

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

A community supported newspaper

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\$1

WASTE NOT

The Brandon Energy Committee's Repair Fair on Sunday brought new life to old items.

PG. 2



SPRING INTO ACTION

Lyn Desmarais shares tips on how (and how not) to prepare for the upcoming growing season.

PG. 3

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Representative Stephanie Jerome explains why she supports the revised OVUU school budget.

PG. 15



READY TO RUMBLE

WOH Wrestling delighted pro wrestling fans at the Brandon Town Hall on Saturday. Photos inside.

PG. 16



SPRING TRAINING

Brandon Rec to host baseball clinic for children in pre-K through sixth grade.

PG. 28



Emotions run high at Brandon SB meeting

GEORGE FJELD

BRANDON—At the Brandon selectboard meeting Monday night, there was an emotionally charged moment when Tim Guiles read a comment in the Rutland Herald from board member, Brian Coolidge, describing Guiles as deceptive and deceitful in his budgeting recommendations. Coolidge stood by his comment, saying, "That is my opinion." Heather Nelson responded by saying, "This was not deceptive or deceitful. We cut money and moved money, and it was all done in a public session."

Bill Moore presented the Recreation Department report with 168 participants in the baseball program. Fourteen teams will play on four fields over the next eight weeks. There will be swim lessons this summer at the pool behind the Brandon Inn for the weeks of June 24, July 15, and July 29. Bus trips are planned to Salem, Massachusetts on October 3 and New York City on December 14. Park clean-up is proceeding as warmer weather comes in. There is a plan to re-

(See Brandon SB, Page 14)



A host, of golden daffodils

DAFFODILS AT MILLER Hill Farm on RT 73 in Sudbury welcome passersby to enjoy a burst of spring.

Photo by Nan Jenks-Jay

TOP OF THE POPS FOR BRANDON IDOL

BY GEORGE FJELD

BRANDON—Pop music, the music we all know from the radio, the Top 40, and across all decades, came to Brandon Idol last Friday in a big way. Contestants brought their top pop tunes to the stage in the last contest before the finals. Venus Diamondis stole the show and the People's Choice with dramatic costuming and a deeply emotional rendition of Hozier's "Take Me to Church." Soaring vocals and great instrumental backup were elevated by Diamondis's all-white costuming. The white platform boots she



FROM LEFT: CONTESTANTS Baker LaRock, Peggy Sue Rozell, and Venus Diamondis take the stage during Friday's Brandon Idol, which this time around had performers captivating the crowd with pop music.

wore came right from a top pop singer's wardrobe.

Emily Doty, who was originally a contestant before the pinning ceremony for her nursing degree was scheduled on the same night as the Idol finals next month, opened the show with the catchy "Hey, Soul Sister" by Train. She was accompanied by Kenny Cifone on ukulele.

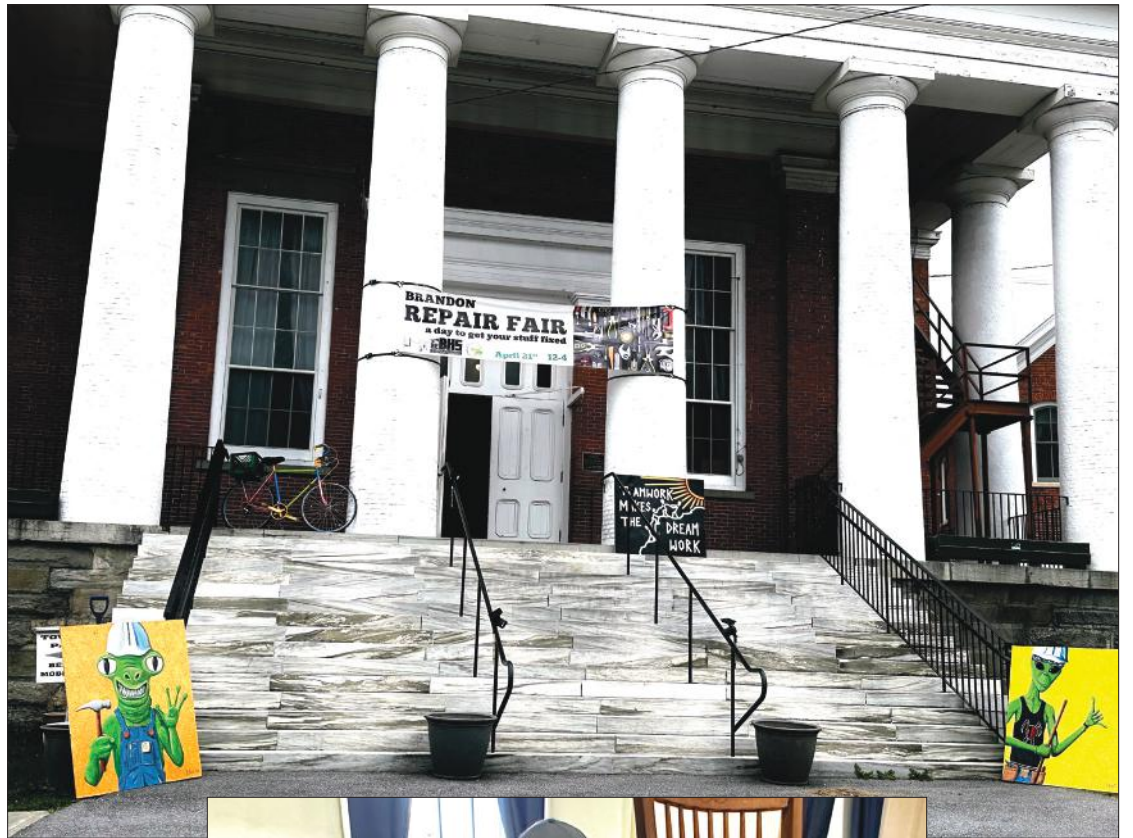
Jordan Bertrand soared on the one-hit wonder "Shut Up and Dance" from Walk the Moon. Matthew Graham belted out 1961's "Stand By Me" from Ben E. King, backed by a great

(See Brandon Idol, Page 12)

Waste not, want not Repair Fair at Brandon Town Hall was a success

The Repair Fair at Brandon Town Hall last Sunday was a success. The event was co-sponsored by the Brandon Energy Committee and ReBHS (the organization rehabbing the old Brandon High School). Eight volunteers helped roughly 20 people. According to David Martin, who belongs to both sponsoring organizations,

“People were very pleased.” Martin himself repaired seven or eight lamps (see photos). Also shown, Jeff Dardozzi of ReBHS repairing a short-wave radio, Jeff Haylon of the Energy Committee repairing a chair, and Wyatt Waterman entertaining the crowds on the keyboards.



**Photos by
Jill Pariseault
and Dorothea
Langevin**



GARDENING CORNER

Earthquakes, eclipses, and snowstorms, oh my! (It's time to garden now)

BY LYN DESMARAIS

Pruning

You'll be forgiven if you haven't had any time to think about your gardens, with all the weather we've been having. But it's time to sharpen and clean your tools. The master gardener course has taught me the value of each of these steps. Sharp tools mean clean cuts, which means less wounds for disease and rot to get into. Most of us have some fungus or powdery mildew on certain plants, so here's a habit I'm adopting: bring a diluted cleaning solution of bleach or alcohol with you when you prune. Dip your shears, loppers, or saw into it after each plant you prune and wipe dry. Also, I intend to pick up each plant's pruned bits before I move onto the next plant and correctly dispose of them. Since we can't see fungal spores, we can so easily spread them.

I hadn't realized the value and necessity of pruning. I'm generally a no-prune kind of gardener. I hadn't realized that this was the reason I didn't get apples every other year, for example. I wasn't pruning the fruit correctly, so trees didn't have enough energy for the following year's crop. I wasn't pruning, so my plants didn't flower or fruit as well as they could have.

I also have made all the bad pruning mistakes whenever I did prune, so this course has been invaluable in teaching me what to do and when to do it, as well as what tool to have on hand. I've incorrectly headed shrubs causing weak uncontrolled growth at the top, instead of cutting off dead bits or spent blooms in a timely way and pruned in late summer and early fall when I should have pruned

in the spring. I killed a rose bush by pruning at the wrong time of year. I even pruned hydrangea in the fall, thus destroying the next year's flowers. In fact, I've concluded that I have done just about everything wrong except that I always knew that pruning was complicated and differed for different plants. I always meant to learn about how to do it properly, and now I am. I'm hoping through the master gardener program to find lectures I can share on pruning and perhaps get an expert to come to Brandon to speak with whoever is interested. In the meantime, I have found these two short videos on you tube, naturally. UC Marin master gardeners: <https://.youtube.be/YLYolsTjmKs?feature=shared>. And from almanac.com <https://www.almanac.com/pruning-101-guide-pruning-trees-and-shrubs>.

At a minimum, Google what plant, tree, or shrub you'd like to prune and find out when and how.

The Goldilocks problem: Just like watering and mulching, over- or under-pruning creates problems and can kill the very thing you are trying to grow. I'll let you know how my efforts work out. I did unlearn two things I was taught: prune whenever your shears are sharp, and you can cut up to a third of anything and not adversely harm it. Yes, make sure your pruning shears are sharp BUT timing is critical in pruning. For pruning to produce more bounty, you have to know what you are doing. Most folks agree now that that the old upper limit of pruning 33% of a tree or shrub is slightly high and should be kept closer to 25%. This way,

although it may take you longer to get your desired look or fruit, you'll be assured healthier plants, trees, and shrubs. Your plants will thank you.

Jumping worms

Springtime also means weeding, planting, and mulching. So, it's time to talk about jumping worms. Yes, jumping worms. I'd be remiss if I didn't. Worms are great. Along with compost and a few other things, they are considered a gardener's best friend. They aerate and enrich the soil. My kids, in third grade, were in a bug play and one of the lines (See Gardening corner, Page 11)

Spotlight On Business LAZY ACRES EQUINES



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We are a full-service training and lesson facility specializing in foundation horse training, using traditional and natural techniques. We equip students - horse and human - with the knowledge and physical ability to create a strong base.

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Lazy Acres
EQUINES

have a mastery of horsemanship fundamentals to support the horse and achieve their goals.

Home of Green Mountain Pony Club Riding Center, where it all begins.

MAY & JUNE 2024 EVENTS AT THE BRANDON TOWN HALL

Saturday, May 4, 7:30 pm

"The Doughboys"

The Doughboys are back and ready to play their signature mix of highly danceable soul and rock music from the 1950s to today.

Sponsored by TKJ Plumbing & Heating, Tony & Kristy Johnson, Ed & Cindy Thomas, Tracy Holden & Kirk Thomas, N.E. Woodcraft, Christine & Jonathan Fries, Jeanette Devino, Sarah & Louis Pattis, Dorothy Leysath & Edward Loedding.

Saturday, May 11, 7:00 pm

Silent Movie... "The Gold Rush" (1925), Starring Charlie Chaplin

The Little Tramp prospects in the Klondike in this Chaplin silent movie epic. "Gold Rush" is full of classic laugh out loud sequences and heartfelt drama.

Sponsored by Bill & Kathy Mathis in memory of Martha Thurston.

Saturday, May 18, 7:30 pm

"The Gallison Hill Band"

The Gallison Hill Band, with former Brandon resident Joe Carr on vocals and

guitar, play a lot of classic rock, blues, country, grunge and alternative.

Sponsored by Diane Bryant & Todd Cooley, Sam & Sharon Glaser, Pat Wood, Ettie & Frank Spezzano, Sally & Del Cook, Shirley Markland, Jeanette Devino, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust.

Saturday, June 8, 7:00 pm

Silent Movie... "The Thief of Bagdad" (1924)

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of this eye-popping cinematic spectacle starring Douglas Fairbanks Sr. who must complete a series of epic tasks to save his beloved.

Sponsored by Kathy & Wayne Rausenberger, Donna Malewicki, Jean & Harold Somerset, Donald & Dolores Furnari, Gary & Nancy Meffe, Pam & Steve Douglass.

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BRANDON REPORTER

Editorial

Let's try cooperation rather than confrontation

BY STEVEN JUPITER

Last week's guest editorial by Vicki Disorda provoked a slew of reactions, mostly critical. My decision, as editor, to publish the piece was understandably called into question. I accept responsibility for that decision and for the criticism that followed.

When I read Ms. Disorda's submission, I thought she made a good point: the needs of Brandon's low-income residents must be taken as seriously as anyone else's. And as someone who attended most of the budget workshops and subsequent Selectboard meetings, I saw firsthand that the Selectboard generated a fair amount of resentment among those citizens who had given their time, energy, and ideas but ultimately felt dismissed. It was, and remains, a point worth discussing.

But these points got lost in a delivery that veered off course and which I, as editor, should have set right if I intended to publish the piece. I should have double-checked the timeline of the Declaration and should not have published the misguided criticisms of individual Selectboard members that were not directly relevant to the issues raised. If the goal of the piece was to demand a more sensitive consideration by the Selectboard, the inclusion of those comments was counterproductive, to say the least, and I should have counseled Ms. Disorda to omit them and focus on her central message.

Another valid criticism was that it was inappropriate to call the

piece a "guest editorial," since that designation implies the paper's stamp of approval. Point taken. I did, and still do, approve of much of what Ms. Disorda was trying to convey, but there was certainly material in the piece that should not have received the paper's perceived backing.

When we publish letters to the editor, there is no assumption that the paper is endorsing the content. But with an "editorial," people understandably assume that the paper is standing behind the material being published. In retrospect, perhaps "guest essay" would have been more appropriate, since the piece was more than a letter to the editor.

But there is an issue for which I don't have a ready solution: the increasingly tense relationship between town officials and town residents that prompted the piece in the first place. If The Reporter is to truly be a "community newspaper," we can't categorically exclude submissions that are harshly critical of our town government. Sometimes those in positions of authority need to be called out, and the editor of the paper can't be a perfect arbiter of what is or is not a valid criticism or what is or is not too harsh. Editors make mistakes. I made one in allowing unnecessary attacks on town officials. But even in saying that, there's a judgment call: who gets to decide what is "unnecessary?"

Nevertheless, in this particular instance it should have been clear that the comments about the individual Selectboard members
(See *Try cooperation*, Page 27)

Continuous conflict is a dead end.



You can let this one near the chicken coop

This handsome Fox sparrow was seen last week on Hollow Road.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

BRANDON REPORTER

Guest Essays

My expectations clouded my vision

My expectation of disrespect from both current and former select board members has clouded my point of view. I have misinterpreted select board member Heather Nelson's intentions in explaining the budget and have used a very derogatory word. The very moment I pressed send on an email to The Reporter, I knew it was a mistake. For this I am sorry: Using the word "mansplaining." It is derogatory to both men and women and I apologize to all of Brandon for

having seen it in print.

I acknowledge that while I desire to be a part of the solution, I have inadvertently become a part of the problem. As I do not believe in a double standard of conduct, for anyone, my intention is to immediately modify my language and be more mindful of my own feelings.

Heather, I am sorry for hurting your feelings with my words. Socioeconomic, educational and life experience continue to be a barrier in our ability to commu-

nicate and work together effectively. I have apologized to you before, I apologize to you today, and, as I too am new to the public arena, anticipate apologizing to you many more times in the future as we both continue to learn and grow in our new roles.

I am called to be a peacemaker in my profession and hope I have done so effectively today. I acknowledge the humanness in each of us.

*Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Disorda*

The recent attacks on the Brandon Selectboard are inaccurate and unwarranted

BY CECIL RENICHE-SMITH

As a former member of the Brandon Selectboard who was involved with the creation of the budget that was voted down on Town Meeting Day, I am compelled to respond to last week's guest editorial by Vicki Disorda. Ms. Disorda has every right to dislike and disagree with the current proposed budget, and to try to convince voters of the correctness of her position, but her editorial contains

both incorrect information and unwarranted attacks on individual Board members that require response.

Ms. Disorda's suggestion that the Board purposely omitted a reference to socioeconomic status from the Declaration of Inclusion it adopted in 2021 is simply incorrect. Brandon was an early adopter of the Declaration of Inclusion, and at that time the text of the draft Declaration did not contain a reference to socioeconomic sta-

tus. Other early adopters, such as the cities of Burlington and Bennington, have Declarations that mirror that of Brandon. That does not mean that these early adopters do not consider socioeconomic status unimportant; it merely reflects the primary concerns of the Declaration's drafters at the point the Declaration was originally proposed, which was on the heels of the murders of George Floyd and other members of the BIPOC
(See *Unwarranted attacks*, Page 7)

The **REPORTER**
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Letter to the Editor

Selectboard members are being personally attacked both at meetings, and in public venues

I moved to Brandon 41 years ago for a job. At that point Brandon was just a random name on a map. I certainly did not know that I would come to love the community and decide to stay here the rest of my life. Brandon is the ideal Vermont town with many characteristics that individuals want. We are the gateway to the Green Mountains with plenty of lakes and ponds for families to enjoy. But the best part of Brandon has always been the people and opportunities to get together at local events and activities.

Recently I have been witness to our town employees and Selectboard members being personally attacked by a few people

at meetings and in the press. They claim that they are being disrespected and ignored at Selectboard meetings. To be clear, everyone is allowed to speak and offer input at every Selectboard meeting. I would reply that some of their interactions border on harassment. The constant dialog has revolved on lowering the budget and that the Board members, in their opinion, refuse to set a budget that reduces property tax.

I would like to share two examples and actual FACTS for all to ponder. The first idea being pushed is that the recreation budget should be cut by elimination of programs. Fact: for FY23 the program revenue exceeded

program expense by \$13,706. So if we cut programs, we must also cut the revenue that is generated. Also, recreation activities bring people into town and while they are here, they frequent our local businesses and thereby provide economic benefits.

The second area of complaint is about putting a new slate roof on the Town Hall. The complaint is why increase property tax for this? Let's just put up a metal roof. Fact: the current roof has been there for over 160 years and has now reached the end of its useful life. The actual cost estimates are \$228,000 for standing-seam metal or \$269,000 for a new slate roof. Now, metal will last 25 years versus slate over

100 years. There has been \$1.6 million spent renovating this structure over the last 20 years and historic-preservation grants have paid for a large majority of it. We have been advised that changing the roof material would make it very difficult to obtain future grants for this building. We may need to have some of the decking replaced under the roof due to past leaks. However, the most important fact is this is NOT being paid for by property tax; it is federal ARPA money and using slate will save money for many future generations of Brandon residents.

The budget is built by looking at the needs of the town and citizens. Public safety, public

works, and community development drive the process, and our administration team are all vital for a healthy town.

If you have managed to read all of this, I appreciate your interest in the Brandon that I fell in love with. I feel that we are now at a crossroad and that the budget vote will determine the future direction of the town. I never tell people how they should vote, but every vote is important and will give guidance to the Selectboard moving forward.

Doug Bailey
Chair, Brandon Selectboard

If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all. Enough already

I've turned a blind eye to the words that keep falling on my deaf ears, to the point that they've left a bitter taste in my mouth. It's gotten to the point where I can't stomach them because they make my brain hurt. After months, though it feels like years, of vitriol in FPF and The Reporter, the straw that broke this camel's back was the Guest Editorial in The Reporter dated 4/17/2024.

Enough already! At this point, and as my age keeps advancing toward oblivion, it's time for me to start worrying about total organ failure and a nervous system breakdown in addition to an overuse of cliches from the incessant haranguing about taxes, alternative energy, socioeconomics, EVs, the Selectboard, and any and every person who holds a position of influence in the

Town of Brandon.

Thus, I am proposing one of these themed groupthink exercises à la the Ice Bucket Challenge, No Mow May, November, Dry January, March Madness, and such. I call this one "Shut the May Up!" Maybe leave off the exclamation point for the pearl-clutchers in our midst.

What this quasi holiday would represent is a break from

any and all negative comments, editorials, FPF posts, Facebook posts, and the like for the month of May – all 31 days.

If you've got nothing nice to say, don't say anything. Let's keep it positive and appreciative (especially of those trying to make a difference), leaving out the accusations and insults, the pontificating and finger pointing, the soapbox standing, as well as the grandstanding.

Instead, let's count our blessings that we live in such a vibrant, beautiful, interconnected community with a solid infrastructure thanks to those in charge of keeping it humming and buzzing.

If "Shut the May Up!" doesn't work for you, how about "May Peace Be with You?"

Jeff Sacks
Brandon

Leicester News

Dog registration is required and Green Up Day help would be nice

Town Clerk Julie Delphia reminds dog owners of the **requirement to register dogs**. Cost information is available on the town website. To avoid penalties and fees, be sure to register your dog(s) before the dog census is scheduled.



Green Up Day is Sat, May 4. As usual, a free volunteer luncheon for workers will be held at the Senior Center from 11:30 until 1:00. Lunch tickets double as raffle tickets. Filled Green Up bags can be left at the trailer at the Town Shed that morning. Volunteers are eligible to pick up a free Leicester grocery bag as well as choice of a Leicester cap or visor. The state of Vermont is attempting to achieve a Guinness World Record by gathering at least 5,000 pledges to help clean up trash. You can sign up at the Town Office to be part of the effort. For more information, or to volunteer to clean a particular segment of road, contact Diane Benware at 247-3786. Volunteers are needed for Lake Dunmore Road, Hooker Road and portions of the Leicester Whiting Road.



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Obituaries

Burton Arthur Reynolds, 97, Brandon

Burton Arthur Reynolds, age 97 died peacefully, after a short illness, at Rutland Regional Medical Center.

Burt was born on September 6, 1926 in Landis, Saskatchewan, Canada. He was the son of Roy and Gertrude (Wilton) Reynolds. His family moved to the States and in 1938 settled in California. He graduated from Campbell High School, in June 1943. Following graduation, he joined the United States Marine Corps on his 17th Birthday. He served honorably, with the Marines in the South Pacific until WW II ended in 1946. He then moved with his family to Alberta, Canada, where he was employed by the Alberta Government Telephone Company. He moved back to California in 1953, employed by Pacific Bell, later A.T. & T. Following his retirement in 1980, Burt purchased a vineyard in Lodi, California for a short time. He then moved to Barrow, Alaska, where he owned and operated Stellar Services, a freight handling company. Due to health reasons, he returned to California in 1999, where he underwent open heart surgery. He moved to Brandon in 2001, where he shared a home with



BURTON A. REYNOLDS

his sister, Patti. Burt enjoyed a busy life, having belonged to several service organizations. He was a member of the Marine Corps League, a life member of the Brandon American Legion, where he held several offices, including Commander, Historian, and Chaplain. He was a longtime member of the Lions Club, having served as president and treasurer and had received the Melvin Jones Award. He volunteered throughout his life with many organizations, including the Brandon Library. Burt enjoyed travelling and traveled to many countries worldwide.

He is survived by 2 daughters, Roxanne Luttrell of Elko,

NV and Rhonda May (Mike) of Clovis, CA; 2 sons, Glenn Reynolds of Bonaire, GA and Gregory Reynolds of Lilian, AL; and his sister, Patti of Brandon. 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, & cousins also survive him. He was predeceased by his parents, a son Gordon, a brother Richard and 2 sisters, Evelyn "Peggy" and Jeanne.

The funeral service will take place on Sunday, May 5, 2024, at 11 AM, at the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon. The graveside committal service and burial with Military Honors will follow in Pine Hill Cemetery.

Friends may call at the funeral home on Saturday, May 4, 2024 from 6 to 8 PM.

Following the committal service, the family will receive friends at Brandon American Legion Post #55, for a time of remembrance.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made in his memory to Brandon American Legion, P.O. Box 25, Brandon, VT or to Brandon Area Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 232, Brandon, VT 05733.

Charles Edmund Callahan, 72, Orwell

Charles Edmund Callahan, age 72, passed away on December 25, 2023. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on September 27, 1951 to Charles E. Callahan and Margaret Mary Callahan (née Leary), Dr. Callahan was a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, PA; his graduate degrees are from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

He moved to Orwell, Vermont in 1988. Dr. Callahan holds the Associate and Choirmaster certificates of the American Guild of

Organists. In 2014 he was honored with the Distinguished Artist Award of the A.G.O. He is a member of the Cosmos Club of Washington D.C.,

Dr. Callahan has taught at Catholic University, Middlebury College, Baylor University, Rollins College, and The Bermuda School of Music. He has served as organist and music director for churches in Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., New York, Vermont, and his native Massachusetts.

He was often consulted on the design of new organs, and resto-

ration and improvements on existing instruments. His two books on American organ-building history, *The American Classic Organ* and *Aeolian-Skinner Remembered* have become standard reference works on 20TH century American Organ history.

Dr. Callahan was a prolific composer; Callahan's compositions include commissions for Papal visitations to the United States and from Harvard University. His four-movement orchestral work, *Mosaics* premiered at the Cathedral Basilica of St.



CHARLES CALLAHAN

Louis, MO, and other works have been performed at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton Universities.

He is survived by loving

friends, his sister-in-law, Jean C. Callahan, and by his nieces Kim and Chrissy. He was predeceased by his spouse, Orlando Mustico, his parents, and his brother, Edward M. Callahan.

Per his wishes, he was laid to rest with his parents in Cambridge, MA.

A Celebration of Life Service will take place on April 27, 2024, at 2 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Cornwall (2598 Route 30, Cornwall, VT). Light refreshments will follow. Memorial contributions in his honor may be made to the Cornwall Congregational Church Music Program at 2598 Route 30 Cornwall, VT 05753.

Celebration of Life

CALVIN MERRITTE GRIFFIN, 80

The graveside committal service and burial, with Military Honors, for Calvin Merritte Griffin, age 80, who passed away on March 4, 2024, will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2024, at 11 AM, in the family lot at Evergreen Cemetery in Pittsford.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon.

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Obituary Guidelines

The Reporter will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing. For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the Reporter offers a free notice of passing up to 100 words, subject to editing by our news department. Photos (optional) with either paid obituaries or free notices cost \$10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to news@brandonreporter.com.

Submissions must be received by 11 a.m. on Monday for publication in the Wednesday paper.

Brandon Energy Committee

Explore your options at the Brandon electric lawn equipment event, May 21, 2024



Come see the first Brandon Electric Lawn Mower Demonstration!

See electric lawn equipment including zero-turn mowers, chainsaws, and weed trimmers for professionals and homeowners!

Hmm, now what to write next...I stare out the window at the puddles of muddy grass in the yard...

Then I had the idea, I'll ask our granddaughter what questions she has about electric lawn equipment.

Lily asked me these three

questions:

1) "Do they work?"

"Yes" I said, she was okay with that answer, so we moved on.

2) "How long do they stay charged?"

"Well that depends on what kind of battery you have, how long and wet the grass might be...but I can cut the front yard, recharge the battery if it needs it, and keep going to cut the back yard. Honestly, I usually stop before the battery."

She laughed.

3). "Do you have to plug it in?"

This is my favorite question. And I smiled and answered:

"In the mid 70s, 1975 or 76, there was a big fuel crisis. Really high gas prices, lines for pumping gas that went all the way down the street. In an effort to spend less money on gas, my Dad traded his big sedan, a green Buick LeSabre, for an

economy car, a silver Ford Capri, which was sporty and cute, so a win-win.

But, he also got rid of his gas lawn mower, and bought an electric one that you had to plug into a wall socket and run the mower without running over the cord...my Mom followed behind him to make sure the cord was 'all clear.' Now, you can plug a battery into a charger, slide the battery

into the mower, turn a switch, and start pushin'. There are self-propelled models as well as riding mowers, but there is

some great exercise in pushing the mower."

Lily nodded her head with a smile.

In a recent article from N Y S E R D A (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) a few benefits of electric yard equipment were mentioned: quieter and cleaner to operate. So, when you are cutting with an electric chain saw, you can

In the mid 70s, 1975 or 76, there was a big fuel crisis. Really high gas prices, lines for pumping gas that went all the way down the street. In an effort to spend less money on gas, my Dad traded his big sedan, a green Buick LeSabre, for an economy car

still hear the birds, smell the wood. Much easier to start, no yanking on the cord. For me, just turning a knob, rather than

pulling a cord really made cutting the grass so much more enjoyable. And the article also mentioned not having to store gas and oil and transport them to remote locations. Plus, lighter-weight electric equipment means less user fatigue.

Now, here is my question for you, would you like to see what changes are happening right now? Changes that will make your work cleaner and easier, too?

Join us on May 21st, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at Estabrook Park in Brandon, for hands-on demonstrations by several electric lawn equipment companies. See how they work and how we can all learn together.

*Clare Babyak-Schick
Brandon Energy Committee
volunteer*

Unwarrented attacks

(Continued from Page 4)

the version of the Declaration that was presented to it. The omission of a reference to socioeconomic status may have been an oversight, but it was an innocent oversight. Had anyone in the community noticed or raised the issue at the time, the Board could readily have added it; and even now anyone can ask the Board to revise the Declaration to include it.

Moreover, the suggestion that the Board does not care about lower-income residents is not only incorrect, but also insulting. The Board is well aware of the makeup of Brandon's population, including the fact that we have a number of residents living at or below the federal poverty level. According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the 2022 general poverty rate in Brandon was 10.9 percent (albeit with a 5.3 percent margin of error), a slight decrease from 11.2 percent in 2010. The number Ms. Disorda cites is at the high end of the margin of error, but even a 5.6% poverty rate – the low end of the range – represents over 230 people out of our total population of 4,129, a not-insignificant number. Those residents were always on our minds as we debated the budget; our goal was to maintain the highest

quality of municipal services for the lowest number of tax dollars possible.

Indeed, one of the reasons that this year's budget demonstrated such a large increase in the tax rate is that for several years the Board chose to fund the budget through accounting methods that allowed for minimal tax-rate hikes that did not even keep pace with inflation or the cost of living, so as to ease the burden on Brandon's most vulnerable populations. Those decisions (such as drawing from the town's cash reserves, paying off equipment leases, and deferring maintenance on some town properties), were well intended, but

they were not fiscally sustainable. The Board has realized that, in the future, such workarounds should be deployed with caution, because weaning the budget off those funding alternatives turns out to be quite difficult. In creating the current proposed budget, the Board focused on creating an honest budget that reflected the actual cost of providing Brandon residents with the services they

want and need.

The most egregious portion of Ms. Disorda's editorial, however, was her attack on Selectperson Heather Nelson's presentation of the budget on April 8. Ms. Disorda asserts that Ms. Nelson "insult[ed]...the intelligence of the audience members" by "treating them as if they were grade-school students being introduced to a subject for the first time." Yet Ms. Disorda herself has recognized that not everyone

has the same level of knowledge in all subjects, as shown by her explanation earlier in her editorial of the difference between wants and needs. It could be argued that distinction is something we

learn as children and do not need to have explained, but, as Ms. Disorda implicitly acknowledges, some of her readers may still struggle with that distinction.

Having worked with Ms. Nelson on the original budget presentation upon which her April 8 presentation was based, I can state with authority that the intention was not to insult anyone's intelligence. Rather, her

presentation was shaped by the fact that not everyone receives and processes information the same way. Some people prefer a written text, others are visual learners, and still others require auditory cues. Moreover, the presentation was intended not just for "seasoned voters" like Ms. Disorda but for others who may have been learning about the town budget for the first time. Ms. Nelson hoped to avoid putting any listener in the position of not understanding the material, because it is often very difficult in a room full of people for a person to speak up and admit they do not understand something.

It had also been clear in the run up to Town Meeting that many people in town were confused about the difference between the budget and appropriations, the effect of the separate education budget, and how the town's budgetary amounts to be raised by taxes would shake out for their individual property tax bills. Indeed, for even the most seasoned voters, municipal finances are an arcane subject. It is important, especially in a heated and emotionally charged debate, to be sure that everyone is talking about the same thing. The use of charts, graphs, and simple terms better ensures that out-

come. It is easy to get confused in the midst of so many numbers and emotions. That risk is especially high for the Select Board members who are on stage and being closely observed by the audience, and who are still trying to do their most thoughtful listening and respond to comments and ideas on the spot.

Ms. Disorda's unfortunate and unwarranted attack on Ms. Nelson is a perfect example of why so many talented and knowledgeable citizens have chosen not to remain involved in politics – at both the local and national level – and why so many others have been dissuaded from getting involved in the first place.

In parting, I urge Brandon residents not to be disheartened by the possibility of such personal attacks and to become involved in town governance; whether it be by serving on one of the town committees, running for a seat on the Selectboard when the time comes, or even just attending a Selectboard meeting when the Board is considering something that may affect your personal concerns or interests. The meeting agendas are always made available the week prior to the meeting and can be found on the town's website and posted outside of the Town Offices.

New 'incentive calculator' launches to help Vermonters electrify their homes

Here's how to use the tool to find which rebates, tax credits & discounts you might qualify for

BY JUAN VEGA DE SOTO/
VTDIGGER

To celebrate Earth Day, two nonprofits have announced the launch of a Vermont-specific incentives calculator to electrify everything from your car to your water heater.

Rewire America, a national electrification nonprofit, worked with Efficiency Vermont on a version of Rewire's "savings calculator" that gives Vermonters a customized breakdown of the incentives they might qualify for if they want to electrify any aspect of their homes.

Vermont House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, Agency for Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore and representatives for all three members of Vermont's congressional delegation spoke at the Statehouse on Monday at the launch of the new online tool.

It is part of Efficiency Vermont's efforts to help people know where to start when electrifying their home and to nudge them toward decarbonising and installing high-efficiency electrics, according to Managing Director Peter Walke.

To that end, the calculator is simple to use. Users can input six pieces of personal information—homeownership status, ZIP code, electric utility company, household income, tax filing status and household size—and the tool responds with a list of currently available incentives.

These incentives come in many different forms—from tax rebates to upfront discounts—and from a variety of federal, state and private sources.

For instance, a home-owning Burlington family of four with an annual income of \$80,000

might qualify for \$840 off a heat-pump-powered clothes dryer, up to \$5,000 off a new electric vehicle or 75% off, up to \$9,500, of the cost of weatherizing their house—among other incentives.

The tool returned such results within about 30 seconds. It's also available in Spanish.

"The breadth of incentives available to Vermonters is extensive," Walke said.

In their brief remarks to the assembled press at the Statehouse, the representatives of the congressional delegation


underscored that most of these incentives were a product of the federal Inflation Reduction Act's \$8.8 billion in funding for the Department of Energy to allocate to states for home energy efficiency and electrification projects.

In her remarks, Moore said her old clothes dryer stopped working, and she used the calculator over the weekend to see if she should switch to a heat pump dryer.

"It was actually extremely cost-competitive," she said.

Call 247-8080 for details.

Yard Sale?



Advertise it in the Reporter!

Cross-Vermont canoe organization seeks input on accessibility updates

BY K. FIEGENBAUM/VT-DIGGER

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail—145 miles of which runs through Vermont—is beginning a project to understand and improve accessibility for people with mobility challenges.

The paddlers' organization is seeking input via an online survey to help it identify needs and target future infrastructure improvements.

"We want to know where folks like to paddle and what kinds of improvements would make certain paddling opportunities safer and more enjoyable for a range of bodies, from those with creaky knees and stiff hips to people in wheelchairs and everyone in between," said Alex Delhagen, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail's assistant trail director, in a press release earlier this month.

The canoe trail begins in Old Forge, New York and follows Native American travel routes upstream for 740 miles through Vermont, Québec and New Hampshire to Fort Kent, Maine. While some have paddled the entire route, many utilize segments of the trail for quick day paddles or weekend trips.

In Vermont, the trail crosses the northern portion of the state: across Lake Champlain to the Missisquoi River into Canada, and then south across Lake Memphremagog to the Clyde and Nulhegan rivers until reaching the Connecticut River on the New Hampshire border.

According to the trail organization's executive director, Karrie Thomas, expanding access to the trail is a core part of the group's mission. But it struggled to make headway until receiv-



ing technical support from the National Parks Service's Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance program about a year ago.

The organization, which works with the private landowners who allow the use of the waterway's campgrounds and portages, created an accessible launch on the Missisquoi River in Richford and made a portage in Maine wheelchairable, Thomas said, but neither launch point is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The survey, scheduled to run until June, is intended both for those who have paddled before—via canoe or kayak, and on flatwater or whitewater—and

newcomers.

It is the first phase of a project that will include focus groups to help the Northern Forest Canoe Trail gather information about where to direct its efforts. The subsequent phases of the project are expected to include field assessments, fundraising, building, and sharing information about the improvements.

"We plan to engage people with disabilities to assess the projects in the planning and implementation phase to ensure that we are doing it correctly," Thomas said.

Once people with disabilities have tested the improvements, the organization plans to de- (See *Canoe accessibility*, Page 9)

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Friends of Brandon Library to raffle off local handmade quilt

BRANDON—The Friends of the Library received a special gift this spring. Maple Leaf Quilters of Rutland worked together to produce a beautiful queen size quilt. It is a traditional log cabin design and was quilted by Nancy Bart of Brandon. The quilt will be raffled off over the summer with the drawing in October—just in time for winter. Tickets will be available in several downtown locations.

Brandon Selectboard hears complaint of vicious dog attack

BY GEORGE FJELD

BRANDON—The Brandon Selectboard met before their regular meeting Monday night to hear a vicious dog complaint. In an emotionally charged presentation, Joanne Casey described the attack on her five-year-old, 35-pound border collie. Running in from his owners' apartment 300 feet away, "Cash," an 80-pound bulldog, attacked the collie for 10 to 15 minutes. The collie sustained many bites to the flank, back and leg. On its way, the bulldog knocked Casey down.

"It's not the breed, it's the training. This dog is dangerous."

—Samantha

dog with a board without success.

Casey's neighbor, Samantha (no last name given), witnessed the attack. She said it was disgusting and she's concerned for her six- and nine-year-old children. "It's not the breed, it's the training," she said, "This dog is dangerous."

Bulldog owner, Gerry Tanner, who described himself as liking to fight, got a call from the girl who had been walking the dog and responded to the scene. He stated he was unable to pull the dog off and, "I choked him



and his hips hurt for two days. According to animal control officer Tim Kingston, the bulldog was unregistered and unvaccinated. The dog had to be quarantined by his owners. The dog was leashed but got away from the 14-year-old girl who was walking it. Kingston said the attack was preventable.

The selectboard planned to deliberate in closed session after the regular meeting and render its decision to Casey and Tanner by letter.

out and he let go." Tanner said he would pay the vet bill which is presently over \$1,000. Jennifer Wedge, who lives with the dog, described it as gentle and loving. She said Cash had a nosebleed



KAYAKERS ON A portion of the Connecticut River on the Vermont-New Hampshire border, part of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, on September 23, 2023. Photo by K. Fiegenbaum/VTDigger

Canoe accessibility

(Continued from Page 8) velop and share trip descriptions for those with varying mobility needs. The information will be posted on the organization's trip planner tool, and it is also work-

ing with a number of statewide accessibility and trail organizations to make the information more widely available—and to inform future accessibility projects.



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OUR CREATIVE KIDS

STUDENT: Emmett Mallory

GRADE: 8

SCHOOL: Otter Valley Union
Middle School

TITLE: One point
perspective color wheel

MEDIUM: Mixed

TEACHER: Dasha Kalisz



Gardening Corner

(Continued from Page 3)
I'll never forget is "and some of us to be quite candid, were on the Pilgrims when they landed." Earthworms in Vermont today are interlopers, an invasive species. As with all invertebrates, there are thousands of them—more than 5000 types—and we need to be worried about only one at the moment: the jumping worm.

The jumping worms were first noticed in Wisconsin in 2013 but scientists suspect have been here for much longer. They are being studied because of the harm they are causing the forest floor. They are so named because they wiggle violently and thrash about when touched. We humans are spreading them by buying compost, soil, mulch, plants, potting soil, and bait worms that come from outside Vermont. They outcompete and outeat the locals. So how is that

bad? They are such hungry eaters that they consume all the organic matter wherever they are, so your plants, trees, and shrubs won't get any nutrients. These worms affect the anchor

Earthworms in Vermont today are interlopers, an invasive species. As with all invertebrates, there are thousands of them—more than 5000 types—and we need to be worried about only one at the moment: the jumping worm.

systems of trees, shrubs, and plants in the ground so they may become uprooted. They also contribute to nutrients being washed away in the rain, because the compost which holds them is gone. If you buy them as bait worms, do not dump them into the environment. Throw away your unused ones in the trash, please. They are sold as snake worms, crazy worms, Alabama worms, or jumping worms. And sadly, they may be coming to a soil near you. Home gardeners if you find one, kill it. And keep your eyes out for earthquakes, wild weather and jumping worms.

MAPLE the COW™ by Matt Aucoin



INVASIVE JUMPING WORMS are a threat to gardeners everywhere. Ensuring that purchased compost, mulch, plants, potting soil, and bait worms originate in Vermont can help limit their spread.

Would you like to come to the Senior Center for a free meal, but don't drive?

WE WILL PICK YOU UP IN OUR HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE BUS. BRUNCH, DINNER AND LUNCHES — JUST CALL KATHY AT 247-3121 TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT.

BRANDON SENIOR CENTER **1591 FOREST DALE BRANDON**

Sharpen your mind with our puzzles.

See page 25



BRANDON IDOL

(Continued from Page 1)

bass line by Cifone. The song was the lead music in the film of the same name.

“Hero” by Mariah Carey was ably performed by Bethany White. Gloria Estefan made the song famous in 1992. Hilary Collier showed off her dramatic vocal abilities with “All Coming Back to Me Now,” the best-known rendition coming from Céline Dion after it was first popularized by the band Meat Loaf.

After a short intermission, Peggie Sue Rozell sang “Believe” by Cher. She was accompanied on stage by her 11-year-old daughter for emotional support. Rozell promised to make a big batch of her brisket for the finals on May 17th.

Calvin Ladd crooned Billy Joel’s “Only the Good Die Young” to the obvious delight of the audience. It was released in 1977.

Baker LaRock dedicated the song “Perfect” by Ed

Sheeran to his girlfriend of almost one year! Emoting fully, he poured his heart out into that song. And the audience loved it!

As always, the singers were expertly backed by the Brandon Idol Live Band consisting of Bryon Billado on guitar, Carina Ellis on keyboards, Kenny Cifone on electric and standup bass (and a little ukulele), and Ross Edmunds on drums. Master of Ceremonies was Bill Moore, who was as entertaining as ever.



**Photos by
Kevin White**



LEFT PAGE: TOP, Brandon Idol contestants perform together at the Brandon Town Hall on Friday. Contestants delighted audience members with their renditions of beloved pop songs, both modern and classic. (Continuing clockwise from top) Calvin Ladd singing "Only the Good Die Young," Kenny Cifone providing backup vocals, and Peggy Sue Rozell (left), with her 11-year-old daughter, performing "Believe."

THIS PAGE: CLOCKWISE from top left: Bethany White, Emily Doty, Hilary Collier, Venus Diamondis, Baker LaRock, emcee Bill Moore, and Matthew Graham.

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 1)
 surface the Estabrook tennis court to a multiuse surface.

During the public comments, the board reminded participants that the roofing of the Town Hall will not affect the town budget as it is using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that were made available during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vicki Disorda made a public apology to Heather Nelson for her personal attack in a guest editorial in this paper. Jim Leary reminded everyone that Saturday May 4 is Green-Up Day. He will be in the gazebo with coffee and green bags from 8–10 a.m.

Also during the public comments, participant Sandy Mayo, in a lengthy statement, attacked Tim Guiles for deceptive budgeting. Chair Doug Bailey responded that the board responded to and echoed the community and did not feel there was any disrespect. Bailey went on to describe a series of emails

from Mayo. In the first, Mayo demanded the board meet privately and dismiss Guiles. Bailey responded that this is against Vermont State law. Mayo followed up wondering if the board had met privately to consider her proposal. Mayo then accused Ethan Nelson, the husband of Heather Nelson, of coming to her house and threatening her. Mr. Nelson described his visit in which his six-year-old daughter brought Mayo flowers and he helped her out with some lifting. He asked her not to refer to his wife as a linebacker and he said Mayo then erupted, scaring his daughter and causing her to cry. He left immediately.

Judy Bunde stated that she had asked to have the budget presentation in an easy to understand format, such as pie charts, which sounded similar to what Nelson presented in March. Bunde went on to encourage the board to spend the ARPA money on the Town Hall roof or other projects not in the budget. Bunde said, “ARPA is not a spending

spree. One-time monies should not be used for the annual budget. We shouldn’t use Aunt Flossie’s birthday check to pay the electric bill.” Kevin Thornton said he trusts the integrity of the board and appreciates their work. Karen Farwell reminded the board that they are committed to maintaining the swales on Park Street or the Agency of Natural Resources could come back looking for a return of the money.

The selectboard appointed a seven-member Downtown Parking Solution group consisting of Bernie Carr, Stephanie Corliss, Dorethea Langevin, Janet Mondlak, Bill Moore, Barbara Scribner, and Heather Nelson. The board approved four to one

“This was not deceptive or deceitful. We cut money and moved money, and it was all done in a public session.”

*—Heather Nelson,
 Brandon
 Selectboard*

(Coolidge nay) the engineering design and solutions scoping study for a multiuse path from Brandon village to Forestdale to the only bidder, Dubois and King for \$44,972. Funds are already appropriated being \$10,000 from

the 1% tax and \$40,00 in grant aid. The board approved, in a unanimous vote, a letter of support for a solar array off Clarks Mill Road. This is a privately funded 125 kW solar array off Champlain Street. It will not be visible from surrounding roads and properties. Jack Schneider, chair of the Planning Commission, said it followed the town plan for renewable energy. After the vote, Mayo requested it be explained to her, and it became apparent that she had not read the board packet where it was fully described.

The selectboard updated the declaration of inclusion to include socioeconomic status. This update was added one year ago to the proposed declaration. Brandon was the third town to adopt the original declaration three years ago.

The board entered executive session to complete the Town Manager’s evaluation and deliberate the vicious dog complaint.

Brandon Town Manager's report, week of April 8 – 18

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Town has submitted and received receipts for three applications for Class 2 paving grant funds for FY25 [portions of Cobb Hill Road, Union Street, and North Street].

The Town has received confirmation from the Division of Watershed Management that 2023 flood response extends the Town’s deadlines for compliance with Municipal Roads General Permit requirements for improving road segments. The FY24 segment quota (5) will be added to the FY25 quota (18).

We are working with a Vermont certified lead abatement contractor regarding abatement required preparatory to installation of the three large sidewalk-level windows at the town office.

FOCUS AREAS DURING REPORTING PERIOD

I sent a letter to the editor of The Reporter regarding the revised budget proposal, which The Reporter published on 10 April. I sent a post to Front Porch Forum in response

I participated in the first of three VLCT webinar trainings in their grant writing and management series. I also participated in a VLCT risk management training. I attended the Brandon planning commission meetings of April 1 and 15 and shared information about one-acre vs ten-acre Act 250 review. I took active part in the quarterly meeting of town managers facilitated by Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Brandon always receives compliments from other Rutland County officials on its vibrancy and volunteerism.

I participated in the monthly meeting with the engineers and contractor on the wastewater facility upgrade. The project is at 97% complete and a walkthrough is planned for May 16th at 9AM. Ongoing meetings will be held to square up paperwork and financial obligations.

I had many meetings with town officers, staff, townspeople and a journalist, and responded to many requests for information from various parties.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT	
Operating Expenses	85% thru funds / 83% thru year
Unrestricted / Unassigned Fund Balance >>>SEE NOTE<<<	\$560,265
1% (Local Option) Tax Fund Available / Undesignated	\$249,025
Known Grant Matches Not Yet Designated	UNION STREET
Delinquent property taxes (prior years)	\$333,530 (was \$334,403)
Delinquent wastewater (prior years [over 120 days])	\$185,413 (was \$188,866)
Number of payment plans for delinquent accounts	23 active

to a guest editorial in the 17 April edition of The Reporter. Both of these accompany my report.

The Town staff responded to a public information request, has partially fulfilled it, and is working to complete its fulfillment of it.

We activated the Town’s opt-in text alerts for high water road closures.

FEMA was in Brandon on Tuesday to consider mitigation possibilities at Newton Road. We met at the town office to review Brandon’s flooding history and explore mitigation options and then went up to Newton Road for another site visit. The follow-up from FEMA raised the possibility of conducting a hydrologic & hydraulics (“H&H”) study in light of the the 14 square miles of watershed drained by the Neshobe. The Town will not pursue that at this time due to the cost of time and money involved, and rather undertakes to complete the reconstruction of the road as previously contemplated, which is acceptable to FEMA. Voluntary buyouts continue to proceed.

Our three small FEMA projects are “obligated” meaning at their near-disbursement step, and our large project (Newton Road) is pending disposal of the mitigation aspect mentioned above.

NOTE: A reduction in unrestricted fund balance of \$152,100 occurred through the Treasurer’s transfer to “Reserved by Selectboard” funds as voted by the Selectboard during its budget proposal workshopped in November and December 2022 and adopted on 9 January 2023. This resulted from Highway surplus funds which are now called upon to square up accounts with the Arnold District Road paving project completed in the late Fall of 2023. The Town has since submitted its reimbursement request for just under \$200,000 of Class 2 paving funds for this project. The transfer represents the Town’s match. The project actually was completed significantly under budget through use of Town crew and Town equipment. Once the grant funds are received from the State and the project closed out, the underspending of this project will be available for redesignation, including possible return to the unrestricted general fund balance. A comprehensive recap of the project and any resulting surplus from it will be provided to the selectboard upon the Town’s receipt of the Class 2 grant funds.

FOR AWARENESS OF THE SELECTBOARD

(See Town Manger's report, Page 23)

Mim's Photos
 Like all things vintage?
 are on page 24!



Legislative Report

BY STEPHANIE JEROME

Budgets & education create the perfect storm — and future reforms

I support the revised Otter Valley Unified School District budget and look forward to voting for it on April 30th. I appreciate the difficult decisions the School Board has made in this budget. I am deeply committed to a strong public school system, and all it does for our students and our community. I am deeply concerned about projected increases in property taxes and the financial pressures this causes for the residents of Brandon. It is imperative that we seize this opportunity to transform Vermont education into a right-sized, strong public education system that supports all students and uses our statewide resources sustainably and efficiently.

Here is some history on Vermont's complicated education finance system. Each school district's education spending is determined at a local level and the resources are pooled in

a statewide education fund, as a result of a 1997 Vermont Supreme Court Brigham decision. This ruling found that our Constitution requires "substantially equal educational opportunity to all students" regardless of where they live. As a result, taxes must be levied in order to raise the funds for all approved school budgets across the state. In 1997, the legislature passed Act 60, creating the statewide Education Fund (updated by Act 68 in 2003). This led to our current system where decisions about district spending are made at the local level while money is collected and redistributed at the state level. This resulted in more money flowing to poorer areas of the state, but it also came along with a complicated formula and insulated taxpayers from the direct consequences of their local spending choices. In 2022, Act 127 updated Vermont's "pupil

weights"—a key factor in our complex education funding formula that accounts for the different cost of educating different categories of students.

Throughout the state we are facing a "perfect storm" of financial pressures, including the end of federal COVID-19 funds, increases in employee healthcare costs (16% increase), increased salaries for educators, deferred maintenance on school buildings (\$33 million), and no statewide program for school construction. In addition there has been a huge increase in mental and behavioral health spending (about \$53 million). We are also contending with challenges of a lack of staffing at the Agency of Education, too many school buildings, an increase in the amount of public education dollars going to independent school tuition and the increased needs of students. Our

tax rates are based on spending in OVUU schools, education spending across the state, property values, and revenue from sales and meals/rooms taxes. With additional revenues are likely to come a tax on cloud-based services purchased over the internet as well as some other sales tax adjustments. This tension between a statewide fund and local decisions may be reaching a breaking point!

This week the legislature will be voting on the "Yield" bill to fund education. This bill has the support of the Principals Association, School Boards Association, Superintendents Association, NEA, and Association of School Business Officials. The bill provides relief to property tax payers, clarifies guidance for changes to our education system in future years, and provides a path to rethink the funding formula, its use,

and its sustainability.

With leadership from the legislature and the Agency of Education, I believe we can transform Vermont's education system into a right-sized, strong public education system that supports all students and uses our precious statewide resources sustainably and efficiently.

I trust we can come together to vote to support our schools and our students. Please vote on April 30th to support our Brandon schools!

*Rep. Stephanie Zak Jerome,
Brandon
Committee on Commerce
and Economic Development
(Vice-Chair)
802-683-8209
sjerome@leg.state.vt.us*



Type a poem or love letter (in the spirit of Taylor Swift's "Tortured Poets Department"... or otherwise)




Play Brandon Business Crawl Bingo!!

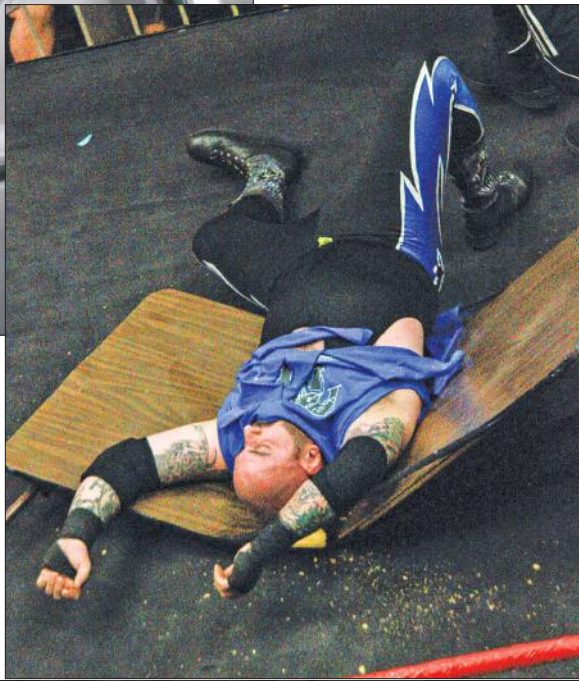
Mae's Place Diner	Neshobe Cafe at Brandon Inn	Brandon House of Pizza	The Bookstore	Red Clover Ale Co.
Blue Moon Clothing & Gifts	Blooming Bungalow	Brandon Artists Guild	Across the Street Antiques	The Bookstore type a poem
Morning-side Bakery	Nifty Thrifty		Li's Chinese Restaurant	Sister Wicked
The Bookstore Origami Contest	Brandon Florist Shoppe	Free Space	Cafe Provence	Compass Treasure Chest
Brandon Free Public Library	The Bookstore Make your own bookmark	Carr's Gifts	River Pub & Grill	Delilah's Hair Studio

- Pick up a bingo card (at The Bookstore and participating businesses)
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- Spin the PRIZE WHEEL!
- Win fabulous prizes

Make your own bookmark!

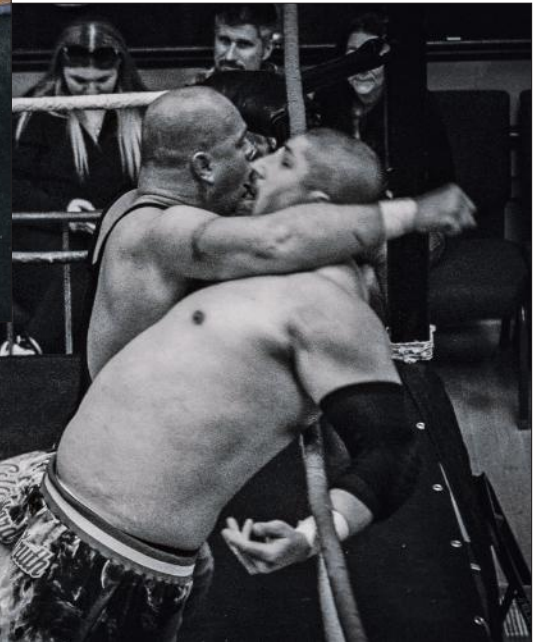
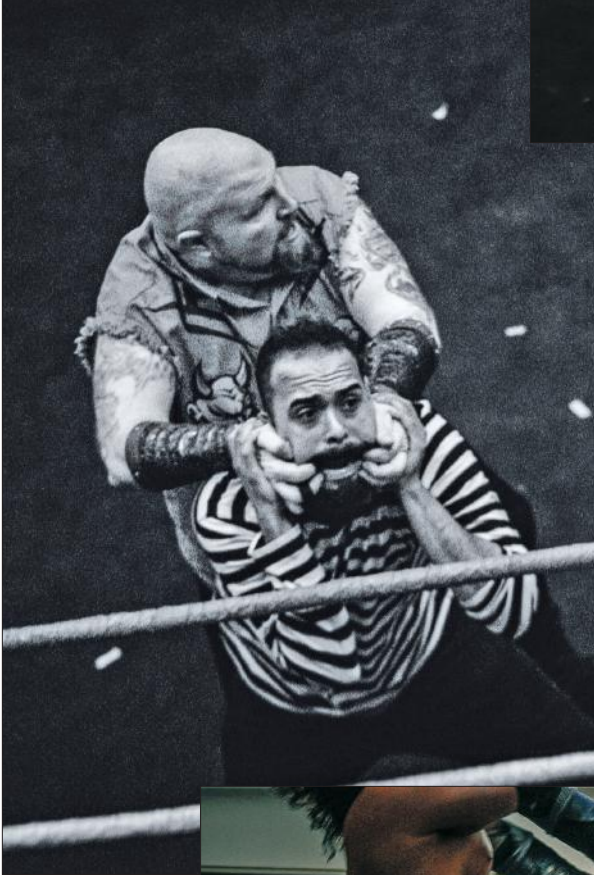
Learn origami





PROFESSIONAL WRESTLERS DESCENDED on the Brandon Town Hall for an epic live event Saturday night hosted by World of Hurt Wrestling. Fans cheered as these muscular men and women competed to secure their place in the ring.

WORLD OF HURT BRINGS THE HEAT



Photos by Lennon Philo



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

Let's discuss lots of latches, lunch, and last one off

BY CONNIE M. NITE

Hi again, my wonderful readers, and welcome back to—believe it or not—week nine of my tips and tricks to airline travel! I'm so glad you're back with me for this week's article! Today we're going to be chatting about latches and lunches! This "senior mama" of a quarter of a century old is always trying to find you those money-saving cheaper airfare options and ways to have the airlines pay you! If this is your very first time joining us, I'm so glad you're here! Whether you've flown a million miles or never flown at all, here's to hoping you learn some interesting behind the scenes information about traveling and flying those "friendly skies."

Let's start off with "latches!" Airplane companies Boeing and Airbus love adding latches to compartments on their airplanes! They do this because everything has to be stowed during taxi, takeoff, turbulence, and landing. So, they essentially need latches for everything and boy oh boy do they have fun designing them! Small latches, big latches, latches that open and close side to side, while others open and close up and down, and even confusing latches that need to be held down to open and pushed up to close. Truthfully, there are so many different types of latches on the airplanes that I've de-

veloped my own latch method for those really low latches it's called my "kick it closed" method. My black patent-leather Dansko shoes come in handy with my "kick it closed" method. The hard-toed front of the shoe keeps my toes safe and gets those latches locked. On a side note, Dansko are the most comfortable shoes besides tennis shoes for most doctors, nurses, and you guessed it... flight attendants. I love my Danskos! Ok!

I'm sure you don't want to hear any more about my shoes, so let's get to the exciting part, what's behind all those different latches!

Most of the time behind our "latches" is a ton of

emergency equipment. All airlines are required by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) to equip their airplanes with pretty much everything we need to face any type of fire, medical emergency, flight emergency, or other security issues. You name it, we've got it on board! We have halon and water fire extinguishers, fire hoods to go and fight fires through smoke. We have fire bags to place those laptops or

other personal electronic devices if they catch fire. We have portable oxygen bottles that can be used if we go through a slow or rapid decompression or when passengers medically need them. We have seatbelt extensions, customer demonstration equipment, aspirin, extra toilet paper, paper towels, and the infamous vomit disposal bag. We have escape ropes (no, they're not for us to "escape"--we use them if we

have to send people off the wings of the airplane if we say land in the Hudson River.) We have handcuffs (never leave the gate without them!) We have an infectious control kit so if we need to, we can dress up in

a hazardous materials suit and pick up any suspicious material. We have abundant and excessive medical equipment to help with anything from a band aid to giving birth on an airplane (yes, it has happened!) Babies come when they come, and we've had several babies birthed in the air with the help of the flight crew! So next time you're on an airplane, take a look all around and notice all the latches. Most of the latched

compartments will have a plaque next to them stating what's behind the latch and other times they'll be nothing. It's just some piece of mind for all of you to know that the crew "got this" whatever the "this" is!

Next up let's talk about airplanes and lunch! This conversation goes for breakfast and dinner too, but latches and lunch kind of rhymed so I went with it! I eat the airplane food all the time, and frankly it's ok; it's not delicious, it's just edible. I think it's ridiculous how much the air carriers charge for "buy on board" food. Truly, I'm embarrassed to charge passengers sometimes \$12 dollars for an overcooked burger that doesn't even come with French fries! Outrageous! Yet, at times you need to eat, and airplane food is food after all, so here's a few tips and tricks to ensuring you get your first choice in meal selection. First class on most air carriers allows you to "pre-order" your meal in advance of your flight and you definitely want to take them up on that offer. Most people will pre-order their meal option, there are around ten meal options to choose from. Please don't wait until you board because your options then become two which would be chicken or beef. It's fine if you don't mind chicken or beef, but when you end up seeing your neighbor's

cobb salad or burger with fries, you might want to reconsider and at that point it's too late. Take a minute and check out your options and click that button to place your order!

On to economy food! Again, on many air carriers you can "pre-order" from the different options to ensure you get your selection. Most air carriers allow you to pre-order but won't charge you until they ok the sale with you. They do this because passengers misconnect all the time, so there's no struggle to get your money back or an issue getting charged for something you've decided not to purchase. We have a cheese-and-cracker option and it's usually sold out by row 10 and if you're sitting anywhere behind row 10, you're out of luck. However, if you "pre-order" the crew will save it for you. Go ahead and make sure you get what you want and pre-order on your flights, and if you change your mind, no problem, I'm sure someone else in the back of the airplane will want to purchase what you don't! It's a win-win!

Lately, people have been bringing their own homemade bento boxes on board the airplane. These are fishing lure clear plastic boxes that you can buy at Walmart or Target with different ways to divide up the box, so you put whatever you
(See *Let's Fly*, Page 31)

Can you guess the street?

In the past I have wondered about the fires that have changed the Brandon streetscape over the years. Phil Marks of Brandon was kind enough to let me show you these four photos of the 1943 fire that gutted a section of Brandon's downtown.

The section that was destroyed was the area that is now the span between the Brandon Artist Guild and Carr's Gift shop on Center Street.

In 1943, when this fire occurred, the United States was right in the middle of its involvement in WWII. I wonder about the manpower to clean up and rebuild.

[Editor's note: included here is the front page of the Sept. 17, 1943 issue of The Brandon Union, with coverage of the fire.]



IN AND AROUND BRANDON

Vol. Sixty-Five No. 19
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1943
FIVE CENTS A COPY, \$2.00 A YEAR

The Brandon Union

FIRE LEVELS SEVERAL BRANDON BLOCKS

LOSSES HIGH

Brandon P. T. A. Holds Reception For Teachers

The first fall meeting of the Brandon P. T. A. was held at the Brandon High School last night. The meeting was held in the gymnasium and was attended by a large number of teachers and their families. The program consisted of a variety of songs, plays, and recitations. The P. T. A. is a very active organization and is always ready to help in any way possible.

600-COWS TESTED BY RUTLAND D. H. I. A.

Neshobe Grange Sponsors Exhibit Of Vegetables

Members Vote To Buy Seven \$100 War Bonds

William Thomas Collins Dies During Fire

Brandon's Quota Set At \$61,572

Committee Has No Difficulty Securing Enough Contributions

With a quota of \$61,572 as Brandon's share, the third war bond drive opened in Brandon last week. The committee in charge reported on Friday to the Brandon P. T. A. that they had no difficulty in securing enough contributions to meet the quota. The committee is confident that the quota will be met by the end of the drive.

Clay Castle Addresses Brandon Rotary Club

Clay Castle, of Randolph, addressed the Brandon Rotary Club last night. He spoke on the subject of "The Future of Our Country." He stressed the importance of civic duty and the role of the citizen in the government. He also discussed the current situation in the world and the need for unity and cooperation.

Barbed Wire Woven Wire Electric Fences

General Mills Inc. Tel. 225 Brandon, Vt.

STRETCH THAT CLOTHES BUDGET

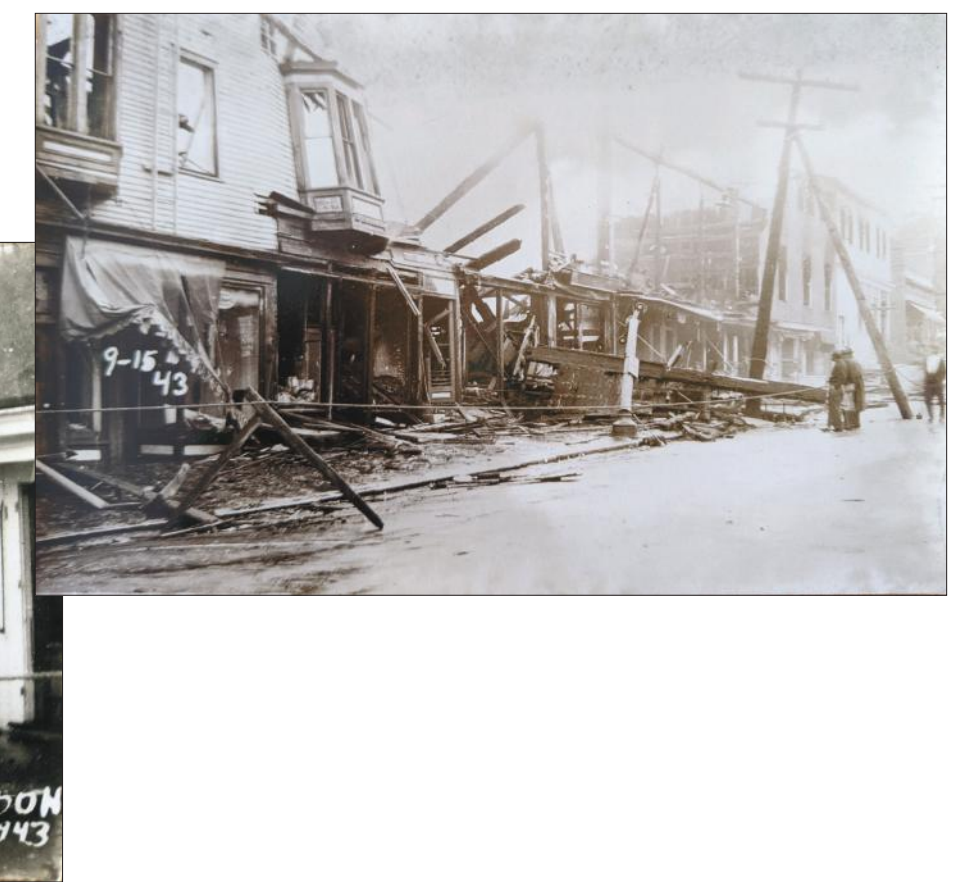
Baron's Your Choice General Mills Inc. Tel. 225 Brandon, Vt.

REAP THE WILD WIND

Inexpensive Technicolor SEVERELY TESTED MATINEE 8:15

MISSION TO MOSCOW

Re-Released Joseph E. Berry Story on Making Walter Huston - Ann Harding - Geo. Tobin



Calendar of events

April

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

Goings on around town

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,

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 Godnick Adult Center

By request, we will have drop-in cornhole in the Rec Hall on Fridays from 2–4 p.m. Play with whomever shows up each time or just practice your cornhole skills!

Saturdays

Bingo at the Brandon Senior Center

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

Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library

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

Sundays

Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal

Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event! Yes, you CAN paint! More info, contact Crystal at ceastman88@gmail.com

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

The Brandon Museum Artifact Roadshow April 25th, 6–8 p.m., Brandon Town Hall

The Artifact Roadshow will give you a fascinating look into local history through the identification and dating of objects you bring to the event where archeologists will examine and discuss your artifacts.

The show will also provide a casual opportunity for mingling with others interested in historical objects.

No Artifacts? Come anyway to see what turns up!

Thanks to Professors Matthew and Ellen Moriarty and their students of the Vermont State University Archeology Program for their time and expertise to make this event possible.

The Brandon Museum offers events that bring history to life for our community! For more information contact info@brandonmuseum.org



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



Vermont Homeschool/ Alternative Prom, May 26, 2024

Free event for kids
12–19 from any school
Friday, May 26, 2024
6:00–10:00 pm, at the
Brandon Town Hall

Potluck style, please
bring food or drinks for
the sharing tables.

We will have a
professional
photographer this year with photo packages if desired

No need for a date, all kids are welcome! Come make new friends.



their regular routines and MCs interpreting the routine with a free-style verse. It was fresh, fun and lasted a whole year. And then a pandemic happened. But, while producing this show, she released her debut album *Wounded Healer*. She was given the opportunity to go on tour to open for Pace Won.

Vast & Slade: Slade and Vast are two emcees born and raised in Vermont. They began rapping together when they met in high school at the end of the Nineties. Slade (Jesse Newton-Ward) and Vast's (Shane Mcfarlin) style showcases lyrical intricacies and technical skills matched with meaningful content. The two share a lifelong love of hip hop, an authenticity that is clear when they perform, and a synergy that only comes from over

twenty years of making music together.

Friday 26th

Sara Juli's "Naughty Bits" — Next Stage Arts Project

"Naughty Bits" is a dance-play set inside Juli's memories that examines trauma while finding levity within the tragic. Through movement, text, song, projections, and humor, *Naughty Bits* finds the forgotten bits, funny bits (and wobbly bits) of putting one's mind and body back together. Her mission is to explore her own personal struggles through the medium of performance. In sharing her work, she creates space for audiences to access their own challenges or traumas. Her provocative, introspective autobiographical solo performance fuses movement, text, song, audience interaction and comedy to both acknowledge the gravity of her burdens as well as laugh at their reality. Sara Juli has been described as a "skilled comedian, actress and dancer" and "a light of the downtown dance and theatre scene." Please note: This piece explores one person's experience around trauma. \$20–\$25. 7:30–8:20 pm.

Modist & Friends — The Underground - Listening Room

Advance: \$12 (+fees) // Day of show: \$15 (+fees)
Doors: 7:30 pm // Show: 8:00 pm. All Ages. BYOB.
Hosted by Mister Burns + Special Guests

Modist: 'Modist is a Vermont emcee who has been part of the scene for 12+ years. After a two-year hiatus, and spending the last year and a half producing new music, Modist is ready to let it be known he's not going away any time soon. His music is a mixed bag of alternative hip hop, jazz, and emo.'

Claytone: Formerly known as Drive, Claytone is a lyricist first and foremost. With complex rhyme schemes, multifaceted lyrics, and a clear delivery, he is looking to change the tone of hip hop as it's currently known. Whether venting or just enjoying the aspect of creating music, Claytone has an emphasis on being true to himself and simply doing whatever comes to mind without worries of outside expectations.

Omega Jade: Omega Jade made her start in 2016 with standup comedy. Six months after her first open mic, she was asked to be in her first show. An all-black line-up with the name *Darker Side of Comedy*, produced by Jade Marcotta. After the thrill of her first show, there was no stopping her grind. Eventually, that led her to creating, producing, and hosting her own show; a show that mixed two things she loved: comedy and hip hop. It was called *Rhyme & Unreason*. The show involved standup comedians doing

Spring Fling and Bike Safety Day— Pittsford Village Farm & Maclure Library May 5th Sunday, 2–4 p.m.

Free and open to the public! Join us for Spring Fling and Bike Safety Day. We'll have free helmets sponsored by OMYA, games, treats, seed planting, soccer kick-off and bike safety. At long last, it's time to celebrate spring at Pittsford Village Farm!
See you all there!

Saturday 27th

Running For Prevention 5k Run/Walk — Giorgetti Athletic Complex Rutland County Parent Child Center's 1st annual "Running for Prevention" 5K Run/Walk starts at 11 am.

After the run, join us for bounce houses, fire trucks, food trucks, games, and activities, including local vendors and a magician! Race registration includes after race events (with exception of food trucks). Now here's the why . . . 94% of parents receiving support through parent child centers throughout the state reported feeling stronger and more confident as parents according to recent survey data. Parent Child Centers were a remarkable innovation when they were first created nearly 30 years ago, and they are still on the cutting edge of prevention work with vulnerable families. PCC prevention programs and services build protective factors in families that improve families' overall well-being, strengthen a child's environment, and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect.

All of RCPCC's programs focus on Strengthening Families Framework 5 Protective Factors: Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Concrete Support in Times of Need, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Social and

Emotional Competence of Children. The five protective factors at the foundation of Strengthening Families are characteristics that have been shown to

make positive outcomes more likely for young children and their families, and to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. 100% of all proceeds go to RCPCC community prevention programs and services.

Songwriter's Showcase Concert at Rutland's Unitarian Universalist Church

Singer/songwriters Phil Henry and George Nostrand have been hosting a songwriters workshop at A Sound Space for the past several months. This concert, hosted by Phil Henry, will showcase the original music created by the participants. Professional sound provided by A Sound Space. Refreshments. From 7:30–8:30 pm, \$10 admission at the door.

Storytelling Event with Duncan McDougall, founder of Vermont Children's Literacy Foundation — Rutland Free Library

Join us from 11 am–12 pm as Duncan McDougall, founder of Vermont Children's Literacy Foundation, entertains children with stories and singing. Refreshments will be served. Event is free and sponsored by the Imagination Library at Rutland Free Library.

Sunday 28th

The Ruta Beggars — Roots & Wings Coffeehouse at UUCUV

Ever since they met in Berklee's American Roots program, the Ruta Beggars have been playing bluegrass and old-time swing together, both honoring the traditions and

Stone Valley Arts at Fox Hill— summer film screenings begin

Friday May 3rd at 7pm: *Past Lives* (2023)

Two childhood sweethearts are reunited for one weekend in New York after decades apart. A modern romance from debut filmmaker Celine Song and nominated for five Golden Globe Awards.

Friday June 21 at 7pm: *Showing Up* (2023)

A sculptor preparing to open a new show tried to work among the daily dramas of family and friends. Starring Michelle Williams and directed by Kelly Reichardt. A captivatingly funny portrait of art and craft.

Friday July 19th at 7pm: *You Hurt My Feelings* (2023)

A novelist's marriage is threatened when she overhears her husband's honest criticism of her new book. A comedy-drama starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus and directed by Nicole Holofcener.

*All Films are supported by Kanopy in partnership with Castleton Free Library.

carrying them forward. Their playing is by turns fiery and playful, and always impeccable.

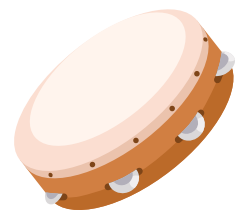
They've opened for the likes of Lyle Lovett and Ricky Skaggs. Watch them live in front of the Fenway MBTA Train Stop, and you'll be hooked: <https://youtu.be/oF258VKHtew>.

Performance starts at 4 pm, \$22.

Duo Andalus featuring LALA Tamar — Next Stage Arts Project

An intimate encounter of voice and strings, sounds and cultures. A journey in song and story, through the lands of the Mediterranean Sea & North Africa. The young diva of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic music, LALA Tamar breathes vibrant new life into Sephardic, Flamenco and Middle Eastern musics. She is a collector of lost stories and women's song in Haquetia, Moroccan Ladino. Accompanied by the virtuoso guitar of Ofer Ronen, the duo masterfully weaves an evening of tenderness and depth, enchanting listeners into a ritual that celebrates the roots of three cultures in one. Famous on the streets of Marrakech, LALA's videos have collected millions of hits. Coming off a sold-out debut at Lincoln Center, the singer is an emergent force, delighting new and old friends across the globe. An evening with Duo Andalus is a pure gift, an unforgettable sweetness.

From 7–9 pm, \$10–\$25.



Torn apart by chaos in Afghanistan, a refugee family is reunited with their teenage sons in Bennington

BY TIFFANY TAN/
VTDIGGER

To many in Vermont, Feb. 26 was just another Monday, the first day of another week at school or at work. To Musa Muslim Yar and his wife, Zakia, it was a day they'd been dreaming of for two and a half years, when they'd again be able to put their arms around the two sons who could not evacuate Afghanistan with them in 2021.

That morning, at New York City's John F. Kennedy International Airport, the couple and the youngest of their three sons, Shahidullah, clutched bouquets of roses as they waited for the two teenage boys to arrive on a flight from the Middle East. After 90 minutes, they saw the boys walk through a pair of sliding glass doors.

Naweedullah, 17, hugged his father and then clasped his

mother. Mustafa, 16, followed suit, with both teens also kissing their parents' hands, a sign of respect in the Afghan culture. A cellphone video of the reunion captured several of them wiping away tears.

"There are no words to describe that moment," Musa said in a recent interview, speaking in Dari through an interpreter. "We were very happy."

In August 2021, as the Taliban advanced into the Afghan capital of Kabul, the family—Musa, Zakia and their three sons—prepared to board a plane to the United States. Musa had been serving as a security guard at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for nearly a decade, and feared the Taliban would throw him in prison because of his American ties. The federal government had given their family permission to relocate to the U.S.

With thousands of people trying to flee Afghanistan that August, the airport was overrun with crowds. Naweedullah and Mustafa got separated from their parents and brother, and did not make it onto the flight out of the country. But they were able to safely return to relatives.

"I'm always thinking of Afghanistan, even when I'm working, because my two children remain there," Musa told VTDigger during a 2022 interview in Bennington, where his family has resettled.

At that time, Zakia said that the separation from her sons created a hole in her heart. The couple worked not only to support their new lives in Vermont but also to send money back to their sons, including paying for their English language lessons.

Meanwhile, multiple individuals and organizations worked to bring Naweedullah and Mustafa to Bennington through the international migration system, according to people involved in the process.

These entities included the United Nations' International Organization for Migration, Vermont's congressional delegation and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Also part of the efforts were two organizations in Vermont: the Ethiopian Community Development Council, a federally contracted resettlement agency that brought the Muslim Yars to southern Vermont, and Bennington County Open Arms, a volunteer organization that supports international resettlers in the county.

Over the past couple of years, Musa and Zakia submitted documents, agencies coordinated up and down the chain, and volunteers helped the family make calls and write letters to officials.

"It really was a lot of different people," said Bryan Dalton, a member of Bennington

County Open Arms, who was closely involved in the process of reuniting the family. "They arrived properly vetted."

As a retired U.S. foreign service officer, Dalton acknowledged that his professional experience enabled him to help the Muslim Yars navigate the system. "I did what I did," he said, "but I did not singlehandedly bring the Muslim Yar boys to reunite with their parents."

The Ethiopian Community Development Council coordinated with the International Organization for Migration to get Musa and Zakia permission to meet their sons at the airport in New York, said Jack Rossiter-Munley, a staffer with the development council. Under the usual process, he said, the parents would have met their sons in Bennington or at an approved location closer to Bennington.

"Musa and Zakia, for very understandable reasons, wanted to meet the boys as soon as possible in person," said Rossiter-Munley, who was part of the group that went to the airport.

The Muslim Yars are among at least 115,000 Afghans who've come to the U.S. since the summer of 2021 through the federal government's Operation Allies Welcome, based on data from the Department of Homeland Security.

Around 500 Afghans have (See Reunited family, Page 23)

Restaurant guide



Robert's
Café Provence

From Provence to You
De la Provence à Vous

Wednesday – Saturday: 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Want a reservation? Please book through the website <https://cafeprovencet.com> or call (802) 247-9997

11 Center Street, Brandon, VT



Franklin's
FOOD, FRIENDS & FUN

Full Menu 7 days a week
Eat In or Take Out
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Prime Rib Every
Friday & Saturday
from 4–9 p.m.

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Ad design included in pricing
Call 802 236-4662, or email
george@brandonreporter.com
for more information



AFGHAN REFUGEE MUSA Muslim Yar, second from right, recounts how he and his wife were separated for two years from their two older sons, Mustafa, second from left, and Naweedullah, right, at their home in Bennington on Friday, April 12. Younger brother Shahidullah is at the far left.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Reunited family

(Continued from Page 22)

been resettled in Vermont during this time, according to resettlement agency figures. The Ethiopian Community Development Council operates in Bennington and Windham counties while the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants encompasses the Montpelier area, as well as Chittenden and Rutland counties.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said Afghans now constitute one of the largest refugee populations in the world, with 5.4 million registered in Pakistan, and Iran alone.

Since moving to Bennington, Naweedullah has turned 18. He and Mustafa are now enrolled at the local high school, while 14-year-old Shahidullah continues to attend middle school.

The older boys are still adjusting to life in Vermont but said they're happy to finally be reunited with their parents. "We were very lonely in Afghanistan without them," Naweedullah said through an interpreter, in an interview at their house.

He and Mustafa said they now feel more hopeful about their future. They stopped formal education after the Taliban took over Afghanistan, an effort to keep a low profile and prevent themselves from being targeted because their parents and brother had fled to the U.S.

"We feel at peace here, mentally and physically," Mustafa said in Dari. "There is no war. There is no fighting."

Naweedullah spoke about his dreams of becoming a doctor. Mustafa wants to be a professional soccer player and Shahidullah, a police officer.

The youngest boy is pleased to have his brothers around again, saying they hang out together and he doesn't feel so alone anymore.

Musa, 46, is now working for a local nonprofit organization, and Zakia, 38, just got licensed to start a home-based catering business. The couple has been looking forward to earning additional income through Zakia's cooking since they're no longer relying on government aid, as they did when they first arrived in Vermont in January 2022.

With the onset of warmer weather, the Muslim Yars are now planning family trips for the summer. They're talking about seeing Niagara Falls and visiting Boston.

"Life is going well," Zakia said.



ZAKIA MUSLIM YAR and her son, Mustafa, 16, share a quiet moment together at New York's JFK International Airport on Feb. 26, after two and a half years apart.

Photo courtesy of Bennington County Open Arms



BROTHERS MUSTAFA (ABOVE), and Naweedullah Muslim Yar recount how they were separated from their family while fleeing Afghanistan.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Town Manager's Report

(Continued from Page 14)

Our valued buildings & grounds staffer Nate McKeighan has returned to work following recovery from an off-work injury. We are glad to have Nate back in time to spruce everything up for springtime.

TOWN MANAGER'S

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

I recommend approval / adoption of all warned items presented tonight.

Respectfully submitted,
Seth Hopkins
Town Manager

NEW ENGLAND WOODCRAFT
A Focus on Sustainability
Since 1961
newenglandwoodcraft.com

REAL ESTATE



Stylish and well-maintained Brandon village home with a warm, inviting feel the moment you step in. Period details such as curved walls, stained-glass doors, exposed brick, natural light, built-ins, and a sliding barn door repurposed from the antique carriage barn just behind the house. The most recent upgrades include: two heat pumps with new sub-panel, heat pump water heater, washer/dryer, and refinished wood floors. Comfort & convenience! \$249,500

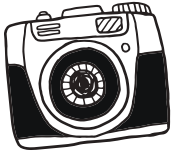


802-236-9112 • Wendy@RoweRealEstate.com
RoweRealEstate.com

Mim's Photos

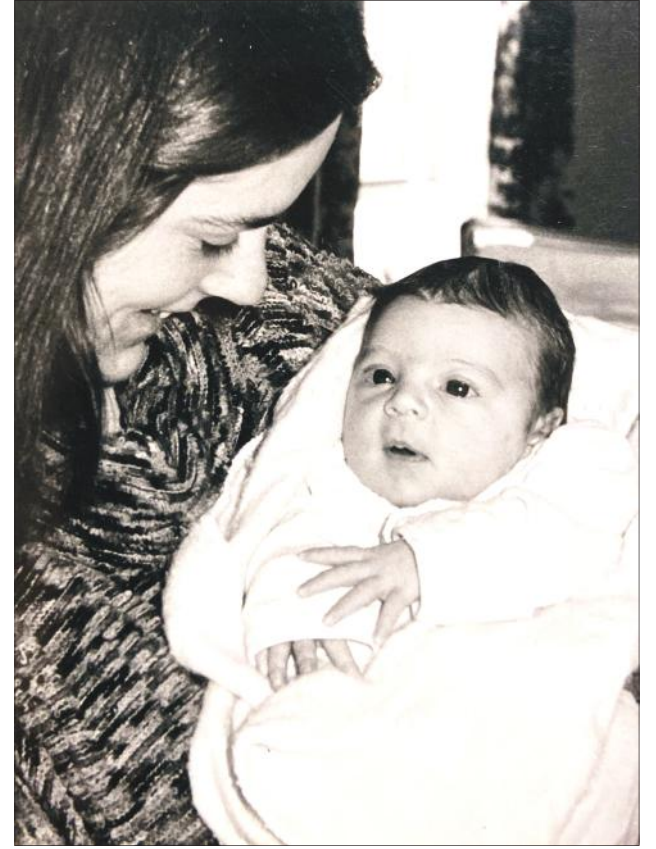


Can you identify any of the people in these vintage photos from Mim Welton's Dateline Brandon newspaper archives? Let us know!



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

Or call us at 247-8080



Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1. Excessively theatrical actors
5. Footwear
10. A way to disfigure
14. Exchange rate
15. Hawaiian wreaths
16. North-central Indian city
17. Bungle
18. Extremely angry
19. A short note of what's owed
20. Criminal organization
22. Mimic
23. Try to grab
24. U.S.-born individuals
27. Some are covert
30. Order of the British Empire
31. Don't know when yet
32. Payment (abbr.)
35. Winged angelic being
37. Variety of Chinese
38. A way to be anxious
39. Famed wrestler Hulk
40. Partner to cheese
41. Slang for sergeant
42. Canadian flyers
43. Actress Ryan
44. Highly unpleasant vapor
45. Body part
46. Halfway
47. Cool!
48. Consume
49. Salts
52. Upper bract of a floret of grass
55. Housepet
56. Cavalry-sword
60. Symbol of a nation
61. Frocks
63. Used to carry food
64. Portuguese folk song
65. Sharp mountain ridge
66. Ireland
67. Where golfers begin
68. Greek mythological sorceress
69. Fluid suspensions

CLUES DOWN

1. "Mad Men" leading man
2. Water (Spanish)
3. Annoy
4. Bulgarian capital
5. Japanese title
6. Capital of Zimbabwe
7. Giraffe
8. A mixture of substances
9. Midway between south and southeast
10. Staffs
11. Turkish title
12. Type of acid
13. Thin, flat strip of wood
21. Russian river
23. Ribonucleic acid
25. Partner to flow
26. Airborne (abbr.)
27. Earthy pigment
28. Genus of earless seals
29. "Key to the Highway" bluesman
32. By or in itself
33. Hot fluid below the earth's surface
34. Partner to trick
36. British Air Aces
37. Ammunition
38. Supervises flying
40. Health care for the aged
41. Flanks
43. Millimeters
44. Where wrestlers perform
46. Not around
47. Flightless bird
49. Bell-shaped flowers of the lily family
50. Expressed concern for
51. Satisfies
52. Flew off!
53. Wings
54. Load a ship
57. Vigor
58. British title
59. Whiskeys
61. ___ Adams: founding father
62. Body of water

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21		22				23				
			24		25				26					
27	28	29		30				31				32	33	34
35			36			37				38				
39					40				41					
42					43			44						
45			46				47				48			
			49				50				51			
52	53	54				55				56		57	58	59
60					61				62		63			
64					65						66			
67					68						69			

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.

		8						
	5			1	3			
			5			8		2
2					7		8	
		4						7
				6		4		5
	6				9			
			3	7		2		
8		3					7	4

Level: Intermediate

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

S	T	O	S	V	E	D	M	S	E	E	T	E								
E	R	I	E	T	E	R	V	S	O	D	D	V	F							
Y	A	V	T	R	S	I	V	S	A	G	V	F	L	A						
R	B	E	R	T	C	C	V	E	T	L	V	P	A							
S	E	T	V	C	I	L	I	S												
T	V	E	D	H	R	D	I	M	R	V	A	E								
V	M	S	V	I	M	G	E	M	E	V	A	C								
E	G	R	V	S	O	V	W	N	V	G	O	H								
R	V	E	F	N	I	M	B	U	R	H	E	H								
T	W	P	T	O	T	B	E	G	S											
S	N	V	I	E	V															
H	C	A	R	P	F	I	F	F	A	W										
T	I	H	C	E	T	V	R	I												
V	G	V	S	U	K	V	H	O	I	G	V									
L	U	V	M	S	E	O	H	S	S	W	V									

4	7	9	1	5	6	3	2	8
1	9	2	8	7	3	6	4	5
8	5	3	9	4	2	1	9	7
5	3	4	2	9	1	7	8	6
7	2	1	5	8	6	4	3	9
6	8	9	7	3	4	5	1	2
2	1	2	8	4	9	5	6	3
9	6	7	3	1	8	2	5	4
3	5	4	9	2	7	8	6	1

Happy National Volunteer Appreciation Week from RCHS

This week (April 21–27) is National Volunteer Appreciation Week and while we're ALWAYS thankful for our volunteers, the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) wants to take a special opportunity to thank you this week! We are so fortunate to have such dedicated and passionate volunteers who make a real difference in our collective effort to help animals get the second chance they deserve. From shelter volunteers to foster families and everything in between, each volunteer provides love and care that makes a difference for the animals. We couldn't do what we do without you! Thank you for sharing your time, talent, and compassion to support the work we do! Happy National Volunteer Appreciation Week from all of us at RCHS.

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



MEET BENJI - 2 YEARS OLD. NEUTERED MALE. CATAHOULA MIX. TAN/CREAM.

Benji is the perfect balance of energetic and laid-back. He is the type of dog who can zoom around with boundless enthusiasm one moment and then peacefully snooze by your side the next. He knows how to live it up and unwind just as effortlessly! Benji thrives on playtime and exploring every inch of the world. What sets him apart is his knack for chilling out. After a burst of activity he shifts gears, finding contentment in a cozy spot or soaking up the sun. Benji is the best of both worlds who will make a great addition to the family! Benji came to us on April 9th from a busy shelter in Louisiana. We know he loves to run around with his K9 friends. However, we have no known history on how he will do with cats or children. If this happy go lucky boy sounds like the right fit for you, please stop by and visit with him. He is currently a foster to adopt because he is on some medication for his skin. The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 am to 4pm.

MEET KING - 1 YEAR OLD. NEUTERED MALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. BLACK.

King is a sweet boy with a heart as big as his name suggests! King has an affectionate nature and enjoys being the center of attention. He loves his people and will shower them with love and headbutts! He is very playful and a curious boy. He likes to entertain himself with toys and investigate new surroundings. Despite his name he is a very down to earth boy who is anxiously awaiting his forever home. King was surrendered to us with his friend Minnie on March 29th because their previous owners had too many cats. We do know that he likes other cats. However, we have no known history on how he will do with children or dogs. If this handsome King sounds like the right fit for you, please stop by and visit with him. The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 am to 4pm.



RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

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



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

OFF THE SHELF



The following Large Print books were donated by Brenda Whittaker

Love, Unscripted by Denise Hunter, donated in memory of Marion C. Sawyer

Soon after a bad breakup, Chloe Anderson poured her heart into penning the ideal boyfriend—and the result was a bestselling debut. Now, Chloe's book is headed for Hollywood. When bad boy Liam Hamilton has been cast as the perfect hero of her novel, she's horrified. With Liam's reputation already on the rocks, his agent concocts a plan to upgrade Liam's image while putting the story—and the film—in the spotlight. The catch? During the movie's filming in Chloe's cute hometown, Chloe and Liam will fake a wholesome relationship. As the two navigate the waters of the PR relationship, they're unprepared when their professional agreement turns into an actual relationship.

Simply the Best by Susan Elizabeth Phillips, donated in memory of Meryl Sawyer

Brett Rivers is the hottest sports agent in the business. Failure? Not an option. Chocolatier Rory Garret is a disaster. She has an empty bank account, a passion for chocolate, and an inferiority complex from living in the shadow of her football legend brother. Brett and Rory shouldn't have met, but now have to deal with the consequences of one stupid, drunken night: a disastrous lie, a career in jeopardy, a missing football player, and

a dead body. When a woman who has succeeded at nothing and a man who's succeeded at everything confront the challenge of their lives, what price are they willing to pay?

The Twilight Garden by Sara Nisha Adams, donated in memory of Maureen Vogel

In a small pocket of London, between the houses of No.77 and No.79 Eastbourne Road, lies a neglected community garden. It was a beautiful thing once but now it's overgrown and neglected, lost to time. That's exactly how Winston at No.79 likes it – anything to avoid Bernice and her son, who have moved in next door. Their houses may share the garden, but they're not exactly neighborly. But then a mysterious parcel drops on Winston's doormat containing no note, only a bundle of photographs of the garden in vibrant bloom many years ago. Somewhere out there, a secret gardener made a decades-old promise to keep the community's spirit alive. Now it's time for The Twilight Garden to come out of hibernation.

Murder Backstage, A Murder She Wrote Mystery (based on the television series), donated in memory of Zula B. Sawyer

Jessica Fletcher's cousin, Emma MacGill, invites her to join her in Edmonton in Alberta, Canada, where she'll be performing with the internationally famous star of stage, screen, and television Derek Braverman in an old-fashioned musical revue. Having just finished her latest book, Jessica is ready for a vacation. Upon arrival in Edmonton, Jessica is quickly

DID YOU KNOW?

Our plant swap has been moved to April 27th from 1 to 3 pm. Bring your pest-free plants between 1 and 1:30. Swapping goes from 1:30 to 3:00 or whenever the plants are gone!

outed as mystery writer J. B. Fletcher, and despite numerous protests, a hotel staffer arranges a book signing for her. But when a stagehand for Emma's play turns up dead backstage, Jessica's fun vacation quickly becomes anything but.

Toxic Prey by John Sandford, donated in memory of Arthur E. Sawyer

Dr. Lionel Scott believes Gaia, the earth, is dying. A renowned expert in infectious diseases, Scott has witnessed the devastating impact of illness and turmoil at a critical scale. Society as it exists is untenable, and Scott knows that it is truly humanity itself that will destroy Gaia. It's only by removing the threat that the planet can continue to prosper, and Scott is just the right man for the job.

But when he disappears without a trace, Letty Davenport is tasked with tracking down leads. Scott's connections to sensitive research into virus and pathogen spread has multiple national and international organizations on high alert, and his shockingly high clearance levels at various institutions, including the Los Alamos National Laboratory, make him the last person they'd like to go missing. Soon it becomes a race to find him before the virus he created becomes the perfect weapon.

Brandon Police Report

April 15

- Received a report of suspicious activity on Pearl Street involving a vehicle off the road with several people walking around it. It was determined that the vehicle had driven into high water and had gotten stuck.

April 16

- Received a report of a piece of steel piping in the road at the intersection of Arnold District Road and Grove Street. The piece of pipe was located and removed from the roadway.

April 17

- Responded to a building alarm at the Hannaford Supermarket on Supermarket Drive. It was determined that the alarm was accidentally set off by an employee.

- Spoke with a Brandon resident regarding inappropriate videos that were sent to a family member residing in New Hampshire on her Snapchat account.

- Responded to a residence for a report of an out-of-control teenager who was acting aggressively toward her family members.

- Received a report regarding a suspicious vehicle that was seen driving in the area of Town Farm Road. Incident documented for informational purposes.

- Received a complaint regarding a dog being walked around the neighborhood that had previously bit someone on Mulcahy Drive.

- Conducted VIN verification at Thunder Towing on Paint Works Road.

- Assisted Brandon Area Rescue at the Winter Green Residential Care Home with a patient experiencing a mental health episode.

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

April 18

- Conducted traffic enforcement on Mulcahy Drive.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for misuse of license plate(s).

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

- Vehicle stop on Arnold District Road for failure to display license plate and for having an expired registration. Warning issued.

- Responded to the area of Park Street for a report of a loose Australian Shepherd. The area was checked, but the dog was not located.

April 19

- Responded to a residence on Frog Hollow Road for a report of a burglary. It was determined that it

was a family member and no burglary had occurred.

- Assisted an insurance company in identifying an operator that was involved in a vehicle crash that had occurred on Forest Dale Road in 2023. The individual was located and identified at his place of work in Brandon.

- Received a report of a neighbor dispute on Mulcahy Drive.

- Received a request for a welfare check on a patient on Franklin Street on behalf of the Rutland Regional Medical Center. The individual was located safe and sound at their home.

- Located a Be-On-Lookout vehicle that was reportedly failing to maintain its travel lane in the vicinity of Grove Street near Cattails Restaurant. The operator was located and screened for suspicion of DUI; however, it was determined that the driver was not impaired. The operator was released with no enforcement action taken.

- Vehicle stop on Arnold District Road for defective equipment (taillight). Warning issued.

- Conducted speed enforcement on Champlain Street. Enforcement was cut short as officers responded to a vehicle complaint on Franklin Street, which resulted in an arrest for DUI.

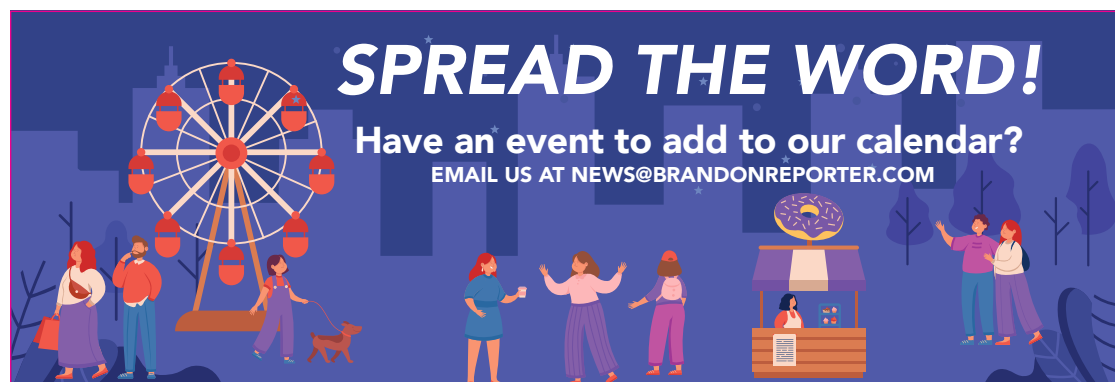
- Received a report of an operator driving erratically on Franklin Street, which indicated the vehicle had pulled into the parking lot of a local bar. Officers contacted the operator, who was ultimately arrested for suspicion of DUI. The operator was released on a citation to appear before the Rutland Superior Court on 5/6/2024 at 10:00 a.m.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street. Warning issued.

April 20

- Received a complaint from a motorist regarding a vehicle behind him that was all over the road on Route 7 in Leicester heading south toward Brandon. The vehicle reportedly pulled over at the Leicester General Store and the complainants were able to report to the dispatcher that it had a California license plate and that the car was a Blue Tesla. The vehicle then pulled back onto Route 7 and drove into Brandon, where it was stopped by officers on Conant Square. Upon investigation, the operator was arrested for DUI-Criminal Refusal and Grossly Negligent Operation. The man was later released on a citation to appear before the Rutland Superior Court on 5/6/2024 at 10:00 a.m.

(See Police report, Page 27)



Bald eagles are back, but great blue herons paid the price

BY OLIVIA WILSON/
VTDIGGER

After years of absence, the most patriotic bird in the sky returned to Vermont—but it might've come at another's expense.

Vermont finally took the bald eagle off of its endangered species list in 2022 following years of reintroduction efforts starting in the 2000s. Since that reintroduction, researchers have concerns about the relation between the bald eagles' rise and a receding blue heron population in the state.

"Much like many predator reintroductions, there are controversies and conflicting views in the bald eagle project," said Allan Strong, dean of University of Vermont's Rubenstein School and professor in the wildlife and fisheries biology program.

"Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge has reported that their blue heron populations have dramatically dropped," he said. "Bald eagles are not killing these birds, but rather they are bullying and harassing

them out of their territories in Vermont."

REVIVAL EFFORTS

Since the late 1970s, a number of states across the Northeast added the bald eagle to their endangered species lists and began the work to take it back off. Vermont, however, took a while to catch up.

In 2003, Vermont was the only state in the lower 48 without any breeding bald eagles. A year later, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife launched a three-year reintroduction project at a wildlife management area in Addison County. By 2006, 29 young eagles were back in the sky.

Today there are 45 bald eagle breeding pairs—or couples—being monitored, said Margaret Fowle, the senior conservation biologist at Audubon Vermont, who took charge of the state's eagle efforts around 15 years ago.

"Once they started to come, they really started to expand and do really well," Fowle said. "It just took a while to get them here."

The threatened status for bald eagles ends at around 19 nests producing an average of 19 young, Fowle said. The amount it takes to remove them from the endangered species list is around 28 nests, producing an average of 28 young. The population in Vermont met that goal when Audubon Vermont observed over 40 pairs in the state in 2022. The species was officially delisted in February that same year.

But amid all the excitement, researchers are asking the question: Are we trading one bird's prosperity for another?

FALLING HERONS

Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge has been known for its prosperous great blue heron population. People travel across state lines to kayak and look for the heron before the trees fully fill in for summer.

But now they may be harder to find.

A Vermont Fish and Wildlife report on species conservation from 2015 warned that bald eagles were (See *Eagles vs. herons*, Page 29)

Try cooperation

(Continued from Page 4)

did not serve a larger purpose and were indeed unnecessary. I apologize for allowing them into print.

Since Town Meeting, the tenor of our public disagreements has become increasingly confrontational, if not downright combative. Many of us have played a part in our current state. And now we need to find a way out of it. Little progress will be made while wagging fingers at one another. I sincerely regret that The Reporter enabled this rancor to whatever degree it has.

Our Selectboard members hold office because a majority of Brandon citizens wanted them there. We should press them when necessary but also give them the support they need to do their job. They genuinely want to improve life in Brandon. It does no one any good to treat the Selectboard as the enemy. They're simply neighbors who were willing to take on the considerable burden of this

crucial public service. They deserve to be treated with civility. And we've been lucky to have the town leadership we've had. No town is perfect, of course, but Brandon has been very well managed over the last decade or so and we all need to recognize our good fortune in this regard.

In return, the Selectboard needs to hear and heed the voices of the citizenry. When people stand up and state week after week that the Board is being insensitive and intransigent, it may be time to change course. Sometimes citizens have answers that the Board does not.

I'm not so naïve as to think this appeal will be universally embraced. Nor am I suggesting that we suppress our disagreements. But all of us, including The Reporter, would do well to move forward in a spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation. The success of our town depends on our ability to come together to solve our problems.

Continuous conflict is a dead end.

Police report


(Continued from Page 26)

- Responded to an apartment complex on Barlow Avenue for a report of a child playing on the roof. The child ended up coming down safely.
- Conducted a welfare check per request of the Rutland City Police Department regarding a city employee. The employee was located and determined to be okay.
- Together with the Pittsford Police, arrested a woman on an outstanding warrant following a traffic stop by the Pittsford Police Department.
- Responded to a report of a domestic disturbance on Marble Street. It was determined that no physical altercation occurred between the two individuals. The man involved subsequently left the residence without further issue.
- Assisted the Rutland City Police Department with serving an Extreme Risk Protection Order at a residence in Brandon. Firearms were seized at the residence without incident.
- Received a complaint of a late-reported domestic assault that occurred at a residence in Brandon. After a review of the facts, a man was taken into custody and charged with Domestic Assault. He was released on Conditions of Release as well as a citation to appear before the Rutland Superior Court for arraignment on 4/22/2024 at 12:30 p.m.

April 21

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street at Lovers Lane after a vehicle complaint was received about a driver passing others unsafely on the right. Warning issued.
- Conducted a welfare check at an apartment building on Mulcahy Drive. Contact was made with the man of interest and officers left without incident.
- Investigated a threatening complaint. Probable cause for a criminal charge was not found.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street at Estabrook Park for failure to display license plate. Warning issued.
- Attempted to conduct a welfare check on an individual expressing suicidal remarks to his significant other. The man was not at home and a Be On Lookout was aired to surrounding agencies with details of the man's vehicle and directions to conduct a welfare check.
- Vehicle stop on Arnold District Road at Adams Road for erratic operation. It was determined that the operator was not impaired but was having an issue driving due to an injury.
- Conducted traffic enforcement on Lovers Lane.
- Attempted to locate a dog at a residence that was reported to be stolen out of Leicester. The dog was not found at the residence of interest.

- Received a report of an illegal fire on Church Street. The call was transferred to the Brandon Fire Department with police on standby in case law enforcement was needed.



WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

ARIES March 21–April 20
Aries, your friends have stepped up to support you, and it is time to get together and enjoy one another's company. Think about an activity that everyone can get behind.

TAURUS April 21–May 21
Taurus, the people around you may work more slowly than you, so you will likely need to be patient this week while working on a particular project. Eventually things will work out.

GEMINI May 22–June 21
Gemini, exercise caution when dealing with people who promise big returns on your investments right now. Avoid financial dealings with anyone you have not fully vetted.

CANCER June 22–July 22
Cancer, some people around you would like to use flattery to get you to do what

they want. However, you are too savvy to fall for people who may be guiding you in the wrong direction.

LEO July 23–Aug. 23
Loved ones and friends in your life deserve your time and energy right now, Leo. Figure out a way to cut down on hours spent on the job this week.

VIRGO Aug. 24–Sept. 22
Virgo, things going on in your life right now may be a bit more confusing than you anticipated. It can be stressful, but with some assistance from others you will get through the situation.

LIBRA Sept. 23–Oct. 23
Someone in your life who has not always been on your side has been changing his or her ways lately, Libra. You may want to reevaluate the relationship soon.

SCORPIO Oct. 24–Nov. 22
Scorpio, you have been working hard to avoid conflict with someone close to you, but it could start to feel like more effort than you can care to keep up.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23–Dec. 21
An interesting travel opportunity is coming your way, Sagittarius. When the news arrives, take advantage of it and start planning your itinerary.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22–Jan. 20
Capricorn, is your schedule flexible right now? Try to rearrange things to take advantage of some last-minute recreational opportunities. You deserve to have more fun.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21–Feb. 18
Aquarius, you may be feeling moody and introspective right now. Take time to evaluate your dreams and the thoughts going through your head. There may be common threads.

PISCES Feb. 19–March 20
Don't let some ambiguous feedback adversely affect your mood, Pisces. You will never be able to please everyone, so focus on those people who are on your side.

♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

April 26 Ma Rainey, musician (d)
April 27 Lizzo musician (36)
April 28 Terry Pratchett, novelist (d)
April 29 Daniel Day Lewis, actor, (67)
April 30 Willie Nelson, musician (91)
May 1 Wes Anderson, film director (55)
May 2 David Beckham, soccer player (49)

Sports



LAST YEAR'S TEAM picture making funny faces.

Brandon Rec holds kids' baseball clinics for pre-K through 6th grade

If your kids love baseball but want to sharpen their skills, consider signing them up for the baseball clinics being run by Brandon Rec. Local residents Alexandria Barnhardt, Erica Mahoney, Lexi Duba, and Heather Disorda will help your kids develop the tools to get the most out of baseball and have fun doing it.

"The baseball season is so short in Vermont," said Barnhardt. "I thought what a great way to get the kids ready for the season by doing a clinic. It's so important to get the kids moving and ready to head outside. I chatted with Bill Moore, our Rec Director, and pitched him the idea. Bill worked very hard to get us the inside gym locations to practice. It was also great of Steven Keith, the OV Athletic Director, to allow us to use the OV North Campus gym!"

"This clinic is helping the kids improve every aspect of their baseball skills," continued Barnhardt. "We focus on proper batting stance, go over the 'triangle ready position' and work on improving batting skills. There is something for every kid to learn regardless of whether they're starting out or have been playing baseball for years!"

The clinics are open to girls and boys from pre-K through sixth grade. On Mondays, third through sixth graders meet from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. and on Tuesday pre-K through second graders meet from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Contact Brandon Rec for more info or to sign up your child.



CLINIC COACH ALEXANDRIA Barnhardt with Emma Duby and her son, Ryan.



CLINIC COACHES ALEXANDRIA Barnhardt, Erica Mahoney, Lexi Duba, and Heather Disorda.

Turkey hunting safety tips from VT Fish & Wildlife

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Hunting safely during Vermont's spring turkey hunting seasons is easy if you follow tips issued by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

Fish and Wildlife Commis-

sioner Christopher Herrick strongly encourages all hunters to have a safe turkey hunt. "A successful hunt is one which sees ALL hunters returning home safely afterward," said Herrick.

With the opening of spring turkey hunting for youths and novices on April 27 and 28 and the regular season May 1–31, Fish and Wildlife urges hunters to consider these safety tips:

- Never shoot unless you are

absolutely sure of your target and what is beyond it. Look for a beard as only turkeys with beards are legal during the spring season.

- Never stalk a gobbling turkey. Your chances of getting close are poor, and you may be sneaking up on another hunter.
- Avoid red, white, blue, or black in clothing and equipment. A tom turkey's head has similar colors.
- Stick with hen calls. A gobbler call might draw in other hunters.
- Avoid unnecessary movement. This alerts turkeys and attracts hunters.
- Don't hide so well that you impair your field of vision.
- Wrap your turkey in blaze orange for the hike back to your vehicle.
- Always sit with your back against a tree trunk, big log or a

boulder that is wider than your body. This protects you from being accidentally struck by pellets fired from behind you.

- Place decoys on the far side of a tree trunk or a rock. This prevents you from being directly in the line of fire should another hunter mistakenly shoot at your decoy.
- Wear hunter orange while moving from set-up to set-up. Take it off when you are in position.
- If you see another hunter, call out to them, but don't move until they respond. You may ruin the hunt, but you may have avoided injury.
- Make sure you know your effective range when shooting. For the most clean and ethical shot, make sure your shotgun is patterned and you are shooting within your effective range.



Eagles vs. herons

(Continued from Page 27)

a potential threat to the great blue heron population.

"Attempted predation by bald eagles is suspected of causing colony abandonment," the report says. "Potential eagle nesting near colony sites could result in the loss of the colony."

The wildlife refuge observed its first bald eagle nest in 2012, which has stayed on the site from then on—excluding one year when it briefly blew over. The refuge has since added three nests that consistently and actively produce young, according to Ken Sturm, the wildlife refuge manager at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge. He said it's been at the expense of the herons.

"Since that 2012 nest occurred, we had a complete crash of our great blue heron rookery, which had a high of over 400 nests, and an average of 275 or 300 nests per year," said Sturm. He added, "Since that time, they've plummeted, and we had several years with very low numbers of nests."

The number of great blue heron nests dropped from 410 in 2011 to 150 in 2012, according to data provided by Sturm. A year after that first eagle nest emerged in Missisquoi, the herons attempted to set up a new rookery, or gregarious bird breeding colony, in a different location. But they quickly abandoned it, and in 2019, the population fell again, to the lowest it's ever been: 12 nests.

POTENTIAL FOR HARMONY

Sturm said a similar thing happened in the Pacific Northwest a few decades ago. The reintroduction of the bald eagles into ecosystems there completely disrupted the great blue heron rookeries. The herons left their nests abandoned.

Over time, however, he said the herons began nesting closer to well-established bald eagle nests, and the results proved positive.

A 2013 article published in Canadian Science analyzed the effects of great blue herons nesting near bald eagles. It found that "70% of heron nests and 19% of heron colonies

were located within 200 meters of eagle's nests with high reproductive success. These herons had greater reproductive success than those nesting far from eagles' nests."

To Sturm, bald eagles defend their territory like territorial gangs—if you're in their neighborhood, you automatically have a layer of protection.

Does that have a chance of playing out at Missisquoi? It's unclear, but Sturm thinks there's potential for future growth.

"In theory we could even have three or two other rookeries established near those other eagle nests and have a much larger heron population on the refuge than we do now," said Sturm. "To me, that's the real interesting part of this whole story, not just the fact that the eagles came and the herons left, but this dynamic predator exclusion."

Olivia Wilson is a reporter with Community News Service, part of the University of Vermont's Reporting & Documentary Storytelling program.



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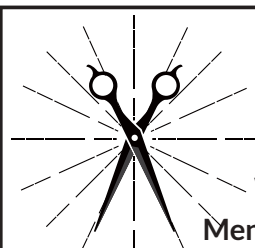
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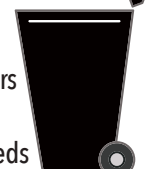
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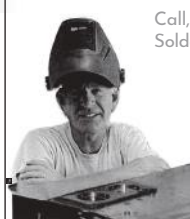


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PUBLIC NOTICES

TOWN OF BRANDON WARNING FOR EVENING MEETING APRIL 29, 2024

The legal voters of the Town of Brandon, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to convene at the **Brandon Town Hall, 1 Conant Square, Brandon, VT on Monday, April 29, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.** to transact the following business:

1. To hear a presentation by the Select Board of its revised budget for fiscal year 2024–2025. This budget will be voted by Australian Ballot on April 30, 2024 at the Brandon American Legion Post #55, 550 Franklin Street, Brandon, VT, between the hours of 7 am and 7 pm.
2. To transact any other business proper to be done when met.
3. Adjourn.

TOWN OF BRANDON, AUSTRALIAN BALLOT FOR APRIL 30, 2024

The legal voters of the Town of Brandon, Vermont are further notified and warned to meet at the **Brandon American Legion Post #55, 550 Franklin Street, Brandon, VT on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M.** to vote in person by Australian Ballot or to drop off mailed ballots on the following matters:

Shall the voters of the Town of Brandon authorize total general fund expenditures of Three Million, Five Hundred Fifty-Four Thousand, Eight Hundred and Eighty Dollars (\$3,554,880) for the FY 2024–2025 budget year, of which the sum of Five Hundred Twenty-Four Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy Dollars (\$524,670) is to be raised by non-tax revenues and Three Million, Thirty Thousand, Two Hundred and Ten Dollars (\$3,030,210) is to be raised by property taxes?

Approved by Selectboard at meeting on April 8, 2024

D.A. Barty
Heather Nelson
Timothy A. Gule
ph co

Let's Fly

(Continued from Page 18)
want in your bento box. Most people are filling them with goldfish, pretzels, grapes, gummy worms, M&Ms, or anything else you want to snack on. I think it's a brilliant idea and it keeps both kids and adults ready for snack time any time!

Ok everyone, I hope you've all found some of my trips and tricks to airline travel interesting and entertaining, and cost saving too! It has been my sincere pleasure writing these articles for you over the past nine weeks! I didn't want to tell you in the beginning, but this is my last article in the Let's Fly se-

ries. Who knows if or when I'll ever return and in what avenue, but I wish you all future fabulous flights and wonderful adventures ahead! This has been an adventure for myself, as I've never written articles before, so I want to thank The Reporter for giving me this chance for a new adventure of my own! I'm truly grateful! Here it comes for the last time! So, if you're flying this week or in the future, don't forget to bring the crew chocolates...we love chocolates! Signing off from your friendly "senior mama" flight attendant! Fly safe and fly on!

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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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