



What voters in the towns of Windham County will debate this week • Pages A4–A5

Town Meeting Day is Tuesday, March 5

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YOUR AWARD-WINNING, INDEPENDENT, NONPROFIT SOURCE OF NEWS AND VIEWS

WSESD board candidates eye process, priorities

Candidates take on questions about school climate, community relations, getting along with administration, and the now-closed sexual abuse investigation

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Residents of WSESD member towns will vote on all candidates for the Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) School Board, including those not from their specific towns, on Town Meeting Day next Tuesday, March 5.

Most of the candidates in the three races for seats on met Feb. 26 in a candidates' forum. Dummerston Town Moderator

Cindy Jerome moderated the exchange, sponsored by *The Commons*, the *Brattleboro Reformer*, and Brattleboro Community Television, with questions asked by Jeff Potter, editor of *The Commons*, and *Reformer* reporter Chris Mays.

Matt Schibley, who was appointed in October 2023, is being challenged for a three-year term as Brattleboro representative by Lance Cutler.

Two three-year terms as
■ SEE WSESD FORUM, A8

Candidates have their say in Brattleboro

At forum, contenders for Selectboard air thoughts on public safety, housing, safe injection sites, the EMS decision, and the budget. And pickleball.

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The five candidates for the three Selectboard seats on the March 5 ballot met on Feb. 22 to discuss the issues in a forum sponsored by *The Commons*, the *Brattleboro Reformer*, and Brattleboro Community Television.

Melanie Winters, managing editor of the *Reformer*, and Randolph T. Holhut, deputy editor of *The Commons*, asked questions of all five, breaking them apart into those vying for a three-year seat and those competing for two one-year seats on the board.

Running for the three-year seat being vacated by Selectboard Chair Ian Goodnow are Peter “Fish” Case, who is completing his first one-year term on the board, and challenger Oscar Heller, who ran for a seat unsuccessfully in 2020. Heller had to participate in the forum remotely due to a bout of Covid that he said he didn’t want to spread to others.

Incumbent Vice Chair Franz Reichsman, who is also completing his first year on the board, is vying with Richard Davis and Jaki Reis for two one-year seats on the board.

Case said he looks forward to
■ SEE SELECTBOARD FORUM, A7



Connecting COMMUNITY with FARMS and FOOD

Throng of people at a recent Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market mill about the gymnasium at the Winston Prouty campus in Brattleboro, creating community around the produce and wares of approximately 20 local and regional farmers. Organizers report that the market is thriving in its new location.

The Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market sees tremendous growth — and a growing need to provide access to local food — as it grows roots at its new home on the Winston Prouty campus

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—What started 18 years ago as a way for Windham County farmers to help feed the local community with surplus food — produce that remained at the end of the summer season — is now a thriving local attraction that boasts hundreds of visitors weekly through the winter months.

The Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market describes itself on its website (brattleborowinterfarmersmarket.org) as the only weekly winter farmers’ market in Windham County and one of the oldest in the state.

Opened in 2006 as a project

of Post Oil Solutions, a non-profit grassroots sustainability group in southeastern Vermont, the Winter Farmers Market has grown from a two-month to a five-month market serving all of Windham County and neighboring towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Nearly 20 farms and 20 vendors sell their goods at the market each week.

The benefits of the Winter Farmers Market are many, says market co-founder and co-manager Sherry Maher, who spoke with *The Commons* recently.

“You buy directly from the producer — the person who grew, raised, cooked, or created [the item], and they can
■ SEE FARMERS MARKET, A2



Peter Dixon, co-owner of Parish Hill Creamery, slices a wedge of cheese at a recent Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market.

Stylists unite for a friend in need

A ‘leap day’ fundraiser will raise funds for Re Sheppard, a hair stylist and multitalented artisan, who is out of work while battling lymphoma

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Loretta Palazzo recalls her first impressions of Re Sheppard.

“All those years ago, she popped into Boomerang looking for a job,” says Palazzo, the owner of the clothing store on Main Street. “I noticed right away that she is artistic, she was dressed so cool. Soft spoken, super kind. That’s how we became friends.”

Some people know Sheppard as a talented rock star musician who plays bass guitar. Other people know her from work at New England Center for Circus Arts as a circus performer. Still others know her as an inspired visual artist.

“She does it all,” Palazzo says with a wide smile. “Re has also been my hairdresser for years.”

Her voice drops. “That is, until she got sick.” Sheppard, who is in her early

50s, was first diagnosed with a very-slow-growing lymphoma 10 years ago. She became ill again in the winter of 2022, but it took months for doctors to discover that the lymphoma had returned — this time, a very aggressive version.

Six rounds of chemotherapy failed to kill the cancer. Since then, she’s received another round of a different chemotherapy, and she is continuing treatment to control the growth of the tumor until they can get her into another form of cancer therapy.

Sheppard has no sense of the trajectory of the treatment or when she might expect her health to return.

“All of her friends thought she’d be done with chemotherapy in February,” Palazzo says, “but as of this past couple of weeks, the tumor has continued to grow.”

Palazzo notes that “people who are ill don’t qualify for disability insurance until they are done with

cancer treatment.”

When Sheppard could no longer earn a living, Palazzo started a GoFundMe account for her.

“How do people live without money while they are going through cancer treatment?” Palazzo wonders aloud.

Enter local hair stylist Joanna Terry Gabriel, who has organized and is heading the fundraising for what she and her friends have named the Leap Day Cut-a-thon Fundraiser for Re.

This Thursday, Feb. 29, Leap Year Day, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., some local hairdressers, barbers and independent stylists will be available for walk-in haircuts by donation, at Gabriel’s salon, Natural Beauty, in Guilford.

“When you are an independent hair stylist, as Re and I are, you don’t have the benefits of working for a big company. If you don’t work, you don’t get paid,” says Gabriel, who has owned her salon for 15 years.

■ SEE RE SHEPPARD, A3



A raffle jar sits on the counter at Natural Beauty in Guilford, ready for the fundraiser taking place on Leap Year Day, Thursday, Feb. 29, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Info: Michael Landis,
emagicmtan@gmail.com

The Commons

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Recognizing that a vigorous exchange of ideas and information allows democracy to function and is the lifeblood of a community, Vermont Independent Media:
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SUBMITTING NEWS AND TIPS

We welcome story ideas and news tips. Please contact the newsroom at news@commonsnews.org or at (802) 246-6397.

VOICES

The Commons presents a broad range of essays, memoirs, and other subjective material in *Voices*, our editorial and commentary section. We want the paper to provide an unpredictable variety of food for thought from all points on the political spectrum.

We especially invite responses to material that appears in the paper.

We do not publish unsigned or anonymous letters, and we only very rarely withhold names for other pieces. When space is an issue, our priority is to run contributions that have not yet appeared in other publications.

Please check with the editor before writing essays or other original submissions of substance. Email: voices@commonsnews.org.

Editorials represent the collective voice of *The Commons* and are written by the editors or by members of the Vermont Independent Media Board of Directors.

The views expressed in our *Voices* section are those of individual contributors. Bylined commentaries by members of the Vermont Independent Media board of directors represent their individual opinions; as an organization, we are committed to providing a forum for the entire community. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Vermont Independent Media is legally prohibited from endorsing political candidates.

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Without our volunteers, this newspaper would exist only in our imaginations.

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In memoriam: Alan O. Dann, Judy Gorman, Mia Gannon



COURTESY OF BRATTLEBORO FARMERS MARKET

Fresh vegetables await customers in the winter months.

Winter Farmers Market

FROM SECTION FRONT

tell you how best to use it and to enjoy it,” Maher says. She called it “a win, win, win.” “Your dollars contribute to the local economy and promise the future of a healthy regional food system while supporting local farmers during their lean season,” Maher says. The Winter Farmers Market began at the River Garden on Main Street and operated there for 12 years. In 2018, it moved to the Church building on Flat Street, its home for four years. In 2022, the winter market moved to its current location in the gymnasium on the Winston Prouty campus on Austine Drive. Maher notes that the market enjoyed more visibility and foot traffic in those River Garden years. “We were nervous about moving out of the downtown area, where we’d been for 16 years,” she says. But along with that loss of casual foot traffic came an increase of people who come “intending to shop,” Maher adds — “and now we have a dedicated weekly following of mostly local residents and tourists alike.” The result: “tremendous growth to the Winter Farmers Market” — and, in fact, the two years on the Winston Prouty campus “have brought our two most successful seasons ever,” Maher says.

“An average of 450 to 500 people attend the Winter Farmers Market each week at the height of our season — for example, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving and the two weeks leading up to Christmas,” she adds. “There can be up to 450 people on a regular Saturday market.” Some attribute the success to the cooperation among farmers, customers, and market organizers. “The community that supports the market is a dedicated group

of people who make the market happen,” says Jon Cohen of Deep Meadow Farm in Ascutney. “We are doing the work growing the food, and dedicated customers show up each week to buy the food,” he says. “We have a wonderful group of vendors who are meeting the needs and demands of people who are coming to the market each week.” Malah Miller of Dwight Miller Orchards in Dummerston sang the praises of the Winter Farmers Market team, including “a special shout out” to Maher. “She is so dedicated and passionate about local food and the people who produce it,” Miller says. She also praised Jill Green, co-manager, and to the “cheerful Saturday morning volunteers,” calling participating in the market “an honor for our farm.” SNAP benefits available at market Ensuring access to local food is an important part of the Winter Farmers Market’s mission. The Northeast Organic Farmers Association of Vermont’s Crop Cash program had provided funding to offer matching funds for customers using federal SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, known statewide as the 3SquaresVT program. Crop Cash, combined with the Winter Farmers Market’s own Boost Your Bread program, could turn a customer’s \$10 into \$30 for local food. But when funding for Crop Cash ran dry at the end of November 2023, the market had to work quickly to find funding to support that food security program. With the help of a \$10,000 grant from the Vermont Community Foundation’s Environmental Justice Small

Grants Program to help tackle this problem, as well as funding from the Vermont Foodbank, the Windham Foundation, C&S Wholesale Grocers, and the New England Grassroots Environment Fund, and donations from individuals, the market created a replacement program, the Harvest Bounty Campaign. Maher traveled to Montpelier in January for SNAP Awareness Day to testify in front of the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and the Senate Committee on Agriculture. She talked about the increasing numbers of people in the region accessing food security programs at the Winter Farmers Market since the pandemic. Maher notes that the senators and representatives alike thought that enabling SNAP customers to turn \$10 of benefits into \$30 at a local farmers market was a “great deal.” Maher says that she shared with the committees that since the 2019–20 season, the Winter Farmers Market had seen an increase of 150% in SNAP transactions. “It translates into federal SNAP dollars along with added incentives to put more nutritious local food on families’ tables while keeping all of those dollars in the local economy and helping to support vibrant farms and food producers in our region,” explains Maher. She urged lawmakers to put money in the FY 2025 state budget to keep these incentives going because they lead to healthy families, vibrant farms, and stronger communities. Justin Bramhall and Vanessa Rose of Leaping Bear Farm in Putney say they are “incredibly impressed” with the Harvest Bounty fundraising, which has given “so much meaningful support to both farmers and shoppers.”

A walk through the market

Farmers from the region connect with buyers for winter food and other goods

BRATTLEBORO—*The Commons* spoke with several farmers who participate in the Brattleboro Winter Farmers’ Market to find out more about their farms and offerings. Coming to the Brattleboro Winter Farmers’ Market from Westminister, Peter Dixon and Rachael Schall of Parish Hill Creamery say that the enterprise is where they’ve been able to put their experience and passions into full play, making “cheese that is the ultimate expression of this place” from milk that comes from the Elm Lea Farm at the Putney School. Dixon made his first cheese in 1983 at Guilford Cheese Co., which operated in Dummerston until 1990. Schall is new to the game, getting started when she and Dixon opened Parish Hill Creamery in 2013. Dixon has consulted and taught classes with makers from well over 100 cheese businesses “from Albania to Shanghai, mostly here in the U.S.,” he says. Schall was an English teacher, worked at a winery, and spent years writing grants and coordinating education for farmers, dairy farmers, and cheese makers.

“We make cheese from May to November when the cows are on pasture, with raw milk, autochthonous fermenting cultures, animal rennet, and Maine sea salt,” she says. They now make 13 varieties, selling “as much as possible in our local community and in New England,” but the Parish Hill Cheeses are also available “as far away as Los Angeles,” she says. The small cheese operation received huge honors in 2023, when four varieties were honored in the World Cheese Awards in Norway, the largest cheese competition in the world. Out of more than 4,500 cheeses from 48 countries entered, Parish Hill received bronze medals for its Vermont Herdsman and Jack’s Blue varieties and top honors — the Super Gold medal — for another two varieties, Humble (its longest-aged cheese) and Idyll (its shortest-aged offering). “Out of the 100 Super Golds awarded, seven came to U.S. producers, so we are delighted that two came to our cheeses,” Schall says. “We hope that our win encourages other small scale producers, so that they might feel empowered to make cheese using natural methods and traditional techniques.” Howard Prussack, proprietor of High Meadows Farm in Westminister, was with Imelda Reilly, who he described as “our public face for the farm and [who] always has a radiant smile for everyone.” Prussack got started farming in Westminister West on Kim Hubbard’s Nature Farms in 1971, and he “just fell in love with the soil and growing organic vegetables.” “Eight years later, I was able to buy my own 50-acre farm just down the road a bit and since 1979 have built nine greenhouses and rebuilt the barns and established one of the premier produce farms in the county,” says Prussack, who co-founded the original Brattleboro Farmers’ Market on Route 9 and still loves being there.

he has agricultural roots in Westminister, where he farmed before being able to obtain a conserved farm, Deep Meadow Farm, through the Vermont Land Trust. “We started farming on the seacoast of New Hampshire in 1986,” he says. “It was more of a homesteading effort which turned into small farmers markets and [community supported agriculture farms].” Cohen says he returned to farming in 2001 in Westminister, and about 13 years ago, moved to Ascutney to farm about 48 acres. “We do year-round, diversified vegetable production with some berries,” he says. “All certified organic.” The farm sells greens, root crops, potatoes, beets, carrots, onions, cabbage, “and lots more,” says Cohen, who calls the Winter Farmers Market “an integral part of our year-round income.” “Winter production and winter storage have dramatically increased including supplying the Winter Farmers’ Market,” he says. “We have really benefited from the market.” Justin Bramhall and Vanessa Rose of Leaping Bear Farm in Putney are self-described “first-generation farmers with a passion for healing and the environment.” Bramhall has a background in permaculture design and education, and Rose is a graphic designer and marketer. “We use our past experiences daily to grow our farm, and to help refine our customers’ understanding of regenerative agriculture, organic growing practices, and how they can positively contribute to healing our food systems,” Rose says. “We deeply value our community, which makes our work rewarding, but we know food producers are facing some serious challenges [because of on-going climate change] and we want to help face those issues head on,” she added. She pointed out that “how our food is farmed can either add to the destruction of our planet or it can do the opposite — creating abundance and resiliency across our communities.” “In five seasons, we have produced over 5,000 pasture raised chickens for the local community, as well as fresh eggs, micro-greens, homemade broth, and pet food topper,” she says. “We are focused on making a positive impact on our land, in our management of animals, and in your health and diet.” Dwight Miller Orchards in Dummerston has participated in the Winter Farmers Market since the beginning. Malah Miller, who operates the orchard with her husband, Read, calls the 2023 season “a very challenging one for growing successful crops, starting with a mid-May freeze, flooding in June/July, and an overabundance of rain all summer.” Consequently, “our apple offerings at this time are slim but we work hard to provide a variety of products,” she says. “As always, organic apple cider vinegar, farmmade fruit jams, honey, sweet cider, farmhouse doughnuts, and — drumroll, please! — this year’s crop of maple syrup.” “In the past, both of our daughters Ruth and Martha, have helped us at Farmers Markets,” says Malah, who notes that she and Read have celebrated their 42nd wedding anniversary. “Now they are pursuing their careers.” But the legacy will continue. “Read is generation seven on our farm and our son Will, number 8,” Malah says.

VOTE MARCH 5TH

RE-ELECT PETER “FISH” CASE
SELECTBOARD

“This past year has given me unique insight into our town. I’m looking for another three years to make sure that the work this board and I have started, continues. To do that, I hope to serve as part of the agenda setting committee so I can keep what is important to Brattleboro in the forefront while also doing what is necessary. Please vote for me on March 5th.

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“These are my guiding principles and my promise to this community.” - Peter “Fish” Case
I ask for your vote on March 5th!

Paid for by Peter “Fish” Case for Brattleboro Selectboard

To market, to market

Visit the Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market on Saturdays, November through March, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., to shop local for food, produce, and crafts. The market is fully accessible with on-site and nearby parking. There is local live music from 11 a.m. — 1:30 p.m. weekly. You can get lunch from a number of market vendors or a chair massage from Micah Ranquist, who is trained in Swedish circulatory massage and medical massage. The Winter Farmers Market takes place at 60 Austine Dr. in Brattleboro on the Winston Prouty Campus. The MOOver bus offers Saturday service to the market from the Brattleboro Transportation Center on Flat Street. For more information, visit brattleborowinterfarmersmarket.org.

Support your neighbors: become a volunteer!
Two new trainings this spring...

Serious Illness Volunteers support their neighbors who are learning to live and thrive while they adjust to the changes that a serious illness brings. This is a new program launching later this spring. This training begins in March. For more information contact Eileen Glover at (802) 257-0775 x106 or eileen.glover@brattleborohospice.org.

Bereavement Volunteers provide emotional support and companionship to their neighbors who are grieving the death loss of a loved one. This training begins in April. The first day is Saturday, April 6, 10-5pm, with subsequent sessions on Tuesdays, 5-8pm, April 9 - May 28. For more information, contact Lars Hunter at (802) 257-0775 x104, or lars.hunter@brattleborohospice.org.

To apply for either training, go to this website page below, or click the QR code
<https://brattleborohospice.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-training-application>

GOTAN OPINION?
(Of course you do! You’re from Windham County!)

Got something on your mind? Send contributions to our Letters from Readers section (500 words or fewer strongly recommended) to voices@commonsnews.org; the deadline is Friday to be considered for next week’s paper. When space is an issue, we give priority to words that have not yet appeared elsewhere.

Re Sheppard

"We all own our own businesses, and we work alone," she says. "What would anyone of us do in the same situation?"

Gabriel met Sheppard when she was doing hair and makeup for a local production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* in 2010.

"Re was one of the performers, for two years running, playing the second lead in the production," she remembers. "We hit it off right away."

On hand at her studio at 475C Coolidge Hwy, will be Gabriel and barber Simon Miller, whose shop, Rust Tonsorium, recently moved from downtown Brattleboro to share space in Gabriel's shop.

From 9 to noon, Patricia Wyse (of Patricia Wyse, her salon on Flat Street), will also be joining in the fun. She will be offering three one-hour haircuts.

Gabriel is excited how "the community has shown an outpouring of love for Re. Not only are we doing haircuts by donation, local photographer Ezra Distler will also have his photo booth set up from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for photo shoots by donation."

"We are so excited to raise money for Re. So many people are reaching out to this stellar human being."

In addition to haircuts, a haircut raffle will offer a \$50 Boomerang gift certificate, an original piece by local artist Remi Brooks, and haircuts that other local stylists have donated. Tickets are available for \$5, or five for \$20.

"But that's not all," says Gabriel, breathless with positive energy for her friend. "There are other stylists and salons who are considering participating as well. Some will donate some of the proceeds from haircuts in their own salons that day."

She adds that "the wonderful



Re Sheppard has been battling an aggressive form of lymphoma for several years, in a portrait by photographer Ezra Distler, who is one of many participating in the Leap Day Cut-a-thon Fundraiser for Re.

people at the Guilford Country Store" next door will be providing treats.

"Every day more and more people are joining the fundraiser," she says. "So far, the raffle is getting more exciting by the day as businesses donate their services."

Other stylists in the area are also doing their own raffles for Sheppard in their own shops.

Suggested donations for cuts start at \$40, but you also can "pay as your wallet allows."

Gabriel knows firsthand what this type of support can mean to someone who is very ill.

"My sister-in-law, Tracy Gabriel, was also an independent hair stylist in the area. She died of cancer when she was only 49," she says. "We can't bring back the people we've lost, but we

BRATTLEBORO

Early and absentee ballots now available

BRATTLEBORO—Early and absentee ballots for the Presidential Primary, Brattleboro Annual Town Meeting and Windham Southeast School District School Board vote to be held March 5 are now available by request. Absentee ballots for this election must be requested.

Anyone wishing to vote early and in-person may now do so at the Brattleboro Town Clerk's Office. This option is available through Monday, March 4, at 5 p.m.

Anyone wishing to vote absentee may apply for an absentee ballot until 5 p.m. on March 4. All voted ballots must be received by the Clerk before the polls close on Election Day, March 5, to be counted. For more information or to request an absentee ballot, call 802-251-8157 or visit mvp.vermont.gov.

Absentee ballots can be mailed to the voter or picked up from the Town Clerk's office by the voter. Only the voter may pick up their ballot. If a voter is in need, ballots can be delivered outside of the voter's location by two Justices of the Peace. Mailing of requested ballots began in mid-February.

For the Presidential Primary, voters are required by State Statute to choose the either a Democratic or Republican ballot when requesting their ballot, and they will receive only that

party's ballot. Sample Brattleboro ballots and meeting warnings can be found at Brattleboro.gov, under "Elections." Visit their new Voting FAQs at brattleboro.gov/voting-faqs.

Vermont offers same-day voter registration. However, to save time on Election Day, it is advisable to register to vote in advance by going online to olvr.vermont.gov. Paper applications are available at the Town Clerk's office. You can also update your voter information or request a ballot

at mvp.vermont.gov. For more information about voter registration and absentee voting, contact the Town Clerk's office at 802-251-8157. The Brattleboro Town Clerk's Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The office will be closed Tuesday, March 5, Election Day, and will reopen to the public on Wednesday, March 6 at noon.

Brattleboro voting on March 5, will be held at the American Legion at 32 Linden Street. Polling hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

can do everything in our power to support those who are still here."

Those who cannot come to the event are encouraged to purchase a raffle ticket or to donate to the GoFundMe for Sheppard at gofundme.com/f/re-sheppard-fundraiser.

'Genuinely touched and encouraged by the love and support'

Palazzo has seen what the funds raised so far have done to help Re Sheppard.

"Currently, Re is living with a friend who can care for her while she is receiving treatment, but we all know about the housing crisis in town," she says.

"She is still paying rent on her apartment that she hasn't been able to live in so that she doesn't lose it," Palazzo adds. "She'll still need a place to live when she has recovered."

Palazzo also notes that without an income, Sheppard is still responsible for paying for utilities, phone, car, car insurance, fuel to get her to numerous medical appointments and treatments, and for the hospital bills that her insurance will not cover completely. "She is the most hard-working person I know, and she's frustrated that she can't jump back into her life," Palazzo says.

"She had wanted to be working by now."

Re Sheppard is known by friends as a very private person.

"She's not used to so much attention, but she is genuinely touched and encouraged by the love and support being shown to her," says Palazzo. "Without the fundraisers, I don't think she would have any options. I know how very grateful she is for the support."

Gabriel agrees. "This fundraiser is a tribute to this talented person who needs all the love and care she can get. Everybody simply wants her to be able to feel all the love and support we feel for her."

And, she adds with a heartfelt smile, "It's going to be a really fun day! I hope lots of people will join us!"

AROUND THE TOWNS

Leap Day concert in Guilford

GUILFORD — A special Leap Day house concert will be presented on Thursday, Feb. 29, at Wendy's Soiree in Guilford, featuring bluegrass duo Andrew Finn McGill and Anya Hinkle, the 2019 Merlefest songwriting winner and 2023 USA Songwriting winner for "Best World Song."

McGill played in the series with a Brazilian trio in mid-July, and Wendy Redlinger says that "they blew the audience away with their virtuosity and exuberant presence. Now he's back with a different sound."

The concert begins at 7 p.m. with no intermission. Admission is \$15 — 20 at the door. Reservations recommended by emailing wendy@asteriamusica.com.

Art show reception at Brooks Library

BRATTLEBORO — On Friday, March 1, from 4 to 5 p.m., there will be a reception for the art exhibit, "YUM!" in the Main Reading Room of Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St.

"YUM!" is an exhibit of 15 bright, bold watercolors depicting edible delights: from mousse to macarons, paella to potato chips, shortcake to strawberries. These posters are by Art Among Friends, a group of six local artists — Connie Evans, Alice Freeman, Kathy Greve, Laurie Klenkel, Louise Zak, and Lynn Zimmerman — who gather regularly to paint and to support and encourage one another on their artistic journeys.

The exhibit will be on display at the library through Friday, April 26. For more information about the art and artists, contact them at artamongfriends6@gmail.com.

Sugar on Snow supper served in Guilford

GUILFORD — Broad Brook Grange's annual Sugar on Snow Supper will be held Saturday, March 2, at the Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd.

The meal features ham, and the following homemade items: baked beans, deviled eggs, mashed potatoes, coleslaw, rolls, doughnuts, and Guilford maple sugar on Guilford snow. Pickles accompany the snow. There will be three seatings: 5, 6, and 7 p.m. At each seating, a half-gallon of Guilford maple syrup will be raffled.

This longtime annual fundraiser helps support the many activities of the Grange, which sponsors pre-town meeting, a community Thanksgiving dinner, this supper, and brunches, as well as Guilford Center Stage

productions. The Grange organization also provides Christmas stockings for seniors and a college scholarship.

Tickets for the supper are: \$15 for adults; \$5 for children ages 5 — 12, and \$2 for kids age 4 and under. Reservations for a particular seating are recommended, as the earlier seatings often sell out in advance. A waiting list will also be kept, and those with reservations who cannot make it are asked to phone their cancellation.

There are usually a few unreserved seats left for the 7 p.m. seating, for those who show up without a reservation. Reservations made by emailing thayertomlinson@hotmail.com; you'll get a confirmation reply. Or you may text to 202-247-5251, or phone 802-257-5359.

Jazz vocalist to perform in house concert

BRATTLEBORO — Under the Maple chez Grossman/Peel will present jazz vocalist and pianist Doug Bowles in a house concert on Sunday, March 3, at 7 p.m.

Bowles is a tenor, pianist, conductor, dance band leader, and an acknowledged expert in the performance styles of the 1920s and 1930s. "Hear the music that would have been enjoyed in this house 100 years ago, sung and played the way it should be, with drinks and homemade baked goods at the break," say organizers.

There is a suggested donation of \$25 at the door; however, any amount is welcome. Reservations are required and can be made at BrattleboroHouseConcerts@gmail.com. The address and further details of the concert will be sent.

Kindergarten information night

BRATTLEBORO — On March 7, at 6 p.m., there will be a kindergarten information night at Green Street School for Brattleboro parents/guardians with children who will be entering kindergarten in the fall (must be 5 before Sept. 1).

Participants will meet the three Brattleboro principals to learn about consistencies across the three town schools, elements of the kindergarten day, and answer other questions about starting kindergarten in Brattleboro. Pizza and child care will be provided.

An RSVP is not required, but would be appreciated, to kbeeb@wsesdvt.org or 802-579-1013. Those who have not registered their child for kindergarten in Brattleboro, contact Pre-Kindergarten Coordinator Kerri Beebe at the contact information listed above.

PUBLIC NOTICES

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STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT Windham Unit In re ESTATE of: Barbara J. Calabrese	PROBATE DIVISION Docket No.: 24-PR-00285
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Barbara J. Calabrese (Decedent) late of West Wardsboro, Vermont (Decedent's town of residence)

I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.

Dated: February 15, 2024

Christopher J. Calabrese, Executor
802-251-6598
adarrow@secrestdarrow.com

c/o Amelia W. L. Darrow, Esq.
Secret & Darrow, PLC
209 Austine Drive
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Name of Publication: The Commons / Publication Date: February 28, 2024

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Probate
Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, 2nd Floor, Brattleboro, VT 05301

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Meeting Needs | Changing Lives

SEVCA
SOUTHEASTERN VERMONT COMMUNITY ACTION

Family Service Worker White River Junction

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), the designated anti-poverty agency in Windham and Windsor Counties, is currently seeking a community-minded individual to work in our White River Junction outreach office. This person will help clients avoid eviction, obtain safe and affordable housing and keep their homes heated by accessing emergency programs. This individual will assess clients' needs and help resolve crisis situations by providing application assistance, coordinating community services, providing information, referrals and advocacy. The Family Services Worker helps clients understand their options and access the services that they need.

Qualified candidate must be able to establish and maintain positive and respectful relationships with clients, community resources and other agencies. They must possess excellent organization, communication and problem-solving skills. Experience in the Human Services field is preferred. Full Time M-F. Benefits Pkg.

Resume and cover to: Pat Burke, Family Services Director, SEVCA, 91 Buck Drive, Westminster, VT 05158, pburke@sevca.org. EOE

WINSTON PROUTY
Center for Child and Family Development

Operations Coordinator

Looking for a job with lots of variety in a fast-paced, lively environment? The Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development in Brattleboro is seeking a full-time Operations Coordinator to provide comprehensive support and leadership to the Winston Prouty Center's community. This role manages a diverse array of responsibilities including but not limited to managing front office communications; performing administrative tasks; event planning; technology support; supporting the Executive Director and Administration; management, coordination, and execution of special projects; and fostering an environment rooted in collaboration, learning, inclusion, and persistence.

Rolling interviews will be scheduled as applications are received, with an ideal start date on or before March 25th.

Learn more at www.winstonprouty.org/jobs

Town Meeting Day is Tuesday

A summary of what's on the agenda at Annual Town Meeting for voters in 22 Windham County towns

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

Most voters throughout the county will assemble on Town Meeting Day on Tuesday, March 5. Voters in Athens, Brattleboro, Brookline, Rockingham, Vernon, Windham, and Westminster will convene on their own respective timetables, and Marlboro voters won't meet at all, with voters making all decisions by Australian ballot.

That day also marks the presidential primary election throughout the state.

According to the Vermont Secretary of State's office, "Vermont law makes town meeting a holiday for employees of the state government."

State law "also gives an employee the right to take unpaid leave from work to attend his or her annual town meeting, subject to the essential operation of the business or government. An employee must give the employer at least seven days notice if he or she wants to take advantage of this right to attend town meeting."

Most Windham County towns are listed here with the election information that was available by press time.

Brattleboro's Annual Representative Town Meeting — the only one of its sort in Vermont — takes place Saturday, March 23. Town Meeting members will be elected by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 5.

Athens

• **Annual Town Meeting/Election:** Town Meeting will be held *Monday, March 4*, at the Athens Community Center (the former elementary school, at 28 Brookline Rd.) at 6 p.m.

All voting for town officers and the presidential primary will occur on *Tuesday, March 5*, by Australian ballot, as will votes on budgets for the Athens/Grafton and Bellows Falls Union High School districts and River Valley Technical Center.

Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Athens Town Office.

- **Budget:** Voters will be asked to vote on a \$643,357 general budget.
- **Financial contributions:** Voters will be asked to spend \$32,886 for a weekly trash/recycling service starting in June, and raise and appropriate a total of \$6,726 in support of 10 social service organizations.
- **Other:** Voters will consider discontinuing use of the Australian ballot for election of town officers and to allow the sale of alcohol in town.
- **More information:** athensvt.com.

Brattleboro

• **Annual Representative Town Meeting** members will gather *Saturday, March 23*, at 8:30 a.m., in the gymnasium at Brattleboro Union High School (131 Fairground Rd.).

Warrant articles not acted upon by 5 p.m. will be moved to *Sunday, March 24*, at 8:30 a.m., unless the body votes to continue past 5 p.m.

Informational packets can be picked up at Brooks Memorial Library starting *Thursday, March 7*.

Caucuses and the town budget informational meeting are slated for *Wednesday, March 13*, at 6:30 p.m., in the Academy School gymnasium.

- **Election:** Election of town officers, Representative Town Meeting members, and Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) school board members will take place on *Tuesday, March 5*, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at American Legion Post 5 (32 Linden St.).

Absentee ballots for this election are by request only.

WSESD elects board members by ballot on *March 5* and then holds an annual meeting on *Tuesday, March 19* to take up other matters, including school officers and the budget.

- **Financial contributions:** Voters will be asked to support a proposed \$23 million operating and capital budget as well as plans to spend the town's remaining \$1.38 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money.

Voters will also consider whether the town should raise and appropriate \$367,810 to support 36 human service providers, spend \$1.62 million to build a secondary Pleasant Valley water storage tank, spend \$131,699 to pay debt service for water/sewer improvements serving Mountain Home and Deepwood Mobile home parks, and spend \$80,000 in the Downtown Improvement District.

- **More information:** brattleboro.gov.

Brookline

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held in the multipurpose room at the former Brookline School building (624 Grassy Brook Rd.) on *Monday, March 4*, at 6 p.m.

- **Election:** Voters will elect town officers on the meeting floor.

- **Financial:** Voters will consider allocating \$201,299 to the general fund and \$327,418 for the highway fund and authorize spending \$10,000 in American Rescue Plan Act money for a new fire truck.

- **Other:** Voters will consider approving quarterly tax collection.

- **Humanitarian expenditures:** Voters will consider spending \$9,746 to support 23 social service organizations.

- **More information:** brooklinevt.com.

Dover

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, at 10 a.m., at Dover Town Hall (189 Taft Brook Rd.).

- **Election:** Polls will be open at Town Hall on *Tuesday, March 5*, for Australian ballot voting from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to authorize a general fund expenditure of almost \$2.6 million, and \$1.8 million from the highway department fund.

- **More information:** doververmont.com.

Dummerston

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, in person for the first time since the pandemic at 10 a.m. in the gymnasium at Dummerston School (52 School House Rd., East Dummerston).

- **Elections:** Polls will be open at the school from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. There are no contests for town government on the ballot.

Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) board members will also be elected on *March 5*.

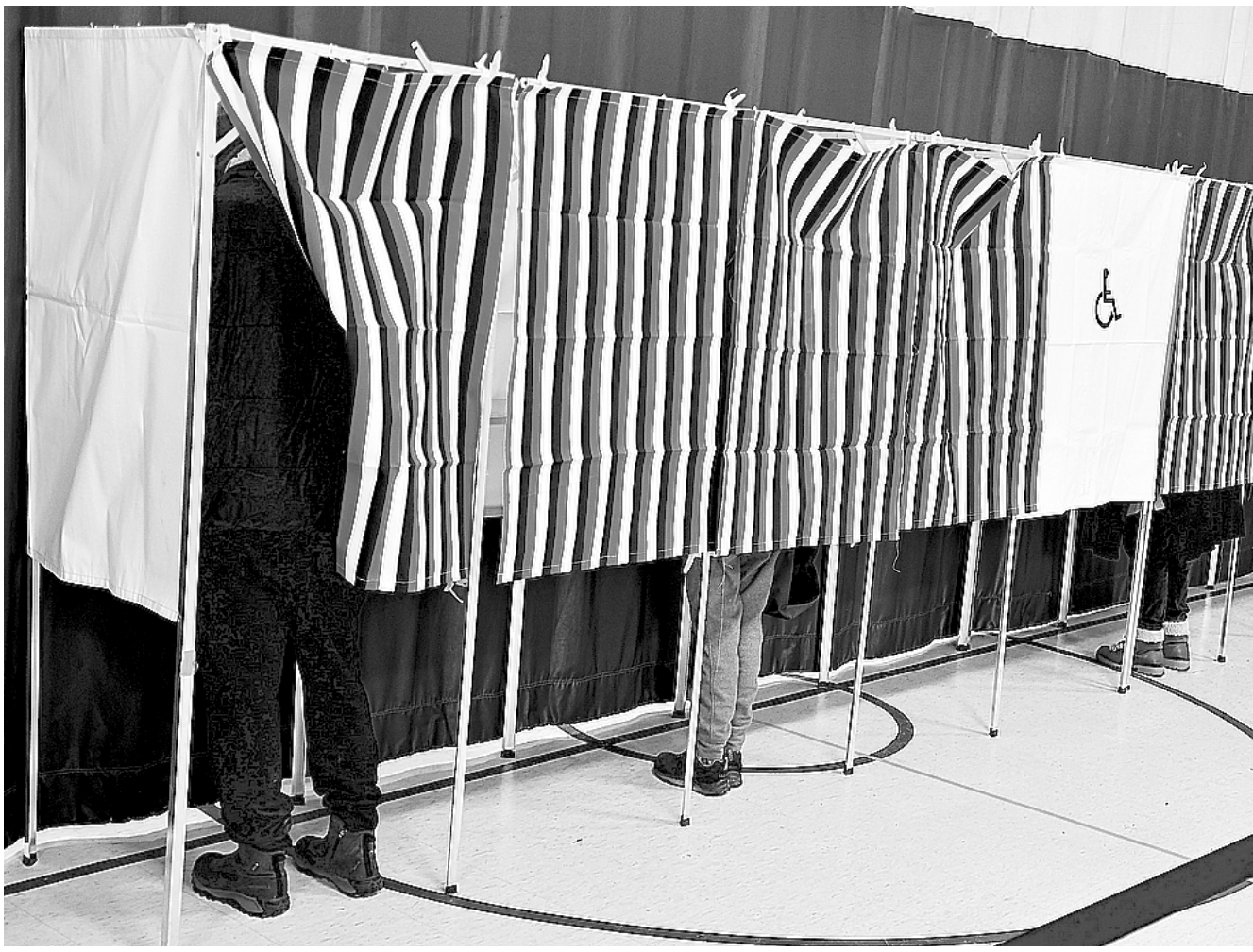
- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to support an overall \$183,000, or 18.8%, increase in taxes raised in the proposed \$1.16 million budget. The budget includes increasing the capital fund by \$85,000 and increasing the highway and general funds by \$49,000 each.

- **More information:** dummerston.org. A pre-Town Meeting information session on Feb. 21 is available to stream at bit.ly/754-dummerston-pre-atm. Candidate statements appear in the current issue of *Views of Dummerston*, and a candidate forum is available at bit.ly/754-dummerston-candidates.

Grafton

• **Annual Town Meeting** will take place *Tuesday, March 5*, at Grafton Elementary School (58 School St.) at 10 a.m.

- **Election:** The polls will be open for voting by Australian ballot from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Voters cast their ballots at last year's Putney Town Meeting.

Votes by Australian ballot on the budgets for the Athens/Grafton and Bellows Falls Union High School districts and the River Valley Technical Center will take place *March 5*.

- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to approve a budget of \$242,440 for the general (Selectboard) budget and \$717,086 to maintain highways and bridges.

- **Public safety:** Voters will decide whether to spend \$43,450 for emergency and public safety services (ambulance service, fire department, rescue squad).

- **Humanitarian expenses:** Voters will consider spending \$12,081 to support 15 local and regional organizations.

- **More information:** graffonvt.org.

Guilford

• **Annual Town Meeting** will take place *Tuesday, March 5*, in the gymnasium at Guilford Central School (374 School Rd.) at 10 a.m.

A pre-Town Meeting information session took place *Feb. 27*.

- **Elections:** Polls will be open at the Guilford Central School from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. to vote by Australian ballot.

Incumbent Selectboard member Zon Eastes is running for re-election to a two-year seat, while Hannah Tustin and Chip Carter are vying for a three-year term on the board.

Windham Southeast School Board members will also be elected on *March 5*.

- **Financials:** Voters will consider approving \$831,856 for general fund expenses, \$1.1 million in highway fund expenses.

They will consider \$268,550 for fire department operating expenses and \$35,000 for the fire department capital improvement fund, along with \$68,000 to contract with the Windham County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services.

Voters will also consider changing the Annual Town Meeting date to the Saturday immediately preceding the first Tuesday in March.

- **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will consider spending \$24,093 to support 14 health care and human services organizations.

- **More information:** guilfordvt.org.

Halifax

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, at 10 a.m., at Halifax Elementary School (246 Branch Rd.). A pre-Town Meeting information hearing was held *Feb. 27* and will likely be posted on the Halifax, Vermont Selectboard YouTube Channel (bit.ly/754-halifax-youtube).

- **Elections:** Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. There are no contested races on the ballot.

- **Financial:** Voters will consider approving \$2,432,019 in Selectboard and highway expenditures. They will also vote whether to assess a 1% room tax.

- **School:** Voters will be asked to approve a proposed \$2.28 million budget for the Halifax School.

- **Humanitarian spending:** Town Meeting will be asked to consider spending \$20,574 in support of 18 social service organizations.

- **More information:** halifaxvt.com.

Jamaica

• **Annual Town Meeting** will occur on *Tuesday, March 5*, at 10 a.m., in Town Hall (3735 VT-30).

- **Elections:** Voters will elect town officers on the meeting floor.

- **Financial:** Voters will decide whether to exempt the Masonic Lodge land and building from taxation for another five years and to approve the proposed total highway and general fund appropriation.

- **More information:** jamaicavermont.org.

Londonderry

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held on *Tuesday, March 5*, in Town Hall (139 Middletown Rd., South Londonderry) at 9:30 a.m.

- **Election:** Polls will be open at Town Hall from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. At the ballot box, voters will consider borrowing up to \$282,000 to help pay for the town's share of a new \$3.4 million community wastewater system in the north village and borrowing up to \$515,700 for the town's share of the total \$4.525 million project for same in the south village.

A pre-Town Meeting information forum to discuss the two proposals will be held *Thursday, Feb. 29*, at 6 p.m., at the Town Office (100 Old School St., South Londonderry). Greater Northshire Access Television will film the meeting, which will be available on the access station's YouTube channel (bit.ly/754-gnat).

Voters will also vote by ballot for the Taconic & Green School District school board members and the proposed \$38.9 million school budget.

- **Financial:** Voters will determine how much to appropriate for the general fund on Town Meeting floor.

They will also address whether to spend \$71,250 for fire/library/conservation operating expenses; \$42,912 to support 22 health care/social service organizations; \$50,000 (to be offset by registration fees) for a part-time, short-term rental administrator; and \$90,000 to hire a fourth full-time highway department employee.

They will also decide whether to assess a 1% local-option tax on sales, meals, and alcoholic beverages.

- **More information:** londonderryvt.org.

Marlboro

- **Town Meeting:** There will be no in-person Annual Town Meeting. Australian balloting takes place on *Tuesday, March 5*.

Ballots have been sent to all active voters and may be returned through *March 5* by mail, in the drop box outside town office, or hand-delivered at the office by calling ahead to ensure an officer is there to receive it.

In-person voting will be available *March 5* at Marlboro Town House (13 Town Hill Road), where polls will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Town officials ask that voters bring mailed ballots.

Two back-to-back pre-Town Meeting informational meetings were held *Feb. 24*.

- **Financial:** Voters will consider appropriating \$570,400 for the general fund and \$1.05 million for highways.

Also to be voted is spending \$55,000 to help defray fire department operating expenses, \$50,000 for fire department capital improvements, \$21,905 to pay Rescue Inc. and \$5,000 to pay Deerfield Valley Rescue for emergency services, \$5,000 for the community center, and \$15,868 to support 16 health care/social service organizations.

- **School:** Voters will consider a FY25 \$3.85 million proposed operating budget — a 2% decrease to this year's budget — for the Marlboro School District.

Voters will elect school board directors.

- **Other:** Voters will consider returning to an in-person Town Meeting, replacing the Australian ballot adopted during the pandemic.

They will also look at changing the term of constable from a one-year to a two-year term and making proposed bylaw changes.

- **More information:** marlborovt.us.

Newfane

- **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, at Union Hall (2 Church St.) at 9 a.m.

- **Election:** Australian ballot elections will take place from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

- **Financial:** Voters will consider a proposed general fund expenditure of \$1.69 million for town and highway operating expenses and capital expenses of \$420,000, plus \$98,000 to hire a new highway department employee.

They will also vote on a proposed \$10,000 appropriation for the Historical Society of Windham County to help create a free public museum at the 1825 Jail Building.

- **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will consider approximately \$41,640 for 29 local and regional organizations.

- **Other:** Voters will consider a change to quarterly tax billing.

In addition, voters will take up a nonbinding resolution to force the U.S. State Department to certify or end arms sales to Israel.

- **More information:** newfanevt.com.

Putney

- **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, at the Putney Central School (182 Westminster Rd.) at 10 a.m.

- **Election:** Polls will be open to vote for town officials, the presidential primary, and Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) board members at the Putney Fire Station from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

There are three races on the ballot for WSESD seats and one, between incumbent Aileen Chute and challenger Frank Harlow, for a three-year term on the Selectboard.

- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to consider highway fund expenditures of \$1.34 million and general fund expenditures of \$1.83 million.

- **Other:** Voters will consider exempting the Yellow Barn from taxes for two years; levying a 1% local-option tax on sales, meals, alcoholic beverages, and rooms; transferring charge of town cemeteries to the Selectboard; and authorizing that property taxes be paid in three installments for the coming year.

- **More information:** putneyvt.org. Visit bit.ly/754-putney-candidates for a candidates' forum.

Rockingham

- **Annual Town Meeting** will take place *Monday, April 1*, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall Main Theater (Bellows Falls Opera House, 7 Square) to act on spending public money.

- **Election:** Presidential primary and school budget balloting take place on *Tuesday, March 5*, at 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Masonic Temple (61 Westminster St.).

Polls for the town election portion of Annual Town Meeting are open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on *Tuesday, April 2*, at the Masonic Temple at 8 a.m.

- **Financial:** Voters will be asked to approve a proposed \$6.54 million appropriation for combined general and highway expenses, \$436,780 for Rockingham Free Public Library operational expenses, and an amount not to exceed \$125,000 for five years to pay the town's share of Rockingham Meeting house structural repair.

They will also consider borrowing up to \$280,000 for five years to buy a new highway department grader; up to \$150,000 for the same time period to pay the town's share of Bellows Falls Train Station repair; and up to \$125,000 to pay for Town Hall structural repair.

- **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will also consider spending \$67,019 to support 16 humanitarian and community organizations.

- **Schools:** Voters will consider the \$10.78 million Rockingham Town

Your guide to Annual Town Meeting in Vermont

(except if you live in Brattleboro)

MONTPELIER—On Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday in March, citizens across Vermont come together in their communities to discuss the business of their towns.

For over 200 years, Town Meeting Day has been an important political event as Vermonters elect local officers and vote on budgets. It has also been a time for neighbors to discuss the civic issues of their community, state, and nation.

This piece is designed to help you learn about Vermont's Town Meeting Day, its history, and how it works today, with the hope that it will help you get involved in your town meeting.

The origin of Town Meeting Day

The first town meeting in America was in Massachusetts in 1633, but the practice of direct democracy dates back to around 400 B.C. in Athens.

The first Town Meeting in these parts was held in Bennington in 1762, 15 years before Vermont was created.

In the late 1700s, as today, town citizens in Vermont held meetings so that they could address the problems and issues they faced collectively, issues like whether to let pigs run free or whether smallpox vaccinations should be allowed in the town. Voters also decided what goods or labor could be used as payment for taxes. Town Meeting also served a social function, as it does today.

What is Town Meeting Day?

On the first Tuesday of March, most Vermont towns hold a meeting to elect local officials, approve a budget for the following year, and conduct other local business.

Vermont Town Meetings (with the one exception of Brattleboro) are the practice of direct democracy. That is, eligible citizens of the town may vote on specific issues that are announced through a warning.

The Town Meeting warning tells us when and where town meeting will be held, and it lists all of the articles (topics) that are going to be discussed and voted on at the meeting. The warning must be posted at least 30 days before the meeting.

Voting at Town Meeting

Towns can vote in two ways at March Town Meeting: by floor meeting or by Australian ballot.

Most towns use a combination of both voting methods. In 2008, approximately 15 towns conducted all of the town meeting business using Australian ballot voting, 61 decided all of their business by floor vote, and 170 towns used a combination. During the pandemic, almost all towns used the Australian ballot for exercising democracy during the lockdown.

The floor meeting is what we generally picture a Vermont Town Meeting to be like. It is when people gather at a public meeting place to discuss

and vote on issues.

Floor meetings can last a few hours, or they can go all day. The length of the meeting depends on how many articles are on the warning and how much discussion takes place over the issues raised by the articles.

Australian ballot voting, which is how we cast our ballots at the general election in November, takes only a few minutes. It takes place at a polling place where voters mark a secret ballot that is counted after the polls close.

Town Boards of Civil Authority determine when the polls open in the morning (between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m.). All polls must close at 7 p.m.

Floor meeting

At a floor meeting there are no representatives (except in Brattleboro, which uses a system of representative democracy for its town meeting). Citizens speak directly for themselves, seeking to clarify or amend items to be voted, or to persuade those present on whether to vote for a particular measure.

Town Meeting holiday

Vermont law makes Town Meeting Day a holiday for employees of state government. The law also gives an employee the right to take unpaid leave from work to attend his or her Annual Town Meeting, subject to the essential operation of the business or government.

An employee must give the employer at least seven days notice if he or she wants to take advantage of this right to attend Town Meeting.

Students who are over 18 also have the right to attend Town Meeting, unless the student is in state custody at a secure facility.

The moderator

The moderator's job is to ensure that the meeting is orderly and fair. He or she calls for votes on each item of business and announces the decisions of the voters. The moderator must also interpret and apply rules governing how the discussion and votes proceed.

Unless the voters decide to pass over an article or rearrange the order of the articles, the meeting will address each article in turn, from the first to the last, until they are all addressed.

Vermont law requires that the moderator use a very formal procedure to run the meeting called Robert's Rules of Order, which sets specific rules to help the moderator keep order and ensure that the meeting is fair. These rules are published in a small book that can be referred to during the meeting if necessary.

Who may participate?

Only legal voters may participate in Town Meeting.

Of course, non-voters (people who live in other towns, people who are not old enough to register to vote, or people who live in town but who are not registered to vote at all or who are

registered elsewhere) may never vote at Town Meeting.

This means that a non-voter does not have a right to speak at Town Meeting unless the meeting passes a motion to allow the individual to "address the assembly." This motion must pass by a two-thirds majority vote.

There is a well-known story about a governor who visited one of Vermont's Town Meetings and asked permission to address the assembly.

The town was unhappy about some piece of legislation the governor had supported and, as a result, the vote to permit her to speak to the meeting initially failed. After some debate, a motion to reconsider was passed and the governor was allowed to address the meeting.

The business of the meeting

At Town Meeting, voters hear and approve reports from town officers, elect new officials, and review and approve a budget for the town.

Voters also decide whether to raise money from taxes to give to groups that shelter the town, like a youth center, a homeless shelter, or a transportation program for the elderly.

Some communities also vote on the school budget at a School District Meeting warned for the same day as Town Meeting.

Most items on the warning for Town Meeting are required by Vermont law, but some articles are added by the Selectboard so that the board can get feedback or approval from the citizens.

Other articles can be added by local officials or by citizens who bring in a petition signed by 5 percent of the town's registered voters.

Some towns discuss social issues facing the region, the state, or the country even if the decision has no legal standing (nonbinding vote). Past examples include whether to ban genetically engineered seeds, whether the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant should close, or whether the country should go to war.

Such articles are usually added to the Town Meeting warning by voters who bring a petition to the Selectboard, but occasionally a Selectboard will agree to put the articles on the warning without a petition.

Not every petitioned article must be included in the warning. The topic for discussion must be an issue that the voters have the power to decide.

One Selectboard asked its town voters to decide where the new Town Hall should be built. This was an issue the board could have decided on its own, but this board preferred to let its townspeople help make such an important decision.

The budget is the amount of money the town plans to spend to support the town government. It pays for town buildings, roads, town employees, the town library, and other expenses. The budget is paid for by taxing the property owned by individuals and businesses in the town.

Elections of local officials

Vermont law requires voters to elect a variety

of officials at Town Meeting. Some are elected to serve for one year. Others are elected to serve for as long as a three-year term.

Vermont law requires local officials to be elected by paper ballot on the Town Meeting floor, unless they are elected by Australian ballot.

Towns that elect officers at a floor meeting nominate candidates, who can then accept or decline to run. Once nominations are closed, paper is passed out, and voters write out their preference.

If no candidate receives a majority vote, the moderator will ask voters to vote again. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes by the third ballot, the moderator eliminates the candidate with the least votes and repeats the procedure until someone receives a majority of the votes.

If only one person is nominated for a position, a voter can move to direct the clerk to cast a single ballot in favor of the person nominated. This saves time and paper!

In towns that vote by Australian ballot, the candidate who receives the most votes wins. Towns that elect officers by Australian ballot require candidates to submit a nominating petition signed by 30 voters or 1 percent of the voter base, whichever is less. The petition must clearly indicate the office and term length on the petition prior to circulating it for signatures.

The nominating petition must be filed with the municipal clerk no later than 5 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election.

In many towns, it is difficult to find people willing to run for every town office. If no one is elected at Town Meeting, the office is vacant. The Selectboard must appoint someone to fill the vacancy.

Examples of local officials who are elected at Town Meeting:

- **Moderator** — Runs the Annual Town Meeting and any Special Town Meetings during the year.
- **Selectboard** — A board of three to five people who run the town. They implement decisions made at town meeting. (In cities, voters elect a city council and mayor instead.)
- **Town Clerk** — Runs elections and keeps records (land records, and records of marriages, births, and deaths).
- **Treasurer** — Oversees the town's finances, pays bills, and balances the accounts.
- **Listers** — Decide the value of land and buildings in the town. (Properties that have a higher value pay a larger tax.)
- **Auditor** — Reports on whether the town is handling and spending its money correctly. The auditor's report is discussed at Town Meeting.

This piece is adapted from information on the website of Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas. For more information and state government resources, visit sos.vermont.gov/elections/election-info-resources/town-meeting-local-elections.

School District budget on the Australian ballot on Tuesday, April 2.

On Tuesday, March 5, voters will consider the proposed \$3.28 million proposed River Valley Technical Center School District budget and the proposed \$7.94 million Bellows Falls Union High School budget.

• **More information:** rockinghamvt.org.

Stratton

• **Annual Town Meeting** on *Tuesday, March 5*, will begin at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall (9 West Jamaica Rd.). Voters will consider the school budget at 11 a.m.

• **Election:** Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

• **Financial:** Voters will decide whether to raise and appropriate \$1.122 million for the general fund and \$1.52 million to the highway fund. They will also consider appropriating \$90,292 for fire department operations.

• **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will consider allocating \$48,608 to support 28 local and regional organizations.

• **School budget:** Voters will consider a \$925,565 Stratton School District budget proposal, which represents a 51.7% decrease to this year in per-pupil spending.

• **More information:** townofstrattonvt.com.

Townshend

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, at 9 a.m. at Leland & Gray Union Middle School and High School's Dutton Gymnasium (2030 VT Route 30, next to Town Hall).

• **Election:** One three-year term and two one-year terms are open on the Selectboard. All nominations are from the floor the day of Town Meeting, and so it is as yet unknown how many will vie for those seats.

• **Financial:** Voters will be asked to consider spending \$441,565 for general expenditures and liabilities and \$921,552 for town roads.

In addition, they will consider spending \$63,473 for town library operating expenses and \$13,000 to increase the librarian's hours by eight per week, spend \$50,000 to make Town Hall compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and authorize \$50,000 for future Back Windham Road stone arch bridge restoration.

• **Other:** Under consideration is an article for voters to decide what future Town Meeting format will look like.

Voters will also decide whether to change to quarterly tax billing.

• **Humanitarian spending:** Voters will decide whether to spend \$21,243 for social services.

• **More information:** unofficialtownshendvt.net.

Vernon

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Monday, March 4*, at 6:30 p.m. in the Vernon Elementary School gymnasium. Free child care will be available.

• **Election:** Polls will be open on *Tuesday, March 5*, downstairs at the Town Office from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to vote by Australian ballot for town officials, school board directors, and the proposed \$7.7 million town school budget.

There are no contests and several open seats.

• **Financial:** Town Meeting voters will consider a proposed \$2.29 million general fund budget. They will also be asked to appropriate \$529,685 for items in the capital plan and \$15,099 for the solid waste district assessment to the town.

• **Other:** Voters will take up whether to continue curbside recycling and municipal building refuse collection.

A "no" vote will require a vote about dissolving the pay-as-you-throw fund and building a \$50,000 transfer station, with an additional \$60,000 appropriation for three part-time operators.

• **More information:** vernonvt.org.

Wardsboro

• **Annual Town Meeting** will take place *Tuesday, March 5*, at 9 a.m., in Town Hall (71 Main St.).

• **Election:** Polls will be open at Town Hall to elect town officials and for the presidential primary from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on *Tuesday, March 5*.

• **Financial:** Voters are being asked to appropriate \$455,826 to the general fund and \$1.02 million to the highway fund.

The Wardsboro Public Library is asking for \$64,579 in support, and



RANDOLPH T. HOLMUT COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Voters, and elected officials, listen to a speaker at last year's Putney Town Meeting.

voters will also consider supporting the fire department, the Windham County Historical Society, and six health care and social service organizations with a total of \$93,726.

• **More information:** wardsborovt.gov.

Westminster

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Saturday, March 2*, at 10 a.m., at Bellows Falls Union High School (406 High School Rd.).

• **Election:** Polls will be open at the Westminster Fire Station (103 Groat Ave.) *Tuesday, March 5* from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. for the election of town and school officers.

John Kmetz Jr. and Jason Perry are vying for a three-year Selectboard term.

• **Financial:** Voters will consider a \$1.28 million appropriation to the general fund and a highway fund operating expense of \$1.58 million.

The \$5.37 million Westminster Town School District budget will be considered March 2.

Also requested is spending \$8,000 to defray costs of printing and distributing the *Westminster Gazette*.

An anti-discrimination resolution, "Declaration of Inclusion," is also on the warning, calling for the town to welcome all and to commit to "being a place where individuals may live freely and express their opinions without fear, where kindness and respect are valued, and where all persons feel safe and welcome."

• **More information:** westminstervt.org.

Whitingham

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Tuesday, March 5*, at 10 a.m. in the Twin Valley Middle/High School gymnasium (4299 Vt. Route 100).

• **Election:** Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Twin Valley Middle/High School to elect school and town officials.

• **Financial:** Voters will be asked to consider general fund operating expenses of \$3.11 million and \$1.6 million for town roads.

They will also take up spending \$193,425 for fire department operations, \$60,000 for fire department equipment, and \$94,180 to operate the library. They will consider appropriating \$50,000 to the highway garage renovation/replacement fund.

• **More information:** whitinghamvt.org.

Wilmington

• **Annual Town Meeting** will take place *Tuesday, March 5*, at the Old School Community Center (OSCC, 1 School St.)

• **Election:** Polls will be open at OSCC from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Thomas Fitzgerald and Ralph Staib are vying for a two-year term on the school board, and Sarah Fisher and John Lebron are in a contest for a three-year seat on the Selectboard.

Voters will also consider the proposed \$10.85 million Twin Valley Unified Union School District budget on the ballot.

• **Financial:** Voters will decide whether to approve a general fund of \$3.11 million and \$1.63 million for the road budget.

• **Other:** Whether to obtain an up-to-\$3.1 million loan to extend water and sewer infrastructure along Route 9 East is slated to be considered, as will be an annual, two-installment property tax payment.

Voters will consider spending about \$40,000 to pay for social service and health care services, including Beaver Brook Children's School, Grace Cottage Hospital, and Senior Solutions.

• **More information:** wilmingtonvermont.us.

Windham

• **Annual Town Meeting** will be held *Saturday, March 9*, at 10 a.m., at the Windham Meeting House (26 Harrington Rd.).

• **Financial:** Voters will consider approving a general fund of \$339,107 and a road budget of \$536,287.

• **Humanitarian expenditures:** Voters will also decide whether to spend \$8,535 to support 19 nonprofit organizations, as recommended by Windham Social Services.

New proposed agencies include Brattleboro Development Credit Corp., Neighborhood Connections (transportation program), Senior Solutions (for Meals on Wheels), Townshend Community Food Shelf, Valley Cares Assisted Living, Vermont Fire Protection, and the Vermont Foodbank.

• **Other:** Voters will consider prohibiting the constable from exercising any law enforcement authority and changing that position from elected to appointed.

They will also decide whether to adopt Australian balloting to elect town officers and for special elections, except in cases where a floor vote is mandated by state statute.

• **More information:** townofwindhamvt.com.

MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

The following local students were named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts: Freddie G. Learey of Brattleboro received first honors and Lydia Hazzard-Leal and Lucy M. Szpila, both of Brattleboro, received second honors. Eva Ramey of Jamaica, Jordan Roach of Brattleboro, Alex Shriver of Brattleboro, Will Taggard of Brattleboro, and Broden Walsh of Marlboro were all named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. Travis Meggiolaro of Dummerston, who is in the civil engineering technology program, and Niko Huber of South Londonderry, who is in the new media interactive development program, were named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology. Elijah Cooper of Brattleboro and Meagan Kelly of Westminster were named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island. Jasmine Denny, a human services major from Whitingham, was recently inducted into the Elmira (N.Y.) College chapter of Iota Iota Iota (or Triota), the National Women's Honor Society. Triota strives to maintain the feminist values central to women's studies: egalitarianism, inclusiveness, and a celebration of the diversity of women's experiences.

Obituaries

Christina Marie Allcock, 54, of Putney. Died at her home on Jan. 29, 2024. Christina was born on Jan. 15, 1970, in Pekin, Illinois, to Cecille (Bodine) and the late Earl E. Allcock. She grew up in Illinois before moving to Westminster in 1980. She attended school at Bellows Falls Union High School and later would study business at Laconia (N.H.) Technical College. Over the years, Christina worked at Dunkin' Donuts in Bellows Falls. She also held employment at Taco Bell and Subway. She had a strong affection for helping others and volunteered for a number of groups to continue in their aid. Christina loved her family and friends tremendously and will be remembered for her loving and caring ways. She had a passion for taking pictures and enjoyed doing photography at events. She was also fond of shopping and playing card games. She is survived by her mother, of Westminster; her daughter, Breona Allcock and her boyfriend, Cody, of Bellows Falls; sons Lucas Allcock and his wife, Lacie of Mount Holly, Ryan Allcock of Westminster, and Nathan Allcock of Bellows Falls; grandchildren Griffin, Maddox, and Clover; her brother, Michael

Allcock and his girlfriend, Becca, of Claremont, New Hampshire, and her partner in life, Brandon Hutton of Putney. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of her life is being planned for a later date. Donations to the American Heart Association.



James M. Deyo, 72, of Rochester, New Hampshire, formerly of Brattleboro. Died peacefully at home on Feb. 17, 2024. He was Born Dec. 1, 1951, in Brattleboro to Harold and Vera (Maynard) Deyo. Jim had lived in Rochester for the past three years after moving to be closer to his children and grandchildren. In Vermont, he spent his career working at lumber yards, being promoted from an entry-level role to the general manager over several store locations. From there, he settled back into a sales role at the lumber yard to allow more time for his family and the many hobbies he enjoyed. He got married to Susan in 1976 and enjoyed 47 years of marriage. He was a member of the Elks Lodge in Brattleboro, where he served as Head of House Committee. Jim served his church for many years while the children were young and eventually took on the task of being a trustee at the First Baptist Church in Brattleboro. Jim was an honest, hard-working man who never took the easy way out and always did the right thing for everyone around him. All will remember him chuckling at his own jokes with a bright smile on his face and a twinkle in his eyes. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, golf, playing cards and sitting by a fire at "Camp." Surviving members of his family include his wife of 47 years, Susan (Andersen) Deyo of Rochester; his son, Matt Deyo, of Dover, New Hampshire, his daughters Pam and Kim Deyo, both of Portsmouth, his grandchildren Nathan James Deyo and Kenedy Pamela Deyo, many nieces and nephews; his brother David Deyo and wife Sherri Miner of Guilford; a sister-in-law, Jackie Deyo; and his sister, Jeanne Deyo of Brattleboro. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of Jim's life was held on Feb. 26 at First Baptist Church in Brattleboro.

Lenore Hartly of Bellows Falls died on Feb. 15, 2024, in North Walpole, New Hampshire. Lenore was predeceased by her husband, Edward, and her brother, Eli Rush. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Lenore wanted to be remembered fondly by her family and friends. There will be no calling hours or services. Donations can be made to local animal shelters.

Matthew Seth Johnson, 42, died on Feb. 15, 2024, surrounded by family and friends, at Elliot Hospital in Manchester, New Hampshire. Born on Jan. 28, 1982, Matt was an avid music lover, especially rap and hip-hop.



Ruth Margaret Lapan, 92, of Brattleboro. Died on Feb. 16, 2024, 19 years and 1 day after her husband Richard's passing. She had lived in Brattleboro since 1956. Born June 1, 1931, to Raymond and Catherine (McGarr) Noonan, Ruth grew up on the Bostwick Farm on Lake Champlain. A self-identified "tomboy," she played basketball and softball while taking an interest in the farming operation her father oversaw. She graduated from Shelburne High School in 1949 as valedictorian and class president, with a scholarship to UVM and a DAR Good Citizenship Medal. After three years at UVM, where she was on both the basketball and debate teams, she briefly joined a convent in Ireland to explore a larger commitment to her Catholic faith. When reflecting on this experience, Ruth acknowledged heartbreak upon being dismissed by the Mother Superior and, also certainly, that the woman had ultimately been correct about a different life being meant for her. After returning from Ireland, Ruth graduated from Trinity College with a B.S. in Science before enrolling in medical school at UVM. During this time she was introduced to, in her words, "a nice young man from Brattleboro" by her sister Rae Catherine and Rae's co-conspirator (and eventual husband), Leo Stack. Whilst in medical school, she became engaged to Richard E. Lapan after he walked across several fields to find her fixing a tractor in the pouring rain. Ruth appreciated his lack of surprise or complaint when she promptly went back under the machine as a reflection of their quiet understanding of one another. They were married at St. Catherine's in Shelburne on Oct. 8, 1955, before making their marital home in Brattleboro. Their quiet understanding fortified 49 years of marriage until his death on Feb. 15, 2005. Ruth went on to earn her M.Ed. from Keene State College in 1977 and an M.S. in physical science from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1982. Her fascination with math and science and voracious appetite for learning were lifelong, hallmark traits. She spent most of her career as an educator, teaching at Chester High School, Southern Vermont College, Rivier College, Hinsdale High School, and Whitingham School. Brilliant at differentiating instruction, she tutored many nursing students at her dining room table on Grove Street. Her efforts were memorable and deeply appreciated by these nurses as essential to their careers. Additionally, Ruth assisted her husband with the daily operation of Lapan's Cash Market on Main Street in Brattleboro. A loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt, Ruth's family was very important to her. She also served



folks in need, donating considerable time to a crisis hotline. She was quietly invested in the communities in which she dwelled and the people she loved. She was masterful at comfortable silence as well as an excellent storyteller. Ruth was a lifelong devout Catholic and longtime communicant of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church. She was also an ardent Red Sox fan. Survivors include her children, Patrick Lapan (Robert) of Brattleboro, Richard Lapan (Dru) of South Barre, James Lapan (Alyson) of Burien, Washington, Mary Worsman (Ken) of West Brattleboro, and Bridget Devlin (Dylan) of Putney; a brother, John Noonan (Brenda) of Shelburne; sisters Sheila Fanelli of Madison, Connecticut, and Sharon (George) Sinnott of Lake Orion, Michigan. She also leaves grandchildren Grace Freeman (Gavin), Maggie Fleming (Dan), Harrison Lapan, Addison Worsman, Richard Worsman (Eliza), Devon Lapan, Kaitlyn Odell (Ross), Connor Lapan, Martin Lapan, and Siobhan Devlin. Her legacy includes great-grandchildren Lucia Freeman, William Odell, and Lillian Worsman. In addition to her beloved husband, Ruth was predeceased by a son, Raymond Lapan, and sisters Nancy Rice, Ellen Young, and Rae Catherine Stack. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was held Feb. 23 at St. Michael's Catholic Church, followed by committal rites and burial in St. Michael's Parish Cemetery. Donations to St. Brigid's Kitchen, 38 Walnut St., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To send condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

Jean (Choiniere) McAuliffe, 77, of Brattleboro. Died on Jan. 3, 2024, at Thompson House in Brattleboro, after a long illness, Jean was a long-time resident of Brattleboro and is dearly missed by her family and friends. She was born in Barton on Sept. 7, 1946, daughter of Germain A. Choiniere and Ruby (Racine) Choiniere. Jean attended three years at Orleans High School, and participated in Girls Chorus and the Northeastern Music Festival. She was also a majorette. A 1964 graduate of Sacred Heart High School in Newport, she graduated from Houle's Beauty Academy in Manchester, New Hampshire in 1965 and worked several years with her mother as beautician in her hair salon located in the family home. In August 1966, Jean married Joseph S. von Dembowski, who predeceased her. They resided in Orleans for many years. Jean learned her cooking skills from her father-in-law, "Sid," who was a chef. Jean married Paul M. McAuliffe in 1996, they had two children: Jacquelyn B. McAuliffe and Jonathan P. McAuliffe of Brattleboro. Jean was an employee of New Chapter for many years and especially enjoyed her trip to Costa Rica, and was truly impressed by its natural beauty. She was the happiest when entertaining and cooking for her family members and friends. She also loved to sing and dance, play scratch tickets, garden, and cook. Jean loved her family, all of whom were especially important to her. She is survived by: her daughter, Jacquelyn B. McAuliffe (John King), and her grandson, Keegan J. McAuliffe, as well as her son, Jonathan P. McAuliffe (Autumn). Her siblings include Jim Choiniere (Fran), John Choiniere (Diane), Jacalyn Slaiby (William L. Slaiby-deceased), and Janet Goodine (Frank). Her stepchildren include Paul McAuliffe (Melissa), William McAuliffe (Christie), and Jamie McAuliffe. She is also survived by several great-grandchildren, aunts and uncles, and nieces and nephews. She was also predeceased by her husband, Paul C. McAuliffe, and her parents. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Graveside services will take place on May 18, at noon, at St. Michael's Cemetery in Brattleboro, followed by a celebration of her life at American Legion Post 5. Donations to the American Legion, Brattleboro

Post 5, 32 Linden St., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To send condolences, visit phaneuf.net.

Mildred May Momaney, 94, of Brattleboro. Died unexpectedly on Feb. 20, 2024 in the emergency department at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. Mildred was born in Mooers Forks, New York on Oct. 7, 1929, the daughter of Henry and Emma (LaValley) Gero. She attended school in Mooers Forks, Chesterfield, New Hampshire, and Brattleboro. She had been employed through the years at several Brattleboro area businesses that included the former Berkshire Fine Spinning Associates and Arnoldware, both on Cotton Mill Hill, and American Optical Company. She had also worked as an apple sorter for Francis Miller Orchards in Brattleboro. A devout Catholic, Mildred was a longtime communicant at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Brattleboro. Of her leisure time activities, she enjoyed Bingo, playing cards, fishing, and cooking, especially putting on big meals for her family. On Sept. 3, 1951, at St. Michael's Church, she married Richard D. Momaney, who predeceased her on February 21, 2016. Survivors include one son, Michael Momaney, of Brattleboro; a sister, Lillian Record, of Brattleboro; three grandchildren, Sheldon Momaney, Duncan Momaney and Nichole Jurnudd; five great-grandchildren, Mariam, Chloe, Damien, Theodore and Freya; two special daughters-in-law, Kathy Momaney of California and Judith Palmeri of Hawaii; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews. Mildred was predeceased by a son, Mark Momaney, and 13 siblings. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass will be celebrated on Monday, March 4, at 11 a.m., at St. Michael's Catholic Church. Committal Rites and burial will follow in St. Michael's Parish Cemetery. Donations to St. Michael's School, 47 Walnut St., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

Raymond P. Perra, 90, of Brattleboro. Died on Jan. 3, 2024 at Albany (N.Y.) Medical Center, surrounded by his six children and one of his 17 grandchildren. Raymond — fondly known as Ray, Dad, and Grandpere — was born to Henry and Cecile Perra July 31, 1933, in Taunton, Massachusetts. He attended St. Jacques Parochial School and Coyle & Cassidy High School in Taunton, followed by Stonehill College in North Easton, Massachusetts, where he graduated valedictorian of his class in 1955. After graduation he attended Harvard Law School from 1955-1957, when he enlisted in the Army. After completing basic training, he was assigned to Army Intelligence for surveillance duties and remained stateside in this role for the duration of his three years of service. While in the army, he collected some lifelong friends and many funny stories of Army life. On Aug. 6, 1960, Ray married the love of his life, Ann Marie O'Connell, in North Dighton, Massachusetts. He returned to Harvard and completed his final year of law school, graduating in 1961. Shortly thereafter, Ray and Ann moved to Brattleboro, where Ray joined the Fitts & Olson law firm. In 1978, Ray left Fitts & Olson and formed a partnership with David Gibson, Bruce Weber, and Ken Fisher. Ray continued to practice law in Brattleboro, partnering with several other lawyers more than 40 years, including Doug Wilson, Lucy Weber McVitty, Richard Munzing, and Jane Krochmalny, and also his son Richard. Ray retired from his long and successful law practice in 2002. He was a consummate student, earning a Master of Law in Taxation degree from Boston University in 1971 and learning Spanish in his seventies. Throughout his life, Ray was a devout Roman Catholic. He and Ann were actively involved communicants at St. Michael's Catholic Church, leading Marriage Encounter

retreats, lecturing masses, teaching catechism classes, serving as Eucharistic Ministers and volunteering at Brigid's Kitchen and Pantry for many years. In addition to the church, Ray served as a member of the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center on the Board of Trustees from 1989 to 1992. Family was first and foremost to Ray. It was as husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and great-grandfather that he was at the top of the class. From summer vacations to Cape Cod and Maine to trips to Washington D.C. one-on-one with each child, games invented, and books read aloud, he made the family home the warmest, safest, most welcoming place, filled with love and acceptance. Family dinner was always at 6 p.m., and "Around the Table," a Ray version of Jeopardy, was a nightly request made by his children. The door to the house on Oak Street was always open (and usually unlocked) to guests, prodigal children, exchange students, and refugees. He was a father figure to those who were not his own children. He was a true gentleman; a connoisseur of the finer things in life, most notably oysters and martinis and he was a regular at Peter Havens to savor both. Ray was an avid reader, gardener, lover of history and a collector and aficionado of Jazz. He and Ann enjoyed traveling with friends or family including sailing in the Virgin Islands, trips to Ireland, England, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, and the Southwest with dearest friends George and Judy Taylor. Ray was predeceased by his wife, Ann Perra. Ray is survived by his six children, Elizabeth Chevalier (Michael) of Brattleboro, Catherine Dwyer (Duane) of Pasadena, Maryland, Mary Dix (Tom) of Jericho, Richard Perra (Jeanette) of Brattleboro, Anthony Perra of Dover, New Hampshire, and Meghan Brown (Chris) of Denver, Colorado; grandchildren Alexander, Joseph, Gillian, Jonathan, Amelia, and Finn Dwyer; Jack, William, and Michael Dix; Zoe, Liam, Aidan, Cole, and Owen Perra; and Adelaide, Georgiana, and Emerson Brown; and great-grandchildren Peter, Anneliese, Esther, and Rebekah Dwyer. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass at St. Michael's Catholic Church will be conducted at a later date to be announced. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

Frances J. (Bobrowski) Vaine, 86, of Bellows Falls. Died peacefully at her home on Feb. 10, 2024. Frances was born on February 28, 1937, to Joseph and Julia (Shelc) Bobrowski. She graduated from Bellows Falls High School in 1955 and from Elliott Community School of Nursing in Keene, New Hampshire, in 1958. On June 11, 1960, at Sacred Heart Church, Frances married her husband, Louis Vaine. Together they celebrated 52 years of marriage before his death in 2012. Frances worked at Rockingham Memorial Hospital in Bellows Falls. She was then an industrial nurse at Bryant Grinder and Fellows Gear Shaper, the two main machine shops in Springfield, Vermont, until her retirement. Frances was a devout Catholic. She embraced her faith, which gave her amazing strength. She especially loved her family and the many dear friends along the way. She was one of a kind and will forever be remembered for her beautiful and generous heart. Frances was predeceased by her husband. Surviving are her children, Ronald Vaine of Bellows Falls, and Diana Poitras and her husband, Ethan of Ashland, New Hampshire; grandchildren Jacob and Alycia Poitras; nieces and nephews Denise Smith, Brenda Forrest, and Peter and Timothy Bushway, and several cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was held Feb. 24 at St. Peter's Church in North Walpole, New Hampshire, at 11:30 a.m. Burial will follow in the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Westminster. Donations to the Bellows Falls Senior Center, 18 Tuttle Street, Bellows Falls, VT 05101.

Milestones are published as community news at no cost to families, thanks to financial support of our members and advertisers. Send them to news@commonnews.org. Though we ask that content for this column be sent by Friday at 5 p.m., we will do our best to include late obituaries. Please alert the newsroom at 802-246-6397 for post-deadline urgent submissions. We will always do our best to accommodate contributors in their time of grief.

Advertisement for Windham County Humane Society. Includes contact information: 916 West River Rd, Brattleboro, VT, 802-254-2232, wchs4pets.org. A section titled 'WILL YOU ADOPT ME?' features a photo of a dog and text describing a sweet energetic boy named Domino. Sponsored by Guilford Sound, 802-254-4511, info@guilfordsound.com.

Advertisement for Transcribing, Editing and Proofreading Services. Contact Elizabeth at elizabethjulie88@aol.com or 802-257-7475.

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Advertisement for Buying/Selling services. Text: 'BUYING SELLING COINS/PAPER \$ VINTAGE SPORTS POKEMON CARDS COMIC BOOKS. SAT, MARCH 2 CHARLESTOWN NH SENIOR CENTER. SAT, MARCH 9 HOLIDAY INN BRATTLEBORO 9AM-3PM. 802-379-2353. TABLES AVAILABLE'

Advertisement for Brattleboro Books. Text: 'Brattleboro Books Since 1988. Temporary home to the area's best USED books. 25,000 USED BOOKS. Buying books by appt. 802-257-7777. OPEN THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11AM - 5PM SUNDAY 11AM - 4PM. 36 Elliot St, Brattleboro brattbooks@gmail.com'

Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the o-er wrought heart and bids it break. —WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Selectboard forum

working on questions around panhandling and drugs in town, which he believes is “a Selectboard responsibility” to help resolve, as well as tangential issues regarding housing and public safety. He’s also interested in helping with plans for a new community swimming pool.

The incumbent said his focus is on how the town “has poor narrative hung on it.”

As a business owner — Case recently acquired Burrows Specialized Sports on Main Street — he said he walked the town in summer, listened to other business owners, and “see[s] the issues, and some of them are easy to fix.”

Case said many business folks in town want others to know “it’s not as bad as people say it is.”

“We can make this town a really nice community again with a really nice, small, old-town feel,” he said.

Heller, also a business owner who builds websites and offers marketing services, summered here as a child and moved here in 2014. He has served on the town Energy and Finance committees and also owns a property in town.

He said he’s not sure about the narrative around Brattleboro.

“In many ways, this is an incredibly desirable place to live,” Heller said, adding that housing is, to him, the “number one” problem to grapple with, “because of the way it hooks into so many other issues, including homelessness.”

Reichsman said his “heartfelt issue” is providing better public bathrooms for visitors and homeless people alike. He feels the town must make a needs assessment, evaluate resources, and enter both public and private partnerships to address the issue.

Davis would look at a long-term vision for the town and ways to market Brattleboro within that vision to take better advantage of the town’s proximity to the river as well and relatively easy access to larger towns and cities.

Reis agreed with Reichsman and Davis, saying that she would like to hear more ideas about how the downtown “could be more expressive” of what people love about it.

Housing and homelessness

Asked what tools town government can deploy to help the housing crisis, Heller said that “some of what we do is trying to be the squeakiest wheel as we go up the chain of state and local government.”

Saying he’d like to be “particularly active” in finding solutions, Heller said town government does have “influence and authority to start conversations and start things moving on a personal level.”

He added that he is “a little disappointed in what seems a reticence to take on the problems and thinking they are too big.”

“I think that is the wrong mentality, and I’d like us to be more aggressive on this,” Heller said.

“It’s a really big question and it has some far-reaching implications, as far as getting it done and in a timely manner,” Case said of the housing crisis.

He noted the current board has invited legislators to meet and that he has proposed helping people “get into homes possibly using the revolving loan fund for first and last months’ rent.”

Noting a 2021 study showing there was a 500-unit housing deficit in Brattleboro, Case said he doesn’t think that number has budged.

“This issue does the one thing I don’t like to do around it, and that is move slowly,” he said.

Asked what role, given a report stating that 90 school-aged children here are reported as homeless, that the town should play in finding a solution, Case advocated working with agencies such as Groundworks Collaborative “and those on the front lines.”

“Drug addiction, poverty, are social tragedies happening everywhere — not just here — and nothing the board does will change their existence, but we have to keep exploring and remaining open to ideas,” Heller said, adding the importance of realizing that “the attitude that this is a separate class of people” needs to change.

“In fact, it’s people that we know — family members and friends,” he said.

“We can’t minimize the problem and have to keep working toward it,” Heller said, noting his pride in the “commitment by the town to fund human service agencies to make these commitments at an institutional level.”

Reichsman, noting housing is “expensive and hard to come by,” added that many people don’t know what the town has already done to remedy the situation.

“We’re not going to build housing, we don’t have the financial resources to do that,” he said, adding the town can, however, “make it easier for development

to take place.”

Noting the town’s “awesome Planning Department,” the incumbent said Brattleboro “leads the state in terms of regulations and zoning.”

Reichsman said the homelessness issue involves “several sub-populations, some with resources and some without, some with social disabilities who need services attached to home situations, so we have to separate things out, depending on which population you’re dealing with, to craft a solution.”

Reichsman said some of that help “probably has to come at the state [and] federal levels” and that locally, town leaders have to “be ready to go after those resources in a framework of looking at the differing populations that need to be taken care of.”

Davis said he believes the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust to be a “great resource” and that town support for the activities of it and similar organizations is “critical” in helping create new housing.

“Homelessness has been around for a long time, and we won’t tackle roots locally,” Davis said, because the “real reason is the gap between the haves and have-nots in the country, which feed all the issues that create homelessness.”

He believes Groundworks does a “tremendous job” and the town needs to “support the organizations that support the homeless.”

Reis, a residential house owner/manager, said she also looks at the housing crisis from the “providers’ viewpoint” and would like to come up with “a better solution” to the problem.

“Without mom-and-pop providers, all the housing will go to large corporations,” she said, adding hers is “a viewpoint that’s not always appreciated and sometimes even looked down upon.”

She noted that tenant support and communication are key and that the “scope of the problem is bigger than that we need more housing.” She said that income needs also to be addressed.

Reis believes that while the town has many programs in place to help, there’s room for more “by looking at the results of efforts [and] a little backward glancing” to help “create an atmosphere where people are more willing to find solutions.”

EMS decision

The board’s decision to move to a town-run emergency service model through the fire department and to leave Rescue Inc., which moderators noted was controversial and one that “many felt went against public opinion,” was also addressed.

What would the candidates have done differently and what will they do if elected?

Heller said he’s now “looking forward, not backward” about it. Lessons learned, he said, include “ways to be more transparent and engaged with the public” and finding a better process.

Termining this the “largest addition to the town’s portfolio of services in a very long time,” Heller said, “We’re going to be very careful with it” and “committed to making it succeed. I think it has to succeed. We’ve invested too much time already.”

Within “a few years,” Heller said, the town should be able to “untangle EMS funding from the budget, although it’s now a sort of clerical problem.”

Case noted the question dates back to the board before he sat on it but that by the time he and other members engaged in the determination process — which took up half his term on the board — and took the final vote in 2023, the Selectboard was “honestly, over-the-top transparent.”

Noting it was a five-board-member unanimous decision in the end, Case said already the expected 60% collection rate has been increased to 80%.

“It’s not personal, it’s business,” Case said. “That Rescue would provide superior medical care capability was not part of the decision. We were an open book this time around.”

When asked how the town will accurately assess the success of the new EMS program, Case noted new software and the town’s easier-to-navigate new website will allow leaders to see “exactly where we are” and “report to everyone sitting in this room and out in the community.”

For Heller, public presentation is “mostly a technical issue to communicate effectively.”

Saying the software and website are “good tools,” he said he’s concerned about how to look at and understand the fire department budget and understand which costs are EMS-related and which are fire-related.

“We must be maintaining the data in such a way so as to look back over time and say, ‘Here’s what we said it would cost, and here’s what it did cost,’” Heller said.

Reis admitted that while she

saw “this was the issue that everybody had a strong opinion on,” she doesn’t know enough about it.

She said she thought the change seemed to have been thoroughly reviewed by the board, adding that she would “personally, rather give money to the town than an outside agency” and that she “does trust the Selectboard and Fire Department.”

Saying that he believes “significant” problems between the town and Rescue go back farther than when former Town Manager Octavian “Yoshi” Manale stirred public controversy, Reichsman blamed the town for “60%” of the problem, but said both sides managed things “really bad.”

Initially entering his tenure with the Selectboard thinking the town should make amends with Rescue, Reichsman said he became convinced otherwise, coming to the opinion that a rapprochement would “not be the financially smart decision.”

“This was a business relationship that has to be a very close, collegial, working relationship, and the willingness to make that happen simply was not there,” he said. “And we had a very good alternative in our fire department.”

Davis said while he tried to follow the issue closely, he realized, “I didn’t know what I didn’t know,” and he was frustrated.

“It’s a very personal issue for everybody, but [...] at some point, you have to say, ‘Let’s move on, but not forget about what happened,’” he said.

All agreed it will be important to review income and expenses, and to get feedback to accurately assess current projections for the town model.

Reis said she thinks a comparison between the new model and the old will be difficult to make, “because it’s static, and this program is moving forward.”

“I think it’s going to be totally scrutinized,” she said. “I don’t think anybody is willing to let this one go.”

Climate change

Candidates also discussed how to advocate for resiliency and plan for Brattleboro’s economic future in the face of climate change.

Thinking “creatively and, possibly, painfully” about the future of some of the town’s important industries — such as tourism, maple production, and skiing — Heller said those aren’t “just economic; these are part of Vermont’s identity.” He advocated for strengthening and diversifying the business mix in town.

Heller also noted the cost of physical damage from environmental events — some of which is being mitigated by flood plains and stormwater gardens — and investing in more of those measures.

Case said that taking a look at options such as bike path infrastructure and more electric charging stations near highways could help. He noted the town has already removed and replaced freon compressors.

“All we can do is control our town, and I think we are doing and taking positive steps to do that,” he said.

Property taxes

Given that the proposed budget includes a 4.3% property tax increase, candidates were asked how to balance the needs of the town with taxpayers’ ability to pay — and whether they could say “no” to a project in the interest of preserving that delicate balance.

“Yes, we are perfectly capable of saying ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to things, sure, when it makes sense,” Case said.

“It becomes a weighing game because sometimes it means eliminating services, such as town trash removal,” he added.

“These are all decisions made to help keep the tax base where it is,” Case said. “Infrastructure is what it is; we have to repair sidewalks and roads.”

Heller, too, said he’s willing to say “no.”

“Nothing we do as a town comes for free [...] and our tax rate is high,” he said, calling it a balancing act and saying board members have to listen to the constituency.

“You have to be practical and frugal,” Heller said.

He added there are “ways to be smarter, including putting money aside on a schedule for capital needs,” which he’d like to see expanded to other areas.

Davis said he takes it “personally” when the town spends money — “because it is.”

He wants leaders, when the town wants to make a significant expenditure, to “find a way to offset it,” and said that he fears Brattleboro will become like Cape Cod, “where those who work there can’t afford to live there anymore.”

Safe injection sites

The Vermont House recently passed a bill that could create safe injection sites for drug users. The bill is now being considered by

the Senate.

Part of the proposal includes giving cities and towns the right to prohibit such sites within their boundaries. Candidates were asked if they would support a site in Brattleboro and why.

Case was clear that he is not in favor.

“Everybody has the right to get the help they need,” he said. “I want to help, but I don’t want to help them in this way.”

Heller is still “reading and researching,” he said, and hasn’t yet made up his mind on the issue. He said his first reaction is “a little bit of discomfort [...] but I’m unwilling to rule it out,” saying such a move would be “radical, but so is the crisis.”

“So many in the community are dying, and it might help,” he said. “I think it’s something we owe to the community to at least consider.”

Public safety and crime

The Community Safety Review Committee’s report, presented three years ago and still not acted upon, also emerged as a forum topic.

Heller said he believes a broader discussion and more community outreach are needed.

He called the report “important” but not a “full accounting about what everyone in town thinks about community safety.” He added that the board needs to “stop kicking the can down the road.”

Case felt his board has tried “to advance the conversation a little bit,” adding there is “good, substantive stuff in that report to do with de-escalation and people who are self-policing.”

He said the issue doesn’t “come to the agenda as much as it should” and that he is looking forward to advancing that agenda, “so we can get traction in the conversation.”

Reis said she doesn’t have enough information about the report but is “willing to learn.” Davis also said he’s not completely up to date on the issue but suggested that public safety also be looked at from the perspective “of fear” — in that some are afraid to be downtown at night.

Reichsman, saying the safety report addressed only a subset of the population, said the issue will be “a big deal for the Selectboard starting very soon.”

He added that it would have come to the front burner sooner, but that the board learned of a program that might also provide financial help and is investigating that.

Pickleball

On a somewhat lighter note, moderators asked about the rationale for spending \$30,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money to study the feasibility of pickleball courts when the town has many other needs.

“I don’t see the justification for spending ARPA funds on pickleball,” Heller said. “I’m not sure there is one.”

Case agreed. “There is no justification for it,” he said, adding no other sporting need or want came before the board.

“I didn’t understand it,” he said. “Nothing against pickleballers; I love you all. But I think if you want to play, you do the work and make a presentation to the Selectboard.”

“I don’t know enough about it,” said Reis, as far as nixing the project, but that “it’s an important part of being a governing body to make practical choices.”

Reichsman was adamant in his support of the expenditure.

“Of course we should,” he said animatedly. “We’re spending \$4.1 million on generational improvements at Living Memorial Park. Pickleball’s an awesome sport, and we don’t have enough facilities to meet demand.”

He added that the sport has been nationally drawing an older group to participate, which helps them get exercise and socialize, both important aspects for healthy life as we age.

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Remember, kids: Every time you see a new pickleball court open, an orthopedist gets a new boat.
 —RICK REILLY, THE WASHINGTON POST

WSESD forum

Brattleboro representative are being sought by incumbent Tim Maciel, Colleen Savage, and Richard Leavy.

Neither Schibley nor Leavy was able to be present in person, but Jerome read statements they had provided and answers to questions, which had been provided to the candidates in advance.

Current board Chair Kelly Young is being challenged for a three-year term as Guilford representative by Brian Remer. A third challenger, Deborah McNeil, has dropped out of that race.

Incumbent Anne Beekman is the sole candidate for re-election to a three-year term as Putney representative.

Young has come under scrutiny as the 2½-year investigation into alleged sexual abuse in the District unfolded. It fell to her to make the January announcement that effectively ended the investigation, without disclosing any results to the public and saying the board would “likely” make no further comment.

She noted in her opening statement that the “voice of a board member should be strong and directed about the interests of the entire district and every student.”

Saying she works in collaboration as a team with the entire board, Young went on to say, “what I as a board chair present to the community reflects the view of the entire board. I speak for the board, not myself. It is not my opinion because it is not my personal opinion. I am no longer a community member, I am an elected board director.”

Young said one of her goals has been to work toward effective collaboration with the administration and the community, “demonstrating professionalism at all times.”

District challenges and solutions

Question 1: In running for a seat on the WSESD board, what do you believe are the three biggest challenges facing the district, and what do you feel you bring to the table to contribute to the solutions?

Remer, an educator and facilitator who recently retired from his work for the state of Vermont as training and engagement specialist at the Center for Achievement in Public Service, noted staffing as a concern. He said he’s heard that many who work in the school system “are concerned” with the lack of backup/substitute personnel.

He also noted finances — “how we balance the need for quality education with our ability to pay for it” — and school climate.

“As a board member, part of my responsibility would be to help the board act as role model for how it can conduct its business and therefore be an example for administrators, staff, teachers, as well as students, and set the tone for the kind of environment we

want to have,” he said.

Young, who works as a judicial assistant for the state of Vermont in Windham Superior/Probate/Criminal/Family courts and has served on local school boards for six years, noted the challenge of budgeting and how schools are funded as a primary concern in providing quality education.

She especially noted “outside factors” not in control of the board or administration and said she would rely on Superintendent Mark Speno and the business office “to advise the board on what would need to be done.”

She also cited the social climate in school as a continual and complex issue, noting especially the challenges for middle schoolers. Young said she would rely on Speno to advise and develop a plan to address the social climate as well.

Young noted the future use of athletic fields as a potential issue, saying again she would again consult with the superintendent to review and advise on this issue.

For Savage, who settled here in 2020 and has a child at the Green Street School, a sense of community, social climate, and staffing are important.

“I think we could do more to make people feel included and safe, respected, and happy to be in schools,” she said.

In comments read by Jerome, Leavy, a former commercial organic farmer who now owns Southern Vermont Home, LLC and has children at Brattleboro Area Middle School and the Academy School, noted infrastructure as the major issue and challenge across the District.

He said he is also “unhappy” with the direction the school lunch program is taking and said he would like to help in both areas. He added that “mental health needs” should be included as a central focus of the District.

Maciel, a higher education consultant for his company, Educational Solutions of New England, has served four years and is involved in the work of the BUHS Leadership Council and the Student Advisory Committee, among others.

He said attracting and retaining quality teachers is key.

Maciel also noted that “removing, alleviating barriers to learning and personal growth” for students who may experience behavior issues, depression, and more is important, as is “how to close the learning gap [...] to instill the feeling that every student belongs.”

Cutler, a lifelong Brattleboro resident and program supervisor at Kindle Farm School, has a child in the District and one who has been graduated from it.

He also noted the complexities of budgeting as well as staff retention, which he called “paramount” for effective schools and teachers and students to feel safe.

Plus, Cutler said, having consistent staffing “allows the

community to trust what’s happening year to year.”

Noting he believes the District is still struggling with post-pandemic issues that linger, Cutler said, too, that “opportunity with access for students to participate” is key.

Schibley is executive director of the NEARI School in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and father of two boys at Green Street School. He said in a statement read by Jerome at the top of the forum providing a “safe, inclusive, and educational environment” are top of his list.

Calling this a “pivotal time” for the District, Schibley noted a need for “compassion and a levelheaded approach.”

His priorities include “improving communication between the board and superintendent,” “maintaining fiscal responsibility,” and “restoring belief in the board’s efforts vis-a-vis the safety of students and accountability.”

Schibley said he is “dedicated to our cause and will work tirelessly.”

Safety in the schools

Question 2: How, specifically, can you assure survivors of past abuse, as well as parents, students, and concerned community members — and yourselves — that students are and feel safer in WSESD schools since the investigation?

Cutler called the question “challenging” and noted the “nuances of how to support survivors” with things like “social and therapeutic structures.” He said he asked his son if he thought there is a difference in the school climate regarding students’ sense of safety.

“And he assured me the climate of the school is very different from two years ago,” Cutler said, noting that myriad vicissitudes, “not only here but around the country,” still affect the post-pandemic transition back to in-person classrooms.

Asking students directly how they feel, said Cutler, is a “big part” of how to assure kids feel safe in schools.

Maciel agreed that students “should be part of solution,” but said “there should never, ever be a moment when we feel self-assured and less vigilant to protect our children.”

“My heart goes out to victims of sexual assault,” he said, adding that “one thing we can do is do everything possible to prevent it from happening again.”

Saying the current District policy regarding sexual harassment reflects that effort, Maciel said that — while nothing is ever “enough” — the District must “always look for better ways to keep students safe and healthy and measure that in reliable ways.”

He added that any college or university that discovers a graduate has admitted to assault should revoke the offender’s degree.

In his statement, Leavy noted such potential assurances as “strictly enforced policy” and said that “consistent, periodic review, and time will help.”

He said he believes schools are “aware, generally care, and doing their best.”

“Listen to victims,” said Savage. “Hear them. Give them the space to be open and honest, be approachable.”

Young noted the District has delineated a “certain level of conduct in our schools,” and said the past few years have been challenging, with several boards merging and the pandemic.

She said she shares safety as “an absolute priority,” noting the board and administration make concerted efforts to make numerous presentations about key programs to help and publicizing information.

FROM SECTION FRONT

Again noting the roles of the school board and administration “are different,” Young explained the District’s mandatory reporting of any abuse is “clear.”

She said it falls to the Superintendent and administrators “to take action, as they are doing” to ensure student safety.

Noting that the challengers don’t know all the board has already done in the area of increased safety and survivors, Remer also noted that he understands there are “reasons” why the board has not and cannot disclose information regarding the investigation.

He said that when people live through “difficult or even a positive situation,” those experiences “become part of who they are” and they “build resilience,” and he hopes that can, “at some point,” become the case for survivors.

Remer said he is glad that policies are in place and said that “to make them livable and doable, people need to think about how they apply to their specific situations.” He advocates “lots of conversations” about policies.

Information about abuse investigation

Question 3: Are you personally satisfied with the complete blackout of information as it pertains to the investigation as a current or would-be representative of your community?

“Not completely comfortable” is how Remer phrased his response. “At the same time, the way the issue was finalized and shared, I wish there had been more care taken in how that message was conveyed.”

“At this point, I’m not sure what can be done,” he said, again noting that he is “sure there’s a reason” for how it was handled.

Calling it the “most difficult issue” for her in her six years on school boards, Young said “one of the most difficult parts” is that she “feels empathy.”

She added she knows all board members have empathy “for anyone who’s felt trauma.”

“We all want to be able to take away someone’s pain, as parents, as community members,” she said.

“As board members, we are placed in a position where we have a lot of obligations and sometimes they are difficult to express,” Young said. “I feel compassion for anyone who has suffered but, as a board member, there is an expectation we will be addressing the needs of the entire district and, hopefully, people who feel they were harmed feel we are addressing their needs as well.”

Savage said she didn’t “feel qualified to have an opinion on the matter” as she was not present on the board during the investigation.

Saying it put a “tremendous strain” on each board member, Maciel said, “We are as transparent as we can possibly be.”

“If there’s any doubt our hearts did not go out to victims of sexual assault, you just don’t know the individuals on the board,” he said.

In his statement, Leavy said he, also, “can’t entirely speak” to the question as he wasn’t “in on executive session discussions with lawyers” and thus found it “impossible to say what should be disclosed to the public, but a zero tolerance policy should be implemented.”

“No, I’m not entirely happy with it,” Cutler said. “But I don’t mean that as an insult or for a lack of understanding of the situation the board is in. From a meta-standpoint, there are more things to maybe protect or make sure don’t happen. I’m disappointed, but fully trust the board had to make decisions based on what was best for everyone.”

The school board in the community

Question 4: How do you view the board’s relationship to the community and to the administration? How will you effectively represent your community to the district and represent the district to your community?

Cutler admitted he hasn’t had “a strong connection to the board” and had not been “making my best effort,” although his daughter has brought issues to him in the past year, which actually prompted his decision to run.

He said he “feels strongly” it would be “great” for more people in the community to be involved so mutual understanding could be “more real-time than reactionary” and that he hopes to encourage more active participation in the community.

While board responsibilities “are spelled out,” said Maciel, he believes the board “can be much more proactive” in its outreach to parents and community organizations to keep the channel of communication open.

Noting that one board member duty is to “keep the community informed,” as spelled out in law, Maciel said, it is spelled out “also in our hearts.”

Vote for two! Misprint identified on Dummerston ballot for WSESD board election

DUMMERSTON—During the Feb. 26 candidates’ forum for the Windham Southeast School District (WSESD) board of directors, Moderator Cindy Jerome realized the Dummerston ballot includes an error.

There should be direction on each town’s ballot to vote for “not more than two” for the three-year seat as Brattleboro representative. It was printed as “not more than one” on the Dummerston ballot.

Voters in all WSESD member towns vote on all candidates, whether they represent their specific towns.

There are three candidates for that seat, and voters should choose two of them on their

ballots.

Dummerston Town Clerk Laurie Frechette has sought advice from the Office of the Secretary of State and town counsel.

She said that on election day on Tuesday, March 5, she will distribute notices to each voter, instructing them to vote for two people in that race, contrary to the misprint. Notices will be posted in voting booths as well.

Each of the town’s 106 voters who requested early ballots are being notified and a “supplemental” ballot for that race will be sent to them.

The sample ballot on the town website will also be corrected.

He said he feels the board is “moving toward a very good, collaborative, cohesive relationship” with Speno and his administration.

Savage noted the board goal of establishing a vision and setting goals for the superintendent and that boards “serve the community” while being also “entwined” with the superintendent.

“They have to collaborate or it doesn’t work,” she said, adding that she will work to that end and “listen and talk to parents, and listen to what the group wants more than what I want.”

Leavy, in his statement, said he views the role of board members “as facilitators,” and that they can do so by “listening,” adding the “feedback loop needs scrutiny.”

He hopes to “keep that conversation going” and said one area to facilitate is with school-based Leadership Councils and to hone their roles in decision-making.

Young again noted that the board oversees district schools and supports the administration, saying it has “sometimes been critiqued for maybe overstepping,” so it is important to the remember the board’s role versus that of the administration, “the entity that takes the action within the schools.”

Leadership Councils and the mini-committee boards, she said, can help, adding the public is “always encouraged” to participate/join and to communicate to board members and the administration.

Saying he “learned a lot tonight,” Remer said most basically he sees the board as “a liaison” between the public and the administration.

He said he’s looking forward to hearing from neighbors and other communities in the district and encourages the community to be involved.

Polarizing issues and student resilience

Eileen Arama came prepared with two complex and connected questions.

Arama, a social worker in the District and a parent of a high school student, said because she works with individuals and small groups, she has the chance to see “the best some of our students manifest in terms of compassion and caring and emotional growth.”

She noted, too, her witness to the struggle of all middle schoolers “for generations” as they “learn to communicate effectively and build and maintain relationships with adults and peers, learning their own strengths and weaknesses and how to use both.”

Arama also noted Covid and other general life stressors, some seeming “more intense for our students.”

“Some of the manifestations of behaviors are happening without enough notice, much like our challenges with vaping: difficult to detect and requiring a cultural shift to address,” she said.

She asked, first, how the candidates saw their role “in supporting a culture within our school district that will help support and address the community needs of students who missed nearly three years of socialization opportunities.”

She then also noted that many board members voted “to endorse the office of Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice to provide support to teachers and staff in communicating about the recent events in Gaza and Israel.”

She then asked, “as an American Israeli and the mother of a student in this district,” about candidates’ thoughts “about the current level of extremism in our world, the ‘us versus them,’ polarizing rhetoric and increasing anti-Semitism around the world, even here in Vermont?” she said.

“I see a relationship between the challenges our children face

and the challenges we adults face in communicating across dividing issues,” she said. “What are your thoughts about ways to enhance and support dialogue among us so that we can model our successes for our children?”

“We’re not looking at someone on our doorstep right now,” said Young about the war in Gaza. “We’re looking half a world away and we’re trying to understand them. I can only imagine how challenging it is for a student.”

She said as chair she has only voted twice, to break ties, but that she would have voted in support of the statement and advocated they “look in the face of the issue” so “we can see the humanity of it.”

Maciel related a story of a mother telling him that, while driving together to a Leadership Council meeting, her son was being bullied and was upset.

Her phone rang while they were in the car and Maciel learned it was the student’s “trusted adult,” a faculty member who had heard of the incident and contacted the young man.

Maciel noted the conversation that ensued between student and teacher was “so moving.”

He said the District teaches content and models values and that the world students are entering “is a very tough place.” He added that he likes to think schools are “a cut above” in teaching “skills, social relationships and personal self-knowledge.”

Regarding the Gaza statement, Maciel said “education should not be divorced from current events and we made that statement because we saw teachers across the nation struggling with how do you deal with that? And we wanted them to know we’re behind them, if they choose to address it.”

“Arguing for argument’s sake is taking precedence in the world,” Cutler said. “Kids are watching, and we need to start modeling a way we can agree to disagree [...] rather than constantly creating a polarizing situation.”

He added it is “incumbent on schools to teach current events and not be afraid” for questions to be asked and talked about with students.

Jody Normandeau of Dummerston, a former board member, asked challengers whether they have watched videotapes of or have been present for board meetings and, if not, how they would encourage the public to “attend board meetings and hear it for themselves?”

Cutler said he has reviewed “every meeting and read every agenda notes,” adding social media tools do help “because people are watching, and the board needs to find ways to encourage community members to have a say.”

Savage admitted to catching up as well, saying she’s also read board minutes and newspaper accounts of meetings, and she’s watched videos. She said she would “make it a priority” and encourage others “to talk about the work and get different ideas, more involvement.”

“I’m a big education nerd,” she said. “I like learning a lot and I would dive in headfirst and give it my all.”

Working in Montpelier, said Remer, made it difficult for him to participate previously, but now he has plenty of time. In his work during the pandemic, when training state officials had to switch to online, Remer said he found that “we miss something when we’re not in the same room together.”

He said he’s learned “it’s important to do something different in person, if the intention is to have people solving problems together” and that meetings should be structured so “all feel welcome, and that we all feel we’re happy to be there.”

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David Parker Jr., who chronicles the lives of the beavers in his pond, shows his photos at Crowell Gallery

Art beneath the water



A beaver emerges from photographer David Y. Parker's pond.



Photographer David Y. Parker

By Alyssa Grosso
The Commons

NEWFANE—The Crowell Art Gallery at Moore Free Library will presents a wildlife photography exhibition by David Y. Parker Jr.

The free exhibit will run from Saturday, March 2 to Sunday, March 31. A reception will be held on March 2 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Parker has been living in Brookline for the last 30 years, in a house built by his grandfather in the late 1960s.

The house sits on a small bluff above a 2½-acre beaver pond. All of his photographic work comes from the pond, which he also calls his “studio.”

“I live, basically, with these beavers, and they’ve created this amazing aquatic paradise here that attracts all kinds of wildlife,”

Parker says.

“You get to see these animals up close, and I have always felt that part of my responsibility as the steward of the land, if you will, is to interfere as little as possible with what they do,” he says. “So when you see pictures that I take and put out there, they are pictures that are taken at a respectful distance.”

An individual photo might take 1/1000 of a second of time, he says — “yet I may have been sitting there for three hours taking hundreds of other photographs, but then deciding to share this one.”

Parker has gotten the opportunity to observe these animals’ life cycles. He has seen them build families, grieve, and experience other milestones.

Learning beyond the classroom

Parker grew up in Buffalo, New York, and

spent summers here in his childhood.

His family owned a house here for over 100 years, though it’s different from his current home. “We’ve been around here for a good long time,” he says.

After an undergraduate degree from Middlebury College and a master’s degree from Norwich University, Parker ended up making Vermont his home.

Before his photography journey, he worked as an elementary school teacher in Newfane.

“I’ve always enjoyed the outdoors,” Parker says. “I’m somebody who’s always been interested in birds and spend a lot of time teaching about birds when I’m working with third- and fourth-grade children, as I did for most of my teaching career.”

He stated he was amazed at some of what he was seeing anew.

■ SEE PARKER PHOTOGRAPHS, B3

Musicians find a creative spark in mixing two cultures

‘The most profound social justice can be expression of joy within a situation where people from different cultures, from different walks of life are merging,’ says Joe Troop of Larry & Joe, a duo that will perform and shine light on the asylum seeking experience at Next Stage Arts

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

PUTNEY—In its efforts to tune in to global issues and inform and educate the public, the Windham World Affairs Council (WWAC) will draw focus to the current and rising needs of asylum seekers in southern Vermont by presenting Larry & Joe, a North Carolina-based

duo who will explore and expose immigrants’ experiences with asylum-seeking efforts.

Supported by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation’s ‘Welcoming Communities’ program and Brattleboro Union High School’s PeaceJam Club, the program will take place at Next Stage Arts in Putney on Friday, March 1, at 7 p.m.

The acoustic duo, Larry

Bellorin and Joe Troop, have been playing together professionally for two years, offering music that Troop has described as “Latingrass.”

Troop explains that in their original tunes they offer a fusion of sound influenced in part by his own bluegrass roots and by the style of Bellorin, a musician/music educator from Venezuela.

“It’s a mix that stems from

■ SEE LARRY & JOE, B3



Larry & Joe

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NECCA's Circus Spectacular brings international artists to the stage

BRATTLEBORO—Join the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) for an evening of "world-class entertainment" for the entire family in Brattleboro on Saturday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 10 at 1 p.m.

The Circus Spectacular is NECCA's most important annual fundraiser — a unique opportunity to see high flying aerialists, acrobats, and jugglers. In a news release, NECCA co-founder Serenity Smith Forchion marveled that "The Circus Spectacular started with one show in 2011 to help NECCA raise funds for outreach and programming. Thirteen years later, it's turned into our largest annual fundraiser!"

There are two ways to enjoy the show on Saturday: in person at the Latches Theater or via livestream for NECCA fans who live far and wide or prefer to watch from the comfort of their home. Sunday's performance will be in person only.

The star-studded show will be led by world record holder John Higby, also known as Yo-Yo Guy. He has been appeared on *The Late Show* with David Letterman, Discovery Channel's *Time Warp*, Comedy Central, and *Fetch with Ruff Ruffman* on PBS.

Higby will be joined by high-flying rope artist Nick Ng, on break between tours with Cirque du Soleil, and Stacey Strange performing her hoop juggling act. Strange most recently won a silver medal for her performance at the Hubei Chutian Star Gushen Competition in China. Locals may be familiar with Arielle Ebacher, a wire dancer who made Brattleboro her home a few years ago and is among the faculty at NECCA.

These professional performers and others are sharing their talents to raise funds toward supporting student financial aid, outreach, and programming. "We are very fortunate to have these generous performers in our NECCA family," says Executive Director Jenna Struble. "They believe so much in what NECCA gives — empowerment, strength, joy, community — that they come to our small town and grace our stage and support this, our most important annual fundraiser."

Last year, NECCA served nearly 2,800 students of all ages, awarded \$81,235 in financial aid across numerous programs, performed seven free community shows valued at \$33,500, and gave hundreds of free tickets to groups in need.

Forchion touts other performers who may be familiar faces to NECCA fans.

"Troy Wunderle of Circus Smirkus and Wunderle's Big Top Adventures is always great for some levity," she says, "and he's doing a comedy magic act this year. Fans of youth classes at NECCA will enjoy the elevated talents of duo aerialists Katie Schmidt and Victoria Quine. They are both talented coaches at NECCA and will be performing a lighthearted and impressive duo *lyra* act."

Tickets for in-person and livestreamed shows are \$20-\$50 and are available at necenterforcircusarts.org/about/circus-spectacular-2024. For more information, call 802-254-9780.

CLiF contest challenges young writers to write a story in just two sentences

WATERBURY — The Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) announces the launch of its second annual Two-Sentence Writing Contest. Open to all Vermont and New Hampshire children ages 12 and younger, the contest is free to enter, and prizes will be awarded to top submissions in each of four categories.

This year's contest challenges young writers to "tell a two-sentence story that takes place in the sky." Loosely tied to the upcoming total eclipse on April 8, 2024, the contest draws inspiration from the stories and legends ancient civilizations invented to explain sky phenomena.

CLiF's inaugural Two-Sentence Writing Contest, held in February 2023, asked young writers to tell a story about winter and drew over 700 submissions from across the Twin States.

"The range of creative expression demonstrated by the stories was truly amazing," CLiF Project Specialist Mary Edith Leichter said in a news release. "With just two sentences to work with, it's incredible what kids can come up with. We had comedy, horror, tragedy, sci-fi... you name it. We can't wait to read the stories generated by this year's theme."

The categories for this year's contest are divided as follows:

kindergarten and below, grades 1 and 2, grades 3 and 4, and grades 5 and 6. The winner of each category will receive a five-book library from CLiF, curated to their age and interests.

Additional details about the contest and a downloadable entry template can be found on CLiF's website at clifonline.org/writing-contest-2024.

Entries must be received at communications@clifonline.org or CLiF Writing Contest, 3579 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677 by Friday, March 29. Winners will be announced in early April.

Tickets for Marlboro Music's 2024 season go on sale March 1

MARLBORO—Tickets for the 2024 Marlboro Music summer season go on sale on Friday, March 1, at 9 a.m. Performances take place from July 13 to Aug. 11 in Persons Auditorium on the Potash Hill campus in Marlboro.

At Marlboro, musicians "enjoy the rare and invaluable synergy of music, community, nature, freedom, and time," say organizers in a news release. For nearly two months, "exceptional young professionals — who are invited each winter following competitive auditions — are joined by artistic directors Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss, other "world-renowned artists," and staff,

spouses, and family. Over the course of the season, some 200 chamber music study groups explore works of their own choosing, from the Baroque period to the present day. The musicians can read a piece once and then form another group, or continue to delve into it for many weeks.

Since the primary purpose of Marlboro is to learn, a group is scheduled to perform only if and when the musicians are ready and have achieved "extraordinary results."

As there are no pre-determined concert programs, however, the repertoire and personnel for each performance are announced only a week or so

in advance. Organizers promise concert-goers will experience "unique interactions between generations of musical leaders, a fascinating breadth of repertoire, and a commitment — by all of our artists — to the highest standards."

This season's participant list can be found at marlboromusic.org. Tickets are available at \$40, \$30, and \$20, with seating assigned within each section. Visit marlboromusic.org for individual concert dates, or contact box office manager Patrick LaVecchia-Burke at 215-569-4690 or boxoffice@marlboromusic.org.

Next Stage hosts Biribá Union on March 3

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, presents Biribá Union, a musical trio featuring Grammy Award-winning Mike Block (cello, vocals); Christylez Bacon (beatbox, guitar, rhymes); and Patricia Ligia (electric bass, pandeiro, vocals) Sunday, March 3, at 7 p.m.

"We love presenting projects that have a one-of-a-kind feel, and Mike Block has put together something people won't forget easily," Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said

in a news release. "Block is a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, and he has numerous projects that are creative. He says the combined sound of the group is like "something out of a musical fairy tale."

Block, Bacon, and Ligia blend original music with global influences to form "a fresh and accessible sound."

Each member of the collective brings influences and repertoire from their diverse backgrounds, such as Brazilian,

hip-hop, classical, jazz, bluegrass, funk, and pop styles, synthesizing them through original compositions and songs that highlight their improvisational spontaneity and stage presentation.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for access to the livestream and may be purchased at nextstagearts.org. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

Sarasa presents Bolivian baroque music

BRATTLEBORO—Sarasa Ensemble presents "Anónimo from Amazonia: Bolivian Mission Baroque," Friday, March 8, at 7 p.m. at the Brattleboro Music Center (BMC). Organizers bill it as "a sunny program of secular and sacred Baroque music from the Missions of Bolivia, with an undeniable impulse from the folk element of its indigenous people."

Featured performers are Carley DeFranco, soprano; Jesse Irons, Rebecca Nelson, violins; Jennifer Morsches, cello; William Simms, Baroque guitar/theorbo; and John McKean, organ.

The Sarasa Ensemble is a collective group of international instrumentalists and vocalists who perform classical music spanning the 17th to the 21st centuries on both period and modern instruments and bring this music to diverse communities. Through the

ensemble's outreach program in adolescent detention facilities, it is dedicated to bridging cultural, aesthetic, and economic barriers and providing incarcerated teenagers with opportunities for growth, self-expression, and enrichment through music.

Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door, available at bmcvt.org or 802-257-4523. For more information, call the BMC or email info@bmcvt.org.

arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY 29
Music
GUILFORD Special Leap Year House Concert: Wendy's Soiree brings bluegrass duo, Andrew Finn McGill and Anya Hinkle, the 2019 Merifest songwriting winner and 2023 USA Songwriting winner for "Best World Song"! Finn played in the series with a Brazilian Trio in mid-July and they blew the audience away with their virtuosity and exuberant presence. Now he's back with a different sound.
► 7 p.m. (no intermission).
► \$15 to \$20 at door.
► Wendys Soiree, 2596 Tater Ln. Information: Reservations recommended and contact Wendy for directions: wendy@asteriamusica.com.
BRATTLEBORO Join the Brattleboro Women's Chorus! The Brattleboro Women's Chorus starts its exciting spring session featuring music from the African diaspora with a "relaxed singing" rehearsal that is open to new singers.
► 10 a.m. - 12 noon.
► Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Mayse Way. Information: Information, registration, cost: BrattleboroWomensChorus.org/join-us.
Community building
WEST TOWNSHEND Empty Bowls Fundraiser for Townshend Food Shelf: We have a spread of beautiful handmade bowls created by local artists. You choose the bowl that speaks to you and we fill it with our hearty, vegetarian soup. This is a chance to be in community with others as we cultivate gratitude for a simple, nutritious meal, while also acknowledging the way many in our community are struggling to meet their needs. All proceeds from this event go directly to the Townshend Food Shelf.
► Sign up for 5:30, 6:00, or 6:30 p.m.
► \$20.
► West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: To purchase a ticket or learn more about the cause visit: emptybowlstownshend.com/.

FRIDAY CONT.
BRATTLEBORO First Fridays with The Woodpeckers: The Woodpeckers play the high-spirited, danceable, good humored, joyful jazz of the 1920's. Walter Slowinski clarinet, Ron Kelly tenor saxophone, Mark Anagnostopoulos rhythm guitar, Ty Gibbons bass. All sing. Congenial pub atmosphere, fun community vibe.
► 7:30-10 p.m.
► Free admission.
► Latches Pub & Latches Underground, 6 Flat St. Information: 802-380-1369.
Community building
PUTNEY Musical Duo's 'Latingrass' Concert features Storytelling on Asylum-Seeking Journeys: Windham World Affairs Council partners with Brattleboro Development Credit Corporations Welcoming Communities program and Brattleboro Union High Schools PeaceJam Club to present an inspiring music and storytelling with "Larry & Joe" exploring their experience with asylum and immigration. Post concert Q&A on current status of asylum seekers, refugees, immigration in the US and VT led by Liv Berelson, Exec. Dir. of Community Asylum Seekers Project.
► 7 p.m. Larry Bellerin and Joe Troop (Larry & Joe) combine bluegrass music w/ traditional Venezuelan music creating 'Latingrass' - fusion of Venezuelan/Appalachian folk music: upright bass, harp, banjo, cuatro, fiddle, maracas, guitar. Music combines w/ storytelling about Larry's journey of forced exile from Venezuela to asylum-seeking in North Carolina.
► \$20 suggested donation.
► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Secure your seat at Latingrass.eventbrite.com.
Visual arts and shows
"Telling Stories Frame by Frame: A Vermont State University Student Film & Video Showcase" (Online): Variety of student work showcased in "Telling Stories Frame by Frame" includes video essay about Spanish cinema after the death of dictator Francisco Franco; short film about isolated young man with diabetes finding connection; experimental shorts about nostalgia, anxiety, memory, more.
► 3/8, 5 p.m.: Artist talk via Zoom. From home, view a variety of student film in Vermont Arts Council's newest Spotlight Gallery exhibition. Video essay about Spanish cinema after the death of dictator Francisco Franco and short film about an isolated young man with diabetes finding connection, experimental shorts about nostalgia, anxiety, memory, more.
► "Telling Stories" is available for viewing on the Council's gallery web page from March 1-April 30.
► 6-7:30 p.m.: Lost River Racial Justice meetings offered on 2nd Monday of every month.
► Through Tuesday, April 30.
► Free.
► Online. Information: Go to lostriverracialjustice.org to sign up on the Lost River Racial Justice mailing list where the Zoom link is sent out.

SATURDAY CONT.
Audience members command - sharing stories, scenarios, or topics - and Dan DeWalt performs by spontaneously composing and playing a unique piece based on the audience topics. The concert celebrates the work of his recent CD release, "Played Once": "Each of the 16 compositions took on its shape as I played," he said. "As it sounded, the music informed my fingers and led the way the way through a narrative until a conclusion presented itself!"
► 7:30 p.m. Proceeds from concert benefit a project to build an accessibility ramp for the South Newfane Schoolhouse.
► \$15 suggested donation to South Newfane Schoolhouse Ramp Project. All welcome regardless of ability to donate.
► South Newfane Schoolhouse, 387 Dover Rd. Information: More information on Facebook: fb.me/e/1rjpaA0la.
Community building
MARLBORO The Mud Fling: Auction, 50/50 Raffle, Live Music: Annual Marlboro Mud Fling is the premier event of Marlboro's winter season. This year it will feature a silent auction with lots of fabulous items, a 50/50 raffle, live music by Dante and the Moonings, plenty delectable desserts and savory foods. New this year will be a raffle of three exceptional prizes!
► 6-9 p.m. Mud Fling this year is a collaboration of Marlboro Elementary School's FTA and the Marlboro Community Center. Proceeds will be split by the two organizations to support field trips for MES and operating costs for the MCC.
► \$10 to \$15 sliding scale.
► Marlboro Community Center, 524 South Rd. Information: marlborocommunitycenter.org.
Arts and crafts
CHESTER Colored Pencil Demonstration plus Painting with Primaries in Watercolor: Saxtons River Art Guild exhibition closing events: "Colored Pencil Demo" in the morning, "Painting in Primaries Watercolor Workshop" in the afternoon.
► 10-11:30 a.m. Liz Winchester-Larson offers colored pencil demo with a focus on still-life subjects. Liz works from a small still-life set-up to show how she applies many layers to achieve rich color intricate detail. She exhibits her paintings throughout New England area. Informal drop-in, registration not required. 12:30-2 p.m.: Donna Bascom Lund workshop: "Painting with Primaries in Watercolor." Examples of Bascom's work: www.facebook.com/donnabascomlund.
► Free.
► Whiting Library, 117 Main St. Information: Registration for watercolor workshop required, space for 6-8 participants, supplies provided. Call library: 802-875-2277.
Community meals
GUILFORD Sugar On Snow Supper
► Seatings: 5, 6, and 7 p.m.
► \$15 adult; \$5 ages 5-12; \$2 kids age 4 & under.
► Broad Brook Community Center/Grange, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Reservations: thayeretomlinson@hotmail.com and get a confirmation reply. Or text 202-247-5251. 802-451-0405; broadbrookcommunitycenter.org.
GUILFORD First Sugar on Snow Supper of the Season: Broad Brook Grange's annual meal features ham and homemade items: baked beans, deviled eggs, mashed potatoes, coleslaw, rolls, donuts, Guilford maple sugar on Guilford snow (pickles accompany snow. Fundraiser helps support the many activities of the Grange: pre-town meeting, community Thanksgiving dinner, this supper, brunches, Guilford Center Stage productions. Grange organization also provides Christmas stockings for seniors and a college scholarship.

SUNDAY CONT.
► Three seatings: 5:00, 6:00, 7:00 p.m. At each seating, a half-gallon of Guilford maple syrup will be raffled.
► \$15 adults; \$5 for children ages 5 to 12, \$2 ages 4 and under.
► Broad Brook Community Center/Grange, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Reservations: Email Thayer at thayeretomlinson@hotmail.com for confirmation reply (preferred). Or text 202-247-5251.
Activism
BRATTLEBORO Vigil: Ceasefire Now! In Gaza and Israel: Tim Stevenson: "This vigil will continue every Saturday till Ceasefire." Stevenson's newly published book is: "Transformative Activism: A Values Revolution of Everyday Life in a Time of Societal Collapse."
► 12 noon - 1 p.m.
► Brattleboro Post Office, Main St.
Community building
BRATTLEBORO All Souls Hybrid Worship Service: "Healing Happens!": While harm and trauma necessarily make more news, we know there's a powerful current of hope and change flowing through our community as well. Join us in welcoming the Women's Freedom Center, offering help and advocacy to ALL survivors of domestic and sexual violence. We'll share in their recognition of Women's History Month and year-long celebration of their 50 years creating a community where violence is not tolerated.
► 10 a.m. "Healing Happens." Pre-service activities: 8:45 a.m. Choir rehearsal. 9 a.m. the following activities take place: Children's Religious Exploration class, Adult Coffee & Conversation, Quiet Meditation.

SUNDAY CONT.
► Free. Donations welcome.
► All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: Go to ascvt.org Sunday shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.
Community meals
BRATTLEBORO Mac 'n' Cheese Supper: Edible Brattleboro invites you to come cook and eat with us! In this class, we will make vegan Mac 'n' Cheese, winter salad and a creamy rice pudding for dessert. Shake off the winter cold with some healthy and delicious comfort food and good company!
► 4:45 - 6:45 p.m.
► Free (donations accepted with gratitude).
► Brattleboro Food Co-op Cooking Classroom, 7 Canal St. Information: Registration required: bit.ly/EBwintercooking24.
Community building
BRATTLEBORO Compassionate Brattleboro: Community Conversations on Compassion. Today: "Compassion for Non-Human Animals": Conversation includes panelists Patrice Jones of WINE Sanctuary, Dr. Sue Kelly of Spruce Mountain Veterinary Acupuncture, Lisa Jablow of Protect Our Wildlife, and Bella O'Connor of VT Law School. Panelists discuss issues ranging from farming to the law to hunting and related to the idea of compassion and non-human animals and how compassion might play a role in our everyday lives.
► 6-7:30 p.m. There will be time for questions/conversation with the audience. Co-sponsored by Windham County Humane Society.
► Free.
► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: compassionatebrattleboro.org.
BELLOWS FALLS Rockingham Conservation Committee & Windham Regional Commission: Rockingham's Outstanding Resource Waters: Property owners along Williams River and Herricks or Roundys Coves are invited to this public discussion. Rockingham residents are working on the nomination of two sites in the Town of Rockingham as Outstanding Resource Waters. Discussion explains what the ORW designation is and what it will and won't mean for nominated water bodies and more details about potentially nominated sites themselves. Questions welcome.
► 6:30 p.m. Open to the public.
► Free.
► Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org.

SUNDAY 3
Local history
WESTMINSTER WEST Lecture on the History of the Haywards' House and Garden: Illustrated with a power point presentation, the Haywards walk the audience through their four-season 1 1/2 acre garden to illustrate universal garden design principles that can be employed in any number of ways by anyone in their own home gardens. This lecture is most useful for those who garden themselves.
► 6:30 p.m. Presented in support of The Congregational Church in Westminster West, VT.
► Free. Donations welcome.
► Congregational Church of Westminster West, 44 Church St. Information: 802-387-2334; westminsterwest.org.
The written word
Smoky Quartz editors host Reading (Online): Writers with ties to New Hampshire read selections from Anniversary Anthology. The poets reading at the event include Liz Ahl, Joan Doran, George Drew, Carlene Gadapee, Elizabeth Gouffreau, Jimmy Pappas, Carla Schwartz. They will be joined by short story author Tina Rapp. Artwork from the anniversary issue will also be featured. The public is invited.
► 2 p.m.
► Free.
► Online. Information: Email mwsmokyquartz@gmail.com for online link to the reading.

TUESDAY 5
Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance.
► 5 - 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.
► Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; brattleborowalkinclinic.com.

WEDNESDAY 6
The written word
PUTNEY VT River Conservancy offers free River-themed Poetry Workshops throughout Windham County in March and April: In VT, we know that rivers, like people, like communities are complex. Calm pools, churning riffles. Steady periods of baseflow; floods that inspire awe and grief. Meanders, bends, sandy shores/rocky ones, floodplain forests, peaceful coves, rushing waters/trickling streams. Rivers are places to wander solo and to gather, process and play, think and to empty our minds, steady ourselves and to embrace change.
► 6:30-8:30 p.m. "We've put together this 5-week workshop to create space for connections with nuance and depth - both within our community of readers/writers and between us and our river lands. We'll read pieces from diverse styles, cultures and time periods including many from our neck of the woods. We'll share reflections these poems provoke for us and talk through the poetic craft moves that makes them tick. Then we'll set off to write. What will you discover when you let the words flow?"
► River-themed workshops continue:
► 3/7: Rockingham Free Public Library, 3-5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 6
To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org
Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

Larry & Joe

our musical backgrounds and also basically folk music from all over the Americas that we've listened to our whole lives. We're throwing them all into a pot and turning it around to see what we can cook up," Troop says.

With bluegrass, merengue, tango, venez calypso, and other overlapping genres, Troop says "it's a varied show."

"This fusion [...] folk music is played on the harp, banjo, cunatro, fiddle, guitar, maracas, and upright bass. Interspersed will be personal stories — both Larry's and Joe's — of experiences with immigration and asylum seekers and, especially, of Bellorin's journey of forced exile from Venezuela to asylum-seeking in North Carolina."

A legendary Llanera musician in Venezuela, Bellorin came to the U.S. eight years ago to flee persecution in his home country. A professional musician whose livelihood was teaching and performing, Bellorin could no longer work under a totalitarian regime.

Fearing for his family's safety, his family relocated to North Carolina, where he found the only work he could — in construction, which he did for seven years until recently. He is grateful to be a full-time musician again.

Troop is a Grammy-nominated bluegrass and old-time musician who lived in Argentina for 10 years working as a freelance musician, educator, and session musician until 2020.

"I had a band down there that I started with two students called Che Apalache," he says. "We had a really good run in the States, and then the pandemic decimated our operation. We were on tour when that happened, and it was that very thing that landed me back here [in Durham, North Carolina]."

With the band forced into hiatus, Troop never went back to Argentina; instead, he turned to working with asylum-seeking migrants.

How Bellorin and Troop found each other is "a matter of destiny, really," he says.

"During the pandemic, I was working in the activist sphere, teaming up with social justice people doing a web series and get-out-the-vote campaigns," he says. "That's how I ended up working with the migrant community of North Carolina for the first time."

One thing led to another, and Troop ended up volunteering in a migrant shelter south of Tucson, Arizona, on the Mexican border, working with asylum-seeking migrants and using music as a means of learning and connecting.

"I was planning to come to Durham and do a residency in December of 2021," Troop recalls. "I was looking for potential collaborators, and a friend connected me with a genius musician who's also an asylum-seeking migrant in Raleigh, [North Carolina]. She said to check him out."

"I saw videos of Larry and realized he played the [Venezuelan folk] music I've loved since I was a teenager: I'd listened to it but I've never had any direct contact with it, barring a few street musicians I'd met in Buenos Aires." He had never seen an artist who plays the arpa llanera harp, as Bellorin does.

"And so I cold-called Larry and asked if he wanted to collaborate on this residency. He said, 'Sure, let's do it.'"

"So that's how this began," Troop says. "We hit it off immediately, and that's where our musical brotherhood began [in March 2022]."

Bellorin, speaking with the translation help of Troop, recalls that he was escaping from "not

being able to continue work as a musician, as a music teacher, and as a professional performing musician."

"The political situation had us cornered — backed into a corner since we were not sympathetic with their cause, we were not allied with them politically," he continues.

"I had my own private music school," he says, "and in 2011, when the Venezuelan economy started to tank, I realized it was no longer sustainable to work in musical education, so in 2012 I had to close the school's doors" and leave.

Most of Bellorin's family is in the U.S.; some remain in Venezuela.

The duo's focus during their March 1 visit to Next Stage is on social justice in both music and narrative.

"Deeply embedded in our story," says Troop, "are the paths that brought us together."

He thinks "the most profound social justice can be expression of joy within a situation where people from different cultures, from different walks of life are merging."

"We're hoping our show is like medicine," he says. "A very strong component of it is healing music; there's also storytelling so people can share the context of the songs we're playing — many of which have a profound social justice message."

"And there's a dance party at the end," he continues. "Get people up and dancing!"

Dancing can lift spirits in tough times, Troop asserts, noting that Bellorin's case for asylum, first presented to officials six years ago, has not advanced.

"It's unlikely it's ever going to get reviewed because they're processing recent arrivals first" in what's prevailed recently as a "last in-first-out" approach. There are so many that [immigration services] can't keep up with the paperwork and they are understaffed. Larry's in a perpetual holding pattern like hundreds of thousands of others."

About his recent reunion with his first calling — music — and about being in America, Bellorin says he feels like he "now [has] the opportunity to share all the talent God gave me with the world."

"It's a relief to return to the artist I've always had inside me," he says. "I was paused for so many years that that artist was dying."

Larry & Joe, who toured for 200 days last year and this year, are on the road for six months, "to humanize the story of the growing numbers of people forced out of their home countries due to a variety of factors that make life impossible," according to a WWAC media release.

WWAC Administrative Director Susan Healy said they received a Vermont Humanities grant "enabling us to bring the humanities into our community through partnerships with other nonprofits: Next Stage Arts, Community Asylum Seekers Project, and Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Welcoming Communities."

Planning the event, Healy recalled, began in September.

"The focus on asylum seekers and immigrants was significant, but not as intense [then] as now," he says. "It is essential to counter the vitriol and tension with humanity. What better way to do that than through music?"

Shining a light on seeking asylum

A post-concert question-and-answer session on the current

FROM SECTION FRONT

status of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigration policy in the U.S. and Vermont will be led by Liv Berelson, executive director of Community Asylum Seekers Project (caspvt.org) in Brattleboro.

According to the Immigration Research Initiative (immresearch.org), Vermont is ranked sixth highest in the nation in terms of welcoming and offering assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. This stance has benefitted hundreds statewide.

Locally, according to Francie Marbury, a volunteer with CASP, 19 asylum seekers are working with the nonprofit, with a new client expected to arrive within the next month and four children expected to be reunited with their parents soon.

Those being served by other resettlement initiatives, such as St. Michael's Episcopal Church's refugee ministry, add dozens more in our region alone who benefit from such assistance and guidance — some asylum seekers, others refugees. (Distinctions among the terms "refugee," "migrant," and "asylum seeker" can be found online at amnesty.org.)

CASP is a social justice and immigrant activist organization committed, according to its website, to welcoming asylum seekers from Afghanistan and around the world.

"A group of community members," it states, "has been trying to make sure that the county will be a place where immigrants of all backgrounds can live without fear of being targeted because of their perceived immigration status."

According to the agency, "We seek to cultivate a supportive community for those seeking asylum in the U.S., while offering basic needs and accompanying them on their journey towards building a life in southern Vermont."

Finding such a new life has not been easy of late.

The CASP website notes the organization's work now aims to address "the need for extended support of our asylum-seeking guests, who must now wait double the time — a full year — to become eligible for a work permit" and "the need for renewed support for asylum-seekers who had received a work

Vermont River Conservancy hosts river-themed poetry workshops around region

The Vermont River Conservancy will offer free, river-themed poetry workshops throughout Windham County this March and April. Workshops will be held at the following locations:

- Wednesday, March 6: Putney Public Library, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Thursday, March 7: Rockingham Free Public Library, 3 to 5 p.m.
- Monday, March 18: South Londonderry Free Library, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Tuesdays, March 26 – April 23: Brooks Memorial Library, Brattleboro, 12 to 2 p.m.
- Thursday, April 11: Dover Free Library, noon to 2 p.m.

"In Vermont, we know that rivers, like people — like communities — are complex," organizers said in a new release. "Calm pools, churning riffles. Steady periods of baseflow, floods that inspire awe and grief. Meanders, bends, sandy shores and rocky ones, floodplain forests, peaceful coves,

rushing waters and trickling streams. Rivers are places to wander solo and to gather, to process and to play, to think and to empty our minds, to steady ourselves, and to embrace change."

With these themes in mind, the Conservancy put together this five-week workshop series around Windham County "to create space for connections with nuance and depth — both within our community of readers and writers, and between us and our riverlands."

Participants will read pieces from diverse styles, cultures, and time periods, including many from Vermont. After sharing the reflections that these poems provoke, and talking through the poetic craft moves that make them tick, participants will then set off to write and see what might be discovered in the process.

For more information and to sign up, visit bit.ly/754-river. Walk-ins are also welcome.

permit two years ago [but whose] renewal is taking longer than the 180 days that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services promises."

Larry & Joe's performance, as stated on the WWAC website, is part of the organization's focus in March on immigration and asylum, a series that includes a Thursday, March 21 lecture on "Migration from the Northern Triangle," with Sarah Osten, Ph.D., associate professor of Latin American History at the University of Vermont.

For more information on the programs and mission of WWAC, visit windhamworldaffairscouncil.org.

Suggested donation for the event on Friday, March 1 is \$20; though WWAC policy is to make all events accessible to all regardless of ability to pay. All students will be admitted free. To reserve seats, visit latingrass.eventbrite.com.

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SATURDAY 2 / 6:50 / 9
SUNDAY 2 & 6:50
MON.-THUR. 4:15 & 6:50

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Feb. 26–March 3
CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

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Here We Are - Liv Berelson. Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP) Director. Mon 8p, Tues 12:40p, Wed 9p, Thurs 1:15p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 12:15p, Sun 5:15p	Guilford Pre-Town Meeting Info Session 2/27/24: Tues 6:30p (LIVE) Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
The World Fusion Show - Ep# 172 - Payton MacDonal: Mon 5:30p, Tues 9a, Wed 3:50p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 7:30a, Sat 2p, Sun 6p	West River Education District Board Special Mtg. 2/21/24: Mon 9:15p, Tues 10a, Wed 5p, Sun 6p
Harris Hill Ski Jump 2024 - Saturday: Mon 1p, Wed 9p, Sat 9a	Meet The Candidates - Putney Selectboard Candidate Forum 2/24/24: Tues 8:30, Wed 6a, Thurs 12p
Harris Hill Ski Jump 2024 - Sunday: Tues 8p, Thurs 2p, Sat 8p	Meet The Candidates - Windham Southeast School District Board Candidate Forum 2/26/24: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 12p
Mitchell Giddings Fine Arts - Masterworks: The Inside Story with Dan Weiden: Tues 3:15p, Wed 12:40p, Thurs 9:45p, Fri 4:30p, Sat 5:30a, Sun 6:30p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 2/26/24: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:30p
Couch Potatoe Productions - Dummerston Historical Society Remembers Dr. Grace W. Burnett: Tues 10a, Wed 4p, Thurs 9:30a, Fri 3p, Sat 5:30p, Sun 8p	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 2/26/24: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
At BMAC - Artist Conversation: Fawn Krieger, David B. Smith with Wendy Vogel: Mon 10a, Fri 1p, Sat 2:30p, Sun 9:30a	River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 2/26/24: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
Root Social Justice Center - Families United Meeting 1/26/24: Mon 5:30a, Sun 12:30p	Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg. 2/26/24: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30
Couch Potatoe Productions - Abenaki Forum 1/21/24: Fri 10a	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 2/27/24: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Fennell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 2/29/24: Sat 8:30p, Sun 6a
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 2/21/24: Mon 9a, Tues 12p
News Block: WTSR News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p BUHS-TV News: Mon-Fri 12:20p & 6:40p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 2/21/24: Mon 2:30p
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Meet The Candidates - Dummerston Selectboard Candidate Forum 2/21/24: Mon 7:45p, Tues 6a, Wed 12p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Dummerston Pre-Town Meeting Info Session 2/21/24: Mon 6:15p, Tues 7:30a, Wed 1:30p
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Town Matters - Weekly Episode: Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p, Thurs 8p

Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at brattleboroTV.org

BCTV's Program Highlights are sponsored by The Commons. BCTV's municipal meeting coverage helps Commons reporters stay in touch. Read about it in the Town & Village section at www.commonsonline.org.

Brattleboro Community Television - 257-0888

Parker photographs

FROM SECTION FRONT

"I just hadn't been aware of the diversity of birds," Parker says. "And other wildlife, it was just a great thing. And so I began, again, taking pictures — you know, working on my craft, and hopefully getting better and better."

Developing photos and a relationship to photography

Parker says he doesn't really do shows — though he did do one at Crowell Gallery in early 2020, and he had a show at the Marina in Brattleboro.

He was still taking a lot of photos during the Covid shutdown but was not printing a lot, or putting a lot of effort into displaying anything he had recently taken, due to the uncertainty of when anything would reopen.

During the intervening years, he has gone back and looked at photos from the last six or seven years "again, with a sort of different fresh set of eyes," Parker explained.

"Our older photographs

— they've never been shown publicly before, but I have reworked them to the point where I really liked what I had," he says. "And so it's kind of neat."

Parker explained for someone looking to get into photography, it takes practice and learning from your mistakes, just like everything else. He advises new photographers to "just stick with it and be willing to learn new things."

"I'd spend probably four hours a day with my camera outside," he says, noting that during that time he might take "anywhere from 500 to 1,000 frames."

"I would shoot, then spend another couple hours going through to maybe find one or two, maybe three, that might be worth keeping," Parker says.

"But just keep doing that."

The Crowell Art Gallery is part of the Moore Free Library at 23 West St., Newfane. Library and gallery hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1 to 5 p.m.; Thursday, 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Library talk examines 'Comics and Queerness in Vermont and Beyond'

PUTNEY—On Tuesday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m., Vermont Cartoonist Laureate Tillie Walden will speak at Putney Public Library about "Comics and Queerness in Vermont and Beyond."

From Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* to Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, say organizers, "comics have been a part of American culture since print first began." But comics are no longer relegated just to the newspaper, and "as books like *Maus* or *Persepolis* have proven," we are currently experiencing a "golden age for graphic novel storytelling."

What is even more exciting, they say, is how the comics industry is currently championing narratives for all identities and ages.

Those attending the talk can explore process and power through visual narrative and learn why comics are relevant. Walden presents a look at the intersection of indie comics with queer identity through her many graphic novels — including science fiction, memoir, and historical retelling.

Walden's published works

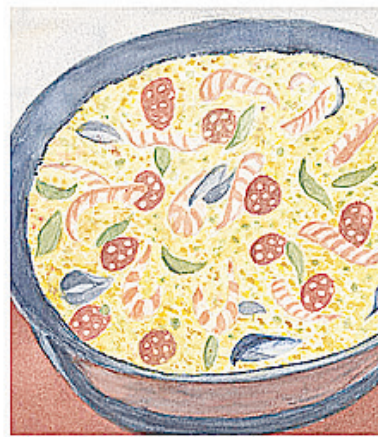
include *Spinning*, *Are You Listening?*, *On a Sunbeam*, and *Clementine*.

This talk is part of the Vermont Reads program. Since 2003, Vermont Humanities Council has invited students, adults, and seniors across the state to read the same book and participate in a variety of community activities related to the book's themes.

Over 200 different Vermont towns, cities, and villages have participated in Vermont Reads to date.

The 2024 Vermont Reads book is *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, by Melinda Ho, and explores themes of self-acceptance, familial and cultural ties, U.S./China relations, LGBTQ+ and feminist history, McCarthyism and xenophobia, music of the 1940s and '50s, and the Asian American experience, among others.

Copies of this book are available for checkout at the Putney Library. This talk is free, and the space is accessible to those with disabilities. All ages welcome. For more information, contact Putney Public Library at 802-387-4407 or julia@putneylibrary.org.



COURTESY OF ART AMONG FRIENDS
Clockwise from top left: Works by Alice Freeman, Laurie Klenkel, Lynn Zimmerman, Connie Evans, Kathy Greve, and Louise Zak.

Watercolor exhibit celebrates edible delights

'Yum!,' at Brooks Memorial Library, features the work of six area artists portraying food

By Alyssa Grosso
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—During March and April, Brooks Memorial Library hosts "Yum!," an exhibit of watercolors that portray food by the local group Art Among Friends.

Art Among Friends is a group of six local artists: Connie Evans, Alice Freeman, Kathy Greve, Laurie Klenkel, Louise Zak, and Lynn Zimmerman. This creative group met online during the pandemic to create not only art but also strong friendships.

According to a news release, the 15 pieces on display in this show "celebrate edible delights — from mousse to macarons, paella to potato chips, shortcake to strawberries."

The paintings were scanned and enlarged before printing large posters that will be displayed on

panels above the Main Reading Room.

Prior to this show, Art Among Friends had a show at the Crowell Gallery in 2022, and another show, "Bloom!," at Brooks Memorial Library in April 2023.

The members of Art Among Friends choose a theme and a title for these shows usually by meeting for lunch and brainstorming as a group.

"The library loved it, and lots of people commented and whatnot, so we decided to do it again," Evans stated. "I think we probably will make it an annual thing."

The group is planning another show at the Crowell Gallery in June, where a reception will be held Saturday, June 8, at 1 p.m.

A colorful canvas and community

"I started this group back a few years before the pandemic, because I've wanted to make art

with people — I really enjoy being with other people while I'm using my hands and my eyes," Alice Freeman said.

Freeman explained that the group is socially sustaining and also provides support and within this community they have created. They gather "probably once a month" for lunch and individually share connections with one another, she said.

"I rely on this group for critique and support," Freeman explained.

She explained why they choose watercolor painting as their form of art.

"It's the unexpectedness of it," Freeman said. "I also love the light coming through it, and the layers on it, but mostly it's the fact that it's hard to control and a lot of artists consider it to be very challenging and hard to do."

Freeman also noted one advantage of watercolor: its portability.

"You can go almost anywhere with a little box of watercolors, a flask of water, and your brush and paper," she said. "That's all you need."

Finding the art in life

For anyone looking to start this genre of art, Evans has a bit of advice: Just stick with it.

She explained that even in their group of six, so many styles have emerged. "It's really fun to see other people's styles developing," she said.

Evans acknowledged that watercolor art does require a lot of learning techniques and practice and thinks "it's helpful to have somebody who knows what they're doing guiding you at the beginning."

There are also resources online for people looking to begin this new art journey.

"Don't beat yourself up about what you think you can do. There is not just one way to paint," Evans explained.

"Since I started painting, I see the world differently. I see the colors; I see the incredible gradations in colors. I see details, and I see shapes and all that in a way that I never did before. And that inspires me to want to capture all that stuff that I'm seeing," Evans said.

"I just love to paint, I love the color... and I that's why I keep doing it every day," Freeman said.

A reception for "Yum!" will take place at Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St., Brattleboro, on Friday, March 1 at 4 p.m. The posters in the exhibit, as well as original paintings, prints, and cards will be available for purchase. Contact the Art Among Friends artists at ArtAmongFriends6@gmail.com.

GOT AN OPINION?
(Of course you do! You're from Windham County!)

Got something on your mind? Send contributions to our Letters to Readers section (500 words or fewer strongly recommended) to voices@commonsnews.org; the deadline is Friday to be considered for next week's paper. When space is an issue, we give priority to words that have not yet appeared elsewhere.

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Wednesday, March 6 from 6:00-7:30 PM
Brooks Memorial Library (snow date: Tuesday, March 19)
This event is free, and all are invited.

Panelists with varied perspectives will discuss a wide range of issues —from farming to the law to hunting— related to the practice of compassion toward animals, and how this compassion might play a role in our everyday lives.

Panelists:
patrice jones, VINE Sanctuary
Dr. Sue Kelly, Spruce Mountain Veterinary Acupuncture
Lisa Jablow, Protect Our Wildlife
Bella O'Connor, Vermont Law School
Moderator: Lindsey Britt

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Annual elections take place March 5

Leaders will make towns stronger, more inclusive, and more vibrant

For local Selectboards, I recommend that Brattleboro residents vote for Oscar Heller and Richard Davis, that Putney residents vote for Aileen Chute, that Guilford residents vote for Zon Eastes and Chip Carter, and that Vernon residents vote for Thomas Guerino and Jim Pinkerton.

For WSESD school board, I recommend Brian Remer from Guilford.

For the Brattleboro Selectboard, I plan to vote for Oscar Heller, who is running for a three-year seat. At age 35, he brings fresh energy and perspective to town government. I am impressed with his energy to protect us from future floods and his ambition to support the creation of affordable housing.

With Ian Goodnow, chair of the Selectboard, having announced he will not seek re-election, the town needs representation of his and Oscar's generation on the board. Oscar has served in leadership roles for years on the town finance committee, energy committee, and Representative Town Meeting, and he will bring commitment to the Selectboard.

I also plan to vote for Richard Davis, a retired nurse and administrator running for a one-year seat on the Selectboard. Richard has been an amazing force in the community for many years, and you are likely familiar with his column in the *Brattleboro Reformer*.

His work achievements speak for themselves: He has prioritized public and community health, and meeting the basic needs of our neighbors in need. I am excited to see his name on the ballot.

In Guilford, voters should reelect Zon Eastes, and elect Fred "Chip" Carter for Selectboard. Residents of Brattleboro, Dummerston, and Putney should all vote for Brian Remer in the WSESD school board election.

Zon Eastes has proven to be an honest and hard-working Selectboard chair for the past two years. He is willing to hear other views when they are presented civilly and makes time for residents to talk with him.

Chip Carter has a track record of volunteer service, including with Guilford Cares.

Brian Remer, a Guilford candidate for the WSESD school board, and a recently retired educator and facilitator, has a reputation for his thoughtful and collaborative approach. He will serve the young people of our towns well.

Voters in Putney should re-elect Aileen Chute to the Selectboard. In this role she has supported the creation of housing in Putney — a critical need throughout Vermont. She also has helped revive the town's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and is an ally to the LGBTQ+ community. She is the kind of leader our towns need.

In Vernon, Thomas Guerino and Jim Pinkerton, community-focused candidates for Selectboard, have proven their abilities to help transition Vernon to a post-Vermont Yankee reality. The Vernon School Board is still searching for people to fill a vacant seat.

Let's come together as communities this coming Tuesday, Town Meeting Day, to support these leaders who are committed to making our towns stronger, more inclusive, and more vibrant places to live.

Isaac Evans-Frantz
Brattleboro

Case: A civic-minded, efficient organizer

I am voting for Peter Case to serve another year on the Brattleboro Selectboard. He has served this town for as long as I can remember. Always a civic-minded citizen, he has served on a number of boards, most notably the Boys and Girls Club.

Always an efficient organizer, Peter Case is a good listener and has always considered all sides of an issue. When faced with a difficult decision, he will, cogently and calmly, state his position.

He works hard. He is smart. He owns an anchor business in downtown Brattleboro. I encourage voters to return him to the Selectboard.

Gorty Baldwin
Brattleboro

Case: 'I trust this guy'

I support Peter Case for a three-year term on the Brattleboro Selectboard. I'm not a resident, but Peter has convinced me to keep my business in Brattleboro rather than moving somewhere else in the state.

How? By being an optimistic, positive influence on the town and, in particular, the downtown area, where he has recently invested his own money in a 100-year-old business.

Peter has a knack for listening to all of the stories and then sorting the loud ones from the majority before forming an opinion. And that opinion is negotiable whenever better information comes to light, no matter how hard that might be.

I trust this guy to represent all of Brattleboro's residents and businesses when stakes are high and patience is thin.

Don Cuerdon
Putney

Reis: Compassion is at the core of her being

I have known Jaki Reis for about 40 years. While we share about 90% of our political views, we don't agree on every issue. But she always listens to what people have to say and has solid reasons for her views. So this is an endorsement based on her character and experience, not specific issues.

Jaki has a cornucopia of skills and experience from the variety of fields she has worked in: paralegal, bookkeeper, and assistant office manager for New York law firms; real estate broker; housing quality inspector for insurance companies.

She has worked for the Brattleboro assessors' office; for the U.S. Census Bureau; for the chamber of commerce; as a Cruise Ship performer; as a pre-school teacher, including one-on-one with a special needs child; as a community volunteer; as a film festival organizer; as movie and hotel administrator at the Latchis; as a rental building owner and manager.

She did all this starting as a single mother on welfare in New York City.

Jaki is scrupulously honest and has the utmost integrity. She is strong and very capable, but she is willing to change her views based on new information, and she does so without hesitation. She listens, has a real thirst for knowledge, and cares about fairness for everyone.

She is a tireless proponent of safe, healthy, loving environments for children. She studied childhood development and counseling.

Jaki is extremely responsible and not interested in getting credit for what she does. Not that she is modest — she knows her abilities, but she doesn't care if others notice and

she often does not get the credit that she deserves.

Here are just a couple of things that show what kind of person she is.

When Covid hit, Jaki, some others, and I volunteered to make deliveries for Nicole Reisman, who offered free meals to anyone who needed them. This made it possible for Nicole's Community Kitchen to expand.

As the need and production increased, so did the problems and confusion. So we took over the logistics of delivery, finding drivers, organizing their routes, and setting up feedback channels to fix mistakes.

Jaki's keen insight into details made this a very efficient and productive process, and Nicole ended up being able to feed hundreds of people over many months. Then Everyone Eats had us repeat the same system for a Thanksgiving meal that year. When Jaki takes on a job she commits to it fully.

And a minor personal story. Her daughter left a traumatized rescue cat, named Rabbit, with her 12 years ago. Rabbit trusted no one and responded to any attention with defensive violence. It took years for her to mellow and occasionally let people pet her. Rabbit started sitting on Jaki's lap when she was safe, so to speak, but she never lost her feral ways.

Jaki had to replace several couches and rugs she ruined. She complained some, but kept caring for Rabbit lovingly during this whole time, until she died a little while ago. She did so not because she was a "crazy cat lady," but because she had taken on the responsibility for a living creature and committed to giving Rabbit the best life she could manage.

Compassion is at the core of Jaki's being, but not something she brings attention to.

Jaki is an unusual person, even by Brattleboro standards: smart, hard-working, dedicated, and thoughtful. She knows how to work collaboratively, and knows how to tap resources to get the info needed for a project.

She is my ex-wife, and I wholeheartedly support her for Selectboard.

Tony Duncan
Brattleboro

Candidate statement: Peter 'Fish' Case

Here are a few things that I haven't worked into a conversation or debate, and I feel you should all know prior to voting on Tuesday, March 5. Something you already know; I'm running for a three-year seat for Selectboard — but why?

Brattleboro doesn't just serve Brattleboro. As Windham County's largest town, we serve as a landing point for the other communities that surround us: Wilmington, West Dover, Hinsdale, Guilford, Putney, Dummerston, West Chesterfield, New Hampshire, and Marlboro, just to name a few.

These are people who don't get a vote but do utilize what this great community has to offer, and it's important to know how they use Brattleboro. So it shouldn't surprise anyone that I take their opinion to heart when making decisions about our municipality.

These people do help shape our town when they shop or take part in the services we offer; they also help shape the narratives and make decisions based on those narratives.

They help drive our economy and, in turn, they allow us to grow. As a downtown business owner, I have a newfound respect for that and, in turn, want to work with our downtown organizations to help

VIEWPOINT

We should put effort into revitalizing Wilmington's Town Meeting

A Town Meeting is direct democracy in action. That is something to preserve and fight for.

Wilmington
FOR THE SECOND YEAR in a row, the Wilmington Selectboard has put before the voters at Town Meeting a choice to do away with in-person Town Meeting and go completely to Australian ballot.

What was the vote last year, you ask? In favor of canceling town meetings? No one. In favor of keeping Town Meetings? Everyone in the room.

The Board asked us to make a decision, and we did but I guess the Board believes that they don't need to listen to what voters overwhelmingly said.

I think everyone agrees that more people at Town Meeting would be a good thing. But from there, opinions on what should happen diverge.

The Selectboard seems to believe that there is little or no worth to the meeting, so let's throw it out. I think there is great worth and that we should put effort into revitalizing it.

Here are my reasons:

- It is really the only time that voters can directly introduce something, discuss it, vote on it right then and, if passed, have it happen. Yes, we can go to meetings and hearings and give input, but the Selectboard is not obligated to do what the voters want. A Town Meeting is direct democracy in action. That

NICKI STEEL
(nickisteel.com) is a photographer who focuses on the details of the rural landscape close to home.

is something to preserve and fight for.

- Now more than ever, we need times when we get together, face-to-face, and discuss differing opinions in respectful ways. As even board members now Zoom in, those times are sadly lacking. When you sit next to someone at Town Meeting or eat lunch together, you see them as a person: People of all ages, economic levels, professions, and points of view are there and interacting.

It doesn't matter how long you've lived here — your opinion is counted with your vote. A benefit of small-town living is you may not agree with your neighbors but you know and appreciate them. There is great value in that.

- Town Meeting is also a place for learning. I have learned a lot over the years about the budget, how different departments operate, how we spend our money, and what as a town we value. Our town is stronger if the citizens are better informed, and Town Meetings do that.

BEING A CITIZEN in a democracy does take some effort. It takes being informed and

involved — not just checking a box or, worse yet, not participating at all.

I do believe that there are some who truly would like to be there but can't because of work or child care obligations, so this year the local child care center is offering care for parents who want to come to Town Meeting. I hope that helps some attend.

Sadly, I also know many people who don't really care — who might want to get on the slopes or head out of town for the day. They could come but will choose not to.

When many seem to think that we (the world, country, state, town — take your pick) are going to hell in a hand-basket, Town Meeting can be a bright light: a time we get together and figure it out, learn about our town government and have a real voice, see friends and meet new people.

Rather than discard Town Meetings, let's work to get more people there. It's not hard — you just have to show up. And bring a friend!

And if you have recently moved to Wilmington, it's a time to participate in a significant Vermont tradition while getting to know your neighbors. We will all benefit if you do.

Wilmington's Town Meeting is on Tuesday, March 5 at 10 a.m. at the Old School gym.

Selectboard I have seen that he can contribute far more. He has demonstrated the ability to work through controversy, to see the human side to matters of dollars and cents, and to participate wholeheartedly and respectfully in our town government.

Tom Franks
Brattleboro

Case: Measured and thoughtful

It is with great enthusiasm that I support the candidacy of Pete Case for a three-year term on the Brattleboro Selectboard. Pete has demonstrated during his first term that he is a measured and thoughtful representative of the many voices of the residents of Brattleboro and their diverse concerns. I know Pete to be a critical thinker, a terrific listener, and a true champion of all things Brattleboro. I strongly believe that the town would benefit greatly from three more years of his participation on the Selectboard.

Nancy Frye
Brattleboro

Case: Not just a talker — a listener, a thinker, and an answerer

I appreciate and endorse Peter Case for reelection to the Selectboard for a three-year term.

Peter isn't your typical Selectboard member — he's not a typical anything, frankly, and we need more of that in this town.

Peter is not afraid to say the things many of us are thinking, and he's been saying them for over 30

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Letters

years now. He's not just a talker, either — he's a listener, a thinker, and an answerer. If you don't believe me, just ask him!

I encourage you to cast your vote for Fish. He loves being a part of this town, and he goes to bat for all of us!

WHESTSTONE BRANDS
Brattleboro

David Hiler

Case: Dedicated, thoughtful, well-informed

As a resident and active member of the community, I'm proud to stand behind Peter Case's candidacy for a three-year term on the Brattleboro Selectboard.

Peter has shown he is dedicated to our community, thoughtful, and well-informed. We have witnessed his service and ability to address challenges head on.

I have every confidence in Peter Case's ability to help the town meet the complicated and demanding issues it faces. He is committed to making Brattleboro an even better place to live.

Maggie Lewis
Brattleboro

Case: A voice for all people

As a teacher in town, I usually eschew airing my political beliefs to the community for obvious reasons. Usually there are vested interests skewing the endorsements or, at the worst, occasions of mud-slinging against people who don't align with one's own political ideologies.

I would like to purposefully put my "off the record" practices aside to proudly endorse a candidate running for a seat on the Brattleboro Selectboard: Peter "Fish" Case.

I have had the pleasure of personally knowing Fish (as my neighbor) here in town for the past eight years. He is perhaps the literal answer to the problems that have been

plaguish this community.

Regardless of your placement on the political spectrum, Fish is a person who will fight for you as a citizen of our hometown.

He bridges the spectrum of political bias by being an active part of our community. Not only is he a local business owner, but he is also a radio personality and a writer for a local paper.

He constantly strives to meet with every member of the community and to honestly listen to their queries and issues in order to make our town a better place. I could list the myriad accomplishments and accolades that he could flaunt, but I am sure that many of you know what he has done for our town already.

The thing that I love best about Fish is that he never has a pre-existing opinion that will cloud his decisions. He makes a point to listen to everybody and give all people a voice.

At a critical time of restructuring in our town, this trait is a necessity and a boon to the spectrum of different members of our community. Whether you feel that his political ideals align with your own, I promise you that he will do his due diligence to give everyone a voice and fight for all of the people of Brattleboro.

J. Tobias Moore
Brattleboro

Case and Reis: experience and fresh, diverse perspectives

On Tuesday, March 5, Brattleboro voters will choose among five good candidates for three Selectboard seats. I support two folks who I think will serve our town very well.

Peter "Fish" Case is just now completing his first year on the board and is running for a three-year seat. In watching his work this past year, I've found him to be refreshingly straightforward and

honest, and a clear thinker who weighs issues carefully.

His commitment to continue volunteering for Brattleboro and now investing in it, with his purchase of the beloved Burrows Specialized Sports, is a reflection of the desire to be hands-on when it comes to our town.

Having recently served six years on the Selectboard, I can tell you that it takes a full year to even get your bearings with the procedures and workings of Town government, so I'm pleased that Pete was first elected to a one-year seat, where he could "try on" the role. Now that we've seen his balanced and honest approach, voters can be reassured that placing him in a three-year commitment is a wise investment.

I recommend Jaki Reis for the vacancy left by Pete Case. I'm similarly impressed with Jaki's commitment to Brattleboro and her diverse experience as a teacher, a Latches Hotel and Theater employee, and a rental housing provider and manager. She and I also seem to share a passion for finding practical, real-world solutions to our housing crisis in southern Vermont.

Again tapping my memories of what makes for a good Selectboard, I feel that electing Jaki, the only woman running this year, would benefit the board greatly. I think getting the board back to at least two women would help bring more diverse life experience and balance to their decision-making.

By including Pete Case and Jaki Reis among your votes cast on March 5, you'll help ensure that the new board has proven public servants, experience, and fresh, diverse perspectives.

Tim Wessel
Brattleboro

Chute: Putney Selectboard has been more productive than it has been in a decade

I'm writing to state how important I believe it is to re-turn Aileen Chute (Tulloch) to the Putney Selectboard for another three-year term.

Under Aileen's guidance as chair, the board has been more productive than I can recall in my decade of Selectboard watching. During her brief three-year tenure (two as chair), the board has expanded access to its meetings, updated and written policies and procedures, established an equitable procedure for allocating American Rescue Plan Act funds, held numerous public hearings, signed an agreement to purchase Cooper Field to expand the town's recreational facilities, solicited a risk assessment of the fire department, and approved a new town plan.

The coming years will present even more challenges as the Selectboard begins to implement the new Putney Town Plan and continues to grapple with the pressing issues of housing, taxes, and infrastructure needs.

Aileen's experience, organizational skills, deep knowledge of the issues, and understanding of town government will facilitate getting this plan off the page and into reality.

In her role, Aileen displays a command of a wide range of subjects, is always prepared and thorough, asks insightful questions, treats all board and audience members with respect, and maintains good order.

She is intelligent and wise with a sense of humor and always responsive to questions by email or phone.

Aileen knows Putney. She's served both as a lister and as a member of two other town committees; she is a parent, a local shopper, a walker of our streets and trails, a library patron, and a believer in Putney's future.

At three years, Aileen has the most experience of this young board, which will add at least one new member in March. There is a steep learning curve to becoming an effective Selectboard member — it takes time to learn how town government works.

As a committed community supporter, I ask you to please vote with me on March 5 for the experience and for the thoughtful, strong, and knowledgeable contributions that Aileen will continue to make to the Putney Selectboard.

Janice Baldwin
Putney

Chute: We need her steady, thoughtful leadership

Putney Selectboard chair Aileen Chute is doing a fantastic job for our community. She has earned my vote and enthusiastic support. With the many complex needs occurring in our town, state, country, and world right now, we need her steady, thoughtful leadership at the front of the room. She has shown up in a diplomatic, intelligent, levelheaded way, done the work, and continues to do the work even when it is hard. As a former

LETTERS

WSESD board elections

Remer for WSESD School Board

I've known Brian for decades, and believe his strong set of personal skills and professional experiences make him an ideal candidate for the WSESD School Board.

Brian cares deeply about the healthy development of our children and the larger community. He has taught elementary and middle school students, coordinated Vermont's youth suicide prevention initiative, served on a Youth Services Diversion Board, and currently co-leads an interfaith youth group focusing on peer support and community service. It includes young refugees new to Vermont.

Brian has also designed and led interactive courses on leadership, supervision, ethics, sexual harassment, and inclusion — all issues relevant to WSESD school board members.

Brian is an experienced meeting facilitator, gifted with the ability to help others listen respectfully to each other and collaborate on positively addressing challenging and sometimes divisive issues.

Elizabeth Christie, Putney Former volunteer in both Guilford and Putney schools Former Executive Director, Windham Child Care Association Member, Guilford Community Church

Elizabeth Christie
Putney

Maciel, Young, Schibley, Leavy for WSESD board

Voters in the four WSESD towns have some terrific choices for school directors this year. (Ballots are available now until Election Day from Town Clerks.)

I hope Tim Maciel and Kelly Young will be elected to continue their work serving our children. They have done well pushing for relevant information to guide decisions while sorting through the complexities of the merged district. That complexity makes institutional memory highly valuable, and takes time to accumulate. Our school communities would lose a lot if Tim or Kelly were displaced.

Tim Maciel was key to finally getting student voices on the board, and their impact is being felt. Tim and Deborah Stanford recruited applicants and interviewed them for seats on the board, then got board approval for two representatives.

More than a dozen students had applied, so Tim and Deb invited those who were not selected to form a Student Advisory Council to support their new representatives. Thanks to Tim and Deborah, the SAC is becoming a solid force for openness and communication at BUHS.

Kelly Young is the crucial heart of the school board. She has a strong moral core and a great B.S. detector. She makes sure everyone is heard and — more importantly — treated with dignity. Kelly is responsive where others are reactive.

Matt Schibley seems to have quickly found his footing and continues to ask for evidence of the effectiveness of administrative decisions. He has strong community service background and a focus on concrete actions and data.

Richard Leavy's experiences represent broad sectors of our communities, and his focus on healthy food comes at a good time. There has been some effort over the past two years to get district leadership to develop a proposal for an in-house food service with a deep focus on local producers.

Food Connects is ready to help, and Bellows Falls Union High School has a working model that actually costs less than the franchise model, even including Vermont protein sources. The administrators are supportive but

Selectperson, I can testify that the work is far more challenging than anyone ever expects it to be, and if it isn't, you're not doing it. She does all this for a paltry stipend, without complaint, with honesty, care, integrity, and transparency.

I was further impressed that Ms. Chute cared enough to have thought about and created a lengthy platform that shares many of the goals and values I see as representative of Putney, as demonstrated in our town plan. Her platform includes that if re-elected to the Selectboard, she will continue to encourage out-of-the-box ideas; explore extra revenue sources beyond property tax; champion government transparency and access; ensure constructive public expression; advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion; seek out ways to decrease dependence on fossil fuels; promote alternative transportation; advocate for land-use planning that

have delayed it a couple times. Richard could bring some consistency to the effort.

All in all, these people will bring stability and new perspectives to the WSESD Board of School Directors. I hope you will honor them with your vote.

David Schoales
Brattleboro

Remer: A first-rate candidate

Brian Remer is a first-rate candidate for the school board.

Having demonstrated an impeccable personal and professional commitment to the welfare of young people in our community over several decades, he will bring his experience as a facilitator and problem-solver to this challenging role.

Brian works tirelessly for others and has greatly improved the dynamics and procedures wherever he has served.

Marguerite Serkin
Guilford

An Ideal Candidate

Please join me on March 5 in voting for Guilford's Brian Remer for Windham Southeast School District Board. He is an ideal candidate.

I have known Brian for 25 years and have seen him in action countless times working with groups, both large and small, and with people of all ages. He is absolutely brilliant in pulling the best out of people and getting them to work together toward a common goal. He is knowledgeable and creative; he thinks outside the box; he is a dedicated community builder. He is also likable, friendly, upbeat, and has a great sense of humor.

A school board requires collaboration, patience, sensitivity, listening skills, and willingness to make tough decisions. I can't think of anyone who would be a better candidate than Brian Remer.

Fred Breunig
Guilford

Remer: An expert at facilitating collaboration among disparate people

I am delighted to endorse Brian Remer for the Windham Southeast School District Board of Directors. Brian has many qualities and skills that make him an excellent candidate to serve on our local school board, and we are lucky to have the opportunity to vote for him.

As the parent of a third grader at Guilford Central School, and having worked in our local school district for 15 years, I am deeply invested in making sure that the WSESD directors are committed to open communication, mutual respect, and a collaborative commitment to student success.

Brian is a thoughtful, flexible, community-minded individual who is eager to devote his positive energy to improving our local schools. His career has revolved around experiential education, mental health advocacy, professional development, training and engagement, and strong collaborative leadership.

He is an expert at facilitating collaboration among people and groups with disparate perspectives, a skill that will be a great asset to the school district.

On the board, Brian will work tirelessly to ensure that our schools have the necessary resources to build a positive learning environment for all students.

If you live in Guilford, Brattleboro, Putney, or Dummerston, please join me in voting on March 5 for Brian Remer as WSESD director. I am confident that he will make a positive impact and work toward the betterment of our local school

district. Sarah Rosow Guilford

district.

Sarah Rosow
Guilford

Letter in support of WSESD candidate Tim Maciel

In the coming weeks, we will be choosing several seats on the Windham Southeast School District board of directors. One of my choices will be to re-elect Tim Maciel.

I was lucky to serve with Tim during my tenure on the board and I found him to be a fully-engaged citizen, devoted to the future of every child in the district. In particular, he's made it his personal mission to get the voices of students represented directly at the board level. Tim's genuine commitment to civic life is rare.

Equally rare is his open-minded approach to new topics. When most of us are set in our opinions and reflexively fight to defend them, Tim is flexible and not dogmatic. This isn't to say that he isn't opinionated or guided by strong beliefs. He is. But he's always been a listener and a collaborator. He never loses the perspective that people elected to office are public servants and that they are to be held to a high standard. All these traits are, again, rare.

His resume is also impressive, with master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard Graduate School of Education, work with the Peace Corps, and extensive experience in higher education.

The position of School Director is an increasingly thankless job. We're lucky to have Tim willing to do it.

Thomas N'ala
Dummerston

Maciel, Young have brought student voices to the board table

Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 5, is election day for Windham Southeast School District School Board members from Brattleboro, Guilford, Dummerston, and Putney.

There have been candidate profiles in both *The Commons* and the *Reformer*. It is important to be fully informed. There are a multitude of issue that the present board has been involved with and that they will continue to be addressing.

I fully recommend and will be voting for Kelly Young from Guilford and Tim Maciel from Brattleboro. They both have been amazing board members throughout their terms.

Kelly and Tim have worked diligently overtime to improve our already-good schools, by listening to students, staff, and administrators. They recently have brought students' voices to the board in a multitude of ways, including student polls, working with active student groups, and having two nonvoting, but listened-to, student members on the board.

Tim, who at present sits on the Student Advisory Panel, has been involved in education his entire life. He loves working with students and would like to continue the board's work addressing students' proficiency scores, especially in reading and math. He would like to continue to work to ensure all our students are doing well academically, socially, and emotionally.

Kelly, the chair, is a very strong proponent of education. Her mother was a math teacher with the Adult Education program, helping people get their GEDs. Kelly grew up seeing what the impact of not having a good education did to a person's life, compared to those students who were educated. She knows how important having a good foundation in education can influence their lives in so many ways.

Jody Normandean
Dummerston

I like to joke that I am the longest-serving member of the Putney Selectboard, and that is true because Putney has a young board. I have served on the Selectboard for one entire three-year term and have been honored with the seat of chair for the last two.

A graduate of Bryn Mawr College, much of my professional career has been in IT. My husband and I also built and operated a successful diversified family farm that featured PYO blueberries, broilers, vegetables, and maple syrup in the small rural town of Washington, New Hampshire. I know how to run a business, I know how to run a farm, and I am not afraid of dirty, tedious work.

In addition to serving on the Selectboard, I have been a Lister, a Planning Commissioner, and chair of the Energy Committee for the town of Putney. I currently work in

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

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the Assessor's Office for the town of Brattleboro. Working for local town government is rewarding in many ways, but more importantly, it has given me the insight and experience to be a more effective leader in town initiatives.

During my time on the Selectboard, we've expanded our Selectboard from a three-member board to a five-member board, which has allowed Selectboard members to meet and collaborate on many different subjects. As a result, we have updated and clarified many outdated policies and procedures to make our local government more transparent and efficient, we have expanded access to Selectboard meetings by investing in the technology for hybrid in-person and online access for the public, and we have seen public engagement in both town committees and citizen-run initiatives, such as the Our Future Putney Housing Solutions Task Force, grow and bring real change and much needed vitality to Putney.

We also face real challenges in Putney. We struggle with empty storefronts, a housing shortage, high taxes, and a changing climate. During my time as a Selectboard member, I have come to understand that all these issues are complex, they are intertwined, and they have no easy answers. If I told you there was one good answer, I would be lying. What I do know is that Putney needs a strong, thoughtful, knowledgeable Selectboard with the experience to navigate these issues. This is what I have brought to the table, and this is what I will continue to bring.

Aileen Chute Putney

Chute: Impressed at how she calls out tough issues

In the contested election for Putney Selectboard, I will be voting for Aileen Chute — who has been serving on the Putney Selectboard as chair. I periodically attend Selectboard meetings for my work or as a resident of Putney. I have been consistently impressed with how Aileen runs meetings. She is fair, balanced, dedicated to following process, and firm in her oversight of the meeting flow.

On multiple occasions that I have witnessed, Aileen has started the meeting with a statement from the chair clarifying her perspective on a particular issue. I have been really impressed with how Aileen manages to call out tough issues, acknowledge the concerns of residents and share clearly where the board can or cannot weigh in on a matter. I have listened to her on two occasions provide a statement that essentially explains why the board won't be acting on some volatile community request, and the statements felt fair and balanced. The clarity with which she delivered them was refreshing.

I also just generally like Aileen. I don't know her well outside of her work on the Selectboard, but I legitimately feel that her skills and no-nonsense approach to her work as chair has enhanced the Putney Selectboard. The work of the Selectboard has appeared to run effectively and in large part this is due to Aileen's leadership.

Ruby McAdoo Putney

Chute: Never afraid of taking a stand

If you are a Putney voter, there is one extra-special person seeking re-election to the Selectboard.

Anyone paying attention can tell you that Aileen Chute works really hard for our town. She is also very smart, with a thorough understanding of policies and procedures, and with the organizational skills to make things happen.

But most of all, she is never afraid of taking a stand and speaking up for what she believes is best for the people of Putney.

Do yourself a favor, and be sure to give Aileen your vote.

Gino Palmeri Putney

Eastes: Brings a vast skill set to Guilford Selectboard

With every Guilford Selectboard meeting that I witness, I am glad that Zon Eastes is chair of the Selectboard. If you've attended any of the meetings, you will have noticed the vast skill set that is needed for the job.

Whether he is running a meeting with a contentious issue on the agenda, exploring a complex topic that requires thought and research, addressing issues that are meaningful to Guilford citizens, or guarding Guilford's interests, Zon brings a curious mind and a warm heart to each task. He is constantly learning, asking questions, and developing a broad understanding of town management, municipal governance, and Vermont statute.

Zon has guided the town through some difficult years involving the pandemic, abrupt staff changes, lawsuits, and increasing divisiveness within our community

and across the country. He has met these challenges with aplomb and equanimity.

The experience and knowledge that Zon has cultivated during his time on the Selectboard benefits the town of Guilford. I will vote to reelect Zon Eastes for a two-year seat on the Selectboard.

Julie Beet Guilford

Pritchard: A practical thinker with common sense is rare

I had not heard of Steven Pritchard until a few weeks ago when he entered the race for the two-year seat on the Guilford Selectboard. We live on opposite sides of the hill and our paths had never crossed — except for the fact that he and his wife Barbara tell me they had been frequent customers at Burton Car Wash on Canal Street when it was in operation.

Since making his acquaintance recently, however, I have discovered him to be a quiet, unassuming man who spends time pondering pros and cons about an issue before opening his mouth to talk about it. He's a practical thinker with common sense — a rare commodity these days — who walks in the footsteps of common Guilford residents and wants to represent them and give them voice in Guilford's major governing body, the Selectboard.

I like his desire to serve rather than rule and his quiet, unflappable demeanor. He vouches to attentively listen to the input of fellow citizens before making up his mind on any given issue.

Steven Pritchard worked for many years in the Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department where he had a position that daily made demands on his decision-making ability. I applaud him for wanting to be of service to the Guilford community in the capacity of Selectboard member. I know he will be fair minded in his approach to issues and will not merely rubber stamp decisions made by others. He will think for himself and will decide questions on the basis of what's best for Guilford's residents.

Connie K. Burton Guilford

Pritchard: Guilford needs his municipal experience and leadership qualities

Although I knew Steve Pritchard from my childhood, I met him only recently. Steve drove the Zamboni at the Nelson Withington skating rink in Brattleboro, and I couldn't begin to number the wonderful memories I have playing hockey in that rink.

I was on the Brattleboro Colonels' first high school hockey team in 1993. The teams before that, as some of you might remember, were called the Brattleboro Nighthawks.

I was playing my first year of club hockey as an 8-year-old when the 1984 Nighthawks went 24-0 and retained the Khan Cup. I watched the Nighthawks with passion and idolized players like Rashad Kamnan and later ones like the Bailey brothers and Miles Billings.

I also learned to ski riding the T-Bar just outside the door from the rink and, for a tiny little hill, it was awesome to ski Living Memorial Park at night.

I wasn't aware of this, but at one point, the town manager of Brattleboro presented Steve, who was the Recreation and Parks Department manager at the time, with a conundrum: Shut down the ice rink or the ski hill.

Could you imagine having to decide if the skating rink or the ski hill will be shut down?

However, this story doesn't end with an outcry of disappointed children and parents. The outcome was amazing.

Through a series of events, the ski hill was motioned to be shut down. However, with Steve's assistance, the ski hill remained open through volunteer efforts.

Steve helped turn a desperate

situation into a win for all the children and families surrounding Brattleboro by keeping the ski hill open and thriving, all while being run by spirited volunteers.

The town of Guilford could desperately use Steve Pritchard's municipal experience and leadership qualities. Perhaps he could even convince the current Selectboard from spending tens of thousands in tax revenue for a Burlington law firm to litigate on their behalf.

For the good of Guilford, I hope you will consider voting for Steve Pritchard to fill the two-year Selectboard seat.

Jason Herron Guilford

Pritchard: A breath of fresh air

Guilford voters, please consider a breath of fresh air to the Guilford Selectboard when you vote on March 5. Steven Pritchard, a true Vermonter, is running for the two-year seat. Steven's desire is to be a voice for the people of Guilford. Steven believes that transparency is important. He knows if elected, he is working for the residents of Guilford, not big-government agendas. Steven and his wife

Barbara love Guilford and its pastoral setting.

Steven worked and retired from the public works department in Brattleboro, primarily the recreation department, where he is fondly remembered by hockey players and skaters as the Zamboni Guy.

Steven's motto will be "your agenda will be my agenda." Citizen input and access to the governing body are imperative to him. We are a small community and our farms, cottage industries, and small businesses will receive his support.

Lyle Howe Guilford

Australian ballot for town elections is working in Athens

In 2020, the way Athens voted for town officials changed.

Australian ballot has always been a part of our elections but not a part of electing our town officials. Since Town Meetings began, we have elected our town officials during town meeting from the floor. Covid changed that, and I believe it changed it for the better.

When attending Town Meeting

you don't think about those who can't attend and whose voices can't be heard. It becomes a select group of people that influences the way a town is run, who holds office, and if the budget passes.

In the three years since we switched over to Australian ballot for town officials, our voter numbers have doubled. These voters have made it clear that even though they may not be able to attend Town Meeting they can at least let their voices be heard in determining who holds a position in town.

We received a petition this year to eliminate the Australian ballot for town officials and go back to voting them in from the floor. This became Article 10, which states: "Shall the Town of Athens discontinue use of the Australian ballot system to elect officers, and instead elect its town officers from the floor at all future annual and special town meetings [...]?"

I think we are better off as a community when the option is there for those who, for one reason or another, cannot attend Town Meeting but who would like to have a voice in how their town, their community runs. It may not seem like a big thing, but these people have, in a way, been discriminated

against since they cannot make it to Town Meeting. It is easy enough to say they should make it when we don't know why they can't, and there are many reasons why someone can't make it to a Town Meeting. We should not be sitting in judgment of these people, but instead, we should be helping them participate in any way that is possible.

I think it says a lot when your voter numbers go up like ours have since we switched over to Australian ballot for our town officials. I understand it may make a small group of people unhappy because in years past they were, in some ways, able to sway the vote when it was done from the floor.

Granted these new voters can't vote on the articles, but just having a say in who holds a seat in town government means a lot to these once silent residents. I ask the voters of Athens to attend this year's Town Meeting to be held Monday March 4 at 6 p.m. at the Community Center to let their voices be heard and to vote a strong and unequivocal no to Article 10.

Sandi Capponcelli Athens

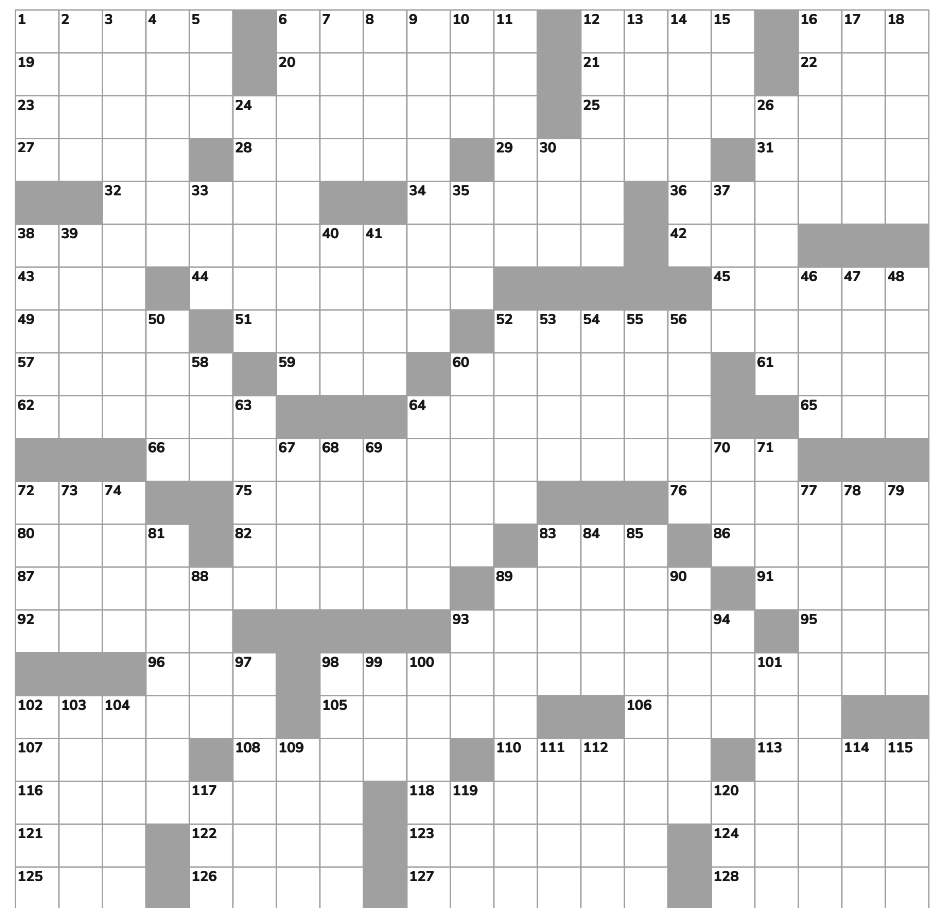
THE COMMONS CROSSWORD "B Movies"

Across

- 1. Gets less cold
6. Fishes with a net
12. Wet bar?
16. New Year's celebration
19. Online lending pioneer
20. Loftily ranked
21. Boots from Australia
22. New Year's ___
23. 1985 movie about the Rumble in the Jungle?
25. 1988 movie about Einstein?
27. Mercedes-___
28. Patronized, as a diner
29. Deals with difficulty
31. High style?
32. ___ Rebellion (1841 Rhode Island uprising)
34. Wimbledon winner Rybakina
36. Hunting dog
38. 2009 movie about an injured offensive lineman?
42. Fury
43. Concealed
44. Element named after physicist Niels
45. Aquarium buildup
49. De-crease?
51. Top of some bottoms
52. 2013 movie about the premature end of a pickup hoops game?
57. Send for a second opinion
59. What the Sons of Liberty dumped
60. "The Orchid Thief" author Susan
61. In its current state
62. Stick up for
64. "Johnny ___: A Story of Boston in Revolt"
65. Fodder for a pet guinea pig
66. 1981 movie about a wide-shouldered fighter?
72. Google Maps tech
75. Mexican novelist Carlos
76. Goes ballistic
80. Opera showstopper
82. Mine hauler
83. Browser window feature
86. General Assembly delegate, for short
87. 1957 movie about someone who's both loud and brash?
89. Currency of Jordan
91. UConn coach Auriemma
92. Thumbs-up or 100, e.g.
93. Shade, but not from the sun?
95. Make lovey-dovey sounds
96. Photo ___
98. 1983 movie about neon?
102. Hearty
105. Demean
106. Old Renault model
107. Laptop brand
108. App problem
110. "Do me a ___"
113. Preowned
116. With 118-Across, 1984 movie with zero plot twists?
118. See 116-Across
121. "That's gotta hurt"
122. Biology study
123. Actor Peter
124. Twilled fabric
125. Vote against
126. "Downton Abbey" domestic
127. Bane's nemesis
128. Belgian painter James

Down

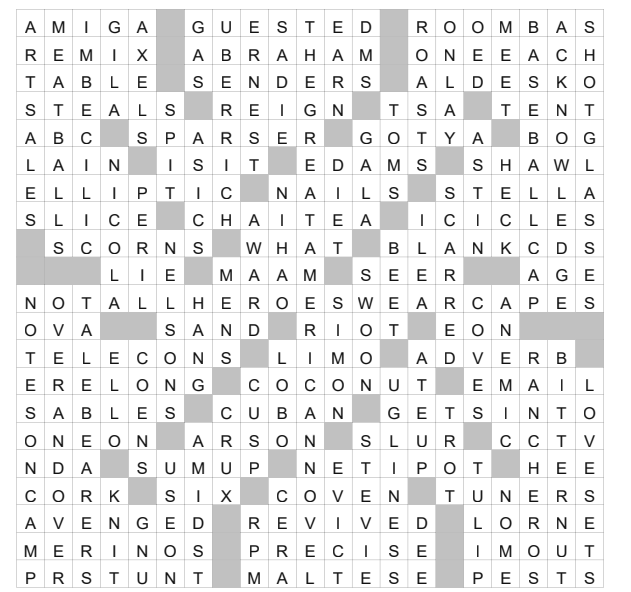
- 1. Golfer Karrie
2. Moisturizer ingredient
3. Reported to the nearest whole number
4. Passover bread
5. ___Caps (candy)
6. Phrase of finality
7. Lush
8. Capital of the Mughal Empire
9. Zero-visibility blizzard
10. NHL great Robitaille
11. "Sam & Kate" actress Sissy
12. Poor, except in golf
13. Fairy tale monster
14. Sampras's rival
15. Trident-shaped letter
16. Entice
17. Get around
18. Barbershop voice
24. Journalist Ronan
26. Chocolate spread
30. "First of all..."
33. Massage or polish
35. 24, for 6 and 8: Abbr.
37. Taylor Swift's ___ Tour
38. Baseball's "hot corner"
39. New employee
40. Spreadable cheese
41. Physicist Randall
46. "Huh, that's odd"
47. Where most people live
48. Online crafts marketplace
50. Bygone depilatory brand
52. Makes coffee
53. ___mater
54. Tragic king
55. Den
56. Concave navel
58. Letters after Gov. Chris Sununu's name
60. Primates, for humans
63. "Robinson Crusoe" author
64. Language spoken in Kazan
67. Singer Ives
68. Film projector unit
69. In the past
70. Tulsa sch.
71. Ladder step
72. Kapler of the 2004 Red Sox
73. 2020 movie musical,



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Last issue's solution

"Themeless Challenger"



PUBLICATION OF THE COMMONS CROSSWORD IS UNDERWRITTEN BY

Advertisement for Brattleboro Tire featuring a tire image, text: "Locally owned for over 46 years! TIRES & ALL UNDER CAR SERVICE", and promotional offers: "OIL CHANGE \$74.95 FULL SYNTHETIC UP TO 5 QTS. INCLUDES 30 POINT COURTESY CHECK Fluids • Belts • Hoses • Steering • Brakes Lights & Much More Upon Request" and "ALL TIRES ON SALE Now through March 31st!".

Advertisement for American Legion Post #5, 32 Linden St. Brattleboro 802-257-1872. Features a logo and text: "Regular lunches will be back March 18th. Check Facebook for a daily special Wednesday-Friday. * Friday Dinner March 8 - Pizza * March 11 - Pot Roast Special 11:30-1:30 * Vets Eat Free * * March 15 - Corned Beef and Cabbage ALL DAY until 7pm. Call with any questions. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC www.brattleboropost5.org"

COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Girls' teams begin basketball playoffs

The Vermont girls' basketball playoffs began this week with road trips for three of our four local teams.

• With an 11-9 record, Brattleboro ended up with the No. 9 seed in Division I and faced No. 8 Mount Mansfield (11-9) in a first-round game on Feb. 26 in Jericho. The Bears lost that game, 70-39, and we'll have the full details in next week's roundup. In their regular season finale on Feb. 24 at Fair Haven, the Bears lost, 46-36. Brattleboro guard Reese Croutworst led all scorers with 23 points as the Bears rallied back from a 20-9 halftime deficit, only to fall short in the fourth quarter.

• Bellows Falls (14-6) got the No. 6 seed in Division III and will host No. 11 Green Mountain (4-16) for a first-round playoff game on Feb. 28. The Terriers lost their regular season finale to visiting White River Valley, 54-36, on Feb. 22.

• Leland & Gray finished 10-10 to capture the No. 7 seed in Division IV and earn a home playoff game. The Rebels will host 10th-seeded Proctor (9-11) in a first-round game in Townshend on Feb. 28. The Rebels closed out the regular season with a 52-14 win over Woodstock on Feb. 22 in Townshend.

• Twin Valley ended the regular season with a pair of home victories to snap an 18-game losing streak and pick up the No. 14 seed in Division IV. The Wildcats will face a familiar foe when they travel to Arlington to take on the No. 3 Eagles (18-2) in a first-round game on Feb. 28. Alanna Bevilacqua and Kate Oyer, the two mainstays for Twin Valley, combined for 22 points in a 35-22 victory over visiting Sharon Academy on Feb. 20. Two nights later, Bevilacqua scored 23 points to lead Twin Valley to a 40-29 over Mill River to give the Wildcats a 2-18 record.

Bears open boys' hockey playoffs at home

• Thanks to a six-game winning streak to close out the regular season, Brattleboro clinched the No. 4 seed in Division I with a 11-6-3 record and will get to host a quarterfinal game at Withington Rink.

The Bears will take on No. 5 Mount Mansfield in a quarterfinal game on Feb. 28 at 7:15 p.m. Mount Mansfield needed double-overtime to beat No. 12 Rutland, 4-3, in a first-round game on Feb. 24 to earn their date with the Bears.

Brattleboro finished the regular season with a 10-1 whipping of Northfield on Feb. 21. Henry Schwartz and Andy Cay led the Bears with three goals each.

Bell wins state bowling title

• Brattleboro's Thomas Bell won the state individual bowling title, finishing on top in a tournament featuring 32 of Vermont's top high school bowlers on Feb. 24 at Rutland Bowlerama.

According to his coach, Will Bassett, Bell had games of 190, 176, and 193 in the opening round to get the No. 9 seed heading to bracket play. "[Thomas] then bowled a 217 to win the first round of bracket play, and then won with a 183 to move into the stepladder [format]. Thomas was seeded fourth in the stepladder which



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, deputy editor of this newspaper, has written this column since 2010 and has covered sports in Windham County since the 1980s. Readers can send him sports information at news@commonsnews.org.

meant he had to win three straight head-to-head matches to win it all. He proceeded to bowl with such focus and power throughout the stepladder, bowling scores of 238, 248 and 238 to win."

Bassett said three other team members — Alyssa St. Louis, Austin Pinette and Charlie Forthofer — were in the event but "did not make it past the first cut to 16, but bowled well in tough conditions. Qualifying for this tournament alone is a very impressive accomplishment and they should be proud."

The four Brattleboro bowlers who participated in this tournament will be joined by Mateo Lopez Course, Cayden Gilson, Nick Carnes, and Taylor Jillson as the Bears defend their state bowling title on March 2 in the team tournament at Spare Time in Colchester. Brattleboro is seeded third in the tournament.

Early exits for local teams in boys' hoop playoffs

• All four local teams were eliminated last week in the first round of the boys' basketball playoffs. The biggest upset came on Feb. 20 in Whitingham, as the No. 4 Twin Valley Wildcats were knocked out by the No. 12 Arlington Eagles, 61-54, in a Division IV matchup.

Arlington took a 29-17 lead into halftime thanks to seven three-pointers, four of them coming from Mason Hill-McDermott. He scored all of his 14 points in the first half, as he keyed a 13-4 run by the Eagles in the second quarter. Twin Valley never recovered. Arlington's defense took away the long-range shooting of Twin Valley's Noah Dornburgh and Brayden Brown, and prevented any second-chance baskets with a strong rebounding effort.

Cameron Clark led Arlington with 17 points, while Steven Oyer led the Wildcats with 18 points. The Wildcats finished with a 12-9 record and will lose only two seniors to graduation, Cody Magnant and Dornburgh. This year's team was mostly freshmen and sophomores, so Twin Valley is well positioned for success next season.

• In a rematch of two of last year's Division III semifinals, the No. 4 Winooski Spartans used a fourth-quarter rally to beat No. 13 Bellows Falls, 58-46, on Feb. 21.

"We battled, we clawed, we gave ourselves a chance to win," wrote BF coach Evan Chadwick on the team's Purple Pride Hoops blog. "Can't ask for anything more than that from these men."

The visiting Terriers kept it close, but could not hold off the Spartans in the late going. Colby Dearborn and Cole Moore led BF with 15 points each, while Will Hallock chipped in with 6 points and 9 rebounds. Bellows Falls finished the season and will lose six seniors to graduation in Moore, Dearborn, Jaxon Clark, Jesse Darrell, Walker

James, and Ben Perry. • Sixth-seeded Burlington took a 28-7 lead after one quarter and a 52-24 lead by halftime on the way to a 101-56 win over No. 11 Brattleboro in a Division I game on Feb. 20.

Khamis Ali and Sawyer Judkins each scored 14 points for the 12-9 Seahorses. Brattleboro finished the season with a 7-13 record and will lose Karson Elliott, Cam Cruz, Trevor Gray, Dillyn Warner, Jackson Emery, and Johnathon Haskins to graduation.

• No. 4 Williamstown led from start to finish in a 71-38 win over No. 13 Leland & Gray in a Division IV game on Feb. 20.

Williamstown had a 27-8 advantage at the end of the first quarter, led 45-19 at the half, and had a 64-32 after three quarters. Evan Bailey led the way with 23 points, six rebounds, and seven assists. Cody Hescock led the 3-18 Rebels with 12 points. They will lose Chip Winkler, Finch Holmes, Peyton Butynski, Theo Kelloway, Paul Persson, and Jackson Fillion to graduation.

BUHS gymnasts do well in state meet

• Brattleboro may not have a gymnastics team, but that has not stopped a pair of BUHS ninth-graders from pursuing their dreams.

Sadie Cheslawski and Lauren Chute competed as independents this season, traveling with the Burr & Burton varsity gymnastics team. On Feb. 17, they were at the Vermont high school gymnastics state meet at St. Johnsbury. Chute was second in Vault and Bars, second in the All Around with a score of 36.725, and eighth on the Beam. Cheslawski placed fourth in Beam and Vault.

Both worked very hard this season, with their ultimate goal to see a varsity gymnastics program established at BUHS.

"Being an independent at the high school state meet was a lot of fun," Chute said in an email to *The Commons*. "Even though we didn't have a team, all the girls there were very supportive and cheered everyone on. Having a high school team at BUHS would be amazing. We have a lot of interest and I think it would be a great addition to the school."

Cheslawski agreed, saying that the state meet "was a different experience from a state meet with USA Gymnastics. This meet we had cheers, handshakes, and a lot of fun. I felt that the state meet was a great team experience and it brought a bunch of girls together that either have been doing gymnastics for a while or just started. Everyone had a smile on their face and all the teams were very encouraging. It was such an enlightening experience. I would recommend gymnastics to anyone who wants a team experience or is willing to give a sport a try."

The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department has had an active gymnastics program at the Gibson-Aiken Center for years, which would be a perfect feeder system for a varsity program, just as the Brattleboro Hockey Association does for the BUHS varsity hockey teams. Here's hoping Sadie and Lauren have some company when next season rolls around, and build some momentum toward a gymnastics program at BUHS.



Twin Valley defenders Alanna Bevilacqua (12) and Kate Oyer (22) attempt stop Bellows Falls forward Laura Kamel as she drives toward the basket during their Dec. 15 game at Holland Gymnasium. Bevilacqua and Oyer led Twin Valley to a pair of wins to close out the regular season.

Bears girls' hockey team finishes season

• The Brattleboro girls ended their season with a 7-0 loss to Stowe at Withington Rink. After taking a 1-0 lead after the first period, Stowe scored six goals in the second period to clinch the win. Kate Tilgner scored three goals, while Isabel Donza scored two, including her 100th career goal.

On Feb. 17, the Bears were beaten by Missisquoi, 8-0, in their annual "Pink the Rink" game at Withington Rink. The team raised \$1,060 for Brattleboro Memorial Hospital's Oncology Department to help breast cancer patients undergoing treatment. The money will go toward gas cards, grocery store cards, and other resources.

The Bears finished with a 2-18 record, and will sit out the playoffs. They will lose three seniors to graduation: Greta Koenig, Lily Carignan, and Alex Gregory.

Rec. Dept. news

• The Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department will offer "Intro to T-ball" for those born between Sept. 1, 2019, and Aug. 31, 2020. Sign-ups begin on March 4. The fee for this program is \$20 for Brattleboro residents and \$35 for non-residents, with a \$10 late fee added for those who sign up after March 29.

Intro to T-ball players will meet once a week for practice beginning the week of May 6 and will continue through the week of June 3. The practice day, time, and location is to be determined based on the schedule of the volunteer coaches. Intro to T-ball will only run if there are multiple volunteer coaches to help run this program.

• Sign-ups also begin on March 4 for Youth T-Ball, for those born between Sept. 1, 2017, and Aug. 31, 2019. During the T-ball season, youths will properly learn the fundamentals of baseball, stressing safety, skills, and fun. Players will be assigned to a team and will have one practice and one game per week.

Each child will need to bring their own glove, water bottle, and appropriate footwear (sneakers or cleats) to each practice and game. The fee is \$35 for Brattleboro residents and \$50 for non-residents, with a \$10 late fee charged after March 29. Each player will be assigned to a team as well as a practice location. Practices will begin the week of April 22



BUHS gymnasts Lauren Chute and Sadie Cheslawski competed as independents in the state gymnastics championship meet in St. Johnsbury on Feb. 17. The ninth-graders hope to build momentum toward creating a gymnastics team at BUHS.

Senior bowling roundup

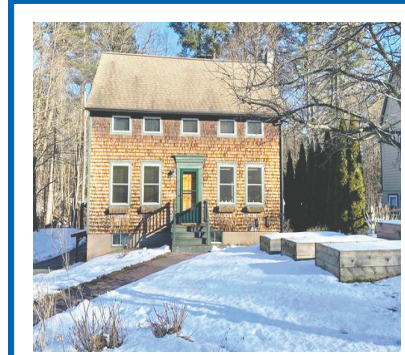
• Week 8 of the winter/spring season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Feb. 22 saw no changes at the top of the standings as High Rollers (29-11) remained in first place, followed by Good Times and Four Seasons (both 19-21), Stepping Stones II and Stayin' Alive (both 18-22), Hairiers and Four Pins (both 17-23), and Slow Movers (11-29).

Pam Greenblott once again had the women's high handicap game (244) and series (660), while Norm Corliss had the men's high handicap game (270) and Stan Kolpa had the high handicap series (674). High Rollers had the high team handicap game (889), while Four Seasons had the high handicap series (2,497).

Grace Cottage presents 'Make Tracks for Health'

• Grace Cottage will host the inaugural edition of "Make Tracks for Health" a snowshoe/cross-country Ski event, on Saturday, March 2, from 1 to 3 p.m., at the Stratton Nordic Center on Sun Bowl Road in Stratton.

Participants can choose to snowshoe or cross-country ski on the Nordic Center's beautifully groomed trails. Afterward, reward yourself with treats by the fire at the Warming Lodge. Rental equipment will be available by advance registration. Register now at gracecottage.org/events.



Cheerful and comfortable with a "nestle-yourself-right-in" feeling! Thoughtfully designed by owners who loved to travel and host family/fellow travelers. Attention was given to create rooms for gatherings, guest/family visits, hobbies, office work and quiet contemplation. Just enough outdoor area for putting and raised bed gardening. Situated on a dead end street, with woods and Kettle Pond on the back border. A neighborhood filled with the lively energy of the high/middle schools, hospital, professional offices, pharmacies, banks, restaurants, a grocery market, a bookstore and Oak Grove Elementary School are all a short walk away! Interstate 91, Exit 1, is nearby. The first floor has a very spacious, light filled living/dining room with wood floors, bookcases, pocket doors, a brick hearth w/wood stove, a deck with views to the woods and pond. The galley kitchen has deck access. Two bedrooms and a full bath complete this level. The upstairs offers a sizable front bedroom w/many windows, a large closet and an adjoining study/office. The bedroom at the back has a skylight, a balcony looks to the woods/pond. Off the hall, a full bath with skylight, soaker tub and large shower. The lower level has radiant floor heat and a separate entrance. A kitchenette/living room, a full bath, office/bedroom. Mudroom to garage. Rinnai heater in garage. Detached 2 car garage w/loft storage.



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