



Love and war

Chris Bohjalian's 25th novel sets a romance in a time of great conflict. See Arts + Leisure.



Mat bosses

Six local wrestlers won titles at the state meet, and the Tigers nearly did as a team. See Page 1B.



Top youth

A VUHS senior has been picked as the Boys and Girls Club's Youth of the Year. See Page 7B.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

A year later, almost all county school budgets pass

ACSD plan OK'd in landslide

By JOHN FLOWERS
Buoyed by good news on projected education property tax rates, a majority of Addison County residents supported their local school budgets on Town Meeting Day. Addison Central School District residents on Tuesday voted 1,797 to 485 in favor of a fiscal year 2026 pre-K-12 budget of \$51,719,284 that reflects a 2% bump in overall budget growth, but a 6.2% decrease in per-pupil spending. That's expected to help reduce ACSD member-towns' education property tax rates by a range of 5% in Cornwall to 48% in Bridport. Meanwhile spending plans in the Bristol-area Mount Abe district (See ACSD, Page 16A)

\$35M approved in MAUSD

By MARIN HOWELL
BRISTOL — Voters in the Mount Abraham Unified School District on Town Meeting Day decisively approved a \$34,894,443 fiscal year 2026 budget. They voted in favor of the spending plan, 1,280-596. The approved FY'26 budget reflects a decrease in total spending of \$486,753, or 1.38%, from the current year. District officials anticipate the spending plan will translate to a decrease in school taxes ranging from 0.55% to 9.26% in the district's member towns of Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro. The positive vote comes a year after voters in the MAUSD twice shot down spending proposals last (See MAUSD, Page 17A)

ANWSD budget wins big

By ANDY KIRKALDY
VERGENNES — Residents in the five Addison Northwest School District communities on Tuesday solidly backed a \$27.653 million budget proposal to provide education for students in the coming school year. The three ANWSD schools are Vergennes Union High School, Vergennes Union Elementary School, and Ferrisburgh Central School. In commingled balloting, residents of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham supported the ANWSD board's spending plan by 1,082-667, or about 62-38%. In a Wednesday morning email announcing the results, ANWSD (See ANWSD budget, Page 17A)

ACSD board to welcome new faces

Venable-Novak and Makleff make the cut

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — Addison Central School District voters on Tuesday decided a five-person race for three of Middlebury's seven seats on the ACSD board, choosing Jess Venable-Novak, Ron Makleff and incumbent Steve Orzech to fill those three-year spots. Venable-Novak, with 1,434 tallies, was the top vote-getter, followed by Makleff with 1,152, and Orzech with 860. Incumbent Brian Bauer and first-time candidate Vance Bishop finished out of the running with 835 and 748 tallies, respectively. In uncontested ACSD elections, Steve Cash (1,701 tallies) will represent Ripton on the board (succeeding former member Joanna Doria), and Jamie McCallum (1,747) was returned to a second consecutive term. All ACSD seats were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. The ACSD election and budget results were not available for (See ACSD board, Page 16A)



By the way

Remember that extra hour of sleep you got back in November? Get ready to give it back this Sunday, March 9. At 2 a.m. that day, clocks move forward to 3 a.m. to reflect Daylight Saving Time. This means getting up for work during the ensuing week will be more aggravating than usual, until your body adjusts. The twice-per-year ritual of "fall back, spring forward" will continue until federal lawmakers decide (See By the way, Page 18A)

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First Tuesday in March
TOWN MEETING DAY in Vermont is such a big deal that it is spread over several days in Addison County. Clockwise from top left, Lou McLaren asks a question about military pensions at Ferrisburgh's town meeting on Saturday; Assistant Fire Chief Bob Howard at Monkton's Saturday meeting describes the new truck being purchased this year; Hancock resident Samantha Sheehan frames her question during Tuesday morning's town meeting; and Lincoln resident Christie Sumner casts a paper ballot during her town's Monday evening meeting. Read Town Meeting recaps from all 24 area towns on Pages 9A-15A.

Photos by Steve James, Buzz Kuhns and Marin Howell



Packed Bristol library race results in a tie

By MARIN HOWELL
BRISTOL — Bristol voters could soon weigh in again on who they'd like to fill an open seat on the Lawrence Memorial Library Board of Trustees after a contested race for two, two-year terms on the board ended in a tie for second place on Town Meeting Day. Audrey Beckwith and write-in candidate Peter Hewitt both received 253 votes for one of the seats. Elizabeth Guilbeault was the top vote-getter in the contest for the two, two-year terms, earning 406 votes. Jill Danyow (139 votes) and Ashley "Boots," Bennett (73 votes) (See Bristol library, Page 17A)

Ripton school fails in bid to attract enough young pupils

By JOHN FLOWERS
RIPTON — An 11th-hour bid to preserve kindergarten and 1st-grade education at tiny Ripton Elementary School (RES) suffered a big setback on Monday. Superintendent Wendy Baker that day announced that not enough out-of-town families had accepted an invitation to join RES's K/1 class this fall to achieve the district's new class-size policy (See Ripton, Page 18A)

Midd OKs \$49.5M sewer bond

Project nets resounding 1,021-134 endorsement at polls

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury residents on Tuesday voted overwhelming in favor of three public works-related bond proposals, the centerpiece of which was a proposed \$49.5 million upgrade of the town's 24-year-old wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) at 243 Industrial Ave. The WWTP bond referendum passed 1,021-134. The vote sends a positive signal to prospective grantors and lenders, whom the town will aggressively court, to potentially lower the cost to wastewater ratepayers. Middlebury Director of Engineering Emmalee Cherington was pleased with voters' willingness to endorse not only the WWTP project, but two other



SUPERINTENDENT JEREMY RATHBUN
requests that were featured on Tuesday's ballot: \$2 million in proposed improvements to the

municipal water pump station off Rogers Road (passed, 1,022-106), and a \$1 million plan to install a stormwater treatment system for the Adams Acres subdivision, which was approved by a 985-138 margin. "I am so thankful that our community supported these three bond votes," Cherington said. "We have been working hard to communicate the importance of these measures, and the effort clearly paid off. I am also grateful to our team of coworkers and engineers that have helped us through this process." The *Independent* detailed the problems — and proposed solutions — to Middlebury's WWTP in a Feb. 20 article. (See Sewer bond, Page 18A)



SALLY TAYLOR OF Lincoln refers to her town report while asking the selectboard a question at the town's annual meeting on Monday evening in Burnham Hall. The gathering attracted over 100 voters, who met for more than five hours and engaged in lively discussion on several articles. Independent photo/Marin Howell

Lincoln weighs the future of Town Meeting

By MARIN HOWELL
LINCOLN — There were several articles on Lincoln's town meeting warning that generated lively discussion at Monday's annual gathering in Burnham Hall. But one in particular seemed to get at the heart of the town meeting tradition and why Vermonters continue to practice the centuries-old exercise in local democracy.

That was Article 9, which asked Lincoln voters whether the town should move to voting on all money articles by Australian ballot beginning next year. While several residents expressed why

they stood on one or the other side of the issue, others seemed to land somewhere in the middle.

"Given what we've been through tonight, at least the people who were here had a chance to make some amendments to the financials," Sally Taylor said. "If we go to Australian ballot, which hopefully would get more people to vote, we will not have that privilege at all...for me it's a bit of a dilemma; do we want more people to vote, or do we want to have a say in the financials?"

Sally Baldwin was among those who raised concerns about

moving to Australian ballot voting.

"That's something to consider when people vote, is that it's basically going to put town meeting out of business, and that's a Vermont tradition that has blown me away since I first moved here," she said. "Democracy is messy, and that's what I love about town meeting."

Multiple residents voiced support for the measure, saying more voters should be fielding town spending requests.

"I agree democracy is important, which is why I really support moving this to Australian ballot so that the other 700 people who aren't here right now have a voice as well," Chris Nezin said.

Jonathan Johnson was among voters in support of exploring a hybrid model that would gather voters for a town meeting in January to weigh in on articles that would be voted on by Australian ballot in March.

"I like the process even if I don't always like the outcome," Johnson said of town meeting.

Ultimately, residents voted by division of the house in favor of tabling the article, 85-48.

savings is that we're finding them being able to do our maintenance in house now. We have fewer contractors doing things like plowing, and we've got much more efficient operations."

After some discussion, Lincoln voters approved both the highway and general fund budgets by voice vote.

Later that meeting, residents approved 28 voted appropriations to local organizations totaling \$153,390, including \$44,000 for the Lincoln Library and \$56,000 for the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Company.

Town officials expect the tax impact of approving all the monetary articles on the warning would result in a 0.8% decrease in the municipal tax rate.

TOWN CLERK SALARY

Voters spent about an hour on Article 7, which asked voters to authorize the town clerk's salary to be raised by \$10,123, plus \$1,382 in associated taxes and benefits.

Town Clerk Sally Ober explained the request was intended to bring her salary in line with the actual number of hours she works, which was previously assumed to be an average of 34 hours a week and is actually 40. Adopting the article would shake out to a new pay rate of around \$28.20/hour, town officials said.

A paper ballot was requested, and then one Lincoln resident moved to amend the article to raise the town clerk's salary by \$14,636.60 — doing so would bring the hourly pay rate up to \$30.37/hour, the average Vermont town clerk's salary according to town officials' presentation.

A Lincoln resident called the question and another paper ballot was requested to vote on the amendment, which ultimately passed, 84-56.

In the end, voters agreed to raise the town clerk's salary by the amended amount, 107-36. The crowd erupted in hearty applause and cheers after the article passed.

Lincoln residents on Monday passed Article 8, which asked if the town should eliminate the

(See Lincoln, Page 3A)

Ripton, College ink 10-year deal

By JOHN FLOWERS
RIPTON — Middlebury College and the town of Ripton have negotiated a new payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement through which the institution will pay the municipality more than \$218,000 during each of the next 10 years, in recognition of its nontaxable holdings in the small mountain town.

Ripton and the college have been negotiating these voluntary PILOT pacts since around 1961, according to language in the latest agreement, which will run through fiscal year 2034. As a nonprofit institution of higher learning, Middlebury College is legally exempted from paying property taxes on land and buildings that contribute directly to its educational mission.

At the same time, the college pays property taxes on its holdings that don't play a direct role in that mission.

Middlebury College currently owns 2,308 acres in Ripton — roughly 7% of the town's total acreage, according to longtime Ripton Selectperson Laurie Cox.

Its assets in Ripton include the Bread Loaf campus off Route 125. Left to the institution in 1915 by Joseph Battell, the Bread Loaf campus includes an 1861 Victorian inn, an adjacent barn, residence halls, a library and a theater building. Bread Loaf in 1920 became home to the college's Summer School of English and, since 1926, of its summer Writers' Conference.

Cox has been part of the town's negotiating team since joining the Ripton selectboard 39 years ago. She recalled being part of a big turnover on the board, and all three members were keen on reexamining an accord that she said called for fairly modest compensation at the time.

"The negotiations have been relatively cordial after that first one, where we all found our footing," Cox said. "I think (the agreements) have worked out well for everyone involved. The college wants to have the town functioning, they want to have the fire department, the roads. We don't maintain Route 125, but there are some things they're dependent on us for, and we certainly don't mind (the college) being part of our town. They're here, just like everybody else is here. It seemed appropriate they kick in a share."

The previous PILOT deal called for escalating annual payments to Ripton with a base of around \$157,000, with local children receiving free ski lessons at the college-owned Snowbowl and Rikert Outdoor Center.

Major provisions of the latest 10-year agreement include:

- An annual payment that's adjusted annually by taking the previous year's payment (in this case, \$218,613) and "multiplying it by the municipal tax rate of the then-current year, divided by the immediately prior year, except in the case of a townwide reappraisal, in which case the payment will be adjusted by the percentage change in the municipal taxes to be collected."
- An extension of the free ski lessons for Ripton schoolchildren at the Snowbowl and Rikert.
- A commitment by the college to mitigate the impact of any potential future development projects in town, with a promise to underwrite its share of municipal infrastructure upgrades to serve new college development.

"This continues the decades-long, mutually beneficial agreement between the town and

(See PILOT deal, Page 3A)



Half a century

MIKE AUDET, THE Orwell town moderator for the past 47 years, holds a commemorative trophy presented to him after he wrapped up his final town meeting on Tuesday. He is joined by his wife Jean Audet on his left, their sons Jonathan on the right and Jeremy on the left, and grandchildren Maria and Ethan. He received a standing ovation and gave a short speech of how he became the moderator his first year.

Independent photo/Sean Dougherty

Town also has school spending

By MARIN HOWELL
LINCOLN — About halfway through Lincoln's town meeting Monday night, the gathering recessed to hold the Lincoln School District annual meeting.

During that gathering, voters agreed to allow district officials to transfer up to \$380,000 of the school's audited surplus funds to the Education Reserve Fund. District officials expect a surplus of \$481,173.55, and the proposed FY'26 budget accounts for applying \$100,000 of the surplus to offset taxes for the upcoming year.

Superintendent Amy Cole explained the large surplus was from the district's first year of operation and largely due to more revenue coming in than expected.

"This is a very unusual situation where in the first year of a district, excess revenue came in that was unanticipated, even some of it showed up in January while we were in the middle of the year," Cole said. "We've already done a budget to actual; we feel like our expenses, the operating budgets we're putting forward, we're actually staying within

those expenses. We believe this is a one-time thing, and it's a chance to set up a savings account for our district."

Voters also considered a \$5,179,244.76 spending plan for the 2025-2026 school year, an increase of 5.1% over the current year. Town officials estimate the spending plan would translate to a homestead tax rate decrease of 20.8 cents, or 16.4%. Residents that pay education taxes based on their income are expected to see a decrease of around 20%.

After some discussion, voters approved the proposed spending plan.

Article 8 of the district's annual meeting warning asked voters if the district should adopt its budget by Australian ballot beginning next year.

Some voters spoke in favor of the move, saying more voters should weigh in on the large spending proposal.

"I don't feel it is fair for now 80 people to make that decision with that much money when there are 1,000 voters in this town," Matt Atkins said.

There was more discussion, and voters ultimately decided to table the article, 48-35.

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Ex-Sheriff Peter Newton pleads guilty

By KLARA BAUTERS, VTDigger.org
BURLINGTON — Former Addison County Sheriff Peter Newton, accused in 2022 of sexually assaulting and unlawfully restraining a woman, pleaded guilty to lesser charges of lewd and lascivious conduct and simple assault during a court appearance on Jan. 24.

During the proceedings, Judge

John Pacht stated that Newton was charged with intentionally engaging in behavior that was “open and gross” as well as “lewd and lascivious,” with the intent of sexual gratification. Newton had been accused of sexually assaulting, physically assaulting and unlawfully restraining a woman he knew in February 2022 while he was sheriff. He was first elected as

sheriff in 2018. He declined to run for reelection in 2022. At least two Addison County towns and numerous public officials asked Newton to resign at the time of his arrest, but lawmakers didn’t take on the arduous task of removing him from office. For the lewd and lascivious conduct charge, Newton would receive a deferred sentence with probation for two years, and if completed successfully, the charge would be expunged. For the simple assault, he would face a suspended sentence of six to 12 months with two years of probation, according to the terms of the plea agreement that was filed earlier in January. The judge deferred acceptance of the plea, ordering a pre-sentence investigation and a psychosexual evaluation, including a screening to determine if Newton needed alcohol or mental health counseling. “Deferred sentence can either be a really good deal for a defendant, or perhaps not such a good deal for a defendant, that really depends on how well someone does during the two-year period of probation,” the judge said. Newton must also complete a 26-week domestic violence counseling program, refrain from owning firearms or other deadly weapons, and is prohibited from working as a law enforcement officer under conditions of the agreement.



FORMER ADDISON COUNTY Sheriff Peter Newton appears for a change of plea hearing in Chittenden County Superior criminal court in Burlington on Jan. 24.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Lincoln

(Continued from Page 2A)
office of lister “and replace it with a professionally qualified contracted assessor appointed by the selectboard.” They also OK’d a sum of \$175,000 for “further restoration and improvement of existing Class 2 asphalt surface town highways,” which would be deposited in the paving reserve fund. Voters also agreed to authorize a sum of up to \$10,000 for contracted law enforcement services. That request has in recent years been shot down by

voters and prompted a lengthy discussion. Residents had a lot to say about the article again on Monday, with several voters speaking in support of the request. “We’ve put in all kinds of speed limiting signs; nobody obeys them,” one resident said. “If we went through all the expense of putting those in there and try to get people to slow down, but without somebody enforcing the laws in town, they don’t work...” People come through the center here in town and west Lincoln 40, 45, 50 miles an hour, and it’s only a matter of time before somebody gets hurt or killed, God forbid.” Others raised questions about what kinds of services the money would pay for, or voiced opposition to the idea. “There’s bad stuff that happens in every community, I guess my concern is adding law enforcement doesn’t stop the bad stuff, and it doesn’t improve it the way we want,” Mike Fisher said. The article passed by division of the house, 37-26.

Voters OK Mt. Abe roof project funds

By MARIN HOWELL
BRISTOL — Bristol-area voters on Tuesday agreed to allow the Mount Abraham Unified School District to use up to \$1.04 million from its Capital Reserve Fund to help pay for replacing Mount Abraham Union High School’s roof. Residents in the MAUSD member towns of Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro voted in support of the request by a 1,518-357 margin. District officials have pointed to a few reasons behind the request to transfer funds for the project from MAUSD’s Capital Reserve Fund to the general fund. One is that the roof has exceeded its life expectancy and needs replacement to avoid larger and more costly issues. Additionally, using money from the capital reserve fund helps the MAUSD avoid an aspect of the excess spending penalty reinstated

by the Legislature last year. Under the penalty, school districts that exceed the per-pupil spending threshold set by the state will incur an additional tax for the amount spent over the threshold. Capital reserve funds older than five years now count toward a district’s cost per pupil, as it relates to the excess spending penalty. According to the spending threshold penalty under 24 V.S.A. § 2804(b), “If the Agency of Education determines that any amount in the reserve fund has not been used for approved school capital construction within five years after deposit into the fund, then 150% of that amount shall be added to the district’s education spending in the then-current year for purposes of calculating the excess spending penalty.” Thus, using the funds to help pay for the roof project also helps the district avoid that tax on reserve funds greater than five years old.

On Town Meeting Day, MAUSD voters also agreed to put all the district’s fund balance (audited at \$819,990) into the Capital Reserve Fund. The district’s Capital Reserve Fund contained \$1,771,800 as of June 30, 2024. With voter approval to deposit the entire fund balance into the Capital Reserve Fund and transfer out funds to support the roof project, district officials estimate the Capital Reserve Fund’s new balance would total around \$1.5 million. As for the cost of the roof project, district officials previously told the *Independent* that current estimates run from \$1.4 million for a 20-year roof to \$1.6 million for a 30-year thermoplastic polyolefin roof, “which is a blend of plastic and rubber with hot air welded seams.” District officials added they’re looking to start the project this summer, with completion prior to the start of school in the fall.

PILOT deal

(Continued from Page 2A)
the college,” said Matt Curran, the college’s director of business services. Ripton, according to Cox, will continue to use the PILOT revenue to help bankroll the town’s operating expenses, just as it does with property tax revenues. Cox said the latest agreement got completed “pretty smoothly,” once it got into the right administrative hands. “No one was having to spend time and money on lawyers and other people to make it happen,” she said.

With the Ripton deal done, the college will now turn its attention to forging a new 10-year PILOT agreement with the town of Middlebury. The current pact — which netted the town \$340,000 from the college for fiscal year 2025 — expired last summer, though college and town officials said they’re committed to renewing. It should also be noted that in addition to the yearly PILOT payment, the college contributes \$600,000 annually toward debt service on Middlebury’s \$16 million Cross Street Bridge

project; is slated in fiscal year 2026 to provide around \$304,128 toward debt service on the town’s municipal building and recreation center; and pays more than \$1 million in annual property taxes on its holdings that don’t contribute to its educational mission. The college is Addison County’s largest employer and its economic impact is also felt through purchases at local businesses and restaurants, donations to nonprofits, and in-kind services to area communities. John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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Editorials

School budgets: What a difference a year makes!

At Vermont’s Town Meetings last year, voters rejected over 30 school budgets, about one in three, because of budget increases that averaged close to 13%. This year, when the average property tax is expected to rise about 6% or half what it did last year, only nine district budgets (out of 100 reported by mid-day Wednesday) were defeated.

In Addison County, voters overwhelmingly passed school budgets at ACSD (Middlebury), ANWSD (Vergennes) and MAUSD (Bristol). The RNESU (Otter Valley) budget passed by just one vote, while the lone budget defeat was Slate Valley Union (Fair Haven), which includes Orwell.

Chelsea Myers, executive director of the Vermont Superintendents Association, expressed relief Wednesday morning to *VtDigger* that so many communities supported their school budgets, describing the results as “kind of (reverting) back to normal.”

“We would be having a very different conversation if the results resembled last year,” she said in an interview covered by Ethan Weinstein.

Which begs the question, are Vermont schools in such a state of crisis to warrant the draconian reforms touted by the Scott administration? And let’s define “draconian” here to mean the total loss of local control that consolidating 100 school districts into five regional mega-districts would entail.

No matter how much lipstick Gov. Scott and his team try to put on that consolidated pig, if passed local residents will have a greatly diminished voice in school affairs. What does that mean specifically? Here are two plausible examples:

- Class sizes will be determined at the state level and school districts will be mandated to comply. That means, while the “state” won’t officially force school closures, they are mandating that district administrations (and those boards) do it. That’s “big brother” government mandating its will, just via a “local” board — which in Addison County’s case would be a combined school district of 34,000 students representing Franklin, Chittenden and Addison counties. That’s not “local control” by any standard Vermonters have ever known.
- Team sports and extracurricular activities: While it’s unlikely teams or popular student activities would be cut at schools early on, such decisions per individual school would be based a program’s viability countered by its cost to the district. In a system where cost is the determining factor (lowering costs is reason Gov. Scott has championed his plan), cost in a larger district will likely have an upper hand over delivering auxiliary value to students.

Taxpayers should be careful what they wish for.

This is not to say that structural reform couldn’t improve Vermont’s educational system, and that there aren’t good aspects to several of the proposals, but if Vermonters want to maintain a semblance of local control, they better pay close attention to the proposals advancing in the legislature. So far, the solutions proposed by the Governor’s office are extreme, while those proposed by other legislators would still make significant changes to the status quo.

Considering the outcome of this week’s elections, perhaps legislators will find less favor for the more drastic recommendations.

Angelo Lynn

If you believe him, you lose

If you managed to watch President Trump’s address to Congress without blowing a gasket, that either means you fell asleep during the longest, chest-thumping, rambling rampage of narcissism the nation has ever witnessed or, like too many congressional Republicans, you’ve either drunk the Kool-Aid or are too afraid to challenge him.

If you blew a gasket, you had reason just based on the misinformation and exaggeration that’s typical of most Trump speeches. Many media outlets provided fact-checks to the speech, of which the *New York Times* cited 26, or about one every three and a half minutes.

Here are a few the *Times* recounted, in order of when he said them:

- He routinely exaggerates his victory over Democrat Kamala Harris. Trump won the popular vote by 1.5%, the smallest since 2000, and the fourth smallest since 1960. Biden beat Trump in the popular vote in 2020 by 4% and won the Electoral College 306-232. It’s important to keep correcting this as Trump’s strategy is to say it so often the public comes to believe it’s true. What’s true is he has a narrow mandate, just as the House and Senate have narrow mandates to govern (if they choose to.)
- Trump said he “withdrew from the *unfair* Paris Climate Accord, which was costing us trillions of dollars.” False. The *Times* accurately notes that each country sets its own commitments under the accord, so it’s imminently fair. Trump could have unilaterally changed the terms of agreement, as is allowed. Furthermore, the agreement is nonbinding; there is no mandate at a set cost. Trump uses inflated cost estimates from industry-reports that are against the agreement without considering any cost benefits or the tremendous expense to society from worsening storms, fires and other environmental consequences.
- Trump’s claim that he “inherited... an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare” is absurd. President Biden presided over a surprisingly robust economy during his four years and was able to bring high inflation down to 3% by the end of his term. In the final year of Biden’s presidency, the Economist called the U.S. economy “the envy of the world,” despite the fact that what Biden inherited from Trump was a true train wreck with the highest number of lost jobs since the Great Depression and the nation in shock due to Trump’s mishandling of the Covid pandemic.
- More importantly, when Trump suggests there is rampant waste in programs like Social Security, it’s to justify, through misinformation, his intentions to cut Social Security funding. Claims of funding millions of people over 100 years old are simply untrue. Several media outlets have explained the numbers Trump cites as a coding issue due to 70-year-old computer programming language. When a person’s birth date is not known, a default date is chosen, often May 20, 1875. An existing government report explains the default and why those names are in the system, but the Trump team didn’t bother to read it. The facts are that 98% of the people Trump cited “have not had earnings reported to the SSA in the past 50 years.” Again, Trump cites falsehoods like this to justify the cuts he wants to make in large programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, so he can pay for tax cuts to the very rich.

And on and on, Trump’s misinformation rampage goes. If you believe it, you lose — and so does your neighbor. Read, be informed. The nation’s future depends on an informed public.

Angelo Lynn

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Townies
HE'S FOLLOWING ALONG in the town report while she keeps her hands busy with knitting during Monday evening's New Haven town meeting. They both seemed to be actively following what was going on.
Independent photo/John S. McCright

Freedom and Unity Forever

I’ve been a proud Vermonter for my entire life. I love the mountains, valleys, lakes, farms and my family history going back generations, but perhaps the thing I love most is our state motto: *Freedom and Unity*. In these times of intense division it helps to focus on the ways we are stronger together.

In January of this year my husband and I were at a car dealership signing some paperwork on a vehicle lease and talking with the finance manager when the alert came on my news app that the new administration had frozen all federal spending. A shocking and deeply unsettling turn of events happening in our own country. It prompted a conversation about society and the future and he expressed an interest in retreating from the world, “you know, grow my own food, hunt, need no one.” The irony was not lost on me since he sat across the desk from us, his customers, agreeing to a monthly payment for the next three years, that he, in fact, needed us as a critical piece of his “thirty acres and independence” plan. When, exactly, would this “needing no one” plan begin?

Recently I was checking out at a store and the cashier broke down the bill and remarked on the tax portion, “They always take their money, don’t they?” It was a cordial interaction, so I retorted casually, “Well, I drove here on a road so I appreciate that.” She paused and said, “Well, that’s true.” I didn’t go on, but I could have said how the road was safe and plowed. How I got an education here, how my kids were educated here, too, and beyond just an education we all had some remarkable experiences in competitive sports, field

trips, band, and other extracurriculars. Had she been to a play at a local high school recently? Amazing! In first grade I was given extra support to correct a slight speech impediment and thanks to the taxpayer funded Speech and Language Pathologist I don’t speak with a lisp! (Nothing against lisps but brutal with my last name!).

I could have said how state and federal taxpayers fund the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, which funds the Vermont Land Trust, which conserved our farm in 2001 and is how we started our cheese business, which now employs ten local people. Beyond the economic impact of our employees on the area, every pound of cheese exported is money imported into our local economy. Multiply our business by one thousand other small businesses in Addison County and by ten thousand to represent Cabot and its massive global reach, and you can comprehend a great return on farm conservation investment.

Besides contributing essential funds to keep farms locally owned and independent in the face of constant out-of-state private acquisition pressures, the Vermont Land Trust preserves local jobs by ensuring those properties continue to be farmed. In this way our state investment supports veterinarians, hardware stores, grain mills, mechanics and the myriad other businesses our agricultural economy spawns. Nearly 30% of the state of Vermont is in some form of conservation, so when you enjoy local food, a view, a hike, a ski, a

(See Ways of Seeing, Page 5A)

Ways of Seeing

By Hannah Sessions

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(See Ways of Seeing, Page 5A)

Not too old to adapt to new tech

I recently read an article making fun of older people for stubbornly resisting new technology. I took offense.

Sure, I panic sometimes. Someone at work will email me a request that sounds like “Go ahead and batch the router files to my SSP hub, unless you’ve got more than 3 gigs of stringpool data, in which case convert the Gauss packs into TPQRs first.”

My typical response: “No problem. Or — if it’s easier for you — I can just print it all out and drop it off to you in person this afternoon.”

But I am not, as the article asserted, fighting new ways of doing things because of my age. Sometimes it just takes me a little longer to adapt.

As proof of my evolution, I dug up a column I had written way back in 2012, a time when I was struggling with all kinds of innovations.

Back then, the sense of confusion I felt regarding new technology was exacerbated by the automation of most — but not all — mechanical items. I recounted how one time, in the bathroom at a middle-school girls’ basketball game, I stood waving my hands under a paper towel dispenser for far too many seconds before realizing that it was not, in fact, the type with a sensor. And that all the while, a cluster of teenage girls had been watching me while stifling giggles.

Around the bend

By Jessie Raymond

I did own a cell phone back then, although — don’t laugh — I used it for phone calls. In the column, in a tone that sounds downright dowdy to me now, I questioned why anyone would go through the effort of typing out a text (pressing the number buttons one, two, or three times, depending on the desired letter) when it was so much faster, and more sociable, to call.

Of course, I had spent a good 30% of my youth tethered by a curly cord to a landline rotary phone. Back then, hours-long calls weren’t a means to an end; they were my passion.

As I got older, however, I grew to value my solitude and now rank it only slightly below food and shelter. Carrying a cell phone meant that I could be reached at any time, in any place. Ew.

With that lost boundary, and with new touchscreens that made composing texts easier, I shifted my “Calling is more polite” mindset to one of “Why would you make me have a complete conversation with all the social niceties when you could have just messaged me?”

I do, however, still answer phone calls, a quaint custom of yesteryear unheard of among the younger folks. And I have learned that when I want to speak to our kids, I must never, under any circumstances, send them a text that reads, “Please call me.”

(See Jessie, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

Vermont has enough people

By keeping the population as it is (or lower), we can maintain our civility and out sense of community.

Increase housing and apartments and we lose our agriculture, our cows, sheep and goat dairies and farms and our ability to take care of ourselves, and also local control is gone.

How do we maintain the beauty of Vermont and accommodate climate control when we are over-populated and depending on more and more outside resources?

**Pat Ullam
Orwell**

Act now to save our democracy

If you care about the health and education of children ...

If you care about food safety and clean air. ...

If you care about farmers getting paid what they have been promised, and having honest, hardworking migrants keeping their farms going. ...

If you care about people dependent on Medicaid and Medicare for their health continuing to receive coverage. ...

If you care about cancer and Alzheimer’s research continuing (or have ever known anyone with cancer or Alzheimer’s). ...

If you care about the privacy of your personal data. ...

If you think billionaires do not deserve tax cuts. ...

If you care about airplane safety. ...

If you care about having consumer protections if a business rips you off. ...

If you care about or know someone who is LGBTQ or someone who is a person of color or is a woman (or are yourself LGBTQ or a person of color or a woman). ...

If you think standing up for democracy is patriotic and personal freedoms are worth defending. ...

Then you are not alone! You have power!

Speak out.
Show up at protests.
Write or call your elected officials.

Send postcards.
Stay informed.
Be kind to others.
Sew love not hate.

If you voted for Trump, please understand that he is not thinking about you unless you are a billionaire. It’s okay to admit that. Are your groceries less costly now? Do you want a leader who has called himself a king? Do you want an unelected billionaire from South Africa calling the shots?

Standing up for Democracy is free. Not standing up for Democracy costs your freedoms!

Rachel Guy
Monkton

Scott attacking public education

Any faith I had in Gov. Scott has been destroyed by his actions regarding education in Vermont.

He has appointed Zoie Saunders as scting Secretary of Education, despite the Senate having rejected her nomination as interim secretary of education by a vote of 19-9. As the acting secretary, she must again be confirmed by the Senate, but this has been ignored or delayed.

Saunders has little experience in public school management. She has seven years’ experience as vice president of strategy for Charter Schools USA. This was followed by her only public-school experience: three months as chief strategy and innovation officer in Broward County Public Schools in Florida, during which she advocated closing several schools. Given her lack of qualifications, she should not be confirmed.

Gov. Scott has proposed to eliminate the Board of Education and give the Agency of Education all the power and responsibility for our public schools. They should remain separate entities to maintain checks and balances in the governance of our education system.

The governor is rushing a drastic reshaping of our education system, yet the bill advancing his

(See Andrews letter, Page 5A)

Letters to the Editor

Scott’s ed plan attacks local control, public schools

I am writing to express my deep dissatisfaction with Gov. Scott’s school reform plan for the state. I would like to preface this criticism by saying that though I have never voted for Scott, I hold him in high regard and am thankful for his steady, rational and humane leadership during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. It is precisely because I have this respect for him that I am so taken aback by what is a patently radical plan (I reject Zoie Saunders’s descriptor of “bold” as mere euphemism) to transform educational governance in Vermont. Although the Republican Party made historic gains in Vermont and Scott was re-elected with an overwhelming majority, I fear the governor has misread his mandate.

Of course, the only way this plan was proposed in the first place is through the parliamentary tricks Gov. Scott used to appoint Zoe Saunders without the approval of the legislature. When that occurred, I gave the governor the benefit of the doubt, as a popular political figure whose agenda had been thwarted or revised, depending on your perspective, repeatedly by Democratic supermajorities in both legislative chambers in Montpelier. After reading about the plan, the manner of Saunders’s appointment should be seen as indicative of how out of step her and, apparently, the governor’s ideas are about educational reform in our state. My objections are twofold.

First, the creation of five mega-districts is an arrogation of local power that flies in the face of what used to be a central

tenet of conservative politics: limited centralized power and deference to local control. Has the governor changed his views on this traditional conservative first principle? The policy proposed seems to suggest that he has. Additionally, the mega-districts will have negative downstream effects on the excellent practices of deliberative democracy, which local school boards both encourage and exemplify. Community engagement, understanding and discussion of educational matters will suffer as a result.

Second, the proposal also entails a nearly universal ability to opt for so-called “school choice,” a vast augmentation of, admittedly, extant practices. If private and even private religious schools are eligible for such a school choice program, we really need to think of another name. As a former private high school teacher, I want to stress the private element of these institutions. The instant you join a private school faculty, you are informed that this is not a private school, but instead an “independent” school. More euphemism. Private schools have the ability to decide upon the make-up of their student body and cannot be compelled to admit students. With regard to private schools, we should think about this as “schools’ choice” rather than school choice, because it will be the private schools who decide which students they want. Moreover, the endgame of such a program is a voucher system. This would amount to a vast and regressive transfer of wealth as more and more public funds go towards private

school tuition. The vast majority of Vermonters cannot afford a single annual private school tuition cost (let alone the costs for multiple children) even with the state paying 50, 60 or even 75 percent of the total bill. Thus, wealthy families who are already paying for private school tuition will be getting a nice subsidy drawn from public coffers, while the overall funding for public schools will be systematically siphoned away. Given Ms. Saunders’s background — the majority of her career (2012-2019) has been spent in senior positions at Charter Schools USA — this is not idle speculation about what might be but rather takes seriously the mission of such an organization. Founded in 1997 by a researcher from the Heritage Foundation (of Project 2025 fame/infamy), Charter Schools USA partakes in a larger national movement to be rid of “government” (read: public) schools. The method? Death by a thousand cuts...or a thousand vouchers.

In an era where public things, indeed, the public thing (the res publica, or republic), are under attack on multiple fronts, Vermont has the opportunity to model deliberative democracy, civic engagement, and community participation through the local governance of our schools. I encourage Gov. Scott to reconsider his proposal and focus on making Vermont’s public education system the envy of the nation. For the sake of our children and the generations to come.

Amit Prakash
Middlebury

Article on county’s state’s attorney was one-sided

I read the recent article on the front page of the *Addison Independent* concerning Addison County State’s Attorney Eva Vekos. It belonged on the editorial page and not on the front page. It was not an objective evaluation of Ms. Vekos’ running of the office.

It appeared to me to support two concepts: 1) that all domestic abuse matters were being mis-handled; and 2) the sentences that were being handed out were too lenient and that was the fault of the State’s Attorney.

My experience with that office under Ms. Vekos’ leadership has been that she has been a tough and fair prosecutor.

In my experience in domestic abuse and sexual assault cases, I have never known a case, with a few rare exceptions, where the victims thought the punishment imposed was enough.

I would point out that the Vermont Constitution requires that all prosecutions by way of information end with the words of “against the peace and dignity of the state.” The duty of the prosecutor is not to bring satisfaction to the retributive

instincts of victims but to protect the state and its citizens. While some retributive instincts may be necessary to be filled to satisfy the dignity of the state the real important subject matter is protecting its citizens. Sentencing must be guided by the danger of the defendant in being released to the general public. In many domestic cases this is a minimal risk.

It costs approximately \$85,000 a year to incarcerate an individual. Thus, when a penalty of three years of prison is imposed on some person that is calling for an expenditure of state funds of \$250,000. The victim may feel wronged and certainly has a right to bring suit against the perpetrator and extract from that perpetrator whatever is available to satisfy their need for retribution, but it is not necessary to penalize the tax payors where the major reason for doing so is not to protect the public but to make the victims feel better.

Admittedly in many retributive situations there is real damage to the individual in a physical sense and the victim’s compensation plan and the right to bring suit against

the defendant is available.

Unfortunately, with every prosecution there are potential collateral consequences. Jailing of a family member may and will have serious effect on members of that family as well. Punishment that is ordered not to satisfy the protection of the public but to satisfy the victim is something that should be weighed carefully in attempting to reach justice.

There is nothing in the article that brought any sense of balance to a very difficult and complex situation. The police and charities fighting against sexual assault and domestic abuse also have a vested interest calling for stiffer penalties than might not be thought appropriate by objective observers who weigh all the factors in making a decision. We live in a time of the abuse of power. This article in my mind holds for a strengthening of the police side of executive power — abusive or not — in a time when a touch of mercy and of understanding would be well deserved.

Peter F. Langrock,
Former State’s Attorney of
Addison County

Andrews letter

(Continued from Page 4A) priorities was only filed this week, when it’s almost halfway through the legislative session. This doesn’t provide legislators’ the time needed to properly review it or give ordinary citizens a chance for input.

All of this is further complicated by the uncertainty over potential federal cuts to education.

We must insist Zoie Saunders’s appointment as acting Secretary of Education be confirmed by the Senate and that the Legislature be provided the necessary time to

determine whether the proposed restructuring is the best way to fix our education problems and lower

property taxes.

Linda Andrews
Bristol



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Paying for gold, getting dirt?

The three-acre rule in the Clean Water Act, 10 VSA 1264(c)(7), is a single paragraph in Vermont statutes. It affects property owners of three or more collective impervious acres, permitted before 2002 or never permitted. They must get a new stormwater permit to remediate the runoff from their property at their own expense and usually on their own property.

Based on testimony taken in the House Environment Committee, the 677 affected sites, which include residential developments, commercial properties, schools, and four of our popular fairgrounds, represent about 3% of all properties in Vermont. This three-acre mechanism accounts for less than 1% of the total phosphorus reduction into Lake Champlain. Based on the

testified costs of these permitted projects, the average cost to prevent a single kilogram of phosphorus (aka. dirt) from flowing into the lake is about \$100,000. This is the same as the current market rate of gold!

This statute is retroactively extracting the per weight price of gold from a small percentage of Vermonters that don’t even live near the lake, whose property meets some seemingly arbitrary attributes, for nothing more than dirt.

If held to this rule, the \$3.7M estimated price tag will put the Rutland fairgrounds out of business. This is unfair and insanely unaffordable and must be repealed. Current bill H.162 will do exactly that.

This past November, Vermonters achieved an historical elimination of the

legislature’s super-majority because we wanted change. Now is not the time to stall, but to press forward with legislation to reduce our high cost of living, improve affordability in Vermont. The good news is that Vermonters have the power and must continue to call for the changes you voted for. Contact your Representative and let them know of your desire to move forward with the bills that will repeal costly laws such as: H.162 to repeal the three-acre rule, and H.16 to repeal the Clean Heat Standard.

As of this letter, the Legislature has passed and the Governor signed just two bills into law: Bill H.78 became Act 1, which defines the use of the Australian ballot system in local elections; Bill H.35 became Act 2, which unmerged the individual and small group health insurance markets, aiding small businesses in Vermont.

I remain honored to be your Representative.



Legislative Review

by Rep. Rob North,
R-Ferrisburgh

Jessie

(Continued from Page 4A)

Those three words imply, apparently, that I have fallen into a ravine and snapped both my femurs. You can’t imagine their relief (and anger) when they find out I just wanted to know, for example, what I should do with their old high school textbooks, which are taking up space in the hall closet.

As of now, I still use capital letters and punctuation in my texts (both of which, according to the article, younger people consider “aggressive”). But that could change.

After all, I’ve adopted a lot

of electronic practices I never thought I would. I still remember the first time, around 2006, when I printed a document from a computer several rooms away and thought I was Harry Potter. Now, connecting to Wi-Fi — not to mention streaming movies, paying at the pump, syncing to Bluetooth, banking online, and talking to Siri — is part of my normal day.

I admit that, like most people, I tend to fear new things and cling to the habits I’m used to. But I think I’m keeping up damn well. Sweet, naive 2012 me would have been stunned to see 2025 me in

Zoom video calls — we’re talking Jetsons-level sci-fi magic — acting like it’s no big deal.

I’ve come a long way.

My smugness, however, took a hit at a high school sporting event this past weekend. I was in the bathroom washing my hands when I noticed a gaggle of teen girls next to me, exchanging glances with barely disguised glee as I waved my hands repeatedly, and futilely, under a manual paper towel dispenser.

OK, maybe in some ways I haven’t evolved.

But in my defense, neither have teenage girls.

Ways of Seeing

(Continued from Page 4A)

snowmobile, or when you harvest a deer or fish, you can thank a taxpayer.

Let’s not forget healthcare. When Governor Dean adopted the publicly funded Dr. Dynasaur program in 1989, he was ensuring free or low-cost health care for all pregnant Vermonters and those under 19. As a result of this wildly popular program, we achieved virtually universal health care for children and we were recognized as providing the best healthcare in the nation (not a high bar, but

still). As a parent whose kids have now aged out of the program, I am eternally grateful for Dr. Dynasaur and would always advocate for it. Thank you, taxpayers.

Back at the car dealership, fortunately my husband had a kind retort for the aspiring recluse finance manager and that is that we will never be able to exist without each other — nor should we try. Isolation is not the point, freedom and unity is. Unity does not mean hand-outs, it means we invest in each other as parts of a whole and in doing so we are

more free. Freedom should not mean free from responsibility or consequences, but the freedom to live up to our potential.

Just as we hope that our Constitution will hold under an unprecedented and unjust power grab, let’s hope that our state motto will act as a North Star, a foundation of hope and respect for a viable future. May we all be unified, may we all be free.

Hannah Sessions is the co-owner of Blue Ledge Farm, artist, and a long-time Addison County resident.

Letters can be found on Pages 4A, 5A, 6A, 7A & 8A.

Elderly Services Inc. ESI College

King Arthur and the British Empire

Tuesday, March 11, 10-11:30 AM
Congregational Church of Middlebury

The mythical King Arthur supposedly conquered all of Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, France and Italy, becoming an example for ambitious English kings who sought to recreate his so-called “British empire.” Arthur’s



reputation lived into the 18th century, and the notion of an empire persisted down into the 1960s. Presented by

Paul Monod, retired professor of British and European history at Middlebury College,

this is the story behind an aspect of the Arthur myth that is today very little known.

The Story Behind Vermont’s Pollinator Protection Law

Wednesday, March 19, 10-11:30 AM
Congregational Church of Middlebury

What are neonicotinoids? How do they affect pollinator populations? In 2024, the Vermont Legislature passed landmark legislation protecting pollinators, including honeybees. Andrew Munkres was a key witness testifying to the



legislature during passage of the bill. He will discuss the research on the effects of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinator populations and what the new law entails. Munkres is a beekeeper

and former president of the Vermont Beekeepers Association. From his treatment-free apiary, Lemon Fair Honeyworks in Cornwall, he sells raw honey and honeycomb, nucleus colonies and queens.

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Obituaries

Mary Krabbe Kerr, 91, of Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — Mary K. Kerr of Ferrisburgh, Vt., passed away quietly in her sleep on March 3, 2025, in her home on Lake Champlain that she fondly referred to as “the most beautiful place in the world.” She was one day shy of her 92nd birthday. Her family was with her.

Born Mary Sonja Krabbe in Bellingham, Wash., to Johan and Winifred Gamble Krabbe, Mary spent her youth moving about the west coast with her family. She attended Sequoia High School in California and Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., where she graduated from the Medill School of Journalism in 1954. She also studied at the University of Copenhagen.

She first met her devoted husband, Joseph Minott Kerr, while skiing at Sugar Bowl in Soda Springs, Calif., and continued their relationship at Northwestern. They were married on April 2, 1955, at Aftermath, the Kerr family summer home in Wainscott, N.Y. Joe preceded her in death in 2008.

While living in New Jersey, Mary and Joe fell in love with Vermont, invested in the then-burgeoning ski industry, and eventually built a “ski home” in South Fayston in 1962. They moved there full-time in 1965, where they raised their three sons. In addition to loving the mountains and skiing, Mary and Joe loved the water and sailing. In 1981 they bought a home on the shores of Lake Champlain near Basin Harbor, where they moved permanently in 1997.

For most of Mary’s life, she had a love affair with the Green Mountains and Lake Champlain. Her enthusiasm for the beauty of the natural world was truly evident in the plethora of gardens, flowers, birds, squirrels, and even chipmunks, she encouraged to grow around her home on the Lake. Inspired by the variety of birds she watched every day; she worked with the Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative to help return



MARY KRABBE KERR

the American Bald Eagle to Lake Champlain.

Mary was an avid writer and photographer and capitalized on her training as a journalist. She served as the editor of two publications, Window of Vermont, a bi-monthly newspaper devoted primarily to the ski industry, and The Valley Reporter, the weekly newspaper for the Mad River Valley in Central Vermont. Mary had taught journalism as an adjunct professor at Saint Michael’s College in Burlington, Vt. She was also a prolific writer on skiing and the ski industry.

Mary wrote two books; “The Tapestry of My Life,” an unpublished autobiographical work that she gave to her sons, and the second, what she called her life’s work, “A Mountain Love Affair: The Story of Mad River Glen.” It was a compendium of photographs and stories of the iconic ski area’s history.

Mary loved to ski. From the moment the mountains had enough snow until it was completely gone, you could find Mary and Joe schussing one of the 140 ski areas around the world, where they adventured during their lifetime together. She loved organizing ski trips all over the world for the New York Amateur Ski Club, of which

she and Joe were lifelong members.

Above all was Mary’s passion for traveling and seeing the world, having been to five of the seven world continents. She loved to capture her travels in pictures, and her home is filled with carefully annotated albums documenting her exploits on the road. Even after Joe passed in 2008, Mary continued to travel the world, traveling extensively in the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

Her most passionate project grew out of her senior thesis on women and leadership at Northwestern and her travels to Afghanistan, where she sought to help young women become strong and independent. She worked with the School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA), a boarding school for Afghan girls that operated in Kabul from 2016 until 2021, and since the return of the Taliban now operates out of Rwanda. She made several trips to that war-torn country to mentor the girls as well as teach them writing and journalism.

Mary is survived by her three sons, Minott Kerr, Geoffrey Kerr (Dan Flanagan), and Gibson (Diane Lawliss) Kerr; five grandchildren, Kirstin (Seamus) Kerr O’Connor, Alyssa (Matthew) Kerr Pyrak, Maxer Kerr, Gavin Kerr, and Peter Kerr; and one great-granddaughter, Rory Kerr O’Connor. Her surviving Minnesota nieces, Lois Meekins Croonquist, Lisa Meekins Meyer, and Heidi Meekins were very dear to her.

Though a devoted wife, she was fiercely independent, and she left this life exactly as she said she would to anyone who knew her well: “out of her house feet first, going up through the trees.” Her outgoing personality and strong belief systems will be remembered by many.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to SOLA at www.sola-afghanistan.org/. The family is planning a private life celebration at Scotch Bonnet in the springtime once the gardens begin to bloom. ◊

ADDISON COUNTY

School Briefs

Ian Henderson of Vergennes has been named to the dean’s list for the fall 2024 semester at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Conn.

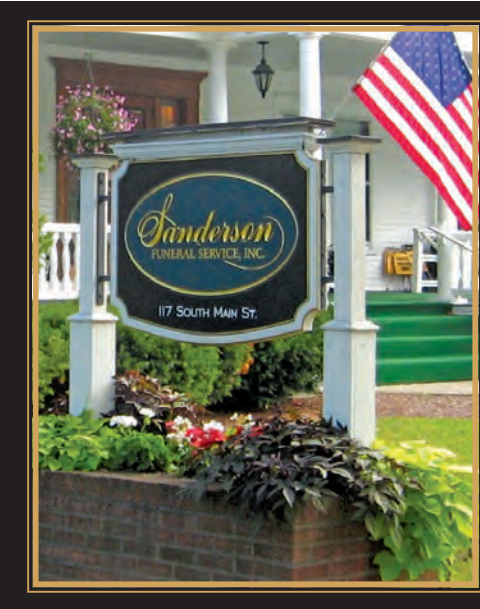
Seina Dowgiewicz of Cornwall and **Parker Kayhart** of North Ferrisburgh have been named to the dean’s list at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Conn. In order to be placed on the list, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours in a semester, have no outstanding or incomplete grades for that semester, and have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better.

Olivia Depatie of Brandon has been named to the dean’s list and president’s list for the spring 2024 semester at The University of Hartford in Hartford, Conn.

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Dorothea Kravetsky, 96, of Orwell

ORWELL — Dorothea Kravetsky of Orwell, Vt., passed away peacefully at her daughter’s home in Orwell on Feb. 26, 2025.

Dorothea, known as Dottie or Grandma, was a woman who loved life and her family. She had a deep passion for golf, enjoyed word search puzzles in her later years, and loved trips to the casino. She was also an avid viewer of NCIS, Castle, and the Golf Channel.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., to Peter D. Volkens and Catherine M. Neubert on March 24, 1928, Dottie met the love of her life, Nicholas Kravetsky, a farm boy from Thompson, Pa., while visiting her uncle’s home. On Aug. 20, 1949, the Brooklyn girl became a farmer’s wife. Dottie was known for her incredible baking skills, especially her bread and pies. She often could be found in the kitchen canning pickles, making jams, or



DOROTHEA KRAVETSKY

baking, or out in the barn doing chores — always with a smile.

She is survived by her children, Gary (Lois) Kravetsky, Edward (Kathy) Kravetsky, Richard (Heidi)

Kravetsky, and Catherine (John) Tester; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and 5 great-great-grandchildren. She is predeceased by her beloved husband, Nicholas Kravetsky; her daughter Cecilia Hazen, and her grandson Travis Tester.

The family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to her caregivers: Dawn Bruce of Orwell, Becki Lund of Brandon, and the Addison Home Health Care Hospice team.

Dottie will be laid to rest next to her husband of 66 years at St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Cemetery in May.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Addison Home Health Care Hospice program.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon. ◊

Letters to the Editor

Gov. Scott, protesting bad behavior is a civic duty

Dear Governor Scott,
First, I’d like to tell you I am a moderate independent voter and voted for you in the last couple of elections. Though I always don’t agree with your stance on issues, I appreciate your leadership during some tough times and your ability try to find solutions to difficult problems here in Vermont.

I am writing you with regard to the protests in Waitsfield and Warren during Vice President Vance and his family’s ski vacation at Sugarbush this weekend. I know you called on Vermonters to respect the privacy of the vice president and his family so they could enjoy their time skiing together. I wish for the

same for Mr. Vance’s family.

However, I also think it is the civic and patriotic duty of Americans to call out their elected officials when they blatantly lie about our allies and then berate and attempt to humiliate our allies’ heads of state in public. How can Vermonters not protest when the day before Mr. Vance came to ski in our state, he perpetuated the administration’s lie that Ukraine started the war against Russia? When he and President Trump displayed the most appalling lack of respect for President Zelenskyy before the world? I think the Vermonters (including myself) who showed up to demonstrate were saying loud and clearly that

this behavior is unacceptable.

My father fought in the invasion of Normandy at Utah Beach. He was a Republican, but I suspect he was rolling in his grave during the presidential press conference with the Ukrainian president. My son and daughter-in-law serve in the Army and have done multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are apoplectic.

I hope Vice President Vance saw the protesters and heard our message loud and clear. Maybe his children will ask, why? And he will pause to think about his actions and his children’s future.

Sally Baldwin
Lincoln

Thanks to the ANWSD Board for their hard work

Dear residents of Addison Northwest School District:
I am writing to thank our school board for the hard work it’s done, not just this year, but for many years. After Town Meeting Day, John Stroup, a long-time school board member and the chair of the board for the last five years, is stepping down from the ANWSD Board. I had the chance to serve with John on the board from 2016-2022, and as vice chair of the board during John’s first year as chair. We are all of us better off for the substantial and important service John has done for the whole community.

Part of what’s always impressed me about John is his capacity to bring together a very clear moral vision of the work of public schools with a deep knowledge

of the policies and processes that allow the schools and the district to function. In my time on the board, John was the one who saw most clearly when the board needed to make a statement of values, that our goal was to provide students with skills and knowledge to thrive in the contemporary world, and to do so in a way that recognized the humanity of all of our students and staff. For most of the first five years of its existence, John was the chair of the policy committee, providing important leadership in establishing the policies that would guide the district. None of this work was easy, as the district has navigated the challenges of a shrinking student population, an aging district population, and economic constraints on all sides. John’s clarity of vision, with a

focus on opportunities for students and kindness, has helped us navigate complicated times.

We have been fortunate in this district to have had excellent, caring people leading the ANWSD board. Laurie Childers, Sue Rakowski and John Stroup have all given their time, energy, and talents to ensure all of our children have had an education that would allow them to succeed. I don’t think we always sufficiently recognize the often-selfless work that enables the functioning of our social systems by people like Laurie, Sue, and John. So as John finishes his time on the school board, I want to thank all of them for making our community a better place.

Thomas Borchert
Waltham

Trump’s toxic governance not welcome here

In a brazen history rewrite, President Trump declares Ukraine at fault for Russia’s invasion of their sovereign country, calling Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a “dictator.” Last week, in a U.N. Assembly, the U.S. sided with Russia against European allies voting down a Resolution condemning Russia’s violence against Ukraine. Trump’s crowning achievement — the made-for-Putin reality press conference in the Oval Office, with a surprise, unauthorized Russian State Media guest.

Are you seeing red yet? The Trump Administration’s public shaming of President Zelenskyy backfired. The U.S. was not in a position of diplomatic strength. Trump’s focus on Zelenskyy’s streetwear and Vance’s fascination with allegedly unexpressed gratitude showed the

world America’s ill-informed two-bit bullies in action.

American diplomacy isn’t a street fight. Facts, a measured demeanor, and strong global allies are essential to outcomes that benefit the U.S. Zelenskyy emerged as the global leader in the room.

Every American must reject Trump’s compliance with Putin.

With a population of 340 million, the U.S.A. boasts the world’s largest economy — 30 trillion dollars. Yet Trump capitulates to a dictator? Trump is trashing decades of American intelligence, global leadership, and our national safety to please Putin. Why do Republican leaders stay silent as Russia continues to influence American foreign policy? European leaders call for new leadership on the world stage. Trump decimates valuable

federal services and populates his administration with inexperienced yes-men, downgrading America’s image and influence abroad. Some may welcome Trump’s toxic governance style, but our global community will not, and all Americans will suffer for it.

Kelly Bowen
St. George

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.

Writing Through
Grief Support Group



March 24 – April 28, 2025
MONDAYS 5-6:30 pm

Middlebury Regional EMS, 55 Collins Drive

Advanced registration required.

Must commit to full 6 weeks.

Maximum 8 participants

Facilitator: Reyna Morgan-Richer

Space Holder: Taylor Zak, LCSW

Please send referrals to: Mara Dowdall at mdowdall@portermedical.org

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Grief Support Groups - Facilitated 6-8 week group options based on personal needs

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University of Vermont
HEALTH NETWORK

Porter Medical Center

PALLIATIVE CARE DEPARTMENT

Louella Richer,
Palliative Support Services Mgr.
Phone: (802) 388-4744

E-Mail: lricher@portermedical.org



UVMHealth.org/PMC

South Champlain
grants available

ADDISON COUNTY — Grants are now available to support projects focused on education and research concerning the cultural and ecological history and heritage of Southern Lake Champlain through the South Lake Champlain Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation.

The fund supports projects located in the area of Lake Champlain south of Crown Point in both Vermont and New York, with a preference for projects directly on the lake or in close proximity. School-based projects are encouraged. The fund also aims to support projects that involve experts and others living in the southern Lake Champlain region. Matching funds are encouraged but not required.

Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18. Please visit vermontcf.org/slcfc for more information or to apply.

Letters to the Editor

Send a postcard to thin-skinned President on 3/15

On March 15, many people will mail Donald Trump a postcard that publicly expresses our opposition to him. And we, in vast numbers, from all corners of the world, will overwhelm the man with his unpopularity and failure. We will show the media and the politicians what standing with him — and against us — means. And most importantly, we will bury the White House post office in pink slips, all informing Don that he’s fired.

Each of us — every protester from every march, each Congress-calling citizen, every boycotter, volunteer, donor and petition-signer — if each of us writes even a single postcard and we put them

all in the mail on the same day, March 15, well: you do the math.

No alternative fact or Russian translation will explain away our record-breaking, officially-verifiable, warehouse-filling flood of fury. Hank Aaron currently holds the record for fan mail, having received 900,000 pieces in a year. We’re setting a new record: over a million pieces in a day, with not a single nice thing to say.

So sharpen your wit, unsheathe your writing implements, and see if your sincerest ill-wishes can pierce Donald’s famously thin skin.

Prepare for March 15, 2025, a day hereafter to be known as #TheIdesOfTrump

Write one postcard. Write a dozen! Take a picture and post it on social media tagged with #TheIdesOfTrump! Spread the word! Everyone on Earth should let Donnie know how he’s doing. They can’t build a wall high enough to stop the mail.

Then, on March 15, mail your messages to:
President(for now)Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

It might just be enough to make him crack or at least stress him out or find his humanity.

**Laura King
Middlebury**

Getting up early: lacrosse athletes & farmworkers

Early Morning Lacrosse Practice in Middlebury Vermont

It’s not my place to suggest to your coach, she bus you to one of our Addison County farms. If you have to be in the Field House this early, you might as well see what’s going on around you. Not that far from your gym, your dormitories. I mean the early morning farm workers, preparing the cows for another day. Arranging them in their team’s stanchions. Letting machines

paddle manure from their stalls. Sucking it up into the honey dippers.

cucharón de miel. What they call their shitkickers. pateadoras de mierda.

They’ll drive later onto the frozen fields. Letting it melt the snow. Sweeten winter. Before they have to amble out again next spring. Ringing in another season. If they still had bells to wear.

And could low in Spanish. Back to their caretakers. Coaching them to stand still in a milking

machine.

Relieve themselves of their bags of burden. By now, girls, our championship women, you’re likely to get the feeling, there’s more to just getting up early, going to practice. Realizing what you’re here to win. Clouds a breathe scores when the air is zero. New fans, these men and women, working their jobs. Making a stadium of a barn. Raising their trophies of milk and butter.

**Gary Margolis
Cornwall**

One way to fight fascism — don’t purchase Teslas

I have been living with an illusion. I believed that everybody was educated to know what the Nazis did in World War II and that use of Nazi symbols was illegal in Germany. Elon Musk’s apparent use of the Nazi salute violated those beliefs. Had the gesture been somehow different or accidental, a normal person would have apologized. Instead, he called criticism of his gesture a “dirty trick.”

It is impossible and irresponsible to ignore Musk’s illegal intrusion into Government operations, far-right politics and use of the Nazi salute. One action normal people can take is to boycott Tesla. In addition, there is the problem of rebates. Electric vehicle (EV) rebates are available from Vermont electric utility providers. The list of providers can be found at driveelectricvt.com. Rebates are

funded by a tax on your utility bill (and other sources) — the “Energy Efficiency Charge” of 4.5%, whether you have an EV or not. You are paying to provide rebates to people to buy Teslas. If you don’t like this idea, call your electric utility and let your state representative know.

**Steve Reynolds
Cornwall**

Monkton

Have a news tip?
Call Liz Pecor at 453-2180

NEWS

MONKTON — The Russell Memorial Library has a busy agenda this month. Sign up or stop in to participate in these great events!

Learn about Monkton’s Pollinator Pathway on Thursday, March 6, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Expert gardeners Debra Sprague, Stephanie Hyatt and Julie Parker-Dickerson will be available to explain what the pathway is and how to increase pollination in your own backyard, along with plant selection and maintenance. Come to learn more about how to entice our natural pollinators to your yard!

Come and join Nora from Woolf Den Homestead to create two handmade whisk brooms on Saturday, March 8, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You will learn to make two traditional Appalachian-style hand brooms. One a simple round whisk and the other a turkey wing hand whisk. Learning the steps to make these two whisks will provide you with the knowledge to make more at home on your own. Nora will provide more tips, material list and sourcing. Supplies will also be available for sale. Gather with your friends for broom making fun! In the morning, tea and snacks will be provided. Cost for this class is on a sliding scale of \$55, \$65 and \$75. Email the library to register at russellmemlibrary@gmail.com.

On Tuesday, March 11th from 6 to 7:30 p.m., there will be a free Sewing Machine Basics class held at the library. Sign up for this class designed for 12 year olds to adults. You will be taught the ins

and outs of how a sewing machine works and introduced to different types of sewing machines from different eras and makers. Learn the basics of how to thread your machine, thread a bobbin and how to solve troubleshooting problems. Machines will be provided, but you may bring your own sewing machine if you wish. Come join in on this fun evening! Email russellmemlibrary@gmail.com to save your spot.

On Thursday, March 13, at 6:30 p.m., a presentation ‘Adventures on a 38 foot Sailboat’ will be presented by longtime Monkton residents, Roger Wallace and Susan DeSimone. They will share their adventure when they sailed to the Bahamas in 2022-2023 aboard Pathfinder, their 1983 Bristol which they previously rebuilt themselves. Come hear their stories about dolphins, rays, turtles and secluded Islands. They saw fabulous sunsets and made many new friends while exploring cultures and enjoying amazing scenery while experiencing the simple life on a boat.

Nerd Night continues on March 27th. Watch for more details as the date nears.

All activities are free unless noted. For more information on any of the activities, call 802-453-4471. Leave a message if no

answer with your name and phone number.

Alleged burglar arrested again

VERGENNES — Vergennes police on March 1 arrested a Waltham man for the second time in eight days and again charged him with number of offenses, including burglary and grand larceny.

Police said they were told on Feb. 28 that Auto Creek on West Street had been burglarized, with a Subaru Forester and a number of items stolen. Police said they used security footage to identify Jacob Burmania, 30, of Waltham as the alleged culprit and arrested him on March 1, a day later.

Police charged Burmania with burglary, aggravated operation without owner’s consent, violation of conditions of release, unlawful trespass, unlawful trespass of a motor vehicle, grand larceny, petit larceny, and resisting arrest. Burmania was ordered by a court to be held on \$25,000 cash bail and cited to appear in Addison County Court’s Criminal Division on Monday.

That’s the same court where Burmania pled innocent on Feb. 21 to eleven counts of burglary, three counts of attempted burglary, eleven counts of possessing burglary tools, nine counts of petit larceny, one count of grand larceny, four counts of possessing stolen property, five counts of unlawful mischief, and 14 counts of unlawful trespass. He was released with conditions.

Those charges stemmed from a series of break-ins and attempted break-ins into businesses in and around Vergennes in recent weeks.

In other actions between Feb. 24 and March 2, Vergennes police conducted 19 traffic stops, seven cruiser patrols and one foot patrol; processed one fingerprint request;

Vergennes Police Log

and also:

On Feb. 24:

- Resolved a custodial dispute on Second Street.
- Responded to a two-vehicle accident on Main Street.
- Calmed a verbal dispute between a sparring couple on First Street.
- Referred a social media complaint to the agency that had jurisdiction.
- Served paperwork in the Booth Woods neighborhood for the state’s attorney’s office.
- Went along with EMTs to Northlands Job Corps to help with a student having a mental health issue after taking medication. The student agreed to go to a hospital.

On Feb. 25:

- Returned a TV that had been stolen from city hall to the assistant city clerk, who came to pick it up.
- Conducted a background investigation on an individual seeking employment.
- Looked into a complaint of vehicle vandalism on Second Street and concluded it was unfounded.

On Feb. 26:

- Checked out a complaint that one Comfort Hill neighbor had pushed snow onto another’s property and concluded it was unfounded.
- Were told that a wallet had been lost on South Maple Street.

On Feb. 27:

- Asked a Green Street homeowner to have guests’

vehicles moved because they were blocking traffic.

- Acted as a go-between by allowing a former employee to drop off keys to a business so they could be picked up.
- Took a report of a minor two-car accident on North Green Street.
- Heard from a citizen about a spam caller purporting to represent the Vergennes Police Department.

On Feb. 28:

- Ordered a car towed off city streets while enforcing the overnight parking ban during a snowstorm. Police said they tried to reach the owner before calling for the tow truck.
- Took a report that a flag was removed from the front of a Main Street building and left on the ground.
- Checked out a report that a man was slumped over in the driver’s seat of a running vehicle parked on North Green Street. Police said he was fine and had just fallen asleep.
- Responded to a report of a parking issue on North Street, but the vehicle was gone when police got there.

On March 1 received an online report about a Feb. 28 incident in which an individual walking to Vergennes Union High School was allegedly offered a ride by a man in a vehicle. The individual ignored the offer and continued walking. No description of the man or vehicle was provided. Due to the late report and lack of details, police took no further action but ask anyone with similar concerns or knowledge of the incident to call Vergennes police at 802-877-2201.

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Addison County Home Health and Hospice is hosting Grief Support Groups beginning on March 26th continuing for eight weeks on Wednesdays until May 14th

These meetings will be held **in person** at Addison County Home Health and Hospice headquarters located at 254 Ethan Allen Highway (Rt 7) in New Haven, VT 05472 from 3:00pm-4:30pm.

We welcome all community members whether or not they or a loved one have had care from us in the past. Thanks to generous donors, the groups are being offered free of charge. Rev. Stephen Payne, ACHHH Chaplain and Stephanie Corliss, LICSW, will lead the groups.

Healthy snacks and coffee will be provided.

Please call the ACHHH office at 388-7259 to complete a brief screening process and to sign up.



254 Ethan Allen Highway, New Haven (Route 7) | P.O. Box 754, Middlebury 05753 | 802-388-7259 | ACHHH.org

Letters to the editor

The Addison Independent encourages you to write letters to the editor.

We print signed letters only. Include an address and telephone number, too, so we can clear up any questions.

Send it to: Letters to the Editor, Addison Independent, 58 Maple St., Middlebury, VT 05753. Or email to news@addisonindependent.com.

Letters to the Editor

Amid Washington turmoil, our own backyard is on fire

Vermont Governor Phil Scott has a track record of opposing progressive climate policies brought forth by the Democrats in the state Legislature. Now that the Democrats have lost a veto-proof supermajority, Gov. Scott is finally showing us his true colors on climate.

As of Feb. 20, we are finally able to see the governor’s own proposal on climate actions. Touted as “an act relating to affordable climate initiatives,” Bill H.289 was introduced by five Republicans in the Vermont Statehouse on Thursday. It proposes sweeping changes that eliminate the greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements and opens up the possibility of nuclear power generation in the state. He also proposes to switch the method Vermont uses to calculate emissions from the gross network to a net accounting system. Finally, he wants to eliminate the authority of the Vermont Climate Council, the body that is responsible for keeping Vermont on track to meet the emission requirements outlined in the Global Warming Solutions Act.

In 2017, Gov. Scott criticized President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord. Now, he is calling for the departure from the very same goals he vowed to support, the goals he committed to when he became the governor, the commitment that won his governorship.

At a time when the federal government is rolling back on climate, along with every aspect of normality in the federal government and policies — a decision Vermonters overwhelmingly voted against — we need leadership from the governor to navigate through this crisis. The governor is doing the opposite.

Bill H.289 is dubbed the governor’s climate omnibus bill. But it’s much more a “kill the climate” bill than a genuine

solution to our climate crisis. Touted to deliver “affordable climate initiatives,” the governor claims that the bill is aimed to address the affordability issue with Vermont climate actions. However, it is very clear that the Governor’s plan to address the issue is to completely kill the GWSA. This bill would remove the pathway for citizens to sue the state for failure to meet the climate requirements, a notable feature of the GWSA which enables citizens to file suits against the state for failing to follow the requirements set into law, including the emissions requirements. The state is already facing its first lawsuit under the GWSA, filed by the Conservation Law Foundation for failing to meet its 2025 emission requirement.

In addition, the bill will switch the way Vermont calculates emissions from calculating the total human-caused emissions produced in the state to an accounting system that takes into account the amount of carbon offset by existing forests, which make up 71% of Vermont’s landscape. Under this scheme, Vermont would become “net zero” on carbon emissions by 2035. The bill also rebranded the current renewable energy standard to a clean energy standard, allowing the possibility of nuclear energy to be incorporated into the state’s energy plan addressing climate.

The bill proposes to make the Vermont Climate Council’s power advisory, eliminating any authority given to the Council. It also gave the Agency of Natural Resources power over the Council, the very same government arm that the Council was responsible for holding accountable.

The Council would also lose its mandate to accurately measure the state’s progress toward the emission requirements, climate resiliency, and effectiveness of its environmental policies. Shifting the state from a science-driven policy framework to one that is more “don’t ask don’t tell” on

climate.

This is a time when we need leadership, as the governor displayed during COVID-19. Instead, the governor has apparently decided to sell out the state to Trump and Elon. In a Feb. 4 press release, the governor states: “But we should be fair and take time to understand what problem the president intends to solve, the results he expects to get, and the risks he’s willing to take, before we cast judgement... While the president’s tariffs would undoubtedly be very disruptive, and the risk of higher prices has been well reported, I have directed my team to weigh the outcomes fairly and objectively.”

While our federal government is in the midst of its biggest crisis since the Civil War, our governor seems more concerned about “weighing the outcomes fairly and objectively” instead of responding aggressively to the impact caused by the Trump administration, from cancelled grants that support research and Vermont non-profits, to fired employees who previously worked in federal jobs and NGOs. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to understand that Trump’s action will have a long-lasting, devastating impact on the state. We elected the governor to protect us, and we need him to do it now.

Our way of life, our economy, our livelihoods, land, houses, roads, people — everything is on the line due to the warming climate. Here are two paths we can take: either do nothing and keep letting our home get destroyed, our neighbors getting swept away in flood water, and our mountains unleashing mudslides and floods year after year, or we can step up and at least try to give us, not just our children, us, a better future, in the places we love. In 2026, when Scott is up for re-election, think about the two paths we can take in our state’s future.

Rick Walker
Student
Middlebury College

Israel is not an apartheid state, it’s fighting for survival

I write in response to the letters condemning Israel.

The Hamas Covenant 1988 states “Israel will exist, and will continue to exist, until Islam abolishes it.” The Houthis flag states “Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews, Victory to Islam.” There are American students who carry this flag. They promote the propaganda against Israel created by Iran and Qatar. Often it is based on the same Nazi propaganda supplied to the Arab world by the Grand Mufti, the Arab leader who spent the war years in Berlin as a guest of Hitler and begged The Fuehrer to build extermination camps in British Palestine.

This propaganda says Israel

commits genocide. It does not mention the human shields used to protect Hamas as it fires missiles at Israel, or the Gaza civilians who freely support Hamas terrorism and in 2007 elected Hamas as their government. No comments on the considerable Israeli efforts to prevent civilian deaths. The statistics of civilian deaths are provided by Hamas.

They say that Israel is an Apartheid state, despite the fact that over two million Arabs are Israeli citizens with full rights. They complain of barrier walls, when those walls are a last resort to slow down the continuous terrorist acts against Israel.

We know about the devastation of Gaza, but there is little

mention of the continuing firing of weaponry and missiles against Israeli civilians, or that the massive military tunnel structure under Gaza still exists.

The accusation of “Settler Colonialism” is absurd. Jewish residents of Israel were not settlers who colonized a section of British Palestine, they were a vibrant people who were living in the Jewish homeland. The UN decision for a separate state was always rejected by the Palestinian Arabs. Always for them — Israel must be eliminated.

Hamas is in a war against Jews. Israel is in a fight for survival.

Brad Braun
Middlebury

Political realities spark creative pragmatism

Editor’s note: As our political realities continue to shift in unexpected and unwanted ways, the writer has had several conversations with friends and family about where their thoughts are. A surprising number talked about stocking up on items, just in case. Those conversations led to this poem.

Shopping list for the end

To be used in case of nuclear accident, mutated influenza, retribution for tariffs, fake news, conspiracy theory militants, climate collapse, world war, civil war, food chain termination.....

I must remember to buy:

At least a dozen beeswax candles that burn clean and smell like honey. (fields of clover and wild grasses).

Six boxes of strike-anywhere matches to light the wicks.

An entire case of dark-roasted coffee... don’t forget to grind the

beans coarsely for the press...an elixir of sobriety that will hold me to the earth when I feel myself floating away.

Ninety-six cans of beans. black beans preferably. practical beans. I will season with cumin, granulated garlic, flaked red pepper.

Fifty pounds of flour...organic is best.

Leavening agents...powder and soda...yeast (wild or packaged).

Three containers of cocoa powder, two four-ounce bottles of vanilla extract, one package of powdered eggs, walnut oil.

Chocolate cake as sacrament.

Cases of expensive red wine... French is best... with notes of earth and minerality...this will remind me of who and what I once loved.

Spices and accents to make the days pass well... to make the hours and minutes matter... anchovies, capers, kalamata olives, curry powder, cinnamon, more garlic.

Two dozen boxes of rusk-like crackers (the bread will mold and spoil).

Lastly buy seeds (of course)... at least forty-two packs of flower seeds.

I must remember to sow them freely,

broadcasting them everywhere as if I were a madwoman...arms akimbo, loose jointed...flowers of every shade and shape and size

Calendula blazing orange and yellow

Icelandic poppy delicate as tissue

Brick red nasturtium

False indigo blue as the skies

Mountain mint verdant and icy

Magenta hued liatris

Gully-loving loosestrife

Wild lily of the field that will turn itself inside-out in bloom, blazing red when we’re gone

Leigh Harder
East Middlebury

Craven film to screen in Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — The Friends of the Union Meeting Hall will host a special screening of Jay Craven’s award-winning 1997 film

“A Stranger in the Kingdom,” on March 8, at 7 p.m. at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall. The film is based on the novel of the same name by Howard Frank Mosher and stars David Lansbury, Martin Sheen, Ernie Hudson, Henry Gibson and Jean Louisa Kelly. Director Craven will introduce the film, and give a a post-screen Q & A.

“A Stranger in the Kingdom,” tells the story of a small Vermont town whose veneer of peace and tranquility is shattered when a black minister arrives as the town’s new pastor, and soon after finds himself charged with adultery and the murder of a French Canadian

waif passing through town on her way to pursue her Hollywood dream.

Young rascal lawyer Charlie Kinneson, the local favorite son, tricks the young Canadian girl into town under false pretenses, but he decides to defend the minister, placing himself at odds with family, friends, and a vanishing way of life. The film — and Mosher’s novel — were inspired by the true events surrounding the infamous 1968 “Irasburg Affair.”

Tickets are \$12 in advance and are available by visiting www.unionmeetinghall.org/programming-and-events.



Contact Your U.S. Senators

Sen. Bernie Sanders
1-800-339-9834
SRC-2 United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.sanders.senate.gov

Sen. Peter Welch
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Thank you, Middlebury Voters

I am honored and committed to serve a second term on the Selectboard.

Please contact me with any concerns or questions.

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\$19,895

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\$14,995

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More than a decade of delivering Quality!

beavers to thrive. Learning to harness beavers’ superpowers is to our advantage on many levels.

This past few weeks we’ve gotten a boost in support from Vermont legislators taking notice and asking questions and hearing testimony from professional organizations across Vermont. It’s time our state beaver program is brought current, to not only reflect special interest organizations, but environmental ones as well. Testimony was given clearly about the financial savings to keeping beavers in the landscapes vs. removing them for personal use. Watching so many environmental organizations and groups sprouting up all over our state gives me hope. Knowing they see the same benefits I do will help us to keep educating about benefits, especially in flooding mitigation, climate control and water quality.

At some point, these qualities and benefits are going to have to take precedence, and beavers will be left alone to serve a much-needed environmental purpose. Only then will their superpowers be able to help save the planet and help humans despite us almost eliminating them. This isn’t just a Vermont issue. Beaver benefits are being realized across our nation and the world. Beavers are not only on local legislators’ minds but government ones as well, and our organization is part of that national working group.

We are getting a second chance to do the right thing, to appreciate beavers and their benefits. Just remember last time we used them as a resource for man’s profit, we almost eliminated them. If beavers are gone, so are their benefits and the hope we have in them helping to save our planet.

Beavers’ environmental superpowers can’t be mstched by any other creature on the planet besides man, and they’re much less expensive. Vermont Beaver Association is 100% dedicated to non-lethal resolutions. If you’ve reached out to us, then you’ve made that choice on your own and we appreciate you choosing that path. We protect identities and locations as well, so you can feel secure when you participate with us. A pathway to non-lethal coexistence is a good thing. We will know where to send you, based on your issues and needed solutions.

That’s a pretty productive and amazing second chance and I think Beavers deserve better considerations and protections.

Bev Soychak
Monkton

Addison	Bristol	Goshen				New Haven	Orwell	Panton
Brandon	Cornwall	Granville				Waltham	Salisbury	Shoreham
Bridport	Ferrisburgh	Whiting	Lincoln	Middlebury	Hancock	Leicester	Starksboro	Vergennes
					Monkton	Ripton	Weybridge	

Addison

ADDISON — In Australian balloting on Tuesday, March 4, at the Addison Community Center (formerly the Addison Central School) gymnasium, Addison residents returned an incumbent selectboard member to office and chose between two newcomers to fill a second vacancy on the board.

In one selectboard contest, farmer and multi-term incumbent Peter Briggs defeated Levi Barrett, an Addison Town Hall Committee member who is self-employed, for a two-year term, 217-171.

Briggs had also defeated Barrett for a one-year term in March 2024.

The other selectboard race pitted artist and former Apple and Gap Inc. employee Michael Hollis, an Addison Planning Commission and Town Hall Committee member, against Vermont Agency of Transportation employee Geoffrey Grant. They were also on the 2024 ballot, both coming up short in a five-way race won by incumbent Roger Waterman.

Hollis did earn a few more votes than Grant a year ago in the crowded field, but this time Grant came out on top, 225-160.

Other Addison candidates for office were unopposed. Incumbent Adam Thomann earned another two years on the Tri-Town Water board after being appointed to the board during the past year to fill a vacancy.

Also, Addison is one of the towns that still elects its town clerks and treasurers, and incumbent Cheri Waterman was unopposed for another three years in both those posts.

Voters also backed all other measures, including the selectboard's proposed higher town spending for the coming fiscal year.



Salisbury

DEBRA HURLBURT LISTENS intently at the Salisbury town meeting held Saturday at Salisbury Community School. Most of town business is voted on by Australian ballot.

Independent photo/Steve James

The town's general fund budget, including all spending except that on roads and nonprofit donations, was proposed at \$788,655.50. That's about \$55,000, or 7.5%, higher than the spending plan residents approved in March 2024. It prevailed by a 258-136 tally.

The selectboard also proposed a \$1.024 million road budget, up by about \$85,000, or 9%, from the spending voters backed a year ago. A culvert replacement on Nortontown Road drove that higher spending, which passed by 279-114.

The selectboard plans to use ARPA funding to help offset any tax increase driven by the higher spending, according to town officials.

Residents also backed nonprofit requests that totaled \$63,931, an increase of \$1,100.

In a separate article, Addison residents also gave "the Selectboard or its agents" the authority to negotiate leases for "portions of the Addison Community Building" for up to five years, with renewal rights for five more years. This measure will allow the town to start earning rental income from the building, including from a proposed child care business. That article passed, 268-122.

Another housekeeping item will give the selectboard authority to rename a reserve fund "the Addison Community Center Reserve Fund." Currently \$23,143.65 sits in the

former "Addison Central School Fund" that the Addison Northwest School District transferred to the town along with the title to the former central school.

According to the article, the selectboard would use the fund for "voter approved budget appropriations for the purposes of covering expenditures that cannot be supported by a regular budget."

Voters backed that article, 271-119.

Brandon

BRANDON — After Town Meeting Day voting, the Brandon selectboard will see one incumbent keep his seat, one familiar face not currently on the board win a seat, and one newcomer claim the third seat up for grabs.

Selectman Ralph Ethier easily defeated challenger Isaiah K. Webb, 756-89, for a three-year seat on the board. In a four-way race for two one-year spots on the selectboard, one-time member Cecil Reniche-Smith was the top vote-getter with 600. Jeff Haylon also won a one-year seat with 565 votes. Two others on the ballot Vicki Disorda (323 votes) and Raymond Marcoux (188) finished out of the money.

More than 900 votes were cast on the municipal budget, which passed by a comfortable margin. Last year, voters rejected the town budget on the first try.

Residents on Tuesday voted 607 yes, to 318 no on proposed FY2026 general fund spending of \$3,403,965, which represents a 2.25% increase over the current year. The amount to be raised by taxes — \$2,876,645 — is a 1.4% hike.

The margin of approval for a separate article asking voters to raise \$50,000 to put aside for a capital fund was similar; 567 voted yes, 333 said no.

Brandon voters joined their peers in Leicester, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. Last year, those voters rejected the proposed OVUU spending plan twice. This year they approved it on the first round — but only by a single vote.

The Brandon-area district in 2024 approved a spening plan of \$26,808,222.

The board this year warned a FY26 spending plan of \$28,022,999, which is 9.38% higher in per pupil spending than the budget approved last year. It passed by a tally of 817 yes, 816 no.

The approved spending represents a 4.5% hike (\$1,214,777) from last year.

There were no surprises in the election of school board members. The winning school directors in uncontested races were

Lauren Thomas (Brandon), Lesley Bienvenue (Leicester), Laurie L. Bertrand (Sudbury), Brett Mullin and Jessica Markowski (Pittsford) and Barbara Ebling (at-large). Two OVUUS board seats — one representing Whiting and one at-large — appear to have not garnered enough write-in votes to pick a winner. The new board will have to appoint those members.

Bridport

BRIDPORT — Bridport residents on Town Meeting Day agreed to all the spending articles on their warning, including a \$75,000 request for a new one-ton truck with equipment (to be financed over three years), and to use \$194,220 in general fund surplus as a state grant match to finance an estimated \$971,100 culvert replacement project on Middle Road.

Other requests receiving overwhelming approval at Bridport's March 4 gathering included:

- A combined general fund/highway budget of \$1,765,090 for fiscal year 2026.
- A request that — in accounting for repairs related to the August 2023 rainstorm damage — any deficit from the fiscal year 2023-2024 public works budget be softened by any fund balance from the department's 2022-2023 fiscal year budget.
- \$30,000 to support the Bridport Fire Department during FY'26.
- A combined \$52,165 in social service agency requests from

nonprofits that serve Bridport residents.

There were no contested municipal elections in Bridport this year. Those unopposed included Drexel Wheeler, three years, selectboard; Stephanie Ouelette Pope, two years, selectboard; Tim Howlett, one year, town moderator; Darwin Pratt, three years, water commissioner; and Vicki Major, three years, town lister.

Bridport residents in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a Patricia Hannaford Carer Center FY'26 budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Bristol

BRISTOL — Perhaps the most surprising result from Town Meeting Day voting in Bristol was a tie for a two-year term on the Lawrence Memorial Library Board of Trustees. Audrey Beckwith and write-in candidate Peter Hewitt both received 253 votes for the seat.

Bristol Town Clerk/Treasurer Sharon Lucia said that according to state statute, the town must now warn a runoff election within seven days. That election must then be held between 15 and 22 days after the warning.

Only the candidates who tied will be on the ballot for the runoff election, unless one of them withdraws within five days after Town Meeting Day, in which case the other tied candidate would be certified as the winner.

The two-year term was one of six seats on the Lawrence Memorial Library Board of Trustees on the March 4 ballot. Nine candidates filed to run for the spots, and those seats went to:

- Elizabeth Guilbeault, the top vote-getter in a four-person contest for two two-year terms on the board, earning 406 votes. Beckwith and write-in candidate Hewitt received the second-most votes, tying with 253 tallies each. Jill Danyow (139 votes) and Ashley "Boots," Bennett (73 votes) finished out of the running.
- In a race for three three-year

(See Bristol, Page 10A)



Ferrisburgh

FORMER FERRISBURGH SELECTBOARD member Red Muir raises his hand to get the moderator's attention during a discussion at the Ferrisburgh community center during Saturday's town meeting.

Independent photo/Steve James

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REMINDER

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY PROPERTY TAX BILLS

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FINANCE OFFICE ON OR BEFORE:

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025 (since the 15th is a Saturday)

Finance Office: 388-8100 ext. 203, 204 or 208
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Office Hours: Mon – Fri, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

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Middlebury
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Whiting
Salisbury



Addison	Bristol	Goshen	Town Meeting Results				New Haven	Orwell	Panton
Brandon	Cornwall	Granville					Waltham	Salisbury	Shoreham
Bridport	Ferrisburgh	Whiting						Starksboro	Vergennes
			Lincoln	Middlebury	Hancock	Leicester	Monkton	Ripton	Weybridge

(Bristol continued from Page 9A)

terms on the board Vicki Coyle earned the most votes with 492, followed by Darren Klinefelter with 428 and write-in candidate Ken Johnson with 340. Nakeeya Deas finished fourth with 227 votes and Alison DaBica received 197 votes.

- Daniella Sutherland won a one-year term on the board with 312 votes. Sutherland was the lone candidate on the ballot, but write-in candidate Betsy Almeter received 273 votes.

In other Town Meeting Day voting, incumbents Elizabeth Sayre and Meredith Rossignol were elected to continue serving in their spots on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board. In the three-person race for two three-year terms, Sayre earned the most votes with 506 and Rossignol received 421 tallies. Chanin Hill received 238 votes.

MAUSD board member Melissa Laurie was unopposed for a two-year term.

Selectboard incumbents Ian Albinston (three-year term) and John “Peeker” Heffernan (two-year term) won re-election. Both ran unopposed.

Over 200 Bristol voters turned out for the town’s annual meeting on Monday — 229 in person and 30 watching online, in addition to around 15-20 nonvoters in attendance. Monday’s turnout saw a substantial increase from last year’s annual meeting, when 66 residents attended in person and 20 over Zoom.

Bristol town officials and community members this year implemented a few strategies to try and attract more people to the annual event, including offering free childcare, starting the meeting an hour earlier and having food trucks outside Holley Hall prior to the meeting for residents to grab

dinner.

At the annual meeting, residents OK’d:

- A General Fund Operating Budget of \$1,096,775, with \$909,845 to be raised in taxes. That figure includes capital appropriations for the building and maintenance, sidewalk, technology, cemetery reserve, conservation reserve and reappraisal funds.
- Public works department spending of \$1,292,108, with \$1,177,108 to be raised in taxes. That amount includes capital appropriations for the Highway Equipment, Capital Paving and Road funds.
- Arts, Parks and Recreation Department spending of \$463,484, with \$314,684 to be raised in taxes. That includes capital appropriations for the Recreation Equipment and Facilities Fund.
- Fire department spending of \$501,093, which would all be raised in taxes. That figure includes appropriations for the Fire Equipment and Fire Vehicle funds.
- A total of \$435,363 in appropriations to civic organizations, including the Lawrence Memorial Library.

Voters also amended a couple of articles from the floor: opting to increase the appropriation for the Have-a-Heart Food Shelf from \$6,000 to \$10,000 and decrease the limit set on the penalty charged for late property tax payments from 4% of the amount owed to 2%.

At the polls on March 4, Bristol residents living in the police district (primarily the village) approved a proposed fiscal year 2026 police budget of \$688,370 — which reflects an increase of \$61,742, or 9.85%, from the current year. Voters OK’d the spending plan, 300-103.

Bristol voters on Town



Hancock

BRANDON SHAWN IS looking for answers during a discussion at Hancock’s town meeting on Tuesday morning.

Independent photo/Steve James

Meeting Day also weighed in on a \$34,894,443 MAUSD spending plan for the 2025-2026 school year and an article asking district voters whether to allow district officials to transfer up to \$1.04 million from the Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to help pay for replacing Mount Abraham Union High School’s roof.

They also fielded a proposed Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Cornwall

CORNWALL — Cornwall residents at their town meeting endorsed every item on their warning, including proposals to have their town clerk elected (instead of appointed), and to allow the selectboard to appoint the community’s planning commission members to one-year terms, instead of the current practice of electing them by Australian ballot.

It was only recently that Cornwall had decided to appoint its town clerk, rather than continue the process of electing that official. But incumbent Town Clerk Laura Fetterolf — a Cornwall resident — suggested to the selectboard that the town revert to electing its clerk, and the panel agreed to allow local voters to decide the matter. The measure passed by an overwhelming voice vote — following a 30-minute discussion — at Saturday’s annual meeting, which drew around 125 residents, according to former Cornwall Town Clerk Sue Johnson.

The practice of voting on the town clerk (for a three-year term)

will take effect next Town Meeting Day, and Fetterolf has pledged to be on the ballot.

Also passing by comfortable voice votes on Saturday were proposals to:

- Adopt a fiscal year 2026 general fund budget of \$548,081, and a recommended FY’26 highway budget of \$515,050.
- A \$81,200 appropriation to help fund the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department during FY’26.
- A recommendation to exempt the fire department and its two properties at 1952 Route 30 and 63 North Bingham St. from property taxation for the next five years.
- A \$5,000 contribution to the Cornwall Free Public Library to pay its expenses during FY’26.
- \$26,395 for various social service agencies that serve Cornwall residents.

On Tuesday, residents cast ballots on some contested seats for the Addison Central School District board, and on uncontested races for various municipal positions.

There were no contested elections on Cornwall’s municipal ballot. Those running unopposed in Tuesday Australian ballot elections included Cy Tall, town

moderator, one year; Don Burns, selectboard, three years; Tanya Byker, selectboard, two years; Laura Fetterolf, Richard Isenberg, Patricia McCormick and Kristina Simmons, library trustee, all four terms of two years; and Don Burns and Steve Mahoney, planning commission, both for terms of three years.

Cornwall residents on Tuesday also helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a Patricia Hannaford Carer Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH — At Ferrisburgh’s town hall on Saturday morning, Ferrisburgh residents from the floor of town meeting approved by unanimous voice vote the selectboard’s proposed 2025-2026 spending plan of \$2,830,154.

Likewise, residents also backed by voice vote \$38,895 of nonprofit requests, all in a single amended motion. The amendment came from the floor and boosted the town’s donation to American Legion Post 14 in Vergennes from \$300 to \$1,000.

Thus, the overall increase in spending residents supported was \$210,970, or roughly 8%.

Residents retain the right to amend the budget from the floor of the meeting in Ferrisburgh.

According to Town Clerk and Assistant Treasurer Pam Cousino, each penny on the town’s tax rate raises about \$55,000, meaning if all things were equal the higher spending could raise Ferrisburgh’s municipal (non-school) rate by about 3.8 cents.

But Ferrisburgh is sitting on an undesignated fund balance of about \$840,000, some of which the selectboard could choose to use to offset a tax increase.

Selectboard Chair Clark Hinsdale said before the meeting the selectboard would wait until the board sets the tax rate this summer

(See Ferrisburgh, Page 11A)

Lincoln, VT Homeowner Recommends Bristol Electronics



Phase I - 2014

For a long time I had been thinking of going solar, but had not pursued it until I talked with a neighbor who just had hers installed. I contracted with her installer and soon had panels on the roof that supplied all of my household electricity, with some extra capacity to supply an on-demand electric water heater I soon put in. I loved not hearing the propane boiler firing up in the summer to keep domestic water hot for the shower I’d be taking 16 hours later. Thrilled with the installation and not having an electric bill. I even splurged and bought my first ever noisy window A/C.

Phase II - 2016

While my primary heat source has been a woodstove and later a pellet stove, the propane boiler served as my backup. On a December road trip to PEI, I discovered the 25+ year old propane boiler died on me. I’m lucky to have had a monitoring system to notice this and awesome neighbors to feed pellets until I got back. Rather than buy another fossil fuel burning device, I decided to have heat pumps installed. At the time Bristol Electronics didn’t install those, but they were very competitive as I shopped around for additional solar capacity. So in February 2016 they were on the roof installing panels that would provide enough electricity year round to supply my heating needs. And, since the heat pump also cools the house quietly on the hottest days, I sold the window unit. Maybe I’m just getting older, but there seems to be more and more of those hot days.

Phase III - 2019

Since I commute from So. Lincoln to Burlington, I’ve always felt guilty about all of the CO2 I’ve been emitting to get to work. I still have 7-10 years before I can even think about retiring, so I decided to make the investment and buy an electric car. And part of that investment was to buy the additional solar capacity to power it. I didn’t think twice about having Bristol Electronics do it. My roof was running out of space, and since it has a low pitch, snow coverage was a issue for the last two years. This time I worked with Chris, Stephen, Dave and Trevor to have a ground mount installed that will be easy to clear the snow off of. They did amazing work, despite weather issues, and were actually able to make some long overdue landscaping improvements during the process. I couldn’t be happier with my experience with this team!

~ Paul Webb, Lincoln, VT



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								Weybridge	

(Ferrisburgh continued from Page 10A)
— the new fiscal year begins July 1 — to decide whether to apply some of that surplus toward lowering the tax rate.

By then, town officials said the town’s fiscal picture will be clearer, including how much growth there will be in the grand list, a factor that will affect how much money that penny on the rate raises.

The town is undergoing a property reappraisal, but officials said it would not be completed in time to affect FY2026 tax rates.

Also, according to Addison Northwest School District estimates, Ferrisburgh’s homestead school tax rate will be lower. That final rate could influence the selectboard’s decision, Hinsdale acknowledged.

Within the selectboard budget, one proposal is to add a town administrative position. After debate on whether to make the position fulltime, the selectboard added into its spending plan \$48,000 for an 80% position. But Hinsdale said the board could use some of the surplus to expand the position’s hours. Board members agree that with Road Foreman John Bull leaving at the end of the year and Cousino doing so this summer, an administrator could become necessary.

One item not on the warning came up for discussion. The selectboard declined earlier this year, after hearing arguments both pro and con at board meetings, to include an article calling for a vote on criticizing the state of Israel for its actions in the war in Gaza and its treatment of the Palestinian people. The board said that the issue did not pertain to town business.

Moderator Kyle Rowe also declined to allow an amendment to the warning to allow the issue, as the law gives the moderator power to do so. Rowe agreed with the selectboard position that the proposed article was not relevant to town business. But town meeting also allowed residents to ask for



Ferrisburgh

FERRISBURGH SELECTMAN CHRIS Campbell emphasizes his point about military pensions during an exchange with State Sen. Ruth Hardy during the Ferrisburgh town meeting on Saturday. Independent photo/Steve James

a vote to overrule a moderator’s ruling if they could achieve a two-thirds majority.

Officials asked for those in favor and those against allowing a vote to stand in turn, and Cousino said the vote against won by a substantial margin.

In Australian balloting on Tuesday there were no contested races on the ballot, but also no major offices left unfilled.

Running without opposition and elected to the selectboard were former selectboard chair Rick Ebel, who filed for a three-year term to return to the board after an absence of a few years, and two incumbent board members, current Selectboard Chair Clark Hinsdale and Walter Reed.

Hinsdale filed for the one-year remainder of the term of former

selectman Steve Fleming, who resigned from the board. Another former board chair, Jessica James, has been serving as an appointee to fill Fleming’s seat, but only through Town Meeting Day. And Reed filed for another two-year term.

Ferrisburgh ANWSD board member Nikki Bearor’s term expired, and she ran unopposed for another three years.

Goshen

GOSHEN — Perhaps it was the new town moderator, or something in the water, but for whatever reason, Goshen on Monday experienced the fastest town meeting that anyone could

remember.

“Thirty-eight minutes,” Town Clerk Martin Fjeld reported.

Michael Medeiros stepped in as moderator, and by all accounts kept the business of the meeting moving along.

By voice vote, the 40 or so citizens in attendance approved the warned \$618,960 in general municipal spending, even though that figure was \$349,199, or 130%, more than they approved last year. The big difference is that the new budget includes a big project to renovate the town hall, making it much more energy efficient. The project will be paid for with a \$334,057 Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grant, that just came in this past October. Taking out that federal grant, the proposed increase in municipal spending

is around \$15,000, or about 3%. Once the MERP renovations are completed, the upstairs in town hall will be available for community gatherings.

Goshen voters also OK’d \$749,200 to spend on the roads, which is an increase of less than \$2,000 (.03%). But here too outside grant money decreases the need for local tax dollars. The selectboard says that minus outside grants, town taxes for roads will represent a net 9% decrease from last year.

Medeiros must’ve made a positive impression. In Australian ballot voting on Tuesday, he won 28 of the 37 ballots counted for town moderator and won a one-year term.

Selectboard member Diane O’Classen decided not to seek re-election, and Alyza McKeighan was the winner of a three-year seat. Fjeld was re-elected as town clerk.

Goshen voters joined their peers in Brandon, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. Last year, those voters rejected the proposed OVUU spending plan twice. This year they approved it on the first round — but only by one vote.

The Brandon-area district in 2024 approved a spending plan of \$26,808,222. The board this year warned a FY26 spending plan of \$28,022,999, which is 9.38% higher in per pupil spending than the budget approved last year. It passed on Tuesday by a tally of 817 yes, 816 no.

The approved spending represents a 4.5% hike (\$1,214,777) from last year.

There were no surprises in the election of school board members. The winning school directors in uncontested races were Lesley Bienvenue (Leicester), Lauren Thomas (Brandon), Laurie L. Bertrand (Sudbury), Brett Mullin and Jessica Markowski (Pittsford) and Barbara Ebling (at-large). Two OVUUS board seats — one

representing Whiting and one at-large — appear to have not garnered enough write-in votes to pick a winner. The new board will have to appoint those members.

Granville

GRANVILLE — Discussion at Granville’s town meeting on Tuesday evening wasn’t too loud, but it may have lasted a little longer than some people like. There was a question about how the fire department explained its funding in the town report (the question was resolved), a little talk about the \$500,000 Municipal Energy Resilience Project (MERP) grant that the town will use to make energy improvements at the town clerk’s office and town hall, and the legislators gave an in-person report that seemed to last a little longer than some residents thought was necessary.

When it came time for the estimated 40 people to vote on a noise ordinance, they instructed the selectboard *not* to create one.

“People just have to talk with their neighbors when there’s a problem,” Town Clerk Cheryl Sargeant said.

As far as the MERP grant, Sargeant said that a portion of funding coming from the state is already being used to advertise for a designer and an engineer to begin planning the updates to the town clerk’s office. But the uncertainty around federal funds right now — the Trump administration has put holds on federal disbursements or threatened to — means the town is going slow on some portion of the energy-saving upgrades.

Residents OK’d the town spending as proposed. Specifically, Granville has budgeted \$420,820, which was a hike of \$14,934, or 3.7%, from what was approved last year. The selectboard’s budget broke that down as municipal *(See Granville, Page 12A)*

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Brandon	Cornwall	Granville					Waltham	Salisbury	Shoreham
Bridport	Ferrisburgh	Whiting	Lincoln	Middlebury	Hancock	Leicester	Monkton	Ripton	Starksboro
								Weybridge	

(Granville continued from Page 11A)
spending of \$223,912, up 2.3% from last year, and road spending of \$196,908, which is 5.2% more than last year.

On the personnel front, Granville lost a long-time selectboard member. Board chair Bruce Hyde said he didn't want to serve in that post again, and so residents elected Kelli Eckroth to a three-year seat on the selectboard. Hyde isn't completely going away; he was elected as second auditor. Others winning election were Sargeant re-elected as town clerk, Eckroth re-elected as moderator, Nancy Needham town treasurer and delinquent tax collector, Jennifer Stickney second constable for East Granville, and Kate Stauss and William Brokoff as cemetery commissioners

Hancock

HANCOCK — It took three hours for Hancock residents to work their way through a very consequential town meeting on Tuesday morning, but when they left, they knew they had made big changes in the little White River Valley town.

After much discussion, voters approved three measures that will change three key municipal jobs.

The first will allow a non-resident to become town clerk and town treasurer, and will also allow the selectboard to appoint those two key officials for the time being. Residents also agreed that Hancock should adopt the town manager form of governance. Selectboard Chair Scott Gillette explained that the job has just become too big, and requires too much specialized knowledge, for a selectboard made up of basically volunteers. He said that the recovery from the 2023 floods, which involved a lot of work with state and federal agencies, really showed the need for professionalization. At that time, Gillette told the *Independendent*, one of the board members was spending 20 hours a week just working on flood recovery for the town — in addition to a regular, full-time job.

“We’re missing out on a lot of grants,” because they take a special skill set to procure, he said.

While the changes in town government were passed by a vote from the floor of town meeting, Gillege said, “Voters were a little anxious about giving up control.”

The path to installing a town manager is not exactly clear. Hancock could not offer a full-time position to a person with the appropriate skills, so the selectboard will work with a regional planning commission to see if it can partner with a nearby town to split a town manager — thus giving the right applicant a good reason to take on the job.

Town Clerk Wendy Stender was appointed in December. Gillette said she was very capable, and one possible route would be to get her training to become a town



Hancock

HANCOCK TOWN CLERK Wendy Stender appears to be enjoying a lighter moment during Tuesday morning's town meeting in the White River Valley town. It is her first town meeting since being appointed to her post in December.

Independent photo/Steve James

administrator. If that does come to pass, Gillette said the town could return the town clerk position to an elected job, rather than appointed.

Tuesday's Hancock town meeting also featured some familiar work. Attendees approved a town spending proposal of \$436,244, plus \$7,019 in voter approved appropriations, for a total of \$443,265. That represents a decline in spending of around \$29,000. There was one change from the warned budget figure; the town added \$9,000 as the municipal match to a \$60,000 grant awarded in January to help the town plan expanded housing development in the center of the village at Tyler Meadow.

The selectboard also discussed the town's recently awarded Municipal Energy Resilience Project (MERP) grant — \$342,155 that will be used to weatherize town buildings.

Finally, incumbent Jim Leno won re-election to a three-year seat on the selectboard.

Leicester

LEICESTER — Like they often do, Leicester residents came to their in-person town meeting at the Leicester Meeting House on Monday evening and approved municipal and road spending by a voice vote.

But the next day, Leicester voters went to the polls and adopted Article 3 — “Shall the Town of Leicester adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot ... beginning 2026?” — by a large margin. In Australian ballot voting, 132 residents voted yes, and 54 voted no. Next year there will be no floor vote on the municipal budget.

Not like there was a lot of changes this year.

The selectboard proposed town spending of \$825,216, which was down \$9,470 from last year. The

amount to be raised in property taxes will increase \$23,014, or 3.7% — from \$617,966 last year to \$640,980 this year.

The Leicester selectboard budgeted town spending into two chunks: general town expenses and highway expenses. Voters OK'd \$349,401 for general expenses, with the amount raised by taxes pegged at \$300,580. They approved proposed spending on roads of \$475,815, with the amount to be raised by taxes \$340,401.

In addition to voting on the town budget, residents on Tuesday cast ballots on a handful of elected positions. Incumbents won: Richard Reed, 1 year as moderator; Diane Benware, 3 years selectboard; Tom Barker, 2 years selectboard; Beth Ripley, 1 year delinquent tax collector; and Donna Pidgeon, 3 years auditor.



Monkton

OUTGOING MONKTON SELECTBOARD Chair Stephen Pilcher handles questions large and small with aplomb and good humor during Saturday's town meeting. It was his last after many years in service to his town.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

The other result from Tuesday's Australian ballot voting approved spending \$1,000 to support the Whiting Community Food Shelf; the tally was 161 yes, 28 no.

Leicester voters joined their peers in Brandon, Whiting, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the

Otter Valley Unified Union schools. Last year, those voters rejected the proposed OVUU spending plan twice. This year they approved it on the first round — but only by one vote.

The Brandon-area district in 2024 approved a spending plan of \$26,808,222. The board this year warned a FY26 spending plan of \$28,022,999, which is 9.38% higher in per pupil spending than the budget approved last year. It passed on Tuesday by a tally of 817 yes, 816 no.

The approved spending represents a 4.5% hike (\$1,214,777) from last year.

There were no surprises in the election of school board members. The winning school directors in uncontested races were Lesley Bienvenue (Leicester), Lauren Thomas (Brandon), Laurie L. Bertrand (Sudbury), Brett Mullin and Jessica Markowski (Pittsford) and Barbara Ebling (at-large).

Two OVUUS board seats — one representing Whiting and one at-large — appear to have not garnered enough write-in votes to pick a winner. The new board will have to appoint those members.

Lincoln

LINCOLN — On Town Meeting Day, Lincoln resident Jessica Erwin earned 32 write-in votes for the one year remaining of a two-year term on the selectboard, enough to win the open seat. Bay Jackson received 23 write-votes for the spot.

Lincoln selectboard members Ken Stockman (three-year term) and Lisa Sargent (two-year term) ran unopposed to continue serving in their spots on the board.

Lincoln school board members Jeanne Albert (three-year term) and Mary Gemignani (two-year term) were also unchallenged in their bids to continue serving on the school board.

Over 100 Lincoln voters filed into Burnham Hall for the town's annual meeting on Monday evening. Those in attendance voted from the floor to approve a general fund budget of \$672,065 and \$1,157,856 in highway spending for the upcoming fiscal year. The general fund spending reflects an increase of 7.8%. The highway budget saw an increase of \$70,176, or 6.5%.

Later on in the meeting, residents approved 28 voted appropriations to local organizations totaling \$153,390, including \$44,000 for the Lincoln Library and \$56,000 for the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Company.

Voters spent about an hour on Article 7, which asked voters to authorize the town clerk's salary to be raised by \$10,123, plus \$1,382 in associated taxes and benefits. Town Clerk Sally Ober explained that the request was intended to bring her salary in line with the actual number of hours she works, which was previously assumed to be an average of 34 hours a week and is actually 40 hours. Adopting

the article would shake out to a new pay rate of around \$28.20/hour, town officials said.

The article was amended to raise the town clerk's salary by \$14,636.60, which would bring the hourly pay rate up to \$30.37/hour, the average Vermont town clerk's salary according to town officials' presentation. In the end, voters agreed to raise the town clerk's salary by the amended amount, 107-36.

Lincoln residents on Monday passed Article 8, which asked if the town should eliminate the office of lister “and replace it with a professionally qualified contracted assessor appointed by the selectboard.” They also OK'd a sum of \$175,000 for “further restoration and improvement of existing Class 2 asphalt surface town highways,” which would be deposited in the paving reserve fund.

Voters authorized spending up to \$10,000 for contracted law enforcement services. That request has in recent years been shot down by voters and prompted a lengthy discussion.

Article 9 asked Lincoln voters whether the town should move to voting on all money articles by Australian ballot beginning next year. After discussion, residents voted by division of the house in favor of tabling the article, 85-48.

During the Lincoln School District's annual meeting, voters approved a \$5,179,244.76 spending plan for the 2025-2026 school year, an increase of 5.1% over the current year. Town officials estimate the spending plan would translate to a homestead tax rate decrease of 20.8 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, or 16.4%. Residents that pay education taxes based on their income are expected to see a decrease of around 20%.

Voters also agreed to allow school officials to transfer up to \$380,000 of the district's audited surplus funds to the Education Reserve Fund. District officials expect a surplus of \$481,173.55, and the proposed FY'26 budget accounts for applying \$100,000 of the surplus to offset taxes for the upcoming year.

Residents were also asked if the district should adopt its budget by Australian ballot beginning next year. Voters ultimately decided to table the article, 48-35.

Middlebury

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury residents at their annual gathering on Monday, and in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday, endorsed all the money items that were presented to them — including a \$49.5 million bond to perform a major upgrade to the community's wastewater treatment plant.

A crowd of around 125 people turned out for the annual meeting, held in the Middlebury Union High School auditorium. The biggest item on their to-do list: Decide a fiscal year 2026 municipal
(See Middlebury, Page 13A)



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									Vergennes
									Weybridge

(Middlebury continued from Page 12A)

budget of \$14,548,535, of which \$9,162,148 is to be raised by taxes. Those present passed the budget by a unanimous voice vote following around 40 minutes of discussion.

Middlebury Town Manager Mark Pruhenski explained the budget will require a 5.33-cent increase (5.99%) in the municipal tax rate, to 94.27 cents per \$100 in property value.

Pruhenski told attendees the biggest FY’26 budget drivers are a \$492,329 increase in negotiated wage and benefits for municipal employees, a \$123,451 bump for capital improvements, a \$91,474 hike for equipment maintenance and purchases, a \$28,500 rise in parks & recreation administration expenses, and a 16% increase in healthcare premiums.

“Inflation, fixed costs, equipment purchases and maintenance, and very necessary capital improvements, are driving this year’s increase,” Pruhenski said, adding, “that trend is likely to continue.”

Resident Ross Conrad, among others, asked about surging health insurance costs.

“Is there anything the town can do ... to control healthcare costs, or are we totally at the mercy of what goes on at the state and federal level to pay whatever costs come down the pike?” he asked.

Some meeting participants suggested the town partner with other towns and area schools to create more bargaining clout with insurance carriers. Pruhenski said the town is working with the Vermont League of Citizens & Towns on options for stabilizing healthcare premium increases for FY’27.

Resident Dave Silberman took issue with the proposed police budget of \$2,311,650. He noted the budget had grown by around



Middlebury
AFTER NINE YEARS serving Middlebury on the town selectboard, Heather Seely gives her attention to one last town meeting at Middlebury Union High School Monday night before her term on the board expires this week.

Independent photo/Steve James

30% over the past three budget cycles.

“That’s a lot,” he said. “It’s a big driver of the overall increase in taxes. Why is it going up by so much, and has the selectboard spent time thinking about whether the police department we *have*, is the police department we *need*?”

Middlebury Police Chief Jason Covey said the FY’26 PD budget reflects a 4.87% increase in spending, with most of that related to wages.

“The police department is still understaffed,” he said, adding that current wages are also a reflection of “the most educated police department we’ve ever had.”

He discussed the difficulties PDs nationwide are having in recruiting and retaining qualified

officers.

“I believe we need the PD that we have, and I believe we need a larger PD,” he said. “We are struggling at times to keep up with our call volume.”

Last year’s calls-for-service were almost 1,000 more than the year before, according to Covey.

“The police log is just a small snapshot of what we’re doing,” he said. “Last Saturday alone, our department (dealt with calls about) two stolen vehicles in town, a DUI that required use of force, and an attempted murder.”

Middlebury PD, he added, is the only municipal police agency in the county that operates 24/7, at times when mutual aid isn’t available.

“If Middlebury residents want

the service they expect right now, this is the cost of doing business,” he said.

Silberman asked for a response from the selectboard, and Chairman Brian Carpenter weighed in.

“We’re very proud of our police department. Our PD has been very frugal, when you look at the services you’re getting and what it costs us,” he said. “If you want to look at a community that defunded the police, look at Burlington. We don’t intend to be like Burlington.”

Resident Victoria DeWind asked about the town’s \$119,000 charge for Middlebury Regional EMS service in FY’26. Carpenter explained the ambulance service wasn’t making ends meet under a prior fee schedule, and elected to up the ante in 2024 by assessing a higher per capita fee to the communities it serves to reflect the true costs of business and ensure periodic replacement of its ambulances.

LOCAL OPTION TAXES

Participants learned the FY’26 budget’s tax impact could have been more severe, were it not for the \$1.3 million in local option tax (LOT) surplus that will be applied to the spending plan. Approved by Middlebury voters in 2008, the 1% local tax on rooms, meals, sales and alcohol is raising far more than its intended purpose: to pay the town’s share of annual debt service and maintenance on the \$16 million Cross Street Bridge project.

The LOT — paid by anyone who shops, dines or pays for lodging in Middlebury — is conservatively estimated to bring in \$1.3 million next year. Middlebury College is underwriting \$600,000 annually for debt on the Cross Street Bridge, leaving the town’s share of next year’s debt at \$234,137. This leaves 1,065,863 for investing in local capital projects that would otherwise languish or require taxpayer investment.

Officials estimated the LOT surplus fund will amount to \$2,398,473 at the end of this fiscal year (June 30). The selectboard proposed using \$131,264 from the fund to offset debt on the now-completed conversion of a former wastewater treatment plant building into storage space for the police department, and up to \$125,000 from the fund to offset engineering and construction for a planned Exchange Street bike-pedestrian path.

Voters approved both those expenditures, by unanimous voice vote, through article 3 on the warning.

Middlebury residents were given a chance on Tuesday to reiterate their desire to use future LOT surplus for capital projects. They voted 900-238, though article 6, in favor of removing what had been a Sept. 20, 2038, sunset for the LOT. This means that once the Cross Street Bridge is paid off, all local option tax revenues will be available to lower local taxpayers’ responsibility for capital improvements.

Town meeting attendees on Monday also paid tribute to longtime civic volunteer Gary Baker (to whom this year’s town report was dedicated); the winners of the annual Robert E. Collins award for “extraordinary commitment and dedication to the Parks & Recreation Department”: Casey and Marc McDonough; former Middlebury police Chief Tom Hanley, for stepping in as acting town manager prior to Pruhenski’s hiring; and Selectperson Heather Seely, who chose not to seek reelection this year after nine years of service.

In Australian ballot voting on Tuesday, Middlebury residents endorsed:

- By a 1,021-134 margin, a \$49.5 million bond to finance a major makeover of the municipal

wastewater treatment plant (see related story on Page 1A).

- By a 1,022-106 margin, \$2 million in proposed improvements to a major municipal water pump station off Rogers Road.
- By a 985-138 margin, a \$1 million plan to install a stormwater treatment system for the Adams Acres subdivision.

There were no contested municipal elections on the Middlebury ballot. Elected unopposed, for three-year terms, were incumbent Selectpersons Isabel Gogarty and Andy Hooper, as well as first-time candidate Megan James; Natasha Sen and Dianne Lawson, for three-year spots on the Ilsley Public Library board; incumbent Susan Shashok, one year, as town moderator; and Beth Dow, three years, as lister.

Middlebury residents in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a Patricia Hannaford Carer Center budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Monkton

MONKTON — Monkton voters on Town Meeting Day elected three new faces to serve on the town’s selectboard.

In a three-person race for a three-year term on the board, Jessica Demeritt earned the most

(See Monkton, Page 14A)

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			Middlebury		Weybridge
			Hancock		
			Leicester		
			Monkton		
			Ripton		

(Monkton continued from Page 13A)

votes with 301. The second top vote-getter was Tom Steadman (97), followed by Scott Gordon (73).

John Dunham prevailed in a four-person contest for a two-year term. He earned 172 votes, Matthew Huizenga won 142 tallies, Randall Charboneau received 124 votes and Anthony Delgreco earned 14 votes.

Sam Peisch ran unopposed for the one year remaining on a three-year seat on the board.

Mount Abraham Unified School District board member Kielee Pelland was unchallenged for a three-year term on the school board.

Around 90 Monkton voters gathered for the town’s annual meeting this past Saturday.

At the annual meeting, residents approved \$877,790.72 in general fund expenditures, a decrease of \$23,628 from what voters approved last March.

Voters also OK’d:

- \$1,498,207 in highway fund expenditures, an increase of \$687,100.4 from what voters approved last March. It’s worth noting Monkton had a highway fund surplus of \$290,286.16 that factored into the amount voted on last year.
- \$20,849 in total appropriations for 27 local social service agencies, down \$9,348 from what was approved last March.

Monkton voters at their town meeting also OK’d a sum not to exceed \$114,801 for the purchase of a Ford F550 truck.

Residents also decided to add back in \$40,000 for the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department that was previously eyed for reduction as a way to cut down the tax rate.

Departing selectboard chair Stephen Pilcher explained that there was a significant jump in the tax rate for various reasons, in part due to how the town has in recent years had a surplus in the highway department, which was not the case this year. Thus, there was a significant increase in the tax rate, and the selectboard looked at ways to decrease various expenses and bring the rate down.

One of the reductions town officials made was to cut \$40,000 from the fire department’s request, but voters at the annual meeting decided to add those funds back in.

On Town Meeting Day, Monkton residents agreed to adopt the Monkton Town Plan 2025-2033 as approved by the selectboard in December, voting in favor 358-71.

Monkton voters on Town Meeting Day also weighed in on a \$34,894,443 MAUSD spending plan for the 2025-2026 school year and an article asking district voters whether to allow district officials to transfer up to \$1.04 million from the Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to help pay for replacing Mount Abraham Union High School’s roof. They also fielded a proposed Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280 to deliver

vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

New Haven

NEW HAVEN — New Haven voters on Town Meeting Day weighed in on a two-person contest for a two-year seat on the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board, electing Sarah Louer to continue serving in the spot she was appointed to fill in July. Louer received 192 votes, and Britney Cyr earned 148 votes.

Also on Town Meeting Day, selectboard incumbent Michael Audy was unchallenged for a three-year term and Chris Bataille was unopposed for a two-year seat on the selectboard.

New Haven voters also approved:

- \$875,573.21 in general fund expenses, up \$61,326.73 from last year’s request.
- \$1,573,462.59 for the proposed road fund budget, with \$994,129.57 to be raised by taxes.
- \$3,400 in voted appropriations for local organizations. An additional \$26,558.25 in appropriations for 19 other organizations are included in the proposed general fund budget and detailed in the town report.

Voters in New Haven were asked to weigh in on several other articles. Residents agreed to:

- Spend up to \$300,000 from the road equipment fund for a new town truck.
- Spend up to \$85,000 from the reserve facilities fund for asbestos remediation, installation of a vapor barrier with new flooring on the first floor of the Town Hall and to upgrade the restrooms to be ADA compliant.
- Combine the town treasurer position with the trustee of public funds for a three-year term starting in 2028.

- Transition the New Haven Community Library from an incorporated entity to a municipal library beginning in January 2026.

- Spend up to \$60,000 from the Bridge Fund for the replacement of the Plank Road Bridge.

Residents also voted in opposition to an article asking whether the town should discontinue paying for the trash/recycling drop-off site effective May 2025, shooting down the article 220-148.

New Haven voters on Town Meeting Day also weighed in on a \$34,894,443 MAUSD spending plan for the 2025-2026 school year and an article asking district voters whether to allow district officials to transfer up to \$1.04 million from the Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to help pay for replacing Mount Abraham Union High School’s roof. They also fielded a proposed Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition revealing those results.



Middlebury
MIDDLEBURY RESIDENT GEORGE Marcus holds the microphone and gets his say during a discussion at Middlebury town meeting on Monday in the MUHS auditorium.

Independent photo/Steve James

Orwell

ORWELL — The most intensely buring question that residents in Orwell considered on Town Meeting Day was not whether to approved \$2 million in town spending. It was who to elect as town moderator.

That’s because they’ve had the same moderator for nearly five decades. Mike Audet was pressed into service as moderator in 1978. He returned year after year to conduct the annual town meeting. This year he said it would be his last.

Among the 14 town offices up for election Tuesday, only town moderator saw a contested race. In the end, Glen Cousineau defeated Joe Andriano, 182-152.

Others on the ballot winning elections were Town Clerk Betty Walker, Town Treasurer Bryan Young, Selectboard Chair Andrea Treadway (who won a three-year seat), Selectman Mike Christian (one year), and Harold “Joe” Pouliot (two years on the selectboard, among others).

At Tuesday morning’s meeting residents OK’d the warned town budget of \$2,100,909, which was \$322,361, or 18.1%, greater than the spending figure approved last year.

There were plenty of other spending items on the town meeting warning that were also approved. Among the \$25,750 in town projects that got funding were \$16,000 for operating the Wright Memorial Library Building, \$4,000 for the historical society, \$2,200 for the Orwell Parade Committee, \$1,000 for the youth rec program, and \$14,500 for the painting the town clock tower.

The \$112,076 sewer budget, which voters approved, will be paid for by user fees.

Nearly \$14,000 in requests for funds to social services agencies that service Orwell was led by \$5,000 requested by Addison County Home Health and Hospice. All were approved.

If anything could be called controversial it was the question asking Orwell voters if they wish to instruct the selectboard to develop an ordinance for the recreational

use of ATV/UTVs on town roads. The measure came up last fall when a petition with 61 signatures was presented to the selectboard asking the question to be put to voters. On Tuesday, 182 voters said yes — they did want the selectboard to create such an oridnance. Only 169 said no — they were alright with the status quo.

Also at the polls on Tuesday, Orwell voters joined those in other Slate Valley Unified Union School District on deciding the fate of the \$32,086,270 school budget. Although it was expected to result in an education property tax decrease in four of the district’s six towns — including in Orwell — the budget was defeated.

Panton

PANTON — Panton residents on Tuesday unseated their multi-term selectboard chair in favor of a first-time candidate.

Reese Jaring, a Collins Aerospace employee described by a supporter in an email to the *Independent* as having an “extensive background in finance and budget administration,” edged longtime incumbent Howard Hall, a former veteran Chicago firefighter and EMT and union head, 85-79, in 29% turnout.

In another selectboard-related vote, residents backed a proposal to expand the three-member board to five members, 101-60.

Another contested Panton race saw two candidates vying for one of two open Panton seats on the Vergennes-Panton Water District Board. In that duel, challenger Kathy Kennett defeated appointed incumbent Bob Hartenstein for the remainder of a two-year term, 99-55. Incumbent VPWD board member Chris Cook ran unopposed to serve another three years.

The selectboard’s proposed \$1,119,514 budget won support, 105-59. That spending plan shaves off a little more than \$10,000 from the current spending level.

The lower spending plan was achieved despite several major expenses added to the upcoming year’s budget, chief among them being \$72,000 for the first year of payments on a new truck for the

highway department (approved by voters a year ago) and about \$35,000 in higher costs for health insurance benefits for the town’s three fulltime employees.

Some items eliminated from previous spending levels in the current budget proposal were \$7,500 in a selectboard discretionary fund, \$7,000 from office IT and supply costs, and \$20,000 in summer and winter road materials.

But the major offset for those increased costs in the budget is a reduction in what the selectboard is proposing to put into reserve funds in the coming year. On the March 4 ballot were only two such funds: \$2,400 as an Emergency Fund and \$2,000 toward Panton’s next town-wide reappraisal. That \$4,400 total is \$71,600 less than voters were asked to approve for a half-dozen such funds in 2024.

Voters backed both those smaller reserve funds, as well as \$13,451 of tax money to help fund nonprofit organizations.

Town Clerk and Treasurer Kyle Rowe said he was hopeful the town’s municipal tax rate would drop by 4 cents per \$100 of assessed property value.

Ripton

RIPTON — Ripton voters at their annual meeting on Monday endorsed a proposed fiscal year 2026 town/highway budget of \$869,487, and all the other financial asks on their warning.

Requests winning approval by voice vote included:

- \$44,950, to help fund the Ripton Volunteer Fire and First Response Department through FY’26.
- \$6,000 for the Ripton Cemetery Commission.
- \$25,000 to seed a capital fund for future “long-term or large infrastructure projects.” Plans call for the sum to be built over time, with voter permission required before it can be expended.

- A combined \$21,846 in social service agency requests pitched by various nonprofits that serve Ripton residents.

Voters selected, in a series of uncontested municipal elections, incumbent Selectman Bill Hunsinger for another three years on the board; Tim O’Leary, moderator, one year; Chris Smith, town constable, one year; Carolyn Smith, delinquent tax collector, one year; and Erk Eriksen, town lister, three years.

Town meeting participants also received an update on efforts to keep Ripton Elementary School viable. That effort suffered a setback on Monday when Addison Central School District Superintendent Wendy Baker announced that Ripton Elementary’s effort to reach the district’s 10-student minimum for grades K/1 for the 2025-26 academic year had failed (see related story in this edition).

Ripton residents in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a

Patricia Hannaford Carer Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Steve Cash was unopposed in his run for Ripton’s seat on the ACSD board; incumbent Joanna Doria chose not to seek reelection.

Salisbury

SALISBURY — Salisbury residents on Town Meeting Day approved all the money items on their warning, with the closest vote being a 120-59 endorsement of a request to give \$17,868 to the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District to apply adulticide to control mosquitos this year.

Voters decided their entire town meeting agenda by Australian ballot. Items earning majority voter buy-in included:

- A proposed fiscal year 2026 general fund budget of \$401,174, which passed 164-15.
- An FY’26 highway budget of \$537,370, which prevailed by a 163-17 margin.
- A proposal to apply general budget surplus (in excess of \$30,000) from the current year to help stabilize the FY’26 tax rate. That passed by, 165-13.
- A combined \$107,925 to help fund Addison County social service agencies that serve Salisbury residents.

There were no contested elections on this year’s ballot. Those elected unopposed included John Nuceder, town moderator, one year; Allen Hathaway, town clerk, one year; Patrick Dunn, selectboard, three years; Jonathan Blake, selectboard, two years; Brenda Burchard, lister, two years; and Jeff McDonough, first constable, one year.

Sue Mackey, with 21 write-in votes, won a one-year term on the selectboard.

Salisbury residents in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday also helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a Patricia Hannaford Carer Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Shoreham


SHOREHAM — Shoreham residents at their town meeting endorsed all the requests put before them, including a proposed 2025-2026 municipal budget of \$473,018, and a proposed highway budget of \$1,072,955.

Both the municipal and highway budgets passed by a resounding voice vote at the annual meeting Monday night, as did requests to transfer \$40,000 in General Fund balance to the town’s Highway Equipment Reserve Fund, and to set Nov. 12 as the deadline for paying taxes.

There were no contested municipal elections on the Shoreham ballot. Elected unopposed were Barb Wilson, one year, town moderator; Steve Goodrich, selectperson, three years; Rebecca Kerr, selectperson, one year; Kelsey Cummings, library trustee, five years; Linda Larrabee, planning commission, two years; Scott Douglas, water commissioner, three years; and Tom Rose, lister, three years.

In write-in campaigns for positions that had no takers, Mark Spitzner earned 66 tallies for a one-year term on the selectboard, Tamra Hawley-House earned 52 votes for three years as auditor, and Heather Stafford received 30 votes for a term on the planning commission.

(See Shoreham, Page 15A)



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Bristol Animal Hospital**	Sat. March 15 , 9:00 - 10:00 AM
(**Lincoln town clerk on site for Lincoln registrations - \$25)	
Bridport Fire House	Sat. March 15 , 10:00 AM - 12 Noon
Monkton Fire Station	Tues. March 25 , 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Orwell Town Office	Fri. March 28 , 5:00 - 7:00 PM

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BRANDON: Brandon Discount Beverage Champlain Farms Hannaford Jiffy Mart Junction Store & Deli Morningside Bakery Union Street Grocery Walgreen's	EAST MIDDLEBURY: Goodro Lumber Jiffy Mart Maplefields Otter East Bakery & Deli	FERRISBURGH: Jiffy Mart	SHOREHAM: Shoreham Service Center
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Brandon	Cornwall	Granville					Waltham	Salisbury	Shoreham
Bridport	Ferrisburgh	Whiting	Lincoln	Middlebury	Hancock	Leicester		Starksboro	Vergennes
							Monkton	Ripton	Weybridge

(Shoreham continued from Page 14A)

Voters also approved a variety of social service funding requests for nonprofits that serve Shoreham residents.

Shoreham residents in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday also helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a Patricia Hannaford Carer Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Starksboro

STARКСBORO — A total of 127 voters turned out for Starksboro’s town meeting this past Saturday, which lasted around three and a half hours.

Those in attendance voted from the floor to approve:

- \$1,215,919 in general fund spending, an increase of \$14,045, with \$958,395 to be raised in taxes.
- \$67,689 for the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund, an increase of \$5,589.
- \$126,505 for the Road Equipment Reserve Fund, an increase of \$7,161.
- \$51,958.83 for the Starksboro Public Library, an increase of \$7,766.83.
- \$13,520 for the Bristol Rescue Squad to provide ambulance service to parts of Starksboro, an increase of \$5,930.

Residents approved a total of \$96,013 for 37 organizations that serve Starksboro and other parts of the county.

Voters also agreed to spend \$50,000 to support the Starksboro Village Meeting House and Starksboro Cooperative Preschool renovation project.

On Town Meeting Day, selectboard incumbent Eric Cota (two-year term) and Tony Porter (one-year seat) were unopposed in their bids for spots on the selectboard.

MAUSD board member Brad Johnson was unchallenged for a three-year term, and Herb Olson ran unopposed for a two-year term on the school board.

Starksboro voters on Tuesday also weighed in on a \$34,894,443 MAUSD spending plan for the 2025-2026 school year and an article asking district voters whether to allow district officials to transfer up to \$1.04 million from the Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to help pay for replacing Mount Abraham Union High School’s roof. They also fielded a proposed Patricia Hannaford Career Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280 to deliver vocational-technical education



Salisbury
SALISBURY TOWN MODERATOR John Nuceder gives an answer from the heart during Saturday’s town meeting at Salisbury Community School.

Independent photo/Steve James

to Addison County students. See separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Vergennes

VERGENNES — Vergennes residents by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 4, backed measures related to the Vergennes Opera House and the city’s fire and recreation departments. There were no contested races on the ballot, although one write-in candidate made some noise. And another ballot measure asked whether residents should advise the city council to take a position on the war in Gaza.

Vergennes residents do not weigh on city spending. The city council will set the 2026 Fiscal Year budget for the city in June.

Residents did back all nonprofit requests on the ballot, and there was one other financial issue on the ballot, a revote of the fire vehicle bond residents originally approved more than a year ago. Citizens in December 2023 backed a proposal to bond for up to \$1.75 million for the city’s fire department to spend on replacing a 21-year-old heavy rescue truck and a 25-year-old ladder truck.

Since then city officials discovered that vote was not properly warned, and that quality used trucks could be purchased for less money.

Thus, residents were instead asked to back a new bond for up to \$1.233 million for the purpose of financing the purchase of a used heavy rescue fire truck, a used ladder truck, and upgrading radio and safety systems for the vehicles. They did so, 476-93.

There were also two articles related to the Vergennes Opera House.

The first asked voters to amend the lease between the city and

the theater (the Vergennes charter requires voter approval of all city real estate deals) to reduce the theater’s liquor liability insurance from \$2 million to \$1 million, both per occurrence and overall, in the existing lease between the city and the Friends of Vergennes Opera House.

The issue, according to officials, is that no insurance company will underwrite \$2 million of such insurance. Thus the lease must be rewritten to be legal. Residents backed the lease amendment, 500-68.

The second ballot item related to the opera house handled a technical requirement from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service as a condition of a jointly awarded \$500,000 grant toward the theater’s All Access Project.

City and theater officials said it is intended to formalize protection of the opera house’s historic features through voter approval of a 15-year easement. Residents supported the article, 525-47.

Voters also backed two other articles seeking nonprofit status for two entities, thus allowing folks to make tax-deductible donations. One would create a Parks and Recreation Fund, and the other would establish a Vergennes Burying Ground Fund Reserve to help pay for improvements to the old School Street cemetery that it is no longer in use. The parks-and-rec measure passed, 535-52, and the cemetery article was backed by 513-67.

A petitioned article the council approved for the ballot gave residents a chance to weigh in on a non-binding advisory vote on Gaza. It read:

“Shall the voters of the City of Vergennes advise the City Council to adopt the following pledge? We, the Vergennes City Council, affirm our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all

people; We oppose all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and we declare ourselves an Apartheid-free community and to that end, we pledge to join others in working to end all support to Israel’s Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation?”

The article was defeated, 392-162.

Voters also checked off names for elective office.

For major offices, in unopposed races, the following candidates were reelected with these vote totals:

Mayor: Christopher Bearor, 503 votes.

City Council: Susan Rakowski, 462; Mark Koenig, 461; Carson Harder-Hyde, 406. Rakowski and Koenig are incumbents.

Michael Kane was returned to the Addison Northwest School District board with 464 votes, but Jon Kidde amassed an impressive write-in total of 126 votes

Also, there was an open city seat on the Vergennes-Panton Water District Board. There were 30 write-in votes for the position, but no one candidate received enough votes to qualify for election, city officials said. An appointment looms.

Waltham

WALTHAM — Around 40 Waltham residents on Monday night gathered in their town hall for the community’s annual town meeting. They elected a new selectboard member in a contested race and supported higher town spending.

Residents picked Dan Morris to fill a three-year on their selectboard. Morris and Peter Emerson were nominated for the job, and the former beat the latter, 23-11, in a paper ballot vote.

All other positions were filled without opposition, including incumbent Mimi Clark being returned to the Addison Northwest School Board, Robin Jackman voted in as a lister, and Jay Stetzel chosen as an auditor.

Voters at the Monday meeting also supported the selectboard’s proposed \$64,000 increase, or 23%, in town spending for the upcoming fiscal year. That’s for a combined general fund (\$141,013) and road maintenance (\$107, 850) spending.

Road spending is projected to drop slightly by around \$2,000, but town officials cited several factors for pushing the general fund higher, most notably a \$25,600 payment on a \$200,000 culvert project.

Salaries and benefits for the clerk/treasurer and assistant clerk/treasurer are projected to rise by \$15,565, and the town also hopes to add a part-time zoning administrator for \$8,700.

Meanwhile, the cost of Vergennes Fire Department protection will increase by \$6,000. Other increases are small and spread around in a number of line items.

Separately, residents backed a total of \$5,099 for a number of nonprofits, another \$10,692 to support the Bixby Library, and a total of \$29,000 to place in four reserve funds.

Waltham is in the middle of a town-wide reappraisal of its taxable property, and officials said the property tax impacts of the higher spending are difficult to predict. But based based on the status quo, the average increase per town property could be \$250.

Weybridge

WEYBRIDGE — Weybridge residents at their town meeting Monday approved all the articles on their warning in a series of decisive voice votes, including a request for a \$70,000, 1-ton truck for the highway department.

Plans call for the town to borrow the money for the truck from the municipal equipment fund and pay it back during a five-year period.

Other items dispatched by voice vote without much fanfare at the town’s annual gathering included requests for:

- A proposed fiscal year 2026 general fund budget of \$210,882, and a \$618,748 ask for highway department operations.
- \$30,000 to help fund fire protection for the town.
- \$13,000 to continue the town-sponsored recycling program.
- \$25,060 to continue a program that allows Weybridge residents full access to Middlebury’s Ilsley Library. Weybridge currently doesn’t have its own functioning municipal library.
- A proposal to consolidate the town’s two building funds into a single capital fund.
- A nonbinding resolution in support of a “commitment to freedom, justice and equality for the Palestinian people and all people,” and in opposition to “Israel’s apartheid regime,

settler colonialism and military occupation.”

There were no contested elections on the Weybridge ballot. Those elected unopposed included Spencer Putnam, town moderator, one year; William Mayers, selectboard, two years; and Megan Sutton, selectboard, three years.

Weybridge residents in Australian ballot voting on Tuesday helped decide a proposed 2025-2026 Addison Central School District budget of \$51,719,284 to run Middlebury-area schools; a Patricia Hannaford Carer Center FY’26 budget of \$5,704,280; and a five-person race for three Middlebury seats on the ACSD board, which were voted at-large in the district-member towns of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. Please see separate stories in this edition revealing those results.

Incumbent Jamie McCallum was unopposed in his bid for a new, three-year term representing Weybridge on the ACSD board.

Whiting

WHITING — After the polls closed on Tuesday, Whiting residents gathered in their town hall for one of the shorter annual meetings in recent memory. Town Clerk Heather Bouchard clocked it at 47 minutes.

Nevertheless, voters took care of some weighty matters — all by voice vote.

Perhaps the weightiest was approving \$512,293 in town spending, which represents an increase of \$24,618, or 5%, over the figure approved at last year’s town meeting. That figure will result in raising \$316,098 through property taxes, which represents a \$1,000 decrease compared to last year.

Eight town officials were up for

(See Whiting, Page 16A)



Monkton
AT SATURDAY’S MEETING at Monkton Central School, resident Laurie Earle enquires about getting a digital sign in front of the town hall for announcements.

Photo by Buzz Kuhns

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RON MAKLEFF

ACSD board

(Continued from Page 1A)
public consumption until 1 p.m. on Wednesday, as the *Independent* went to press. But you can

find more information about Venable-Novak and Makleff in a Q&A (tinyurl.com/5avpuj52) published in the Feb. 27 edition

of the *Independent*, and about Orzech in a separate article (tinyurl.com/4hpu26e9) that ran Jan. 9.

ACSD

(Continued from Page 1A)
and Vergennes-area Addison Northwestern district passed by wide margins (see stories on Page 1A).

Votes in the Otter Valley Unified Union school district OK their spending proposal by a mere one vote. The Brandon-area district approved a FY26 spending plan of \$28,022,999 by a tally of 817 to 816.

Meanwhile, residents in 16 county towns voted 4,406 to 1,585 in favor of the Patricia Hannaford Career Center (PHCC) FY’26 spending plan of \$5,704,280 to deliver vocational-technical education to Addison County students. It’s an ask that represents an 8% increase compared to this year and is largely driven by debt service on recent career center renovations, contracted wage increases, and health insurance hikes.

“We are so grateful for the overwhelming support of our community,” PHCC

Superintendent Nicole MacTavish said on Wednesday. “We love the work we do, supporting high school students and adult learners on their way to high-skill, high-wage, high-demand careers. Our graduates are leaders in their fields, in Vermont and beyond, and we all depend on them every day. As the Legislature works through the challenge ahead in public education, we are relying on them to ensure that Career & Technical Education retains the strength and vibrancy our community counts on. We believe an outcome of this strength is a clear message, and we appreciate everyone who came out to vote.”

Only in Orwell, part of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD), is there lingering uncertainty about a fiscal year 2026 spending plan.

Voters in the SVUUSD-member towns of Orwell, Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton and West Haven voted collectively on Tuesday to

reject the proposed FY’29 preK-12 budget of \$32,086,270, by a 1,107-789 margin. The budget ask reflected a 5.21% increase in total spending, but was expected to result in an education property tax decrease in four of the district’s six towns — including in Orwell.

Those SVUUSD voters did endorse, by an 1,181-720 tally, a separate referendum requesting a transfer of \$700,000 in general fund surplus to the district’s capital improvements and repairs reserve fund.

Slate Valley directors will now need to regroup and determine whether to warn the same budget for a revote, or make changes to it and take another swing.

It took five tries before SVUUSD residents endorsed the district’s current spending plan, and district officials don’t want that scenario to play out again this year.

Reporter John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

MAUSD eyes student support

Principals offer insight on resources, system in place

By MARIN HOWELL

BRISTOL — The Mount Abraham Unified School District Board late last month got a chance to hear from some of the district’s principals about the systems and resources in place for supporting students.

Available supports for students has been a big topic in the district in recent years, particularly this past spring, when community members raised concerns about pupils not getting the assistance they needed, and asked district officials to preserve student-facing positions originally eyed as potential cost reductions during last year’s budget cycle.

Community members’ concerns were closely tied to budget conversations last spring, when MAUSD voters twice shot down fiscal year 2025 spending proposals before adopting a budget on the third try.

On March 4, MAUSD voters approved a \$34,894,443 district spending plan for the upcoming fiscal year that reflects the reduction of eight fulltime equivalent (FTE) positions achieved without layoffs, including 4 FTE unfilled roles related to social emotional learning, or SEL.

In addition to presenting on the systems currently in place to meet students’ needs, district principals on Feb. 18 were asked if there should be any concern about money for those social emotional learning positions coming out of the proposed budget.

None of the principals at the Feb. 18 meeting voiced such concern.

“I think part of it is not just ‘is it enough?’ but are there people willing to apply?” Bristol Elementary School Principal Aaron Boynton said. “I have three unfilled (positions) currently... People aren’t applying. I think I still have an SEL thing posted. There’s just nobody to do it, so there’s that reality.”

Mount Abraham Union High School Principal Shannon Warden highlighted school officials’ efforts to build capacity and make adjustments based on staffing.

“For me, in my position, I think we’re OK right now,” she said. “Could we always use more? Yes, and it’s very similar to ‘Could we all use a bigger house?’ Yes, and then you’re going to fill that space... We’ve had to do some shuffling and that sort of thing, but I think for us, right now, it’s working.”

SUPPORTS IN PLACE

District principals at the Feb. 18 meeting provided an overview of social emotional learning and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in the district, in which levels of support build off one another depending on a student’s needs.

“Each school has their own unique

characteristics due to variations in demographics, socioeconomic backgrounds, community context and even the school building itself, making each learning environment distinct and requiring tailored approaches to support,” Monkton Central School Principal Michael Lansing said. “What you’re going to see tonight is kind of a broad overview of things we have available to us. How they’re applied and how each of us do it is a little bit different due to all these different circumstances.”

Beeman Elementary School Principal Travis Park explained that “Tier 1” or “universal” supports are for all students. Those include personalized learning plans, access to school counselors and school-wide expectations detailed in student/family handbooks.

“If we’re feeling like they need a little bit more on top of what we give to everybody, we have where they can come together through the MTSS, and we look to create student support plans, and that’s really targeted and focused on them, on how can we best support that individual student,”

he said.

That second level of support — called Tier 2 or “targeted” support — can include counselor-led group sessions, SEL coaching support for teachers and a check in-check out system aimed at providing positive support on a more regular basis for students.

Boynton told the board that about 3% of MAUSD students receive supports at the intensive level, or Tier 3.

“If targeted isn’t quite working, and there’s still more questions, we want to discover more, we want to find out more about a student, we might be looking at the (Individualized Education Program) process, special education process,” he explained.

Other intensive interventions can include 504 plan development, behavior intervention plans and safety plan implementation.

“At the elementary level at least, sometimes a safety plan might include something between students,” Boynton said. “Maybe an event occurred and there needs to be some parameters put in place to ensure that they’re separated for a little bit and staff know how to navigate that.”

Professional support available at the intensive level includes school social workers, school-based clinicians and agencies like the Counseling Service of Addison County.

Principals also discussed how school officials would identify a student who receives universal or targeted support. Monkton’s Lansing explained the district uses a school-wide information system

to monitor incidents and track data.

He noted each school has a team that reviews data collected in the system, which can be used to inform school officials’ approach to support.

For example, Monkton Central staff found that data from this past November showed there were more referrals on Monday than any other day of the week, and that many of those referrals were related to “obtaining peer attention.”

“So, we’re like ‘Hey man, a lot of referrals happen on Monday. We believe it’s kids who want to get attention from their friends; what can we do about it?’” Lansing recalled. “What we did was we did a six-week universal plan...every Monday we had an a.m. recess.”

The plan was aimed at offering students an opportunity to engage with their peers at the start of the day, Lansing explained. Monkton Central staff were planning to meet to talk about the effort and if it made a difference.

Data collected through the information system also plays a role in how targeted or intensive social emotional learning support happens. Lansing offered an example of how data can show different aspects of referrals for a student and be used to craft a targeted plan based on what school officials notice.

School board members posed several questions to principals during the presentation, seeking more information about how the MTSS plays a role in responding to an incident in the moment and ongoing training and support for educators.

Bristol Elementary Assistant Principal Bill Huggett noted that one of school officials’ goals is to have every teacher go through de-escalation training every two years.

“That is something that is critical, so that when you run into those situations, we’re all not needlessly escalating the behavior,” he said.

LOOKING AHEAD

Principals then weighed in on the question posed by MAUSD board Chair Erin Jipner about whether there should be any concern over funds for unfilled social emotional learning-related positions coming out of the proposed FY’26 budget.

“As a board, we want to know that the budget we’re putting forward is giving you all and our kiddos the best chance at developing as a whole child and having the system be healthy,” Jipner said. “If that feels like the direction we’re going, I’m still comfortable with what we’ve done with the budget; I just want to know, and I want the board to know, you all have that same idea — that that’s where we’re headed as a district.”

MAUSD board member Kathi Appar noted that while the current system might be working in a bigger school like Mount Abe, she’s heard that’s not the case in the district’s elementary schools.

“I’m hearing that shuffling is difficult, and that it’s not the answer,” she said. “I am concerned that cutting any more positions, if we don’t have the funding there, we can’t even advertise for those positions. So, I am worried that you all are having to do an awful lot above and beyond with this MTSS system and others to make sure that the needs of the students are being met, but the bottom line is we don’t have, especially in the elementary schools, enough bodies to provide a safe and really fruitful environment for every child — that we’re having to scramble to do that.”

Lansing noted that certain student profiles are challenging and also part of the job.

“It’s my 11th year as principal in three different schools in three different states...there’s always really hard situations. It’s not abnormal, or just here,” he said.

He added MAUSD has a good team and pointed to some of the complexities and challenges that come with addressing student needs.

“I think we manage well, we do OK,” Lansing said.

As the conversation wrapped up, MAUSD board member Liz Sayre noted the presentation could help inform the school board’s future planning.

“Some of the struggles of shuffling staff, my understanding is that it’s really hard when it’s from one building to another building that a need arises,” she explained. “It’s a lot trickier to shuffle with the elementary schools being the sizes that they are. So, I wonder if that helps us as a board think about future planning.”

Whiting

(Continued from Page 15A)
election. Incumbents winning re-election were Marcia King, three

years on the selectboard; Peg Allen, three years as lister; Alison Remy, three years as auditor; Rani Fallon, one year as delinquent tax collector; and Mike Dame, one year as first constable. Three library trustees were re-elected: Heather Mattison (three years), Jaime Quenneville (two years), and Tara Trudo (two years).

In addition, one other important piece of town business garnered a lot of attention at Tuesday’s meeting: Setting June 28 as the date for the Whiting town picnic.

Whiting voters joined their peers in Brandon, Leicester, Goshen, Sudbury and Pittsford in casting ballots on the budget and board members representing the Otter Valley Unified Union schools. The OVUU spending plan passed — but only by one vote.

The Brandon-area district

OK’d a FY26 spending plan of \$28,022,999, which is 9.38% higher in per pupil spending than the budget approved last year. It passed on Tuesday by a tally of 817 yes, 816 no.

The approved spending represents a 4.5% hike (\$1,214,777) from last year.

There were no surprises in the election of school board members. The winning school directors in uncontested races were Lesley Bienvenue (Leicester), Lauren Thomas (Brandon), Laurie L. Bertrand (Sudbury), Brett Mullin and Jessica Markowski (Pittsford) and Barbara Ebling (at-large). Two OVUUS board seats — one representing Whiting and one at-large — appear to have not garnered enough write-in votes to pick a winner. The new board will have to appoint those members.

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<p>JAMESON IRISH WHISKEY 1.75L</p> <p>SALE PRICE \$51.99 SAVE \$8.00</p>	<p>ABSOLUT VODKA 1.75L</p> <p>SALE PRICE \$36.99 SAVE \$6.00</p>	<p>MAKER'S MARK BOURBON WHISKEY 1.75L</p> <p>SALE PRICE \$56.99 SAVE \$3.00</p>	<p>HENDRICK'S GIN 750ML</p> <p>SALE PRICE \$36.99 SAVE \$4.00</p>	<p>BOMBAY SAPPHIRE GIN 750ML</p> <p>SALE PRICE \$21.99 SAVE \$4.00</p>

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Ripton

(Continued from Page 1A)
requiring ACSD classrooms to have “a minimum of 10 students in not more than two grades.”
Baker, in an email to the *Independent*, said she’d provide an update of any further details at the ACSD board’s March 10 meeting.
It was on Feb. 10 that the ACSD board voted 8-4 to revise the district’s minimum class-size policy (D6), intended “to ensure the district maintains equitable access for all ACSD students to learning environments that are appropriate for academic success, social and emotional wellbeing, and are sufficient to support the district’s educational programming,” according to the policy’s preamble.
District officials recently projected RES’s fall 2025 K/1 enrollment at three students — less than half of the 10-student minimum. The revised policy allows the superintendent to reassign students in underenrolled classes, as a group, to a different ACSD school. In Ripton’s case,

Salisbury Community School has often been cited as a potential landing spot.
In an effort to salvage K/1 instruction at Ripton Elementary, ACSD officials reached out on Feb. 11 to all rising ACSD kindergarten and grade 1 families, to see if they’d consider enrolling their children at Ripton this fall. ACSD serves students in Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. The district publicized the offer through multiple outlets, and Ripton residents also organized outreach efforts.
Families were given until March 3 to declare interest, a timeline that would allow ACSD to finalize RES’s 2025-26 enrollment by March 24.
But ultimately, there weren’t enough takers, Baker announced in a March 3 email to the Ripton community.
“We are currently anticipating three students in the 2025-26 K/1 classroom. To date, five

additional families expressed interest in learning more about the possibility of joining the K/1 classroom. As a result of our initial conversations with these families, two students may be eligible and interested in continuing to pursue an opportunity to join the Ripton K/1 classroom. At present, we are looking at the potential of as many as five students enrolled in the K/1 classroom,” Baker wrote in her email.
“I know this response will raise concern and that many of you will have questions about what happens next,” she added.
Baker and acting Ripton Elementary Principal Bjarki Sears were slated to meet with the RES stakeholders this Thursday, March 6, at 5:30 p.m. in the school library.
Ripton Elementary was forecasted to serve a total of 29 K-5 students this fall, a number that includes a handful of children from the Route 100 towns of Granville and Hancock, which don’t have their own elementary schools.

By the way

(Continued from Page 1A)
otherwise. The U.S. Senate in 2022 unanimously approved the Sunshine Protection Act — which would have made daylight saving time permanent throughout the country — but the U.S. House hasn’t brought the legislation up for a vote.

Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., has opened his web portal to accept FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending requests from state and local government entities and nonprofit organizations based in Vermont. Organizations are encouraged to submit their requests early to accommodate corrections that need to be made or questions that need to be answered before the deadline. All forms must be completed and submitted by Friday, March 28, at 5 p.m. Apply at welch.senate.gov/services/cds-requests.

Students from across the state are set to rally in and around the Vermont Statehouse on Thursday, March 13, to protest proposed policies they believe would result in the state back-pedaling on its stated climate action goals. Gov. Phil Scott has asked the 2025 Legislature to pass H.289, the so-called “Climate Omnibus Bill,” which among other things proposes to make multiple cost-related changes to the state’s Global Warming Solutions Act.

Those amendments include changes to its current mandate to meet specific greenhouse gas reduction thresholds prescribed for 2030 and 2050. Instead, H.289, simply calls upon Vermont to “continue to implement the policies to achieve the objectives of the 2016 Paris Agreement and remain at net zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors into the future.” President Trump recently announced his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, an international climate change treaty. Students participating in the March 13 Youth Lobby are being asked to meet at Montpelier High School at 10:30 a.m., and then march to the Statehouse at 11 a.m. and wrap up by 1 p.m. Students planning on attending are being asked to register at tinyurl.com/45euxt68. Email youthlobbyvt@gmail.com with any questions.

Want to relive 2021’s 1.5-mile relocation of the historic New Haven Junction Train Depot to a town-owned parcel on North Street? It’s one of several interesting highlights that’ll be part of Vermont Public’s TV show “Made Here,” to air Thursday, March 6, at 8 p.m. The show will feature a film called “Vanish — Disappearing Icons of a Rural America,” described as “A remarkable story of past and present” that chronicles the

“visual-preservation adventures of photographer Jim Westphalen, as he travels across the country seeking out and creating stunning imagery of America’s disappearing rural structures.” The film also explains many of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation programs, including barn and preservation grants. Can’t catch the March 6 airing? The film will be rebroadcast at 9 p.m. on March 10, according to Vermont Public.

Mark the date: The Addison County River Watch Collaborative, Pollinator Pathways and other partners on May 25 will host a workshop on “green stormwater infrastructure practices” designed to reduce the impact of stormwater on area roads, homes and rivers. The event, from 1-3 p.m. at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, will allow participants to connect with contractors, funding sources and ideas that can make your yard more stormwater-friendly. Unbeknownst to many, residential lawns play an important role in slowing and soaking up groundwater that might otherwise pick up chemicals and other impurities on their way into Vermont streams, rivers and lakes. To learn more email acrwcvt@gmail.com, or go to acrwc.org.



Let’s vote
SALLY LINCOLN (FRONT) and Laura Fair are a little surprised by what they are hearing at the Ferrisburgh town meeting on Saturday. The two introduced a discussion on the war in Gaza, but it was ruled to be not relevant to town meeting.


Independent photo/Steve James

Sewer bond

(Continued from Page 1A)
At the top of the list were a series of age-related upgrades that will address outdated technology and equipment that’s prone to failure. This phase of the project will involve, among other things, renovating the main pump station, improving the headworks, modernizing the secondary treatment/sequencing batch reactors, replacing an ultraviolet disinfection system, and making various site improvements.
“If we don’t push this (project) forward at this point, our costs are going to be exponentially greater,” Cherington said, citing in part “sunk costs” — investments in temporary and short-term fixes.
Middlebury’s WWTP was built in 2000 and was due for an overhaul four years ago, according to public works officials. Replacement parts are difficult to find for the plant, which operates 24/7 and last year treated around 378 million gallons of domestic and industrial wastewater. In addition, the facility receives 2.5 million gallons of septage per year from haulers of septic tank waste from surrounding areas. Given the average 1,000-gallon residential septic tank, this equates to around 2,500 additional properties served by the Middlebury plant.

A portion of the \$49.5 million project includes a series of technology-related enhancements to improve the plant’s solids handling process (the sludge), provide reliable alternatives for solids disposal, increased environmental resiliency, the ability to comply with environmental regulations in the long term, and energy efficiency upgrades.
Cherington and her colleagues are already preparing grant applications to such entities as: the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which could cover 10-35% of the project costs and \$250,000 for engineering services; the Federal Emergency Management Agency to subsidize flood protection for the plant’s main pump; the Northern Borders Regional Commission for money for regional septage receiving and/or a regional solids handling dryer; and a Congressional earmark.
Cherington at Monday’s town meeting acknowledged the uncertainty of federal grants and services under a Trump administration that’s been promising massive cuts. The administration is paying South African billionaire Elon Musk and his “Department of Government Efficiency” team to search for what

they say is government waste.
But Cherington remains optimistic about federal aid. She noted that absent significant outside funding, which has typically been granted to town infrastructure projects, Middlebury wastewater rates would need to double to cover 100% of the project costs. Those rates currently include a base rate of \$52 every three months and a usage rate of \$7.55 per 1,000 gallons.
If all proceeds according to plan, the WWTP project will be completed in 2030, at which time debt service on the bond would begin.
Heather Seeley, who left the selectboard on Tuesday after nine years on the panel, hailed Tuesday’s WWTP vote. Seeley chaired the town’s infrastructure committee for several years.
“I thank the voters for trusting us and supporting us,” she said, giving a special shout-out to wastewater Superintendent Jeremy Rathbun, and the many other town staff that helped further the project.
“I know the selectboard and staff will do everything they can to keep the impact (of the bond) as low as possible on our rates,” Seeley added.
John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



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Why supporting a free press is so vital today

Rarely in our country's history has the nation needed a strong, independent press more than it does today. We need a press that accurately tells what's going on in the nation's capital, to explain the serious consequences of this administration's cuts to domestic programs and the betrayal of our long-standing allies while also becoming a patsy to a villainous dictator. We need a press free to publish truth to power, a press free to encourage public discourse of on all sides of the issues, a press free to dig into the meat of any issue, and be a trustworthy source of *news* for the community.

It goes without saying that same free press should be unafraid to question and challenge facts and leadership when their actions seemingly go against the public good — a tenet that is seriously under threat by this current president.

Not that the press is free to do whatever it pleases. It must endure market-based constraints. If it is to

maintain its integrity, its news must be reliable and trustworthy. If it is to grow and be successful, it must demonstrate consistent value to its customers. These are constraints we gladly embrace.

The *Addison County Independent* recognizes how fortunate we are to live in a state, and among a population, that respects the tenets of a free press. We're fortunate to be able to challenge facts we think are false, expose lies and explain the consequences of actions proposed to the citizens whose lives will be impacted.

Importantly, we are free to act on our conscience and stand by our professional ethics because we are independent. Being solely owned and operated is an *enormous asset*. It allows us to operate as a newspaper should — without favor and without fear of retribution or influence by investors or stockholders, or political tyrants.



ANGELO LYNN

"WE CELEBRATE THE **FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADDY ALL-STARS** WITH HUMBLE THANKS."

— Angelo Lynn

The one constraint we most value is predicated on how well we serve our community. If we're not that listen more intently, change our tactics and do a better job.

To that end, we celebrate the first anniversary of the ADDY ALL-STARS with humble thanks for the extra level of support that over 232 friends and subscribers have made. This "friends of the *Addison Independent*" group has donated over \$40,000 in the first year to help this newspaper keep the public informed and help our advertisers reach their respective markets. These donations represent an average gift of \$100 over the cost of the subscription and help us keep our powerful

team of nine reporters/editors/photographers on our news team (plus all of our columnists) working around the clock.

Our goal this year is to reach 500 ADDY ALL-STARS. That's not just to remain sustainable, but also to develop a stronger network of town correspondents, so we get more coverage more often from each of the county's 22 towns and, the biggest little city, Vergennes.

If you haven't become an ADDY ALL-STAR, please consider signing up today. It's never been more important to have a strong, independent press. And we can assure our readers, the *Independent* will fulfill that role to the best of our ability.

— Angelo Lynn, editor/publisher

Help us puzzle it together.



PARTICIPANTS IN ILSLEY Public Library's annual puzzle competition piece together their entry.

Independent file photo / Steve James

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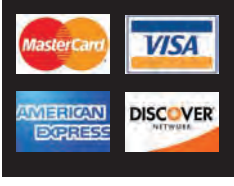
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MUHS SENIOR ALEX Sperry is in control of this 144-pound match on the way to winning the title in the weight class at the Vermont high school championship wrestling tournament in Barre on Saturday.

Photo by Jessie Raymond



TIGER SENIOR AVERY Carl dominates one of his four opponents, none of whom he allowed to score a point, on the way to winning the 157-pound title at the Vermont high school championship wrestling tournament in Barre on this past Friday and Saturday.

Photo by Jessie Raymond

Four Tigers, two Commodores win Vt. titles; Lavoie named outstanding wrestler

By ANDY KIRKALDY

BARRE — Four members of the Middlebury Union High School wrestling team won state titles as the Tigers made a run at a Vermont crown. But MUHS fell just short of dethroning perennial champion Mount Anthony (MAU) in the Vermont championship tournament this past Friday and Saturday in the Barre Auditorium.

The Patriots broke a tie by

winning the final two championship contested matcheds, and prevailed with 210.5 points — just 11.5 points clear of the Tigers’ 199.

Spaulding was the only other team in Patriots’ and Tigers’ scoring neighborhood in the 25-team field, with 177.5 points. Otter Valley (109) was fifth, Vergennes (91.5) was seventh, and Mount Abraham (63) was 10th.

Winning individual titles for

MUHS were senior Avery Carl at 157 pounds, his second individual state championship and first since he was a freshman; senior Alex Sperry at 144, his first after reaching the podium regularly since he was a freshman; and sophomores Tucker Wright at 175 and Wyatt Kennett at 165, the first for both.

Also reaching the podium for MUHS were freshman Miles Goetz, second at 106; sophomore Jason

Sperry, third at 150; sophomore Parker Carl, fourth at 190; junior Steven Lackard, third at 215; and junior Kameron Raymond, fifth at 285.

Two Commodores also won titles. Senior Isaac Preston claimed his second, earning the 215-pound crown after winning at 190 pounds in 2024. He won both those state titles by pinning everyone in his path. VUHS junior Payton Lavoie

won at 190 this year and was voted by the coaches as the tournament’s outstanding wrestler after defeating higher seeds on the way to his title.

Also reaching the podium for VUHS were sophomore Stephen Kittredge, second at 126, and freshman Jackson Scribner, fourth at 138.

Five Otters placed. Senior Isaac Whitney, second at 190, and junior Drake Felkl, second at 215, had the

best results. Junior Maisa Allen took third at 113, freshman Colby Benoit was fourth at 144, and sophomore Blake Allen was third at 157.

Four members of the young Mount Abe team reached the podium, all of them sophomores: Baxter Montgomery (third at 120), Isayah Isham (third at 138), Mason Atkins (sixth at 157) and Lincoln Painter (sixth at 165).

(See Wrestling, Page 3B)

Tiger girls’ hockey wins handily

Defeats Stowe in first round of Div. II playoffs; MVU next

By ANDY KIRKALDY

MIDDLEBURY — The No. 3 seed Middlebury Union High School girls’ hockey team broke open Tuesday’s home Division II quarterfinal vs. No. 6 Stowe with three straight goals in the second period on the way to a 5-1 victory.

The Tigers, who improved to

12-7-2, will next take on No. 2 Missisquoi in Swanton on Friday at 7 p.m. At the same time in the other semifinal, No. 4 Hartford (9-9-3) will visit No. 1 seed Burr & Burton (15-4-1). Friday’s winners will meet for the D-II title at the University of Vermont’s Gutterson Arena at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

One fact stands out: The Tigers are unbeaten against those three teams.

The Tigers won at Missisquoi, 5-2, on Feb. 1. The Tigers defeated Burr & Burton at home, 2-1, on Dec. 28. They tied Hartford at home, 5-5, in their season opener, (See Girls’ hockey Page 2B)



TIGER SOPHOMORE FORWARD Julia Morrisey banks the puck in off the Stowe goalie for the Tigers’ second goal in their 5-1 D-II quarterfinal win over visiting Stowe on Tuesday.

Independent photo/Steve James

Score BOARD

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls’ Basketball

2/27 Mt Abe vs Missisquoi.....43-16
2/27 MUHS vs Colchester41-29
2/27 Milton vs VUHS57-34
2/27 OV vs Springfield45-29
3/1 VUHS vs Fairfax76-18

D-II Playoffs

3/4 #4 Mt Abe vs #13 Lk. Region.....44-28
3/5 #12 U-32 at #5 MUHS.....Late

D-III Playoffs

3/5 #9 VUHS at #8 Winooski.....Late

Boys’ Basketball

D-II Playoffs

2/26 #8 N Country vs #9 Mt Abe56-50
2/28 #4 OV vs #5 Fair Haven.....51-46
3/1 at #3 Harwood vs #6 MUHS.....57-50
3/5 #1 Montpelier vs OV (Barre)Late

D-III Playoffs

2/26 #3 VUHS vs #14 Oxbow49-29
2/28 #6 Winooski vs #3 VUHS46-40

(See Scoreboard, Page 5B)

Mount Abe girls advance

Other local squads set to open playoffs

By ANDY KIRKALDY

ADDISON COUNTY — Mount Abraham was the only high school girls’ basketball team to set action before the Wednesday deadline for the *Independent* as the playoffs got underway. And the Eagles, the No. 4 seed in Division II, won their first-round matchup on Tuesday to set up a likely showdown with No. 5 seed Middlebury in Bristol on Friday.

The winner of that game will almost certainly travel to face No. 1 seed North Country in a semifinal on March 12. The Falcons have lost only once this winter. The final in Barre will be played on March 15.

EAGLES

On Tuesday Mount Abe brushed aside No. 13 Lake Region, 44-28. Mackenzie Griner led Mount Abe with 13 points and nine rebounds, and Louisa Painter scored 12 points

as the Eagles improved to 17-4.

Mya Patenaude led the 6-15 Rangers with six points.

TIGERS

MUHS earned their No. 5 seed with a 14-6 record. They were set to host #12 U-32 (6-14) on Wednesday in what will be a rematch of an early-season Tiger loss to the Raiders. The winner of that game gets the Eagles on Friday.

OTTERS

Otter Valley doubled their 2024 win total in finishing 6-14 and earning the No. 14 seed in D-II. Their reward was a trip to No. 3 Lamoille in a game that was moved to Thursday at 7 p.m. The teams did not face one another this season.

COMMODORES

The 9-11 Commodores drew the No. 9 seed in D-III and were set to visit No. 8 Winooski (11-8) on Wednesday after deadline. The teams did not meet in the regular

(See Girls’ hoop, Page 5B)



COMMODORE GUARD COHEN Howell looks to make a play against Winooski during the Division III boys’ basketball quarterfinal playoff game in Vergennes on Friday.

Independent photo/Steve James

VUHS boys’ hoop falls just short

Winooski edges Commodores in D-III postseason

By ANDY KIRKALDY

VERGENNES — Visiting No. 6 seed Winooski started strong on Friday against the No. 3 Vergennes Union High School boys’ basketball team.

The Commodores bounced back and finally took a late lead, but the Spartans closed strong to eke out a 46-40 victory and end what was another successful VUHS season.

Winooski (15-6) led by 39-32 with 6:11 to go when Hussein Mohamed hit a free throw. But the 14-7 Commodores reeled off eight straight points during the next five minutes to take a 40-39 lead.

Forward Ryker Mosehauer drove for a bucket at 4:40, Quinn LeBeau nailed a three-pointer at 3:50, and Spencer Gebro converted a miss at 2:50. And after LeBeau grabbed an offensive board, Mosehauer drew a foul and hit one of two free throws, and the Commodores had the lead, 40-39, at 1:13.

Mohamed pushed the ball, drew a foul and hit a free throw

(See Commodores, Page 4B)



COMMODORE FORWARD RYKER Mosehauer knifes inside the Winooski defense for layup during Friday night’s Division III basketball quarterfinal playoff game in Vergennes.

Independent photo/Steve James



TIGER SOPHOMORE DEFENDER Sedona Carrara and sophomore forward Julia Morrissey (#5) watch Carrara's crisp wrist shot get past Stowe goalie Ella McAllister for the Tigers' first goal in Tuesday's D-II quarterfinal win.

Independent photo/Steve James

Girls' hockey

(Continued from Page 1B)

and more recently defeated the Hurricanes on the road, 4-2.

That's all well and good, said MUHS Coach P.J. Lalonde after Tuesday's game. He said his team should approach Friday's game, and hopefully the D-II final to follow, with confidence.

But the Tigers also have to be ready to play their best, he added. "They've played really well against all those teams. We're confident in our ability to proceed through the tournament," Lalonde said. "But that comes with hard work and poise. These teams that are left are not going to roll over by any means. But they're ready to do it. They're certainly up to the challenge."

Moving forward, the Tigers might have to start better than they did in Tuesday's first period, when the Raiders put six of their 14 shots on MUHS goalie Ruby Hubbell, at least half of them challenging.

Hubbell made excellent kick saves on Ada Reilly and Lydia Mandigo in the first eight minutes, with 4:34 to go, dove to cover a shot that deflected off a defender, and with two minutes left kicked away Sydney Larson's low one-timer from the slot.

"There were a couple times the puck took some funny bounces, and she was up to the challenge," Lalonde said. "She's been absolutely phenomenal for us throughout the last part of the season."

The Tigers did fire seven of their 26 shots on goal in the period. But Stowe goalie Ella McAllister was not tested to the same extent as Hubbell, although she did do well to deny Hayden Dunakin from the right side in the fifth minute and Lia Calzini from between the circles in the eighth minute.

Lalonde acknowledged the Tigers were not their sharpest in the first 15 minutes, and the coaches and team talked things over between periods.

"We certainly stressed moving to open space, looking for each other, all that stuff that seems to elude us sometimes," he said.

Then the game quickly took a turn in the second period, with sophomore defender Sedona Carrara finding the net.

Shortly after the opening faceoff the Tigers worked the puck deep into the right corner. Calzini knocked it loose, and it popped to Carrara at the top of the right circle. She skated to the top of the left circle, cut to the dot, curled to move the puck to her forehand, and whipped the puck home 42 seconds into the period to put the Tigers ahead.

The Raiders were awarded a power play at 2:10 that the Tigers stuffed. MUHS then went right back on the attack, and Julia Morrissey made it 2-0 at 5:47. Defender Ireland Hanley shot on McAllister, and Morrissey picked up the puck just to the right of the goal and backhanded it home off

the sprawling goalie.

The Tigers kept pressing, and Calzini made it 3-0 at 12:42. Kenyon Connors fed Calzini between the circles, and Calzini's shot pinged in off the left post. Dunakin got the second assist.

Stowe was awarded a second power play late in the period, and Quinn Sheldon one-timed home a Jackie Henderson feed into the slot with 42 seconds left in the period to make it 3-1.

The Raiders' hopes of a comeback realistically lasted 44 seconds into the third period. That's when Calzini converted a breakaway with a short wrist into the upper left corner. Carrara got the assist for springing Calzini out of the defensive zone.

Two minutes into the period, a Raider was sent to the penalty box. Eighteen seconds after that Nova Bojanowski flicked home a Dunakin rebound from close range, and it was 5-1.

The Tigers took one more penalty later in the period, and Hubbell made the last of what where her several saves on Henderson from the right point. Hubbell finished with 13 stops, while McAllister blocked 21 shots for Stowe (8-12).

The Tigers managed five goals despite a rare game without a point from dangerous leading scorer McKenna Raymond. LaLonde said it was a good sign, noting in particular that four Tigers scored and two goals were scored by crashing the net.

"We were commending them for their net-front presence tonight," Lalonde said. "Getting the pucks to the net and having a presence, that was great to see."

He was also happy to see a defensive group led by Carrara, Quinn Doria and Hanley have a good night.

"We definitely had some lapses, but overall we were strong in front of Ruby," Lalonde said. "We held down the fort, kept pucks to the outside."

Walking with Coda — and then without him

Last week we pulled our snowshoes out of storage and took them out into the woods for a walk. We did this partly because we could. It was the first time in a while that we had enough snow down here in the Champlain Valley for snowshoes to be meaningful: enough that if we had taken the same walk without them, we would have been post-holing our way through the woods.

We also did it in memory of our dog Coda, walking our lower loop trail that was always his favorite.

For nearly 13 years until this month, we have taken twice-daily walks with Coda. My wife Deborah more often than me, but frequently all of us. In Coda's younger and more exuberant years, we'd often let him off leash to go bounding through the woods. Or through the snow. He loved winter rambles in fresh powder. If he strayed too far, we'd seek to lure him back with treats. Sometimes it worked, especially

if he knew we had treats in the pocket. Sometimes it didn't. Like if he knew where an old deer bone lay hidden. Or if he came upon some nice fresh deer droppings, which he liked to gobble up like chocolates.

He always loved walks, and for most of his life he had boundless energy. Never wanting the walk to end, if he sensed us turning toward home he would dig his heels in, or just flop on the ground and roll over. In the winter, his protest against returning home was to make doggy snow-angels. (Or are they snow doggy-angels?)

We had a few different trails through the woods. I usually opted for one of our shorter walks, in part because it kept to dryer ground. But whenever we got to the trail intersection and I would start to turn left toward the shorter loop, Coda would plant his feet for just a moment, and look back and forth between me and the path to his right, hoping on this occasion he might get his way and

we'd turn right instead. Often he did get his way. And we'd all get back home with muddier feet.

Some of my best lessons in attentiveness to nature came from Coda, whose nose was always alert to smells. His constant stopping and stooping to sniff made me have to stop to. (90-pound dogs have the ability to do that.) Later in his life (and mine), I finally began to learn my lessons of patience and attentiveness that he'd worked so hard to teach me. Instead of just tugging on his leash to get him going again, I'd just stop with him and look around, and listen, and be still, and wonder at what he might be smelling or thinking about. Lacking a dog's nose, of course I could only guess. But I might notice a patch of moss, or a red eft, or some small fern or wildflower I hadn't before seen.

Or a pile of deer droppings

buried just an inch under the snow from the previous night's dusting. Usually by the time I realized what he was nosing in the snow for, it would be too late and he'd have already gotten a few. No doggy kisses allowed that night.

For the past year of his life, though, Coda was in hospice care. His body was giving out. I had to help him up the stairs, and when we went for a ride in the car I needed to lift him up into the



MATTHEW DICKERSON

hatchback. He got painkillers in the mornings and evenings. No more bounding away from us on walks. He would instead just trudge alongside us often a pace or two behind, sometimes stopping to catch his breath. And yet still rarely wanting to come home even when he was clearly tired. And still able to find those goodies left in the snow by passing deer.

And still eager to play a game of tug with me, with either his big stuffed alligator or his big stuffed trout. He'd taunt me, dropping the animal on the floor in front of me and waiting for me to make a move to steal it. In his young days, he could go for hours — easily outlasting his old man. For his last few months though, even his stamina for tugging had waned and he'd last only a few minutes before he'd concede and let me have the trout.

And then he was gone. Laid in the ground in a big hole his boy Peter dug for him out by the raspberry patch.

On that first snowshoe trek without him, when we got to the intersection where a decision was needed, we paused and looked both ways, gazed out into the brush that always got the attention of his nose. Then we turned right and took the longer way.



R.I.P., Coda



THE MUHS GIRLS' hockey team celebrates the second Tiger goal, scored by Julia Morrissey, in their 5-1 D-II quarterfinal victory over visiting Stowe on Tuesday.

Independent photo/Steve James

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VUHS JUNIOR PAYTON Lavoie was voted the Vermont high school wrestling tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler after winning the 190-pound title in Barre this past Friday and Saturday.

Photo by Jessie Raymond



MOUNT ABE'S LINCOLN Painter works to break free from his 165-pound foe at the Vermont high school championship wrestling tournament in Barre on Saturday. Painter finished sixth in the weight class.

Photo by Jessie Raymond



OTTER BLAKE ALLEN makes a move from on top of an opponent in a 157-pound match at the Vermont high school championship wrestling tournament in Barre on Saturday. Allen was third in the weight class.

Photo by Jessie Raymond

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Wrestling

(Continued from Page 1B)

The results of the championship matches, with local competitors and local results at each weight class, were:

106 pounds: Brayden Buchanan, Essex, defeated Miles Goetz, MUHS, by technical fall in the final.

Also, Mason Markowski, OV went 0-2.

113: OV's Maisa Allen finished third with a 2-1 record. Also: Addie Smith, VUHS went 0-2.

120: Mount Abe's Baxter Montgomery finished third with a 2-1 record. Also, Kegan Stone, MUHS went 0-2.

126: Cahota Lafond (Col) pinned Stephen Kittredge of VUHS in the final.

Also: Bradley Lavangie, Mt. Abe went 1-2.

132: Jordan Couture, MUHS went 0-2.

138: Mount Abe's Isayah Isham took third by defeating Commodore Jackson Scribner in the consolation

final. Isham finished with a 4-1 record, and Scribner with a 2-2 mark. Tiger Colton Murray went 1-2.

144: Tiger Alex Sperry defeated Michael Grasso of Spaulding, 8-1, in the final.

OV's Colby Benoit finished fourth with a 2-2 record. Also, Eagle Clayton Markwell lost two close matches.

150: Tiger Jason Sperry finished third, losing his first match and then winning four straight, including the consolation final.

157: Tiger Avery Carl defeated MAU's Spencer Boucher in the final, 14-0. Carl did not surrender a point in his four matches. OV's Blake Allen finished third with a 3-1 mark, and Eagle Mason Atkins was sixth with a 2-2 record.

165: Tiger Wyatt Kennett rallied with a five-point third period to defeat Brody Coppins of Colchester, 6-4, in the final. That came after Kennett, the No. 5 seed, defeated No. 1 seed Gabe Bache of Fair Haven, 5-1, in the semifinal round, with another five-point third period.

Mount Abe's Lincoln Painter finished sixth at 2-2. Otter Lincoln Wilcox, the No. 4 seed, lost both his matches in close bouts, one to Kennett.

175: Tiger Tucker Wright pinned Mill River's Ethan Patch in the final's third period after rolling to a 13-3 lead. Wright did not allow

a point in winning three close matches in his first three outings.

Also, OV's Max Potter and Mount Abe's John Meshna both came up short in two matches.

190: Payton Lavoie, the No. 3 seed, earned his outstanding wrestler award by rallying in the final to pin top-seeded Otter wrestler Isaac Whitney in the second period after trailing, 5-1. That came after Lavoie trailed No. 2 seed Aiden Riordan of MAU, 6-1, in the semifinal round before storming back to win, 9-6. The Commodore pinned his first two opponents.

Also, Tiger Parker Carl claimed fourth place in this weight class, losing only to Whitney and Riordan in finishing 2-2.

215: Another Commodore made a good case to be named outstanding wrestler. When Isaac Preston pinned OV's Drake Felkl in the first two minutes of the 215-pound final, that made four straight first-period pins for the two-time VUHS champion in the tournament. Preston also racked up first-period pins of all four of his 2024 opponents at 190 pounds on the way to winning his first state title.

Tiger Steven Lackard, the No. 5 seed, finished third with a 4-1 record, losing only to Preston.

285: MAU's Ryan Marsden, the top seed, pinned No. 2 Hunter Ferland of Springfield in the second period to claim the title. That result broke a late tie with MUHS for the

team points lead.

Tiger Kameron Raymond, the No. 3 seed, finished fifth in the weight class with a 2-2 record. OV's Keegan Reid was sixth with a 3-2 mark. Eagle Benji Havey lost his two matches.

Also, the previous weekend a qualifying tournament was held for high school girls to compete for spots at the New England girls' championship. Qualifiers were given their medals Saturday in Barre, including the following local wrestlers: 1. Maisa Allen; OV, first at 114; 2. Addie Smith, VUHS, second at 114; Hailey Isham, Mt. Abe, first at 132; and Commodore Caeleigh White, first at 165.

Carl wins wrestling scholarship

MIDDLEBURY — MUHS senior Avery Carl has been selected as a recipient of the 2025 New England Pride Scholarship for wrestlers. The goal of the scholarship is to recognize outstanding high school seniors who are moving on to collegiate wrestling. The aim is to show pride in New England Wrestlers and to support the next generation of collegiate wrestlers.

Carl is one of 18 recipients, all of whom will receive a \$500 scholarship. The scholarships will be awarded at a ceremony in Fitchburg, Mass., on March 16.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 6:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Tuesday, March 11:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

Thursday, March 13:
9:00 - 11:00 AM Public Skating

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COMMODORE GUARD REESE Paquette guards Winooski's Omar Turnage during Friday night's Division III boys' basketball quarterfinal playoff game in Vergennes.

Independent photo/Steve James

Commodores

(Continued from Page 1B)

five seconds later, and the game was tied. Mosehauer rebounded the miss, but the Commodores couldn't convert at the other end. And then the Spartans nailed the biggest shot of the game: a three by Omar Turnage, from the right corner at 0:36, and the Spartans led, 43-40.

There was still plenty of time, but with 15 seconds remaining, the Commodores missed the first of two free throws and committed a lane violation on the second.

With 13.4 seconds left, Mohamed hit the first of two free throws and missed the second to make it a four-point Winooski lead. And in the scramble for the rebound, the ball went out of bounds off the Commodores. VUHS had to

foul, and with 10.7 seconds on the clock, Dahir Duad iced the win for the Spartans by swishing two free throws to create an insurmountable six-point lead and the final score.

As much as the game's ending was painful, VUHS Coach Eric LeBeau said the beginning was just as problematic. Winooski — and Mohamed — came out firing, and the Commodores appeared to have no answer in the first quarter. Mohamed hit two three-pointers and a jumper in the first three minutes as the Spartans took a 10-3 lead on the way to a 19-9 edge by the end of the first period.

Mohamed scored 10 of his game-high 19 in that period, and Destin Enwa added four of his five points as Winooski asserted itself. Ryan Wright scored all six of his

points in the quarter for VUHS.

LeBeau credited the Spartans for their fast start, but wished the Commodores had matched them.

"Granted, we found ourselves and fought back, like we always do. That was never in doubt," he said. "But I just felt they were more ready to start that game."

Certainly, the Commodores began to play better in the second period. A press rattled the Spartans — they committed six of their 12 turnovers in the quarter — and gave some energy to the Commodores. They outscored their guests, 14-7, to pull within 26-23 at the break.

They could have come closer, but were only one for five from the free-throw line. In all, while Winooski was making nine of 12 free throws during the game, a 75%

clip, the Commodores converted just six of 17 from the line, or 35%.

LeBeau also cited a number of "missed layups and chippies," shots the Commodores might usually make during the game.

But there was a lot to like about the second period if you were a Commodores fan. Spencer Grimm hit a three, Quinn LeBeau hit a three and a layup, Cohen Howell chipped in two assists and strong defense off the bench, and Mosehauer scored three. A 1-3-1 zone to go with the press helped slow the Spartans. Four Spartans scored in the period, including Mohamed, who beat the buzzer with a jumper.

The Spartans added two points to their lead in the third period, which finished at 36-31, Winooski. Four Commodores scored, including a three from Paquette. Winooski center Chris Buker worked loose inside for four points in the period, and Mohamed added another four.

Then came the comeback in the fourth that looked promising for the home team, but ultimately ended in disappointment.

Along with Mohamed's 19 points, Turnage and Oliver Mathys-Vallario scored seven apiece, and Buker added six for Winooski.

For Vergennes, Mosehauer led the way with 11 points, seven rebounds, two assists and two blocks. Gebo had seven points and eight rebounds; LeBeau, eight points and three assists; Wright, six points and two steals; and Howell, two assists and six rebounds.

Team rebounds were even at 29 apiece, and VUHS committed fewer turnovers — 10 to Winooski's 12.

Six seniors will graduate from the program: Gebo, Paquette, Grimm, Ethan Croke, Owen Collette and Hayden Bassett.

They'll be missed, and Coach LeBeau said he's enjoyed this year's team.

"I've seen a lot of these guys since they've been in 4th or 5th grade. I would never question their effort," he said. "My guys have really good attitudes, and give 110% all the time."

LeBeau said they had a good season. The Commodores won 14 games against a schedule of mostly

Division II teams.

"I told those guys in there they're definitely a three seed," he said. "That's what we deserved.

That's what we are. We're a top four Division III basketball team. They earned it. They worked hard all year."



COMMODORE GUARD QUINN LeBeau skies for a layup against Winooski during Friday night's Division III boys' basketball quarterfinal playoff game at VUHS.

Independent photo/Steve James

ADDISON COUNTY School News Briefs


Lacey Greenamyre of Middlebury and **Charles Hodson** of Weybridge recently received degrees at the University of Tampa commencement ceremony on Dec. 13. Hodson graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Management, while Greenamyre graduated with a Master of Science in Exercise and Nutrition Science.

Each semester, Bard College at Simon's Rock recognizes superior scholarship through the dean's list. **Eliza Doucet** of Bristol has earned a place on the list for the fall 2024 semester. To be eligible for this honor, a student must carry 14 or more credits and achieve a grade point average of 3.5.

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Taking it to the mat

AT THE WRESTLING State Championships meet in Barre last week, all four local high schools represented well. Pictured here, Tiger wrestler Jason Sperry has his 150-pound Mill River opponent in trouble at the Vermont high school championship wrestling tournament in Barre on Saturday. Sperry took third in his weight class.

Photo by Jessie Raymond

Girls’ hoop

(Continued from Page 1B)

season.

If VUHS prevails, they will almost certainly visit No. 1 Oxbow on Saturday. The D-III semifinal and final are in Barre on March 13 and 15, respectively.

REGU/LAR SEASON

Mount Abe, MUHS and OV wrapped up their regular seasons on Thursday, Feb. 27, all with victories.

The Eagles easily shut down visiting Missisquoi, 43-15, to finish at 16-4 and guarantee no worse than a No. 3 seed. Griner’s 13 points and seven rebounds led the way. **Lauren Cousino** scored seven points, **Abba Parker** scored six, and **Gen Forand** filled up the stat sheet with six points, four assists

and four steals.

The Tigers got past host Colchester, 41-29, on that Thursday. **Louisa Orten** (14 points) and **Solstice Binder** (13 points) paced the MUHS attack.

The Otters knocked off host Springfield, 45-29, behind strong defense and balanced scoring. **Matelin LaPorte** paced the Otters with 13 points, and other offensive contributors included **Tegan Boynton** (nine points), **Jazzy Madrigal** (eight) and **Breanna Bovey** (seven).

Notable was Cosmo junior Macie Stagner scoring 26 points, giving her 1,853 for her career and moving her into 10th all-time in the Vermont girls’ hoop scoring list.

Another opponent reached a milestone on Thursday: Milton’s

Marlie Bushey’s 24 points at VUHS gave her 1,000 for her career. Bushey scored 16 of those points in the second half as the Yellowjackets pulled away from a four-point lead at the break to win by 57-34. Evie Bushey added 16 for Milton, which won its ninth straight and improved to 15-5.

Leading the VUHS attack were **Ashtin Stearns** with 12 points, **Kendra Jackson** (10), and **Ava Francis** (eight).

On Saturday the Commodores tied a bow on their regular season by rolling over host Fairfax, 76-18, to wrap up at 9-11.

The VUHS points came from Stearns, 26; Francis, 14; **Georgia Krause**,13; Jackson, nine; **Amelia Giroux**, eight; and **Summer Gosliga**, six.

Ferrisburgh

Have a news tip?
Email Sally Kerschner at smwkersch@comcast.net

NEWS

FERRISBURGH — A Ferrisburgh Grange “King Pedé” card party is scheduled for Saturday, March 15. This get-together is held at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center and will begin at 6:30 p.m. with 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!

Rokeby Museum is supporting the “10 Million Names Project,” recently launched by American Ancestors and its partners. The project works to connect the family stories of the descendants of the ten million men, women, and children of African descent who were enslaved in the U.S. prior to emancipation and to restore their names to history. Join Rokeby for a virtual presentation by researcher Cynthia Evans on Tuesday, March 11, 6-7 p.m., to learn more about the scope of this project, the objectives, and methodology used in researching this history. The event is at no cost and to register visit www.rokeby.org.

The final installment of Rokeby Museum’s Winter Book Discussions will take place on Tuesday March 18, at 6 p.m. Up for discussion is “Sleeping with the Ancestors” authored by Joseph McGill, Jr. and Herb Frazier. Registration in advance is required, so visit www.rokeby.org for more information.

Join Rokeby in meeting the young ladies of eighteenth-century Vermont who tell us of their stories in the samplers they stitched. Ellen Thompson, Project Manager for the Vermont Sampler Initiative, will present on these young women, their place in history, their education, and how they expressed themselves in their embroidery. This virtual event will take place on Tuesday, March 25, at 3 p.m. For registration, visit www.rokeby.org.

The Friends of the Union Meeting Hall in Ferrisburgh will present a special screening of Jay Craven’s award-winning 1997 film, “A Stranger in the Kingdom” at 7 p.m., on Saturday, March 8, at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall. Director Craven will introduce the film and lead a post-screen discussion. “A Stranger in the Kingdom”

tells the story of a small Vermont town whose veneer of peace and tranquility is shattered when a black minister arrives as the town’s new pastor and finds himself charged with adultery and the murder of a French-Canadian waif passing through town. The film and the novel by Howard Frank Mosher were inspired by the true events surrounding the infamous 1968 “Irasburg Affair.”

Ferrisburgh Union Meeting Hall’s storytelling session, “My Dentist’s Son” will hold its next session on Sunday, March 23, at 3 p.m., at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center. The group will explore the joyous moments that appear in our lives with supportive reflections by those who attend. For more information, visit www.mydentistsson.com.

On Sunday, March 9, the Ferrisburgh Historical Society will host local legend Douglas Brooks, who will present about the traditions of small boat building in our state. The bulk of our state’s historic boatbuilding traditions involves Vermonters building their own boats, whether for pleasure or commercial use. The historical record illuminating this subject resides today mostly in family stories and photo collections. In this slide presentation, Brooks shares his research on these traditions and his work in recreating some of these historic vessels. The event will be at 2 p.m. at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall and Community Center on Route 7.

On Saturday, March 8, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Bixby Library, will host a session on emergency preparedness with the Vermont Health Department and Vermont’s Medical Reserve Corps. Experts will be on hand to guide Vermonters through VT-ALERT and the CARE Registry — two vital tools that can help keep us informed and safe in case of an emergency. VT-ALERT is used by the state and local responders to notify the public of emergency situations. The Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies (CARE) program was created to help emergency responders identify Vermonters who might need additional assistance in case of a wide-scale emergency event such as ice storms, floods, fires, and major traffic accidents that can cause

power outages, isolate individuals, or prompt the need for evacuation. Learn how to sign up and make sure you — and those you care about — are prepared. More information at www.bixby.org.

Bixby Library and the Otter Creek Audubon Society continue to host the Cabin Fever Lecture series with a presentation on “Birding Scotland’s Great Glen Way” on Thursday, March 20 at 5:30 p.m. Local birding expert Mike Winslow will talk about his travels to Scotland and the challenges of spotting and identifying Reed Warblers. For more information on this event which is offered both in-person or virtual, visit www.Bixby.org.

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum is accepting registrations for summer camps and expeditions. Day camps are available for children ages 7-14 and there are openings for the teen expeditions and kayak building. These camps offer rowing, fishing, history and archeology, boat building and many more experiences for children and youth. Some of the camps are already filling up so visit www.lcmm.org to register.

Note: We are always interested in including a variety of Ferrisburgh-related event announcements in this column, so if you have events that would be of interest, contact Sally Kerschner at smwkersch@comcast.net. You are also able to access these columns and other information about Ferrisburgh news and events by viewing the Ferrisburgh Town Website at www.ferrisburghvt.org.



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Tiger boys’ hoop season ends

By ANDY KIRKALDY

SOUTH DUXBURY — No.3 Harwood rallied in the second half on Saturday to defeat visiting No. 6 Middlebury, 57-50, in a Division II boys’ basketball quarterfinal.

The 19-3 Highlanders won their 12th straight game in advancing to the D-II semifinal in Barre, while the 13-8 Tigers saw their 10-game winning streak snapped and their successful season end.

The Tigers took a 26-22 halftime lead, but the Highlanders took charge by outscoring them by 19-9 in the third quarter and held their lead in the fourth. It was Harwood’s first quarterfinal victory in 13 years. Tucker Buffum led Harwood with 14 points, and Steele Nelson

recorded a double-double with 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Cooke Riney had a big game for the Tigers with 22 points.

The game marked the last for eight Tiger seniors: Cooper Quinn, Tucker Morter, Kyle Stearns, Cam Whitlock, Tassilo Luksch, Keenan Chicoine, Colton Odell and George Devlin. Stearns, Whitlock and Devlin are captains.

CORRECTION: Our Feb. 27 story on the Tigers’ first-round playoff victory incorrectly stated it was Coach Chris Altemose’s first postseason win. Altemose’s teams have won four first-round and two play-in games. The reporter apologizes for the error.

Otter boys heading to Barre

BRANDON — The No. 4 Otter Valley boys’ basketball team on Friday rallied in the second half to defeat rival No. 5 Fair Haven, 51-46, and book a date on Wednesday evening in a Division II semifinal.

In a game scheduled after the deadline for this print edition of the *Independent*, the 17-4 Otters were set to take on No. 1 Montpelier (21-1), the four-time defending D-II champion. That game was a rematch of a 2024 semifinal in which the Otters bolted to a double-digit first-half lead, only to see the Solons roar back to claim the victory.

This past Friday’s win over Fair Haven was the Otters’ first over the Slaters since defeating them twice in the 2019 regular season. But Fair Haven then knocked them out of the playoffs. This time, the Slaters swept two regular season meetings,

but the Otters broomed them out of the postseason.

But it wasn’t easy. The Slaters hit nine first-half three pointers and led by 12 points at halftime.

The Otters responded right out of the break with a 15-1 run that gave them the lead. Logan Letourneau scored nine points in the surge, and Lucas Politano and Brady Lathrop sank three-pointers.

The Otters maintained that resulting two-point lead through the end of the third quarter. The Slaters tied the game more than once in the fourth, but never regained the lead as the Otters answered the challenge.

Letourneau’s 21 points paced the Otters. Lathrop scored 12 points, and Connor Denis added nine.

Jack Almeida and Phil Bean each scored 11 points for the 16-6 Slaters, and Sam Kyhill scored nine.

MUHS boys’ hockey bows out

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury Union High School boys’ hockey season came to an end on Friday, when visiting No. 9 Colchester pulled away late for a 5-1 victory over the No. 8 Tigers in a first-round Division II playoff game. The result left both teams with 4-16-1 records.

Colchester scored three times in the third period to break the game open as the Lakers avenged a 6-2 regular season loss to the Tigers at the Memorial Sports Center. Lakers Colton Lefebvre (two assists) and Gunnar Navari scored two goals apiece, and Jackson O’Dell also found the back of the net. Laker goalie Torren Burt made 21 saves.

Asa Root Pratt scored for the Tigers, with an assist from Adrien

Malhotra, Tiger goalie TJ Baron made 25 saves.

The Tigers had ended their regular season on a high note two days earlier: They defeated visiting D-I Burr & Burton, 7-4. The Bulldogs entered the playoffs at 6-12-2.

In that game, Tyler Munson led the Tigers with two goals, and Malhotra finished with a goal and an assist. Adding a goal apiece were Joe Sullivan, Root Pratt, Logan McNulty and Ethan Mulcahy. Sutton Rubright and Quinn Collins each assisted two goals, and Gabriel Quesnel set up one. Luke Brownlee led the Bulldogs with three goals.

The young MUHS team will graduate only two seniors, Quinn Collins and Caleb Foster.

Gardeners offer climate change workshop

MIDDLEBURY — As climate continues to change, it is likely Vermont summers to be hotter and drier. Quickly falling rain can cause damaging runoff rather than slowly soaking into the soil. On Tuesday, March 11, join Sarah Salantino of Full Circle Gardens in Essex for a Middlebury Garden Club program to explore

ways to prepare for droughts.

Salantino’s talk will provide water-wise ideas, practices, and perennial varieties to keep gardens gorgeous under drier conditions. The talk begins at 1 p.m. at the Residence at Otter Creek in Middlebury, 350 Lodge Road. It is free and open to the public.

Scoreboard

(Continued from Page 1B)

Boys’ Hockey	
2/26 MUHS vs Burr & Burton	7-4
D-I Playoffs	
2/28 #9 Colchester vs #8 MUHS	5-2
Girls’ Hockey	
2/26 Essex vs MUHS	4-0
D-II Playoffs	
3/4 #3 MUHS vs #6 Stowe	5-1
COLLEGE SPORTS	
Women’s Hockey	
NESCAC Playoffs	
3/1 #2 Midd vs #7 Williams	2-1 (OT)
Men’s Hockey	
NESCAC Playoffs	
3/1 #7 Midd vs #2 Trinity	1-0
Women’s Lacrosse	
3/1 Midd vs Amherst	15-6
3/4 Midd vs Babson	16-7
Men’s Lacrosse	
3/1 Amherst vs Midd	16-7
3/5 Midd at RPI	Late
Baseball	
3/1 Emory vs Midd	19-5
3/1 Emory vs Midd	12-2
3/2 Emory vs Midd	5-3
3/4 Midd vs Colby Sawyer	9-3

Schedule

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS	
Girls’ Basketball	
D-II	
3/6 #14 OV at #3 Lamoille	7 PM
3/7 TBD at #4 Mt. Abe	7 PM
3/12 Semifinal in Barre	TBA
3/15 Final in Barre	TBA
D-III	
3/8 Quarterfinals	TBD
3/13 Semifinal in Barre	TBD
3/15 Final in Barre	TBD
Boys’ Basketball	
D-II Playoffs	
3/8 Final in Barre	TBD
Girls’ Hockey	
3/7 #3 MUHS at #2 Missisquoi	7 PM
3/7 #4 Hartford at #1 BBA	7 PM
3/9 Final at UVM	3 PM
COLLEGE SPORTS	
Women’s Hockey	
NESCAC Final Four at Amherst	
3/8 #2 Midd vs #3 Colby	4:30 PM
3/8 #1 Amherst vs #5 Hamilton	1 PM
3/9 Final	2 PM
Men’s Hockey	
NESCAC Final Four at Hamilton	
3/8 #7 Midd vs #1 Hamilton	1 PM
3/8 #5 Tufts vs #3 Colby	4:30 PM
3/9 Final	2 PM
Women’s Lacrosse	
3/8 Midd at Bowdoin	Noon
3/11 Midd at RPI	4:30 PM
3/15 Bates at Midd	Noon
Men’s Lacrosse	
3/8 Bowdoin at Midd	1 PM
3/11 Union at Midd	4 PM
3/15 Midd at Bates	1 PM
Baseball	
3/8 Midd at Rutgers/Newark	Noon
3/9 Midd at Stevens (2)	11 AM
3/13 Lyndon at Midd	3 PM
3/16 Midd at Cal Lutheran	(2) 2 PM
3/16 Midd at Cal Lutheran	6 PM
Softball	
3/8 Castleton at Midd	10 AM
3/8 Clarkson at Midd	3 PM
3/9 Clarkson at Midd	10 AM
3/9 Castleton at Midd	3 PM
Games in Clermont, Fla.*	
3/15 Midd vs S. Maine*	9 AM
3/15 Midd vs Montclair*	11:15 AM
3/16 Midd vs Chicago*	9 AM
3/16 Midd vs Endicott*	11:30 AM

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Lincoln

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

NEWS

LINCOLN — The library’s community room display for March is “Lincoln’s Lincoln: A Revolutionary Hero and the Sword that Made America” by Lucinda Cockrell. The exhibit, by the Lincoln Historical Society, will highlight the 1780 charter of Lincoln, Vt., and how the town came to be named for Revolutionary War Major General Benjamin Lincoln. Visitors to the exhibit will witness the scope of American independence through one of George Washington’s most trusted commanders, from the events leading up to the Revolutionary War through the Battles of Bennington, Saratoga, Charleston, and Yorktown.

The exhibit is part of the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence promoted by Vermont’s 250th Anniversary Commission and funded by a Vermont 250th community grant.

While you’re at the library, check out the display case where Mike Dever’s turned bowls and vases are available for viewing this month.

There will be an author talk with Ellie Bryant on Friday, March 14, at 4 p.m. at the library. Ellie will talk about her book “Willie, Rum Running Queen,” the true tale of notorious prohibition bootlegger Willie Carter Sharpe. During prohibition she rises from poverty to the heights of fame and fortune in the moonshine business. In spite of her high-speed truck driving, the law catches up to her and she is brought to testify in the Great Moonshine Conspiracy Trial of 1934.

Ellie will also share the story of how she came to write this book and give ideas to help you start your own story.

Until next time ... If Not Now, When? No One But Ourselves Can Free Our Minds.






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Check winning amounts at MiddleburyLions.org/!

United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Vermont

In re Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, Vermont,
Case No. 24-10205-HZC

Claims Notice for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Others With Claims Against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, Vermont

If you were sexually abused by any person connected with the Diocese, a Catholic parish, or Catholic school within the geographic area of the Diocese, or have any claim against the Diocese, you must file a claim by **April 4, 2025**.

For more diocesan information: visit vermontcatholic.org

For the bankruptcy docket: visit <https://case.stretto.com/dioceseforburlington>

For U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Vermont information: visit vtb.uscourts.gov

For advice about your rights: contact an attorney

Reader Comments

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

A subscriber from Middlebury writes:

“Thank you for all your hard work to keep independent journalism alive. Our community is enriched by your coverage and all you provide.”

Quotes are taken from reader comments submitted with subscription renewals.



ADDISON COUNTY
INDEPENDENT

community

calendar

mar 6

THURSDAY

Twist O’ Wool Guild meeting in Middlebury. Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m., American Legion, 49 Wilson Rd. Come and show off your projects and learn a new skill. All are welcome.

Grassland birds of Vermont in Ferrisburgh. Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Office, 3279 Route 7. Join the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission for a talk by Vermont Center for Ecostudies’ Grassland Bird Biologist Kevin Tolan, who will discuss the past, present, and future of grassland bird habitats.

Pollinator Pathways talk in Monkton. Thursday, March 6, 7-8:30 p.m., Russell Memorial Library, 92 Monkton Ridge. Learn about Monkton’s Pollinator Pathways when expert gardeners Debra Sprague, Stephanie Hyatt and Julie Parker-Dickerson explain what the pathway is and how to increase pollination in your own backyard, along with plant selection and maintenance.

mar 7

FRIDAY

Lenten fish dinner in Vergennes. Friday, March 7, 5-6:30 p.m., St. Peter’s Parish Hall, South Maple Street. This Knights of Columbus event will include a menu of beer battered haddock, zesty wedges, coleslaw, mixed vegetables, roll & butter, chocolate chip brownie. \$13 adults \$7 children 6-12 (cash or checks). For take-out reservations call 802-877-3352 (Parish Hall) and leave a message with your name, phone number and number of dinners, and please speak slowly. This dinner repeats March 21, and April 4.

mar 8

SATURDAY

Emergency presentation in Vergennes. Saturday, March 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Bixby Library, 258 Main St. Experts will be on hand to guide Vermonters through VT-ALERT and the CARE Registry — two vital tools that can help keep us informed and safe in case of an emergency. More information at www.bixby.org.

Legislative luncheon in Middlebury. Saturday, March 8, 10:30 a.m., Middlebury American Legion, 49 Wilson Rd. Join Addison County Farm Bureau for a meal with your neighbors, a chance to connect with your local legislators, and an opportunity to learn more about the ongoing topics in Montpelier. Invited guest Anson Tebbetts, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Make a donation for lunch at noon; RSVP to Bill Scott at wjscottjr@comcast.net so they can get a headcount for food.

Town-wide chili fest and sugar on snow party in Starksboro. Saturday, March 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Starksboro Meeting House and Robinson Elementary School, Route 116. Celebrate Starksboro with chili and sugar on snow, and bring your photos for Starksboro Historical Society’s Community Photo Scanning Day Games and toys kit on loan from Middlebury’s Sheldon Museum. Have fun with parlor games played by 18th and 19th century children with rings, graces, hoops, marbles and other games. Parking is in the school lot off Parsonage Road.

National Women’s Day gathering/rally/march in Middlebury. Saturday, March 8, noon-2 p.m., Middlebury Green. Share poems, personal stories, words of wisdom, and music. We will exit the green around 1:30 to march the downtown loop then disperse. Bring your signs and your voices. This is a standing/walking event and will occur rain or shine. This event will be posted on The Women’s March website as well as the national Indivisible website.

Queer hangout in Middlebury. Saturday, March 8, 3-5 p.m., Juice Amour, Merchants Row. In this time of uncertainty and division, we are looking to foster a space where Vermont LGBTQ+ folks can connect in a safe environment. Community is vital during these times. Join us. All are welcome, snacks and drinks available, activities and games provided. Bring a friend. Eat, play games and socialize at your own pace.

Corned beef and cabbage supper in Vergennes. Saturday, March 8, 5-6 p.m., Vergennes United Methodist Church, Main St., across from the Opera House. Menu includes corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potato, onion, roll and dessert. \$12. Takeout only. Preorder only at 802- 877- 3150 before 7 p.m. Thursday, March 6.

Bingo in Vergennes. Saturday, March 8, 5 p.m., St Peter’s Parish Hall, 85 S. Maple St. Doors open at 5 p.m. and games start at 6 p.m. A family friendly event. All cash prizes, 50/50 raffle. Refreshments sold. Sponsored by the St. Peter’s Historic Preservation Committee to benefit the ongoing restoration efforts for the bell tower and the church.

Willowell Boogie Benefit in Bristol. Saturday, March 8, 6 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. The Willowell Foundation’s annual benefit dance and silent auction features a cash bar, and the Almendros, a popular Addison County band whose infectious repertoire ranges from rock, country and blues to reggae, ska, calypso and African styles. Tickets are \$10 at the door, children free. Proceeds support the Willowell’s scholarship fund, which helps children access local nature-based programming and education.

mar 11

TUESDAY

“Gardening with Climate Change” in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 11, 1 p.m., The Residence at Otter Creek, 50 Lodge Rd. As our climate continues to change, we expect our summers to be hotter and drier. Quickly falling rain can cause damaging runoff rather than slowly soaking into the soil. Join Sarah Salantino of Full Circle Gardens in Essex for this Middlebury Garden Club program to explore ways we can prepare for droughts. Her talk will give you water-wise ideas, practices, and perennial varieties to keep your gardens gorgeous under drier conditions. Free and open to the public.

Resist, Renew, Explore: How to Think About Human Writing and Learning in the Age of AI in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 11, 4:30 p.m., Dana Auditorium, 356 College St. Author and writing teacher John Warner will explore the differences between “syntax generation” and writing; the experience of thinking, feeling, and communicating and provide a framework that moves beyond policing student behavior in order to privilege student engagement and increase educational rigor. This event is hosted at Middlebury College and open to the public. RSVP at <https://forms.gle/TC3dx1vVSNXkmmBj9>.

“10 Million Names Project” virtual presentation. Tuesday, March 11, 6-7 p.m., Zoom. Rokeby Museum is supporting the recently launched 10 Million Names Project by American Ancestors and its partners. The project works to connect the family stories of the descendants of the 10 million men, women and children of African descent who were enslaved in the U.S. prior to emancipation and to restore their names to history. Join Rokeby for a virtual presentation by researcher Cynthia Evans on to learn more about the scope of this project, the objectives, and methodology used in researching this history. Free. Register at www.rokeby.org.

mar 9

SUNDAY

Breakfast buffet in Vergennes. Sunday, March 9, 8-10 a.m., St. Peter’s Parish Hall. 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. \$13 adults. \$8 children 8 to 12 years. No cap/cost on families. Sponsor: Vergennes Council Knights of Columbus.

Douglas Brooks, boatbuilder in Ferrisburgh. Monday, March 9, 2 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall, 3279 Route 7. While stories of Vermont naval history and commercial shipping have been well documented, the traditions of small boat building from throughout our state have remained untold. The bulk of our historic boat building traditions involves Vermonters building their own boats, whether for pleasure or commercial use. The historical record illuminating this subject resides today mostly in family stories and photo



A bee-breeder’s perspective

KIRK WEBSTER OF Champlain Valley Bees and Queens will discuss why Addison County is an ideal location for pollinators yet is constantly changing due to increased pressure on the landscape in his presentation, “Beekeeping in Addison County, Yesterday and Today,” Wednesday, March 12, at 7 p.m., at New Haven Town Hall, 78 North St.

Photo courtesy of Marianne Eaton

collections. In this slide presentation, Douglas Brooks shares his research on these traditions, and his work in recreating some of these historic vessels.

Meet Your Neighbors in East Middlebury. Sunday, March 9, 2-4 p.m., Sarah Partridge Community House, East Main St. Join the East Middlebury Historical Society for punch and cookies and an opportunity to chat with your neighbors.

“Gardening with Climate Change” in Middlebury. Tuesday, March 11, 1 p.m., The Residence at Otter Creek, 50 Lodge Rd. As our climate continues to change, we expect our summers to be hotter and drier. Quickly falling rain can cause damaging runoff rather than slowly soaking into the soil. Join Sarah Salantino of Full Circle Gardens in Essex for this Middlebury Garden Club program to explore ways we can prepare for droughts. Her talk will give you water-wise ideas, practices, and perennial varieties to keep your gardens gorgeous under drier conditions. Free and open to the public.

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mar 12

WEDNESDAY

“Beekeeping in Addison County, Yesterday and Today” in New Haven. Wednesday, March 12, 7 p.m., New Haven Town Hall, 78 North St. The latest talks in the New Haven Armchair Naturalist series. Kirk Webster of Champlain Valley Bees and Queens will discuss why Addison County is

an ideal location for pollinators yet is constantly changing due to increased pressure on the landscape. Webster raises bees and queen bees to sell. With the loss of colonies due to mites and pesticides, he is breeding harder stock to combat both these problems.

mar 14

FRIDAY

Lenten fish fry in Bristol. Friday, March 14, 5-7 p.m., St. Ambrose Parish, 11 School St. Menu includes all-you-can-eat fried or baked haddock, French fries, cole slaw, dinner roll, beverage and dessert. Adults \$17/children 9 and under \$9/immediate family of 5 \$50. More info call 802-453-2488.

Pi Day in Shoreham. Friday, March 14, 5-7 p.m., Shoreham Congregational Church, School Rd. Celebrate the arrival of spring by coming to Pi Day. You can buy a slice of pie for \$4, or add a scoop of ice cream for another \$1. Beverages (coffee, tea, cocoa, or water) are free. There will also be a special raffle for a pie a month for 6 months. Raffle tickets are \$5 each or 3 tickets for \$10. The winner will be drawn that evening, but you do not need to be present to win.

mar 15

SATURDAY

American Legion birthday party in Vergennes. Saturday, March 15, 7-10 p.m., American Legion Post 14, Armory Ln. DJ Jam Man will spin the tunes in honor of the American Legion’s 106th Birthday and St. Patrick’s Day! Cash bar, light snacks, Open to the public. Admission by donation.

mar 16

SUNDAY

“Four Hebrew Prophets: Amos” lecture in Middlebury. Sunday, March 16, noon, St. Stephen’s Church, 3 Main St. In the first lecture in a four-part series on four biblical books, Shalom Goldman, Professor of Religion at Middlebury College, will explore the historical and cultural context of these Old Testament figures and delve into the timeless relevance of their messages. Free and open to the public. Come early for refreshments. Series continues March 23.

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Mentzer named ‘Youth of the Year’

VERGENNES — The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes has selected Megan Mentzer, a senior at Vergennes Union High School, as the 2025 Club Youth of the Year. Mentzer will compete against other Vermont Boys and Girls Clubs in April at the State Level Youth of the Year event to be held on April 10 in Montpelier.

Mentzer, who is currently attending Castleton University through the early college program, is a dedicated student and musician. She has an impressive schedule, balancing college courses, music performances, college auditions, and an array of community service projects. She spends time reading to elementary students, working with TREX recycling, mentoring her peers, and actively engaging with local civic organizations such as the American Legion, Lions, Rotary, and LEOS.

Since joining the Boys & Girls Club in middle school, Mentzer has embraced opportunities for leadership and personal growth. Her time at the Club helped her build confidence, expand her social



MEGAN MENTZER

circle, and develop skills that have supported her passion for meeting new people and sharing her love of music.

Mentzer continues the legacy of the Club’s founder, Sam Allo, who believed in empowering young people with the tools they need to succeed. As Allo often said, “Give them the tools and watch them shine.”

In a major fundraising effort to help the organization continue to serve youth in the Vergennes area, The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes has planned two major events coming up in March — Shamrock Shenanigans Online Auction and a Bowling Event at Sparetime Colchester.

The auction began March 1 and will continue until March 15. People may bid online from the organization’s website. A number. Of local businesses and individuals contributed to the auction. The funds raised will help support the Club’s programs, which provide a safe and enriching environment for local youth.

A bowling fundraiser will take place on March 16 from 2:30-4:30 p.m., at Sparetime Colchester. The friendly and competitive event is an opportunity for the community to come together in support of the Boys & Girls Club, and local businesses are encouraged to become event sponsors. Sponsoring a team is \$30 per person, including shoes, lane rental, pizza and a beverage.

ESI college announces their spring 2025 offerings

MIDDLEBURY — For more than 20 years, Elderly Services has been offering an array of community programs featuring local experts, various Middlebury College professors, authors and others through the “ESI College” series.

The spring, 2025 season opened with a program that surveyed the life of the musical genius, Cole

Porter, led by Robert Wyatt on Tuesday, March 4.

The next installment in the series, “King Arthur and the British Empire” will be held Tuesday, March 11, at 10 a.m. and will be presented by Paul Monod.

Other topics featured in the spring series include programs on the Vermont Pollinator Protection Law, Vermont’s Rising Health

Care Costs, Vermont Folk Songs, the Works of Alfred Hitchcock, Political Conflict and the South China Sea, the Fictional Works of Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Woolf and the Economics of Climate Change.

More detailed information on all nine programs, including online registration, can be found at the Elderly Services website at www.ESI.org.

Grace Baptist welcomes new pastor

MIDDLEBURY — Grace Baptist Church in Middlebury has recently welcomed Jennings Boateng as its interim pastor. Boateng will serve and work with the Church leadership as the congregation transitions from the recent loss of their former Pastor, Bob Henley who served the church and the community more than 40 years.

Pastor Boateng currently serves as the U.S. chair of the Men’s Ministry, as a member of the National Finance Committee, as a leadership member of NJ-Philadelphia Circuit and Elder-Secretary of the Philadelphia Assembly (all) of the Christ Apostolic Church International. He is also Pastor of the Maranatha Prayerline Ministry, a small tele-conference prayer group of devoted Christians dedicated to expository studying and teaching of the Bible, intercessory prayer, and holy and righteous living in earnest expectation of the Rapture.

Boateng also serves on the administration team of the Counseling Service of Addison County in Middlebury.

Boateng became born-again whilst a medical student in the Ukraine. He has humbly shared the word of God on the streets and trains, and churches across the Ukraine, Russia, Moldavia, Germany and



PASTOR JENNING BOATENG, left, pictured here with his wife Vivian, has taken the helm as interim pastor at Middlebury’s Grace Baptist Church

Photo courtesy of Mary Harris

Ghana, and is a founding member of the Church of the Risen Christ in Vinnitsa, Ukraine.

In addition to various Christian and leadership training, Jennings Boateng holds numerous degrees including:

- Master of Science, Finance (MSF) & Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Northeastern University, D’Amore-McKim School of Business, Boston, MA
- Master of Science (M.S.)

Chili, sugar on snow help celebrate Starksboro Day

STARKSBORO — Starksboro historical society is giving Starksboro residents the opportunity to be local historians when it holds a community photo scanning day as part of the town’s Chill and Sugar on Snow fest on March 8.

Events will be held at both the Starksboro Meeting House and at Robinson Elementary School. from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Starksboro farmers, businesses, homeowners,

hunters, gardeners, individuals, students (young & old), and more – are encouraged to take part in Photo Scanning Day, which is about collecting town history, the story of Starksboro’s people, their actions and decisions. Up to six images of Starksboro’s past per person can be scanned.

The Historical Society also will have a games and toys kit on loan from Middlebury’s Sheldon Museum, including parlor games

played by 18th- and 19th-century children with rings, graces, hoops, marbles, as well as other games.

On hand will be a variety of chilis made by local experts to taste and vote on. The Starksboro Village Meeting House will also be offering traditional sugar on snow, pickles, and homemade doughnuts. Donations for the restoration project welcome.

Parking is in the school lot off Parsonage Road.

Screening of ‘Lost Nation’ to be held in New Haven

NEW HAVEN — Jay Craven’s latest film, “Lost Nation” will be screened Saturday, March 15, at 2 p.m. at New Haven Town Hall.

The film is a Revolutionary War-era action drama set in the early upstart Republic of Vermont. It features Vermont founding

father and rebel schemer, Ethan Allen, who leads resistance to New Yorker land claims, launches an ill-fated attack on British forces in Montreal, and leads invasions by his Green Mountain Boys into Yorker strongholds of Guilford and Brattleboro.

Craven will be on hand after the film to talk about its creation and answer questions. Free admission is available at the door. Email librarian@nhcl.org, call 802-453-4015, stop in at the library, or visit nhcl.org for more information.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Mount Abraham Union High School

Sophie Batten

This week, Mount Abraham Union High School recognizes Sophie Batten as our Student of the Week! Sophie resides in Bristol with her parents and her dog Jack. She is an exceptional student whose dedication, perseverance, and passion for learning and service make her an amazing member of our school community.

Sophie has received honors each semester of high school. Her favorite classes at Mt. Abraham include Astronomy and Sociology. She is grateful for her science teacher Mrs. DeWitt because she has provided Sophie the opportunity to be her unofficial DUO (Do Unto Others). She also wrote a letter of recommendation for college to help Sophie pursue her goal of attending Quinnipiac University for a bachelor’s in health sciences.

Beyond her academic achievements, Sophie volunteers weekly at Porter Medical Center. She serves as a greeter, warmly welcoming patients and visitors. Sophie also works part-time at Shaw’s as a cashier, where she enjoys the constant flow of energy and movement around the store. “I know everyone is just there to get groceries, but I like to really mean it when I tell them to have a good day.” In her free time, she enjoys spending time with friends, thrifting, going for drives, drawing and painting with watercolors.

When asked about the most important thing she has learned during high school and advice she would share with current students, Sophie reflected that “it is the prioritization of mental health. It’s not selfish to seek help, you are important and loved!”

After spending her summer in Hamburg, Germany, Sophie plans to attend Quinnipiac University. She will major in health sciences with the goal of attending graduate school to earn her license as a physician’s assistant. The Mt. Abraham community wishes her all the best with her future endeavors.



Sophie Batten
MAUHS

Otter Valley Union High School

Jordan Bertrand

Jordan Bertrand is Otter Valley Union High School’s Student of the Week. She lives with her parents and brother in Sudbury. Her sister attends college in Pennsylvania as a zoo science major. She has two dogs, Duke and Bretta, her favorite animals in the world.

Jordan attends Early College at Vermont State University-Castleton, where she primarily takes music classes. Prof. Joshua Thompson has been one of her influential teachers to date. He is funny, intelligent, and has a true passion for conducting and teaching like no other, and she aspires to be like him. There have been a select few teachers at OV that have become her favorites, “so heck, yeah, to them,” she says. Jordan is a percussionist and has attended the All-State Music Festival three times.

Jordan has been involved in Walking Stick Theatre throughout high school, and serves as the troupe’s vice president. This year she played Janis in “Mean Girls” and had the role of Patrick in Walking Stick’s 2023 production of “SpongeBob.” She wrote a musical called “Mildly Brunette” that premieres at the One Acts in March. Jordan also plays in the VTSU Castleton Wind Symphony under the direction of Professor Thompson and has done so for four years. She is also involved with chorus, band, and jazz band, and she received the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award from P. Robs last year.

Outside of school Jordan teaches dance to children under 12 twice a week. She wishes to do more, but she is simply too busy. She also volunteers when she can, such as wrapping presents for the Toy Project. She loves to read. She is currently reading “A Clockwork Orange.” She also loves canoeing, especially whitewater, and enjoys frolicking in the woods.

The most important experience she has had at school is realizing that there will always be someone better than you or someone better treated than you. Sometimes, you are not the issue, it is the teacher/coach/director, etc. Her advice to her peers is to enjoy life and make their own decisions. “Rather than worrying about grades, work or friends, just do what makes you happy,” she says.

Jordan plans to attend college in the fall, though she is unsure of which one, or her major. Her main options are between the arts and science. She also says it would be awesome if someone would just pay her to pet dogs all day.



Jordan Bertrand
OVUHS

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Students of the Week from all area high schools are entered into a raffle to win a \$100 gift card to The Vermont Book Shop.

The winner will be chosen at the end of the school year.

Students of the Week are chosen by school teachers and administration.

Best of luck to all Addison County students!

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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).

Public Meetings

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Public Meetings

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Help Wanted

by contacting Vergennes-free thinkers@gmail.com for Zoom and in-person meeting information.

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Help Wanted

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Help Wanted

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More Help Wanted ads can be found on Page 11B.

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ART & LEISURE

The Addison Independent

March 6, 2025

HISTORY, ROMANCE MINGLE IN BOHJALIAN'S 25TH NOVEL

LOCAL AUTHOR PLAYS TO HIS STRENGTHS IN 'THE JACKAL'S MISTRESS'

Bestselling author Chris Bohjalian of Weybridge gets a smooch from his omnipresent sidekick, Jesse, who keeps the writer on task with walks.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO/STEVE JAMES

While many scribes don't find their writing voice until well into adulthood, Chris Bohjalian was in full throat even as a child. Asked during a recent interview how he'd developed and nurtured his love of writing, Bohjalian, 64, plucked a nondescript blue notebook from his office.

BY **JOHN FLOWERS**

It was a journal containing short stories he'd written at age 9 while attending 4th grade at Northeast Elementary School in Stamford, Conn.

One of the stories — which rated an "A" from his teacher — ended thus: "The dripping stopped, and the vultures had their meal..."

"Clearly, my literary sensibilities were in place; that (sentence) could've appeared in any of my books," confessed Bohjalian in what, for him, is a rare self-congratulatory remark.

While other kids his age were reading Archie and Batman comics, Bohjalian was carrying

around a 45-cent paperback copy of Edgar Allen Poe stories. After graduating from Amherst College and taking a brief professional detour as an account rep. for a New York City ad firm, Bohjalian in 1988 moved to Lincoln, Vt., with his first love, photographer Victoria Blewer, to focus on his second love — writing.

The rest is history, the most recent chapter of which is this month's release of his 25th book: "The Jackal's Mistress." Bohjalian will discuss the book at a special taping of Vermont Public's "Vermont Edition," this Sunday, March 9, from 4-6 p.m. at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater. It's a free event, but tickets must be

reserved in advance, at townhalltheater.org.

"I view it as a 'Civil War Romeo & Juliet,' a novel about the North and South that's as relevant in 2025 as it was in 1864," he said of his latest book.

While "The Jackal's Mistress" largely unfolds in Berryville, a small town in Northern Virginia, there are plenty of references to Vermont and Addison County. Local readers will appreciate references, and historic ties-ins, to Vergennes, Panton, Middlebury and Middlebury College. Sixteen of Bohjalian's 25 books have a Vermont connection.

The male protagonist in "The Jackal's Mistress" is Capt. Jonathan Weybridge, a Middlebury College professor who in 1863 enlists in the Union Army's Vermont Brigade, driven by his resolve that no human being should be able to own another.

Weybridge, Bohjalian's eponymous salute to his current hometown, is a cerebral warrior in an environment where book-smarts must take a backseat to brass tacks. He adjusts, and becomes a quick study of battlefield

SEE NOVEL ON PAGE 3

"I VIEW IT AS A 'CIVIL WAR ROMEO & JULIET,' A NOVEL ABOUT THE NORTH AND SOUTH THAT'S AS RELEVANT IN 2025 AS IT WAS IN 1864."

— Chris Bohjalian

FILM SCREENINGS

'No Country for Old Men' to screen March 16 at Middlebury Town Hall Theater

Last week, before Sunday's Academy Awards ceremony, Washington Post film critics reviewed Oscar choices over the last 50 years, weighing in on which films they thought should have won Best Picture. They mostly chose nominees that didn't win.

Critics love to indulge in retrospective second-guessing, and it can be amusing to look back. But I disagree with their suggestion that first-time filmmaker Tony Gilroy's legal thriller, "Michael Clayton," should have been selected in 2007, instead of the Coen Brothers' thematically rich crime thriller, "No Country for Old Men," adapted from Cormac McCarthy's edgy, engrossing 2005 novel of the same name.

Many of the Coens' films are about them — and those films are often clever and perfectly entertaining. "Fargo" and "Blood Simple" are two of my favorite Coen Brothers' films — even though both wink at the audience and even their on-screen subjects. With "No Country for Old Men," the Coens' seemed to take very seriously the privilege and responsibility that came with translating the literary master's work to cinema. I think the resulting film ranks as their most potent and cohesive narrative.

The picture's fabulous cast includes Tommy Lee Jones as stoic, empathetic, aging small-

town sheriff, Ed Tom Bell, who has a hard time adapting himself to the senseless and escalating intensity of modern crime. While out hunting, welder Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin) comes across the aftermath of a drug deal gone wrong, finding several dead men, a wounded Mexican man begging for water, heroin in the truck, and a briefcase containing \$2.4 million in cash. He takes the briefcase and returns home. Feeling guilty, Moss returns with water that night but finds the man has been murdered. He looks up to the ridge and sees two men with guns who pursue him in a truck.

He escapes by diving into a river. After making his way back home, Moss sends his wife, Carla Jean, to stay with her mother.

Moss knows this will be a rough ride — and it is.

Ruthless hitman, Anton Chigurh (Javier Bardem) blows into town, looking for the briefcase holding the drug money. Chigurh tracks Moss, homing in on the signal transponder that's hidden in the briefcase. Sheriff Bell does his best to protect Moss — but when wily bounty hunter Carson Wells (Woody Harrelson) joins the chase, the stakes go through the roof.

The picture won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actor (Bardem), and Best



BY JAY CRAVEN



"No Country for Old Men" will screen at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on March 16, at 3 p.m.

COURTESY PHOTO

Adapted Screenplay. It's considered a film noir because of its bleak, pessimistic mood; its morally ambiguous characters; and its fatalistic sense of foreboding. It's gritty, desolate landscape suggests both a modern Western and film noir. It also includes elements of a chase picture, horror, and dark comedy, a Coens staple.

The Coens have commented on the adaptation — which they described as being simple and straightforward.

"I held the book open while Ethan typed the text into the computer," Joel Coen said. "It's almost not an exaggeration in this case to say that we took much of the dialogue directly from the book. It's more a process of editing, condensing and then having to find a solution to a specific problem in terms of how you handle something in the novel that may be more literary than cinematic."

The Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival will screen "No Country for Old Men" at 3 p.m., on Sunday, March 16, at the Middlebury Town Hall Theater. Tickets will be available at the door or, in advance, at townhalltheater.org.

MORE FROM JAY CRAVEN

While I'm at it, I'll also make a shameless plug for my second feature film, "A Stranger in the Kingdom" that will play at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 8, at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall. The film is being presented by the Friends of Union Meeting Hall in Ferrisburgh.

"A Stranger in the Kingdom" tells the story of a small Vermont town whose veneer of peace and tranquility is shattered when a black minister arrives as the town's new pastor and, soon after, finds himself charged with adultery and the murder of a French Canadian waif passing through town on her way to pursue her Hollywood dream. The film was inspired by the true events surrounding the infamous 1968 "Irasburg Affair" — and it's based on the novel by Howard Frank Moshier. The film stars David Lansbury, Martin Sheen, Ernie Hudson, Henry Gibson, and Jean Louisa Kelly.

I will introduce the film followed by a post-screen Q&A. Tickets are available in advance at unionmeetinghall.org.



NOVEL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tactics, with no shortage of moxie and leadership skills.

But Weybridge is

unceremoniously ejected from the war during the fall of 1864, courtesy of Confederate canister in a battle at Opequon Creek in Virginia. He suffers horrific injuries and is ultimately abandoned by his own unit, which has no confidence in his survival.

That's when the female protagonist, a woman named Libby Steadman, discovers Weybridge in an abandoned house and decides — despite his Union allegiance and his proximity to death's doorstep — to care for him, risking her own execution as a traitor if her good deed is discovered. Steadman enlists the help of her niece, a hired hand and his wife, in her dangerous goodwill conspiracy. The deed takes on added luster when one learns that Steadman has been pining for her own husband, a Confederate soldier, last known to be languishing in a Yankee prison.

The Steadman-Weybridge relationship evolves from humanitarian gesture to something more, amid the Civil War violence.

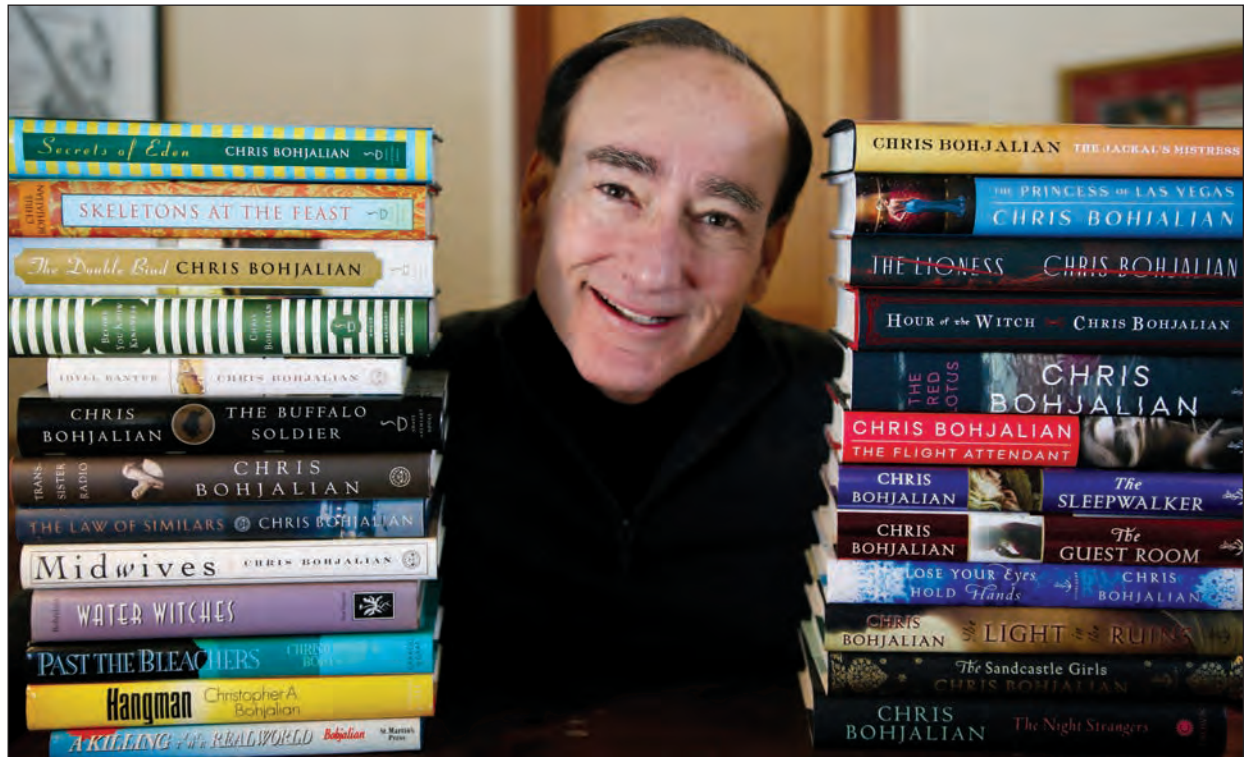
"The Jackal's Mistress" sent Bohjalian and Blewer to the Shenandoah Valley and points nearby to view Civil War landmarks and related history. Stops included the Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Md., Harper's Ferry in West Virginia, plus Richmond and Berryville in Virginia.

Bohjalian's travels allowed him to see the lay of the land, battlefields he'd reference in his book, the area where his characters would live, and learn what it must have been like to be treated for major injuries in a makeshift battlefield hospital — where saws, not scalpels, were the surgeon's instrument of choice.

Bohjalian took steps to ensure his novel was as battle-tested as the soldiers that roamed its pages. He asked three Civil War authorities (all Vermonters) to read a draft of "The Jackal's Mistress" to ensure its trappings were authentic to the war between the states: Howard Coffin, Robert Grandchamp and Dr. Ken Borie. Coffin has written four books about Vermonters in the Civil War and has taken an active role in preserving its battlefields. Bohjalian recalled a helpful, cautionary comment from Coffin when he was made aware of the former's writing project.

"He said, 'You have to get the details and this history right. You make a mistake? People know this war and they *will* correct you,'" Bohjalian recounted.

So, Bohjalian did what he'd done 24 times before: Develop a cast of characters that earn an emotional investment from the reader, along



Weybridge author Chris Bohjalian's 25th book, "The Jackal's Mistress," is being released this month. He describes it as a "Civil War Romeo & Juliet." Bohjalian will discuss the book at an appearance at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater on Sunday, March 9, from 4-6 p.m.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO / STEVE JAMES

with a page-turning plot and — as always — a deeper message. Here, it was humanity and love persevering through a war that would leave 620,000 dead soldiers, with some battles pitting brother against brother.

While slavery has become a disgraceful footnote in U.S. history, political polarization, racism and intolerance don't seem to have an expiration date. And with the recent removal of statues and monuments that lionized Confederate leaders — a move that's drawn opposition among some Americans — Bohjalian felt it was time to take a new look at a 2003 essay he'd written for *Reader's Digest*.

That essay celebrates the unlikely-but-real-life association of Henry Edson Bedell, a Union lieutenant from Westfield, Vermont, and Bettie Van Metre, the wife of an imprisoned Confederate soldier who's trying to keep the family farm and grist mill alive with the help of her niece and two of her husband's former slaves, Dick and Ginny Runner. Van Metre discovers a badly injured Bedell and selflessly cares for him until he's able to be repatriated with Union forces. A limited archive of letters chronicling Van Metre's good deed can be found at Middlebury College, where Bohjalian researched his 2003 essay.

Bohjalian acknowledged "The Jackal's Mistress" has foundational parallels to the Van Metre-Bedell saga, but doesn't follow the story to the letter. The author takes artistic license to draw readers in and make the story more relatable. "I

love historical fiction and history," Bohjalian said. "The reason we read historical fiction, versus traditional history, is because readers will learn

SEE MISTRESS ON PAGE 4

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Sizzling stories: The Moth's 'Beef' StorySlam comes to Middlebury

The nationally recognized, award-winning storytelling series "The Moth" is coming to Middlebury's Town Hall Theater on Tuesday, March 11. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and the StorySlam will start at 7 p.m. Listen to true stories or share your own at this open-mic storytelling competition. The event will be recorded, with select stories potentially broadcast by The Moth Radio Hour on National Public Radio.

The StorySlam theme is "beef". Prepare a five-minute story about bad blood. The petty grievances that drive you mad, the cold wars waged, long-standing grudges to petty spats, tell us about the rivalries that pushed your buttons. Whether it's a feud with a neighbor, an old friend turned frenemy, or a silent standoff that's gone on way too long. Blood-boiling showdowns to simmering passive-aggressive battles. Montagues and Capulets, Sharks and Jets, tell us about the grudges that just won't quit.

Need some courage to tell your story? The THT bar will be open — and the past two Moth events at Town Hall Theater featured a highly supportive crowd.

"This is a life experience you don't want



Andy Mitchell was the September StorySlam Winner at Town Hall Theater last year.

to miss," said Executive and Artistic Director Lisa Mitchell, who is a Moth enthusiast and braved the stage with a story at the first THT Moth StorySlam in 2024.

Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Arrive at least 10 minutes before the show. Tickets may be purchased in advance at themoth.org/events/beef-burlington-2025.

MISTRESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

things from fiction that they'd never learn from nonfiction."

That became patently clear to him following the release of his 14th novel, "The Sandcastle Girls,"

which explores the parallel stories of a woman who falls in love with an Armenian soldier during the Armenian genocide, and their future granddaughter, who's inspired to look into her Armenian past.

"No one in the world was going to read a nonfiction account of the Armenian genocide," said Bohjalian, whose paternal grandparents survived that systemic annihilation of an estimated 1 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. "But if you cloak the Armenian genocide in a novel that's a love story, people will read it and learn about it."

**"THE ONLY PERSON
IN THE WORLD WHO
NEVER DOUBTED ME
WAS VICTORIA."**

— Chris Bohjalian

And there's a lot to learn from Bettie Van Metre's selfless act, Bohjalian noted. The Vermont Legislature officially commended her in 1914 for having risked her life to save one of the state's native sons. "She really viewed it as an act of humanity that *any* decent person would have done," said Bohjalian, who examined a letter she wrote describing her actions. "There was nothing in the letter that suggested she was boastful or desirous of attention. Her heroism was about trying *not* to draw attention to herself."

Bohjalian is appreciative of the attention his latest book has been getting but takes nothing for granted. He recalled a time during his 30s when the family had to sell furniture to pay the mortgage and keep health insurance. "The only person in the world who never doubted me was Victoria — even when we were selling our furniture so our infant daughter (Mount Abe graduate and stage actress Grace Experience) could have another month of health insurance, Victoria said, 'I knew we'd be fine,'" he said.

So what's next?

If you ask Bohjalian about the subject of his 26th book, he'll give you a quick answer. It's titled, "The Amateur." Set in 1978-80, the book is about a 60-something female novelist who, as an 18-year-old professional golfer, accidentally kills a caddy at the driving range at the local country club.

"It completely derails her life," he said.

Adversity. A theme you'll see in several Bohjalian novels.

"I like books that break my heart, that don't end well for everyone," he said mischievously.

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.



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"This Place Called Home: A Photography Collaboration" documents the beauty of Vermont today; and captures the essence of the geography, people, land and experiences that make this place our home. It is a joint project linking VUHS Vermont Studies Class taught by Becca Coffey and the Vergennes LEOS — a teen community service organization led by Cookie Steponaitis.

"Biosphere in Your Backyard" follows the themes of explore, enrich, enjoy and interprets the library's records through a biosphere lens, considering how the landscape around us can influence the history we create. On view in the Kerr Room, with accompanying book displays in both the Vermont Room and the Children's Room.

EDGEWATER AT THE FALLS

1 Mill Street, Middlebury

For more info visit edgewatergallery.com, call 802-458-0098 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com.

"New Work for a New Year" featuring new work from Victoria Blewer and Holly Friesen. The winter is a uniquely beautiful time of year in Vermont but it is also a season with long nights, limited sunshine, cold temperatures and a limited landscape palette. Both artists featured at the gallery by the falls provide a panacea to the monochrome through work that is done in vibrant hues that give a contemporary twist to two traditional subject matters. Victoria Blewer — hand colored and mixed media photography. Holly Friesen — wilderness landscapes in acrylic.

EDGEWATER ON THE GREEN

6 Merchants Row, Middlebury

For more info visit edgewatergallery.com, call 802-989-7419 or email info@edgewatergallery-vt.com.

"Shimmer", is Julia Purinton's solo exhibition of new paintings in oil. She presents this body of work at a time that she feels we need to remember the healing abilities of the natural world. An opening reception will be held Friday, March 7, 5-6:30 p.m. On view Feb. 28-April 5.

JACKSON GALLERY

68 S Pleasant St, Middlebury

For more info visit townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery or call 802-382-9222.

"Landscape Complexions: Paintings by H. Keith Wagner." Wagner combines free artistic exploration with his more deliberate designer's eye to create balanced compositions that are simultaneously simple and complex. On view through March 15.

SEE EXHIBITS ON PAGE 8

Cosmic Forecast

ARIES: March 21/April 20. Aries, you are in a leadership position this week, whether you realize it or not. Your confidence may inspire others to follow your lead. Just be sure not to micromanage.

TAURUS: April 21/May 21. Taurus, stability is important to you. This week you may find yourself craving a deeper connection. Explore the different types of relationships in your life and make a plan.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21. This is an excellent week for networking and making new friends, Gemini. Just be careful of overcommitting, as it's easy to fill up your plate with too much to handle.

CANCER: June 22/July 22. Cancer, you might be craving an emotional connection this week. You may feel drawn to someone who shares your values and outlook. Pay attention to signs that may guide you.

LEO: July 23/Aug. 23. Now is the perfect time to push forward with creative projects or ideas at work, Leo. You might receive recognition for your efforts, so don't worry about the spotlight if it happens.

VIRGO: Aug. 24/Sept. 22. Don't lose sight of the bigger picture, Virgo. For too much time you have focused on the small details that are getting in the way of the bigger plan. A mentor might offer guidance.

LIBRA: Sept. 23/Oct. 23. Libra, you and your partner might come up with plans to improve your living situation or finances this week. Collaboration is really the best way to tackle this.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24/Nov. 22. Scorpio, a transformation could take place this week. You might feel like stepping into a new version of yourself and figuring out the best path to personal growth.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 23/Dec. 21. Stay focused on what matters most, Sagittarius. You will find that most things will fall into place. Prioritize your health and finances this week.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22/Jan. 20. Capricorn, with so much creativity flowing, you might want to express yourself through hobbies or an art project. Approach challenges in new ways and the solutions will come.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21/Feb. 18. Aquarius, you might find yourself taking a step back at work to focus on personal matters. This doesn't mean you are slacking off. It just means you need to shift priorities for a bit.

PISCES: Feb. 19/March 20. Avoid any miscommunications by expressing yourself clearly and concisely, Pisces. Focus on strengthening your communication and connection with others in the days to come.

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 7 — Bryan Cranston, actor (69)
MARCH 8 — Lester Holt, newscaster (66)
MARCH 9 — Juliette Binoche, actor (61)

MARCH 10 — Jon Hamm, actor (54)
MARCH 11 — Douglas Adams, writer (d)
MARCH 12 — Vaslav Nijinsky, dancer (d)
MARCH 13 — Coco Gauff, tennis player (21)

CALENDAR

MARCH 6-14
2025



THURSDAY, MARCH 6

“JOIN OR DIE” ON SCREEN IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 6, 6 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. Join Vermont Public for a 45-minute excerpt of the highly acclaimed 2023 documentary “Join or Die,” a film about why you should join a club — and why the fate of America depends on it. A social hour will follow to practice lessons from the film. Free. More info at tinyurl.com/JoinDieTHT.

GRASSLAND BIRDS OF VERMONT IN FERRISBURGH. Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Office, 3279 Route 7. Join the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission for a talk by Vermont Center for Ecostudies’ Grassland Bird Biologist Kevin Tolan, who will discuss the past, present and future of grassland bird habitats.

POLLINATOR PATHWAYS TALK IN MONKTON. Thursday, March 6, 7-8:30 p.m., Russell Memorial Library, 92 Monkton Ridge. Learn about Monkton’s Pollinator Pathways when expert gardeners Debra Sprague, Stephanie Hyatt and Julie Parker-Dickerson explain what the pathway is and how to increase pollination in your own backyard, along with plant selection and maintenance.

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE OR SNOWSHOE IN RIPTON. Friday, March 7, Widow’s Clearing, Ripton-Goshen Rd. Moderate snowshoe of 5-6 miles with moderate elevation gain. This will

be an out and back snowshoe headed towards the Water Tower trails. Contact Ellen Cronan at 908-595-2926 to sign up and for further information. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

PHOTOGRAPHY OPENING RECEPTION IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 7, 4-7 p.m., Photoplace Gallery, 3 Park St. Join us for the opening reception of “Portraiture: Unveiling Identity,” a heartfelt photography exhibit showcasing the depth, emotion and personal stories that make each of us unique. Featuring work from talented artists, this collection goes beyond physical appearance to explore the hidden layers of identity and the human experience. Come enjoy an evening of art, conversation and community as we celebrate the power of photography to connect us and tell our stories.

PIANIST IYAD SUGHAYER IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 7, 7:30 p.m., Robison Hall, Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. Acclaimed Jordanian-Palestinian pianist Iyad Sughayer embodies a captivating blend of exceptional skill and profound musicality. A prize-winner with the Young Classical Artists Trust International Auditions, he was named a ClassicFM Rising Star Artist, and “One to Watch” by International Piano Magazine. Tickets: \$25/20/10/5, available at go.middlebury.edu.

FUTURE GROOVES: A MIDDLEBURY RAVE IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 7, 8 p.m., Anderson Studio, Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. Come and move to futuristic techno and experimental dance

music in the new Town Hall Theater space! All-vinyl DJ set by t.h.e.o.t.h.e.r. (aka Amit Prakash) and visuals by TVC95. Student \$8/Adult \$12. Cash bar (21+ with ID). More info at addisonarts.org/event/future-grooves-a-middlebury-rave.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

MONTHLY WILDLIFE WALK. Saturday, March 8, 8-10 a.m. Meet at Otter View Park parking lot, corner of 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 and the Hurd Grassland. Birders of all ages and abilities welcome. For more information, call 802-388-6019.

HANDMADE WHISK BROOM WORKSHOP IN MONKTON. Saturday, March 8, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Russell Memorial Library, 92 Monkton Ridge. Join Nora from Woolf Den Homestead to create two whisk brooms. You will learn to make two traditional Appalachian style hand brooms. One a simple round whisk and the other a turkey wing hand whisk. Nora will provide more tips, material list and sourcing. Supplies will also be available for sale. In the morning, tea and snacks will be provided. Tickets, sliding scale \$55, \$65 and \$75. Register at russellmemlibrary@gmail.com.

BOOK CLUB ON THE TAM IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 8, noon-2 p.m., Otter Creek Gorge, Northern Trailhead, Morgan Horse Farm Rd. Join

MALT and Ilsley Public Library to discuss “Flight Behavior,” by Barbara Kingsolver. We will meet in Otter Creek Gorge underneath an ancient and beloved oak tree (the large oak with a swing), a short walk away from the northern parking lot on Morgan Horse Farm Rd. All ages are welcome. Light refreshments provided. No bathrooms on site; please plan accordingly. Free. Club continues Saturday, March 22. More info and registration at maltvt.org/events.

WILLOWELL BOOGIE BENEFIT IN BRISTOL. Saturday, March 8, 6 p.m., Holley Hall, 1 South St. The Willowell Foundation’s annual benefit dance and silent auction features a cash bar, and the Almendros, a popular Addison County band whose infectious repertoire ranges from rock, country and blues to reggae, ska, calypso and African styles. Tickets are \$10 at the door, children free. Proceeds support the Willowell’s scholarship fund, which helps children access local nature-based programming and education.

CONTRA DANCE IN CORNWALL. Saturday, March 8, 7-9 p.m., Cornwall Town Hall, Route 30. Fern Bradley will be calling, with live music by Red Dog Riley. Beginners welcome. All dances will be taught. \$5 to \$10 or pay what you can.

AN EVENING OF SONGS AND ARIAS IN MIDDLEBURY. Saturday, March 8, 7:30-9 p.m., Mahaney Arts Center, 72 Porter Field Rd. Music Department vocal students present a lively evening of songs and arias. More info at

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.	
Channel 1071 Through the Nights: Public Affairs	Sunday, March 9 4 a.m. Energy Week 9 a.m. Catholic Mass 11 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 12:30 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 4 p.m. Congregational Service 6:30 p.m. Eckankar 7 p.m. Catholic Mass 8 p.m. Health Care Expensive 9:05 p.m. Under the Dome Monday, March 10 4:30 a.m. Energy Week 5:30 a.m. Eckankar 6:05 a.m. Press Conf., Public Affairs 10 a.m. Town Meeting as Recorded 6 p.m. Health Care Expensive 7:05 p.m. Under the Dome 7:38 p.m. Gov.Scott 2026 Budget Tuesday, March 11 8 a.m. Health Care Expensive 9:05 a.m. Under the Dome 9:30 a.m. Eckankar 10 a.m. Town Meeting as Recorded 2 p.m. Health Care Expensive? 3:05 a.m. Under the Dome 4 p.m. Congregational Service 5:30 p.m. Gov. Scott	7 p.m. Selectboard (LIVE), Pub. Affairs Wednesday, March 12 7:30 a.m. Memorial Baptist Service 9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass 10 a.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 4 p.m. Energy Week 7 p.m. Selectboard 10 p.m. Energy Week, Public Affairs Thursday, March 13 5 a.m. Gov. Scott FY 2026 Budget 8 a.m. Congregational Service 12 p.m. Selectboard, Public Affairs 8 p.m. Energy Week 9:30 p.m. Eckankar 10:05 p.m. Health Care Expensive 11:10 p.m. Under the Dome Channel 1091 Through the Night: Music, Arts and Nature Friday, March 7 4:30 a.m. Festival On the Green 6 a.m. Yoga 7 a.m. Tai Chi 7:30 a.m. Sharpe Takes 10:30 a.m. Statehouse Education 6:30 p.m. Demystifying AI	8 p.m. School Board Meeting/s Saturday, March 8 5 a.m. North Branch Nature Center 6:30 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 9:05 a.m. All Brains Belong 10 a.m. Statehouse Education 2 p.m. Demystifying AI 3:30 p.m. Festival On the Green 5:30 p.m. Foltz Studio 8:50 p.m. Statehouse Education Sunday, March 9 5 a.m. North Branch Nature Center 8:45 a.m. Statehouse Education 1 p.m. Festival On the Green 4 p.m. Demystifying AI 5:30 p.m. Sharpe Takes 6:05 p.m. All Brains Belong 7 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 8 p.m. School Board Meeting/s Monday, March 10 5 a.m. All Things LGBTQ 6 a.m. Sharpe Takes 6:35 a.m. Tai Chi 7 a.m. Chair Yoga 12 p.m. School Board Meeting/s 5 p.m. Foltz Studio 6 p.m. Sharpe Takes	6:35 p.m. Demystifying AI 11 p.m. Sharpe Takes Tuesday, March 11 5 a.m. Sharpe Takes 5:35 a.m. Tai Chi 6 a.m. Chair Yoga 12 p.m. North Branch Nature Center 6 p.m. Sharpe Takes 7 p.m. School Board Meeting/s Wednesday, March 12 6:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6:55 a.m. Chair Yoga 4 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 5 p.m. Tai Chi 5:30 p.m. Demystifying AI 7 p.m. School Board Meeting/s Thursday, March 13 5:30 a.m. Foltz Studio 6:30 a.m. Tai Chi 6:55 a.m. Yoga 8 a.m. School Board Meeting/s 12:30 p.m. Demystifying AI 4 p.m. Foltz Studio 5 p.m. All Things LGBTQ 10 p.m. Sharpe Takes	

middlebury.edu/events/event/songs-and-arias-2.

"A STRANGER IN THE KINGDOM" SCREENING WITH DIRECTOR JAY CRAVEN IN FERRISBURGH. Saturday, March 8, 7 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall, 3279 Route 7. The Friends of the Union Meeting Hall will host a special screening of Craven's award-winning 1997 film based on the novel by Howard Frank Mosher. Craven will introduce the film followed by a post-screen Q & A. Tickets, \$12 in advance, available at unionmeetinghall.org/programming-and-events. Questions? Email unionmeetinghall@gmail.com.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

CHRIS BOHJALIAN BOOK RELEASE CELEBRATION IN MIDDLEBURY. Sunday, March 9, 4 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. Join Vermont Book Shop and Vermont Public at to celebrate the publication of New York Times bestselling author — and our beloved neighbor and friend — Chris Bohjalian's 25th novel, "The Jackal's Mistress." Vermont Edition host Mikaela Lefrak will interview Bohjalian live on the theater's main stage. Q&A to follow. Free. Registration required at townhalltheater.org.

DOUGLAS BROOKS, BOATBUILDER IN FERRISBURGH. Monday, March 9, 2 p.m., Ferrisburgh Town Hall, 3279 Route 7. While stories of Vermont naval history and commercial shipping have been well documented, the traditions of small boat building from throughout our state have remained untold. The bulk of our historic boat building traditions involves Vermonters building their own boats, whether for pleasure or commercial use. The historical record illuminating this subject resides today mostly in family stories and photo collections. In this slide presentation, Douglas Brooks shares his research on these traditions, and his work in recreating some of these historic vessels.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

"GARDENING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE" IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, March 11, 1 p.m., the Residence at Otter Creek, 50 Lodge Rd. As our climate continues to change, we expect our summers to be hotter and drier. Quickly falling rain can cause damaging runoff rather than slowly soaking into the soil. Join Sarah Salantino of Full Circle Gardens in Essex for this Middlebury Garden Club program to explore ways we can prepare for droughts. Her talk will give you water-wise ideas, practices, and perennial varieties to keep

your gardens gorgeous under drier conditions. Free and open to the public.

SEWING MACHINE BASICS IN MONKTON. Tuesday, March 11, 6-7:30 p.m., Russell Memorial Library, 92 Monkton Ridge. Designed for 12-year-olds to adults. You will be taught the ins and outs of how a sewing machine works and introduced to different types of sewing machines from different eras and makers. Learn the basics of how to thread your machine, thread a bobbin and how to solve troubleshooting problems. Machines will be provided, but you may bring your own sewing machine if you wish. Email russellmemlibrary@gmail.com to save your spot.

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO PRESENTS: THE MOTH IN MIDDLEBURY. Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m., Main Stage, Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. Listen to true stories or share your own at our open-mic storytelling competition! The night's theme... BEEF: Prepare a five-minute story about bad blood. The petty grievances that drive you mad, the cold wars waged, long-standing grudges to petty spats, tell us about the rivalries that pushed your buttons. Blood-boiling showdowns to simmering passive-aggressive battles. Tickets \$17.50, available at townhalltheater.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB HIKE IN SHELBURNE. Thursday, March 13,

Shelburne Farms. Hike around beautiful Shelburne Farms and see farm animals, great views, and perhaps some beachcombing opportunities. Plan on being out for about 4 hours and 6 miles with minimal elevation gain. Group limit of 8. Contact Helena Nicolay at sqrlma@gmail.com or 802-236-3541 for details & to sign up. More at gmcbreadloaf.org.

"THIN MAN" ON SCREEN IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 13, 1 p.m., Middlebury Marquis Theater, 65 Main St. Join fellow community film lovers to watch this month's Middlebury Classic Film Club movie, followed by short discussion of the film. As always, the popcorn is on us.

"ADVENTURES ON A 38-FOOT SAILBOAT" PRESENTATION IN MONKTON. Thursday, March 13, 6:30 p.m., Russell Memorial Library, 92 Monkton Ridge. Longtime Monkton residents Roger Wallace and Susan DeSimone will share their adventure of sailing to the Bahamas in 2022-2023 aboard Pathfinder, their 1983 Bristol, a boat they rebuilt themselves. Come hear their stories about dolphins, rays, turtles and secluded islands.

"THE ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS OF LEONARD PELKEY" ON STAGE IN MIDDLEBURY. Thursday, March 13, 7:30 p.m., Anderson Studio Theater, Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. In this play by James Lescene, Andrew Ritter plays every character in a small

New Jersey town as he unravels the story of Leonard Pelkey, a tenaciously optimistic and flamboyant 14-year-old boy who goes missing. A luminous force of nature whose magic is only truly felt once he is gone. Leonard becomes an unexpected inspiration as the town's citizens question how they live, who they love, and what they leave behind. A MACo production. Tickets: Standard \$33/budget \$28/generous \$39.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

AUTHOR ELLIE BRYANT IN LINCOLN. Friday, March 14, 4 p.m., Lincoln Library, Rover Rd. Bryant will talk about her book "Willie, Rum Running Queen," the true tale of notorious Prohibition bootlegger Willie Carter Sharpe. During Prohibition she rises from poverty to the heights of fame and fortune in the moonshine business. Eventually, the law catches up to her and she is brought to testify in the Great Moonshine Conspiracy Trial of 1934. Bryant will also share the story of how she came to write this book and give ideas to help you start your own story.

"THE ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS OF LEONARD PELKEY" ON STAGE IN MIDDLEBURY. Friday, March 14, 7:30 p.m., Anderson Studio Theater, Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. See March 13 listing.



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Participate with The Valley Players in Waitsfield this March

MAD RIVER STORY SLAM

The Valley Players are now accepting stories for the 5th annual Mad River Story Slam, a one-night-only show focusing on sharing stories from real lives. This year's theme is "Relationships" — true stories about exploring the many facets of relationships: love, family, friendships, and everything in between. Story pitches will be accepted until tomorrow, **Friday, March 7**.

Anyone interested in sharing their story for possible performance should call (802) 583-1674 and choose mailbox #4 to share a 2-minute synopsis. Stories should be between 5 and 8 minutes long in their final form, well-rehearsed and delivered without the use of notes or props.

The performance will take place on **Saturday, April 5**, at 7:30 p.m., at the Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100) in Waitsfield. As in previous years, two Zoom workshops will be available for those who want support polishing their stories. These workshops have been invaluable for helping people hone their stories from their humble beginnings and

participation is encouraged. Workshops will be held on **Tuesday, March 11 and Tuesday, March 25**. Tickets for the performance will be on sale soon.

SCENIC PAINTING WORKSHOP

On **March 16**, the Valley Players will present a Scenic Painting Workshop with artist Danielle Peveril from 1-4 p.m., at the Valley Players Theater. Tailored for both beginners and those with some painting experience, this hands-on session will guide participants through the essential techniques needed to transform a simple set into a vivid, realistic environment, focusing on mastering the craft of painting highly realistic textures like stone, brick, and metal — elements commonly used in theatrical sets. In addition to learning the step-by-step processes of achieving these lifelike effects, participants will also delve into the technical side of scenic painting, including the proper use of tools, materials, and safety practices. The workshop is for participants ages 15 and up and there is a pay-what-you-can tuition fee. Materials will be provided. Register by **March 8** by going to valleyplayers.com.

AUDITION CALL

Auditions for the Valley Players summer production of "As You Like It" by William Shakespeare, will be held on **Sunday March 30**, at 4 p.m., and **Tuesday, April 1**, at 6 p.m. This classic tale of love, loss, and disguise will be directed by Jeanne Beckwith, with performance dates **June 26-July 13**. This classic play is a romantic comedy set in the Forest of Arden, where characters discover love, identity, and forgiveness. Rosalind, disguised as a boy, flees with her cousin and the court jester to escape court politics. In the forest, she encounters her love Orlando, who loves her in return but doesn't recognize Rosiland in her disguise. The story weaves together comedic misunderstandings, philosophical musings, and a love triangle, culminating in reconciliations, revealed identities, and multiple weddings, celebrating love's transformative power and the joy of self-discovery. Roles are available for actors ages 17 and up. Actors are encouraged to audition for any role.

Go to valleyplayers.com for more information. Questions about these opportunities can be directed to valleyplayers@madriver.com.

EXHIBITS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

JOHNSON EXHIBITION GALLERY

78 Chateau Road,
Middlebury
For hours and info

[visit middlebury.edu/events](http://visit.middlebury.edu/events)

"To Save and Protect: Textile Conservation for the Future." Textiles and clothing are some of the most sensitive items in museum collections, and Middlebury College is the proud owner of an historic teaching collection of over 400 pieces of antique clothing and accessories. This exhibition, presented by students in THEA/HARC 1033 Historic Clothing Practicum, explores ways in which these valuable artifacts can be preserved and protected from damaging elements, and catalogued to make the collection digitally available to a wider audience. Free and open to all. On view through early March.

K. GRANT FINE ART

37 Green St, Vergennes
For more info visit kgrantfineart.com.

"Mortal Coil," featuring works by Misoo Bang, Austin Furtak-Cole, Suzy Spence, Kalin Thomas, Mollie Ward, and Corrine Yonce. This six-person show explores the human experience through the lens of self-possession, connection, and vulnerability, all rooted in the physicality of the body. On view through April 26.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

72 Porter Field Road, Middlebury
For more info visit middlebury.edu/museum/exhibitions

"Rania Matar: SHE." The photographs of Lebanese Palestinian American artist Rania Matar — captured through car windows, in abandoned buildings, snow-strewn fields, or floating in the Mediterranean Sea — tell the stories of young women through portraits taken throughout Lebanon, France, Egypt, and the United States. On view Feb. 14-April 20.

"MuseumLAB: Teaching with the Collection." Each year, professors in departments ranging from Classics to

Economics teach hundreds of students in the largest classroom on campus: the Middlebury College Museum of Art. Discussing art produced throughout history and around the globe offers students perspective on the topic at hand — and space to reflect on their own place in today's complex world. On view Jan. 17-April 20.

PHOTOPLACE GALLERY

3 Park Street, Middlebury
For more info visit photoplacegallery.com.

"Portraiture: Unveiling Identity" explores portraits that transcend the surface, revealing the often-hidden dimensions of identity. Juror Jeff Curto selected approximately 35 images for exhibition in the Middlebury gallery, and 40 more for the online gallery. On view March 7-28.

SPARROW ART SUPPLY

44 Main St., Middlebury
For more info visit sparrowartsupply.com

"All That Glitters." Featuring nearly 40 local artists, this New Year showcase highlights eye-catching metallics, iridescence, and the play of light, with works that span subtle, soft glints to bold, radiant statements. On view through April 5.



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PUZZLES

sponsored by SPARROW ART SUPPLY

ACROSS

- 1. Cut a little bit off
- 5. State with confidence
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Not narrow
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Challenged
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Showing extreme greed
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one

- 35. Lake in Botswana
- 38. E.T. rode in one
- 39. Juniors' parents
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Mother of Perseus
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Gov't investigators
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. The vast grassy plains in S. America
- 55. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 56. Noted consumer advocate
- 60. Spanish sports club
- 61. Body part

- 62. Tractability
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught

DOWN

- 1. Brushed aside
- 2. Water sprite
- 3. Ones to look up to
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. A number everyone has
- 6. Marine invertebrate
- 7. One who takes you to court
- 8. Indicates outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Strains
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Some pages are

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14					15							16		
17					18							19		
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		8	6					
1			8			6	2	

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

dog-__

- 18. Ukraine city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Summer month (abbr.)
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Jewelry brand
- 30. Fictional rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Russian city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Furious

- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They __
- 45. Women
- 47. Inspire with love
- 48. Japanese ankle sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Type of protein

- 54. Pennsylvania town
- 57. Art __: around 1920
- 58. __ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to sleep
- 66. Muslim ruler title
- 67. Depressed
- 68. Gradually gave way
- 69. Clear-thinking

This week's puzzle solutions can be found on Page 10.

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- Enjoy cupcakes by Thistle & Honey Baking!

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

BOOST VEGGIE DIVERSITY WITH SEEDS

Choosing seeds and starting your own transplants are among the most empowering ways to garden. Why grow the same vegetable varieties that you can buy at the grocery store when there are so many others to try?

BY AMY SIMONE In addition, purchasing unique varieties of seeds encourages growers to keep offering them. As a bonus, diversity in your vegetable garden

can give our pollinators and other beneficial insects a wider diet.

Perhaps you are looking for the ideal tomato to slice fresh off the vine into your salads and prefer them to be balanced between acidity and sweetness. As you read the growers' notes on various tomato varieties, focus on the description of their flavors and uses and let that guide you to a few options.

Among the choices between those perfect,



Amy Simone is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from South Burlington.

not-too-sweet, fresh eating tomatoes, there also are options for hybrid, heirloom or open-pollinated seeds.

Hybrid seeds, also referred to as F1 (first generation off-spring) hybrids, are the result of a controlled cross between two parent plants of the same species carefully chosen for their attributes. This is a lengthy process that may take seven to eight years until a consistent hybrid plant is achieved.

The seeds from this winning combination are packaged and sold with a higher price tag. In exchange for the extra cost are seeds with "hybrid vigor." These seeds germinate into strong seedlings that become larger plants, yield more fruit and are more resistant to the common diseases and pests for that type of plant.

To clarify, hybrids are not genetically modified organisms, also called GMOs, as some people may believe. GMOs are made by modifying the plant's genetic material in a lab.

The downside to hybrids is that to continue to grow the variety that you like, you will need to buy seeds for it each year. Seeds saved and planted from F1 hybrids will not result in the same plant.

Open-pollinated seeds, often noted as OP on packets, are from plants that are pollinated naturally by the wind and insects. Seeds saved from these plants will grow exactly the same variety. It's especially easy to save the seeds of beans, lettuce, tomatoes and peas for planting in future

SEE GARDEN ON PAGE 11



PUZZLE

SOLUTIONS MARCH 6, 2025

ADD YOUR PIECE!
BE THE NEXT SPONSOR OF THE PUZZLE PAGE.

EMAIL CHRISTY@ADDISONINDEPENDENT.COM TO FIND OUT HOW.



S	N	I	P	A	S	S	E	R	T	D	E	E
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8	1	3	9	7	5	2	4	6
4	8	5	2	6	7	3	9	1
9	2	6	1	3	4	7	8	5
3	7	1	5	8	9	4	6	2
6	3	4	7	9	2	1	5	8
2	5	8	6	4	1	9	3	7
1	9	7	8	5	3	6	2	4

GARDEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

seasons since these are self-pollinating plants.

Heirloom seeds are open-pollinated plants that were developed naturally outside of the commercial plant trade. Heirloom plants often have been saved and replanted for more than 50 years, and there is usually an interesting backstory to how that variety developed.

Standard and heirloom open-pollinated seeds will yield stable traits from generation to generation. Many people feel that their flavor is superior to that of hybrids. They are less expensive than

hybrids, especially when you save their seeds for the following year's crop.

If saving seeds is important to you, there is likely an open-pollinated variety with the desired attributes that is similar enough to a hybrid that you like.

Hybrid varieties may be better if you have a smaller garden and want to get more yield from fewer plants. Open-pollinated plants will offer more varieties that focus on taste and uniqueness. There is room in your garden for both.

Most importantly, embrace the power to expand the diversity of vegetables that you grow by selecting your own seeds.

For questions about seeds, seed starting and other gardening topics, feel free to reach out the Extension Master Gardener Helpline at go.uvm.edu/gardenquestion.



Growing different tomato varieties allows gardeners to enjoy a wider range of unique flavors and ripening times throughout the growing season. PHOTO / AMY SIMONE

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Paws To Consider

with Dr. Bri Letaw, Medical Director, Bristol Animal Hospital

Q: I am worried about tick-borne diseases. How does a veterinarian test for them?

A: There is an in-house test that can be run for an initial test. This test cannot tell you the difference between exposure or an active infection of the tick-borne disease. If your dog is positive, there are further tests such as a PCR test or a Lyme C6 test that can then confirm more of an active infection.

Bristol Animal Hospital, 167 Monkton Rd., Bristol
(802) 588-7387 • <https://bristolvtvet.com>

Pets In Need

HOMeward BOUND

Addison County's Humane Society

Daisy

Daisy is a super sweet, goofy pit bull mix. She absolutely loves people and will wiggle her body out of excitement to say hello. Toys are her favorite, and she will gladly play fetch and tug. Daisy is housebroken and walks well on a leash. In her previous home, she didn't get along with the other female dog. She's fine with male dogs and has been around young children regularly. Daisy likes to chase cats. She's looking for an active family that can give her endless cuddles!

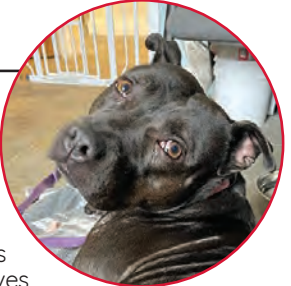


Graham

Graham is a silly adolescent trying to navigate life with his long legs. At only 1 year old, he's still working on his manners. He knows some basic commands and absolutely loves to snuggle. Although he's 55 pounds, Graham thinks he's a lap dog and will happily sit with you and give kisses. Squeaky toys are real fun, and he's very treat-motivated. Graham did not get along with the cats in his previous home. He would probably be fine with older teenagers. His history with other dogs is unknown.

Maggie

Maggie may seem shy at first, but she adores people once she's gotten to know them. At only 47 pounds, she's a perfect petite pittie waiting for a lap to cuddle on. Maggie doesn't get along with other dogs. Her history with cats and kids is unknown. She is housebroken and loves treats & toys. Give her pets, and she will be your forever friend.



Spade

Spade is a friendly boy who is looking for a family who will give him time and patience to come out of his shell. He warms up with some gentle petting and will roll over to show you his belly! He gets along with other cats, but we are unsure about dogs.

Tess

Tess is a very affectionate 8-year-old gal. She loves to give kisses and thoroughly enjoys breakfast time! Tess would do best in a quiet home with no other animals or children.



Homeward Bound

Addison County's Humane Society

Want to learn more?

Call or check our website. We may have a pet for you!
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236 Boardman Street | Middlebury, VT

2025 MID-WINTER COLORING + DECORATING CONTEST

Color and decorate this frosty picture however your heart desires!

Use the one here, make photocopies, or grab a printable version from addisonindependent.com/contests.

Once your chilly masterpiece is complete, submit it:

By Email:
contests@addisonindependent.com

By Mail or In Person:
Addison Independent, 58 Maple Street, Middlebury, VT 05753

Deadline for Entries:
Monday, March 17th

Two lucky winners from each age group will win a snow-tastic prize from our wonderful contest sponsors. Winners will be announced in the March 20th edition of the Addison Independent.

Swing by our office between 9 AM and 4 PM to collect your artwork and prizes by March 31st.

Many thanks to our sponsors:



LET IT SNOW!



Name: _____ Age: _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Age Group: ☐ under 5 ☐ 5-6 ☐ 7-8 ☐ 9-11 ☐ 12-15 ☐ 16-Adult

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MIDDLEBURY, VT

WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT DOOR

Chandler Center's 'Our Town' blends Wilder with Noah Kahan

The Chandler Center for the Arts presents a unique, Vermont-centric production of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," that opened on Feb. 28, and will run through March 9, at Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N Main Street in Randolph. Tradition has its virtues, but while this timeless American play is still set in the fictional New England town of Grover' Corners and reflects rural life's most precious moments, it is not quite the "Our Town" that millions have read in school or seen on stages in the near-century since its 1938 Broadway premiere. This "Our Town" will weave two new locally inspired elements into the theatrical experience.

"In Chandler's new production, gone are the period costumes, the morose church hymns, and the folksy exaggerated sentimentality," said Ben Rapson, the show's director and lead actor as 'The Stage Manager'. "Wilder's script begs to play its own role in our modern Vermont lives."

The production will incorporate live covers of three songs written and made popular by this generation's native son of Vermont, and Grammy-nominated musical artist Noah Kahan. And just next door the acclaimed traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution about small town life, both past and present, will welcome viewers.

Audiences are invited to explore the

Smithsonian Institution's "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" exhibit in the Chandler art gallery, on view until March 23.

Rapson was struck early in pre-production with a realization. "Noah's songwriting speaks to so many of us in Randolph and the rest of Vermont, in the same way that Thornton Wilder's words perfectly capture something eternal about being a human with a northern attitude. We're really taking that Wilder-Kahan kismet and running with it. And I'm thrilled to say we received Noah's personal blessing to cover his songs in our show — a truly serendipitous benefit to the nature of community in our state."

Along with the show's music director Ryder Musselman, Rapson, the cast, and a live bluegrass band, the company is poised to create a rich, emotional soundscape that complements the heart of the play. Together, Kahan's music and Wilder's exploration of love, loss, and the afterlife offer comfort and reflection to anyone who has ever pondered life's fragility or feared death.

Chandler's gallery offering of the Smithsonian Institution's exhibit in tandem with a unique production of "Our Town" promises more than a theatrical experience: it's a love letter to Vermont and a must-see for locals and visitors alike.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, AT 7 P.M.
SATURDAY, MARCH 8, AT 7 P.M.
SUNDAY, MARCH 9, AT 2 P.M.

Adult general admission:
\$20 advance, \$25 at the door.
Student admission: \$15.
Kids 12 & younger admission: free.



Ben Rapson as Stage Manager.

PHOTO / JESS RHOADES

Tickets are on sale at chandler-arts.org/ourtown.



Jessamine Kelley, Beatrice Scott, Emelia Palmisano, and Mark Rosalbo rehearse a scene from "Our Town" presented by the Chandler Center in Randolph.

PHOTO / RAMSEY PAPP

CAST & CREW:

Director: Ben Rapson
Producers: Erica Robinson & Killian White
Music Director: Ryder Musselman
Costume Designer: Kate Branstetter
Hair Stylist: Melissa Smith
Makeup Designer: Erica Dana
Scenic Designer: Shannon Sanborn
Stage Manager: Samantha Augustus
Lighting/Sound Designer: Jon Madden
Stage Manager: Ben Rapson
Emily Webb: Beatrice Scott
Mrs. Webb: Jessamine Kelley
Mr. Webb: Mark Rosalbo

George Gibbs: Caleb Paige
Mrs. Gibbs: Rita Champion
Dr. Gibbs: Rob Marois
Simon Stimson: Steve Augustus
Howie Newsome: Max Dybvig
Constable Warren: Roger Benham
Mrs. Soames: Lana Wood
Sam Craig: Raymond Merrill
Joe Stoddard: Eric Dickerson
Rebecca Gibbs: Hayley Sherman
Winnie Webb: Emelia Palmisano
Professor Willard: Lisa Foley
Joe Jr and Si Crowell: Jasper Smith

ENSEMBLE:

Whitney Bowers
Ella Roberts
Annie Hutchinson
Leanne Hoppe
Leila Hoppe
Sonia Bond
Laura Rooney
Cassidy Seidler
Karina Lee
Anne Kaplan
Nancy Murray
Naomi Peterson
Amy Urana
James Greenleaf
Jeanne Ward
Ramsey Papp



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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 1-800-669-9777.

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This unique property is located at the far northern end
of the Taconic Mountain Range in Brandon, Vermont.
Views from the top include the Taconic, Green and Adirondack
Mountain Ranges, as well as the Champlain Valley and Vermont
Valley. The timber on this property is primarily a mix of high value
hardwood species, dominated by sugar maple and northern red oak.
Located at the end of a dead end road, this parcel offers great privacy.

Info & photos: Taconicsend.com

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**NEW
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1956 ROUTE 73 EAST, SUDBURY, VT - MLS #5030584 - \$649,000

Situated on 18.2 gently sloping acres, this well-maintained classic Gambrel-style home provides breathtaking views of the Green Mountains and the surrounding landscape. Cozy up with a book in the family room by the built-in fireplace or in the oversized living room with a picture window that floods the interior with natural light. Attached to the breezeway is a two car garage which includes extra storage space above. Do you like to garden? This home also features a glass paneled greenhouse for gardening enthusiasts. New roof and new paint in the entire exterior in 2024.



**Champlain Valley
Properties**

70 Court Street, Middlebury, VT

802-989-7522 | ChamplainValleyProperty.net





March into spring with Town Hall Theater!

THE MOTH



Live Storytelling at Town Hall Theater

The Moth StorySLAM!

Tuesday March 11th Doors 6:30pm, Stories 7pm

Tickets: \$17.50

Listen to true stories or share your own at this open-mic storytelling competition from the nationally recognized, award-winning storytelling series THE MOTH.

The theme is BEEF.

Prepare a five-minute story about bad blood. The petty grievances that drive you mad, the cold wars waged, long-standing grudges to petty spats, tell us about the rivalries that pushed your buttons.

Whether it's a feud with a neighbor, an old friend turned frenemy, or a silent standoff that's gone on way too long.

Cash bar available throughout the event.

An Elton John & Billy Joel Tribute

Billy and the Jets

Friday March 28th 7:30-10pm

Town Hall Theater's Rothrock Main Stage

Tickets: Student \$15 | Adult \$20

A spectacular live concert celebrating the hits of songwriting and piano-playing music legends Elton John and Billy Joel, performed by beloved Massachusetts-based band Billy and the Jets. In an astonishing tribute, this show will have audience members dancing and singing along (though sitting and observing is welcome too!). Find out why this band has developed an enthusiastic following, and don't miss their Vermont premiere.

This concert is sponsored and presented in partnership with WVTB-92.1FM Radio.

Dance floor and seating available.

Cash bar available throughout the event.



What's Coming Up

VT Public & VT Book
Shop Present
**Book Talk with
Chris Bohjalian**
Mar 9 @ 4pm

Middlebury Acting
Company Presents
**The Absolute
Brightness of
Leonard Pelkey**
Mar 13-16 & Mar 21-23

MNFF Selects
Presents
**No Country for
Old Men**
Mar 16 @ 3pm

Great Art
Wednesday
**The Dawn of
Impressionism**
Mar 19 @ 11am

Jackson Gallery
**MUHS IB Art
Exhibition**
Mar 28 @ 5pm
Show Mar 24 - Apr 2

Champlain
Philharmonic
Orchestra
**With Diana
Fanning**
Mar 29 @ 7:30pm

Sponsored by



Tickets: townhalltheater.org ▪ 802-382-9222 ▪ 72-76 Merchants Row, Middlebury, VT 05753

Follow us on IG @tthtmidd and FB @townhalltheatervt.

THT would like to thank The Vermont Arts Council and those who have donated to Membership. We couldn't do this without you!