there were a few scattered votes for these open seats, nevertheless, no one received a sufficient number of write-ins to prevail in the election. So town selectboards can appoint school board members.

There was an animated discussion — on both sides — over whether the town should do away with the two town constables... [t]he vote to abolish the constable positions prevailed.

How rising health care costs are driving up property taxes

BY PETER D’AURIA/
VTDIGGER

On Tuesday, many Vermont voters weighed in on school budgets that have grown by the largest margins in recent history.

The reasons for that growth include rising costs for special education, vanishing Covid-19 pandemic aid, deteriorating school buildings and increased expenses related to student mental health.

Another reason is likely familiar to Vermonters across the state: health care is getting increasingly expensive.

Exactly how much Vermont will spend on its schools is still unclear. Last month, Gov. Phil Scott signed a law allowing districts to revise their budgets and delay votes until mid-April.

But according to Vermont’s teachers union, health care costs across all districts are expected to increase by 16.4%, or roughly \$47.9 million cumulatively, between the current school year and the 2024-2025 school year.

Roughly 80% of that increase will be borne by taxpayers, according to the union. The other 20% will be paid by those employees. The school districts’ share would make up roughly 17% of the most recent estimate of the growth in school spending, \$230 million.

To be sure, property taxes are not the only source of funding for education spending. And the cost of health benefits for mu-

nicipal and state employees are also going up, and are generally funded through a variety of taxes, including on property.

But rising education spending is a visible example of how Vermonters across the state, even those who do not visit hospitals or clinics, bear the burden of higher health care costs.

The ‘precarious aftermath’

The costs of much of Vermont’s health care is regulated far from the state’s educational apparatus, at the Green Mountain Care Board.

Every year, hospitals come to the five-member board seeking approval for increased prices for medical care in their budgets for the next fiscal year. Commercial insurers also ask the board’s permission to increase premium rates for certain kinds of insurance plans.

Last year, most Vermont hospitals came to the board seeking permission to grow their revenue by double digits — growth that would come largely from increasing prices for medical care.

Hospital administrators told the care board that their organizations needed the additional money to cover the increased cost of supplies, pharmaceuticals and labor, amid a shortage of nurses and other care staff.

Vermont is also contending with a shortage of staff at mental health and long-term care facilities. That has left many patients who no longer need hospital-level

care languishing for days or weeks in hospital beds, because there is nowhere for them to go.

Those patients take up valuable hospital real estate, but hospitals do not always receive payments from insurers to care for them.

“The cost and wage pressures that began during the pandemic — and have continued in its precarious aftermath — are not over,” University of Vermont Health Network administrators said in a June memo that accompanied their budget request to the Green Mountain Care Board.

When hospitals are approved for price increases, those higher prices generally lead to higher costs for insurers. In turn, insurers usually seek to increase the premiums they charge for health care coverage. (Reimbursement rates for government-run insurance programs, Medicare and Medicaid, are limited in how much they can increase year-to-year by federal

and state laws.)

Last year, commercial insurers asked the Green Mountain Care Board for permission to enact significant premium hikes, among the highest in their history.

The board ultimately cut rates for both hospitals and insurers, but still allowed some significant price increases.

“The driving factors behind the increase in health insurance costs are the same for everyone,”

Sara Teachout, a spokesperson for BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont, the state’s largest private insurer, said in an interview. “So really high increases in hospital budgets, really high increases in drug prices, are the two sort of standout factors.”

“That did not happen”

School employees’ insurance is overseen by the Vermont Education Health

But according to Vermont’s teachers union, health care costs across all districts are expected to increase by 16.4%, or roughly \$47.9 million cumulatively, between the current school year and the 2024-2025 school year. Roughly 80% of that increase will be borne by taxpayers, according to the union.

Initiative, or VEHI, a nonprofit that provides health coverage to educators and school employees. VEHI offers four health cover-

age plans, all administered by BlueCross BlueShield.

VEHI says that the 16.4% increase in premiums for those plans is due primarily to increased costs for care, and a rise in the number of members seeking care.

“Continued increases in hospital budgets and in prices for hospital services, plus more expensive pharmaceutical charges, remain the major cost drivers,” VEHI administrators told members in an October letter.

School district employees’ health insurance is determined through statewide bargaining between representatives of the Vermont School Boards Association and the Vermont chapter of the National Education Association, the teachers union.

Roughly half a decade ago, stakeholders, lawmakers and the Scott administration hashed out the statewide bargaining system in an attempt to bring down school employee healthcare costs.

But in testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee on Thursday, representatives of the Vermont School Boards Association said that the process has not lived up to its promises.

The move to statewide bargaining “was supposed to slow the rate of growth in the cost of these benefits,” Sue Ceglowski, the executive director of the Vermont School Boards Association. (See *Health care/taxes*, Page 19)

OUR CREATIVE KIDS

ARTISTS: Emily Colaluca

GRADE: 8

SCHOOL: Otter Valley
Middle School

MEDIUM: Paint

TEACHER: Dasha Kalisz



Rutland votes to keep fluoride in city water

BY TIFFANY TAN/
VTDIGGER

Rutland city voters spoke loud and clear Tuesday that they want to keep fluoride in the municipal water.

A ballot article asking voters to approve a Rutland charter change that would ban fluoride from the city water supply failed on Town Meeting Day. There were 2,031 votes against the proposal and 1,334 in favor of it, according to unofficial election results gathered by PEGTV local access television.

Rutland city water has been fluoridated since 1983, a practice that's been implemented in various parts of the country because it's been found to prevent tooth decay. But opponents of local water fluoridation — who petitioned to get the article on the ballot this year — questioned whether the practice truly promoted oral health.

Rutland-area dentists welcomed the vote results Tuesday evening. Voters had rejected a similar ballot article in 2016.

"It's reassuring that they listen to the science and the history and the long-standing effectiveness that we've seen with water fluoridation," said Judith Fisch, a dentist who has been practicing in Rutland for about 35 years and who has served on the board of trustees of the American Dental Association.

"I think that was the right decision for future generations," Fisch

said in an interview.

According to data from the Vermont Department of Health, as of 2020, there were 72 public water systems in Vermont that fluoridate and serve some 213,400 people. These systems include five with naturally occurring optimal levels of fluoride.

The state has a total of 465 public water systems that serve about 380,000 people, or 60% of Vermonters, the data shows.

In 2009, Plainfield voters decided to stop fluoridating their water.

But communities that have chosen to fluoridate or not have largely maintained the status quo. During Town Meeting Day last year, Ensbury residents chose to keep their water fluoridated. In 2015, Bennington voters decided to maintain their water supply unfluoridated, a similar position that Brattleboro voters had taken twice before.

Opponents of water fluoridation have questioned whether the practice truly prevents tooth decay — although the scientific evidence behind this connection is the reason it's been implemented so broadly.

Some blame the additive for causing a variety of physical and mental health problems, but doctors and dentists question the veracity of these findings.

Vermont health department officials have said Vermont communities that fluoridate their water
(See Fluoride, Page 31)

MAPLE the COW™ by Matt Aucoin



Health care/taxes

(Continued from Page 17) tion, told lawmakers. "And as we all know, that did not happen."

Ceglowski called on lawmakers to alter the bargaining process between school boards and employees, which she said could help the parties reach a more equitable compromise and thus bring down costs.

The discussion "has typically been framed by the notion that this is a systemic health care issue, and until that problem is solved, there's nothing we can

do about these rising health care costs," she said. "And we don't think that sentiment is entirely correct."

But Don Tinney, the president of the Vermont teachers union, said in an interview that the union is "not interested in changing the process."

"The issue is not to be found at the bargaining table between the School Boards Association and Vermont NEA," he said. "The real issue is the rising costs of health care."



Get your glasses ready

THE BRANDON AREA Chamber of Commerce is pumping up enthusiasm for Eclipse Weekend (April 5-8) with this sign in Brandon's Central Park. The Chamber is planning a host of events to mark the occasion.

Calendar of events

March

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.

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

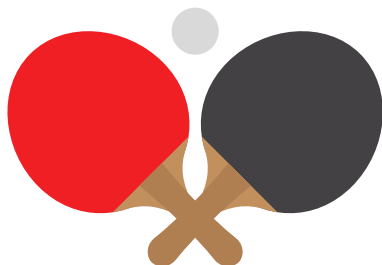
Drop in from 5:30–7:00 p.m., and bring your projects to work on.

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.

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 Conscientious, 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 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 God-nick 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, contact Crystal at ceastman88@gmail.com

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

Friday 8th

Community Dance at Brandon Town Hall

Community Dance with Cast Off 8s (Squares, Contra, Line Dances) with Caller Peter Tobin. ALL WELCOME!!

Join us from 6:30–8 pm for our annual Community Dance—all welcome, no experience needed; come as you are, have fun, relax and laugh, while dancing easy squares to Peter Tobin.



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:

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, homewardboundanimals.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.

A splash of contra and line dancing. Door prizes, refreshments, and FUN!

\$5.00 per dancer, littler kids free.

Cosponsored by Brandon Recreation Dept.

Stories Told in Tinmouth

An evening of storytelling by audience members. The prompt is Mud Season. Bring a true 5-minute story to share or come to listen. Free with refreshments.

Please join us for an ongoing series of storytelling evenings at the Tinmouth Old Firehouse in beautiful downtown Tinmouth. The prompt for March 8 is Mud Season, so your story could be about mud, sugaring, early spring, or other springtime adventures. Stories about Tinmouth are always welcome.

From 7–8:30 pm. Come to share your true 5-minute story with a live audience of kind and supportive listeners; or come to listen and enjoy! Free admission; sponsored by the Tinmouth Community Fund.

Friday 8th Saturday 9th

Wallingford Town Hall—Murder by the Book

Performance Seating limited to 80 seats per show. 90-minute run time. Please call 802-446-2685, or email ghlib@comcast.net to reserve a seat and plan to pay at the door with cash or check (no credit cards). Thank You to our Sponsors!

Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 2 pm & 7 pm.

In *Murder by the Book*, the town of Two Spruce is about to lose their beloved library! A team of volunteer actors come to its rescue by staging a murder mystery. But on opening night a real murder most foul threatens to thwart their fundraiser. Lucy the Librarian and a

team of quirky volunteers scramble to solve the crime before the curtain rises and the library is lost forever!

The script comes compliments of mystery writer Louise Penny & playwright Laura Teasdale who created the play to help raise money for libraries everywhere.



Saturday, 9th

Eclipse Talk!

From 11 am–12 pm. Join us for a family-friendly talk from the The Vermont Astronomical Society about the upcoming eclipse at the Brandon Free Public Library (in the Brandon Town Hall).

Chowder Fest and Basket Raffle at Farmers Haven, Orwell

Join us for a chowder fest and a basket raffle where all proceeds from raffle will be donated for Tatum's Totes. Who doesn't love to taste test some yummy Chowder?!?

The chowder contest is from at 2–4 pm. \$5 per person to taste. We are also very excited to partner up with Tatum's Totes for a basket raffle. All proceeds from the raffle will be donated to Tatum's Totes.

We currently have more room for people to enter their chowders and we are also accepting more baskets for the raffle. Please contact Farmers Haven or MaKayla Davis 802-349-3038 or Makayla.davis96@gmail.com for more information.



Sunday 10th

Va-et-Vient in Essex

Vermont's Addison County group Va-et-vient ("Come & Go") celebrates the many colors found in music from several French cultures. These musiciennes will take you through the centuries from France to Québec and New Orleans with lively dance numbers, touching love songs, kickin' Cajun and Créole tunes, and rollicking Québécois favorites. From our neighbors to the north, they bring back traditional tunes learned from Québécois elders (and

youngsters!), reweave them into their own arrangements, and have been spreading them throughout New England and Québec since 2001.

The group includes Carol Reed from Leicester (voice, guitar, & mandolin), Suzanne Germain from Lincoln (voice and percussion), and Lausanne Allen from South Starksboro (voice, fiddles, flute, penny whistles, harmonica, & mandolins).

Learn more about the trio at <https://www.vaetvient.net/>

Concert proceeds will support Steps to End Domestic Violence.

From 3–4:30 pm. at the First Congregational Church, 39 Main Street, Essex.

\$0.00–\$20.00

VT's Original Pregnancy and Baby Expo Rutland Join us from 11 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Franklin Event Center at 1 Scale Ave Rutland, VT. General Admission: \$5 cash or Venmo at the door, kids free. Vendors, Workshops and Main Stage Demos! For more info, find us on Facebook @vtspregnancybabyexpo.

Wednesday 13th

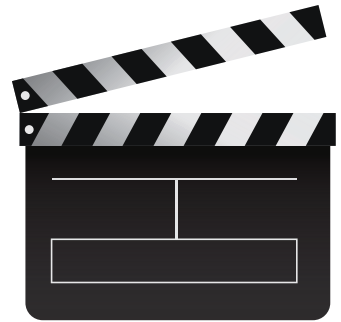
NXT Rockumentary Film Series: 20 Feet from Stardom (2013)

Filmmaker Morgan Neville shines a long-overdue spotlight on the hit-making contributions of longtime backup singers like Darlene Love and Merry Clayton.

Rich, insightful, and occasionally heartbreaking, 20 Feet From Stardom is an energetic tribute to the passion, talent, and hard work of backup singers.

Co-presented with Next Chapter Records.

From 7–9 pm at Next Stage Arts Project. \$10.00



Saturday 16th Sunday 17th

24 Hours of Stratton—FREE

The 24 Hours of Stratton is an epic weekend and your ONLY chance to ski Stratton through the night under lighted trails and starry skies into sunrise for a great cause.

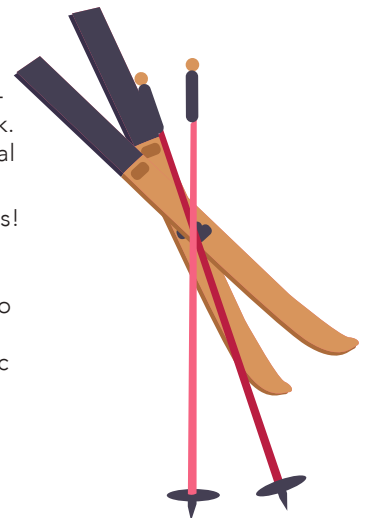
Snow Much of a Good Thing! From 9 am–9 am, the 24 Hours of Stratton is an epic festival weekend for the whole family. Wear your bib for two-day access to lifts. Ride the mountain to your heart's content. Start a team, join one, or participate as an individual.

Wear a tracking chip and download the App to track your progress and earn points and badges for participating in different games,

competitions, and activities. Plus . . . fireworks, overnight, food, music and more!

You can also join the #Shred4Nate race for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention at dusk. Racers will love the dual panel slalom format.

Join one or both events! Proceeds support the Stratton Community Foundation's mission to help Vermont children in need—Hunger, Basic Necessities, Health, and Education. Every child deserves a strong foundation.



Goings on around town

Warmest winter on record: Several Vermont communities hit new highs

BY HABIB SABET
/VTDIGGER

Ordinarily, Matt Trombley takes his first customers out on the ice around Christmastime. This year, though, he didn't lead his first Rutland County ice-fishing trip until February.

"I had people calling left and right in January," Trombley said. "I told them we don't have any ice — in the middle of January — and they were like, 'Excuse me?'"

Trombley runs the Vergennes-based guide service 3rd Alarm Charters, which he said does

most of its business during the warmer months but has led ice fishing trips in the region for years.

With warming winters and increasingly unreliable and unsafe ice conditions, however, Trombley said that guiding during ice-fishing season is no longer worth it. In the past two years, he said, 3rd Alarm Charters has done less than 25% of its normal winter business.

"It has been steadily tougher," Trombley said. "To be honest with you this is probably our last year doing it."

The paltry ice conditions this year have been a result of what has been the warmest meteorological winter on record for large swaths of Vermont, a striking example of rising temperatures across the globe due to climate change.

According to data from the National Weather Service, the Burlington area just concluded its warmest winter since at least the 1886-1887 season, when recording for the area first began.

Across the three months that comprise the meteorological winter — December, January, and February — Burlington saw a record-high average temperature of 30.7 degrees this season, shattering the previous record of 30.1 degrees. Burlington also saw its highest recorded minimum temperature of 3 degrees, making this one of only a handful of winters on record that Burlington didn't see temperatures at or below zero.

Burlington wasn't the only area that set records this season. According to NWS data, St. Johnsbury and Woodstock both notched new high average winter temperatures. Montpelier and Bennington, meanwhile, each had their second-warmest seasons on record.

The toasty winter came on the heels of a year that was itself overall the warmest on record in the Burlington area, during which Vermont faced various forms of extreme weather, including last summer's historic flooding.

The high temperatures have come amidst the ongoing El

Niño, a periodic climate phenomenon known to increase global temperatures, which scientists have said is exacerbating warming trends caused by climate change and driving record heat across the globe during its current cycle.

According to Robert Haynes, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Burlington, the phenomenon isn't necessarily the main driver of record temperatures in the Green Mountain state this year, however.

"(El Niño) is a contributing factor as far as the global temperature is concerned," said Haynes. "Here, regionally, it does not have quite as much of an impact. Specifically speaking, it's very marginal here in the northeastern United States."

Haynes said that one of the contributing factors to the record temperatures was the lack of snowfall in much of the state. Between December and February this year, the Burlington area had just 31.2 inches of total snowfall, which is the third-smallest amount since the 1980-1981 season.

"With as little snow as we've had ... we have a lot more darker Earth that absorbs more sunlight," said Haynes, who noted

that more snow reflects sunlight and ultimately cools down the earth.

Haynes also attributed the record temperatures to an excess of cloud cover over parts of the state this year. According to the NWS, this January was the cloudiest on record in Burlington since 1951. Haynes said that the cloud cover has essentially insulated the Earth, trapping in heat.

"With the cloudy nights especially ... we have not had temperatures radiate out as efficiently as they would if the skies are clear and open," said Haynes.

As far as next year goes, Haynes said it would be "hard to break the record in consecutive seasons" but that the warming trend likely isn't going away.

"Given the fact that we've had warmer-than-average winters over the last several winters, statistically it's a safe forecast to suggest that it'll be likely a warmer-than-average year next year," said Haynes.



Restaurant guide

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Café Provence

From Provence to You
De la Provence à Vous

Wednesday – Saturday: 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.
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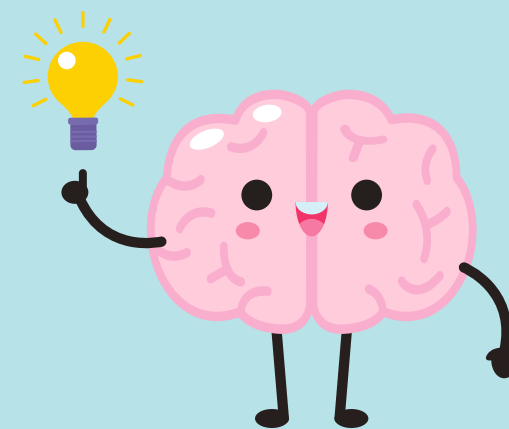
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Brandon Brain Buster Answered

Answer: D

To have a 50/50 chance of finding the suitcase on the next break-in, the thief would have to be left with only two rooms to check. So, he would have had to break into all but two rooms. Since the hotel has 100 rooms at 30% occupancy, we know that 30 rooms are occupied. When the thief begins breaking into rooms, there is a probability of 1/30 of finding the suitcase on the first break-in. Once that room can be ruled out, there's a probability of 1/29 of finding the suitcase on the second



break-in, because there are only 29 occupied rooms left. This pattern will continue until there are only 2 rooms left to break into. At that point, there's a probability of 1/2 (or a 50/50 chance) of finding the suitcase on the next break-in. So, the thief would have to break into 28 rooms to have a 50/50 chance of finding the suitcase on the next break-in.

Can you guess the street?

BY LAURA PETERSON

Last week the photo was of the space in front of the Congregational Church. The back of the photo says: “Briggs—corner of Union /Carver—Cong Church.” The Briggs building was removed to make way for a grocery store, now Walgreens. The photo of the present-day scene requires a special “thank you” to Bar Harbor Bank. They allowed me to take a photo from the second-floor corner office in order to get the correct angle



Do you know what part of Brandon this is?



THE FRONT OF the Congregational Church now, and circa 1880.



REAL ESTATE



Stylish home in great condition. Woodland Park custom build, featuring a bright and crisp interior with a vaulted ceiling in the kitchen, dining, and living areas and a roomy loft above the bedroom. The open layout and large window banks really connect the house to its country setting. The home is sited on a private 15.44 acres with a small pond and stream, and panoramic views of the surrounding woods. A detached one-car garage provides additional storage. Close to Lake Hortonia and Lake Bomoseen with quick access to Route 30. \$205,000



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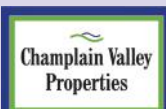
AMY YOUNG
(802) 345-8490
amycvprop@gmail.com



JOHN SNYDER-WHITE
802-989-1066
cvpropjsw@gmail.com



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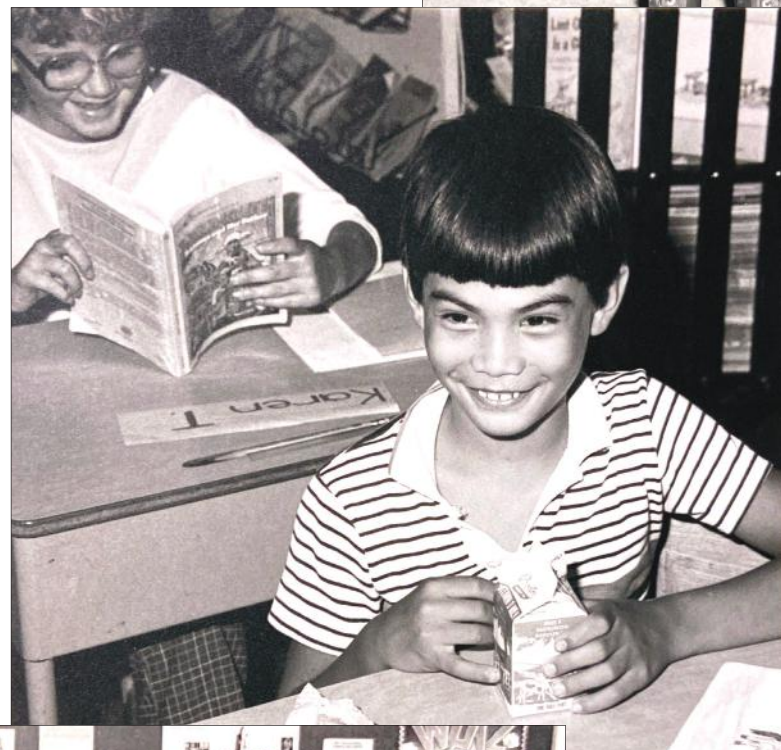
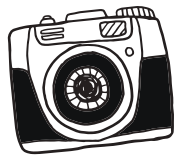
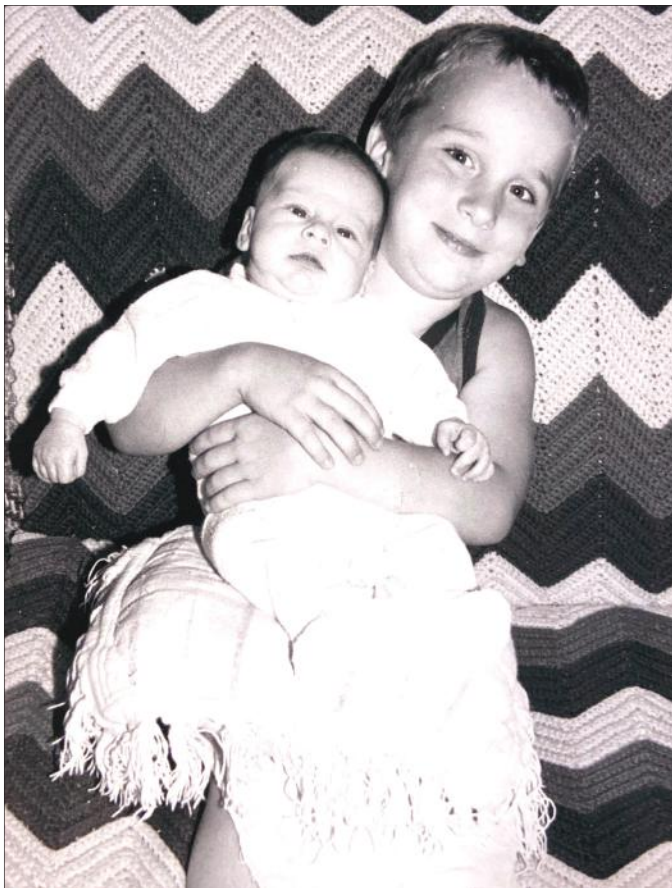
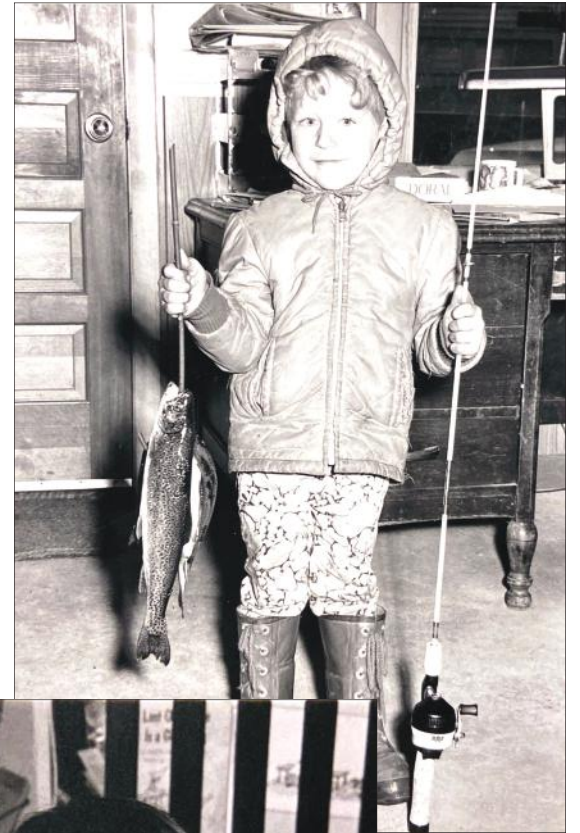




Mim's Photos

E-mail kate@brandonreporter.com
if you can identify someone in these photos.
Or call us at 247-8080

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



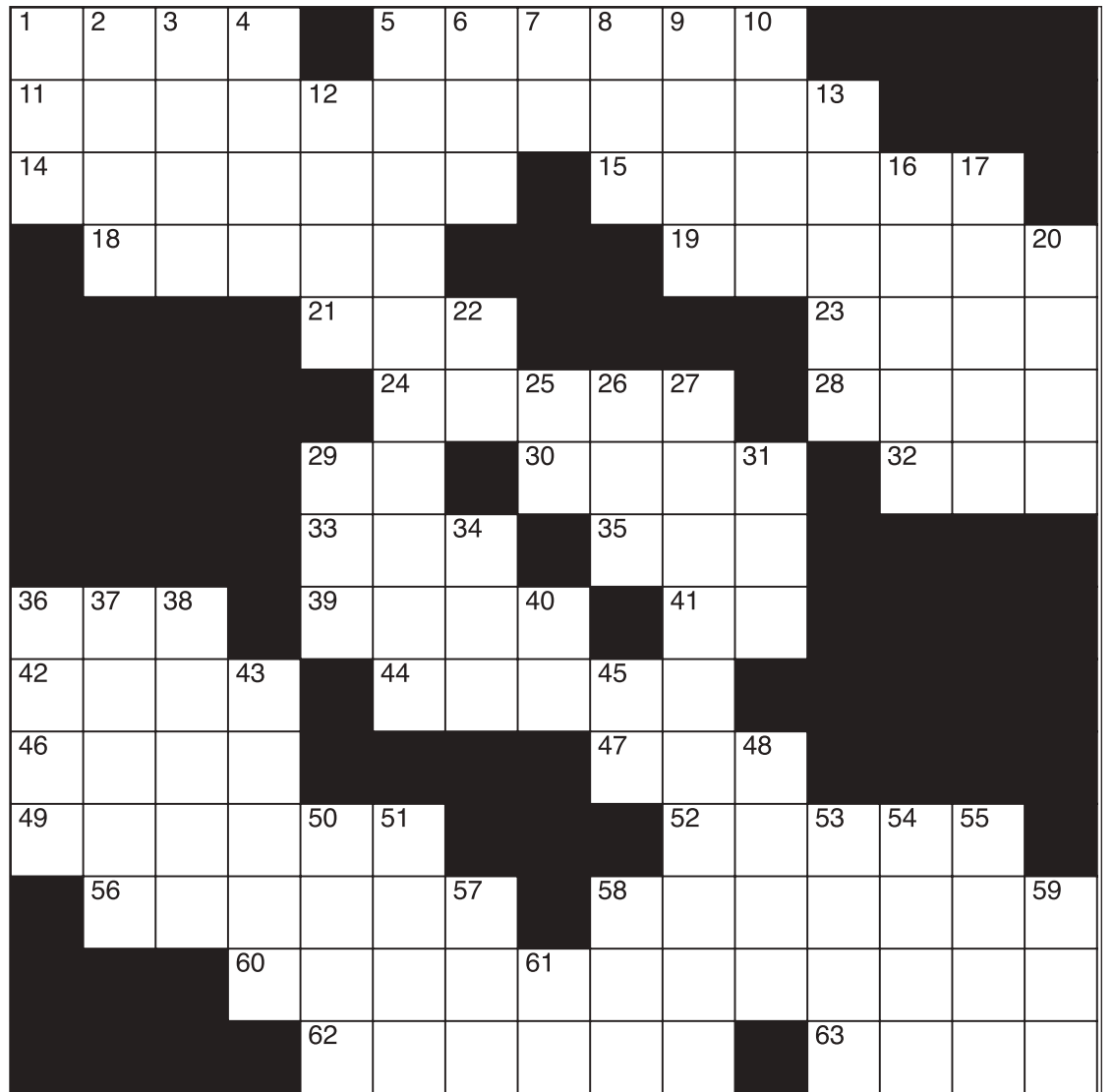
Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1. A minute amount (British)
5. Mystical or magical
11. Shortening
14. More satisfying
15. Other side
18. Philippine island
19. More unnatural
21. Mutual savings bank
23. Famed designer Chanel
24. Makes less wild
28. At some prior time
29. The cops who investigate the cops
30. Immune system response
32. Distress signal
33. Engine additive
35. "No Scrubs" trio
36. Very fast airplane
39. A reward (archaic)
41. Commercial
42. Spots where golfers start
44. Polite form of address (Indian)
46. French river
47. Reduce the light
49. Blood-sucking fly
52. A way to categorize
56. Procrastinates
58. Tall slender tower
60. Where researchers work
62. Office of the Pope
63. Office furnishing

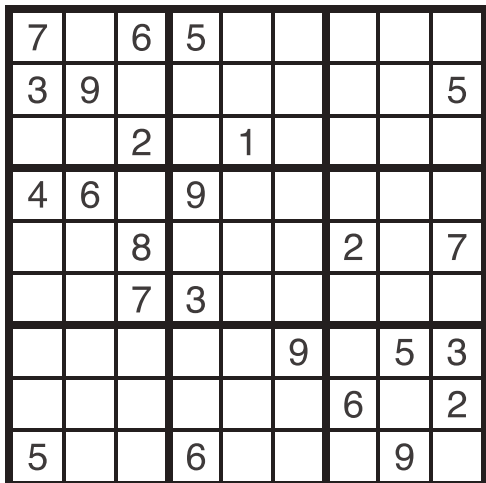
CLUES DOWN

1. Possesses
2. American Board of Orthopedic Surgery
3. Ancient Syrian city
4. Clip
5. In a way, misleads
6. Human gene
7. The Golden State (abbr.)
8. Lizard genus
9. Parasites that invade the skin
10. Took apart
12. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
13. S. California town
16. Suffix plural
17. Painting technique
20. Small Eurasian deer
22. Mr. T character
25. Microsoft
26. Shock therapy
27. Able to be sold
29. A doctrine
31. These three follow A
34. Pulse
36. Quantitative fact
37. Doctor ___: children's book author
38. Hebrew calendar month
40. Designated hitter
43. Norther Poland village
45. A passport is one form
48. Hand (Spanish)
50. Hit with the open hand
51. Actor Idris
53. Shakespeare's nickname "The ___"
54. Northern U.S. lake
55. Marvin and Horsley are two
57. Soak
58. Partner to cheese
59. Expression of disappointment
61. College dorm employee



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

Spring Cleaning? The animals at RCHS love old bedding!

Now that the weather is (hopefully!) getting nicer, many people clean out closets and do some Spring cleaning. If you find old bedding or towels, please think about bringing them to the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS). They make great bedding for the animals and keep them cozy and comfortable while they're here. The animals especially love blankets, quilts, fleece, and towels. Please no fitted sheets. Thanks for your continued support and for thinking of the animals! If you have any questions, please contact the Shelter at 802.483.6700.

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



MEET CLIFFORD - 9 YEARS OLD. NEUTERED MALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. BLACK.

Clifford is a very handsome boy who is looking to live out his golden years on a comfy couch! He is a very sweet boy who loves attention. He never says no to a good pet! He is the ideal companion! He has a very mellow personality and will more than likely be a couch potato in his forever home! He has so much love to give! He is one of the sweetest boys you will ever meet. Clifford was surrendered to us on January 18th because he was having some litterbox issues. However, since he has been in our care, we haven't seen that behavior. He has been using his litterbox perfectly! We do know that he did well with men, women, and children! In his previous home he didn't live with any other cats, but we do not think he would have an issue with feline friends. He hasn't shown any negative behavior towards them! We also know that he loves to play with toys when he gets comfortable in his environment! If this loveable boy sounds like the right fit for you, please stop by and visit with him! The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am to 4pm.

MEET DALE - 5 MONTH-OLD. BLACK MOUTH CUR MIX. TAN/BLACK/WHITE. 40 LBS.

Hey Friends! My name is Dale! I'm a high energy pup that loves all my friends here at the shelter. My puppy ways were a little much for my last household. My family says I'm very sweet and even got along with the cats, but I was getting bigger than they had expected and they didn't feel able to take care of me. I get excited easily and love jumping on my friends for kisses, but have been told that it's not very good manners. I hope that someday soon, my new family will come to meet me. They'll understand that I'm still learning and need consistent love, exercise, and boundaries. In return I'll teach them all about loyalty, playing, and unconditional love! Come visit me at the Rutland County Humane Society, from 11am to 4pm Tuesday-Saturday.



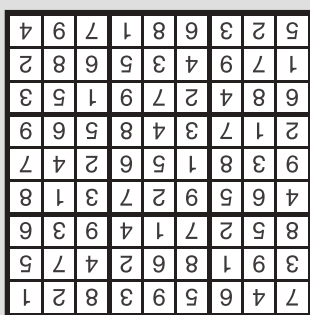
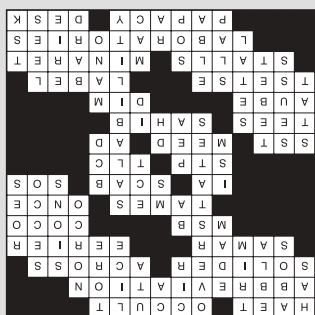
RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

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TUESDAY-SATURDAY FROM
11AM-4PM.
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



OFF THE SHELF



Recently donated large print by Brenda Whittaker

Three-Inch Teeth by C.J.Box, donated in memory of Arthur E. Sawyer

Dallas Cates, whom Joe Pickett helped lock up years ago, is released from prison with a special list tattooed on his skin. He wants revenge on the people who sent him away: the six people he blames for the deaths of his entire family and the loss of his reputation and property. Using recent grizzly attacks as cover, Cates sets out to methodically check off his list, and both Nate Romanowski and Joe Pickett are on it.

New in fiction

River Mumma by Zalika Reid-Benta

Months out of grad school, Alicia has no career prospects and lives with her mom, who won't stop texting her macabre news stories and reminders to pick up items from the grocery store. Then, one evening, the Jamaican water deity, River Mumma, appears to Alicia, telling her that she has twenty-four hours to scour the city for her missing comb. Alicia doesn't understand why River Mumma would choose her and can't remember all the legends, unlike her retail co-worker Heaven, who knows all the Jamaican folklore by heart. She doesn't know why she feels a strange connection to her other co-worker Mars. But when the trio are chased down by malevolent spirits, they realize their tenuous bonds to each other may be their only lifelines. Alicia's quest

through the city broadens into a journey through time—to find herself and what the river carries.

Murder by Lamplight by Patrice McDonough

November 1866: The grisly murder site in London's East End is thronged with onlookers. None of them expect the calmly efficient young woman among them to be a medical doctor, Julia Lewis, who has arrived to examine the corpse. Inspector Tennant, overseeing the investigation, at first makes no effort to disguise his skepticism. But, days later another body is found with links to the first, and Tennant calls in Dr. Lewis again. The murderer begins sending the police taunting letters and clues. Lewis and Tennant struggle to understand the killer's dark obsessions and motivations. But there is new urgency, for the doctor's role appears to have shifted from expert to target. And this killer is no impulsive monster, but a fiendishly calculating opponent, determined to see his plan through.

The American Daughters by Maurice Carlos Ruffin

Ady and her fierce mother, Sanite, are inseparable. Enslaved to a businessman in the French Quarter of New Orleans, they spend their days dreaming of a loving future and reminiscing about their family's rebellious and storied history. When they are separated, Ady is left directionless until she stumbles into the Mockingbird Inn and meets Lenore, a free Black woman with whom she becomes fast friends. Lenore invites Ady to join a society of spies called the Daughters. With the courage instilled in her by Sanite and the Daughters, Ady begins her journey

DID YOU KNOW?

Upcoming March events...The Vermont Astronomical Society on 3/9 from 11-1; on 3/16 Bonny will be demonstrating her antique sock maker from 2-3; on 3/23 we'll have our first ever plant swap. Details to follow on our website, FPF, and Facebook.

toward liberation and a new future.

The Warm Hands of Ghosts by Katherine Arden

January 1918. Laura Iven was a field nurse until she was wounded and discharged from the corps, leaving behind a brother still fighting in Flanders. Laura receives word of Freddie's death in combat, along with his personal effects—but something doesn't make sense. Laura returns to Belgium as a volunteer at a private hospital, where she soon hears whispers about haunted trenches and a strange hotelier whose wine gives soldiers the gift of oblivion. November 1917. Freddie Iven awakens after an explosion to find himself trapped in an overturned pillbox with a wounded enemy soldier. Against all odds, the two form an alliance and succeed in clawing their way out. Unable to bear the thought of returning to the killing fields, especially on opposite sides, they take refuge with a mysterious man who seems to have the power to make the hellscape of the trenches disappear. As shells rain down, Laura's and Freddie's deepest traumas are reawakened. Now they must decide whether their world is worth salvaging—or better left behind entirely.

Brandon Police Report

February 26

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street near the NAPA Auto Parts store for defective equipment (brake light). Warning issued.

- Intercepted a "Be-On-Lookout" (BOL) vehicle reportedly driving erratically on Route 7 and heading into Brandon. The operator was found to be all right and not impaired.

- Stopped an individual on a dirt bike who was driving down Lovers Lane. The operator apologized and admitted that he knew he wasn't supposed to be operating on the roadway. Warning issued.

- Observed a vehicle traveling on Grove Street, which was believed to be operated by a man with a criminally suspended driver's license. During a consensual encounter in a parking lot off Mulcahy Drive, it was confirmed that the operator did have a suspended license. Because the man operated his vehicle on a public highway, he was issued a citation to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court for arraignment on 6/3/2024 at 10:00 a.m.

- Assisted Pittsford Police on Plains Road in Pittsford with taking a subject with an active arrest warrant into custody.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for unregistered motor vehicle. It was determined that the vehicle had been registered just a few days before the stop but that it had not yet been entered into the Vermont DMV database.

- Responded to a building alarm at the Jiffy Mart on Grove Street. The building was checked and appeared secure.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for unreadable plate. Warning issued.

February 27

- Responded to Grove Street for a building alarm. Nothing suspicious was observed.

- Attempted to locate a wanted individual in the Lake Dunmore Road area in Leicester who is a suspect in an investigation involving several crimes committed in Brandon. The individual was not located. Investigation is ongoing.

- Responded to Center Street for a dog left in a car. Owners were advised.

- Performed a routine business check on Prospect Street at Vermont Made Furniture.

Building was secure.

February 28

- Escorted the Otter Valley boys basketball team through town on their way to the semi-finals in Barre.

- Received a report from the Brandon Town Manager that a Casella truck had run over a stop sign on Arnold District Road. Brandon Highway Department was notified.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for a cell phone violation. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for speeding past Otter Valley in the active school zone. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street at Wood Lane for failure to display front license plate. Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street at Farr Way for a cell phone violation and failure to display license plate(s). Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Park Street for a stop sign violation. Warning issued.

- Stopped a vehicle on Forest Dale Road fitting the description of a truck believed to have been driven by a suspect who was under active investigation for numerous crimes around Brandon. The vehicle was not the suspect's and the individuals were sent on their way.

- Vehicle stop on Center Street for not displaying a registration plate. Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for speeding. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Pearl Street for failure to use turn signal. Warning issued.

- Opened an investigation into a report of stolen insulin needles from a residence on Mulcahy Drive.

- Conducted traffic enforcement around Brandon as part of the Governor's Highway Safety Program. 4 tickets and 1 warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street at Nickerson Road for failure to display license plate(s). Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street at Park Street for a cell phone violation. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street at Town Line Road for a cell phone violation. Warning issued.

- Responded to a welfare (See Police report, Page 27)

SPREAD THE WORD!
Have an event to add to our calendar?
EMAIL US AT NEWS@BRANDONREPORTER.COM

Police report

(Continued from Page 26)

check at a residence in Brandon regarding a 5-year-old child, who was staying with her father, and whose mother had not heard from her in several weeks. The child was located safe and sound.

- Received a report from a concerned citizen that a suspended driver passes through Brandon. A description of the vehicle was provided.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for a local speed limit violation. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Grover Street for a defective equipment violation. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for defective equipment. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street at Park Street for vehicle entering/blocking intersection violation. Warning issued.

February 29

- Received information regarding criminal activity in Brandon.

- Responded to a domestic disturbance on Champlain Street. No crime had been committed and the altercation was only verbal.

- Assisted the Brandon Fire Department on Mulcahy Drive for a report of the smell of burning plastic inside one of the apartments. It was determined that the smell was coming from food that was cooking.

- Attempted to locate a wanted individual that was allegedly in the vicinity of the Jiffy Mart on McConnell Road. The vehicle with the parties of interest in it fled the scene as the officers were arriving. A further search was conducted, but the vehicle was not found.

- Officers with the Brandon Police Department responded to Conant Square for an unresponsive man inside his vehicle. Upon approaching the vehicle, the investigating officer observed an overwhelming odor of intoxicants and initially was unable to wake the operator. The operator was arrested and charged with DUI. A citation was issued to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court for arraignment on 3/18/2024 at 10:00 a.m.

March 1

- Received a report from a complainant regarding a minor vehicle crash that occurred the day before in Brandon. The incident was documented for insurance purposes.
- Responded to a residence

on Franklin Street for a burglary alarm activation. It was determined that the alarm had been accidentally tripped by two subjects checking on the property.

- Responded to a local residence for a report of loose dogs that were acting aggressively toward the neighbor. The Brandon ACO was contacted. Police further investigated a separate, non-animal related incident while on the property.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for failure to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Lovers Lane for failure to display license plate(s). Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for defective equipment. Ticket issued.

- Received a vehicle complaint on Forest Dale Road.

- As part of an ongoing investigation by the Brandon Police Department (BPD) into the production of counterfeit money being used in and around Rutland and Addison Counties, a vehicle stop was conducted at Arnold District Road and Adams Road on a suspect vehicle that had an expired registration. The investigating officer immediately recognized the occupants of the vehicle as being the suspects of the counterfeiting investigation and requested back-up as one of the suspects had a history of gun violence. A felony stop was conducted on the vehicle and evidence of drug activity was later observed in the truck. The BPD K9 Unit was brought in with K9 Guinness making a positive hit on the vehicle for the presence of drugs. The vehicle was seized and a search warrant was applied for and granted on the truck. A subsequent search of the vehicle found 33-counterfeit \$100 bills, 1.2 grams of crack cocaine, drug paraphernalia, and a loaded handgun.

As a result of this investigation, Jeremiah Cole (30 of Leicester, VT) and Joseph Brown (49 of Leicester, VT) are facing pending charges for the crimes of Forgery/Counterfeiting and Possession of Cocaine. Bryden Alger (23 of Brandon, VT), and Cale Quenneville (30 of Brandon, VT) were taken into custody prior to the vehicle being searched and later lodged at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility in Rutland. Cale Quenneville was flash cited to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court on 3/2/2024 for arraignment on the charges of Counterfeit-

ing/Forgery, Possession of Cocaine, and from a previous investigation being conducted by the BPD: Eluding a Police Officer in a Grossly Negligent Manner, Driving With a Criminally Suspended Driver's License, Reckless Endangerment, Excessive Speed, and Grossly Negligent Operation. Bryden Alger was also flash cited to appear in the Rutland County Superior Court on 3/2/2024 for arraignment on the charges of Counterfeiting/Forgery and Possession of Cocaine. The BPD was assisted on the vehicle stop by the Royalton Police Department, Pittsford Police Department, and the Rutland County Sheriff's Department.

March 2

- Investigated a suspicious incident complaint regarding two people walking on Grove Street arguing. The people were located and no crime had been committed.

- Received information regarding ongoing drug activity.

- Intercepted a BOL vehicle for erratic driving on Route 7 that was coming into Brandon on Grove Street. Warning issued for a defective equipment violation.

- Responded to a residence for a report of two individuals

allegedly hitting two dogs with sticks and who appeared to be under the influence of drugs. It was also reported that there was a child, with only a diaper on, running around outside.

- Responded to a residence in Brandon after a caller reported that his friend was suicidal and had a knife to his neck. Officers contacted the individual and convinced him to drop the knife and come outside the residence. The man was later transported to the hospital for evaluation.

- K9 Unit responded to a vehicle that had been seized and was suspected to contain illegal drugs. K9 Guinness alerted on the vehicle. A warrant found over 6 grams of suspected crack cocaine inside the vehicle, along with \$3,300 in counterfeit currency.

- Responded to the Jiffy Mart on Grove Street after employees reported multiple juveniles had stolen alcoholic beverages from the business. Investigation is ongoing.

- Attempted to locate a vehicle that had fled an attempted traffic stop by the Pittsford Police Department. The vehicle was not located.

March 3

- Vehicle stop on Conant

Square at Pearl Street for a stop sign violation. Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Route 7 near Monument Road for speeding. Ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street near the Brandon Motor Lodge for following too closely. Warning issued.

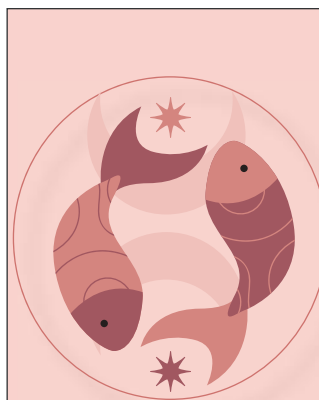
- Responded to a citizen dispute at Park Village. The matter was handled civilly upon police intervention.

- Vehicle stop on Park Street for a red light violation. Warning issued.

- Received a vehicle complaint concerning an erratic operator on Route 7/Franklin Street heading into Pittsford. The vehicle was not located.

- Received a call regarding a couple with a dog and children outside Cattails restaurant on Grove Street that appeared to be on drugs and were screaming and yelling. Upon investigation, a woman was arrested after the responding officer determined that she had violated active conditions of release. The woman was released on a flash citation to appear before the Rutland Superior Court for arraignment on 3/4/2024 at 12:30 p.m.

- Executed a search warrant on a vehicle seized on 3/3/2024.



WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

LEO July 23-Aug. 23

Leo, exercise caution so that your actions are not misinterpreted. You do not want others thinking you are doing things for the wrong reasons. Try to lighten up and be positive this week.

VIRGO Aug. 24-Sept. 22

This week you could find yourself being the center of attention at a gathering with friends or family, Virgo. Use the opportunity to get your thoughts out there and heard.

LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 23

Libra, you will need to pick a course and stick with it, especially over the next few days. There is a lot of temptation out there but if you don't commit you'll never get things done.

SCORPIO Oct. 24-Nov. 22

Arguments that have been slowly building up may come to a head this week, Scorpio. Your best bet is to stay out of the fray by keeping your distance and avoiding commentary.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21

Sagittarius, it is possible that someone new you will meet this week can become a close friend who sticks with you through thick and thin. Look for this person in the days to come.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 20

Capricorn, now might be a time to figure out how to reduce some stress, especially if you find that people are avoiding you as of late. A change in attitude is all it takes.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21-Feb. 18

You might be ready to delve into the next chapter of a relationship, Aquarius. Figure out what means the most to you and move those priorities to the forefront.

PISCES Feb. 19-March 20

Inspiration comes your way this week, Pisces. You will have plenty of time to do anything you want to put your mind to. Start making that running list of ideas.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- March 8 Mississippi John Hurt, Blues musician (d)
- March 9 Juliette Binoche, actor (59)
- March 10 Pam Oliver, sportscaster (63)
- March 11 Astor Piazzola, composer (d)
- March 12 Vaslav Nijinsky, dancer and choreographer (d)
- March 13 Mikaela Shiffrin, alpine skier (29)
- March 14 Diane Arbus, photographer (d)

ARIES March 21-April 20

Aries, if you notice you have been running into obstacles as you work to achieve your goals, you may want to step back and try to figure out another course of action.

TAURUS April 21-May 21

Taurus, an offer that notes your efforts and achievements comes your way. Do not let this immediately go to your head, but enjoy the fruits of your labors.

GEMINI May 22-June 21

Lately your willpower has been weak, Gemini. If diet plans are getting sidetracked by your inability to stay on track, you may want to enlist a buddy to keep you motivated.

CANCER June 22-July 22

Cancer, take a break when you can because there is soon to be a whirlwind of activity coming in your direction. Enjoy down time while it is still available to you.



Let's Fly: A weekly series on tips and tricks for air travel

Week two, planning and packing are part of the trip too

BY CONNIE M NITE

Hello fellow air travelers! I hope some of my tricks and tips from last week's article regarding booking your tickets have given you some food for thought! This week's piece broaches the subject of planning and packing! During my time as a flight attendant for over a quarter of a century—wow, I do feel old after that statement—I have seen it all in terms of luggage! Figuring out what to do with a 13-inch old box tv that doesn't fit into the overhead bin or closet is no easy task. Not to mention trying to fit lamps with shades, large paintings, loved one's large urns, huge team trophies, and of course air travel could never be complete without a 5-gallon glass fish tank.

Whoever came up with the term “bring everything but the kitchen sink” was right! We love to travel with our own belongings, gifts, or travel treasures! So, today we are going to talk about what to pack and how to make it easier to travel!

Let's start with the business traveler. If you are traveling for business never, ever check your bag! Only bring one roller suitcase that fits into the overhead bin and a personal computer bag or small duffel bag. Most hotels have dry cleaning, laundry, and irons available, and this helps for extended business travel. I can't count

the number of business passengers who have checked a bag and have an important business meeting the next day. Their flight is delayed, has a mechanical issue, or is cancelled and they're unable to get their suitcase. What's in their suitcase? You guessed it, their meeting clothes. Talk about stress! Last week, we talked about getting a mileage card and this is another reason to have one because with it you can access priority boarding. First passengers on means bags on! It's also so much easier to switch flights or change destinations at the last minute if your bags are with you! So, although baggage service for all airlines has improved, I would never depend on it!

Just take a look at your crews! Your crews have designated luggage space on the aircraft because the airlines know that baggage checking for crews will never work. Oh! Here's a behind-the-scenes bit of information...crews on all major airline carriers have an overhead bin toward the back of the airplane that has a lock on it. Why a lock? Through the decades passengers have had sticky fingers and have stolen

enough of the crew members' personal items that the airlines have had to install locks on the bins. Passengers always come on our airplanes and try and open our locked bin. They even come to us and tell us it's broken, which isn't true, it's just locked! Next time you fly, take a look toward the back of the overhead bins and see if you can find the lock!

Next, let's talk about the family vacation! If you don't need to bring a car seat, then don't! Most kids want to lay down next to a family member and it's just one extra item you don't have to worry about. Most rental car companies

Most rental car companies provide car seats for a small rental fee if you need one at your final destination.

provide car seats for a small rental fee if you need one at your final destination. I will tell moms with infants to never leave home without your breast-feeding pillow. It is so much more comfortable for you and your baby to have a comfortable pillow to rest your baby on and keep your arms comfortable too! Even if you are a dad, always bring that pillow and add a soft blanket too, you'll both be more comfortable!

When traveling with young

kids, go to the dollar store and stock up on fun stuff. It will be the best \$10 you've spent! Every hour the kids are well behaved, they get a new toy to play with and it keeps them busy and focused while keeping parents less stressed. The best part is that if you lose a toy, no worries because it was just temporary! I also recommend traveling with snacks like goldfish or pretzels, an extra set of clothing, including for yourself, along with Tylenol, Benadryl, and Neosporin, plus band aids. There is nothing worse than a night flight and a baby with an unexpected fever!

One last bit of advice for traveling with children on vacation. At times, you're going to have to check luggage, and this is how I travel with my kids. If I'm heading to Hawaii, I pack a large suitcase with food like crackers, goldfish, oatmeal, peanut butter, and jelly, etc. On vacation, you now have snacks and are saving money! By the end of your vacation, you'll have an empty suitcase to fill up with all of your souvenirs and dirty laundry!

Now, let's talk about traveling with your pets! If you happen to have a large dog who is too big to travel in the cabin and you must check them via baggage, here are some helpful hints. Take the brightest printing paper you can find and at-

tach sheets on the top of the carrier (please make sure you're not blocking the air holes) and on both the left side and right side. Now write in bold large letters that fill the entire page, “Hi, my name is [insert your dog's name] and I am traveling on [insert flight number] from [insert location to location], please take good care of me! Thank you!” If you have two pets, change your note to say, “Hi, my name is [name] and I am traveling with my sister/brother [name], please keep us together” and finish by attaching the flight number and location. You'll find the ramp crews at all airlines are extremely caring and will try to call your fur baby by name and make sure that if you have two, they are together and on the right flight!

Lastly, here are a few extra tricks and tips on packing. Try rolling your clothes, they tend to fit better, and you can fit more! Never keep all of your credit cards and cash in one wallet. Place at least one credit card and some cash somewhere else in your bags, along with a photocopy of your driver's license and passport. If you lose your wallet, then you'll at least not be stranded and have some cash or a credit card available to you. Always hang onto your checked baggage claim slip. This allows you to track your baggage and file a claim if the

(See Let's Fly, Page 29)

Square Pegs are for everyone, just bring your rhythm

BY AMY QUENNEVILLE

BRANDON—Your parents did it. Your grandparents did it. George and Martha Washington did it. Even King Louis and Marie Antoinette did it, though maybe not so much with each other.

We're talking about dancing, of course!

Dancing has been around in some form or another since mankind can recall. Most likely the first rendition was the Hot Coal Boogie, performed by a barefoot caveman. Dancing has known many forms and variations since then.

Frequently flaunted as a status symbol, dancing was often the domain of the wealthy or powerful, from European nobility to tribal leaders. The expanding colonization of the 18th and 19th centuries began to change that.

On the continent of North America, French, English, African, Celtic, Spanish, and Native American cultures collided. Each culture contributed to and adopted from the other cultures. Their dance traditions reflected this. Over time, many other cultures also contributed.

The hardy colonists occasionally put down their hoes and gathered to socialize, usually at the biggest barn or structure available. They serenaded the cows, pigs, and chickens with fiddles, washtubs, harmonicas, or anything that would make a joyful noise.

Drawing from existing dances, such as quadrilles or cotillions, they adapted the dance movements to their own styles, eventually synchronizing the movements as specific calls. Square dancing, contra dancing and the American hoedown were born. The colonists had taken dancing from the realm of elite status symbol and shared it with the populace, a legacy worthy of preservation.

On March 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Brandon Town Hall, Peter Tobin and the Cast Off 8s, will share their joy of square dancing with the public, who will have a chance to participate in this American tradition. Peter is the caller for the group, and he's agreed to provide some info on the specific genre of square dancing.

Amy Quenneville (A.Q.): Most of us who grew up in the area remember the Horseshoe, Old Lantern, and those venues where each song had a routine that never varied. How is Western Style square dance different?

Peter: Those were barn dances. They usually had live music. For a specific song, the routine was almost always the same. A routine or several routines, could be taught in one night. After a few go-rounds the caller was not even needed, as the dancers knew what to do. In modern western square dancing, the music is pre-recorded. The dance patterns change at the whim of the caller. The dancers need to know the different steps, or calls, and to perform them in the order given by the caller. A skillful caller varies the order and complexity of the calls to keep the dancers moving smoothly to the beat of the music.

A.Q.: Are there any specific skills required to be a square dancer?

Peter: Few skills are required to become a square dancer. A sense of rhythm is helpful, as is knowing left from right. One should also enjoy socializing with friends in a smoke-free, alcohol-free setting.

A.Q.: You are an accredited caller. Calling is more complicated than it looks. What exactly is the role of caller in a square dance?

Peter: The caller's job is to deliver the calls to the dancers

so they can enjoy dancing smoothly, to the beat of the music. He/she must keep the calls complex enough to be interesting without breaking down squares. He/she should be to get each dancer back to their partner and to their home position regularly.

A.Q.: What type of training is required to become a caller?

Peter: Most common is attending callers' school, where caller coaches teach all aspects of calling. I have attended one school in New England five times, learning new things each time.

A.Q.: When people think of square dancing, they often recall the "yodeling cowboys" of earlier years. Can you tell us about the music used in modern square dancing?

Peter: Today, we use all types of music. I have jazz, big band, Texas Swing, Carolina Beach, classic rock, country and western, classical, rap, pop, etc. Songs should be in 2/4 or 4/4 time and have a recognizable beat between 120 and 130 beats per minute. Otherwise, almost anything goes.

A.Q.: How does your teaching program work? Are there beginner and advanced dancers in the group?

Peter: Workshops usually start in September, once a week until late spring or so. Experienced dancers help by dancing with the new folks during the learning process. By the end of these workshops, most dancers will know all the Basic and Mainstream calls and could dance anywhere.

A.Q.: Many members of the Cast Off 8s are planning a trip to Portland, Maine to attend the NE Square and Round Dance Convention in April. But square dancing often has regional styles or traditions. Can square dancers dance universally? Can dancers find opportunities to dance while traveling?



PETER TOBIN OF the Cast Off 8s square-dancing troupe with his grandson, Bennett Eddy, age 10. Tobin and his troupe will be at Brandon Town Hall this weekend.

over the world. The calls are always in English, though the songs might be in other languages.

Peter: Modern western square dancing is the same all

(See Square Pegs, Page 31)

Let's Fly

(Continued from Page 28)
airline loses your bags. Some people even purchase GPS luggage trackers on Amazon for around \$35 to keep track of their checked bags. My last tip regarding lost baggage is that if your airline loses your bag and then finds it, it's their responsibility to bring it to you! Yes, it is! You just need to ask for it to be delivered to the address you are staying at, and they will do

it! The airlines even have certified people whose job is just to drive lost bags from the airport to wherever you are staying. The only time the representative may give you a hassle is in a weather situation but even then, be nice but push a little and enjoy your stay until your bag arrives!

I hope you found this week's article full of some interesting tricks and tips to make trav-

eling with your baggage and family a tad bit easier! Oh boy, next week's article I'll talk about how not to lose your pets on the airplane, how not to get yourself locked in the bathroom and break the door trying to get out, and lastly how not to end up naked and looking for your bed while on a redeye! Signing off from this "senior mama" until next week! Fly on!

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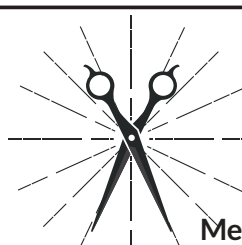
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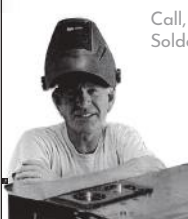


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Square Pegs

(Continued from Page 29)
gauges. The steps are universal. Though there might be some minor regional differences, you can square dance comfortably most anywhere.

A.Q.: When and how did you first get involved in square dancing?

Peter: My parents began square dancing in the early 1960s and used to drag me and my brother to dances all over Vermont. In our teens, we learned to dance ourselves. My wife's parents also danced when she was young. After we were married, we danced for a couple of years but stopped when our children were young. We started again after our girls were grown and have been dancing ever since. Now our daughter, son-in-law, and grandson are dancing as well.

A.Q.: Thank you, Peter, for your contribution to the legacy of American square dance.

Jacob Bloom, Dancing Mas-

ter, attributes the following quote to a French visitor in Philadelphia around 1795:

"Dancing, for the inhabitants of the United States, is less a matter of self-display than it is of true enjoyment. At the same dance you will see a grandfather, his son and his grandson, but more often still the grandmother, her daughter and the granddaughter. Each one dances for his own amusement, and not because it's the thing to do."

It's nice to know some things about dancing haven't changed.

The Cast Off 8s, square-dancing troupe extends a hearty invitation to the general public to join them at the Brandon Town Hall on March 8 at 6:30 p.m. There will be light refreshments, community level dancing, and a lot of fun. Be there AND be square!

[Editor's Note: Amy Quennville is an active member of the Cast Off 8s.]

Fluoride

(Continued from Page 19)

maintain the optimal fluoride concentration of 0.7 parts per million, with the state monitoring the concentration levels.

Others, who describe fluoride as a drug, argue that local officials need to gather city residents' informed consent before adding it into the water supply.

Jack Crowther, a prominent opponent of fluoridation in Rutland, said those who advocated for change "took a beating" during Town Meeting Day.

"By my calculation, the margin was about what it was in 2016," he said. Crowther said that, after spearheading a ballot question that year and this year, he does not see himself leading a ballot petition again.

In the weeks leading up to the vote, Crowther had placed ads in the Rutland Herald calling on residents to support the charter change. The issue has been a hot topic regionally, with people submitting letters to the editor or commentaries on both sides of the water fluoridation issue.

Mayor Mike Doenges said people are increasingly concerned about being able to make decisions on issues related to their health, but that the vote Tuesday showed the majority of Rutland voters wanted to keep the fluoridation decision with the city public works commissioner.

"I think that greater good wants to see (the water supply) still be

managed by those who have that education, who have that understanding," Doenges said Tuesday evening. "The doctors and the dentists and, in our case, the Vermont Department of Health have all recommended that we put fluoride in the water."

Dentists have emphasized that fluoride is safe at appropriate levels and maintains oral health. They've said that stopping water fluoridation would see a return to higher rates of tooth decay and diseases in Rutland — an area that is facing a steep shortage of dentists.

A representative of the Vermont State Dental Society earlier said there have been thousands of scientific studies of fluoride, and none show any link to serious health problems, such as neurological toxicity and cancer that the opponents have brought up. But the dentists acknowledged that too much fluoride intake during childhood can lead to dental fluorosis, or changes in the appearance of tooth enamel.

In a Jan. 29 public hearing on the charter change proposal, Rutland resident Lopi LaRoe said installing a household system to remove fluoride from tap water is too costly. If Rutland water stopped being fluoridated, she said, those who want to include it in their drinking water can choose to use a fluoride additive.

"I think it's unfair to put the onus on the people who don't want it in their water," she said.

Classified

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Desired candidates will have an active, unstipulated, Vermont state RN license. A minimum of 3 years full time, or 5 years part-time work history in a health-related environment. Provide impeccable references, be a team player and enjoy working in a collaborative environment.

This is a flexible position and will occasionally require some evening and weekend time. Work will be performed both on and off the clinic site. Park Street Healthshare offers a competitive wage based on Rutland County's current RN wages.

If you are interested in obtaining a full job description and directions on how to apply for this position, please email a letter of interest to Tia Poalino, Executive Director, at tiap@rutland-countyfreeclinic.org. The position will remain open until filled.

Park Street Healthshare, Inc. is an equal employment opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

Park Street Healthshare, Inc. is an independent, 501c3 non-profit organization providing free medical and dental care to uninsured and under-insured adults living in Rutland County, VT.



204 North Main St., Rutland

HIRING OFFICE MANAGER

The Rutland County Free Clinic, as we are more commonly known, has a full-time (40 hr/wk) Office Manager position available.

Desired candidates will have a minimum of 2 years work history in a health-related environment, impeccable references, be capable of passing a background check, be a team player and enjoy a collaborative environment.

This position is Monday-Friday but may on occasion require evening or weekend time. Park Street Healthshare offers competitive wages based on experience and potential benefits for this position.

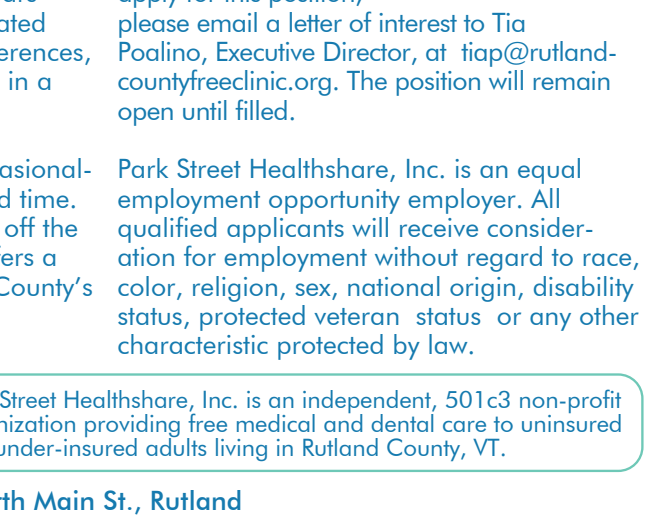
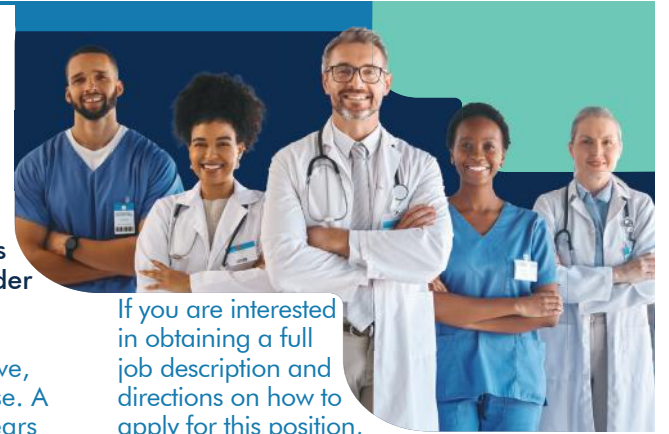
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It's not déjà vu!

ONCE AGAIN CROWDS and trucks lined Park Street in Brandon to send off OV's boys' Varsity Basketball team as they made their way to the State Semifinals in Barre on February 28. The Otters played against Montpelier and even though they didn't pass through to the finals, we couldn't be any prouder. Congrats, boys!

Photos by Steven Jupiter

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