

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

A community supported newspaper

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Wednesday, May 5, 2024

\$1

## CREATIVE SPIRIT

The Brandon Congregational Creatives and the United Methodist Church of Brandon will hold their spring art show at the Brandon Inn on May 18.

PG. 4



## GIVING TREE

Brandon celebrated Arbor Day by planting saplings at the Senior Center and honoring Tree Warden Neil Silins.

PG. 7

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brandon's State Rep. Stephanie Jerome explains the recent bills passed by the House and Senate and what's still to come.

PG. 9



PG. 10



## DEVIL OF A TIME

The Devil's Bowl season opened with a bang when NY's Fire Swamp bested reigning champion Tim Laduc, of Orwell.

PG. 14



# Relations to the Otherwise: an interview with VT's newest Poet Laureate, Bianca Stone of Brandon

## PART I

BY MAT CLOUSER

BRANDON—The Olympian god Apollo has a deep resumé, including the god of archery, music and dance, truth and prophecy, healing and diseases, the sun and light, and even poetry—not among the highlights, however, are Braggart and Spurned Lover. According to myth, Apollo's braggadocio was so great that he couldn't help but tease the god of love, Eros, for his lack of archery skills. Not one to take guff from a gasbag, Eros discharged two arrows, one struck Apollo, filling him with an unquenchable thirst for a Dryad (a nymph or nature spirit), Daphne—the other struck Daphne herself, filling her with a revulsion for romance.

Apollo, then most vile, be-

came such an antediluvian Pepé Le Pew that Daphne begged

tree to escape him. Yet, as it's good to be a God, not all was



BIANCA STONE

her father, river god Peneus, lost for Apollo. Ever passionate to transform her into a laurel ate, he anointed himself with

laurels, insisting they become his major symbol, a symbol that became an honor bestowed upon the best Greek poets and heroes. The symbol endures today in many places, not least of which is in the esteemed title of Poet Laureate, even in far-flung places like Vermont.

Speaking of Vermont, its newest Poet Laureate, Brandon resident Bianca Stone, is well-steeped in tradition and myth. Stone is a visual artist, musician, mother, educator, and third-generation writer. Bianca is the daughter of Middlebury's Abigail Stone and granddaughter of former Vermont Poet Laureate Ruth Stone, a Goshen resident from 1956 until she died in 2011. Alongside her brother, Walter J. Stone, and her husband, the poet Ben Pease, Bianca co-founded The Ruth

(See Bianca Stone, Page 3)

## Brandon SB revises budget for 3rd vote: spending down 0.5% but tax revenue up 2.5%

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—In a special meeting on Monday evening, the Brandon Selectboard unanimously approved a revised FY2025 budget that reduces spending overall by 0.5% (less than 1%) while increasing the amount to be raised by taxes by 2.5%, both figures in comparison to the current year's levels. Brandon voters will now vote on the town budget for the third time since March, with the date of the latest vote set for Tuesday, May 21.

The new proposal reduces the FY2025 budget to \$3,328,882 from the FY2024 (current year) level of \$3,346,150, a decrease of approximately .5% (less than 1%). The amount to be raised by

(See Brandon SB, Page 20)

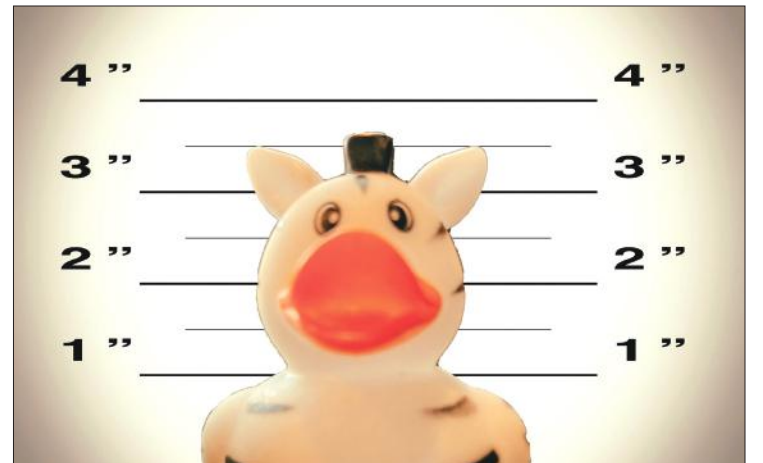
## Town left aghast at heinous crime Canyon the duckie arrested for assault against July 4th competitor

BY STEVEN JUPITER AND LORYNDA FISH

BRANDON—No one thought it could happen here in Brandon: a crime of such depravity that it defies comprehension. A young, virile specimen of a duckie was viciously attacked in order to eliminate him as competition in the July 4th Duckie Race in Brandon, leaving the once-strapping bird wondering if he'll ever paddle again.

Winky, who came in 2nd place in last year's race and has been expected to dominate this year, had just left practice on the stretch of the Neshobe River behind the Brandon Inn. He was waddling toward his summer nest on the bank when a masked assailant leapt from the reeds and clubbed him in the knee with a metal pipe.

"I was just finishing a truly excellent practice session," said Winky from his hospital bed at Rutland Regional Medi-



CANYON THE DUCKIE is shown here in his booking photo at the Brandon Police Department. Canyon was booked on assault, conspiracy to commit assault, and crimes against poultry. "You haven't heard the last of me!" he shouted as Brandon Police put him into a cardboard box with airholes.

cal Center. "I was feeling great, like I knew I was in the best shape of my life. I was just a few feet from where I nest for the summer and suddenly this, this, this lunatic jumps out at me, quacks maniacally, and smashes my knee with a steel

pipe." According to Winky, even through the pain—the sheer agony—he immediately knew who the culprit was.

"I'd recognize that fetid stench of duckweed any- (See Canyon arrested, Page 5)

# Brandon Artists Guild celebrates 25 years with reception and recognition

On Friday, the Brandon Artists Guild (BAG) held a reception at its gallery on Center Street in Brandon to mark its 25th anniversary. Incoming Board President Althea Bilodeau Lamb presented roses to three of the original founding members, shown here left to right: Liza Myers, Warren Kimble, and Dolores Furnari.

Longtime member Judith Reilly said, "As a 20-year member, one of the highlights has been watching our growth from being a small village shop of local artists to blooming into the awesome gallery of amazing talents that it is today. But the most important aspect for me have been the friendships, support, and encouragement of so many others, not just my fellow artists, but of the entire community. What blesses one, blesses all."

The BAG will return to its roots with an auction of decorated pigs to echo the massively successful auction that gave put the BAG on the map back in 2003. Previews of the decorated pigs will begin in June with a silent auction to take place in August.



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# Bianca Stone

(Continued from Page 1)

Stone House (RSH) to preserve Ruth's legacy and the broader promotion of poetry. Her work is feral, dizzying, profound, deeply personal, tragic, uproarious, and colossally expansive. In other words, it's what all poets aspire to. It's no surprise Vermont chose to fix her with its laurels.

But what is a Poet Laureate? Simply, a Laureate is honored for achievement, and regarded by their country or region as

honored for their work but also asked to raise awareness and greater appreciation for poetry. A four-year appointment, the previous Laureates are a who's who of poetry whose work endures far beyond the Green Mountains:

Robert Frost (1961-63), Galway Kinnell (1989-1993), Louise Glück (1994-1998), Ellen Bryant Voigt (1999-2002), Grace Paley (2003-2007), Ruth Stone (2007-2011), Chard de-Niord (2015-2019), Mary Rue-

she won the 2023 Vermont Book Award (What is Otherwise Infinite) and has published in places like The New Yorker, The Nation, and the Atlantic—as well as that of RSH. That work includes the Ode & Psyche podcast (hosted by Bianca), “devoted to starting conversations around how poetry illuminates the mechanisms of human consciousness,” the poetry journal ITERANT and many educational workshops, including a free online workshop on Tuesday nights focused on attendees' work and examinations of other poems.

As part of her commitment to the art of poetry, and as a sign of love for the local community, Bianca—who is by turns chasmic, brooding, radiant, and hilarious—sat down recently for a sprawling, delicate, and delightfully profound conversation with The Reporter. The following is excerpted from that exchange:

**Reporter:** You're in great company with VT Poet Laureates, how does it feel?

**Bianca:** So humbled. Such good company, such beautiful, beautiful company, I'm honored... [laughing] I'm probably the only one with tattoos.

**Reporter:** You think so?

**Bianca:** Maybe Mary [Ruefle] has one?

**Reporter:** Ok, the million-dollar question—how would you describe your poetry and process?

**Bianca:** [laughing] Poets are notoriously bad at talking about their own poetry... I would describe my poetry as, in some ways, a metaphysical inquiry into personal and shared experience... what does it mean to be in this world? Are you out there other?

**Reporter:** [laughing] Oh, yeah, just a little question that the sum total of humanity has yet to answer...

**Bianca:** [laughing] Yeah... let's see... I would describe my poetry as... the work. Period.

**Reporter:** What would you recommend as a jumping-off point for people who haven't read your work before?

**Bianca:** [laughing] Start with the newest poems and work your way backward... come to a reading... open one of my books at random... let go of all expectations, and read the poem out loud. And slowly.

**Reporter:** What influence has Brandon, or VT, had on your work?

**Bianca:** This landscape where I built my mind up, it's infused in my poetry. Place is very important to poets; certain places have an energy... I feel it in my work.

**Reporter:** What do you think it is about Vermont that seems to pull so many poets in and pulls so much out of them?

**Bianca:** It's not that far from [cities] but it's far enough... there's just a rich history... the mountains are mountains but they're not too much...they're manageable mountains, I don't know [laughing]... poets like manageable mountains.

**Reporter:** On the subject of place, you recently published the chapbook *The Black House* with Foundlings Press, you also painted your house black, can you address the rumors that you are a Goth?

**Bianca:** [laughs] I have always been one foot in the shadow, I can't help it... historically I've been more punk than goth, but the Gothic aesthetic does appeal to me, a lot of it is about death... poetry probably was first brought forth by a person dealing with grief, dealing with death... I see death as being almost synonymous with the unconscious, so of course, I have a Gothic edge.

**Reporter:** I think Goth culture has a through-line to the Romantic poets, are there any

Romantics you would have liked to see fronting bands in the late '70s or '80s?

**Bianca:** [laughs] I don't know if Keats would have been the greatest frontman, probably Shelly would have been much more adept at that.

**Reporter:** Morticia Adams said, “Black is such a happy color, Darling.” Your work grapples with the absurdity of life, it confronts the unknown and painful, often without resolution, but it remains focused on how that struggle can be fulfilling. What role do you think darkness plays in finding or approaching happiness?

**Bianca:** It's absolutely imperative to face the shadow, face the dark side of your consciousness, to bear suffering to come to love and happiness. I'm not saying you have to suffer to be happy... that's just the human condition, to suffer as Simone Weil says, “in proximity to the void.” There's so much I've learned about contradiction and the importance of having both sides of the dyad, you can't have happiness without feeling the full extent of your loneliness and your sadness. What would happiness look like without sadness? It wouldn't look like anything.

Bianca Stone's interview with The Reporter will continue next week. Please pick up the next issue for Part II.

More information about Bianca Stone and the Ruth Stone House can be found online at <https://bianca-stone.com> and <https://ruthstonehouse.org>

The author of this article works as Editor-at-Large for ITERANT <https://iterant.org>



its most eminent/representative poet. Duties range by location from symbolic honors with no formal tasks (US Poet Laureate) to attending official ceremonies, sometimes writing poems in commemoration.

Vermont's duties include serving as an ambassador for the art of poetry, Laureates are

fluent (2019-2024)...and now Bianca Stone. Their list of bonafides is appropriately massive and includes National Book Awards, Pulitzer Prizes galore, even a Congressional Gold Medal and a Nobel Prize.

Stone will achieve this awareness and appreciation of poetry, in part, via her work—

**Sharpen your mind with our puzzles.**

See page 17

**Spotlight On Business COUNTRY VILLAGE CAMPGROUND**

BRANDON AREA CHAMBER of Commerce  
Brandon.org for more info

This is our 2nd season as owners of Country Village Campground, in Leicester. Our family has been camping all our lives, and seasonal at CVC for 10 years. We love showing other families the joys of creating memories around campfires, eating ice cream at the playground, and taking a swim in the pool. We have a great campground store that is open to the public and ice for sale. Stop by and say hello!

# Plan for home cannabis business in Rutland leads to fight among neighbors

BY TIFFANY TAN/  
VTDIGGER

A proposal to establish Rutland City's first home-based cannabis cultivation site has become so contentious it could create legal precedent in Vermont's nascent retail cannabis industry.

Rutland's Development Review Board is reassessing a home business permit that the planning and zoning administrator issued to city resident Fred Watkins in February, after more than a dozen of his neighbors asked that it be thrown out.

Watkins intends to set up a cannabis-growing operation inside a garage-like structure on his residential property, located about a mile from downtown. He hopes to generate 30 pounds of products every two to three months, which he said would be sold to dispensaries.

Following a second public hearing on the issue Wednesday, the Development Review Board has 45 days to decide whether to grant the neighbors' request to overturn the permit. The neighbors, as well as Watkins, told VTDigger they'd appeal in court if the board's ruling doesn't go their way.

During the public hearings and in written submissions to the board, the neighbors said a cannabis cultivation site on Watkins' East Washington Street property would ruin the area's residential character and bring nuisance to residents. They're expecting the cannabis operation to create increased noise, odor and round-the-clock activity, which they said are in violation of local zoning laws.

The neighbors' arguments included public safety issues, which they linked to the nature of Watkins' business venture.

"We believe the approved business is a safety concern; attracting the criminal element to the neighborhood in an attempt to burglarize the subject and adjoining properties," 14 residents in the East Washington Street area said in a joint appeal letter.

An attorney representing Susan Kelley, a neighborhood resident who lodged the first board appeal, has also questioned whether Watkins' home business permit application received favorable treatment from city hall due to his ties to Mayor Mike Doenges — a charge the mayor denies.

A recent court filing in a separate case alleges that Doenges and Watkins owe money to a cannabis consultant named Wesley Tipton, who said they hired him last spring to build a plant-growing system on Watkins' property and provide operational advice. The complaint stated that Doenges and Watkins were business partners.

"It just calls into question and puts a cloud over all the decisions now that (have) been made in this case," the attorney, Tom Bixby, said in an interview.

Bixby said that, according to an event timeline prepared by Rutland Planning and Zoning Administrator Andrew Strniste, Strniste's office told Watkins on Dec. 22 that a home-based indoor cultivation facility would qualify as a cottage industry, requiring the plan to be assessed by the Development Review Board.

Seven days later, Bixby said, the timeline shows the office walked back its original directive, telling Watkins his cannabis operation could qualify as a home business. It would still need a business permit but  
(See Home cannabis, Page 6)



## Chicken of the marshlands

THIS VIRGINIA RAIL was on the boardwalk at the W. Rutland Marsh.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

## Community Forums

# 'Celebrating the Creative Spirit' art show at the Brandon Inn on May 18

The Brandon Congregational Creatives group and the United Methodist Church of Brandon will hold their spring art show, "Celebrating the Creative Spirit," at the Brandon Inn on Saturday, May 18 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Artists of all ages will be exhibiting work in diverse mediums: painting, photography, sculpture, fiber arts, and fine

crafts.

At noon there will be readings of original literary works and poetry followed by a Q & A moderated by Vermont Poet Laureate (and Brandon resident) Bianca Stone. The audience will be welcome to join in the discussion of the importance of poetry and arts in our community.

At 7 p.m., there will be a

showing of the documentary on Goshen poet Ruth Stone, "Vast Library of the Female Mind," in the Inn's ballroom, followed by a discussion.

There will be musical offerings throughout the day and dinner will be available for purchase at the Inn.

The event is free to the public. All are welcome to stop by and enjoy!

## The REPORTER

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

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# Vermont statewide Summer Free Fishing Day coming up, Saturday, June 8

Grand Isle Family Fishing Festival, Bass Opener both on Free Fishing Day

MONTPELIER —Vermont's annual, statewide Summer Free Fishing Day is Saturday, June 8 this year, and it will be highlighted by a free family fishing festival in Grand Isle as well as opening day of the state's regular bass fishing season.

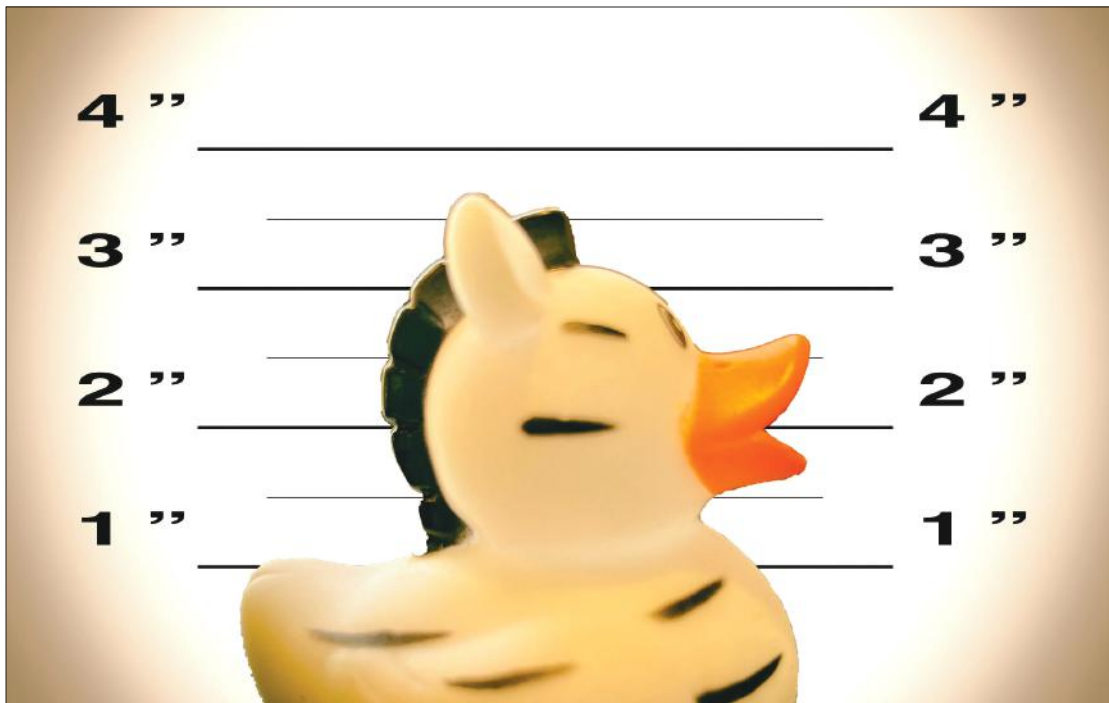
"Vermont's Free Fishing Day gives resident and nonresident anglers the opportunity to go

fishing without a license for the day in Vermont lakes and streams," said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. "Free Fishing Day is a great opportunity for an experienced angler to be a mentor to friends who have not gone fishing before. A day on the water could lead to a lifetime of great experiences and healthy local

food."

Free Fishing Day in Vermont also will be celebrated at the "Grand Isle Family Fishing Festival," to be held at the Ed Weed Fish Culture Station at 14 Bell Hill Road in Grand Isle. The festival will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Designed for young or nov- (See Free Fishing Day, Page 5)



## Canyon arrested

*(Continued from Page 1)*

where,” said Winky. “I knew it was Canyon! That son-of-a-goose can’t win fair so he’s trying to cheat again!”

Readers will recall that Canyon was disqualified from last year’s race for cheating. His urine test showed traces of performance-enhancing algae and several spectators claimed to have seen him grabbing other duckies by the tailfeathers in order to clear a path for himself.

Canyon showed no remorse then and denies the charges now.

“I didn’t do it, I tells ya,” asserted Canyon from the newspaper-lined cage he’s occupying at the Marble Valley Correctional Facility in Rutland. “I’m being framed. Yeah, that’s it. I’m being set up, dontcha know. Everyone’s out to get ol’ Canyon. Blame everything on Canyon! Well, I’m innocent! INNOCENT!”

“My client has done nothing wrong,” said criminal defense attorney Lionel Hutz. “There’s not a single shred of evidence

to prove Canyon had anything to do with this. The system is rigged! I move for a bad court thingy!”

If the allegations hold up, Canyon is looking at some serious time back in the mallardentiary, where he was previously incarcerated for the illegal distribution of duckweed.

“Canyon has been on our radar for years,” said Chief David Kachajian of the Brandon Police Department (BPD). “Some ducks just have no respect for the law. We’re glad we were able to get him off the streets before he hurt anyone else.”

When asked what evidence there is to link Canyon to the crime, Chief Kachajian declined to comment, noting that the investigation is still active. But Guinness, BPD’s K-9 officer, growled at the mere mention of the accused duckie’s name.

Winky now faces a long, uphill battle to return to his competitive form. Surgeons at Rutland Regional spent hours reconstructing his knee with titanium and space-age poly-

mers, but Winky may henceforth always waddle with a waddle.

“I can’t wait to get back in the water,” he said. “There’s still time to get myself ready. This is nothing but a speed-bump.”

A nurse brought him a bowl of grubs, which he snapped up only to spit right out.

“Hospital food,” he said sheepishly as a dozen squirming worms dangled from his bill. “I’m used to a higher grade of grub.”

Asked what he’ll do if he can’t compete on July 4th, Winky refused to even countenance the possibility.

“I’m not a quitter and I’m not going to let some mite-bitten thug destroy everything I’ve worked for,” he insisted.

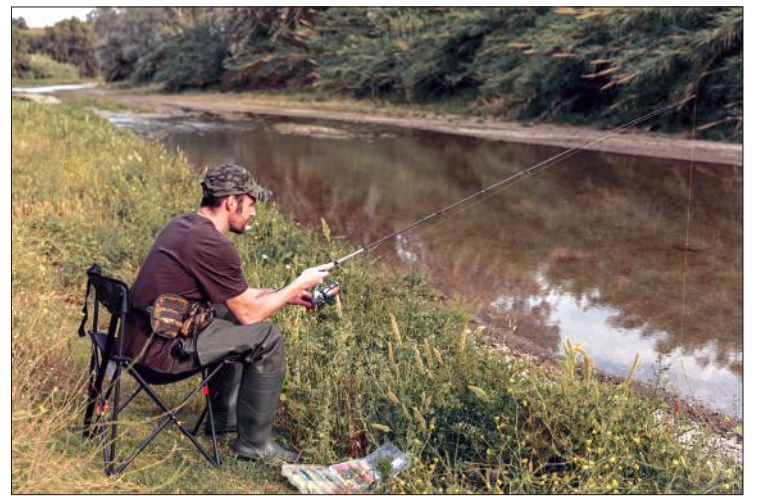
For his part, Canyon is confident he’ll be exonerated and may even participate in the race.

“You haven’t seen the last of me,” he laughed. “I may be down, but I ain’t out.”

## Correction

In last week’s issue, the Brandon Brain Buster identified the answer as D when the explanation correctly gave what was listed as C among

the choices. The explanation is accurate, but the answer should have been identified as C. Our apologies for any confusion.



## Free Fishing Day

*(Continued from Page 5)*

ice anglers and families, this exciting event offers basic fishing instruction and the chance for kids to catch big trout in a hatchery pond. No prior fishing experience is needed, and Vermont Fish and Wildlife will be supplying fishing rods, reels and bait for use by participants.

Vermont’s regular bass season also opens on June 8,

marking the start of some of the hottest bass fishing action in the northeast. The season opens each year on the second Saturday in June and extends through the last day of November.

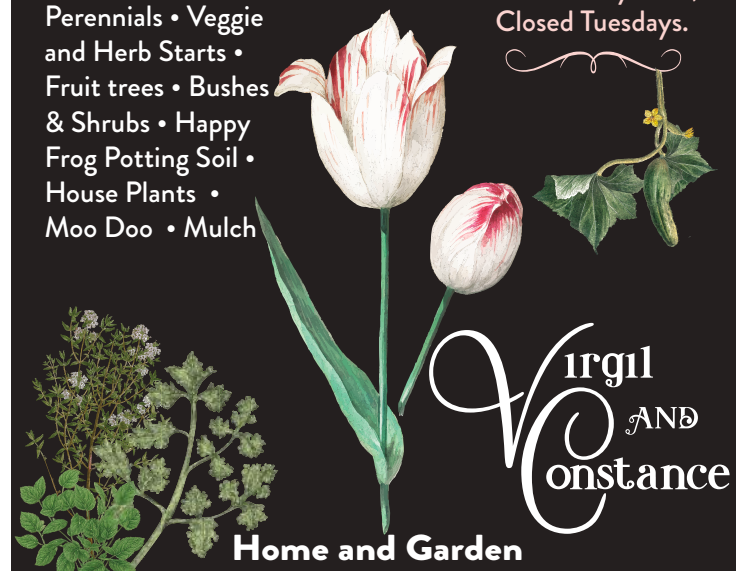
To learn more about fishing in Vermont or to purchase a fishing license, visit [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com).

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THE BRANDON REPORTER

# Obituaries

## Christopher G. Wetmore, 53, Orlando/Brandon

Christopher G. Wetmore, 53, son of Sue and George Wetmore of Brandon, lost his battle with cancer on May 5, 2024, in Orlando, Florida. He is survived by his wife, Brit-tany Brooking, and four children, Alivia, Dean, Wyatt and Emily. He is also survived by his brother Jeffrey, nephew Ryan, and aunt Karen.

## Marilyn (Morse) Dwyer, 89, Pittsford

Marilyn (Morse) Dwyer, 89, widow of Dr. Francis M. Dwyer, formerly of Pittsford, Vermont, died at The Meadows on May 4, 2024, after a period of declining health.

Born in Hackensack, New Jersey, on August 14, 1934, she was the daughter of Emory M. Morse and Lois Rhodes. Her parents, both natives of Massachusetts, descended from passengers on the Mayflower. She was raised by her mother and stepfather, Dr. Peter E. Tobia in Maywood, New Jersey. Her father and stepfather served their country during World War II. Many happy summers were spent with her maternal grandparents in Wareham, Massachusetts. At 16, she graduated from Holy Trinity High School in Hackensack and then went on to train as a registered nurse in Fall River, Massachusetts, at Truesdale Hospital, the same school of nursing her mother attended. As a student nurse, she met her future husband, Frank Dwyer, when he was a patient. They wed on July 13, 1957, while Frank was a medical student in New York City. Their marriage endured until Frank's death on November 13, 2015.

"Mickey," as she was known to family and friends, continued her education at Jersey State Teachers College where she earned a B.S. in Health Educa-



MARILYN "MICKEY" DWYER

tion. She served as a clinical instructor at Englewood Hospital for three years. After moving to Fall River, Massachusetts in 1959, she taught at Union Hospital School of Nursing and in the Fall River public school system until her husband established his medical practice as a cardiologist.

She was a corporator of the Marine Museum in Fall River and enjoyed collecting marine art with her husband. For two decades, she derived joy as an antiques dealer. After wintering in Venice, Florida for twenty-five years, she and her husband moved to Pittsford, Vermont, in 2004, building a house next to their son, Michael. Mickey's native intelligence, nursing background, and sharp wit stayed

with her throughout her final days.

Her survivors include her son, Pastor Michael F. Dwyer (George Valley) of Pittsford, a daughter, Kerry Goulart (Robert) of Little Compton, Rhode Island, three sisters, Toby Shea (Bill) of Westport, Massachusetts, Judy Melissinos (Nick) of Seattle, Washington, and Penney Morse Winter (Rev. Robert) of Berea, Ohio. Two granddaughters, a niece, and three nephews also survive her.

She was deeply appreciative of pastoral visits and communion calls from Christ the King Church in Rutland.

Calling hours are at the Aldous Funeral Home on Wednesday afternoon, May 8th, from 4 to 6. A Memorial Service will be held at the Pittsford Congregational Church on Thursday, May 9th at 11 A.M., with a reception to follow in the church's Fellowship Hall. A private burial service will be held later at St. Alphonsus Cemetery.

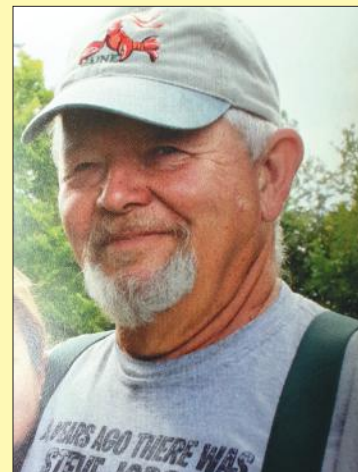
In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Dwyer Memorial Scholarship [in care of Aldous Funeral Home], to be established at Otter Valley Union High School for students who wish to further their education in any medical or health-care field.



## KEN (SONNY) YOUNG LEICESTER, MAY 18TH

Please come to share memories, stories and gratitude for his life. There will be a pig roast, good food and great company.

**At Foxcroft Farm, 898 Delorm Rd. in Leicester, from 1-5 pm.**



## Home cannabis

(Continued from Page 4)  
wouldn't need the board's approval.

"They've given him the permission to go ahead," Bixby said. "If it was, maybe, somebody from the outside, they wouldn't have gotten the same treatment."

Memo from the mayor Doenges, elected Rutland mayor in March 2023, said he had never exerted influence on Strniste to grant Watkins a business permit for his home-based cannabis cultivation. Doenges acknowledged he and Watkins are friends, and they've explored going into various businesses together, but said he issued a memo to Strniste and other city officials in February, underscoring that city hall should not give Watkins preferential treatment in the permitting process.

Doenges started off the memo by saying he had heard concerns about Watkins' proposed cannabis business, and people knew they were friends.

"While it is true that there is a pre-existing relationship with Mr. Watkins, I want to emphasize that this relationship has not and will not influence the permit process here at City Hall," Doenges wrote in the

Feb. 8 memo, which was also addressed to the Rutland public works commissioner, building inspector and city attorney.

Doenges also said he'd chosen to maintain distance in the case. "I have and will continue to abstain from any discussions or decisions regarding Mr. Watkins' zoning permit approvals to avoid any potential conflicts of interest or perceived biases," according to the memo, which Strniste provided to VT Digger.

Doenges said he and Watkins discussed setting up a cannabis cultivation operation in the town of West Rutland last year, but not in the city of Rutland. He said those plans were reflected in state business filings.

Business records with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office show that a domestic limited liability company was formed in April 2023 by the mayor's wife, Sara Doenges; Watkins' stepdaughter and a member of the Rutland Board of Aldermen, Kiana McClure; and Tipton, who is now suing the mayor and Watkins. The company was classified under the agriculture industry, as "all other miscellaneous crop farming."

The business venture "did not end up working out," Doenges wrote in the (See Home cannabis, Page 20)


## 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.



## BARNARD FUNERAL HOME INC.

3186 U.S. Route 7 Pittsford • www.barnardfuneralhome.com

(802) 483-2811  Christopher Book/Director

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

Also operating the Birch Grove Crematory 



**BRANDON TREE WARDEN** Neil Silins, pictured bottom left, distributed red oak saplings in observance of Arbor Day. Deputy Town Manager Bill Moore (left) planted one of the saplings at a ceremony at the Senior Center in Forest Dale on Friday, May 3. Mr. Silins was presented with the 2024 Vermont Tree Steward Arbor Day Award. Congratulations, Neil!

# Arbor Day celebration in Brandon: Tree Warden distributes oaks and receives award

Vermont's official Arbor Day celebration is the first Friday in May, and Brandon celebrated at the Senior Center in Forest Dale. Tree Warden Neil Silins introduced Assistant Town Manager Bill Moore, Elise Schadler, Program Manager of the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program (UCF), and Joanne Garton, Technical Assistance Coordinator at UCF, to the assembled guests. Neil spoke about the need for long-range planning to plant younger trees that will be ready

to take the place of the older trees that will age and fail over time. Bill Moore talked about the enthusiasm he's witnessing in Brandon for the increased (and increasing) interest among the general town population and acknowledged Neil's contribution to Brandon as Tree Warden. Elise announced that Neil is the recipient of the 2024 Vermont Tree Steward Arbor Day Award. The recipient of this award is selected by the UCF staff. Joanne spoke about the importance of trees to ev-

eryone and planted a tree at the Senior Center while demonstrating best planting practices for saplings to thrive, and Neil

distributed red oak saplings to those who lined up to receive one. Leftover saplings were distributed at the Green Up

Day staging area on Saturday. Congratulations, Neil, and thanks for all your work keeping Brandon's trees healthy!



## GARDENING SEASON SALE



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# Bernie Sanders is running for reelection to the U.S. Senate

BY SARAH MEARHOFF/VT-DIGGER

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., isn't ready to call it quits.

The 82-year-old progressive firebrand announced Monday that he will seek a fourth six-year term in the U.S. Senate this November. Sanders, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, was first elected to the post in 2006 and has served in Congress for more than three decades.

Citing his seniority in the U.S. Senate, the Burlington independent said in a press release and recorded statement on Monday that, if he were reelected, he would continue to be "in a strong position to provide the kind of help that Vermonters need in these difficult times." Serving in the Senate, he said, "has been the honor of my life."

In an interview with VTDigger Monday afternoon, Sanders said

he chose to run again because, "In my view, this moment in American history is one of the most dangerous that we have seen for a very,

very long time." The senator listed what he sees as existential threats to the nation, including the possibility that for-



U.S. SEN. BERNIE Sanders, I-Vermont, speaks at a rally at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Sunday, July 31, 2022.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

mer President Donald Trump — whom he called "one of the most dangerous presidents in American history" — could win reelection.

Sanders said he saw the nation moving toward authoritarianism and oligarchy, "where a small number of billionaires have incredible wealth and power over our economic and political systems, while 60% of our people live paycheck to paycheck." He also pointed to the erosion of abortion rights after the fall of Roe v. Wade in 2022, and the slow burn of climate change, which he said "threaten(s) the very wellbeing of our kids and future generations."

"You add all that stuff up together, and more," Sanders said. "(This is) an extraordinarily difficult moment in American history, and I just did not feel comfortable about walking away from it when I have some influence in Washington

right now representing Vermont."

Though Sanders had given no public indication that he was considering retirement, his plans have been closely watched in Vermont, which lost considerable seniority in the Senate with the departure two years earlier of veteran Democrat Patrick Leahy. On Monday, Sanders cited that as one of the very reasons he ultimately decided to run again.

"For better or for worse, the Senate relies a lot on seniority," Sanders told VTDigger, pointing to his high-ranking positions on key committees and the relatively junior status of the state's other U.S. senator, Democrat Peter Welch, who joined the chamber in 2023. "Sen. Welch has done a great job, but it's important to have, I think, a senior member in the Senate fighting for Vermont's needs."

(See Bernie Sanders, Page 19)

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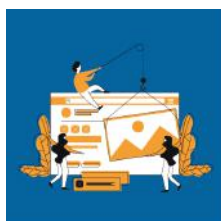
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### It takes a village

THE BRANDON MUSEUM thanks Nifty Thrifty for funding the portable display panel shown with Board members Jennie Masterson, Harmony Van Eaton, John Peterson, and Scott Scribner. The Museum's Solar Eclipse weekend was a success, with many visitors viewing the exhibits and enjoying John Peterson's presentation. Watch for upcoming events as the Brandon Museum develops programs to connect our community with its history.





# Legislative Report

BY STEPHANIE JEROME

## Important Acts passed by the House and Senate

We are in the final stretch of the 2023-24 legislative session! This year, our session runs from early January to mid-May and is scheduled for 18 weeks. Vermont is one of seventeen states that have citizen legislatures, with most legislators maintaining another job while also working in the statehouse. We have a bicameral legislature, with 30 senators in the Senate and 150 representatives in the House of Representatives, which operates in a two-year cycle.

The House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance Committee are meeting in a Conference Committee to go over the final negotiations of the budget. There will be much compromise between the two bodies of the General Assembly, showing that our check-and-balance system works. When the Budget Bill passes the House - then the 2023-24 session is adjourned. The goal is to adjourn the legislative session on May 10th - the end date always coincides with the passing of the budget.

For the past 18 weeks, each of the 13 Committees has been discussing the bills before it, hearing from witnesses, experts in the fields, advocates, and opponents. Nearly 900 bills were introduced in the House and over 300 in the Senate. It would be impossible to take up and discuss all these bills and provide the attention each one deserves. This time of year, the bills which the Committees have approved, have been passed by the House and sent to the Senate, and have come back for approval by the House. There has been intense activity and over the the past two weeks, we have seen the following bills passed by both House and Senate:

**S.120** An act relating to post-secondary schools and sexual misconduct protections

**S.196** An act relating to the types of evidence permitted in weight of the evidence hearings

**H.606** An act relating to professional licensure and immigration status

**H.706** An act relating to banning the use of neonicotinoid pesticides

**H.766** An act relating to prior

authorization and step therapy requirements, health insurance claims, and provider contracts

**H.27** An act relating to coercive controlling behavior and abuse prevention orders

**H.649** An act relating to the Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**H.629** An act relating to changes to property tax abatement and tax sales

**H.884** An act relating to the modernization of governance for the St. Albans Cemetery Association

**H.350** An act relating to the Uniform Directed Trust Act

**S.189** An act relating to mental health response service guidelines and the safety of social service and home health providers

**S.109** An act relating to Medicaid coverage for doula services

**H.659** An act relating to banking, insurance, and securities

**H.861** An act relating to reimbursement parity for health care services delivered in person, by telemedicine, and by audio-only telephone and extending time for flood abatement reimbursement

**H.247** An act relating to Vermont's adoption of the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact

**H.40** An act relating to non-consensual removal of or tampering with a condom

**S.187** An act relating to student application of sunscreen

The Commerce and Economic Development Committee, where I serve as vice-chair, is furiously working to get two very important consumer protection bills approved by the Senate so that they can go to the Governor for signature:

**H.81**, the right to repair bill, provides consumers and independent repair shops with the tools, parts, and information necessary to repair their own agriculture and forestry equipment. Currently, when a piece of equipment stops working, the farmer or logger has no other choice than to use a manufacturer-approved dealer to make repairs. H.81 would allow customers to make their own repairs, use an independent repair service, or continue to use the dealer. Similar leg-

islation has been proposed in at least 11 states with strong bipartisan support. H.81 passed the House in May 2023 and is now pending in the Senate.

**H.121** The Vermont House has unanimously passed the comprehensive Data Privacy Act earlier this session and we are incorporating the Senate edits. This groundbreaking legislation ensures your right to access, delete, and correct your info, plus opt-out of data sales and targeted ads. It is a fair consumer protection bill that does not burden business and will ultimately protect consumers. Vermont is set to become the 15th state to champion consumer data privacy. We are currently working with the Senate to find a compromise to get this over the finish line, to protect our private personal information from being sold and used without our permissions. Our hope is to incorporate S.289. The "Kids Code" bill is a consumer protection bill that would require online products likely to be accessed by children under 18 to be age appropriate, institute privacy by design and default and be designed with kids' best interests. To date, the following bills (other than town charter amendments) have been Signed by the Governor. The bill is assigned an Act Number once it is signed and becomes a law. Many more bills are waiting for his signature:

**H.666** An act relating to escrow deposit bonds. Act 96

**H.363** An act relating to prohibiting discrimination based on certain hair types and styles. Act 92

**H.621** An act relating to health insurance coverage for diagnostic breast imaging. Act 94

**H.603** An act relating to the poultry slaughter exception to inspection. Act 93

**H.741** An act relating to health insurance coverage for colorectal cancer screening. Act 95

**H.543** An act relating to Vermont's adoption of the Social Work Licensure Compact and to emergency housing eligibility documentation. Act 91

**S.190** An act relating to statements made by a child victim of an offense involving serious

bodily injury. Act 89

**S.278** An act relating to prohibiting a comparative negligence defense in an action for a negligence claim relating to a sexual act or sexual conduct. Act 90

**H.469** An act relating to remote and electronic processes for executing an advance directive. Act 88

**H.839** An act related to fiscal year 2024 budget adjustments. Act 87

**H.849** An act relating to technical corrections for the 2024 legislative session. Act 85

**H.850** An act relating to transitioning education financing to the new system for pupil weighting. Act 84

**S.154** An act relating to the Vermont State Plane Coordinate System. Act 86


**H.599** An act relating to retroactively reinstating 10 V.S.A. § 6081(b). Act 83

**S.160** An act relating to State education property taxes and flood-related damage. Act 82

In my next article, I will review the highlights of the legislative session. This has been a tremendously difficult session. Vermont has many issues that need to be addressed including education, housing, healthcare, climate, workforce, and cost of living. We have worked on many of these priorities this year, but solutions will take a long time.

I will continue to hold constituent coffee hours throughout the summer and look forward to having you participate. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to me if I can help you. Take care!

*Sincerely,*  
Rep. Stephanie Zak Jerome  
(Brandon)  
Vice-Chair, House  
Commerce and Economic  
Development Committee  
[www.stephaniejeromevt.com](http://www.stephaniejeromevt.com)  
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STUDENT: Leo Doner-Bilodeau

GRADE: 8

SCHOOL: Otter Valley Union  
Middle School

MEDIUM: Mixed

TEACHER: Dasha Kalisz



**Statement from Ms. Kalisz:**

The class was studying the principle of design, contrast. Leo used different materials, cloth, watercolor, and markers to express contrast.

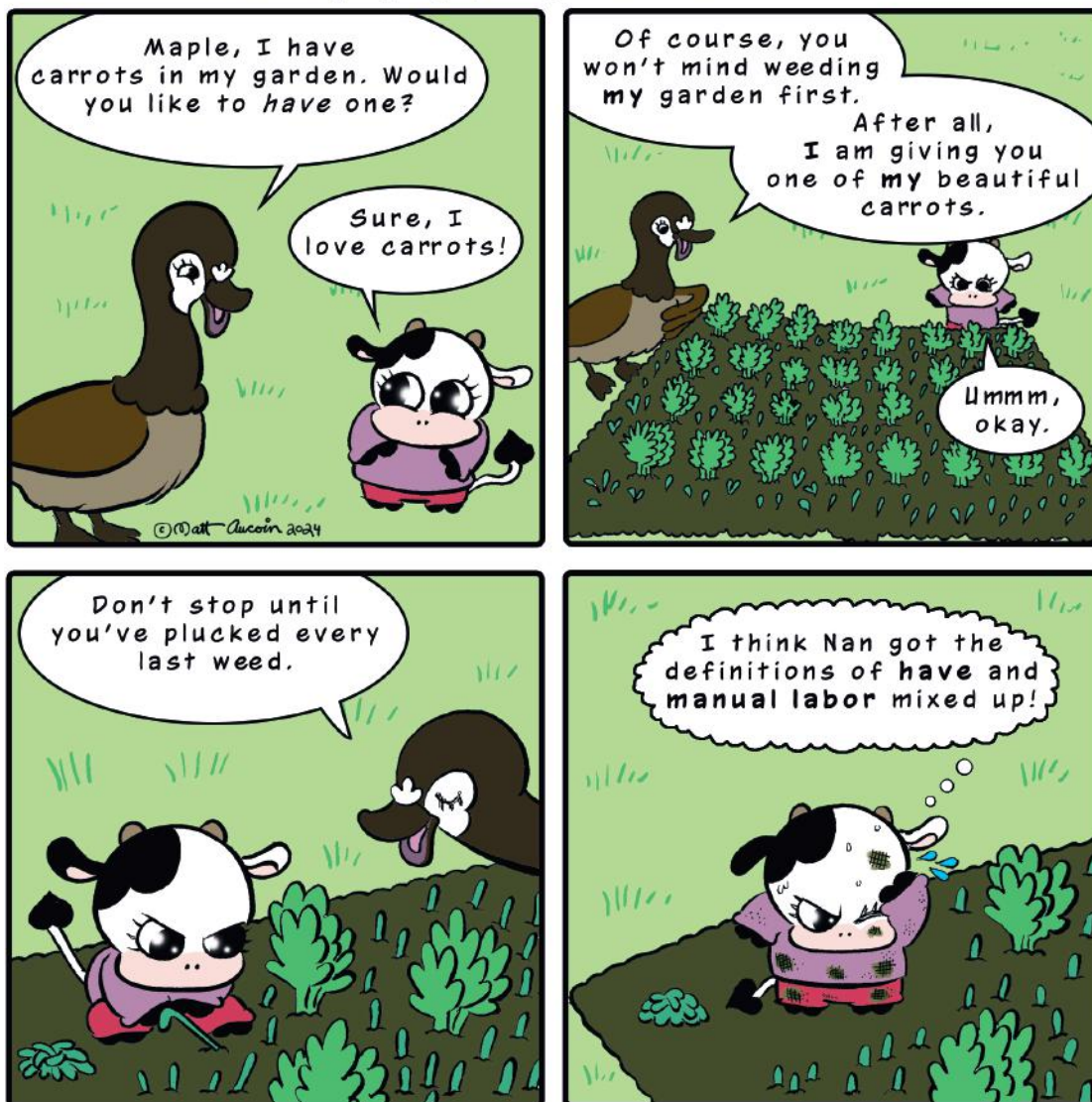
# Otter Valley student takes gold at 2024 skills USA Vermont championships in Crime Scene Investigation



Lauren Palmer is a junior at Otter Valley and attends Stafford Technical Center in Rutland as a criminal justice major. She also takes classes at CCV. She recently won gold in the USA Vermont championships in crime scene investigation. She will be attending and representing Vermont in the national conference contest in Atlanta, Georgia in June. She won an all-expense paid trip to compete and a \$1,000 gold scholarship from Vermont State University. Lauren has been doing ride-alongs with the Brandon Police Department and plans to pursue a career and law enforcement and eventually become a game warden. Congrats, Lauren!

(L TO R) Kellen Beaudry, Lauren Palmer, and Riley LaFountain pose with their awards at the 2024 Skills USA Vermont Championships. Lauren is a junior at Otter Valley and won a \$1000 scholarship to Vermont State University. She plans to study law enforcement and hopes to become a game warden. Beaudry and LaFountain are students at Rutland High School.

## MAPLE the COW™ by Matt Aucoin



## Café Provence Mother's Day Brunch

Sunday May 12th

Seatings at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm

\$55/person (plus tax & gratuity)

Call 802-247-9997 for reservations



### MENU

#### Soup

Chilled Gazpacho & Lobster Bisque

#### Appetizer

Caesar Salad in a Crispy Asiago Cheese Cup & Egg Benedict with Grilled Ham & Blue Ledge Farm Goat Cheese Cake with Spring Mix and Balsamic Reduction & Red Beet Salad with Gorgonzola Crumbles

#### Main Course

Grilled Double Lamb Chop on Curry Coconut Lentil Stew & Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes & Baked fillet of Haddock with Crab Cake on Creamy Lobster Polenta, Lemon Butter Sauce & Seafood Stew with Scallops, shrimp, mussels & available fresh fish on Saffron Risotto Beef Bourguignon over Angel Hair Pasta & Chicken Cordon Bleu with Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Red Wine Sauce

#### Dessert

Mother's Day Trio  
Key Lime Tart or Raspberry Tart & Flourless Chocolate Cake & French Macaron

Children Brunch menu available

11 Center Street Brandon Vermont a Tel: 802-247-9997

# Calendar of events

## May

### 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](http://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](mailto: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 ([hazfm@hotmail.com](mailto:hazfm@hotmail.com) or (802) 282-7532) or Vicki Disorda ([vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com](mailto:vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com) or (802) 345-4125).

#### Pins & Needles Craft Club at the Brandon Free Public Library

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

### Wednesdays

#### Ping Pong

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

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

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

If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or

## Goings on around town

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](http://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 Conscious, Spiritual, Gentle Physical Yoga Practice. We meet on Mondays via zoom. Contact for Zoom link. (There is also a Monday Zoom only class)

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

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

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

To stay tuned if there are any cancellations, follow on 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](mailto:ceastman88@gmail.com)

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

### Thursday 9th

#### Social Connection—CVPS Leahy Community Health Education Center, Rutland

A conversation about the superpower that heals and reduces social isolation and loneliness so that people and communities can thrive. RRMC is excited to host an interactive presentation and discussion facilitated by Social Tinkering: A Human Connection Project! Social Tinkering's Director, Jeanette Langston and her team are joining forces with RRMC mental health experts Sheila Sharrow and Kathy Kinirons to talk about the impacts that social isolation and loneliness have on individuals, families, and entire communities. Social Tinkering offers hope for this foundational human dilemma, sharing their work to create intentional social spaces for making friends, learning, and working together to reduce the barriers to social connection. Come learn about the power of connection and how you can use it to help yourself and the people around you to thrive! Be sure to register! With a maximum capacity of 50 participants, seats will fill up quickly. Secure your spot before they're all taken! Enjoy complimentary light refreshments and snacks!

## STAGE 20 p Frie

Homegrown adaptations of classic tales that feature the childhood classic!

Stage 20 is produced by students in middle school support from high schoolers the Stage 40 program. 6:30–7:30 pm at 2321 Middle Rd Clarendon, VT.

The doors will open at 5:30 pm, and the conversation will begin at 5:45 pm.

**Bulbs: Planting in Spring for Summer Color—Horsford Gardens & Nursery, Charlotte**  
Bulbs aren't just for fall planting! Join us for a talk from 10–11 am by our own Paige Cascio on planting bulbs in the Spring, for both enhancing your garden and growing cut-flowers.

**Carsie Blanton—Next Stage Arts Project**

Carsie Blanton is a songwriter with hooks, chutzpah, and revolutionary optimism. Inspired by artist-activists including Nina Simone and Woody Guthrie, her catalog careens through American popular song from folk and swing to pop-punk protest anthems. With her unique mix of humor, soul, and political wit, and fifteen-plus years on the road, Blanton has amassed a dedicated fan base and a small menagerie of viral hits (Rich People, Shit List, Fishin' With You). Her latest album, *After the Revolution*, produced by Grammy-winner Tyler Chester, was released in March of 2024. Co-presented with Twilight Music.  
From 7–9 pm, \$10–\$30.

**Friday 10th**

**Breanna Elaine Band w/ Bird Boombox—The Underground - Listening Room**  
Advance: \$14 (+fees) // Day of show: \$17 (+fees)

**...presents Strega Nona  
...day, May 10th**



forms a mix of originals as well as a wide array of covers on both guitar and banjo. Comparisons have included singer/songwriter Jewel, as well as legends Alanis Morissette and Stevie Nicks. Breanna is recognized around Vermont and surrounding areas for her unique sound and songwriting talent. With over 100 original songs that have yet to be recorded, this is just the beginning for Breanna Elaine, a true star on the rise.

**Bird Boombox:** A trio from the picturesque Champlain Valley, Bird Boombox is a vessel for the vibrations of the natural world and a catalyst for community connection. Consisting of Josh Cummings on guitar and vocals, Rob Fjeld on drums and Garrett McMillan on bass, they beckon

**Divine Gifts & Their Terrible Cost**  
**Reading Emily Wilson's New Translation of The Iliad with Ben Pease**  
**Thursdays 6–8:30 pm: May 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th & June 6th**

*The famous god whose legs are bent replied,  
'Take heart, dispel these worries from your mind.  
I wish that I could hide him far away  
from cruel death when harsh fate comes for him  
as easily as I can make him armor  
so marvelous that any human being  
would be astonished at the sight.'*  
—The Iliad, Book 18

Emily Wilson opens the introduction to her thrilling new translation of The Iliad by explaining that it “tells two interwoven stories across its twenty-four books. The first describes the overwhelming anger of a Greek warrior, Achilles, and its catastrophic consequences. The second tell how a brave Trojan warrior, Hector, leave his city and family to attack the Greek invaders—and returns home only after death. [...] The beautiful word *minunthadios*, ‘short-lived,’ is used for both Achilles and Hector, and applies to all of us. We die too soon, and there is no adequate recompense for the terrible, inevitable loss of life. Yet through poetry, the words, actions, and feelings of some long-ago brief lives may be remembered even three thousand years later.”

In this class, we will gain a better understanding of not only these two interwoven stories, but also what the epic poem has to say about its sprawling cast of humans and gods, fate, power, war, love, justice, and more. Focus

will be given to the narrative, poetic technique, and the translation itself. We will cover 4 books of the epic per class over the course of 6 weeks and supplement our discussion with the following incisive secondary sources:  
“The Iliad, or The Poem of Force” by Simone Weil  
“The Iliad as Ethical Thinking: Politics, Pity, And The Operation Of Esteem” by Dean Hammer  
“The Poetics of Loss in Greek Epic” by Sheila Murnaghan  
“‘Bitch that I Am’: Self-Blame and Self-Assertion in the Iliad” by Ruby Blondell

**ABOUT BEN PEASE**

Ben Pease is an epic poem enthusiast and has previously read the Robert Fitzgerald translations of the Iliad, Odyssey, and the Aeneid. On receiving Emily Wilson's translations for a Christmas present, he thought it would be a worthwhile venture to start a class about the new version. Much of his work is heavily inspired by the epic form, including Chateau Wichman (Big Lucks, 2017), a book-length narrative poem with a cast of fallible gods and humans, and Furniture in Space (factory hollow press), selections from an epic poem inspired by Pease's hometown friends making movies, and a psychic who gets involved with them in order to have his ultimate vision. Pease is also interested in the art of translation and is curious to see how the new translation compares to others!

listeners to join them on a voyage of self-discovery and collective resonance.

**An Evening of Poetry with Julia C. Alter, Pablo Medina, Rage Hezekiah, and Ben Aleshire—Next Stage Arts Project**

Sundog Poetry and Green Writers Press present an evening of poetry featuring Julia C. Alter, winner of the 2023 Sundog Poetry Book Award for “Some Dark Familiar,” and special guests Pablo Medina, Rage Hezekiah, and Ben Aleshire. 7:30–9:30 pm. Free.

**Friday 10th Saturday 11th**

**Moana, Jr.—Paramount Theatre, VT**

Rutland Youth Theatre presents Disney's Moana, Jr. See the line where the sky meets the sea? Rutland Youth Theatre brings you this thrilling and heartwarming stage adaptation of the coming-of-age tale of Moana as she sets sail across the Pacific to save her village and discover the truth about her heritage. She and the demigod Maui embark on an epic journey of self-discovery and camaraderie as she learns to harness the power that lies within. Adapted for young performers, this musical includes favorite songs by Tony®, GRAMMY, Emmy, and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, Opetia Foa'i, and Mark Mancina, such as “How Far I'll Go,” “Shiny,” and “You're Welcome.” With its empowering message of bravery, Moana, Jr. is sure to awaken your inner hero! Come support the uber talented youth from the Rutland Community and beyond. Rutland Youth Theatre is thrilled to have 93 young actors from over 24 different schools in this production of Moana, Jr. You won't want to miss this!

Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 2 pm & 7 pm. Tickets: Adults: \$15 + tax/fees and Children under 18/ Seniors over 65: \$10 + tax/fees.

**Saturday 11th**

**Luxe Touches: Curate-Your-Own-Wedding Retreat—Day Haus, Stowe**

Join us for a day of luxury, inspiration, and relaxation at “Luxe Touches: A Curate-Your-Own Wedding Retreat” in the picturesque setting of Stowe, VT. Hosted by Luxe & Low-Key Events, this

exclusive bridal retreat is designed for couples who want to transform their nontraditional wedding dreams into reality.

**What to Expect: Networking & Check-In:** Kick off the day with networking and check-in at the Day Haus, where you'll meet fellow brides and our team. **Breathwork & Moodboarding:** Engage in a rejuvenating breathwork session where we will get out of our heads and into our bodies so we can truly dream into our moodboarding activity and envision your perfect wedding day. (No social media, no future mother-in-law's whispering in our ears, and no judgment!) **Beauty Bar & Calligraphy Workshop with Colorful Calligraphy:** Discover your bridal style with makeup tutorials at our Beauty Bar and indulge in a calming calligraphy & flower preservation workshop with some rejuvenating tea. **Flower Workshop with Honey Flora:** Learn the art of creating stunning floral arrangements with guidance from the experts at Honey Flora. **Cocktail Hour, Cake Tasting, & Mini Engagement Shoot:** Partners are invited to join for a delightful cocktail hour with a grazing table by Cooking With Stephanie, cake & dessert tasting with Matryoshka Bakery & Red Poppy Cakery, and a mini engagement photoshoot with Rae Ann Photos & Anne Mientka Photography to capture your love.

**Walk Away With:** A full plan of what you need to do to execute your nontraditional wedding. A locally sourced, flower bouquet & the know-how to do it yourself. 6 professionally edited engagement photos (sent within 3–4 weeks of the event).

Handmade calligraphy pieces to use for your big day and the ability to create more. A full belly of cake, charcuterie, and drinks!

**Early Bird Tickets:** \$333 (use the promo code “EARLYBIRD” at checkout). **Regular Tickets:** \$399. Spaces are limited, so secure your spot today and embark on a journey to create the wedding of your dreams! For more information email rachel.desimone12@gmail.com.





Photo by Bill McGaffin

## At Devil's Bowl Swamp shocks Devil's Bowl Field at 'Matty B Memorial' with sweep

WEST HAVEN—Akwasasne, NY's Fire Swamp led every lap of Saturday's season-opening, 32-lap Sunoco Sportsman Modified feature and collected \$3200.00, which was presented by Black Diamond Builders and 32B Storage in memory of Matt Bilodeau. Gary English, Jr., Matt Wade, Quinn Quenneville, Griff Mahoney and Eric Friend also picked up wins on the day.

A more-than-healthy crowd was on hand to witness the beginning of a new racing season, and young Fire Swamp started it off with a bang.

Swamp took advantage of a good pill draw to start on the front row of his heat race and win it, before using his front row starting position to lead every lap of the feature. He was challenged at the end by Orwell, VT's Tim Laduc, but the North County youngster held off Devil's Bowl's reigning champion and landed in victory lane. Anthony Warren was 3rd. Justin Comes and Dave Camara rounded out the top five.

In the O'Reilly Auto Parts Limited Feature, Gary English, Jr. returned to victory lane, us-

ing his 4th-to-1st heat race run to start on the outside of the front row. When polesitter Kyle Kerr hit an infield tire on lap one, English drove out front on the top side and stayed there, fending off a late challenge from Scott Towslee to grab the win. Cody O'Brien finished 3rd in his return to Devil's Bowl, Mike Clark was 4th and John Gosselin finished 5th.

In the Hoosier Tire Novie Sportsman, it was Matt Wade and Nick Austin-Neil trading the lead a few times with Wade eventually coming out on top. Autin-Neil went under Wade on the bottom when the top seemed like the place to be, and Wade made the bottom work to slip by again and grab his first career open-wheel victory. Josh Bussino was 3rd, Logan Denis was an impressive 4th and fellow true-rookie Aiden Benoure was 5th.

For Friend Construction Mini Sprint driver Quinn Quenneville, Saturday was a day he will not likely ever forget. His father, Andy, a staple mechanic in the pit area, was best friends with the late Matt Bilodeau, whom Saturday's race was in memory

of. Carrying Bilodeau's colors, black and fluorescent red, Quenneville finished 3rd in his heat and the random invert put him on the pole for the feature. Quenneville was perfect, holding off Gage Provencher for the win. Chris Lenox was 3rd, stalwart Ray Hanson was 4th and Vern Woodard was 5th.

In full-fendered competition, Griff Mahoney drove from 6th position to win the Fisher Auto Parts Mini Stock Feature. Defending champion Brian Blake charged from 11th to finish 2nd. Sophomore competitor Ryan Patch rounded out the podium, while Craig Kirby and Mark Mahoney completed the top five.

Eric Friend won the 9th State Cannabis Crown Vic feature from the 4th starting position. Friend, known for his all-out approach to spectator racing, enduros and support of the mini sprint division, drove the #4 Friend Construction car to victory lane, besting nine other drivers in the growing class. Brad Cram, Norman Morrill, completed the podium.

# Vermont Senate passes Act 250 reform bill after whirlwind debate

BY CARLY BERLIN/  
VTDIGGER

After a flurry of last-minute deliberations, the Vermont Senate passed a mammoth bill on Friday afternoon that makes sweeping reforms to the state's land use and housing policies.

The bill, H.687, relaxes the reach of Act 250 – Vermont's half-century-old land use review law – in existing development centers, a move proponents hope will clear red tape and encourage more housing growth amid an acute housing shortage.

It also lays the groundwork for extending Act 250's protections over to-be-determined ecologically sensitive areas.

The bill's passage marks a major juncture for legislators, who for years have attempted – and failed – to thread the needle on modernizing Act 250. Proponents of H.687 argue it strikes the right balance between protecting Vermont's natural resources in an era of climate change while also lowering barriers to more housing development.

"I hope that we can all look ahead and celebrate both the places that we've allowed to further thrive, the people that we've allowed to live here," said Sen. Kesha Ram Hinsdale, D/P-Chittenden Southeast, before voting in favor of the bill late Friday. "And also the places that we love and care about, that we get to still gaze upon and celebrate. And that's truly what makes us Vermont."

Yet the bill has more hurdles to clear. The Senate made fundamental changes to the version passed by the House in March; as lawmakers race toward a planned adjournment date of May 10, time is running out for the two chambers to reconcile their differences.

And as lawmakers consider their next moves, they also face the possibility of a veto from Gov. Phil Scott. The Republican governor has criticized earlier versions of H.687, arguing that it does not go far enough to promote housing development, particularly in rural areas. The Senate passed H.687 with 18 votes

in favor and 10 against, making the likelihood of a veto override – which requires a two-thirds majority – questionable.

### WHO SHOULD HEAR ACT 250 APPEALS?

One of the Senate's major changes to the bill involves who will hear appeals of Act 250 permits. The Senate's version keeps appeals in the judicial system, while teeing up a study to consider moving appeals out of the courts and to a new quasi-judicial board.

"There's no reason to make a decision now," Sen. Christopher Bray, D-Addison, told colleagues during an all-Senate caucus yesterday. He noted that moving appeals to the new board had arisen as a contentious issue, and proposed the study

*The bill's passage marks a major juncture for legislators, who for years have attempted – and failed – to thread the needle on modernizing Act 250.*

instead.

The House's version of H.687 would have shifted appeals to such a board, modeled after the Public Utility Commission. Proponents argue that shifting appeals out of the courts would speed up the process and allow the new board to make precedent-setting decisions on land use policies.

The Senate's approval of a study appears as something of a concession to the Scott administration, which has voiced its strong opposition to shifting appeals to the new board. Officials have argued that the move would in fact increase the time it takes a developer to get a permit and potentially increase development costs.

### HOUSING POLICIES IN THE MIX

H.687 sets in motion a years-long process to chop Vermont into a series of "tiers" that will dictate how development is treated under Act 250, loosening the law's reach in some municipalities and strengthening its protections over "critical natural resources areas."

Yet the actual boundaries of those tiers are largely left up to future mapping and rulemaking efforts. In the meantime, the bill sets up a number of interim exemptions from Act 250, including one for all housing projects (See Act 250, Page 23)



## Yard Sale?

Advertise it in the Reporter!

Call 247-8080 for details.

# Can you guess the street?

BY LAURA PETERSON

Last week, the photo was the view of what is now the Crosby's parking lot, as seen across Center Street from the Café Provence terrace. There was once a whole building there called the Hill Block which has a very interesting history. Ken McFarland has written an historical account of this building that will be published in The Reporter

soon. Briefly, it was built around 1840 and filled many needs, including a barber shop, a billiard hall, and the Brandon Town Hall before the Hill Block burned and was razed in the early 1900s. The building that houses Crosby's Sales & Service now is also a significant building because of its siding. The facade, which looks like stone is actually stamped tin that simulates stone blocks.



Crosby's parking lot above, and the same site 1907 on the right.



Your mystery for next week!

SUBMIT YOUR BIRTH, ANNIVERSARY,  
OR WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

## REAL ESTATE



Stylish home in great condition. Woodland Park custom build, featuring a bright and crisp interior with a vaulted ceiling in the kitchen, dining, and living areas and a roomy loft above the bedroom. The open layout and large window banks really connect the house to its country setting. The home is sited on a private 15.44 acres with a small pond and stream, and panoramic views of the surrounding woods. A detached one-car garage provides additional storage. Close to Lake Hortonia and Lake Bomoseen with quick access to Route 30. \$185,000



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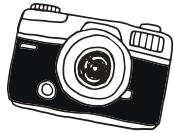
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# Mim's Photos



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](mailto:kate@brandonreporter.com)  
if you can identify someone in  
these photos.

Or call us at 247-8080

## Recognized



Kathy Mathis recognized the man in this photo as Dr. Charles Foster, "in his early years." She writes, "His office was where BHOP's dining room and next door was. He moved out of there and bought the present location on Marble St. along with a place in Rutland, Randolph, and I'm not sure Springfield? Mim was one of his patients."

Brannon & Leslie Godfrey also recognized Dr. Foster, describing him as a "friend, fellow golfer, and member of the Carr Brothers fax-in Fantasy Football League of the 1990s."





# Crossword

## CLUES ACROSS

1. It wakes you up
6. A place to sleep
9. Czech village
13. Appetizer
14. African country
15. Dark brown or black
16. Parent-teacher groups
17. Saturates
18. ESPN personality Kimes
19. Songs to a lover
21. Cavalry-sword
22. Begat
23. Patriotic women
24. Famed Princess
25. One who does not conform
28. Neither
29. Nigerian monetary unit
31. Body parts
33. Hit Dave Matthews Band song
36. Depicts with pencil
38. Make into leather without tannin
39. Plants grow from them
41. Alias
44. Fingers do it
45. More dried-up
46. Clod
48. Senior officer
49. A way to listen to music
51. The bill in a restaurant
52. Historic center of Artois region
54. Cyprinid fishes
56. Poisonous perennial plant
60. Scottish Loch
61. Heads
62. Extra seed-covering
63. Wings
64. Britpop band
65. Forearm bones
66. Small immature herring
67. Female sibling
68. Hymn

## CLUES DOWN

1. Vipers
2. Not on time
3. Resembling a wing or wings
4. Tears down
5. Professional designation
6. Noise a sheep made
7. Type of lodge
8. Speak poorly of
9. Ties the knot again
10. Apron
11. Studied intensively
12. City in Finland
14. One who monitors
17. 18-year astronomical period
20. Trent Reznor's band
21. Takes to the sea
23. Split pulses
25. Valentine's Day color
26. Wyatt \_\_
27. Type of rail
29. One from the Big Apple
30. Asteroids
32. Made more sugary
34. Change in skin pigment
35. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
37. Koran chapters
40. A place to relax
42. Young woman ready for society life
43. Female horses
47. Half of Milli Vanilli
49. Icelandic poems
50. Indiana town
52. Golden peas
53. Closes tightly
55. It's mined in mountains
56. Cliff (Hawaii)
57. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
58. Monetary unit
59. Primordial matter
61. TV station
65. Rise

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			

# 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.

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

Level: Intermediate

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

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

## Spring is upon us, and with it comes the pitter-patter of tiny paws!

As the days grow longer and the temperature slowly rises, so will the number of kittens and puppies arriving at the Rutland County Humane Society who will need our help. This spike in the number of kittens and puppies (almost 500 in 2023) places an immense strain on our resources, including supplies, staffing, and volunteers. Our dedicated team at RCHS is committed to giving these little ones the best chance at a happy and healthy life, but we cannot do it alone. Your generous donation will allow RCHS to provide age-appropriate vaccines, spay/neuter surgeries, deworming, flea treatment, and other necessary medical care before they can find their loving homes. On behalf of the kittens, our dedicated staff, volunteers, and the RCHS community, we thank you for your support. Let's make this kitten and puppy season triumphant, full of health, happiness, and homes filled with love! To donate please visit [www.rchsvt.org](http://www.rchsvt.org) or bring your donation to the shelter during normal business hours (M-F 8 am-4 pm).

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



#### MEET MAURO IN FOSTER - 3 MONTHS OLD. NEUTERED MALE. HEELER MIX.

**BLACK/WHITE.** Hello, my name is Mauro! I am a lighthearted and energetic pup, with a working dog's drive to learn. I'll need plenty of exercise and stimulation as I learn and grow, but I'm incredibly reward motivated, so it'll be fun! I love running around the yard to chase toys, sticks, friends, and snowballs. I came to the RCHS on March 15th from a busy shelter in Louisiana, and I love romping in the spring Vermont weather. I can't wait to have a family to teach me tricks and take me on long walks! I am currently in a foster home so, if you would like to meet me, please call the Adoption Center to schedule an appointment! I'll be waiting!

#### MEET RUE - 5 YEARS OLD. NEUTERED MALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. BUFF.

Rue is a distinguished gentleman! He prefers the company of humans over other felines. He commands attention wherever he goes! Despite his aloof nature toward other cats, Rue is a loyal companion to his human friends. He loves to shower his favorite people with affection and purrs! He loves to lounge in the sunbeams and take cat naps throughout the day! He may be a bit shy at first but, once he warms up to you, he will be your best friend! He loves to play with toys. He enjoys playing with ball toys especially! Rue was surrendered to us on April 18th because he was fighting with the other cats in the house. Therefore, he needs to be the only feline in the house. He does well with older kids but, we have no known history on how he will do with dogs. If this happy, handsome boy 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 4 pm.



### RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

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# OFF THE SHELF



NEW BOOKS AND NEWS



## New large-print books donated by Brenda Whittaker

### Feline Fatale by Rita Mae Brown, donated in memory of Mary Blackmer

It may be spring in Crozet but Harry is thinking about snow. Her dear friend Ned Tucker is in the House of Delegates, advocating for a bill to improve road clearing during bad weather, and Harry and Ned's wife, Susan, have gone down to the statehouse to support him. Tensions are high between political parties, and no one can agree on anything for long enough to get something done. The bill's chief detractor is the glamorous Amanda Fields, a former newscaster turned delegate whose flair for the dramatic has earned her a formidable reputation—and made her more than a few enemies. Amanda's claws-out approach to politics might have some of her colleagues wishing she was dead, but the statehouse is rocked when one of the young pages who assists the delegates dies under mysterious circumstances. Harry must call on her pets to help her solve the mystery.

### A Calamity of Souls by David Baldacci, donated in memory of "Judge" Chet Ketcham

Jack Lee is a white lawyer from Freeman County, Virginia, who has never done anything to push back against racism, until he decides to represent Jerome Washington, a black man charged with brutally killing an elderly

and wealthy white couple. Doubting his decision, Lee fears that his legal skills may not be enough to prevail in a case where the odds are already stacked against both him and his client. Desiree DuBose is a black lawyer from Chicago who has devoted her life to furthering the causes of justice and equality for everyone. She comes to Freeman County and enters a fractious and unwieldy partnership with Lee in a legal battle against the best prosecutor in the Commonwealth. Yet DuBose is also aware that powerful outside forces are at work to blunt the victories achieved by the Civil Rights era. Lee and DuBose could not be more dissimilar. On their own, neither one can stop the prosecution's deliberate march towards a guilty verdict and the electric chair. But together, the pair fight for what once seemed impossible: a chance for a fair trial and true justice.

### It Had to Be You by Mary Higgins Clark, donated in memory of Madelyn C. Neumann

The two identical brothers seemed perfect in every way—handsome, intelligent, popular—until a shocking summer night when one brother killed his parents in cold blood while the other brother had an iron-clad alibi. Years later, the twins are long estranged, each of them claiming to be convinced that the other is responsible for the death of their parents. Married now with children of their own, they may finally be ready to clear one name at the expense of the other and turn to Laurie Moran and her

## DID YOU KNOW?

We just found out that we'll be the recipients of a \$2500 Winnie Belle grant from the Vermont Public Library Foundation, which will enable us to provide teen and young adult programs this fall!

team to reinvestigate their parents' murder. But as the Under Suspicion crew gets closer to the truth, the danger that was assumed to be left in the past finds its way into the present.

## New Fiction

### Sweetness in the Skin by Ishi Robinson

Thirteen-year-old Pumpkin Patterson is living in a tiny two-room house in Kingston, Jamaica, with her grandmother, her Aunt Sophie, and her absentee mother. When Sophie is offered the chance to move to France for work, she seizes the opportunity and promises to send for her niece in one year's time. All Pumpkin has to do is pass her French entrance exam so she can attend school there. When her grandmother dies, Pumpkin must somehow find a way to raise the money for her French exam, so she can reunite with her beloved aunt in France. In a moment of ingenuity, she turns her passion for baking into a true business and develops a booming trade—but when her school and her mother find out what she's up to, everything she's worked so hard for may slip through her fingers.

# Brandon Police Report

## April 29

- Took fingerprints for school employment.
- Took fingerprints for foster care.
- Received a complaint of stalking on Forest Dale Road. Investigation ongoing.
- Took fingerprints for foster care.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for failure to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.
- Conducted traffic enforcement at the intersection of Champlain Street and Grove Street. The patrol was cut short due to a call for service. No vehicle stops were conducted.
- Responded to Church Street for a welfare check on a woman.

## April 30

- Received a call from a Brandon resident regarding an interaction she had with another resident at her home. She inquired about how she could get a trespass order issued against the other individual.
- Conducted a VIN verification on Pearl Street.
- Vehicle stop on Center Street for illegal window tinting. Ticket issued.
- Responded to a home intruder alarm on Long Swamp Road. The alarm was determined to be false.
- Received a complaint of a late-reported hit and run that had occurred at OVUHS several days prior. Incident documented for informational and insurance purposes.
- Assisted the Berlin Police Department (VT) in contacting a Brandon resident regarding an ongoing investigation. The individual was located and the information obtained was reported back.

## May 1

- Responded to a vandalism complaint on Frog Hollow Road in which the former One Church building had windows broken and graffiti painted inside.
- Received a report regarding a drone that was hovering over the complainant's barn on Pearl Street. Investigation ongoing.
- Conducted Sex Offender Registry compliance checks throughout Brandon. Contact was made with all of the individuals of interest and all were found to be in compliance.
- Took fingerprints for a school chaperone.
- Conducted a welfare check on Furnace Road. The individ-

ual was determined to be okay.

## May 2

- Received a walk-in complaint from a Brandon resident that she had been the victim of a wire fraud.
- Received a report of a loose dog on Richmond Road. The dog, which may have been abandoned, was retrieved by the Animal Control Officer and held for safekeeping until the owner could be located.
- Spoke with an area business owner regarding concerns about a former employee who was displaying erratic behavior and declining mental health.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for operating a vehicle without a visible license plate. Warning issued.

## May 3

- Vehicle stop on Nickerson Road for failure to display license plate(s). Warning issued.
- Conducted traffic enforcement for cell phone violations on Center Street. No violations were observed.
- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for failure to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Supermarket Drive for failure to obey traffic control signals. Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop on Conant Square for defective equipment (trailer taillight out). Warning issued.
- Vehicle stop conducted on Grove Street for failure to display license plate(s). Warning issued.

## May 4

- Received a call on North Street of a woman who had entered the caller's garage then left the area. After investigating the incident, the nature of the call remains suspicious; however, no elements of a crime were found.
- Vehicle stop at the intersection of Forest Dale Road and McConnell Road for failure to yield. Warning issued.
- Located what appeared to be a disabled vehicle at a pull-off spot on the side of the road at the intersection of Forest Dale Road and Wagner Road. The vehicle was unoccupied and no suspicious activity was observed.
- Responded to the area of Forest Dale Road for a report of a woman with dementia who had wandered off from her resi-

(See Police report, Page 19)

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

# Police report

(Continued from Page 18)  
 dence. The responding officer located the woman near the Brandon Senior Center. She was voluntarily transported to the hospital for evaluation.

- Took a complaint of a stolen license plate on Birch Hill Road.
- Received a report of a stolen lawnmower from a residence on Champlain Street. Matter is under investigation.
- Received a complaint of

barking dogs on Mulcahy Drive.

- Conducted traffic enforcement on Route 7 in Brandon.
- Received a call of a possible domestic dispute at an apartment complex on Mulcahy Drive. The incident was found to be a verbal argument and no criminal activity had occurred.

## May 5

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

• Conducted a search warrant on a vehicle that was seized as a result of a vehicle stop on Franklin Street and was believed to contain illegal drugs.

- Responded to a residence on Forest Dale Road after the caller reported rocks being thrown at his residence as well as hate-motivated comments directed at the caller. The case is under investigation.
- K-9 Unit assisted with a vehicle search that was suspected

to contain illegal drugs. K9 Guinness alerted to the presence of illegal drugs in the car and a search warrant was sought and granted.

- Conducted traffic enforcement on Franklin Street near the Brandon Fire Department. No violations observed.
- Received information regarding a possible attempted burglary or unlawful trespass on Church Street from a week prior. The incident was document-

ed for informational purposes.

- Received a complaint and later spoke to a juvenile regarding reckless driving that had occurred on Long Swamp Road. The youth was advised that any further complaints could result in potential civil or criminal charges.

# Bernie Sanders

(Continued from Page 8)

In his announcement, Sanders' campaign noted that he is the longest-serving independent in congressional history. He is also one of the oldest members of the Senate and would be 89 years old at the end of a fourth term.

Asked about his decision to run for another six-year term as an octogenarian, Sanders told VTDigger, "All that I can say is, I obviously would not seek reelection if I didn't consider myself strong enough to do the job well."

Over the past three years, the senator said, "With the exception of a week when I had Covid and stayed home, I have not missed a day of work — zero days — and that includes working on weekends occasionally."

He added, "Vermont is entitled to a senator who is fighting for them 24/7, and I believe I am that senator."

Vermont Republican Party chair Paul Dame told VTDigger that he doesn't foresee Sanders' age hindering his reelection campaign.

"Even though we're in a presidential race where age and competency are an issue, I think Bernie recognizes that he gets a pass on that," Dame said. "I think people are looking at the individual, not necessarily the age, the numerical value of the age."

But Dame told VTDigger that he does see a potential vulnerability in Sanders' leftist politics this November. Pointing to a slew of rejected school budgets in Vermont in recent months, Dame said Vermonters are in search of more fiscal discipline. "And if you're looking for fiscal discipline, Bernie Sanders is the exact opposite," he said.

Sanders faces at least one Republican challenger this year in Gerald Malloy, an Army veteran who ran for the Senate seat opened up by Leahy's departure and filled by Welch. Malloy did not respond to VTDigger's requests for comment on Monday.

Even as partisan control of the

Senate remains in question, Sanders' seat is not widely seen as vulnerable. He has skated to reelection in recent years.

Sanders has been a presence in Vermont politics since he first ran unsuccessfully for statewide office as a member of the Liberty Union Party in the 1970s. He served as mayor of Burlington, the state's largest city, from 1981 to 1989 and was elected to the U.S. House in 1990, defeating a Republican incumbent. He moved to the Senate in 2006, following the retirement of Republican-turned-independent Jim Jeffords.

After decades in local, state and congressional politics, Sanders became a household name when he sought the presidency in 2016 and gave former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton a run for her money in the Democratic primary. His progressive, populist stances on issues such as income inequality, health care and student loan debt struck a chord with a substantial block of voters. Though he did not secure the presidential nomination in 2016 — nor in 2020, when he again sought the presidency — Sanders cemented his status as a leading voice of the left on Capitol Hill.

In a written statement Monday expressing support for his colleague's reelection, Welch called Sanders "my friend and collaborator in Congress for 18 years," saying, "His focus, always, is on Vermont's working families, first and foremost."

"The Senate needs Bernie Sanders' leadership now more than ever," Welch said.

The third member of Vermont's congressional delegation, U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., echoed the praise.

"He is a proven, battle-tested legislator who has secured the progressive movement a seat at the table here in Washington," Balint said in a written statement.

Sanders has served in a number of leadership positions in the Sen-

ate, first chairing the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, then the Committee on the Budget and, since 2023, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. He also serves on the Committee on Environment and Public Works and is a member of the Democratic leadership team.

It is through his position on the HELP Committee, Sanders told VTDigger on Monday, that he sees his greatest shot at delivering for his constituents in Vermont. He pointed, in particular, to Vermonters' first-in-the-nation rate of utilizing federally funded community health centers for primary health care, mental health care, dental care and prescription drugs.

"I believe, obviously, that health care is a human right, and my long-term goal is to continue to fight for a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program," Sanders said. "But in

Vermont, at the very least, I want to see everybody in the state, regardless of their income, be able to get the primary care they need."

And there is "no question," the senator told VTDigger, that among his top priorities is to help deliver federal aid to Vermont so the state can rebuild from last summer's devastating floods. He said that touring the state last summer to survey flood damage was "one of the more painful experiences that I had."


Nearly 10 months after the initial floods wreaked havoc on Vermont, Sanders said, "I think we've made some progress, but we have a long, long way to go to get FEMA to do its job, to get the SBA to do its job, making sure that funds are available for homeowners, renters, businesses."

"The other thing — which is really, really tough, but it's going to

be true in Vermont and around the country — is understanding, you cannot rebuild in the same way that existed before the flood. It makes no sense at all," Sanders added. "So how you do that, how you make buildings more resilient, how you change the locations of where homes and businesses are — that's an issue that Vermont's going to have to struggle with, as well as the nation."

Asked by VTDigger if he felt a moral obligation to run for reelection, Sanders answered, "I would phrase it another way."

"If you look at the history of the United States, this is a pivotal moment. It really is," Sanders said. "We're on the verge of so many crises. I just did not feel comfortable walking away from that when I have some influence in Washington to try to change policy."



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

**in your social circle.** It may take a little while for you to reconnect.

**you into action.** Explain your hesitation carefully and respectfully.

**LEO July 23–Aug. 23**  
 Let others see a side of you that you don't often share, Leo. It is alright to be vulnerable at times, and this vulnerability actually may appeal to some new people in your life.

**CAPRICORN Dec. 22–Jan. 20**  
 What is the point of power struggles if it alienates all of the people closest to you, Capricorn? Sometimes you must forego ego to maintain personal relationships and family harmony.

**ARIES March 21–April 20**  
 Aries, a friend has made steady progress and exhibited significant personal growth. Continue to support this person's pursuits and act as a source of encouragement.

**VIRGO Aug. 24–Sept. 22**  
 Virgo, you have a tremendous amount of power at your disposal this week. You should use all of it wisely and not waste a drop. Others will be affected by your presence.

**AQUARIUS Jan. 21–Feb. 18**  
 Aquarius, try to interact this week with the people who may not necessarily agree with you or share your beliefs. It could be good to see things from different perspectives.

**TAURUS April 21–May 21**  
 Your happiness can bring joy to many other people this week, Taurus. Spread all of your positivity among those people who can use it the most. You will reap rewards as well.

**LIBRA Sept. 23–Oct. 23**  
 Libra, expect to spot trouble on the horizon before other people around you. This gives you a head-start to take action and prepare yourself and others for what's to come.

**PISCES Feb. 19–March 20**  
 Positive energy is circling around you this week, Pisces. Those good vibes will put you in a mood to reach out to some people in your life who may have drifted away.

**GEMINI May 22–June 21**  
 The people around you may be behaving in interesting and unexpected ways, Gemini. You don't know what to make of this just yet, so sit back and watch the show.

**SCORPIO Oct. 24–Nov. 22**  
 Pay careful attention to any and all financial transactions you make this week, Scorpio. You want to keep tabs on where your money is going and avoid as many mistakes as possible.

**CANCER June 22–July 22**  
 Cancer, it is challenging to keep up with all of the comings and goings of the people

**SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23–Dec. 21**  
 Sagittarius, a situation may arise this week in which you are expected to do more than you feel comfortable. Don't let others bully

~~~~~

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

**May 10** Bono, singer (64)  
**May 11** William Grant Still, composer (d)  
**May 12** Katherine Hepburn, actor (d)  
**May 13** Daphne du Maurier, author (d)  
**May 14** Cate Blanchett, actor (55)  
**May 15** Mikhail Bulgakov, author (d)  
**May 16** Adrienne Rich, poet (d)

# Home cannabis

(Continued from Page 6) enges said in an interview. When asked, the mayor said he did not know that Watkins had pivoted to setting up a cannabis cultivation site at his residential property until he learned of it through the municipal permitting process.

He and Watkins both deny breaching a contract with Tipton or that they owe him any money.

Doenges said he personally believes Watkins' residential neighborhood was not the ap-

propriate place to set up a cannabis-growing site. "I don't know that that type of operation is a good fit in that area of the city," he said, adding that he remains neutral on the issue in his role as mayor.

Doenges maintains there is no evidence of wrongdoing on his part, but that some community members are roping him into the Watkins case as a strategy to win their board appeal.

"I never thought that people would use my name to try to win their fight on the permitting

process, like they had," Doenges said. "I definitely didn't think my name would get dragged into it because of a past connection."

Rick Smyrski, who is serving as spokesperson for the group of

14 neighbor appellants, doesn't believe Doenges swayed the permitting process for Watkins. But at the same time, he said the mayor should have been more transparent about his plans to set up a cannabis busi-

ness with Watkins before those were made public by the Tipton lawsuit.

"I don't believe he abused his position," Smyrski said of the mayor. "I just don't think that, (See Home cannabis, Page 23)

## Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 1) taxes in the new proposal will increase to \$2,804,212 from current-year \$2,737,260, an increase of approximately 2.5%.

The reductions were achieved through the removal of several line items from the proposed budget that failed on April 30.

First, the \$85K for paving in the latest failed proposal has been removed from the budget and will be presented as an appropriation to voters on May 21. If voters approve the amount, it will add \$85K to the budget and will increase the amount to be raised by taxes by that amount. The \$85K will be combined with \$100K from the 1% local option tax fund for a total amount of \$185K for paving in FY2025. The motion to place the \$85K in an appropriation to be approved by voters passed 3 to 2, with Board members Brian Coolidge and Ralph Ethier voting nay.

If the \$85K appropriation fails, the \$100K from the local option tax will still be available for paving. However, Brandon Town Manager Seth Hopkins noted that \$100K would not be enough to cover both of the paving projects that remain on the Highway Department's FY2025 schedule: North Street in Forest Dale and the stretch of Union Street between the river and High Pond Road. If only \$100K is available, Mr. Hopkins said, the priority would be to repave North Street.

Mr. Hopkins also stated that the town has applied for paving grants that would, if received, allow the town to complete both projects in FY2025.

Second, the new proposal eliminates both new police cruisers from the budget, saving a total of \$48K. The previous, failed proposal had eliminated only one of the two \$24K line items that were for police cruisers. The Brandon Police Department currently has seven vehicles, and the new cruisers were meant to replace existing cars.

Third, the new proposal eliminates one of the four positions in the Highway Depart-

ment, saving \$102K on salary plus benefits (e.g., health insurance, etc.). Mr. Hopkins stated that the Highway Foreman, Jeremy Disorda, had told him that the department could function with three employees. Bigger projects, Mr. Disorda suggested, should be hired out and additional drivers could be called in to drive snowplows in heavy storms.

The new proposal was not met with universal approval by Brandon residents in attendance. Some residents, including former members of the Budget Advisory Committee, urged the Board to schedule additional budget workshops in which the budget would be revisited line by line. Other residents expressed concern that the reduction from the original proposal that failed in March was

now too steep and compromised public safety and infrastructure.

A few attendees asked that the Board specifically re-examine the budget of the Recreation Department, stating variously that out-of-town users represented too large a percentage of all users and that residents who do not take advantage of the Rec Department should not be asked to subsidize it with tax money.

Mr. Hopkins revealed that both the Rec Department and Buildings & Grounds had already gone overbudget 10 months into the current fiscal year. But he noted that both departments had brought in significantly more revenue than anticipated, negating the effects of the overbudget spending.

Not all attendees were critical of the new proposal, or of the prior proposals, for that matter. Some attendees stated that spending more now will

reduce the likelihood of needing to spend more down the road, when costs are likely to be higher.

Board Chair Doug Bailey started the meeting with a quote from U.S. Representative Ha-keem Jeffries of New York:

"These are challenging times and people need to come together to find common ground."

Former Board Chair Tracy Wyman addressed the Board as a citizen to state that he'd been offended by comments he'd heard that some current Board members blamed him for the failed budgets because of his insistence on including

*Other residents expressed concern that the reduction from the original proposal that failed in March was now too steep and compromised public safety and infrastructure.*

\$300K for paving. He stated that he'd made the demand only because he'd been told that there were \$150K of other expenses that could be cut to offset the increase for paving.

An alternative proposal to use money

from the town's general fund to offset expenses was shot down, primarily on the grounds that to do so would create a situation similar to the one the Board found itself in this year: having to make up with tax revenue the amount offset by the general fund. The decision by the Board to use money from the general fund for FY2024 created the impression among some town residents that spending had increased more than it had when that amount had to be raised by taxes in the proposed FY2025 budget.

As the meeting wound down, after the adoption of the new proposal, Mr. Bailey stated that he planned to make himself available between now and the May 21 re-vote for discussion with town residents. He will announce those "office hour" sessions on Front Porch Forum.

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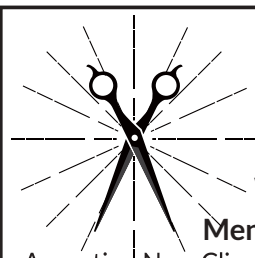
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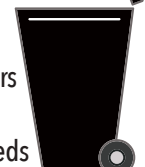
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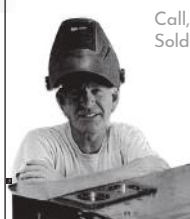


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## Home cannabis

*(Continued from Page 20)*  
you know, him not disclosing this looks very good.”

Taking the case to court

If Smyrski and his group lose their appeal with the Development Review Board, he said they intend to bring the case to the Vermont Environmental Court, which would have jurisdiction on the matter. Bixby said his client, Kelley, would also appeal.

Watkins has the same plan if he loses on the board level. “I absolutely, 110%, am not backing down,” he told VTDigger.

If the case goes to court, it would be one of the first lawsuits involving the state’s relatively young retail cannabis industry, said James Pepper, chair of the Vermont Cannabis Control Board. Litigation, he said, can clarify questions with the law and how it’s applied to the cannabis industry.

“We haven’t seen any real litigation around this yet,” Pepper said. “Maybe Rutland will be a test case.”

Strniste, the city’s planning and zoning administrator, said he decided to issue Watkins a home business permit after evaluating the impact his proposed operation would have in the neighborhood. He said he considered factors such as loud noises and odors, then made a decision in consultation with the city attorney and outside counsel.

Strniste said he also followed state government guidance that cannabis businesses not receive unique scrutiny as Vermont was working to support the industry’s growth.

“When all the cannabis stuff came down from the state, it said that we were supposed to treat cannabis as if it was any other product,” he said. “Take cannabis out of this analysis and

substitute in tomato plants. The calculus, the perception, changes a little bit.”

Strniste said he advised Watkins to apply for a home business permit, rather than one as a cottage industry, after a few days of having reviewed local regulations. Strniste, who was appointed to his position by the former mayor, David Allaire, said he never felt any pressure from Doenges to rule one way or the other in Watkins’ case.

“I’ve always understood his partnership with Fred Watkins dealt with dealings outside the city and never inside the city,” Strniste said.

Despite municipal officials’ directives, however, Watkins believes state law allows him to operate a cannabis cultivation site at home without the need for a permit. He also likens the situation to planting tomatoes in one’s yard before selling them at a market.

“You don’t need a permit to grow a garden in your yard,” he said.

Watkins denies his neighbors’ allegations that his indoor cannabis-growing operation would bring nuisance to the neighborhood. He has told the Development Review Board that the equipment he’d use wouldn’t create extra noise and an air filter would eliminate any smell. And because it’s a wholesale operation, Watkins said, he would deliver to dispensaries and no customers would be coming to his home.

He also dismissed public safety concerns over the business. “There’s no criminal activity in marijuana,” Watkins said, but added that he has installed multiple surveillance cameras and security alarms on his property.

“The neighbors are more secure right now,” he said.



### So long (for now)!

COLLEEN WRIGHT AND Derek Li serve the crowds who came to enjoy a final feast prepared by Derek’s family at Li’s Brandon Chinese Restaurant on Friday, May 3. The restaurant closed on April 30, but owners Bo Li and Tiffany Jiang wanted to thank the community for 20 years of support and friendship. The Li family is contemplating opening a smaller café and Asian market in its storefront space.

## Act 250

*(Continued from Page 14)*  
within the state’s 24 designated downtown areas through July 2028, and up to 50 units in dozens of village centers around the state.

The sprawling bill – which multiple senators lamented they had not had enough time to fully read and comprehend – includes a laundry list of other housing policies and money for programs outside of the Act 250 realm.

It creates a new property transfer tax on second homes, expected to bring in about \$10 million this coming year. It

places a property tax valuation freeze on some newly constructed and rehabbed homes in areas impacted by last year’s catastrophic flooding. The bill also includes flood disclosure requirements for home purchases, rental agreements, and mobile home lot leases.

A last-minute amendment Friday would have placed a temporary moratorium on no-cause evictions in municipalities that have already voted to approve the protections for tenants, but have faced roadblocks at the Statehouse. The amendment failed, though, as senators con-

sidered it not to be pertinent to the bill.

H.687 will now be sent back to the House, and leadership can decide to either concur with the Senate’s changes or request a conference committee to allow members of the two chambers to hash out their differences. Asked whether he anticipates the House will call for a conference committee, Conor Kennedy, chief of staff for Speaker of the House, Rep. Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, said via text that he wasn’t sure yet.

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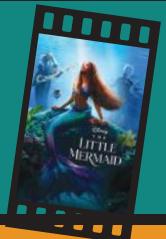
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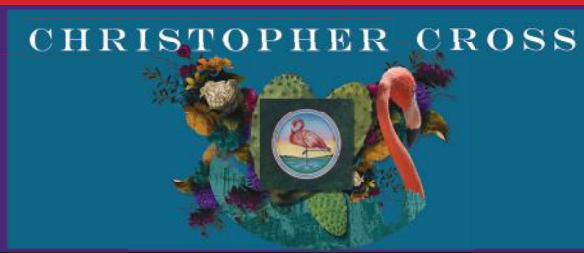
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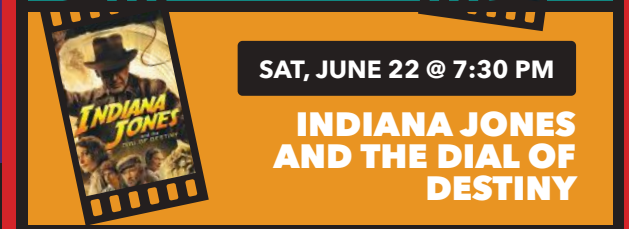
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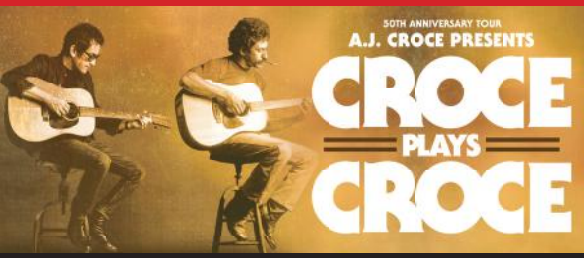


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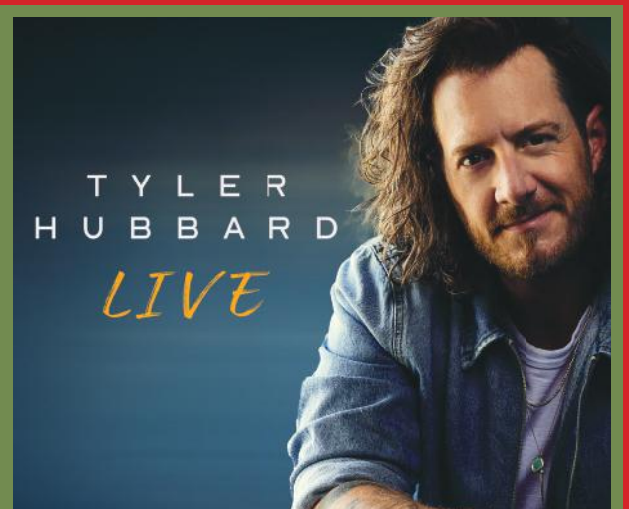
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