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

Brattleboro resident crowned Miss Vermont

Meara Seery, who walked the stage with 5-year-old Annabelle Reynolds, will compete in January for Miss America

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Just a few days after she turned 24, Meara Seery of Brattleboro has been crowned Miss Vermont.

“It is really special to feel all the support coming from all over the country,” Seery said after her win, adding that friends all around the country watched the pageant unfold via livestream and her family was there in person.

“It almost felt overwhelming how much love and support I’ve been receiving in the last few days,” she continued. “My heartfelt thanks for all the community support, my friends, and my family. I couldn’t be Miss Vermont without any of them, and their help.”

For Seery, the daughter of Theresa Conway of Brattleboro and James Seery of Massachusetts, the third time was, indeed, the charm.

“Every cell in my body had been tingling all week, and the sensation of positive joy got stronger each day the pageant grew closer with Meara being on stage,” said Conway. “It is so exciting. My feet haven’t touched the ground yet — and I’m not even the winner. I couldn’t be more proud.”

“She’s worked hard,” she continued. “With everything she does, she gives 100%. When she played jazz trumpet in high school, she wouldn’t miss practice — three hours every night, after field hockey practice.”

■ SEE MISS VERMONT, A5

BFUHS will turn focus on student mental health

The Jed Foundation aims to improve students’ mental and emotional health through self-assessment surveys and a three-year plan

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—This month, Bellows Falls Union High School will begin a partnership with the Jed Foundation, a national nonprofit, for a three-year program aimed at improving and safeguarding the emotional and mental health of students and preventing teen and young adult suicide.

The Jed Foundation was established by Phil and Donna Satow following the death of their youngest son, Jed, by suicide in 1998, when he was in college.

BFUHS and the Jed Foundation will collaborate on implementing a comprehensive high school program of mental health support and suicide prevention that has been used in over 500 high schools, colleges, and universities in the U.S.

New BFUHS Principal Kelly O’Ryan said the first step in implementing the program will be conducting a confidential self-assessment survey this month focused on getting an overview of student behavior. This will create a baseline from which to focus on the specific mental health issues local students are facing.

“Jed is going to help us crunch the numbers,” O’Ryan said, “and

help us create a road map going ahead.”

According to a release from the school, the collaboration will invoke a “strategic planning process” to evaluate “existing initiatives while fostering positive, systemic change within the high school community.”

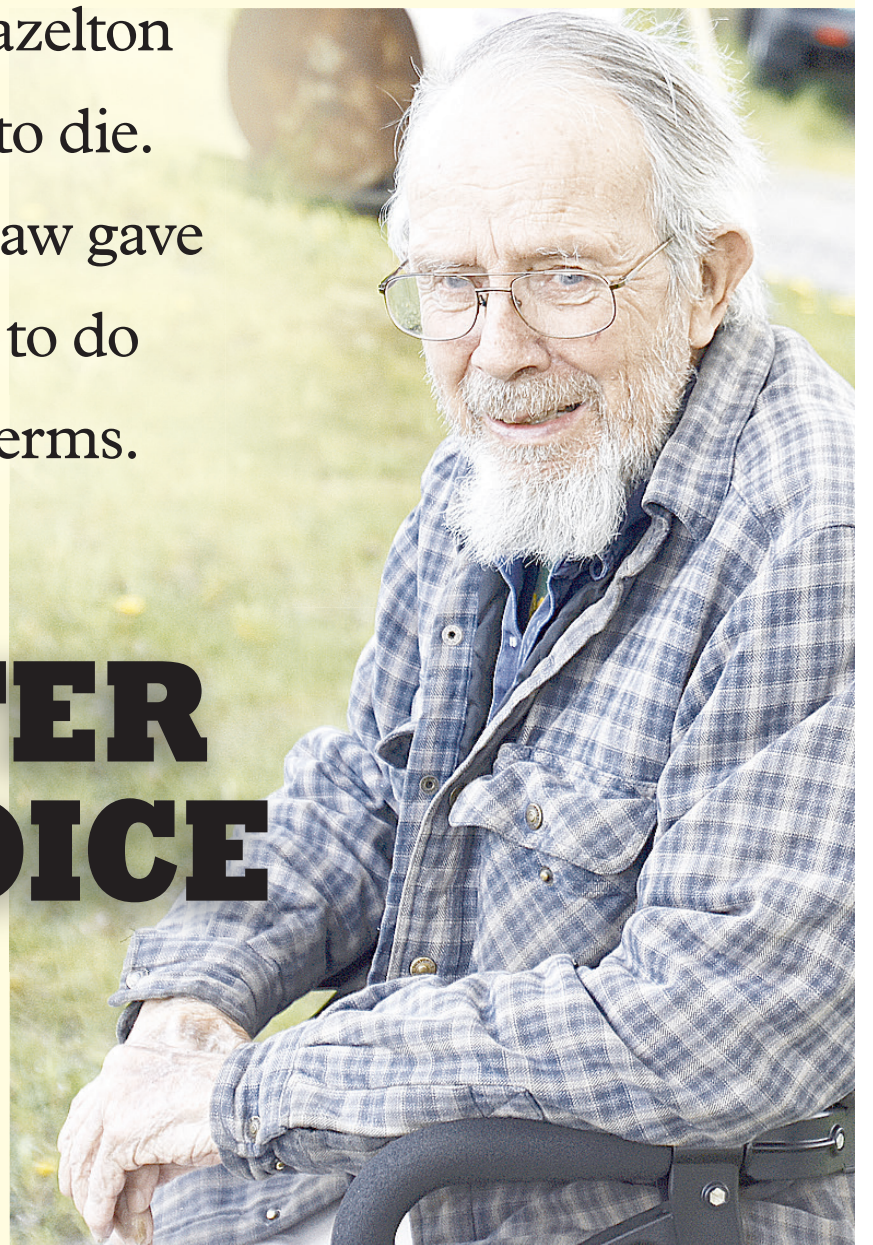
Specifically, the program provides the schools with essential resources, such as this initial assessment survey and the feedback reports based on that data, and then helps create a strategic mental and emotional health

■ SEE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH, A6

At 94 and in failing health, Don Hazelton felt it was time to die. Vermont state law gave him the option to do so on his own terms.

A MATTER of CHOICE

Don Hazelton, seen here on his 90th birthday in 2020, died on March 8.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen
The Commons

DON HAZELTON’S MIND was in fine working order. But his body was failing him.

“I’m not happy with what is going on inside my body,” said Hazelton early in March, a couple months shy of his 94th birthday.

Hazelton, in hospice care for many months, had decided to avail himself of Vermont’s Act 39, known as Patient Choice and Control at the End of Life.

Four days later, on March 8, a sunny, warm, spring day of his choosing, Hazelton drank a legal, lethal dose of a prescription. He left this Earth exactly as he wished and

planned — quickly and without pain, and with grace, style, and dignity.

Sometimes referred to as “death with dignity” or “medical aid in dying” by those who support the concept and as “assisted suicide” by those who don’t, Act 39 — the law that let Hazelton end his life on his terms — was passed by the Vermont Legislature and signed into law in 2013.

In fact, Act 39 explicitly says that the actions defined in the text of the law are not suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing, or homicide.

Though Oregon and Washington had both passed similar laws by voter referendum at that time, the Vermont law was the first in the United States to be passed by a state legislature.

Since then, 10 more states and the District of Columbia

■ SEE ACT 39, A2

COLUMN

What’s next for beer in Brattleboro?

There were three breweries pre-pandemic, and now there are none — but only for the moment, as the Whetstone Beer brand plans to resume production under new ownership

WHEN I WROTE in the Dec. 10, 2014, edition of *The Commons* that “Brattleboro, Vermont, now has three operating breweries,” it was with an excitement that bordered on effusive.

The then-recent opening of Hermit Thrush Brewery on High Street really put the town on an enviable map of craft beer brewing locations. Three breweries in a relatively small town? What could be better?

Now there are none. Luckily, this is true only for

Brattleboro TOM BEDELL (theaosition.com/tombedell) has written extensively about beer and golf in countless articles (including in *The Commons*) and in several books.

the moment. The Whetstone Beer Company was sold last month and is in a transition period, but should be back in distribution soon.

■ SEE BEER IN BRATTLEBORO, A6



TOM BEDELL/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Hermit Thrush Brewery co-owners Christopher Gagné, left, and Avery Schwenk mugg for the camera during the 2016 Brattleboro Brew Fest.

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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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In memoriam:

Alan O. Dann, Judy Gorman,
Mia Gannon

Act 39

FROM SECTION FRONT

have passed similar bills. The Vermont Department of Health estimates that 200 people in Vermont have availed themselves of the opportunity to obtain the lethal prescription, but the state doesn't track the number of people who subsequently use the drug.

As described by the website for Vermont Ethics Network, a social-service organization in Montpelier, Act 39 "permits a physician to prescribe to a terminally ill, capable, adult patient medication to be self-administered for the purpose of hastening their own death."

While the law offers dying people a simple solution to die with dignity, the process to obtain the legal prescription is rigorous and can take several months to achieve.

The process centers around ensuring that a patient not only has a diagnosis of a terminal illness, but has agency in the decision process.

The window of opportunity for those who go through the legal process to use the prescription is sometimes very small, and some participants miss their window of opportunity, due to the stringent legal safeguards embedded in the law. Others hang on to the prescription as a future option but they ultimately don't follow through.

"My mother lived to the age of 102 and had to be in a wheelchair for many of those last years of her life," Hazelton said.

"I don't want to live to 102," he continued with calm conviction.

"And I don't want to have a long death after lying in bed for years. I'm a farmer. I belong outdoors."

Jeanette Hazelton Fairhurst, Hazelton's youngest daughter and his healthcare proxy, said that her father had come "so close to dying when he had little ability to breathe a few months ago during a bout of pulmonary edema, after a resurgence of congestive heart failure."

"It was tortuous to know how he struggled," said Fairhurst, a retired scientist. "When he got through the treatment and recovered, he was clear that he didn't want to have that experience again," she said.

'It's not for everyone'

"Act 39 is not designed to be a quick decision," said Joan Martin of Brattleboro, whose life partner, Joe Thompson, died of pancreatic cancer on April 29. "The process can take months."

Thompson was diagnosed in October, "and we didn't receive the prescription until late December," she remembered. "The process is a thoughtful one."

The qualifying criteria for medical aid in dying under Vermont's Act 39 includes that a patient must be at least 18 years of age or older, have a terminal illness with a prognosis of six months or less to live, be capable of making their own health care decisions, be able to make an informed and voluntary request to their physician, and be able to self-administer the medication.

That's not all.

"Act 39 is not a decision that happens quickly. Dad researched it well," said Fairhurst, "and took his time in learning about it."

Those who wish to qualify for Act 39 must also make a written request that must be signed in the presence of two witnesses who are at least 18 years old. They sign the document to affirm that the patient appeared "to understand the nature of the document and to be free from duress or undue influence at the time the request was signed."

Further, the two witnesses cannot be the patient's physician or relative or otherwise have a conflict of interest or connection.

A second physician must confirm that the patient meets the required qualifying criteria.

"There is also a lot of paperwork to fill out," Martin said. "That took a lot of care and time as well."

Jeanette Hazelton Fairhurst agreed.

"Dad also took his research many steps further than he was required to," she said. "He also considered his pastor's opinion and discussed his thoughts with many more family members and close friends before he made his decision. And he did this over a long period of time."

She observes the irony that she has spent her whole life "working on biology, medicines and pharmaceuticals," said Fairhurst.

"Over 35 years, I've been working toward making medicines that make a difference, but I fully supported his decision, as



Joe Thompson, who died at age 63 of pancreatic cancer, worked for Rescue Inc. for 42 years.

did the majority of my family," she said.

Don Hazelton planned his death to the last detail, inviting *The Commons* to follow his last days and write this article to educate others about his personal decision and Act 39.

"It's not for everyone," said Hazelton soberly, "but we all deserve to know about all options available at end of life."

"I've had all of my papers in order for some time," he said with confidence. "My children know what I want and how I wish to have things handled. It's important to me that we've all taken the time to speak openly about my decision," he said.

Hazelton's wife of 68 years, Carolyn "Bunny" Hazelton, died five years ago.

"I don't want to leave this Earth like Bunny had to. She was in a wheelchair for years, and in the end she had to be in a nursing home," he said firmly. "I want to choose my time and place to die."

Hazelton's daughter also recognized that even though her father chose Act 39, he made other choices along the way, too.

"Dad had a cancerous tumor in his chest removed 30 years ago. He might have had two years but has lived an additional 30 years, for which we are so grateful. However, during that surgery, his diaphragm was injured, so he had pneumonia regularly."

During the last round of pneumonia, Hazelton decided to accept medical assistance.

"Act 39 is always a choice," says Fairhurst, "but at that time, he decided he wanted treatment."

She described Act 39 as "a very well thought-out law."

"The patient doesn't have to choose to use the prescription; it's simply a choice made available to the dying person to use or not," she says.

'Way too personal a medication to drop in the mail'

"I am bringing some choice to these folks who are often suffering through a great deal of pain," said Steven Hochberg, the owner of Rutland Pharmacy, the only pharmacy at present licensed to dispense the lethal medication to those approved to purchase it under Act 39, though he anticipates at least one other pharmacy will begin offering the prescription within the next few months.

For now, though, it's still just him.

"I drive all over the state to deliver this medication personally," Hochberg said. "I think this is way too personal a medication to drop in the mail."

A pharmacist for 50 years who runs his business with family members, Hochberg has seen a lot.

"I know what a terminal patient goes through," he said. "I know what their family goes through."

Hochberg said he sees a pattern in his interactions with patients who have made this difficult decision when he tells them what will happen when they drink the lethal cocktail.

"When I tell the patient that [...] they will, within minutes, be asleep and at peace, they get this big grin on their face," he said.

"They have peace, knowing that they are in major discomfort in their lives. They are ready," he says quietly, and with a great deal of empathy in his voice.

Hochberg spends as much time as is necessary with each patient, and he provides them with his contact information and all the relevant information in written form.

He also educates the patient's family on how to safely dispose

of the medication should the patient decide not to use it. He welcomes phone calls and last-minute questions.

Many times, even months later, family members will call Hochberg to let him know when their family member has died.

"The family was very grateful they were no longer suffering," he said.

During his visit with patients and their families, Hochberg explains that there are three parts to the process of using the prescription.

The patient first takes a pill to alleviate nausea and vomiting, then about 20 minutes later takes a second pill that will put them to sleep.

The second pill is swiftly followed with the lethal powder mixed with apple juice. He is careful to explain that only the patient may hold the solution as they drink it.

Before he leaves each home, Hochberg reminds the patient that they are not under any pressure or obligation to use the medication.

"It's totally up to you," he tells them.

Last year, adjustments to the law added protection for the prescribing pharmacist and other health care professionals involved in the process.

"We go to school to learn how to help people," Hochberg said in an interview with Vermont Public last year. "That was always my view of what pharmacy is. And this is the ultimate help."

Joe Thompson died before he was able to use the prescription. Martin remembers that day clearly.

"The pharmacist had reminded us that sometimes the window of opportunity can be small," she said.

Thompson was unable to eat and was having trouble drinking. He thought it was a temporary setback, so he didn't consider using the prescription.

He died that night in his sleep. He missed his chance, says Martin, but "Act 39 was one of his options."

"While it didn't work out, Joe was still comforted by knowing he could have chosen the prescription anytime he felt like he'd had enough of being in pain," she said.

'The situation is far different when you don't have any options for recovery'

Not everyone is supportive of Act 39. Those who object to it often do so for religious, ethical, or other personal reasons.

Don Hazelton was aware of the naysayers. "I realize it's not for everybody," he said.

"There are people who weren't supportive at first of my decision, but they also didn't understand in the beginning that this wasn't a snap decision," Hazelton said in the days before his death.

"Many don't know all that is required of those who choose this path," he said. "Once they did, they became more supportive."

Hazelton's pastor, Shawn Bracebridge of the First Congregational Church in Dummerston, supported him in making his own decision.

"I think it is a good and viable option for people who want to avoid a lot of pain and suffering," Bracebridge said. "There is a whole process to it, and you go through that process with your loved ones. Act 39 is not intended to be decided quickly."

Bracebridge went on to explain that "we all need to keep our own views and to take things like this

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE



Celebrating Don Hazelton Day with the Dummerston Historical Society last July was the guest of honor, center, flanked by four of his five children. Left to right: Phyllis Isbell, Ted Hazelton, Don Hazelton, Steve Hazelton, David Hazelton. Missing from the photo: Jeanette Hazelton Fairhurst.

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into our own consideration,” he said. “It’s a personal choice for each individual.”

Jeanette Hazelton Fairhurst brought a unique perspective to her family about their father’s decision.

“I’ve had discussions with a couple of people who objected on religious grounds,” she said. “I lost my daughter to suicide, yet I am supportive of those with a terminal diagnosis choosing when and where they die.

“I want to lend my voice to the discussion because Act 39 is so important,” Fairhurst said.

She described the process as thoughtful, lengthy, and supportive of both families and their loved ones.

“While he had some good days, Dad knew he would watch his body fail further until he became bedridden and in constant pain. He wanted to avoid a prolonged death. In cases like Dad’s, you mourn what’s gone, but you also know that the future wasn’t going to be a good one. His body was giving out.”

Joan Martin agrees. “This decision to end one’s suffering is a very personal one,” she said.

Medical aid in dying can be difficult on surviving family members — “including some family members who weren’t supportive of Joe’s personal choices about his cancer,” Martin said.

Joe Thompson chose “a middle-of-the-road” chemotherapy regimen, she said. One family member thought that he should have fought harder.

But Thompson, a longtime paramedic with Rescue Inc. in Brattleboro, “wanted to be able to continue working, and that [was] his choice,” Martin said.

She added that the family member was also deeply against Thompson considering Act 39.

Martin said that Thompson made it clear from the beginning that he alone would oversee all decision-making concerning his health, and he proceeded with his cancer treatment as he felt appropriate.

“And that included Act 39 to end his suffering, if and when it came to that point,” she said.

Thompson’s daughter, Kate Boudreau, also wholly supported her father’s choices.

“For me, my dad’s decision wasn’t that hard,” she said. “The situation was hard, but that decision wasn’t. I’d had cancer in the past, and there were options for me. I survived the illness.

“But there were no options for him,” she added, with sadness in her voice.

“The situation is far different when you don’t have any options for recovery,” Boudreau observed. “All that is left sometimes is a painful death.”

I don’t want to fall and have to cancel my plans’

Very few people knew of Joe Thompson’s decision to use Act 39, outside of a few family members and close friends.

The situation was entirely different for Don Hazelton, who put the word out to a lot of friends and family during his last week of life.

Hazelton had planned out exactly how he wanted his final day on Earth to be, and he made his needs known to his family, who followed his wishes to the letter.

“All of us kids felt that it was Dad’s story to tell. All we said to people was that you might want to call or check in because he wasn’t doing well. But Dad had other ideas,” Fairhurst said, laughing.

Fairhurst’s brother, Ted Hazelton agreed.

“It was hard and strange because his mind was still so good,” said Hazelton, who lives in Kansas. “Us kids were putting out the word that he would be gone by the end of the week. Then friends and family called him or showed up to visit and found him sitting in his chair smiling, laughing, and enjoying their company.”

But Ted Hazelton also noted the changes in his father’s physical body.

“I was home in July to visit him and came back again in January. He had deteriorated quite a bit in just those five months,” he said.

“Dad’s big fear was something happening to him so that he couldn’t take the prescription” — including “a huge fear of having a stroke and not being able to express what he wanted,” Ted Hazelton said.

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A lifetime helping animals

Dummerston Historical Society hosts retired veterinarian Clyde Johnson on April 21

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen
The Commons

DUMMERSTON—Clyde Johnson, best known as a veterinarian who retired from the Vermont–New Hampshire Veterinary Clinic, says that, although he was born in Pennsylvania, he came into the world mysteriously as a Vermonter.

When asked how he came to live in the state, he shows his understated sense of humor by responding in sensible Vermont fashion.

“In a car,” he says.

The Dummerston Historical Society has invited Johnson to speak on Sunday, April 21, at 2 p.m. about his years practicing veterinary medicine. He will also be bringing some of his extensive collection of antique medical equipment.

A *Brattleboro Reformer* article in 1995 laid out Johnson’s personal history:

“Farming had been Johnson’s first love when he was growing up in the small town of Lottsville, Penn., where he was born in 1937. His father died when Johnson was only 8, leaving the boy to find a surrogate father in a family friend. Johnson worked at the man’s small dairy farm from the time he was 9. Consequently, becoming a farmer was what filled his young head.”

Johnson told the newspaper, “I wanted to grow up and emulate that man. That’s a normal thing to do with someone you love.”

Johnson graduated from high school in 1955. Knowing that he wouldn’t inherit the farm because his mentor had his own children, he saved \$2,000 and enrolled as a pre-veterinary medicine student at Pennsylvania State University.

“It was a way to get close to animals,” Johnson says. Johnson attended Penn State

and after three years was accepted into the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School.

At the invitation of David Baldwin, Johnson came to Vermont in 1962.

“The Baldwin family and the Johnson family were all one family,” says Johnson with a huge smile. The two doctors shared the practice.

“In rural areas you did everything, both small and large animals,” says Johnson.

Eventually, he and Baldwin divided up their efforts, Baldwin treating small animals in the clinic, and Johnson taking on the cattle and horses.

But Johnson has many interests. He’s been on the Dummerston Selectboard and has served on the school board as well. He also skis, hunts and fishes; makes a mean sourdough pancake; and shares his love of local history with the town.

He ran the Dummerston Town Meeting for years with “his strong voice and commanding presence,” according to the Historical Society’s press release for the event.

“Clyde’s expertise led to work as the attending physician at the Hinsdale Standardbred track and at the six-horse hitches at the [Eastern States] Exposition,” the news release continued. “Such experiences alone could fill a book, but there were other animals, too, including a chimpanzee, of which you may hear. If you don’t, ask him.”

Johnson also taught anatomy at Windham College when it was in Putney, and was a ski instructor when Maple Valley was open.

Johnson has traveled the world as a representative of the American Association of Equine Practitioners, the world’s largest association for veterinary professionals dedicated to raising the standards in horse health. He’s spent eight years as director of

the organization, six years as treasurer and four years as director-at-large prior to becoming president.

But there is more.

Antique instruments tell the story of medicine

“Antique items interest me greatly. The older I get, the more it does because I myself am one,” Johnson jokes, speaking about his collection.

Johnson was a Rotarian for many years. He and Dummerston resident Tom Johnson spearheaded what came to be a fundraiser for the Brattleboro Rotary Club and the Police Benefits Association. The annual Green Mountain Antique Arms and Gun Show in Brattleboro was the first of its kind in Vermont. Begun in 1980, the award-winning event was a high-quality gun show which brought exhibitors from as far away as Texas.

“We held this event for 20 years or so. Ours was truly an antique arms show. A lot of them were works of art. Some of the guys who collected antique guns also

collected antique medical instruments,” remembers Johnson. A friend had given Johnson an antique bleeding instrument called a fleam, years before the antique gun show started up. They were widely used in the 17th and 18th centuries for bloodletting in both animals and humans.

“I began buying some medical instruments from one dealer there because I’ve always been interested in medical equipment,” says Johnson, and adds with a deep laugh, “After a bit, the guy knew I was a sucker and made it a point to bring things he knew I’d be interested in.”

His collection also includes antique glass syringes and needles. Johnson is very familiar with these, as he used glass syringes when he was in veterinary school and during the beginning of his career.

Johnson met up with another Dummerstonian, Chuck Fish, a member of the Historical Society, to ask him whether the society would like to house his collection. Fish suggested Johnson do a talk about them and tell some veterinarian stories at an event.

“There is a fascinating history around the use of fleams,” Johnson says. “It’s been discovered that men who donate blood have [fewer] heart attacks. Premenopausal women generally don’t have heart attacks. Medically, it’s thought that bleeding gets rid of some of the heavy metals in our body. The practice of using fleams to let blood stopped around the 1800s.”

Johnson adds some historical perspective by noting that wars are terrible events that bring one bright spot: “Improvements in medicine is one of the few advantages of war. Civil War surgeons didn’t even wash their hands while doing amputations, unaware that they carried diseases from one patient to the next,”

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Dr. Clyde Johnson works out a horse at Stoneleigh Burnam School in Greenfield, Massachusetts. COURTESY PHOTO

the organization, six years as treasurer and four years as director-at-large prior to becoming president.

But there is more.

Antique instruments tell the story of medicine

“Antique items interest me greatly. The older I get, the more it does because I myself am one,” Johnson jokes, speaking about his collection.

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“I love driving around the country to tend to a sick horse or a pregnant cow,” Johnson told her. “I even like wrestling with a calf to get it vaccinated. And if there’s 20 minutes to spare between calls, it’s great to be able to stop and do a little fishing.”

Johnson’s talk will follow the quarterly meeting of the Dummerston Historical Society at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 21, at the organization’s schoolhouse at 1521 Middle Rd. in Dummerston Center. The schoolhouse is accessible, and all are welcome. For more information, contact Muriel Taylor at 802-380-7525 or Gail Sorenson at gailsvt@gmail.com.

he says.

The Civil War brought advancements in facial reconstruction surgery, and the numbers of amputees led to improvements in prosthetics. World War II brought penicillin and streptomycin to treat bacterial infections.

“Before the Vietnam War, there weren’t many plates and screws being used. If you had to do a procedure on a situation during war, physicians tried new techniques to try to save their patients. A lot of modern plating and screws came out of those situations in Vietnam, such that today patients often walk right off a surgical table,” he says.

“All that knowledge has migrated down to animals. I was reading an article recently about a horse that broke his leg at the Preakness. Twenty-eight screws and bone plates put the breaks back together again. Twenty years ago, that horse would have been put down.”

Another quote from another *Reformer* article, this one from 1968, might shed more light on his upcoming talk.

“It’s hard for me to imagine a better occupation,” he told columnist Marge Runnion.

“I love driving around the country to tend to a sick horse or a pregnant cow,” Johnson told her. “I even like wrestling with a calf to get it vaccinated. And if there’s 20 minutes to spare between calls, it’s great to be able to stop and do a little fishing.”

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Proposed Invasive Plant Control Measures

Springfield, VT (4/9/2024)

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation proposes to conduct treatments to control invasive exotic plants on properties owned by the State of Vermont in Windsor and Windham Counties. The proposed treatment area will not exceed 150 acres in size. Application will include foliar and cut stem methods utilizing common site-specific herbicides such as Rodeo or Roundup. Treatment will occur between 4/20/2024 and 11/30/2024, and each site will have signage displayed for additional public notice.

For specific locations or more information, please contact State Lands Forester Aaron Hurst at Aaron.Hurst@vermont.gov or 802-279-8624

Notice of Disinterment

I, Dawn Eckels, am requesting a permit from the town of Brattleboro, Vermont to exhume the cremated remains of Ernest J Belair who died on September 1st 1998. His remains are in The St. Michael’s cemetery. They will be given to Jackie Belair Lee.

Any family member, town cemetery commissioner or other authority responsible for cemeteries in the municipality can object to the proposed removal by filing a complaint in probate court.

Notice of Bid

The Town of Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department is accepting sealed bids for a refrigeration plant replacement at the Nelson Withington Skating Facility. This project will be bid on a design-build basis. There will be a Mandatory Walk-Thru on Tuesday April 30TH at 10:00 AM at the Nelson Withington Skating Facility 61 Memorial Park Drive Brattleboro, VT 05301

For more information regarding this project, please contact the Recreation & Parks Department Office at 802-254-5808.

Sealed bids should be sent to the Town Manager’s Office, 230 Main Street, Suite 208, Brattleboro, VT 05301, and must be received by 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 5/29/24.

The Town of Brattleboro reserves the right to refuse any and all bids and accept the bid that best serves the interest of the Town.

MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• **Noah Hirchi** of Brookline recently received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

• **Alejandro Toledo Cornman** of Brattleboro and **Michele Hartje** of Wilmington were recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Toledo Cornman was initiated at the University of Massachusetts, while Hartje was initiated at Sacred Heart University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

• The following local students were honored for academic achievement in the fall 2023 semester at Champlain College in Burlington: **Zachary Condon** and **Janelle Fisher**, both of Whitingham, were named to the Trustees' List, for maintaining a 4.0 or higher grade point average for two or more semesters. Condon, Fisher, and **Melissa French** of Bellows Falls were all named to the President's List for achieving a 4.0 GPA, while **John Clark** of Brattleboro, **Jayden Crawford** of Wilmington, **Mark Hunnewell** of South Londonderry, **Ritter Redfield** of South Newfane, **Nicholas Stratton** of Putney, and **Sasha Tschernisch** of Brattleboro were all named to the Dean's List for achieving a 3.5 or higher GPA.

• **Nieve Whitehouse** of Marlboro was named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

• **Liina Koch** of South Londonderry was named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine.

• **Annamarie Mulkey** of Stratton was named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at the Albany (N.Y.) College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

• **Grace Wilkinson** of Bellows Falls, **Lucy Day** of Jamaica, **Annabelle Gray** of Londonderry, and **Althea Holzapfel** of Marlboro were named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts.

• **Jessica Tatro** of Brattleboro was named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire.

• **Cassidy A. Fusco** of West Wardsboro and **Emiline L. Stewart** of Wilmington were named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at Fairfield (Conn.) University.

Obituaries



• **Samuel Bergman, 79**, of Hancock, Maine. Died on April 2, 2024, at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, following a long illness. Sam was born on April 26, 1944, in Burlington, Vermont, the son of George and Molly Bergman. He grew up in Burlington, but moved to Boston to attend MIT. He graduated from MIT in 1967. Political action was very important to Sam. He was actively involved in the anti-war movement of the 1960s. He was pictured in The Walker Report, "Rights in Conflict," during the riots at 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, as a "Hippie Medic." This experience solidified his decision to attend medical school. Sam worked for a year as a substitute geometry teacher in Chelsea, Massachusetts, while preparing to apply to med school. While in Chelsea, he became involved in the Chelsea Organization to Improve Community Education (CHOICE). It was there he met the love of his life, Irene Melamed, a

recent graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Boston. They quickly fell in love after meeting in July 1969, were engaged by Thanksgiving, and married in February 1970. Sam enrolled in Boston University School of Medicine in September 1970. Despite the difficulties of medical school, he and Irene continued their political activities. They lived communally in Allston, Massachusetts, during the four years of med school — moving to Worcester, Massachusetts, for internships and residency in family practice at UMass Medical School. After residency, Sam and Irene moved to Cavendish, Vermont, to serve in the U.S. Public Health Service. They moved to Duxbury, Vermont to allow Irene to go to graduate school for her MSW degree. There, Sam began his career as an emergency room doctor in small community hospitals throughout New England. Sam and Irene lived briefly in Connecticut where their eldest child, Robert was born in 1982. The family then moved to Brattleboro, where their youngest child, Alli, was born in 1989. While there, Sam worked in the ER at Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, New Hampshire, Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield, Massachusetts, and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. The family loved life in Brattleboro. It was a wonderful community to raise their children and follow their political passions. Sam was an avid hockey dad, traipsing all over New England and New York to Rob's hockey games and supporting him in his endeavors. He also served as the team doctor. One of Rob's fondest memories later in life was his dad being able to see Rob come full circle in his hockey run, sitting front row watching him win a state title as a high school hockey coach in the state of Maine. He will always remember his dad's selflessness and ability to put everyone above himself for the greater good of humanity. Alli said that she and her dad were "like father, like daughter," often appearing unemotional to the world but big softies to those that knew their hearts. Both were masters of researching any topic on the internet and they were two people that were "never wrong" because they had already done the study to back up their points. Sam instilled peace and fairness in Alli, amongst his other beliefs such as Healthcare for All. Alli will honor his legacy by spreading information about her dad's desire for a more peaceful earth. She is proud to have given Sam his first grandchild, Aaliyah, in 2009 and will cherish the memories of her father for the rest of her life. Irene said that, to her amazement, Sam showed a totally different side of himself in his later years as he joined the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Maine and performed in *The Pirates of Penzance*, *HMS Pinafore*, and *Iolanthe*. Seeing him on stage and watching his passion for performance warmed her heart. Sam was predeceased by his parents and his sister Betty Levin. He leaves behind to cherish his memory his wife Irene (Melamed) Bergman; son Robert Bergman and fiancé Hannah Cook of Sarasota, Florida; daughter Alexandra (Alli) Bergman of Fredericksburg, Virginia; and granddaughter Aaliyah Williams of Fort Worth, Texas. Also surviving are his brother and sister-in-law David & Kathy Melamed of Gilbert, Arizona, brother-in-law Amos Levin of Newton, Massachusetts, and many cousins, nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Sam requested a Green Burial. He was dressed in a simple shroud in a pine box at Cedar Grove Burial Ground in Limington, Maine on April 8, before the historic solar eclipse, surrounded by his immediate family

There will be no funeral, but the family will have a celebration of his life later in the spring. Donations to a progressive cause of your choice.



• **Leah Bonnette, 87**, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Died April 5, 2024, at Maplewood Nursing Home in Westmoreland, New Hampshire, where she was a resident for the past five months. Born in Lowell, Vermont, on Oct. 4, 1936, she was the daughter of Clinton and Elizabeth (Mason) Peters. She was raised and educated in Lowell, attending Lowell Elementary School and Richford High School. She continued her education later in life by taking bank courses through Vermont National Bank. On August 8, 1953, at St. Isadore Parish in Montgomery Center, Vermont, she married Royal Bonnette. Her faithful and devoted husband of 57 years predeceased her on Oct. 7, 2010. Leah worked at the Book Press for many years. She left the Book Press to start her own business. Leah ran the Double Header Restaurant in Hinsdale with two of her sons, Bruce and Terry. She then ran a catering business before starting work at Vermont National Bank. She went on to work for Brattleboro Savings & Loan as a receptionist for 14 years until her retirement in 1996. While working at the Book Press, she also completed hairdressing school. She and her husband, Royal, spent many years living in the Algiers section of Guilford before moving to Hinsdale in 1964. With her husband, she was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Hinsdale. Leah was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Her greatest pleasure in life was spending time with her family, whether it was at family gatherings or at sporting events for her children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren. She spent much time at baseball/softball fields, soccer fields and basketball courts. She was their biggest fan. She also loved working in her gardens and tending to her lawn. Prior to her husband's death, they enjoyed traveling together; spending time in Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee. Those were her favorite places. Leah leaves behind three sons, Bruce (wife, Maryann), Steve (partner, Claire) and Terry (wife, Kim) Bonnette, all of Hinsdale; one daughter, Diane (husband, John) Butler of Virginia Beach, Virginia; two brothers, Dennis Peters of West Dover and Robert Peters of Enosburg Center; 11 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Besides her husband, she was predeceased by her parents; her sister, Flora Gilbeau; and two brothers, Clinton Peters Jr. and Artie Peters. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was held on April 12 at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Brattleboro, followed by committal rites and burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery in Hinsdale, where she was laid to rest beside her husband. Donations to the Hinsdale Education Foundation, P.O. Box 837, Hinsdale, NH 03451. To offer condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Whitney T. "Whitty" Hamilton, 39**, of Marlboro. Died unexpectedly on April 5, 2024. He was born on Nov. 14, 1984, in Brattleboro and grew up on his grandfather's dairy farm. He graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 2003. Whitty worked at the Retreat Farm, Feed Commodities in Bernardston, Wayne C. Corse Excavation, the town of Whitingham Roadworks, and Whetstone Valley Excavating.

He was a member of the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Department. Whitty enjoyed working on dairy farms and operating equipment. He was a sensitive, loving father and thoughtful friend and neighbor who was happy sitting on a log skidder with a chainsaw by his side. He leaves behind his significant other, Carrie Billings, and their son, Bennett; his parents, Kevin and Jean Hamilton of Brattleboro; his sister, Katrina of Westminster; his brother, Jacob, of Brattleboro; his good friend, Andrew Rockwell of Dover; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of his life will be held at the field off of Levi Howard Road on Saturday, April 27, at 1 p.m. To send condolences, visit sheafuneralhomes.com.



• **Merry Belle Haskell, 74**, died April 8, 2024 at Pine Heights, in Brattleboro, surrounded by her family, following a courageous battle with cancer. A beloved mother, grandmother, aunt, and sister, Merry was born in Goffstown, New Hampshire on December 20, 1949, the daughter of Edwin and Ruby (Stevens) Haskell, Jr. She was raised and educated in Hooksett, New Hampshire, graduating from Mashoba High School with the Class of 1967. Merry went on to attend the former Thompson School for Practical Nursing, earning her LPN license, was a graduate of Southern Vermont College in Bennington, where she received her RN Degree, and later graduated from the University of New Hampshire where she earned her Bachelor's Degree (BSN) in Nursing. She worked her entire career in healthcare, starting her career as a nurse's aide at Thompson House. She later worked at Applewood Healthcare Center in Winchester, New Hampshire, Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, New Hampshire; and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, where she was employed as a nursing shift supervisor. A devout Catholic, Merry was a communicant of St. Joseph's Church in Hinsdale and was a member of the Catholic Daughters. She enjoyed quilting, travel, riding motorcycles, baking and tending to her plants. Merry was known for her positive outlook on life, her desire to always keep learning, her wonderful spirit of friendship, and the love she had for her family. Survivors include her sons Eric Graham (Sharon) of Ormond Beach, Florida, and Wesley Graham (Alice) of Westminster; a sister, Jacqueline House of Green Cove Springs, Florida; a brother, Harold Haskell of Lubbock, Texas; and 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. Merry was predeceased by her daughter, Laura Graham; her brother, Edwin Haskell III; a niece, Tammy Jo Linececum; and her parents. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at 10 a.m., at St. Joseph's Church in Hinsdale with a reception to follow in the church fellowship hall. She will be laid to rest in St. Joseph's Cemetery on Plain Road. Donations to St. Joseph Catholic Church, in care of the Parish of the Holy Spirit, 173 Main St., Keene, NH 03431. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Frederick W. "Fred" Houston, 81**, of Wilmington. Died peacefully at his home on April 5, 2024, after a night of watching footie (soccer for the rest of us) and chatting with dear friends. Born on Dec. 19, 1942, Fred lived a full life that took him around the world more than once. "For the sins of his youth," he went into law and practiced in Brattleboro, Londonderry and, finally, Wilmington before retiring into curmudgeonhood at his apartment at 6 South Main St. Prior to practicing law, he was a member of Putney Folk at Windham College, then toured across the country as a roadie with Dawson Sound Company, hauling gear for bands such as Steely Dan and the Mahavishnu Orchestra. He is predeceased by his moustache, and his best friend of many years, Eileen Greber. He is survived by his sister Molly Savard, and his two children Clay and Justin Houston. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services were held April 13 at St. Mary's In the Mountains Episcopal Church in Wilmington. In lieu of cut flowers, go outside and plant some. And remember, "It's all Rock and Roll!"

• **Robert Schnare King, 95**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully at Pine Heights nursing home on April 10, 2024. He was born in Brattleboro on October 15, 1928, the son of Atkins H. King Sr. and Priscilla Schnare King. Robert graduated from Brattleboro High School in 1947. He served



in the Vermont National Guard for four years in the U.S. and in Germany. On February 11, 1956, Robert married Shirley Blodgett. Survivors besides his wife, Shirley, of 68 years, include his children Gary, of Brattleboro, Brian (Lynn), of Guilford, and Steven (Cindy) of Vernon; his sister, Nancy, of Florida, granddaughter Theresa Nicole King, and great-grandchildren Ryker, Willow, and Waylynn. Robert was predeceased by a brother, Atkins King Jr., a son, Jeffrey King, and a great-granddaughter, Ashley King. Robert worked at Brattleboro Trust and Vermont Bank and Trust for 20 years. Robert and Shirley owned and operated Gunzingers grocery store for 16 years. After retirement, Robert and Shirley traveled by RV for 20 years. He also enjoyed trap shooting, woodworking, and gardening. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: There will be no visiting hours or memorial service. Friends and family are invited to meet at American Legion Post 5 on Saturday, May 11, from 1 to 4 p.m., for a Celebration of Life.

• **Barbara (Rudolph) Pofcher, 100**, of Newton, Massachusetts, and West Brattleboro, passed away on April 5, 2024. She was born on Jan. 12, 1924. For 59 years, she was the beloved wife of the late Harvey Pofcher. She was the loving mother of Steven, Eric (Wendy) and Amy (Enrique). She was also devoted to her seven grandchildren and was a dear sister to the late James Rudolph (Adrienne). Barbara was an exceptional woman and, being 100 years old, was a role model for many of her younger friends. She graduated from Wellesley College in 1945, where she became an avid bridge card player. After college, she played bridge three times a week and she achieved Life Master status. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: She was buried at the Roxbury Lodge Cemetery in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Donations to the Fanny Pofcher-Golda Griefman Scholarship Fund at Hebrew Senior Life, 1200 Centre St., Boston, MA 02131.



• **Byron Stookey, 90**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully at home on April 12, 2024. During the last months of his life, he was cared for by his three daughters and his wife of almost 64 years, Lee. She was holding his hand when he died. Byron was born and raised in Manhattan with two brothers, John and Lyman, to whom he was devoted throughout his life. He was thoughtful and soft-spoken. He lived with quiet integrity and dedicated his life to taking care of others. He worked harder than most, though that was not always the case. During his first two years at Harvard, he prioritized driving (and hitchhiking) around the Northeast, returning rental cars to Boston (night driving, backroads, and diners became a lifelong pleasure). The college "suggested" he take some time off. He enlisted in the Army as an infantryman and served for three years as a paratrooper and officer in the 82nd Airborne Division. He credited the Army with giving him opportunities to work with purpose, to lead, and to learn from and with people from very different backgrounds. It also left him with a permanent affection for olive green. When he returned to Harvard, he earned his B.A. and a Master of Arts in Teaching (History) while continuing to serve in the Army Reserve. He wrote about Jack London and the socialist movement and became committed to education as a motor for social and personal transformation. He met Lee in Cambridge. After numerous proposals, she finally said "yes," and they were married in 1960. They had four daughters in five years: Sarah, Anna, Kate, and Joan. Always close, their family of "originals" held each other more tightly during the year and a half after Joan was diagnosed with ALS and through her death last year. Byron described his career as "checked" but there was a consistent throughline. He always worked to strengthen the voice and capacity of people with less power. As an administrator at Harvard, he started the Freshman Seminar Program, connecting young students with senior professors, directed the initial Peace Corps training program, and founded the first student housing cooperative. In 1963, he was recruited as part of a small team to develop the University of California at Santa Cruz. When he and Lee arrived from Cambridge with two toddlers, UCSC was a 3,000-acre ranch with a padlocked gate. Byron soon became the first Director of Academic Planning. He was a moral and intellectual force in shaping the culture and programs

of the campus. He advocated for student voice, academic creativity, and connections between campus and the community. Byron and Lee returned East in 1968, settling in Brooklyn. Together they worked to end segregation and improve the quality of public schools. Byron helped create an alternative public high school in East Harlem (Park East) and a social services organization in Queens (Sunnyside Community Services). Both of these organizations continue to thrive. Beginning as a senior center in a church basement, SCS now offers programs for all members of the community and is one of the largest home care agencies in the city. He was the extraordinary combination of an expert administrator and a wildly creative visionary. Whether students or old people, he believed in and worked to build people's capacity for managing and owning their organizations. Byron was most drawn to the work of starting organizations and shied away from accumulating power. At 50, he returned to education. He became a New York City public school teacher and taught world history to high school students in East Harlem for a decade. He was dedicated to helping his students connect their lives and concerns to larger histories and ideas. Byron and Lee moved to Brattleboro in 1994. They had built a cabin in Westminister West in 1970 and felt a strong connection to this area. He was happiest when he was at the cabin with family, engineering drainage channels, and making trails. Byron was often teased by his children and nine grandchildren for "vacuuming the woods." He helped found Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing, worked with the residents of the Westgate community in West Brattleboro to establish tenant control, and fought the exploitative rent-to-own industry. Byron liked to be at his desk when the world was quiet and asleep. He and Lee often stayed up working together into the wee hours. They were partners in ways well beyond family. Tireless activists and advocates for a more just world, they rode school buses to Washington D.C. for war and justice protests and joined Occupy Wall Street in 2011. Byron became particularly dedicated to the fight to address climate change. In October 2022, at 90, he led a family delegation in the March to End Fossil Fuels to the United Nations. A prolific writer, he used words to make unassailable arguments, convey white hot outrage and express love. His handwriting was beautiful; there should've been a font called "Byron." Whether a letter to the editor about the life cycle of ladybugs or the horrors of war or climate change, an essay on careers, or advice to a grandchild, he took care with everything he wrote. He wrote extraordinary toasts and delivered them so beautifully that, no matter how large the room or gathering, you could hear a pin drop. Though Byron worked hard, he was a master snoozer, ice cream eater, novice woodworker, wannabe surveyor, and a lover of music and hardware stores (especially Brown & Roberts). He liked exploring — places, people, and the way things worked. Byron acted with integrity and humility. Small gestures mattered. It was always "more important to be interested, than interesting." He leaves a hole in the lives of his wife, Lee, his daughters Sarah Stookey, Anna Clancy (Tom), Kate Haviland (Sandy), his son-in-law Jeff Haring, and nine grandchildren Holly, Quitzé (Melissa), Adam (Sarah), Kate, Elena (Sam), Emma, Charlie (Julia), Laura, and Grace, and his first great-grandchild, Arthur. He was predeceased in 2023 by his youngest daughter, Joan Haring. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: All who knew Byron are welcome at a memorial gathering with light refreshments at The Stone Church, 210 Main St., Brattleboro, on Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a brief program at 11 a.m. A livestream of the program will be available; email kateshaviland@gmail.com for details. Donations in Byron's memory may be made to Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing (baahvermont.org), Groundworks Collaborative (groundworksvt.org), and/or Sunnyside Community Services (scsny.org).



• **Kenneth N. "Kenny" Toney, 82**, of Brattleboro. Died on April 10, 2024, surrounded by his loving family. Kenny was born in Brattleboro on Feb. 3, 1942, son of the late Nathan and Deanna Toney. Kenny was a loving brother, father, grandfather, uncle, and friend to all who knew him. Growing up in Brattleboro as one of four siblings, he worked to develop and maintain the family-run business known as Toney's Market and Deli with his brother Robert as co-owners, when their father and uncle Thomas Toney could

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

Love thy neighbor

- thy immigrant neighbor
- thy black neighbor
- thy atheist neighbor
- thy religious neighbor
- thy depressed neighbor
- thy asian neighbor
- thy lgbtqia neighbor
- thy disabled neighbor
- thy indigenous neighbor
- thy conservative neighbor
- thy elderly neighbor
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■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

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Services

• A celebration of life service for **Richard R. Emond** will be conducted Saturday, April 27, at 11 a.m., at First United Methodist Church on Town Crier Drive. Richard will then be escorted by motorcycle to Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery on Orchard Street where he will be laid to rest beside his parents. Anyone wishing to join the escort with their motorcycles is welcome. A reception will follow the services in the church reception hall. Mr. Emond died on Oct. 26, 2023, at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. To view his full obituary, visit atamaniuk.com.

• A memorial service for **Stanley Mack** of Grafton will take place on Saturday, May 4, at 11 a.m., at the White Church in Grafton. A celebration will follow. The Cremation Society of New Hampshire has been entrusted with arrangements. For more information, visit csnh.com.

Miss Vermont

"I'm just so proud. This was her year. She's ready." After competing in 2021 and 2023, Seery was crowned on Saturday, April 14, at the Miss Vermont and Miss Vermont Teen 2024 competition held at Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center in Stowe. How did the crowning moment feel? "They announce the first runner-up first, so I knew I'd won and, honestly, I kind of blanked out then," Seery said with a laugh. "It was really magical, and I was in complete shock, even though I felt entirely confident in my performance," she said. "I kept touching my sash to remind myself it was actually happening."

Seery, who competed as Miss Southern Vermont, vied with 10 others in her category for the crown.

"The Miss Vermont organization is a really special place," she said. "I've competed in other systems, and there's nothing like it. The volunteers and board members and girls are so supportive. I really think of the girls as friends and peers, not competitors, because the camaraderie level is so high."

The about 2½-hour program consisted of onstage questions, or "hot topics," as well as a fitness, talent, and evening gown presentation.

For the question portion, each woman chose an envelope with an unknown topic on which she had to speak for 30 seconds.

Seery pulled the drug crisis topic. "It was the only one I did not want to get, but I think I did really well, regardless," she said, noting she spoke of the seriousness of drugs in the state and pledged to use her year as Miss Vermont to help educate young people about how to prevent and avoid addiction.

Seery, a digital producer, spearheads "Green for Good," her community service project in which she advocates for sustainability practices by promoting shopping at farmers markets and second-hand shops.

She bought her Jovani gown secondhand and credits Nancy Bell from The Right Fit in Brattleboro for tailoring it just two days before the pageant.

For her talent performance, Seery sang a jazz rendition of "The White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army," in the style of a cover version sung by Postmodern Jukebox.

Today's pageant

Seery is reportedly the fifth Brattleboro resident to win the Miss Vermont title, the last being Sue Glover in 1971.

Vermont still has never had a delegate chosen as a Miss America finalist, but Seery will get the chance to change that in January, when she competes for the 2025 title.

She now starts a year providing community service for Vermonters through appearances and events, a big part of the mission of the organization.

Seery has partnered with Green Up Vermont and plans to be part of the 100-mile Route 100 cleanup on Green Up Vermont Day on Saturday, May 4.

Her first public appearance as

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Miss Vermont will be Thursday, April 25 in Burlington with the Vermont chapter of the American Heart Association.

Fighting 'misconception' and 'ignorance'

Asked why she competes in pageants and what they have to offer young women in 2024, Seery said she believes "there's a lot of misconception about what pageantry is about and a lot of ignorance about who's competing."

"It's changed a lot in the past 102 years," she said. "The Miss America organization, of which Miss Vermont is a part, is the largest provider of scholarships for women in America."

Seery received a \$7,500 scholarship for school tuition costs, a \$5,000 scholarship for a public speaking course, and a \$2,500 wardrobe award.

If she wins in the Miss America contest, she'll spend the year in community service across the country. If not, she'll crown the next Miss Vermont in April 2025.

Seery said she's most looking forward to "the variety of appearances and events that I get to go to."

"I'm really looking forward to the Father's Day Fishing Derby because it's a tradition that Miss Vermont gets to kiss the winning fish, the largest fish of the day," she said with a laugh, adding she may well enter the contest with her dad since she grew up fishing with him.

Mentoring thrills

Seery also registered three young girls from Brattleboro in the Red Clover Kids Program — aka, Miss America's Little Sisters — a mentorship program with events throughout the year that the young ones attend with title holders.

This year, Annabelle Reynolds, 5, was partnered with Seery, whose mother — a preschool teacher — knew Annabelle, who has Down Syndrome.

"Annabelle — oh my goodness, I call her 'my firecracker,'" said Conway.

Mulberry Bush Early Learning Program sponsored Annabelle, the daughter of Jaci and William Reynolds of Brattleboro, to participate.

"Our experience with the Miss Vermont scholarship organization was filled with so much love and inclusion," Jaci Reynolds said.

"All of the organizers were amazing. Everyone was willing to make any necessary accommodations to make the event work for Annabelle," she continued. "We were given a laptop to watch the livestream so that Annabelle wouldn't be overwhelmed by the crowd. I was allowed to accompany her backstage and even across the stage."

Reynolds pointed out that accommodations are "an important part of inclusion because the typical world just isn't set up for folks with disabilities."

Among the accommodations made for Annabelle, who was invited to participate in all Red Clover Kids' events, were "open communication with event organizers to ensure that we knew what to expect."

FROM SECTION FRONT

"My requests for accommodations were granted, and it truly felt like it was no problem whatsoever," said Reynolds. "This is a rare feeling. Usually I feel like I have to apologize for being difficult. Not the case with these lovely people."

She said Seery also reached out ahead of time "so that we would know that Annabelle would be paired with her and also so that we could ask her any questions."

"Meara also sang Annabelle's favorite song ['Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes'] with her to help her feel comfortable," Reynolds said.

"Once backstage, Annabelle wasn't able to stay in her designated spot for long. We were allowed to explore backstage until it was 'go' time," she noted.

Annabelle did have to leave before the end of the event, "which was unfortunately necessary to prevent a tired girl from melting down," her mother said. "However, we were informed immediately that Meara won. It felt like they really cared about us."

Seery, said Reynolds, not only made Annabelle's day, but also was the perfect partner for her daughter.

"When she saw Meara, she yelled, 'Princess!', said Reynolds. "And when she saw the crowns, she said, 'Me first!' She was stoked. She has been saying that she wants to be a princess for the past two days."

Reynolds said Seery was "so patient, composed, and sweet with Annabelle."

"I expected it to be very stressful, given Annie's tendency to investigate every interesting aspect of her surroundings, but Meara was completely unfazed, and I was wishing that the judges could have seen it," said Reynolds.

"The world is not exactly full of people who have a natural ability to connect with people who have disabilities, and Meara has that," she continued.

"And fortunately, although the judges didn't see what I saw, they were as impressed as I was. When we learned that Meara won, we felt like we won, too," Reynolds said.

Annabelle went home with her Little Miss Red Clover sash, crown, and necklace as gifts.

For Seery, Annabelle's exuberance was a joy.

"I saw a lot of myself in Annabelle because I also like to do what I want, and I saw that she was just having a good time and wanted to explore," she said.

"I was like, 'Me, too, girl — I get it.' She was so sweet," Seery said. "I hope we'll be partnered together for the next year."



Meara Seery of Brattleboro is Miss Vermont 2024.



COURTESY PHOTO

Annabelle Reynolds, 5, of Brattleboro.

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Art provided by Amelia Zimmerman (IG: @_animal_rightst_art)

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Beer in Brattleboro

But Hermit Thrush Brewery announced its impending closure in an Instagram post on March 27. The most cataclysmic closure possible occurred in December 2022, when a fire at McNeill's Brewery on Elliot Street took the life of owner and brewer Ray McNeill.

The closure of Hermit Thrush doesn't compare to the tragedy of McNeill. Still, the announcement of its shuttering produced an outpouring of tribute and regret on social media, from both fellow Vermont brewers and fans of the brewery's all-sour beers.

CHRISTOPHER GAGNÉ and partner Avery Schwenk opened the brewery on Nov. 22, 2014. I managed to be the first customer through the door, and it was clear from the start that something different was going on; all the beers were brewed with wild yeasts that imparted a distinctive sour note to the final product.

It became the brewery's slogan: "Yes, they're all sour." Though Belgian by way of

inspiration, the beers were hyperlocal. The yeast used to ferment them was harvested right in the wilds of Brattleboro.

"Of any breweries doing sour, we may be the only one that never bought yeast — ever," said Gagné in a recent conversation. "The yeast was one of the reasons [Avery and I] moved here to begin with — the best wild yeast we could find, and a great community open to welcoming new, weird ideas."

Not every palate could deal with Hermit Thrush's wild beers. My favorite critic remains the guy on TripAdvisor who, after a 2015 visit, wrote, "I'd rather drink my own urine."

But there were enough fans to help expand the brewery's distribution into nine states and Washington, D.C.

"We were crushing it," said Gagné.

Then came Covid, and the business line graph began moving in the other direction — for many craft breweries, not just Hermit Thrush.

"That's when everything

FROM SECTION FRONT

began to change. We're not the exception in the industry; we're feeling it like anyone else, but perhaps moreso as a specialty product," Gagné said.

A beer like Rowdy Monk started life as a dark ale and then spent almost two years in red wine and scotch barrels, emerging as a mind-bending complexity of flavors at a leg-wobbling strength of 14.5% ABV (alcohol by volume), stronger than many wines. Like many of Hermit Thrush's beers, it was expensive to make and priced accordingly.

"We had a good 10 years," Gagné said. "I feel happy about the level of beer quality that we achieved. We were doing weird stuff and we were doing the best of the best weird stuff. And there's been a crazy outpouring of support — so many coming in and expressing their sorrow."

"I'm totally flattered and amazed at the response. You can't really expect anything like that, and we're just grateful. We are well-loved among people who like beer for wine-lovers."

A closing sale of existing inventory sent crowds to the High Street tap room location through April 7; mail orders will remain available through Monday, April 29.

As of April 12, of the 41 beers offered on the brewery website (hermitthrushbrewery.com/shop), 18 were already sold out.

THE GOOD NEWS on the Brattleboro beer front is that the Whetstone Beer Company, which was sold a month ago, should emerge from a transition service agreement and begin distributing beer again soon. Its new owner, Keane Aures, said that will happen "shortly, in a couple of weeks, or maybe a month or so."



Keane Aures, seen here in 2021, is the new owner of Whetstone Brewing Company. He recently purchased the Whetstone Brewing brand and its brewery on Frost Street in Brattleboro.

To be clear, Aures purchased only the Whetstone Beer brand and the production brewery on Frost Street. The original owners, David Hiler and Tim and Amy Brady, still own the Whetstone Station restaurant and brewery on Bridge Street, the River Garden Marketplace on Main Street, and the Kampfires Campground in Dummerston.

Aures, 44, owns a bit of property in Dummerston as well — the 375-acre Maple Valley Ski Area. He's owned it since 2018, and for close to seven years he has been trying to get all the legal ducks in a row to reopen the lodge as a brewery, distillery, and sometime performance venue.

A Vermont Supreme Court ruling late last year finally gave him the all-clear after a long bureaucratic slog. Aures can't completely hide his frustration and wouldn't hazard a timeline for the work ahead on the Maple Valley project.

"I stopped putting a date on it a long time ago," he said.

"We hope to start doing some work later this year," Aures said. "But the cost to construct anything has risen greatly since 2018. Our initial budget was essentially ruined, to put it nicely."

Of course, he may have been tired. I spoke to Aures the day after his wife gave birth to twins, which immediately doubled the number of the family's children.

Aures lives outside Boston, but practices construction law for a firm in Connecticut. He's been a frequent visitor to southern Vermont for years, and has family in the area.

"Yes, I was caught up in the craft beer movement but never really had a thought of opening a brewery," he said. "It was more that, as I continually drove by Maple Valley after it was closed as a ski area, I thought it would be a great spot for a brewery."

And so it yet may be. The purchase of Whetstone Beer is a result of reimagining the entire Maple Valley project.

"We saw the purchase of Whetstone as a big part of it, to help fund some of the Maple Valley work," Aures said. "So now we're focused on the transition, and immediately in front of us is making sure that we're making the best beer that we can and getting it back into distribution."

Connor Busch will remain the head brewer. Twelve former Whetstone brands will be trimmed to four core styles, and a new line will emerge, named after some Maple Valley equipment — North Chair Brewing. And once some whiskey and gin begin emerging from Maple Valley, look for South Chair Distilling.

And will skiing ever return to the hill?

"Never say never," says Aures.

He also said he was sad to hear about the closing of Hermit Thrush: "And I'm frankly surprised that someone didn't want to pick it up. It's such a great brand, making great beer. And there's all that equipment."

True enough. Besides the brewing facilities on High Street, Hermit Thrush had its extensive barrel operations in a building straddling the Brattleboro-Dummerston town line on Route 5. But as it turns out, it's not just the Hermit Thrush equipment that is available.

"The brewery is up for sale," Gagné said. "All I can say is that during the crazy amount of business we've been doing for two weeks, some voices have come out of the woodwork, and we're discussing things with them. But it's premature to say anything that may or may not happen."

So Brattleboro might return to a two-brewery town? One can hope. And if two, why not three?

Never say never.

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Student mental health

FROM SECTION FRONT

plan, with ongoing support over the three years from the Jed Foundation High School Program team.

BFUHS has created an interdisciplinary, campus-wide team that will be dedicated to implementing the program enhancements focused on improving student mental and emotional health. The feedback from the Jed Foundation will use the survey to help the school see what it is doing well and what it needs to improve.

That collaboration will continue over the next three years as the school implements specific suggestions from the Jed Foundation's mental health experts. Principal O'Ryan said that the school will keep the community updated on how the program progresses.

Increasing mental health issues among teens

"We're very concerned with the issues of mental health and social connectedness of our students," O'Ryan said.

School-based clinician Vicki Jones said that "more and more kids are struggling to do day-to-day things — their schoolwork, being comfortable in a classroom, and of course many kids have trouble navigating the social network."

O'Ryan said that pockets of students, in particular LGBTQ students and students of color, often experience the school climate in more negative ways. "It is a complex day-to-day climate in the school."

One of the issues many students seem to struggle with across the board is chronically high truancy. Increased anxiety often leads to students feeling the need to avoid being in class or even in the school itself.

Social media and cyberbullying also present issues for many students, and can sometimes add to an already unwelcoming atmosphere.

Substance use — in particular tobacco, alcohol and cannabis — continues to be a recurring problem among teens. The advent of nicotine and cannabis vaping has added a new level of concern to these issues.

Students have also expressed anxiety and concern that they face a bleaker future than earlier generations. For some, pursuing the necessary education for the career they desire means graduating from college and starting their adult life saddled with massive student loan debt.

A rapidly changing global climate is a major concern among young people, as is the threat that war in Ukraine will escalate into another world war.

The way the U.S. is addressing the atrocities and civilian deaths in the latest Israel-Hamas



Kelly O'Ryan is the new Principal at Bellows Falls Union High School.

war is one of the major concerns of young people when asked about the upcoming presidential election.

The largest political divide in over a century and a half in this nation, with serious threats to personal freedom and life choices combined with a massive and constant flow of disinformation, add to the anxiety young people are feeling.

In the past few years, these issues were dramatically exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. The resulting shutdown of schools and social isolation have had a massive negative effect on young people.

One parent of a BFUHS student said she believed many young adults developed major mental health issues during the isolation of the Covid shutdown.

"So many students lived in areas where they had no Wi-Fi service," she said, "and they could not even do their classes. They had no schedule or routine and were doing their classwork in their pajamas all day in their beds. They had nothing to look forward to."

What BFUHS saw happening to its students was similar to what happened in every place affected by the pandemic, but being in a rural community presents additional challenges.

"This is exactly what I saw and exactly what these students shared with me," she said. "The parents were also getting depressed due to seeing how this was affecting their children and no one knew when the end of the pandemic would come."

Dealing with the aftermath of the Covid pandemic on students will certainly be one of the focuses of BFUHS's work with the Jed Foundation program, O'Ryan said.

New principal is hopeful

Coming in this year as the school's new principal, O'Ryan brings to that position her previous work as the BFUHS diversity and equity coordinator and the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union Title XI coordinator.

"What Jed has," O'Ryan said, "is that they understand this work on a national level. They know about what resources are available and they can help supply some of these resources to BFUHS."

O'Ryan said that at times BFUHS feels like "being on an island. We're in a bubble here," she noted, compared to the greater resources available in larger high schools such as those in Brattleboro and Springfield.

She expressed enthusiasm and hope about what the new Jed Foundation partnership will bring to the table. "At BFUHS, we are deeply committed to nurturing the holistic well-being of our students," she stated. "Partnering with the Jed Foundation allows us to access invaluable resources and expertise to strengthen our mental health support systems and foster a culture of resilience within our school community."

For more information about the Jed Foundation high school program, visit jedfoundation.org/jedhighschool.

arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY	THURSDAY CONT.	FRIDAY	FRIDAY CONT.	SATURDAY	SATURDAY CONT.
18	<p>questions you have about any issues we are debating in Montpelier. This is a great way to connect with neighbors and discuss issues you care about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 10-11 a.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Broad Brook Community Center/Grange, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-451-0405; broadbrookcommunitycenter.org. <p>BRATTLEBORO War Tax Resistance: The U.S. military budget for one year exceeds the combined yearly military budgets of the next 11 largest military nations. This is paid for by our federal income tax. To discover what you can do about paying (or not paying) for war when your conscience says "No," come to our war tax resistance information table.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. outside at our war tax resistance information table. ▶ Free. ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op, 2 Main St. Information: taxesforpeace.org. Info: taxesforpeaceengland.weebly.com. <p>Community meals</p> <p>WILLIAMSVILLE Breakfast at the Williamsville Hall: Enjoy homemade pancakes, pastries, tea, coffee, and orange juice. This breakfast is offered monthly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 8-10:30 a.m. ▶ Breakfast is complimentary. Donations for the Hall are welcome. ▶ Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: 802-365-7772; williamsvillehall.com. <p>Visual arts and shows</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO HCRS (Health Care and Rehabilitation Services) Annual Spring Staff and Client Art Show: Gallery walls are alive. HCRS is Windham County's main provider of services for substance use, mental health, other services people need. Jonathan Matton, co-curator: "More people are beginning to recognize the connection between art, healing, public health. Our show is an excellent opportunity for the community to view the creative expressions made by our staff and individuals we serve across our agency."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Gallery hours: 4-7 p.m. Fri. (4/12, 19, 26); 12 noon-4 p.m. Sat. (4/6, 13, 20, 27); 12 noon-4 p.m.; Sun. (4/7, 14, 21, 28) 12 noon-4 p.m. ▶ Through Tuesday, April 30. ▶ Free. ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: 118elliott.com. 	<p>ter's Dungeons & Dragons notebook, and finds herself catapulted into a journey of discovery in the imaginary world. Agnes embarks on an action-packed quest to save her sister's soul, coming face to face with lazy ogres, homicidal fairies, blood thirsty cheerleaders and, of course, a dragon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 7 p.m. Lila Armour-Jones (Tilly Evans), Marian Wojcik (Agnes Evans), Leo Mousseau (Chuck Biggs). Ensemble cast: Kaitlyn Blouin, Tess Bogart, Bramblestar, Chris Brewer, T Contakos, Kyle Girard, Levi Healey, Lincoln Hurley, Mayra Killian, Dominic Johnson, AJ Kussinen, Sam McVety, Nyx Miller, John Mosher, Chekina Pamba, Cyrus Smith, Dakota Vonfeldt, Griffin Woodruff. Show directed by Michelle Page w/ Christopher Rose serving as Fight Dir., Technical Dir. Charize Forthier and Kaylee Unruh serve as Stage Managers, Cyrus Smith as Fight Captain. Costume crew led by Allison Ackerman-Hovis includes Madeline Berube, Grayce Callahan, Rei Carpenter-Ranquist, Vivian Elliott, Raven Grabel, Chloe O'Connell, Mason Swinburne, Bella Taylor, Dylan Taylor, Ely Zamore-Cohen. ▶ Through Saturday, April 20. ▶ Tickets \$10 each and BUHS students and staff are eligible for one free ticket. ▶ Brattleboro Union High School, 131 Fairground Rd. Information: More information, visit: buhs.wssesvt.org. <p>Music</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO The Vermont Jazz Center's Eighth Annual Solo Piano Festival (Livestream): Celebrate Jazz Piano at the Vermont Jazz Center's 8th Annual Solo Piano Festival. Listen to four of the world's top jazz pianists on 4/19 and 4/20. Includes evening headline concerts plus a full day of Saturday activities: workshops, Q & A panel, emerging artist performances. For all music-lovers. Performers: Hey Rim Jeon, Aaron Parks, Mathew Mueller, Alfredo Rodriguez, Jacky Terrasson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Through Saturday, April 20. ▶ Vermont Jazz Center, 72 Cotton Mill Hill, #222. Information: vtjazz.org. <p>WEST TOWNSHEND Breeze Verdant and Annie Landenberger play Old Tunes and New Originals during Pizza Night: Verdant on guitar, vocals, stomp box; Landenberger on vocals and percussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 5-7 p.m. ▶ No cover. ▶ West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: 802-874-4800; info@westtownshend.org. <p>Kids and families</p> <p>WILLIAMSVILLE Princess Bride (1987) Motion Picture Rating (MPAA) rated PG: Rob Reiner directed this National Registry film - a hilarious swashbuckling romantic fable about a farmer-turned-pirate (Cary Elwes) who finds friends and foes on his journey to rescue his true beloved, Buttercup (Robin Wright), from the evil Prince Humperdinck (Chris Sarandon).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 7:30-9:08 p.m. Refreshments will be served. ▶ Admission is by donation and will raise funds for Williamsville Hall. ▶ Williamsville Hall, Dover Rd. Information: 802-365-7772; williamsvillehall.com. <p>Well-being</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Wellness Fair at the Brattleboro Food Co-op: Do you feel like you are experiencing optimal health?</p>	<p>Or do you feel like your eyes could be brighter and your tail a little bushier? Come to engage with your wellness community and meet local healing professionals and producers to explore and experience energizing techniques and products. The first 25 participants will each receive a gift bag.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1:30-4:30 p.m. in the Brattleboro Food Co-op Café. Registration not required. ▶ Free. ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op, 2 Main St. Information: 802-257-0236; brattleborofoodcoop.org. <p>Arts and crafts</p> <p>PUTNEY Landmark College Hosts Artists Reception: Story, B4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reception: 4/19, 5-7 p.m. Fine Arts Building (southeast corner of campus). Lozancich and faculty exhibits are on display until 4/21. ▶ Through Sunday, April 21. ▶ Free. ▶ Landmark College Fine Arts Center, 1 River Rd. So. Information: samuelrowlett@landmark.edu. <p>Visual arts and shows</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS Judy Hawkins: An Artist's Exploration: New oil paintings: Hawkins begins work on canvas from the top down, moving quickly and allowing paint drips, and accidental color combinations to guide the painting. Thin glazes build up layers of often brilliant and high contrast color. Spirit Trees, the title work for the show, is a bright and misty vision of tree branches, sky, atmosphere, dense undergrowth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Open Tues. through Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Hawkins: "Over the last few years, I've thought about how important it is for me to continually learn something new whenever I put brush and color on canvas. When I paint, I have an internal 'dialog' with myself. Each new experience brings a new perspective and vocabulary to my work, not unlike life." ▶ Through Saturday, June 15. ▶ Free. ▶ Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St. Information: Mike: 802-289-0104, canalstreetartgallery.com, artinfo@canalstreetartgallery.com. <p>BELLOWS FALLS Judi Forman returns to the Working Artist Program for Gallery Night: This program is an artist's studio and exhibition space within the gallery, and is open during the gallery's regular hours. Judi Forman: Judi Forman: "My jewelry work is all about color and texture; I'm always on the lookout for new ways to add surface design to metal with combinations of patinas, dyes, colored pencils, and anodizing. This creates an abundance of possibilities."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 5-7 p.m. The Working Artist Program takes place the 3rd Friday of every month during Gallery Night. ▶ Free. ▶ Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St. Information: canalstreetartgallery.com online, 802-289-0104 (Mike), info@canalstreetartgallery.com. 	<p style="font-size: 48px; text-align: center;">20</p> <p>Music</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO "Smear Out The Difficulties": The Turbulence Orchestra & Sub Units: Story, B3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 7:30 p.m. ▶ One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: 118elliott.com. <p>PUTNEY Session Americana with Eleanor Buckland plus Sam Robbins (In-Person / Livestream): Roots and folk/rock quintet Session Americana with Eleanor Buckland, plus singer/songwriter Sam Robbins. The anything-could-happen feel of their show depends on craft that's not accidental or easily won bringing a kind of ease/genuineness to timeless music, sometimes presenting latest batch of original songs or reaching back into the American "song bag". Buckland adds original songs, beautiful vocals, rock steady guitar and fiddle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 7:30 p.m. Next Stage provides beer, wine, cocktail cash bar. ▶ Tickets: \$22 in advance, \$25 at door, \$10 livestream. ▶ Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Advance tickets available at nextstagearts.org. More information: 802-387-0102 or website. <p>Recreation</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Recreation and Parks announces Super Fun Bike Day: Join Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Dept., Brattleboro Fire & EMS Department, Brattleboro Police Department, and local Kiwanis members for helmet fitting, safety information, bike rodeo, and course and more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Helmets sponsored by Kiwanis Club are free. If it rains, event will be held in the Nelson E. Withington Skating Facility. If special needs are required, let us know at least five days in advance. ▶ Free. ▶ Living Memorial Park, Guilford St. Ext. Information: For more information, call Gibson Aiken Office at 802-254-5808 Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-noon and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. <p>Community building</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS Bellows Falls Rotary hosts Shona Grill Pop-Up Night: For one night, you can get the Shona Grill burger, fries, Shona salads and lots of maple mayo. Veggie burgers available as alternative. Food served in to-go containers to sit down and enjoy at the Moose with a cocktail or beverage of your choice, or take it with you to eat at home. Enjoy live music from Eric and The Steamrollers. Evening includes launch of Rotary's Spring Raffle to benefit local scholarships and Rotary's many initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 4:30-7 p.m. Money raised from this event goes toward the local scholarship fund and local service projects. The Bellows Falls Rotary Club recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, marking a century of service and dedication to the community. ▶ Moose Lodge Family Center, 59 Westminster St. Information: More info about Shona Grill Pop-Up event or Bellows Falls Rotary Club: saamj@gmail.com, 802-376-9983. <p>NEWFARE Community Shredding Event: Securely dispose of your old documents and support the Townshend and Newfare Libraries. Items shredded as you wait. A Secur-Shred truck will be parked on Jail Street in Newfare for this on-site shredding event. No need to remove staples or paper clips. WSWMD will be there to discuss composting and have a truck to take computer peripherals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 9 a.m. - 12 noon, on Jail Street in Newfare. ▶ \$10 per box donation suggested. Proceeds split between the Moore Free & Townshend Library. ▶ Moore Free Library. Information: 802-365-7948; moorefreelibrary.org. <p>BRATTLEBORO Wickopee, Wine, and Woodcocks: A pre-Earthday Celebration of Spring: Visit a rich wildflower site, then watch the courtship flight of woodcock from the summit of BEEC's Heifer Hill. Enjoy wine and cheese and the brightening light of a nearly full moon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 6:30 - 8:15 p.m. ▶ Suggested donation: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. ▶ Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. Information: Register: tinyurl.com/3yy3mc77. <p>BELLOWS FALLS Meet with Your Legislators at the Rockingham Library: Meet Windham County Senators: Nader Hashim, Wendy Harrison and Windham-3 (Brookline, Rockingham, Westminster) and House Reps: Michelle Bos-Lun and Leslie Goldman. Ask questions about issues to be addressed in current Legislative session. Legislators will give updates about expected legislative priorities/pending bills. Help Senators and Representatives understand what's important to Westminster, Rockingham, Brookline constituents and take these concerns to Montpelier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 10:30 a.m. 2nd floor Meeting Room. Community conversations about current issues are planned for 3rd Saturday each month, same time, during legislative session through May. Bring questions! Questions: Rep. Leslie Goldman 802-380-4285, lgoldman@leg.state.vt.us. ▶ Free. ▶ Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org. <p>Arts and crafts</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Future Pliny Park Mosaic - Co-Creation Celebration! Experience the co-creative process of sorting colorful pieces for the mosaic and organizing them into beautiful designs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2-5 p.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Epsilon Spiros, 190 Main St. Contributions welcome: www.patronicity.com/project/mosaic_mural_in_pliny_park/! Reserve your space at: Epsilon.org. <p>Dance</p> <p>GUILFORD Village Dance Series: A Community Contra Dance for all Ages and Abilities: Village Dance Series, now in its 34th year, is an opportunity for families/friends to come together to enjoy contra dance - one of New England's revered pastimes. Program includes traditional New England contra dances, square dances, circle mixers, couple dances. Laurie Indenbaum on fiddle and</p>	
19	<p>Performing arts</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO BUHS Players announce their upcoming spring play: "She Kills Monsters," Young Adventurers Edition by Qui Nguyen: "She Kills Monsters" tells the story of high schooler Agnes Evans who stumbles upon her sis-</p>	<p>Well-being</p> <p>WILLINGBURY Memory Café: Memory Cafés are welcoming places for caregivers and their loved ones with dementia or other cognitive disorders to come and enjoy support, learn about resources, make connections. People in early stages of Alzheimer's are welcome. Senior Solutions sponsors these Memory Cafés. Their staff/volunteers will engage with your loved one while you meet with other caregivers. Come with your loved one who has dementia, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on the 3rd Thursday of every month. ▶ Free for everyone. ▶ Old Firehouse, 18 Beaver St. https://www.seniorsolutionsvt.org/services/caregiver-support/memory-cafes/ Contact person: Joann Erenhouse, jerenhouse@seniorsolutionsvt.org. <p>Community building</p> <p>GUILFORD Coffee with Coffey - Sara Coffey, State Representative Windham-1/Vernon & Guilford: Join me in Vernon for my monthly Coffee with Coffey hour. Share updates, plans, your priorities and get answers to any</p>	<p>Well-being</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Future Pliny Park Mosaic - Co-Creation Celebration! Experience the co-creative process of sorting colorful pieces for the mosaic and organizing them into beautiful designs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2-5 p.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Epsilon Spiros, 190 Main St. Contributions welcome: www.patronicity.com/project/mosaic_mural_in_pliny_park/! Reserve your space at: Epsilon.org. <p>Dance</p> <p>GUILFORD Village Dance Series: A Community Contra Dance for all Ages and Abilities: Village Dance Series, now in its 34th year, is an opportunity for families/friends to come together to enjoy contra dance - one of New England's revered pastimes. Program includes traditional New England contra dances, square dances, circle mixers, couple dances. Laurie Indenbaum on fiddle and</p>	<p>SEE SATURDAY, B2</p>	

COLUMN | Deeper Dive

A grand Brattleboro tradition

Six pianists share their artistry and their knowledge at the Vermont Jazz Center's annual Solo Jazz Piano Festival

THE VERMONT JAZZ CENTER celebrates the vital role of the piano in the history of jazz by hosting its annual Solo Jazz Piano Festival on April 19 and 20. The artists headlining this year's festival are Hey Rim Jeon, Aaron Parks, Alfredo Rodriguez and Jacky Terrasson; emerging artists are Yujin Han and Mathew Mueller.



EUGENE UMAN is director of the Vermont Jazz Center. The Commons' Deeper Dive column gives artists, arts organizations, and other nonprofits elbow room to write in first person and/or be unabashedly opinionated, passionate and analytical about their own creative work and events.

On each night of the festival, two headlining pianists will present back-to-back solo sets starting at 7:30 p.m. April 19 will include performances by Hey Rim Jeon and Aaron Parks, and on April 20 we will hear Alfredo Rodriguez and Jacky Terrasson.

Saturday, April 20, is a full day of educational and concert programming. The day begins at 10 a.m. with a sequence of workshops led by the four headlining musicians. These presentations are designed to be accessible to all music lovers, not just pianists. The day will also include short sets from the two emerging artists as well as a round-table discussion with all six performers.

some of the world's top pianists and most important musical innovators of this generation, including NEA Jazz Masters Toshiko Akiyoshi and Joanne Brackeen, as well as the acknowledged luminaries Stanley Cowell, Benny Green, Sullivan Fortner, Kenny Werner and many others.

The fest continues to be a unique opportunity for audiences to communicate directly with performers as they share their spiritual and historical sources of inspiration, and offer tips on their methods of learning, teaching and practicing. The VJC is honored to continue this important tradition in Brattleboro. The structure of this solo piano festival is unique in that it is geared toward community building

and knowledge-sharing, using the piano as a catalyst.

Each of this year's headliners is highly regarded by jazz lovers around the world. They are all virtuosic in their abilities and have released numerous celebrated recordings as leaders and side people. But what sets this group of four apart is the way each of them conveys a completely distinct approach to the instrument, demonstrating an instantly recognizable stylistic, rhythmic, and harmonic palette.

It is this diversity, combined with the artists' rich depth of knowledge and ability to connect with audiences, that assures a fascinating show. Listeners are encouraged to check out each of the performers to enjoy the full spectrum of their approaches.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION to the artists' musical styles:

- **Hey Rim Jeon's** style is characterized by rhythmic precision, graceful melodic lines and adroit technical facility. Jeon also embraces longform improvisation. She teaches courses in piano technique and the solo improvisations of Keith Jarrett at Berklee College of Music and the depth of her ability in both of these skill sets shines through in her solo performing.

- **Aaron Parks's** creations are reflections of his search for beauty. Whether they're original compositions or swinging standards, his approach is all about heart. He conveys emotion without being saccharine by using expressive phrasing and captivating arrangements that encourage spaciousness.

- He is also a master of timekeeping — he speaks of developing an "inner drummer" by feeling rhythm in his body and playing games with a metronome — and of creating reharmonized renditions of tunes from the Great American Songbook on the fly.

- **Alfredo Rodriguez** brings a vast knowledge of the Latin American piano tradition, replete with the virtuosic ability necessary to convey that style. His Cuban roots saturate his sound, which is also strongly influenced by classical music.

- Rodriguez began studying classical music seriously at the age of seven, and realized at the age of twelve that playing the piano would be his lifelong endeavor. He feels that the "message of music is about expressing unity and about being together, knowing where we are coming from, and trying to help each other."

- **Jacky Terrasson** is yet another virtuosic player. A major presence in the

vibrant New York jazz scene during the early 1990s, he chose to reside in his native France, where his star continues to rise. Terrasson plays in the tradition, and he loves to swing hard with lots of dynamic emphasis, emulating players like Ahmad Jamal. He also has a knack for folding unexpected pop tunes (such as those of Michael Jackson) into a jazz set.

THE VJC'S SOLO JAZZ PIANO FESTIVAL is a tribute to Mike McKenzie who for the past 27 years has provided artists performing at the VJC with the finest pianos possible, including the beautiful Steinway D Concert Grand upon which this festival was founded.

In-person tickets for the Solo Jazz Piano Festival are offered on a sliding scale from \$85-\$130 for the entire event; single concert options are also available. Visit vtjazz.org to purchase. For educational group discounts, email eugene@vtjazz.org. Reservations can be made by calling the Vermont Jazz Center ticket line at 802-254-9088, ext. 1. Mobility access for the in-person event is available by emailing elsavjc@gmail.com.

The online streaming of this concert will be offered free at vtjazz.org. Donations are welcome.

Publication of this week's Calendar is underwritten by BERKLEY & VELLER GREENWOOD COUNTRY REALTORS • www.berkleyveller.com



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Forum to discuss multiple dimensions of homelessness in Vt.

BRATTLEBORO—The Commons invites the community to a panel discussion about Vermont's homelessness crisis and how it affects us all. Systemic problems (like lack of affordable housing, low wages, and cost of labor) and personal circumstances (like life-altering events) can cause anyone to become homeless.

BRATTLEBORO

Spring water main flushing begins April 19

Utilities Division crews from the Department of Public Works will start spring flushing of the town water mains on Friday, April 19, at 10 p.m., and continue work through Friday, May 3. Some daytime flushing will continue throughout the week of May 6 through May 10.

- Street, Signal Hill, Hillcrest Terrace, Maple Street, Chestnut Street, and Esteyville area.
Wednesday, April 24 — Night: Canal Street from Fairview Street south to John Seitz Drive, Fairview Street, Ledgewood Heights, Winter Street, Fairground Road, Atwood Street, and Sunny Acres.
Thursday, April 25 — Day: SIT Graduate Institute, Dickinson Road, Kipling Road, and Black Mountain Road. Night: Canal Street from Main Street to Fairground Road, Lexington Avenue, Belmont Avenue, Horton Place, Homestead Place, Brook and Clark Street area, Flat Street, and Elliot Street (east end).

- Tuesday, April 30 — Night: Oak Street area, Main Street area.
Wednesday, May 1 — Night: Linden Street, Route 30, Putney Road from Park Place to Vermont Veterans Memorial Bridge. Vermont Avenue and Eaton Avenue, Terrace Street, Tyler Street, Walnut Street, and Wantastiquet Drive.
Thursday, May 2 — Night: Putney Road from Vermont Veterans Memorial Bridge to Exit 3.
Friday, May 3 — Day: Exit 1 and Old Guilford Road to Welcome Center. Night: Putney Road north of Exit 3, Ferry Road, Glen Orne Drive.
Friday, May 10 — Flushing of the water mains in Tri-Park Cooperative Housing and Deepwood Park developments.

PUTNEY

Sand Hill Road flood project subject of April 18 meeting

PUTNEY—On Thursday, April 18, at 6:30 p.m., at the Putney Public Library, the town of Putney will hold a community-wide meeting to present three possible alternatives for mitigating flood damage on Sand Hill Road and in Putney Village. In 2022, the town received a grant from the state of Vermont Flood Resilient Community Fund to study mitigating damage from flooding in the Sacketts Brook Wetland Complex from Putney Central School to the dam behind the Putney General Store.

conducted the study and will give a presentation on the three alternatives at the April 18 meeting. Those who cannot attend the meeting in person can do so via Zoom; the Zoom link will be published on the town website, putneyvt.org, but only those attending in-person will be able to participate in the discussion after the presentation. More information on FEA's draft study, Sacketts Brook and Sand Hill Wetland Assessment, can be found at putneyvt.org.

WHITINGHAM DVFiber marks high-speed internet access with an ice cream social. WHITINGHAM—DVFiber invites the community to celebrate the arrival of "wicked-fast" fiber internet with an ice cream social on Tuesday, April 23, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Whitingham Municipal Center, 2948 VT100, in Jacksonville. The family-friendly event will feature an ice cream bar, and DVFiber representatives will be available to answer questions about service and construction.

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CHESTERFIELD, NH CEMETERY COMMISSION
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SATURDAY CONT. FROM B1
Mary Cay Brass on piano provide lively New England dance tunes. Andy Davis plays accordion and calls the dances in an inclusive style. Sit-in musicians welcome at the dance.

Visual arts and shows
BRATTLEBORO Eileen Christelow: "Telling Stories Through Pictures" plus Dinner: Eileen Christelow is the author/illustrator of over 30 picture books for children such as "Five Little Monkeys" series.

SUNDAY 21
Music
BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Cameraata presents Make it a Place of Springs with Musical Director Jonathan Harvey.

MONDAY 22
Kids and families
BRATTLEBORO Wild Nature Explorers Camp: Winter SpringLife - Small and Speedy: With a different theme every day, kids ages 5 to 10 will have a great time playing outside and learning about the springtime world.

SUNDAY CONT.
Hannah Cressy, Fred Brunig, Mary Alice Amidon, Jon Patter, Peter Amidon, Emma Schneider, William Danforth, Peter Shea, Walter Cramer, Debbie Grossman, Ingrid Brinkman, Wendy Fiering, Hannah Cooger, Lissa Greenough, Kattia Morosan, Faith Kaufman, Thomas Cain, Tim Kieschnick, Alden Booth, Ijod Schroeder, Kathryn Tolbert, Alison Schoales.

Community building
DUMMERSTON Dummerston Historical Society Quarterly Meeting & Program: Opening reception for landscape pastel paintings by Rodrica Tilley. Rodrica Tilley shares her experiences in painting her Fifty State en plein air landscapes.

TUESDAY 23
Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance.

MONDAY 22
Kids and families
BRATTLEBORO Wild Nature Explorers Camp: Winter SpringLife - Small and Speedy: With a different theme every day, kids ages 5 to 10 will have a great time playing outside and learning about the springtime world.

MONDAY CONT.
nurture a love for nature. Come for one day or all five.
8:45-9:00 a.m.: Drop off. #65279:3:00-3:15 p.m.: Pick up.

MONDAY CONT.
Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Memory Café: Memory Cafés are welcoming places for caregivers and their loved ones with dementia or other cognitive disorders to come and enjoy support, learn about resources, make connections.

TUESDAY 23
Well-being
BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic: Primary medical treatment for patients ages 18 to 64 in our community who do not have health insurance or who cannot afford their high deductibles or co-insurance.

WEDNESDAY 24
Music
BRATTLEBORO Goth-Rock Revivalists Vision Video: Athens, GA-based goth-rock sensation Vision Video brings their explosive North American tour to Brattleboro promising a night of dark anthems and cathartic energy.

WEDNESDAY 24
Community building
BRATTLEBORO Members & Friends Salon: Conversation with Elissa McLean & Andy Winter: We continue exploring immigration issues by welcoming Elissa McLean and Andy Winter to share their work at the border and preview their upcoming podcast "Border Stories."

WEDNESDAY 24
Ideas and education
PUTNEY Landmark College Academic Speakers Series concludes: "Talk About Future Uses of Artificial Intelligence" with Cyrus Shaoul: Cyrus Shaoul - entrepreneur, software expert and cognitive scientist with experience in the basic scientific research and commercialization of artificial intelligence (AI) - will cover the many possible meanings of the term AI.

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

Turbulence Orchestra & Sub Units to perform at 118 Elliot

BRATTLEBORO—118 Elliot and Sparkles, the Giant Evil Clown, present “Smear Out the Difficulties,” performed by The Turbulence Orchestra & Sub Units on Saturday, April 20, at 7:30 p.m.

The Turbulence Orchestra is a large improvisational ensemble featuring more than a dozen musicians. The performance will begin with four improvisations by smaller groups. An hour-long improvisation follows with the full ensemble. This performance is part of 118 Elliot’s dedication to nurturing nontraditional and experimental music that brings together local musicians with “outstanding masters of experimental music,” say organizers.

The Turbulence Orchestra is led by multi-instrumentalist Dave Peck (PEK) and his alter ego Sparkles, The Evil Clown. The roster of musicians includes Peck (reeds, percussion), Bob Moores (trumpet, electronics), Michael Caglianone (reeds), Eric Dahlman (trumpet), Duane Reed (reeds, electronics), Bonnie Kane (saxophone, electronics), Vance Provey (trumpet), John Fugarino (trumpet), Scott Samenfeld (double bass), Eric Zinman (piano), Victor Signore (saxophone), Keith W (baritone sax), Scott Moore (trombone), F (saxophone), Becca Pasley (double bass), John Loggia (drums), and more.

PEK says he has been working for many years on “the very interesting and difficult aesthetic problem of large-ensemble free improvisation.” Free improvisation is typically performed by smaller ensembles, from duos to quartets. “Larger ensemble size combined with a broad-palette approach where most of the



Dave Peck

players play many different instruments allows us to construct a journey through a series of highly varied sonorities of the duration of the work.”

The vision of the overall Evil Clown project is to create “an extremely broad universe of sound” and to realize music that “transforms into widely different sonorities within a single performance. The large ensemble size and extended improvisations will take us on a sonic journey that evolves through the spontaneous interplay of the musicians,” says Peck.

Since the pandemic, the Turbulence Orchestra has livestreamed to YouTube eight times from Evil Clown Headquarters in Waltham, Massachusetts, with the ensemble size between 8 and 10 musicians — the largest unit that can easily fit in the Evil Clown Live Streaming Studio Space.

These performances are posted on the Evil Clown YouTube channel and released on CD/download available at bandcamp

(turbulence2.bandcamp.com) and other locations, including an album page on the Evil Clown webpage (evilclown.rocks/turb-orchestra).

This is only the second live performance of the Turbulence Orchestra & Sub Units and is the largest ensemble yet for this project.

Another Evil Clown ensemble is The Leap of Faith Orchestra, which performed before the pandemic 13 times in three years at the Third Life Studios in Somerville, Massachusetts. The entire run of performances has been released on download/CD and is available both as a 25-CD set and individual double CD sets of each performance.

118 Elliot is a gallery and modern, multipurpose environment for the creative arts, educational talks, and personal events for up to 220 people. It is a fully ADA-accessible space in the heart of downtown Brattleboro. Learn more at 118elliot.com.

Canal Street Art Gallery opens show in BF and NYC

BELLOWS FALLS—As part of Canal Street Art Gallery (CSAG)’s Inclusive and Accessible Art Action Plan, this spring the Atlantic Gallery at 548 West 28th St., Suite 540, in New York City presents CSAG’s “Open,” on view through May 4.

The exhibit’s opening reception is Thursday, April 18, from 6 to 8 p.m. and offers visitors an Affordable Art Wall, a Community Art Table, and “Tell Your Truth” stickers. Featured are new works by Clare Adams, Penelope Arms, Len Emery, Mindy Fisher, Corinne Greenhalgh, Medora Hebert, Carol Keiser, Nicholas Kekic, Jean Krasno, Kathy Lavine, Jeanne McMahan, MC Noyes, Phyllis Rosser, Chris Sherwin, Jeanette Staley, and Kathleen Zimmerman.

The following night, in Bellows Falls, CSAG presents its 3rd Friday Gallery Night on April 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. to celebrate the openings of “Judy Hawkins: An Artist’s Exploration” solo show with Judi Forman in the Working Artist Program and the unveiling of the new Community Art Studio.

“Today’s galleries must be welcoming and accessible community institutions. This may be accomplished by providing art as an entry point to learn about ourselves and others,” said CSAG Director Mike Noyes in a news release.

The “Judy Hawkins: An Artist’s Exploration” solo show, on view through June 15, exhibits new oil paintings by the Westminister West artist. Hawkins begins work on a canvas from the top down, moving quickly and allowing paint drips, and accidental color combinations to guide

the painting. The artist uses thin glazes to build up layers of color. “Spirit Trees,” the title work for the show, is “a bright and misty vision of tree branches, sky, atmosphere, and dense undergrowth,” according to the news release.

“Over the last few years, I have thought about how important it is for me to continually learn something new whenever I put brush and color on canvas. When I paint, I have an internal ‘dialog’ with myself. Each new experience brings a new perspective and vocabulary to my work, not unlike life,” Hawkins said.

Judi Forman returns to the Working Artist Program at Canal Street Art Gallery, which is an artist’s studio and exhibition space within the gallery, and is open during the gallery’s regular hours.

“My jewelry work is all about color and texture; I’m always on the lookout for new ways to add surface design to the metal with combinations of patinas, dyes, colored pencils, and anodizing. This creates an abundance of possibilities,” Forman said.

The Community Art Studio, following a successful fundraiser to keep the program, is now permanently open at CSAG. All ages are welcome to the free-to-use space. Artist-grade supplies will be available for visitors during gallery hours to make art while overlooking the Bellows Falls Canal.

For more information, contact Noyes at 802-289-0104 or artinfo@canalstreetartgallery.com. Canal Street Art Gallery is located at 23 Canal St. and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Saxtons River Art Guild offers one-day watercolor workshop

BELLOWS FALLS—The Saxtons River Art Guild (SRAG) announces a one-day workshop given by Vermont watercolorist Robert J. O’Brien on Saturday, April 20, at the United Church of Bellows Falls, 8 School St., from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The theme of the workshop is “Spring Landscapes.” Students will learn how to paint the subtle colors of spring using reference photos. Composition and painting light and shadow will be explored in this workshop. Class attendants should bring watercolors, paper,

and a reference photo, preferably of a spring scene, to work from.

O’Brien will have several reference photos available for students to work from. This is open to all abilities with some drawing and watercolor experience suggested.

O’Brien will demonstrate painting a landscape, while explaining each step of the painting process, and participants will paint along on their own pieces. A critique and class discussion will be held at the end of the session.

O’Brien has been painting in watercolor for more than 40

years and is a popular workshop instructor. More information and images of his artworks can be found on his website, robertjobrien.com.

Workshop fees are \$70 for SRAG members and \$90 for nonmembers. SRAG will have coffee and tea, but participants should bring their own lunch. For registration or more information, contact Carolyn Berglund at poohbear@ne.rr.com (poohbear@ne.rr.com).

Brattleboro Camerata welcomes spring on April 21 at BMC

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Camerata presents “Make it a Place of Springs” Sunday, April 21, at the Brattleboro Music Center. This 4 p.m. concert will feature Renaissance-era and modern music exploring nature and the natural world.

“Our spring program is all about nature, with pieces on swans, crickets, deer, seasons, flowers, trees, fleas, bees, and blue birds,” Musical Director Jonathan Harvey said in a news release. “We’re singing in English, Latin, Italian, and French to music from the Renaissance era as well as the 20th and 21st centuries.

Harvey explains the program’s title, “Make it a Place of Springs”

is a line taken from a piece by recent Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw called “and the swallow,” written in 2017. The piece is a setting of Psalm 84, and Shaw has said she was inspired by two humanitarian crises: the Syrian civil war, and the southern border of the United States.

“The text speaks to a yearning for home, and the title line references the idea that in creating a new home while on a journey, sometimes one can take a desolate place and ‘make it a place of springs,’” says Harvey. “Our concert has several other pieces that reference water springs, and since this is a springtime concert, it feels like the right name.”

The Brattleboro Camerata is a chamber choir devoted to exploring the beauty and power of Renaissance-era and Renaissance-inspired music. “Its performances breathe new life into old music,” says the BMC’s website, “bringing vivid and expressive intensity to innovative thematic programs that highlight canonic favorites, under-performed gems by neglected voices, and new works that allow audiences to see early music in a different light.”

Tickets are \$20 (\$25 at the door), \$10 for youths and free for under 12, and are available online on the BMC website at bmcvt.org, by calling 802-257-4523, or by emailing info@bmcvt.org.

Next Stage presents Session Americana, plus Sam Robbins, on April 20

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present roots and folk/rock quintet Session Americana with Eleanor Buckland, plus singer-songwriter Sam Robbins at Next Stage on Saturday, April 20, at 7:30 pm.

Session Americana has been described as “a rock band in a tea cup, or possibly a folk band in a whiskey bottle.” According to the news release, “The Boston-based band/collective of musician’s musicians craft a musical experience unlike any other. On stage is a collapsible bar table wired with microphones, a vintage suitcase recast as a kick drum, an old Estey field organ, a pre-war parlor guitar, a mandocello and all of its smaller siblings, a harmonica case fire damaged when Jack’s bar went up in flames and graffitied by Depeche Mode roadies, and an assortment of other instruments that get passed around as the quintet trades off lead vocals

and shares songwriting credits in this freewheeling modern hootenanny.”

Eleanor Buckland has been one-third of the Boston-based folk/rock trio Lula Wiles since 2014.

Late one Sunday night in October 2003, Session Americana had its first jam around a table in the back of the club Toad in Cambridge, Massachusetts. “Since then, the group has had a natural, almost inevitable evolution from a loose bunch of friends sitting around swapping songs in a bar, to a hot-ticket weekly residency, to a touring collective.”

The band has made nine records, played clubs and festivals across the U.S. and Europe, and developed bonds with a wide community of musicians. Since last October, Session Americana has celebrated that two-decade journey with anniversary shows in venues around the Northeast,

with a 20-year retrospective album of some of the band’s most popular songs in hand.

Robbins has been described as an “old soul singer-songwriter,” and the Nashville-based guitarist’s music has been compared to 1970s musicians such as James Taylor and Neil Young. Since moving to Nashville in 2019 following his graduation from Berklee College of Music, he has toured extensively, appeared on NBC’s “The Voice,” and won the Kerrville Folk Festival New Folk and Eddie’s Attic Songwriter’s competitions.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney. Tickets are \$22 in advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for access to the livestream. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For information, call 802-387-0102.



Vermont Independent Media invites you to join our

Voices Live: Conversation on Homelessness

Wednesday, April 24

6:30pm-8pm

Brooks Memorial Library

224 Main St, Brattleboro

The public is welcome to join us in person, or watch live on BCTV’s YouTube Channel and Facebook Page.

Current Panelists Include:

Michael Pieciak, Vermont State Treasurer.

Anne N. Sosin, Public Health Researcher and Practitioner, Dartmouth College.

Elizabeth Bridgewater, Executive Director, Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

Josh Davis, Executive Director, SEVCA.

Libby Bennett, Executive Director, Groundworks Collaborative.

Chloe Learey, Executive Director, The Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development.

Moderated by Joyce Marcel

Landmark College celebrates three exhibits by faculty and guest artists

PUTNEY—Landmark College invites the public to a free reception on Friday, April 19, from 5 to 7 p.m. that celebrates three art exhibits currently on display on its Putney campus.

The reception will take place in the Fine Arts Gallery, located in the Fine Arts Building on the southeast corner of campus. That space is hosting the “Integrated Arts Faculty Exhibition,” and includes works by Landmark College faculty members Meg Baronian, Annie Ewaskio, Christie Herbert, Cynthia Ludlam, Humberto Ramirez, John Rose, Samuel Rowlett, Eric

Stewart, and Luke Strosnider. “This exhibition highlights the scholarship of our art faculty and their contributions to their fields of study,” Samuel Rowlett, associate professor of art at Landmark College and the current director of gallery exhibits, said in a news release. “The works on display give both students and the greater Landmark community the opportunity to explore, in-person, the diverse themes, media, and methods of their art professors’ areas of research, and how this research informs the teaching and learning that happens in the studios of the Fine Arts Building.”

The foyer of the Fine Arts Gallery currently hosts a solo exhibition by action sports photographer Katie Lozancich. Originally from the Sacramento, California, area, Lozancich is an award-winning freelance storyteller and artist who creates content and stories for countless brands and magazines, including Teton Gravity Research, Red Bull, Visit Vermont, and *Freehub Magazine*.

A third exhibition, currently on display in the Nicole Goodner MacFarlane Science, Technology, and Innovation Center features Andrae Green. The Kingston, Jamaica-native artist says his sensibilities were shaped by the comic books of Marvel and DC, the only accessible art sources in the impoverished ghetto where he grew up.

Economic hardship and social upheaval, compounded by the threat of violence, led Green to take refuge in art, school, and church. He says this sparked a deep inner world he explored by creating comic characters that embodied the hope and freedom he yearned for.

In 2006, Green was awarded the Chase Prize by the Jamaican government to attend the New York Academy of Art, where he earned his Master of Fine Arts in painting.

Both the Lozancich and faculty exhibits are on display until Sunday, April 21, when they’ll be replaced with an exhibit featuring works by Landmark College students in the Integrated Arts program. The Green exhibit is on display through June 2024.

Directions to campus and a map can be found on the landmark.edu website. For additional information, contact Rowlett at samuelrowlett@landmark.edu.



COURTESY PHOTO

‘Reassembling,’ a ceramic sculpture by Cynthia Ludlam.

McEachern shares new oil paintings at Main Street Arts gallery

SAXTONS RIVER—“Semitones,” artist Ricky McEachern’s new gallery show at Main Street Arts (MSA), 32 Main St., opens with a reception on Saturday, April 27, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Semitones will feature several new oil paintings by

McEachern. The show will run from Thursday, April 25, to May 12. Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. The paintings will be available for purchase.

McEachern said that, with these works, he sought to express ideas inspired by his recent

exposure to music theory and piano.

“A semitone is a musical interval—the smallest building block in western music. As this is a sort of a reset of my artwork inspired by music, I wanted to start with the smallest idea,” he said in a news release.

“My past work was all representational—reflecting views we may see as we move through the world. This work is abstract, representing ideas and emotions many of us experience as we go through our journey in life,” McEachern continued. “I was motivated by learning music theory and piano. Learning these made me realize that emotions and ideas can be evoked in a meaningful, thoughtful manner with abstract visual concepts.”

McEachern is a native of Massachusetts and has also lived in Philadelphia and Chicago. He moved to Saxtons River from Chicago in July 2022. McEachern has a degree in engineering as well as having art training.

He has spent most of his life in New England, where he finds his work inspired by its unique landscapes and architecture. McEachern records a podcast, *Eager To Know*, and art at rickyartist.com.

Main Street Arts’ mission is to strengthen personal and community well-being through diverse arts experiences and social connection.

For more information about the show or opening, visit mainstreetarts.org or email gallery@mainstreetarts.org.



John Newsom

RACHEL BOETTCHER

Painting the vision of a hip-hop musician

In ‘Painting the Forest of the Happy Ever After’ at BMAC, John Newsom and MC Killah Priest join forces

BRATTLEBORO—Two artists have joined forces for an exhibition currently on view at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC). The exhibit features the original work by visual artist John Newsom created for hip-hop artist MC Killah Priest’s 2023 album *Forest of the Happy Ever After*.

In connection with the exhibition, which is titled “Painting the Forest of the Happy Ever After” and runs through June 16, Killah Priest will perform at Brattleboro’s Stone Church on Tuesday, June 4, at 8 p.m.

The night before—Monday, June 3, at 6 p.m.—Killah Priest and Newsom will take part in a meet-and-greet at BMAC. All are welcome, and there is no charge to attend.

Killah Priest is known for his work with the Wu-Tang Clan and for writing “mystical, almost psychedelic lyrics,” say organizers in a news release. Newsom is known for creating “richly detailed” paintings of the natural world.

The music of *Forest of the Happy Ever After* is layered with “a wild variety of sounds and lyrics,” and Newsom’s paintings “capture the same mood, depicting colorful landscapes teeming with plants and creatures, each one taking its cue from the album.”

In one painting, a Tree of Life camouflages a gnome, a mythical spirit said to be the guardian of Earth’s energy systems. In another, a river represents the knowledge that Newsom sees flowing through Killah Priest’s rhymes, which are a “masterpiece of penmanship and lyrical wonderment,” Newsom says.

A portrait of Killah Priest, which appears on the album’s cover, shows the musician surrounded by flora and fauna, “like a natural deity or shaman existing in both an imaginary realm and the physical world.”

In the museum gallery, Newsom’s paintings are complemented by walls painted two shades of green, a small library of books on nature and mysticism for visitors to peruse, a seating area with naturalistic wooden furniture handcrafted by Vermont artist David Holzapfel, and Killah Priest’s music playing in the background.

“Rather than simply exhibiting the paintings,” BMAC Director Danny Lichtenfeld says, “we sought to create a holistic environment, a multi-sensory experience.”

Newsom’s artwork is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney

Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the New York Public Library, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and many others.

He says he finds inspiration in other artists who have balanced the making of fine art and album art, such as Raymond Pettibon, who illustrated albums for Sonic Youth, Iggy Pop, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers; and the late Mati Klarwein, who made album art for Jimi Hendrix, Miles Davis, and Carlos Santana.

While Newsom made the paintings for *Forest* during the singular experience of the pandemic, it wasn’t his first time creating art to accompany a hip-hop album. In 2015, he contributed original artwork to *Fly International Luxurious Art*, a solo album by Raekwon, another Wu-Tang Clan musician, who ended up connecting Newsom with Killah Priest.

When Newsom collaborates with musicians, he has a clear objective: “I’m like a visual scribe,” he says. “I look and I listen.”

For more about the exhibit and the June 3 meet-and-greet, visit brattleboromuseum.org. Tickets for the June 4 concert can be purchased at stonechurchvt.com.

Epsilon Spires, Brooks Library present screening of ‘The Kite Runner’

BRATTLEBORO—The Banned Books to Film series continues at Epsilon Spires, 190 Main St., on Sunday, April 21, with a screening of *The Kite Runner*, followed by a discussion led by Abdullah Hafizi and members of the artist collective The ArtLords.

Doors open at 5 p.m., and the film begins at 5:15. Free admission will be granted to those who bring their library card or a copy of the book. Free Afghan cuisine, created by Taza, will be offered after the screening. Dinner begins at 7:30 p.m.

The Kite Runner is a 2007 American film directed by Marc Forster with a screenplay by David Benioff, adapted from the 2003 novel of the same name by Khaled Hosseini. It tells the story of Amir, a well-to-do boy from the Wazir Akbar Khan

district of Kabul who is tormented by the guilt of abandoning his friend Hassan. It was inspired by Hosseini learning through a 1999 news report that the Taliban had banned kite flying in Afghanistan, a restriction he found particularly cruel. It struck a personal chord for him, as he had grown up with the sport while living in Afghanistan.

The story is set against a backdrop of tumultuous events, from the fall of the monarchy in Afghanistan through the Soviet military intervention, the mass exodus of Afghan refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the Taliban regime.

Though most of the film is set in Afghanistan, these parts were mostly shot in Kashgar in Xinjiang, China, due to the dangers of filming in Afghanistan

at the time. The majority of the film’s dialogue is in Dari Persian, with the remainder spoken in English and a few short scenes in Pashto and Urdu.

The film was a challenge to make as the cast and crew came from 28 countries and spoke 13 languages. Out of concern for the safety of the young actors in the film due to fears of violent reprisals to the sexual nature of some scenes in which they appear, the original release date for the film was pushed back six weeks.

The controversial scenes also resulted in the film being banned from cinemas and distribution in Afghanistan itself.

The film was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2007 and the film’s score by Alberto Iglesias was nominated for Best Original Score at the Golden Globes and the Academy Awards. The book won the Alex Award from the American Library Association and the paperback was on the bestseller list for more than 240 weeks, and was No. 1 for four of those weeks.

For more information and reservations to attend the dinner, visit epsilonspires.org. The Banned Books to Film series is a project of Epsilon Spires, the Brattleboro Literary Festival, and Brooks Memorial Library.

118 Elliot and Sparkles Presents

‘Smear Out The Difficulties’

Performed by a Free Jazz Big Band
The Turbulence Orchestra & Sub Units

Saturday, April 20 at 7:30pm

118 Elliot Street, Brattleboro VT
Free. Donations go to the musicians.

For more info, scan the QR code or visit:
118elliot.com/event/turbulence-orchestra

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72 Blanche Moysse Way,
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Brattleboro Camerata
Jonathan Harvey Music Director

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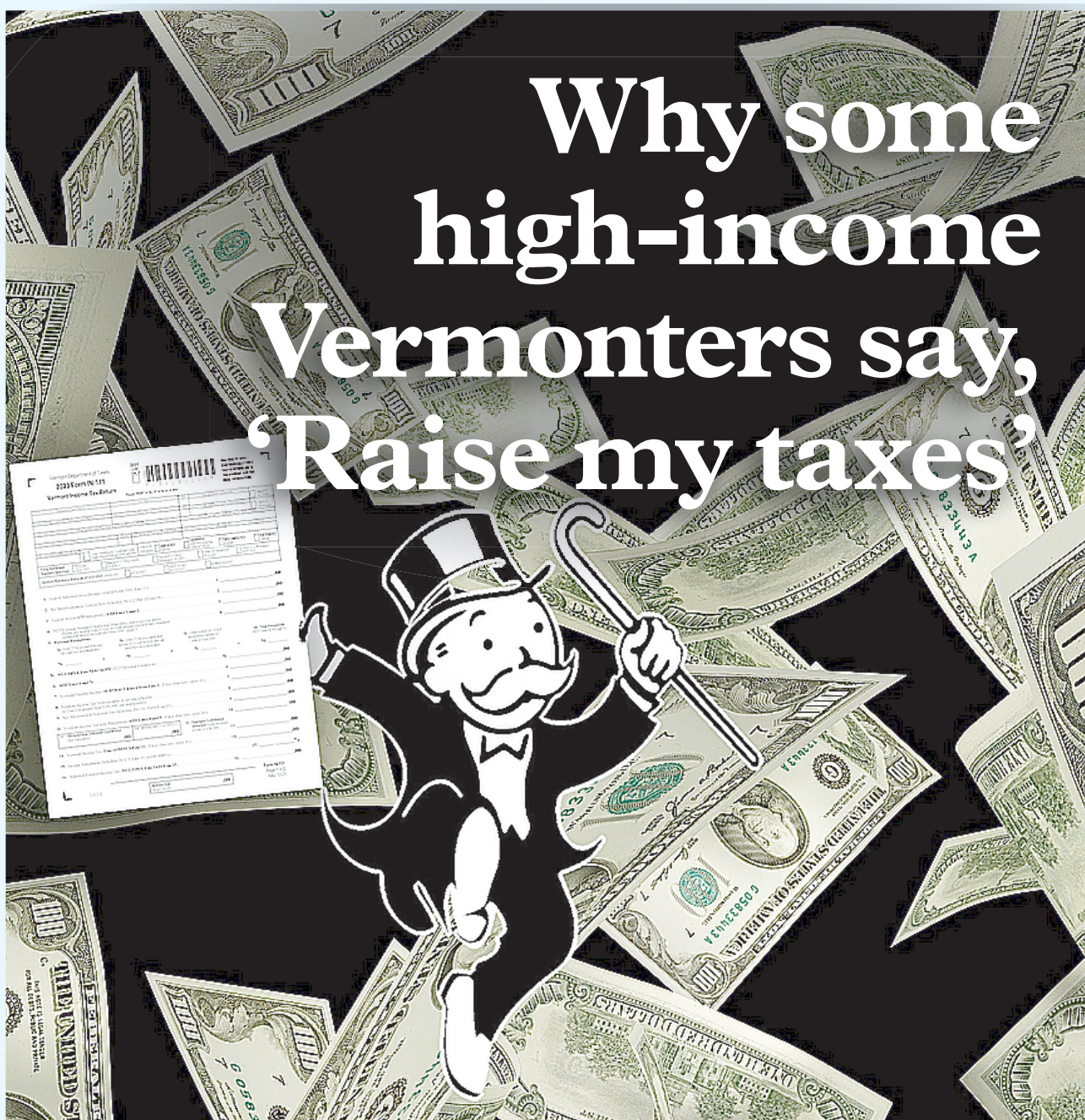
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VIEWPOINT



Why some high-income Vermonters say, 'Raise my taxes'

Affluent Vermonters understand that their neighbors are being pushed out of their communities due to a lack of affordable housing, high property taxes, and other factors. By paying a bit more income tax, they will also benefit from a healthier, more-just state.

Guilford
AS THE Vermont Legislature debates how to pay for housing solutions — and Gov. Phil Scott laments that “there just isn’t any money” — a group of 35 high-income Vermonters have suggested a path forward: raise their taxes. In a public letter to Vermont state legislators, they write: “As Vermonters who have economically prospered in our state, we believe in contributing our fair share to build a state that works for all people who live here.”

CHUCK COLLINS is co-editor of *Inequality.org* (inequality.org/ target=) and author of the recent, Vermont-based novel *Altar* to an Erupting Sun. See the letter at fairsharevt.org/wealthy-letter (target=).

They support a tax proposal that will increase taxes on the highest-income Vermonters, which would raise \$74 million each year. On Friday, March 29, the proposal was passed by the Vermont House, with this revenue being directed toward addressing Vermont’s housing crisis.

Signers include Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield of Ben & Jerry’s, Olympic ski champion Hannah Dreissigacker, Phoenix Books co-owner Renee Reiner, Magic Hat Brewing Company co-founder Alan Newman, and green-energy entrepreneurs David Blittersdorf and Duane

Peterson. Understandably, this might not compute for most readers. After all, we are flooded daily with stories of billionaire venality, excess, influence, and power. Over the past few years, ProPublica has revealed the plentiful techniques deployed by the ultra-wealthy to avoid paying taxes. So why would these Vermonters, in the face of a severe housing crisis, publicly endorse higher taxes on themselves?

■ SEE TAXES, C2

VIEWPOINT

Let’s not destroy a good law

There are many economic and political pressures on FY 2025 school budgets that seem to be creating a perfect economic storm. Act 127 is not one of those pressures.

West Dover
ACT 127, the 2022 law that corrected 25 years of injustice in our education funding system, is a good law. It allows all children in Vermont to receive an excellent education regardless of their background or ZIP code, all while supporting local control and decision-making. The bill that led to Act 127, S.287, passed committee reviews and then passed both the House and Senate with unanimous voice votes, and the governor signed it. Hundreds of Vermont school officials, teachers, school board members, members of education associations and citizens spoke in favor of the legislation. It was among the most important bipartisan pieces of legislation to be passed in years.

MARC SCHAUER is executive director of the Coalition for Vermont Student Equity (CVTSE).

Sadly, with immense and complex economic upward pressures on fiscal year (FY) 2025 school budgets, many are mistakenly and unfairly blaming the equitable funding law for the sharp rise in property tax rates. There are many economic and political pressures on FY 2025 school budgets that seem to be creating a perfect economic storm. Act 127 is not one of those pressures.

are seeing a substantial reduction in funding from the state for these services, which puts an increasing portion of these costs on local taxpayers.

Mental health is another example. In recent years we’ve seen a major shift in how our schools provide the mental health support that more and more Vermont students require to be able to learn. In the past, most of that support was provided through the Designated and Special Services Agencies, the county or regional organizations that are contracted by our schools. Those funds come from the state’s general fund. For many reasons the designated agencies are unable to provide our schools and children with all the vital services they need, forcing schools to either hire staff themselves or contract privately with other providers. This has shifted the cost burden from the general fund to the education fund, and thus to local, taxpayer-supported budgets.

Let’s consider the upward pressures on FY 2025 school budgets. Many existed long before Act 127: inflation, double-digit increases in health insurance costs for the past several years, and the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA), just to name a few. Other pressures have been ratcheted up for a variety of complex reasons.

Finally, some school districts are facing a fiscal cliff with federal Covid relief funds coming to an end. Many districts used these funds to hire staff. Many of those hires were for positions that our schools sorely needed and which are now seen as invaluable for the education of our children.

Let’s take special education. The recent implementation of Act 173 of 2018 changed how the state pays for special education services, moving from a model of partially reimbursing costs incurred to one that provides a flat “census block grant” dollar amount. Many districts

Many of these pressures have existed for years. Indeed, for the past two years, one-time funds were used to artificially lower tax rates. While the relief was welcome, it has resulted in what appears to be an even larger tax increase now that those one-time funds are no longer available.

■ SEE ACT 127, C2

ESSAY

The mystery in the miracle

Earth creates the miracle of life with a particular evolutionary trajectory. In our own conception and birth, we embody this unfolding mystery.

Westminster West
HIGH NHAT HAHN, a revered Thai Buddhist monk and teacher, wrote, “The true miracle is not walking on water or walking in the air, but simply walking on this earth.” Albert Einstein, the preeminent scientist of the 20th century, stated, “You can move through life seeing nothing as a miracle, or seeing everything as a miracle.” Our luminous Earth is the

PETER ADAIR (pcadair@sover.net) is the creator of the stations of “Elemental Elders” (earth, water, life, air, fire) in the Sanctuary Garden.

miracle, and we are integral parts of this wonder. Four billion years ago, Earth unveiled one of its startling miracles: the appearance of

single-celled life in the oceans. These single-celled organisms are our true forebears.

Each time a human life is newly generated, we return to our ancestors. We present ourselves in the form of single cells of egg and sperm. Our life begins as Earth’s life began.

The amniotic sac of our mother’s womb is an internal sea within which the single cell develops into an embryo — a



Also a photo of the Earth Mandala in the Sanctuary Garden.

PETER ADAIR

We are excited to announce our new office at 18 Harmony Place, Brattleboro VT

Come visit us or make an appointment to discuss all your real estate needs.

Same phone number and same great real estate professionals 802-257-7979



Taxes

I KNOW FROM co-organizing this effort that this is only the tip of the iceberg of support among those who would pay. Many more high-income Vermonters support this proposal but do not wish to go public.

We live in a state of small, face-to-face communities. Most high-income Vermonters, whether they are recent arrivals or have their family name on the road signs, quietly pay their state income taxes without complaint. They want to keep a low profile.

These Vermonters are not unusual. A global poll of millionaire households in G20 countries found significant support for higher taxes on themselves.

A January poll found that 74% of millionaire households support targeted income and wealth taxes to address the cost of living crisis and improve public services; 72% think that extreme concentrations of wealth corrupt our political system, with 54% believing it to be a threat to democracy itself.

You will hear the fear that higher taxes may drive affluent Vermonters away. But this notion of the fleeing millionaire is a myth.

Like all Vermonters, our wealthy neighbors appreciate the quality of life and public investments in the state. And frankly, if someone's decision about where to live were dictated by income taxes, they probably would have moved to the "live free or die" state a long time ago.

THOSE WHO REMAIN in Vermont have chosen to live in a state where people care for each other and the land we share. As their letter states, "Here in Vermont, we take care of our neighbors and form close relationships that transcend economic circumstances. Public investment, funded through tax dollars, is necessary to amplify these community efforts and fund programs that strengthen our communities."

These are folks who understand that their neighbors are

being pushed out of their communities due to a lack of affordable housing, high property taxes, and other factors. By paying a bit more income tax, these affluent Vermonters will also benefit from a healthier, more-just state.

The alternative is to either ignore urgent needs or increase housing investments by taxing everyone else. At a time when many Vermonters may already feel squeezed, this group believes those with the greatest capacity should pay more.

VERMONT LAWMAKERS in the House, led by House Ways & Means Committee chair Emilie Kornheiser, have put forth a proposal to increase taxes on incomes over \$500,000 (over \$410,650 for individuals) by 3%. Under the plan, the funds will be invested in affordable housing initiatives, including emergency shelter, permanently affordable rental housing, and assistance for first-time homebuyers.

Over the next decade, this tax

will contribute to almost \$900 million for long-term solutions to our housing crisis. Only the top 1% of Vermont taxpayers would pay this additional rate.

Some cynics will trot out the tired canard, "Go ahead, you can contribute more to the state treasury." That is like cleaning up a river by each neighbor volunteering to dump less and pick up litter. Taxes are how we all pay for what's important. It is not voluntary charity.

As one of the signers, entrepreneur Duane Peterson, told *Seven Days*, "Societal needs are better identified by elected representatives than left to the whims of philanthropists. Some Vermonters have huge wealth. Contributing more won't change their lifestyles but can really strengthen society."

If you doubt that our communities are facing an acute housing crisis, step out your door and talk to your neighbors.

And if you think, "There isn't any money," listen to the signers of this letter.

FROM SECTION FRONT

LETTERS

Missing metric in school budget story

RE: "WSESD voters, citing student needs, pass \$65.8M budget" [News, March 27]:

The article on the WSESD school budget failed to help educate anyone on the true cost of education that the taxpayers are expected to pay.

By failing to include the number of students this \$66 million budget is intended for, and therefore the cost per student, how is anyone able to make sense of this large number and discuss it in any meaningful way? Perhaps compare it with other schools?

A quick Google search says 2,500 kids attend these schools for a cost of \$26,400 per kid, nearly \$150 per kid per school day.

Now a parent or student can ask: "Did I get \$150 value today at school?"

Steve Morse
Halifax

themselves as peace activists yet refresh a language of war with words that dehumanize their enemies. Please stop. This is trickling down to the simpler anti-Semitic language of swastikas, too common lately in our streets and schools. We can do better in Vermont. We owe it to our future, and to people dying in the Middle East now.

John Ungerleider
Brattleboro

An inspiring act of inclusion

To everyone at the Multicultural Center: I want to express my profound thanks and appreciation for the amazing Global Talent and Fashion Show, an inspiring act of inclusion.

One of its most poignant aspects was hearing you refer to the refugees from across the globe as New Vermonters. This stood out to me as a symbol of authentic inclusion, because it embraces all people, regardless of where they're from, regardless of their differences from each other.

It truly celebrated the music, the dance, and the vibrant and colorful clothing from the different cultures. The celebration of differences created an inclusive environment and symbolized true inclusion — where everyone is seen and valued for who they are, and where everyone belongs.

As we celebrated the beautiful array of differences, the support from the community members in the audience was palpable; while our New Vermonters are recent arrivals and the audience members have presumably lived here for some time, the community felt seamless.

As I sat in the audience, taking in the celebration, I was amazed to learn of the tremendous dedication the Multicultural Center upholds, and the lengths you've gone to ensure that all of the needs of our New Vermonters are met. I feel at peace knowing that they are not only cared for and included, but in the work you've done, you've truly welcomed our New Vermonters home.

Thank you.

Julianne Kaplan
Brattleboro

Earth

multicellular being. When Earth formed multicellular organisms in the ocean 600 million years ago, there was also seeded an impetus to break away from the sea, and enter land and open air. After nine months of gestation, we, too, must break free of our ocean-womb, and arrive in a new world, breathing new air.

Earth creates the miracle of life with a particular evolutionary trajectory. In our own conception and birth, we embody this unfolding mystery.

WITH EACH BREATH we take, we inhale Earth's omnipresent sky. The air of Earth then becomes our internal wind. Qualities of the atmosphere — whether breezy, calm, heavy, glowering, steady, sultry, fierce or blustery, among many others — circulate as moods within us. The word *atmosphere*, from the Greek, derives from the Sanskrit *atman*, meaning "breath, soul." Our planet's atmospheric halo is Earth's soul sphere.

Birds are emissaries of Earth's wider soul. We know that the sounds and songs of birds stimulated the brain structures of humans that are related to singing and spoken language. Birds, it could be said, transmit the language of the sky.

In the human arena, there

are envoys from the sky domain — harbingers of a lofty realm — possessing musical ability and feathered wings. They are called "angels." From the Greek *angelos*, the word means "messenger." Humans and birds join as vocal expressions of the encompassing mystery of air.

For humans, the language of the sky achieved a sophistication between 80,000 and 50,000 years ago. That is, the sounds of thought took on a body and structure capable of complex expression. At the end of this period, visual language also found complex expression in the magnificent cave art of paleolithic humans.

The vivid and vivacious paintings of animals on cavern walls are revelations. They are internal visions given physical reality.

With the development of human imagination, Earth is able to hold a mirror to itself, as it were, and ponder its own astounding creativity. Earth's presentation is echoed in the miracle of human re-presentation. With the advent of human consciousness, a profound mystery is broached: Earth has matured into self-awareness.

Paleolithic humans crawled along deep narrow tunnels, as if through a birth canal, carrying

the flickering flame provided by burning animal fat, to approach in homage the numinous revealed images.

Eons later, humanity will create aboveground caves in the form of stone henges, grottoes, churches, synagogues, cathedrals, mosques and temples, which house other revelations, often lit with candles. The worship will be by kneeling, bowing or prostrating, rather than crawling.

Human awareness emanates from Earth's self-awareness. Self-reflection enabled us to know ourselves and our environment in material and spiritual dimensions. Physically, we belong to the elemental miracles of Earth: earth, water, life, air, fire. Spiritually, we can realize aspects of wonder and oneness that open unto realms of sacredness and holiness.

With the Earth-given capacities of awareness and imagination, humanity progressively discovered and harnessed Earth's physical energies. This endeavor began with the domestication of fire more than one million years ago. Fire inaugurated a distinctively human culture. It is around the central fire, which provided safety and warmth for early humans, that singing, dancing and storytelling took place — activities that ignited human imagination.

With the rise of civilization, additional physical energies were corralled: water, wind, steam and fossil fuels, and the forces of electricity, magnetism and nuclear and solar energy. In the history of our use of these powers, we have demonstrated a peak of invention and creativity, and a nadir of persistent destruction and exploitation.

Humanity has now grown into a global geologic force, responsible for powerfully impacting Earth's oceans, forests, soils, atmosphere, plants and animals to such a degree that many report that we are instigating Earth's sixth major extinction.

Extinctions are transformative and — temporarily — traumatic events in Earth's journey. Following upon each extinction episode, life has rebounded, becoming more widespread, more diverse and more complex. The most recent extinction event, 65 million years ago, led to the demise of the dinosaurs, and from that calamity arose birds, mammals and hominids.

In forming a being with the sensitivity of a human — a being vulnerable to distortion and disorientation — Earth wounded itself. We are squandering an opportunity to augment the life and beauty of the planet, and it is likely that our current acquisitive and ism-based version of human society will need to become extinct. Earth may then reestablish itself on a foundation of interconnection and wholeness, qualities that reflect our innermost reality. There are already budding communities holding templates for an enhanced and nourishing relation to Earth.

"Someday," wrote the visionary paleontologist and Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin, "after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness [...] the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire."

Mystery unfurls, and a renewed human-Earth culture beckons.

FROM SECTION FRONT

War of the words

Near the end of the movie *Golda*, which was released for the 50th anniversary of the 1973 October War, or Yom Kippur War, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat ends the war by saying "Israel" for the first time — rather than "the Zionist entity" — giving recognition to the Jewish state.

Wars begin as well as end with words.

In our local newspapers, authors have begun to refer to Israel with terms such as "the Zionist project." Widely used in anti-Israel advocacy, this implies a rogue transience that delegitimizes Jewish existence in Israel. Such lack of recognition is the core of the past century of war. That failure to see the "other" goes both ways, failing to see Palestinians or Israelis, and their needs for security and dignity.

Southern Vermonters have worked for decades to build this mutual recognition. Palestinian and Israeli students have come to our towns, to programs at SIT and Jerusalem Peacebuilders, to learn how to see and speak to each other.

It is distressing to see such work disrespected by local editorial writers, who may see

Act 127

FROM SECTION FRONT

MISTAKENLY BLAMING Act 127 for the impacts of all of these upward pressures on school budgets is inaccurate and does a disservice to students and taxpayers.

Act 127 is largely expense- and revenue-neutral. It creates a more accurate allocation of education fund resources to improve equity in our statewide school funding system. With the sole exception of a multi-year transition provision, no more and no less money needs to be raised for the education fund due to Act 127. During a five-year transition period, Act 127 limits the increase in a school district's "equalized" tax rate to 5% per year, as long as the school district's spending per pupil does not increase by more than 10%. Important note: this cap is applied before the CLA. The idea is to protect schools from experiencing an unmanageable one-year jump in equalized tax rates as the new funding mechanism is implemented.

It's a laudable idea. However, that provision is proving to be

problematic because it also creates a gap in revenue. How will that gap be filled, and where will the additional funds come from? In Vermont's statewide education funding system, a shortfall in one district will be made up for with higher taxes on residents of other school districts. Moreover, many of the districts that might bear that added tax burden from higher spending elsewhere are likely to be among those schools that Act 127 was originally intended to help.

The transition provision is problematic, and the legislature should look at potential solutions to address it. But make no mistake: doing so will not solve our education spending challenges. Until we address major societal issues such as health care costs and the accessibility of mental health services, we will have an ever-more-expensive education system on our hands. Let's fix this one provision in Act 127, but let's not destroy a good law in the process, nor take our eyes off the real drivers of education spending.

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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 15-21

CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Anna Patton, Musician: Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 9p, Thurs 9a, Sat 12:15p, Sun 5:15p	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 4/16/24: Tues 6:15 (LIVE), Thurs 1p, Sun 6p
Ep 176 - Jamshid Sharifi: Mon 9p, Tues 1:30p, Wed 9a, Thurs 10:30a, Fri 11:30a & 4:30p, Sat 6:30p, Sun 6:30a	Putney Selectboard Public Hearing 4/4/24: Mon 6:10p, Tues 8:30a, Wed 2:30p
Community Forum - Moover Microtransit Meeting 4/9/24: Mon 6a, Tues 12:35p, Wed 9:35p, Thurs 9:35a, Fri 5p, Sat 5p, Sun 6p	Windham School District Board Mtg. 4/11/24: Mon 6:30p, Tues 6a, Wed 12p
Sunflower Court - Episode 1: Tues 10:15a, Wed 6:15a & 4:45p, Thurs 1:15p, Fri 11:15a, Sun 1:45p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 4/15/24: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 12p
At BMAC - Art Talk: Samira Abbassy and Sarah Freeman: Mon 10a, Tues 8p, Wed 11a, Thurs 5p, Fri 7a, Sat 8p, Sun 2p	River Valley Unified School District Board Mtg. 4/15/24: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:30p
Juno Orchestra - Challenge - Exodus: Mon 5:30p, Tues 6:30a, Thurs 4:45p, Fri 9:30p, Sat 9a, Sun 7:30p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 4/16/24: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
Perspectives on Trauma - Part 3: Chief Robert Strahan: Mon 8:35p, Wed 12:35p, Fri 12:35p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 4/17/24: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Windham World Affairs Council - Migration from the North Triangle: They Are Here Because We Were There: Mon 12:35p, Tues 9a, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 10a, Sat 9p, Sun 12:30p	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 4/17/24: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
Town of Brattleboro - Meet The BPD: Officer Deanna Lopez: Mon 6:55a & 6:55p, Wed 6:55p, Fri 6:55p, Sat 12:55p, Sun 5:55p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 4/17/24: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30a
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Brattleboro Charter Revision Commission Mtg. 4/17/24: Sat 8:30p, Sun 6a
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	West River Education District Reorganizational & Annual Mtg. 4/8/24: Thurs 8:30p
News Block: Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p BUHS-TV News: Mon-Fri 12:15p & 6:35p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 4/8/24: Tues 10a, Fri 5p, Sun 11a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 4/9/24: Thurs 11:10a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 5p	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 4/9/24: Mon 9a
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Town Matters - Weekly Episode: Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p, Sat 4p (LIVE)	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

Note: Schedule subject to change.

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

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

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Brattleboro releases annual water quality report

BRATTLEBORO — The Town of Brattleboro Water Department's annual Consumer Confidence Report/Water Quality Report for 2023 is available and can be viewed online at Brattleboro.gov under "Water Supply."

Printed copies are available at the Department of Public Works, the Tri-Park Co-op Office, Guilford Country Store, the Brattleboro Town Clerk's office and Treasurer's office (both located in the Brattleboro Municipal Center), and at the Vermont Welcome Center in Guilford.

Questions about this report can be addressed to the Department of Public Works' Water Treatment Division at 802-257-2320.

Guilford Cares adds new Tai Chi for Fall Prevention class

GUILFORD — Guilford Cares is adding a new Tai Chi for Fall Prevention class; a great opportunity for total beginners or those who would like to build on previous experience with this fall prevention practice.

The classes meet Wednesday mornings, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 p.m., at Guilford Community Church on Church Drive (near the Guilford Country Store). Leah Gessner, a certified Fall Prevention Tai Chi instructor, leads the class. There is no charge or age requirement, but donations are welcome. For more information, contact Guilford Cares at guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com or 802-579-1350.

Hospice program looks at VSED for terminally ill patients

BRATTLEBORO — On Thursday, April 18, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Brooks Memorial Library Meeting Room, 224 Main St., Brattleboro Area Hospice will be showing a video of a three-person panel presentation on VSED (voluntary stopping of eating and drinking) as an alternative choice for terminally ill, mentally competent patients to hasten the end of life.

The panel, presented at the Hemlock Society of San Diego in March 2023, features Kate Christie, author of *The VSED Handbook*; Andrea Fenwick, a death doula from VSED Resources Northwest; and Dr. Donald J. Moore Jr., a hospice and palliative care physician in San Diego.

This event is free. RSVP by emailing info@brattleborohospice.org or by calling 802-257-0775 as

space is limited.

Freed Yorick Theatre Ensemble to hold auditions for 'Our Town'

WILMINGTON — Freed Yorick Theatre Ensemble will hold auditions for the Friends of Historic Memorial Hall presentation of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* in the music room of the Old School Enrichment Center, 1 School St., on Friday, April 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday, April 20, from 1 to 3 p.m.

All ages are welcome; there's no need for those auditioning to prepare a reading unless they wish to. Scripts will be available during auditions. Rehearsals will begin June 25; performance dates are Thursday through Saturday, July 18-20. Performances will be at Memorial Hall in Wilmington.

Earth Day and beyond at Brooks Library

BRATTLEBORO — Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St., will host two panel discussions to observe Earth Day and spotlight sustainability efforts statewide and on a local level. Discussion will include whether it makes sense to buy an electric car, the latest on rebates and charging stations, how to buy into a community solar project to reduce electric bills, and what Brattleboro has been doing in the past year to reduce its carbon footprint.

On Monday, April 22, state legislators Mollie Burke, Emilie Kornheiser, and Nader Hashim will discuss environmental legislation that has been passed at the state level in the current session and legislation that is still pending. They will be joined by John Woodland of Third Act Vermont, an organization of seniors, started by Bill McKibben, to promote environmental stewardship and address climate change.

Then, on Tuesday, April 30, Brattleboro's Sustainability Coordinator, Stephen Dotson, will facilitate a panel of leaders from community environmental groups to highlight local efforts that address climate change and resilience, and learn of actions residents can take to improve the town's overall sustainability.

The panel will be composed of Marilyn Chiarello, Edible Brattleboro; Django Grace, Brattleboro Energy Committee; Dave Cohen, VBike and Brattleboro Coalition for Active Transport; Alex Wilson, Building Green Inc. and the Resilient Design Institute; and Jamina Shupack, Rich Earth Institute.

Both events begin at 7 p.m. and are free. For more information, contact the library at 802-254-5290 or visit brookslibraryvt.org.

AROUND THE TOWNS

Economic, social impact of the arts in Vermont examined at forum

BRATTLEBORO — On April 23, from 5 to 8 p.m. at The Stone Church on Main Street, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) and The Stone Church will provide networking, food, and drinks as participants engage in discussion about the far-reaching economic and social impact of the arts in Vermont.

This free event is also accessible online; register at bit.ly/761-arts.

Organizers said in a news release that "The arts are the glue for our tight-knit communities, a platform for social justice, and also a powerful driving force in Vermont's economy. The Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 — an economic and social impact study of the nation's nonprofit arts and

culture industry — found that the Vermont arts industry 'generated \$158.6 million in economic activity during 2022,' which supported '2,712 jobs, provided \$112.8 million in personal income to residents, and generated \$34.8 million in tax revenue to local, state, and federal governments.'"

The panel on Tuesday, April 23, will include Robin Johnson, owner of The Stone Church and member of National Independent Venue Association; Danny Lichtenfeld, executive director of the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center; and Kate Trzaskos, executive director of the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance.

Organizers said the panelists "will reflect on the waves of economic impact generated by Vermont's arts, their experiences with building community through art, the ties between art and tourism, and how our state is uniquely positioned to be a leader in art."

Senior lunch in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON — Evening Star Grange and Senior Solutions will present their next Senior Lunch at Evening Star Grange, 1008 East West Road, on Wednesday, April 24, with take-outs available between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., and an in-house meal served at noon.

On the menu are baked beans (vegetarian or nonvegetarian), baked ham, and macaroni and cheese with broccoli, with carrot cake for dessert. Reservations are highly recommended and can be made by calling the Grange Hall at 802-254-1138. Leave name, phone number, number of meals desired, and whether they are for eating in or taking away. A donation of \$3 for those 60 and above and \$4 for the younger folks is suggested.

Moore Free Library offers Robert L. Crowell Scholarship

NEWFANE — Moore Free Library is offering a total of \$12,000 in scholarships funded by the family of the late Robert L. Crowell. These awards are open to all residents of Newfane and Brookline who are graduating high school seniors at any high school or who are GED recipients, and who will be entering their first year of college, community college, trade, or vocational post-secondary education in the fall of 2024.

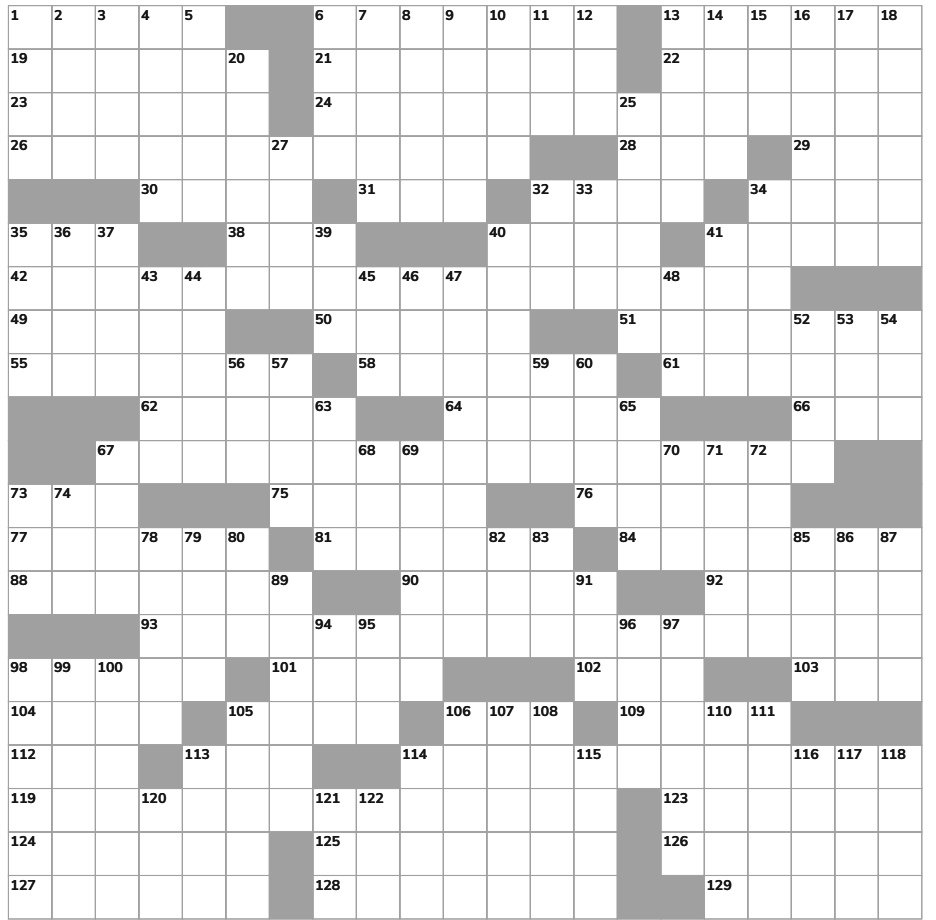
Complete applications must be received by May 10. For more information and to apply, visit the Moore Free Library's website scholarship page at moorefreelibrary.org/scholarships.

BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Animal Collective"

Across

1. Israeli president Herzog
6. Enthusiastically gets to one's feet
13. Some Halloween headpieces
19. One of the smart set
21. Pick up
22. Disclose, as wisdom
23. Dress
24. Alternative rock band with the 1993 hit "Mr. Jones"
26. Super Bowl XX winners
28. State ___
29. Black cuckoo
30. Run through with a knife
31. Swelled head?
32. Power Rankings grouping
34. One with a mortarboard
35. Says yes to
38. Up to, briefly
40. Trig function
41. Actor Plemons
42. Avoid interfering in a situation
49. Vintner's fruit
50. Where you might see a long thread
51. Stirring up
55. Touchdown
58. Big, big test
61. Not liable
62. Splendid
64. Fancy dinner parties
66. Doping injection, for short
67. Cause of restlessness
73. "That don't impress me"
75. Ewok's forest moon
76. Comic Silverman
77. Like bhajis, often
81. Totally decent
84. Play station?
88. Coat for your corgi, e.g.
90. Women's name that means "beloved"
92. Very, very
93. Frustratingly difficult
98. Bygone
101. Little boxer?
102. Fella
103. Boozehound
104. Insect-repellent compound
105. Spa treatment
106. Bank investments
109. "Reputation" and "Midnights" for Taylor Swift
112. Poet's "always"
113. Congressional rival of MTG
114. "Never!"
119. Tempt fate
123. Norway's canonized ruler
124. People of interest?
125. Highly-valued 45-Down
126. High-card holding in bridge
127. "Roger," at sea
128. Get atop, as a bike
129. California's Point ___



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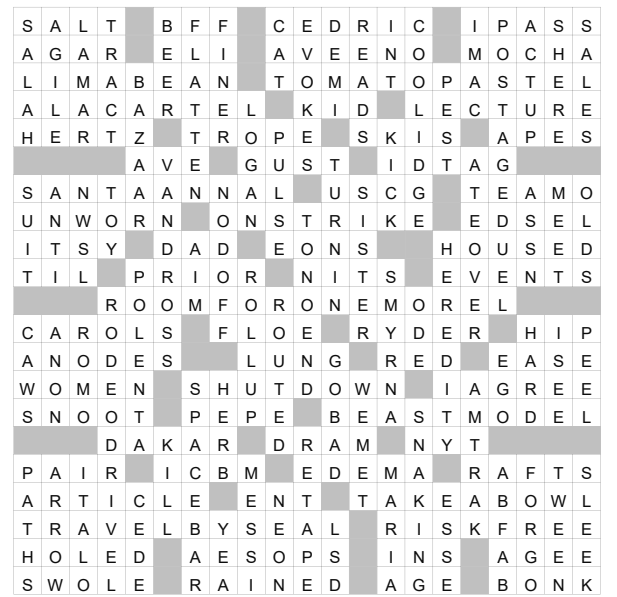
9. Kicks Down the road
10. Jedi foe
11. Swiss canton
12. It looks good on paper
13. Clock function
14. Gambler's pleased status report
15. National Poetry Mo.
16. Airplane locators
17. Match points?
18. Big step
20. Cancel out
25. Fraternity and sorority types
27. New York theater award
32. Acapulco aunt
33. ___ : US :: 54-Down : UK
34. V-formation team
35. "Eugene Onegin" mezzo
36. Warriors coach Steve
37. Have the lead
39. Content dug out while crate digging
40. Ire
41. "We said the same thing!"
43. Vice president before Gerald
44. Balancing tool
45. Wall St. debut
46. Prefix for easter or wester
47. "Perish the thought"
48. Bassist Geddy
52. They call 'em as they see 'em
53. Graceless bum
54. ___ : UK :: 33-Down : US
56. Back, in a way
57. Country road
59. Got into a stew?
60. Not as much as
63. City nearly 11 miles from Boston
65. Go at it
67. Gambling marker
68. Courtroom affirmation
69. ___ public
70. Is after you?

71. Cheesy chip
72. Pitched
73. Floor-cleaner's tool
74. Opposite of WSW
78. Young hooter
79. Teutonic turnaround
80. Bearded bovine
82. Montreal mate
83. Lion's home
85. The ___ (baby boomers, etc.)
86. Yellow spread
87. Corner shop
89. Turn down
91. Avocado toast topper
94. Weed killer
95. Fish that hunt at night
96. Signal provider
97. Apollo, musically

98. Ukrainian seaport
99. Margin for error
100. Glean
105. Calm under pressure
106. Muchacho's nickname
107. English cattle breed
108. Dutch split pea soup
110. In the future
111. Cairn piece
113. A little off
114. Senate figure
115. Bond villain who plans on disrupting a missile launch
116. Scold severely
117. Shoestring
118. Designer Saint Laurent
120. ___ culpa
121. "Say what?"
122. Prefix for Caps or Balls

Last issue's solution

"Left Behind"



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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Bears start Unified season with four straight wins

The Brattleboro Unified basketball team is off to a 4-0 start this season, with a 48-44 win over the Burr & Burton Bulldogs on April 9 at the BUHS gym and a 46-27 win over the Twin Valley Wildcats in Whitingham on April 11.

While the first game between Twin Valley and Brattleboro at the BUHS gym on April 5 was a 38-36 nail-biter won by the Bears, Brattleboro kept the drama to a minimum in the April 11 rematch.

The teams were tied 10-10 after the first period, but the Bears took a 22-18 lead into halftime. The Wildcats hung around in the third quarter and trailed the Bears, 32-27, heading into the final period. The Bears then proceeded to shut out the Wildcats with a 14-0 run in the fourth quarter.

Austin Pinette led the Bears with 12 points. Jeffrey White added 14, Ashley Cleveland chipped in six points, and Darius Cansler-Cooper, Caden Russell, Jamieson Crochetiere, Tyler Bolduc, Alex LaBounty, and Bobby Petrie each scored a basket.

John-Michael Richard led the Wildcats with 12 points. Thomas Richard and Chloe Lashway scored six each and Brady Lackey scored two points.

The Bears are off until April 30, when they travel to Brandon to face Otter Valley. Twin Valley is back in action on April 29, when they host Hartford.

Baseball

The weather last week, aside from two nice days for the April 8 solar eclipse and its aftermath, was mostly rainy. The soggy led to several cancellations. Twin Valley saw its road games at Poultney on April 12 and at Mill River on April 13 both washed out. Brattleboro's opener against Leland & Gray in Townshend on April 13 also met with the same fate.



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• Bellows Falls was in Fair Haven on April 9 and got their season off to a strong start with a 17-7 win in a five-inning game cut short by the 10-run mercy rule.

The Slaters took a 1-0 lead in the first inning, but BF responded with five runs in the second inning to take control of the game. Fair Haven scored three runs in the bottom half of the inning to cut into the Terriers' lead, but BF scored five runs in the third and seven runs in the fifth inning to slam the door shut.

Steven Joslyn led the Terriers at the plate, hitting three singles and scoring two runs. BF's starting pitcher Trenton Fletcher struggled and was replaced by Joslyn in the second inning. Joslyn finished up the game for the Terriers' first win of the season.

Softball

• Bellows Falls pitcher Izzy Stoodley picked up where she left off last season as she struck out 14 batters and walked only two in a 16-6 road win over Fair Haven on April 9.

Aliya Farmer had a double and a single for the Terriers in their season opener, while Riley Haskell had two singles. Losing pitcher Tori Raymond went the distance with eight strikeouts and five walks. At the plate, she had a double and a single.

• Brattleboro's season opener at Northampton, Massachusetts on April 12 got rained out. Twin Valley's opening game

against Poultney on April 10 was also postponed. Leland & Gray is set to play its first game at Woodstock on April 20.

Lacrosse

• The Brattleboro girls lost their season opener, 16-3, to Northampton on April 9. A scheduled game on April 13 at Keene, New Hampshire was canceled.

Track & Field

• Brattleboro and Bellows Falls also had to wait to get their seasons started, as a scheduled meet on April 9 in Springfield got canceled. At press time, they were both in action on April 16, as Brattleboro was the host for a multi-team meet at the Freeman Track.

Rec. Dept. news

• The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department says that the following parks & facilities are now open: the Living Memorial Park tennis and pickleball courts, Perseverance Skatepark at Living Memorial Park, and the Brattleboro Dog Park at Living Memorial Park.

• The annual Super Fun Bike Day will be held at Living Memorial Park on Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This program is a collaboration between Recreations & Parks, the Brattleboro Kiwanis Club, the Brattleboro Fire Department, and the Brattleboro Police Department.

This free event will include a helmet fitting, bike tune-ups, safety information, a bike rodeo, and more. The Kiwanis Club will be giving away helmets for kids age 16 and under. They will also be raffling off a BMX bike. In the event of rain, the event will be held in the Nelson E. Withington Skating Facility. Bring your bikes and enjoy the fun.

For more information on this and other Rec. Dept. activities, call their Gibson-Aiken Center office at 802-254-5808.



Brattleboro's Austin Pinette, left, looks for an open teammate to pass to during first-half Unified basketball action against Twin Valley on April 11 in Whitingham.

Green Mountain Conservancy hosts Earth Day hikes

• On Sunday, April 21, the Green Mountain Conservancy will host a pair of hikes in celebration of Earth Day at the Deer Run Nature Preserve in West Dummerston.

The tougher of the two hikes will be led by Roger Haydock on Deer Run Nature Preserve's recently opened North Trail. The hike will go up the ridge and then down to the West River and back. The total distance is about 7 1/2 miles and will include a 1,700 foot vertical ascent. This is a strenuous hike and only experienced hikers in good condition should attend.

The route will feature several viewing spots along the way, including a dramatic vista up the West River and Grassy Brook Valley with Stratton Mountain in the distance. The hike goes through several different forest types, including a mature hardwood forest, a hop hornbeam savannah, and old growth trees.

In this first year of the North Trail's existence, the Conservancy says that "the passage of hiker's boots on the trail will act to pack down the treadway and prevent plants from growing in. The more that people hike the trail this year, the better for breaking in the footpath."

Hikers are invited to assemble at 10 a.m. at the parking area of Deer Run Nature Preserve on Camp Arden Road, which is two miles north of the Route 30 Covered Bridge. The hike will last about 4 1/2 hours. Hikers should bring a lunch and water. There will be a short lunch break at the West River.

A less strenuous hike on the Preserve will be led by several Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center board members, focusing on the early spring woodland plants and birds, signs of mammal activity, various natural forest communities, the forest topography, and forest management for addressing climate change.

"This is an idyllic time to spend in the forest as it wakes

up from our strange winter," the Conservancy says. "Beginning at the trailhead, we will go through a young white pine forest, view an abandoned porcupine den and have an opportunity to examine a bear-clawed utility pole. As we move into an older forest, we can take some time to think about the history of several very, very old maples, ponder the pillow and cradle topography, wonder at the intermittent piles of stone, and consider the littered forest floor."

"Crossing the bridge over the rushing mountain stream, we will discuss signs that this stream has changed course over time and the geological features that have made it possible. The lichens and mosses along the way will be of special interest. Tall red pine trees, planted in the 1930s by the farmer who worked this land, will stand out among the white pines, hemlocks, birches, oaks, and cherry trees."

For more information, call 802-257-0012, email info@greenmountainconservancy.org, or visit greenmountainconservancy.org.

Green Street School's Tulip Trot set for May 4

• On Saturday, May 4, Green Street School in Brattleboro presents the 12th annual Tulip Trot 5K Run & Walk. Organized by the Green Street School PTO, it's the school's biggest yearly fundraiser and proceeds are used for school-wide and grade-level enrichment programs, field trips, winter sports, and staff appreciation activities.

This year, the Tulip Trot will also be celebrating Green Street School's 100th birthday. More details on the race, including registration information, can be found at sites.google.com/wsesdvt.org/tulip-trot/home.

Still time to sign up for Grace Cottage's family-friendly 5K

• Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital hosts its 15th annual Spring into Health

5K on Saturday, May 11, on the Townshend Common. The event begins with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. You can run, walk, roll, stroll, or push your baby carriage for this fun, family-friendly event.

Registration is \$20 for adults; children under the age of 18 are free with signed parent/guardian permission. To register, go to graccottage.org/events. A virtual option is also available. Register at the same link. You can also register just before the event.

For more information, contact Grace Cottage Foundation at info@graccottage.org or call 802-365-9109. All proceeds from this event will benefit healthcare services at Grace Cottage.

Senior bowling roundup

• Week 14 of the winter/spring season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on April 11 saw first place High Rollers (47-23) had a 4-1 week to hold onto their lead, while Stepping Stones II (44-20) remained in second place, followed by Stayin' Alive (41-29), Four Seasons (37-33), Good Times and Four Pins (both 28-42), Hairiers (23-47), and Slow Movers (20-50).

Carol Gloski had the women's high handicap game (246) and series (682), while Eric Brown had the men's high handicap game (257), and Al Dascomb had the high handicap series (657). Stayin' Alive had the high team handicap game (867) and series (2,562).

John Walker had the men's high scratch series (608) with games of 219 and 204. Peter Deyo had a 568 series with a 201 game and Robert Rigby had a 551 series with games of 197 and 195. Rich Westcott had a 524 series with a 190 game, and Brown had a 203 game.

Gloski had the women's high scratch series (529) and game (195). She also had a 177 game. Nancy Dalzell had a 513 series with a 188 game.

Twin Valley's Alex Lackey, right, inbounds the ball to teammate Kate Oyer (11) during the second half of their Unified basketball game against Brattleboro on April 11 in Whitingham.



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