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Brattleboro, Vermont • Wednesday, February 14, 2024 • Vol. XIX, No. 7 • Issue No. 752

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Races are on for three seats on Brattleboro Selectboard

Two one-year incumbents face challenges March 5

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—All three open seats on the Selectboard will see races, and both current board members are facing challenges in the March 5 election.

Running for the three-year seat being vacated by Selectboard Chair Ian Goodnow are Peter “Fish” Case, who is completing his first one-year term on the board, and challenger Oscar Heller, who ran for a seat unsuccessfully in 2020.

Incumbent Vice Chair Franz Reichsman is vying with Richard Davis and Jaki Reis for two one-year seats on the board.

As to his decision not to seek another term, Goodnow tells *The Commons* that “it has been a pleasure serving on the board for the last four years.”

“I’m excited to give some new people an opportunity and to look for other ways to serve my community,” he says.

Peter “Fish” Case

A longtime radio personality and columnist for the *Brattleboro Reformer*, Case is general manager of the Great Eastern Radio group.

The creator and host of *Vermontitude*, a podcast that focuses on issues being discussed in southern Vermont and the tri-state region, he recently became the proprietor of Burrows Specialized Sports on Main Street.

Case moved to Brattleboro from Wilmington about 35 years ago. He says he “got involved right away,” organizing a fundraiser for new scoreboards and backboards for the Brattleboro Union High School gymnasium.

He is a Representative Town Meeting (RTM) member for District 8 and has served on many nonprofit boards.

The past vice-president of Groundworks Collaborative, Case has chaired the Windham County American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life, and he also served on the boards of Girls on the Run, the Brattleboro Area Drop-in Center, and the Boys’ & Girls’ Club.

He is president of Black Mountain Assisted Family Living, a nonprofit that, as described on its website (bmafl.org), provides “stable, quality housing for people who have developmental disabilities.”

He has raised money for the then-Morningside Shelter and served on a committee of the Windham Solid Waste Management District to expand a better recycling program.

Case also works with the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce on its annual Jingle

Bell Jog fundraiser.

“I’m immersed in nearly every facet of this community,” he says, adding that he joined the Selectboard a year ago “so I could have a more direct impact on how we shape Brattleboro, based on the thousands of conversations I’ve had with its citizens and business owners.”

“There was an opening and thought I could make a difference and be the voice that would represent our downtown and surrounding community,” Case said.

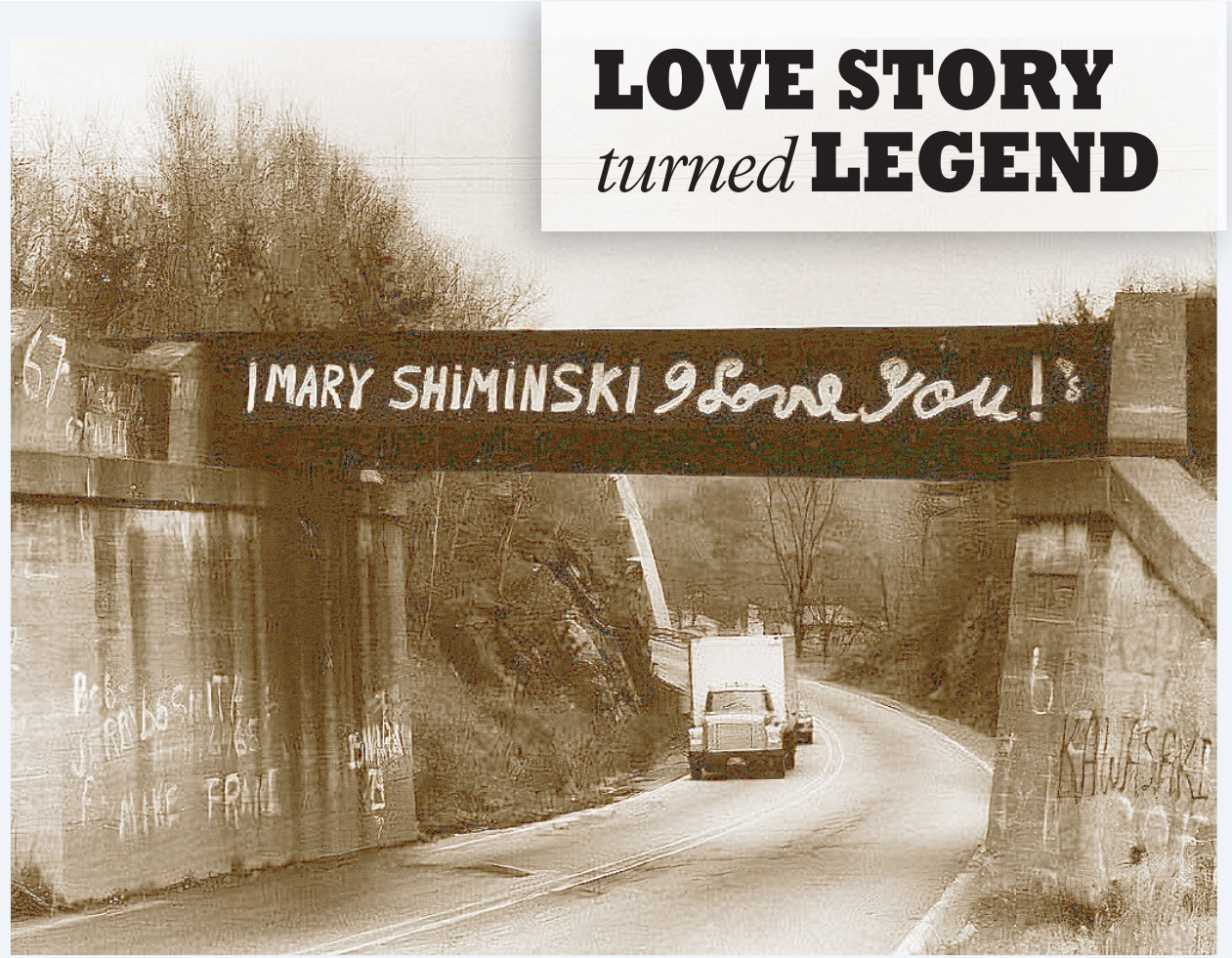
He’s now seeking the three-year seat “first and foremost” because he can “commit myself to the job for a longer period of time,” and secondly, because “running for a public seat is a fairly big professional disruption for me; I have to stop doing some of the things I love that serve the community, like Vermontitude and writing my column, and a three-year seat would give me a little reprieve on that.”

Asked why he’s running for a second term on the board, Case says, “there is unfinished business that I want to resolve.”

For Case, that includes questions around panhandling, a drug problem he feels “is the Selectboard’s responsibility to help craft a solution for,” housing issues, and public safety.

He also hopes “to be a big part of” the conversation about the project to rebuild the town swimming pool at Living Memorial Park.

■ SEE SELECTBOARD, A2



LOVE STORY turned LEGEND

For years, the message “Mary Shiminski I Love You!” suddenly appeared on the Route 9 railroad overpass, baffling the Brattleboro region and inspiring poems and music. A Keene Sentinel editor unraveled the mystery in 1978.

A love note painted on a railroad overpass captured the imagination of the Brattleboro area in 1974, inspiring poems, a sermon, and a folk song. Now, a Townshend musician has lovingly added to Mary MacArthur’s ballad of Mary Shiminski and Bert Salva.

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—In 1974, Brattleboro got a new muse; she may be long gone now, but her legend lives on in poetry and song. Especially in song.

Her name was Mary Shiminski, and she became famous because of a fight she had with her boyfriend, Bert Salva.

Yes, anyone who has lived in Brattleboro for any length of time knows about the hand-painted message on the railroad bridge over Route 9 leading to New Hampshire — the bridge that for many years said, “Mary Shiminski I Love You!”

The graffiti was the talk of the town. When the railroad bridge was replaced to accommodate the widened Route 9 that led the new Chesterfield Bridge, the message had become so iconic to the town’s image that someone repainted it on there.

Some of the name “Shiminski” can still be seen, although it has long been overpainted with other much-less iconic graffiti.

For a long time, no one knew who Mary Shiminski was. She remained a mystery until 1978, when *The Keene Sentinel’s* assistant news editor, Dayton Duncan, solved the puzzle after “chasing leads for

four years.” He published his story in the June 19, 1978 issue.

According to Duncan, the graffiti was a muse to several artists and even a pastor.

A student at Keene State College, Joan Margolis, wrote a poem in the college literary magazine about it in 1975. “Can you imagine how much he loves her?” it began.

In 1976, a pastor at the Unitarian Church in Brattleboro turned it into a sermon.

“It was such a beautiful statement,” Bob Holer said. “I don’t know Mary Shiminski, but I know the spirit behind the message.”

Frank Cordelle, a

professional photographer in Bennington, N.H., took a picture of the bridge and its message and published it as a postcard. “Mary Shiminski I Love You!” was sent around the country.

And then Miriam Andrews, a poet in East Dover, published a book of her work, *Mary Shiminski I Love You! and Other Poems*. On the cover was a picture of the bridge featuring the familiar legend.

Her poem about the graffiti ends, “Poets passing simply stop and listen to their hearts beating out Mary Shiminski, Mary Shiminski and think of no poem more complete.”

■ SEE MARY SHIMINSKI, A5

BELLOWS FALLS



Last year, Tim Wells and Erica Daniels bought the former Shona Grill and Real Scoop buildings on Rockingham Street in Bellows Falls. A year later, they have finished refurbishing them.

‘We are trying to do this right’

Erica Daniels and Tim Wells put the finishing touches on two formerly vacant storefronts, recounting some extensive — and expensive — construction surprises

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—Erica Daniels and Tim Wells have almost completed renovations and upgrades on two historic buildings on Rockingham Street after a challenging and expensive — but ultimately rewarding — year.

The Shona Grill building at 92 Rockingham St. is now Studio 92 Hair Salon and Fine Art. Daniels, formerly a successful hair salon owner in Boston, has now fully relocated to the new space. Wells, an artist, is finishing up his studio in the building’s loft area.

The art deco building at 94 Rockingham St. — once The Real

Scoop ice cream shop — has been completely renovated and is ready to be rented.

Daniels and Wells said they are receptive to any number of potential uses, noting that “it could be any business, except not a restaurant, but it could be an ice cream shop again, or a bakery, or something we haven’t thought of yet. We’re open to ideas.”

The buildings, an important part of downtown Bellows Falls since the 1930s, also sit next to the iconic Miss Bellows Falls Diner, which was purchased by the nonprofit Rockingham for Progress Inc. and is also slated for a total renovation over the next year.

■ SEE RENOVATIONS, A6

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The Commons

A publication of
Vermont Independent Media

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

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The Commons is a nonprofit community newspaper published since 2006 by Vermont Independent Media, Inc., a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)3 of the federal tax code.

The newspaper is free, but it is supported by readers like you through tax-deductible donations, through advertising support, and through support of charitable foundations.

The paper is published weekly, with the exceptions of the weeks of July 4 and Dec. 25.

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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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Special thanks to:
Simi and Mark Berman,
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Jim Maxwell, Rob Bertsche,
Barbara Evans,
Cameron Cobane, Shannon Ward, and
Hooker-Dunham Theater & Gallery;
Clay Turnbull and NEC;
Brendan Emmett Quigley
and Joon Pak

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

Selectboard

The pool, he says, “will serve this community for years to come and provide an outstanding place for our families to gather.”

“While these are defined goals, I understand that they can be derailed easily because of circumstances that can pop up, so it’s important that we are able to have people on the board that can bring the focus back to these defined goals,” says Case.

Case says running for this seat “requires a commitment to community service and a deep understanding of local issues.”

He says a candidate should possess “strong leadership skills, effective communication abilities, dedication to improving the town, knowledge of municipal policies and budgetary matters, and the ability to collaborate with diverse opinions on any given issue.”

“Engaging with residents, addressing concerns, and proposing solutions to enhance the town’s well-being are key responsibilities,” Case says. “As a Selectboard member, I’ve been transparent, approachable, and capable of making informed decisions for the betterment of Brattleboro.

For me, this is an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to local governance and foster positive change. It’s just not one issue, it’s all the issues, which is why I’m running for a three-year seat.”

What he’s not, says Case, is “a fan of red tape” or “a politician.”

“I’m an outspoken member of this community who is not afraid to speak and, in turn, is not afraid to listen,” he says. “I’m also fully capable of walking something back when I’ve been wrong and doubling down on something when I feel it’s the right thing to do.”

“It has to make sense for our whole town, not just the folks that are the loudest,” he says. “And sometimes, cutting through that can be tough.”

“I like to say I’m 20% of a mayor; I need at least two others to agree with me on an issue, and that doesn’t always happen. It takes a community to build a community, and public participation is critical in that process.”

“I’m not talking about a few loudmouths like myself, I’m talking about everyone weighing in. That is something I want to encourage more of.”

“Whether it’s reaching out to



COURTESY PHOTOS

Brattleboro Selectboard candidates: Above, left to right: Franz Reischmann, Oscar Heller, and Peter Case. Below: Richard Davis and Jaki Reis.

myself or any member of the board, we need to hear from you and we, as a board, need to ask more questions of this community as well.”

Oscar Heller

Heller, who is the youngest candidate at 35, was born in New York City and grew up on Long Island, then found Vermont through Camp Waubanong when he was 14.

“Coming to Brattleboro was the highlight of my summer and when I was too old to come as a camper, I worked as a counselor,” he says. “In the meantime, I graduated from McGill University in Montreal with a major in political science and moved to California to play guitar. In 2014, the band I was in was falling apart and I wanted a change. I packed up my little Hyundai — the same one I drive today — and drove back across the country to Brattleboro. I’ve lived here ever since.”

Heller has created two small businesses here, 10F Design, which builds websites, and Winterland Marketing, a digital marketing company.

He first got involved in the community when State Rep. Mollie Burke, D-Brattleboro, visited his home while she was

campaigning.

Their subsequent conversation, he says, “reawakened a lifetime interest in politics and public service.”

“Mollie recommended I apply to the Energy Committee, and I was appointed and served for five years. In 2019 I joined Representative Town Meeting and was appointed to its Finance Committee,” he says.

Heller says he joined the Finance Committee “to learn.”

“The job of the Finance Committee is to research, understand, and explain the town budget,” he says. “In practice, that means complete immersion in the business of the Selectboard, and an apprenticeship in the workings of the town’s government and departments.”

Heller says he spent four years “learning from my colleagues, watching meetings, researching questions with town staff, analyzing policy, and reporting our findings to Representative Town Meeting. Those four years taught me how the town works.”

Heller still serves on the RTM Finance Committee, which is in the process of writing its report for this year’s RTM.

He believes younger representation on the board is vital,

“especially in an era when so many are worried about the population of the town and aging.”

“I think it’s important to represent younger generations, especially with [Chair] Ian [Goodnow] not running for re-election,” he says.

“If we want to attract young people to our town and our state, we need to give their values — my values — a voice,” Heller says.

“Let’s start with affordable housing: how can you work here if you can’t find an apartment? From there, it’s climate resilience — who wants to buy a moldy house with a 10/10 flood risk? — and public transit, downtown beautification, community safety, and a dozen other things,” he says.

Heller points out that many residents and business owners here have been his clients, and he knows “the struggles of the small business life and the satisfaction of building something of your own, protecting it, and nurturing it, until suddenly it’s a substantial thing with clients across Vermont.”

“I also know how, when you’re struggling, a tiny act of generosity or encouragement can be meaningful. That’s what Brattleboro businesses need — not a firehose of money the town can’t afford, but thoughtful gestures that say, ‘We know it’s hard and, because we value you, we thought we’d do this for you.’”

Heller has lived in the same Elliot Street building for seven years, first renting, then buying it when the building went on the market.

“When I saw out-of-state buyers touring the apartments, I crunched some numbers and managed to buy it myself,” he says.

“I’ve tried to keep my life as a renter vivid in my mind,” Heller says, “so while I understand the pains and stresses of being a landlord — and believe me, they exist — I also remember the uncertainty and powerlessness of renting. I do my best to be decent and understanding.”

Richard Davis

A retired nurse, writer, and political activist, Davis is a Boston-area native who has lived in Windham County for 45 years, 41 of them in Guilford. For the past 2½ years, he and his wife, Roberta Levy, have lived in Brattleboro.

With Daryl Pillsbury, Davis created the Windham County Heat Fund in 2005 and they have raised almost \$1 million locally while providing more than 2,000 allotments to local families and individuals to pay heating fuel bills.

He served on the Morningside Shelter board of directors for 13 years, four as president, and was a co-founder of Guilford Cares.

Davis writes a weekly blog on current events and posts it on iBrattleboro.com. He was a weekly columnist for the *Brattleboro Reformer* for 25 years, writing mostly about health care issues.

As executive director of the Vermont Citizens Campaign for Health, he lobbied for the creation of a single-payer health care system in Vermont and worked for more than 25 years with local and national health care activists to promote a universal health care system.

In 1994, Davis was appointed by then-Gov. Howard Dean to the Commission on Public Health Care Values and Priorities and served until 2002, for two years as chair.

Davis believes he has “a proven track record of being able to solve problems efficiently while creating a climate of collegial collaboration.”

He notes that, in 1989, he helped to organize a medical relief team to help health care workers suffering the aftereffects

of Hurricane Hugo on St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The group had acquired \$500,000 in medical equipment donations but was unable to get the supplies to St. Croix.

Davis says he then negotiated with generals from the Pentagon, “who were ruling the island under martial law.”

“I was able to convince them to send a cargo transport from Westover Air Force Base to the Virgin Islands,” he says.

During his nursing career, Davis worked at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) as a staff nurse and evening nursing supervisor for 10 years and was also director of nursing at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend.

He ended his formal nursing career as a nurse case manager, helping to establish the Vermont Blueprint for Health Community Health Team at BMH.

In 2007, he received the Community Person of the Month prize awarded by Brattleboro Savings & Loan and WKVT, and in 2008 he received the Community Catalyst Award from Southeastern Vermont Community Action.

In 2023, Davis self-published his book, *The Village*, drawing on stories from his clients in his health care career to craft a fictional account of small-town Vermont life told by a narrator whose family bought a country store that became the center of their new life after leaving New York City.

Davis says he’s running because he feels the current Selectboard “needs new blood to provide a different perspective on issues important to the people of Brattleboro.”

“Many people have been frustrated at the appearance of a lack of transparency that has surrounded the actions of the current board, especially in relation to the decision to end a longstanding relationship with Rescue Inc.,” he says, adding he believes “any new board member should be prepared to promote as much transparency as possible while asking difficult questions and demanding clear and relevant answers.”

Davis says some current issues of concern to residents are high property taxes, lack of affordable housing, viability of downtown businesses, and public safety.

“While it is clear that one person cannot change the course of local politics, a thoughtful and creative voice can go a long way to moving local government in new directions,” Davis says.

Jaki Reis

Reis was born and grew up in Queens, N.Y. She attended Queens College, where she earned a paralegal certificate. She then worked in accounting for a large Park Avenue law firm in New York City, at which point she moved to several smaller firms, working as a paralegal and in office management.

As Reis has said, she then “ran away to join the circus” after meeting her then-husband, Tony Duncan, a world-champion juggler. Reis also learned to juggle to travel with her husband to Japan.

The couple has a grown daughter.

Reis moved to Vermont 20 years ago.

“I always like to remember that where I grew up, we were a little enclave with about 10,000 or 12,000 people, and that’s a major reason I moved here,” Reis says.

There, “you could go to a store and have a conversation without the people behind you champing at the bit. And I do think that is still a hallmark in Brattleboro. You can sit at any light that’s turned green, or a stop sign, for

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

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“It’s an important part of living in a community; patience and understanding,” Reiss says.

After moving here, Reiss worked part-time for the Winston Prouty Center, “clowning and face painting,” and she also did so with disabled kids in Brattleboro schools.

She then started working at the Latchis Theatre and ultimately took a full-time day job at the Latchis Hotel, where she is hospitality coordinator.

Reiss is also a residential landlord in town, owning a four-family home and managing three other buildings for her niece.

Around 2009, she started volunteering with the Women’s Film Festival on the Film Selection Committee. Reiss is a founding member of the Brattleboro Film Festival.

She is also a founding member of the nonprofit Housing Providers Alliance of Southern Vermont Inc., whose mission is “to impart information, education, and alliance between housing providers/landlords and tenants.”

“A lot of times the public image is stacked against landlords, but there is a plethora of reasons why we’re needed and [shouldn’t] get replaced by big corporations,” Reiss says.

She is a member of Representative Town Meeting for District 7 and served on the town’s “now-defunct” housing commission.

“We really need it,” she says. “But we had 10 people on that,

and they all had their own agendas. One day I asked if we could please find one thing to agree on, and people actually said, ‘No.’ That was very disturbing.”

Reiss is running for Selectboard now because she believes she can help bridge gaps and “find traction.”

“The whole country is being stalled because of divisiveness,” she says. “We can’t get anywhere, and problems can’t get solved. I think it’s come down to that also here. More and more issues that are important to take care of, and people that are important to take care of — I think we need to be more supportive of our first responders and the Selectboard itself — and people are so caught up in their own agendas that nobody can hear the other side.”

“I can hear all of the sides, and I actually have a pretty good way of taking the emotion out of it and bringing it down to the facts,” she says, and she believes she does so “in a way people can understand, so I’m hoping to be able to help find the middle ground where you get a lot of traction.”

“You can only make progress if you have traction and, if everybody’s spinning their own wheels, you’re not going to go anywhere,” Reiss says. “And we need everybody to help. We need everybody to be on the same page.”

Franz Reichsman

A retired internal medicine specialist with Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, New Hampshire, Reichsman served as medical director of emergency service providers and ambulance

crews in Cheshire County for seven years.

An emergency room doctor for 30 years, Reichsman has a medical degree as well as a master’s degree in public health, with a focus on epidemiology and biostatistics.

He first came to Brattleboro in 1970, spending summers until he moved here permanently in 1986.

Reichsman also has years of experience as a Representative Town Meeting member, including chairing its Finance Committee for five years.

As he finishes his first, one-year term on the Selectboard, Reichsman says the experience has been “very interesting, very challenging, and really enjoyable.”

“It’s brought me into much closer touch with affairs, with events in town, and with lots of interesting, smart people who have a lot to offer and are engaged in a lot of different ways with what’s happening in our community.”

Reichsman is unique on his board in that he holds “office hours” twice weekly at The Works Cafe on Main Street: from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Fridays.

“Whoever wants to can come in and tell me whatever is on their minds,” he says.

“Although sometimes I sit there by myself, I think it’s picking up,” Reichsman says. “I’ve heard amazing stories and very defined thoughts about where Brattleboro’s going and how we should get there.

“I’m really looking forward to the next year, if I’m elected, and

sitting down and hearing from more people. People want to express their thoughts and feelings about the town, so I’ve been taking advantage of that to be physically available to talk with.”

Reichsman notes the “predictable” — and the not-so-much — as issues the Selectboard faces.

“There are some very interesting things ongoing,” he says. “Some of what the board does is very predictable and some, very unpredictable. Things come up and it’s, ‘Whoa, how did that happen?’ Being on the board for those things, it’s an opportunity for me to learn more and be involved in really interesting things.”

As to the “predictable” issues the board addresses, Reichsman says they include “rekindling the public safety discussions that were actively part of town dialogue for three or four years and part of the Community Safety Review Committee. That effort was deliberately focused on a subset of the community — those most in contact with the police force and marginalized people in town, whether based on substance use, or race, or gender nonconformity.”

He says the committee report focused on those groups more than the overall public safety structure in town.

“I think the task before us now is to take the information gathered and take it to the community as a whole,” Reichsman says. “A big part of that discussion, I think, is going to be the bill in the [state] Senate, passed by the Vermont House of Representatives, creating the possibility of safe injection sites. How that works out in practice is a big question.”

Saying he was “very active as an observer of the Community Safety Review process in 2020 and has read the committee’s report three times,” Reichsman says he recognizes that while people want drug users to “be safe,” he sees, too, that they want “to discourage drug use.”

“I’m motivated and dedicated to advance that process further,” he says.

Not shy to disagree with his colleagues in his first term, Reichsman — who ran for office as a critic of the Selectboard’s decision to drop Rescue Inc. as the provider of the town’s EMS services — has said publicly that he changed his mind about a municipal emergency services model after receiving all information possible.

He now says follow-up on the board’s decision to place the service within the town fire department is keen for him.

Nature Museum offers winter, spring, and summer camps

GRAFTON—How can snow keep us warm? What causes sap to flow in maple trees? What is a macroinvertebrate? The Nature Museum’s day camps offer activities designed to educate campers about our regional ecology while providing plenty of outdoor free play, exploration, and hands-on learning.

These all-day camps take place outside The Nature Museum in surrounding local habitats. Participants will explore the meadow and garden with native plantings, the newly developed pond, and the Magic Forest Natural Playscape. Each day or week features a unique theme, from exploring “Snowflake Science” in February to “Wilderness Trekking” in August.

The winter camps will take place during February Break (Tuesday through Thursday,

Feb. 20–22), and the spring camps during April Break (Tuesday through Thursday, April 23–25). The summer camps will run for five weeks between June and August.

“Being outside for long periods provides ample opportunities for observation and learning,” Environmental Educator Sam McGonigle said in a news release. “These sessions help deepen the appreciation for our wild neighbors while providing lots of outdoor exercise and community-building activities. Our campers build connections with each other and with the natural world through play, exploratory learning, and creative exercises that enrich their experiences outdoors.”

Registration is open for the camps. To learn more about ages, dates, and program details, visit nature-museum.org.

“So now we’re in the process of doing that and making sure the system functions properly and is structured properly,” Reichsman says, noting the board will be looking at charging, billing, and collection policies at its next meeting.

Housing options are also on his mind, although Reichsman notes the board “is limited in what it can do.”

Regarding the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget, Reichsman notes “a difficult balance” between budgetary responsibility and issues of service to taxpayers and their tax bills.

He did challenge the proposed budget, suggesting several adjustments to it about which his board colleagues did not agree.

“I think we adopted a good budget [...] I engaged in the discussion to get issues on the table,” he says.

Reichsman is also interested in pending pedestrian and bicycling paths in town, particularly along Whetstone Brook.

“I’d like to see one from downtown to Living Memorial Park and the farmers’ market for people to get in and out of town without having to get in their automobiles, or fight with automobiles,” he says.

Reichsman is clear in his wish to continue to learn and connect with the community. “I think we still have a lot to do on that and with communications

with the public, the media, and our state legislators,” he says.

Serving as board vice chair, Reichsman says, has helped him feel “more connected to the process” in setting agendas with the town manager and chair.

“This has made it easy to have the level of involvement that I enjoy,” he says.

Tax filing season in full swing

MONTPELIER—The 2024 tax season officially opened on Jan. 29, at both the federal and state levels. This is the date that the IRS and Vermont begin accepting personal income tax returns for tax year 2023.

The Department offers the following tips to make filing and getting your refund easier and faster:

- Wait to receive all W-2 forms, 1099 forms, or any other necessary tax documents before filing. Filing too early without all your documentation is one of the most common reasons a tax refund is delayed.
- File electronically through a commercial software vendor. Filing electronically reduces the risk of errors and significantly speeds up refund processing

time. Last year, taxpayers who e-filed their returns saw their refunds on average in less than three weeks, while the average refund time for paper filers was over eight weeks.

• Free File allows eligible Vermonters to file their taxes at no cost. Information regarding who is eligible and how to access this software is available at the Department of Taxes’ website, tax.vermont.gov/free-file.

• After you have filed, you can check online at myvtax.vermont.gov for the status of your tax refund, homestead declaration, property tax credit, and renter credit.

The 2024 filing deadline for personal and corporate income tax returns, homestead declarations, property tax credit

claims, and fiduciary income taxes is Monday, April 15.

Vermont resident homeowners must file a homestead declaration each year and may qualify for a property tax credit as well.

Both the homestead declaration and property tax credit claim can be filed when you file your Vermont personal income taxes.

The eligibility for the Vermont earned income tax credit and Vermont child tax credit have been expanded this year. Taxpayers who otherwise qualify for these credits but do not have a Social Security number or an Individual Tax Identification number are now eligible to receive the credit in Vermont.

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Learn More

MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• Vermont State University honored several local students for academic achievement in the fall 2023 semester. Named to the President's List were **Claire Holmes** of Wardsboro, **Denny Hughes** of Guilford, **Trevor Kipp** of Brattleboro, **Christopher Leary** of Saxtons River, **Samantha Martin** of Brattleboro, **Amy Nelson** of Putney, **Rebecca Robinson** of Saxtons River, and **Adam Shard** of Bellows Falls. Named to the Dean's List were **Stacy Bryck** of Dummerston, **Rio Coursen** of Putney, **Sally Densmore** of Wilmington, **Damian Dierkes** of Dummerston, **Emma Dornburgh** of Whitingham, **William Drummey** of West Halifax, **Thaddeus Engstrom** of Guilford, **Makayla Goetz** of Townshend, **Jason Guerino** of Vernon, **Johannah Parker** of Grafton, **Brianna Paul** of Brattleboro, **Fiona Perez Razaque** of Brattleboro, **Marcus Pratt** of Newfane, **Jenna Robinson** of East Dover, **Leo Schnipper** of Bellows Falls, **Aaron Soskin** of Wilmington, **Kestrel Voulgarakis** of Wilmington, **Gabriel Wilkinson** of Bellows Falls, and **Aria Zarnoski** of Vernon.

• **Tyler Millerick**, a general business major from Vernon; **Devin Speno**, a civil engineering major from Brattleboro; and **Harrison Gleim**, a mechanical engineering major from Bellows Falls, were all named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Western New England University in Springfield, Massachusetts.

• **Riley Dionne** of Wilmington was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts.

• The University of Hartford honored the following local students for academic achievement in the fall 2023 semester: **William Frank** of South Londonderry was named to the President's List, and **Caroline Mehner** of West Wardsboro and **Spencer Butynski** of Brookline were named to the Dean's List.

• **Ella Vilozny** of Dummerston was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Emmanuel College in Boston.

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

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

LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Jan. 5-Feb. 11

CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

<p>Here We Are - Evie Kiehle, Author, BUHS Student. Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 9a, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 12:40p, Sat 8p, Sun 6a</p> <p>The World Fusion Show - Ep# 171 - Valerie Naranjo. Mon 5:30p, Tues 8p, Wed 11a, Thurs 10:30a, Fri 9:30p, Sat 5p, Sun 9:30a</p> <p>Harris Hill Ski Jump 2024. Sat 11a (LIVE), Sun 11:30a (LIVE)</p> <p>At BMAC - Artist Conversation: Fawn Krieger, David B. Smith with Wendy Vogel. Mon 10a, Tues 8:30p, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 9a, Fri 4:30p, Sat 5:30p, Sun 6:30p</p> <p>Root Social Justice Center - Families United Meeting 1/26/24. Mon 2p, Tues 9a, Thurs 3:30p, Fri 2p, Sat 9:30p, Sun 8p</p> <p>Couch Potatoe Productions - Abenaki Forum 1/21/24. Wed 9p, Thurs 11:55p, Fri 9:55a</p> <p>Deliberate Drift - 5. A Rookery of Chinsstraps. Mon 9:15p, Tues 6:30a & 12:45p, Wed 11:30a, Fri 1:15p</p> <p>Couch Potatoe Productions - 78th Guilford Fair - Morning Events. Mon 12:45p, Fri 6:45a, Sun 5:15p</p> <p>Brattleboro Reformer Presents Windham County's Got Talent 1/25/24. Mon 6a, Sat 9a</p> <p>Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Fennell. Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p</p> <p>Vermontwide - Weekly Episode. Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 7p, Sun 5p</p> <p>News Block: WTSa News. Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break. Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p BUHS-TV News. Mon-Fri 12:20p & 6:40p</p> <p>St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service. Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 10a</p> <p>Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service. Wed 10a, Thurs 7a</p> <p>Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service. Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a</p> <p>St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass. Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p</p>	<p>Windham Elementary School District Board Special Mtg. 2/1/24: Mon 6:15p, Tues 7:15a, Wed 5p</p> <p>Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 2/12/24: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 12p</p> <p>West River Education District Board Mtg. 2/12/24: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:30p</p> <p>Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 2/12/24: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p</p> <p>Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 2/13/24: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p</p> <p>Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 2/13/24: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a</p> <p>Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg. 2/14/24: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p</p> <p>Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 2/15/24: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30a</p> <p>Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 2/6/24: Mon 2:30p, Sun 5:30a</p> <p>Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 2/5/24: Thurs 2:30p, Sun 6p</p> <p>Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 2/5/24: Thurs 12:30p, Sun 7:30p, Sun 5p</p> <p>River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 2/5/24: Mon 9a, Sat 2:30p</p> <p>Putney Selectboard Special Mtg. with AP Triton 2/6/24. Thurs 11a, Sat 9:45p</p> <p>St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass. Sat 4p (LIVE)</p> <p>Town Matters - Weekly Episode. Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p</p> <p>The David Pakman Show. Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p</p>
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Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at brattleborotv.org

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Obituaries

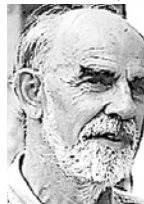


• **Ellen Marie "Ellie" Lascore, 86**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, on Jan. 14, 2024.

Brattleboro Memorial Hospital following a period of declining health. Born Ellen Marie Feeney on Oct. 27, 1937, in Hartford, Connecticut, she was one of two children of Patrick Feeney and Rita Bilodeau. She was the eldest of her brother (pre-deceased) William "Billy" Feeney and her half-siblings Thomas, James, Brian, Madeline (Gallagher), and Angela (Patriquin), all children of Patrick and Carmella Feeney. Ellen's spirited journey in the hospitality industry began at age 16, gliding on roller skates as a waitress at the Hamburger Den in Connecticut. She later met her future spouse Leo Joseph Xavier Lascore Jr and they wed on July 6, 1963. From this union came the role of mother to her daughters Judith Ann and Lena Marie. Unfortunately, their differences — Leo wanting a homemaker and Ellen's passion to work outside of the home — ultimately led to divorce. After her divorce from Leo, Ellen embraced her independence, immersing herself in various restaurants throughout Vermont. Most notably, she became a fixture at the Railroad Diner in Brattleboro, which after it sadly burnt down, later became the Riverview Diner. She was employed there for 20 years. She tried her hand at business ownership and opened Ellie's, her own restaurant in West Brattleboro, but running a business and raising two teenage daughters proved to be too much, so she closed the doors just one short year later. She later worked at Jad's Restaurant and, finally, landed at The Putney Diner, where she spent the last 30 years of her diner days until retiring at the age of 80. As much as she didn't want to, her body said it was time. Renowned for her quick-witted comebacks or as her customers called them "Ellie-isms," she effortlessly blended sweetness with sass, leaving an indelible mark on those she served. She may not have remembered your name and called you "toots," but she would remember what your order was even if a

long time had passed. Her claim to fame was that she never, no matter how big a table she got, wrote down an order. In the off chance she made a mistake she would say, "You'll eat it anyways, won't you toots?" If a customer didn't know what they wanted to eat, she'd playfully reply, "Take your time, I'm here until 10!" These witty remarks delighted her customers and exemplified her quick-witted nature, making her a beloved figure in the local dining scene. As a well-loved figure in the Putney community, she was nominated and chosen as Putney's Person of the Year for 2001 and had several articles written about her over the years in the *Brattleboro Reformer*. Beyond her bustling work life, Ellie found solace in simple pleasures — reading, watching television, and cherishing moments with her family and friends. Her final chapter was spent in the loving care of her daughter Lena and son-in-law Mike, where she found comfort during her declining health. Ellen was raised as a Roman Catholic. She went to a Catholic school and attended church throughout her life. She had a strong faith in God. Ellen leaves behind a legacy of independence, laughter, and hard work. Ellie will forever be remembered for her unwavering strength, infectious laughter, and the enduring impact she made on all who were fortunate enough to know her. She is survived by her daughters Judy Pike and Lena Lascore; granddaughters Amy Lascore (whom she adopted when Amy was 1), Heather Pike, and Shayla Pike; great-granddaughter Taylyn Anderson; and sons-in-law Doug Pike and Michael Grover. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In honoring Ellen's wishes, there will be no formal funeral services. Instead, a celebration of her vibrant life will be held on leap day, Feb. 29, from 3 to 7 p.m., at the Brattleboro VFW. Donations to a charity of one's choice in honor of Ellie's enduring spirit of generosity and compassion. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Nellie Thomas McColl Commager Lasch, 89**, of South Newfane. Died on Feb. 6, 2024. She was born on Sept. 26, 1934, to Henry Steele Commager and Evan Commager. She is survived by her sister, Lisa Commager, her son Rob Lasch (and daughter-in-law Mikell), her daughter Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn (and son-in-law Ray), her daughter Kate Loomis (and son-in-law Peter), and her daughter-in-law Elizabeth Stovall. She is also survived by her grandchildren Robby Ramdin, Greta Ramdin, Grace Noe (husband Zack), Eleanor Lasch, Isabel Lasch-Quinn, Honoré Lasch-Quinn, Chris Lasch, and Rain Lasch, and great-grandson Gunnar Noe. Nell was preceded in death by her beloved husband Christopher "Kit" Lasch, her parents, her brother Steele Commager, and her son, her "blue-eyed boy," Chris Lasch. An alumna of Barnard College, Nell enjoyed crossword puzzles, reading, sitting outside in her beautiful valley in any weather, and writing. She was known for her sharp intellect and quick wit. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: There will be a service for Nell in Williamsville, where she was married at her family's summer home in 1956. It will be held at Williamsville Hall on Saturday, Feb. 17, at 3:30 p.m. (Zoom link: ramd.in/nell.html).



• **Peter R. Klein, 88**, died Jan. 17, 2024 under hospice care in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

He was born in Arlington, Massachusetts on July 24, 1935, son of Ruth (née Simmons) and Frank Klein. He grew up with his brother Fritz on a small dairy farm in Chester, New Hampshire. A childhood of hard physical labor spurred his later ideas of liberation from workplace drudgery. His hands were so strong from milking cows every morning that his father used to make him shake hands with the other men around town just to show off. He had powerful hands until his last days. Peter attended Pinkerton Academy where he was known as the "Chester Casanova." He was very popular and was elected class president for four years. He loved to folk dance, and even danced in a celebration for Eisenhower held at the University of New Hampshire. When he was 16, he met his life-long partner and best friend, Gloria Klein (née Abbott). In the mid-1950s, Peter was drafted into the Army, where he trained to become an expert marksman. Later, he would tell his kids about his minor acts of rebellion. (He was in the same battalion as Elvis Presley and yet never cared to meet the guy.) For a month, he was stationed in Germany, where he was joined by his wife Gloria. There she gave birth to their first child, Sandy. Following his discharge, he studied physics and computer science at the University of New Hampshire. During this time, Gloria gave birth to their second child, Eric. Peter's interest in workplace economics led him to find work as a computer programmer at Western Electric, and later at Digital Equipment Corp. He taught programming at the

• **Joanne Sara Gorbey, 79**, and **Jimmy Lee Gorbey, 81**, both of Vernon.

Joanne Gorbey died unexpectedly in her home on Jan. 31, 2024. Born Sept. 6, 1944, in Brookline, Massachusetts, she was the daughter of the late Dominic J. and Theresa M. (Caloggero) Dalicandro. She was raised and educated in Newton, Massachusetts, attending Newton High School. Joanne was a dedicated licensed nurse's aide employed for many years with the Milford (Mass.) Geriatric Authority, where she retired after many years of faithful service. Previously, she worked at Hopedale Gardens Nursing Facility. Prior to building a new home and moving to Pond Road in Vernon in 2019, she and her husband were residents of Chelsea, Vermont for 18 years. A devout Catholic and strong in her faith, she was a communicant of Our Lady of the Angels Roman Catholic Church in Randolph. Joanne enjoyed sewing, doing her puzzles on her iPad, and cooking. When she was outside, she loved to admire her flower gardens and watch her husband mow the lawn on his tractor. Most importantly, she cherished time spent with her family whom she loved dearly. Joanne's life centered around her family and, for the last few years, she devoted her time taking care of her husband. On Feb. 16, 1968, in Waltham,



Massachusetts, she was married to Jimmy Lee Gorbey. Sadly, her husband of almost 56 years died on Feb. 2, 2024, less than 1½ days following her death.

Jimmy Lee Gorbey died unexpectedly on Feb. 2, 2024, at Albany (N.Y.) Medical Center, following a period of declining health. Born Dec. 2, 1942, in Killarm, West Virginia, he was the son of the late John Henry and Emma Mae (Woods) Gorbey. He was raised and educated in Fairmont, West Virginia, where he attended local public schools. A proud veteran, he went on to serve his country during the Vietnam War in the Navy, on board the USS Wasp. Following his honorable discharge from active service, he returned home, relocating to Massachusetts. Jimmy worked as a mechanic for the Milford (Mass.) Highway Department, retiring from his position following many years of faithful service to the town. He had also worked at General Automotive, an auto supply store in Milford. During his earlier years in life, he was a milkman for H.P. Hood. Of his memberships, Jimmy

was an active member with VFW Carl M. Dessaint Post 1034 in Brattleboro. An ardent outdoorsman, he enjoyed hunting, gardening, putting around his home, and piloting his Coyote tractor. In his earlier years, Jimmy enjoyed archery, attending many competitions throughout the New England area. He won three state championships in Massachusetts.

The Gorbey family is survived by their three children: a son, Joseph Gorbey and wife, Amy, of Hanover, Massachusetts, and two daughters, Loraine M. Gorbey of Milford and Cynthia Kinahan and her husband, Gregory, of Northbridge, Massachusetts; grandchildren Theresa, Tyler, Henry, and Thomas; great-grandson Benjamin; and many cherished nieces and nephews. Mrs. Gorbey was predeceased by her only brother, Frederick Dalicandro, while Mr. Gorbey is also survived by his sister, Opal Price, of Wadestown, West Virginia. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass for Mr. & Mrs. Gorbey was held Feb. 9 at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Brattleboro. Burial will take place in the springtime in the family lot in Tyler Cemetery in Vernon. Donations to the VFW, Carl M. Dessaint Post 1034, 40 Black Mountain Rd., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

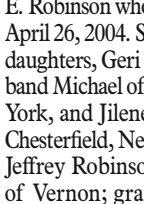
New Hampshire Technical Institute and, by the 1980s, had set out as a freelance programmer. Peter was a utopian who believed that many common and unpleasant workplace practices should be eliminated, and that our society would be a better place if people were allowed to associate free of the traditional restrictions of age, class, race, and gender. He and Gloria understood concepts of polyamory early in their relationship even before the free love movement of the 1960s. They settled and raised children in Canterbury, New Hampshire, and later lived in the Boston area before finally moving to Brattleboro. Beginning in the late 1970s, both he and Gloria were active in various alternative marriage support groups. Peter spent his 60s with another beloved partner, Jan Frazier, and then returned to live out the rest of his life with Gloria. While not a holiday gift-giver, for a span of time he gave his kids tools as gifts. When his oldest granddaughter was a toddler, her favorite game was to play in his toolbox. He wrote short stories, including some erotica, and completed a memoir, *Fields and Islands*. Peter enjoyed shooting, archery, fishing, boating, swimming, and camping — as well as some unusual hobbies like hang gliding, which he pursued intermittently until he was 80. He would often talk of flying a mile over Mount Ascutney sailing the wind alongside the hawks. Peter was an avowed atheist who loved to discuss religious ideas with all kinds of people. He read Gurdjieff, P. D. Ouspensky, Franklin Merrell Wolf, various philosophers, and anything about the origins of man, science, and the universe. The last book he read was *The Dawn of Everything* by Graeber and Wengrow. Peter was also really good at buying small parcels of land, islands, and peninsulas, back when the average person could do such things. Finally, he was particularly fond of his five grandchildren — Xavier, Rosa, Isaiah, Eliza, and Oliver — whom he taught how to have real fun with wild stories and his puppets (he was a double ventriloquist). Together, they tried roasting every possible thing on a fire (from Oreos to Certs), slightly dangerous things like trespassing, crossing trestle bridges, swimming across the Connecticut River, sneaking a sip of scotch, sliding down cliffs, and hang gliding. To his grown children, Eric and Sandy, he was not just a great dad and granddad — but a great friend too. When his health declined, Peter could be seen almost daily shooting pool at the bowling alley and the local pub, Bar 580, hitting great shots and unabashedly cheating, saying "Why waste your limited time on a bad shot?" He leaves behind many beloved family members both blood-related and chosen — Gloria, Sandy, Eric, Fritz, Melissa, Rosa, Isaiah, Xavier, Eliza, Oliver, Jan, Gino, Hayden, Nanci, Kristofer, Peter T, Nicole, Ross, Jerry, Judy, Bill D., Helene and Adwoa — as well as their respective partners who lent continual love and support: Laurie, Mary, Matt, Gracie, Prerna, Sue, Susan, James, Lisa, Brew, Fawn, and Susan. He is also survived by great-grandchildren Finley and Reed, and their parents Brit and Marissa. He was predeceased by many loved ones, most notably Dolphin, Stine, and Casey. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: The day after his death, family and friends buried Peter under an apple tree in Putney. A red tail hawk soared above the burial. There will be a memorial fire and gathering on March 15. If you would like to come, call Sandy at 802-579-3044.

• **Richard H. "Rick" Taylor, 72**, of Newfane. Died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on Feb. 5, 2024. Born on May 20, 1951, Richard grew up in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts. He attended Agawam (Mass.) High School and went on to earn an associate degree in automotive technology from Hudson Valley Community College. He had a successful career as a customer relations manager at Wagner Ford in Simsbury, Connecticut for more than 30 years and later worked at Stratton Mountain Resort, before retiring. Rick was a genuinely kind individual who was always ready to lend a helping hand. He had a knack for fixing things, and enjoyed taking on various projects. He loved being outdoors and was a talented woodworker. He had a passion for antiques and enjoyed collecting them. Above all, Rick was a proud grandfather who cherished his family dearly. Rick is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Laura (Hart) Taylor; his children, Richard and Jennifer (Lavarriere) Taylor, and Jessica Taylor and Danny Silva, all of Southwick, Massachusetts, and Justin Taylor and Amanda Hescock of Newfane; grandchildren Sam, Sara, and Riley Taylor; siblings Gail Taylor (Paul) and Larry Taylor (Ruth); and many nieces, nephews, extended family, lifelong friends, and his trusty sidekick, Rosco. Richard was preceded in death by his father, Richard L. Taylor, his mother, Shirley (Morse) Taylor, his sister, Kathy Manley, nephew Brett Taylor, and grandson Owen Taylor. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service will be held on Feb. 18, at 12:30 p.m., at Newfane Congregational Church, 11 Church St. A celebration of his life will be held on Feb. 25, at 1 p.m., at American Legion Post 338, 46 Plover Mill Rd., Southwick. Donations to Grace Cottage Hospital, P.O. Box 1, Townshend, VT 05353.



Valley, Marion was born at home in Brookline on Oct. 17, 1936, the daughter of Arthur and Nola (Perry) White. She was raised and educated in Newfane and was a graduate of Leland & Gray Seminary, Class of 1954. She went on to attend the Sheldon Academy of Beauty Culture in Burlington, after which she received her license as a hairdresser. For many years, Marion owned and operated her own beauty shop, The Beauty Den, which she opened in 1962 at her home in Newfane. She served a large client base in the West River Valley and also offered her services to several local funeral homes. In her earlier years, she was a telephone operator working out of the Newfane office of New England Telephone, a position she started when she was 16. A woman of faith, she was a longtime member of the Newfane Congregational Church and was involved with many activities within the church. Marion served as a Girl Scout leader for seven years and was a member of the Stitch & Bitch Sewing Club in the Valley. With her husband she was a member of the Maple Leaf Square Dance Club, and Windham Wanderers Club, a local camping club organization. An excellent cook and baker, she made beautiful wedding cakes for three generations of brides. Marion enjoyed travel, camping, knitting, sewing, and time shared with her family. On Sept. 17, 1955, at Newfane Congregational Church, she was married to Oscar E. Robinson who predeceased her on April 26, 2004. Survivors include two daughters, Geri Feeder and her husband Michael of Hudson Falls, New York, and Jilene Robinson of West Chesterfield, New Hampshire; a son, Jeffrey Robinson and his wife Bev of Vernon; grandchildren Kieara, Evan (Kristina), Samuel (Catherine), Tyrel (Lauren), Logan (Jeff), and Levi (Vanessa); great-grandchildren Everett, Brett, and Astrid; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by half-brothers Arthur, Harold and William White, and grandchildren Nichole and Jordan Souza. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service in celebration of her life will be conducted Saturday, Feb. 17, at 11 a.m., at the Newfane Congregational Church, with a reception to follow. Friends are invited to call at the Atamaniuk Funeral Home on Terrace Street in Brattleboro on Friday, Feb. 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. Marion will be laid to rest with her beloved husband in the Robinson family lot in Woodlawn Cemetery in Newfane in the springtime when the cemetery reopens. Donations to Newbrook Fire & Rescue, P.O. Box 77, Newfane, VT 05345. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Theodosia "Teddy" Swinyer, 94**, of Brattleboro. Died at home, surrounded by her loving family, on Feb. 1, 2024. Teddy was born in Albany, New York, on Jan. 4, 1930 to Alberto and Maria Francesca Sacca (Pagliarulo). There she attended school and started her career as a waitress in the family business, Al's Italian Restaurant. Later in life, she cared for two families as a beloved nanny who was remembered with cards and letters for the rest of her life. She also provided end-of-life care to several family members. She lived in Galway, New York with her daughter, Elizabeth and her family for 10 years and moved to Vermont in 2007 where she lived with her



daughter, Bernadette, and her family for the remainder of her life. She married the love of her life, Charles E. Swinyer, on Sept. 29, 1968, and together they raised four daughters: Patricia (Paul) Plante, Geraldine (Ralph) Sim, Elizabeth (Robert) Rue, and Bernadette (Jeffrey) Meyer. Her cherished family grew to include 14 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. Teddy was predeceased by her husband, Charles; brothers Giacomo, Nicholas, and Donald; and sisters Rosalie (Motta) and Antoinette (Motta). She is survived by four siblings: Alfred, Albert, Louis and Clementina (Salmeri); her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as many nieces and nephews. She had so much love in her heart to give, and it continues to grow every day through her whole family and every life that she has touched. In addition to doting on her family, Teddy created many beautiful and intricate crocheted doilies as treasured gifts to her family. She was known for her delicious pizza, lasagna, rum cakes, struffoli, and large Christmas cookie platters. Her grandchildren fondly remember the many group sleepovers with Poppy serving popcorn in the evenings and Nonnie serving pizza fritte the next morning for breakfast. Later in life, she enjoyed reading and making puzzles. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: As she requested, there will be no calling hours or services. Teddy's family will gather in the spring to celebrate her life. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the charity of your choice. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Richard H. "Rick" Taylor, 72**, of Newfane. Died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on Feb. 5, 2024. Born on May 20, 1951, Richard grew up in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts. He attended Agawam (Mass.) High School and went on to earn an associate degree in automotive technology from Hudson Valley Community College. He had a successful career as a customer relations manager at Wagner Ford in Simsbury, Connecticut for more than 30 years and later worked at Stratton Mountain Resort, before retiring. Rick was a genuinely kind individual who was always ready to lend a helping hand. He had a knack for fixing things, and enjoyed taking on various projects. He loved being outdoors and was a talented woodworker. He had a passion for antiques and enjoyed collecting them. Above all, Rick was a proud grandfather who cherished his family dearly. Rick is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Laura (Hart) Taylor; his children, Richard and Jennifer (Lavarriere) Taylor, and Jessica Taylor and Danny Silva, all of Southwick, Massachusetts, and Justin Taylor and Amanda Hescock of Newfane; grandchildren Sam, Sara, and Riley Taylor; siblings Gail Taylor (Paul) and Larry Taylor (Ruth); and many nieces, nephews, extended family, lifelong friends, and his trusty sidekick, Rosco. Richard was preceded in death by his father, Richard L. Taylor, his mother, Shirley (Morse) Taylor, his sister, Kathy Manley, nephew Brett Taylor, and grandson Owen Taylor. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service will be held on Feb. 18, at 12:30 p.m., at Newfane Congregational Church, 11 Church St. A celebration of his life will be held on Feb. 25, at 1 p.m., at American Legion Post 338, 46 Plover Mill Rd., Southwick. Donations to Grace Cottage Hospital, P.O. Box 1, Townshend, VT 05353.

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The Barnstormerz — fiddler and keyboardist Ned Phoenix of Townshend, left, and guitarist Marvin Bentley of South Wardsboro — plan to release a recording of Phoenix's adaptation of Margaret MacArthur's "Mary Shiminski I Love You."

Mary Shiminski

FROM SECTION FRONT

The late Margaret MacArthur, a folksong collector and singer of Marlboro, read a *Brattleboro Reformer* article about the graffiti and in 1979 wrote a song, "Mary Shiminski, I Love You!" The MacArthur family band — Margaret and her children Dan, Gary, and Megan — recorded this song on their 1981 LP *Make the Wildwood Ring*.

Now there is a new, updated version of MacArthur's song and a future music video in the making. One of the musicians is Ned Phoenix of Townshend, a well-known organist, violinist, music teacher, and self-described "fiddler extraordinaire" and "composer of tunes and songs, including story songs about local towns and Vermont subjects."

"Mary Shiminski is such a musical name," said Phoenix, who during the 1970s and '80s played and called for square and contra dances and other events in New England.

"I visited Margaret at home in Marlboro shortly before she died and told her I wanted to learn 'Mary Shiminski, I Love You!'" he said. "The song wasn't published, and as she handed the LP album to me, she said, 'I consider this to be my legacy.'"

"As I received the record I assured her, 'You've given it to the right person, because I intend to learn it and popularize it.'"

This is a classic love story perfect for Valentine's Day, Phoenix said.

"People don't know Margaret wrote the song or that I improved it," he said. "The song is great. People love it. We are going to make a video with the song."

Who is Mary?

So who was the famous Mary Shiminski?

According to Duncan's *Sentinel* story, from a reader's tip he found Mary Shiminski's mother and her husband, Theodore, of Long Island. It turns out they owned a trailer on an isolated dirt road in Westminster, where they spent holidays and some weekends.

They had no phone and no mailbox and did not know about the graffiti until Duncan finally tracked them down. That led him to Mary and Bert, who fleshed out their love story.

Here is Duncan's version of the story:

"In the summer of 1974, Mary Shiminski, age 29, had been going out with Bert Salva in Long Island for about a year. 'We used to fight over stupid things,' Salva remembers, and one of their fights was that summer.

"Mary came north with her family for three weeks of vacation.

"Bert Salva followed in the tractor-trailer truck he owned.

"I was determined I wouldn't see him, and he was just as determined I would," Mary says now.

"Salva would park his huge tractor-trailer in Putney and walk the two or three miles to the Shiminskis's trailer, where he'd stand at a small distance and ask Mary to come out and talk to him. She wouldn't.

"Wherever we'd go, he'd follow," says Mrs. Shiminski.

"One day they went to Spofford Lake, about 15 miles from Westminster. Salva knew that if Mary saw his truck, she'd hide, so he walked from Putney again and waited by her car for her to finish swimming.

"Won't you even give me a ride back to Putney?" he begged her. She drove off without him.

"That afternoon he went to Brattleboro and bought the paint. That night, he was holding on with one hand and spray-painting with the other from 11 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.

"The next morning, Mary and her family had breakfast at the

"Mary Shiminski I Love You" appears as the last track on Gary, Margaret, Megan, and Dan MacArthur's 1981 LP of folk music. "The slogan became immortalized in our community by postcard, book title, sermon and folk tale," Margaret MacArthur wrote. "After writing the song, I realized that here is still another ballad on the age-old theme of lovers' contests and trials."

Howard Johnson's restaurant that overlooks the overpass.

"I thought, 'How am I ever going to live this down?' Mary says. 'I was really angry. There were two policemen in the restaurant and I went to them and told who I was, pointed to the sign, and told them I knew who painted it. 'What should I do?' I asked them.

"The policemen told her she should be honored, not mad, and invited her to have a cup of coffee. 'It's not often we get to have coffee with a celebrity,' they told her.

Back on Long Island, Salva remained persistent. Shiminski became receptive to his overtures. And, on Aug. 7, 1974, the couple got married. They moved to California, and the next year Mary gave birth to twin boys. She told Duncan that they all couldn't be happier. They even still had the guard dog.

"Bert Salva says he's the one who gave up three weeks of work, walked 30 miles one day to be snubbed, spent \$25 on spray paint, and risked injury and arrest hanging for six and a half hours from an overpass to write 'Mary Shiminski I Love You!'" Duncan wrote. "He says he still does."

In 2014, the *Reformer* reported that Shiminski and Salva had divorced but remained close. According to public records, Shiminski died in 2021.

A lively tune

Phoenix admits to changing some of the words to the song.

"I realized that Margaret had left out the important turning point: the reason Mary made her conciliatory call to Bert," Phoenix said.

"What impressed me in the article was how the policeman refused to arrest Bert for his expression of love," he said. "So I supplied the pivotal verse, which of course blends in, and no one would know I wrote it if I didn't mention it here."

One of Phoenix's new lines: "So Mary called down to Long Island, said 'Wedded my love we will be.'"

"I did have an opportunity to sing my verse for Margaret; she made no comment," Phoenix noted.

He also composed a new melody for the chorus.

"Margaret's original song used

the same melody for the chorus and the verses," Phoenix said.

"This guy was way over the top, and he needed an over-the-top chorus melody, so I composed it. It really sounds like he's '...hanging' by one hand from that railroad bridge, writin' by the light of the moon."

"I also changed a few words and gave the song an ending, so it has already gone through the folk process — fortunately, for the better. Margaret's good song is now a great song. I also added the exclamation point to the title, so it's forever as Bert painted it. He deserves it."

He calls it an "uplifting song with a happy ending."

Phoenix has sung his version

at schools, outdoor festivals, and Brattleboro's Gallery Walk.

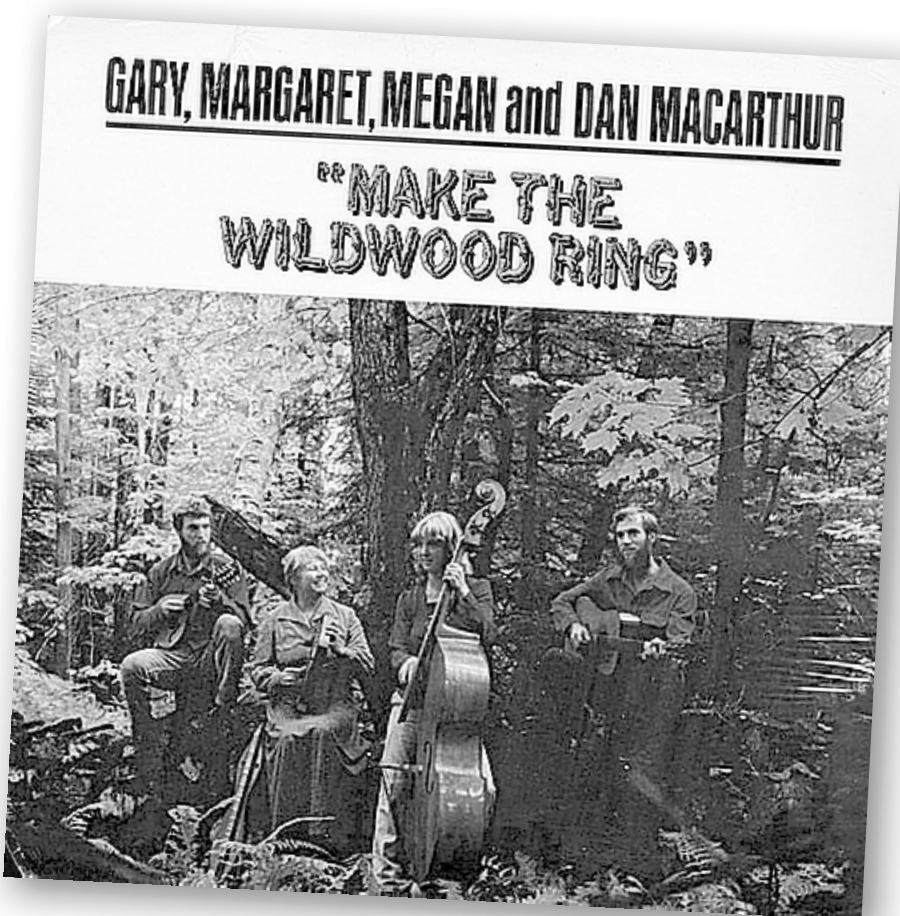
"People like it a lot," he said. "When the song ends, some audiences spontaneously jump to their feet, arms up, shouting."

Barnstormerz seek photos of overpass

Phoenix and Marvin Bentley of South Wardsboro perform as The Barnstormerz.

Bentley, a self-taught musician, sings and plays acoustic, electric, slide, and bass guitars. The two play their original upbeat songs and tunes featuring Bentley's songs — from love songs to views of the Vermont experience — and Phoenix's improvised fiddling.

They have played for



FROM THE EDITOR

Have we turned a stalker into a local folk hero?

Looking at the overpass message through a different lens can be chilling

Readers will have much to enjoy about Joyce Marcel's feature, in which she writes about what is widely regarded as a piece of Brattleboro lore. We publish it with that hope and in that spirit.

But think about it.

A woman came to Vermont with her children in 1974 to elude an estranged partner who then tracked her down and obsessively pursued her, literally ignoring requests to leave and not taking "no" for an answer. After seeing the 3-foot-tall message to her painted on a railroad overpass, the woman sought help from police — who responded dismissively. The man, undeterred, continued his quest until he wore her down and the woman finally agreed to marry him.

That sounds terrifying.

To be clear: Nothing reported and written about Mary Shiminski and Bert Silva over the past 50 years has suggested that abuse was a part of this relationship. Nothing has indicated that Silva was anything other than an over-the-top goofball who would go to absurd, dramatic extremes of highly visible vandalism to private property to woo Shiminski. The two

raised a family together and, as the *Brattleboro Reformer* reported about 10 years ago, even after they divorced they remained good friends.

But, in 2024, we would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the grim warning that co-exists in this story, right along with the years of mystery, the local lore, and the folk music. Such coercive behavior all too often is also a huge red flag for other domestic abuse — or the potential for such behavior to escalate.

So if elements of this story feel congruent with your own domestic situation, we encourage you to consider seeking out the services of the Women's Freedom Center (womensfreedomcenter.net) or find similar support. Please do so with care. Please be safe.

I'd like to think that if a Bert Silva today were guilelessly smitten with a Mary Shiminski and wanted another chance at a relationship, he would express that desire by doing something far, far less obsessive, creepy, and coercive to the person he ostensibly loves. I'd like to think that at the very least he wouldn't stalk her.

Read the room, dudes. — Jeff Potter

weddings, convention receptions, local fairs and events as The Barnstormerz ([youtube.com/@TheBarnstormerz](https://www.youtube.com/@TheBarnstormerz)) and as Ned Phoenix and Friends during the first 15 years of Brattleboro's Gallery Walk.

Phoenix and Bentley are currently preparing to make a music video of Phoenix's version of "Mary Shiminski I Love You!" Their video will simply show the song's story in photographs of the time and place. The musicians will be heard but not seen, so illustrative photos are needed.

"We were hoping to contact Mary and Bert to ask for photos, but it seems that Mary died a few years ago, and we have not been able to contact Bert," Phoenix said. "Perhaps Mary's children might hear of this."

So, he continued, "we are turning to the public for personal photos to show how it was and to keep the visuals interesting."

The Barnstormerz seek black-and-white or color photographs from about 1965 to 1985. They would like photos of the former

Howard Johnson's restaurant (since remodeled, and now the site of Ramunto's), and the intersection of Routes 5 and 9 and Exit 3 of Interstate 91. All photos of the old black railroad bridge before or after Silva painted his message will be accepted.

Only photos that are not protected under copyright can be used. Those found online, Phoenix warns, may not be permissible.

People with photos can submit JPEGs to a dedicated email address: MarySilveyou@yahoo.com.

All people whose photos are included will be acknowledged in the video's credits, Phoenix said.

"We are sorry that Mary and Bert did not hear their song," he said. "But through this song and video, their love story will live on."

Warm thanks to our friends at The Keene Sentinel for permission to reprint excerpts of Dayton Duncan's 1978 story (bit.ly/752-shiminski).

Hear from the
Candidates
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Brattleboro Selectboard Candidates Forum

Thursday, February 22nd • 6-8 pm

FEATURING THE CANDIDATES
Peter Case, Richard Davis, Oscar Heller,
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YouTube Channel, and available on brattleborotv.org

Limited seating for the live event is available
Selectboard Meeting Room - Municipal Center
230 Main Street, Brattleboro

To submit questions for the candidates
email kate@commonsnews.org.

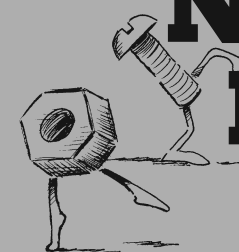
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Renovations

Originally, 92 Rockingham St. was an automotive repair garage and 94 Rockingham St. was a gas station. Over the years, the buildings were remodeled and used as a Chinese restaurant, ice cream parlor, martial arts studio, hot dog and bratwurst restaurant, and as an American food bistro. At times, the two buildings have been empty or used for storage.

Keeping the art deco design of the 94 Rockingham St. building as original as possible was one particular goal of the renovation, said Daniels and Wells, who also saved its unique black-and-white tile floor.

As is often the case with such projects, Daniels and Wells had already started on the renovations and bringing the buildings up to code when they found that the project would be more extensive — and more expensive — than they had originally thought.

They bought the buildings thinking that the membrane on the flat roof of the 94 Rockingham St. building was fairly new, only to find that it had to be replaced. During that

process, it became clear that the roof structure itself needed work.

In the end, both buildings had new roofs installed, along with new wiring, plumbing, and fully accessible bathrooms.

Very soon into the renovation process, interior demolition revealed a total lack of insulation in both buildings, and in some places a lack of exterior sheathing.

The exterior walls of both buildings were insulated, and drywall hung, finished, and painted. The 92 Rockingham St. building has new floors, walls, and trim.

“We are trying to do this right,” Wells said. “We’re really trying to care about this project.”

Adding to the stress of the project was the fact that through most of the year, the couple still lived in Boston, where they owned two homes and a business, and they were commuting to Bellows Falls for several days each week while trying to get a new home built in Walpole, New Hampshire.

The home building project started behind schedule, and the

FROM SECTION FRONT

couple found themselves sleeping in a barn without heat or water for four months while juggling all the projects.

Selling their homes and the business in Boston helped to cover some of the unexpected expenses of the project, which Daniels said “were a lot more than we’d figured. Definitely above our limit. You have to know that can happen going in, but it was more than we had planned for.”

In an interview a year ago, Daniels had commented on why they chose to move to the Bellows Falls region.

“I know this is a really special town,” she said then. “We want to be part of the growth, the story of the town.”

A year later, Daniels said that their love for the town really helped them through a rough year.

“We’ve made friends here,” she said. “They would come through and look at things, and their enthusiasm for the project meant everything to us. The love of the town was our anchor through everything.”

As they look at a potential renter for the 94 building, Wells said that they “want a business that will add some flavor and character to the town.”

“We feel like the town is gaining traction all the time,” Daniels added. “That it’s up and coming. It’s happening in this town.”

The couple had an open house at the salon on Feb. 2. With two chairs, Daniels said she plans on working alone, and she is taking appointments.

“After working in a busy salon for many years,” she said, “I want this to be a calm, relaxed experience. I have 13 years in the industry specializing in cuts and colors. I’ve really honed my craft.”

After her first four days in business, Daniels said she’s been averaging five clients a day. A good start, she said, for an area where she has yet to establish a client base.

Daniels noted that over the past year they had experienced several of life’s major stressors all at once — buying property and starting a new business, changing jobs, selling property and moving, facing financial challenges, and overseeing major construction projects.



BELLOWS FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A 1940s view of the garage and gas station on Rockingham Street where Studio 92 is now. The garage front of the rear building is gone, and the gas station was replaced by a newer building.



ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

The newly-renovated interior of Studio 92.

It’s the sort of thing that can put a heavy strain on any relationship, she said, then added “we actually got engaged this year.”

“Tim said all the time, ‘We’re fighting for the dream,’” Daniels said. “It became our mantra. It’s

brought us closer together.”

Daniels can be reached for appointments and bookings through

studio92bf.com, where photos document some of the renovation journey of the two buildings.



ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

Tim Wells stands in the refurbished art deco-designed Real Scoop building, with the original floor restored.

Water bill assistance program ends next month

WATERBURY—The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) can help pay overdue water or sewer bills. Eligible households have until Friday, March 15, to

apply. The LIHWAP program pays for overdue water and sewer bills, including back charges and fees associated with the outstanding balance. In addition, the program may be able to provide a one-time future payment. Payments are made directly to water or sewer providers.

Eligible persons are customers of a public drinking water or wastewater utility in Vermont. In addition, the gross household income must be below 60% of the state median income based on household size. For a household of four, this would be \$66,396. Renters are eligible for this program.

To apply, the completed application and current water/sewer bill must be mailed to: Economic Services Division, Application & Document Processing Center, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT 05671. The application can be found at bit.ly/752-water or by calling 800-339-6433.

This program is administered by the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) using funding provided by the federal government during the Covid-19 pandemic. So far, the program has paid over half a million dollars in water and sewer bills, and there are still funds remaining. However, all funds must be spent by the end of March, or they will be returned to the federal government.

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Art meets outdoor recreation



Artful Ice Shanties exhibit ‘brings together elements of both our natural and cultural heritage through a really funky artistic lens’

KELLY FLETCHER COURTESY PHOTO
 Anne Murphy, who entered the 2023 contest with sister Amy Nelson, stands with their entry last year. They will be participating in the exhibit again this month.

By Victoria Chertok

The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The Artful Ice Shanties exhibit returns for the fourth year, presented by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center and Retreat Farm. Nearly a dozen ice shanties — portable sheds that provide shelter for people who are ice fishing — will be set up at the Retreat Farm courtyard from Saturday, Feb. 17 to Sunday, Feb. 25.

According to publicity materials, the competition was launched in 2021 when the COVID-19 pandemic drove people to engage in more outdoor activities.

Artful Ice Shanties celebrates artistic talent, ingenuity, and New England’s rich ice-fishing heritage that continues to this day. Last year, more than 2,000 people visited the 15 shanties on display.

“This is such a fun event, and one that brings together elements of both our natural and cultural heritage through a really funky artistic lens,” says Kristin Sullivan, executive director of Retreat Farm.

“I love the interactive elements of the shanties — being able to go inside and experience them — and seeing how artists and builders of all stripes interpret their brief,” she says. “We also hope visitors will also take time to enjoy our trails and

the farm while they’re here; it will be a fun, immersive experience for the whole family.”

A panel of four will award prizes for the best shanties: Jenny Crowell, program director at Retreat Farm; Bo Foard, CEO of Foard Panel; Tom Bodett, board chair of HatchSpace; and Donna Hawes, former program director of River Gallery Art School.

The competition selects judges who “have design and art experience that are local to the area,” says Crowell.

The judges will award five prizes: Best in Show, Most Creative, Best Craftsmanship, Most Likely to Catch a Fish, and People’s Choice. Winners will receive gift certificates to Brown and Roberts Hardware.

The criteria for judging: creativity, craftsmanship, and imagination.

“This has certainly become a beloved event for Retreat Farm and the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center. Each year the entries get more complex and exciting, and it’s so thrilling to see what folks come up with,” adds Crowell.

Brattleboro’s Artful Ice Shanties range from the traditional to the conceptual, from functional to whimsical, from the scientifically inspired to those that feature culture and history.

■ SEE SHANTIES, B4



COURTESY OF ANNALISE BISCHOFF

Annaliese Bischoff makes progress on her ice shanty, “Fishing for Snowflakes,” which honors the legacy of groundbreaking Vermont photographer and meteorologist Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley.



REBEKAH KERSTEN COURTESY PHOTO
 Emily Matthew-Muller (Donna and Harry) and Kyle Girard (Harry) are two of the Brattleboro Union High School students who will perform in Mamma Mia.

Gonna do their very best ‘Mamma Mia!’ takes center stage at BUHS

By Nancy A. Olson
 Special to The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Conflict between the generations is a given. The February production by the Brattleboro Union High School Players of the musical *Mamma Mia!* explores, through the songs of the pop group ABBA, the relationship between a single mother and her daughter. The show was a hugely popular 1999 stage hit and an acclaimed 2008 movie.

The daughter, Sophie, is about to be married at her mother’s taverna on the fictional Greek island of Kalokairi. She really wants to have her father escort her down the aisle, only she doesn’t know

who he is. Her mother, Donna, isn’t even sure who is her daughter’s father.

Finding her mother’s old diary, Sophie learns her father could be one of three men her mother knew in her hippie days. Secretly, Sophie invites each to her wedding.

Meanwhile, Donna is feeling emotional about her “little girl” growing up. She accidentally discovers the three former lovers hiding in her barn.

As might be expected, chaos ensues, all to the soundtrack of ABBA’s music.

“I’ve loved this show for years,” said Rebekah Kersten, BUHS English and theater teacher, who directs the show.

After last February’s

production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, “we were looking for something more lighthearted this year, and this seemed like a natural suggestion,” Kersten said.

This jukebox musical, so-called because most of the songs included are previously well-known and popular outside of the context of the show, presents some challenges, she said.

“First, the temptation is to replicate the exact delivery of ABBA’s recordings, the exact performances seen in the 2008 film, or a combination of both,” Kersten said.

“Secondly, the challenge is to recognize that, in spite of this show’s fluffy demeanor and jukebox subgenre, these characters

■ SEE ‘MAMMA MIA!’, B2

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
15	16	17	18	19	20
<p>Well-being</p> <p>GUILFORD Beginners Fall Prevention Tai Chi: Find out about why everyone is talking about the benefits of tai chi - this exercise of slow continuous movements which improves strength, balance and posture. Instructor is Leah Gessler.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. every Thursday. ▶ Free, donations are welcome. ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: More information: 802-579-1350 or guilfordcarestv@gmail.com. <p>Community building</p> <p>WEST DUMMERSTON Dummerston Conservation presents Hiking Trail Construction & Layout with Roger Haydock: Over 30 plus years, Roger Haydock has constructed more than 20 trails in the local area for the Windham Hill Pinnacle Association, Putney Mountain Association, the Nature Conservancy, and the Deer Run Nature Preserve. He'll share his methods, approaches, goals, and lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 7 p.m. ▶ \$5 suggested donation will be split between Dummerston Community Center and Dummerston Conservation Commission. ▶ West Dummerston Community Center, 150 West St. Information: 802-254-2703. <p>Visual arts and shows</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO "All Hearts" Opening: This February Group Show will showcase love and hearts contributed by member artists. Many of our artists may also feature the theme in their own display space, as well as in the group show. We will have snacks and refreshments on hand for art lovers and LUV Craw attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. ▶ Through Thursday, February 29. ▶ Free. ▶ Harmony Collective, 49 Eliot St. Information: 802-258-7470; HarmonyCollective49@gmail.com. 	<p>Music</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Acoustic Trio SIREN makes their Vermont Debut: After years heading up and down the east coast and abroad, SIREN makes their VT debut. They use inventive arrangements/powerhouse 3-part harmonies to re-imagine hits by eclectic artists - i.e. Dolly Parton, Lady Gaga, Post Malone, Tom Petty in their upbeat/engaging shows. They've headlined in NYC's premiere venues such as Joe's Pub, Iridium Jazz Club, National Geographic Encounter, opened for RuPaul's Drag Race winner Jinkx Monsoon, were featured performers on cruise line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 7 - 10 p.m. ▶ Through Friday, February 16. ▶ Tickets are \$20 in advance and can be purchased at http://latchis.ticketleap.com/siren. ▶ Latchis Pub & Latchis Underground, 6 Flat St. Information: 802-380-1369. <p>Recreation</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Harris Hill Ski Jump Weekend plus Free Friday Night Event: Harris Hill Ski Jump, the only Olympic sized ski jump in New England, is celebrating its 102nd year, February 16-18 in Brattleboro. 2/16: Evening target jump competition with athletes from weekend's lineup of international competitors On Friday, February 16, Harris Hill Ski Jump will host a Friday night target jump competition featuring athletes from the weekend's lineup of international competitors. The event is FREE and a thank you to the greater Brattleboro community for its continued support of the annual ski jumping event. Live announcing and some limited hot drinks will be available for sale for Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, approximately 30 of the world's up and coming male and female ski jumpers from the US and Europe are scheduled to compete at Harris Hill in the Pepsi Challenge (Saturday) and the Fred Harris Memorial Tournament (Sunday). The event takes place on a 90-meter jump, the only Olympic sized ski jump in New England. Jumpers launch from the take off and soar more than 300 feet at speeds of nearly 60 mph. The event has a festive atmosphere for the whole family with live event, music, local food/drink, a jumbonton and souvenirs. ATHLETES: Athletes scheduled to jump include Brattleboro's own Spencer Knickerbocker in the Masters Division, two-time Fred Harris Memorial Tournament trophy winner Chris Lamb (USA), and Kai McKinnon (USA), who just took the silver in Nordic Combined at last week's Nordic Junior World Ski Championships in Slovenia (with teammate Alexa Brabec). On the international front, Harris Hill will welcome back jumpers from Norway, France and Slovenia - including last year's Fred Harris Memorial Tournament winner Ozbej Kotnik. The weekend will serve as a stop on the US Cup competition of the United States American Ski Jumping (USASJ) series. ▶ 2/16: 5:30 p.m.: Athletes scheduled to jump include Brattleboro's Spencer Knickerbocker in Masters Division, two-time Fred Harris Memorial Tournament trophy winner Chris Lamb (USA), Kai McKinnon (USA), who just took the silver in Nordic Combined at Nordic Junior World Ski Championships in Slovenia (with teammate Alexa Brabec). On the international front, Harris Hill will welcome back jumpers from Norway, France and Slovenia - including last year's Fred Harris Memorial Tournament winner Ozbej Kotnik. ▶ Through Sunday, February 18. ▶ Free. ▶ Harris Hill Ski Jump, Cedar Street. Information: harrishillskijump.com. <p>Kids and families</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Little Explorers Nature Playgroup: Children ages 3 to 5 and their caregivers are invited to get together with others to explore, discover, wonder, and play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 10 - 11:30 a.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. Information: 802-257-5785; beec.org. </p>	<p>Kids and families</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Boogie Down Kids: Enjoy a DJ dance party for children and their grown-ups to experience the joy of dance, free play, and community together! BDK was created to build community, move our bodies, celebrate life. We are a multi-cultural collective of parents who have backgrounds in DJ-ing, teaching dance, and organizing events who have created a dance party where children are free to play!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2 - 5 p.m. ▶ Free for kids under age 12. \$10 donation is requested from adults. ▶ Heart Rose Club, 11 Green St. Information: 802-380-0333; heartroseclub.com. <p>Community building</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS Meet your Windham County Senators Nader Hashim & Wendy Harrison - Windham-3 (Brookline/Rockingham/Westminster) & House Reps Michelle Bos-Lun & Leslie Goldman: Session provides an opportunity for community members to ask questions about issues to be addressed in current Legislative session. Legislators will give updates about expected Legislative priorities and pending bills. This meeting at the Library will help your Senators and Reps understand what's important to Brookline, Rockingham, Westminster constituents and take these concerns to Montpelier. ▶ 10:30 a.m., 2nd fl. (Community conversations are planned for the third Saturday of each month at 10:30 a.m. during the legislative session through May.) ▶ Free. ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Contact Rep. Leslie Goldman with questions: lgoldman@leg.state.vt.us or 802-380-4285 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org. <p>Arts and crafts</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Artful Ice Shanties: ▶ Dawn to dusk: Outdoor exhibit displayed at Retreat Meadows - the ice across the street from Retreat Farm. On 2/24, at 3 p.m., join us for an Awards Ceremony, where a panel of local judges will give out an array of light-hearted awards. ▶ Through Sunday, February 25. ▶ Free. ▶ Retreat Meadows Fishing, Route 30. Information: Check out: brattleboromuseum.org/2023/11/01/artful-ice-shanties-3/. </p></p>	<p>of Westminster West around 1790. Gordon and Mary Hayward explore history of what since 1983, is their house, built by the Ranney family ca. 1790 within context of early history of Westminster West Village. Then Gordon and Mary use power-point to illustrate talk about the house's history; pre-1983 photos; its condition in 1983 and on as they restored the house and one remaining attached barn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 6:30 p.m. Lectures continue 2/25 and 3/3. ▶ Free. ▶ Congregational Church of Westminster West, 44 Church St. Information: 802-387-2334; westminsterwest.org. 	<p>forms this year? Come to the library to print the tax forms you need. Vermont does not distribute free paper forms through libraries. You can print blank forms at the Library. All forms are free.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2 p.m. "A different tech class will be held in the Youth Programming Room each Tuesday in February. Note: February is National Library Lovers' Month! Love your library more by learning how to access eBooks, films, and television for free through our online library resources." ▶ Free. ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org. <p>Well-being</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 5 - 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays. ▶ Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; brattleborowalkinclinic.com. 	<p>Well-being</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Health Justice Jam with local members of the Vermont Worker's Center: Cut off of Medicaid? At risk of losing it? Is your healthcare unaffordable? Are you dealing with medical debt? Unable to access care you need? Share your experiences with the healthcare system and participate in discussion about how we can work for a system in which everyone is able to enjoy the human right to healthcare. Get information about current legislation that proposes to expand access to Medicaid and Medicare Savings Programs. ▶ 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the parlor. Free COVID tests and blood pressure screenings available. Light refreshments served. Childcare and interpretation available by request: email:windham@workerscenter.org or call 802-257-4436. ▶ Free. ▶ Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St. Information: 802-254-4730; centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org. </p>
TUESDAY					
20	<p>Instruction</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS Tech Time - "Tax Time Online Forms Help" hosted by Rockingham Free Library: Join us for one of our upcoming tech sessions this February to learn more about different applications and digital library resources. Need help finding and printing your tax</p>		<p>Arts and humanities curators speak at Next Stage in February, March, and April</p> <p>PUTNEY—Next Stage announces the return of the NXT Curators Series, offering an opportunity for audiences to hear from curators in various arts and humanities fields. The intent, organizers say, is “to shine a light on less known styles and genres, providing a behind-the-scenes look at what curators need to consider when working with their medium.”</p> <p>Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, said in a news release that three curators, all speaking on a different facet of what it means to present, collect, and preserve various objects, will be a part of the yearly Curator Series. “The series highlights a diverse lineup of topics — Art Deco, the environmental movement, and a historian committed to preserving music recorded on shellac. The range of topics gives the audiences a broad range of perspectives to consider.”</p> <p>On Sunday, Feb. 18, “Art Deco: Commercializing the Avant-Garde,” will be presented by Angelina Lippert, the Chief Curator of Poster House, the country’s first museum dedicated to the art and history of posters. She will discuss the history of Art Deco advertising. This talk covers everything from the Great Gatsby up through the Great Depression, from the Paris Exhibition of 1925 up through the 1939 New York World’s Fair. She will also address the “true meaning behind the definition of Deco and how it became the first global art movement.”</p> <p>Lippert is the author of <i>The Art Deco Poster</i> and has lectured at the School of Visual Arts, The Cooper Union, New York University, the Pratt Institute, <i>The New York Times</i>, Columbia University, and The Sotheby’s Institute of Art. She has written for <i>Muse</i> by Clio and is currently a reviewer at <i>The New York Journal of Books</i>. She holds a master’s in the art of the Russian avant-garde from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and a bachelor’s degree in theology and art history from Smith College.</p> <p>The series continues on Wednesday, March 20, with “Historical Grooves: Archiving the Sounds of the Jewish-Muslim Relationship.” Professor Christopher Silver will detail his efforts to amplify a set of 20th-century North African Jewish and Muslim voices, “which for too long have remained silent in the historical record,” say organizers.</p> <p>What if listening for the past could change our understanding of history? In this interactive musical conversation, through selections from his archive of early-20th-century shellac records from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, Silver will introduce the audience to the sounds of the artists whose music “shaped and spoke to an era of profound change and remarkable resilience.”</p> <p>Silver is the Segal Family Assistant Professor in Jewish History and Culture in the Department of Jewish Studies at McGill University. His first book, <i>Recording History: Jews, Muslims, and Music Across Twentieth Century North Africa</i>, was published in 2022 by Stanford University Press and was the winner of the 2023 L. Carl Brown AIMS Book Prize in North African Studies. He is also the founder and curator of the website Gharamophone.com, a digital archive of North African records from the first half of the 20th century.</p> <p>The series concludes on Sunday, April 21, with “We Tried to Warn You! Environmental Crisis Posters, 1970–2020,” with curator Tim Medland. Recently receiving a full-page review in <i>The New York Times</i>, Medland’s show chronicles how graphic designers from around the world have attempted to tackle issues of environmental activism—and how they’ve both succeeded and failed at changing public consciousness.</p> <p>Medland is an independent curator who focuses on the history of visual and material culture. He holds a master’s degree in museum studies from the University of Leicester, with a concentration in socially engaged practice. His research interests include environmental activism and sustainability, and the histories of transport, propaganda, colonialism, and migration.</p> <p>All talks are held at Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill, and are free to attend, but donations are appreciated. Advance registration is available at nextstagearts.org. For information, call 802-387-0102.</p>		



Arts and humanities curators speak at Next Stage in February, March, and April

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‘Mamma Mia!’

do have emotional depth, and it’s important to highlight that through their relationships and interactions with each other,” she continued.

Bringing performances to the table

“Anytime we perform something with material as well-known as this, we encourage the students to do their own research — listen to the recordings, watch the film, and then use what they’ve learned to craft their own characters and performances,” Kersten said. “We also spend some time very early on in the process engaging in what’s called ‘table work.’”

Table work, she explained, is the time in rehearsal when the actors, stage managers, and the director get together to look at the text of the script, the text of the songs, and talk about each of the characters, asking such questions as *What is their history like with each other? How do you know? Why are they here in this moment now? What do they want, and what are they willing to do to get it?*

“This analysis allows the actors to dive deep into their characters and to build relationships with each other, both on- and off-stage,” Kersten said, “and the discoveries they make help them to solidify their characters for themselves, which, in turn, helps them to create their own unique performances, rather than a parody of or a tribute to someone else’s.”

Students reflect on their roles and acting

In recent interviews, some

of the students involved in the production talked about their experience.

Sophie Hamm, a senior, has worked behind the scenes on costumes with Mary Linney, BUHS librarian.

“I’ve been sewing since I was in seventh grade,” Hamm said. “I’ve always really liked fashion. When I was younger, I sewed with my grandmother. She gave me a sewing machine when I was in eighth grade. I like to go to thrift stores. I buy and alter the things I like. I’ve definitely learned from Ms. Linney, doing costumes for the musicals.”

Kyle Girard, a senior, plays the part of Harry “Headbanger” Bright, one of the three possible fathers.

“He was a rock star in his youth,” Girard said, “and became a lawyer for the Bank of England. He met Donna on the rebound, after Sam broke up with her. They met when Harry was an exchange student in Paris, and he followed her to Greece.

“Now he’s a middle-aged man. In the years since, he’s found out he’s gay, and he has a husband, Nigel. Harry wants to prove that he’s not a boring bank teller.”

Girard, who started acting in freshman year, has inhabited a wide range of roles.

“I’m really enjoying diving into this new character,” he said. “The hardest part is the accent, and the cultural references. But I’m growing into it.”

Ori Johnson, a junior, plays the part of Sky, Sophie’s fiancé.

“Sky used to work in stocks, but he decides he hasn’t seen the world,” Johnson said, “so he’s traveling around the world, and he goes to the Greek island and meets Sophie. I like him. He’s more mature than Sophie and a little bit of a father figure. He is constantly calming Sophie down.”

Johnson’s family moved to Vermont from Hawaii when he was 4, almost 5. He started acting in the town/school theater program when he was 10, and he liked it so much that he wanted to do more.

“In acting you can go from being you to being a whole different person,” he said. “You really feel the emotions of your character. It’s a good escape.”

Johnson has been friends for a long time with Lila Armour-Jones, who has the part of Sophie, “so our chemistry is good on stage,” he said.

In earlier interviews, some of this production’s actors talked about their interest in theater.

Armour-Jones (Sophie) started acting at the age of 10 in New England Youth Theatre’s town/school program.

“I love getting to tell a story,” she said. “I have the most fun on stage, when I get to leave it all behind and spend time as someone else.”

There is that moment in the darkness of the wings, she said, and then you go on — and fear and doubt melt away in the most beautiful way.

“I’d love to be acting my whole life, if I can be,” she said.

Leo Mousseau, a junior, plays Sam, another of the possible fathers.

“I like being in the mode of another person,” he said. “You can be so scared in the wings, alone in the stillness, feeling the energy, and the second you walk out on stage, it all goes away. It’s the greatest feeling to have a lot of people laugh — not in a bad way — at what you say.”

John Mosher, a senior, has the part of Bill Austin, a Swedish sailor, a travel writer, and the third potential father of Sophie.

Mosher brings lots of experience to his character, having acted since middle school in Whitingham and having done summer plays in Wilmington.

Casting the kids

Casting a musical requires consideration of many factors, Kersten said.

“It always starts with understanding the demands of the show,” she said, “and putting the appropriate performers into the appropriate roles in order to meet and surpass those demands. We also have to consider things such as vocal range, dance ability, and acting.

“We also have to consider which actors ‘fit’ with each other if they’re playing leads together,” she continued, “asking ourselves such questions as, Are they believable as a couple? Will that make sense to an audience? How do these actors play off of each other in this scene? Do they have the connection it takes to make it believable? Are their instincts for the character in line with the textual evidence?”

Some audience members might consider the subject matter of this musical a little mature, but Kersten said that as a high school teacher of literature, she frequently broaches mature topics in the classroom.

“I believe in discussing

FROM SECTION FRONT

challenging topics in a matter-of-fact, down-to-earth sort of way,” she said. “I tend not to have many concerns from a directorial point of view — theater is about life, after all, and life is theater.

“My biggest concern about any show that contains PG-13 content is to ensure the health and safety of my actors when they’re performing — they have to be able to be comfortable with the content in order to portray it effectively.”

As a result, Kersten said, “we talk about the script, we talk about what sorts of onstage actions feel in keeping with the demands of the character, while also respecting the needs of the actor.”

“It has been such a joyful process to put this show together,” she continued. “The cast and crew are so invested in the work, and everyone has been having a blast. I want the audience to have a thoroughly good time, but I also want them to be wowed at the emotional depth some of these characters have.

“That’s not what we usually think of when we think about *Mamma Mia!*,” Kersten said, “but it’s definitely there.”

Mamma Mia! at Brattleboro Union High School will take place on Thursday, Feb. 15 and Friday, Feb. 16 at 7 p.m., and Saturday, Feb. 17 at 2 p.m. in the BUHS Auditorium. Tickets for all performances are \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students/seniors, and all BUHS students get one free ticket. For more information, call 802-451-3511.

Art exhibit focuses on Ukraine

WEST BRATTLEBORO—All Souls UU Church is hosting an exhibit of more than a decade of paintings by Jeremy Aldridge, many focused on Ukraine.

Organizers of the show describe the first series, "Processing the World," as "a group of intuitive acrylic paintings on canvas from the decade leading up to the Russian invasion of Ukraine." The second series, "Witnessing Ukraine," features paintings inspired by media photos of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Aldridge grew up in Brattleboro and is a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

"Painting, for me, is evolution, an experience of artistic materials and daily emotional painterly

conversation," Aldridge said in a news release. "Painting is curiosity of 'what if's.'

"The conversation starts, evolves, sometimes long, sometimes shorter. As long as the painting's conversation is always open to continued exploration and curiosity then it will hold life for others to find.

"The breadth of painted conversations is evident in the contrasts between the 'Witnessing Ukraine' paintings and 'Processing the World' paintings through changes in color, energy, and mood and focus on realism," Aldridge continued.

He described the paintings from the decade before the Ukraine invasion as "more immediate, intimate, and local

conversations." "The invasion of Ukraine on my birthday made the event more personal to me, and also a bigger, more global discussion," he continued.

Inspiration and support

Aldridge has been creating art from an early age.

"When I was 5 years old or so, I remember painting with my grandmother under the lilac in the side yard at her home on Cedar Street," he said.

His grandmother, Lanice P. Dana, "was a graduate of Pratt Institute, and an early art teacher in the Brattleboro school system. She inspired me."

He also cites "good support"

from high school teachers at Keene High School and Amherst Regional High School.

"The art corridor of Amherst High is where I met my love, Sue. Eventually, we both attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, encouraged by summer Ames Hill neighbor Homer Johnson, who was a painting instructor there."

The Aldridge exhibit will be on view through the end of March at All Souls Church, West Village Meeting House, 29 South St., West Brattleboro, up the hill from the West Brattleboro fire station. Regular viewing time is Sunday, 11 a.m. to noon, and by appointment. For more information, visit ascvt.org.

Arts organizations receive grants

MONTPELIER—Four Windham County arts organizations are among the recipients of 12 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grants totaling \$217,000 to Vermont arts and cultural organizations and individuals, including two fellowships to Vermont authors.

The Vermont awards are part of more than \$32 million in recommended NEA grants to organizations in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions. "We are grateful to the NEA for its continued support of and investment in the nation's arts and cultural ecosystem, and we congratulate the 12 recipients who were recognized by the NEA for their outstanding work," said Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Susan Evans McClure.

The local recipients are:
• Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, \$10,000, to support a collaborative art project inspired by a contemporary art exhibition.

• New England Center for Circus Arts, \$15,000, to support the creation and touring of circus shows.

• Retreat Farm, \$10,000, to support a free outdoor summer concert series in rural Vermont.

• Sandglass Center for Puppetry and Theater Research, \$25,000, to support the Puppets in the Green Mountains theater festival.

For more information on the projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

Brattleboro Resource Guide 2024

Community Meals

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and 2nd/4th Saturday

St. Brigid's Kitchen, 38 Walnut St
Bagged Lunch and Pantry items 11:30am -12:30pm

Tuesday & Friday

Loaves & Fishes @ Center Congregation Church
193 Main St.
Bagged Lunch and Pantry items 11:30am-12:30pm

Congregate Meals

Brattleboro Senior Center, 207 Main St.
Monday-Friday at Noon
\$5 suggested donation for diners 60+
\$7 for diners under 60
Reservations are encouraged (802) 257-1236

ALCOHOL / DRUG RECOVERY

- AA Meeting information (802) 257-5801
- Al-Anon (866) 972-5266 or (802) 860-8388
- NA Meetings (802) 773-5575
- Turning Point of Windham County (802) 257-5600
- Starting Now/Brattleboro Retreat (800) 738-7328
- HCRS Open Access Intake Line (855) 220-9428
- VT HelpLink (802) 565-5465
- SaVida Health (802) 451-0231
- Habit OPCO (802) 258-4623

CHILD CARE RESOURCE and REFERRALS

- Winston Prouty Center (802) 257-7852
- Childcare Referral Program
- Childcare Financial Assistance Program

CHILD / YOUTH / FAMILY SERVICES

- Early Education Services (802) 254-3742
- Winston Prouty Center (802) 257-7852
- Children's Integrated Services
- Family Supportive Housing
- Supervised Visitation Program
- Prevent Child Abuse VT (800) 244-5373
- Meeting Waters YMCA (802) 463-4769
- Boys and Girls Club (802) 254-5990
- Youth Services (866) 888-4498
- DCF - Family Services (802) 257-2888
- Office of Child Support (800) 786-3214

CLINICS

- Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic (802) 251-8484
- Planned Parenthood (802) 257-0534
- AIDS Project of Southern VT (802) 254-4444
- Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (802) 257-0341

Looking for a new primary care clinician?

- Call BMH Centralized Scheduling (802) 251-8777

CREDIT COUNSELING

- Greenpath Debt Solutions (800) 327-6778
- SEVCA (800) 464-9951

DISABILITIES

- HireAbility (formerly Voc Rehab) (802) 257-0579
- Families First (802) 275-6306
- VT Social Security (800) 772-1213
- VT Ctr. for Independent Living (802) 254-6851
- The Gathering Place Adult Day Service (802) 254-6559

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Women's Freedom Center office (802) 257-7364
- Domestic violence 24-hr Hotline (802) 254-6954
- Sexual assault 24-hr Hotline (800) 773-0689

FREE FOOD/CLOTHING

- Agape Church (Pantry-Thurs 5:30-7pm) (802) 257-4069
- Foodworks (802) 490-2412
- Economic Services (Food Stamps) (800) 479-6151
- Meals on Wheels (802) 257-1236
- Supplemental Food Commodities (800) 214-4648
- VT WIC Program (802) 257-2880
- American Red Cross (802) 254-2377
- Guilford Cares Food Pantry (802) 254-5990
- St. Brigid's Kitchen (802) 254-6800
- First Baptist Church (802) 254-9566
- Village Closet (802) 289-8778

HEALTH INFO/ADVOCACY

- Health Care Ombudsman (800) 917-7787
- VT Dept of Health (802) 257-2880
- VT Health Access (800) 250-8427
- VT Health Connect (855) 899-9600
- Planned Parenthood (802) 257-0534
- Brattleboro Area Hospice (802) 257-0775
- Vermont Chronic Care Initiative (866) 900-5004

HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE

- St Michaels Fund (802) 257 5101
- SEVCA emergency fuel (800) 464-9951
- DCF/ESD fuel assistance (800) 479-6151
- Windham County Heat Fund (802) 254-2240

HOUSING CASE MANAGEMENT

- Pathways Vermont (888) 492-8218
- SEVCA (800) 464-9951
- Groundworks Collaborative (802) 257-5415
- Winston Prouty (802) 257-7852
- Youth Services (866) 888-4498

HIV TESTING & FREE CONDOMS*

- AIDS Project of Southern VT* (802) 254-8263
- HIV/AIDS, Hep, STD Hotline (800) 882-2437
- Planned Parenthood* (802) 257-0534
- Groundworks Drop-In Center* (802) 257-5415
- VT Dept. of Health* (802) 257-2880

JOB SEARCH SUPPORT

- HireAbility (formerly Voc Rehab) (802) 257-0579
- Vermont Adult Learning (802) 257-9449
- VT Dept of Labor (802) 254-4555

LEGAL

- Family Court (802) 257 2800
- VT Legal Aid (800) 889-2047

MENTAL HEALTH

- HCRS Crisis (802) 622-4235
- HCRS Open Access Intake Line (855) 220-9428
- Brattleboro Retreat (800) 738-7328

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

- Brattleboro Housing Partnership (802) 254-6071
- Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (802) 254-4604
- Green Mtn Apartments (802) 254-2011
- Stewart Property Management (802) 257-7616
- THM (Adair Heights) (802) 362-4663

SENIOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

- Senior Solutions' HelpLine (866) 673-8376
- Adult Protective Services (800) 564-1612
- SASH (c/o BHP) (802) 254-6071
- RU OK (phone reassurance svc.) (802) 365-4941
- The Gathering Place Adult Day Service (802) 254-6559

SHELTER

- Groundworks Drop In Shelter (802) 257-5415
- DCF Economic Services (800) 775-0506
- Morningside House (802) 257-0066

TRANSPORTATION

- The Moover (888) 869-6287
- Deerfield Valley Transit (802) 460-7433
- VT Ride Share (800) 685-7433

VETERANS

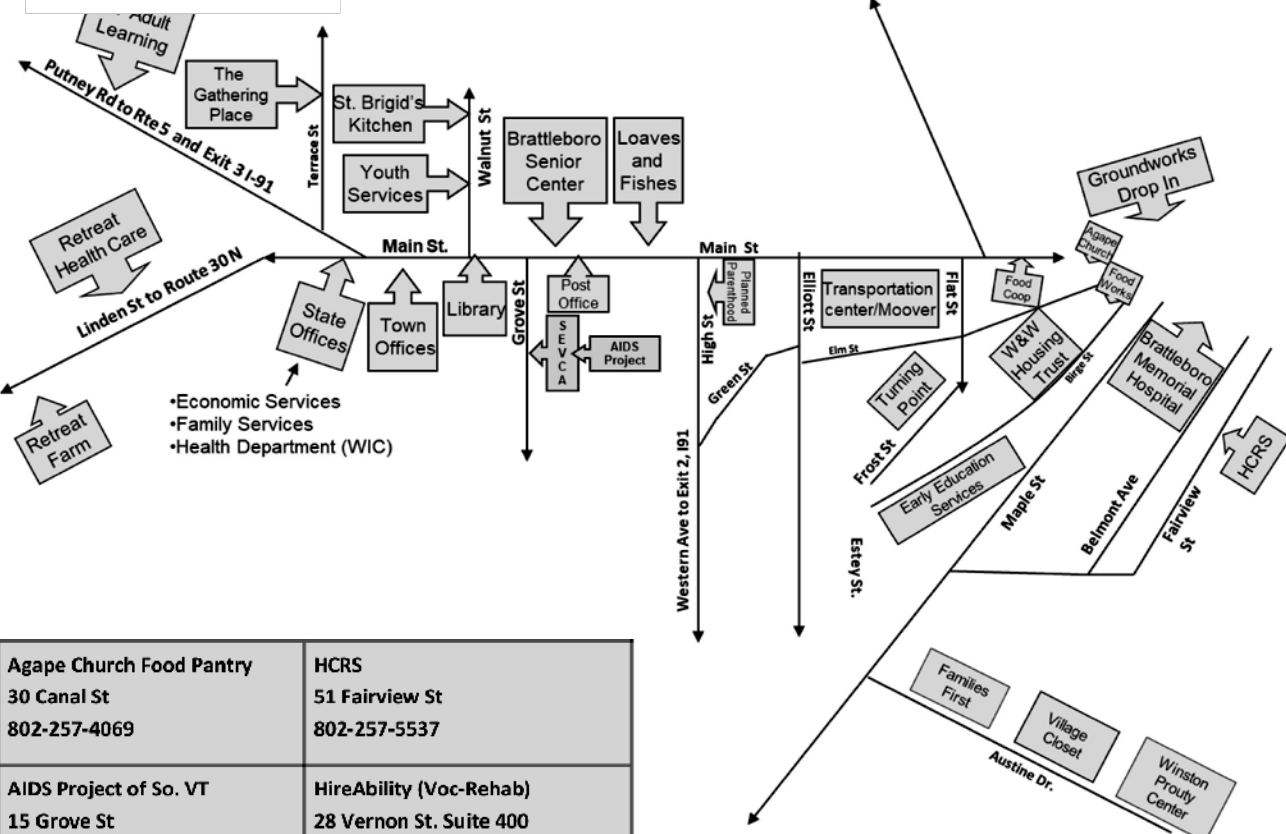
- Veteran's Administration (800) 827-1000
- Military Family Support Ctr (888) 607-8773
- Brattleboro VA Clinic (802) 251-2200

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Boys and Girls Club 17 Flat St 802-254-5990	Planned Parenthood 6 High Street 802-257-0534
Brattleboro Retreat 1 Anna Marsh Lane 802-257-7785	Senior Center/Meals on Wheels 207 Main St. 802-257-7570
Brattleboro Walk-in clinic 191 Clark Ave Tuesdays 5-7:30 802-251-8484	SEVCA 15 Grove street 800-254-2795
St. Brigid's Kitchen 38 Walnut Street 802-254-6800	The Gathering Place 30 Terrace St 802-254-6559
Dept of Children & Families 232 Main Street 802-257-2888	Turning Point 39 Elm Street 802-257-5600
Early Education Services 130 Birge St 802-254-3742	Village Closet 60 Austine Dr 802-289-8778

Economic Services 232 Main Street 800-479-6151	VT Adult Learning 999 Putney Rd. 802-257-9449
Families First 18 Austine Dr 802-275-6306	VT Center for Independent Living 28 Vernon Rd, Suite 436 802-254-6851
Family Court 30 Putney Rd 802-257-2830	VT Dept of Health (WIC) 232 Main Street (802) 257-2880
Foodworks 141 Canal Street 802-490-2412	VT Dept of Labor 28 Vernon St, Suite 212 802-254-4555
Groundworks Collaborative Drop in Center 54 South Main 802-257-5415	Youth Services 32 Walnut St 802-257-0361
Groundworks Shelter 81 Royal Rd 802-257-0066	Winston Prouty Center 209 Austine Dr. 802-257-7852

Drag Ball returns on Feb. 24

BELLOWS FALLS—Drag Queens extraordinaire Anita Cocktail and Friends perform for the Queen of Hearts Drag Ball on Saturday, Feb. 24, at the Moose Lodge, 59 Westminster St.

They invite everyone to “dress to impress” as their favorite Alice in Wonderland character. There will be prizes awarded for best costumes, as well as the chance to win two tickets to Bianca Del Rio’s Dead Inside Tour at the Paramount Theatre in Rutland on March 4.

Andrews Inn founder John Moisis originated the Queen of Hearts Ball at the Andrews Inn in the 1970s. In a 2017 interview with Moisis, he recalled, “It was a three-day holiday weekend with Washington’s birthday. What are you going to say? It’s Washington’s birthday? Boring. So we made it the Queen of Hearts and it just took off like a rocket.”

The evening will celebrate several birthdays and surprise announcements, the ticket giveaway to the Bianca Del Rio show, and it will recognize Bellows

Falls resident Carl Anhalt and Windsor resident Roger Barraby for their medals in water polo and track and field, respectively, at the Gay Games Guadalajara last November.

Tickets are \$20 per person, or tables of six may be reserved for \$120. Purchase online at ramp-vt.org by clicking the Donate button and typing “Drag Show” in the note line.

If not sold out, tickets can also be purchased at the door by cash or check made payable to Bellows Falls Pride. Reserved seating for tickets purchased in advance.

The Moose Lodge is wheelchair accessible. Doors open for this 18+ event at 8 p.m.; the show begins at 9 p.m. Bring your own picnic or order food delivery. There will be a cash only bar (an ATM is on site).

The Rockingham Arts and Museum Project is fiscal sponsor for Bellows Falls Pride. For more information, email bellowsfallspride@gmail.com or visit bellowsfallspride.com (shadarko1.wixsite.com/bellowsfallspride).

NXT Gallery presents ‘Aldila,’ paintings by Nancy Calicchio

PUTNEY—NXT Gallery at 15 Kimball Hill hosts an opening reception of “Aldila,” an exhibition by painter Nancy Calicchio, on Sunday, Feb. 25, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Inspired by the Italian expression “Al di La,” meaning “the beyond” or “heaven,” Calicchio says her paintings seek to express the vast expansiveness of the sky above Southern Vermont: “The landscapes of rolling hills and meadows are uniquely captured, creating an intimate yet expansive connection between the earthly and the celestial.”

In her artist statement,

Calicchio describes the “delicate dance of brush and palette” as she “anchors the dynamic, elusive world of the sky to the solid earth below.”

Calicchio, a graduate of Brown University and Dartmouth College, brings a rich background in education to her artistic journey. Having moved to Vermont in 1963, she dedicated her retirement years to painting the landscapes she loves.

Her work, she says, “reflects a deep connection to the natural world and combines it with the traditional and contemporary uses of the land, celebrating the beauty of Vermont from the Taconic Mountains to the Connecticut River.”

The exhibition will continue through Sunday, May 12. The Gallery is open during Next Stage events and by appointment with the artist or by contacting info@nextstagearts.org or 802-451-0053.

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Shanties

The only requirements are that the structures be moveable and sturdy enough to withstand Vermont’s mid-February weather as well as wear and tear from the public over the course of a week.

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

The Commons reached four artists who are building ice shanties this year who talked about designs and past years’ participation. Here they are in their own words:

The beauty of snowflakes

ANNALIESE BISCHOFF, 71, of Leverett, Massachusetts, is a landscape architect and professor emerita at UMass Amherst. Last year, she created ‘A Tree Blooms in Winter,’ and the previous year ‘Swimming in Plastic.’ This is her third year of participating in the Artful Ice Shanties exhibit, which she calls ‘a tonic for the spirit.’

Vermont’s Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley (1865–1931) inspired me to create a “Fishing for Snowflakes” laboratory this year.

While researching photographs for a book I’m writing, I came across the photomicrographs of Bentley, a photographer and self-taught meteorologist. When I learned that Bentley caught snowflakes with a turkey feather to photograph under a microscope, I got hooked to learn more.

As a teen, Bentley drew snowflakes, striving to capture their beauty. He went on to study them under a microscope, next pioneering ways to photograph them.

On the ice shanty’s walls and ceiling you can see copies of the photo-microscope images he made. You can also see a collection tray, a turkey feather, an old microscope, a repro bellows camera, and faux-glass versions of the photographic plates he made.

You can read some background information about Bentley and draw snowflakes on a slate-shingle chalkboard.

I love discovering the passion of someone from the past and finding inspiration from it for new projects and hope visitors will learn about Bentley’s skill in capturing the beauty of snowflakes.

Fishing stories through the generations

JOSHUA FARR, 35, of Guilford, is executive director of the Vermont Center for Photography. This year’s event is his second year participating in the Artful Ice Shanty exhibit.

After brainstorming things from our everyday lives that may vaguely resemble an ice shanty already (albeit something you might not expect to see out on a frozen lake), I decided to build a replica of a vintage phone booth which I’m calling “Fish-Tales,” complete with a pay phone.

To encourage active participation of visitors, I have configured the phone to play through the earpiece historical recordings of New Englanders from days past retelling some of their most epic, funny, or memorable fishing stories.

Visitors can stop, listen, and perhaps recall their own fishing stories from their childhood, or stories they heard from their parents or grandparents.

The Artful Ice Shanty melds my passions for the outdoors, the arts (photography, in particular), and practical building/woodworking skills.

Naturally, as an active member of the regional photographic community, I felt compelled to bring that into my design in 2023, leading to my decision to construct an 8-foot-tall scale replica of a vintage twin-lens film camera, which I dubbed “Photomatic.”

It featured a doorway on one side inviting visitors to enter, close the door behind them, and experience the optical phenomenon known as a “camera obscura,” where light from outside of the camera enters an otherwise completely dark space through a precise hole on the camera’s lens and

projects an image of the scene outdoors onto the interior wall opposite the lens, clearly representing the most fundamental science behind photographic cameras.

A symbol of navigation and safe passage

CHARLIE KONKOWSKI, 68, of West Chesterfield, New Hampshire, won Best Museum Exhibit in 2021 for his shanty ‘Curiosity,’ and in 2022 his ‘Moto Magic Bus’ shanty won ‘Best in Show.’ In 2023 he built a shanty called ‘Pisces.’

When I see fishing shacks out on the ice, it creates a connection with the great outdoors! I ask: What are these small villages that pop up during the winter months? Artful as they are, they evoke emotion.

This draws me to this event, which is an opportunity to be creative and expressive — yet, all the shanties I have built can actually be used for ice fishing.

My construction technique has evolved each year. I build a lightweight wooden frame and clad it with recycled aluminum printing plates from newspaper print shops.

This year, I am building a classic nautical lighthouse. A lighthouse is a symbol of navigation and safe passage and a striking sight in any environment. I also built a keeper’s house with a cedar door and window clings of stained glass. My design is 15 feet tall and 7 feet around.

My goal is to create curiosity and evoke artistic expression. If I can put a smile on a few faces I consider my effort successful. As for the build details, I like to leave some of that to the imagination of onlookers and hopefully they will visit the exhibit.

An underwater world of gingerbread houses

ANNE MURPHY, of Putney, returns this year. ‘My sister, Amy Nelson, and I had so much fun making the fairy house, the ‘Fanciful Flower Fairy Fishery.’ she says. ‘On my way home after the final day of the exhibition, I started brainstorming ideas for what to do next.’

What happens after Christmas to all of the gingerbread houses? A select few are eaten of course, some are composted, and some are fed to hens to produce colorful Easter eggs in the spring.

A few, however, are tossed into lakes, rivers, and streams all over the world, including the waters of the Retreat Meadows.

Legend has it that there are villages of gingerbread houses down there, now occupied by fish. In fact, most rainbow trout spend their formative years in these villages.

This year, we built the “Snug Sugar Shanty,” which is inspired by this legend. How better to catch a fish than with a shanty resembling its own habitat?

This one is not made of cookies, candy, or icing, of course. This recipe includes foam — foam board insulation, Styrofoam, and spray foam — as well as cardboard, wood, wire mesh, joint compound, caulking, paint, and a variety of adhesives. Since as many of its ingredients as possible were sourced from scraps of other projects, this shanty is for looking, not licking.

I’m a fan of scale — making big things small and small things big. I appreciate the little twist of the mind that happens when you encounter an ordinary object on a different scale. I especially enjoy making such a thing myself, when there is creativity built into that ordinary object — like with a gingerbread house (or a fairy house, like last year).

I hope visitors come away with a sense of whimsy. Because there is a lot of detail, I hope they are entertained by the whole, then pause to let it all unfold to enrich their experience.



FROM SECTION FRONT

Upcycling with a message

JASON GRAGEN’S GRADE 4 CLASS at NewBrook School, Newfane, worked on their shanty with Suzanne Paugh, West River District art teacher.

This project encouraged students to think about the ways in which we can use unconventional items (in this case, plastic waste headed to the recycling bins) to create structures and 3D objects.

The project started with a study of the “great Pacific garbage patch” [concentrations of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean, as described by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] we learned and talked about the dire situation in our Earth’s oceans and then looked at artists who are using plastics in their work.

We learned that this is called “upcycling” — creating something even better out of a recyclable object.

Students processed over 200 plastic shopping bags to be woven into the walls of our shanty. They also repurposed plastic bottles, caps, and other waste to create whimsical fish sculptures that will hang inside.

This project encouraged all our students to work together, persevere and think about how they can send a message through their art and encourage others around them to rethink how they interact with our planet. It’s been a really fun project, and we are excited to showcase it!

Toby Bertram, student: “Creating a shanty at NewBrook School was fun. It was really fun, actually. And building it was enjoyable, because it took a long time during several of our art classes.”

Cooper Eldridge, student: “My favorite part was cutting the bags into strips for everybody to weave with. My second favorite part of this project was weaving the walls.”

An ice shanty amplifies human rights worldwide

VALERIE BILLS’ GRADE 3/4 CLASS at Wardsboro Elementary in Wardsboro has created a shanty with a message.

The “Human Rights Ice Shanty” is made of plywood and is very colorful.

Students learned what an activist is and researched human rights activists from a list of pre-selected activists. They first wrote a multiparagraph biography and then designed a T-shirt about the activist they chose. These T-shirts will have their biographies posted on the back describing how the activist helped change the world in some way. At the exhibit, the student’s T Shirts will be displayed on clotheslines off the Ice Shanty.

Each of the four classrooms (grades 3, 4, 5 and 6) designed and helped paint a mural for one of the four sides of our ice shanty reflecting a human rights idea.

We hope that people will understand the importance of continuing to fight for human rights all around the world.

There is a value in students learning about the struggles people have had to ensure basic human rights, and in making them aware that we have a long way to go to protect the rights of all people.

Brek Ryan Holton, student: “This project made me think a lot. I did a lot of research. The resources for research we used were Epic and Sora (resources our librarian teacher, Ms. Fiona [Chevalier], taught us). I also took a million notes.”

“Some classes made a picture representing human rights. Each classroom will vote to pick the image for a side on our ice shanty.”

After the exhibit, “we will have the shanty at school to store our sleds and remind us of our learning.”

The Artful Ice Shanties Exhibit will be on display from Saturday, Feb. 17 to Sunday, Feb. 25 in the courtyard at the Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Square, in Brattleboro.

This event is free and appropriate for all ages. Visitors are welcome from dawn to dusk. Park at Retreat Farm, stop in at the welcome hut near the farmhouse, and then head into the square to see the shanties.

For more general information, visit brattleboromuseum.org and retreatfarm.org.

Lectures will examine history of house and garden in Westminster West

WESTMINSTER WEST—Three lectures on the history of the Gordon and Mary Haywards’s House and Garden will be presented at the Congregational Church in Westminster West at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday evenings, Feb. 18 and 25 and March 3.

On Feb. 18, the Haywards will explore the history of what is, since 1983, their house, originally built by the Ranney family ca. 1790.

First, Westminster historian Jessie Haas will offer context of the early history of Westminster West Village, and start the evening talking about the life and the buildings in the village around 1790. Then, for 40 minutes or so, Gordon and Mary will present an illustrated talk about the history of their house with images of the process of restoring the house and its one remaining attached barn.

On Feb. 25, the Haywards will discuss their three sources of inspiration as they developed the early stages of their new garden. This lecture will focus on how a living garden grows out of the lives of the gardeners as well as the place where they garden:

It will include attributes of the original farmyard; discussion of the farms on which Mary and Gordon grew up, in the Cotswolds of England and in Connecticut, respectively; and Hidcote Manor Garden, designed by an American who lived across a field from the hamlet Mary grew up in, recorded in *The Domesday Book* of 1086.

The series concludes on March 3, when the Haywards will walk the audience through a

Powerpoint presentation of their four-season, 1 1/2-acre garden to illustrate universal garden design principles that can be employed in any number of ways by anyone in their own home gardens. Of the three lectures, this is the one most filled with practical information for those who garden.

To preview some of the content of these talks, go to HaywardGardens.com, or read their book, *The Intimate Garden*, published by W. W. Norton.

BMC presents Musicians from Marlboro Group III on Feb. 17

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Music Center’s Chamber Series presents Musicians from Marlboro Group III on Saturday, Feb. 17.

The 7 p.m. concert at the BMC begins with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s Five Fantasy Pieces for String Quartet or “Fantasiestücke,” and concludes with Arnold Schoenberg’s “Verklärte Nacht.”

The program also includes Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor, Op.

90, B. 166, by Antonin Dvořák and Six Bagatelles, Op. 9, by Anton Webern.

Performers include Anna Göckel and Stephanie Zyzak, violin; Jordan Bak and Hsin-Yun Huang, viola; Christopher Richter and Chase Park, cello; and Evren Ozel, piano.

General admission is \$30. Tickets may be purchased through bmcvt.org, 802-257-4523, or info@bmcvt.org.

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VIEWPOINT

Compared to homelessness, an RV was a godsend

Kurt Daims was in for it — he was bringing homeless people into a residential neighborhood. We all talk a great community line until it comes time to act like one.

HAVING KNOWN Kurt Daims and his organization Brattleboro Common Sense for many years, I have followed with interest the brouhaha he created when he bought, at his own expense, a couple of old RVs and parked them in his driveway to shelter a few of the homeless population.

I did see these vehicles and, though they were hardly luxurious or well-equipped, it was quite apparent what a huge relief it would have been to a person who was trying to exist in a tent under a bridge or down by the river.

I was reminded what a great feeling of luxury it was when our Army unit would rotate back to base camp and could sleep on a cot with a thin mattress in a screened-in barracks-like hooch. No bathrooms, but it was dry and clean.

Foxholes weren't my first choice for accommodations. The first flush toilet I enjoyed that year was in Bangkok on R&R. Not much different an

SPOON AGAVE, a former member of the Selectboard and Development Review Board in Brattleboro, serves as a Representative Town Meeting member for District 8.

experience than that of half a million other guys. We got used to it. Stayed clean. Actually, I don't recall any sanitation problems.

I figured Mr. Daims was in for it. He was bringing homeless people into a residential neighborhood. It was frightening some people the way proximity to the poor always frightens the better off. We tuck away subsidized housing out by the highway, down in the floodplain, far back on a hillside ... anywhere the land is cheap and out of sight.

I remember, when I was serving on the Development Review Board, some of the Upper Dummerston residents anxiously pleading to not let one of

■ SEE HOMELESSNESS, C2

Too much of a good thing, but not for much longer

OF LATE, we at *The Commons* have been receiving an unprecedented number of contributions to the Voices section, a volume that has outstripped the capacity of your editor to keep up.

We are committing to adding pages to the section to meet the demand, starting with next week's issue, and we are also taking steps to increase our editorial capacity, at least temporarily.

In the meantime, we appreciate our writers, and we are working diligently to get your contributions into print. Thank you for your patience, and please keep them coming.

ESSAY

A knitter needs the enhanced skills of a carpenter. But unlike in carpentry, every material is slippery, has a bias, can move even after you have attached it to other pieces, and has personality.



JOHANNA GARDNER/TROLLHAUGEN FARM

"I dove into the deep end of the pool: I spent \$1,700 just to get some yarn made from my wool."

The satisfaction of knitting

Newfane

LAST NIGHT, I sat down to struggle through "turning the heel."

This sounds like some form of torture, and indeed it is, but probably not what you imagine it to be. There is no prisoner getting his foot wrenched in directions it was not intended to go, forced to spill highly sought information of great importance to national security.

No, turning the heel is a banal bit of knitting most human beings unintentionally touch the product of daily, if

JOHANNA GARDNER is the proprietor of Trollhaugen Farm (trollhaugenfarm.com). Her dispatch from the farm recounting the ups and downs of lambing season (bit.ly/752-lambing) appeared in these pages in 2022.

you have at least one functional foot and you wear socks. Given that it is winter as I write this, that would be most everyone in the Northeast.

My saving grace, if you want to call it that, is that I grew up with parents who expected me to be above average and to work hard at all things I tackled; thus,

I am capable of focusing and working through tasks that might discourage others.

This is certainly true of all knitters: This craft or "hobby" is not for the faint of heart.

Like sewing, one needs the skills of a carpenter, but in an enhanced version. These include an ability to measure, attach, cut, untangle, decipher patterns with unbelievably complex code words for tiny little movements performed with needles, and envision the final product.

■ SEE KNITTING, C2

VIEWPOINT

What is Israel's endgame? And what is ours?

Much of Israel's military conduct is strategically nonsensical when attempting to see it through the lens of its stated objectives

WHAT IS THE ENDGAME in Gaza? What does "winning" look like for Israel? As articulated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, its goals are "straightforward: to bring home hostages and defeat Hamas."

Let's consider how well Israel is accomplishing these war aims.

First, of the 257 hostages (many of whom were combatants and should more properly be considered prisoners of war) captured by Hamas on Oct. 7: four were released unilaterally by Hamas, 105 were released as part of a negotiated prisoner swap, and three (one a soldier) were rescued by the Israeli Defense Forces.

The number killed by Israeli bombardment or friendly fire or otherwise ranges somewhere between 42 (according to Israel) and 65 (according to Hamas). Military actions, then, seem particularly ill-suited to the goal of winning the freedom of Israeli hostages.

Israel's second stated objective is to "defeat

FHAR MIESS is a resident of Brattleboro, chair of the Conservation Commission, a District 9 Representative Town Meeting member, and bookkeeper at *Everyone's Books*. He lived in Egypt from 2007 to 2009 and traveled by bicycle around Syria.

Hamas," but what, exactly, is the Hamas that is meant to be defeated?

Hamas is many things: a political party, an armed faction of the Palestinian resistance, the main civil authority governing Gaza, and finally, an ideology.

The head of Hamas's politburo, Ismail Haniyeh, remains alive and well. Israel did appear to assassinate Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy chairman of Hamas's politburo in a drone attack in Beirut, but the organization's political infrastructure seems very much intact.

That same attack on Lebanese soil killed two Hamas commanders, but, despite this clear

proficiency with precision-guided munitions, Israel does not seem to have made a similar attempt within Gaza itself (except when it targets journalists and health workers).

On the contrary, it has largely relied upon "dumb" unguided munitions (nearly half of the total), which are by their nature liable to inflict massive civilian casualties in a place as densely populated as Gaza.

And yet, *The New York Times* reports that "[a]fter more than 100 days of war, Israel's limited progress in dismantling Hamas has raised doubts within the military's high command about the near-term feasibility of achieving the country's principal wartime objectives."

That same article also states that "police officers and welfare officers from the Hamas-run government have re-emerged from hiding in [...] two northern cities, and tried to maintain day-to-day order and restore some welfare services." Thus, even areas claimed by Israel to be under its control continue to see Hamas civil administrators restoring order.

And as for Hamas as an ideology? A recent poll of Palestinians found that "57% of respondents in Gaza and 82% in the West Bank believe Hamas was correct in launching the October attack." Hamas's popularity in Gaza has waned in recent years, but Israel's relentless bombing of civilians seems to have reversed that downward trend.

From this, it should be clear that much of Israel's military conduct is strategically nonsensical when attempting to see it through the lens of its stated objectives.

Reducing Gaza to rubble isn't just unnecessary to free hostages and defeat Hamas — it actively makes it more difficult to do so.

THERE IS NOW a growing global consensus — backed up by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling — that a genocide is quite likely occurring.

Contrary to the protestations of many who defend Israel, "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing"

■ SEE ENDGAME, C2



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Homelessness

their neighbors bring in a trailer to house his mother-in-law. It would depreciate property values, you know.

THERE ISN'T ANY legitimate reason to have homeless in our country. But the highest ethic in a capitalist culture is the right to unlimited accumulation of wealth.

Since there is only a certain amount at any given time if a few people take the vast majority of our wealth, there will have to be large numbers without any. We are also a culture that exempts the wealthiest of all from social responsibilities and places the economic burden on the middle class — many of whom are just a paycheck or illness or some disaster away

from ending up on welfare rolls themselves.

We allow our corporate boards and moguls to send our manufacturing abroad to the foreign poor who must work for 50 cents an hour or not at all.

We send millions of our own home emptyhanded when automation eliminates the need for their labor. We do so with the kindly encouragement that "you can find another job." But there are no other jobs, because the next plant automated as well.

But wait! McDonald's has a sign for an opening.

THE MEAN STREETS. The poverty, the discouragement, the anger, the escape into depression, drugs, and crime, if need

be. Soon, that promising, beaming young couple in the picture wearing wedding attire is mired in misery. And they look it. Believe me, just look at them.

These are our homeless. These are our neighbors who we discarded. They started out as babies just like your own. They went to schools with your own children.

Elon Musk argues that \$59 billion is appropriate pay for what he does in a year. But we cannot afford to create living-wage jobs and housing for the homeless.

Kurt Daims doesn't have \$59 billion but did spring for a good few hundred for a couple RVs to get a few homeless people out of the rain. They used the bathroom in his house, and he

FROM SECTION FRONT

rented a port-a-potty as well. It was wet, dirty, and dangerous in the woods.

An RV was a godsend. The town sent them back to the camps. For their own good, you know.

What Mr. Daims did was not cheap, it was not easy, it was not convenient or fun. I can't think of any one who has won a community award who has sacrificed as much. We all talk a great community line until it comes time to act like one.

If there is a legislator in this area who doesn't support the two tiny wealth taxes currently proposed, they will answer for it.

Knitting

But unlike in carpentry, in knitting and sewing every material you work with is slippery, has a bias, can move even after you have attached it to other pieces, and has personality.

Yes, yarn has its own agenda, as do most fabrics. And these need to be considered when you embark on a project.

I USED TO KNIT when I was in my 20s, before I had children. One sweater took me two years to complete, simply because I was traveling and living life in between working on it.

I sewed constantly, too: clothing, curtains, mattress covers, all kind of things. Some were wildly successful; others, not so much.

There is a fair amount of crashing and burning when learning to knit and sew. In the end, I had no patience for the amount of time and money I spent, and the outcome, which often fit poorly, left me frustrated.

So I stopped. I stopped knitting for over 30 years.

BUT THEN, once my kids got a little older, I bought some sheep. Here's where things got really interesting.

When sheep entered my world, everything flipped on its head. I lost all control over my life.

Fencing, hoof care, breeding, rams and subsequently bad knees (mine, not the rams'), giving shots and dewormer, being up at 2 a.m. to check if a lamb was being born.

I became an obstetrician, a mortician, a dietician — it's all there, it all tumbled down on my head.

A rich and exciting series of new experiences, all because I decided to get what I hoped would be a flock of new and improved lawn mowers.

MEANWHILE, the downstream effect of getting sheep has been to rekindle my interest in the skill of knitting. Because now my new lawn mowers also produce wool. Suddenly, there's wool everywhere. Bags of it. Beautiful wool in all kinds of colors: I had to come up with a

way to use it.

Reluctantly, I accepted that this knitting thing that I thought I was done with was going to be resurrected. I dove into the deep end of the pool: I spent \$1,700 just to get some yarn made from my wool. I acquired a loom and two spinning wheels.

And I am finding that while I remember the basics, knitting demands that you screw your hands and fingers up with strings leading off in all directions, small wooden or metal slippery double-ended sticks that happily slide away when you least expect them to...leaving behind empty loops — of tantamount importance to completion of the task at hand — that need to be recaptured and coerced into cooperation.

I needed to work on my skills pretty seriously to get back in the saddle.

THE GOOD NEWS is that I am not drawn to complex patterns in knitting. I like stripes and

solids.

Being of Norwegian background, I grew up surrounded by Norwegian sweaters with some of the most complex patterns I have ever seen. My aunts and mother were all expert knitters, throwing off gorgeous sweaters with seemingly effortless speed.

But the amazing patterns they made never really appealed to me.

I am perfectly happy with stripes: I guess I am more of a Pippi Longstocking than I like to admit.

While I still bristle when I remember how I was taunted at age 9 by Norwegian boys for looking just like Pippi, with my red hair in braids walking through the town of Dröbak, where my grandparents lived, I always loved those striped red and white socks.

I guess it is time to accept that persona; after all, Pippi certainly seems pretty cool to me at this point in my life.

I wonder if Pippi ever had

FROM SECTION FRONT

sheep?

SO HERE I SIT, having listened about 10 times to the same YouTube presentation on how to turn the heel, and, by Jove, I think I have it!

I hold my work out at arm's length to see how the decreasing of my stitches has gone off and — even though I began with an uneven number of stitches, which for a perfectionist would be unacceptable — I am beyond getting hung up on such details.

The heel looks great! I turn my sock around and around, and I consider getting that self-congratulatory glass of chardonnay the video recommends after completing this challenging step.

But no, I still need to pick up stitches and get on with my sock ... we are far from done, folks!

But at least tonight I can feel proud for having passed through this step for the first, but hopefully not the last, time in this new year of 2024.

Endgame

aren't just buzzwords meant to make Israel look bad; they are the only conceivable rationale for Israel to be conducting this operation as they are.

Israel may be coming to terms with its strategic failure in achieving any of its wartime objectives in Gaza, stated or otherwise, so we can expect it to pivot to a diplomatic assault — one which is quieter, but no less deadly or injurious to Palestinians. We should not allow ourselves to be deceived that a genocide and ethnic cleansing has been averted when a ceasefire agreement is inevitably signed.

This, I would argue, is Israel's endgame: the ethnic cleansing that it fails to achieve through military operations. Israel will continue to pursue through settlement expansion, through the dismantling of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), through the buying of U.S.

politicians by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and Democratic Majority for Israel (DMFI), AIPAC's "Democratic" arm.

WHAT, THEN, is our endgame, for those of us who want to see safety and security both for the Jews who have suffered under millennia of antisemitic oppression as well as for Palestinians, who have suffered under over a century of British and Zionist oppression?

A January poll shows most of our elected decision-makers are out of step with the electorate on Gaza, but this issue highlights just how inadequate our political leadership is to the task of tackling any of the challenges we face: climate change, rampant wealth inequality, mental health crises, housing affordability, etc.

We will need to build collective power and use it strategically to stop the wars and build

FROM SECTION FRONT

the solutions we need. And we will need to always remember the endgame we are working towards: freedom, justice, and collective liberation for all.

LETTER

We should all think about minimizing or eliminating burning wood

As someone who has regularly walked and cycled these gorgeous back roads of ours here in rural southern Vermont for over 30 years, I have to say that I've noticed that fresh air is fast becoming a scarce commodity to come by these days.

The reason: the increased use of wood stoves for home heating and the increased popularity of fire pits and outdoor campfires during the warmer months.

It just seems like so many people don't even see all that wood smoke as the air pollution it actually is, nor do they recognize the health hazard wood smoke is to the lungs and everyone's overall well-being.

Likewise, I've noticed what seems to me a high incidence of pulmonary illnesses among my neighbors — asthma, emphysema, even lung cancer — and believe there may well be a connection.

Wood smoke is full of toxic carcinogens and lung irritants (particulate matter, black carbon, benzene, formaldehyde, dioxins, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, benzo[a]pyrene, etc.), all of them very bad for human health as well as the environment in general.

Over the years, I've picked up tidbits of information on this subject in news, environmental, and health publications. Recently, I found a website that consolidates and well presents the results of scientific studies on the subject from all angles, and I encourage folks to check it out and think about it. The organization is Doctors and Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution (dsawsp.org).

We have alternative methods of heating our homes and entertaining ourselves in our backyards that don't cause this extent of harm. Perhaps we should all think about minimizing or eliminating burning wood so as to better protect everyone's health and to better safeguard this wonderful and precious planet we all share.

Tom Vickers
Williamsville

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We are a Level III Residential Care facility with a home-like atmosphere and great benefits (we are not a nursing home).

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To learn more and to apply for a position, please visit our website at www.gardenpathelderliving.org.

HELP WANTED: ROAD CREW MEMBER

The Town of Marlboro, Vermont is accepting applications for road crew member.

This position requires knowledge and operation of a variety of construction equipment including pick-up trucks, dump trucks, snowplows, sanders, salt trucks, loaders, light rollers, road rakes, excavators, backhoes, and the various tasks associated with road maintenance.

Other duties include equipment maintenance, cleaning ditches & culverts, installation of culverts, pothole patching, installing culvert posts, guard rail posts, installing street signs, brush cutting, as well as any other duties as assigned by the Road Supervisor, or/and Select Board.

A current Commercial Driver's License is a huge plus, but for the right applicant the Town will set up and pay for the State of Vermont CDL-B Training. This position requires: the applicant to pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol screening, as well as random drug and alcohol screening as an employee; the ability to work a flexible schedule with holidays and weekends as necessary due to weather and other factors; and a willingness to abide by safety rules and regulations.

The pay rate (\$19.00 - \$21.00/hr) will be based on experience. Benefits included health insurance, Life Insurance, Short-Term Disability (as needed), and VT Municipal Employee Retirement program.

To apply, please provide a cover letter and resume (due by February 29, 2024) either by US Mail (address: PO Box 518, Marlboro, VT 05344), drop off in person at the Marlboro Town Office (510 South Road, Marlboro, VT 05344 – there is a locked "drop-box" outside the office should the office be closed), or via email to the Marlboro Road Supervisor Andrew Richardson at marlborovhighwaydept@gmail.com or by calling (802) 257-0252.

Westminster considers 'Declaration of Inclusion'

WESTMINSTER — As part of a statewide effort by the Governor and Chambers of Commerce to engage municipalities in celebrating diversity in Vermont and as a path to policies and planning to enrich all citizens., the following Declaration of Inclusion will be voted on at Westminster's Annual Town Meeting on March 2 Town Meeting:

"The Town of Westminster welcomes all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, differing ability, socio-economic status, and education.

"The Town of Westminster commits to being a place where individuals may live freely and express their opinions without fear, where kindness and respect are valued, and where all persons feel safe and welcome.

"As a town, we condemn discrimination in all its forms and will strive to ensure that all our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment."

Anyone with questions is invited to attend an information meeting on Saturday, Feb. 17, at 10 a.m., at the Westminster Institute. Local state representatives and Al Wakefield, one of the founding organizers, will be there along with Rev. Lise Sparrow and Sarah Waldo, who are working on this locally. The livestream of the meeting can be found on the town website and at us02web.zoom.us/j/84727645820.

Open house at Dummerston Historical Society

DUMMERSTON — The Dummerston Historical Society has regular open hours on the first and third Sundays of the

month from 1 to 3 p.m. (weather permitting) and other times by appointment. All are invited to join them on Sunday, Feb. 18, for their next open house and to view their current exhibit, "Old Tools and Industries of Dummerston," which features tables of old tools and many photos of past industries, including farms, quarries, mills, dams, and railroads.

Future donations of historical artifacts are welcome. Those who have old photos of Dummerston are welcome to share; the items can be copied and returned. Contact Chuck Fish at cfish05346@gmail.com or 802-254-2554. The Historical Society, adjacent to the Town Office in Dummerston Center, is accessible, and all are invited to visit at no charge.

Workers' Center to host Health Justice Jam

BRATTLEBORO — The Vermont Workers' Center invites community members to a Health Justice Jam on Wednesday, Feb. 21, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., in the parlor of Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St.

Organizers say the Jam will include "opportunities for people to share their experiences with the health care system and to participate in a discussion about how we can work together for a system in which everyone is able to enjoy the human right to health care. There will be information about current legislation that would expand access to Medicaid and to programs that make Medicare more affordable."

Free COVID tests and blood pressure screenings will be available, as well as community resources about access to health care. This event is free. A light meal will be served. Child care and interpretation are available by request to windham@workerscenter.org or 802-257-4436.

AROUND THE TOWNS

Tai chi for fall prevention offered in Guilford

GUILFORD — Find out about why everyone is talking about the benefits of tai chi, the exercise system of slow, continuous movements that improves strength, balance, and posture.

Sessions led by instructor Leah Gessner are held from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. every Thursday at Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. There is no charge to participate, but donations are welcome. For more information, contact Guilford Cares at 802-579-1350 or guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com.

RFPL sponsors Classic Movie Night

BELLOWS FALLS — The Friends of the Rockingham Free Public Library (RFPL) invite all to their sponsored viewing of the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers 1934 musical, The Gay Divorcee,

on Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 7 p.m. at the Bellows Falls Opera House.

Based on a Broadway play, this film paired the famous dancing duo for the second time on screen. Released during America's Great Depression, say organizers, the film "provided much-needed relief for moviegoers and started a dance craze based on The Continental." It also introduced Cole Porter's classic "Night and Day" to accompany a dance sequence.

The Friends of the Library will be available in the lobby before the movie to sign up new members. For the first 20 paid new memberships at any level, there is an added incentive: the Hunter Art Studio has again donated a free Triple Up (a soda, popcorn, and candy package).

Rockingham hosts a Town Meeting tutorial

BELLOWS FALLS — "Introduction to Town Meeting: How to Participate" is a

public education event to be held Saturday, Feb. 24, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Rockingham Free Public Library's second floor meeting room.

The key steps for taking part in this aspect of local government will be explained. Representatives from the branches of town government will take part, and there will be time for questions and answers. To spice it up, they will present a nonbinding mock article to be decided by the people present.

"Introduction to Town Meeting: How to Participate" is open to any interested person. Participants do not need to be a registered voter or even of voting age to have their say on the mock article.

The actual Rockingham Town Meeting will take place Monday, March 4, at 7 p.m., in the Main Theater of the Bellows Falls Opera House. For this event, each participant must be a registered voter. See the Town Clerk for details.

Family Law Clinic offered on Feb. 27

BURLINGTON — Legal Services Vermont is hosting a free Family Law Clinic for low-income Vermonters on Tuesday, Feb. 27, from 9 a.m. to noon. It is by appointment only and space is limited. Appointments may be made by phone, video conference, or in-person in Burlington.

Lawyers will be available to answer your questions about divorce, parentage, custody, visitation, child support, and more.

Call 800-889-2047 and leave a message with name and contact number. Be sure to mention the Family Law Clinic. A Legal Services Vermont advocate will return the call to screen for eligibility and schedule the appointment.



THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Two-Way Streets"

Across

- 1. Rebuff
6. Have an impact on
12. [Not my error]
15. Author Gaiman
19. Luke's droid buddy
20. Auction participant
21. "Te ___" ("I love you")
22. Designer Rubik
23. Wild animal standing next to a rapper?
25. Soccer plays starting from the sideline
27. Practice
28. Any joke from "Seinfeld"?
30. Heart singer Wilson
31. Manipulated with persistent lies
34. Maestro Toscanini
35. Noticed
36. Puts back on
39. Inspid fare
43. Use the nearest entrance?
48. "Permission to Dance" band
49. Actress de Armas
50. Situation after a leadoff walk
51. "Amirite?"
52. Monopoly quartet: Abbr.
53. Mother of Kylie, Kendall, Kourtney, Kim, and Khloé
54. Prevaricator
55. Hartsfield-Jackson airport code
56. Evening event
58. Profundity
59. 1-800-Flowers rival
60. Face-to-face exams
62. Like the 1972 Dolphins
64. Tile that falls over quickly?
67. Helping hand in the bedroom?
71. Soft drink orders
73. Caught some shut-eye
74. Luau instrument, informally
75. Schindler with a list
78. Like bumpy dirt roads
80. "___ noticed"
81. Use a swizzle stick
82. A few bucks, maybe
83. Large tub
84. Aggressive poker declaration
86. Duck down
87. Common piercing spot
88. Transgress
89. Wind tunnel manufacturer's motto?
91. Backpack features
93. Bedsheets
94. Low
95. Give a hard time
97. Mr. Peanut accessory
100. Geologic time span
103. Boxy bird home?
108. Warranty fig.
110. Gather, as courage
111. Annoying student in class?
114. Swear word
115. Gibbon or bonobo
116. Miserable experience
117. Printer consumable
118. Greeting Down Under
119. Boyo
120. ___ peak (facial feature)
121. Flurry

Down

- 1. Israeli-born Jew
2. Admire oneself in the mirror
3. Many a Jazz fan
4. Actress and activist

Crossword grid with numbers 1-119 indicating starting points for clues.

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- 5. "Why does this keep happening?!"
6. Chasm
7. Raii's brother and predecessor
8. New Deal pres.
9. Actor Byrnes
10. Inst. with the Large Hadron Collider
11. Timberland logo feature
12. Horny creatures of myth
13. "Can we turn on the A/C?"
14. What power does, per Lord Acton
15. Reason for a move, perhaps
16. Toledo's lake
17. Tolkien's Green Dragon and Prancing Pony
18. Missing
24. Physical strength
26. Pod veggies
29. Bump on a toad
32. What ferric substances contain
33. Tries out
35. Toffee bar brand
37. Facetious fivesome?
38. "Ugh, not my day today"
40. Dress up as a paladin, say
41. Inch or pound
42. Sitcom set during the Korean War
43. "This Boy's Life" author Tobias
44. "Sweet Love" singer Baker
45. Plays the first card
46. Twin-hulled vessel
47. Island of tiny people
48. Show neither profit nor loss
52. Go in for another tour
53. Casino lottery game
55. Former Yankee slugger's nickname
57. Stats for a cleanup hitter
58. Financial hole
60. Scent
61. Obnoxious little twerp

- 63. Kind
65. Bygone emperor
66. Put or call, in finance
68. One-up
69. Cross-country competitor
70. Towel cloth
72. Suit fabric
75. Keats masterpieces
76. Bench or stool
77. Soccer star Sam
79. Intimidate
81. Farm tower
83. Gut
85. "That ___ cool!"
86. Self-absorbed sorts
88. High point of church?
89. Boy, in Bolivia
90. Astrologer Sydney
92. Indifference

- 93. Played on repeat
96. Jazz drummer Gene
98. "Horsefeathers!"
99. Prom wear, often
100. Rybakina of tennis
101. Beginning
102. ___ Dame
103. Air pollution problem
104. Campus green area
105. Org. for Coco Gauff
106. Put away
107. Name that sounds like 70-Down
109. Each
112. Go on to say
113. Corp. boss

Last issue's solution

"Eh? Oh!"

Grid for the previous issue's crossword solution with letters filled in.

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STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT Windham Unit In re ESTATE of: Elwood C. Tenney

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Elwood C. Tenney (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: February 9, 2024 Franklin Chrisco, Executor 802-251-6598 jsecret@secretstarrow.com

Name of Publication: The Commons / Publication Date: February 14, 2024 Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Unit, Probate Division Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, 2nd Floor, Brattleboro, VT 05301

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT Windham Unit In re ESTATE of: Stephen Anderson

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Stephen Anderson (Decedent) late of Putney, Vermont (Decedent's town of residence)

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

Dated: February 9, 2024 Teja Anderson, Executor 802-251-6598 adarrow@secretstarrow.com

Name of Publication: The Commons / Publication Date: February 14, 2024 Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windham Unit, Probate Division Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road, 2nd Floor, Brattleboro, VT 05301

COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Bears rally to beat Windsor on Senior Night, 32-31

The Windsor Yellowjackets came into the BUHS gym on Feb. 8 with a 12-3 record and ranked No. 2 in Vermont Division III girls' basketball. Windsor have averaged about 60 points per game and have more than held their own against upper division teams. However, never underestimate the power of a team that is on a hot streak and peaking at the right moment.

The Brattleboro Bears recovered from their 36-29 loss to Bellows Falls on Jan. 25 with three straight wins over Fair Haven, Mount Anthony, and Springfield. With the extra boost of a loud and passionate Senior Night crowd behind them, the Bears rallied from a six-point deficit midway through the final quarter to pull out a 32-31 win.

Defense and rebounding were the keys to the Bears' victory. Head coach Karen Henry said a big reason why Brattleboro suffered a 47-36 road loss to Windsor on Jan. 15 was the Jacks' dominance on the boards.

In the rematch, Brattleboro racked up a 31-26 advantage in rebounding as Reese Croutworst and Mallory Newton both pulled down seven rebounds, Kate Pattison had six, Montana Frehsee had five, and Abby Henry had four. The Bears' defense also held Windsor's top two scorers, Audrey Rupp and Sydney Perry, to just 10 points each.

"We've been working on boxing out," said Henry. "We lost the last game because we got out-rebounded. That was the big focus. We needed to rebound the basketball."

But the Bears' secret weapon has been their confidence, which Henry said has been growing ever since the loss to Bellows Falls. So when Windsor tied the game, 20-20, with about two minutes left in the third quarter, and finished with a 6-1 burst to take a 26-21 lead in the fourth, the Bears were unfazed.

"We knew they were going to do that," said Henry. "We also knew that we could contain it long enough and that we have enough scorers and enough offensive power to overcome a little run. I was really proud of us for hanging on and being able to come back the way we did. It says a lot about our composure and about our confidence."

The last two minutes of the game illustrated Henry's point. Frehsee connected on a 15-footer to cut the Jacks' lead to 29-27. Pattison then scored the go-ahead basket when she nailed a long three-point shot in front of the Bears' bench with 37.8 seconds to play to send the crowd into a frenzy. But Windsor responded with a pair of free throws with 11.6 seconds left to retake the lead.

Croutworst then saved the day when she was fouled while driving toward the Windsor basket with 4.3 seconds remaining. She calmly sank both her free throws to seal the Bears' fourth straight victory.

"She had a little bit of rough game earlier on, and I just pulled her aside [after the game] and I said 'I know you struggled a little bit, kiddo, but when it counts, you were there. You were focused and that's what good athletes do,'" Henry



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.

said.

Pattison was the Bears' high scorer with 10 points, while Croutworst and Henry added eight and seven points, respectively.

The high from the Windsor win carried over into the Bears' 50-28 loss to the Champlain Valley Redhawks, the defending Division I champions, on Feb. 10 in Hinesburg. While the Bears lost, they made the Redhawks work for the win. Brattleboro trailed the Redhawks 14-13 at the half and 27-20 after three quarters before Champlain Valley finally pulled away with a 23-8 burst in the fourth quarter.

Croutworst led the Bears with 13 points, while no Redhawk player scored in double figures. Merrill Jacobs had 8 points and 7 rebounds. Samara Ashooh had 7 points and 10 rebounds, and Elise Berger had 7 points, 6 assists, and 5 steals for Champlain Valley.

At 9-7 with four games left in the regular season, the Bears still have a shot at having a home game to start the Division I playoffs.

Boys' basketball

- Brattleboro kept it close for eight minutes, but Rutland dominated the other 24 minutes of the game and rolled to 72-55 win on Feb. 9 at the BUHS gym.

The Bears jumped out to a 12-6 lead in the first four minutes, and trailed Rutland, the No. 4 team in Division I, by just a point, 16-15, at the end of the first quarter. It was Rutland after that, as they outscored Brattleboro, 27-5, in the second quarter to take a 43-20 halftime lead. The Bears never recovered as Rutland's full court pressure defense forced numerous turnovers.

Cellan Wood led Rutland with 21 points, seven assists, and five rebounds. Will Fuller had 16 points and four rebounds, while Ethan Whalen added nine points on three three-pointers. Jack Cady, starting in place of the injured Keagan Syto, led the Bears with 19 points. John Satterfield added 10 points as the Bears slid to 6-11 on the season.

- On Feb. 6, Brattleboro got a 61-56 road win over Bellows Falls. Johnathan Haskins led the Bears with 16 points and 14 rebounds — the third straight game that Haskins was in double-digits in rebounding. Syto also scored 16 points, while Jackson Emery and Karson Elliott contributed 12 and 10 points, respectively.

BF's Colby Dearborn led all scorers with 27 points. Three nights later, the Terriers' losing streak was extended to five games with a 87-37 road loss to Hartford. BF entered the final week of the regular season with a 6-12 record.

- Leland & Gray snapped a



Brattleboro players celebrate while Windsor coach Kabray Rockwood, center, makes a last ditch plea to the referee as time expired in the Bears 32-31 win over the Yellowjackets on Feb. 9 in the BUHS gym.

12-game losing streak with a 56-55 win over Green Mountain on Feb. 9 in Townshend to improve the Rebels' record to 3-15.

- Twin Valley's dynamic duo of Brayden Brown and Noah Dornburgh provided nearly all the offense as the Wildcats took care of Mill River, 55-41, in Whitingham on Feb. 9. Brown led all scorers with 27 points, while Dornburgh added 21 points. Together with a 57-54 loss to Rivendell on Feb. 6, the Wildcats' record now stands at 11-7.

Girls' basketball

- Bellows Falls got 15 points apiece from Abby Nystrom and Delaney Lockerby as the Terriers defeated Green Mountain, 63-42, on Feb. 8 in Chester. The Terriers led by 12 at the half and turned away an attempted rally by GM to get the win. Colie Roby led Green Mountain with 13 points.

- Leland & Gray headed into the last two weeks of the regular season riding a five-game winning streak. The Rebels' fifth straight win was a 37-31 victory over Rivendell on Feb. 8 in Townshend to improve to 9-8.

- Twin Valley may be winless at 0-15, but the Wildcats are showing plenty of fight in every game. Against visiting Proctor on Feb. 5, the Wildcats lost 38-28. It took a career-best night from Proctor's Makayla French, who scored 18 points and pulled down 11 rebounds, to beat Twin Valley as Isabel Greb, the Phantoms' top scorer, got into foul trouble and was held to nine points.

On Feb. 8 in Rutland, the Wildcats lost to Mount St. Joseph, 49-22. A strong first half by MSJ put the game away early, and Twin Valley could not overcome the big deficit. There were some good performances for Twin Valley as junior Alanna Bevilacqua, one of Twin Valley's co-captains, had 12 points, 11 rebounds, five steals, and two blocks. Eighth-grader Kate Oyer had five points, nine rebounds, and four blocks, while co-captain Bianca Place had five points and five steals.

Ice hockey

- Andy Cay had a pair of goals, Evan Wright had a goal and two assists, and Henry Schwartz and Will MacIntosh each added a goal as the Brattleboro boys defeated Burlington, 5-2, on Feb. 7 at Withington Rink. Together with a 7-5 win at St. Johnsbury on Feb. 10, the Bears improved to 8-6-3 on the season.

- The Brattleboro girls fell to 1-14 after a 7-0 loss to Rice at Withington Rink on Feb. 7. Emery Rasco had three goals to lead Rice as goalie Tayton Barrett made 15 saves to the earn the shutout victory.

Brattleboro's Montana Frehsee (24) pulls down a rebound in front of Windsor defenders Audrey Rupp, center, and Sophia Rockwood, right, during the second half of their game on Feb. 9 at the BUHS gym.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Nordic skiing

- The Brattleboro girls finished second, while the boys took third in the classical portion of the Southern Vermont League Nordic championships on Feb. 7 at Wild Wings Ski Touring Center in Peru.

In the girls' race, Mount Anthony had the fastest individual times as Eden White (14 minutes, 37 seconds) came in first and her sister Tanis White was close behind in 14:59, and teammate Roey Rella-Neill was fourth in 15:30. But those times didn't count toward a team score, since the Patriots were a skier short of having a full complement of four.

Woodstock had enough skiers and Isabel Cellini led the Wasps with a third place finish in 15:30, followed by teammates Priscilla Richardson (15:43, fifth), Ada Mahood (16:34, eighth), and Schuyler Hage (16:39, ninth) to take first place in team scoring.

Brattleboro finished second on the strength of Katherine Normandeau, who finished sixth in 15:53, and solid performances by teammates Maeve Bald (17:05, 11th), Maayan Coleman (17:21, 12th) and Myra McNaughton (18:58, 13th).

The boys' race was as close as can be with Woodstock edging Mount Anthony, 20-21. Luke Rizio led the Patriots with a first place time of 11:39, with Woodstock's James Underwood finishing second in 11:40.

Brattleboro finished third with 40, followed by Burr & Burton with 72 points. The Bears had three skiers in the top 10: Willow Sharma (13:09, seventh), Gabriele Jeppesen-Bellecci (13:10, eighth), with Nico Conathan-Leach (14:51,

10th) and Oliver Herrick (15th, 14:20) rounding out the Brattleboro scoring.

The SVL championships are set to continue on Feb. 14 with the skate race at the Marlboro Nordic Ski Club.

Junior jumpers fare well at Salisbury event

- The Harris Hill Nordic Junior Jumping Team has had a good winter of competition, and one noteworthy performance came on Feb. 2-4 during the 98th annual Salisbury (Conn.) Winter Sports Association's Jumpfest.

Spencer Jones competed on Salisbury's 65-meter hill in two competitions. On Feb. 3, Jones placed third in the U-16 group in the Jumpfest competition with jumps of 41 and 39 meters. The next day, competing in the Eastern Championships among a larger field of athletes, Jones finished in seventh place with jumps of 34.5 and 34 meters. He also was first in the U-14 class on the 30-meter hill.

Those performances helped land Jones a spot on the U.S. Junior National Ski Jumping Team, and a chance to compete in the Junior Nationals in Anchorage, Alaska from Feb. 27 to March 2.

"This winter has not allowed for a lot of training, but Spencer has progressed exponentially in a short time," Harris Hill Junior Jumper coach Todd Einig said in an email to *The Commons*.

Other Harris Hill Jumpers who excelled at Salisbury included Maple Billings, who was first in the U-10 class on the 20-meter hill, and Myles Billings, who was second in the U-12 class on the 20-meter hill. Two Brattleboro jumpers who competed with the Ford

Sayre team — Ava Joyal and Wes Leonard — also did well on the 20-meter jump as Joyal was second in the girls' U-12 class while Leonard was third in the Open class.

Senior bowling roundup

- Week 6 of the winter/spring season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Feb. 8 was cancelled due to a power outage on Putney Road. League Secretary Nancy Dalzell says the league will resume play on Feb. 15.

On a personal note...

- Thirty-five years ago this week, I started my first week on the job as a sports reporter and photographer for the *Brattleboro Reformer*.

There have been many twists and turns in my career since landing in Brattleboro in 1989, but I can say that the most rewarding part of these last 35 years have been the friendships made during my stints covering high school sports in Vermont.

Covering local sports is not my primary job here at *The Commons*. I like to say it's my way of playing hooky from all the other responsibilities I have in helping to put this paper together each week. But I certainly have more fun doing this than any of my other jobs, and that is due to the athletes, the coaches, and their families I've spent time with over the years.

So, thank you all for the many kindnesses you have shown me over the years. May we keep seeing each other in the gyms, the diamonds, and the playing fields of Windham County for years to come.



Cheerful and comfortable with a "nestle-yourself-right-in" feeling! Thoughtfully designed by owners who loved to travel and host family/fellow travelers. Attention was given to create rooms for gatherings, guest/family visits, hobbies, office work and quiet contemplation. Just enough outdoor area for puttering and raised bed gardening. Situated on a dead end street, with woods and Kettle Pond on the back border. A neighborhood filled with the lively energy of the high/middle schools, hospital, professional offices, pharmacies, banks, restaurants, a grocery market, a bookstore and Oak Grove Elementary School are all a short walk away! Interstate 91, Exit 1, is nearby. The first floor has a very spacious, light filled living/dining room with wood floors, bookcases, pocket doors, a brick hearth w/wood stove, a deck with views to the woods and pond. The galley kitchen has deck access. Two bedrooms and a full bath complete this level. The upstairs offers a sizable front bedroom w/many windows, a large closet and an adjoining study/office. The bedroom at the back has a skylight, a balcony looks to the woods/pond. Off the hall, a full bath with skylight, soaker tub and large shower. The lower level has a skylight, a radiant floor heat and a separate entrance. A kitchenette/living room, a full bath, office/bedroom. Mudroom to garage. Rinnai heater in garage. Detached 2 car garage w/loft storage.



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