



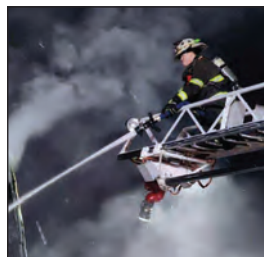
Booking a tour

A monthly musical series will stop at all of the 5-Town area's libraries. See Arts + Leisure.



Hooping it up

The Panther women's basketball team made it seven wins in eight games. See Sports, Page 1B.



Fire fight

Despite firefighters' best efforts, the Mount Abe principal lost her home this weekend. See Page 2A.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Maple season is off to an early start for some

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — While the maple season likely won't be in full swing for another month or two, the unusually warm freeze-and-thaw cycle in December enabled some county sugarmakers to already begin collecting and boiling sap.

That's certainly been the case for the team at Heffernan Family Sugarworks in Starksboro, which started tapping its trees on Dec. 5.

"It is the earliest that we've ever started tapping but only by a week," sugarmaker Bill Heffernan (See Maple, Page 8A)

'Perfect storm' hits ACSD spending plan

Ed property tax rates likely to skyrocket

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — A perfect storm of expiring federal aid, inflation, rising fixed costs, new state legislation and spiraling real estate values is conspiring to make for the most challenging budget

year in the relatively short history of the Addison Central School District.

The ACSD board, which is preparing to endorse a fiscal year 2025 spending plan of roughly (See ACSD, Page 5A)



Get down!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS JOINED the Middlebury Union High School dance team on the floor of the school gym for an impromptu dance party Saturday after a home competition. Dancing in front are Tiger hip-hoppers Jordyn Rushton, left, and Gedeleine Franklin, teammate Madelyn Brochu dances behind Rushton, and behind Franklin is Joleigh Bradford, an MUHS graduate who danced on the team last year. See more photos and a story on Pages 1B and 4B.

Independent photo/Steve James



Land of the free

STUDENTS AND STAFF at Middlebury's Mary Hogan Elementary School admire the Black Lives Matter flag that was hoisted up the flagpole along with the Stars and Stripes and the Vermont state flag on Thursday, Jan. 4. See more photos on Page 3A.

Independent photo/Steve James

Local lawmakers set statewide priorities

Housing and climate change top list

By JOHN FLOWERS

MONTPELIER — Boosting the state's housing stock, continuing the fight against climate change and helping communities make millions of dollars in overdue repairs to school buildings are among the top 2024 priorities of various Addison County lawmakers

who hold key leadership positions in Montpelier.

Legislators converged upon the Statehouse last week for the start of a 2024 session that'll be long on challenges but short on resources. Gov. Phil Scott, during his state-of-the-state speech on Thursday, Jan. 4, presented lawmakers with

his to-do list — one that he said is predicated on making Vermonters safer, with more housing options and more disposable income.

"Public safety, affordability and housing are the issues that demand our immediate attention because Vermonters are seeing, feeling, and living them every single day, and because these issues are critical to reversing our demographic trends,"

he told those who had gathered in the House chambers for a joint session of General Assembly.

It's an agenda he argued is essential to attracting and retaining younger residents to fill jobs in a state that's been grayning at an alarming rate, according to Scott.

Using statistics from the Joint Fiscal Office, Scott noted that in (See Lawmakers, Page 9A)

Low CLA ratios seen driving up school tax rates

By ANDY KIRKALDY

ADDISON COUNTY — The good news for Addison County and Vermont property owners is that the value of their real estate has increased in recent years.

The bad news is that as well as contributing (See CLA & taxes, Page 12A)



CHARLESTIN

Midd Dem. launches her bid for governor

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Esther Charlestin a few years ago got a taste of public service as a member of the Middlebury selectboard.

Now she's seeking to dramatically expand her network of constituents — as governor of

the state of Vermont.

Charlestin, 33, confirmed her gubernatorial candidacy at a kickoff event held on Friday, Jan. 5, on the steps of the Vermont Statehouse.

"This is something I only (See Charlestin, Page 12A)



By the way

Here's a reminder that if you live in Monkton and are having trouble heating your home this winter: the Monkton WoodBank has firewood available for families in need. If you or someone you know is struggling to keep their

(See By the way, Page 13A)

Young Lions club does good work

'Leos' teens helping out in city region

By ANDY KIRKALDY

VERGENNES — Over the past 10 months, a group of more than 20 Vergennes-area teens have built a playground at the John Graham Shelter, helped fund and install an owl barn and plantings at the Otter Creek Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, worked at Bixby Library book sales and at monthly American Legion fish dinners, helped rake the grounds at D.A.R. John Strong Mansion, read to youngsters at Ferrisburgh Central School, and helped residents tend gardens and clean up after floods.

That's just a partial list of what the members of Vergennes



MEMBERS OF THE Vergennes area Leos Club, pictured here with members of the American Legion and Auxiliary, are a regular sight as volunteers at the Legion's monthly Fish Fry dinners.

Photo courtesy of Cookie Steponaitis

Leos Club, which is affiliated with the Vergennes Lions Club, has accomplished since the club's adult mentors and Lions Club

Members Cookie Steponaitis and Mason Charlebois were inspired to revive the Leos Club in March 2023.

The Leo teens have plenty more planned for 2024, including running a career fair at Vergennes (See Leos Club, Page 14A)

MAUSD board will have three openings

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — The Mount Abraham Unified School District Board will welcome at least a few new faces this spring, as three longtime board members have decided they will not seek reelection when their terms expire in March.

Those outgoing incumbents are: New Haven representative Sarah LaPerle, Bristol representative Kevin Hanson and MAUSD Board Chair Krista Siringo, who also represents Bristol.

"I've learned so much during my time on the board. We've worked through a lot of challenges, such as becoming a unified school district, navigating the COVID pandemic, and exploring the possibility of a (See MAUSD board, Page 13A)

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Fire destroys Mount Abe principal's home

Accidental short deemed the cause of Ferrisburgh Plank Road blaze

By MARIN HOWELL

FERRISBURGH — A weekend fire destroyed the Ferrisburgh home of Mount Abraham Union High School Principal Shannon Warden.

Warden discovered the fire when she returned to the single-family dwelling on Plank Road on Saturday evening. No injuries



CREWS FROM FIVE local fire departments responded to a structure fire on Saturday evening in Ferrisburgh, which destroyed the home of Mount Abraham Union High School Principal Shannon Warden. The blaze is believed to have been caused by a short in the home's main electrical service.

Photo courtesy of Vergennes Volunteer Fire Department

were reported, but three dogs were killed in the blaze, and the structure is considered a total loss, according to Vergennes Fire Chief David DiBiase.

"As the shock waves and wanes, I'm coming to the realization that I have lost a lifetime of memories, belongings and the pride I had in buying my first home independently," Warden wrote in a Facebook post on Sunday.

In the social media post, Warden expressed gratitude for area firefighters' swift response to the blaze and grieved the loss of her three dogs: Paisley, Moxie and Hadley.

"I don't think we fully appreciate the unconditional love of our four leggeds until they're no longer with us. It was the worst feeling to open the door of my burning home and not have any of them greet me at the door or let out their 'happy you're home!' barks and yips," she wrote.

DiBiase said his department was called into action at 7:21 p.m. on Saturday for an active structure fire and arrived at the scene seven minutes later. The Ferrisburgh, New Haven and Addison fire departments were also called in, as well as the Vergennes Area Rescue Squad

and Charlotte Fire and Rescue.

Crews were able to contain the blaze in about an hour, according to DiBiase. However, the fire reignited early Sunday morning.

"We got called back at 5:30 a.m. the next morning for a rekindle. At that time, we saw the entire structure to be fully involved with fire through the roof," DiBiase said.

The Vergennes fire chief noted that the home was considered a complete loss prior to the rekindling, though the later burning caused additional damage to the roof of the structure.

Addison County Firefighters Association Fire investigators were at the scene on Saturday and determined the fire was caused by a short in the main electrical service between the electrical meter and the panel.

Warden's sister Donna Warden Gerhart launched a GoFundMe fundraising effort for Shannon Warden on Sunday.

"All she has left is the clothing she was wearing," Gerhart wrote in her appeal.

As of Tuesday morning the site had raised \$15,436 from 197 donors. To view the appeal go online to [tinyurl.com/HelpShannonW](https://www.tinyurl.com/HelpShannonW).



A SATURDAY EVENING fire destroyed a home on Plank Road in Ferrisburgh, owned by Mount Abraham Union High School Principal Shannon Warden. No humans were injured, but three dogs were killed in the blaze and the structure is considered a total loss.

Photo courtesy of Vergennes Volunteer Fire Department

Middlebury water tank installation delayed

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The planned installation of a 1.3-million-gallon water storage tank on Middlebury's Chipman Hill is in a holding pattern, due to the absence of federal funds that town officials had counted upon to help reduce the \$3.5 million project's financial impact on municipal water ratepayers.

Emmalee Cherington, Middlebury's director of public works operations, said the town will spend the coming months enhancing its chances of receiving up to \$750,000 in project financing through the state's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. And she fully expects the water storage tank project to proceed by the spring of 2025 — if not sooner.

On Town Meeting Day 2023, Middlebury residents voted 948-102 in favor of the new water tank, designed to supplement the current, 1.5 million-gallon receptacle in that same Chipman Hill area that now delivers municipal water to

6,000 year-round consumers. Those users include 2,500 Middlebury College students and 2,300 service connections providing flow to a variety of residential, commercial and industrial customers.

A 2017 "sanitary survey" conducted by the state found the current Chipman Hill water storage facility lacking in its ability to meet average-day demands. At the same time, the state ordered the town to build additional capacity into its municipal water system "on or before March 31, 2018."

Middlebury, with the help of engineers, designed a plan for a new 1.3-million-gallon tank, to be placed next to the current tank. Designers of the project said the combined capacity of the two tanks would crank out enough water to meet peak-hourly demand, generate 3,500 gallons per minute for fire-flow demand, stabilize water pressure and ensure uninterrupted service during repairs.

To cover the costs, officials

pitched a \$3.5 million bond, with payback reduced by using \$1 million in surplus from Middlebury's local option tax fund. Town officials vowed to apply for additional funding to further draw down the remaining \$2.5 million in costs for water ratepayers.

"The overall cost to our users — along with safety water quality — are the big concerns," Cherington said. "We need to keep in mind the users that are actually paying for the overall goal. Whatever we can do to advance the project with that in mind, is the approach we're taking."

Cherington and her colleagues had hoped to net \$750,000 through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), but in the end, the Middlebury project didn't make the cut. Each project application is assigned points based on need and urgency.

"Unfortunately, the project didn't score high enough in comparison to other projects that applied," Cherington said. "The funding line this past year was 157 (points) — while we only received 95 points."

The town is now taking steps to add to its point total to make for a successful DWSRF application, according to Cherington.

(See Tank, Page 3A)



OVERNIGHT HIGH WINDS during the Jan. 9-10 winter storm took down this tree on Drew Lane in Middlebury. Bristol, Lincoln, and the eastern side of Middlebury along the mountains were particularly hard-hit by the storm, where more than 3,000 customers lost electricity.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

High winds sweep across the county

Winter storm and downed trees leave thousands without power

ADDISON COUNTY — Thousands of Addison County residents were without power

on Wednesday morning, after heavy winds from an intense winter storm downed trees and damaged utility lines throughout the region.

As of Wednesday afternoon, outages had been reported in 15 of the county's 23 towns, leaving more than 4,000 residents without power.

As a result, utility crews were busy on Wednesday working to clear county roads and restore power across the region. According to the Green Mountain Power (GMP) Outage Center, an active incident on

Hewitt Road in Bristol left 2,538 residents without power in the towns of Bristol, Lincoln, Ripton and Starksboro.

In Middlebury, more than 500 residents were still without power on Wednesday due to 18 active incidents throughout the shire town.

Damaging winds knocked out power in other parts of the state as well. Widespread outages left an estimated 12,595 Vermonters without power in 72 towns throughout the state on Wednesday, according to the GMP Outage Center.




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Jan 11 - Jan 17

Porter plans new musculoskeletal clinic

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Porter Medical Center is planning a major renovation of the 23 Pond Lane office complex in Middlebury so it can launch a new musculoskeletal clinic offering orthopedic, podiatry and rehab services under one roof.

Those three services are currently offered in separate Middlebury locations, according to Scott Comeau, Porter's chief financial officer.

"This is going to be a great thing for our patients and the people of Addison County," Comeau said. "We're consolidating these clinical spaces into a single location that'll provide more square footage than the three spaces combined do now. It'll be purposefully designed and constructed."

The 23 Pond Lane office complex was originally built 29 years ago to house a business called Concentrated Knowledge Corp., also known as Soundview Executive Book Summaries. The company, among other things, generated book summaries for the convenience of executives and entrepreneurs.

Clement Publishing Group purchased Concentrated Knowledge from Cynthia Langley Folino back in 1999. The business ceased operating in Middlebury, and Remora LLC is the current owner of the 23 Pond Lane property.

It was originally erected as

a 12,000-square-foot office and warehouse. In 2005, the Middlebury Planning Commission approved an application by then-owner Foster Real Estate Development to equip 23 Pond Lane with a 6,000-square-foot addition, bringing it to 18,000 square feet.

Middlebury Interactive Languages, a provider of virtual and in-person world language courses for K-12 students, was among past tenants of the building. The two current occupants of 23 Pond Lane are Porter — which leases 12,000 square feet for its patient financial services department — and the University of Vermont, which rents approximately 3,200 square feet for the Middlebury office of UVM Extension.

Around 2,800 square feet of the complex is unoccupied.

"When I walked into 23 Pond Lane, I thought, 'This could actually be good clinical space,'" Comeau recalled. "The leases at the three other places are running out, and the (current) orthopedics place is out of date anyway. This opportunity came up, and I'm glad we're able to take advantage of it."

Plans call for Porter's financial services department to relocate to a smaller spot within the 23 Pond Lane complex, thereby freeing up space for Porter Orthopedics (now located at 1436 Exchange St.); Porter Podiatry, currently situated at 76 Court St.; and the physical

therapy clinic at 108 Catamount Park.

"The bulk of the construction will be around the physical layout," Comeau said. "There will be exam rooms, check-in space and a rehab therapy gym."

The UVM Extension offices will remain at 23 Pond Lane, according to Comeau.

Porter will finance the renovations, and Comeau believes the institution will be able to take on the project without having to submit to a Certificate Of Need (CON) process through the Green Mountain Care Board. According to state statutes, any activity or function related to "care, treatment or diagnosis of patients" costing more than \$500,000 requires a CON.

Comeau said Porter is seeking a 20-year lease for the Pond Lane building, which he believes will afford plenty of time for the institution to amortize its renovation investment in the property.

The Middlebury Development Review Board earlier this week OK'd Remora LLC's request for a change in use of 23 Pond Lane from office to healthcare clinic/office.

If all goes according to plan, Porter's new musculoskeletal clinic should be up and running in early to mid-2025, according to Comeau.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

Tank

(Continued from Page 2A)

"One of the factors that will greatly increase the town's ability to secure the DWSRF funding is completing an Asset Management Plan (scheduled for spring 2024)," she said. "With an approved Asset Management Plan, the town will likely qualify (for DWSRF funding), as that increases the points needed by 75 points."

Also adding to Middlebury's point total will be the successful 2023 bond vote.

Cherington added the town isn't investing all its funding hopes in the DWSRF. Officials are also seeking resources through a Congressional earmark and/or the Northern Border Regional Commission.

"There are different approaches we're trying to take to get (the money) sooner," she said.

While Middlebury missed out on a key funding source for the water tank installation, it's a rare miss amid what has been a successful

track record securing state and/or federal assistance for major capital projects.

For example, the town received substantial DWSRF funding for its \$2.5 million effort in 2021 to replace antiquated waterline on sections of Court Street, Court Square and Washington Street.

Also, Middlebury has qualified for Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) assistance to cover the majority of:

- A \$1.2 million plan to do a complete reconstruction of Bakery Lane, while also addressing ongoing drainage issues. This project has been awarded \$944,871 from the CWSRF.

- \$1.5 million in sewer and stormwater work for South Street. This project has been awarded \$498,200 from the CWSRF, in addition to \$664,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act Combined Sewer Overflow Fund.

It should be noted that CWSRF

assistance is contingent on a positive bond vote on the two aforementioned projects this spring.

Middlebury has also secured funding help from the Vermont Agency of Transportation Highway Structures Program to design and construct a replacement culvert on Halladay Road (scheduled for this year); and up to 90% assistance through Greenprint Partners for a more than \$1 million, stormwater-related treatment of impervious surfaces at the town's recreation park and Memorial Sports Center.

Meanwhile, Cherington said the town's water system shouldn't be at risk while waiting for the new Chipman Hill water tank.

"In the immediate, we're not asking people to conserve water; it's more about future growth," she said of the need for more water holding capacity.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

ADDISON COUNTY

School News Briefs

Kierra Lacey of Middlebury has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's fall 2023 dean's list. The fall term runs from September to December. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the list.

Timothy Geist of Orwell, a freshman majoring in Engineering Studies, was named a Presidential Scholar for the Fall 2023 semester at Clarkson University. Presidential Scholars must achieve a minimum 3.80 grade-point average and carry at least 14 credit hours.

Indie Choudhury of Cornwall and Annie Lapiner of Middlebury have been named to the dean's list at the University of Wisconsin, Madison for the fall 2023 semester. Choudhury is a student in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Lapiner is a student in the College of Letters and Science.

DO YOU HAVE AN OPINION?

Email your Letter to the Editor to: news@addisonindependent.com



Flag raising

MIDDLEBURY'S MARY HOGAN Elementary School students witnessed the raising of a Black Lives Matter flag at their campus for the first time on Thursday, Jan. 4. Top right, students Sara Miranda-Ngaiza, Elias Urang, Elise Mical and Ainsley Watson stand under the just-raised flag, which will fly through the balance of this academic year. Second photo from top, fourth-graders Urang — who engineered the BLM flag effort — and Miranda-Ngaiza pull on a rope to send the flag skyward. Above photo, Mary Hogan Principal Jen Kravitz holds Urang's speech, which he delivered prior to the flag raising ceremony. Left, Watson and Mical carry out their usual job of raising the U.S. and Vermont flags.

Independent photos/Steve James

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Editorial

Freakish storms, hottest year, send unmistakable message

Another strange winter storm swept through the state on Tuesday night packing winds gusting to 70 mph, heavy snow changing to rain amounting to a few inches in most of the state, but up to 10 inches in Randolph and Braintree, and leaving 27,000 or more Vermonters without power for what could be multiple days. Another high-wind storm follows on Friday.

Last year a similar storm hit the state a couple weeks earlier, just before Christmas, causing even more damage with higher winds and colder temps and knocking out power for 3-5 days around Lake Dunmore and many parts of Addison County. We don’t want to say it’s part of the new normal, but it’s no coincidence these freakish storms are related to higher-than-normal global temperatures with a climate changing faster than anticipated.

It’s no secret 2023 shattered records for being the hottest year on record across the globe. According to a report in Monday’s *New York Times*, scientists confirmed 2023 “appears to be among the warmest years in at least 100,000,” according to Carlo Buontempo, director of the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service. “There were simply no cities, no books, agriculture or domesticated animals on this planet the last time the temperature was so high,” he said.

The signs of that warmer globe were everywhere: Canada saw it most destructive wildfires ever as more than 45 million acres of forest burned, sending a choking haze across the northern half of the U.S.; hot weather baked Iran and China, Greece and Spain, Texas and the American South.

That warming climate had local impacts as well, seen this year with a summer that started off dry in late May, then turned on its head and sent incessant rain and record flooding across the state for the rest of summer. While some snows came early in mid-to-late November, Vermont saw more flooding and a record warm and snowless Christmas week.

Temps were so warm this December in Addison County that several maple sugarmakers began tapping their trees. A story on today’s front page reports the Heffernan Family Sugarworks in Starksboro collected 43,000 gallons of sap by the end of December and has already made over 1,500 gallons of syrup. When I moved here 40 years ago, Town Meeting Day was more the marker of when the sap would flow.

Such changing weather is news because it affects so much of what we do — from farming practices to outdoor recreation, tourism to how we build and site our homes and businesses, and of course the choices we make to power our homes, vehicles and businesses.

As the legislative session kicks off this week (see story Page 1A), how to address the issues around climate change are among the top concerns of area legislators, with much of that concern focused on the practical issues of making strategic investments in infrastructure to reduce future damage.

To that point, ANR Secretary Julie Moore wrote an op-ed this week which, while sympathizing with legislators wanting to address the issue on various fronts, suggested a holistic strategy.

“Last year will be remembered for a series of environmental disasters and is a clear indication that our changing climate is already threatening Vermonters’ health, safety, quality of life and economic security. . . . The devastating floods this past summer impacted our bridges and dams, impacted our homes and businesses, and left indelible marks in communities throughout Vermont, amounting to more than \$500 million in losses. Estimates from the December floods are still being calculated. . . .

“The raft of resilience-related draft legislative proposals released last week, in addition to the work already under way by state agencies,” she continued, “makes it clear the legislative and executive branches share an understanding of the magnitude of the challenge – and a sense of urgency in addressing it.”

Meanwhile, climate activists around the world are trying to get as many of us regular folks as possible to do what we can — from driving hybrids or electric vehicles, to weatherizing our homes, to installing heat pumps and solar panels or trackers, and everything else to reduce our carbon footprint — to stave off the worst results of a warming climate.

That message can be dire and anti-big oil, but it’s also about something much more: the loss of winter — the magic of this season of sledding, skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, or just walking on a snowy night — that stings the most.

Environmentalist, author and journalist Bill McKibben, who is also a Ripton resident and avid skier at Rikert Outdoor Center, recently recalled that “the EPA, twenty years ago, said in their regional climate report for northern New England that cross-country skiing might well become extinct in the second half of this century, along with snowmobiling. So in one sense a winter like this is not surprising, but it’s still so painful. Winter is the whimsical season, when friction gives up its grip on the Earth for a while and lets you slide across the surface. That we’d sacrifice that to help Exxon’s profit margin is sad indeed.”

But what can be done, I asked.

“Climate change is not mysterious,” he replied. “If we build enough solar panels and wind turbines and batteries, we can cut the rising slope of temperature. We’re not going to get the winters of my youth back, but we might be able to stop us short of one long mud season.”

Enough said. Past time for all of us to do what we can.

Angelo Lynn



Hangin’ in there

HOOKS USED TO dangle Christmas ornaments on the tree sit on a table this past weekend waiting to be separated and organized before being stowed away until next December, when they will be pressed into service again.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

Phone call led to expanded family

It was almost thirty years ago when we received a phone call from Indonesia. While we did not know the person calling, she was actually a Vermonter from the Vergennes area who lived in that part of the world. She asked if we might be willing to have a boy come to live with us so that he could complete high school in this country. This would allow him to have strong English and be ready to attend a U.S. college.

For us, this was truly an out-of-the-blue request. A friend of ours had given her our names, but as that friend was also living in Indonesia (and we were not so linked with email, etc.), we had no forewarning. Nevertheless, we took the request seriously. We talked as a family, since bringing in a new person would impact all of us. Our own boys were seven and eleven, and the older one had more of a sense of how things might change. At that time, we had three bedrooms in our house, and it did not seem fair to require anyone to share their room with a stranger. We decided to say “Yes” to the request, however, and proceeded to do some renovations in order to create an additional bedroom. We had a chance to speak with the boy and his family on the phone, allowing us at least a bit of acquaintance. At that time, phone calls between here and Indonesia came via satellite, adding a significant lag between what one spoke and when the listener would hear it, which sometimes made for an awkward conversation, but it worked.

In July the boy arrived, one of a small group of Indonesian students joining a variety of Vermont

families. It wasn’t long before he fit into our family with ease. At the high school, he was successful academically and even took up football — a sport not played in Indonesia. When we received a request a few months later to have his younger brother also join us, we were glad to agree, as long as the brothers could share a room. And so it was that in one year’s time our family expanded from four to six.

These boys became our boys. They were the older brothers who truly benefited our own sons’ lives. The elder was with us for two years, the younger for three, but we were also their U.S. home after they went away to college. They joined us for Christmas holidays and other breaks from their schedules. They both ended up staying in the U.S., getting employment and establishing themselves. When they got married, we were a part of their weddings. When their parents died, we became their parents in a deeper sense, even though they did not live nearby. We all felt like and continue to feel like family in the important ways of love and emotional connection.

I think about this because they were with us over the recent holidays. While we have seen them on and off over the years since they graduated from college, it has been over twenty years since they were here for Christmas. Of course, now it was not just the two boys (actually men in their forties) but also their wives and four children. Meanwhile, we usually host about eleven of our own close relatives, so this year our crew

(See *Ways of Seeing*, Page 5A)

Ways of Seeing

By Laurie Cox



An AI humor column? Not yet

I’ve heard that someday, on its unstoppable and accelerating march to becoming sentient and subjugating humanity, artificial intelligence (AI) is going to put writers out of work. I tried AI last week and have concluded that this column, at least, is safe for now.

For anyone not familiar with AI, there are websites where you can type prompts or questions and a “chatbot” will scan the internet for relevant information and respond — sometimes accurately, sometimes not — in a humanlike, conversational way. (This is essentially what I do, except with my brain, and more slowly, when asked such challenging questions as “What did you do this weekend?”)

I wondered whether AI could find my columns online and approximate my writing style. So I went to the ChatGPT website and prepared to engage with the chatbot as if AI were a harmless novelty and not the future overlord of humankind.

I loaded my first prompt with helpful key words: “Write the opening paragraph of a column in the style of Vermont humor columnist Jessie Raymond.” The chatbot leaned into the “Vermont” angle, responding with the following (and I am not making any of this up): “Well, slap on your flannel and dust off your maple syrup collection, because here in the Green

Mountain State, we’ve officially entered the season of unpredictable weather and even more unpredictable neighborly interactions.”

Yikes.

The chatbot (as me) went on to talk about my fictional neighbor, Bob, and how we recently clashed over the proper way to stack firewood. The paragraph ended with, “It’s a frosty world out here, folks, but at least we’ve got a sense of humor as sharp as a cheddar cheese wheel.”

This is what I sound like? A cross between Wilford Brimley and an intern at the Vermont Department of Tourism?

Hurtful.

I tried again, this time leaving out the word “Vermont.” The result was not much better: “Well, grab your coffee mug and settle into your comfiest chair, because we’re about to dive headfirst into the chaotic symphony that is my life here in the good ol’ Green Mountain State.”

In this iteration of the column, the chatbot had me baking bread, with disastrous results. The paragraph ended with, “The only thing rising more unpredictably than my sourdough is the quirky charm of Vermont living.” (Sorry to be pedantic, but since when does quirky charm “rise”?)

I tried many permutations, asking for opening

(See *Jessie*, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

Snowbowl bus a huge value

The bus from Middlebury to Rikert/Snowbowl is absolutely free! The bus leaves from Middlebury’s Academy Street roughly every hour Wednesday through Sunday, so it is quite convenient. The drivers are all very kind. The ride is beautiful and you can sit back and take in the view. No worries of finding a parking spot at Snowbowl. Since the bus is running, why not park your car at the academy stop and use less fossil fuels each time you head out for a ski?

You can also coordinate bus rides from other towns (like Bristol) and transfer to the Snowbowl bus. Again, multiple options with convenient times.

And lastly, there is now a punch card where for every 10 rides you get a free gift from Rikert/Snowbowl.

Hope to see you on the bus!
Jennifer Kluever
Bristol

A vivid view on value of water

Matt Dickerson’s article (Jan. 4) in which he expressed, among other things, his concern for the ecological health of our waters resonated deeply with me. Among all the resources civilization depends upon water is arguably the most vital, and also the most disrespected and wasted.

For the past 30 plus years I have led a mostly normal American lifestyle with one big difference. I have pumped the water I use by hand. My family helped and my wife takes equal turns now that she is retired, but most often it was my job. This simple fact is very hard for most people to believe, and it’s emblematic of why we pay so little attention to water. It is simply the stuff that flows from the tap, or the showerhead. It is there on demand, and who cares where it comes from or how. For me it was simply a choice I made when I was doing the plumbing for an 1820’s farmhouse I restored and moved into, and I never had reason to regret it. It’s been good exercise.

But more than that, it’s a daily reminder of what water means. This is not a trivial matter, and I have never even mentioned it before, knowing the type of reaction it would generally invite. Not that I set my mind to drudgery. I have such a love for water where I find it in nature that I’m content to meet it again with each stroke of a pump handle. This is what life feels like. It is what we bargained away so long ago that it scares people to think about it. It is what we may return to, gratefully.

In his book “Song For the Blue Ocean,” Carl Safina described our moment perfectly: “When things of great value that are irreplaceable in human time are knowingly destroyed, it can only be because we have elevated and venerated the worst we are capable of, and have all conspired with our actions and inaction in a great dishonesty and debasement of ourselves and our descendants.”

Brian Carter
Salisbury

Report on bees missed the mark

Recent media announcements by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets (VAAFAM) suggest that due to the great work the agency is doing, Vermont’s managed honeybee population is “healthy and robust.” They point to statistics that indicate a 43% percent increase in managed honeybee hives since 2016. Unfortunately, this interpretation of the data is completely inaccurate.

Make no mistake, honeybees and beekeepers in Vermont are struggling. Annual losses of 30-50% are common and almost every beekeeper in the state has to work hard every year replacing yearly colony losses simply to stay in business and try to keep their hive numbers steady from season

(See *Conrad letter*, Page 5A)

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INDEPENDENT

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Letters to the Editor

Article 22 on reproductive rights was misleading

Under Article 22 of the Vermont Constitution, Vermonters may be required to pay for medical procedures related to reproductive choice through increases in health insurance premiums. The Purpose section of Article 22, which did not appear on the ballot in 2022, purports under Chapter 1, Articles 1 and 7, that “reproductive liberty” is a common benefit and protection bestowed by government.

Fertility services bills H.369 and S.63 serve to define reproductive “common benefits” by requiring health insurance companies and Medicaid to cover fertility-related services such as, “fertility diagnostic care; intrauterine insemination treatment with donor or partner semen; at least three retrievals of oocytes under anesthesia for in vitro fertilization with a donor or partner semen or egg;” fertility-related medications; and fertility preservation services.

Both the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Finance received

testimony in early 2023 on H.369 and S.63, respectively. Both bills are expected to be passed in 2024.

According to the Billing Fertility Mandate submitted to the Senate Committee on Finance by Sebastian Arduengo, Esq., Vermont Department of Financial Regulation, premium costs would increase from between \$6.69 to \$17.40 Per Member Per Month (PMPM - see chart on page 16) depending upon three scenarios ranging from unlimited to limited coverage outlined on page three of the Executive Summary.

On top of inflation, the “Affordable” Heat Act, double-digit health insurance premium increases in 2023, and a potential 18.5% increase in property taxes across Vermont in 2024, H.369 and S.63 fertility services bills are an additional threat to the economic security and prosperity of Vermont families, seniors, and individuals.

Vermonters were told Article 22 was needed to protect women’s access to abortion in Vermont. This is untrue in at

least three ways: 1) the Supreme Court of Vermont, Chittenden, determined the legislature cannot prohibit the safe exercise of abortion in Beecham V Leahy and Jeffords in 1972, a year before Roe V. Wade was decided; 2) there were no legal restrictions on abortion in Vermont prior to the passage of Act 47 in 2019, which expressly prohibits a public entity (government) from interfering in reproductive choice; 3) Article 22 would not prevent any future federal laws affecting abortion nationwide, under the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

In addition, legislators failed to educate the public on their plans to introduce and pass legislation that requires financing the constitutional right to reproductive liberty, and the potential costs to Vermonters for funding this government-given “right.”

**Renee McGuinness
Addison County GOP
Committee Woman**

Conrad letter

(Continued from Page 4A)
to season.

Where did the VAAFM go wrong? In 2015 the Vermont State legislature passed a law (6 V.S.A. §§ 3022 & 3023) that requires all beekeepers in the state to register with the VAAFM. For the first time, this law also required beekeepers who registered to pay a \$10 annual registration fee for each apiary location in the state. It turned out that many Vermont beekeepers were not interested in paying registration fees. As a result, in 2016 ,the first year that the new law was enacted, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of bee hives registered in Vermont.

This new apiary law also changed the timing requirements so bees are now registered during the month of June. Previously, beekeepers could register their colonies anytime during the year. This is a critical distinction since colony numbers in apiaries fluctuate widely during the year from an annual low during the first few months of the year to the peak of the season around July 1. Vermont’s honeybee numbers

then decline drastically in autumn when many of the state’s largest bee operations move thousands of hives south to states like Florida and North Carolina for the winter.

The legislature was smart enough to add some teeth to this new law and included fines for those that fail to register their hives annually with the state. Now the state can go after these beekeeping scofflaws that fail to register, and today the number of colonies on file with the state is probably more accurate than ever before.

Unfortunately, comparing the year 2016 when the states’ reported honeybee colony numbers were artificially low, with today’s numbers that are not only more accurate but also reflect the peak honeybee colony population of the season, creates a false representation of how managed bees in Vermont are faring.

Another problem is that total colony numbers at the peak of the season are not an accurate proxy for the health of Vermont’s honeybee industry. By VAAFM accounting if a beekeeper with

1,000 hives loses 500 over the course of the winter, and splits all the surviving hives in the spring to create 500 new colonies to replace the losses, and reports having 1,000 hives again in the new year, this is a “healthy and robust” beekeeping industry.

VAAFM should be focusing on the huge losses Vermont beekeepers suffer annually, which beekeepers know is tied to the hundreds of tons of toxic pesticides spread across the Vermont landscape year after year. According to testing done by the Vermont Bee Lab at UVM, pesticides are regularly showing up in bee hives at levels known to be acutely lethal to bees. The fact that many of these pesticides are also known to contain PFAS, or “forever chemicals,” adds yet more urgency. VAAFM needs to stop patting itself on the back and start getting serious about addressing an environmental crisis that they are playing an active role in creating.

**Ross Conrad
Vermont Pesticide and Poison
Action Network (VT PAPAN)**

Jessie

(Continued from Page 4A)
sentences on various topics. Here’s the chatbot, as me, writing about winter: “As the first snowflake fell from the sky, I looked out my window and thought, ‘Well, it’s that time of year when my thermostat becomes my most treasured possession, and my car suddenly develops trust issues.’”

That one wasn’t bad, actually. It was mildly amusing, which tracks with most of my attempts at real zingers. But that was the closest the chatbot ever came to sounding like me.

In one last experiment, I asked the chatbot for the final paragraph of this very column. And this is what I got: “So, as I bid farewell

to my AI experimentations and return to my trusty typewriter — yes, I’m that person — I can’t help but wonder if ChatGPT has figured out how to craft the perfect punchline, or if it’s just sitting in the virtual corner, questioning why humans insist on adding humor to everything. Until next time, may your laughter be as infectious as a Vermonter’s love for maple syrup.”

Seriously? Not only was it still hammering the folksy Vermont similes, but now it was insulting me with “why humans insist on adding humor to everything.”

Listen, the world can be a pretty dark place, and humor serves as a distraction to help keep us from

staying in bed more days than not. Also, I’m a humor columnist; “adding humor to everything” is the whole job description.

From what I’ve seen at this point, AI poses no threat to my column; it hasn’t read my stuff and can’t mimic my writing style. Still, don’t be surprised if in future columns you run across a few ham-fisted references to maple syrup and cheddar cheese.

I’m hoping our future overlord will treat me less harshly, when humans are vanquished, if I let it fill in for me now and then.

The chatbot — and humans — can find my writing online at www.jessieraymond.com.

Athletes compete and play, they don’t ‘do battle’

Athletes, whether in “individual” sports such as swimming or wrestling, etc., i.e., sports in which each athlete competes on an individual basis with another athlete, or in “team” sports, i.e., sports in which the team must function together in play, cannot do their sports without competitors. They need those competitors in order to draw out their own better athletic performances. So, while they do compete, they are or should be friends, at least within the moment, if not friends even outside a given competition. Experience tells me that many athletes understand their competitors in

precisely this manner.

They complete, but they do not “do battle.” Permit me, therefore, to take exception to the caption for the picture of two wrestlers in the upper-left corner of section B, page 1, of your 4 Jan., 2024, issue. I trust that battle is not your word, nor would it be your word choice, though it would seem to be the word choice of a writer who does not comprehend what is going on in sports’ finest moments. As such, he demeans the sport, the athletes in that picture, and, by implication, all athletes.

In the finest sense of athletic competition, athletes do not fight.

ACSD

(Continued from Page 1A)
\$46 million for Middlebury-area schools, received the sobering financial news on Monday evening from Matt Corrente, the district’s business manager, and Rep. Peter Conlon, D-Cornwall, who chairs the House Education Committee.

The resulting property tax increases could result in some residents in the ACSD seeing their school taxes go up by hundreds of dollars in the coming year.

Here are some of the issues that could trigger homestead education property tax rate increases ranging from 23 cents per \$100 in property value in Shoreham, to 44 cents in Cornwall:

- A 16.4% increase in health care premiums for teachers and other school district employees, adding \$765,874 to the bottom line; a 4.5% hike in student transportation costs; an expected bump of 5-9% in the Patricia Hannaford Career Center tuition rate; a new contract for ACSD teachers that is under negotiation; a commitment by the board to ask taxpayers to fund an approximately six full-time-equivalent positions — including a special worker and three literacy interventionists — that had been created with federal pandemic-related money that is about to sunset (more below); and a new Child Care Contribution (CCC) tax that’s part of Act 27, a law that provides more resources for child care centers and the eligible households that use them. The Child Care Contribution is an

employer payroll tax of 0.44% on gross wages. As a major employer, the district’s exposure could be \$100,000-\$120,000, according to Corrente.

- A loss of \$917,000 in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding that was tied to the COVID-19 pandemic, though officials are expecting a \$400,000 revenue increase through the Census Block Grant and a \$25,000 bump from an English Language Learner Grant.
- A COVID-era real estate market that’s seen home values skyrocket, as folks — many of them out-of-staters seeking a *pied a terre* in Vermont — snapped up available abodes in an already tight market. While area homeowners have seen their homestead values double or triple in a short time, those values are creating huge deviations in communities’ Common Level of Appraisals (CLAs).

The CLA is the state’s method of ensuring each town is paying its fair share of education property tax to the state’s Education Fund. If a town’s property assessments are below fair market value (often the case because of upward pressure on home prices), then the CLA goes down and property tax rates go up. In Addison County, all towns’ property assessments are well below fair market value (see CLA story on Page 1A).

It should be noted that roughly two-thirds of Vermonters pay an education property tax that’s

They play! The suggestion to the contrary becomes a subtle but all-too-real reason why our society has such difficulty in respecting those with opposite thoughts or functions from our own. Thus, in a subtle way, your caption writer’s attitude about sports makes our society just a bit less kindly or generous, person to person.

Please counsel your writers about the subtle implications of their writing, hoping always for the higher and better sense of things.

**Karl E. Moyer
Lancaster, Penn.**

determined by their income, with a small adjustment for property values. The remaining third of the population pay their taxes based on property value.

Corrente on Monday presented the board FY’24 CLA estimates for all seven towns. They reveal Bridport’s CLA is 70.67% of fair market, which would drive the need for a \$2.08 local education property tax rate based on the current FY’25 spending plan — a 30-cent (or 17%) increase; Cornwall, with a CLA of 70.6%, would also need a \$2.08 tax rate based — a 44-cent (27%) increase. The tentative increases calculated for the other ACSD towns include

Middlebury: 23-cent (14%) bump for a rate of \$1.91.
Ripton: 24-cent (13%) increase for a rate of \$2.01.

Salisbury: 30-cent (16%) increase for rate of \$2.15.
Shoreham: 23-cent (14%) increase for a rate of \$1.93.

Weybridge: 25-cent (15%) increase for a rate of \$1.91.

“It reflects the insanity of real estate in Vermont,” Conlon said of the current state of towns’ CLAs.

Towns are expected to get town wide reappraisal every five years so that their CLAs don’t show wide discrepancies. But officials in Bridport — which is in the midst of a reappraisal — noted long waits for towns to initiate that process, as there are relatively few firms that do such work.

(See Rate increase, Page 8A)

Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A)
numbered nineteen! Everyone did not sleep at our house, but we were the location for meals, celebrating, and socializing. While somewhat exhausting, it was perhaps the best Christmas ever.


I think back to that initial phone call, that request. We could so easily have said “No”, and then what we would have missed. Sometimes we need to take the risk. Sometimes we need to make a little extra room for others. Give an opportunity. We don’t always know. Certainly, not all of these young people who arrived thirty years ago meshed with the families who took them in, or maybe even with the American culture. But they got the chance, and those who they lived with also got the chance — to be open to a new person with a totally different background.

We live in a time where people from many parts of the world are moving, whether out of necessity or for opportunity. It can be unsettling, especially in a place like Vermont. Most of the influx to our state over

the years have been immigrants coming for specific industries such as quarrying, or the back-to-the-landers about fifty years ago. If we can value the chance to meet other cultures, if we can find a little extra room, we may also create wonderful new experiences. We may find new family, new friends, new hope,

and even new opportunities for ourselves.

Laurie Cox is a retired school counselor and longtime Ripton Selectboard member. Besides occasional writing she pursues art, gardening, hiking with her dog, and is always striving to build stronger communities.




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Obituaries

George Niles Devoid, 38, of Salisbury

SALISBURY — George Niles Devoid passed away unexpectedly Monday, Jan. 1, 2024, at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center at the age of 38.

Niles was born Nov. 4, 1985, in Middlebury, Vt. He was the son of George E. and Jackie Devoid.

Niles grew up in Salisbury on the family farm, graduating from MUHS in 2004. He worked at Berthiaume Brothers Dairy Farm and JP Carrara & Sons for several years before returning to the farm he loved.

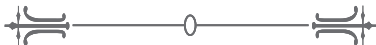
He loved the outdoors, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and four-wheeling. But his greatest joy and proudest accomplishment was his son Graedyn. They spent countless hours together exploring the pond while teaching Graedyn to fish, hiking through sugar woods learning about sugaring and hunting possibilities. They



GEORGE NILES DEVOID

were often found roaming the farm finding things to do together.

Niles is survived by his parents, George and Jackie Devoid; his son, Graedyn, and Graedyn's mother, Shanyin Leduc; his sister Jennifer and her partner, Steve Aruzza;



Shirley McClay, of Vergennes

VERGENNES — Shirley McClay has gone to join the Angels and to be with her husband, Jim, the love of her life. She was born in 1931 in Cabot, Vt., to Harry and Addie Searles. She was one of 18 children. She had a special connection with her brother Jake and his wife Nettie.

Jim and Shirley moved to Vergennes where they were very involved in the community. They operated the Brown-McClay Funeral home for many years; Shirley became a licensed funeral director to help Jim with the business, getting her driver's license when she was 50. They helped to start the Sam Fishman Pool, the Vergennes Rescue Squad and she was an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

She enjoyed attending services and participating in activities at the Addison Community Baptist church, and outings and meals with the Addison County Seniors. Shirley was very proud to be an honorary member of the Cairo Mini Monsters of Rutland, helping to raise money for Shriners children's hospitals.

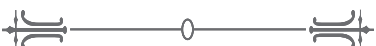
Shirley leaves her family and many others who were blessed by her love and kindness. She was recognized for her many years of volunteering in the Vergennes community, most notably at Clarks



SHIRLEY MCCLAY

Residential Care Home. She loved dancing, bingo, visiting the ocean and fondly remembered her Alaskan cruise with a few of her girlfriends. Shirley went skydiving for her 70th birthday.

Shirley is survived by her children, James McClay (Kathleen), Gayle Torrey (Mark), Tom McClay (Giselaine) and a beloved daughter-in-law Toni McClay; grandchildren, Shirley Katherine (Steven), James II, Amy, Timothy (Alexandra) Shelley, Paul (Jennifer), Joshua (Anna), Caitlin, Jen (Jim) Guenther, Carlie Porter, Nicole (Patrick), Karrinne (Ben), Danielle (Chris), Natalie (Brandon), Dominic,



Elizabeth Ann Marcum, 36, formerly of Vergennes

LOUISA, Va. — Elizabeth Ann Marcum, 36, of Louisa, Va., formerly of Vergennes, Vt., passed away unexpectedly on Oct. 14, 2023, in Richmond, Va. She was born on Sept. 8, 1987, in Middlebury, Vt., and grew up in Vergennes with her parents Patricia (Bedard) and Gerald Gaouette.

Elizabeth moved to Louisa, Va., in 2013. She worked as a companion to the elderly. She truly enjoyed her clients, and they appreciated her support and caring ways. She loved being a mother to her two boys and felt they were her greatest accomplishment.

She is survived by her two sons, Jack Kirk and Conner Kirk; and her parents, all of Louisa, Va.; her brother, Daniel Marcum of Atlanta, Ga.; her aunt, Lisa Stearns of Louisa, Va.; her uncle Jim O'Brien of Ferrisburgh, Vt.; cousins Heather Bedard, Dana O'Brien-Billings, and James O'Brien; and many other friends and family. She was predeceased by her grandparents, Marlene Bedard Findiesen and William Findiesen of Pantton, Vt.

A graveside service was held at Spring Grove Memorial Park in Mineral, Va., with Ronald Swenor officiating.◇

nephews Tucker and Griffin; and grandmother Connie Needham.

He was predeceased by his sister Jamie and grandparents Jon Needham and George and Lois Devoid.

There will be no visiting hours. Services were held Wednesday, Jan. 10, at 11 a.m., at the Salisbury Congregational Church, 853 Maple St, Salisbury, Vt., with a reception to follow. A private burial will be held at Holman Cemetery in Salisbury, Vt.

In Lieu of flowers, Niles would have wanted contributions to be made to a fund being set up for his son, Graedyn, at the National Bank of Middlebury, PO Box 189, Middlebury, VT 05753.

Arrangements are in the care of the Sanderson-Ducharme Funeral Home, Middlebury, Vt.

Online condolences at www.sandersonfuneralservice.com. ◇

Alyssa (Noah) and Ciara; great-grandchildren, Annalise, Savannah, Kyle, Emily, Stephen, Nova, Bella, Nilah, Rachel, Zoe, Vance, Natalia, Cara (Corbin), Courtney (Steven), Dustin, Sadie, Patrick Jr., Lucy, Ciaran, Aoife, Ronan, Declan, Felicity, Finn, Adelina, Kolby, Lillian, Eloise, Charlotte, Penelope, Colette, Victoria, Sebastian, Agnes, Philomena, Gemma and George; and her great-great-grandchildren, Ava, Maverick, Colton, Addy, Tyler and Evan.

Many thanks to the caring staff at Helen Porter Nursing Home for caring for Shirley in her last months of life.

Calling hours will be held at Sanderson-Ducharme Funeral Home, located at 117 South Main Street, Middlebury, on Thursday, Jan. 11, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, Jan. 12, at 10:30 a.m., at the funeral home with the Rev. Stephen Payne officiating.

Private burial will take place in Prospect Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Boys and Girls Club of Vergennes or Vergennes Area Rescue Squad. Arrangements are under the direction of the Sanderson-Ducharme Funeral Home. Online condolence at www.sandersonfuneralservice.com. ◇



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David A. Joy, 82, of Bristol



DAVID A. JOY

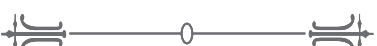
BRISTOL — David A. Joy, 82, passed away on Jan. 1, 2024, at UVM Medical Center in Burlington, Vt., three days after a catastrophic fall. Originally from Maine, (North Haven, Portland and Alfred) he moved to Bristol, Vt., to be closer to family after retirement. He was the only son of Austin and Barbara (Stone) Joy.

An aspiring stuntman in his youth, Dave became a pole vaulter during his time at Deering High School, the next best thing. Later, his interest in design led him to Rhode Island School of Design where he graduated with a degree in architecture and in 1986, co-founded Joy & Hamilton Architects in Maine with his college roommate, Bill Hamilton. He was a supportive and loving husband to Torrey (Smith) Joy for 49 years, after a chance meeting at an auto repair shop with the same water pump failure in their identical cars. They married four months later.

David was an avid reader and writer, always bringing the unique and humorous aspects of events to his storytelling. He enjoyed time with writing groups in both Maine and Vermont. He loved canoeing, camping, golfing with friends, collecting banjos to play, and has left many beautiful stained-glass lamps and window decorations to remember him by. Time with

family and friends was always a pleasure and a good opportunity for a funny poem, clever gift, or treasure hunt for the kids.

He loved to travel and marvel at the architecture and design in the U.S. and Europe. His favorite trip was to Ireland in 2015 with Debi and Harry Hartford, one of many wonderful trips. He had a sweet tooth for maple walnut fudge and used to say "everything's better with maple syrup on it." Dave was an active member and volunteer with several Maine organizations, including Sanford Kiwanis Club, where he gave much time in service to the community. He was the longest serving board member of the York County



Mitchell E. "Mitch" Kelly, 80, of Starksboro

STARKSBORO — Mitchell "Mitch" Earl Kelly, 80, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, at his home in Starksboro.

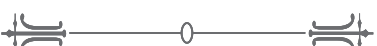
He was born Jan. 23, 1943, in Stockbridge, Vt., the son of Earl and Leona (Rogers) Kelly.

He lived in Starksboro since 1957 and he was a lifelong Vermont farmer dedicated to his

herd of cows

Mitchell is survived by his sister Grace and her husband Keith Pike; two brothers, Melvin and his wife Sue Kelly, and Joseph and his wife Sharon Kelly; several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his parents, and a sister, Beverly Booska.



Douglas Coursey Fenn, 81, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — A devoted father, husband, brother, flirt, and jokester who loved to tell stories, and a man who always had a smile, Douglas C. Fenn, 81, of Middlebury, Vt., died at The Pines in Rutland after a long illness on Dec. 30, 2023.

He was born in Middlebury on April 25, 1942, to Robert E. and Doris M. (Coursey) Fenn, and graduated from Middlebury High School in 1960. He married Donna Hope on Sept. 28, 1963, divorced in 1980 and married Janice Seymour on April 17, 1982.

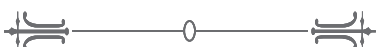
Doug was preceded in death by his second wife, Janice A. (Seymour), who died on Feb. 5, 2015, to whom he dedicated over 25 years of care; his parents and step-mother Carol (Merritt) Fenn, and his brothers David and Dale Fenn. He is survived by his daughter, Amy (Brad) Boise of Middlebury; son, Robert Fenn (Laura) of Middlebury; stepdaughters, Crystal D'Avignon (Corey) of Orwell and Andrea Conway (Shaun) of Chittenden; and his first wife, Donna, who he reconnected with in his later years. Also, his grandchild Katina



DOUGLAS COURSEY FENN

Aro (Ryan); stepgrandchildren Kelsey Ryan, Brooke Ryan, and Dylan Ryan; and 5 stepgreat-grandchildren.

Doug enlisted in the Vermont Army National Guard in November 1965, where he was an M1 rifle Marksman and honorably discharged. He worked at Hendy Bros. for 44 years, working his way up from mechanic to Service Manager until his retirement in 2007. He was a master welder and continued to enjoy working on John Deere tractors and other



Bertha Jean Benjamin, 83, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Bertha Jean Benjamin, 83 years old, passed away Jan. 2, 2024, surrounded by loved ones in Middlebury, Vt. She was born to Clarence Fleming Sr. and Alice (Hill) Hastings on June 1, 1940, at home in Starksboro, Vt.

She loved spending time with her family, cooking, playing bingo and going to yard sales.

Bertha is survived by her sons, Ralph Brown (Becky Brown),

Myron Brown, Ronald Brown (Melissa Clough) and Francis Benjamin Jr.; grandchildren Morgan Brown (Jared Malzac), Christopher Brown (Kait Robinson), Elissa Brown, Taylor Benjamin (Joe Birttain), Ginni Lind Benjamin and Jessney Benjamin; great-grandchildren Brynley Malzac, Malzac baby on the way and Bradley Pease; siblings Theresa Bougor, Wanita Stocker, Janis

Shelter and devoted over 30 years to help struggling people in the community. He and Torrey were also members of the New Century Club, a local study/social group in Alfred, for 40 years.

He is survived by his wife, Torrey; son Tim and wife Elin; son Nick and wife Xiaoli; and grandson Austin. He's also survived by sister-in-law Carlie Barnhart and husband Terry, brothers-in-law Allen and Dutton Jr. and their wives Rose and Kathleen, several cousins, and his favorite dog, Addie. He was predeceased by his parents.

A celebration of life will be held at a future date. Donations in his honor can be made to Homeward Bound, Addison County Humane Society, Middlebury, VT; Kiwanis Club, P.O. Box 990 Sanford, ME 04073; York County Shelter Programs, 147 Shaker Hill Rd. Alfred, ME 04002. Arrangements have been made by Sanderson Funeral Home in Middlebury VT.

"On crisp, clear fall nights it is inspiring to stand in my back yard and gaze up at the stars. Sometimes the sky is so black with depth and distance it feels as if the slightest nudge would send me tumbling in and, I wonder, where would my imaginary journey take me?"

—David Joy ◇

A service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Starksboro First Response and Starksboro Fire Department, Attn. Cheryl Estey, 3902 N 116 Road, Starksboro, VT 05443. To send online condolences to his family please visit www.brownmccclayfuneralhomes.com.◇

equipment in his home garage. At the age of 16 Doug starting flying lessons and earned his commercial pilot's license and enjoyed flying his Luscombe and Cessna until he could no longer fly. He was a lifetime motorcycle enthusiast and enjoyed riding his Harley. Douglas was a lifetime volunteer fire fighter, having served as Chief and Assistant Chief with the East Middlebury Volunteer Fire Department and the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department.

A Celebration of his life will be held on Jan. 20, from 1-3 p.m., at the Middlebury American Legion, located at 49 Wilson Road, Middlebury.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department at 1952 Vermont Route 30 Cornwall, VT. 05753 or to the Addison County Humane Society (Homeward Bound) at 236 Boardman Street, Middlebury, VT 05753.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Sanderson-Ducharme Funeral Home. Online condolences at www.sandersonfuneralservice.com. ◇



BERTHA JEAN BENJAMIN

Calkins, Kathy Boldyga, Evelyn Sackett and Tom Fleming; and many special nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents; siblings Clarence Fleming Jr., William Fleming, Carolyn Tuller, Arlene Brown, Sandra Tebbets, Betty Holcomb and Michael Fleming; first husband, Allan Brown; second husband, Francis Benjamin Sr.; and her long-time boyfriend, Robert Forrest.

Funeral services, burial and a celebration of life will take place in the spring.◇

Celebrating 94 years | 1930-2024

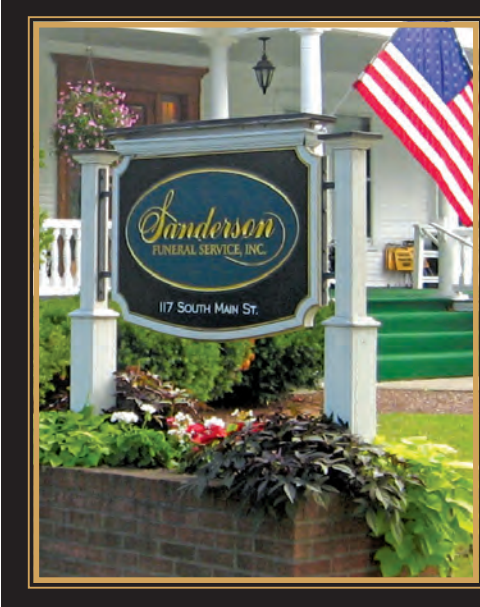
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Lisa (Desabrais) Bagley, 59, of Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — With heavy hearts and bittersweet gratitude, the families of Lisa (Desabrais) Bagley announce the passing of one of the kindest and most genuine souls. Lisa was a cherished wife, loving Mother, immensely proud Grammie, caring sister, daughter, Aunt, cousin, friend, and absolute inspiration to us all. Lisa always lived life to the fullest and maintained her shining spirit and optimistic attitude throughout her heroic and hard-fought battle against cancer until Jan. 4, 2024.

Lisa was born April 13, 1964, to parents Lucien and Thea (Schmidt) Desabrais of Salisbury, Vt. Lisa was a 1982 graduate of Middlebury Union High School, where she spent her extracurricular high school years cheerleading and playing softball. Following high school, she started her family in Salisbury with Rusty Bagley, where Laura, Heather, and L&R Trucking were born. She spent many years volunteering to coach youth softball while also working at her family business, Desabrais Laundry & Dry Cleaning.

After marrying her life partner,



LISA (DESABRAIS) BAGLEY

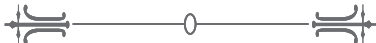
May Morse in 2007 and changing careers, she held a variety of retail management positions until eventually returning to Middlebury to work at TJ Maxx, where she loved her coworkers deeply. Lisa was known for her positive spirit that could light up a room and she loved to socialize with anyone's path she crossed.

Lisa is survived by her partner, May; her daughters, Laura (Bagley) Miner and husband, Aaron, and Heather (Bagley) Quesnel and

husband, Taylor; and stepdaughters Nicole (Morse) Ellis and husband, Daniel, BreAnna (Morse) Cyr and husband, Josh. Though she held many titles in life, Grammie, was undoubtedly, her favorite. Her grandchildren, Camry, Brinnley, Brextyr and Jameson, were her absolute pride and joy. Lisa is also survived by her three sisters, Marion, Lucie, and Rebecca. Lisa is predeceased by her parents (Lucien and Thea) and siblings, Lucien and Bettina.

Lisa proudly wore the pink cancer ribbon in honor of her breast cancer victory fifteen years ago. She felt deeply connected to her "pink sisters" and unknowingly served as a beacon of light and inspiration to so many.

The family would like to extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Lisa's Oncology team and especially, Dr. Unger, at Champlain Valley Hematology/Oncology. Even on her most challenging chemotherapy days, she looked forward to seeing the nurses and providers she considered to be her friends and her greatest support system.◇



Tyler Arnold Brouillard, 25, of Bridport

BRIDPORT — Tyler Arnold Brouillard, 25, of Bridport went to be with his Lord and Savior in the early hours of Dec. 25, 2023, due to injuries received from an automobile accident. Tyler was born on July 28, 1998, in Middlebury, Vt.

Like so many others, Tyler struggled with a severe anxiety disorder. Despite his anxiety, he loved deeply and created laughter all around him. His friends found him to be a great listener and someone to lean on. Within the last two years, Tyler had begun to set goals and was heading in a positive direction. He became closer to family and friends. Tyler was furthering his education and considering joining the military.

Tyler was developing into a fine young man, and he had started his journey with Jesus. We are forever thankful for that. Tyler found comfort and happiness in the kitchen, where he cooked many



TYLER ARNOLD BROUILLARD

wonderful meals for his family and friends. Tyler also enjoyed fishing, online gaming with friends, ATV riding, golf, basketball and baseball. Tyler was loved by so many. Our hearts are broken, but we take comfort in knowing that he is reunited with his father Marcel,



Rhonda Mae (Lamoureux) Bashiru, 57, of Brandon

BRANDON — It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Rhonda Mae (Lamoureux) Bashiru. She passed away in the early hours Monday, Dec. 18, 2023, at Porter Hospital in Middlebury, Vt. Rhonda was a devoted daughter, mother and grandmother.

Rhonda graduated from Otter Valley in 1983. She would later go on to Mount St. Joseph Academy and receive a degree in teaching. She was admired by many and loved by all. She traveled to many parts of the world and met new friends.

Rhonda leaves behind her father, Raymond and her mother, Shirley, along with her sister, Jeanne and her brother-in-law, Robert Wood. Among those left behind are her children, Travis, Nichole and



RHONDA MAE BASHIRU

Johnathan; her nieces, Rebecca and Tanya; along with several grandchildren, Travis Jr. Thomas, Tyler, Hunter, Coleton, Addison

and Kenzi, whom she loved greatly.

Rhonda opened her heart to many and never looked down on anyone. Her students adored her and respected her. Rhonda believed everyone should have equal opportunity to a proper education and knowledge was power.

Rhonda had a gypsy soul that enjoyed traveling. She enjoyed her alone time to be able to sit and paint. She was an amazing artist. She will be greatly missed by all of her family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, Rhonda's family has asked for any donations to help support Hazel Griffin as she is battling cancer and was a dear friend to Rhonda. Donations may be dropped off at 30 Union Street in Brandon, Vt., to Jamie Quenneville.◇

ADDISON INDEPENDENT

50 Years ago this week

Addison County was quiet at this time 50 years ago, as several snowstorms and the continuing oil crisis kept many people at home. Here are some of the top stories that appeared in the Jan. 3 and Jan.10, 1974, issues of the *Addison Independent*:

- Town officials in Middlebury contemplated turning off streetlights in some residential areas to save energy in response to the oil crisis. Citing similar concerns, Middlebury College also announced that it was closing several buildings on campus for the January term.
- The Middlebury Bahá'í Community announced its plans to host a lecture in honor of World Religion Day (January 20).
- Joseph and Mary Philion of Shoreham welcomed a daughter on Jan. 4, the first baby born at Porter Hospital in 1974.
- Two teens were slated to appear in juvenile court after they allegedly pushed a car into Otter Creek and stole food and tobacco products from the Smith Park Restaurant in downtown Middlebury.
- Owners of service stations just over the Canadian border reported that "90 percent more Vermonters" than usual were crossing the border to buy gas, hoping to avoid stateside restrictions on gasoline purchases.
- The Addison-Bridport Thief Detecting Society, the nation's oldest still-acting association of private investigators, met in Bridport for its 159th annual meeting.
- Owners of 10 independent grocery stores in the county traveled to Montpelier to ask the Legislature to repeal a so-called "bottle ban," which prevented them from selling beer and soda in non-returnable containers. Although many agreed with the

bill's intention to help keep litter off of Vermont's roads, store owners complained that the new bottle deposit system hurt their sales, as many would rather drive to New York or New Hampshire, where there was no deposit law, to avoid paying an additional 30 cents per bottle. Local business owners also advocated for centralized bottle redemption centers, rather than the current practice of returning bottles and cans to the grocery stores, which created extra work and confusion for employees.

— Emma Pope McCright

Smith is Alzheimer's advocate of the year

MIDDLEBURY — The Alzheimer's Association Vermont Chapter has named Middlebury resident Pamela Smith as 2023 Advocate of the Year. On Friday, Jan. 5, Smith was awarded the honor among the 30 advocates in attendance for her role in giving a voice to those living with the disease and advocating for core Alzheimer's Association efforts, including increasing concern and awareness of the disease, advancing public policy initiatives, and championing support for disease research.

Smith, who was diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease in 2020, has spoken to several committees of the Vermont Legislature and serves on the Governor's Commission on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders, participating as a person with lived experience. Twice she has attended the AIM Advocacy Forum in Washington, D.C., speaking with her state's senate and congressional leaders. Smith is just one of eight who serve on the 2023-2024 Alzheimer's Association National Early-Stage Advisory Group (ESAG).

"Pamela has traveled Vermont raising awareness and participating in our Walk events. Her words have

moved people to tears, brought laughter, and built community. Her advocacy and testimony in the Statehouse has greatly increased awareness of dementia, highlighted the lack of support for both people with Alzheimer's and their care partners, and moved legislators to pass critical legislation and fund a Statewide Dementia Services Coordinator Position," said Megan Polyte, Public Policy Director for the Alzheimer's Association Vermont Chapter.

Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health crisis in Vermont. The most recent data show more than 13,000 individuals aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease in Vermont and 9.8% of Vermonters aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline. More than 19,000 family caregivers bear the burden of the disease in Vermont providing over 28 million hours of unpaid care.

Through her work, Smith aims to advocate for stronger support services for families affected by dementia, connecting them with local resources that can help. She also wants to facilitate early detection, diagnosis, and support services for younger individuals experiencing memory and thinking

problems — a process that proved so challenging for her. In 2023, Smith envisioned and co-produced two awareness raising videos focusing on living with dementia.

"Pamela, you are a trailblazer in Vermont. You have demonstrated courage, shared knowledge, and embraced the role of being a powerful advocate in detailing what is needed to improve the lives of those with early onset dementia and latter stages of dementia. I am so very grateful for you stepping into this role, sharing the journey with us all and improving the future of others impacted by dementia. As an artist and an advocate, you are literally destigmatizing dementia one beautiful flower at a time," said Rhonda Williams, Chronic Disease Prevention Chief for the Vermont Department of Health.

Smith will continue to play a key role in advocacy during Vermont's 2024 legislative session. She will also gather among dozens of Alzheimer's Association advocates for the Vermont State Advocacy Day on March 28, at the state capitol. For more information, visit alz.org/vermont.

Smith's videos can be viewed at www.youtube.com/@alzvt_videos/ videos.

Obituary Guidelines

The Independent 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 Independent 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 obits@addisonindependent.com.

Submissions must be received by 11 a.m. on Wednesday for publication in the Thursday paper. Email obits@addisonindependent.com or call 802-388-4944 for more information.

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THE MAPLE SEASON is underway at Heffernan Family Sugarworks in Starksboro. The sugarworks team began tapping in early December and has made over 1,500 gallons of syrup in the past month. Here, sugarmaker Brian Heffernan peers into a steam evaporator at the Starksboro operation.

Independent photo/Steve James

Maple season

(Continued from Page 1A) told the *Independent*. “A year ago, we started tapping in December. We have seen other sugarmakers that started tapping in November, so we looked at their numbers and saw that it wasn’t hurting their production. It was actually increasing it.”

Heffernan said it can be challenging for the sugarworks to find workers. Starting the season in December ensures the team has enough time to put out all of its taps before trees start producing sap.

“We have over 50,000 taps, and labor is a real issue, trying to find help,” he explained.

The earlier approach has been particularly productive for the Starksboro sugarbush this winter, as warmer daytime temperatures had sap flowing throughout December. The sugarworks had collected over 43,000 gallons of sap by the end of the month.

Maple sugaring kicks off when temperatures drop below freezing at night and rise into the 40s during the day, creating a freeze-thaw cycle that causes the maple sap to flow. Traditionally, that freeze-thaw cycle occurs in March and April, but an abnormally warm December had sap flowing earlier this winter.

Heffernan said the sugarworks has made syrup in December and early January before, though this year the operation has more taps out than usual, as little snow cover has made it easier to get around the woods over the past month.

This winter, the team collected enough sap to boil a few times

throughout the month of December. When the *Independent* spoke with Heffernan this past Friday, the sugarworks had already made over 1,500 gallons of syrup.

Heffernan said there’s no noticeable difference in the taste of syrup made earlier in the season compared to what’s produced during the conventional season.

The sugarmaker said tapping trees for a longer period of time doesn’t appear to put any additional strain on the trees, and that the Starksboro operation prioritizes tree health.

“Every tree gets one tap. Regardless of the size of the tree, we only put one tap in it, and we do a lot of maintenance in our woods to keep our trees healthy,” he said.

OTHER OPERATIONS

The Starksboro sugarworks isn’t the only one to start its season in the past month. Heffernan said he knows of a handful of other producers that have already begun tapping.

“Everybody is kind of following the trends to tap early just because of the conditions of working in the woods,” he said. “We’re on the side of a mountain, and it’s easier to tap when there’s one to six inches of snow.”

While the maple season is underway for some local sugarmakers, other, smaller operations in the county haven’t started tapping just yet.

Hillsboro Sugarworks in Starksboro hadn’t started tapping as of Monday and did not plan to start immediately. Hillsboro Sugarworks puts out around 16,000



SUGARMAKER BRIAN HEFFERNAN and the rest of the team at Heffernan Family Sugarworks have been busy this winter, as the Starksboro operation began collecting sap in early December. The sugarworks has made over 1,500 gallons of syrup over the past month.

Independent photo/Steve James

taps and typically starts boiling in March.

In Lincoln, Twin Maple Sugarworks is also waiting to start its season. The sugarworks has 5,200 taps and typically produces around 2,000 gallons of

certified organic syrup each year. When the *Independent* spoke with sugarmaker Jodi Gale on Tuesday, the Twin Maple team was planning to start its season on Feb. 1 as usual.

Rate increase

(Continued from Page 5A)

• Act 127. The so-called “pupil-weighting law” seeks to change the education funding mechanics in Vermont by assigning different weighting standards for students. In short, as reported in *VT Digger*, students who fit into those more expensive categories are “weighted” more, and the more weight a district has, the more money it can spend without raising local tax rates.

A preK student, under Act 127, has a “weight” of 0.46, while a high school student is weighted at 1.39. The ACSD is expected to have 1.6% fewer students next year, according to Corrente.

LAW CAPS RATE INCREASE

Act 127 caps tax rate increase at 5% in school districts disadvantaged by the law, providing the community keeps its education spending per pupil increase at below 10%. If education spending per pupil increases by 10% or more, a state panel will review and determine if the budget contains excess spending. If so, the 5% tax rate increase limit won’t apply to that town.

The “5% cap” for annual tax rate increases through Act 127 will be available from fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

ACSD leaders said they’re committed to keeping the FY’25 per pupil spending increase at around 9.9%. This would tentatively create a districtwide homestead education tax rate of \$1.47 per \$100 in property value — *before* the CLA is applied in each of the seven towns.

Board member Steve Orzech asked Conlon if the state will have enough money to cap tax rates at 5% for all the towns that will likely ask for it.

Conlon said he anticipates as many as half of Vermont communities will exceed the 10% increase in per-pupil spending for FY’25 and thus won’t qualify for the 5% cap. The non-residential property tax is one of the few revenue “levers” the state can use to guarantee the 5% cap, if other resources go dry, according to Conlon.

“The danger is that... if a higher-than-anticipated number of school districts take advantage of the 5% this year, we’re going to revisit it for next year,” he said. “It doesn’t work if everybody is (using it).”

Conlon added the 5% offer was devised at a time prior to the inflationary, CLA and federal funding issues coming home to roost this year.

“It was (created) at a time when budgets were going up 3% or 4%,” he said.

Board member Mary Heather Noble voiced concern school districts are “being set up for failure” in the current financial climate.

“The confluence of events was not something that could have been totally predicted, but on the other hand, the state has been — over a long time — trying to get a handle on education spending. So in some ways... the circumstance we’re in is not a one-time situation. It seems like a repeating broken record,” she said.

LOCAL CONTROL

Conlon said the state’s current education finance system is in large part shaped by a consistent, resounding message from Vermonters: We want local control

over school spending.

“We don’t control districts on what they choose to spend,” he said. “We control the levers for how to raise the dollars.”

He said the 5% offer from the state was meant as a catch-all for school districts facing financial crisis.

“It wasn’t meant to be incentive; it was meant to soften the blow for those districts affected negatively by per-pupil weighting, over time, so they could adjust their spending,” Conlon said.

In the meantime, he said a confluence of bad financial news has placed districts “in a challenging place, very much through no fault of their own. It’s leading to a lot of confusion and questions.”

While Act 127 will give some districts a financial break for the next five years, local officials are concerned about what’ll happen in 2030, when communities will be expected to transition from the facilitated 5% tax-rate increases to a new unknown. ACSD board members noted the ability to increase per-pupil spending by 9.9% annually while limiting the districtwide tax rate increases to 5% will create a cliff.

“In year six, is when the bill comes due,” Corrente said. “If your 5% annual tax-rate growth hasn’t kept pace with your spending — even if you did everything right and never passed the threshold — you still have this 10-30% tax bill that’s going to come due at the end of this cycle. And that’s the scary part. If districts in Vermont don’t figure out a way to equalize the actual and capped rate within the next five-year period, they’re going to face this cliff.”

Orzech agreed, saying that keeping per-pupil spending lower than 10% for FY’25 will simply “mortgage a 5% cliff. If we don’t make that up over the next four years, that 5% cliff is still out there, and we add to that cliff. It’s a growing gap. Each year we exceed 5%, we’re creating a bigger cliff.”

CONVERSATIONS

Board member Suzanne Buck said the latest fiscal news should open up more conversations about how the district can save money.

“Can we afford to keep everything open and educate all of our students equitably, but still stay within this formula the state has just put out? Are we having to look at other things, besides staffing issues?” she said.

The ACSD board has in recent years discussed the prospect of school consolidations as a money saver and in recognition of declining enrollment, but hasn’t taken that path to this point.

Orzech believes the latest news suggests ACSD school buildings won’t be seeing major repairs anytime soon. Prior to the pandemic, a consultant suggested the schools need tens of millions of dollars in renovations, many of them tied to building code updates.

“A capital bond seems like an impossibility over the next five years,” he said.

Plans call for the ACSD to finalize its budget during the week of Jan. 22. Voters in the seven towns will cast ballots on the plan on March 5.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Lawmakers

(Continued from Page 1A)
2022, Vermont had “14,000 fewer kids under the age of 18 than we did in 2010. Vermont also had 28,000 fewer adults ages 40 to 54 — which he called “the core of our workforce” — and 48,000 *more* residents older than 65.

“This is all within just 12 years, but this is nothing new. It’s been happening for decades,” he said.

Scott urged lawmakers to steer policies and resources toward the creation of more homes to accommodate folks who want to live and work in Vermont, but currently can’t find a home — especially one that’s right-sized and affordable. He called for revisions to Act 250 — the state’s land use and development law — to promote more residential development.

When first enacted 53 years ago, Act 250 slowed growth at a time when the state was growing too fast, according to Scott. But the pendulum is now swinging in the opposite direction, he argued.

“Today, we face a different reality — one where families desperately need homes, and communities need reinvestment,” he said.

“There’s an expression: ‘If nothing changes, then nothing will really change.’ In our case, that means if nothing changes, things will continue to get worse,” Scott added.

Around 2,200 residential units are being permitted each year in Vermont these days, while census data and vacancy rates suggest 6,800 units are needed right now, according to Scott.

“Housing is key, and it’s something we can do right now,” he told lawmakers. “So let’s work together and get more families in homes faster, and at a cost they can afford.”

Scott acknowledged the state has gotten off to a good start building infrastructure to pave the way for more housing, thanks to a recent infusion of \$1 billion in federal COVID pandemic relief funds that have gone to projects in 160 cities and towns in all 14 counties.

“We’ve already laid the foundation, literally in many cases, to help revitalize communities across the state,” he said. “From big capital projects to small renovations, what they all have in common is an investment in the basic tools a community needs, to keep from falling behind and spark momentum for more good work.”

Scott urged lawmakers to ease up on taxpayers, many of whom he said can’t afford what they’re currently paying into the state coffers.

“I continue to believe we need to keep our spending within existing revenue. So, in full transparency, you can expect my budget will increase by about 3%,” he said. “Let’s do what’s best for them, and live within their means.”

The Republican governor conceded he has little leverage in pressing for his agenda; Democrats hold veto-proof majorities in both the House and Senate. While not keen on making wholesale changes to Act 250, it appears Democrats agree with Scott that the state needs a major infusion of new housing.

CLIMATE & CLEAN WATER
Sen. Chris Bray, D-Bristol, chair the Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee — a panel that would have a major say in any effort to change Act 250.



“Addressing the backlog in the courts is critical to helping us with the perceived and actual increase in crime.”

— Rep. Robin Scheu

Bray said he continues to believe “there’s great value in Act 250,” and that “the Vermont we see now is the result we see of 50 years of thoughtful planning that Act 250 has supported.”

At the same time, he said “if there are aspects of (Act 250) that are duplicative, that are adding time and costs to the development of housing we want, then I’m 101% happy in participating in making those improvements.”

Act 250 aside, the Senate Natural Resources panel will be fielding a lot of big initiatives this session, and Bray expects these — among others — to figure prominently on the agenda:

- The Climate Change Response Act (S.213), which he said “addresses natural resources with a nexus to water management — especially in light of the flooding that is becoming more common and damaging. It addresses the planning and management of river corridors, wetlands, and dams.”
- A Constitutional amendment proposing a “right to clean air, water and a healthy environment.” This would entail a multi-year process for approval.
- Revision of makeup and authority of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife board, making it — like all most other state boards — advisory, while returning rulemaking to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Also in the works: making permanent the current moratorium on hunting coyotes with hounds and requiring the F&W commissioner to produce a plan to manage non-game species.

• Creation of a new utility type — geothermal energy networks — to fall under the Public Utilities Commission review for review of projects requiring a certificate of public good.

Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Middlebury, chairs the Senate Government Operations Committee. She expects the Senate to address three overriding goals

before adjourning this spring, including helping communities recover from this summer’s flooding, while making them more resilient for future weather events; expanding housing opportunities; and making progress on climate-change legislation.

As for the Senate Government Operations panel, she outlined the following priorities:

- Taking testimony on how well state and local government responded to the summer’s flood emergencies, with an eye toward improving that response for future catastrophic weather events.

“Also, how can we make government itself more resilient, because (state offices) were flooded in a number of instances — especially since Montpelier was in the eye of the storm (this past July), in a lot of ways,” she said.

Hardy intends to file legislation based on storm-related feedback she receives from state and local officials.

- Initiating a Constitutional amendment that would create a more streamlined way to remove elected county officers. This issue came to a head during the summer of 2022, when former Addison County Sheriff Peter Newton was charged with sexual-assault-related crimes. Numerous state officials — including Gov. Scott — asked Newton to resign, but Newton refused and served out the balance of his term. The case reinforced the fact that the only way to remove an elected county officials is through an arduous legislative impeachment process.

The proposed Constitutional amendment would simplify the process, according to supporters.

“We are hoping to have, in the future, some additional levers to pull other than a lengthy impeachment process,” Hardy said.

- Revisions to the state’s Open Meeting Law intended to reflect how governmental meetings have been conducted and accessed during COVID. More meetings are being held virtually. The Vermont Press Association has been among those concerned about a potential weakening of the Open Meeting Law in a way that could affect transparency and public access to meetings.

• An increase in legislative pay. Scott last year vetoed a pay-raise bill for the state’s part-time general assembly, but some lawmakers stressed a pay raise is long overdue and is key to ensuring that folks other than the affluent or retirees



“We’re trying to find a way to make the job (of state legislator) more sustainable.”

— Sen. Ruth Hardy

can serve in the Legislature. Lawmakers currently receive \$811.68 per week. Last year’s bill would have raised that to \$1,100 per week in FY’25, \$1,100 in FY’26, and \$1,210 in FY’27, with additional compensation for those in leadership roles, such as chairmanships.

Hardy expects a new bill to be filed soon, with this one linking pay to the average Vermont salary, which is currently around \$59,000 per year, or \$1,100 per week.

“We’re trying to find a way to make the job more sustainable,” Hardy said.

Hardy said she’ll also be supporting bills this year that would expand the Medicaid health insurance program and provide more support to municipal libraries.

USING FEDERAL MONEY

Reps. Diane Lanpher, D-Vergennes, and Robin Scheu, D-Middlebury, will have important seats at the table when it comes to allocating state funds. Lanpher chairs the key money committee (Appropriations), while Scheu is its vice chair.

Both legislators share a big concern — making sure Vermont uses the hundreds of millions of federal ARPA, pandemic-relief and flood-recovery dollars the state has received during the past three years.

Vermont must still obligate \$637 million in federal funds it has received, according to Lanpher, including \$373 million in State and Local Fiscal Recovery (SLFRF) money that must be deployed for specific projects by the end of this year, or return it to the feds.

“We know it’s been appropriated. We just want to keep oversight over (the money) and make sure it’s used,” she said. “We need accountability for the money that hasn’t yet gone out the door.”

Lanpher is excited about the uses to which the money is being put, including expansion of broadband service and investments in housing. She stressed, however, that Vermont can’t get used to being flush with federal cash.

“We might be busy spending, but it’s one-time money,” she said.

Meanwhile, the fiscal year 2025 state budget is looking like a heavy lift, with inflation, the impending loss of federal funds and flood repairs (there’s a 25% state share) all factoring into the equation, according to Lanpher.

“State revenues are up a bit, but is it enough to take on all the pressures?” she said, citing the need for housing, more folks needing to access mental health services, short-staffed courthouses,

and the need to address PCBs in schools as among priorities that must be addressed.

“I’m warning people we’re going to need to make some very tough decisions,” she said.

Scheu echoed Lanpher’s concerns about ensuring proper accounting and deployment of the one-time federal flood/pandemic/ARPA funds. She said Democratic lawmakers seem to agree that they must make progress on housing, public health, public safety and climate resilience efforts.

At the same time, she lamented the backlog in court business associated, in part, with six judgeship vacancies. Scheu said the state’s Judicial Nominating Board forwarded Scott a list of judicial appointees last spring, but said the governor didn’t act on the appointments until the fall.

“We know that when there’s too long a time between legal actions and consequences, people re-offend,” Scheu said. “Addressing the backlog in the courts is critical to helping us with the perceived and actual increase in crime.”

Scheu was pleased to report the first bill passed this year by House Appropriations (H.72) would create two overdose prevention sites in Vermont. Burlington is interested in hosting one of the sites, which, among other things, would connect people with recovery services.

“If we can get more places where people can receive services, we can reduce overdoses and the number of people taking drugs,” she said.

Rep. Peter Conlon, D-Cornwall, chairs the House Education Committee. As such, he will be influential in shaping any efforts to improve public schools and the manner in which they are funded.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

Conlon told the *Independent* one of committee’s top priorities will be to see if Vermont is able to resurrect its state-aid-for-school construction program,

which was scrapped during the 2008 recession. Prior to that year, the state offered 30% of the approved cost of a school construction project, and 50% aid for projects leading to school consolidations.

A recent report from the Vermont Agency of Education suggests Vermont’s schools will require at least \$6.3 billion in repairs during the next 21 years. Here in Middlebury, the Addison Central School District board has been sizing up repairs to the ACSD’s nine school buildings that will cost in the tens of millions of dollars, according to a consultant.

“With the cost of construction, it’s becoming impossible for communities to pass school bonds without some level of help from the state,” Conlon said. “School boards have had to make tough choices, and they have understandably

Quilters Guild to hold service sewing day

MIDDLEBURY — The Milk & Honey Quilters Guild will hold its annual community service sewing day on Saturday, Jan. 13, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Community room at Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main Street in Middlebury.

Anyone interested can come for the whole day or for however many hours they can spare. Participants can come for the whole day or for however many hours they can spare to work on a variety of projects for area non-profits. Bring a sewing machine, basic sewing supplies and a drink. The guild will provide ironing and cutting stations as well as patterns and fabric for items that are most needed now. The guild will also provide lunch. Get more information and sign up at www.milkandhoneyquilters.com/guild-meetings or contact Peg Allen at mjallen@shoreham.net.

avored teachers and programs over the needs of their schools.”

Conlon was part of a school construction aid task force that studied this issue. The panel is due to unveil its report early next month.

“The numbers are huge, but we’ve got to start somewhere,” Conlon said of the construction needs.

As far as other issues, Conlon also stressed the importance of making sure Vermont gets full benefit from its one-time federal money, beefing up literacy education statewide, protecting the state from the impacts of climate change, and making sure the increasing demand for mental health services is met — both for adults and students.

Rep. Amy Sheldon, D-Middlebury, chairs the House Committee on Environment and Energy. She said her panel will spend a lot of time this session finding ways to help communities become more resistant to the impacts of climate change. Sheldon’s committee is about to take up H.723, a 22-page bill that “proposes to enact multiple provisions related to statewide flood recovery and improved future flood preparedness and resilience.”

Also on the docket for the Environment & Energy Committee: More work to help Vermont accomplish its goal of meeting its Renewable Energy Standard, which calls for the state to meet 75% of its electricity needs from renewables — like wind, solar and hydro power — by 2032.

In terms of non-energy issues, Sheldon anticipates reducing school funding pressures on taxpayers, assisting those struggling with substance use disorder, and criminal justice reform will be a big part of the Legislature’s 2024 to-do list.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Free Ice fishing day offered in Vermont

VERMONT — Vermont’s state-wide Free Ice Fishing Day is Saturday, Jan. 27.

Free Ice Fishing Day is held annually on the last Saturday in January. The day is geared toward giving new ice anglers an opportunity to try ice fishing before purchasing equipment, but any angler may ice fish on any waterbody open to ice fishing statewide without a fishing license on Free Ice Fishing Day.

To celebrate, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is holding an Ice Fishing Festival at Elmore State Park in Elmore. The festival will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is free and open to all ages as well as families with kids.

“The Ice Fishing Festival typically draws between 500-700 participants for a day of fishing, skill-building and community,” said Education Specialist Corey Hart. “The annual event is moved around the state each winter, and we are excited to be back at Lake Elmore for 2024.”

Fishers are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather, and ice cleats are strongly recommended. Take care that the ice is fully frozen before venturing out on it.



TO CELEBRATE FREE Ice Fishing Day, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department will hold an Ice Fishing Festival for kids and others new to ice fishing at Elmore State Park in Elmore on Saturday, Jan. 27.
Photo courtesy of VTF&W

“Ice fishing is one of the most accessible forms of fishing and can be a great way to introduce people to how much fun fishing can be,” said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “This festival will demonstrate that ice fishing

isn’t just about catching fish. It’s also a great way to spend some time outdoors with friends and family. You can skate, sled, make a snow fort, and have a cookout — all while waiting for the flags on your tip-ups to signal when you’ve

caught a fish.”

For more information, visit the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website. Registration for the Lake Elmore event can be completed online in advance at www.register-ed.com/events/view/206074.

Age Well talk to be held in Shoreham on Jan. 17

SHOREHAM — The Shoreham Congregational Church will host a free presentation by Age Well Vermont at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 17, in the Fellowship Hall.

Age Well Vermont is a non-profit organization that supports and advocates for the aging population of Northwestern Vermont. It has programs for nutrition and wellness, support for transitioning from hospitals to home, services like transportation and friendly visits to help elders remain at home, assistance and information about insurance and community agencies, and more.

Over 1,000 volunteers assist the staff in meeting the diverse needs of clients, their families, and caregivers, with the goal of helping our community members to age with confidence. Age Well wants seniors to have social opportunities, opportunities for good meals both at home and dining out, wellness and safety checks, and proper information about local agencies and services.

This program is free and open to the public. Senior citizens, family members or friends, caregivers and those interested in volunteering are all welcome.

Middlebury Fire Department recognizes achievements

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Fire Department and Battell Hose Company held their annual awards dinner last month at the American Legion Post 27 in Middlebury. The dinner was attended by current, former, and life members of the Middlebury Fire Department, as well as by the members of the board of directors of the Battell Hose Company, and guests. including City of Vergennes Fire Department Chief David DiBiase.

Battell Hose Company board member Kevin Parizo served as the master of ceremonies.

Chief David Shaw and Firefighter Michael Bougor presented challenge coins to probationary firefighters Jonathan Brooks, Jonathan Duckworth, Andrew Klein, Ethan Klossek, Delayah Leavitt, Megan Lussier and Gabriel Schine, and to firefighter Anthony Porter to acknowledge membership in, and service to, the organizations.

Assistant Chief Myron Selleck presided over the presentation of service awards to the following members:

- Probationary firefighter Jonathan Duckworth for five years of service
- Probationary firefighter

Andrew Klein for five years of service

- Firefighter Joshua Dishaw for five years of service
- Firefighter Karissa Peltier for five years of service
- Lieutenant Blake Harrison for 10 years of service
- Firefighter Michael Mayone for 30 years of service
- Dispatcher Larry Volkert for 40 years of service

Assistant Chief Selleck presented firefighter Dylan Montagu with the Captain Richard E. Hayes Training Award for completing the most hours of training in the department for the prior year (2022) at 180 hours.

This award is given in memory of Captain Hayes, who passed away in 2001.

Chief Shaw presented the chief’s award to Captain LeRoy Graham and to firefighter Audrey “A.J.” Rossbach in appreciation of their dedicated service and assistance beyond the expected. Chief Shaw noted that Firefighter Rossbach is the first Middlebury College student member to receive the chief’s award.

Chief Shaw recognized the department for responding to 293 calls in the last year and for completing 1,935 hours of training.

Vt. Brain Bee competition to be held February 10

VERMONT — The Vermont Brain Bee returns for its annual day of neuroscience for high school students on Saturday, Feb. 10, at UVM Medical Center. This is its 15th year.

The bee is for any high school students interested in the brain.

The event is an opportunity for like-minded students from around the state to get together. On average, students from 6-10 high schools attend each year.

The day, which runs from 8:45 a.m. to 2 p.m., consists of three exam forms (written, practical

and oral), and three other dynamic experiences that include case presentations by invited guests, a keynote speaker, and a college-led panel discussion.

This year’s keynote speaker will be Lisa Bernardin, VBB creator and traumatic brain injury

survivor. Her address, “Our Brains: How They Change,” is a personal, compelling and insightful presentation.

To learn more about the bee, its location, and how to register, email vermontbrainbee@gmail.com.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Mount Abraham Union High School

Siena Stanley

Mt. Abraham Union High School introduces Siena Stanley as our Student of the Week. Siena lives in Monkton, with her mother, father, younger brother, and two dogs.

Siena loves Math, English and Ceramics. An accomplished student, she has received highest honors every year.

Siena is a member of several activities at Mt. Abraham, including Varsity Girls’ Lacrosse and Varsity Girls’ Basketball, Mount Abraham Eagle Leadership Society and the Clay Club. In addition, she has previously participated in Community Council and Vermont Young Playwrights. Outside of school, Siena has worked at Philo Ridge Farm in Charlotte and the Residence at Otter Creek this summer and fall.

Siena loves to be outside! She enjoys running, hiking, skiing, playing sports, biking and hanging out with her friends. When asked what the most important lesson she has learned in high school is, Siena answered, “I have learned that the people around me have unique stories and values and that through listening to other perspectives your view of the world changes. Always learn from what people have to say, and work to understand and respect their views.”

After high school, Siena plans to attend college and major in business. The Mt. Abraham community wishes Siena all the best with her future endeavors.



Siena Stanley
MAUHS

Otter Valley Union High School

Aiden Wade

Otter Valley Union Middle and High School’s Student of the Week is Aiden Wade. Aiden lives with his mom and two younger sisters in Orwell/Whiting. He has two dogs — a German Shepherd and a Black Lab — and four cats.

Aiden likes waking up every day knowing he gets to be with his friends at school. He does not have a favorite class but enjoys art class, in part, because he can escape from everything while working on a mural for his class. Aiden has received many honors at Otter Valley, including honor roll and being the lacrosse team captain.

Aiden plays lacrosse and basketball for Otter Valley, participates in Up for Learning, and is a mentor.

With the loss of a younger cousin in 2022, Aiden was determined to bring more positivity to life, be kind to people, help when he can, and not waste opportunities to spread kindness. His advice to other young people is: Notice those around you, try to find someone who could use some kindness and to be that person for them. It could mean the world to that person.

Aiden plans to leave for basic training for the Army National Guard in September. Otter Valley wishes Aiden the best in all of his future endeavors.



Aiden Wade
OVUHS

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Bristol Beat

Libanus Lodge has busy December



LIBANUS LODGE BROTHERS Mike Bushey, left, and Mike Brown presented Queen Bee Creemee Stand owner Kim Jewell with a check for \$2,500 to help her rebuild after the stand burned in November. Photo courtesy of Cecil Foster

BRISTOL — December was an incredibly busy month for Libanus Lodge. In late November, a landmark local favorite, Queen Bee's Creemee Stand suffered a total loss fire. Kim Jewell (aka Queen Bee) has always been a strong supporter of the community and has generously participated with Libanus Lodge in the Cops & Creemee Program. It was decided that the lodge would donate all the proceeds from its December breakfast to Queen Bee.

Brothers Mike Brown, Mike Bushey, Cecil Foster and their spouses were joined by Austin Dickerson, Johannes Haensch, and Lila Smith, daughter of brother Averil Smith in serving 143 attendees at the December breakfast. This surpassed the old record of 126 when the Lodge sponsored the Lungs For Kate Breakfast several years ago to aid a young woman that needed a double lung transplant.

The following Thursday the Lodge had its annual Christmas luncheon, where they serve a traditional Thanksgiving turkey meal with all the fixings to another record of 132 attendees.

In keeping with the spirit of the giving season, brothers Matt Moyer and Brown presented five \$100 gift cards to the nurses at Mt. Abraham Union High School, who see to it that the cards are distributed to a family in need in each of the five towns that are part of the Mt Abraham District.

In addition, the lodge continued its tradition of presenting gift baskets to its Masonic widows. Among the dozen or so widows was Bushey's aunt, Helen Vroomann, the widow of brother Barry Vroomann. Bushey and fellow brother with Jim Burt both went on to be the potentates of the Cairo Shriners Temple located in Rutland. They are the only potentates from Libanus Lodge.



MASON MIKE BUSHEY, right, gave Masonic widow, (and his aunt) Helen Vroomann a gift basket, continuing the long tradition of such gifts to the widows of fellow Masons. Photo courtesy of Cecil Foster



Down and out

A downed tree lays across Hewitt Road and on power lines in Bristol at 8 a.m. on Wednesday morning. Bristol, Starksboro and Lincoln, like other towns along the western slope of the Green Mountains, were hit by high winds Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, which resulted in more than 2,000 homes without power. Utilities crews and volunteers worked as quickly as they could to clear roads and restore power. All Mount Abraham Unified School District schools delayed opening by two hours.

Photo courtesy Bristol Police Department



Meet Leonardo Deer Vinci

MIDDLEBURY'S TYLER DAY poses with the carved deer standing outside Art on Main in Bristol. Day was among close to 100 names submitted in the gallery's "Name the Deer" contest. Day had many clever suggestions, including Salvadeer Dali, Rembrandtler, Stagson Pollack, and Bambi Warhol. He says he was inspired to create his art-related ideas for the deer's name because, being a dad of two elementary school students, he likes to be "punny." Other submissions included Deer John, Cliff, The Main Deer, Arturo (Art for short), Art I. Deer, Bruce Bucky, Buck-a-Roo, Arty, Spike, and Deerleaper. Leonardo Deer Vinci, "Leo" for short was the all-around favorite.

Photo courtesy of Pam Farnsworth

Lincoln

Have a news tip?
Call Dawn Mikkelsen at 453-7029

NEWS

LINCOLN — An Open Art Studio featuring gnomes will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 24, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the library. Make a cute little gnome by sanding and painting an angle cut branch. Get creative with personality and special designs of your own. There will also be some pinecones ready to transform into an action gnome. This event is open to all ages.

A paper shredder is now available at the library for public use. This service is being offered without charge for up to 40 sheets of paper. Large quantities or boxes of shredding are not accepted at this time.

As part of Hill Country Holiday weekend, the inaugural Lincoln Sports jack jump race will be held

on Sunday, Feb. 4, at the sledding hill on Gove Hill at 1 p.m. A practice will be held from noon to 1 p.m. A jack jump is a home-made contraption in which a seat is attached to a single ski. It is said to have been used by green mountain loggers in the late 19th century. Bring your own jumper if you have one or some extra ones will be available for use. Please park in the town office lot, Burnham Hall

or the library.

SAVE THE DATE

Burnham Presents welcomes Colby Chehan and Marsh Lights to Burnham Hall stage on Saturday, Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Until next time ... Believe In Yourself And Anything Is Possible. Happiness Is A Place Between Too Little And Too Much. Make Yourself A Priority.

Mountain Community Health Welcomes Dr. Richa Singhania, our new Full-time General Dentist



Dr. Singhania brings many years of experience and a strong background in all aspects of general dentistry. She has received numerous awards for both her clinical and research skills and is committed to working with the community to raise dental awareness. Dr. Singhania is focused on both the highest quality of care and a chair-side manner defined by compassion and clear communication.

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Charlestin

(Continued from Page 1A)
thought was a dream, but now, I’m working on making it a reality,” the Democrat told the *Independent* during a phone interview on Monday.

Charlestin is the first Democrat to officially announce a run for governor this November. Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger and Rep. Caleb Elder, D-Starksboro, have expressed interest in the race, according to reports by VT Digger. Incumbent Gov. Phil School is widely expected to run for a fifth consecutive term but has yet to confirm his plans.

Charlestin lives in Middlebury with her husband, Jesse Norford, and her two young children. She runs a company called Conversation Compass LLC, through which she serves as a “facilitator, moderator and consultant to help individuals, companies, organizations, and school districts unlock understanding through compassion, one conversation at a time.”

She’s a first-generation Haitian American who first won a seat on the Middlebury selectboard in 2021, when her last name was Thomas. She was re-elected on Town Meeting Day 2022, and was the top vote-getter.

But Charlestin was unable to serve out her three-year term because she couldn’t find a new housing option in Middlebury after her previous lease expired. She ultimately had to move

out of town, though has since returned. Charlestin, who is Black, told the *Independent* at the time that she’d received no call-backs from some prospective Middlebury landlords and home sellers, even though she’d met the income requirements. She was concerned about possible housing discrimination.

“Knowing the floods that happened this summer are going to keep happening, we need to create communities that are climate resistant.”

— Esther Charlestin

Formerly a residence director at Middlebury College, Charlestin was named the first Dean of Climate and Culture at Middlebury Union Middle School in 2022. She left that job a year later after being the target of racial slanders by a few students, and said she’d hoped for more support from Addison Central School District administrators.

Many people rallied to her support with comments to the ACSD and letters to the editor and commentary. Asked what issues she’d likely to stress during her campaign, Charlestin listed Vermont’s dearth of affordable housing, improving the quality of public education, confronting the impacts of climate change, and boosting the state’s dwindling workforce.

“Knowing the floods that happened this summer are going to keep happening, we need to create communities that are climate resistant,” Charlestin said. She said she’ll reveal, later on during her campaign, her proposed solutions to the problems she described.

“Right now, I want to introduce myself and let people know who I am, my intentions,” she said.

It was in 2022 that Charlestin first stated her goal to run for Vermont governor. She’s spent the past several months learning about the political process through programs at the Vermont Leadership Institute and Emerge Vermont, a nonprofit with the stated goal of recruiting, training and providing “a powerful network to Democratic women who want to run for office.”

Becca Balint’s successful 2022 run for Vermont’s lone congressional seat further inspired Charlestin to run for governor.

Though not a fan of Donald Trump’s policies, Charlestin said the former president’s successful 2016 run proved that one doesn’t necessarily have to build a vast resume of prior elective positions to justify a run for major statewide office.

“There’s no ‘right way’ to go about this,” she said. “It’s about being a citizen and being willing to engage and bring vision as a part of it.”

“I believe there’s no perfect time, or that you have to have certain qualifications to make you ready,” she added.

Charlestin will continue to work full-time as she gets her campaign in order. She promised to release periodic statements on her website, [estherforvt.com](https://www.estherforvt.com).

Though she’s new to the statewide election scene, she promised a vigorous campaign.

“I decided to go for it this year. I have the capacity to do it and wanted to be part of the shift that’s happening in Vermont. I believe more people are rising up to engage in helping to make our state better. And I believe, ‘Why not start now?’”

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

CLA & tax

(Continued from Page 1A)
to the state’s housing affordability problems, the heated real estate market also means towns have been unable to keep their property valuations for tax assessment purposes up to date.

And that almost certainly means higher school tax rates than homeowners might expect when they see the level of spending on local schools. A significant impact of those lagging property assessments — essentially undervalued grand lists — are lower Common Levels of Appraisal, CLAs for short, which are expected to cause a spike in most communities’ school tax rates.

Those below-market grand lists and their impact were a major factor when the Vermont Commissioner of Taxes wrote in early December school taxes statewide could increase this year by an average of 18.5%. That translates to hundreds of dollars a year, even thousands, on most homes.

Why does the real estate market have such an impact on school taxes? The short answer is because of property tax equalization, which the Vermont Department of Taxes uses CLAs to accomplish.

The goal of property tax equalization is making sure everybody’s property is taxed to support education on fair market value, not on possibly inaccurate town or city valuations.

For example, a home assessed at \$250,000 in one town might be worth that amount, while a home assessed at that figure in another town might be worth \$400,000 if the town had not reappraised its property recently. And that’s the case in the vast majority of Vermont communities. After all, the reappraisal process is expensive and time-consuming, there is a shortage of qualified appraisal companies, and the market was stable for many years before the pandemic struck.

How does equalization work? The first step the Department of Taxes takes is analysis of communities’ real estate sales to compare their property tax assessments to fair market value.

Then the department uses that data to create CLAs for each community. CLAs are ratios of a town’s assessed values to actual fair market sales values. They are expressed as a percentage: A 100% CLA means a community’s

Property value ratio will drive tax rates up			
CLAs below 100 mean school tax rates will adjust upwards this year in every Addison County community			
Town	Total Town Property Value	2023 CLA	Last Reappraisal
Addison *	\$290,234,000	72.35	2006
Bridport *	\$207,849,000	70.67	2010
Bristol	\$489,615,000	72.17	2018
Cornwall *	\$321,647,000	70.60	2009
Ferrisburgh *	\$765,292,000	72.60	2013
Goshen *	\$38,848,000	70.21	2009
Granville *	\$60,574,000	66.84	2008
Hancock	\$52,399,000	66.30	2016
Leicester *	\$266,258,000	69.17	2020
Lincoln *	\$271,418,000	67.51	2010
Middlebury	\$1,275,614,000	76.95	2019
Monkton *	\$373,435,000	72.04	2017
New Haven	\$455,640,000	73.48	2013
Orwell *	\$197,944,000	76.79	2011
Panton	\$140,535,000	75.96	2012
Ripton *	\$93,450,000	73.29	2011
Salisbury *	\$317,448,000	68.33	2012
Shoreham *	\$196,790,000	76.09	2007
Starksboro	\$228,906,000	75.09	2016
Vergennes	\$337,192,000	70.78	2007
Waltham	\$74,484,000	73.79	2019
Weybridge	\$180,100,000	77.07	2006
Whiting	\$50,284,000	76.25	2012
* Mandatory town wide reappraisal ordered			
Source: Vermont Department of Taxes			

property assessments — its grand list — on the average accurately represent fair market value.

According to the Department of Taxes website, “If the grand lists were always at 100% of fair market value, there would be no reason for the state to estimate market values and determine common levels of appraisal (CLA). The CLA is used to equalize the education property tax rates throughout the state.”

Thus, a CLA above 100% means a community’s

assessments are higher overall than fair market value, and CLAs are used to lower school tax rates. The town’s district tax rate — or individual tax rate if it does not belong to a district, as is the case of towns like Lincoln and Hancock, for example — is lowered by the percentage the rate is over 100%

But a CLA below 100% means a community’s assessments are lower overall than fair market value. CLAs are applied to increase school tax rates. The rate is divided by the CLA; for example a pre-CLA rate of \$1.50 per \$100 of assessed value in a town with a CLA of 80% would then have a rate of \$1.875.

The mathematical equation for this is $\$1.50 \div .8 = \1.875

And according to the figures released by the Department of Taxes in this past week, every Addison County community has a CLA well below 80%. They range between 66.3% (Hancock) and 76.95% (Middlebury).

Overall, only 18 of Vermont’s 251 communities have CLAs higher than 100%; almost certainly all those communities have recently reappraised and updated their grand lists. The highest CLA is in Danby, at 111.67%.

Three towns have CLAs lower than 60%; Killington’s 52.35% brought up the rear. It should be noted all CLAs are subject to appeal; see the chart with this story for a list of Addison County CLAs and head online to tinyurl.com/yc2r5tdz for the full list of the

state’s CLAs.

Meanwhile, only another 17 Vermont communities have CLAs between 90 and 99.99%. That means many more than 200 municipalities have CLAs between 60 and 89.99%.

In Addison County this means that school tax rates will be adjusted upwards this year in every community by the percentage that its CLA is below 100%, most often by a lot.

Some news that came out of Montpelier will help county homeowners’ pocketbooks, but only a little. In the 2023 session, lawmakers passed Act 127, which capped district-wide homestead school-tax increases at 5%, but only if a district increases spending by less than 10%.

But that cap will only make a small difference, even though the Addison Central, Mount Abraham Union

and Addison Northwest school districts are all eyeing budgets that would meet that spending target.

ANWSD TAX RATE EXAMPLE
For example, in the Addison Northwest (ANWSD) district, the board late last month was considering a budget that could increase spending by about 9%. The Act 127 cap of a 5% increase would mean a 7.71-cent rate hike for the district to about \$1.62 per \$100 of assessed value.

But when ANWSD district CLAs ranging from 70.78% in Vergennes to 75.96% in Panton are factored in, the potential tax hikes are much higher, according to ANWSD Director of Finance and Operations Elizabeth Jennings.

“Once these CLAs are applied our towns will see tax rate increases ranging between the low 30s to mid 40s in cents,” Jennings wrote in an email to the *Independent*. “It appears that many towns statewide that do not have a very recent appraisal are seeing similar results.”

Legislators could change funding laws, add money to the Education Fund or otherwise act by late this spring, thus changing the picture by the time school rates are set this summer, school officials are saying. But they are worried.

“This is terrible for taxpayers, and the school districts have no control over these figures,” Jennings wrote.

Shedidhaveonerecommendation for municipalities, and suggested they act quickly:

“Every town needs to apply to have a new appraisal. But I am certain that the state does not have enough bandwidth to get them all done in any timely fashion.”

To read a more extensive explanation of Vermont’s CLA, head online to read: “A Citizen’s Guide to the CLA: Vermont’s Common Level of Appraisal Adjustment for School Taxes” by the Vermont Children’s Forum and the Public Assets Institute, 2006. You can find it at tinyurl.com/CLAprimer.

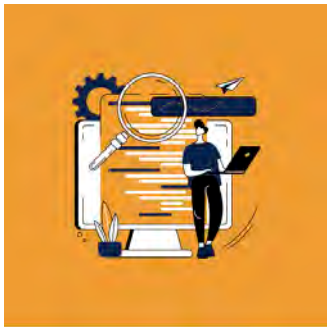
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By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)
house warm, have them get in touch through Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects (HOPE) in Middlebury, at 802-388-3608. If you're able to donate wood or provide financial support, write to info@willowell.org. Organizers of the program note that all firewood deliveries are handled confidentially, and only HOPE personnel and those making the delivery are aware of the recipient's identity.

The three presenters at this quarter's "100+ Women Who Care Addison County" will be the Turning Point Center of Addison County, Bixby Memorial Free Library, and Stride – The Wright Foundation for Female Athletes. Each presenter will be giving a 5-minute presentation, and voting will follow. This meeting will be held entirely on Zoom on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at 7:30 p.m. Any woman who would like to join 100+ Women to vote at this meeting can find information at 100wacvt.org.

Join herpetologists Jim Andrews and Matt Gorton, and transportation expert Chris Slesar to learn about amphibians and the effectiveness of the wildlife underpasses in Monkton that assure their safety. The talk will be held at Monkton Central School on Thursday, Jan. 25, from 6:30-8 p.m. The local amphibians and wildlife underpasses will be dedicated to honor Trish White and the late Marty Illick, whose work helped make these innovative tunnels a reality. Get your free tickets at donorbox.org/events/541352. Signing up for tickets through this link will send you an e-mail with your ticket and confirmation; this will not be required for entry, but it does allow organizers to contact you if the event needs to be cancelled due to inclement weather or sickness, so is strongly encouraged.

The Mount Abraham Union High School Environmental Action Group/Eagle Student Activism is hosting a "Prom Wear and Clothing Swap" on Saturday, Feb. 3, from 10

a.m. to 2 p.m. Donations of gently used formal wear, shoes and jewelry, and other gently used clothing (no housewares please) will be accepted at Mt. Abe in Bristol during school hours or during designated drop-off times (Jan. 20 and 27, from 10 a.m. to noon, and Feb. 2, from 3-6 p.m.). This is a great place to find something fancy, regular clothing and costumes and accessories for theater groups. It's great to see this clothing get a second use... It's also wonderful to have lovely apparel available to all students. Questions? Email Teresa Boucher teresa.boucher@mausd.org.

The final number of deer taken in Vermont's 2023 hunting seasons will not be available for a few more weeks, but the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department indicates the final tally will be around 16,800 deer. Those deer will provide approximately 3.4 million servings of local, nutritious venison, according to state officials. The buck harvest will be close to 9,800, up from 2022 (9,619) and the previous 3-year average of 9,336. The final antlerless deer harvest will be around 7,000, down from the previous 3-year average (8,101). The 2023 White-tailed Deer Harvest Report with final numbers will be on Fish & Wildlife's website in early March. Also beginning in late March, the department will hold hearings to share biological information and to listen to any information people wish to share.

Average gasoline prices in Vermont have fallen 4.2 cents per gallon during the past week to \$3.23, according to GasBuddy. That's 18 cents lower than a month ago and 16.2 cents lower than a year ago. The cheapest station in Vermont was \$2.89; the most expensive \$3.99. Meanwhile, the national average price of gasoline fell 3.8 cents to \$3.03.

Each year, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce honors an outstanding Vermonter as its "Citizen of the Year." This award is presented to the individual who

MAUSD

(Continued from Page 1A)
merger with another school district," Siringo told the *Independent*.
"Although there is so much more to learn and do, I feel really good about the place that the board is in right now, and I'm confident that this work will continue with some great energy and people in place. I'm about to launch my twin daughters off to college next year, and I'm ready for some new and different challenges."
Siringo is finishing her sixth year on the MAUSD board and currently leads the district's Community Engagement Committee.

She also spent two years on the Bristol Elementary School Board prior to the former Addison Northeast Supervisory Union consolidating into the one-board governance of MAUSD.

"Like many people, I joined the school board because I wanted to get involved in what was happening in our schools in an impactful way. I wanted to understand not just what the math curriculum was for elementary school students, for example, but why we chose that particular curriculum," Siringo said.

The school board chair said she's learned a lot about the school system throughout her eight years of service.

"At the same time, I gained a greater appreciation for the need

has made major contributions to the betterment of Vermont, has been distinguished through outstanding service to their community and region, and typifies the true spirit of service and self-sacrifice in representing the finest ideals of citizenship. Nominations are now open for the Citizen of the Year; make submissions online at tinyurl.com/3hdhrrwd. The deadline to nominate is Feb. 16. The recipient will be presented with the award at an event in May. Previous recipients have included U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, Barbara Snelling, Antonio Pomerleau and Ken Squier. The award dates back to 1964.

for continual engagement with the community, making sure people know what's happening in our schools and also have opportunities to provide input to shape the direction of the district," Siringo said.

BOARD WORK

Finding ways to effectively engage with community members has been a focus for the board during Siringo's tenure, particularly as the panel has been challenged in recent years to consider the way it governs, Siringo said.

"We've seen this not just locally but at a national level, that people are less trustful of those in power, they are asking for more transparency and accountability of our leaders, and they want to have a voice in the decisions that are made about things that matter to them," she said. "We have made some specific changes to the way we operate as a school board, and how we work with our communities and our administration, that I think are really responsive to these new expectations of us."

Siringo cited the board's current efforts to revise its public participation process, changes that are aimed at helping board members be more flexible and responsive to community input, while also recognizing the legal requirements and responsibilities they must abide by.

Siringo said the board has also been working to ensure that serving on the board is a sustainable experience for people, "while also making sure everyone is well informed about what's happening and that we're able to get our work done."

Siringo said one thing that has been working really well is having the board chair and vice chair share a lot of the work that used to be

solely the work of the chair.

"Together with the administration, we develop meeting agendas, discuss topics that come up between meetings, and think about the best way to facilitate topics that can sometimes be challenging," she said.

Last March, four open seats on the MAUSD board failed to draw candidates or enough write-in votes to be filled on Town Meeting Day.

Siringo acknowledged that school boards around the nation are facing challenges, but said she feels confident in the Mount Abe board's ability to attract and maintain candidates moving forward.

"I do think people see that school boards across the country are in the crosshairs more than ever before, as schools become staging grounds for political division, but I think we're in a really great place, in MAUSD, to navigate these challenges," she said. "We have a strong working relationship with our administrative

team, and I think that the work we've been doing in the past few years will help us attract and retain board members."

Siringo invited community members to learn more about the board's work.

"It's hard work for sure, and it's a big commitment, but one of the greatest things about our small state is that you can do something like serve on your local school board and actually have a significant impact," she said. "I would strongly encourage people to attend or watch a recording of one of our meetings to get a sense of what we do, and to reach out to a board member to get their perspective on the experience."

MORE OPEN SEATS

Hanson and LaPerle have also decided they will not run for another term on the MAUSD board.

LaPerle has represented New Haven on the board for eight years. In recent years, she's also served on the MAUSD-ANWSD Merger Study Committee and the school board's finance sub-committee.

"While I have found the work both rewarding and challenging, it is time for me to move on," LaPerle wrote in an email to the *Independent*. "While we have been through a lot, I still feel confident that this district is stronger together and I am optimistic about the future."

Hanson has served two terms on the board, and prior to that filled out an open position on the former Mount Abraham Union High School Board. He has also served on district's facilities feasibility study committee, the MAUSD-ANWSD Merger Study Committee, and currently leads the school board's facilities sub-committee.

"The end of this term fits pretty well into future plans. My wife will be retiring next spring/early summer and we will have many new adventures that will reshape my time," Hanson told the *Independent*. "The work of the MAUSD Board will not lighten given continuing new issues, but much of what I was interested in, such as right sizing schools and merging MAUSD with ANWSD, has been put to the voters and not supported."

Five other MAUSD board members have terms or appointments set to expire in March, and four have decided they'll seek more time on the board.

Steve Rooney will run for another three-year term representing Starksboro. Mike Dash of Bristol and Monkton residents Barbara Crandall and Justin Pearson will each run to finish the remainder of the terms they were appointed to earlier this year.

New Haven resident Kathi Apgar, who was appointed to fill a vacancy on the board in April, had not yet decided if she would run for the remainder of her term when the *Independent* reached out to her last week.

Candidates have until the Jan. 29 filing deadline to get onto the March 5 Town Meeting Day ballot.

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What does love mean to you?

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Send your photo along with a short description by email to contests@addisonindependent.com or by mail to 58 Maple Street, Middlebury, VT 05753. All entries must be received by February 1st. Winners will be announced in the February 8th edition of the Addison Independent.

All submissions will be entered to win one of three local prize packages. Prize packages will be selected at random and mailed to each winner.



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Package 2: Prizes from Tourterelle and Middlebury Floral & Gifts

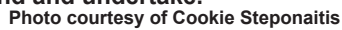
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"I wanted to help give voice to these young people. I remember being in high school and not having many avenues ... to really be as involved in the community as I wanted to," he said. "It's just making these younger people, these teens, see that there is a way to get involved. And not only that, but showing the positives of

The club meets twice a month, once at VUHS and once at the Bixby Library, to set its goals and plan its projects. Hargett emphasized the group not only works, but also



“We’d only been a club for three months, and it’s the highest value grant Lions International gives out to Leo programs,” Steponaitis said. “The kids felt really validated,



“The kids had to go to zoning meetings. They had to write grants. They had to get permit applications. It’s been a huge learning experience,” she said. “Sure, we help them, but we don’t

“The most valuable thing I’ve gained from being a Leo have been the memories I’ve made. Whether it was selling popcorn on Memorial Day or digging in Addison County clay to plant trees, these are the things that I will look back on with great fondness years from now. I will always be thankful for the opportunity to make those memories.”

Those interested in learning more about or joining the Leos may contact Steponaitis at cookiesteponaitis@gmail.com or Charlebois at masoncharlebois@gmail.com.

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SPORTS

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- School News
- Classifieds
- Legal Notices
- Police Logs

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Hockey

1/3 MUHS vs Harwood	8-0
1/8 MUHS vs. Rutland	4-1
1/6 Stowe vs MUHS	5-1
1/10 MUHS at Brattleboro	Late

Boys' Hockey

1/6 Hartford vs MUHS	3-1
1/10 Burr & Burton at MUHS	Late

Boys' Basketball

1/3 OV vs VUHS	61-34
1/3 Randolph vs Mt Abe	55-44
1/3 Fair Haven vs MUHS	64-42
1/5 Mt. Abe vs MSJ	63-24
1/6 OV vs Bellows Falls	69-44
1/6 Hartford vs MUHS	67-26
1/9 OV at MUHS	Postponed
1/9 Peoples at VUHS	Postponed
1/9 Fair Haven at Mt Abe	Ppd. to 1/22

Girls' Basketball

1/3 VUHS vs Mill River	53-17
1/5 Fair Haven vs MUHS	58-27
1/5 Mt Abe vs OV	55-31
1/9 OV at BBA	Postponed
1/10 Milton at MUHS	Late
1/10 Fair Haven at Mt Abe	Late
1/10 Missisquoi at VUHS	Late

COLLEGE SPORTS

Women's Basketball

1/3 Midd vs Wellesley	57-37
1/5 Midd vs Hamilton	57-54
1/6 Midd vs Amherst	76-67
1/9 Midd vs St. Lawrence	66-41

Men's Basketball

1/5 Hamilton vs Midd	70-61
1/6 Midd vs Amherst	70-56

Men's Hockey

1/5 Midd vs Wesleyan	1-1
1/6 Trinity vs Midd	3-2

Women's Hockey

1/6 Endicott vs Midd	3-3
1/9 Midd at Plattsburgh	Postponed

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls' Hockey

1/13 Rutland at MUHS	7 PM
1/17 MUHS at Spaulding	5:15 PM
1/20 Essex at MUHS	5 PM

Boys' Hockey

1/13 MUHS at Mt. Mansfield	7:15 PM
1/17 MUHS at Spaulding	7:15 PM
1/20 Essex at MUHS	7 PM

Boys' Basketball

1/11 OV at Mill River	7 PM
1/12 Milton at VUHS	7 PM
1/12 Rutland at MUHS	7 PM
1/13 Mt Abe at OV	2:30 PM
1/16 BBA at OV	7 PM
1/16 VUHS at Fair Haven	7 PM
1/17 Mt Abe at Enosburg	7 PM
1/18 OV at Fair Haven	7 PM
1/17 Missisquoi at MUHS	7 PM
1/20 VUHS at MUHS	12:30 PM
1/20 Mt Abe at Milton	11:30 AM

Girls' Basketball

1/13 Mt Abe at Enosburg	2:30 PM
1/13 VUHS at MUHS	12:30 PM
1/13 Rutland at OV	6:30 PM
1/16 Missisquoi at MUHS	7 PM
1/16 Mt Abe at VUHS	7 PM
1/17 Windsor at OV	7 PM
1/19 Mt Abe at Colchester	7 PM
1/19 VUHS at Enosburg	7 PM
1/19 OV at MUHS	7 PM

Wrestling

1/12&13	Essex Tournament
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Gymnastics

1/12 Burlington+ at MUHS	6 PM
1/18 Harwood at MUHS	6 PM

MUHS Nordic

1/13 Host at Rikert	10 AM
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MUHS Dance

1/20 MUHS at Richford	1 PM
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COLLEGE SPORTS

Women's Basketball

1/12 Bowdoin at Midd	7 PM
1/13 Colby at Midd	3 PM
1/20 Midd at Williams	3 PM

Men's Basketball

1/12 Midd at Bowdoin	7 PM
1/13 Midd at Colby	3 PM
1/16 Johnson at Midd	6 PM
1/20 Williams at Midd	2 PM

Men's Hockey

1/12 Midd at Plattsburgh	7 PM
1/19 Colby at Midd	7 PM
1/20 Bowdoin at Midd	4 PM

Women's Hockey

1/12 Colby at Midd	7 PM
1/13 Colby at Midd	3 PM
1/19 Midd at Bowdoin	7 PM
1/20 Midd at Bowdoin	3 PM



PANTHER GUARD ALEXA Mustafaj puts up two of her game-high 26 points during the Middlebury College women's hoop team's home win on Tuesday.

Independent photo/Steve James



PANTHER FORWARD EMILY Downer digs in on defense against St. Lawrence point guard Annie Perry during Tuesday's women's basketball game in Middlebury.

Independent photo/Steve James

Women's hoop rolls on, thumps Saints in 2nd half

By ANDY KIRKALDY

MIDDLEBURY — Sometimes statistics can be misleading. But in Tuesday's night's home game for the Middlebury College women's basketball team against St. Lawrence, the underlying numbers pointed to the truth: The Panthers ruled the second half in their 66-41 victory, their seventh in eight outings.

The scrappy Saints played hard in their play-on-player defense, holding the Panthers to 22.2% shooting and outrebounding the Panthers, 27-22, as they took a 24-20 lead into the locker room.

But in the second half, the 10-5 Panthers played like the team that swept two NESCAC road games this past weekend against 11-win teams, one against then-10th-ranked Amherst. They worked the ball more patiently, hit their attempts in the paint, shot 61.3%, outrebounded the Saints, 20-8, and outscored them, 46-17. It also helped that junior guard Alexa Mustafaj, their leading scorer, broke loose for 20 of her 26 points after the break.

Middlebury Coach KJ Krasco said she expected the 4-7 Saints, who run a non-stop motion

offense, to come at the Panthers hard. She added she was a bit concerned about her team's frame of mind entering a midweek non-league game after the big weekend, with another critical home NESCAC game looming against Bowdoin (13-1) on Friday.

"I told our kids yesterday their record doesn't indicate who they are and how they play," Krasco said. "They're tough, they're gritty, and they find a way to get their teammates open shots."

The message certainly got across after the first 20 minutes. For example, Krasco noted the Saints got only one offensive rebound in the second half after grabbing 11 in the first half, and the Panthers continued to play tough man defense.

"We talked about that at halftime, being able to force them to take a contested shot and then rebound. I felt like we got a

couple of unlucky bounces in the first half, but we also got a little bit outworked in the first half, too," she said. "I knew this was going to be a challenge coming off such an exciting weekend to get our kids focused and getting (See Hoop, Page 3B)



PANTHER FORWARD BETHANY Lucey makes a move into the St. Lawrence lane during the Middlebury College women's basketball team's win on Tuesday.

Independent photo/Steve James

Locals place well at indoor track meet

By ANDY KIRKALDY

BURLINGTON — Athletes from Vergennes and Mount Abraham union high schools combined to win five Division II events on Sunday at an indoor track and field meet run at the University of Vermont.

Eagle Joseph Darling claimed two of those, the long jump and shot put, while Commodore runners prevailed three times: Calder Rakowski won at 600 meters, Grey Fearon took first in the 1,500-meter race, and Rakowski teamed up with Chance Koenig, Riley Gagnon and Ryder Messenger to win the boys' four-by-400-meter relay.

Gagnon, in the 600, and Eagle Truman Sawyer, in the boys' long jump, also earned second-place finishes.

On the girls' side, Mount Abe's Ruby Connell (second at 300 meters) and Hazel Stoddard (second in the high jump) submitted the top performances.

For the Commodore girls, Jing Williams was third at 600 meters, and Madeleine Stroup took third at 1,500 meters.

Overall, the VUHS boys were fourth out of nine teams with 13 points, and the VUHS girls were tied for fifth with 10 points out of eight teams. The Eagle boys were listed as last with two points, an apparent error given Darling's efforts. The Eagle girls were tied for sixth with eight points.

The full results for the Eagle and Commodore athletes were:

BOYS:

- 55 meters: 6. Koenig, V, 7.72; 16. Ryan Johnson, V, 9.14.
- 300: 6. Messinger, V, 41.93; 7. Sawyer, M, 42.32.
- 600: Rakowski, V, 1:30.06; 2. Gagnon, V, 1:35.8; 5. Koenig, V, 1:45.91.
- 1,500: 1. Fearon, V, 4:37.3.
- 4x400: V, 3:59.32 (Rakowski, Koenig, Gagnon, Messenger).
- Long jump: 1. Darling, M, 5.52 meters; 2. Sawyer, M, 5.16m.
- Shot put: 1. Darling, M, 10.47m; 4. Sawyer, M, 7.7m; 5.

(See Track, Page 2B)



Independent photo/Steve James

Hip Hop to the top

THE MIDDLEBURY UNION High School dance team wowed the judges winning the Hip Hop discipline at the Tigers' home meet on Saturday. Pictured are, left to right, Madyson Hutchinson, Madelyn Brochu, Autumn Lowell, Gedeleine Franklin and Jordyn Rushton. For more photos and a story see Page 4B.

Tiger, Commodore wrestlers earn titles

By ANDY KIRKALDY

BENNINGTON — A dozen and a half wrestlers from Middlebury, Vergennes and Mount Abraham union high schools fared well at the Scott Legacy Invitational tournament hosted by Mount Anthony on Saturday, with Addison County grapplers bringing home four individual weight class titles and an outstanding wrestler award.

The Tigers posted the second-best results for a Vermont team behind the host Patriots by scoring 116.5 points, according to MUHS Coach Ethan Raymond. Mount Abe finished fifth overall as a team, and Vergennes was sixth, according to their coaches.

Winning the tournament's most outstanding wrestler award, as

voted on by the coaches, was VUHS junior Isaac Preston, who won the 190-pound title. He pinned his way through the early rounds then capped his day off with a thrilling overtime victory over CVU's Tom Murphy.

Another Commodore champion at Mount Anthony was senior Jamison Couture. He captured his third tournament title of the season by winning the 215-pound weight class.

VUHS also earned a third-place and a fourth-place finish among its six wrestlers. The names of those wrestlers weren't available.

Leading the way for MUHS was junior Avery Carl, who won the 144-pound weight class by winning all five of his matches, including a

win by default over Mount Anthony's Shawn Gassaway in the final.

Freshman Wyatt Kennett also won, claiming the 165-pound weight class with a 3-0 record. Kennett defeated Mount Abraham's Wesley Husk in the final. The *Independent* also owes Kennett an apology for misprinting his record at the Tigers' recent Hubie Wagner Invitational: Kennett won five of his six matches at that late December tournament.

Two Tigers finished second on Saturday. At 126 pounds junior Alex Sperry went 2-1, losing only to Logan Davis of Mount Anthony, 4-2, in the final.

Freshman Parker Carl at 132 also took second with a 2-1 record, losing to Mount Anthony's Asa Ries in the

final, 17-2.

The other two MUHS competitors, both sophomores, went 2-2 and earned fourth-place finishes, Steven Lackard at 190 and Kameron Raymond at 285.

Mount Abe's Husk was one of three Eagles who earned second place in Saturday's invitational. Also making their final and finishing second were freshmen Kaidin White at 132 pounds and Isayah Isham at 138.

Sophomore Mason While (132 pounds) and ninth-grader Baxter Montgomery (106) each finished third in their respective weights. Eagle freshman Thales Artis wound up fourth at 113 pounds.

John S. McCright contributed to this story.

College hoop teams net wins

Women’s hockey earns tie; men’s hockey loses, ties

By ANDY KIRKALDY
MIDDLEBURY — As Middlebury College basketball teams began NESCAC play, the women’s hoop team picked up two road wins to earn a spot in first place, while the men’s squad settled for a split of two home NESCAC contests.

The Panther women’s hoop team also picked up one non-league triumph, and hosted another non-league opponent on Tuesday — see story on Page 1B.

Meanwhile, the men’s hockey team returned to league action with two road games, tying one and losing the other, while the women’s hockey squad got back on the ice with a non-league tie in its first game of the semester.

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

With three wins heading into Tuesday, the Middlebury women’s hoop team improved to 10-5, 2-0 in NESCAC play.

On Jan. 3 the Panthers topped visiting Wellesley, 57-37, in a non-league game. Middlebury led at every checkpoint, including by 40-30 after three periods before pulling away in the fourth. Alexa Mustafaj scored 25, Kate Tornwini recorded her first career double-double with 12 points and 10 rebounds, Augusta Dixon contributed eight points and seven boards, and Bethany Lucey grabbed 10 rebounds as the Panthers earned a big edge on the boards over Wellesley, which dropped to 6-5.

On this past Friday, Middlebury opened its NESCAC schedule with a 57-54 win at Hamilton. In a back-and-forth game the Panthers erased a late two-point Hamilton lead.

With 1:59 to go, Continental Kendall Harris converted a three-point play to make it 53-51, Hamilton. At 1:43 a Dixon layup tied the score. Taylor Lambo hit a free throw at 1:15 to put Hamilton back on top by a point, but at 0:54 Gabby Stuart sank two from the line to make it 55-54, Middlebury. Dixon then stole the ball, and as the clock ticked down Emily Downer and Mustafaj each hit a free throw to ice the win.

Dixon sparked the Panthers with 19 points and nine boards, Mustafaj scored 15, and Downer added 13. Lambo led three Continentals in double figures with 16 points as they dropped to 11-2 heading into Saturday.

Going into Saturdays game vs. Middlebury, Amherst was undefeated and ranked No. 10 in NCAA Division III. Then the Panthers dealt host Amherst (11-1, 1-1 NESCAC) its first loss of the season, 76-67. The Panthers outscored the Mammoths in the second (19-11) and third (20-15) periods, and then held off Amherst in the fourth. The closest the Mammoths came was seven points down with 42 seconds to go.

Mustafaj had a big game for the

Panthers, scoring 33 points, Dixon scored 10 and added 12 rebounds, Lucey chipped in nine points and six boards, and Downer scored 11.

WOMEN’S HOCKEY

On Saturday the Panthers settled for a 3-3 tie with visiting Endicott despite outshooting the Gulls, 38-19. The Panthers entered the game ranked No. 4 in NCAA D-II and now have a 5-2-2 mark. The No. 14 Gulls are 8-4-2. The Panthers needed a late Britt Nawrocki goal to forge the tie.

The Gulls opened the scoring 5:07 into play, when Rivers Morris put the rebound past Panther goalie Sophia Will.

With just 53 ticks gone in the second period, Middlebury’s Kate Flynn knotted the score from the slot by converting a Cat Appleyard pass from behind the goal.

The Panthers took a 2-1 lead midway through the period when Appleyard found the top of the net from the left circle. Endicott responded at 16:48 with the teams skated four-on-four; Lily Anderson snuck the puck inside the left pipe.

The Gulls made it 3-2 with 4:31 gone in the third period, when Morris tipped in a shot.



Nawrocki equalized with 2:07 left in regulation. Callia Ferraris sent a cross-ice pass that Nawrocki one-timed home.

Middlebury landed nine shots on Endicott goalie Casey Moritz in overtime. Moritz denied them all, including with 2:48 remaining, when she sprawled to kicked away a Flynn bid for the game-winner.

On Tuesday the Panthers had been scheduled to visit highly ranked rival Plattsburgh, but the day’s iffy forecast led to a postponement.

MEN’S BASKETBALL

The Middlebury men’s basketball team stands at 6-8, 1-1 NESCAC, after splitting their first two league games at home.

On Friday, in their league opener, the Panthers mustered just 21 points in the first half and trailed by 10 at the break in a 70-61 loss to visiting Hamilton. Middlebury came no closer than seven points twice in the second half as the Continentals improved to 6-6. Noah Osher (17 points) and Tristan Joseph (16) were the only Panthers to reach double figures. Garrett Keyhani scored 26 for Hamilton.

The Panthers bounced back on Saturday to dispatch visiting Amherst, 70-56. A 12-0 run in the middle of the second half proved

to be decisive. The Mammoths led, 42-38, with 11:39 on the clock when the Middlebury used that surge to take a 50-42 lead at 7:34. David Brennan scored six points on jumpers to spark the run, and Evan Flaks and Sam Stevens each sank three-pointers.

Amherst (8-7, 0-2 NESCAC) cut the lead to seven twice in the next few minutes, but the Panthers pulled away and led by as many as 16. Osher led the Panthers with 18 points, Brennan scored 12 and added 11 boards, Flaks scored nine and chipped in a team-high four assists, and Stevens finished with nine points and six rebounds. Will Scherer (14 rebounds) and Chris Hammond scored 10 points each to lead the Mammoths.

MEN’S HOCKEY

On Friday night the men’s hockey team settled for a 1-1 tie with host Wesleyan despite outshooting the Cardinals, 32-23. Wesleyan goalie Erik Voloshin made 31 saves for his 3-6-1 team. Andrew Heinze stopped 22 shots in the Panther goal.

Wesleyan scored first. With 10:19 gone in the opening period Connor Sutherland collected a rebound on the crease and poked the puck inside the right post.

Jake Oblak tied the score for the Panthers with 0.5 seconds remaining in the second period. His shot from the left dot found its way through traffic and into the net. Dante Palumbo and Chris Garbe earned assists on what was Oblak’s first goal of the season.

On Saturday the Panthers came up just short at 15th-ranked Trinity, 3-2. The Bantams improved to 11-2, while Middlebury wrapped up the weekend at 2-7-3, 1-5-2 NESCAC.

The Bantams took the lead at 15:29 of the opening period, when Alexander Mozian scored from the doorstep.

Trinity doubled its lead 4:20 into the second period, when Spencer Korona tapped a pass home from close range.

Middlebury’s Ben Boren responded with a goal 30 seconds later. John Burdett skated down the left side and backhanded a pass to Boren, who swept it home to make it 2-1 with his first Panther goal.

With 2:35 gone in the third period, Trinity took a 3-1 lead. Mozian circled the net and flicked a shot high into the net.

The Panthers pulled to within one on a power play with 6:47 remaining. Paddy Mangan received a pass from Jin Lee at the blue line and blasted in a one-timer to make it 3-2.

Middlebury peppered the Trinity net in the final 2:30, but the Bantams hung on as Bantam goalie Devon Bobak made several of his 15 saves. Jake Horoho finished with 19 saves for Middlebury.

OV boys top VUHS; Eagles win

By ANDY KIRKALDY
ADDISON COUNTY — In high school boys’ basketball play between Jan. 3 and 9, Otter Valley won big over Vergennes and claimed another victory, Mount Abraham split two games, and Middlebury dropped a pair of contests.

An ominous forecast caused Tuesday’s games to be postponed.

VUHS-OV

In a Jan. 3 battle of two teams with good records, host Otter Valley coasted over VUHS, 61-34.

The Commodores took a quick 8-0 lead, but the Otters pulled to within two points after one quarter and led by 11 points at the half after **Lucas Politano** erupted for all eight of his points in the second period. The Otters then put the game away with a 25-point third period.

Drew Pelkey led OV with 16 points and 10 rebounds, and **Logan Letourneau** scored 10 points and added eight rebounds and five steals.

Devin Brisson paced the Commodores with 11 points, and **Oakley Francis** scored 10 as VUHS dropped to 5-2.

On Saturday the Otters rolled past host Bellows Falls, 69-44. OV outscored the Terriers by

29-4 in the third period and led by 38 points entering the fourth quarter.

On Saturday the Otters rolled past host Bellows Falls, 69-44. OV outscored the Terriers by 29-4 in the third period and led by 38 points entering the fourth quarter.

Connor Denis led Otter Valley (6-2) with 18 points, Letourneau finished with 14 after hitting four three-pointers in the first quarter, and Pelkey added 12 points.

The Commodores’ Tuesday’s home game vs. Peoples was postponed, as was the Otters’ visit to MUHS.

EAGLES

On Jan. 3 host Randolph pulled away from the Eagles in the fourth quarter to post at 55-44 victory. The Ghosts led at the half by 28-20, but Eagle guard **Hayden Lutz** sparked a third-quarter rally with 11 points in the period, and Mount Abe trailed by just 41-40 entering the fourth quarter. However, Randolph’s Ethan Davignon and Shea Fontanella combined for 19 fourth-quarter points as the Ghosts nailed down the victory.

Davignon finished with 29 points for Randolph, and Fontanella added 12.

Lutz put up 23 points for Mount

Abe, and **Ian Funke** contributed 10.

On Friday, Jan. 5, the Eagles improved to 3-5 by bolting past visiting Mount St. Joseph, 63-24. Mount Abe erased any doubt about the outcome with a 22-4 run in the third period. Funke led the way with 20 points, and Lutz was next with 12.

The Eagles’ Tuesday home game vs. Fair Haven was postponed.

TIGERS

On Jan. 3 host Fair Haven rolled to a 64-42 victory over the Tigers. The Slaters started fast and led by 61-21 before the Tigers outscored them in the fourth quarter by 21-3.

The Slaters improved to 3-4 by snapping a four-game skid. Forward **Phil Bean** paced the Slaters with 15 points and 15 rebounds, and substitutes **Andrew Barker** and **Dylan Wetmore** added 11 points apiece for Fair Haven.

Forward **Cooke Riney** led the Tigers with 17 points, eight in the fourth quarter.

On Saturday host Hartford, D-II’s first-place team, defeated the Tigers, 67-26. The Hurricanes improved to 8-1. The Tigers dropped to 0-7.

Hartford edges boys’ hockey

MIDDLEBURY — In the Middlebury Union High School boys’ hockey team’s only action last week, the Tigers came up on the short end of a Division II showdown with visiting first-place Hartford, 3-1, this past Saturday night.

Hartford stayed on top of

the D-II standings with a 6-0-1 record, while the Tigers dropped to fifth with a 4-2 mark heading into a Wednesday home game with Burr & Burton. That game was played after deadline for this edition. The Tigers will play at Mount Mansfield on Saturday.

On Jan. 6, Hurricane Ezra

Mt. Abe, VUHS girls prevail

By ANDY KIRKALDY
ADDISON COUNTY — In a light slate of high school girls’ basketball between Jan. 3 and 9, Mount Abraham won at Otter Valley, Vergennes also prevailed on the road, and Middlebury lost at home to Division II’s top team.

Several games were also played on Wednesday after the deadline for this edition of the *Independent*.

EAGLES-OTTERS

On Friday, Jan. 5, Mount Abe rolled at OV, 55-31. The Eagles took control with a 15-4 first quarter and led by 14 points at the half. Mackenzie Griner paced the Eagles with 12 points, Louisa

Painter scored 11, and Abba Parker chipped in eight. The Eagles improved to 5-1 heading into a Wednesday home game vs. undefeated Fair Haven, the only team to defeat them this winter.

Matelin LaPorte and Miley Lape both scored six points for OV, which dropped to 1-5. The Otters’ Tuesday game at Burr & Burton was postponed.

COMMODORES

On Jan. 3 the Commodores pushed their record to 5-1 with a convincing 53-17 win at Mill River. **Ashtin Stearns** tossed in 22 points to lead VUHS, and **Ava Francis** added eight.

Emma Haley scored nine points

for Mill River.

The Commodores were also set to open their Lake Division schedule on Wednesday at home vs. Missisquoi.

TIGERS

On Jan. 5 visiting Fair Haven cruised past MUHS, 58-27. **Maddy Perry** (13 points), **Lily Briggs** (11 points), and **Kate Hadwen** and **Izzy Cole** (10 points each) all reached double figures for the undefeated Slaters.

Solstice Binder led the 1-5 Tigers with 16 points. MUHS was scheduled to open their Lake Division schedule on Wednesday at home vs. Milton.

Tiger gymnastics team ups its scores in defeat of Randolph

By ANDY KIRKALDY
RANDOLPH — The Middlebury Union High School gymnastics team won five events at Randolph on Thursday and breezed to a 74.5-10.3 victory over a shorthanded host Ghost squad.

Tiger Coach Natalia Little was most happy not with the victory, but that her team posted its highest score of the season, which she said was evidence of its progress.

Alixis Williams earned all

five of the MUHS victories and finished third in the sixth discipline. Vergennes independent Bella Audy won that event, the floor exercises, and Tiger Mady Richard was a career-best second on the floor. Little also noted Nataly Johnson earned personal bests in the vault and on the beam.

The full results were:

Vault: 1. Williams (Midd), 7.6; 2. Audy (Ind), 7.55; 3. Nataly Johnson (Midd) 6.85; 4. Emily Johnson (Midd), 5.65.

Bars: 1. Williams (Midd), 5.5; 2. Audy (Ind), 4.6.

Beam: 1. Williams (Midd), 7.8; 2. N. Johnson (Midd), 7.2; 3. Audy (Ind), 6.2; 5. Lila Hescocock (Midd), 4.4; 6. Richard (Midd), 3.9.

Floor: 1. Audy (Ind), 6.85; 2. Richard (Midd), 6.8; 3. Williams (Midd), 6.6; 4. E. Johnson (Midd), 6.3; 5. Hescocock (Midd), 5.9.

All-around: 1. Williams (Midd), 27.5; 2. Audy (Ind), 25.2.

Girls’ hockey takes two of three

By ANDY KIRKALDY
STOWE — The Middlebury Union High School girls’ hockey team won two out of three recent road games, and the Tigers carried a 5-3 record into action this Wednesday.

The Tigers were scheduled to visit Brattleboro on Wednesday after deadline for this issue. The Tigers are set to host Rutland at 7 p.m. on Saturday.

On Jan. 3 the Tigers skated past host Harwood, 8-0. Sawyer Witscher scored a first-period hat trick as MUHS took a 6-0 lead after the first 15 minutes. Kate Kozak netted a goal and two assists in the opening period, when Ellie Wilkinson-Sachs and Ireland Hanley also scored.

Erin Mulcahy and Isla Weaber added third-period goals. Weaber, Sedona Carrara and Quinn Doria each finished with two assists. Ruby Hubbell, Michaela Charbonneau and Heaven Ross all saw time in the Tiger goal, with Charbonneau and Ross making three saves apiece. Harwood goalie Paige Pratt made 19 saves.

On Saturday host Stowe avenged a season-opening loss to the Tigers with a 5-1 victory. The Raiders prevailed despite being outshot, 38-19, as Stowe goalie Marie Zenth held the Tigers at bay with 37 saves. Isabel Donza and Kate Tilgner scored two goals apiece to lead the Raider offense.

Weaber scored for MUHS, and Hubbell stopped 14 shots.

On Monday the Tigers topped host Rutland, 4-1, in a game rescheduled from December. MUHS scored three of its goals in the second period to take charge.

Hanley broke the ice at 5:01, and then she and Lia Calzini set up Carrara at 6:38. Calzini, from Kenyon Connors, made it 3-0. Rutland’s Mikka Patimti made it 3-1 early in the fourth, and Tiger Hayden Dunakin added a mid-period pad goal.

Hubbell, Charbonneau and Ross combined for 11 saves for MUHS, and Riley Quesnel made 20 for RHS.

Track

(Continued from Page 1B)
Brody McGuire, V, 7.19m.
GIRLS:
• 55 meters: 20. Mary Cosgrove, V, 9.17; 24. Kassondra Garrow, M,

9.5.
• 300: 2. Connell, M, 47.55; 5. Isabelle Van Voorst, V, 48.57.
• 600: Williams, V, 1:58.24.
• 1,000: 3. Stroup, V, 4:12.5.

• 1,500: 4. Stroup, V, 6:16.8.
• High jump: 2. Stoddard, M, 1.4m.
• Long jump: 11. Garrow, M, 3.42m.

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MIDDLEBURY LEADING SCORER Alexa Mustafaj is fouled as she attacks the basket during the Panther women's basketball team's win over visiting St. Lawrence on Tuesday.

Independent photo/Steve James



MIDDLEBURY'S KATE TORWINI and St. Lawrence's Kristen Varin — both Burlington residents — chase down a loose ball during Tuesday's women's basketball game in Pepin Gymnasium.

Independent photo/Steve James

Hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)
ready to play a 'midweek, we're-in-classes' kind of game."

What worked in the second half? Krasco said the Panthers began playing to their strengths, and one reason Mustafaj found scoring lanes was the Panther forwards started to hit their shots inside. Forwards Augusta Dixon, Emily Downer and Bethany Lucey combined to score 18 of their 28 points in the second half as the Panthers played more assertively.

"We relied heavily on the three of those guys this past weekend, and I think we can't win games if we don't get them the ball," Krasco said. "In the first half, I thought we were playing a little soft, to be completely honest. We toughened up and got better position on the block, and at catching and finishing at the rim."

The first half was hard-fought, if not elegant. The Panthers eked out a 12-9 lead after one period as Mustafaj scored six points. Elizabeth Flynn hit a coast-to-coast layup and a three-pointer to keep the Saints afloat.

Lucey scored in the lane to open the second quarter and make the lead five points, but the Panthers managed only six points over the next 9:30 as shots bounced and rolled off the rim. St. Lawrence slowly overtook them, with six

Saints scoring in their 14-point quarter, including four from Norah Niesz in transition. A Cam Roberts jumper beat the buzzer for the Saints, and their lead was 24-20 at the half.

Mustafaj sank a jumper to open the second half, but before the Panthers got organized on defense, Flynn rolled to the hoop for two buckets, and with a minute gone, the Saints led, 28-22.

The teams began to trade hoops, and at 5:35 the Saints still led, 32-28. But the Panthers closed the quarter with an 11-3

run to lead by four. Mustafaj, who scored 11 in the quarter, started with a layup on a feed from Dixon, then another layup on a steal and a go-ahead three-pointer. Lucey then laid in a feed from Brooke Collins, and the Saints called for time, trailing by 37-32. Out of the timeout, Katie Chisholm

hit a corner three. Dixon closed the quarter with a jumper, and Middlebury led, 39-35.

St. Lawrence's Niesz hit a baseline jumper to open the fourth quarter and make it a two-point game. Dixon then scored inside, Mustafaj drove for two, and Downer drilled a jumper at 8:12, and it was 45-37. Jackie Malley and Flynn sandwiched hoops around another Dixon jumper, and the Saints had hope at 47-41 with 6:20 remaining. It turned out they didn't have a prayer — St.

Lawrence didn't score again.

Meanwhile, seven Panthers put up points as they closed the game with a 19-0 run.

Margaret Dougher led St. Lawrence with 10 points, and Flynn finished with eight.

For Middlebury, Mustafaj added three steals to her 26 points. Dixon (14 points, 12 boards), Downer (eight points),

Gabby Stuart (five rebounds, four assists), Lucey (six points, four rebounds), and Kate Tornwini (six rebounds) contributed on the stat sheet. Also notable was Stuart's and Collins's defense on top against the Saints' motion attack.

Krasco said the defense is a constant, and the Panthers increasingly are playing to their

strengths offensively.

"We feel confident the way we're defending is going to allow us to compete in every single game. And then we've got to make sure we get the shots we know we're capable of making and not wasting possessions," she said.

Krasco cited chemistry as major part of the team's strong

start.

"The majority of the group has been with us for two or three years," she said. "We have a really good group that's ready to work together through adverse moments. We didn't start out the year like we wanted to, but I think we've really put our head down and focused on what we need to improve on."

"We have a really good group that's ready to work together through adverse moments."

— Coach KJ Krasco



MIDDLEBURY POINT GUARD Gabby Stuart goes on the attack vs. visiting St. Lawrence on Tuesday. Stuart had a team-high four assists in the Panther victory.

Independent photo/Steve James

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Tiger dance wins at home meet

By ANDY KIRKALDY
MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School dance team opened its season strongly this past Saturday in the Tigers' own gymnasium, finishing first out of four teams in the Hip Hop discipline and second among four squads in Pom.

The Tigers are coming off a 2023-2024 season in which they took first place in Hip Hop in all the regular season competitions, but settled for second at the state championship competition at Vergennes Union High School.

On Saturday, the Tigers topped second-place South Burlington in Hip Hop, with Mount Mansfield in third and Burr & Burton Academy in fourth.

In Pom, South Burlington topped the table, with the Tigers in second, followed by Burr & Burton in third and Mount Anthony in fourth.

Two teams competed in Jazz: Mount Mansfield outpointed Mount Anthony. Teams choose

to dance in two out of the three disciplines at each competition and are judged in a number of criteria, including synchronicity and musicality.

The Tiger dance team has three more competitions lined up in its

regular season schedule, all away from home: at Richford on Jan. 20, at Mount Mansfield on Jan. 27, and at Burr & Burton on Feb. 10.

VUHS will again host the state championship competition, which is set for Feb. 17 at 5:30 p.m.



Winning steps

WHEN THE MIDDLEBURY UNION High School dance team hosted a meet on Saturday, the Tigers took first in Hip Hop and second in Pom. In the dark outfits with the pom-poms, the Tigers go for it in the Pom competition, in which they were edged by South Burlington. In the white sweatshirts with the orange M's, they perform their winning Hip Hop routine. Hip hop dancers are Madelyn Brochu, Gedeleine Franklin, Madyson Hutchinson, Autumn Lowell and Jordyn Rushton. Then Kayla Haugan and Carowyn Maceno joined that crew for the Pom routine. Above, Coach Ashley Smith, front, and former coach Caitlin Hurteau join in the fun after the competition.

Independent photos/Steve James



community calendar

THURSDAY

“Art of Film Photography” in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 11, 5 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. At this Middlebury Science Café, Middlebury College Professor of Art Michelle Leftherisa will talk about the vanishing art of manual SLR photography. Coffee and treat provided. More info at Ilsley Public Libray.org.

Cabin Fever Lecture Series: “Beautiful Colombia” in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m., Community room, Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Join Otter Creek Audubon Society for a presentation by world-traveling birder Hank Kaestner. With over 7,000 birds on his life list, Kaestner will give a travelogue of birding in Colombia with his brother Peter during the early pandemic.

FRIDAY

Death Café in Vergennes. Friday, Jan. 12, 9:30 a.m., Maple Café, Kennedy Brothers 11 Main St. Death Café is an international movement started in Europe where people gather to eat cake, drink tea, and discuss death in a relaxed, open setting with no agenda, objective, or themes. It is a discussion group, rather than a grief support or counseling session. Space is limited as the Café will be open to the public. Tickets at tinyurl.com/Death-cafe-Jan-12. More info contact Louella Richer at lricher@portermmedical.org.

“Community Remembrance Ceremony” in Middlebury. Friday Jan. 12, 7 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Come join Rev. Christina and leaders of Champlain Valley UU Society for a contemplative service of honoring and remembering loved ones we have lost, including Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Through photos, naming, music, candle lighting and silence we will honor family, friends and loved ones who have died. No childcare. Parking at MUHS lot. All are welcome.

SATURDAY

Lego Robotics community share in Vergennes. Saturday, Jan. 13, 2-2:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Join our robotics teams in sharing their final preparations for the Lego First Robotics State Competition. Learn about their Innovation Projects this season and watch their robots complete missions in the lobby of the Bixby.

Bingo in Vergennes. Saturday, Jan. 13, 5 p.m., St. Peter’s Parish Hall, 85 S. Maple St. Doors open at 5 p.m., Bingo starts at 6 p.m. A family-friendly event. All cash prizes, 50/50 raffle. Refreshments sold. Sponsored by St. Peter’s Cemetery Committee to benefit the ongoing efforts for cemetery improvements.

Roast Pork Supper in Vergennes. Saturday, Jan. 13, 5-6 p.m., Vergennes United Methodist Church, Main Street, across from the Opera House. Preorder and take-out only. Menu includes roast pork, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, vegetable, applesauce, roll and dessert. Cost \$12. To preorder call 802- 877-3150 before 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11.

Contra dance in Cornwall. Saturday, Jan. 13, 7-9:30 p.m., Town Hall, Route 30. Dance away the winter chill at the Cornwall Contra Dance. Lausanne Allen will be calling. Live music Red Dog Riley. Tickers \$5 to \$10 or pay what you can.

SUNDAY

Breakfast Buffet in Vergennes. Sunday, Jan. 14, 8-10 a.m., St. Peter’s Parish Hall, 85 S. Maple St. Omelets to order, scrambled eggs, French toast, bacon, sausage, fruit, plain and blueberry pancakes, maple syrup, sausage gravy on biscuits, corn bread, home fries, mini muffins, juice, milk and coffee. Adults \$12/children 8-12 \$7/immediate family \$32 (maximum). Offered by Vergennes Knights of Columbus to support their community service programs.

“Practicing Death” in Middlebury. Sunday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. We know that there’s one thing we can count on in this life: that it will end. Through looking at religious and cultural perceptions of death and our personal relationship with death, we will explore what it

means to practice dying so we can truly live. Childcare provided. Parking ant MUHS lot. All are welcome.

TUESDAY

100+ Women Addison County virtual meeting. Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m., Zoom. Turning Point Center of Addison County, Bixby Memorial Free Library, and Stride – The Wright Foundation for Female Athletes will be giving presentations. Each presenter will give a 5-minute presentation and voting will follow. Any woman who would like to join 100+ Women to vote at this meeting can find information at 100wacvt.org.

American Red Cross blood donation in Bristol. Tuesday, Jan. 16, 12:30-5 p.m., Bristol Recreation Department, 1 South St. The American Red Cross is experiencing an emergency blood shortage as the nation faces the lowest number of people giving blood in 20 years. Blood and platelet donors are urged to make a donation appointment to help alleviate the shortage and help ensure lifesaving medical procedures are not put on hold. Download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

WEDNESDAY

American Red Cross blood donation in Middlebury. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. Blood and platelet donors are urged to make a donation appointment to help alleviate the shortage and help ensure lifesaving medical procedures are not put on hold. Download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Age Well Vermont presentation in Shoreham. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m., Fellowship Hall, Shoreham Congregational Church. Come learn about the services offered by Age Well, which aims to meet the diverse needs of clients, their families, and caregivers, with the goal of helping community members to age with confidence. Free and open to the public. Senior citizens, family members or neighbor or friend, caregivers and those interested in volunteering are all welcome.

Learn and Play: Labyrinth in Vergennes. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Be the first to collect all your treasures by shifting the walls of the labyrinth to create a clear path. Players take turns to search the Labyrinth for their magical objects and characters by carefully moving through the constantly changing maze. More info at bixbylibrary.org.

Writing Through Grief Series in Vergennes. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 5:30-6:45 p.m. Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. The first in a series of four evening workshops will introduce writing as a companion to grief. What can our writing tell us about our journey. The series of four workshops will take place every Wednesday night from Jan. 10- 31. Space is limited. Email cedar.winslow@bixbylibrary.org to sign up.

THURSDAY

Homelessness Awareness Day honk-and-wave in Bristol, Middlebury and Vergennes.

Thursday, Jan. 18, 7:30-11 a.m., town greens. Part of a statewide day of action that combines awareness-raising events in local communities with state policy work in the legislature, and more. The Addison County Housing Coalition is holding three simultaneous honk-and-wave events in Middlebury, Vergennes and Bristol We hope you can join us, and spread the word.

“Spiritual Approaches to the Built Environment” film screening in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m., Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 2 Duane Ct. This film explores the spiritual dimension of the built environment and its impact on everyday life. It is an urgent call for the design professions, religious leaders and the public at large to seek, design and implement holistic solutions to our most pressing problems.

SATURDAY

Hocus Pocus Magic Show in Vergennes. Saturday, Jan. 20, 2 p.m., Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. Fun, engaging and great-for-the-entire-family magic fun, comedy, and surprise by magician Blaine Goad. Great for all ages. Tickets \$10 adults/\$5 kids/\$25 family of 4. More info at vergennesoperahouse.org.

SUNDAY

All-you-can-eat pancake breakfast in Addison. Sunday, Jan. 21, 7-11 a.m., Addison Fire Station, jct. Routes 17 and 22A. Menu includes plain and blueberry pancakes, sausage, bacon, home fries, coffee, hot chocolate and orange juice. Tickets \$10 adults/\$7 kids under 12. Funds will be used to purchase equipment. More info at 802-759-2237.

TUESDAY

American Red Cross blood donation in Vergennes. Tuesday, Jan. 23, noon-4:30 p.m., Cross Life Church, 1759 Route 7. Blood and platelet donors urged to make an appointment to help alleviate the shortage and help ensure lifesaving medical procedures are not put on hold. Download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Book and Author Discussion: Emily St. John Mandel in Middlebury. Tuesday, Jan. 23, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Middlebury College students will facilitate a discussion of “Station Eleven” and other works by St. John Mandel. Set in the days of civilization’s collapse, “Station Eleven” tells the story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity.

WEDNESDAY

Writing Through Grief Series in Vergennes. Wednesday, Jan. 24, 5:30-6:45 p.m. Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. The first in a series of four evening workshops will introduce writing as a companion to grief. What can our writing tell us about our journey. The series of four workshops will take place every Wednesday night from Jan. 10- 31. Space is limited. Email cedar.winslow@bixbylibrary.org to sign up.

THURSDAY

Amphibians and wildlife underpasses presentation in Monkton. Thursday, Jan. 25, 6:30-8 p.m., Monkton Central School, 1036 Monkton Rd. Join herpetologists Jim Andrews and Matt Gorton, and transportation expert Chris Slesar, to learn about amphibians and the effectiveness of the wildlife underpasses in Monkton. Tickets and more at donorbox.org/events/541352.

Addison County 4-H Foundation Annual Meeting in Middlebury. Thursday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m., UVM Extension office, Pond Lane. For more information, contact 4-H Educator Martha Seifert at 802-656-7547 or email martha.seifert@uvm.edu.

SATURDAY

Great Puzzle Challenge 2024 in Middlebury. Saturday, Jan. 27, 11 a.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. In honor of National Puzzle Day (Jan. 29), gather your puzzle team of 1-3 people. Race against other teams to be the first to complete the chosen puzzle. Winner(s) will receive a \$10 gift certificate to Tinker and Smithy. Enter your team at www.ilsleypubliclibrary.org/great-puzzle-challenge.

CALENDAR **ONLINE**
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Enjoy ice fishing while using these safety tips

MONTPELIER — Ice conditions across Vermont are inconsistent due to warm and variable weather, and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is urging anglers to put safety first if they venture out ice fishing.

“Check the ice as you go, avoid areas where currents can create weaker ice, and if you are not sure the ice is safe find a different waterbody,” cautioned fisheries biologist Shawn Good. “With good judgment ice fishing is a safe and fun way to get outside in winter. But that means making cautious, smart decisions and changing plans if conditions are not what you hoped for.”

Ice conditions are currently variable across Vermont. At higher elevations and in the Northeast Kingdom many lakes and ponds have frozen over completely and have fishable ice. But in southern Vermont and the Champlain Valley, many lakes and ponds are not yet safe for ice fishing.

“Three to four inches of clear black ice is the minimum for safe ice fishing,” said Good. “For the kind of gray or opaque ice we get after repeated freezing, thawing, and re-freezing we recommend anglers look for at least six inches

of ice where they plan to fish.”

Even on a single waterbody it is important to know that ice thickness is not always uniform. Areas around pressure cracks or near stream or river inlets can be thinner and weaker than surrounding ice.

The department says anglers should always carry a spud bar to test the ice as they go and should have a set of personal ice picks for self-rescue. Anglers should avoid fishing alone and should let someone know where they will be fishing and when they plan on returning home.

“While we wait for colder weather to freeze up waterbodies statewide, I recommend anglers focus on planning and getting their gear in top shape — or that they hit the road and explore the higher elevation waters or northern waters where there is already good ice,” said Good. “Fishing somewhere other than your home waters can be part of the adventure and allure of ice fishing, and is a great way to explore Vermont.”

To learn more about ice fishing safety, tips for beginners, and places to fish visit Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s “Ice Fishing Basics” and “Ice Fishing Opportunities” webpages.

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Reader Comments

Here's what one reader has to say about us!

A subscriber from Bristol writes:

“My wife and I love the Addy Indy. We read most of the articles ... love the Arts + Leisure ... columns. Thank you!”

Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.



ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT



The unhoused are people too

HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS DAY is Thursday, Jan. 18. Addison County Housing Coalition is holding three simultaneous honk-and-wave events in Middlebury, Vergennes and Bristol. Get your signs out and head to the town greens to help raise awareness for those who are unhoused and in need. The action is part of a statewide day of action that combines awareness-raising events in local communities with state policy work in the legislature, and more.

Photo by Jason Duquette-Hoffman

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CLASSIFIEDS

Public Meetings

AL-ANON OFFERS HELP and hope to anyone who has been affected by a loved one's drinking. Middlebury hosts an on-line meeting Sunday night 7:15pm and a face to face one Wednesday at 1:30pm at CVUUS (2 Duane Court Middlebury near the high school) that you can also access by Zoom. Visit vermontalananonlateen.org for links and list of other meetings in the region. If you'd like to speak to an Al-Anon member, call our answering service (866-972-5266) and an Al-Anon member will call you back.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in person meetings are available. For a list of local virtual meetings visit <http://bit.ly/district9aa>. For more information visit <https://aaavt.org/> or call the 24 hour hotline at 802-802-AAVT (2288).

VERGENNES FREE THINKERS Founded in 1935 on the principle of one alcoholic helping another to achieve sobriety, A.A. is an effective and enduring program of recovery that has changed countless lives. A.A. has always been committed to making its program of recovery available to anyone, anywhere, who reaches out for help with an alcohol problem. The Vergennes Free Thinkers meeting was created in January of this year to maintain a tradition of free expression, conduct a meeting where alcoholics may feel free to express any beliefs, doubts or disbelief they may have, to share their own personal form of spiritual experience, their search for it, and/or their rejection of it, without having to accept anyone else's beliefs or having to deny their own. Meetings are held with a high regard for compassion and inclusion without judgment or exception. If you think we can help, please join us on Thursdays at 6pm by contacting Vergennes-freethinkers@gmail.com for Zoom and in-person meeting information.

Public Meetings

THE TURNING POINT CENTER of Addison County is open for in-person services, Monday through Friday, 10am-4pm, 54A Creek Road, Middlebury. We are available by phone 24/7 at 802-388-4249.

VERMONT SUPPORT LINE Are you struggling with a challenging situation? Do you have feelings of sadness, loneliness, isolation, anger, or depression? You don't have to face it alone. Talk with a caring person who understands what you're going through today by calling or texting the free and confidential Pathways Vermont Support Line available 24/7 at (833) VT - TALKS.

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Help Wanted

Help Wanted

PART TIME PERSONAL CARE assistant wanted for 75 year old man, in Addison. To work for 3 hours/day, every other weekend, Saturday and Sunday. There is also a possibility of working one weekday every week for 3 hours. Help with light housekeeping, cooking, and chores. \$25/hour. Contact Ellen at: eresnik@rcn.com.

For Sale

8 MONTH OLD LABRA-DOODLE with curly black hair. Very playful and affectionate. Responds to commands. Please call 802-453-2287.


For Rent

12' X 25' STORAGE SPACES in Brandon. Call 802-349-4212.

Help Wanted

More Help Wanted ads can be found on Pages 8B and 9B.

Help Wanted



Addison County Parent/Child Center

Join the Parent/Child Center Team

CHILDCARE WORKER/PARENT EDUCATOR

Childcare Staff Position: We are seeking a childcare worker who will work with children and parents in our therapeutic program. This is a full-time position with generous benefits. We are a therapeutic childcare program that supports children birth through 5 and their families.

Strong candidates must have knowledge of **child development, family systems**, excellent communication skills, and want to work with young families. Flexibility and collaboration are a must. Experience with children and families wanted: a minimum of a Bachelor's degree preferred.

Please send a resume and cover letter, along with 3 references to **Donna Bailey** at dbailey@addisoncountypcc.org

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Experienced Residential Carpenter

Silver Maple Construction is currently hiring a full-time Carpenter who is eligible for benefits. The ideal candidate should have a strong focus on providing excellent customer service and delivering high-quality work.

- Competitive Weekly Pay (based on experience)
- Comprehensive Medical, Dental, and Vision Plans
- 401k Retirement Plan + Company Match
- 15 days Paid Time Off

- 7 Paid Holidays
- Commuter + Mileage Reimbursement
- Life, Disability And Accident Insurance
- Paid Parental Leave
- And MORE!

To learn more, please visit silvermapleconstruction.com, email hr@silvermapleconstruction.com, or call our office at (802) 989-7677.



Apply Today!



Vermont State Housing Authority

One Prospect Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
(802) 828-3295 • contact@vsha.org

VSHA is Hiring!

PROPERTY SUPERINTENDENTS

Seeking customer-friendly individuals who will be responsible for maintaining the condition and appearance of our properties. Several positions are available in various locations.

We are looking for applicants who have a good work ethic and take pride in their work. They will provide maintenance and repair work which could include carpentry repairs, drywall to include taping, mudding and painting; as well as routine repairs to building systems such as plumbing, electrical and heating.

Visit www.vsha.org or contact Tyson Leno at 802-828-5606 for a complete job description and application form.

Opportunities


Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities

Opportunities



Looking to make an impact on your local community?

Volunteer through United Way of Addison County!

Explore opportunities and organizations at www.unitedwayaddisoncounty.org/volunteer or reach out to Amy Hoekstra at amyh@unitedwayaddisoncounty.org to learn more.



Addison Independent CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM

Cash in on our 4-for-3 rates! Pay for 3 issues, get 4th issue free!
An ad placed for consecutive issues (Mondays & Thursdays) is run 4th time free!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

RATES

DEADLINES: Thurs. noon for Mon. paper
Mon. 5 p.m. for Thurs. paper

- 25¢ per word • minimum \$2.50 per ad
- \$2 internet listing for up to 4 issues • minimum 2 insertions

• Special 4 for 3 rates not valid for the following categories: Services, Opportunities, Real Estate, Wood heat, Attn. Farmers, For Rent & Help Wanted

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notices | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> Att. Farmers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Card of Thanks | <input type="checkbox"/> Help Wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personals | <input type="checkbox"/> For Sale | <input type="checkbox"/> Cars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Meetings** | <input type="checkbox"/> Trucks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free** | <input type="checkbox"/> For Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> SUVs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost 'N Found** | <input type="checkbox"/> Want to Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage Sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Heat | <input type="checkbox"/> Boats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn & Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Wanted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Rentals |

** no charge for these ads Spotlight with large ✓ \$2

PLEASE PRINT YOUR AD...

Number of words: _____
Cost: _____
of runs: _____
Spotlight Charge: _____
Internet Listing: \$2.00
TOTAL: _____

The Independent assumes no financial responsibility for errors in ads, but will rerun classified ad in which the error occurred. No refunds will be possible. Advertiser will please notify us of any errors which may occur after first publication.

Addison Independent CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted

Executive Assistant

Elderly Services is a non-profit organization providing services to our area elders and their families in a caring and collaborative environment. We are looking for someone with a positive attitude who works well as a member of a team of colleagues.

The Executive Assistant reports directly to the Executive Director of Elderly Services and supports her in a variety of ways to manage the day-to-day activities of the organization.

This part-time position involves both office and administrative duties, coordinating our ESI College program, as well as direct service. A full-time position with additional responsibilities is a future possibility.

To apply, please visit our website or send your resume and cover letter to:

Elderly Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 581, Middlebury, VT 05753



Elderly Services

Supporting Elders and Families since 1981

112 Exchange St., Middlebury
802-388-3983 | elderlyservices.org

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

LONG TERM SUB - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT VACANCY 2023-2024

The Slate Valley School District is seeking a person with exceptional secretarial skills, experienced in all areas of (school) office management including keyboarding/computer, reporting, communications, organization, and receiving children, parents, and community for the Fair Haven Union Middle High School. Must be child-oriented, and flexible with excellent problem-solving skills. School experience is preferred but not required.

For more information, please contact
Ben Worthing, Co-Principal, at
bworthing@svvut.org. Applicants for
this position must apply on
www.SchoolSpring.com

Position will remain open until filled. EOE

Help Wanted

For Rent

ALL REAL ESTATE advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex,

For Rent

handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or persons receiving public assistance or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertisement for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD Toll-free at 1-800-424-8590. For the Washington, DC area please call HUD at 426-3500.

DRY, WINTER/SUMMER STORAGE SPACE in Addison. Available storage space in my barn for summer/winter storage. The barn is structurally sound and weather-tight with electricity. No heat or running water. The barn is also available for lease. The entrance door measurements are 8' wide by 7' high. For more info: 802-363-3403 or rochon_m@yahoo.com.

Help Wanted

For Rent

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE - 3000 sq ft - Middlebury. Loading dock. Tall ceilings. Heat and utilities included. \$2,500.00 p/month. 802-558-6092.

MIDDLEBURY, OFF CAMPUS HOUSING available. 802-388-4831, AJ Neri Property Rentals.



SPACIOUS 2 BEDROOM apartment in historic 1860's farmhouse located 15 minutes from Middlebury. Completely renovated with new windows, washer, dryer, dishwasher, etc. Original wide plank flooring and tall ceilings. \$2500/month plus electric, heat, & 1 month deposit. Non-smoking, cats considered. 802-897-5447

VERGENNES VALLEY VIEW APARTMENTS is currently taking wait list applications. Occupants must be 62+ years of age. No smoking/ No pets. Income limits apply - Rent based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity. 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191 www.SummitPMG.com.

VERGENNES WILLOW APARTMENTS is currently taking waitlist applications for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. No smoking/no pets. Income limits apply- Rent rate based on income. Equal Housing Opportunity 802-247-0165 TTY: 800-253-0191. www.SummitPMG.com.

Want to Rent

QUIET, NON-SMOKING, non-pet-owning, retired couple seeks 2BR house or apartment starting May 1st. First preference Bristol village, 2nd preference Vergennes. References available. Call 419-347-3337 (no texts).

Wood Heat

DRY OR GREEN firewood for sale. Delivery available. 802-758-2007.

Att. Farmers

HORSE BLANKET WASH and repair. Accepting non-leather (for now) horsewear of all kinds for cleaning and repairing at my Weybridge location. Call or text Sue Miller at 802-377-5945 or email svdwmiller@icloud.com with "horse" in the subject line for more information.

WHITNEY'S CUSTOM FARM WORK Pond agitating, liquid manure hauling, drag line aerating. Call for price. 462-2755, John Whitney.

OLD & USED GUNS WANTED

Rifles, Hand guns, Shot guns
Top prices paid.
P: 802-775-2859
C: 802-236-7213

For Rent

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or persons receiving public assistance, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertisement for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD Toll-free at 1-800-424-8590. For the Washington, DC area please call HUD at 426-3500.

Auctions



Public Notices

can be found in this
ADDISON INDEPENDENT
on Pages 9B and 10B.

MARKET REPORT ADDISON COUNTY COMMISSION SALES

RT. 125 • EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT
Sales for 01/05/24 & 01/08/24

		COST	
BEEF	LBS.	/LB	\$
Woodnotch	1915	\$1.12	\$21144.80
Gosliga	1910	\$1.12	\$2139.20
Clifford	1610	\$1.11	\$1787.10
Savello	1640	\$1.05	\$1722.00
A. Brisson	1645	\$1.02	\$1677.90
Nop Bros & Sons	1895	\$1.00	\$1895.00

CALVES	LBS.	/LB	\$
Savello	97	\$5.50	\$533.50
Barnes Blk & Wht	88	\$5.50	\$484.00
Sunderland Farm	95	\$4.80	\$456.00
Nea-Tocht	98	\$3.80	\$372.40
Monument Farms	99	\$3.575	\$353.93

Total Beef - 172 Total Calves - 159

We value our faithful customers.
Sales at 3 pm - Mon. & Thurs.
call 1-802-388-2661

PUBLIC NOTICE POLICY WARNING

The Slate Valley Unified Union School District Board will conduct a public hearing at their meeting on January 22, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. and take action on the following policies:

B22 Public Complaints About Personnel
B20 Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, and Background Checks
D20 Curriculum Development and Coordination
B7 Tobacco Prohibition
Copies of the policy are available on the district website at slatevalleyunified.org
Brooke Olsen-Farrell
Superintendent of Schools

PUBLIC NOTICE

Cellco Partnership and its controlled affiliates doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) is proposing to collocate antennas at 67.5 ft within a proposed extension with dome at a top height of 78ft on the 72-ft silo at 3557 Ethan Allen Highway, New Haven, Addison County, VT 05472. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to:

Project 6123008593- MAB c/o EBI Consulting,
21 B Street
Burlington, MA 01803
mbowman@ebiconsulting.com
or at (617) 909-9035.

JOHN GRAHAM HOUSING SERVICES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT/DESIGN BUILD SERVICES

John Graham Housing Services (JGHS) requests Construction Management firms, capable of providing design/build services, to submit proposals for the renovations to three buildings located in Bristol, Middlebury and Vergennes, VT. Qualified applicants will have comparable experience and a bonding capacity of at least \$500,000. To obtain a proposal response form and specific project information, contact Sue Cobb at scobb@redbirdconsulting.org. Response forms must be submitted and received by **January 22, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.** Minority-owned, women-owned, Section 3 businesses and locally-owned businesses are strongly encouraged to apply.

FERRISBURGH TOWN OFFICER OPEN POSITIONS

The following open positions in the Town of Ferrisburgh will be on the March 5, 2024 ballot. A petition with 24 signatures of valid voters and The Consent of Candidate form must be filed at the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2024.

Moderator – 1-year term
Selectboard – 2-year term
Selectboard – 3-year term
Auditor – 3-year term
Lister – 3-year term
First Constable – 1-year term
Town Agent – 1-year term
Rogers & Hazard Fund Trustee – 2-year term
ANWSD School Director – 3-year term
ANWSD School Director – 3-year term

Please contact the Town Clerk at 877-3429 or TownClerk@Ferrisburghvt.org to find out more about these positions and how to apply.

ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS PERIODIC NOTICE

The Federal Environment Protection Agency requires that the public, persons employed in, and parents of students attending any school building containing asbestos of a friable (possible crumbling) nature must be notified of its presence and location. Further, the agency requires that inspections be made and that maintenance be performed to eliminate risk.

Inspections were made of all schools in the Addison Central School District in 1979 by the Vermont Department of Health. In those inspections, asbestos was found in the boiler rooms and pipe lagging of the following schools: Bridport, Cornwall, Mary Hogan, Middlebury Union High School, and Weybridge. Asbestos is also found in the floor tiles of the School District, but it is encapsulated in the tile. It presents no hazard unless it is disturbed and crumbles. No risk to inhabitants of the building was indicated as long as adequate maintenance is performed.

New cycles of inspections will be performed periodically. An Asbestos Management Plan for each school has been developed by the State and a copy is available for inspection in each school.

Eric Warren, Designated Person - Asbestos Addison Central School District

M MAPLEFIELDS

Looking for work in your hometown?

We offer medical, dental, paid vacation, personal time, sick time and 401K for full time positions.

ALL ADDISON COUNTY LOCATIONS
CURRENTLY HIRING!

For openings and to apply, visit
Maplefields.com

NEW HAVEN COMMUNITY LIBRARY

New Haven Community Library is seeking a Library Director

30 hours per week, including evenings and Saturdays.
Our small community library seeks a service-oriented individual with experience in library services, grant writing, and strong community programming skills. Please refer to our website for more information.
www.nhcl.org/employment



Water Treatment & Distribution System Operator

The Vergennes Pantown Water District is seeking an individual for the full-time position of Water System Operator.

Job Description: This position requires the ability to operate the water treatment facility, read water meters, and maintain and repair the transmission and distribution system. Must be willing to work on a rotating on-call basis. Must have or be able to obtain a 4C State of Vermont Operator's Certificate.

To Apply:
Please email resume and cover letter to
Jon.Deming@vpwd.main1@gmail.com

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL COACHING POSITIONS

Middlebury Union High School is seeking coaches for the following:

- Assistant Track & Field (2)
- JV Girls' Lacrosse

Applicants must possess a strong knowledge of coaching principles with previous coaching experience preferred. Must possess strong organizational skills and the ability to communicate and relate to student athletes.

Interested parties should send a letter of interest, resume, and three current letters of reference to:

Sean Farrell/Athletic Director
Middlebury Union Middle School
73 Charles Avenue
Middlebury, VT 05753

Applications will be accepted until the position has been filled.
E.O.E.

In print or online, find your
dream job with help
from the *Addy Indy*.

addisonindependent.com/help-wanted

ADDISON COUNTY
INDEPENDENT

Homeless man cited for stealing car

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury police on Jan. 1 cited Irving D. Rose III, 43, listed as homeless, for burglary into an occupied dwelling and grand larceny, after he allegedly stole a vehicle from a Buttolph Acres home and drove it — with a female companion — to Rutland, where he was apprehended later that day by Rutland police. Police said Rose was lodged at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility for a lack of \$10,000 bail.

In addition to conducting daily checks on the houseless population camping off Bakery Lane, Middlebury police:

- Gave a courtesy ride to an intoxicated man found walking in North Pleasant Street on Jan. 1.
- Cited Antonio E. Johnson, 27, for trespassing at Hannaford supermarket in The Centre shopping plaza on Jan. 1.
- Took an intoxicated woman to Porter Medical Center for evaluation and treatment on Jan. 2.
- Checked on a report of a man allegedly looking into vehicles parked off Exchange Street on Jan.

2. Police were unable to find such a person.

- Assisted Middlebury Regional EMS (MREMS) on a medical call in the Court Street area on Jan. 2.
- Helped Counseling Service of Addison County with a patient in Catamount Park on Jan. 3.
- Assisted MREMS with an overdose patient off Bunny Lane in Weybridge on Jan. 3.
- Took, to the Marble Valley jail, an intoxicated woman who needed to detox on Jan. 3.
- Provided a courtesy ride home to a stranded patient who had been discharged from Porter Medical Center on Jan. 4.
- On Jan. 4, arrested Matthew Hill, 41, of Middlebury on an active Chittenden County arrest warrant for assault with a deadly weapon. Hill — who was arrested on Porter Hospital campus — was taken to the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility in Rutland for lack of \$1,000 bail, according to police.
- Helped Middlebury Jolley store officials remove an unwanted customer on Jan. 4.

- Assisted a person on Jan. 5 who had had a dispute with their spouse in the Jackson Lane area on Jan. 5.
- Arrested Melissa Sird, 42, of New Haven on an outstanding in-state arrest warrant, after a stop in the Court Square area on Jan. 5. Police said Sird was released on a citation after posting \$100 bail.
- Received a report about a woman who was screaming at cars in the South Pleasant Street area on Jan. 5.
- Responded to a report of a “suspicious man” on North Pleasant Street on Jan. 5.
- Received a truancy complaint from Middlebury Union High School on Jan. 5.
- Checked on a woman suspected to be experiencing a mental health crisis on the Cross Street Bridge on Jan. 6.
- Checked on a man found sleeping in his vehicle while parked off Route 7 South on Jan. 6.
- Assisted Vermont State Police with a person experiencing a mental health crisis off Route 7 in New Haven on Jan. 6.
- Assisted MREMS on an emergency call to the Court Street Extension area on Jan. 7.
- Helped a man who was having a mental health crisis in the South Pleasant Street area on Jan. 7.
- Helped a woman who was having a mental health crisis in the Otterside Court neighborhood on Jan. 7.
- Responded to a reported home invasion at a South Pleasant Street home on Jan. 7. Police said they found no evidence of a stranger(s) inside the home.
- Responded to a single-vehicle rollover and collision with a telephone pole on North Pleasant Street at the intersection of with High Streets on Jan. 7. Police said no one was injured in the crash.
- Enforced the town’s winter overnight parking ban in downtown on Jan. 7. Police said they ticketed 20 vehicles and had 18 vehicles towed away.
- Assisted an intoxicated woman in the Seymour Street area on Jan. 8.
- On Jan. 8, again enforced the town’s winter overnight parking ban downtown.



Snow cap
A LOCAL SQUIRREL seems a bit bewildered by the recent snow, especially the bit on its head.
Photo by Dottie Nelson

Jailed man receives citations

VERGENNES — Vergennes police on Dec. 27 charged a man already in jail for a series of November vehicle break-ins in Vergennes. Police said the man was lodged in the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility for allegedly committing similar crimes.

After what was a lengthy investigation, city police cited Zachary LaPointe, 34, of Killington for larceny, alleging he took cash and items including credit cards from vehicles in Vergennes. Police also said they are seeking another

Vergennes

Police Log

suspect in the case.

In action between Jan. 1 and 7, Vergennes police conducted seven cruiser patrols, 11 traffic stops and three property watches; processed one fingerprint request; responded to two false alarms and one accidental 911 call; and also:

On Jan. 2:

- Took a report from a Crosby

Court resident that in late December an iPad and cash had been stolen from a car parked at his home.

- Calmed a man concerned about the behavior of his partner.

On Jan. 3 responded to a noise complaint at an Armory Lane apartment and learned a woman was banging on a door because a family member was refusing her entry. Police took her to the station, where she waited until another family member could pick her up.

On Jan. 4:

- Went to a city home trying to find a person who authorities in Bristol said was involved in a car accident there. Vergennes police did not find the individual.
- Took a call from a woman experiencing delusions due to mental health issues.
- Conducted a background check on an individual seeking to join the military.

On Jan. 5 arranged for a juvenile who drove across a lawn on his way to Vergennes Union High School to write a letter of apology to the homeowner.

On Jan. 6:

- Went to Shaw’s Supermarket to check out a report of a dog left in a car barking and crying, but found nothing.
- Responded to a one-vehicle crash on West Main Street. Police said one person was transported to the UVM Medical Center for evaluation after a cargo van slid off the road in poor driving conditions.

On Jan. 7:

- Took a report from a Main Street business alleging an employee had stolen more than \$400 in the past month; police are investigating.
- Were told that a vehicle had been stolen, but confirmed it had been towed at the request of the Vergennes Public Works Department due to the city’s winter parking ban.

Vt. State

Police Log

ADDISON COUNTY — In an otherwise quiet week, Vermont State Police working out of the New Haven barracks had only one encounter with the public that troopers deemed worthy of reporting to the public.

On Jan 3 at a few minutes after 11 p.m. a state police officer saw a car traveling at 81 mph in a 50 mph zone on Route 7 near Round Barn Road in Ferrisburgh. The trooper, who also saw multiple motor vehicle violations pertaining to the car, stopped it and identified the driver as Daniel E. Field, 62, of Brandon. Suspicious of his suitability to drive, troopers took Field to the Middlebury Police Department for processing where he was later released with citation for driving under the influence, negligent driving and speeding.

ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE TO ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES 8-11 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL CHOICE

Vergennes Union Middle and High School, along with all other Vermont public high schools, participates in a statewide system of public high school choice. Under this system, students from VUHS may apply to transfer to any other public high school in the state. For the 2024-2025 school year, the maximum number of students eligible to transfer is limited to fifteen (15). The actual number will depend on the number of students selected in prior years to continue their enrollment at other area high schools.

To apply to participate in the program for the 2024-2025 school year (grades 9-12):

- Complete an application available from the VUMHS School Counseling Office;
- All applications must be signed by a parent or guardian;
- File the application with the School Counseling Office on or before **March 1, 2024**. Applications received after March 1st will not be accepted.

Notification of decisions to all students who have applied to participate will be provided no later than **April 1, 2024**.

Additional school choice information, including a timeline, is available from the School Counseling Office.

A student’s enrollment application may be denied by another receiving school if the student has been expelled or received an extended suspension for violation of Vergennes Union High School’s alcohol, substance abuse, or weapons-in-schools policies during the year prior to enrollment in that regional partnership school. Upon enrollment in the receiving school, students are subject to the disciplinary policies and procedures of the receiving school. If selected to attend another high school in the regional partnership, students shall be guaranteed enrollment in that receiving school until graduation as long as they remain residents of the Addison Northwest School District and are not subject to expulsion as a result of the receiving school’s policy and federal and state law.

STATE OF VERMONT SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL DIVISION ADDISON UNIT DOCKET NO: 22-CV-04458

MORTGAGE ASSETS MANAGEMENT, LLC, F/K/A REVERSE MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS, INC.
PLAINTIFF
VS.
ANDREW H. MONTROLL, ESQ., ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ESTATE OF ALBERT J. BROUILLARD; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND OCCUPANTS RESIDING AT 66 RATTLIN BRIDGE ROAD, BRIDPORT, VT 05734
DEFENDANT(S)

NOTICE OF SALE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Albert Brouillard, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Reverse Mortgage Solutions, Inc. dba Security 1 Lending, dated August 23, 2013, and recorded in Book 83, at Page 231, of the Town of Bridport Land Records, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder by Assignment of Mortgage recorded in Book 98, Page 207, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction at February 9, 2024 at 12:00 PM at 66 Rattlin Bridge Road, Bridport, VT 05734 all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,

To Wit:

Being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Albert Brouillard and Bettelee Brouillard by Warranty Deed of Raoul Brouillard and Albertine Brouillard dated March 30, 1978 and recorded March 30, 1978 in Book 25, at Page 373 of the Town of Bridport Land Records and further described therein. Bettelee’s interest in property was transferred to the late Albert J. Brouillard by virtue of a divorce certificate dated May 16, 1984 and recorded June 7, 1984 of the Town of Bridport Land Records.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

The public sale may be adjourned one or more times for a total time not exceeding 30 days, without further court order, and without publication or service of a new notice of sale, by announcement of the new sale date to those present at each adjournment or by posting notice of the adjournment in a conspicuous place at the location of the sale. Terms of Sale: \$10,000.00 to be paid in cash or by certified check by the purchaser at the time of sale, with the balance due at closing. The sale is subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

The Mortgagor is entitled to redeem the premises at any time prior to the sale by paying the full amount due under the mortgage, including the costs and expenses of the sale.

Other terms to be announced at sale.

Mortgage Assets Management, LLC, f/k/a Reverse Mortgage Solutions, Inc.
/s/ Caryn L. Connolly

Caryn L. Connolly, Esq.
BROCK & SCOTT, PLLC
1080 Main Street, Suite 200
Pawtucket, RI 02860
VT_Noticesofhearing@brockandscott.com

Public Notices

can be found in this **ADDISON INDEPENDENT** on **Pages 9B and 10B**.

IMPORTANT ANNUAL NOTICE REGARDING HERBICIDE USE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRIC UTILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY

The Vermont Public Utility Commission has set forth rules under PUC Rule 3.600 pertaining to the use of herbicides in the maintenance of electric utility rights-of-way (ROW). Each spring, herbicide applications may begin on or after April 1st. These rules afford you important rights and duties. Vermont electric utilities maintain electric line rights-of-way with several methods, including the selective use of herbicides on trees and brush. They also encourage low-growing shrubs and trees which will crowd tall-growing species and, thus, minimize the use of herbicides. Methods of herbicide applications may include stump, stem injection, basal, soil, and foliar. Only electric utility rights-of-way that have tall-growing tree species with the potential of threatening the electric utility system are treated.

If you reside on or own property in Vermont within 1000' of an electric utility right-of-way:

1. **Sign up to receive written notification** from your local electric utility of plans to apply herbicide on any ROW within 1000' of your property or the property where you reside. Check nearby poles for tags identifying the utility and/or pole number, complete the form below and submit it to your local electric utility by mail before February 15th, 2024 to be added to the notification list. If determined to be qualified, you will receive notification from the utility at least 30 days prior to scheduled herbicide application.
2. **You are responsible to make your local electric utility aware** of the location of any potentially affected water supply, and of any other environmentally sensitive area where herbicide application ought to be avoided.
3. **Watch and listen for public service announcements** in newspapers and radio ads noting upcoming herbicide applications.
4. **Check with your local electric utility** regarding the vegetation management cycle near your particular line.
5. **You have the right** to request, in writing, that the utility refrain from applying herbicides in the process of clearing the right-of-way, and the utility may offer alternatives such as herbicide stump treatment or herbicide stem injections.
6. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever at no cost to you if the type of lines in the right-of-way are distribution lines, bringing electric service directly to individual customers.
7. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever by paying a \$30 administration fee if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **transmission lines** or sub-transmission lines, bringing electricity to or between substations.

For more details, or to ask additional questions, please contact your local electric utility, or one of the following:

(leave blank for local electric co. mailing address and phone)	Agency of Agriculture Public Health & Ag. Resource Mgmt 116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602 1-802-828-2431	Department of Public Service Consumer Affairs & Public Information 112 State St., Montpelier, VT 05620 1-800-622-4496
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Based on the information above, if you believe you qualify to be notified in advance of pending herbicide applications in the rights-of-way, mail the request below to your local electric company before February 15th, 20

Resident/Property Owner Request to be Added to Herbicide Treatment Notification Mailing List			
Name		Home Phone Number	
Street Address		Work Phone Number	
Town	State	Zip Code	O.K. to use work number? Yes No (circle one)
Electric Utility Account Number		Best time to contact you	
Affected Property:	Year-Round Residence	Summer Residence	Commercial Property Water Supply
Organic Farm	Land	Other	
Line/Pole Identification:			
Utility Initials		Pole Numbers	
Please fill out this request completely to help us determine if you qualify for herbicide treatment notification.			
MAIL THIS REQUEST TO YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC UTILITY AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE BEFORE FEBRUARY 15TH, 2024			

ARTS + LEISURE

The Addison County

January 11, 2024



DaddyLongLegs (featuring Rick Ceballos, left, David Gusakov and Matt Witten) will kick off the first concert of the "Winter Into Spring Musical Library Tour" presented by 5 Town Friends of the Arts, on Thursday, Jan. 18, at the Lawrence Memorial Library in Bristol. Concerts will continue once a month through May in Monkton, New Haven, Lincoln and Starksboro. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m., and are free; donations welcome.

COURTESY PHOTO

Musical Library Tour bridges winter into spring

S Town Friends of the Arts is at it again with another awesome monthly music series to brighten our winter months. Beginning next Thursday, Jan. 18, and concluding in May, there will be a free musical performance at each of the 5-town libraries: Bristol, Monkton, New Haven, Lincoln and Starksboro.

BY **ELSIE**

LYNN PARINI

Two winters ago we did a virtual series at the Bristol library," remembered Rick Ceballos, co-chair of the 5 Town Friends of the Arts board. "We got a lot of great feedback from that series, so I had the thought of doing it again — live this time — and then David Gusakov (who's also on the board with me) suggested we do one performance at each library. That seemed like a great idea."

Ceballos and Gusakov set out to find a set of five musicians to perform January through May.

"I wanted to get people who were somewhat local, so people in the 5-town area might know them, but also wanted to give more exposure to these musicians," said Gusakov, who is one of the founding members of the 5 Town Friends of the Arts group that started three decades ago. "I know pretty much all of the musicians.... Tim and I were in a band back in the '70s in Burlington for years; and, of course, Nate is my son. Rodrigo, I've never met in person, but he performed in the Music on the Trail music series we hosted."

The performances will all be acoustic (or with minimal sound amplification), which suits the vibe in the libraries just fine.

"We're thrilled to be hosting the first concert for the 5 Town Friends of the Arts Winter into Spring Music Series — what an awesome lineup they have!" said Rebekah Cameron, interim director at Bristol's Lawrence Memorial Library. "We've done similar music series with them in the past, but due to COVID, etc., we weren't able to host them in person (they aired on another great Addison County resource, NEAT TV). We're really looking forward to welcoming community members, new and familiar, into the library to experience DaddyLongLegs music live this year! We're hoping that through this partnership we can draw new folks into our space, create some great recognition, and really show the community all that libraries have to offer."

SEE 5 TOWN ON PAGE 2

ART ON EXHIBIT

Winter Compositions: new exhibit in Middlebury

"Winter Compositions" is the current exhibit at Edgewater Gallery on the Green in Middlebury. This exhibit features new work by Jim Westphalen and Dale Najarian, and is on view now through Feb. 17.

Vermont photographer Jim Westphalen studies the unique quality of light, and the contrasting tones of the built landscape against the natural one, that comes with the winter season. Dale

Najarian's Shadow series merges the realistic quality of a photograph with the abstract translation of a scene. She explores the perspective that shadows create, and uses figures in motion to capture the ever shifting relationship between light and dark.

For more information visit edgewatergallery.com, call the gallery at 802-989-7419 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com.



Edgewater Gallery on the Green in Middlebury will feature work in their current exhibit, "Winter Compositions," by Jim Westphalen (left) and Dale Najarian (above) now through Feb. 17.

5 TOWN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Funding for this music series comes from 5 Town Friends of the Arts members, donations and past events.

"I'm happy we found a way to provide live music for people in these winter months," Gusakov added. "Especially because there wasn't a Bristol Best Night. I know a lot of people missed that event. For this music series, I can pretty well guarantee people will enjoy all these performers."

Check out the full schedule:

- Jan. 18 — Daddylonglegs at Lawrence Memorial Library in Bristol
- Feb. 15 — Tournesol at the Monkton Library
- March 21 — Nate Gusakov at the New Haven Library
- April 18 — Tim McKenzie at the Lincoln Library
- May 16 — Rodrigo Placencia at the Starksboro Library

All shows will start at 7:30 p.m. Free admission with donations welcome.

MORE ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

DADDYLONGLEGS

Lawrence Memorial Library, Bristol
Jan. 18 | 7:30 p.m.

DaddyLonglegs is the confluence of three well known Vermont musicians — Rick Ceballos, David Gusakov and Matthew Witten

— whose talents merge to form a highly original acoustic trio. Infusing catchy folk songs, Celtic and "old-timey" melodies, and early minstrel and jazz pieces with passion and intricacy, DaddyLonglegs is playful and dynamic. Playing fiddle, viola, banjo, gourd banjo, piano, guitar, percussion and vocals, DaddyLonglegs creates vibrant, sensitive and surprising 21st-century folk music.



TOURNESOL

Monkton Library
Feb. 15 | 7:30 p.m.

Tournesol performs a varied repertoire of songs and tunes. Many

echo the sounds of Parisian cafes of the '30s and
SEE MUSIC ON PAGE 3

MUSIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

'40s — speedy gypsy jazz tunes, flowing musette waltzes and the songs of Edith Piaf, coupled with plenty of well-known and not-so-well-known jazz standards and some Latin beats too. All sung and played acoustically on guitar, fiddle, accordion and mandolin.

Tournesoll features Janice Russotti, vocals and percussion; Mavis Milne, violin; Patti Shannon upright bass and vocals; Carl Severence, guitar; Ted LeBlanc, guitar and vocals; Mike Walker, mandolin and accordion.

NATE GUSAKOV

New Haven Library
March 21 | 7:30 p.m.

Singer-songwriter, banjoist and Astrology Days Records recording artist Nate Gusakov lives in the mountains of Lincoln. He started picking clawhammer-style banjo when he was 20 years old, and he still does so whenever the right porch or campfire presents itself. Recently he's begun exploring new directions in sound, wielding a solid-body electric banjo transmuted through pedal board and vintage tubes into a five-string axe with capabilities that range far beyond his usual open-backed acoustic instrument.



What's the genre? Well, it's folk music. Songs about the lived experience, both real and imagined.

Neofolk when they're dark and honest, blues rock when they're gritty and loud, experimental old-timey banjo when they bounce happily along some old creekside path and then dart suddenly off into an acoustic sonic wilderness...

Nate has performed from Alaska to Maine, both solo and with various bands at bars, weddings, listening rooms and festivals. He has shared the stage and studio with dozens of Vermont musicians including his dad David Gusakov, Jon Fishman, Jamie Masefield, Pappy Biondo, Moira Smiley, Lowell Thompson, Katie Trautz, Annie Nessen, Robinson Morse, Michael Chorney, Michael Roberts, Abby Sherman, The Suitcase Junket, Banjo Dan Lindner and many more.

TIM MCKENZIE

Lincoln Library
April 18 | 7:30 p.m.

Tim McKenzie's great-grandfather walked all the way to Montreal to meet his bride at the dock only to learn she perished on the boat from Ireland. He walked back and married a local girl. His grandfather was a dedicated man. Made the best pork sausage in all the land. His mother and father played the violin and fiddle, respectively... and respectably, he's told. They also cut a mean rug. His brother can dance, too. By the time McKenzie came along (he's one of 11) the fiddles were gone. But there was a piano on the unheated side porch. He struggled with Chopsticks... but got Heart and Soul at -20 degrees F.



Since then he's shared the stage (or billing) with such luminaries as Emmy Lou, Vassar, Marty, Bill, Ricky, Doc, Frank, Lester and Earl... among others. He's also played shoulder to shoulder with many of the best-known musicians in Oregon, New Mexico, South Florida and Vermont... including years with Pine Island, one of Vermont's best-known bands... back in the day.

"Giants all!" says McKenzie. "I, however, am still about the same size I ever was... give or take 30 pounds."

McKenzie quit the music scene about 45 years ago to (ahem) "pursue other

interests." But he never quit playing. "I've lost a boatload of hearing, so I figure I better get back into it while I still can."

RODRIGO PLACENCIA

Starksboro Library
May 16 | 7:30 p.m.

Rodrigo Placencia grew up in Mexico City, where he began playing guitar at age 13. He was inspired to take on the instrument by his grandfather's love for Mexican popular music and his middle school peers' enthusiasm for American rock styles. While he aspired to learn to play electric guitar, his teacher immersed him in multiple styles like classical, jazz, funk and blues. He became highly passionate about music and eventually moved to the United States to study classical guitar performance at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. For the past 17 years, he has been delighted to teach guitar and ukulele to people of all ages. When he is not making music, he enjoys traveling and exploring the great outdoors with his family.



Placencia will be playing music that mixes his passion for classical guitar styles, Latin American folk music, and traditional songs from his native Mexico.

Editor's Note: It's unclear yet if there will also be a virtual component to these shows. So stay tuned to the 5 Town Friends of the Arts online channels (5townfriendsofthearts.org or @5townfriends on social media). And we'll report any updates here, of course.



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MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES
WINTER/SPRING 2024 SEASON



January 19 ■ 7:30 PM
January 21 ■ 2:00 PM

Takács
Quartet

\$25/20/10/5

802-443-MIDD (6433) go.middlebury.edu/pas



UPCOMING MUSIC

Takács Quartet returns to the Mahaney Arts Center Jan. 19 and 21

WORLD-CLASS ENSEMBLE TO PERFORM THE BARTÓK STRING QUARTET CYCLE

In a concert that has been highly anticipated since its postponement in 2020, the renowned Takács Quartet, "one of the world's greatest string quartets" (*New York Times*), will return to the Mahaney Arts Center on Jan. 19 and 21, to perform the entire Bartók string quartet cycle. The Takács Quartet, now in their 49th season, have been longtime friends of the Middlebury Performing Arts Series — these concerts will mark their 28th appearance on campus.

The Quartet is renowned for their affinity with Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, whose six quartets are among the pinnacles of 20th-century chamber music. They will play Quartets 1, 3, and 5 during the Friday performance, and Nos. 2, 4, and 6 on Sunday. Audiences can learn more about Bartók's musical legacy when Professor Emeritus of Music Larry Hamberlin offers a free pre-concert lecture about the music at 6:15 p.m., on Friday.

ABOUT THE QUARTET

The Takács Quartet was founded in 1975 by four students at the Franz Liszt Academy in



The Takács Quartet will perform the Bartók string quartet cycle at the Mahaney Arts Center on Friday, Jan. 19 and on Sunday, Jan. 21.

PHOTO / AMANDA TIPTON

Budapest. Within two years they were gaining international attention, receiving first prizes and gold medals in competitions across Europe. In this, their 49th year, one founding member, cellist András Fejér, remains with the ensemble. He is joined by Edward Dusinberre and Harumi Rhodes on violin, and Richard O'Neill on viola.

When not performing, the Quartet members are Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall, and Christoffersen Fellows and Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado, Boulder. For the 23–24 season the quartet has partnered with El Sistema Colorado, a free afterschool string orchestra and music education program in Denver, working closely with its chamber music education program.

Among their many accolades, the Quartet has

received a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award, four Gramophone Awards, a Grammy, and three Japanese Record Academy Awards. In 2014 Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. In 2012 Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into Gramophone's Hall of Fame.

Hear the Takács Quartet perform at the Mahaney Arts Center's Olin C. Robison Concert Hall on Friday, Jan. 19, at 7:30 p.m., and on Sunday, Jan. 21, at 2 p.m. There will be a free pre-concert lecture by Professor Emeritus of Music Larry Hamberlin on Friday at 6:15 p.m., in the MAC room 125. Tickets for each concert are \$25 for the general public, \$20 for Middlebury faculty/staff and alumni, \$10 for youth, and \$5 for Middlebury College students. For tickets or information, call 802-443-MIDD (6433) or go to middlebury.edu/arts.

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Katy Foote



Jenna Hunsinger



Tom Van Sant



Christy Lynn



Jesse Norford

ART ON EXHIBIT

EDGEWATER ON THE GREEN

6 Merchants Row, Middlebury

Visit edgewatergallery.com, call 802-989-7419 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com for more info.

"Winter Compositions" featuring new work by Jim Westphalen and Dale Najarian. Vermont photographer Jim Westphalen studies the unique quality of light, and the contrasting tones of the built landscape against the natural one, that comes with the winter season. Dale Najarian's Shadow series merges the realistic quality of a photograph with the abstract translation of a scene. She explores the perspective that shadows create, and uses figures in motion to capture the ever shifting relationship between light and dark. On view Jan. 9-Feb. 17.

JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant St, Middlebury

Visit townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery or call 802-382-9222 for more info.

"A New Path: Paintings in oil and watercolor" features a solo show of work by retired veterinarian Dr. Tom Munschauer. His exhibit shows larger format paintings in oil and watercolor. His strong sense of graphic design and composition are evident in his approach to painting. His imagery includes flora and fauna, landscapes, and anything that might spark his interest. On view Jan. 12-Feb. 17, with an opening reception on Friday, Jan. 12, from 5-7 p.m.

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury

For more info visit photoplacegallery.com.

"Portals: Windows, Mirrors and Doors." A portal can be an architectural feature (gate, window, doorway, mirror, tunnel) that frames or isolates or adds dimension to an image. In a fictional sense, a portal can become a magical doorway through time and space. Alone or in combination, they hold unlimited creative possibilities for photographers. This juried photo exhibit uses these devices in intriguing ways. Juror Roula Seikaly selected approximately 35 images for exhibition in the Middlebury gallery, and 40 more for the online gallery. On view Jan. 5-26.

SHELDON MUSEUM

1 Park Street, Middlebury

For more info visit henrysheldonmuseum.org

"From Homespun to Couture: Fashion in Historic Middlebury," curated by Eva Garcelon-Hart, features local advertisements, newspapers, fashion magazines, photographs, trade cards, catalogs, and all manner of documentation from the Henry Sheldon Museum's archives, revealing what Middlebury residents wore, bought, and sold during the 19th and early 20th centuries. On view through Jan. 13.

SEE EXHIBITS ON PAGE 15

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. Aries, if resolutions seem slow-going, give it time to get into a groove and become part of your routine. You can handle anything when you put your mind to it.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Taurus, there is a lot going on in your life at the moment, and you may need to accept that you can't do it all alone. Start farming out tasks to people you trust.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. How will you know if you can do something unless you give it a try, Gemini? Be adventurous this week, whether it is enjoying a new ethnic cuisine or trying a new activity.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Cancer, you may have a few plans on the horizon but aren't sure how to get started. Just like walking, take it one step at a time and soon you'll find that you're on your way.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Leo, you may think you're being humble and putting others' needs before your own this week. But if you look a little deeper, you may discover you have room to improve.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Virgo, if you commit to something, follow through this week. Others are counting on you for your portion of the work and letting them down now is not an option.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Health issues may have you taking inventory of your habits, Libra. It's a new year and the perfect time to start to make changes for the better. Ask for help if you need guidance.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. You're not one for being bashful about things, Scorpio. But something could occur this week that leaves you a little red in the face and perhaps wanting to hide in the shadows.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Someone new in your life is causing all types of changes to your schedule, Sagittarius. You're not quite sure if you enjoy it or not right now. Stay the course and wait to see.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Capricorn, you will not make inroads with family or friends if you continue to play the victim. You must own up to any mistakes you've made and start making amends this week.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Sometimes the best defense is remaining quiet and letting others dig themselves into a deeper hole, Aquarius. Others will see your positive efforts for all they are.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Think about planning a getaway in the next month or so, Pisces. It doesn't have to be a grand voyage. Even a weekend retreat can be a way to rest and recharge right now.

Ashley's Annual Birthday Sale:
This Friday and Saturday!

Tues-Thurs 11am-5pm
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Sun 12-4pm • Closed Mon

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JAN. 12— Haruki Murakami, writer (74)
JAN. 13 — Julia Louis-Dreyfus, actor (52)
JAN. 14 — Berthe Morisot, painter (d)
JAN. 15 — Moliere, playwright (d)

JAN. 16 — Lin-Manuel Miranda, actor and singer-songwriter (43)
JAN. 17 — Michelle Obama, lawyer, First Lady (60)
JAN. 18 — Pep Guardiola, soccer player and coach (52)

CALENDAR

JAN. 11-FEB. 13
2024



THURSDAY, JAN. 11

"ART OF FILM PHOTOGRAPHY" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Jan. 11, 5 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. At this Middlebury Science Café, Middlebury College Professor of Art Michelle Leftherisa will talk about the vanishing art of manual SLR photography. Coffee and treat provided. More info at Ilsley Public Library.org.

CABIN FEVER LECTURE SERIES: "BEAUTIFUL COLOMBIA" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m., Community room, Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Join Otter Creek Audubon Society for a presentation by world-traveling birder Hank Kaestner. With over 7,000 birds on his life list, Kaestner will give a travelogue of birding in Colombia with his brother Peter during the early pandemic.

FRIDAY, JAN. 12

ARTISTS' OPENING RECEPTION IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Jan. 12, 5-7 p.m., Jackson Gallery, Town Hall theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. Come see painting is watercolor and oils by Thomas Munschauer in his exhibit, "A New Path." Exhibit runs through Feb. 17.

SATURDAY, JAN. 13

MONTHLY WILDLIFE WALK IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 13, 8 a.m., Otter View Park, Weybridge St. and Pulp Mill Bridge Rd. Otter Creek Audubon and the Middlebury Area Land Trust invite community members to help survey birds and other wildlife at Otter View Park and the Hurd Grassland. Birders of all ages and abilities welcome. For more

information call 802-388-6019.

1774 HIS MAJESTY'S GARRISON IN TICONDEROGA, N.Y. Saturday, Jan. 13, Fort Ticonderoga. Experience a lively one-day living history and discover the peacetime garrison life for the British soldiers and their families that lived at Fort Ticonderoga. Appropriate footwear for undetermined winter weather conditions is highly recommended. Tickets available at fortticonderoga.org or upon arrival.

MILK & HONEY QUILTERS GUILD COMMUNITY SEWING DAY IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 13, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Community Room, Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St.. Come for the whole day or a few hours. Bring a sewing machine, basic sewing supplies and a drink. The guild will provide ironing and cutting stations as well as patterns and fabric for items that are most needed now. Lunch provided. To sign up follow the link in the M&H newsletter or just come. More info contact Peg Allen at mjallen@shoreham.net.

KNITTING 101 IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.-noon, Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Join fiber artist Lieve Temple as she teaches the basics of knitting. This program is designed for beginner knitters. Feel free to stick around after the lesson for our Fiber Arts Circle, where you can practice what you learn.

BANJO WITH JIM SHAW IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 13, 1 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Jim Shaw, retired professor of physics and astronomy, will give a talk about the history, types, playing styles of banjos,

along with a demonstration of three different banjos. He will treat us with music and sign along, with some tunes 200 or more years old.

LEGO ROBOTICS COMMUNITY SHARE IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Jan. 13, 2-2:30 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Join our robotics teams in sharing their final preparations for the Lego First Robotics State Competition. Learn about their Innovation Projects this season and watch their robots complete missions in the lobby of the Bixby.

CONTRA DANCE IN CORNWALL. Saturday, Jan. 13, 7-9:30 p.m., Town Hall, Route 30. Dance away the winter chill at the Cornwall Contra Dance. Lausanne Allen will be calling. Live music Red Dog Riley. Tickers \$5 to \$10 or pay what you can.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 17

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN WEYBRIDGE. Wednesday, Jan. 17, North Country Trail. Easy hike on the blue trail that branches off the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM). This hike is about 5 miles over level terrain with a mixture of field and forest. At the half-way point of the hike we will check out Bittersweet Falls. Microspikes and snowshoes required depending upon conditions. Contact trip leader Ken Corey at 802-349-3733 or kencorey53@gmail.com for questions and to sign up. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

"THE DANISH COLLECTOR" ON SCREEN IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 11 a.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. For many years no-one was interested in the art of the Impressionists. Artists like Monet,

Degas and Renoir were vilified, attacked and left penniless as a result. Then, something remarkable happened. A new breed of collectors emerged and, before long, they were battling to acquire any work by these new, radical artists that they could find. Amongst them was the visionary Danish businessman Wilhelm Hansen. Tickets \$15, available at townhalltheater.org.

"DIAL M FOR MURDER" ON SCREEN IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. MCCFC's Hitchcock series continues with this film about a husband scheming to murder his wife. Join in for the film followed by a discussion. View the films in person in the Jessica Swift Community Room.

FRIDAY, JAN. 19

TAKÁCS QUARTET IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Jan. 19, 7:30 p.m., Robison Hall, Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. The Takács will present their entire Bartók string quartet cycle, delayed from our 100th anniversary season in 2020. This ensemble has always had a particular association with Béla Bartók, the great 20th-century Hungarian composer whose six quartets are among the pinnacles of 20th-century chamber music. Tickets: \$25/20/10/5 available at go.middlebury.edu/tickets or 802-443-MIDD (6433).

SATURDAY, JAN. 20

HOCUS POCUS MAGIC SHOW IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Jan. 20, 2 p.m., Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MCTV SCHEDULE Channels 1071 & 1091		MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY TELEVISION: P.O. Box 785, Middlebury, Vt. 05753		Please see the MCTV website, www.middleburycommunitytv.org, for changes in the schedule; MCTV events, classes and news; and to view many programs online. Submit listings to the above address, or call 388-3062.	
MCTV Channel 1071 Friday, January 12 Through the Night: Public Affairs 7:30 a.m. Congregational Church 10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 3 p.m. Energy Week 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Church 5:30 p.m. Special Programming, Public Affairs Saturday, January 13 Through the Night: Public Affairs 10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 4 p.m. Memorial Baptist Service 5:30 p.m. Eckankar 6 p.m. Energy Week 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Press Conferences 9 p.m. Montpelier Happy Hour Sunday, January 14 Through the Night: 9 a.m. Alliance for Public Media 9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass 11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 12:30 p.m. Energy Week, Public Affairs 4 p.m. Congregational Service	6:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 7:30 p.m. Energy Week, Public Affairs Monday, January 15 Through the Night: From the Archives 5 a.m. Press Conf., Public Affairs 10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 8:30 p.m. Energy Week 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10 p.m. From the Archives, Public Affairs Tuesday, January 16 Through the Night: Public Affairs 5:30 a.m. Energy Week 6:30 a.m. Public Affairs 9:30 a.m. Eckankar 10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 4 p.m. Congregational Services 7 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs Wednesday, January 17 Through the Night: Public Affairs 7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass 10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 7 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs Thursday, January 18 Through the Night: Public Affairs	5 a.m. Selectboard 8 a.m. Congregational Services 12 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 8:30 p.m. Montpelier Happy Hour 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10 p.m. Dr. John Campbell MCTV Channel 1091 Friday, January 12 5 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 6 a.m. Music In the Morning 9:30 a.m. Food & Cooking Programs 12 p.m. School Board Meeting/s 6 p.m. Samriah Evans at the Town Hall Theater 8 p.m. Ripton Coffee House - Matt Flinner Trio 9:17 p.m. All Brains Belong Vermont 10:30 p.m. Poets & Authors Saturday, January 13 5:35 a.m. Vermont Youth Orchestra 7 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 8 a.m. Matt Flinner Trio 9:17 a.m. Poets & Authors 12 p.m. School Board Meeting/s 4:30 p.m. All Brains Belong Vermont	5:33 p.m. Samriah Evans 9:30 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 11:30 p.m. Poets & Authors Sunday, January 14 5:30 a.m. Vermont Youth Orchestra - 10 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 5 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 6 p.m. All Brains Belong Vermont 7:30 p.m. PechaKucha Night 9 p.m. Matt Flinner Trio 10:30 p.m. Poets and Authors Monday, January 15 6:30 a.m. Vermont Youth Orchestra 8 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 9 a.m. PechaKucha Night 10:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 7 p.m. Otter Creek Audubon Society 9:30 p.m. Creating Next Gen. Community Leadership In the Classroom 11:01 p.m. Samriah Evans Tuesday, January 16 5 a.m. Music in the Morning 6:30 a.m. Yoga 7:30 a.m. Food & Cooking Programs 9 a.m. PechaKucha Night	10:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 8 p.m. All Brains Belong VT 9 p.m. Authors and Poets Wednesday, January 17 5 a.m. Music in the Morning 7 a.m. Chair Yoga 7:35 a.m. Tai Chi 8 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 3 p.m. Middlebury Community Wind Ensemble 4:30 p.m. Vermont Youth Orchestra 6 p.m. PechaKucha Night 7:30 p.m. All Brains Belong 8:33 p.m. Authors and Poets Thursday, January 18 5:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:30 a.m. Food & Cooking Programs 7:30 a.m. Poets and Authors 3 p.m. All Brains Belong Vermont 4:35 p.m. Tai Chi 5 p.m. VYO Orchestra Palooza 3 8 p.m. School Board Meeting/s	

St. Fun, engaging and great-for-the-entire-family magic fun, comedy, and surprise by magician Blaine Goad. Great for all ages. Tickets \$10 adults/\$5 kids/\$25 family of 4. More info at vergennesoperahouse.org.

KING PEDE CARD PARTY IN FERRISBURGH. Saturday, Jan. 20, 6:30 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center, Route 7. A sandwich supper and then on to an evening of fun and games. King Pedé is a game that involves "trick-taking" such as in Hearts and Spades or Pitch. This is a game of fun and skill so come prepared to use your strategic thinking.

SUNDAY, JAN. 21

TAKÁCS QUARTET IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Jan. 21, 2 p.m., Robison Hall, Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. See Jan. 19 listing.

TUESDAY, JAN. 23

BOOK AND AUTHOR DISCUSSION: EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, Jan. 23, 6 p.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. Middlebury College students will facilitate a discussion of "Station Eleven" and other works by St. John Mandel. Set in the days of civilization's collapse, "Station Eleven" tells the story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 24

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN CROWN POINT, N.Y. Wednesday, Jan. 24. Enjoy a leisurely walk across the Lake Champlain Bridge and enjoy the ruins and other sites before watching the sunset and full moon rise. Headlamps and microspikes are required. Contact trip leader Ken Corey at kencorey53@gmail.com for questions and to sign up. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

THURSDAY, JAN. 25

"NEXT TO NORMAL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. This theatrical performance explores how one suburban household copes with crisis and mental illness. Winner of three 2009 Tony Awards, including Best Musical Score and the 2010 Pulitzer Prize. Tickets adults \$27/student \$17/generous \$37, available at townhalltheater.org, 802-382-9222 or tickets@townhalltheater.org. Repeats Jan. 26, 27 and 28.

FRIDAY, JAN. 26

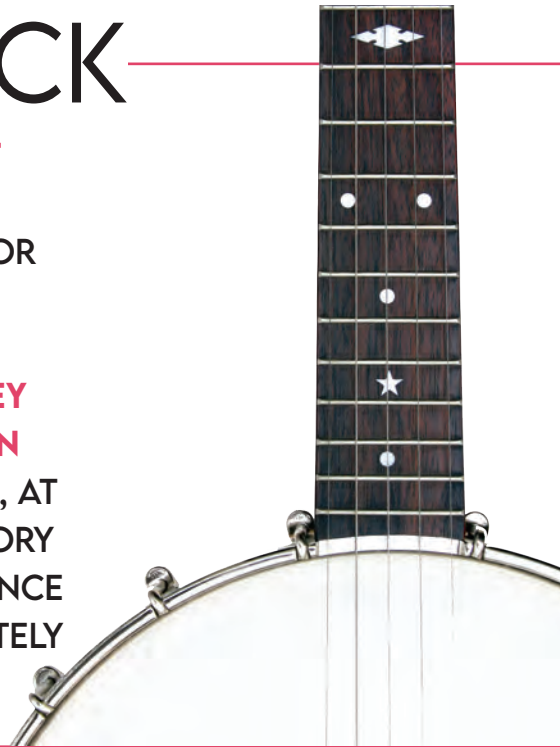
"NEXT TO NORMAL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See Jan. 25 listing.

SATURDAY, JAN. 27

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN RIPTON. Saturday, Jan. 27. Spirit in Nature Trails. Easy to moderate hike on the Spirit in Nature trails in Ripton,

TOP PICK

LEARN ALL ABOUT BANJOS WITH RETIRED PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY JIM SHAW AT THE ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY ON SATURDAY, JAN. 13, AT 1 P.M. MUSIC, HISTORY AND A PERFORMANCE BY SHAW IS DEFINITELY A TOP PICK!



3-4 miles maximum, minimal elevation gain. Hiking poles recommended. Depending on conditions, snowshoes or microspikes may be needed. Contact leader Liana Merrill at merrill.liana@gmail.com to get details and sign up. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

"WOOL & WATER" ARTIST TALK IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Jan. 27, 11 a.m.-noon, Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. Curator Michael Glennon will this collaborative data art project that blends fiber art with scientific data to create visual representations of changing water quality conditions in the Adirondacks and Lake Champlain Basin. The exhibit is on display now in the Community Room.

GREAT PUZZLE CHALLENGE 2024 IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 27, 11 a.m., Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main St. In honor of National Puzzle Day (Jan. 29), gather your puzzle team of 1-3 people. Race against other teams to be the first to complete the chosen puzzle. Winner(s) will receive a \$10 gift certificate to Tinker and Smithy. Enter your team at ilsleypubliclibrary.org/great-puzzle-challenge.

"NEXT TO NORMAL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Jan. 27, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See Jan. 25 listing.

SUNDAY, JAN. 28

"NEXT TO NORMAL" IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, Jan. 28, 2 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See Jan. 25 listing.

TUESDAY, JAN. 30

VIRTUAL WINTER BOOK DISCUSSION IN FERRISBURGH. Tuesday, Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m., Zoom. Rokeby Museum sponsors this discussion of "A History of the Village of North Ferrisburgh" led by the author Jean Richardson, a long-time North Ferrisburgh community member and well-known historian and professor emerita of natural resources, environmental studies and geography at UVM. Free. More info at rokeby.org/visit/programmevents.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 31

"CARMEN" LIVE IN HD IN MIDDLEBURY. Wednesday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. A new production of one of opera's most enduringly powerful works, reinvigorating the classic story with a staging that moves the action to the modern day and finds at the heart of the drama issues that could not be more relevant today: gendered violence, abusive labor structures, and the desire to break through societal boundaries. Tickets adult \$26/student \$12, available at townhalltheater.org, 802-382-9222 or tickets@townhalltheater.org.

FRIDAY, FEB. 2

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN RIPTON. Friday, Feb. 2, west side of Frost Mountain. Moderate hike of 4.5 miles round trip with several views of the Adirondacks. Microspikes or snowshoes required depending on conditions. Meet at the parking lot in East Middlebury on the uphill side of Sand Hill Bridge, on Route 125 over the gorge. May end the outing with a stop at the Waybury Inn for a beverage and snack. More info contact Anne Christie at 802-388-4347 (home) or 802-989-9771 (cell). More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

SATURDAY, FEB. 3

MILES DONAHUE AND FRIENDS IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. The House of Jazz winter offering features Miles Donahue, a Middlebury College music professor, who is fluent in both saxophone and trumpet, and is a celebrated composer and recording artist. He has been hailed as a jazz treasure and one of the best kept secrets of the genre. Tickets \$25 advance/\$30 at the door/\$35 table (includes one drink). More info and tickets at townhalltheater.org or 802-382-9222.

FRIDAY, FEB. 9

"STEALING FROM WORK: ARTIFICIAL IRRELEVANCE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall

Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. The very real and not-at-all-automated minds behind the Vermont sketch comedy troupe "Stealing from Work" are back with their new review for 2024, "Artificial Irrelevance." The new show contains sketches relevant for our times, or at least for an evening of distraction and laughs. Tickets \$20, available at townhalltheater.org or 802-382-9222.

SATURDAY, FEB. 10

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE OR SNOWSHOE IN SHELBURNE. Saturday, Feb. 10, Shelburne Farms. Hike the Farm Trail from the Welcome Center. Moderately difficult; 4-5 miles. Bring a snack or lunch, water, and dress to the weather in thermal layers. Ankle gaiters and hiking poles are recommended. Be prepared for ice and snow with boot traction, aka microspikes. For details including meeting time and possible carpooling from the Middlebury area, contact Ruth Penfield at 802-458-1116 or ruthpenfield@gmail.com. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

COLBY CREHAN AND MARSH LIGHTS IN LINCOLN. Saturday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. to Burnham Hall, 52 E. River Rd. Colby Crehan and Marsh Lights plays acoustic folk-grass music with a hyper-literate edge and beautiful execution. The group's strong rapport built over years of performing together makes for a band that can go light and heavy, solemn and joyful, fast and slow. Doors open at 7 p.m., music begins at 7:30 p.m. \$15/\$20/\$25 or pay what you can. More info at burnhampresents.org.

VERMONT MANDOLIN TRIO IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. The trio of Jamie Masefield, Will Patton and Matt Flinner brings together three of Vermont's finest mandolinists for a rare evening of bluegrass, jazz and roots music in the unique setting of three mandolins. Joined by journeyman bassist Pat Melvin, the group performs music of Bill Monroe, Django Reinhardt, J.S. Bach and everything in between. Tickets \$20/\$30 table, available at townhalltheater.org or 802-382-9222.

LC JAZZ WINTER THAW CONCERT IN VERGENNES. Saturday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m., Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. A favorite event of the season, bringing neighbors and friends out from their homes and into the warmth of the Vergennes Opera House. Great music provided by many familiar faces in a 17-piece orchestra with singers to boot. Free will donations benefit the high school music scholarship fund.

TUESDAY, FEB. 13

BIXBY BOOK CLUB IN VERGENNES. Tuesday, Feb. 13, 6-7 p.m., Bixby Memorial Library, 258 Main St. The book for February is "Under the Whispering Door" by TJ Klune. A delightful queer love story from the author of the New York Times and USA Today bestseller "The House in the Cerulean Sea." Come and discuss. Didn't read or finish the book? No worries! This is a no-judgment book club. Books can be reserved by emailing Martha at Martha.Sanborn@bixbylibrary.org.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT DOOR

Rutland gallery features Brandon artist

The Chaffee Art Center, in Rutland, will host an exhibit by Brandon artist, architect and teacher Robert Black this winter. The exhibit, "The Art of Life" will open with a reception on Friday, Jan. 19, from 5-7 p.m., and be on view through



March 1. This exhibit features a wide-ranging exhibition of photographs and collages that explore the world around us in all its variety and glory.

ABOUT ROBERT BLACK

Robert Black, collagist, photographer, and architect, grew up on the Mississippi River in La Crosse, Wis. He has lived in Vermont since 2009 and has partnered in many shows since then with Vermont artist Fran Bull.

Black was always interested in drawing, a skill that led him to become an architect. But it was in Miss Drumm's art class in fourth grade that he was inspired to do his first real collage. The next year, his fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Hammersberg, encouraged him to draw the street scene of houses and a corner tavern that he could see across the street from his second-story window.

Later, he took shop, mechanical drawing and drafting in junior high school. His first real formal taste of art classes came during his college architecture studies at the University of Minnesota. He was also inspired to explore more improvisational art, including sketching, collage and photography.

Black's collage work and photography have been shown at coffee houses, cafes and other small venues in Ann Arbor, Mich., and in Middlebury, Brandon, and Chester, Vt. He's also had shows at Gallery in the Field and the Compass Center in Brandon, and at the



MORE ART

THE PITCHER INN SHOWS RORY JACKSON WINTER LANDSCAPES

"Blanket of Renewal," featuring winter landscapes by Rory Jackson, will be on view Jan. 11-Feb. 21, at The Pitcher Inn, 275 Main Street, in Warren. An opening reception and dinner will be held Thursday, Jan. 11, from 5:30-8 p.m. Reservations required.

The light is low, the shadows long, the palette of the landscape has shifted to more neutral shades of gray, brown and white. Winter has settled in, in Vermont. The winter landscape carries with it qualities of serenity, quiet and gentleness. Jackson celebrates the landscape of his place in his latest series of oil paintings that focuses on this season.

For more information visit edgewatergallery.com, call the gallery at 802-989-7419 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com.



"Into the Valley" by Rory Jackson.

Chaffee Art Center in Rutland.

Black continues to work on various photographic works, including "Brick Series II" and "Cloud/Sky/Flowers," as well as on one-of-a-kind collages he makes from hand-cut assembled images using his extensive personal collection of photographs from nature, urban environments and other impromptu life experiences.

For more info visit chaffeeartcenter.org.

These two collages are examples of the work by Robert Black that will be on view at the Chaffee Art Center in Rutland beginning Jan. 19 through March 1. There will be an opening reception in the 19th from 5-7 p.m.

PUZZLES

sponsored by SPARROW ART SUPPLY

ACROSS

1. Defensive nuclear weapon

4. Moved back and forth

9. One-time coach of the Cowboys

14. Last letter

15. Cause to become less intense

16. Genus of tree bugs

17. Body art

18. Romance novelist

20. Be filled with love for

22. City

23. Make vivid

24. Horses

28. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano

29. Atomic #18

30. Shortly

31. A type of prejudice
33. Whirls

37. Six

38. Old world, new

39. __ Hess, oil company

41. Talk

42. Not off

43. Begets

44. Cars need them

46. Computing architecture (abbr.)

49. Of I

50. Journalist, activist Wells

51. Takes apart

55. Lists

58. Positively charged electrode

59. Hard, colorless compound

60. Inflammation of the peritoneum

64. Trent Reznor's

- band
65. Simply dry fruit
66. "Ivanhoe" author
67. Google certification
68. French commune
69. Medieval circuit courts
70. Soviet Socialist Republic

DOWN

1. Indigenous people of Mexico
2. Dietary supplement
3. Having a particular sheen or luster
4. Views
5. Academic Bill of Rights
6. Automobile
7. When you anticipate arriving

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17				18					19					
20			21					22						
23						24	25					26	27	
		28				29				30				
31	32					33		34	35	36			37	
38				39	40							41		
42				43						44	45			
46		47	48				49			50				
51				52	53	54				55			56	57
		58						59						
60	61							62	63				64	
65								66					67	
68								69					70	

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

Sudoku

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Puzzles come in three grades: easy, medium and difficult.

Level: Medium

8. Beef or chicken intestine

9. Conspiracy

10. Blood disorder

11. Long-time NBAer Shawn

12. Time zone

13. US, Latin America, Canada belong to

19. Upton Sinclair novel

21. What a cow does

24. Cavalry-sword

25. Ancient Greek war galley
26. Stars

27. Rebukes

31. Billion year periods

32. Some are in a bottle

34. Tears down

35. Lethal dose

36. Humorists

40. Midwestern US state (abbr.)

41. Frameworks

45. Rocker Billy

47. More thin

48. Dog

52. Habitual
- repetitions

53. State of fuss

54. Uneasy

56. Chemical compounds

57. More cognizant of reality

59. A place to build

60. Exclamation that denotes disgust

61. Supplement with difficulty

62. Very slick

63. Hill or rocky peak

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 13.



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(802) 989-7225

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The new year is here!

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ASK A MASTER GARDENER

CALL THE GARDEN HELPLINE

As we begin a new year, many Vermonters may have lingering questions about their garden's performance this past year or new questions as they plan to start or improve a garden in 2024.

The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Helpline can help.

BY **DEBRA**

HELEBA

The Helpline serves Vermonters by providing science-based information on home horticulture, integrated pest management and backyard composting.

Although the program's Thursday morning phone-in service is closed until April

2024, the online Garden Helpline is open 24/7/365. More than 30 specially trained Extension Master Garden volunteers from across Vermont staff the Helpline to answer gardening and composting questions from the public at no charge. Volunteers also are available to provide management recommendations based on the results from soil tests conducted by the UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab.

To pose a question to the Helpline, go to go.uvm.edu/gardenquestion. There, you can submit your question (providing as much detail as possible), can upload photos and enter your contact information. Volunteers will research your question and provide answers and additional resources via email.



Deb Heleba is the head of the Master Gardener Program and Community Horticulture Program at UVM, and lives in Lincoln.

Anyone in Vermont can benefit from the Garden Helpline whether a novice or an expert gardener.

Note that Extension Master Gardener volunteers do not provide personal site visits to home gardens nor answer commercial grower questions. Commercial growers should contact the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic (uvm.edu/extension/pdc) to submit samples or for assistance with the identification and management of diseases, pests and weeds.

During this time of year, trained volunteers are busy fielding questions from home and community gardeners on garden planning and outdoor pruning as well as providing guidance on soil test results and troubleshooting insect and plant diseases of houseplants, among other topics. In 2023, Helpline volunteers responded to more than 800 questions from the public.

The Garden Helpline is a free service provided by the UVM Extension Community Horticulture Program, which offers training and support to Extension Master Gardener and Vermont Master Composter volunteers. To learn more about the program, go to uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener.



University of Vermont Extension Master Gardener volunteers Susan Stanne, South Burlington (front), and Jane Murphy, Burlington, answer questions about gardening and backyard composting through the program's Garden Helpline.

PHOTO / DEB HELEBA/UVM EXTENSION



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Reach readers who are interested in all things gardening and advertise on this page.

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New Year wellness goals for your pet

Every year on Jan. 1 people create New Year's resolutions to live happier and healthier lives. Unfortunately, dog owners often forget that their pets could also use a few new goals to help them live their best lives.

Whether that's going for more walks, or making sure they see a veterinarian more regularly it's important that dogs have healthy habits and routines. Here are five health care habits that are critical for your dog's health and happiness.

TAKE YOUR DOG IN FOR YEARLY VETERINARY WELLNESS VISITS.

Pets are very good at hiding pain and symptoms of sickness. A veterinarian is trained to look for subtle changes during an exam. By taking your dog in for regular check-ups, it is more likely that diseases will be caught early — and an early diagnosis means a better prognosis for many diseases.

As dogs approach their senior years, these exams become even more important. In fact, Dr. Buzby recommends that senior patients be seen for tip-to-tail examinations two times a year. Senior dogs have an increased predisposition to many health problems such as:

- Diabetes mellitus
- Cushing's Disease
- Kidney disease and kidney failure in dogs
- Osteoarthritis
- Cancer
- Declining quality of life

SPEAK WITH YOUR VET ABOUT PARASITE PREVENTION/CONTROL.

In addition to vaccines, parasite prevention and control is an important part of your dog's preventative routine. Parasite prevention helps your dog maintain good overall health.



Dogs can pick up parasites almost anywhere — from other dogs, other animals, and the environment. And, unfortunately, some of these pesky parasites can be spread to your other pets (and even yourself). Therefore, parasite screening and prevention is crucial.

KEEP YOUR DOG ON YEAR-ROUND HEARTWORM PREVENTION.

Heartworms can be very dangerous for dogs (and cats). Unfortunately, as travel becomes more common and readily available in our society (and people are traveling more with their dogs), heartworm populations have grown and spread. Treatment is costly and potentially dangerous for dogs. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

BRUSH YOUR DOG'S TEETH DAILY.

Your dog needs your help fending off bad breath and dental disease. Do you know the best defense against dental disease in dogs? It's as simple as picking up a doggy toothbrush. By brushing your dog's teeth daily, you can help your dog have good oral hygiene that will have a lasting impact on your dog's overall health.

KEEP YOUR DOG AT A HEALTHY WEIGHT.

Proper weight management is important for your dog's overall health. So, be your dog's "personal trainer." One landmark study showed that dogs who were thin lived about two years longer than their chubby littermates. It is up to you to keep your dog a lean, mean canine machine.



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classy

Classy is the sweetest 7-month-old who has the loudest purr! She is super affectionate and gets along well with other cats.





Cassie

Cassie is a 20-pound Jack Russell Mix. She is estimated to be 2.5 years old. Cassie prefers men over women and we think she would do best in a very quiet home with one person. She is scared of strangers when first being introduced and needs a dedicated owner who will continue working on her confidence around people, using a training protocol she knows well from working with staff. Cassie is housebroken and crate-trained, and is very treat-motivated and eager to learn new tricks. She should live in a child-free home. She does not get along with other dogs, but is very snuggly with her people and likes to bury herself in blankets.





Iris

Iris is a little over a year old, 60-pound pit bull mix. Her favorite activity is to play fetch with her precious tennis balls and to snuggle up on your lap. Iris is dog-friendly but should not live with cats. She enjoys basking in the sun and going for walks. Iris is a young dog with a lot of energy, but also enjoys lazy days, taking long naps on her bed. She rides well in a car and seems content to just look out the window. Iris is not super treat-motivated, but tennis balls are the key to her heart. Iris feels insecure when introduced to new people, and needs a lot of encouragement from someone she trusts to feel confident and comfortable in these situations. Iris needs a dedicated owner who will continue working on her confidence around people using a training protocol she knows well from working with staff. She would do best in a quiet home without much traffic where she can get to know new people slowly. All she wants is a lap to snuggle up on and a home to call her own.





Caspian and Caina

Caspian and Caina are part of our 3rd Party Adoption program, still residing at home. They are 7-year-old female lop-eared rabbits with no known medical conditions. They are a bonded pair and should be adopted together if at all possible. They adore each other and will play, groom, and sleep together. Both are social, shy to visitors, playful, and affectionate. They can also be quiet, withdrawn, and fearful of new things. They have lived with cats, dogs, and other rabbits. Children ages 5-10+ years have been a regular part of the rabbits' lives. Caspian and Caina are housed outdoors mostly, but the owner feels they seem happier when being indoors and suggests that their new family might provide them with indoor housing. The difference between them is that Caspian does not like to be held and will kick and scratch to get away, while Caina is okay with being held sometimes.



Want to learn more?

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\$486,000

THE HOME

A LOOK INSIDE ADDISON COUNTY HOMES FOR SALE

Simplify in this Middlebury townhome

Battell Hill offers a lifestyle all its own and your neighbors will attest. If you want to simplify your daily routine, spend less time on yard work and more time on travel or hobbies, and be close to the amenities of Middlebury while remaining far enough away for plenty of peace and quiet, these townhomes offer it all. This center unit offers skylights to let the sunshine in, abundant storage, your own attached garage, a fantastic south-facing deck, and direct access to the TAM for a daily walk in the woods. In the colder months, you'll be content to curl up by the fireplace while the snow is shoveled to the front door. Make a retreat of the second-floor primary suite, complete with two walk-in closets, double vanities, and a soaking tub. A second bedroom and an additional 3/4 bath give you extra space for family or friends. They'll be visiting often!



*This week's property is managed by IPJ Real Estate.
More info at middvermontrealestate.com.*





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MLS No. 4971457 | \$ 475,000



78 Bristol Cliffs Drive, Bristol

This 3 Bedroom home has been in same family since construction in 1978. The spacious kitchen is open to the dining area, and brings in the natural light from the sliding door off the back deck. At the front of the home, the living room is grounded by pine flooring and features a bay window with southeastern exposure of the front yard and circular driveway. The 2.4 acre lot offers level land for gardening, and the surrounding natural tree buffer enhances the privacy of the lot. With a little vision, this house can easily become your home with new flooring, paint and your personal touches. Be sure to check out the 3-D virtual tour on our website!

MLS No. 4978964 | \$ 385,000



for more information, contact one of our agents:



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DID YOU KNOW?

Certain areas of a home are more likely to draw the interest of prospective buyers when a house goes on the market. When that day comes, many realtors and homeowners rely on staging to make a home as attractive as possible during an open house or appointment viewing. According to a 2019 report from the National Association of Realtors, staging the living room is most important for buyers, with 47 percent of buyers indicating a well-staged living room had an effect on their view of the home. The owner's suite (42%) and the kitchen (35%) were found to be the next most important rooms to stage. Though the report is generally concerned with selling a home, the conclusions in the report are something renovation-minded homeowners can keep in mind. If prospective buyers are most impressed by well-staged living rooms, owner's suites and kitchens, it stands to reason that those same rooms, when well-designed and recently renovated, will elicit a similarly positive reaction if homeowners ultimately decide to sell their homes in the future.

— MetroCreative

EXHIBITS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

**"Stellar Stitching:
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7. The maintenance on this home is at a minimum with the
standing seam roof, newer furnace, and a very usable back
yard. The wood stove heats the entire home to keep you
toasty in the winter. The garage-like shed provides space for
your outdoor and water sports equipment. The shared dock
on Lake Dunmore is perfect for launching your kayak. This is
a very cute home for those wanting to live with simplicity.

MLS: 4981633 Price: \$289,000



25 Lower Plains Rd. East Middlebury
**OPEN HOUSE, Sat. 11am-1pm. Stop by for a chance to win a
\$100 Gift Certificate to Fire & Ice.** This comfortable 3-bedroom
home—with a two-car garage—is situated on a spacious 1-acre
village lot in East Middlebury. It features a large open kitchen +
dining area with combination window-patio door leading to deck.
The wide lot offers a mixture of open and wooded areas, providing
plenty of room for gardening and farm work. The home is nearby
National Forest areas for walking, hiking, and seasonal hunting.

MLS: 4980215 Price: \$329,000



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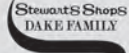
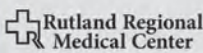
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with **MARK FORWARD**
JEFF MCHEERY AND ALLIE PEARSE
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LEE BRICE
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FRIDAY, MARCH 1 | 7:30 PM

DEAD INSIDE
WORLD COMEDY TOUR
MONDAY, MARCH 4 | 7:30PM

RAILROAD GARDENS
FRIDAY, MARCH 8 | 7:30 PM

WHO'S BAD
THE ULTIMATE MICHAEL JACKSON EXPERIENCE
SATURDAY, MARCH 9 | 7:00 PM

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD BAND
DIRTY ON MY DIAMONDS TOUR
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20 | 7:30PM

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FRIDAY, MARCH 29 | 7:30 PM

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