



HOLIDAYS

SECTIONS B & C

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COLUMN | Reporter's Notebook



GENE HERMAN

'TALENTED, HUMBLE, and IRREPLACEABLE'

Lester Dunklee, 75, prepares to close down his machine shop and retire, bringing to a close a century-old Brattleboro institution

Brattleboro

AT ALMOST 75 years of age, Lester Dunklee is one of those original kinds of Vermonters who are issued so many words at birth. He tries not to let go of too many of them at one time. And yet, once he gets to know you, the stories, historical facts, words, and laughs just flow out of him.

Dunklee is retiring and, on Dec. 31, he plans to close R.E. Dunklee and Sons Machine Shop at 72 Flat St., a local institution that has been in continuous operation since the early 1920s.

A friend to all, the man is full of heart — ask anyone who knows him. They will tell you a tale of brilliance in creating what any job requires, and a heart that is bigger than most.

Fred Cheney of Guilford is a true fan and regular customer.

"A man who is liked by so many and has helped thousands of people over the years is also a man that is so talented and humble — he's irreplaceable," says Cheney. "We, as contractors, farmers, and local homeowners have taken him for granted for many, many years."

Known all over the county as the guy who always has whatever odd-ball thing you are looking for, one can always purchase a single nut or bolt, standard or metric, of any grade or weight from the tiny buckets and tins that hold thousands of them all over his shop.

■ SEE DUNKLEE RETIRES, A2

Lester Dunklee hard at work at the R.E. Dunklee and Sons Machine Shop on Flat Street in Brattleboro. After a century of operation, it will be shutting its doors at the end of the year.



FRAN LYNNGAARD HANSEN, a Brattleboro native with deep connections to local history and to people everywhere, is a Commons reporter and columnist.

BELLOWS FALLS

Village mural gets some repairs

Mural on Flatiron Building gets some attention after nearly 25 years of exposure to Vermont's fickle weather

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—As it approaches a quarter century since it was originally painted, the large mural on the Flatiron Building greeting northbound travelers as they enter the Bellows Falls Square is undergoing repairs and stabilization efforts.

Based on original design sketches and paintings by local artist Ezra Veitch, the 32-foot-by-40-foot mural, created in 1999, depicts The Square as it would have looked a hundred years earlier.

The town's trolley tracks, now long gone, are visible in the painting. Some of the town's buildings look the same today; other buildings, like the Town Hall on the left side of The Square, are depicted as they used to look.

The vanishing point is centered on the building where the Rockingham Roasters coffee shop is today, at the north end of The Square. The building has been a downtown landmark for a century and a half.

The mural was completed in four weeks by muralists Cliff Clear and Bonnie Lee Turner of Art of Life. They had previously done murals on walls, buses, and even in a swimming pool.

■ SEE MURAL, A6

Alternative school expands campus, program

Historic Holbrook House is now the classroom for seven students in the Community House's new program

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Community House has added a high school at 80 Linden St. to its Community School House programs and Oak Street campus holdings.

With the acquisition and renovation of the historic, newly renovated Deacon John Holbrook House, day students in grades 9-12 in the program now, for the

first time, have a dedicated high school building.

According to the organization's website, it provides a short-term residential stabilization and assessment program for children 6-12 years of age, an independent and general special-education school for grades K-8, and a summer extended school year program for children in grades K-8.

"Community House has a focus on meeting children where they are, working with each individual to help them reach their full potential," says Executive Director Jill Stahl Tyler.

"Our motto is 'transforming lives through consistency, compassion and connection.' With

■ SEE COMMUNITY HOUSE, A6



High school students study in Community House's new classroom space at the historic Holbrook House on Linden Street in Brattleboro.

JILL STAHL TYLER

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Jeff Potter Editor-in-Chief Kate O'Connor Executive Director

EDITORIAL

NEWSROOM
Randolph T. Holhut, News Editor
Elizabeth Julia Stoumen, Calendar and Proofreading
Heather Taylor, Copy Editor

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Virginia Ray, Joyce Marcel, Olga Peters, Fran Lynggaard Hansen, Robert Smith, Megan Applegate, Annie Landenberger, Dot Grover-Read, Victoria Chertok, Deborah Lee Luskin, Elaine Cliff, Kevin O'Connor, Alyssa Grosso, Thelma O'Brien

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University of Vermont/Community News Service

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INTERNS AND APPRENTICES
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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: • creates a forum for community participation, • promotes local independent journalism, • fosters civic engagement by building media skills through publication of *The Commons* and commonsnews.org, and through the Media Mentoring Project.

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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.

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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

Dunklee retires

FROM SECTION FRONT

Surprisingly, Dunklee can locate whatever his customer is looking for after a quick moment of thought, and then trudges from one room to the next, leading the way to the home of whatever you need.

That's a bold statement if you've ever visited his shop, where machines of every size and age vie for space on the floor with pieces of metal, tubes, giant cylinders, wires, and oxygen tanks. Here, chains, pulleys, belts, and drives are hung from the ceiling, and you get to machinery via small pathways throughout the space.

In a far corner stands a tire press that came to Brattleboro in the early 1900s. An old belt-driven system hangs above the huge machine which runs on 550 volts and is still used to this day.

Local historian Bob Cornellier thinks of the shop as a "manufacturing museum," and he has suggested that perhaps a museum is exactly what the Dunklee shop should become.

Jay Urato of Brattleboro agrees. "They need to put that building on the National Historic Registry when he decides to close up shop," he says.

FIRST OPENED BY Dunklee's grandfather, Robert E. Dunklee, the business was passed down to his father, David, and then on to Lester, who has been making things in the shop since he was a little boy, giving him a lifetime of experience.

"My father went to the shop almost until the day he died," remembers Dunklee. "He always wanted to be there."

In a town where three generations of Dunklee men have helped so many people from all walks of life, everybody has a

story about Lester Dunklee and his machine shop.

When one regular customer, Ron Minnes, of Brattleboro, was working on his 200-year-old house in 2019, he was grateful to Dunklee.

"I needed a special thing built so that I could lift the house off its foundation to save it. I called Lester, and he said, 'Come on down, I can make it if you tell me what you need.' Three days later he says come and get [it]!" Minnes says.

"I think he charged me all of 50 bucks," he adds. "The man is a gem, and once gone will never be replaced."

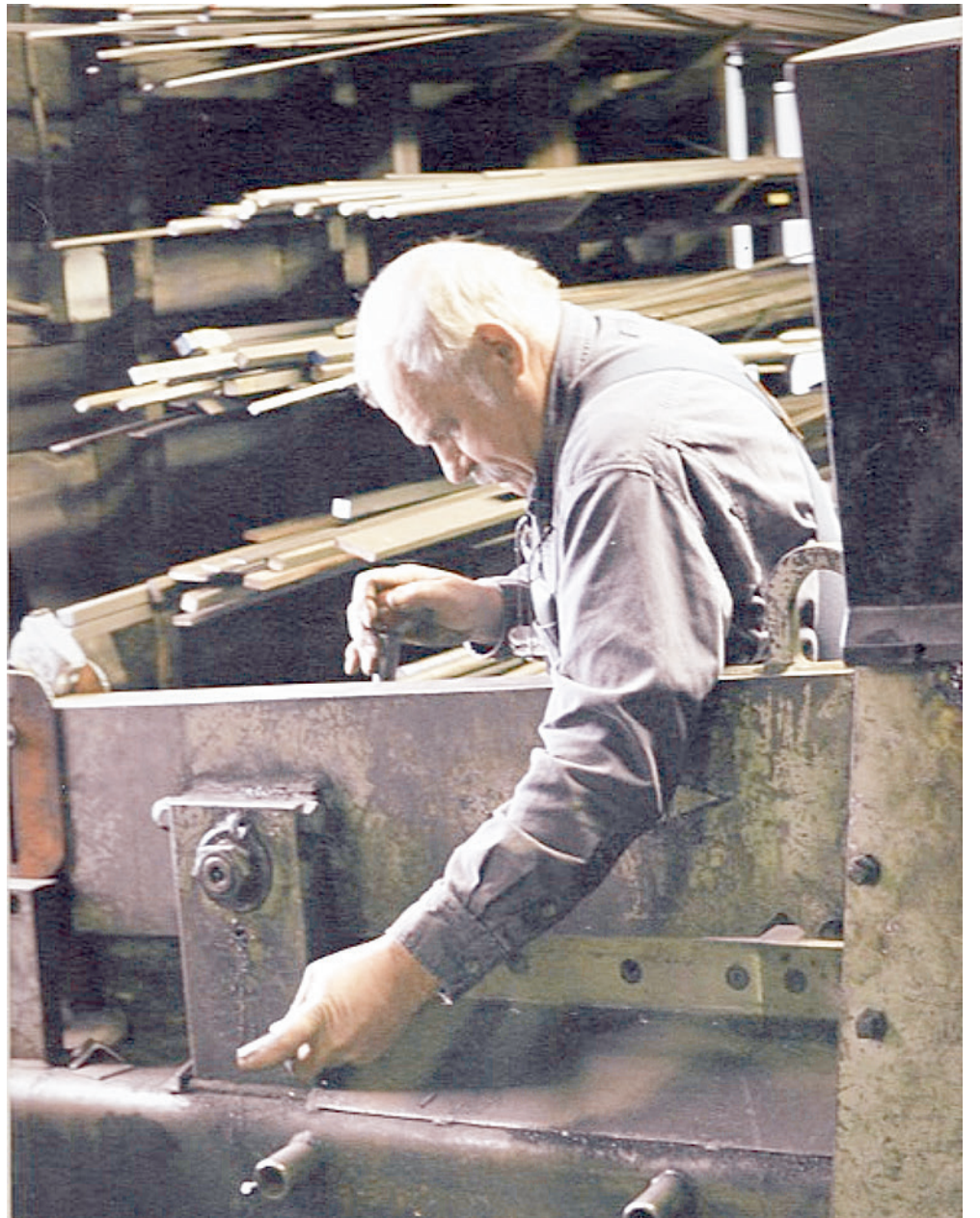
Jessica Turner of Putney says her 4-year-old son's prize possession was an all-metal fire-truck with pedals that he drove every day around Putney village. One day, a pedal fell off and became jammed in its inner workings.

"I took it to Lester's shop to see how much it would cost to fix it," Turner says. "He spent half an hour on it, fixed it perfectly, and then didn't charge me. I have never forgotten his kindness and his excellence at what he does."

TURNER might not have known at the time that Dunklee has been a longtime member of the West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department. Anyone who knows him would have told her that he'd do just about anything for a fellow firefighter in training — even one of preschool age.

Former Fire Chief David Emery is an old friend.

"I dealt with his dad for years. His dad lived on Chase Street. Every day he would pack his lunchbox and put on the same hat that he wore day after day, and head down to the shop, and every night at 5, he'd walk



REBEKAH WINOT NOYES

Lester Dunklee with one arm over an iron worker, an electronic hydraulic machine.

back home. You couldn't meet anybody nicer. Lester is just like his dad."

Emery tells a story about what happened when the Red Knights International Firefighters Motorcycle Club, of which he is a member, was given a piece of steel from the World Trade Center in New York City, destroyed in

a terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I needed to put this twisted piece of steel on a stand or some kind of pedestal, as it was going to be displayed in Boylston, Massachusetts," remembers Emery.

"I brought the piece down to his shop and he said, 'Give me a couple of days to look at it, and I'll see what I can do with it.'"

About three days later, Emery went back to the shop to see what his friend had in mind for the display. On the back of a piece of paper, Dunklee had drawn out what he thought it should look like.

"It was absolutely perfect," says Emery.

But a question lingered. How was Dunklee planning on bolting the piece? The gift of 9/11 steel came with rules. The steel couldn't have any holes drilled into it, and it couldn't be painted. It had to remain as the firefighters at Ground Zero found it.

"He fabricated hot rivets that look exactly like the piece of steel so that you couldn't tell if they were a part of the piece or not," Emery says. "And because

the rivets didn't show, a thief wouldn't be able to tell where they were, so they wouldn't be able to steal it."

He called it a work of "genius," adding that Dunklee had made up this elaborate frame to hold the steel with special bolts that fit into the concrete.

"I couldn't believe it. It was amazing," Emery says with shock in his voice.

Dunklee also managed to find a special dust to apply to the steel, which will prevent the artifact from rusting without using any paint, consistent with the terms of the gift.

The group installed the work of art to great acclaim. When Emery returned to Brattleboro he went back to the shop and asked Dunklee what the group owed him.

Dunklee responded that he wanted to think that question over.

Emery returned to the machine shop and asked the question again, over months, he did so repeatedly without response.

"Lester said that he was still thinking about it, and I said, 'Lester, it's now been eight months! You've had plenty of time to think about it. I really don't want you to donate this effort and time. Can we at least pay you for the steel?'" asked Emery.

Dunklee is still thinking about it, all these years later, Emery says.

"I don't think I'm ever going to get an answer," says Emery. "The man truly has a heart of gold. He does so much for so many people."

ASK AROUND, and you'll hear countless voices in the community sing Lester Dunklee's praises for his volunteer work for many groups and individuals, his amazing ability to craft anything out of metal, and the many ways he makes his skills and equipment available to others.

"Lester used to sharpen our paper cutters for years at Dummerston School."

"He's helped Experienced Goods out with repairs on metal racks."

"He makes wonderful homemade doughnuts for the Maple Sugar Supper in Dummerston."

"He even makes a special Gilfeather turnip doughnut for the Wardsboro Library for their Gilfeather Turnip Festival."

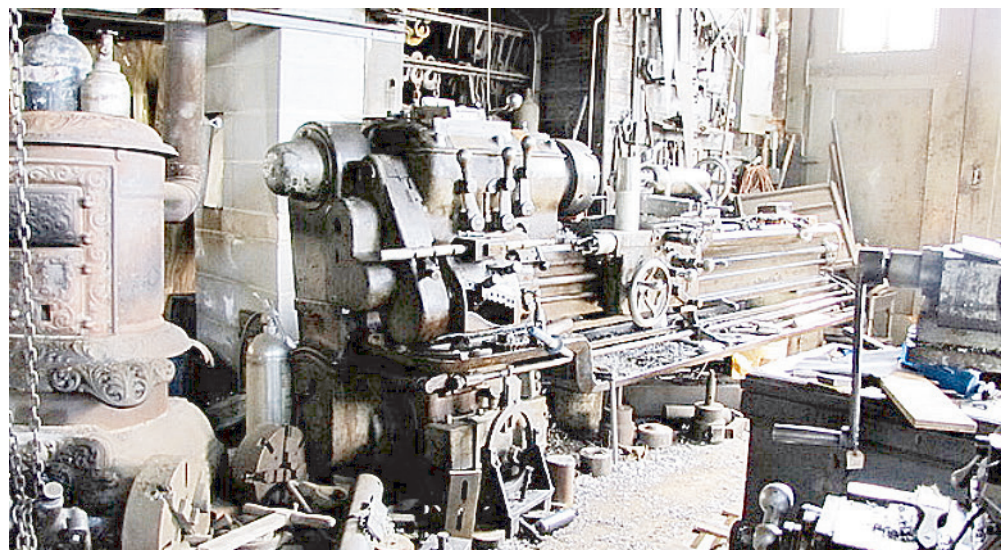
"He serves on the Dummerston Community Center Board."

"He's got a heart of gold; he always charges people what he thinks is right. If they can't pay him, he says, 'Well, just pay me when you can.'"

BOB LEBLOND has known Lester Dunklee for years. About 30 years ago, LeBlond started a group, all photographers, who would meet in his basement processing historic glass plates.

"There was a small group of us doing this work. One of us would put the plate in an enlarger, another would expose the paper, someone was at the developer, and together we brought these old pictures back to life. Most of the pictures were of Wardsboro, but I noticed one night that a bunch of them were from Dummerston,"

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE



GENE HERMAN

Part machine shop, part museum, the R.E. Dunklee and Sons Machine Shop on Flat Street has been a fixture in Brattleboro since the 1920s.

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HOLLY LIGHTS

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HOLLY NIGHTS



The late photographer Roger Katz wrote about Lester Dunklee: "A man with creative solutions to almost any problem, Lester still runs the family machine shop on Flat Street in Brattleboro. A timeless place filled with mysteries, wonders, and that 1956 push lawnmower you brought by for sharpening in 1986." This photo was taken sometime around 1990.

LeBlond remembers.

LeBlond went down to Dunklee's shop and asked his friend if he'd like to join the group and come help with the photos of his hometown.

"At the end of the night he told me, 'I had so much fun, can I come back next week?'" LeBlond recalls.

"For about three weeks at the end of the night, he asked the same question and I finally said, 'Lester, stop asking, just come!'" he adds. "Every week he continues to show up. That was years and years ago now. We like to tease him because in all these years he's only missed two nights. Of course, that was only because he had surgery," says LaBlond with a hearty laugh.

"He's a wonderful guy to work with," he says. "He's devoted to whatever he puts his mind to, and he's a hard worker."

LaBlond worked for Mount Snow for 48 years working on water systems, plumbing, and heating. One day, Dunklee called LaBlond and asked him if he could meet him at the Dummerston School.

"He said, 'We're having a problem with the water system over here. Can you come down and look the thing over?'" The man never stops. When he's done with work, he just volunteers to work for someone else. He's a truly kind human being."

DUNKLEE'S FATHER, David, didn't use a cash register — he made change right out of his pocket.

His son, on the other hand, has had help from an unsung hero: his wife, Debbie Dunklee, who has been his bookkeeper

for the last 40 years. They support each other.

"When I first started doing the bookkeeping, everything was done by hand. That was a little challenging, but we got it done," she says modestly.

"Now I have a computer, Lester writes down what the job was, he brings the slips home, and then I record what was sold."

So WHY IS Dunklee retiring now?

"Well," he says, and pauses. "My body says I have to. I don't have the strength in my arms and my knees that I used to. And then there is the brain fog that comes with getting older. By 2 o'clock, sometimes I can hardly add up some numbers. 'I can't operate that way,'" he says honestly, but with a tinge of sadness in his voice.

We move to what might be a happier question.

In addition to generations-old metalworking machinery and a timeless collection of nuts and bolts, Dunklee's shop has frogs. All kinds, many made of glass, wire, paper, plastic, stuffed. And they are everywhere.

What will become of the frogs?

Dunklee's mood lightens. "You want 'em?" he asks with a laugh.

"I don't know if they'll go back in the water, but they might," he deadpans. "Maybe they'd prefer the mud."

It's hard to figure out when you go in, and more than one guest in his shop has asked Dunklee, "What's up with the frogs?" He never says, he just smiles.

But this is what's up with the frogs.

Many years back, Dunklee's

friend Jim Severance, an amateur race car driver, would have a few breakdowns on the weekends when he might race at more than one venue. He would call Dunklee and ask him for help.

Eventually, Dunklee simply gave him a key to the shop so that if he needed nuts and bolts or a piece of metal, he could just let himself in and help himself.

"I come back one Monday morning," Dunklee remembers, "and there's a whole bunch of little frogs sitting on a wire over a paper lily pad."

And they were all over his shop — everywhere, he notes, laughing.

"After that, you know frogs, they breed. Suddenly another comes in, and then another one, and I just let it happen. It's amazing who brings in the frogs," he says with a wide grin.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN to the shop in 2024?

Dunklee isn't sure just yet. The old Vermonter has returned to the conversation and words become fewer.

"I need to get in there and inventory what's there, and we'll just see what I'll do with the place after that," he says.

Josh Steele, a frequent customer, sums it up for all of Brattleboro.

"Lester is a master machinist, a major local resource, an endless wealth of knowledge, and has two huge green thumbs," he says.

"This is a major loss for this community, but I'm very happy for him," Steele adds. "He deserves a healthy and wealthy retirement."

DUMMERSTON

Designs completed for stormwater gully project at covered bridge

DUMMERSTON—The Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD) recently completed final design work on a stormwater gully restoration and erosion mitigation project in Dummerston.

Windham NRCD worked with Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC, the Dummerston Conservation Commission, and the town of Dummerston on this project. The successful implementation of these designs will have recreational and water quality benefits to Windham County communities.

"This is a popular site that receives a tremendous amount of visitation," Windham NRCD District Manager Cory Ross said in a news release. "It will be great to restore safe access to the river while protecting water quality."

The Dummerston covered

bridge parking lot and access steps are a popular destination for locals and tourists alike. The access allows boaters and swimmers to enter and exit the river and provides great vantage points of the state's longest covered bridge, frequently featured in tourists' photos.

Flood damage resulted in the erosion of these steps and the creation of a gully down to the river. This damage resulted in potentially unsafe access for visitors to the site. Further, the stormwater gully represents a threat to water quality in the West River. Continued erosion during rain events can transport sediment and other pollutants from the parking lot into the river.

Engineers with Fitzgerald Environmental Associates collected field data and completed site analyses necessary for the design of new access steps and

additional site modifications that will protect water quality.

Implementation will include the installation of timber infiltration steps that will restore safe access to the river while protecting water quality. Additional project components will include installing a small rain garden and an infiltration basin to intercept stormwater before it can flow toward the new steps and into the river, as well as regrading the site and planting native vegetation on the hillside.

The construction phase in the project is scheduled to take place either late this fall or early spring of 2024. This project was funded by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Clean Water Initiative Program through grant funding administered by Mount Ascutney Regional Commission.

GRAFTON

Wetland restoration project is underway at The Nature Museum

GRAFTON—The Nature Museum in Grafton announced the latest phase of its wetland restoration project. The Chapman Meadow behind the museum building has been transformed with the construction of a pond, creation of one-of-a-kind natural playscape features, and pathways.

This milestone marks a significant breakthrough after three years of brainstorming and planning by the museum's dedicated "meadow-mittee" and staff.

"Reviving a wetland and providing space for both self-guided and staff-led education are key goals with this project," Nikolas Katrick, the museum's executive director, said in a news release. "I hope this inspires folks in our region to restore small wetlands in their backyards and neighborhoods because, all together, that can have a significant impact in slowing down flood waters and providing habitat for our wildlife neighbors."

An important part of the initiative is building a long-term meadow management plan, including strategies to manage invasive species.

Recently, students from Compass School helped with the task of identifying existing

invasive species on the property, properly removing these plants, and preparing them for proper disposal. Over the past year, hundreds of native species have been planted in the meadow and the native pollinator gardens.

In addition to the conservation of the habitat around the museum, this project is part of its strategic plan to offer children more opportunities for unstructured play in natural settings with the expansion of the Magic Forest Playscape. Situated on the edge of the Chapman Meadow overlooking the new pond, this is a popular destination for visitors, featuring jumping stumps, balancing logs, a shelter-building area, and a cabin overlooking the meadow.

Natural play areas help kids develop in many ways, including in "creative, physical, social/emotional, and spiritual" domains, says Ken Finch, a museum board member and founder of Green Hearts Institute for Nature in Childhood. New features in the Playscape include a bear den and tunnel, boulder piles, earth mounds, a sand pit, and parent seating areas.

The museum worked closely on the project with excavators

Thad and Jan Guild of TMG Enterprises and Jim McClammer of Connecticut Valley Environmental Services. To learn more, visit nature-museum.org.

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TOWN OF DUMMERSTON PLANNING COMMISSION

The Dummerston Planning Commission will hold a public hearing for proposed Zoning Bylaw revisions that address solar screening and air strips on December 11th, 2023 from 7:00pm to 7:30pm at the Dummerston town office, 1523 Middle Rd., East Dummerston, Vermont 05346.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Windham Solid Waste Management District will conduct a public hearing to review the FY 25 Budget. The public hearing will take place on December 14, 2023, @ 6:30 PM in person at 327 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT, and via Zoom. The Zoom link is available at our website (windhamsolidwaste.org) or contact the office at 802-257-0272.

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Sec. 133(b), notice is hereby given that the meeting to review the preliminary proposed budget meeting for Windham County for the ensuing year will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. at the Sheriff's Office 185 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT 05304.

The meeting will be held in person and virtually via Zoom. Please see below for meeting attendance information.

If interested in attending this meeting via Zoom, please contact the Windham County Clerk at CountyClerk@windhamcountyvt.gov. Please provide your full name and town in which you reside. The Zoom information, along with a copy of the proposed budget, will be emailed to you approximately 3 business days prior to the meeting date.

Note: If you prefer to attend the meeting via phone, instead of via the web (Zoom), a dial-in number will be provided to you.

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT **PROBATE DIVISION**
Windham Unit **Docket No.: 23-PR-06372**

In re ESTATE of: Jane Morgan Ashbrook Southworth

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Jane Morgan Ashbrook Southworth (Decedent) late of Brattleboro, 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: November 9, 2023 c/o Annis & Goddard, PLC
Catherine Southworth, Executor PO Box 565
Name of Publication: The Commons Brattleboro, VT 05302
Publication Date: November 21, 2023 802-251-0460
sannis@southernvermontlaw.com

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

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries



• **Stephen Sanford Anderson, 91**, of Putney. Died at his home on Nov. 6, 2023. He was a be-

loved husband, father, uncle, grandfather, teacher, mentor, and friend to many. He was born June 19, 1932 in West Orange, New Jersey to Harold Sanford and Dorothy Josephine (Holland) Anderson, when the world was on the cusp of modern transformation, Steve's life journey was marked by his enduring passion for education and knowledge, his unwavering curiosity about the world and its citizens, and his deep commitment to his growing and extended family and community. Steve's early years were influenced in part by his stoic, intellectual parents, his two creative and much older brothers, Henry and Richard, and his love of nature in the woods around him, which was further fostered when he was sent to the Farm & Wilderness Camp in Vermont at age 11 by his parents. It was life-changing. Years later, Steve studied botany and forestry at the University of Michigan, planting trees out West with the Forest Service as a summer job. While at Michigan, he discovered the Russian studies program and lived in an "International Dorm," which sparked his curiosity. Steve served in the Army in Germany as a medic for a psychiatric ward, an experience that left him humbled by the experiences of others. His time there took him across Europe (primarily by bicycle) and also shaped his lifelong approach to challenges with thoughtfulness, curiosity, and a readiness to explore new paths, including languages, knitting, and the harmonica and violin. Returning to the States led him to Harvard University, where he delved into Russian studies. While leading a student group to Germany, he met and later married Peggy (Bennett), with whom he raised their three children. A dedicated educator, Steve spent years teaching, first at Boston University, then at The Experiment in International Living, Marlboro College and, finally, Windham College, where his impact on his students was as profound as his passion for learning, promoting cultural exchanges for peace and sharing a greater understanding

of different cultures and people. His role as a teacher extended outside the traditional classroom. It included teaching shop at the Community School and involvement in 4-H in Westminster West. Though quietly modest, his students continue to remark on his lifelong impact, many of whom still view him as a friend. When Windham College folded in 1978, Steve embarked on an unexpected but fulfilling career as a chimney sweep as The Chimney Doctor, creating a business that brought him closer to the broader community and grounded him in the simple pleasures of hard work and service. He loved working with his hands, meeting people from all walks of life, and finding ways to help others. Around this time, his marriage to Peggy was reaching an end. He was fortunate to rekindle a childhood romance with Jacquie (Sovulewski) Walker, who moved to Vermont in 1981 and joined him as his life partner. Steve and Jacquie married in 1986 and moved into Hickory Ridge House in Putney, where they became innkeepers, a career they enjoyed for 16 years. They made many new and lasting friendships. They also volunteered for Putney Central School's after-school program to bring nature, learning, and fun to life in the abutting School Forest. He also found great joy in supporting and participating in the school's orchestra program. His commitment to the community was reflected in years of volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association, Putney Mountain Association, area literacy programs, helping people register to vote, Yellow Barn and area music and arts programs, Landmark College's research on invasive plants, community suppers, and Vermont rainfall reports. Steve and Jacquie were also enthusiastic members of the River Valley Singers for two decades, traveling to many countries, including Bosnia, where they used music and culture to connect people to each other and peace. They also found great joy in regular visits with their large, blended family. He shared his love of cooking, baking, gardening, and local food; he loved to sit on his deck with a good dark beer and chat about the happenings of the area and the world; he never shyed away from toast for breakfast or ice cream for dessert; and a cozy fire in the fireplace was one of his life's greatest pleasures. Steve's life was rich with

the tapestry of a life fully lived. Steve was someone who never stopped learning and embracing change (he recently mastered texting and FaceTime). He stayed humble (begrudgingly deflecting compliments), worked hard and tirelessly (never complaining or acknowledging the stress to his tall and aging body), and brought joy to his family and friends through hugs, songs, stories, hikes, "getting things done," and showing curiosity about their lives. He was a lifelong sketcher and doodler, a prolific reader (in French, too), and was passionate about sharing music with friends and family. His inventive nature included creating wooden toys and exploring science with kids. He was an avid hiker and participated in the bi-weekly Strong Living sessions in Putney, outdoors, all year long. He was sharp and practical to the end with a zest for life. Sadly, cancer and Covid had other plans. He is survived by his children: Judy Anderson and her husband Jerry Cosgrove of Kinderhook, New York, Teja Anderson and her husband Frank Dicapoulos of Los Angeles, and Daniel Anderson and his wife Lauren Schwartz of Queens, New York; stepchildren Linda Penn and her husband Lee Penn of Guilford, Connecticut, Sharon Walker and her husband Ed of Bothell, Washington, and Keith Walker of Las Vegas, Nevada; grandchildren Megan Cosgrove, Jaden and Olivia Dicapoulos, Jesse and Luke Anderson, Whitney (Penn) Medeiros and her husband Jesse, Zach and Drew Penn, and Cora, Courtney, and Kaitlyn Walker; great-grandson Carter Medeiros; and nieces and nephews Bonnie, Heidi, Jenn, John, Jill, Wendy, Don, Sue, Sally, Bev, Sara, and Doug. He was predeceased by a stepson, Steven Walker, and a niece, Mel. **MEMORIAL INFORMATION:** A celebration of life will be held next year. Donations may be made to one of the following organizations: Putney Mountain Association (putneymountain.org), Bellows Falls Community Bike Project (bfbike.org), and Putney Fire and Rescue (putneyvt.govoffice3.com/firedepartment). To share a memory or offer condolences to Steve's family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Barbara Anne "Barb" Baker, 76**, of Guilford. Died peacefully on Nov. 14, 2023 at the Jack Byrne Hospice Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, following an extended period of declining health. Barbara

Milestones are published as community news at no cost to families, thanks to financial support of our members and advertisers. Send them to news@commonsnews.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.

Awards

Aliya Farmer has been named the 2023-2024 Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen for Bellows Falls Union High School. The DAR Good Citizen Award and Scholarship Contest, created in 1934, are intended to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship. Aliya, a senior, is the daughter of Melissa Jenne and David Farmer of Grafton.

This award is given based on the following criteria set forth by the DAR national organization: dependability (including truthfulness, loyalty and punctuality), service (including cooperation, courtesy and consideration of others), leadership (including personality, self-control and ability to assume responsibility) and patriotism (including unselfish interest in family, school, community and nation.)

Farmer is an excellent representative of these characteristics, according to school staff.

"As a scholar, Aliya is dependable, works hard, is quick to advocate for herself, and is a strong communicator. She consistently goes above and beyond on her work not only for a grade, but to ensure her own understanding of the ideas and how they apply to the real world. On the rare occasion when she is absent from school, she communicates ahead of time, gets her work done, and follows up with any questions she has. She is attentive to her work, comes to school eager to learn, and has shown herself as someone on whom people can depend."

She was also lauded for being "a positive role model who leads by example, Aliya is a leader in the true essence of the word. She is kind and considerate to classmates and staff and goes out of her way to help. She is often one of the first to volunteer, frequently without being asked."

An active member of the BFUHS community, Farmer is involved in extra-curricular activities including athletics (as a three-sport participant), student council, (elected



Aliya Farmer

COURTESY PHOTO

Vice-President), and is a member of the BFUHS Jesse A. Judd/ Marilee Huntoon Chapter of the National Honor Society.

Mature and responsible, she is kind and inclusive of everyone. Farmer is described by one of her teachers as "the epitome of hard work, determination, integrity, and grace."

Others say Farmer "brings creativity, a plethora of unique ideas, and the willingness to participate in all aspects of any activity she joins. She gives 100% to any sport or activity she gets involved in and encourages others to join. She turns setbacks into learning experiences, and

shows perseverance and grit." Through her role as a third- and fourth-grade basketball coach, Farmer has worked hard to serve as a good example for a younger generation.

Farmer is presently enrolled in the second year of the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at the Windham Regional Career Center and she plans to continue her education in the health field by becoming a pediatric nurse. She says she is passionate about advancing the quality of health care available to her patients and treating them with empathy and respect.



had been a resident of Guilford since 1983. She was born in Brattleboro on Dec. 15, 1946, the daughter of Geno and

Alice (Hallgren) Grassi. Barbara was raised and educated in Brattleboro, graduating from Brattleboro Union High School, Class of 1965. She had been employed as a registry clerk for the Holstein Association USA, which she retired from in 2009 following more than 35 faithful and dedicated years with the Association. Previously, she worked at the former F.W. Woolworth Department Store on Main Street. For many years, Barbara was a member of the American Legion Post 5 Auxiliary. Her life centered around her family. Barbara enjoyed shopping for special gifts for all of her loved ones. She especially enjoyed the holidays and special times when she was surrounded by her family. Barbara spent much of her summers camping with her husband and other family members on their land in northern Vermont. Another summer favorite of Barbara's was going out for an ice cream cone. On Dec. 30, 1967, at Centre Congregational Church, she was married to Dennis S. Baker, who survives. Besides her faithful and devoted husband of almost 56 years, she leaves a daughter, Denise Laakso and her husband Todd of Swanzey, New Hampshire; a son, Michael Baker and his fiancée Dee of Guilford; a brother, Richard Grassi and his wife Marilyn of White River Junction; a sister, Martha Kabaniec; grandchildren Megan Laakso, Savannah Baker, and Nathan Hurley; and three great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by siblings Phillip Grassi and Jean Baker. **MEMORIAL INFORMATION:** Graveside commitment services were conducted on Nov. 20 in the family lot in Baker Cemetery in Guilford. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Mary Ellen (Childs) Tier, 76**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully, surrounded by family, on Nov. 15, 2023, at Pine Heights Nursing Home. She was born on March 14, 1947, in Townshend to the late Everett and Florence (Puffer) Childs. After graduating from Leland & Gray Seminary, Mary went on to get her degree in nursing from the Thompson School of Nursing and spent her career as a nurse at various nursing homes in northern and southern Vermont. She was a volunteer EMT at Richmond Rescue for many years. Later in her nursing career, she was a visiting nurse and cared for patients in their homes. Devoted to her faith, Mary was a longtime member of the West Townshend Seventh-day Adventist Church where she enjoyed fellowship and teaching Sabbath School to the children. Mary loved being around people, especially the time she spent with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She could easily make new friends wherever life led her. She will be remembered for her kind heart, compassion, and

generosity. She was predeceased by her sons Joe and Eric Childs. She leaves behind her beloved children Seth Tier (Mandy) and Jerod Tier (Heather); grandchildren Kassie, Damon, Koree, Alexis, Kourtney, Selena, Grayden, Paige, Ryan, Kane, Austin, Olivia, and Serenity; nine great-grandchildren; brother Everett Childs Jr. "Sam" (Norma), nephew Tim Childs, niece Gina Goldade (Bryan), as well as many cousins. **MEMORIAL INFORMATION:** A celebration of life will be held at the Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Vernon on Sunday, Dec. 10, from 1 to 4 p.m. There will be a potluck afterward. Donations to the West Townshend Seventh-day Adventist Church, P.O. Box 1069, West Townshend VT 05359. To view Mary's online tribute or send a message of condolence, visit csnh.com.

• **Shirley Jean (Byrd) Walsh, 77**, of Bellows Falls. Died Nov. 9, 2023, after a short illness, at the Sullivan



County Nursing Home in Unity, New Hampshire. The child of Morriswell Eugene Byrd and Anita Dehlia (Bousquet) Byrd, she was born Dec. 26, 1945 in Bellows Falls. She was raised in North Walpole, Bellows Falls, and Hialeah, Florida and graduated from Bellows Falls High School in 1963. She attended hair styling school in Burlington, and then worked as a hairdresser. After meeting Lawrence "Poody" Walsh while working at Aumand's Department Store, they married on June 26, 1969 in North Walpole. She then spent years providing childcare to many local children. But her greatest love of all was taking care of her grandchildren daily and making them big breakfasts after athletic practices. She also loved attending her grandchildren's dance recitals, and football, baseball, and hockey games. In her spare time, she knitted scarves and devoured books, particularly thrillers. She is survived by daughters Hillary Jean Walsh and Shauna Marie Walsh Friend and her husband, Bob; grandchildren Matthew Bean (Mimi Rhines), Brendan Bean (Ashlee Brown), Andrew Friend, and Alison Friend; and close cousins David, Theresa, Danny and Timothy Shaughnessy. **MEMORIAL INFORMATION:** A visitation and prayer service was held Nov. 14 at Stringer Funeral Home in Claremont, New Hampshire, followed by burial in Saint Mary Cemetery in Claremont. Donations to the Sullivan County Humane Society, 14 Tremont St., Claremont, NH 03743. To send condolences, visit stringerfh.com.



• **Dorothy Elizabeth "Dot" LeClaire, 93**, of Brattleboro. Died Nov. 14, 2023 at Brattleboro

Memorial Hospital following a period of declining health. Dorothy was born in Luzerne Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania on July 10, 1930, the daughter of Edward R. and Ruth E. (Zombro) Fuller. She was raised and educated in Berryville, Virginia, where she attended local public schools including Berryville High School. She eventually relocated to

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arts & community CALENDAR

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY CONT.	WEDNESDAY CONT.
24	25	26	27	28	29
<p>Performing arts PUTNEY Sandglass presents "A Rafter of Crankies": Crankies are panoramic scrolls "cranked" on the handles of a box that the scrolls wind through. Effect is like watching the analog ancestor of a movie or a comic strip combining with a song or story. Together they create a charming, often wildly funny or strikingly haunting performance. Often associated w/ Appalachian folk tradition, today's crankies embrace cultural/ musical/ artistic expressions that are contemporary and unpredictable! ▶ 11/24: 7:30 p.m., 11/25: 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. New to event: Emily Schubert from PA who enriched the national crankie scene as director of Baltimore Crankie Fest. Alexandra Gorlin-Crenshaw from Montreal performs w/ hand-made fold-out books. To add spice, she performs in Yiddish! Plus Brattleboro's John Ungerleider, known as a songwriter and social justice activist, enters the crankie arena with a 1st-ever scroll of his Mr. Mariposa - a work about climate change, illustrated by Maddy Conley. Heating runs before and between shows - bring layers. Cider/baked snacks by donation. ▶ Through Saturday, November 25. ▶ \$20 adults, \$18 students/seniors, \$16 EBT and Medicaid cardholders. Purchase online or at door. No one turned away for lack of funds. ▶ Green Mountain Orchards, 130 West Hill Rd. Information: Tickets online: app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=207333.</p> <p>The written word BRATTLEBORO The Friends of the Brooks Memorial Library host Annual Friends of the Library Book: Many items are \$2 or less. Friends are also raffling off fantastic gift baskets. ▶ 11/24: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 11/25: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sale continues through New Years. All proceeds from the book sales go to programs at the Library. ▶ Through Saturday, November 25. ▶ Free. ▶ Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.</p> <p>Arts and crafts PUTNEY Legacy of Craft and Community - 45th Annual Putney Craft Tour: Visit 21 of VT's most prominent makers - jewelers, painters, glassblowers, potters, even artisan wine and cheesemakers - at the oldest continuous open studio tour in the country. You will see self-marked signs, and tour maps lead the way. Start at the Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits Welcome Center where you will find an exhibition of the artisans' work. ▶ 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. ▶ Through Sunday, November 26. ▶ Free. ▶ Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits Welcome Center, 8 Bellows Falls Rd., Putney, VT 05346. Information: To learn more about the artists, download the map and sign up for the Putney Craft Tour newsletter: putneycrafts.com.</p>	<p>Kids and families BRATTLEBORO Cooking Class For All Ages: Holiday Huts and Gingerbread Houses: We'll make all kinds of edible homes in this class, open to all ages and abilities. Tierra Farms has donated delicious dried fruits and seeds for us to use, and inspiring books and photos will be on hand so students can make yurts, round homes, and yes, gingerbread houses. Everything will be held together with tempered chocolate made from Equal Exchange chocolate chips. ▶ Choose 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m. Space is limited so early registration is recommended. Repeats 12/9. ▶ Free. ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op Community Room, 7 Canal St. Information: To sign up, visit BFC.coop/calendar. List participants' names, ages, dietary needs in the comments.</p> <p>Well-being BRATTLEBORO The Brattleboro Zen Center In-Person Meditation: This group chants briefly and then sits in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action, either in-person or from wherever they might be. ▶ 1 p.m.-1:35 p.m. on Saturdays. ▶ Free. ▶ Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct. Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30).</p> <p>Community building SAXTONS RIVER 24 Main Street Community Building and area Nonprofits announce the 2023 Generosity Fair: Nonprofits showcase their activities and offer an opportunity to turn your generosity into meaningful holiday gift-giving. The public is invited to attend to learn more about charitable work done near and far by those living in our area. Join us and consider making donations in the name of your friends, family, neighbors, coworkers. ▶ 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Hall. For each donation made, attendees get a gift card provided by the nonprofits and an ornament will be placed on holiday tree in the Community Building. Some organizations have other items for sale and benefits for various giving levels. Bring checkbook and/or cash as not all organizations accept credit cards in-person/online giving. Light snacks/holiday cheer. Generosity Fair is organized by the 24 Main Street Community Building and Anne Manner-McLarty. ▶ 24 Main Street Community Center (formerly Christ Church of Saxtons River), 24 Main St. Information: Questions: 828-545-0420; heurista.com.</p> <p>Arts and crafts BRATTLEBORO American Legion Auxiliary Unit #5 announces Christmas Craft Fair: All proceeds are used to support programs for veterans and their families. ▶ 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. ▶ American Legion Hall (Post 5), 32 Linden St. Information: Questions: Call Lori Nelson at 802-380-6179.</p>	<p>Music PUTNEY Long River CircleSinging led by Paris Kern: Join us for a soulful and uplifting singing experience. Led by seasoned facilitator Paris Kern, this improvisational musical experience follows in the tradition of Bobby McFerrin's vocal improvisation methods and ancestral voices. Need to read music or remember lyrics? Immerse yourself in the joy of music as we gather in person to create magical harmonies together. ▶ 3 p.m. Bring water. Whether you're a seasoned singer or just love to belt out tunes in the shower, this event is for everyone! Discover the power of community singing - the universal language of music - and let your voice soar in a supportive and inclusive environment. ▶ Suggested donation \$10-\$20. No one turned away due to lack of funds. ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. New to CircleSinging? Here is a link to a video! https://youtu.be/dRiRuxtyOZY Register via Meetup: tinyurl.com/92yxww4.</p> <p>Well-being W. BRATTLEBORO "A Generosity of Spirit" led by Rev. Telos Whitfield (In Person/Zoom): Why is it that at times, being generous can feel so effortless while at other times, it can be incredibly difficult? How can we nurture a generosity of spirit toward ourselves, each other and each one that we encounter? We anticipate this service will be both in-person and on Zoom. ▶ 9 a.m.: All Souls Community Breakfast will be offered before the Worship Service. 10 a.m.: Worship Service. ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St. Information: Go to our website - ascvt.org. Sunday shortly before 10 a.m. to join via Zoom.</p> <p>Arts and crafts BRATTLEBORO Art Gift Sale ▶ 11 a.m. - noon on Sundays and by appointment. ▶ Through Sunday, January 7, 2024. ▶ allsoulsstart@gmail.com. ▶ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church West Village Meeting House, 29 South St. Information: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.</p> <p>Dance GUILFORD Brattleboro Bal Folk: Live music & dance instruction by Eloise & Co. Becky Tracy (fiddle) & Rachel Bell (accordion). Fun, accessible French and European traditional dances. No experience/partner necessary! A joyous community event for all! Dances range from beautiful and meditative to raucous and energetic. Even if you've never tried anything like this before, come on over! Feel free to sit along the edges and listen and check it out, or join right in on the fun! ▶ 6:30-9 p.m. Future date: Dec. 17. ▶ \$12 to \$25 sliding scale. ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: Check CoVid updates: rachelbellmusic.com.</p>	<p>Instruction BELLOWS FALLS Email Basics (2 classes: 11/27 and 11/29): Attendees will create a Gmail account, learn how to perform basic email functions like sending, receiving, and replying to an email, recognize and deal with spam, organize and delete emails and search for messages. ▶ 10:30 a.m. (2 classes: 11/27 class builds on 11/27 class). ▶ Free. ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org.</p> <p>Community building BELLOWS FALLS Artists Meet and Greet at Rockingham Library: Join us in welcoming Susan Evans McClure, Exec. Dir. of the VT Arts Council. Hosted by VT Creative Network/Southern Zone, the Rockingham Arts and Museum Project, Rockingham Free Public Library, the Rockingham Incremental Development Working Group, Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance. McClure looks forward to meeting constituents and promoting the Southern VT Creative Network - an initiative of the VT Arts Council: www.vermontartsouncil.org/vermont-creative-network/. ▶ 9:30-10:30 a.m. Following Meet & Greet, McClure tours projects actively contributing to creative economy of Bellows Falls: 33 Bridge Street, Stage 33, Wool fm, Hunter Studio, Sherwin Glass, Keki Glass, Miss Bellows Falls Diner, Exner Blk (providing 10 affordable living workspaces, preference given to artists, and 6 retail spaces), plus the Wild Goose Players. ▶ Free. ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Library is wheelchair accessible. For accessibility questions, call 802-463-4270. RSVPs appreciated. ramp@sover.net (place in subject line rsvp for VAC 11/27 event) or call 802-463-3252.</p>	<p>Brattleboro in preparing and enjoying a community meal with a harvest "Stone Soup." Together we'll create a stone soup supper featuring a variety of hearty local vegetables that are abundant in the month of November in Vermont! If possible, please bring your favorite harvest vegetable(s) to share for the soup! We'll provide the basics, seasonings, hearty bread and fixings for a delicious dessert. ▶ 5-7 p.m. (Use Canal Street entrance). ▶ Free (donations accepted with gratitude). ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op Cooking Classroom, 7 Canal St. Information: Registration required: ediblebrattleboro.org/event/Questions?Email:cooking@ediblebrattleboro.org.</p> <p>view effectiveness and sunset of anti-hunger initiatives following the COVID-19 pandemic, discuss historic flooding and its impacts on food security, preview our upcoming advocacy work. There will be time at the end for questions. Recording of event will be sent out following the briefing for those who cannot make it. ▶ 10-11 a.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Virtual. Information: Register in advance for this meeting: tinyurl.com/mtvsd8wj.</p>	
WEDNESDAY					29
<p>To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org</p> <p>Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday</p>					

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 Hi, my name is **Peppe!** Not much is known about my previous home. I am a very happy and loving boy who loves to go for walks. I seem to be dog selective and would need to meet any potential canine buddies here first. Cats would be new to me so a nice and slow intro would be required. Please come and meet with me soon.

 Hey everybody! I'm **Hans**, and check out my awesome paws! I'm a super sweet guy who's just down on his luck. All I really want is a home of my very own with people who love me. Is that so much to ask? I'm not a fan of other cats. Dogs would be new to me, so a slow intro would be best. Young kids would be too much for me. Come in and meet me today, I don't want to wait any longer!

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AROUND THE TOWNS

Winter parking ban begins in Brattleboro

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Parking Department would like to advise everyone that the winter parking ban is now in effect until April 15, 2024. Overnight parking is forbidden on all streets in the town of Brattleboro.

Vehicles parked for longer than one hour between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. may be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense. The ban applies even if there is no snow on town streets, and vehicles may be towed at any time if they are hampering snow plowing or snow removal.

Brattleboro has a flashing light system and a signboard program in place to assist citizens in knowing when plowing will be done. A flashing amber light designates the need to remove snow from off-street lots. A flashing purple light designates the need to remove snow from the streets.

Snow removal starts at 11 p.m. During snowstorms, vehicles must be parked under cover in the Transportation Center. Also, the Department of Public Works will place sign boards around town with notification of pending snow removals.

If parking is not available in the Transportation Center, overflow parking is allowed in the Preston lot on Flat Street. Vehicles must be out of the Preston lot by 8 a.m. to allow for plowing of that lot.

Thanksgiving closures in Brattleboro

BRATTLEBORO — In observance of Thanksgiving, all Town Offices will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24, with the exception of emergency services.

Brooks Memorial Library will close at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 22. They will be closed on Nov. 23, and reopen on Nov. 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Trash and recycling will not be picked up on Nov. 23. All trash and recycling pick-up will be delayed by one day all week.

Thanksgiving Day service planned

BRATTLEBORO — A Thanksgiving Day service for the community is planned for

10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 23, at First Church of Christ, Scientist, 57 Putney Rd.

The hour-long service — both in person and online via Zoom at csbrattleboro.org — includes readings from the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy; plus music for the occasion and a period for Thanksgiving testimonies.

First Baptist Church presents Christmas bazaar

BRATTLEBORO — A Christmas bazaar will be held at the First Baptist Church, at their new location at 18 Town Crier Drive, on Saturday, Nov. 25, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There will be Christmas items, a bake table, "Grandma's Attic," and handmade knitted items. A light lunch will be available, featuring corn chowder and butternut squash soup. Doughnuts, cider, and coffee are also available. For more information, call 802-254-1234.

Rick Winston presents classic films of the 1950s at Brooks Memorial Library

BRATTLEBORO — Rick Winston, author of *Save Me a Seat: A Life with Movies*, will present a discussion of classic films of the 1950s, on Wednesday, Nov. 29, at 7 p.m. in the Main Reading Room of Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St.

"The 1950s were a fascinating time for Hollywood films. Silent-era film directors were in their prime, and independent films were gaining a foothold. Exciting new stars such as Marlon Brando and Audrey Hepburn were making their mark while vital issues of the time such as juvenile delinquency, conformity, and racial attitudes were addressed, however timidly, while the shadow of the Hollywood blacklist loomed," says Winston. He will show clips from several films of various genres from that era and discuss their significance.

The program is the latest installment of the Snapshot series from Vermont Humanities, an upgrade of the long-running

First Wednesdays monthly lecture series. Snapshot keeps the community-building aspects of First Wednesdays while expanding the benefits of virtual events. A full list of events is available at bit.ly/741-snapshot. Snapshot events in Brattleboro are sponsored by the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library.

All events are free. Brooks Memorial Library is accessible to people in wheelchairs. Those who cannot join in person may register to receive the livestream link at bit.ly/741-50s. For more information, call 802-254-5290 or visit brookslibraryvt.org.

'Pecycling' talk in Dummerston

WEST DUMMERSTON — The Dummerston Conservation Commission presents "Pecycling for Clean Water and Fertile Farms" on Thursday, Nov. 30, at 7 p.m. at the Dummerston Community Center, 150 West St. This program is free, and donations are always welcome.

The Rich Earth Institute will present what organizers say is "the paradigm-shifting practice of pecycling: reclaiming a 'waste' as a resource to complete the food nutrient cycle. Human urine contains vital nutrients for growing crops. By reclaiming urine as an agricultural resource, communities can prevent downstream pollution, access an abundance of local fertilizer, and conserve clean water."

For more than a decade, the Institute has operated the nation's first and largest community-scale pecycling program in Southern Vermont. In this presentation, Education Director Julia Cavicchi will delve into how this program works and provide an overview of the Institute's research and introduce the basics of how to safely and effectively fertilize crops with urine in backyard gardens.

Ham radio license testing offered

TOWNSHEND — The West River Radio Club will offer an FCC licensing and ARRL certification testing session for all levels and upgrades on Saturday, Dec. 2, at 10:30 a.m., at Grace Cottage's Heins Building, 133 Grafton Rd. Interested people should bring two forms of identification (one

picture), any prior radio license, a pencil, calculator (not on a phone), and \$15 (cash or check). Most importantly, they must secure an FRN number from the FCC prior to coming to the test. It can be found at bit.ly/741-radio.

After the testing, all are invited to stay for the club's monthly meeting and holiday potluck luncheon at noon. RSVP Mary Peterson at vt doves@gmail.com or 802-258-3921.

Dummerston School holds 'Buy a Brick' fundraiser

DUMMERSTON — Help the Dummerston School finish its pavilion through its "Buy-A-Brick" campaign.

One can commemorate their family, child, grandchild, business, or favorite teacher by purchasing an engraved paver brick to be set in the floor of the Dummerston School Pavilion. Bricks are \$100 each and can have up to two lines of text with 10 characters each. Bricks can be purchased until Friday, Dec. 15. For more information, email dummerstonplayground@gmail.com.

Historical Society calendars available

DUMMERSTON — The 2024 "Scenes of Dummerston" calendars, published by the Historical Society, are now available for sale. They can be purchased at the Town Office in Dummerston Center, or by calling Jody Normandeau at: 802-380-9027.

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Community House

FROM SECTION FRONT

this expansion, we are able to help a new group of students," she continues. "Opening the high school was something that people here have talked about and dreamed about for a long time. It's exciting to see it come to life."

Before the Linden Street opening, Community House School had three students in the high school program. As of Nov. 6, seven are enrolled.

"Opening this high school was a priority for me from the time I started with Community House just two years ago," says Principal Barbara Barrett. "From my previous experience working in this field, I knew there was a need in our area for this type of school."

She said that she, Stahl Tyler, and the organization's four-person board of directors "had been keeping our eyes open, looking for a property that would work. This building came on the market. We were excited about the location and space."

According to municipal assessors' records, the organization purchased the property, on a 0.44-acre lot, on March 2 for \$575,000.

"It's a beautiful old building. It feels right to be here," Barrett says.

'They believed in the mission'

The short-term residential program accommodates up to six children ages 6-13, who are referred by the Vermont Division of Children and Families (DCF), Vermont Department of Mental Health, and the Vermont Agency of Education.

The general length of stay for a child in residence is 90 to 120 days. The program is licensed by DCF.

The group has for some time overseen the day school for elementary/middle school students (grades K-8) who arrive in the morning by bus and return home in the evening, as well as the five-week summer program.

High-schoolers now studying at Linden Street will also be riding the bus to and from school.

The Oak Street main campus includes the residential building and, across the parking lot, the K-8 school building and administrative offices.

Transforming the building to a school has taken some doing, Stahl Tyler says.

"When we first walked through 80 Linden, we could see how the building could work," she says. "The fire inspection pointed out the need for a better secondary egress, and that meant some

renovations."

She says the building's sellers, listed in town records as Linden Street Properties LLC, "worked with us. They believed in the mission."

"Once we started on the renovations for the stairs, and we hired an architect, we decided to add in a few bathrooms. We had to install a fire alarm system, change several doors," Stahl Tyler adds.

"We've also updated drainage, plumbing, electrical wiring, and flooring," she says. "We're still painting and pulling down some wallpaper. The local tradespeople have been great to work with — they have done a lot in a short time to get us up and running this fall."

How it works

Tyler explains the overall program as intended for "children who haven't found success in a traditional school environment."

"We are an alternative learning environment for students with different learning styles," she says. "We can offer them a different educational environment with different staffing ratios for their individualized goals."

Children are sent by their respective home high schools to Community School House after it has been decided "that this would be a better fit for them academically," she explains.

Community School House follows the students' educational needs and graduation requirements from their home schools. Students will be graduated from those schools on successful completion of 12th grade.

Each sending school pays tuition to Community School House, which focuses on academics in the mornings and on different courses in the afternoons.

Right now one afternoon each week involves focusing on personal finance and "learning how to manage money and be prepared for the real world," Stahl Tyler says.

The school also offers internships through which students can shadow those operating community businesses.

Stahl Tyler says Barrett and other administrators hope to add entrepreneurial training and real-life business skill-building to the high school program.

Since it opened on Nov. 6, the seven students enrolled at Linden Street and their teachers have been pleased, she says.

"I went in this morning and talked with them and one young girl, a new student, I think a ninth-grader, said, 'I love this

Mural

While painting the original mural, Clear and Turner said they were delighted by the community's response, with 20 to 30 people stopping by to watch them every day as they worked.

For the painting, the wall was originally primed, a base coat was applied, followed by a second coat of the dominant blue color of the sky. Clear and Turner then rendered the foreground and buildings.

The southern sun exposure and the effects of nearly 25 years of Vermont's dramatically varied four seasons of weather have taken a toll. The mural is in need of restoration.

Working off an aerial bucket lift, a masonry restoration expert, who explained what he was doing but would not identify himself to *The Commons*, has begun repairing the masonry and removing loose paint and acrylic caulking to stabilize the mural in preparation for future restoration. A few trees growing up into the mural were also removed.

He said that acrylic caulking added after the mural was completed has created problems with the paint due to the caulk's lack of porosity, combined with Vermont's wet and freezing cold winter weather.

After the caulking and moisture issues are alleviated, a traditional European lime wash, matching the sky-blue color, will be used over the nearly 200-year-old brickwork on that section.

Raising money, raising questions

The original mural was the brainchild of Robert McBride,

building; it's beautiful," says Tyler.

Sue Vincent, the high school math and science teacher, says, "I love what's going on here and what we're able to do."

Vincent is one of three teachers; the other two teach social studies and English.

Why expand to include a separate location for high school students?

"We knew the kids that come to the day school program may come for a year or less or for many years, if they start in kindergarten, and then we didn't have an option for them to continue on with us after eighth grade," Stahl Tyler says.

"We also knew the community was asking, and the Brattleboro Retreat school closed a couple of years ago," she continues. "There



FROM SECTION FRONT

ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

Repairs have begun on the mural that was painted in 1999 on the Flatiron Building in Bellows Falls.

a Bellows Falls resident who moved to the village from New York City. He bought a house in the village in 1981 and moved permanently in 1994.

McBride created an arts organization, the Rockingham Arts & Museum Project (RAMP), with the goal of using the arts as one of the major economic drivers for the community.

Among dozens of large and small RAMP projects over the years, the mural on the Flatiron Building is one of the most recognizable and public.

"It was a project that really resonated with the community," McBride said.

McBride was owner of the building at the time, which put him in the position to use its large, flat south wall as a canvas. Through RAMP, he raised over \$17,000 for the project.

He received over \$7,000

just really isn't a lot of offerings for high school-age students in this area, particularly for girls."

Holbrook House history

The Federal-style building was designed and built by local carpenter Nathaniel Bliss in 1825 for prominent local businessman John Holbrook.

As described by its then-owner, Greenfield, Massachusetts, architect James Britton, on the nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places, where it was listed in 1982, the house "remains as one of the village's finer late Federal period houses and has undergone little alteration through the years."

"The interior craftsmanship make it one of the more unusual and outstanding houses in

in grants from the Windham Foundation, the Vermont Community Foundation, and the Vermont Arts Council. Another \$10,000 of community donations came from businesses and individuals.

McBride said he is planning on another RAMP effort soon to raise money to restore the mural. In the meantime, RAMP is funding the stabilization work.

With more and more large and small cities and villages financing public art projects like murals, including in Springfield and Brattleboro in Vermont, and Keene in New Hampshire, McBride said "it brings up questions about creating and maintaining" public art.

He noted that grant money is often available for the initial art projects and "we want the enthusiasm for public art." But he suggested that communities

ask, "Where does the money come for maintenance?"

As with the Flatiron mural, many such projects need redoing in a couple of decades. Should they be viewed as permanent?

Perhaps some could be viewed as temporary, and new artists brought in every decade or two to create a new mural on the site, McBride suggested.

With so many communities encouraging public art, these sorts of questions need to be part of the discussion from the beginning of any project, McBride said.

The Flatiron building itself has had new owners for several years.

"You can't expect future owners of the buildings to be responsible for the money to maintain the murals," McBride said.

Vermont," Britton wrote.

Holbrook, who hailed from Massachusetts, worked in southern Vermont as a surveyor and eventually became part owner of a general store in Newfane.

Expanding his business interests to importing and exporting goods to and from Brattleboro via the Connecticut River, Holbrook was one of the owners of the first flat-bottomed boat to carry goods on the river. His son, Frederick Holbrook, became the 27th governor of Vermont.

The building has most recently housed offices for professional therapists and counselors and was managed through Otter Creek Associates, Inc.

Both Otter Creek Associates and Linden Street Property are corporate entities associated with Dr. David G. Fassler, a

psychiatrist and clinical professor of psychiatry in Burlington.

According to listers' records, Linden Street Property LLC purchased the building in 2006 for \$660,000 — \$85,000 more than Community House paid for it.

Community House filed a record of a \$488,000 mortgage through M&T Bank with the Brattleboro Town Clerk's office along with records of the property transfer.

"The owners quite liked our mission and were very fair with their pricing, and so we took out some loans and applied for a small grant," Stahl Tyler says. "We wouldn't have been able to do it without our own loans and the support of the bank."



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HOLIDAYS

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

page B1

JONATHAN RISSMEYER / CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE (NC BY SA)

The Putney Craft Tour at 45: A look back, a look ahead

Tour is still going strong with some of the original members and new generations of artists

PUTNEY—The 45th annual Putney Craft Tour features glass blowers, potters, jewelers, woodworkers, painters, and artisan cheese and wine makers in their studios.

“Every year, the tour draws arts lovers, shoppers and the curious,” Ken Pick, one of the founders of the tour, said in a news release. This year, there are 21 working studios open to visitors on tour, which takes place 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 24, through Sunday, Nov. 26.

The Putney Craft Tour began in 1978 in a meeting around the dining room table of organizer and woodcut printer, Margot Torrey. Putney’s tour helped lead the way to a national movement of craft tours developing around the United States. Forty-five years later, the tour is still going strong with some of the original members and generations of artists who have followed them.

In its history, the tour has had more than 125 participating artisans. Some participated

for a year or two and others for 10 years or more. For two of the founding members — Pick and glassblower Bob Burch — this will be the 45th year that they have shown the public their studios where they create their unique pieces.

There are always new members on the tour, new studios to see, new demonstrations of craft to educate and entertain, and new insights into the creative process in addition to the familiar favorites.

Silver jeweler Jeanne Bennett, who has been on the tour for 10 years, appreciates the feedback she gets from visitors.

“It’s nice to get the work out in public. I’m up in the woods [in Westminster West], and I love hearing everyone’s feedback,” said Bennett. Like most of the artists, she has customers who return “to see what’s new and add to their collection. More than anything, the tour is great entertainment. Driving through the Vermont countryside and finding the studios is

■ SEE PUTNEY CRAFT TOUR, B4

Festival of Trees at new Vernon community center

VERNON—The Governor Hunt House in Vernon, being developed as a community center for the town, is planning their first-ever Festival of Trees and is seeking businesses to participate by becoming tree sponsors.

The event, which takes place Friday to Sunday, Dec. 1–3, will feature dozens of beautifully decorated holiday trees, with valuable merchandise and gift certificates under each tree. Raffle tickets will be sold to attendees, and each tree — together with all the gifts that go with it — will be taken home by a lucky winner.

Sponsoring businesses, organizations, or individuals are asked to supply an artificial holiday tree with lights and decorations, along with desirable merchandise or gift certificates to be placed with it.

Basic tree sponsorship is free, and each sponsor will benefit from mentions of their name being placed with their tree, and mention in other forms of publicity and outreach. All proceeds will go to the renovation of the

building and operations of the community center.

The event takes place at the same time as Vernon’s traditional Home for the Holidays craft fair at the Vernon Elementary School, which is across the street, and organizers encourage the public to visit both venues during the weekend.

Sponsorship information can be found at governorhunt.org/festival-of-trees. Businesses, organizations, and individuals interested in participating should contact Martin Langeveld at 802-380-0226 or newsafternewspapers@gmail.com.

The Governor Hunt House Community Center is being developed by the Friends of Vernon Center, a nonprofit organization. The property, formerly office space for Vermont Yankee, was donated by Entergy Corp. following the sale of the dormant nuclear power plant to Northstar for decommissioning.

COLUMN | Memorable Meals



Simple, sensational

sides

Ruby red jewels of cranberry and pearl onions get a boost of interest from ginger and a chili for some heat. You can make this one day ahead of time.

Save sanity with these holiday recipes

NO MATTER *Bellows Falls* the feast, we love a variety of side dishes, and sometimes they even upstage the main event. But we want things simple as well as tasty, and having a few tricks up our sleeves at this busy time of year will definitely reduce the stress factor.

Whenever possible, make those sides the day before, or bring them to an almost-done stage to reheat them quickly and easily. When I’m cooking a turkey, I use the giblets to make a gravy the day before. Just before the meal, I add some of the pan drippings and reheat it at the very last.

The cranberry sauce and squash can easily be made the day before — and the cranberry sauce will actually taste better if you allow the flavors time to merge and mellow.

Homemade Cranberry Sauce with Pearl Onions and Ginger

Homemade cranberry sauce is like a sparkling jewel on the table. This jewel also packs flavor and a bit of warmth.

If you are looking for a really quick side dish to make for the upcoming holidays, but one with a definite wow factor, look no further. One pan, one quick cook, and a little simmering time, and you end up with a lovely sauce that marries well with not only turkey or another

big holiday meal, but chicken or even tofu on a weeknight.

In a small saucepan combine:

- ▶ 4 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- ▶ ¾ cup sugar
- ▶ ½ cup brandy
- ▶ ½ cup water
- ▶ 1 Serrano pepper, finely minced
- ▶ 1 heaping Tbsp. fresh ginger, grated
- ▶ Zest and juice of 1 lime
- ▶ Pinch of salt

Toss the lime carcasses in as well. Bring to a boil until the



DOROTHY GROVER-READ’s culinary talents can be found on her blog “The New Vintage Kitchen” (vintagekitchen.org), billed as “[a] Vermont innkeeper’s collection of classics reimagined for today’s kitchen,” from which these recipes are gleaned. Her column has regularly appeared in The Commons’ Food & Drink and other special sections for years.

sugar dissolves and reduce to a simmer.

- Add:
- ▶ 10 oz. frozen pearl onions, thawed

Cook until the cranberries have burst, and the sauce is thick, about 15 minutes. Let cool and serve.

■ SEE SIDE DISHES, B2



Sweet and savory at the same time, these maple glazed delicata squash rings couldn’t be easier. You don’t even need to seed them, and the skins of course are always edible.

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Side dishes

FROM SECTION FRONT

Don't like the flavor of ginger? Leave it out, or substitute with horseradish!

Maple-Roasted Delicata Squash

This is hardly even a recipe! It's quick enough for a week-night but lovely enough for company or holidays. There is just enough maple flavor for interest, but keep a watch on it, because the maple will burn quickly.

Preheat oven to 450 F. Brush a rimmed baking sheet with neutral oil and place in the oven to heat.

Prepare:

► 2 large delicata squash

Cut into 2-centimeter rings, and you don't need to bother to remove the seeds — most people don't mind their texture, and they add a lot of nutrition. But if you don't care for them, just use a paring knife to scrape them out. The skins are always edible and will tenderize.

Mix and set aside:

► 2 Tbsp. maple syrup, dark amber

► 2 Tbsp. olive oil, fruity

Once the oven is hot, remove the sheet and place 1 layer of squash rings on it. Pop them in the oven for 7 minutes. They will have started to soften.

Remove the squash from the oven and turn the rings over, and brush them with the maple mixture. Sprinkle them with salt, pepper, and a little smoked paprika.

Return them to the oven for another 5 minutes, or until they are fully cooked and browned.

Light and Lively Roasted or Grilled Oysters

When we taste an oyster, we taste the sea, pure and simple. There is nothing that can transport us to the shore better than

a plump oyster, fresh from the shell, preferably with just a squeeze of lemon. Add a glass of Prosecco and a friendly companion, and all is well in the universe.

But some prefer their oysters cooked, so this is a great way to offer them up, lightly dressed for the oven or charcoal grill, with plenty of flavor. Don't bury the oysters in a cream sauce, or cover them up with stuffing and spinach and bacon! Let the little bivalves shine in their splendor.

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Have ready:

► 2 cloves garlic, finely minced

► Dry white wine or lemon juice

► Crushed red pepper flakes

► 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, finely minced

► Parmesan, freshly and finely grated

Shuck:

► 1 dozen oysters

The cook deserves a treat, so help yourself to one or two straight up. If you have trouble shucking oysters, ask your fishmonger to do so for you, but mention that you want the liquor as well.

Most of us don't have an oyster pan, but you can crinkle aluminum foil and nestle in the oysters so they are stable and their juice won't leak out.

Sprinkle just a tiny bit of garlic onto each oyster, followed by 1 tsp. or so of white wine, and just a few crushed red pepper flakes. Sprinkle parsley and grated Parmesan over all — minimally, so the oysters shine through.

Broil for 5 to 6 minutes, depending on their size, or until the cheese is melted. Don't overcook! Serve immediately.

Even better: You can also do this on the grill for an additional smoky flavor.



DOROTHY GROVER-READ/THE COMMONS

Roasted or Grilled Oysters – Always a treat at the holidays, this simple and lighter recipe for roasted oysters makes everyone smile.

Pucker up!

Zesty lemon tart is a family favorite

I GREW UP in a family of lemon lovers — the more tart, the better. After a heavy holiday meal, a little slice of a zesty lemon tart is a perfect finish.

One of my mother's favorite tarts to make was her sister's lemon tart, only Mom always topped her version with meringue, probably because my aunt never did so with hers, and they were a bit competitive in the kitchen.

I've simplified my aunt's recipe and reduced the sugar, so the lemon curd filling is quite tart. But, as with everything else, I tell folks: If you like it sweeter, add more sugar! You can add up to ½ cup.

I used an all-butter crust here, but any favorite crust will do — even a packaged one, if you are pressed for time.

This recipe is for the holidays, and I didn't even try to make it less decadent. It just wouldn't be worth it. It's rich, and you only need a very small slice!

Now, pucker up!

- 1½ sticks unsalted butter, cubed
- Large pinch of salt
- ¾ cup superfine sugar

Place over medium heat. Once the butter has melted, keep stirring until the mixture is thickened; whisk as needed to keep everything smooth.

To determine if it's ready, make sure it is the consistency of a thick pudding. While it won't actually be boiling, you should see big pools of curd bubbles breaking through.

Press as much of the curd as you can through a wire mesh strainer, and don't forget to scrape what is left on the bottom of the sieve.

Pour the curd into your baked shell, and smooth it flat. Bake for about 10 minutes, just to finish setting the tart.

Cool completely — overnight is best — with a thin film of plastic wrap set directly on top to prevent a skin from forming. When you're ready to serve it, sprinkle the tart with powdered sugar.

You can also top this tart with whipped cream, or you can use it as a base for a luscious lemon meringue pie (which you can make using those reserved egg whites).

Basic Pastry

This recipe (originally published in the Oct. 7, 2020 issue) makes two crusts, and you can freeze the extra. Have all your ingredients, even the flour, well-chilled before you start.

In a food processor fitted with a steel blade, combine:

- 3 cups pastry or all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. Salt

Pulse a few times to combine, then add:

- ½ cup unsalted butter, cubed and well chilled
- ½ cup shortening (or solid



DOROTHY GROVER-READ/THE COMMONS

A luscious lemon tart is perfect after a rich holiday meal. This one is quite tart, but you can add more sugar if you've a sweet tooth.

coconut oil, or use another ½ cup of butter), chilled

Pulse quickly 6 or 7 times. The dough will look like coarse sand with some big clumps of butter in it. This is what you want.

In a liquid measuring cup with a pouring spout, add:

- ½ cup ice water (remove ice cubes)
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice or white vinegar

Drizzle almost all of the mixture over the dough and pulse again, quickly, six or seven times. Remove a little clump and squeeze it: if it sticks together easily, your dough is ready, even if it still looks

unmixed. If it falls apart, add the rest of the water and pulse once or twice. The dough will still look craggy and unmixed.

Pour the whole thing out on a lightly floured counter and very gently press the dough together, bringing up the loose sides.

If you have hot hands, keep your warm fingers off the dough by placing it on a large sheet of plastic wrap, gathering up the sides, and pressing the edges into the dough.

Continue until the dough forms a mass. Cut in two, and gently form into discs.

Your dough should still have visible bits of butter throughout. As it heats up in the oven, the water in the butter will create steam, which will add to the flakiness.

Wrap the discs of dough and place them in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. This is an important step, as the gluten in the flour will need to relax and the flour will need to absorb the water.

You can freeze the surplus dough at this point.



Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, November 25
9am - 2pm

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Holiday doings around the area

Learn to make holiday huts and gingerbread houses at Co-op

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Food Co-op offers free classes at its Community Room, 7 Canal St., for creating all kinds of edible homes. It is open to all ages and abilities.

Tierra Farms has donated dried fruits and seeds for students to use, and inspiring books and photos will be on hand so students can make yurts, round homes, and gingerbread houses. Everything will be held together with tempered chocolate made from Equal Exchange chocolate chips.

Choose from among four sessions: Saturday, Nov. 25, at 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m., or Saturday, Dec. 9, at 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m. Space is limited so early registration is recommended. To sign up, visit BFC.coop/calendar. List participants' names, ages, and dietary needs in the comments.

Holiday gifts featured at Craft fair

WARDSBORO — There will be a holiday craft fair on Saturday, Dec. 2, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Town Hall on Main Street.

Local vendors will have handmade items for sale, including jams and jellies, Maybelle Farms woolen items, crocheted hats and bags, jewelry, potholders and aprons, baked goods, and handmade wreaths by Scout Troop 428. There will also be a raffle for a breakfast basket filled with treats, and other items donated by vendors.

All Souls Church hosts holiday bazaar

WEST BRATTLEBORO — The annual All Souls Unitarian Universalist Holiday Bazaar will take place on Saturday, Dec. 2, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the West Village Meeting House, 29 South St.

The bazaar will feature handmade and decorated artisan wreaths and ornaments, as well as traditional holiday baked goods and other edibles, such as jams,

jellies, and baking mixes. Also planned are a gift emporium featuring handcrafted items, gift baskets, gift certificates to local businesses, and a raffle of a handmade quilt.

New this year is an Art Gift Sale, featuring affordable, original selections to take home in time for unique holiday gift-giving. Art will continue to be on sale Sundays 11 a.m. to noon through early January, or by appointment. Paintings and photographs were created by Maisie Crowther, Marie Gorst, Beth McKinney, Trish Murtha, Ann Newsmith, and Lois Reynolds, along with cards and calendars featuring the artists' work. For more information, visit ascvt.org.

Holiday supper served at West Townshend Country Store

WEST TOWNSHEND — The West River Community Project has a special holiday meal coming up on Saturday, Dec. 2, from the kitchen of Chef Neal Myers, who comes from a fine-dining background, including his tenure at the Windham Hill Inn for many years.

The menu features ham (raised locally by Litchfield Homestead), creamy scalloped potatoes, green beans, and dinner rolls. The suggested donation price is \$18 but, as always, this meal is available through the Pay-It-Forward program, meaning it is available for any price that works for diners' budgets. For more information, call 802-874-4800.

Holiday festival in Townshend

TOWNSHEND — The Townshend Holiday Festival takes place on Sunday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a variety of events.

A craft fair will take place downstairs in the Town Hall from noon to 4 p.m., while upstairs, the Townshend Public Library presents the Festival of Trees, a forest of artificial trees, decorated by community groups and members in fun, nontraditional themes.

Weather permitting at 1 p.m.,

there will be a horse parade with festively attired horses and their riders starting at Leland & Gray Union High School and traveling up to Valley Cares before returning. Santa will visit at Town Hall at 2 p.m., and a community reading of a shortened version of "A Christmas Carol" will be presented at Town Hall at 3 p.m.

The festival's concluding event begins at 4 p.m., when everyone is invited to meet on the front lawn of Town Hall for the annual tree lighting and songs of the season.

Latchis hosts two holiday concerts

BRATTLEBORO — The Latchis Theatre presents a pair of holiday concerts, one familiar and the other new.

"Sing Nowell" returns to the Latchis on Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m., for an evening of music, friends, and tradition in the legacy of Nowell Sing We Clear. Fred Breunig and Andy Davis will be joined by acclaimed vocal ensemble Windborne (Lauren Breunig, Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Lynn Rowan, and Will Rowan) as well as Arthur Davis, Emma Schneider, Guillaume Sparrow-Pepin, Donal Sheets, and Keith Murphy.

The concert is a benefit for Groundworks Collaborative. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the concert starts at 7 p.m. For wheelchair accommodation and other accessibility questions, contact Jon Potter at 802-254-1109, ext. 3, or jon@latchisarts.org. Tickets are available online and in-person; for more information, visit bit.ly/741-nowell.

Sunday, Dec. 10, Revels North — which is taking its Midwinter Revels on the road for the first time — comes to the Latchis for a 2 p.m. matinee performance. It will be a celebratory show full of music, dance, community singing, and more. Special guests for the Latchis performance are Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy. The performance is directed by Alex Cumming, with Sharon Grobicki (Revels Kids) and Laurel Swift (Dance).

Tickets are \$25, and there is a package opportunity to bundle

a Revels ticket with a ticket for the Dec. 5 Sing Nowell event at the Latchis for a combined price of \$40. For tickets, visit bit.ly/741-revels.

Townwide activities featured at 'Christmas in Grafton' event

GRAFTON — This year's "Christmas in Grafton" event on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., features Christmas tree and wreath sales, a dog parade, a visit from Santa Claus, a craft fair and homemade treats, a concert with Spencer Lewis, wagon rides, a gingerbread house extravaganza, cookie decorating and children's crafts, and a community fire with S'mores.

Christmas in Grafton is focused on supporting local businesses and is made possible by the Grafton Improvement Association and generous sponsors. See the complete schedule of events at visitgrafftonvt.com.

Guilford Community Church
HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Saturday, Dec. 2
9:00 - 1:00

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Dec. 1-2
Friday 4-8pm
Saturday 9-3pm

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A local Vermont holiday feast is at your fingertips

MONTPELIER — The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN) once again encourage those planning holiday dinners to remember that Vermont's local farms are ready to help.

Ingredients from the turkey to the stuffing, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, pies, and local beverages and spirits can be found at a farm, farmers market, or local grocery.

"Buying a Vermont turkey supports our rural communities. We are grateful for our farmers for their commitment to producing fresh food during this season of giving thanks," Agriculture

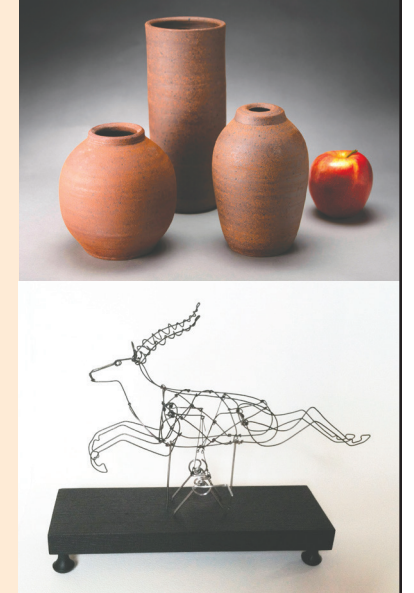
Secretary Anson Tebbetts said in a news release. "Thank you, farmers, for feeding us on this day and every day."

Vermont is home to many turkey farms and diversified farming operations raising turkeys. "To help locate your dream bird and other ingredients to grace your holiday table," VFN suggests checking out their Local Holiday Meal Finder at diginvt.com/localholiday.

And to add a little extra "spirit" to the spread, they suggest visiting the page for holiday Cider and Wine Pairings at bit.ly/741-bev. The Vermont Fresh Network can help connect people to a local farm and farmer.

Along with local turkeys, produce, and spirits, VFN can connect you with more local products for your holiday meal and beyond. Visit DiginVT.com — an interactive website for authentic agricultural and culinary events and experiences in Vermont.

Stephen Procter, Beth Armour and Bruce Campbell invite you to our **Artists' Holiday Studio Sale** November 24-25, 10:00-5:00 Stephen Procter Studios 76 Cotton Mill Hill, Brattleboro



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'Generosity Fair' heralds the season

SAXTONS RIVER — On Saturday, Nov. 25, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., in Assembly Hall at the 24 Main Street Community Center, nonprofit organizations associated with the greater Rockingham area will be gathering to showcase their activities and provide the opportunity to turn individuals' generosity into meaningful holiday gift-giving.

The public is invited to attend the Generosity Fair to learn more about charitable work done near and far by those living in our area. The Fair has been organized by the 24 Main Street Community Building and Anne Manner-McLarty, a nonprofit consultant who now lives in Saxtons River.

"Please join us and consider making donations in the name of your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers," organizers said in a news release. "For each donation made, attendees will receive a gift card provided by the nonprofit organizations,

and an ornament will be placed on the holiday tree inside the Community Building. Some organizations will have other items for sale and benefits for different levels of giving."

Light snacks and general holiday cheer will be shared with all. Patrons are reminded to bring a checkbook or cash, as not all organizations accept credit cards in-person or through online giving.

A Generosi-Tea service will be offered before the fair. Visit mainstreetarts.org/come-for-tea.html to learn more and to register. For additional information about the Fair, contact Manner-McLarty at anne@heurista.com.

Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.

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Well-marked signs, and tour maps lead the way. Start at the Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits Welcome Center where you will find an exhibition of the artisans' work. Sandglass Theater offers a performance of Crankies on Fri. and Sat. To see more about the artists, and to download the map and sign up for our newsletter go to: putneycrafts.com.



“Early Morning Quiet” by Judy Hawkins.

COURTESY PHOTO



Judy Hawkins has been part of the Putney Craft Tour for many years.

COURTESY PHOTO



Ken Pick, seen here in his younger days, was one of the founders of the Putney Craft Tour.

COURTESY PHOTO

Putney Craft Tour

FROM SECTION FRONT

an adventure in itself.”
 “Not everyone knows what they are getting into when they walk into a studio, as there can often be an element of surprise,” says Pick, whose studio and gallery are in an old tobacco barn surrounded by gardens and fields as well as a 200-year-old maple. Sculptures and ceramic benches grace the garden, and large, colorful platters are showcased inside and out.
 “The craft tour has helped put Putney on the map with hundreds of visitors moving through the studios over the course of the three days and engaging with the artists—the real draw of such tours,” Burch says. For him, the tour is a family affair with daughter Caitlin, a jewelry maker, and son Ryan, who makes functional ceramics, joining the tour.

“I always ask people if it’s their first time if I don’t recognize them,” says landscape painter Judy Hawkins. “I try to touch base with every person who comes in. I find people love to have a conversation. It opens their eyes to my work. Sometimes people stay in the studio for an hour; it’s not just in and out.”
 For Hawkins, the bond that develops between the craftspeople and the visitors is what makes the Putney Craft Tour so meaningful. Another early tour member: the Green Mountain Spinnery, chiefly engaged in machine spinning and dyeing of yarn from New England fleece, also—since its founding as a cooperative in 1981—markets sweater patterns designed by Putney artists to go with their array of many-colored yarns.
 Craftspeople in Putney have worked with the schools, offered workshops to children, and have taken on apprentices. For the last several years, The Putney Craft Tour has partnered with Sandglass Theater to offer performances during the tour. The craft tour also supports the Putney Food Shelf by offering items for sale in their studios to benefit the food shelf.

by Windham College, the Yellow Barn Music Festival, The Putney School, and the Experiment in International Living. Some of those artists went on to start the Putney Craft Tour.
 Although the tour was begun as a hospitable commercial venture, many of the craftspeople who joined felt that in celebrating the process by demonstrating how the work was made, in the setting where it happens, they would give the public not just interesting entertainment, but a new respect for the value of the finished product.
 It was this aesthetic and educational aspect as much as the commercial one that provided the stimulus to keep it going. Torrey’s persistent organizing called together the current resident independent craftspeople each spring to form a group and do it once again.
 Sharing the many tasks involved, they produced the tour of crafts studios in Putney that eventually became such a very successful enterprise and was so enjoyed by participants from far and wide, that it became a model for the Vermont Crafts Council and many other communities in Vermont and elsewhere.

A little background
 The artists had been in and around Putney, drawn into its creative orbit in the late 1960s and early 1970s for many reasons, including the back-to-the-land movement, the rise of American craft, and the powerful cluster of creative souls brought there

Well-marked signs and tour maps show the way for visitors. Folks can start at the Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits welcome center where they will find an exhibition of the artisans’ work. Visit putneycrafts.com for more information about the artists, download the map, and sign up for the Craft Tour newsletter.

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Bob Burch, one of the founders of the Putney Craft Tour, has been part of every tour since it began in 1978.

COURTESY PHOTO

'Santa's Belles' present a holiday drag show at the BF Moose Lodge

BELLOWS FALLS—Bellows Falls Pride has invited Vermont's premiere drag queens to perform in a holiday drag show on Friday, Dec. 8, at the Moose Lodge, 59 Westminster St. Hosted by Emoji Nightmare, "Santa's Belles" will take to the stage for an adult-only evening beginning at 9 p.m. Doors open at 8 p.m. for this 18-and-over show.

The festivities will include a celebration of local Gay Games Guadalajara participants Roger Barraby (track) of Windsor and Carl Anhalt (water polo) of Bellows Falls.

Performers for "Santas Belles" feature Anita Cocktail, Emoji Nightmare, Rita Cocktail, Katniss Everqueer, Moxxi Hart, and Jack Rose, and Prince Muffin, with music by Mama Dukes.

Anita Cocktail is the co-host of monthly drag shows at Merchants Hall in Rutland and performs in surrounding towns north of Bellows Falls. For the last five years, her performances have included themed stage revues, public events and, more recently, the inclusion of burlesque performers from Burning Roses Burlesque. Anita also performs as her drag king alter ego, King Cocktail.

As a special holiday perk, Jasper Forest of Ludlow will offer their Oxygen Bar experience for patrons. This fast-growing opportunity is safe and provided by business owner Jennifer Esposito, who travels with the Oxygen Bar



Santa's Belles will bring holiday cheer with a drag show presented by Bellows Falls Pride on Dec. 8 at the Moose Lodge. Above: Anita Cocktail, Emoji Nightmare, and Rita Cocktail. Below: Katniss Everqueer, Moxxi Hart and Jack Rose, and Prince Muffin.

to corporate, sports, and health events, as well as festivals, weddings, and other private parties and public venues.

The cost is \$20 for the first 10-minute oxygen session. Additional 5-minute increments cost \$5 with all sessions including

the option of your choice of aromatherapy. Credit cards, cash, and Venmo accepted.

Food will also be available for purchase.

Bellows Falls Pride is a new program of the nonprofit Rockingham Arts & Museum

Project, founded in 1997. For wheelchair accessibility and other questions, contact the Moose Lodge at 802-463-4054.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased in advance on the Rockingham Arts & Museum Project website at ramp-vt.org. Click on the Donate button, choose Other and indicate Drag Show in the note line. Confirmation will be emailed to you upon purchase. Find out more at bellowsfallspride.com.

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NEW ENGLAND YOUTH THEATRE

Wardsboro Curtain Call presents 'Yes Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus'

WARDSBORO—Wardsboro Curtain Call cordially invites everyone to attend their performance as they re-tell the heartwarming story about Virginia, her family and neighbors, the difficulties of an immigrant family struggling to live and work in New York City at the end of the 1800s, and the bountiful joys of the Christmas season.

The letter to *The Sun* newspaper that eight-year-old Virginia wrote at the urging of her father in New York City and the editorial response written by Francis Pharcellus Church have come to be known around the world. They were printed in the Sept. 21, 1897, edition of *The Sun*.

Originally, the editorial was published anonymously. It was only after Church's death in 1906 that his authorship was made known. From 1924 to 1950, Virginia's letter and

Church's reply were reprinted every year until the paper ceased publication. The editorial continues to be printed by many papers even now and has gained notoriety as the most reprinted editorial in the English language.

Some liberties were taken when the story was written. Virginia's father, Philip O'Hanlon, was actually a surgeon. In the play, you will come to know him as James O'Hanlon, a dock worker. It has been written that his response to Virginia's question asking about the existence of Santa Claus was not adequate, so he suggested she write to *The Sun*, which she did.

She waited so long for an answer that she eventually forgot about it, until a friend of her father's called, saying the editorial was the most wonderful piece of writing he had ever seen. Edward Mitchell, the

editor-in-chief at *The Sun*, had come across the letter and gave it to Church who wrote the reply in an afternoon.

Virginia grew up to be an English teacher in New York and received correspondence about her letter until her death in 1971.

Virginia's handwritten letter was returned to her family by the newspaper. It was authenticated by an appraiser on the popular public television show, *Antiques Roadshow*, in 1997. Its value at that time was estimated to be \$50,000. Currently, the letter is in the care of her great-granddaughter.

The performances of *Yes Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus* are scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m. at the Wardsboro Town Hall. Admission is free and all are welcome.

Stephen Procter Studios hosts open house and holiday sale

BRATTLEBORO—Stephen Procter Studios hosts an open house and holiday sale Friday and Saturday, Nov. 24 and 25, at The Cotton Mill, 76 Cotton Mill Hill. The studio will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Artists Beth Armour and Bruce Campbell will show their sculptural work alongside Procter's ceramic vessels.

Procter is best known for his human-scale clay vessels. "The bare clay he favors evokes antiquity and the earthiness of stone," reports a news release. "His signature scale is monumental, and his pieces are found in gardens and landscapes across the Northeast." Alongside those he will be showing smaller pieces — both for the garden and for the home, and for holiday gift-giving.

Campbell's small wire sculptures are "whimsical and ingenious three-dimensional line drawings," say organizers. His animals and insects often incorporate simple levers to activate legs, wings, and tails. Alongside his wire animals he will be offering kinetic sculptures that explore planets and stars — and how the universe might work if moved by similar gears and levers.

Armour's tabletop sculptures



Three examples of Stephen Procter's work.

reflect her interest in Japanese aesthetics. Armour says she started her artistic career as a popular maker of tableware, and after a hiatus of many years she has returned to clay "with a sculptor's eye." The mottled and satin surfaces she achieves with smoke firing and hand-burnishing "suggest the quality

and resonant beauty of age-old patina, and they create a seamless union of surface and form."

The artists invite everyone to come enjoy the show, conversation with the artists, and holiday cheer and snacks. For more information, email info@stephenprocter.com, call or text 802-490-4983.



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COLUMN | Deeper Dive

‘The problem is unrestrained capitalism’

Epsilon Spires presents ‘They Live,’ John Carpenter’s 1988 anti-consumerist cult-classic film — on Black Friday

WHICH HOLIDAY IS scarier: Halloween or Black Friday? If you answered the latter, you may find comfort and fellowship on Friday, Nov. 24, when arts organization Epsilon Spires screens John Carpenter’s anti-consumerist cri de coeur, *They Live*.

Described as a science fiction action horror film, *They Live* stars Roddy Piper (known to WrestleMania fans as “Rowdy” Roddy Piper), Keith David, and Meg Foster. In addition to directing the film, Carpenter (under the pseudonym “Frank Armitage”) also wrote the screenplay, based on the 1963 short story by Ray Nelson, *Eight O’Clock in the Morning*.

The film follows Piper’s character, John Nada, as he arrives, alone and homeless, in the industrial badlands of Los Angeles. Although the skilled laborer was left bereft of an income and stability by the bosses who laid him off after 10 years on the job, Nada still subscribes, in the beginning of the film, to the patriotic bootstrap myth of “hard work equals a good life.”

But, after Nada has a series of eye-opening experiences — such as meeting other hard-working people who are forced to live in a homeless encampment, then seeing that encampment and a nearby church destroyed in an unprovoked police raid — he begins to question his beliefs.

Other events challenge his worldview, such as the discovery of a special pair of sunglasses that render the landscape in monotone.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Los Angeles and beyond, a



John Carpenter’s 1988 anti-consumerist cult classic, “They Live,” will be shown at Epsilon Spires on Nov. 24.

WENDY M. LEVY is a former reporter and columnist for this newspaper. The Commons’ Deeper Dive column gives artists, arts organizations, and other nonprofits elbow room to write in first person and/or be unabashedly opinionated, passionate, and analytical about their own creative work and events.

plague of inhumane consumerism seems to be overtaking society. Magazines, billboards, politicians, and television all encourage the viewer to buy into the worship of money and selfishness.

Nada begins to wonder: Might there be a connection between this new ethos, the brutality of the police against already-struggling people, and those sunglasses?

While in the business district of Los Angeles, he puts on the sunglasses, and the secret is

revealed. The film then moves into its “science fiction horror” phase of social commentary.

The widespread worship of money and selfishness is a plot enacted by ghoulish aliens disguised as yuppies, who have come to Earth to further global warming and kill off humanity so they can extract all of the planet’s natural resources.

AS CARPENTER has detailed numerous times since the film’s release, *They Live* was his expression of rage against

Reaganism.

He told *Starlog* magazine, in a 1988 interview, “The picture’s premise is that the ‘Reagan Revolution’ is run by aliens from another galaxy. Free enterprisers from outer space have taken over the world, and are exploiting Earth as if it’s a third world planet. As soon as they exhaust all our resources, they’ll move on to another world [...] I began watching TV again. I quickly realized that everything we see is designed to sell us something. [...] It’s all about wanting us to buy something. The only thing they want to do is take our money.”

Carpenter’s prescience doesn’t stop with just consumerism, and the film’s message didn’t stop with the Reagan-Bush years.

The aliens’ diabolical plot to exploit and destroy the planet and humans, then blithely move elsewhere in the Solar System, may sound familiar to modern-day readers who track the shenanigans of robber barons like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk. Instead of using their vast wealth and power to improve this planet and the people in it, they destroy lives and communities, then build rockets to go to Mars.

As Carpenter told *Esquire* in 2016, just before Donald Trump was elected, “I made *They Live* back in 1988, and nothing has changed! Everything has stayed the same. Reaganomics has continued to flourish [...] The problem is unrestrained capitalism. It’s worshipped and adored by everybody here. Well, not everybody, but a lot of people.”

On Black Friday, the biggest consumerist day of the year, instead of getting hypothermia from camping out waiting for Walmart to open, or cramping your hands from scrolling through Amazon, gather with friends and strangers in the sanctuary of a repurposed historic church and watch an ingeniously simple and subversive satire of our modern worship of mammon.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m.; the film begins at 8 p.m. Admission is \$15 and includes popcorn and light refreshments. For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit epsilonspires.org.

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BMAC, Retreat Farm invite Artful Ice Shanty entries

BRATTLEBORO—Artists, ice fishing enthusiasts, and builders of all ages and experience levels are invited to enter the 2024 Artful Ice Shanties outdoor exhibition presented by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) and Retreat Farm.

The exhibition will be held Feb. 17–25, with a closing ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 24, at 3 p.m. The exhibition and closing ceremony will take place on the Retreat Meadows ice across the road from Retreat Farm or, in case of unsafe ice, on the grounds of Retreat Farm itself, at 45 Farnhouse Square.

The deadline to register a shanty is Friday, Dec. 15. The first 15 artists or groups to register will receive a \$200 stipend upon delivery of their shanty. There is no fee for entry. Registration forms and details are available at brattleboromuseum.org.

Launched in 2021 when the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift to outdoor activities, Artful Ice Shanties celebrates artistic talent, creative ingenuity, winter spirit, and the rich history of ice fishing in New England, say organizers. Last year, more than 2,000 people visited the 15 shanties on display.

According to a news release,

Artful Ice Shanties entries can be traditional or conceptual, functional or wacky, permanent or temporary—as long as they can be moved and can withstand the wind, snow, and ice in mid-February, as well as exploration by the general public throughout the week.

Past entries have included a translucent box that used recycled lenses to simulate the experience of the northern lights, a shanty made from bent willow branches in the shape of a giant fish, an enormous black die with moons as dots, a seascape featuring a three-dimensional octopus, and Namaskonek, a shanty inspired

by the Algonquin ancestors of the region.

“Artful Ice Shanties has become one of Brattleboro’s signature winter events,” said BMAC Director Danny Lichtenfeld. “It’s a wonderful mix of art and outdoor recreation, two Vermont passions; and it’s inspired by the long tradition of ice fishing in our area.”

Artful Ice Shanties is generously sponsored by Foard Panel, The Marina, Berkley & Veller, and Brattleboro Subaru. It was inspired by Art Shanty Projects in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sandglass Theater presents ‘A Rafter of Crankies’ on Nov. 24 and 25

PUTNEY—Sandglass Theater’s “A Rafter of Crankies” is back at Green Mountain Orchards on West Hill Road for the third consecutive year. Performances will take place on Friday, Nov. 24, at 7:30 p.m. and on Saturday, Nov. 25, at 5 and 7:30 p.m. Once again, the Crankies event will be part of the Putney Craft Tour on Thanksgiving Weekend.

Crankies are panoramic scrolls that are hand-cranked using handles on either side of a box that the scrolls wind through. “The effect is like watching the analog ancestor of a movie, or a comic strip that combines with a song or story,” say organizers. Although they are often associated with Appalachian folk tradition, today’s crankies embrace cultural, musical, and artistic expressions that are contemporary “and as unpredictable as the weather.”

This year’s performing artists include Rafter founders Eric Bass, Ines Zeller Bass, and Brendan Taaffe, all with new crankies created especially for this event.

New to the event are: Emily Schubert, from Pennsylvania, who has enriched the national crankie scene as director of the famed Baltimore Crankie Fest, and Alexandra Gorlin-Crenshaw, from Montreal, who performs in Yiddish with hand-made fold-out books, a cousin of crankies. Brattleboro’s John Ungerleider, known locally as a songwriter and social justice activist, will enter the crankie arena with a first-ever scroll of his *Mr. Mariposa*, a work about climate change, illustrated by Maddy Conley.

Why a Rafter of Crankies? “Rafter” is the group name for turkeys (just as fish group in schools or geese in gaggles). Just look at the ceiling of Green Mountain Orchards and you’ll see why the name fits for a group of crankies as well. “And on Thanksgiving weekend,” ask organizers, “what better way to tie the rafter together than with the traditional meal and a crankie performance?”

Sandglass will also be part of the Putney Craft Tour, with

BMC Chamber Series presents Musicians from Marlboro-Group II

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Music Center (BMC) Chamber Series welcomes Musicians from Marlboro Group II Saturday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m.

This program pairs Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Ten Blake Songs” for tenor and oboe with Scottish composer Helen Grime’s Oboe Quartet and the expansive majesty of Brahms’s Piano Quartet in A major.

Performers joining tenor Patrick Bessenbacher will include Itamar Zorman, violin; Haesue Lee, viola; Brannon Cho, cello; Filippo Gorini, piano; and Mary Lynch VanderKolk, oboe.

Musicians from Marlboro tours are noted “not only for their joyous performances but also for offering valuable touring experience to artists at the beginning of their careers and touring with unusual chamber repertoire,” say organizers. In the words of *The Washington Post*, “Musicians from Marlboro is a virtual guarantee of musical excellence!”

Tickets for the concert, to be held at the BMC, are \$30 general admission and are available online at bmcvt.org, by contacting 802-257-4523 or info@bmcvt.org.

puppets and crankies for sale at Sandglass Theater’s workshop, behind the theater at 17 Kimball Hill in Putney Village.

Heating will run before and between shows; the temperature in the building should be somewhere between outdoors and cozy. Bring layers. Cider and baked snacks will be available by donation.

Tickets for A Rafter of

Crankies are \$20 for adults, \$18 for students and seniors, and \$16 for EBT and Medicaid cardholders. They can be purchased online or at the door. No one will be turned away from this event for lack of funds. For more information, visit: sandglasstheater.org (sandglasstheater.org/shows/current/crankies).

Kat Wright, Brett Hughes bring holiday show to Next Stage

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present singer-songwriters Kat Wright and Brett Hughes with their quartet performing songs of the season at Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill, on Friday, Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Next Stage Production Director Barry Stockwell said in a news release that Wright is “an incredibly versatile and

gifted singer. Kat performs with her eight-piece soul band, her rootsy/funky trio, her folk duo with Brett, and the Vermont Symphony Orchestra. We’re thrilled to bring her back to Putney for one of just a handful of annual holiday shows that she’s doing.”

Wright and Hughes join forces this December for their 10th annual Vermont holiday tour. The

show also features Tyler Bolles (Swale, Rough Francis) on upright bass and multi-instrumentalist Will Seeders (Carling & Will, Caitlin Canty), who offer songs of holiday heartbreak and holiday cheer.

“If a holiday is an opportunity to journey within,” says Stockwell, “Kat and Brett are the perfect lighthearted guides. For more than a decade, they

have cultivated a show that ushers in the yuletide season and has become a beloved tradition not to be missed for their growing audiences.”

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for access to the livestream. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. Beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar provided. For information, call 802-387-0102.

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COLUMN | Readers Respond

What holiday tradition or a fond memory brings you comfort, solace, or hope?

IN WHAT for many is an exceptionally difficult year, we asked *Commons* readers on Facebook to share enduring memories of holiday moments that permanently resonate.

Robin Rieske: We always got to open one special gift the night before Christmas that my mom would pick out. And she always wrapped our presents in color-coded paper so we would not try to sneak and figure out what we were getting. She would not tell us until the morning of Christmas whose color was whose, and sometimes she would trick us because she went out of ribbon that had a different code. She was a single mom of three. I look back now and think,

“Wow — you rock, Mom!”

Barbara Gantt: Our oldest Christmas tradition is reading the Christmas Story from my Grandma’s Bible. She was born in 1900 and passed in 1999. I remember this from my childhood.

The oldest man reads and then prays for the family — thanking God for His blessing to us.

Nancy Braus: My family has held an ongoing Thanksgiving dinner since long before I was born. In 1941, I believe, the dinner was postponed until the relatives my great grandfather sponsored arrived. Grete had somehow sprung Victor from Auschwitz, and they were arriving by boat. Our families

have celebrated all big events together ever since.

Rolf Parker-Houghton: On the solstice, Cynthia Parker-Houghton and I have flung a little man made of seitan off of a hill (bit.ly/seitan-man). Originally it was all a joke about making a “seitanic sacrifice” — a good laugh to get through the hardship of the dark.

But it morphed somewhat, and now we say if the sun gives more light, it means the little man made from meat-alternative products has succeeded in reigniting the sun. We still do it as part of the University of Brattleboro’s attempts to bring some humor into the dark.

Zara Bodē: Once we break out



Heather Taylor: Bringing order out of chaos — one tiny jigsawed piece at a time.

the Johnny Mathis Christmas record around here, it is *on*.

Mark French: In my family, we had a tradition of “The Christmas Game,” passed

down from my mother’s parents.

After Christmas Eve dinner, we would all sit around the table. Three decks of cards were shuffled and the cards handed

out one at a time to each family member, minus 12 cards from a separate deck that would each be placed face down with prizes on top of them.

My grandfather would use the one deck that the prize cards had been pulled from to call out each remaining card, one at a time. Anyone who had a card left over at the end would win the prize that was on top of the corresponding down-facing card.

This tradition carried over long after my grandparents had passed away.

Mark Ebenhoch: Snow. Virgin snow!

Angela C. Taormina: As the final tree decoration, the youngest in the family was always lifted up high enough to place the star on top of the tree.

Diana Vogel Toomey: Listening to Dylan Thomas read *A Child’s Christmas in Wales*.

COLUMN | Arts Notebook

A dialogue with the wood

Gallery in the Woods features exhibit by Massachusetts artist Nan Salky

AS A CHILD, artist Nan Salky writes on her website (nansalky.com), “I was left free to explore the natural world. I felt exceptionally alive.” The resulting connectedness with nature and her raw materials is crisply evident in her show, on exhibit through Nov. 27 at Gallery in the Woods, 145 Main St.

“She was more into painting on canvas,” according to the Gallery’s Dante Corsano. “She’s always been inclined to use wood.”

Works from the current collection — ranging from platter size to several feet, he says — “have a different feel.” In a rich palette of colors, patterns, and styles, Salky works sympathetically with the flow of each piece of wood.

Through the Gallery’s



ANNIE LANDEMBERGER is an arts writer and columnist for *The Commons*. She remains involved with the *Rock River Players*, the community theater that she founded and directed for years. She also is one half of the musical duo *Bard Owl*, with partner T. Breeze Verdant.

ground-level displays of an eclectic range of art and craft, one passes works deeply grounded, others surreal; some visionary and spiritually compelling, others with a folk-art appeal; and some just remarkable works of art. Down the stairs to the lower level gallery one comes upon these Salky paintings.

Mostly on live-edge wood — though one piece is on a chair seat and another on an old printer’s type tray — Salky aims, it seems, to find in a piece of salvaged wood its grain and

lifelines, its curvatures and expressions.

In one set that’s darker in tones, one finds myth-inspired owls, talons, and teeth. In another set, waves and elucidations of a plank’s knots appear in bright tones that speak a different frame of mind.

“I WAS ORIGINALLY inspired to work on live-edge wood after discovering old wide pine boards left behind in our 1930s barn,” Salky, of Amherst, Massachusetts, says in her artist’s statement. “My husband,

Tom [Murphy], a skilled woodworker, pulled them from the dark basement, culling solid sections with beautiful natural curves.”

She observes that “the live edges that curve sensuously, the beautiful bark left intact and the lines of spalting, inspire a kind of dialogue with the wood.

“The sapwood, lighter in color, that has carried water and sap to the tree’s leaves and the strong central heartwood with its rich dark hues seem to speak a language of their own,” Salky continues.

“I begin the ‘conversation’ by following the natural lines in the wood, making marks spontaneously and animating shapes that have captured my imagination. My hope is to reveal something mysterious that lives within each piece.”



COURTESY PHOTO

Detail from a work by Nan Salky, now on display at Gallery in the Woods in Brattleboro.

A BRATTLEBORO MAINSTAY for 20 years, Gallery in the Woods shows curated works in three floors of its Main Street home.

While his daughter, Aurora Corsano, has taken over the gallery, it was Dante Corsano who opened in the present space 20 years ago with his wife, Suzanne, to offer a collection that’s grown to include artists and craftspeople from Vermont

and nearby states as well as from around the globe all aiming to expose and express the human experience through fine art, jewelry, craft, and folk art.

After the Salky exhibit moves on, a smaller body of her work will remain on display. For more information, contact the gallery at 802-257-4777 or galleriinthewoods@gmail.com.

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WITNESSES to



On the 60th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, a lifelong educator with an interest in unraveling the persistent questions about the national tragedy shares what he and his students heard in conversations with two people who were there at the time

THERE COULD BE no predicting the consequences of a 13-year-old junior high school student hearing a public address announcement stating that President John F. Kennedy had been shot and killed in Dallas, Texas. I was captivated by the images on television from Friday afternoon, Nov. 22, 1963, through the president's burial on Nov. 25.

The haunting cadence of the funeral dirge is still with me now, 60 years later.

I began my classroom instruction of the Kennedy assassination during my first year as an educator in 1972, and I have taught the assassination for over 50 years. I've taught teachers and students alike in classes ranging from two or three days to a full-semester class at Brattleboro Union High School in 2006. I have made numerous presentations to historical societies, libraries, service organizations, a humanities council, and conferences.

In 1999, I was awarded the National Teacher of the Year Award from JFK Lancer, for which I spoke on the Grassy Knoll in Dealey Plaza at the organization's solemn ceremony, which always includes a moment of silence at 12:30 p.m. Central Standard Time — at the location of and at the time of the shooting in Dallas.

I have had presentations in my classroom, both virtual and in person, from people who have been touched by the JFK assassination. I examined truckloads of documents and evidence that included, astonishingly, autopsy photographs of Lee Harvey Oswald, who the Warren Commission concluded was the lone assassin.

I am an educator. I am not a researcher. I am not a conspiracy theorist, nor do I advocate for the lone-nut-assassin version of the truth promoted by the Warren Commission.

My purpose is to share what my students and I have learned from those who witnessed various aspects of the assassination: researchers, doctors, and EMS personnel who tried to save President Kennedy and Oswald, and from others who have provided firsthand accounts from that day.

It's a complicated case, and I make no effort to solve it or suggest the mountain of theories as to who was involved or what motivation one (or more) assassins might have had. I have collected what eyewitnesses and researchers told me and my students.

Abraham Bolden: Some Secret Service agents 'would shoot [JFK] themselves if they had a chance'

Editor's note: This segment quotes the first African American Secret Service agent to serve on a presidential detail for U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Out of respect for Abraham Bolden, a person of color who related vile racial slurs addressed to him and deliberately told his story with the full emotional weight of that language, we are not redacting a particular word that we can all acknowledge is hurtful and offensive.

ONE PRIMARY SOURCE for the Kennedy White House was Abraham Bolden, though I did not even know who he was until I heard him speak at a conference in 2008.

Bolden was the first African American Secret Service agent in the presidential detail and, for three months in 1961, one of the agents assigned to protect President Kennedy. It is important to point out that Bolden was *not* with the presidential detail in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. But he has pointed remarks about the Secret Service, his treatment as an African American, and what happened in Dallas.

When I met with Bolden, he emphasized the importance of educating America's youth about what happened. He later conversed with my students via videoconference, and, on one occasion in 2009, we met with him in Dallas.

Abraham Bolden says of himself, "I was born in southern Illinois, near Carbondale. I grew up in a poor family, and we didn't have very much. My dad was a carpenter and a butcher. We went to high school there.

"East St. Louis, Illinois was what we would call a segregated, prejudiced city," he told us. "We had separate drinking fountains."

"When I was a young man, I wanted to be two things. I wanted to be a policeman and a musician. I got pretty good at music. I played the trumpet. I graduated high school in East St. Louis, Illinois. I then went to Lincoln University and majored in music. That was what I loved. But I always had this yearning to be in law."

Bolden became a Secret Service agent after having served in the Illinois State Police. He was admitted and assigned to its Chicago office.

In 1961, the president was coming to Chicago to thank Mayor Daley for Daley's help in winning the presidential election of 1960 for Kennedy. Chicago would be named the host city of the 1968 Democratic nominating convention as a reward for this support.



WALT CISCO/DALLAS MORNING NEWS, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
President John F. Kennedy, First Lady Jackie Kennedy, and Texas Gov. John Connally and wife Nellie Connally in the presidential motorcade in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

WILLIAM HOLIDAY, retired from a long career teaching history at Brattleboro Union High School and in the wider community, has just written and published JFK Assassination: What They Told Me, a book that conveys the educator's 50-year history of seeking to unravel the truths behind the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on Nov. 22, 1963.

Holiday serves as a conduit for the firsthand accounts that he has, with the help of generations of students, accumulated over time, introducing his students to sources whose accounts can add to the body of knowledge of a heartbreaking day in the life of the United States. He introduces witnesses to the assassination, both direct and indirect, who have shared their stories with him and his students over the years.

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, The Commons brings you two of Holiday's accounts from his book, as well as some of his introductory words to contextualize his interest in and experience with this material.

We have adapted and condensed these accounts for our pages while intending to remain faithful to the richer and more finely grained versions in his book, which he suggests would be useful "for educators to think beyond the daily activities within the four walls of the classroom," he writes. "Opportunities can be arranged for students to experience history firsthand rather than through textbooks."

JFK Assassination: What They Told Me is available at Everyone's Books in Brattleboro and The Toadstool Bookshop in Keene, or at bit.ly/741-jfk.

He was to speak at McCormick Place, a world-class convention center.

"[With my] being the first African American agent stationed in Chicago, they had a little joke going, and they gave me a position that was normally held by a Chicago uniformed policeman — standing in front of the washroom of McCormick Place in Chicago."

But "I had to start at the bottom," he said. "I didn't complain. I just went there and stood in front of the washroom that night, April 28, 1961."

"I could hear the band. [...] I looked up at the top of the steps. And lo and behold, there's President Kennedy, and the first thing he wants to do is use the washroom.

"He walked up to me with this wonderful smile on his face. The president, that smile was a gift. When he smiled, his eyes smiled, every part about him smiled. He walked in and stood directly in front of me. I didn't know whether to back up or step aside.

"I was right in front of the door. I moved to the side. He moved to the side, and then he said, 'Are you a Secret Service agent?' Kennedy turned to his staff and asked, 'Has there ever been a Negro on the White House Secret Service detail?' Kennedy turned to me and asked, 'Would you like to be the first?'

"Yes, sir, Mr. President."

President Kennedy's response was, "I'll be looking forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C."

WHEN ABRAHAM BOLDEN became the first African American on the presidential detail, he ran into a "hornet's nest of racism" around the president.

"I was called the 'N-word' by many of the Secret Service agents who were surrounding the president of the United States," he said.



Abraham Bolden

BILL HOLIDAY/COURTESY PHOTO

"Here's a president who is going on TV almost weekly, talking about the injustice of the people in the United States of America. And here are our agents surrounding him in his detail, who are calling him a nigger-lover [Bolden's choice of wording]."

Bolden pointed out the dichotomy. "He is a man full of love and justice," he said. "And he's surrounded by some agents who would shoot him themselves if they had a chance."

Even after 40 years, "it still affects me because I had an affection for President Kennedy," Bolden said. "I saw in him a man who had deep within him the welfare of all the citizens of the United States of America. He had won the trust and hearts of people across all sections, Blacks, and whites, and Jews — all types of people.

"He had their confidence. He had given, especially the minorities in America, a new hope, a new dream in the freedoms that he had exposed."

Kennedy knew he was putting a spotlight on Bolden. "President Kennedy told me, 'As the first African American, I'm looking for you to demonstrate the same patience and attitude as Jackie Robinson. You're the Jackie Robinson of the Secret Service.'"

■ STORY CONTINUES



looks over a lawn, a rambling stone wall to the meadow and mountain views. Entry porch has EV charger. There is two bay basement garage with high ceilings, ample work space, washer, dryer and laundry sink. The 32 x 40 barn has a workroom and a loft.

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The woman nicknamed “Babushka Lady,” far right, appears in numerous eyewitness photographs and video footage filming the presidential motorcade in Dallas. Since 1970, Beverly Oliver has maintained that she is the mystery woman, and that authorities confiscated her undeveloped film several days after Kennedy’s assassination.



“You can’t fool me,” Bolden said. “When I met President Kennedy, I could tell he was a sincere man. When I looked into his eyes, they were soft. His smile was genuine.”

“When I was with him in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, he took me over and introduced me to his father, his mother, and [his brother,] Robert Kennedy. We all stood around talking. He didn’t have to do that. He didn’t even have to look at me once I reached the White House detail, but he did.”

Bolden recalls that on his first day in the White House, “a cabinet meeting was getting out of session. Sen. Hubert Humphrey was there and the Secretary of State [Dean Rusk]. President Kennedy looked up, and he saw me. He said, ‘Mr. Bolden, I see that you made it here.’”

The President didn’t know whether Bolden was Republican or Democrat. “It didn’t make any difference to him,” he said.

“He introduced me to Evelyn Lincoln [President Kennedy’s secretary]; Pierre Salinger, who was his [press secretary]. And this touched me very much. The president said, ‘Pierre, come in, I want to introduce you to somebody.’”

“I want you to meet Abraham Bolden,” Bolden recalls Kennedy saying. “He’s the Jackie Robinson of the Secret Service. It just melted my heart.”

Bolden’s Secret Service supervisor was a different story. “Harvey Henderson, my supervisor, looked at me, and he said, ‘I’m going to tell you something, and don’t you ever forget it.’ He looked me right in the eye. ‘You’ll never be anything but a nigger. You’re a nigger. You were born a nigger. You’re gonna die a nigger, and you will never be anything else but a nigger. So, act like it.’”

“Nooses were put on my desk.”

“I saw this. I saw laxity and overconfidence. I saw a cavalier attitude. I heard agents who made statements like, ‘If there is an assassination attempt on the president, I won’t protect him. I won’t do anything. I’d let it happen.’”

“You can imagine,” Bolden said. “The president is sending troops into the South to enforce integration, and he has a supervisor like this on his detail.”

Bolden’s options were limited, he said.

“I wouldn’t have benefited by doing anything violent towards him [Henderson]. Number one, he was my supervisor. Number two, I owed it to the president not to engage in any type of violence that would embarrass him. I owed it to my race not to do

anything that would cause harm. I wanted to be bigger than what Harvey had said.

“The 1960s was a rough time. People were trying to find out how they were gonna solve this race problem. The races were divided, Black and White. You had people who were being lynched. You couldn’t imagine that you could go to a town or a restaurant down in the South, and the owner comes out and beats you with an ax handle.

“All these kinds of things were going on, and people were being lynched, with police backing in some cases. In other cases, they were trying to bring the races together. [...] Black people, White people, Indian people, they were all concerned about solving this race problem. Within all that came John Kennedy, a man who had the heart to solve this particular problem. [...]”

“President Kennedy didn’t want to give Negroes an advantage in America. What he wanted was to make the playing field level, and he felt that in his heart.”

THE PRESIDENTIAL DETAIL came to Chicago in early November 1963, and a potential assassination plot was uncovered. It used a location like Dallas with the same shooting trajectory.

Abraham Bolden believes there was a conspiracy to assassinate the President of the United States of America.

“What happened on November the 22, 1963, was an infraction against all the people of America. It was an infraction against the Constitution of the United States of America. It was an infraction against the citizens of the United States of America. The people of the United States of America command justice. They want justice.”

Bolden heard some saying, “The president is about to be taken care of.” (He did not identify who.) He was aware of people saying they had enough money to finance an assassination plan. “We have to get rid of Kennedy,” they would say. “President Johnson is going to be a better person that we can negotiate with to go back into Cuba.”

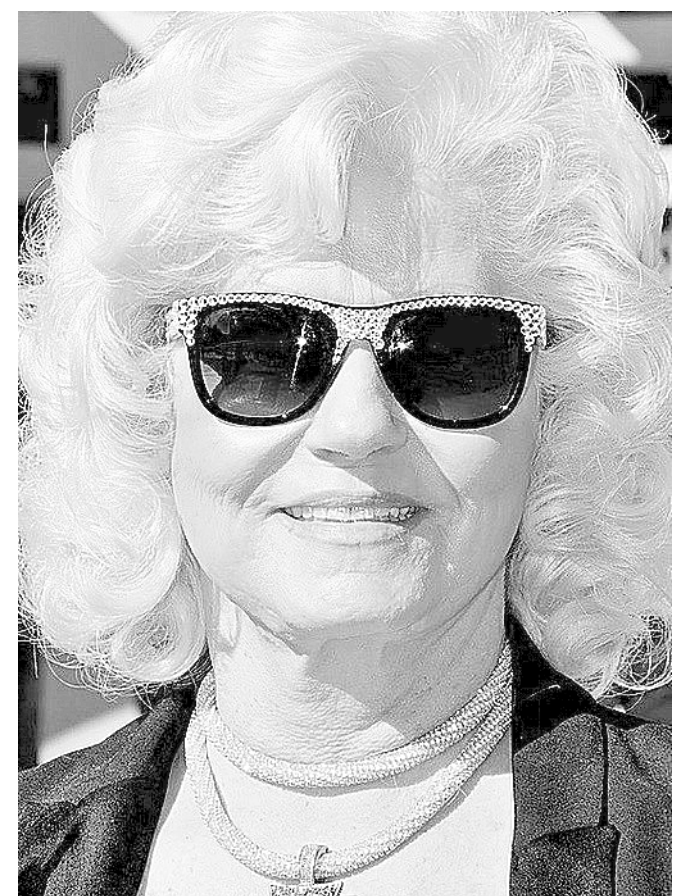
The route of Kennedy’s final parade through Dallas was dangerous, Bolden explains. It was originally rejected because of the risks of “the slow turns that it was going to take.”

But, he explained, “they tell me that the Secret Service was overruled because President Kennedy wanted to be exposed to more people. They figured that with the motorcade moving slowly in making these turns that people would get a chance to see the President.”

In Fort Worth and Dallas Kennedy’s protection detail was cavalier, Bolden said, describing members of the detail who were overconfident and “there more for show.”

They were “just not concentrating on that job when they had the most responsible job that a person can have in American society, and that is the protection of the president of the United States,” he said. “They had let their emotions and feelings interrupt and counteract their duty.”

“I’m not fighting the Secret Service,” Bolden said. “I’m fighting for the Constitution of the United States of America. That’s the important thing. And that’s what was struck down in the streets of Dallas, Texas, on Nov. 22, 1963.”



Beverly Oliver

Clint Hill’s charge was Jacqueline Kennedy. He was supposed to protect her. He immediately ran to Jacqueline Kennedy and positioned himself over her. She was holding her husband, so, in effect, Agent Hill was protecting both. None of the other agents reacted.

To Abraham Bolden, “That was very suspicious to me.”

When Nov. 22 happened, “Everything that I said became true. The president’s brain laid on the back of his limousine.

“We failed the president, not just the guys in Dallas. We all did. We had all sorts of information about conspiracies, from Miami to Tampa and in Chicago. We were receiving all kinds of telephone calls. ‘The President is going to be assassinated.’”

“We had all kinds of information that teams [...] were just following the president around town to get a chance to kill him. To hear one of his bodyguards, the Secret Service agent, saying that if anyone attempted to assassinate him, they wouldn’t react.

“And yet we failed.”

Beverly Oliver: Babushka Lady?

AS THE AUTHORITIES looked for information and evidence in the investigation of who killed President John F. Kennedy, they saw in almost all still photos and video footage a woman whose face was concealed by her position and a headscarf. She appeared to have a movie camera and would have captured the assassination on film.

The police sought information from the woman who, due to her headscarf, had been dubbed the “Babushka Lady.” (A babushka is a headscarf tied under the chin, typical of those worn by Polish and Russian women.)

Beverly Oliver was 17 years old on Nov. 22, 1963. She parked her car and walked to Dealey Plaza with her movie camera in tow.

What happened next would change the life of Oliver, who since 1970 has identified herself as Babushka Lady. She witnessed the assassination of President Kennedy from the side of Elm Street opposite the grassy knoll. She was one of the closest eyewitnesses to the assassination.

She stood next to Charles Brehm, who was there with his son; to Jean Hill, a retired schoolteacher (“the Lady in Red”); and to Mary Ann Moorman who, with her Polaroid camera, took the most iconic photograph of President Kennedy during the assassination.

Investigators had seen the Mary Ann Moorman photograph and how difficult it is to see the background on the poor-quality Polaroid. Oliver was filming in the same direction. A shooter positioned on the grassy knoll would have had a better chance of appearing in Oliver’s film than in any of the other visual evidence collected from that day.

Oliver is a passionate person, full of enthusiasm, and an outspoken eyewitness to the assassination. It wasn’t always that way.

“I had not intended to go to Dealey Plaza that day at all,” she said. “I just wanted to get down to a curb where I could film the president. I had a brand-new movie camera. That was my intent — to film the president.”

From her vantage point, Oliver could see the motorcade come around the corner of Houston and Elm and then pass her on its way through the triple overpass.

She describes the crowd and the atmosphere. “Have you ever been in a situation where the hair on the back of your neck and the hair on your arms stand up? That’s the way it was that day. The air was charged with electricity and excitement. It just made you feel like your hair was just standing up everywhere on the body.”

Oliver began filming to make sure that her camera was working properly. When the president started to get closer the crowd noise intensified. “You could hear them cheering. The closer he got, the more exciting it got.”

It wasn’t long after the limousine turned on to Elm Street that “there was noise, and the noise went *bang, bang*. I remember thinking at the time, *Why would someone bring their children down here?* My mind was thinking that someone had allowed their kids to bring poppers [a.k.a. bang snaps]. [...] You threw them on the sidewalk, and they made a little bang sound. That’s what it sounded like — *bang, bang, bang*. Where the shots came from never entered my mind. I was filming.”

Oliver was occupied filming the motorcade and, later, with the aid of hypnosis, she remembered hearing a “big” and “different” sound, a “boom.”

At that point, “the president went back against the seat,” she said.

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

Be Sure To Check Our Full Program Schedule @ brattleborotv.org

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Nov. 20-26

CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Lee Ha, Brattleboro Historical Society: Mon 8p, Tues 12:30p, Wed 9a, Thurs 1:20p & 9:15p, Sat 12:15p, Sun 5:15p	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 11/21/23: Tues 6:15p (LIVE), Thurs 1p, Fri 8p, Sat 6a, Sun 12p
The World Fusion Show - Ep# 165 - Jim Matius and Richie Barshay: Mon 5:30p, Tues 6:15a, Wed 5:30p, Thurs 12:30p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 6:30a, Sun 9p	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 11/16/23: Mon 6:15p, Tues 6:30a, Wed 11:45a, Sat 7:30p, Sun 9:30a
Veterans Events - Veterans Town Hall 11/5/23: Mon 1:30p, Tues 9a, Sat 9:15p, Sun 12:30p	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Special Mtg. 11/14/23: Mon 8:45p, Tues 10a, Wed 2:15p, Sat 2:30p, Sun 6p
BCTV Annuals - Producer Awards Night 2023: Fri 1:30p, Sat 5p, Sun 7p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 11/20/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 11:45a
Windham County NAACP 4th Annual Freedom Fund Dinner: Wed 9p, Thurs 2p, Fri 3:30p, Sat 9a, Sun 12:30p	River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 11/20/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:15p
Brattleboro Literary Festival - Diana Whitney & Cate Marvin: Mon 12:30p, Tues 8p, Wed 3:30p, Fri 10a, Sun 5:55p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 11/21/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
Brattleboro Literary Festival - Madeline Kunin & Richard Michaelson: Mon 10a, Tues 3:15p, Wed 12:30p, Thurs 9a, Sat 8p, Sun 9:30a	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 11/15/23: Mon 12p
Couch Potato Productions - Cliftheater Turnip Festival 10/21/23: Mon 8:30p, Tues 4:25p, Thurs 4:15p, Sat 11:15a	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 11/15/23: 2:30p
Windham Regional Commission presents Preserving Gullford's Character 11/2/23: Fri 6a, Sat 2p	Windham Central Supervisory Union Board and Exec. Comm. Mtg. 11/15/23: Mon 9a, Tues 12:30p, Sun 8:30p
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Brattleboro Development Review Board 11/15/23: Mon 5:30a, Tues 3p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Putney Selectboard Public Hearing on Approved Draft 2023 Town Plan 11/8/23: Wed 8:15a, Thurs 10:30p, Fri 4:45p, Sat 6p, Sun 8a
News Block: WTSN News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p BUHS-TV News: Mon-Fri 12:15p & 6:35p	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 11/6/23: Tues 4:30a, Wed 9:45a, Thurs 8:30p, Sat 10a, Sun 6a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Windham Elementary School Board Special Mtg. 10/24/23: Mon 6:10p, Wed 4:55p, Thurs 11:10a & 5:35p, Fri 11:40a & 7:50p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 5p	Brattleboro Housing Partnerships Board Mtg. 10/23/23: Tues 5:30p, Thurs 5p, Sat 5:25a
Gullford 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

Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at **brattleborotv.org**

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Scholars of the assassination pay particular attention to the forces of physics on the president.

“They will talk about whether he went forward or whether he went backward,” Oliver said. “The only time I ever have a conscious memory of the president going forward more than just slumping was when Jackie Kennedy [...] pushed him down with her elbow and climbed up over the trunk of a car. [...]”

“When the *bang, bang, or the boom* happened, Mrs. Kennedy said something like, ‘Oh, my God, he’s been’ — I couldn’t tell whether she said ‘shot’ or ‘hit.’ It was like the whole back of his head went out over the back of the trunk of that car. It looked like a bucket of blood had just been thrown out.”

Dan Rather of CBS News called Beverly Oliver “a liar and a hoax,” based on his viewing of the Zapruder film, which shows the president’s head going violently forward from the impact of the bullet.

Beverly Oliver had just been thrust into history and tumultuous years that would question her honesty and character.

“Everybody else is on the ground. Except me. I’m standing still there with my camera. I’m in absolute shock. Just standing there. I could not move. People asked me. ‘Did the car stop?’ I don’t know, Bill. Everything stopped for me. The whole world stopped. I don’t know if it was five seconds, five minutes. I don’t know. I was in total shock.

“I do have a very conscious memory of [the limousine] speeding off. But at the time the president was shot, the fatal shot, time stopped for me. It was like when you have a dream, and you can’t wake up, but that’s the state of emotion that I was in,” she said.

“We had no way of knowing whether he was alive or dead or what had happened. I left knowing that if they wanted to know anything about me, they would know where to find me.

“I left and I walked back to my car. I got in my old Buick. It had a terrible radio. The antenna was broken, so I couldn’t really get a clear signal until I got out on the North Central Expressway. That’s where I was able to pick up the signal to hear that President Kennedy was dead.

“I pulled over into a parking lot. I sat there and cried. My heart was broken. You see, it wasn’t just the tragedy of having seen him blown away right in front of my eyes. But there was an atmosphere in America in 1963 for young people. Kennedy was the first president born in our generation.”

Overcome with grief and trauma, Oliver “went home that day and took some sleeping pills, and I went to bed. I didn’t go to work at night. I couldn’t face it.”

Her mother eventually woke her up and offered to take her to Dealey Plaza to see the flowers that people had brought as tributes.

THE WEEKEND PROCEEDED.

“I didn’t go to work that day (Friday, Nov. 22). I didn’t go to work the next day (Saturday, Nov. 23). On Sunday, I didn’t go to work. I woke up and saw my friend Jack Ruby, his friend Lee Oswald that he introduced me to, on national television — just blew him away,” Oliver said.

Lee Oswald was in custody for the murder of Dallas policeman J.D. Tippit and was in the process of a transfer from the Dallas City jail to the county jail in Dealey Plaza when Oswald was shot dead by Jack Ruby (a.k.a. Jacob Rubenstein). On Monday, Nov. 25, the funeral of the president was on national television.

“I didn’t get to work that night, and on Monday night (the 25th), my mother told me, ‘Beverly, you’re gonna have to get up, you’re gonna have to go. You can’t stay here in bed. You just can’t do this.’

“I went to work the next night. I got there at 7:45, which was my usual time to arrive at work.”

Beverly Oliver worked at the Colony Club next to the Carousel Club on Commerce Street in Dallas, which was operated by Jack Ruby. During breaks from her dancing job, Oliver would walk next door and visit Ruby, “a dear friend of mine.”

She said she was introduced to Lee Harvey Oswald at Ruby’s Carousel Club three weeks before the assassination when Ruby “just casually said, ‘Oh, by the way, Beverly, this is my friend Lee. He’s with the CIA.’”

When she returned to work and walked up the stairs to the Colony Club, she encountered two men on the landing. They wanted the film.

“The taller of the two men stepped forward and introduced himself. He had proper identification. [...] He said, ‘I understand that you were down at the grassy place taking pictures when the president was killed,’“ referring to what would eventually become known as the Grassy Knoll.

“Yes, sir,” Oliver replied. “I was taking movie film.”

The man wanted to know if Beverly had developed the film yet, and she replied that she had not.

“Where is it?” he asked.

“I said, ‘It’s still on my camera.’

“He said, ‘Where’s your camera?’

“I said, ‘It’s in my makeup kit.’

“He said, ‘Well, we want to take it to get it developed and look at it for evidence, and we’ll get it back to you in a few days.’

She realized that right next to the camera and makeup kit was “a Prince Albert can full of marijuana.”

Oliver maneuvered her body so the agent could not see her retrieving the film.

In 2006, as she spoke to my class, she showed us an FBI document that references her as “the female wearing a brown coat taking pictures [sic] from an angle, which would undoubtedly include the Texas School Book Depository in the background [...]”. Her pictures evidently were taken just as the President was shot.”

The document seemingly acknowledges receipt of the film and discusses arrangements to have it developed and returned.

Oliver said she has not seen her film since.

She told us she has been threatened numerous times.

“I used to really take these things [threats] seriously. I don’t anymore. The last time I got threats was whenever I was coming out with my book [in 1994]. And both of these came from Houston, same post office, same handwriting. One of them says, in big black letters — ‘DEATH.’ The other one says, ‘SNITCH, YOUR [sic] DEAD.’”

She believes she has identified the man who took her film as an FBI agent from New Orleans, “field agent Regis Kennedy, who was sent here [Dallas] on Nov. 25, 1963.”

One 1978 response from the U.S. Secret Service to a Freedom of Information Act request asserts that “at the present time, there are no records or documents pertaining to Ms. Beverly Oliver or the film which was allegedly turned over to agents of this service.”

Such language in these FOIA responses might speak volumes. “They’ve lost it,” she said. “They don’t know where it is at the present time.”

Oliver and Jean Hill (“The Lady in Red”) are called liars and a hoax by some. “There’s no place that you can actually see my face,” Oliver said. “I’ve had to resort to other things to prove that that was me down there.”

But her father kept a pair of her shoes — the same shoes that she wore on the day of the assassination. She held them up for us.

“Lo and behold, what do they have on the bottom of them? It’s almost gone after all these years. You can still see a little bit of the yellow paint, freshly painted marks,” Oliver said. She asserted that “it’s an exact match to the paint on the side of the street” and that the shoes can be matched to distinct characteristics of her feet.

She acknowledges that there are many skeptics who do not believe that she is the Babushka Lady and federal officials who “don’t like my story.”

“Let me tell you one thing,” she told my class. “If there’s anybody in the world that would like to say that Lee Harvey Oswald shot the president from the sixth-floor window of the Book Depository, it would be me. I am extraordinarily patriotic. I’m very politically active.

“I still believe with all my heart that this country is the best country on this globe. Yes, we have our spots. We have our blemishes. We have our wrinkles. We have our problems because human beings are running this country. Every human being has spots, blemishes, and wrinkles.

“But let me tell you something: You better be proud that you live in this country, even though it’s a country that allowed something so heinous as a president to get killed in broad daylight in the streets of Dallas and get away with it. But it also allows people like you, and people like me, to continue to question it, and research it and dig into it.

“We’re gonna dig up the truth, and we’ll dig at least through getting a torch to pass.”

LETTERS FROM READERS

To the Jewish community: ‘You are not alone’

As Abram stood upon the heights of Bethel, God said to Him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.”

So, Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord (Genesis 13:14-18).

We are writing to affirm our support and prayers for the nation of Israel and Jewish people

around the world. Our hearts are broken to see the sudden exposure of antisemitism that has revealed itself within our own nation.

It is disheartening to see and hear evidence that the very same evil spirit that led to the Holocaust is rearing its ugly head here in America. It was a joy to watch hundreds of thousands of Americans gather on the mall in Washington to convey to the community of Jewish people around the world that this unspeakable and unreasonable hatred is not universal, and that there are clearly many more voices that are ready to speak in support of the “apple of God’s eye.”

We wanted to add our voices in support of the nation of Israel by writing this letter directly to the Jewish community here in Brattleboro. We have one purpose, and that is to say,

“You are not alone.”

Furthermore, we wish to affirm the following:

- The right of the Jewish People to inhabit the land given to Abraham and his descendants forever (Genesis 13).

- The right of the sovereign nation of Israel to defend itself against the unholy alliance that seeks to deny Israel the right to that inheritance and, indeed, to annihilate the state of Israel.

- The right (and responsibility) of the nation of Israel to pursue and dismantle Hamas to ensure peace and safety for all its citizens.

- And finally, the right of the Jewish people, wherever they live, to live without fear for their safety because of their heritage, free from the scourge of antisemitism, which is, in fact, racism.

As Christians, the seedbed of our own faith is rooted in Israel,

and we honor the commandment to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem,” according to the admonition of Psalm 122:6.

Various Christian congregations in the Brattleboro area are praying for you, even as we see the blossoming of antisemitism springing up in Brattleboro. We are praying for the nation of Israel and Jewish communities around the world, and for our Jewish neighbors right here in Vermont.

BRATTLEBORO AREA OUTREACH Brattleboro

Rev. Michael K. Gannt, Rev. Bryan Gannt, Rev. J. Matthew Worrall, Rev. Bill Steele, Rev. Ben Whittinghill, Rev. Bruce Burks, Rev. Derek Irvine, Rev. Steve Dunklee, Rev. Richard Morton

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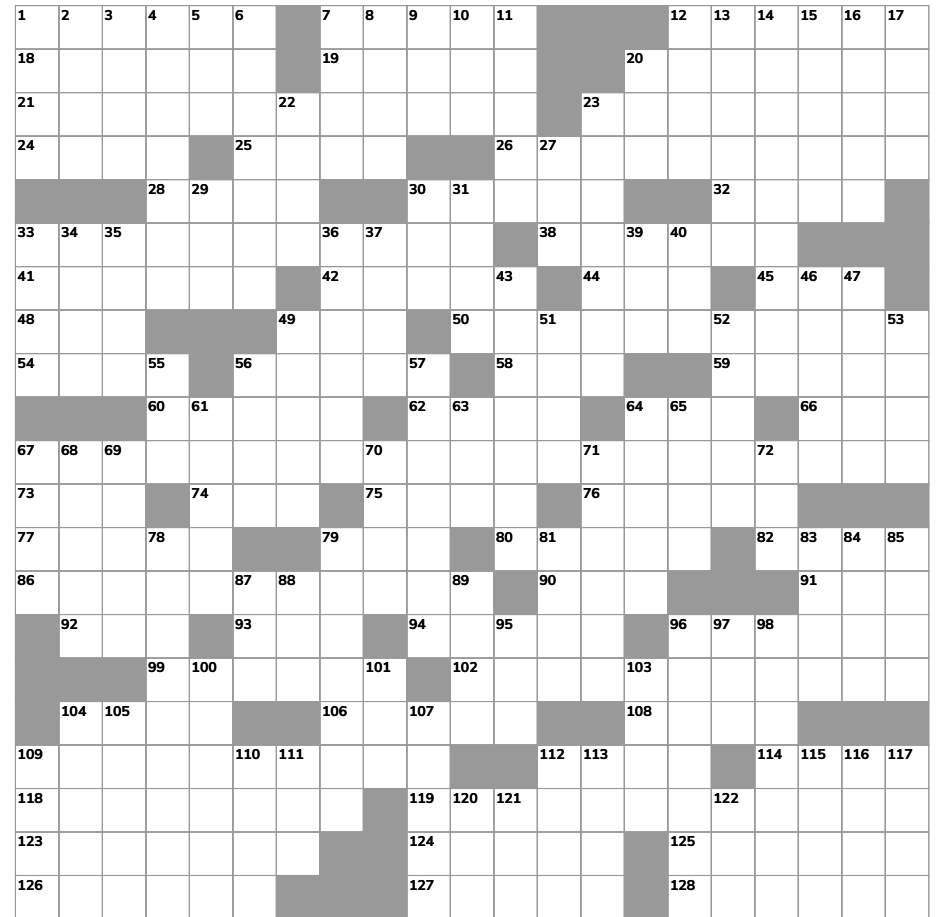
“BBW”

Across

1. Puts the pedal to the metal
7. Utopian
12. French villages
18. Wood of Hollywood
19. Engine booster
20. “Care to double-check that?”
21. Sends a sorry telegram?
23. Italian restaurant amenity
24. Appear to be
25. “As I was going to St. ...”
26. Romances the “Top Gun” star?
28. French door glass
30. Passes over
32. Wonders aloud
33. Sheep-shearing event?
38. Breastbones
41. Raise in relief
42. Mr. Moneybags
44. MetroCard issuer
45. Chapel Hill sch.
48. Short life?
49. Droop
50. Acknowledgment by the Pac-Man ghosts?
54. Part of a wine glass
56. Subject specialist
58. NFL coach Rivera
59. Teaching hospital associated with Tufts, for short
60. Follower of Zeno
62. “Wednesday” actress Myers
64. Ruckus
66. KO caller
67. Alert during Independence Day?
73. Med. plan
74. Bread with ham
75. Street ___ (rep)
76. Sporty Chevy, briefly
77. Bother incessantly
79. It’s a bit more than two cups
80. Flat earther’s world?
82. Pulls hard
86. Grocery store shopper’s question?
90. Consumed
91. Librarian’s admonition
92. Partners’ legal entity: Abbr.
93. Land in un fleuve
94. “___ your life!”
96. Carsickness
99. Orderly displays
102. “Sic” and “attack”?
104. “Auld Lang ___”
106. Brings home
108. Crafts’ partner
109. Millard Fillmore’s meds business?
112. Fictional Jane
114. Ensnare
118. Classic sneaks with a swoosh
119. Voldemort and Lucius Malfoy?
123. Shortest route
124. Fraternal branch
125. Mexican cerveza
126. Classify
127. Does in some dragons
128. Beginning

Down

1. Plies a needle
2. Knee bend, in ballet
3. Leprechaun’s land



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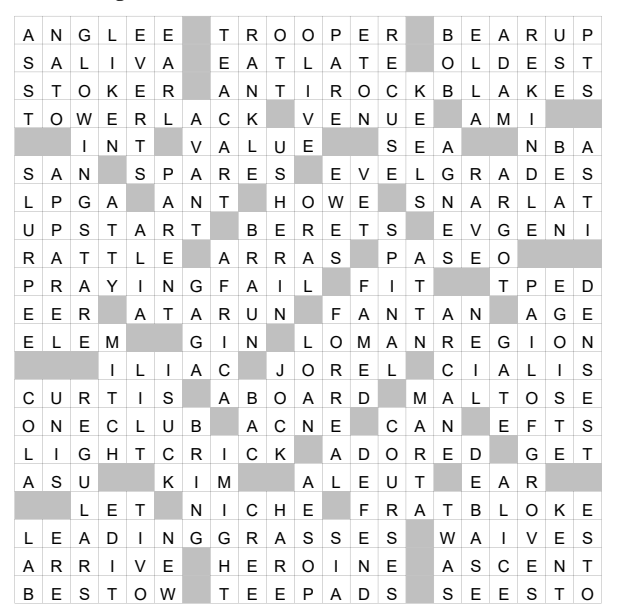
4. “Por ___” (“say” in Spanish)
5. Courtroom figs.
6. Sacred sites
7. “Same here”
8. Two pairs?
9. Go astray
10. Washboard ___
11. Medicine physiologist Otto
12. Autumn pear
13. Left in the dust
14. Olympics chant
15. Hungarian “cubist” Erno
16. Blades on the ground
17. Dried
20. “___ queen!”
22. 12/24 and 12/31
23. They put letters in boxes
27. Photo ___ (campaign stops)
29. Henny’s kin
30. Blubber
31. Have down pat
33. Halloween decorations
34. Leave off
35. Double-reed woodwind
36. Grab
37. Othello nemesis
39. Listing shortcut
40. Cheer with a pom-pom
43. ___ Triangle
46. India’s first prime minister
47. Wickerwork basket
49. Rooms in the office
51. Show fury
52. High up
53. “The Ark” channel
55. 120-Down rival
56. Luxurious
57. Catchy part of a song
61. Rich dessert
63. “The Simpsons” character with a shotgun
64. Up front
65. There are three in Fiji
67. “That was a close one!”
68. “___ and the Night Visitors”
69. Canned tomatoes brand
70. Beige-y color

71. Old rerun channel
72. Deep black
78. 2023 Belmont Stakes winner
79. Edy’s rival
81. Odin’s son
83. Gorbachev’s domain
84. Butter in Indian food
85. Open carriage
87. “___ this is a Wendy’s!”
88. Kennedy Space Center st.
89. Square setting
95. Tech licensing document: Abbr.
96. Harry’s rival
97. Nautical direction
98. Parvenu

100. Garage job
101. OpenAI CEO Altman
103. Calcutta dress
104. Draws back (from)
105. “Gadzooks!”
107. See 122-Down
109. Liberty grp.
110. Nudge for the stumped
111. “My dogs ___ barking!”
112. Avant-garde
113. Man’s name that’s a homophone of 22-Down
115. Bravo and Tinto
116. Shakespeare’s wife
117. Junior’s exam
120. 55-Down’s rival
121. Confidentiality doc.
122. With 107-Down, “Lady Love” singer

Last issue’s solution

“Switching Sides”



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COLUMN | Sports Roundup



Brattleboro sophomore forward Reese Croutworst was selected to the Division I girls' all-state soccer team. She was also a first-team selection for the Southern Vermont League's A Division all-stars.



Brattleboro's Charlie Kinnersley, a junior midfielder, was selected for the Division I boys' soccer all-state team. He was also a first-team selection for the Southern Vermont League's A Division all-stars.

Local soccer players earn All-State honors

The Vermont Soccer Coaches Association released its 2023 high school soccer all-state teams last week, and it is well-populated with local players. Brattleboro's Reese Croutworst, a sophomore forward, was selected to the Division I girls' all-state team. In Division III, Green Mountain senior midfielder/forward Abby Williams was an all-state selection.

Three Leland & Gray players — senior forward Mary Sanderson, senior midfielder Maggie Parker, and senior defensive back Ava Lecours — all made the Division IV all-state team.

Brattleboro's Ozzie VanHendrick, a senior forward, and Charlie Kinnersley, a junior midfielder, both made the Division I boys' all-state team.

Leland & Gray senior forward Finch Holmes was joined on the Division IV team by four members of the Twin Valley squad — Cody Magnant, a senior forward; senior defenders Garrett Cunningham and Noah Dornburgh; and Steven Oyer, a sophomore defender.

SVL soccer all-stars selected

• There was just a bit of overlap on the Southern Vermont League all-star teams. Brattleboro's Charlie Kinnersley and Ozzie VanHendrick were named to the A Division boys' first team, with teammates John Haskins, Emmett Hoyer, Kaidyn Jarvis, and Jackson Pals all receiving honorable mention.

In the C Division, Noah Cherubini and Austin Kubisek of Green Mountain, Holmes and Paul Persson of Leland



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.

& Gray, and Cunningham, Dornburgh, Magnant, and Oyer of Twin Valley were all first-team selections.

Receiving honorable mention were Tristan Boylan, James Mildaver, Ben Perry, Dillon Reed, and Robert Roman of Bellows Falls; Forrest Gavin, Even Kurdzik, Max Peebles, and Andre Solzhenitsyn of Green Mountain; Deyton Butynski, Trevor Hazelton, and Cody Hescocock of Leland & Gray; and Braydon Brown, Theo Kelloway, and Hunter Roth of Twin Valley.

• Brattleboro's Zadié Olmstead and Reese Croutworst were named to the SVL's A Division girls' first team, with teammates Sophia Albright, Kylee Mager, and Kaitlyn Pattison all receiving honorable mention.

In the C Division, Laura Kamel of Bellows Falls, Kyra Burbela of Green Mountain, and Lecours, Parker, and Sanderson from Leland & Gray were all first-team selections. Receiving honorable mention were Natalie Douglas and Aubrey Maxfield of Bellows Falls; Sophia Cherobioni, Autumn Fales, and Grace Wright of Green Mountain; and Abigail Emerson and Amanda Fontaine of Leland & Gray.

Twin Valley's Alejandra Bevilacqua was named to the D Division first team, while teammates Alanna Babilacqua, Leann Crafts, and Bianna Place received honorable mention.

• Twin Valley's Buddy Hayford was named as the boys' C Division Coach of the Year, while Leland & Gray's Joe Towle was the girls' C Division Coach of the year. Both led their respective teams to the Division IV state finals.

Honors for local field hockey, cross-country athletes

• In field hockey, Delaney Lockerby, Emma Bazin, Livie Clough, and Ava LaRoss of Bellows Falls were all named to the Southern Vermont League's A Division first team. Receiving honorable mention were teammates Eryn Ross and Nola Sciacca.

Brattleboro's Erika Favreau and Alexandra Gregory were named to the B Division first-team, with teammates Sadie Mills, Emma Gragen, Mallory Newton, and Ericka Fletcher all earning honorable mention.

LaRoss and Gragen were both selected as forwards, and Ross was selected as a link for the Vermont squad that will face its New Hampshire counterparts in the annual Twin State All-Star Game next June. The top graduating seniors from both states play in this showcase of field hockey excellence.

• In cross-country, Brattleboro's Nico Conathan-Leach was selected to the SVL's boys' A Division all-stars, while Bellows Falls' Desi Bradley was named to the girls' A

Division all-stars.

Boys & Girls Club offer free snowboard lessons

• The Boys & Girls Club (BGCB) of Brattleboro is partnering with Leader Distribution Systems to sponsor members of BGCB's Teen Center to take snowboarding lessons at Berkshire East Mountain Resort in Charlemont, Massachusetts.

On Sundays in February, program participants are invited to partake in tubing, snowboard lessons, and mountain time with qualified instructors from Berkshire East and chaperones from BGCB. This program is designed to provide barrier-free access to southern New England's winter sport community.

Students in grades 6-8 are invited to participate. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Transportation to and from Berkshire East is provided. To register, and for more information, email info@bgcbrattleboro.org or call 802-254-5990.

Kids, take it outside!

• The Vermont Children's Trust Foundation is funding a collaboration between Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro (BGCB) and Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC) to provide guided, outdoor, free family adventures.

On designated Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to noon, families are invited to partake in short walks with naturalists and educators from both organizations to local spots. These excursions are themed and are designed to inspire families to have fun together outdoors, even when it

is cold. There is a spring series being planned as well.

All ages are invited, though it is designed primarily for parents/caregivers and their children ages 5-11.

Here is the schedule of upcoming programs:

• Dec. 2 — BEEC: Nature's Treasures and Spray/Wreath Making

• Dec. 16 — Retreat Farm: Fort Building

• Jan. 6 — Retreat Farm: Fire Skills

• Jan. 20 — BEEC: Winter Animals Track & Sign

• Jan. 27 — make up date

Pre-registration is required. Transportation is available, as is some outdoor gear. Each walk will include basic trail safety instruction and a snack. To register, or to learn more, contact info@bgcbrattleboro.org, 802-254-5990, or visit bgcbrattleboro.org and beec.org.

Registration open for Skating 'FUN'damentals

• The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department are accepting applications for a second session of Skating 'FUN'damentals for anyone 5 years old and older at Withington Rink starting on Jan. 9.

Classes are on Tuesdays, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., on Jan. 9, 16, 23, and 30, and Feb. 6, 13, and 27, with no class on Feb. 20. The cost is \$126 for Brattleboro residents and \$141 for non-residents. Skate rentals are not included.

For all programs, events, facility information, and more, visit brattleboro.org and click on Sport and Recreation tab found on the blue horizontal

bar. A new drop-down menu will appear that will take you to Recreation and Parks. If there are special needs required for these programs, let them know five days in advance by calling 802-254-5808.

Senior bowling roundup

• Week 11 of the fall/winter season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Nov. 16 saw Four Seasons (36-19) have another 4-1 week to hold onto first place. High Rollers (35-20) had another 5-0 week to remain in second place, followed by Hairiers (31-24), Skippers (30-25), Stepping Stones, No Splits, and Dumblebor (all 29-26), Four Pins (28-27), and PEWJ (20-35).

Vicki Butynski had the women's high handicap game (232) and series (691). Gary Montgomery had the men's high handicap game (248), while Warren Corriveau Sr. had the high handicap series (651). Four Seasons had the high team handicap game (905), while High Rollers had the high handicap series (2,481).

Corriveau had the men's high scratch series (594) with games of 223 and 193, while Montgomery had a 537 series with a 214 game and Peter Deyo had a 517 series with games of 191 and 190. Marty Adams had a 201 game.

Carol Gloski had the women's high scratch series (500), while Nancy Dalzell had the high scratch game (176). Gloski had games of 172 and 171, Debbie Kolpa had games of 169 and 160, and Butynski had a 160 game.

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