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

Brattleboro must decide on contract for solid waste, with few options

Casella is the only hauler to offer service so far, and would require adopting an automated collection model, ending pay-as-you-throw

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—As the town approaches the end of its current contract for solid waste collection, the only company interested in handling town trash in future has a caveat about how that will ultimately work: automation. Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, who met with Selectboard members April 16 to lay out the plan for collection after the current contract ends June 30, called the mechanization qualifier

“either a deal-maker or a deal-breaker, depending on how you look at it.”

In February, the board requested that town staff members proceed with the request for qualifications process to identify who might be the town’s next solid waste hauler.

Moreland said letters of interest from qualified firms were solicited via newspaper ads as well as by direct contact to 10 firms in and outside Vermont, including Casella, the company that last

■ SEE TRASH, A5

Bellows Falls train station project moves forward

In July, the historic structure on the Island will undergo asbestos and lead abatement, as well as foundation repairs

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—The century-old historic train station on the Island is moving into the second phase of its restoration and redevelopment as the Bellows Falls Intermodal Transportation Center (BFITC).

Built in 1923, with some parts of the basement dating back to the original depot built in 1849, the station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. It is still in daily use as a bus and rail station, serviced by Green Mountain Railroad (GMRC), Amtrak, and Greyhound.

The 21.5-acre piece of land on which it stands, locally referred to as the Island, is bordered on the north, east, and south by the Connecticut River.

The Island was formed by the construction of a multi-lock transportation canal on its western border that functioned for more than 200 years.

The canal, completed in 1802, allowed barges to circumvent what the Western Abenaki called Kchi Pöntegok — the Great Falls of the Connecticut River. It is now used to power a hydroelectric power plant at the Island’s

southern end.

The area is adjacent to the downtown Square and is part of the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District.

With the help of Vermont’s congressional delegation, the project was awarded a \$1.8 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Program grant from the Federal Railroad Administration.

The complete restoration and renovation of the property is estimated to cost around \$4.3 million. The project has been awarded grants totaling \$3.5 million at this point, and is seeking \$846,000 in matching funds, which can also come from other grants.

The first of the project’s three planned phases is nearly completed.

Rockingham Development Director Gary Fox recently said in an interview that the town is in the process of applying for more grants, and that in order to get them, “you’ve got to show what you’ve been doing. You’ve got to show commitment and readiness.”

Among the accomplishments of Phase I were an environmental assessment of the site, a hazardous materials assessment, and cost estimates based on a rough design of the project.

The town also needed to acquire a lease from the state for the land underneath the building and to finalize the lease for the building itself from the Vermont Rail System (VRS).

Fox explained that the plan is

■ SEE TRAIN STATION, A4

The CHANGING ECONOMY

State’s smallest hospital makes big economic impact



COURTESY PHOTO

An architectural drawing of Grace Cottage Family Health’s proposed new clinic in Townshend. Fundraising is underway to cover the \$20 million cost of the project.

With a \$33 million budget, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital works to keep as much of that money as possible in its underserved, rural economy

By Joyce Marcel
The Commons

TOWNSHEND—The people of the West River Valley love Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital for its role in providing health care to this underserved rural area, but they might not realize the economic contribution it makes to the region.

While Grace Cottage — by numerous metrics, the smallest hospital in Vermont — relies on

philanthropy to continue providing its services, it also pours a significant amount of money back into Windham County.

Founded in 1949, Grace Cottage offers a small, 19-bed hospital; a recently updated 24-hour emergency room; a laboratory; a pharmacy; a rural health clinic with 13 primary care providers who provide more than 30,000 patient visits per year; in-patient and out-patient physical and occupational therapy; and a

■ SEE GRACE COTTAGE, A2



RANDOLPH T. HOLMUT/THE COMMONS

Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital Board chair and president Martha Dale.

Brattleboro wonders about the future of its downtown



JIM COMMENTUCCI/SPECIAL TO THE COMMONS

Sam’s Outdoor Outfitters closed its landmark Main Street store on April 14.

“We’re in a bit of a trough, but I see good signs,” says one developer amid a churn of storefronts

By Kevin O’Connor
Vt Digger

BRATTLEBORO—Five years ago, this community received an early Christmas present with the November 2019 news of a proposed \$30 million arts and apartment block for downtown.

“This project,” Brattleboro Museum & Art Center director Danny Lichtenfeld said then of the priciest Main Street plan in local history, “will encourage enduring economic and civic vitality.”

Four months later, the

■ SEE DOWNTOWN, A3

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The Commons

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- promotes local independent journalism,
- fosters civic engagement by building media skills through publication of *The Commons* and commonsnews.org, and through the Media Mentoring Project.

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

VOICES

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

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

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

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

The views expressed in our Voices section are those of individual contributors. Bylined commentaries by members of the Vermont Independent Media board of directors represent their individual opinions; as an organization, we are committed to providing a forum for the entire community.

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

Grace Cottage

FROM SECTION FRONT

hospice room. “As the largest employer in Windham County outside of Brattleboro, we currently employ 229 individuals,” said CEO and president Doug DiVello. “Most of these employees live within a short distance of Grace Cottage, shop locally, and have a significant impact on the region’s economy.”

Of those employees, 169 are full-time, 17 are part-time, and 43 are per diem.

All together, Grace Cottage, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, and the Brattleboro Retreat employ the largest percentage of employees in any single sector — in this case health care — in Windham County.

The staff has a strong sense of devotion to the hospital. For the second year in a row, it was named Vermont’s Best Place to Work in the medium-sized business category by *Vermont Business Magazine* and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.

Approximately 75% of the hospital’s \$33 million budget will be spent on salaries. That ought to mean a significant amount of money for those 229 employees to put into the many local businesses of Windham County, New Hampshire, or wherever they live.

But where they live might not be where they want to live, because Windham County has a serious housing shortage at the moment.

“The number one question that somebody who’s considering

a job has is, ‘Can I find housing nearby?’” said Grace Cottage Board Chair and President Martha Dale.

“And it is a challenge,” she continued. “I don’t know the geographic distribution of our staff, but I know a fair number travel over from New Hampshire. They come from all around.”

Dale is sure that some Grace Cottage people commute as long as an hour “because either that’s where they wanted to live or where they found housing or whatever. So, yes, it’s a major issue.”

The issue has become even more critical because Grace Cottage is now recruiting for a new president and CEO to replace DiVello, who will retire on Sept. 30.

“Right now we’re doing a search, and housing and relocation is a major factor for anybody we’re going to attract to that position,” Dale said, explaining that “you can sell a position and the challenges and the vision of the organization as best as you can.”

“But somebody who’s making a choice to to throw their hat in the ring to be considered as a candidate is also going to want to know what the likelihood is that they’re going to find a house in their price range,” she continued.

Prospective employees, Dale added, “also want to know if they’re going to find a house where their kids can go to school



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

Grace Cottage Family Health’s clinic in Townshend is crammed into two old houses that were built in the 1840s. Work is underway on building a new expanded clinic adjacent to these structures to provide a more modern treatment space.

and where their spouses can work.”

“All of these tend to factor in,” she said.

A new clinic

Grace Cottage’s current health clinic is crammed into two old houses built in the 1840s and is bursting at the seams. In 2018, it had 21,000 individual patient visits, which grew to 31,000 visits in 2022.

The hospital is trying to raise \$20 million to build a new primary care clinic and broaden its services.

It hopes to submit its Act 250

application in June for a proposed 23,000-square-foot accessible building, with improved parking and easier access to the hospital’s lab and diagnostic services. If things go well, the hospital hopes to break ground in spring 2025.

At the beginning of April, U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, D-Vt., was able to secure an additional \$1.5 million in federal funding for the project, which has now raised \$7.8 million.

“As long as we have targeted congressional spending like this in the appropriations process, it enables us in Congress to work together as Democrats and Republicans,” Balint said when she made the announcement.

“So much has fallen apart in Congress, so many things have made it so difficult for us to work together, and having this congressional spending going directly to people’s communities is a signal that, first of all, we are remembering that the most important people are the people back home,” she continued. “And secondly, that government can actually work for people.”

In constructing the new clinic, Grace Cottage will try to spend as much of the \$20 million as it can in Windham County; this is also part of its ability to be an important economic driver in the West River Valley.

“My hope is that we can employ local contractors and workers in the building of this, that we can purchase products locally, or as locally as we can,” Dale said. “With the engineers and regulatory specialists that we hire for this project, we’re trying to find

the best qualified as near geographically to our service area as we can.”

Buy local

For the 25% of the annual budget not committed to salaries, the hospital tries to spend locally when it can.

It uses Brunelle & Son Construction, based in Brattleboro; DeCamp Plumbing and Heating, of Putney; and Lawrence & Lober Electric, of Rockingham — “just off the top of my head, all local vendors,” said Andrea Seaton, senior director of development, marketing, and community relations.

“We’d be happy to buy more, but there’s not much that we can buy locally — not sheets and pil- lows, medicines, computer net- works, or TVs,” she said.

The hospital also procures building materials from WW Building Supply in Newfane and Wilmington (whose owner, Ed Druke, also serves on the Grace Cottage board of trustees as vice president). It source food from Townshend-based River Bend Farm Market, although it uses US Foods, based in New York, “for most of our food for patients and employees,” Seaton said.

In all, Grace Cottage spends money with 60 local businesses.

Over the past year, Grace Cottage has contracted locally for rubbish removal, new construction, advertising, and tent rentals with local vendors, and the hospital contributes to the Townshend Cemetery Commission. It purchased mulch from the Vermont Mulch Company, services from the Richards Group, and paint from Sherwin Williams, all in Brattleboro.

KitKat’s Embroidery is a sole-proprietor shop in Chester; the owner makes flags and silkscreens T-shirts and hats for events such as the hospital’s Health Golf Tournament and its Fair Day.

“We could send the jobs out to some big multinational corporation, but we don’t,” said Charma Bonanno, the hospital’s associate director of development, marketing, and community relations. “We want to keep it local when we can.”

Grace Cottage pays for membership in the Windham Solid Waste Management District, which is also in Brattleboro. It is a sponsor of the golf tournaments of both Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and the Winston L. Prouty Center for Child and Family Development, which, in turn, sponsor Grace Cottage’s golf tournament at the Haystack Golf Club in Wilmington.

Green Mountain Power is another vendor from the region, as are Best Septic, Miller Milk, and Abatem Exterminating.

An economic challenge to the community

Dale considers Grace Cottage’s very existence to be an economic driver. But in a larger sense, Grace Cottage challenges its community, especially Townshend, to think about its infrastructure.

“Whenever you engage in community infrastructure projects, or buildings, or whatever, you are ultimately going to enhance the grand list,” Dale said.

“But in a more demonstrable way, you’re going to enhance the development potential in your community,” she noted. “And I think whatever Grace Cottage engages in that, it encourages the towns that it serves to think about their infrastructure-building.”

Such a project, Dale added, is “ultimately going to have a positive impact on those communities themselves.”

“It increases the potential for other developments and the like,” she said.

DEC offers advice on backyard open burning

MONTPELIER—With spring clearing underway in parts of the state, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is reminding Vermonters to follow a few guidelines for on-premise or backyard open burning.

“Burning materials from spring cleanup can release harmful pollution that can impact neighboring properties,” said DEC Commissioner Jason Batchelder in a news release. “By following these guidelines, Vermonters can help reduce air pollution, avoid nuisance impacts, and protect human and environmental health.”

On-premise or backyard

burning of brush, deadwood, or tree cuttings collected from normal property maintenance is allowed under the Vermont Air Pollution Control Regulations, as long as no public or private nuisance, such as excessive smoke, is created.

Use these guidelines during backyard burning:

- Allow green materials to dry before burning.
- Consider the wind speed and direction before burning.
- Check the Fire Danger Forecast from Forests, Parks and Recreation and postpone burning during periods of elevated fire danger.
- Check the Air Quality

Forecast and postpone burning if atmospheric conditions are not favorable to disperse the smoke.

- Obtain a local burn permit from your Town Fire Warden.
- Ensure that the fire burns hot.

“Our best suggestion is to avoid burning altogether and let the materials decompose naturally,” said John Wakefield, compliance section chief for the DEC Air Quality and Climate Division.

Find tips on what to do with excess leaves, grass, and wood — such as composting and brush piles — from the DEC at dec.vermont.gov.

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Downtown

COVID-19 pandemic upended everything. The museum and its partners at M & S Development saw funding for their seven-story building dry up as neighboring businesses struggled to stay afloat. Visit downtown today, and you'll see the scars of ever-changing times.

At the start of 2023, the 83-year-old mom-and-pop Hotel Pharmacy was felled by chain drug stores. Then last fall, the 150-year-old former Vermont National turned Chittenden, People's United, and finally M & T Bank closed due to consolidation.

And just this month, the 92-year-old Sam's Outdoor Outfitters shut the doors to its Brattleboro store after three generations of family operation.

"What's going to fill this?" one last-day Sam's shopper wondered aloud as he browsed the town's largest, longest-operating store — deemed by former Gov. Peter Shumlin as the Brattleboro equivalent of Macy's.

The loss of a landmark whose square footage equals half a football field comes as residents continue to complain about people asking for money on Main Street and more than a half-dozen nearby landlords are seeking to rent or sell space.

"We're getting some body blows," said Robert Stevens, a local engineer and head of M & S Development, which has worked

on several projects in town as well as on the \$56 million renovation of Bennington's Putnam Block.

But behind the scenes, Brattleboro leaders see a flip side. The retiring founders of several longtime shops, starting with the four-decade-old Everyone's Books, have successfully sold their businesses to new owners. Main Street's Crosby Block was just purchased by a Brooklyn buyer for \$1 million, while the neighboring former M & T Bank building is under contract for a similar price, according to real estate agents.

"Where we are situated is a business and cultural hub," said Kate Trzaskos, executive director of the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance, which is opening its own storefront (at 57 Elliot St., previously the site of the Artrageus 1 gallery) and teaming with the local Chamber of Commerce to hire an economic development coordinator.

So is the proverbial glass half empty or half full?

As nearly two dozen other Vermont downtowns in the Main Street America support program face the same question, Brattleboro is searching for answers.

"It does seem like we're in a bit of a trough," Stevens said of his community, "but I see good signs in terms of coming out of it."

'Public spaces that draw people together'

The first seeds of what's now downtown Brattleboro sprouted more than 250 years ago, when the banks of the Connecticut River travel corridor and Whetstone Brook tributary attracted the first gristmill in 1762, store in 1771, and tavern in 1795.

"There was no miller to the mill," the late historian Mary Cabot wrote in the *Annals of Brattleboro*, "but settlers themselves could go and grind as they might have occasion."

The 1800s brought the railroad, more buildings, and many blazes, leading to a switch from wooden structures to the historic brick ones that stand today, after the Great Fire of 1869 incinerated half of central downtown.

Main Street had morphed into the north-south Route 5 when national chains began to build their own standalone stores there, including the onetime household names of Montgomery Ward in 1929, A&P in 1939, and Woolworth's in 1956. But soon after the arrival of Interstate 91 in 1960, such retailers moved out to roads nearer the exit ramps.

As internet shopping opportunities have increased, multigenerational downtown businesses have closed, including the 95-year-old Mann's clothing store in 1996, the 86-year-old Baker's newsstand in 2011, and the 95-year-old Galanes



Sam's Outdoor Outfitters in Brattleboro started out as an Army & Navy store, selling military surplus alongside work clothing.

sporting goods store turned souvenir shop just last month.

Stevens first witnessed the problem shortly after moving to the area nearly four decades ago. The engineer then became a part of the solution by working on downtown's two most recent developments: the \$10 million Brattleboro Food Co-op and affordable housing complex that opened in 2012, and the Brooks House business and apartment block, which was gutted by a 2011 fire and revived with a \$23 million restoration in 2014.

"Twenty-first-century community development must include not only housing, restaurants, retail, and offices but cultural and public spaces that draw people together," Stevens said in announcing the museum's proposed \$30 million building in 2019. "We know that investing in vibrant downtowns creates jobs, increases property values, and attracts young families."

Stevens still believes that, even after the latter project fell through. But he recognizes how online ordering and video conferencing have changed the community's commercial center.

'You have to break the old to have the new'

The museum never did expand its downtown footprint, but many locals still see the area's future as tied to the creative economy.

A nonprofit now owns and operates Main Street's oldest surviving business, the 1938 Latches Theatre, whose four-story building also features a hotel, pub, and

shops.

Artists are sharing space in multiple ways. The former W. T. Grant store at 181-183 Main St. now hosts a gallery and schools for photography and dance. A nearby century-old High Street block features studios for wood-working, printmaking, and pottery. And some 30 craftspeople operate the adjacent Harmony Collective store.

"It provides an opportunity for all that none could have done alone," Trzaskos said of the latter group.

Such creativity extends to the town's former First Baptist and All Souls Unitarian Universalist buildings — now the Epsilon Spires and Stone Church performance spaces, respectively — and a coming Pliny Park mural project in which residents are donating cracked ceramics to turn into a wall-size mosaic.

"It's really symbolic in a lot of ways," Trzaskos said of the downtown mural. "You have to break the old to have the new."

An immediate need: housing

Although real estate agents report local demand for retail and office space is weak, a recent municipally sponsored housing action plan found immediate need for more than 500 residential units.

In response, the state has awarded tax credits to convert much of Main Street's TD Bank building into 14 market-rate apartments and neighboring Flat Street's century-old DeWitt Block into 15 apartments,

including studios and one- and two-bedroom units.

"The more people [there are] living downtown," Stevens said, "the more people will spend money on the first floor."

The engineer rewinds back to the day after the Brooks House burned in 2011. He was hired to accompany emergency responders to determine if Main Street's biggest block was stable and salvageable.

"Everything was so wet," he recalled. "The building was literally weeping."

Stevens didn't know that months later, he would buy the smoldering shell of the five-story cornerstone, piece together a rebuilding plan, and reopen to a *Vermont Life* cover story headlined "Miracle on Main Street."

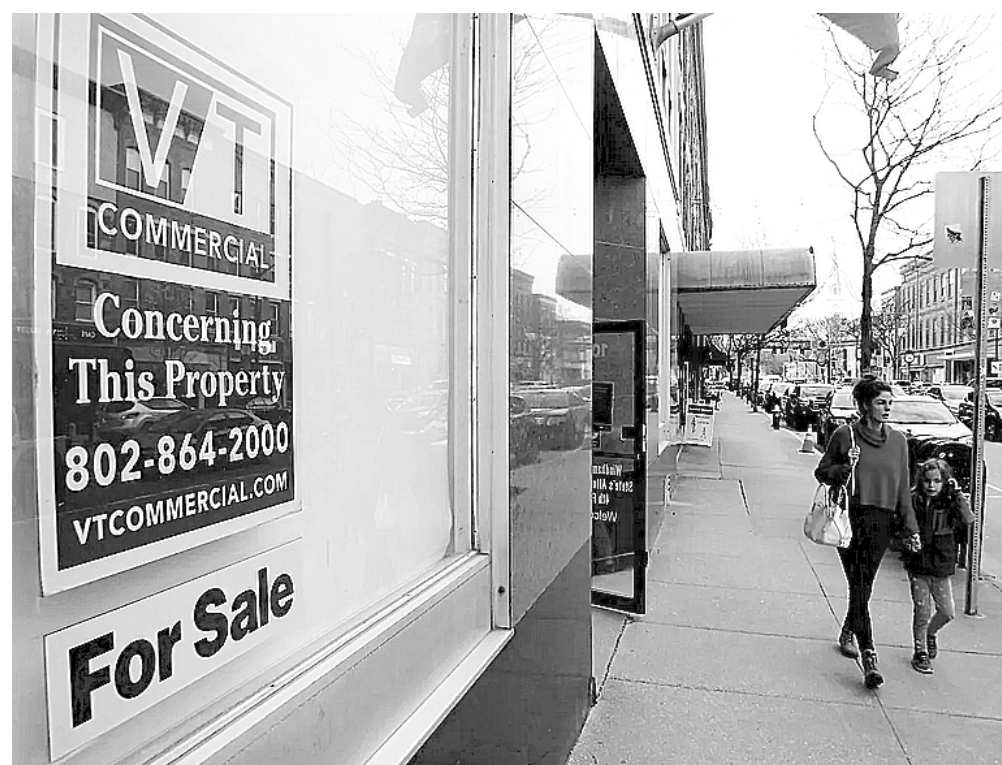
"We have cycles, good times and bad times," he said this month. "Downtown is in a low spot now, and it feels a little harder this time."

Then again, the Brooks House, relying on a mix of storefronts, meeting spaces, and apartments, is fully rented for the first time since its rebirth.

"With a large number of small businesses, you have diversity and that gives you some resilience," Stevens said.

"We keep getting knocked down, but we keep getting back up. People are willing to have faith, take a risk and put their sweat and equity into reinvestment," he added.

He finds that encouraging. "When we don't get back up, that's when we have to worry," Stevens said.



The 150-year-old former Vermont National turned Chittenden, People's United and finally M&T Bank is one of several currently empty downtown Brattleboro properties.

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■ Train station

for the building to be developed for other commercial uses as well, though the town has pledged to keep the building operational as a passenger train station with waiting rooms.

He cited the very successful Windsor Station restaurant in Windsor, housed in a repurposed train station, as a model for what the Bellows Falls station could become.

“That type of restaurant,” Fox said, “generates enough revenue to sustain the business and the building.”

For many years, the building also included a lunch counter and kitchen, but that the kitchen was destroyed by fire and will be restored as part of the renovation.

This pre-development and planning stage took three years to complete, at a cost of \$451,000.

Breaking ground

Fox said that Phase II, scheduled to begin in July, will involve lead and asbestos abatement and will also include preservation and restoration of the exterior masonry, windows, and doors to meet preservation standards of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

That work will also address problems with the building’s bulkhead and foundation.

Phase II will cost an estimated \$606,000. Rockingham was awarded a \$350,000 Northern Border Regional Commission grant and a \$200,000 Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund grant, which will cover most of the necessary expenses.

Phase II is expected to take a year, with Phase III scheduled to start in July 2025 and run through 2026.

“At the end of Phase II,” Fox said, “we’ll have the exterior restored, the building envelope solid, and the building itself healthier.”

Once work on the building’s exterior is complete, Phase III is an interior rehabilitation estimated to cost between \$3.25 and \$4 million.

The entire project will be 80% grant funded, with the town required to raise the remaining 20%.

The building will be restored while preserving the historic interior. All the internal heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems will be updated, as will the plumbing, electrical, lighting, and bathrooms.

In addition to the interior work, Phase III will include development of parking, site work,

and streetscape improvements.

Site work will include water and sewer upgrades, drainage, blending the exterior raised platform with the building, and adding sidewalks, among other improvements. Safety fencing will also create a barrier from the nearby railroad tracks.

A busy place

Three railroads use rail yards at or near the Bellows Falls station.

Green Mountain Railroad, part of the VRS since 2010, and operates a 60-acre rail yard north of Bellows Falls at the site of Steamtown, a rail museum that operated from 1963 to 1983.

It also has a 8-acre rail yard just across the Connecticut River in North Walpole, New Hampshire, connected to the Island by a historic arched stone bridge that is still in daily use. Its rail yard encompasses the northern end of the Island.

The New England Central and Berkshire & Eastern railroads regularly come through Bellows Falls to pick up or leave freight cars coming to and from the GMRC yards.

Since the advent of rail travel in the 1840s, about a third of the Island has been owned by various railroad companies. Great River Hydro, formerly TransCanada and a subsidiary of Hydro-Québec, which operates the hydroelectric dam at the north end of the Island, owns approximately another third.

Because of this unusual ownership arrangement, Depot Street, which cuts across the Island and connects it to downtown Bellows Falls, only became an official village street last year, even though the town has maintained it since the 1820s.

‘Extra rigorous’ attention

Fox said that the Environmental Protection Agency was “extra rigorous in [its] investigation of the site” for both environmental and archaeological reasons in the federal agency’s work to revitalize the Island.

The Island has not only been a major industrial site, with several paper mills operating there for 150 years, but it also has been a historic center of Native American activity, pre-dating European colonization by thousands of years.

Found at the southern end of the Island, the Petroglyphs comprise one of the largest collections of Native rock carvings in the eastern United States. And local



ROBERT F. SMITH/THE COMMONS

The Bellows Falls train station, built in 1923, is in the middle of a major renovation and preservation project.

historians have written that many Native burial sites were uncovered and their contents removed during the Island’s development beginning in the late 1700s.

Plans for the BFITC project include how to proceed if more archaeological discoveries are made.

Boosting the economy

The depot project itself is part of a much larger town plan to redevelop the Island as part of the historic Bellows Falls downtown over the coming decades. The focus will be on creating commercial, street-level properties with much-needed residential space above.

“That’s the goal,” Fox said. “We have approximately 250 housing units in town that are in poor shape and offline. People can’t find quality housing here.”

He noted that the nearby 27-unit Bellows Falls Garage project, just across the street from the Island, “filled up every apartment within a week” when it began accepting tenants last year.

Fox said that he sees projects such as the depot and Island redevelopment, the new Bellows Falls Garage apartments, and numerous others in the works as a means of “driving and developing our economy. We need new quality places for people to work and to move into.”

Construction and restoration at the train station over the next few years will not be the only work going on on the Island.

Two major projects — replacing the current traffic bridge onto Canal Street with a pedestrian-only bridge, and creating a new traffic exit off the north end of the Island with a bridge that will bypass Canal Street altogether — are



RANDOLPH T. HOLMUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Amtrak’s Vermonter pulls into the Bellows Falls station during a July 2021 celebration of the resumption of passenger service in Vermont following a shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

also scheduled to be completed in the next few years.

Other projects planned for the coming decade and beyond include pedestrian pathways to connect the depot area with the downtown and with nearby Riverfront Park [“Bellows Falls project envisions a riverfront oasis,” Reporter’s Notebook, Feb. 7].

The 8-acre park, owned by the Bellows Falls Historical Society, is being developed to create a historical, interpretive park with a Connecticut River heritage center, museums, education and performance spaces, with an emphasis on the arts and recreation. The park is also the only location in the village that offers direct

access to the river.

The park’s trail system is being connected with other trails in the area. A planned Abenaki Cultural Heritage Information Center will also be included in future development for this historic region.

These projects will impact the economic growth and development of the town for decades to come, Fox said.

“Everything we’re doing is helping the economy,” Fox explained. “This is a small investment in light of the return we’ll get 10 to 20 years out and beyond. Now is the time to make this happen. This is once-in-a-generation, funding like this being available.”

Explore Brattleboro’s history on a Walking Tour Fundraiser

BRATTLEBORO — Brattleboro Sunrise Rotary has rebooted its walking history tour of Brattleboro, offering participants a journey through time while supporting a worthy cause. This fundraiser will take place on select Saturdays through 2024 at 11 a.m., with tours on April 27 and May 18, as well as summer and fall tours to be announced.

“This walking tour provides a wonderful opportunity for both residents and visitors alike to connect with the rich history of Brattleboro,” Sandy Shriver, one of the Brattleboro Sunrise Rotary guides, said in a news release. “Not only will participants gain a deeper understanding of our town’s past, but they’ll also be supporting the important work of Brattleboro Sunrise Rotary in our community.”

Led by knowledgeable local Rotarian guides, attendees will spend 90 minutes walking up Brattleboro’s Main Street, delving into its fascinating history from its early beginnings to its present-day charm.

According to local guide Jonathan Secret, “Even lifelong residents will learn many interesting things they didn’t know about Brattleboro.”

With about 10 stops at key historical landmarks, participants will discover the tales of Brattleboro’s evolution. While older kids are welcome, this tour is designed for adults.

All proceeds from the walking history tour will directly benefit Brattleboro Sunrise Rotary’s initiatives, which include supporting student scholarships, local projects and organizations dedicated to community development, education, and humanitarian efforts.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit brattleborosunriserotary.org. Tickets are on a sliding scale of \$20 to \$40 per person. Space is limited, so early booking is recommended to secure a spot.

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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 Dehumidifier 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.

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Trash

year acquired the town's former hauler, Triple T Trucking. Only Casella submitted a letter of interest, and a meeting was held April 8 with Town Manager John Potter, Moreland, and a Casella representative.

Substantive changes ahead

During the meeting, Moreland said all parties agreed that "substantive program changes will require adequate time and plenty of public education."

That's because Casella is interested in a new deal with the town on the condition that it incorporate a transition to automated, or mechanized, collection, a process wherein special carts are left curbside and a truck can reach out by mechanical means to pick up the container and drop its contents into the back of the truck without requiring the driver — the one employee — to leave the cab.

Moreland noted the advantages of an automated collection system include the need for fewer employees, and that they are less likely to be injured on the job. He said the solid waste industry, like many others, is struggling to keep jobs filled, and that a person on the ground lifting cans and bags of trash is at risk due to physical strain as well as traffic.

Town staff members have identified and are evaluating two options for a future deal. These include a standard contract, as the town had with Triple T for many years, and a franchise arrangement.

In a franchise deal, the town would negotiate options but the hauler would be the entity dealing directly with residents.

Moreland also noted that for years, Brattleboro has been successful in diverting waste away from the landfill by promoting recycling and organics collection for composting. He said if the town wants to continue to promote those services, that could be part of a franchise arrangement with the hauler.

There are a lot of issues to explore, including collection frequency.

Currently, recycling and organics are collected weekly and trash is collected every other week.

The current Pay As You Throw system involves pre-purchasing collection bags locally, but Moreland pointed out that this could be accomplished in other ways, depending on the type of agreement reached.

For instance, a franchise could include negotiating multiple cart sizes, depending on each household's needs. If it is a standard contract, the town could provide base carts and if a household needs more, the owner could contract directly with Casella.

"Either option would enable us to step away from the bag program, which may or not be desirable," Moreland said, adding that a plan to dispose of leftover trash bags would be formulated.

"We'll have to come up with a plan because there are going to be some out there, and they will lose value," he said.

Advisory groups will gauge public opinion

Most important now, Moreland said, is to gauge public interest in the two contract options: traditional or franchise.

The town manager's office plans to mount an online survey for input and, "because we think this is something that really would benefit from a slightly deeper dive," to establish four advisory groups: one of Representative Town Meeting members, one of renters, one of West Brattleboro residents, and one of folks who live downtown.

There will be two meetings, one before pricing is obtained and one after. Those who serve on the focus groups will be paid \$25 per meeting. Moreland said the process will extend through May and then he will return to the Selectboard with the information gathered.

Board member Franz Reichsman questioned the timeline and size of focus groups, and asked whether a transition to automation — if that option is selected — would need to be in place July 1.

"How are we going to implement this in a really good way?" he asked.

Moreland responded that any

automation would not start immediately, but during the life of the contract, as the town would agree to make the transition with "as much public education as possible."

He said he has seen "great resiliency" from the public in switching collection practices with plenty of notice and "a certain amount of aggressive public education."

Maintaining sustainability

The town has no legal obligation to provide an organized recycling and composting program such as the one that currently exists, Moreland said, and many towns offer no solid waste collection service, including Keene,

New Hampshire, and Montpelier.

"Brattleboro has what the folks at the Agency of Natural Resources consider to be a 'Cadillac' program, and they love our 'Cadillac' program, and I believe they hope we love it too, and we'll be looking to sustain it in the year to come," he said.

Board Chair Elizabeth McLoughlin asked staff members to provide statistics about how much recycling and composting is now being removed from the trash flow, and Moreland indicated that they would.

"I think it's important for the town to know the sustainability elements that are inherent in our current system so that we, hopefully, endeavor to maintain that," McLoughlin said.

Moreland noted that when Brattleboro transitioned to the pay-as-you-throw model in 2016, "overnight, trash volumes were cut in half and organics collection doubled."

"And I remember people being very trepidatious about that program but it seems to be working very well, and certainly as intended," added McLoughlin.

Moreland agreed, and added that for those with diapers and medical waste, the current program doesn't work as well, but that "presumably in this process we might identify measures that would help those households."

"It can't be tailor-made to everybody, but we can do our best," Moreland said.

FROM SECTION FRONT

Windham County participates in Drug Take Back Day

Saturday, April 27, is the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) National Drug Take Back Day. The Windham County Prevention Partnership (WCPP) says it is using this opportunity to raise awareness about proper storage and disposal of prescription medications.

"This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue," said the WCPP in a news release. "Medicines that are left in home cabinets are highly susceptible to misuse and abuse. Rates of prescription drug misuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Additionally, simply throwing unused medicines in the trash or flushing them down the toilet risks environmental harm, theft, and poses a public health hazard."

Drug Take Back Day gives communities the opportunity to prevent prescription drug

abuse and theft by ridding their homes of expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. The DEA cannot accept liquids, needles or sharps, only pills or patches.

"It is so important to come together as a community and do our part to help raise awareness and take this issue head on. We are so grateful for the support we've seen for this event," said Elisha Underwood, the executive director of West River Valley Thrives in Townshend.

Collect your expired or unused Rx pills or patches in their original bottle or place them in a disposable bag. Be sure to remove or cover your personal information. Anonymously drop your pills and patches in an Rx drug drop box near you.

Medications for disposal can be dropped off at any of the following locations:

- Messenger Valley Pharmacy — 170 Grafton Rd., Townshend
- Brattleboro Police Department — 62 Black Mountain Rd.
- Brattleboro Memorial Hospital — 17 Belmont Ave.
- Bellows Falls Police Department — 170 Rockingham St.
- Wilmington Police Department — 2 East Main St.
- Dover Police Department — 245 VT Route 100.

- All locations listed have permanent drop boxes located in the agency's lobby, and boxes are available for pill disposal during open lobby hours, no questions asked. Note that these locations may have fluctuating hours; call ahead to confirm hours.
- Those unable to make it to a physical drop box who would like a postage-paid bag to dispose of unwanted prescriptions via mail in a medication-safe envelope can request an envelope from the Vermont Department of Health at bit.ly/762-rx.

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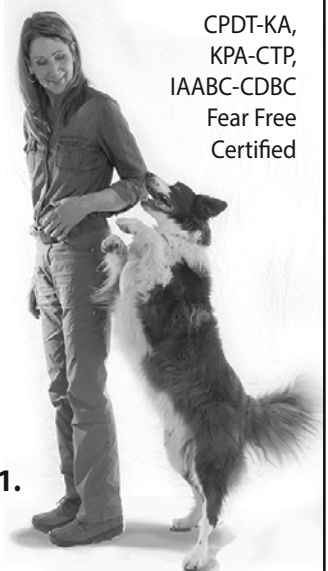
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Elizabeth Bridgewater



Libby Bennett



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Moderated by Joyce Marcel

Panelists Include:

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

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

Libby Bennett, Executive Director, Groundworks Collaborative.

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

Moderated by Joyce Marcel

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries



• **Maureen A. (Eakins) Bell, 53**, of Brattleboro. Died suddenly at her home on April 10, 2024.

Maureen was born on Feb. 4, 1971, to Francis and Patricia (Lawless) Eakins. She attended St. Michael's Catholic School and Brattleboro Union High School. Maureen worked at various jobs locally, most recently as a home health aide for Bayada. She held her clients close to her heart. She had just enrolled in a course to receive her LNA certification to be able to further assist her clients. Maureen's favorite season was summer. She loved going to the beach and camping. She had a passion for animals and was known to rescue quite a few. She enjoyed reading, puzzles, and flowers but, most of all, spending time with family, friends, and her pup, Riley. She was also a master of Eighties music trivia; play her one note and she could name that song. On July 18, 1994, she married Rodney W. Bell of Brattleboro, who survives. Maureen is also survived by her two children, Aeron (Grellia) and Sarah Bell; a sister, Cathy Eakins (Peter) of Brattleboro; and her brother, Mark Eakins (Jed) of Florida. Additionally, she is survived by her sisters- and brothers-in-law: Cindy Susse (Eric), Wendy Kendall, and Randy Bell (Shirley); and her very dear friend, Mary Wheeler, including the entire adopted Wheeler family. She was predeceased by her parents; her father and mother-in-law, Howard and Ruth Bell; brother-in-law, Fred Kendall; and her beloved Golden Retriever, Jake. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: There will be a graveside service and a Celebration of Life to follow in early summer (as this was her favorite season) at a date to be announced. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

• **Robert E. "Red" Davidson Sr., 86**, of East Hartford, Connecticut. Died on April 5,



2024, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Brattleboro on April 2, 1938, he was the son of the late Lyman and Marjorie (Hamilton) Davidson. He received his education in Brattleboro, and was a 1957 graduate of Brattleboro Union High School. Robert joined the Army in 1958 and served until 1964. In his leisure time, he enjoyed woodworking and his vegetable garden and flower beds. Among his love of the outdoors, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, and softball. Following his marriage to Catherine R. White on April 11, 1973, in Bellows Falls, the couple relocated to East Hartford, where they made their home. Robert worked for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft for nearly 22 years, retiring Aug. 31, 1994. He was predeceased by his loving wife Kay, his daughter Bonnie Stansberry and his three sisters Kathy Williams, Marian Akley, and Velma Merrifield; and brother Lyman Davidson. Robert leaves two children: Robert Jr. and wife Lisa (Elliott) and Kelly Davidson, whom he loved dearly. He also leaves his brother, David Sr., and his wife Juanita; grandchildren Sara-Ann, Kristy, and Shayne, and great-grandchildren Ian, Christopher, Jacob, Antonio, and Sasha Rae. He also leaves brother-in-law and sister-in-law Howard and Mary Crown of Vermont; many nieces, nephews and cousins, and beloved friends. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A burial service will be held on Saturday, May 11, at noon, at Meeting House Hill Cemetery in Brattleboro.



• **Rosetta Morse Weber, 39**, of Waitsfield. Died April 11, 2024 from injuries sustained in a tragic vehicle collision in Moretown on her way to work. Rosetta, known by friends and family as Zetty, lived a rich, rewarding — though far-too-short — life working to improve the lives of others. Zetty was born in 1985 in Brattleboro,

and grew up with her brother, Skye, in the hills of Guilford, the daughter of Dale and Eric Morse, who had been part of the Packer's Corner neighborhood community. She graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 2003 and earned a degree in geography and community and international Development at the University of Vermont. Very early in her life, Zetty demonstrated an inclination toward service to others and generosity. She developed her love of endurance sports as a member of the BUHS cross-country and track teams, and her appreciation of music through cello and recorder lessons at the Brattleboro Music School and her participation in the BUHS chorus and the annual musicals. While at BUHS, she helped to create the student-run organization CLEA (Child Labor Education & Action), through which she helped organize a service trip to Guatemala. The focus on child labor continued at UVM and a semester in Ecuador, where she focused on child labor and child safety issues. A pivotal experience for Zetty was her time at the American Youth Foundation's Camp Merrowvista in Center Tuftonboro, New Hampshire, starting at age 12. She returned every year as a camper, then counselor, and eventually — her first job out of college — as program director. As a counselor, she led month-long backpacking, canoeing, and bicycling trips, including a bicycling circumnavigation of Nova Scotia. At Merrowvista and

throughout her life, she lived the camp motto "My own self, at my very best, all the time." Following her work there, Zetty worked as an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer (and later as a board member) with the Burlington-based DREAM (Directing through Recreation, Education, Adventure, and Mentoring) Program, a non-profit aimed at providing free programming for kids in low-income housing communities. Zetty then worked for the Chill Foundation, a Burlington-based organization founded by Jake and Donna Carpenter, the founders of Burton Snowboards, to "inspire young people through boardsports and build a more equitable outdoor community." At the time of her death, Zetty was the vice president of global programs at Chill, whose CEO, Ben Clark, described her as the "soul of Chill." He described her as "without a doubt, one of the best humans I have ever met in my 44 years." She was instrumental in growing Chill from a largely regional organization with presence in 24 cities across 9 countries today. Zetty flourished in the out-of-doors, and traveled widely to enjoy outdoor sports activities and spend time with friends. At every step in life — whether in Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, Burlington, or Waitsfield, Zetty established lifelong friendships. She brought people together and made deep

connections in every chapter of her life, both informally, as countless of her friends described at a gathering in Waitsfield following her death, and formally, as officiant of multiple weddings for dear friends and family. Zetty was an eternal optimist who always saw the good in people. And she had an infectious smile. For Zetty, there were two kinds of days: Golden Days, which were sunny, and Silver Days, which were rainy. And all of them were great. On Aug. 25, 2015, Zetty met Parker Weber and the two began a life of adventure together, splitting their time between Burlington and Jackson, Wyoming, big-mountain back-country skiing, surfing, mountain biking, and rock climbing from coast to coast. They were married in 2018 at Belden Hill in Guilford exactly three years from the day they met. In 2021 they welcomed their now 2½-year-old daughter, Bridger. Parker recently completed a beautiful home for them, lovingly built with his own hands and nestled into the foothills near the base of Mount Ellen, where they could walk to the base lodge of Sugarbush Ski Area. Zetty leaves her husband Parker and daughter Bridger of Waitsfield, her parents Dale and Eric Morse of Guilford, and her brother Skye Morse and wife Geneva and their sons Bennett and Emery of Guilford. To support Parker and Bridger in the years ahead, two GoFundMe campaigns have been created (on the GoFundMe website, search

for "Zetty Weber"). MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service will be held at a later date on Belden Hill in Guilford.



• **Dennis Adelbert "Denny" Peters, 89**, of Marlboro. Died peacefully, with his loving family by his side, on April 16, 2024, in Brattleboro.

A beloved figure in his family and community, he was born on Sept. 21, 1934, in Eden, Vermont. He was fiercely independent and fought to age gracefully. He was a longtime resident of Marlboro, and spent many winters in Florida. He mostly spent the last decade of his life residing in Dover and, most recently, as a resident of Vernon Hall. Dennis was known for his kind and loving nature, his strong work ethic, and his unwavering dedication to his family. He married his beloved Marion, whom he met at a penny auction, on Aug. 2, 1953, in Montgomery Center. As a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, he touched the lives of many with his warmth and wisdom. His greatest pleasure in life was spending time with his family. Dennis worked as a manager at R.S. Roberts in Brattleboro for decades and continued on-call there while he started Denny's Auto Body Shop in Marlboro. His safety and reliability as a wrecker

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

COLUMN | Deeper Dive

Organization gives — and gives back — to community

Brattleboro Time Trade members create an economy of mutual assistance, banking hours by helping their neighbors with tasks both large and small

Brattleboro ONE WINTER not so long ago, Tony, a professional juggler, discovered that a huge icicle had fallen from his roof and penetrated the ceiling above his living room.

Several gallons of water had collected in a large pouch there, held back only by paint, which he punctured and drained into a bucket. Surveying the damage, he sighed, knowing that repairs would be costly.

However, as a new member of Brattleboro Time Trade, or BTT, a local time-bank organization that began in 2009, he decided to try what he thought might be a long shot: He wrote up a request for help and posted it on the BTT website.

To his surprise, Kip offered his skills. As Tony remembers it, "we worked maybe two or three hours and we fixed it, and, while a roofer might have taken half the time, working with Kip didn't cost me anything."

Kip was compensated not in dollars, but in Brattleboro time credits, which are earned according to the number of hours you work.

In BTT, each person's hour of contributed work, whatever the job, is worth one time credit, or one BTT hour. No matter what you do for another member, that time is counted: petsitting or cooking, giving massages or painting pet portraits.

These hour credits can then be "spent" on services you might need, like stacking wood or wedding, or getting a ride to get local errands done while

PHOEBE WAGNER, a local artist and writer, is an enthusiastic and active member of Brattleboro Time Trade. 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.

your car is in the shop.

SILVER is a new member of BTT, a reporter and a novelist. She recounted how, nine days after moving to Brattleboro from New York City in March 2023, she had a serious accident, falling face down on Main Street, and then, after making it to her lobby, blacking out and hitting her head and back.

She says she was appalled by the lack of any response or help from passing motorists, to be seen, no pedestrians were to be seen, perhaps due to the early morning hours.

With a fractured vertebra and a traumatic brain injury, her capabilities were severely limited.

Silver no longer recalls who told her about BTT, but she is grateful for the many members who responded to her BTT requests for help after her accident.

She recounts with enthusiasm how often BTT members came to her aid.

One member drove her and her ailing cat to Massachusetts several times to the nearest veterinarian with openings. Tony rode his bicycle — at night, no less — to bring her ibuprofen to help with pain, and Philip and Kip assembled ergonomic chairs and desks.

These services and more were all done happily and freely,

with nothing more than BTT hours exchanged. Anticipating the need, BTT allows users to go into negative time credits, which was perfect for Silver since it would be months before she was finally feeling well enough to earn hours by responding to others' requests or offering her skills.

BTT MEMBERS have been instrumental in providing community service, such as getting the library's e-bike borrowing program off the ground and playing a major role in staffing it, as well as helping Window Dressers, an organization that

makes low-cost insulating window inserts to help keep out the cold in winter.

Members can earn time credits working with local refugees or performing other community services, like delivering The Commons newspaper or Meals on Wheels.

Brattleboro Time Trade will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, April 28, from 1 to 4 p.m. at The Root Social Justice Center, 28 Williams St, Brattleboro.

Our keynote speaker and facilitator, Eric Bachman, is a long-time time trader with Onion River Exchange (orexchange.org) and has many years of experience in organizational development.

Interested in learning more or becoming a member? Just go to brattleborotimetrade.org, email brattleborotimetrade@gmail.com, or call 802-379-9637.

Antiques and uniques appraisal fundraiser happening in Bellows Falls

BELLOWS FALLS—Treasure or trash? Collectors will be able to find out if that family heirloom Grandma passed along is worth hanging onto at an antiques and uniques appraisal event Sunday, May 5, in Bellows Falls.

The fundraiser runs from 1 to 5 p.m. at the United Church on School Street and is a benefit for the Bellows Falls Woman's Club scholarship fund. Admission is free.

Several appraisers will be on hand to evaluate items and provide information about them. Up to three items can be presented, at a cost of \$8 each, or \$20 for a box lot of coins, stamps, postcards, jewelry or the like. Firearms, knives, ammunition, and other weapons are excluded, as well as rugs larger than 6 by 9 feet. Large furniture pieces can be evaluated through photographs.

Appraisers currently scheduled are Stephan Brandstatter of Brattleboro, who specializes in music-related items, Kit Barry, also of Brattleboro, whose expertise is ephemera, Sharon Boccelli of Westminster, well-known local auctioneer and Dan Yelin, owner of Colony Antiques in Keene, New Hampshire.

Barry describes ephemera as "any paper material [...] covered from 1700s through today, (including) [...] catalogs, booklets, pamphlets, letters, labels, products with labels still attached, product boxes, greeting cards,

invitations, tickets, programs, photographs, school report cards, menus, newspapers, magazines, forms, etc."

Textiles, furniture, currency, coins, clocks, watches, sterling, objets d'art, books, fine china, jewelry, oriental rugs, entertainment memorabilia, American and European art glass, fine art, pottery, musical instruments, and vintage clothing are suggestions for items that can be appraised.

Access to the venue is through the rear of the church at the ground level. Parking is limited in the rear, but additional parking is available in the Hetty Green Park lot behind TD bank. Helpers will be on hand to direct traffic and help with offloading.

The BFWC scholarship fund awards scholarships to graduating seniors at Bellows Falls Union High School and Fall Mountain Regional High School.

Further information can be found on the BFWC Facebook page and at bellowsfallswomansclub.weebly.com.

Our admiration of the antique is not admiration of the old, but of the natural. —RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 22-28 CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Dar Tavernier: Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 8:15p, Thurs 1:15p, Fri 6a, Sat 6p, Sun 5:15p	Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg. 4/25/24: Thurs 6:15p (LIVE)
The World Fusion Show - Ep 176 - Ep 176 - Jamshied Sharifi: Mon 5:30p, Tues 9a, Wed 9p, Thurs 5:30p, Fri 11:30a, Sat 8p, Sun 7:30p	Community Forum - Public Mtg. for Proposed Flood Resiliency Projects on Sand Hill Road: Mon 8:15p, Tues 7a, Wed 12p
Vermont Independent Media presents Voices Live - Conversations of Homelessness: Wed 6:30p (LIVE)	Brattleboro Housing Partnership Board Mtg. 4/22/24: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 12p
Solar Eclipse 2024 at Putney Great Meadows: Mon 6:55p, Tues 6:55p, Fri 5:55p	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 4/22/24: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:30p
Special Events at St. Michael's - Seven Last Words of Christ 3/27/24: Mon 10a, Tues 3:50p, Wed 12:35p, Thurs 9:15p, Fri 6:35a, Sat 2p, Sun 1p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 4/22/24: Fri 6p, Sat 8:30a, Sun 12p
Promos - Moover Microtransit App Tutorial: Thurs 6:55a, Fri 6:55p, Sun 7:55p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 4/23/24: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 2:30p
Perspectives on Trauma - Part 4: Katherine Mague: Mon 9p, Tues 9:30a, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 5p, Fri 10a, Sat 8:30p, Sun 6:30a	Town of Brattleboro - Brattleboro Farm & Food System Assessment Presentation 4/23/24: Sat 6p, Sun 8:30a
Stained Glass Windows of St. Michael's - Week 13: St. Brigid: Mon 6a, Tues 10a, Wed 4p, Thurs 1:55p, Fri 12:35p, Sat 9a, Sun 5:55p	Windham School District Board Mtg. 4/11/24: Tues 11:45a, Wed 6a, Thurs 1p, Sun 8p
Community Forum - Moover Microtransit Meeting 4/9/24: Mon 7a, Tues 12:35p, Wed 5p, Thurs 6a, Fri 5p, Sat 10a, Sun 7p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 4/15/24: Fri 5p, Sat 11a, Sun 6p
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	River Valley Unified School District Board Mtg. 4/15/24: Tues 4:25p, Sat 11:55a, Sun 6:55p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 4/16/24: Tues 8p, Thurs 11a, Sat 1p
News Block: Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p BUHS-TV News: Mon-Fri 12:15p & 6:35p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 4/17/24: Tues 5:30p
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 4/17/24: Sat 8p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 4/17/24: Mon 12p, Wed 9:40a, Sun 6a
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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GUILFORD SOUND According to the heart of Southern Vermont

operator were something that local and state law enforcement people still talk about. Dennis loved working and, despite retiring, he continued to stay working as the maintenance man for his retirement community. He was even awarded "Maintenance Man of the Year" at Butterfield Commons. He loved square dancing, bluegrass festivals and his "old country music." Dennis loved spending time outside, both hunting and fishing. Dennis took pride in the brook trout that he would catch while fishing with his grandkids and great-grandkids. He was a devout Catholic and enjoyed church on Saturday evenings with his wife. His love of cars transcended throughout all generations, down to his youngest great-grandkids. He spent much of his retirement traveling with his wife and family in their motor home, spending much of their time in Zephyrhills, Florida, during the winter. His legacy of love and commitment will forever be cherished by those who knew him. Dennis leaves behind his beloved wife of 72 years, Marion; four children, Dennis Peters Jr. of Vernon, Deborah Wood and her husband, Donald, of Dummerston, Norman Peters and his wife, Linda, of Marlboro, and Edward Peters and his wife, Maria, of East Orlando, Florida; brother Robert Peters and his partner Sue of West Berkshire; and nine grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandson. He was predeceased by his parents, his sisters, Leah Bonnette and Flora Gilbeau, and two brothers, Clinton Peters Jr., and Artie Peters. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was conducted April 22 at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Brattleboro, followed by committal rites and burial in New Westminster Cemetery. Donations to Rescue Inc., P.O. Box 593, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **JoAnn Dorothy Smith, 62**, died peacefully on April 8, 2024. Born on Sept. 8, 1961, she was the beloved mother of Jennifer (Mike Rosso) and Mikey Johnson and the devoted partner of David Coolbeth. JoAnn was the proud grandmother of Marissa, Alexis, Maya, Nick, and Nat. She is also survived by siblings Frank, Genevieve, Diane, Nancy, Danny, Jeanie, Claudia, Anthony, and Monika, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. JoAnn was kindhearted, strong, and independent. She had a great sense of humor and fashion. She loved spending time with her family, friends, and her cat Amber. Some of her favorite things to do were shopping, crafting, listening to Rod Stewart, working on puzzles, and treating herself to ice cream every day. She was a generous soul who loved spoiling family and friends with her handmade gifts. She never missed sending cards on birthdays, holidays, or special occasions. Her friends and family cherish the memories of the joys, love, and laughter she brought into everyone's lives. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial gathering was held at the Cremation Society of New Hampshire's Brattleboro location on April 22. To leave a message of condolence, visit csnh.com.

• **Edward Michael Stack, 87**, formerly of Bellows Falls. Died peacefully on April 4, 2024, at Hanover Terrace in Hanover, New Hampshire. He was born in Bellows Falls on Sept. 16, 1936, the son of Edward J. and Mary (Powers) Stack. Ed graduated from Bellows Falls High School in 1954, Burdett College

Green Mountain Camp for Girls selects new executive director

Samantha 'Sam' Lucheck joins a century-old summer camp as it looks to the future with green construction and new traditions

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen
The Commons

WEST DUMMERSTON—After an exhaustive search, Samantha "Sam" Lucheck has been hired as the new executive director for Green Mountain Camp for Girls (GMC). Lucheck began her new position in December 2023, relocating from Wisconsin with her family this past February.

Gina Stefanelli, a member of GMC's board of directors and head of the search and transition committee, says she is happy with the choice of Lucheck, who succeeds Billie Slade, who retired in December after 12 years. "We wanted to honor Billie's legacy by picking exactly the right candidate," Stefanelli said, "and I think we did just that."

The GMC board began a nationwide search for their next executive director more than a year ago.

"We received some very impressive [applications] both locally and from away," said Stefanelli, who explained that the process included phone screenings, Zoom interviews, and finally an invitation to come to camp to meet GMC leadership in person.

The process involved the search and transition committee as well as the full board, community members, parents of campers, and other "friends of GMC."

"We wanted to judge people by who they were and what they would bring to camp, not compare one candidate to the other," Stefanelli said.

"We had some great people, and I can't express enough how excited we were about the applicant pool, as there were so many wonderful choices," she added.

A love of the outdoors

"I have a lot of passion for camp myself. It's been a huge part of my life," says Lucheck.

"In my last few positions, I've gotten more into the property operations and programming portion of summer camps," she adds. "At Green Mountain Camp, I'm thrilled to be getting back to working with campers while directing. I've missed working directly with the kids."

According to Stefanelli, Lucheck stood out because "she's been a camper since she was a child. She spent her teenage years as a camp counselor, went to college, got her degree, and has a lot of experience as director in semi-rural camps."

Lucheck has spent 10 years as a camp director at other camps,

and Stefanelli noted her relevant experience in programming and capital projects.

"She loves camp life," Stefanelli said. "Like Billie Slade before her, camp is in her blood. It's a passion for her, being in the outdoors."

Lucheck is aware of the "wonderful history and traditions of GMC" and plans to learn from the staff and returning campers "the songs, activities, and traditions that have made GMC the magical place it is."

She feels it's important to listen and learn, especially in her first year.

"I want to hear from everyone involved — parents, campers, community members, all the stakeholders — [about] what's important to them. I'm here for the campers, the staff, and look forward to the opportunity to grow and help foster this important place," she says.

Lucheck has been housed locally for the past three months until her future home on the GMC campus is completed.

Last August, the board began dismantling the ancient "White House," as it has always been known, which stood at the entrance to the 13-acre property since before the camp's founding.

Stefanelli is excited about the new building that will replace the much-loved farmhouse.

"We want to build a new house that is designed to last for the next 100 years. It's a 'green' building," she says with pride.

The new structure will stand on the site of the original house, and the board intends to cover it with white siding so that it can assume the nickname of its predecessor.

The home should be ready for Lucheck to occupy in May, before camp opens for the season.

Honoring the history

Green Mountain Camp for Girls was founded by Sarah Bradley Gamble and Grace Holbrook Haskell in 1917, and it has operated continuously since then. Gamble's grandson, Richard Epstein of Brattleboro, is a current member of the board of trustees for the camp, which for the past century has been a nonprofit organization.

The vision for campers has always been female empowerment.

In its early years, Green Mountain Camp was a place to wear bloomers instead of restrictive corsets and long dresses, and a place for girls to learn about agriculture, archery, and arts and crafts.

in 1956, and then attended Suffolk University before entering the service. He served in the Army from 1958 to 1960. When he returned, he began his long career at the Wilder Dam working for New England Power Company. In his retirement, Edward loved to travel to Ireland, where he reconnected with his relatives and grew closer to his roots. Edward was a life member of Hartford Elks Lodge #1541, the Moose Club of Rutland, the Polish American Club of Bellows Falls, and a secret member of American

Legion Post 37 in Bellows Falls. He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Marilyn (Wasilewski) Stack of White River Junction; sons Edward Stack Jr. of Northfield, Vermont, and Gary Stack of East Albany, Vermont; stepchildren John Kapusta of South Carolina and Deborah Nylund of Enfield, New Hampshire; and five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Survivors also include his sister, Barbara Stack of North Walpole, New Hampshire; a brother, James Stack and his wife, Kay, of Walpole, New Hampshire; as well as several nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service will be held at a later date at the convenience of the family. Condolences may be expressed in an online guestbook found at knightfuneralhomes.com.



Samantha "Sam" Lucheck is the new executive director at Green Mountain Camp in West Dummerston.

Lucheck has been working closely with the board and with Slade.

"I've had the opportunity to work directly with Billie. I appreciate her passion and the impact she has had on the camp," says Lucheck.

For her part, Slade is pleased with the Board's choice.

"With [Sam's] experience and skills, I trust that she will bring new ideas and energy to the job that will help the camp continue to thrive under her direction," Slade says.

Those who wish to meet the new director will have an opportunity during the annual Spring Workday at Green Mountain

Camp on Saturday, May 4, beginning at 9 a.m. Promotional materials welcome both "skilled and nonskilled volunteers to help wake up camp from its winter slumber and prepare it for summer."

Green Mountain Camp for Girls will open its 107th summer season on June 24. Girls from ages 5 to 13 can sign up for day camp, overnight camp, or "try me camp," which gives day campers the option to spend the night if they choose to.

Seven sessions will take place over six weeks, ending on Aug. 2. The complete camp schedule is available at greenmountaincamp.com.

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COLUMN | One on One

Changing our lives to curb climate catastrophe

Alexander More, an environmental health scientist and scholar, says that an interdisciplinary approach to research raises difficult questions about how much we're doing — or not doing — to address the problem of climate change

THE WINDHAM WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL (WWAC) will continue its America 250 Speaker Series at 118 Elliot on Sunday, April 28, with climate change scientist Alexander More, an associate professor of environmental health at the University of Massachusetts Boston and a research scientist at Harvard University.

His talk, "10 Things You Think Will Save the Planet, but Probably Won't ... and What Will," reflects his extensive research on the impact of climate change on the health and economy of populations and ecosystems worldwide.

More grew up in southern Italy, where his parents are from, and came to the United States at age 17. After graduating from Washington University in St. Louis, he entered a doctoral program at Harvard in a focus of his own creation with a full scholarship.

"I petitioned the graduate school to allow me to create an interdisciplinary Ph.D.," More told *The Commons* in a recent interview. "There was no program that covered the issues I was trying to address all together, so I covered environmental science, economics, and public health."

More's work has been published in academic journals and in periodicals such as *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *Popular Science*, *Forbes*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *Natural History Magazine*, *Archaeology Magazine*, as well as several European publications. He has spoken widely and, according to a WWAC press release, has authored "several landmark studies of the impact of climate on pandemics and pollution, and [is] an active contributor to the

ANNIE LANDENBERGER is a freelance writer who contributes regularly to these pages.

fields of environmental health, health economics, sustainability and planetary health."

What follows is an edited version of an interview with More, in which he shares additional thoughts on climate change — and what it will take to really do something about it.

ANNIE LANDENBERGER:

I'm curious about this statement in the [WWAC] press release: "By using ultra-high-resolution climatic, epidemiological, ecological, and archeoscientific records, Dr. More brings recent drastic environmental changes into a broader perspective, one that allows stark comparisons between current and past trends in temperature, pollution, pandemic, disease, and extreme weather, all of which directly impact food production, human health, economic prosperity, and political stability."

Can you tell me more?

ALEXANDER MORE: I work with data from all over, from public health — how many people get sick because of what diseases — from economics — how do social determinants such as poverty and location affect people's health — and of course from environmental records [...] such as records of rain and storms, and I combine all these things because in my research I've found that focusing on only one of these fields gives us a very partial view of reality.

You have to have a much broader view of the effects of this massive problem and one discipline will not do. That's why I use data from as many sources as possible. That is also why my Ph.D. was

interdisciplinary, why my postdoc was, and why my lab is.

In the talk, I want to discuss how media — and especially certain companies' marketing lately — have tried to capitalize on solutions that aren't really solutions to climate change.

Perhaps the most common one that we see on our roads every day is the EV, which is powered by a massive lithium battery. The lithium can be sourced from three major places in the world; it's destroying ecosystems in all those places and is also taking land and threatening the water of Indigenous communities where those minerals can be sourced.

Not to mention the "latest and greatest" idea that this bunch of people had, which is to mine the deep ocean to get these minerals in order to continue to run our car culture instead of actually converting to truly sustainable solutions for the future.

There are a lot of those "solutions." They make us feel better for a moment because that is what advertising is about — making you feel good about what you're doing, that it's OK, but in reality we're not solving the problem.

We're still seeing that in the effects of climate change. We're still seeing that in the effects of pollution that continues to rise. Because Clare [Morgana Gillis, historian, journalist, and WWAC board member] is a good friend of mine, I felt confident enough to have this conversation that is otherwise pretty tricky.

A.L.: So how should we be getting around?



Dr. Alexander Moore

COURTESY PHOTO

A.M.: Public transportation. Like every other developed country in the world.

You can see examples of various very effective climate policies and measures that improve the standard of living of an entire nation in the most recent public transportation systems in countries like Spain and France. A train route in Spain similar to the New York-to-Boston route would take 70 to 80 minutes. In the U.S., it takes us, on average, four hours.

Now, the federal Inflation Reduction Act [aka the "climate bill" [energy.gov/lpo/inflation-reduction-act-2022](https://www.energy.gov/lpo/inflation-reduction-act-2022)] has a lot of funds for redoing the rail system — for improving it — but I don't expect we're going to see a high-speed train between Boston and New York anytime soon.

Other solutions are to redesign our cities and redesign the way we work in more efficient ways so we don't have to commute an hour and a half each morning to go to work.

We thought the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that you didn't have to do that and you still could be productive. Apparently, we did not learn that lesson, and it's not because of productivity. It's most likely driven by that fact that commercial spaces still need to be commercial.

Meanwhile, we have a whole housing crisis — especially in New England. These commercial spaces could actually be repurposed for affordable housing.

A.L.: Are there any visionaries with power who would take a lead on such redesign?

A.M.: I don't currently see anyone in the private sector advocating in serious ways that are actually doable, achievable, feasible. The Inflation Reduction Act is the largest piece of climate legislation that's ever been passed. There are a lot of funds in it for these solutions, but how long it's going to take for all this to actually be implemented — especially given that someone coming into the White House in January could completely repeal or remove all these things — I don't know.

Policy is incremental change: It's not drastic. I think as far as we have seen for the past four years, given the composition of the Congress, we've made huge progress that just didn't happen before, so that's great.

Hopefully it'll continue; hopefully the composition of Congress will make it so that it'll be easier to pass laws instead of getting stuck.

A.L.: Thinking about your talk's title, it's interesting what you say about electric vehicles.

A.M.: If you drive EVs in an area that has only renewable power, they actually do have a

positive effect. They lower pollution, and if you drive them long enough, the carbon footprint is offset.

It takes more carbon to produce an EV than a regular car, but in certain areas of the world — very few, where there's only renewable energy — one could make the argument that they're not so bad. Costa Rica, for example is 99% renewable; Iceland pretty much is all renewable energy.

I'm just saying they're not the solution to the problem.

Carbon offsets, however: if you fly, companies will give you an option to pay \$10 extra to offset your carbon footprint, and nobody knows what that is, but it certainly makes you feel better if you do it, right?

So essentially, these funds are paid into schemes where the company you're paying money to will give the money to another company that will say they used that \$10 to protect this forest, and so this forest is going to capture more carbon.

In principle, it's a great idea; in practice, what this has fueled is schemes where money has completely disappeared. There's no way to track whether those forests are in danger or not, and in most cases they aren't, and sometimes those forests don't exist at all.

Investigative journalists have shown all of this in recent months; they've uncovered a massive scheme to just enrich a couple of people and not actually solve anything.

What will solve something is flying less. There are people who fly multiple times a week for work. That's insane. I can't imagine that anyone who does that understands the true implications of what they're doing, especially if you scale it to millions of people.

One of the main solutions, perhaps, to this massive problem is that we have to be thinking about our personal behaviors as consumers in terms of eight billion people, not in terms of one — and, if not eight billion, because half the world's in poverty — then four billion putting their finger on one button all at the same time.

Whatever that button does is going to be unsustainable, because four billion people doing the same thing at once is not sustainable.

David Attenborough says the only thing that is sustainable is whatever you can do forever. You can't fly every day forever. You can't leak methane or use methane forever, which heats the planet 80 times worse than carbon dioxide.

All I'm saying is perhaps we should start being aware that we're fooling ourselves.

A.L.: I use the argument about carbon footprint as to why my partner and I are not

doing any big air-travel holidays, and yet folks who travel a lot say, "Well, the plane's going to fly whether you're on it or not." But if fewer of us make reservations, they won't need to fly as many planes....

A.M.: We have the memory of the pandemic, when people didn't fly as much and fewer planes were leaving each airport.

People say, "I can't do anything myself because it's just me: All I can do is vote, and I'm not even sure that does anything."

You vote with your dollars every day. Every time you put down a dollar for any product, you're voting to either save the planet or not save the planet. You're voting to maintain an unsustainable market, or you're voting for local farmers and a lower carbon footprint. You're voting.

Whether or not you want to participate, you are because you've got to survive. You can't not buy food, so you're voting.

It's just that people don't realize the market impact of 300 million people doing the same thing in the U.S. — if 300 million people stopped eating meat, for example.

I was interviewed a couple years ago about how meat consumption is driving the deforestation of the Amazon and how that has a climate impact.

Beef is taking all the water. It takes, what, 400 gallons to make a quarter-pounder burger?

The audience said, "Well, you know, nobody's ever going to give up meat," and I showed them a map of meat consumption worldwide: The highest consumption rise worldwide is in China, and the lowest consumption is in India, which just now exceeds the population of China — around one billion — and yet India has worldwide the lowest consumption of meat, while China has the fastest growing consumption of meat.

So what is it we can't do exactly? Why is it? Because Hindus consider cows sacred. It's culture. They choose not to do that for religious reasons.

It's something a billion people in India decide not to do — not to eat beef, the most carbon-intensive meat in the world. There's a natural demonstration here that this is possible.

More will speak to the Windham World Affairs Council at 118 Elliot in Brattleboro on Sunday, April 28 at 5 p.m. Admission is free, but a \$10 donation is suggested and registration is encouraged at [WWACmigration.com](https://www.wwacmigration.com). If you are unable to attend in person, a Zoom link is available upon registering.

For more information, visit [windhamworldaffairsCouncil.org](https://www.windhamworldaffairsCouncil.org).

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Guilford Center Stage opens season with *Love Lost Diaries*



From back to front, Archer Holland, Nina Boyd, and Dyana Lee in "Love Lost Diaries."



From left, Julie Holland, Valentine Chute, and Brandy Reynolds in "Love Lost Diaries."

GUILFORD—Guilford Center Stage opens its 2024 season with a bittersweet comedy, *Love Lost Diaries*, by Vermont playwright Marc Considine. The shows are at Broad Brook Community Center (BBCC), Friday and Saturday, May 3 and 4, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 5, at 2 p.m. Julie Holland directs a cast of eight actors. Considine is a teacher at Hazen Union High School in the Northeast Kingdom town of

■ SEE 'LOVE LOST DIARIES', B4

Psychedelics as a path to personal growth

In a new book, Lauren Alderfer explores the complementary benefits of mindfulness and the therapeutic use of minuscule doses of psychedelic drugs to achieve 'a state of authenticity, loving kindness, equanimity, and wisdom'

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Microdosing, writes author Lauren Alderfer, is not a pill to be taken like an aspirin to get rid of a headache.

Instead, she said, the practice "offers the possibility to connect and live in a greater presence of being. [It] supports overall health and well-being and in so doing the headache may very well disappear."

According to Peter Grinspoon of Harvard Health Publishing, microdosing "involves taking a fraction of a regular dose" of psychedelic substances such as LSD or psilocybin, which may be between one-fifth and one-twentieth of a so-called recreational dose, which would involve a "trip" or hallucination.

A longtime teacher of mindfulness practice who lives in West Brattleboro, Alderfer has also been an advocate for the interweaving of mindfulness and psilocybin microdosing for therapeutic purposes, rather than recreation.

On Sunday, April 28, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Alderfer will celebrate the release of her new book, *Mindful Microdosing: A Guidebook and Journal*, illustrated by Mariana Juárez and published by Brattleboro-based Green Writers Press.

The event, featuring interactive stations and two presentations by the award-winning author and teacher, at noon and again at 2 p.m., will take place at Brattleboro's newest bookstore, Byway Books, at 399 Canal St.

A guidebook and a journal

As Alderfer put forth in a contribution to *The Commons'*

Voices section ["Psilocybin for the people," Viewpoint, April 3], recreational psilocybin can aid "mental health conditions such as depression, addiction, existential anxiety [...], and eating disorders, to name just a few," and that "a growing body of clinical evidence" supports its therapeutic use.

Alderfer's guidebook and journal aim to lead the microdosing reader and documenter toward, according to her website (laurenalderfer.com), a state of authenticity, loving kindness, equanimity, and wisdom.

The book opens with several pages of context-setting background on mindfulness and microdosing, including guidance on preparation, active microdosing, and integration (i.e., self-reflection and transformation).

These sections are followed by 65 pages intended for journaling, most graced with illustrations in soft half-tones, which welcome the journaler to fill in the empty spaces with colors or thoughts. The book ends with two more pages on the basics of microdosing.

A career of mindfulness

Alderfer first came to southern Vermont in 1971 as a participant in the Experiment in International Living, which allowed her to spend her last semester of high school in France.

With bachelor's and master's degrees from the School for International Training (SIT), she began her career in the Andean region as an English language fellow through the Fulbright Foundation, and lived there for more than 20 years.

She was an adjunct

■ SEE PSYCHEDELICS, B4

Vermont filmmaker will share story of reclaiming art stolen by Nazis

BRATTLEBORO—Filmmaker Andy Reichsman of Marlboro will visit the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) on Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m. to share his story of reclaiming family artwork stolen by the Nazi-aligned Yugoslavian government during World War II.

Nearly 80 years after the war ended, Reichsman became the first person to recover artwork that was looted during the Holocaust in Croatia, which was part of Yugoslavia for most of the 20th century.

Three Croatian museums returned paintings, lithographs, and small copper and bronze pieces — about a dozen objects altogether — that once belonged to Dane Reichsman, Andy

Reichsman's paternal grandfather. Dane owned a department store in the city of Zagreb before he and his wife, Frieda, were forced from their home and killed at Auschwitz.

For half a century, Dane's daughter — Reichsman's aunt — fought in court to compel Croatia's National Museum of Modern Art, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts to return the collection, which included paintings by André Derain and Maurice de Vlaminck and lithographs by Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Pierre Bonnard.

Reichsman took up the cause after his aunt died more than

20 years ago. "What drove her was the injustice of it—these were things her father admired, and she wanted them back," Reichsman said in a news release. "I was utterly skeptical. I assumed I would never, ever, see any of this."

But Reichsman and his Croatian lawyer stayed on the case, and in December 2020, he learned that he and his late aunt had won. It wasn't until more than two years later, after the court worked out the inheritance details, he says, that "it dawned on me that I was actually going to be able to go get the art." He did so in September 2023, describing the situation to *The New York Times* as "almost beyond belief." The paintings are now awaiting



Andy Reichsman

auction, and the lithographs will stay in the family, Reichsman says. The Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts still holds 19 pieces that Reichsman and his lawyer in Croatia continue to

pursue. Admission is \$10 (free for BMAC members). Tickets may be purchased in advance at brattleboromuseum.org or by calling 802-257-0124, ext. 101.

Tickets may also be purchased at the door, subject to availability. For accessibility requests, email office@brattleboromuseum.org or call 802-257-0124, ext. 101.

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY

25

Music
BRATTLEBORO Music Appreciation Salons: Moby Pearson - violinist, ensemble coach, orchestra conductor - invites music lovers to enjoy an array of musical treats. Be prepared to pick up new musical perspectives. Today the focus is on Robert Schumann. No other composer was as much a pure romantic as this former law student from Leipzig. In the age of Chopin, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Schumann's style stood out for its yearning and pure passion. For him, composing was a world of fantasy and dreams.

THURSDAY CONT.

6:30 p.m.
 \$25 suggested donation.
 Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moyle Way. Information: Call 802-257-4523 or email info@bmcvt.org to register.

Ideas and education
Resilience Implementation Strategy Kick-Off (Virtual): Learn about this effort to build resilience to climate change in Vermont, and share your ideas and input to help craft a vision for a climate-resilient Vermont.
 12 noon - 1:15 p.m.
 Free.
 Virtual. Information: Register for this virtual event at climatechange.vermont.gov/calendar.

FRIDAY

26

Music
BRATTLEBORO Old Fashioned and Daring Coyotes: Bluegrass duo with dashes of rock, folk, and pop.
 7 - 9 p.m.
 Free.
 River Garden Marketplace, 157 Main St. Information: rivergardenmarketplace.com.

Recreation
WILMINGTON Lego Club
 3 - 5 p.m. Open hours. Come and create with our large Lego collection on Fridays.
 Free.
 Petite Memorial Library, 16 S. Main St. Information: 802-464-8557; petiteelibrary.org.

Community building
Annual Make-A-Wish Vermont: "Together, we can make the wishes of VT children suffering serious or chronic illnesses come true. We have a wonderful array of gift certificates, services, overnight stays, and many other items available. If you cannot find something you would like to bid on (or if you are outbid) just click on the 'Donate' button to make a donation directly to the event. We appreciate all donations! Bid high and often and help us raise \$10,000 to make a child's wish come true!"
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 Through Sunday, May 5.
 Online. Information: Join us online: 32auctions.com/Letsgrantawish2024.

FRIDAY CONT.

of our beloved queer community in Brattleboro. Thumping DJ sets, attendees who costume for theme to its full realization, sassy and heart-stopping drag, burlesque, performance art in a gorgeous space with vaulted ceilings, smoothest dance floors, all intersecting to bring our queer community together.
 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. Event is 18+ due to mature content.
 \$10 to \$20 sliding scale. Purchase tickets at door. No one turned away for lack of funds as per BQDP policy.
 The Stone Church in Brattleboro, 210 Main St. Information: 802-416-0420; stonechurchvt.com.

SATURDAY

27

Music
BELLOWS FALLS Aleda Bliss presents Listening Party of her unreleased New Album: Aleda Bliss's new album is enhanced with performance and projection art. Johnny Gifford and Trevor Robinson will open with a live set - largely improvised unnering ambient treated-guitar and -bass, maybe synthesizers, maybe sax, and probably voice.
 7 p.m. Only 40 tickets will be sold. Event will be recorded and filmed.
 \$10 in advance through www.stage33live.com or at door. All ticket proceeds go to the performers.
 Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge St. Information: More information: stage33live.com.

WESTMINSTER WEST Two River Singers Spring Concerts led by Mary Cay Brass with special guest leader Dr. Kathy Bullock: The 60-voice River Singers Community Chorus performs eclectic concert of world music both days. Multi-generational choir is led by Mary Cay Brass with diverse cultural and musical traditions. Enriching the choir with their thrilling accompaniments to Balkan songs: Walter Slowinski, clarinet; Mary Lea and Laurie Rabut, fiddle; Richie Davis, percussion; Mary Cay, accordion.
 4 p.m. each day. The River Singers Choir is dedicated to musical diplomacy, using music as a bridge for learning about and enjoying other cultures while, at the same time, using their concerts to benefit peace building projects. Concert features love songs

SATURDAY CONT.

from Balkans, liturgical hymns from Republic of Georgia, South African church hymns, plus traditional and contemporary shape note music.
 Through Sunday, April 28.
 \$15-\$25 by check or cash at the door only. This year's concerts supports Refugee Ministry of St. Michael's Episcopal Church.
 Westminster West Congregational Church, 44 Church St. Information: More information: mcbass@vermontel.net.

SO. HADLEY Áine Minogue, Celtic Harp & Vocals: As traditional Irish music and dance continue to enjoy phenomenal success both in the United States and in Ireland, Áine has worked to explore their themes and to understand their very essence. Her voice, though uniquely her own, also reflects the lyricism and richness to be found in Irish music, mythology, and poetry.
 "Minogue proves beyond reasonable doubt why the harp is indeed the instrument of angels." LA TIMES
 7:30 p.m. Aine's harp has entertained Presidents and Prime Ministers. She's a regular performer at folk festivals and concerts throughout the U.S. Her recordings include "The Mysts of Time," "Between the Worlds," "Circle of the Sun," "Celtic Meditation Music," "Celtic Lamentations," "Celtic Pilgrimage," "Winter," "A Meditation" (CD/DVD), "Close Your Eyes, Love."
 Tickets range from \$10 to \$30.
 All Saints Episcopal Church, Woodbridge St. Information: More information and tickets: tinyurl.com/jc4bxsdc.

BRATTLEBORO Face the Music: Face the Music: Dan DeWalt piano/trombone, Tim Gilmore: drums, Wim Auer: bass, perform DeWalt's compositions from their recent eponymous CD. Music ranges from jazz to hip hop to Latin. They'll also feature the music of Chick Corea and Joe Henderson.
 7:30 - 10 p.m.
 No cover charge.
 Latchis Pub & Latchis Underground, 6 Flat St. Information: 802-246-0487.

SUNDAY

28

Recreation
WILMINGTON Solitaire: Card games have been around for centuries - and for a very good reason. They can be easy to learn, you can do it everywhere, and it's fun for all ages! Come to the library with a friend or family members to learn some new ones. These solitaires can be done on your own or with others. Get a free pack of cards!
 2 p.m.
 Free.
 Petite Memorial Library, 16 S. Main St. Information: 802-464-8557; petiteelibrary.org.

Community building
CHESTERFIELD Creative Chesterfield Artisan Fair: A variety of locally made products will be available for sale.
 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Event is offered through the Chesterfield Economic Development Committee to support local artisans.
 Free.
 Chesterfield Town Hall, 490 Rte. 63. Information: 603-363-4624.

Activism
BRATTLEBORO Weekly Gaza Vigil
 12 noon to 1 p.m. weekly. Offered by Tim Stevenson.
 Brattleboro Post Office, Main St. Information: postoisolutions.org.

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Well-being
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 5 p.m. This talk by Dr. More of UMass is possible w/ support from Windham World Affairs Council. Dr. More brings broader perspective to recent drastic environmental changes, one allowing stark comparisons between current and past trends in temperature, pollution, pandemic disease, extreme weather, all which directly impact food production, human health, economic prosperity, and political stability.
 This is a public event, but there is a suggested donation of \$10. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.
 One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. Information: 118elliot.com.

BRATTLEBORO "10 Things You Think Will Save the Planet, but Probably Won't and What Will" :

'Every Day Is Mother's Day' concert at All Souls Church

WEST BRATTLEBORO—Activist singer-songwriting and folk music icons, Sally Rogers, Claudia Schmidt, and Emma's Revolution join together for a benefit concert at All Souls Church in West Brattleboro on Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m.

Funds are being raised for "Standing Together," a grassroots movement mobilizing Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel in pursuit of peace, equality, and social and climate justice. "At a time when we are all trying to come to terms with what's happening in Israel and Palestine, we think this fundraising concert can make a meaningful contribution to ease the suffering," George Carvill, the organizer of the concert at All Souls, said in a news release.

Sandy O of Emma's Revolution said, "War disproportionately affects women and children, and so we have chosen to make this concert a fundraiser for the Standing Together Movement, who are a movement of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis for a just and shared future."

In this time of conflict, Standing Together has focused its years of community-building activism for peace, equality, and social and climate justice to fight for life, freedom, and safety for Palestinians and Israelis. A portion of funds raised from this event will go to Standing Together's ongoing grassroots work to end the war and release the hostages, and their long-term work building the movement for peace, justice, and equality in Israel-Palestine.

This is the second year of the "Every Day Is Mother's Day Tour" to celebrate women's voices. Performers will share the stage again to create four-part harmonies to, as Pat Humphries of Emma's Revolution says, "Lift up mothers and foremothers, trailblazers and hell-raisers of all kinds." Sally Rogers adds, "The actions we can take and the songs we can sing to make this world a better place are the focus of our lives' work and will take center stage in these concerts."

Schmidt and Rogers have been perfecting their craft of performing for over four decades, both as solo artists and as a duo. Schmidt says hers is a quirky and wonderful hodge-podge (her word!) of music, poetry, story, laughter, drama, and celebrating the moment. Work in clubs, theaters, festivals, TV, and radio has added depth and dimension, and since

she has always included her original work along with very personal versions of the work of others, "what you get is a unique look at the world from someone who says what she sees with clarity, humor, and wonder," say organizers.

Rogers began her career as a full-time touring musician in 1979, after encouragement from Stan Rogers, the Canadian singer-songwriter. That was followed by an invitation from Garrison Keillor to appear on *A Prairie Home Companion*. She appeared more than a dozen times on that show, which launched her performing career. Her travels have since taken her to Europe, China, Hungary and Poland, England and Scotland and across the United States.

"Her concerts enfold the audience in the music as they are encouraged to join in throughout the evening. Her gorgeous singing voice, boundless energy and good humor are welcomed from coast to coast," organizers say. Her songs are featured in the Unitarian and Quaker Hymnals and national school music textbooks. They are also sung by community groups in play sings and by children on the playground.

Emma's Revolution is the award-winning activist duo of Pat Humphries and Sandy O. Now in their 22nd year, the duo writes songs about critical issues happening in the world, lending their voices to the movements those issues inspire and delivering "moving, uplifting performances."

Emma's Revolution's songs have travelled around the world and have been praised by Pete Seeger, covered by Holly Near, featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* and Pacifica's *Democracy Now!*, and sung around the world.

A feature documentary, *Keep On Moving Forward*, is being made about Emma's Revolution, their songs, and their work on the frontlines of peace and social justice movements by award-winning independent filmmaker, Tom Weidinger. Weidinger has been writing, directing, and producing documentary films for 35 years; many of his films have won festival awards and 25 have aired nationally on public television. The film is expected to be released in 2026.

Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Advance tickets are available at Everyone's Books on Elliot Street in Brattleboro and on line at ascvt.org/mothersday.

CircleSinging offers improvisation, resilience

PUTNEY—Long River CircleSinging, led by Paris Kern, will be presented on Sunday, April 28, from 3 to 5 p.m., at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill.

This "composed in the moment" singing format was created by Bobby McFerrin and his colleagues. Kern has been leading circles since 2013 and says she is excited to bring this to southern Vermont.

"CircleSinging is an opportunity to tune in, listen deeply, shed beliefs and judgments, and tap into something larger than a single individual," Kern said in a news release. "It's powerful.

It's embodied. It's bonding. It's healing. It's life-affirming. Be heard. Join in. These times need our voices, our songs, our unique beings. The spirit of improv teaches us to be in the moment and teaches us the resilience we need for living in these uncertain times."

Register at bit.ly/762-sing. There is a suggested donation of \$20, but no one will be turned away due to lack of funds. For more information, contact Kern at pariskern@comcast.net. For more about CircleSinging, watch this video at bit.ly/762-kern.

River Singers present pair of spring concerts

WESTMINSTER WEST—The 60-voice River Singers Community Chorus will perform a concert of eclectic world music at 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, April 27 and 28, at the Westminster West Church.

The River Singers, in its 33rd year, is a multi-generational community choir led by Mary Cay Brass. The choir sings a variety of community-based music from many diverse cultural and musical traditions.

Brass will be joined by Dr. Kathy Bullock, Professor Emerita from Berea College, who is a workshop clinician, choral conductor, arranger, and scholar in the field of African American music. This is the 12th time Dr. Bullock has worked with the River Singers, sharing the joy of gospel, spirituals, freedom songs, and West African praise songs.

The River Singers Choir is dedicated to musical diplomacy, using music as a bridge for learning about and enjoying other cultures while, at the same time, using their concerts to benefit peace-building projects. This concert will feature love songs from the Balkans, liturgical hymns from the Republic of Georgia, South

African church hymns, as well as traditional and contemporary shape note music.

The River Singers has a number of excellent musicians as its members who enrich the choir with their accompaniments to the Balkan songs. Joining director Brass on accordion will be Walter Slowinski on clarinet, Mary Lea and Laurie Rabut on fiddle, and Richie Davis on percussion. Admission to the concerts is \$15-\$25 by check or cash at the door only. Every River Singer concert is a benefit for a local or global peace initiative. This year's concerts will support the Refugee Ministry of St. Michael's Episcopal Church. For more information, email mcb Brass@vermontel.net.

Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.

—PLATO

Blanche Moyse Chorale gives its final performance on April 28

BRATTLEBORO—Sunday, April 28, marks the final performance by the Blanche Moyse Chorale.

The 4 p.m. concert at the Brattleboro Music Center will include two works by J. S. Bach: the motet "Jesu, meine Freude" and Cantata BWV 23 ("Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn"), as well as "Musikalische Exequien" by Heinrich Schütz. The Chorale will be led by conductor Mark Nelson.

This will be the last performance of this group of singers as the Blanche Moyse Chorale, and it will serve as an important

moment to honor the ensemble's more than 45 years of performances. "For many, singing in the Blanche Moyse Chorale, or attending their beautiful concerts, stand out as beloved life memories," say organizers.

The Chorale will be accompanied by an ensemble including: Kathy Andrew, Colleen Jennings, Sarah Briggs, Michelle Liechti, violins; Greg Diehl, Stephanie Railsback, violas; Judith Serkin, cello; Paul Horak, bass; Aaron Lakota, Chris Rua, oboe; and Greg Hayes, organ.

The afternoon will conclude

with a reception, where both past and present Chorale members will have the opportunity to share memories and to remember voices from the past. There will be a slide show and perhaps even some singing.

The BMC is collecting photographs for the slide show. Those who have some to share are invited to send them to the BMC at info@bmcvt.org.

Tickets are \$20 (\$25 at the door), \$10 for youths, and free for under 12. Purchase at bmcvt.org, 802-257-4523, or info@bmcvt.org.

Brattleboro Town Arts Fund taking applications for arts project funding

The Arts Council of Windham County (ACWC) has opened the application period for the 2024 Brattleboro Town Arts Fund (TAF) program.

Now in its fifth year, the TAF program will offer grants between \$1,000 and \$3,000 for creative, community-focused projects completed between July 2024 and May 2025. Applications are due by May 15. The program overview and application guidelines can be found at artswindhamcounty.org/taf.

TAF's mission is to promote the development and presentation of creative projects that contribute positively to the greater community and to the vibrancy and diversity of Brattleboro's arts and cultural landscape. TAF projects explore social and quality-of-life

issues in the community, are collaborative in nature, expand accessibility and visibility for underrepresented artists and audiences, and highlight Brattleboro's unique assets and qualities.

Over the past four years, TAF has received more than 120 grant applications and funded more than 40 creative initiatives, representing a range of local artists, organizations, projects, and creative potential.

Past TAF projects include live theater based on EMT provider stories, collaborative audio projects exploring the lives of Afghan women, community mapping and mural projects, LGBTQ+ clay workshops, a Lego Letterpress print event, and various other multidisciplinary performances and workshops in

dance, puppetry, and visual arts.

This year's application cycle will continue the shift ACWC made in 2021 in response to the COVID-19 crisis by soliciting proposals for low-cost creative projects that aim to build connections and share joy, solidarity, and solace in the Brattleboro community. A total of up to \$20,000 will be awarded in this year's grant cycle. With a maximum award of \$3,000, the program seeks proposals for projects that are relatively small-scale and achievable within the project period (July 2024–May 2025).

For those interested in learning more about the TAF application process, eligibility, and other questions, ACWC will host a "TAF Open Hour" Wednesday, May 1, from noon to 1 p.m. at Patio Coffee, 139 Main St.

Program updates are available on the ACWC website — artswindhamcounty.org/taf — and will be shared on ACWC's Facebook and Instagram pages. For questions, email townartsfundbratt@gmail.com.

Write Action hosts poetry reading

BRATTLEBORO—Brooks Memorial Library will host four-minute readings by a group of poets who have poems in storefronts downtown as part of Poems Around Town (PAT), organized by Write Action and supported by the library and the Brattleboro Literary Festival. The reading will take place on Saturday, April 27, at 2 p.m.

Celebrating National Poetry Month, poems are up for the month of April and sometimes beyond. This year, 42 downtown locations are participating, with more than 80 poems chosen from those submitted by poets living throughout Vermont and the tri-state region with an emphasis on the Brattleboro area.

Poems range from the nostalgia of Lynn Martin's "Green"

(Distinctive Decor) or Sydney Lea's "Education" (Stevens and Associates) to reflections on the moment in Kevin O'Keefe's "Ten Day Retreat" (The Works). From the state of the world in Verandah Porche's "Cease Fire Sleep" (Everyone's Books) and Toni Ortnier's "We Cannot Decipher" (Turn It Up) to the yearning for spring in Kent Young's "Perhaps a Daffodil" (Windham Florist).

Readings will be available at intermission and after the reading. The reading will be downstairs in the library's main room. For more information, email info@writeaction.org.

Next Stage features a night of Mediterranean music

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts presents an intimate encounter of voice and strings, sounds and cultures, with Duo Andalus, featuring Lala Tamar, at Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill, on Sunday, April 28, at 7 p.m.

"Take a trip through the Mediterranean — Flamenco, Ladino, Moroccan, Jewish, Arabic — merging together with Duo Andalus. Lala Tamar's vocal virtuosity blends with Ofer Ronen's flamenco guitar style and oud," says Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts, in a news release. "We love the journey music brings us on, and for this show, we may ask audiences to bring a passport."

The young diva of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic music, Tamar performs Sephardic, Flamenco, and Middle Eastern music. She is a collector of lost stories and women's song in Haquetia, Moroccan Ladino. Accompanied by the guitar of Ronen, the duo weaves "an evening of tenderness and depth, enchanting listeners into a ritual that celebrates the roots of three

cultures in one."

Famous on the streets of Marrakech, Tamar's videos have collected millions of hits. Coming off a sold-out debut at Lincoln Center, the singer is "an emergent force, delighting new and old friends across the globe," say organizers. "An evening with Duo Andalus is a pure gift, an unforgettable sweetness."

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For information, call 802-387-0102.

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

—VICTOR HUGO

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SUNDAY 2:00 & 6:45
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SUNDAY CONT. FROM B2

In recognition of Earth Day 2024, Windham World Affairs Council considers how protecting our planet protects our health and the economy by hosting a talk with climate change expert Dr. Alexander More whose research focuses on the impact of climate change on population and ecosystem health/economy. He authored landmark studies on impact of climate on pandemics and pollution and contributes to the fields of environmental health, health economics, sustainability, planetary health.

► 5 p.m. By using ultra-high-resolution climatic, ecological, epidemiological, archeoscientific records, More brings recent drastic environmental changes into broader perspective, allowing stark comparisons between current/past trends in temperature, pollution, pandemic disease, extreme weather, all which directly impact food production, human health, economic prosperity, political stability.

► Event is free to the public but a \$10 donation is suggested - registration is encouraged.

► One Eighteen Elliot, 118 Elliot St. If unable to attend live, a Zoom link is available upon registering at <https://tinyurl.com/3ytfhjj>; 118elliot.com.

Community building

PUTNEY Long River Circle Singing: This "composed in the moment" format was created by Bobby McFerrin and his colleagues. CircleSinging is an opportunity to tune in, listen deeply, shed beliefs/judgments, tap into something larger than a single individual. Powerful, embodied, bonding. It's healing. It's life-affirming. Be heard. Join in. These times need our voices, our songs, our unique Beings. The spirit of improv teaches us to be in the moment and resilience we need for living in these uncertain times.

► 3-5 p.m.
► Donations accepted Suggested \$20. No one turned away due to lack of funds.
► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. New to CircleSinging? Here's a link to a video: <https://youtu.be/dRrUixtyOZY>
Registration via meetup: [meetup.com/pioneer-valley-vocal-improvisation-meetup-group/events/299824715/](https://www.meetup.com/pioneer-valley-vocal-improvisation-meetup-group/events/299824715/).

Ideas and education

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Time Trade Annual Meeting: Keynote Speaker/Facilitator Eric Bachman "Sociocracy, a form of Dynamic Governance"

► 1-4 p.m.
► Free and open to all.
► The Root Social Justice Center, 28 Williams St., 1st fl. Information: 802-254-3400; therootsjc.org.

Film and video

BRATTLEBORO "Palestinian Resilience": Five short films (part of the Palestinian Film Series): "Made in Palestine" (2019), 8 min. "Farming Under Fire in Gaza" (2018), 10 min. "Return to Seifa Village" (2014), 16 min. "Gaza Monologues Documentary" (2010), 23 min. "Horizon" (2013), 18 min.

► 4 p.m. Brief introductions followed by film showings.
► By donation.
► Latchis (Films), 50 Main St. Information: Details about the films and organizers, sovt4palestine.org/palestine-film-series.

MONDAY

29

The written word

BELLOWS FALLS Rockingham Free Public Library Announces Cookbook Club: Part book club and part potluck, cooking enthusiasts are invited to a new monthly program at the library: Cookbook Club. The club is free to join, and cooks of all skill levels are welcome. This program is made possible by a grant from the Association for Rural and Small Libraries and is presented as part of the "Seed to Spoon: Cultivating Community" project.

► 5:30 p.m. Brief organizing meeting to plan together the first official meeting of the Cookbook Club in May. Those interested are invited to bring favorite cookbooks for consideration at the initial gathering and a dish to share. Meetings will be held on the final Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

► Free.
► Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: More info: reference@rockinghamlibrary.org, 802-463-4270, rockinghamlibrary.org, or visit library in person.

Well-being

BRATTLEBORO Film: "Uprooting Addiction: Healing From The Ground Up": From RC Productions comes an urgent look at the national substance use crisis that is ravaging local communities across the U.S. At an innovative retreat organized by addiction and trauma counselor Hope Payson, six people from varying walks of life - each affected by childhood trauma - come together to share their stories, emerging from crisis through community, connection and compassion.

► 4-6 p.m. This event is being offered in connection to Gov. Phil Scott's 10-Point Action Plan for violence reduction, facilitated by Col. (Ret.) James W. Baker of JW Leadership Consulting. Presented by the Vermont Agency of Human Services and the Town of Brattleboro.

► Free.
► Latchis (Films), 50 Main St. Information: More information: sue.graff@vermont.gov.

Arts and crafts

WILMINGTON Craft and Crochet on Mondays: Bring a project you are working on or find some materials at the library to start something new! We now have circle looms for knitting to check out!

► 12 noon - 2 p.m. on Mondays.
► Free.
► Pettee Memorial Library, 16 S. Main St. Information: 802-464-8557; petteelibrary.org.

TUESDAY

30

Music

PUTNEY Anna Patton's SOU-BRETTESS Singing Close Harmony Swing

► 7 p.m. Seating is first come, first served. Carpool if you can - parking is limited. There will be desserts and beverages to share after the performance.
► Free. Contributions of goodies welcome.
► Sun Hill Farm, 120 Plowden Road.

TUESDAY CONT.

Well-being

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

► 5-6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.
► Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic, 191 Clark Ave. Information: 802-251-8484; brattleborowalkinclinic.com.

Ideas and education

PUTNEY Metal Detecting with Rob Phillips at Putney Public Library: Rob Phillips, native Vermonter/Putney resident, has been interested in history, archaeology, paleontology since his childhood but started to get serious about metal detecting in 2014. "It's the closest we can get to time travel, holding items people lost hundreds or even thousands of years ago." Rob has found many items but some stand-out treasures are old Spanish coins, buttons, cuff links.

► 6:30 p.m. Two of the most unique items Rob has found are Revolutionary War (1784) USA buttons and an extremely rare John Adams presidential cuff link, of which there are less than 10 known in existence.

► Free.
► Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: 802-387-4407; putneylibrary.org/events.

WEDNESDAY

1

Music

BRATTLEBORO Musica Franklin Community Concert with Rev. Dr. Floyd Williams: Join Musica Franklin for a student performance and family-friendly concert with Rev. Floyd L. Williams, PhD. Dr. Williams is a world-renowned jazz pianist and composer. He has performed in countries across the globe including Germany, India, Argentina, Russia, Japan, and France.

► 5-6 p.m. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Greenfield Local Cultural Councils, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

► Free and open to the public.
► First United Methodist Church, 18 Town Crier Dr. Information: 802-254-4218; fumcol@gmail.com.

Community meals

WILMINGTON Cookbook Club: "Two Peas and Their Pod" by Maria Lichy. Come and try samples from this month's cookbook and talk recipes.

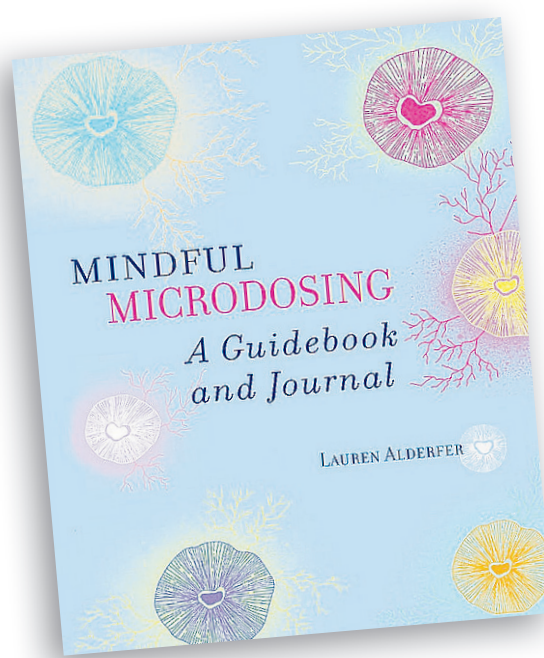
► 6 p.m.
► Free.
► Pettee Memorial Library, 16 S. Main St. Information: 802-464-8557; petteelibrary.org.

To submit your event: calendar@commonsnews.org

Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday

Psychedelics

FROM SECTION FRONT



The cover of Lauren Alderfer's new book, "Mindful Microdosing."

faculty member at SIT Graduate Institute/World Learning for over 25 years. With a doctorate in global leadership, she also served on the adjunct graduate faculty of Marlboro College, which closed in 2020.

"My whole trajectory has been through contemplative practice — mainly mindfulness practice," Alderfer explained. "Over many decades, that was interwoven with writing books about mindfulness — particularly a children's book, *Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda* (Simon & Schuster), and then, in 2015, a mindfulness book for educators."

That book, *Teaching from the Heart of Mindfulness* (Green Writers Press) with a foreword by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, won a Foreword INDIES award for educational literature.

Two worlds intersect

A certified microdosing coach and certified yoga therapist, Alderfer sums up her approach on her LinkedIn profile as "a Western perspective from both the North and South Americas with the deep spirituality of the East."

Alderfer first engaged in microdosing after a "macro-dosing journey" that yielded awareness of the complementary benefits of mindfulness and the therapeutic use of psychedelics.

Curiosity and an eagerness to delve into the intersections of those two worlds led Alderfer to further her education with an on-line course from the Microdosing Institute in the Netherlands, a 10-month training for becoming a microdosing facilitator.

"It wasn't with any intent but to understand more about microdosing," she recalled.

"I'm not a person to just go and do something. I want to learn about it. To be educated. Just like meditation: I wouldn't just dive into meditation without having some kind of structure, some background," Alderfer said.

"I was compelled to learn more because my own experience of mindful practice became very much alive in a microdosing process. To me the two were so similar: microdosing brings out the benefits of mindfulness [more readily], not after years and years of practice."

Around the same time, Dede Cummings, founder and publisher at Green Writers Press, had encouraged Alderfer to do another book.

She struggled with what that might look like until the answer arrived.

"I spoke to Dede. I said, 'How about I do a journal for mindfully microdosing?' And she was totally behind that. In my research at the time I wrote it, there wasn't anything out there in the microdosing landscape or even in the psychedelic community that was specifically about microdosing and doing it mindfully."

That, she said, is "how the idea of a journal came about, and then it morphed into more than just a journal. I had to give some kind of context, so there's a guidebook that maps out a way of mindfully approaching microdosing."

For one practitioner, a change of heart

While it is not yet the case, she said the hope is that in Vermont, psilocybin and related substances will become decriminalized "so folks could gain access safely and easily right here."

"You can microdose with certain other substances that are legal, so there are options," she said. "Many people reading the book are in places where it is legal or decriminalized."

Alderfer stressed that "it's really the process I'm educating on; the sourcing I leave to the person. My support is more in education."

The Vermont Legislature is currently considering the formation of a working group to study how entheogens [psychoactive substances] might benefit physical and mental health.

Kurt White, vice president of community partnerships at the Brattleboro Retreat, hopes to serve in that group if the bill, S.114, passes.

"I've been following the research on psychedelics closely for a number of years," White said. "I was initially a skeptic, and someone who was professionally trained to think of 'drugs' as all quite similar to one another — especially with respect to their harm and addictive potential."

But after following the research in the U.S. and in Europe, White has changed his outlook.

"I've come to be quite confident that these drugs — entheogens, psychedelics — are not only quite safe for most people, but have enormous potential to many people who are suffering in a variety of ways," he said.

He cautioned that psychedelic drugs are "not for everyone and not the answer to everything

— and wholly not without some risks."

But, he added, "these substances, used in a healing context, are far, far safer than even commonly and widely used substances such as alcohol."

"The way I see it," said Alderfer, "it's a wave that keeps growing whether the government supports it or not."

"The evidence and benefits of microdosing are so great," she said. "I know 10 years from now it's going to look so completely different. We're just at the cusp of all this change."

She believes the "stigma around microdosing" will change.

"People are seeing the benefits — physical, emotional, spiritual, cognitive well-being — and more focus, more endurance, the ability to stay with a task much longer," she said.

"Even with athletes, they're seeing it pays off. *Golf Digest* just had a spread on microdosing a little while ago. It's really becoming normalized; people are looking at it differently. The younger generation already normalizes it much more than my generation. Emotionally, we see that it's being used for anxiety."

"Lastly, the spiritual piece: It yields a deeper connection to one's self, to people around them; people tend to get out more in nature — feel more connected to our natural world," Alderfer said.

"I'm not here to say everyone should microdose," Alderfer said. "It's not a panacea, but if it's a good match, it can really help."

As people access such substances ("in this case, psilocybin"), she believes that decriminalizing them can "bring about more information, education, and [potential] harm reduction."

She adds that one would not macrodose psilocybin every week.

"But you can microdose pretty much on a regular basis, so you're going to keep building those neural connections in a soft, gentle, subtle way [...] without any side effects," Alderfer said. "With microdosing you function completely normally through your normal day."

She notes the need for the microdoser to start slowly to find the sweet spot — the right balance — and to take breaks between cycles.

Setting intentions

In addition to Alderfer's talks and book signing on April 28, she says, "We're going to set up interactive stations where people can do different activities. We'll invite people to color beautiful illustrations, all with the metaphor of a garden."

The event on April 28 will also include "a brief sound bath demo" as well as a question-and-answer session.

As for the book launch, "We looked at it as an opportunity to collaborate so people get to know that [new] space is there," Alderfer said.

Another station will focus on intention setting — "the key to microdosing mindfully," she said.

"With mindfulness or microdosing, you start with an intention and then that's basically like the nutrition or fertilizer for your garden," Alderfer said.

"You don't know what's going to happen, but you watch the miracle as things start to grow while some things fade away like the weeds," she continued. "These are the things we no longer need."

Mindful Microdosing can be purchased online and at the Byway Books event on April 28, for which pre-registration is offered at bywaybooks.com.



Dyana Lee and Rich Cianflone in "Love Lost Diaries."

'Love Lost Diaries'

FROM SECTION FRONT

Hardwick. He coaches the after-school drama club, for which he has written a number of scripts.

Love Lost Diaries was written for his students to perform at the regional high school drama festival in St. Johnsbury in March 2013. This production, a southern Vermont premiere, is the first staging of the play by a community theater group, and continues Guilford Center Stage's mission to present work by Vermont playwrights.

In this short play, three high school students have an interesting after-school pastime: They watch the obituaries and sneak into unoccupied houses, looking for spare cash. In this play, they are pulled into the lives of the deceased couple.

Nina Bond is stage manager, with scenic design by Ada Brown. Don McLean is producer of this, Guilford Center Stage's 12th, production.

Cast members are Valentine Chute, Julie Holland, Brandy Reynolds, Dyana Lee, Rich Cianflone, Nina Bond, Archer Holland, and Bob Brown.

Both plays in this 2024 season are by Vermont playwrights, with the October production a revival of Guilford poet Verandah Porche's *Broad Brook Anthology*.

Guilford Center Stage is a project of Broad Brook Grange, which celebrates its 150th birthday this year, and whose building is now Broad Brook Community Center, a Vermont Historic Site. The Grange organization continues as a partner of the BBCC.

BBCC, 3940 Guilford Center Road, is fully ADA-accessible, with an elevator to the second-floor theater space. Tickets for *Love Lost Diaries* are \$14 at the door, or via Brown Paper Tickets online at bpt.me/6247266.

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COLUMN

What are we going to do about the women?

Violence against women is on the rise, including the murder of trans women, rape as a war crime, child marriages, and attempts to deny women's agency over their bodies

BACK IN THE late 19th and early 20th centuries, when agrarian and rural lifestyles gave way to urbanization following the Industrial Revolution, everything changed for women in dramatic ways.

As the late Barbara Ehrenreich pointed out in her important book, *For Her Own Good*, tenement living left women in despair as a total cultural and economic tidal wave began.

Some of the luckier ones found work as seamstresses, maids, and other low-paying jobs, but the changing world affected all social classes. Karl Marx realized this when he wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, as the old world order was rapidly changing and a new order began to take shape.

"All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away," he wrote. "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at least compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind."

That melting down and remodeling of a new order led to the prevalent male question: What are we going to do about the women?

For women in all social classes, the question was personal — and, as we now know, "the personal is political."

Victorian mores were questioned and rejected, women's instincts trumped obligation, and the question

ELAYNE CLIFT (elayne-clift.com) has written this column about women, politics, and social issues from the earliest days of this newspaper.

became: How will women survive in the modern world? As Ehrenreich wrote, "The women who lost years of their youth to depression, who first tasted liberation from grinding jobs and sexual exploitation, who poured their hearts into diaries while their strength drained into childbearing and child rearing all lived out the Woman Question."

It's a question that takes on new meaning in a world in which women are still doing grinding work, still being subjected to violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and now, once again, having their bodies held captive by men who are deeply threatened by women's agency or equality.

LET ME BEGIN by asking this: What are we going to do about the women in India, whose grinding work keeps supplying companies like Coke and Pepsi with sugar?

As a March story in *The New York Times* revealed, those two companies have turned the state of Maharashtra into a brutal system that exploits women and children who work there.

According to the Fuller Project, on whose work the *Times* story is based, women of childbearing age are subjected to unnecessary hysterectomies and sterilization

■ SEE WOMEN, C2

VIEWPOINT



JEFF POTTER COMMONS FILE PHOTO

A 2020 demonstration in support of the Black Lives Matter movement drew thousands to downtown Brattleboro.

'Public safety' is not community safety

The governor's Public Safety Enhancement Team is part of a nationwide backlash to 2020 movements to defund and abolish the police. Its process is at odds with Brattleboro's Community Safety Review (CSR) Committee recommendations.

ON TUESDAY, APRIL 30, in Brattleboro, Jim Baker and Gov. Phil Scott's Public Safety Enhancement Team (PSET) will host more than 100 community, government, business, and nonprofit leaders at a "Call to Action Symposium — Public Safety Enhancement" at the SIT campus in Brattleboro.

This event will be the culmination of several months of Baker's consulting with town government and community leaders aimed at, in his words, a "bigger picture about how to coordinate and collaborate" around public safety.

This process is a piece of Gov. Scott's 10-Point Plan, released in 2022 as part of a nationwide backlash to 2020

JONATHAN ELWELL organizes with Vermont Just Justice (vtjustjustice.org), an organization whose mission is "to promote the reform of the criminal legal system through monitoring and changing Vermont laws that promote mass incarceration and excessive punishment."

movements to defund and abolish the police.

In Brattleboro, the Community Safety Review (CSR) Committee recommendations — which have been saddled with a sort of political taboo in town — have been delayed even further to allow for Baker's process to unfold.

The CSR was a bottom-up process facilitated by trusted, radical community organizers and grounded in the experience of those most targeted and harmed by policing.

Its exploration into safety and well-being in Brattleboro identified the many material struggles facing our communities and the role of policing in oppressing those most dispossessed and marginalized. The CSR report also compiled many possibilities to address harm, change systems, and meaningfully shift power.

The PSET is based on a much more limited understanding of community safety, and one that re-centers police, even as it gestures halfheartedly

toward public health. Unsurprisingly, the possibilities for change are more limited, too — prioritizing communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding among service providers.

Crucially, this process uses the state's power and legitimacy to compel those who may agree with the values and recommendations of the CSR to nonetheless participate in the PSET forums or else lose access to a "seat at the table."

This is no accident.

REFORM IS A FORM OF COUNTERINSURGENCY against radical movements, as abolitionist thinkers like Orisanmi Burton and Dylan Rodriguez teach us, because it conjures a façade of change to

■ SEE POLICING AND COMMUNITY, C2

VIEWPOINT

New beginnings

A year after a tragic death at Morningside House, a new structure in its place will provide greater safety and an enhanced capacity

THIS HAS BEEN a most challenging year for Groundworks Collaborative, for the people we serve, and for the greater Brattleboro community.

The staff and board of Groundworks are committed to resiliency and to building and maintaining caring relationships — understanding that we all must do our part to build a stronger community.

"Our part" at Groundworks is primarily supporting people who are experiencing

LIBBY BENNETT and **RITA RAMIREZ** submitted this piece on behalf of Groundworks Collaborative, where they serve as executive director and board chair, respectively.

homelessness and/or food insecurity, providing temporary shelter, and assisting individuals as they transition to more independent and sustainable housing.

With this in mind, we have begun planning for a new shelter at 81 Royal Rd. We and our predecessor agency, Morningside House, operated

a shelter at that location from 1979 until April 3, 2023, when our friend and colleague Leah Rosin-Pritchard died tragically at the site and we closed the program.

We needed some time to begin healing and to rethink the Morningside program in the broader context of significant changes — both to increase



GROUNDWORKS.VT.ORG

An architect's conceptual drawing of a new Morningside House.

safety and improve programming — that we have been implementing across all of Groundworks services.

FOR THE PAST several months, we have put a great deal of thought into the building and the programmatic changes that we expect will be notable improvements for shelter residents, Groundworks' staff, and

our neighborhood.

We have consulted with Morningside Commons residents and with housing and social service officials, both locally and statewide. We are eager to announce these plans to the broader Brattleboro area community.

To create the program we envision at Morningside, we intend to raze the existing

buildings on the site and build a new, thoughtfully designed structure.

Renovating the existing farmhouse would be very expensive and would result in fewer people being served than the 30-bed program that we previously operated there.

Our architecture firm specializes in designing shelters and

■ SEE MORNINGSIDE HOUSE, C2

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VIEWPOINT

BIPOC homeownership matters

Vermont's lack of diversity translates to wealth and housing disparity. A number of programs across the state aim to correct a longstanding imbalance.

EVERY APRIL, communities and housing organizations across this country recognize Fair Housing Month, commemorating the 1968 passage of the landmark civil rights law that outlawed discriminatory housing practices.

Yet despite nearly six decades of fair housing efforts and advocacy, people of color continue to face challenges in realizing the American dream of homeownership.

Our country has a deep history of systemic racial discrimination in the housing industry. This discrimination, once both legal and widely accepted, has created entrenched patterns of segregation in our communities and very effectively excluded whole populations of color from accumulating wealth through homeownership, something that white families have benefited from across multiple generations.

The fact is, Vermont remains one of the least

Brattleboro

ELIZABETH BRIDGEWATER is executive director of the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

diverse states in the nation and has one of the highest homeownership gaps in the country between Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and white residents.

The policies and practices that created this inequity were intentional. This calls for an equally intentional response.

HERE IN VERMONT, there are some positive things happening to address this disparity and change the experience for BIPOC homebuyers.

• The BIPOC Financial Empowerment (webuildequity.org) program piloted here in Brattleboro has received funding from the M&T Charitable Foundation and has expanded into the

state to provide knowledge, tools, resources, and coaching to support the financial well-being of BIPOC people.

The program offers free, trauma-informed, culturally relevant financial education through monthly workshops on various financial topics; a supportive affinity group setting; and one-on-one coaching.

• Our colleagues at the Champlain Housing Trust have announced the statewide expansion of their Homeownership Equity Program, a special-purpose credit program, offering down payment assistance to BIPOC shared-equity buyers. As a shared-equity provider, WWHT will have access to this funding for BIPOC homebuyers in our community.

• The Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston is opening Lift Up, a new special-purpose credit program designated for BIPOC homebuyers.

The program provides \$50,000 in down-payment and closing-cost assistance toward the

purchase of a first home. The program is available through member banks of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston.

• The Vermont Housing Finance Agency is continuing their First Generation Homebuyer program, a \$15,000 grant toward a home purchase targeting populations that have been historically excluded from homeownership.

HOME IS WHERE the heart is, and home is where the wealth is, too.

By empowering prospective BIPOC homebuyers with financial counseling and homebuyer education resources, access to capital and credit, and a more equitable playing field in the public policy arenas, we are building greater homeownership opportunities — and wealth — for people of color for generations to come.

Morningside House

FROM SECTION FRONT

designed our shelter on South Main Street. What we learned through that recent process is that designing a space for a program — versus “doing the best you can” with a pre-existing space like the Morningside farmhouse or the church basement and dormitory that preceded our shelter on South Main Street — makes an incredible difference in functionality, safety, and program success.

With a well-designed new building, we can offer 40 beds and versatile program space with carefully placed sightlines.

Coupled with 24-hour, 7-day-a-week staffing, these changes will allow us to more adequately monitor the comings and goings of shelter guests, more effectively support those guests programmatically, and provide a safer shelter experience for everyone.

have, and what type of housing would work best for each person.

Our intake process includes questions that identify connections to other services, as well as obtaining permission to coordinate with other service providers.

We ask whether people have health insurance, a primary care provider, or identification documents, and whether they have ever been accused of a violent crime, among other things.

The questionnaire gives our staff a baseline understanding of needs, risks, and potential challenges for each person we serve so that we can wrap the appropriate levels of service and support around each individual. It also helps us determine if a person's needs are greater than we can accommodate in Groundworks programming.

AT GROUNDWORKS, we develop relationships with the people we serve. This helps us understand people's immediate and long-term needs, including any mental health and/or substance use challenges they may or may not

BASED ON THIS information and the relationship we develop with each program participant, we will use the Groundworks Drop-In Center on South Main Street as the conduit to accessing shelter at Morningside.

Policing and community

FROM SECTION FRONT

stabilize oppressive systems. The state reinforces these systems by co-opting movement language, defanging radical demands, and redefining the boundaries of acceptable change and respectable tactics.

These dynamics have been evident in the nationwide movement to reassert police power post-2020.

That summer, Baker retweeted multiple posts that included the Thin Blue Line insignia — symbolism that has proliferated in the past decade as part of the Blue Lives Matter backlash to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Baker's Twitter account also includes retweets of Bill Bratton, the infamous former New York Police Department commissioner behind broken-windows policing, such as “Another nail in the failed Defund the Police Movement”

and “#ReFundThePolice.”

Despite his attempts to appear apolitical, these examples show that Baker is keenly aware of the antagonistic relationship between abolitionist movements and efforts to augment police power, and they clearly illuminate his allegiance in this conflict.

BAKER HAS A HISTORY of stabilizing and reinvigorating oppressive systems in moments of crisis, most recently with the Vermont Department of Corrections.

He became interim commissioner in 2019 after Mike Touchette resigned following reports of widespread sexual, physical, and emotional abuse at Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF), Vermont's only women's prison.

Beginning under Baker's

leadership, the DOC transformed this crisis into a call for a \$500 million investment in new prison construction — starting with \$90 million for a new women's prison to replace CRCF.

Around the same period, it emerged that the DOC had been complicit and neglectful in Kenneth Johnson's death and had then moved to hide their culpability.

Baker managed the fallout and, in subsequent interviews and hearings, described on-going deaths behind bars and the DOC's systematic, unlawful failure to carry out death investigations as a “cultural problem.”

Today, the same violent systems are still leading to premature deaths, followed by yet more empty promises of reform and progress.

THESE ARE NOT problems with culture — they are ingrained features of a system that relies on exploitation, dispossession, and violence.

Reducing the scourges of capitalism and imperialism to issues of management and communication is a counterinsurgent tactic that serves to reinforce these systems.

This is not about intentions; it is about power. Baker's process is reasserting state and police power.

If we are serious about actually addressing root causes, ending systems of violence, and creating liberatory communities, we must speak frankly on these dynamics and act strategically to build the kind of revolutionary communal power that cannot be absorbed by the state.

Women

FROM SECTION FRONT

so they can keep working indefinitely.

Young girls are pushed into illegal marriages so they can work with their husbands cutting and gathering sugar cane. If they miss work for any reason they are required to pay a fee, making them indentured servants.

Or what are we going to do about the women in Gambia, where, according to a March article in *The Washington Post*, the National Assembly voted to overturn a ban on female genital cutting, which would make Gambia the first country in the world to roll back such protection?

One has only to hear the first-person accounts of the horror

of female cutting, or FGM, to know how horrific it is.

I heard those accounts in Sudan and at United Nations world conferences. Young girls are restrained while parts of their genitals are removed by rudimentary instruments in unsterile conditions, without anesthesia, by barbers or village women, often for the sexual pleasure of their future husbands. Women who give birth after having been cut are sown up tightly to satisfy their husbands. Those who survive the procedure frequently suffer serious, life-threatening infections, infertility, and the absence of sexual pleasure.

The men in Parliament who want the rollback say it upholds

religious beliefs and cultural norms. The United Nations and World Health Organization estimate that over 200 million women and girls have survived FGM, but that is likely an undercount.

WHAT ARE WE going to do about the missing and murdered Indigenous women, honored by the Native American artist Nayana LaFond in a portrait series, “Portraits in Red”?

Subjects range in age and offer a stunning wakeup call. “When you've experienced something like these women have you want to claim yourself again,” LaFond says. “You want to speak up and be heard in a safe way. That's why I do this work. I am claiming my own experience and turning it into something positive. I hope I'm creating change.”

Then there's the female students at a New Jersey high school whose photos were digitally altered by artificial intelligence to become pornographic images of nudity and sexual activity and sent to their male classmates last fall.

The retired commander of the New Jersey State Police internet crimes task force reacted this way: “What worries me is the amount of suicide for the children, and the bullying aspect. When you can make an image of someone, it really becomes problematic.”

It is problematic already. Other schools across the country have reported similar incidents.

And then there's the recent spate of young women being hit forcefully in the head and face as they walk the streets of Manhattan, suffering serious wounds and concussions, reported on MSNBC as I write.

IT JUST DOESN'T END, with violence against women growing in various forms, including the murder of trans women, rape as a war crime, child marriages, and attempts to deny women's agency over their bodies using the draconian Comstock laws of the 19th century.

The question — *What are we going to do about the women?* — remains relevant, alarming, and urgent.

What, indeed, are we going to do about women?

Voting blue in November is a good start.

PETER HAVENS



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—WALTER CRONKITE

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Brattleboro Time Trade holds its annual meeting on April 28

BRATTLEBORO — Brattleboro Time Trade (BTT) will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, April 28, from 1 to 4 p.m., at The Root Social Justice Center, 28 Williams St. The meeting is free and open to all who are interested in timebanking, a form of alternative currency allowing people to exchange goods and services using time instead of money.

The keynote speaker and facilitator will be Eric Bachman, a longtime timetrader with Onion River Exchange (orexchange.org) who has many years of experience in organizational development. He will present and demonstrate a form of dynamic governance called Sociocracy within the context of the annual meeting. Sociocracy promotes inclusion of all voices, supporting all members (sociocracyforall.org).

The meeting will also go over the past year's events and consider plans for BTT to utilize practices from Sociocracy, which organizers say tie in with BTT's mission to engage and support all members of its community.

Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact brattleborotimetrade@gmail.com or visit BrattleboroTimeTrade.org.

Rockingham Free Public Library announces cookbook club

BELLOWS FALLS — Part book club and part potluck, the Rockingham Free Public Library invites cooking enthusiasts to a new monthly program at the library, Cookbook Club.

The first gathering is scheduled for Monday, April 29, at 5:30 p.m. at the library and will be a brief organizing meeting to plan together the first official meeting of the Cookbook Club in May. Those interested are invited to bring favorite cookbooks for consideration at the initial gathering and a dish to share. The following meetings will be held on the final Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

The club is free to join, and cooks of all skill levels are welcome. This program is made possible by a grant from the Association for Rural and Small Libraries and is presented as part of the "Seed to Spoon:

Cultivating Community" project. For more information, email reference@rockinghamlibrary.org, call 802-463-4270, or visit the library online at rockinghamlibrary.org or in person at 65 Westminster St.

Moore Free Library presents gardening workshop

NEWFANE — Managing soil health in the garden is the topic of a workshop by Vern Grubinger, offered at Moore Free Library on Tuesday, April 30, from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Grubinger has been the vegetable and berry specialist with University of Vermont Extension for three decades, working with farmers across the state and the region. He is also an avid gardener. He will give a slideshow about the elements of soil, what is meant by soil health, and practical actions that gardeners can take to promote it with proper fertilization, organic matter management, and care for soil structure. For more information, visit moorefreelibrary.org.

Estate planning talk offered in Guilford

GUILFORD — Guilford Cares will host Jonathan D. Secrest, an attorney with the Brattleboro law firm of Secrest & Darrow, who will present an overview on estate planning, including the most important issues to consider and the biggest mistakes to avoid, on Thursday, May 2, at 1 p.m., at the Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd.

Topics will include wills and trusts, lessening the burden on your heirs, providing for minor children or those with special needs, families with children from prior marriages, protecting assets in the event of a nursing home stay, and avoiding or reducing estate taxes. He said he looks forward to questions, and hopes to make these important matters clear, understandable, and even interesting.

During his career, Secrest has worked as an attorney for the federal government, argued before the Vermont Supreme Court, and testified before the Vermont Legislature on improvements to the state's probate laws which he helped draft. He has drafted complex wills and trusts, including special needs trusts; advised clients on business succession issues; and counseled clients regarding elder law and Medicaid planning.

AROUND THE TOWNS

For further information, contact Guilford Cares at 802-579-1350 or guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com.

Brattleboro announces spring leaf collection schedule

BRATTLEBORO — This year, leaves and yard waste will be picked up according to your normal trash, compost and recycling pick up day.

The following dates have been scheduled for Brattleboro's curbside Spring Leaf Collection. For those with Monday and Tuesday pick up days, it will be on Friday, May 3 and 17. Wednesday and Thursday households will have pick up dates of Friday, May 10 and 24. These will be the only dates scheduled for curbside leaf pick up.

All leaves and clippings must be in brown paper leaf bags and at the curb by 6:30 a.m. on scheduled leaf collection days.

Acceptable waste includes leaves, grass, clippings, garden waste, and twigs (no branches larger than 1 inch in diameter and 2 feet long). No other household trash is to be included. Town leaf collection is designated for single family residences or apartment buildings with 2, 3, or 4 units. No plastic bags or other containers will be accepted. Brown paper leaf bags are available for purchase at local businesses.

All Souls Church plans 'Welcome Spring!' crafts fair

WEST BRATTLEBORO — "Welcome Spring!", a craft fair featuring works by the gifted crafters of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 29 South St., will be held outdoors on Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine.

Reflecting the UU principles of respect for the environment and green lifestyles, the organizers

for this fundraiser have selected many recycled and upcycled materials to repurpose, some fun and whimsical, others decorative, or downright useful.

Among the items for sale are various sized totes, flowered wreaths, fairy houses, fabric flower brooches, decorative table mats, as well as many baked goods, jams, and plants for inside and out. Materials will also be available so that both adults and kids can create a fabric garden flag or a floral crown.

The spring fair is a great way to support local crafters and, most importantly, to nurture your spirit celebrating all things spring. A light lunch will be available for purchase. For more info, visit ascvt.org, or call 802-254-9377.

Book donations sought for Putney Library fundraiser

PUTNEY — While it might still be a little early to weed the

garden, it's a perfect time to weed one's bookshelf. Do your spring cleaning and support the library's programs and services by donating your books.

The Putney Public Library seeks book donations to support their Book Sale Fundraiser on Saturday, May 18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Sunday, May 19, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. While books of all kinds are welcome, they are unable to accept encyclopedia sets, magazines, textbooks, Reader's Digest condensed books, VHS tapes, DVDs or CDs, or anything that is musty or moldy. Only two boxes of books per household will be accepted.

Donations are accepted only during library hours: Monday-Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Donations cannot be left outside the library after hours. For more information, contact the library at 802-387-4407 or director Emily Zervas at emily@putneylibrary.org.

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

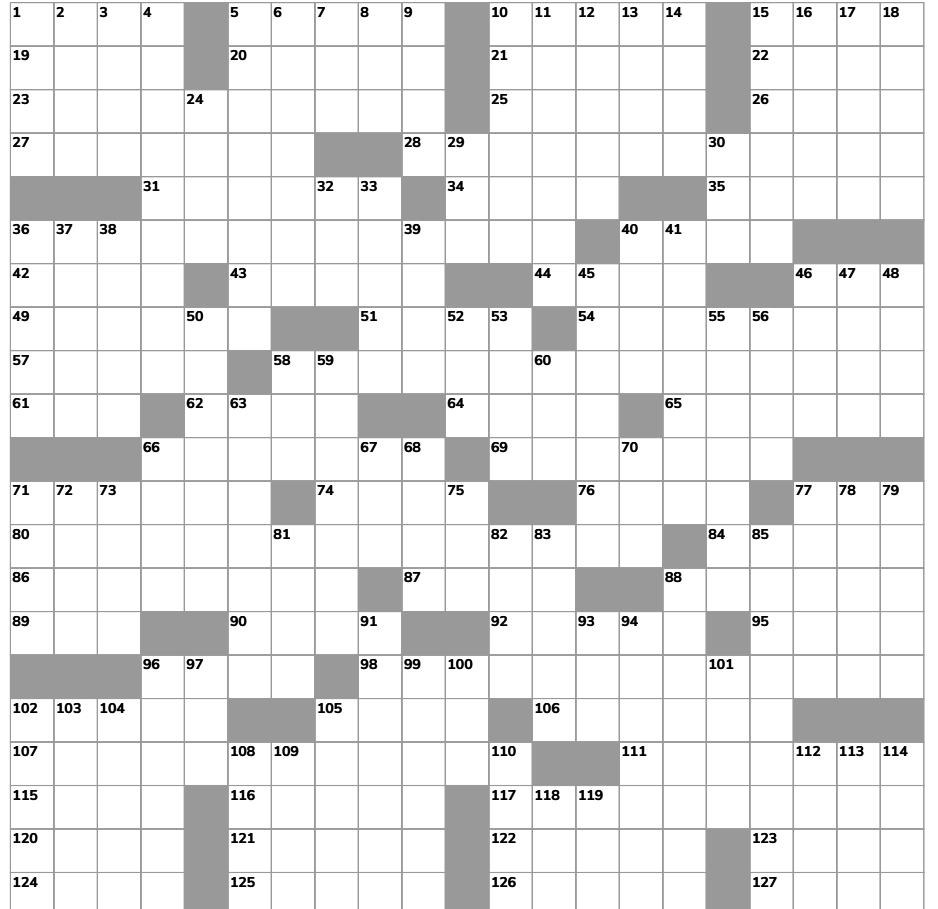
"Baby It's Cold Outside"

Across

- Company symbol
- Shop holder
- Donna Summer genre
- Streisand's nickname
- On
- "Amadeus" actor Tom
- Mass table
- Calculus calculation
- Essence of the messages Charlotte wrote in her web?
- Harsh noise
- Pasta sauce brand
- Ivy in Ithaca
- Liquor that's prone to spilling?
- Instructor
- Belichick's crew, informally
- Scenic view
- Wrap flavored with a Japanese liqueur?
- Rounds in a biathlon?
- River of Spain
- Damascus's nation
- Spitting sound
- Maura Healey's party: Abbr.
- Lack
- Mononymous Irish singer
- Not working for a better future?
- Response to "You are not"
- Heavy haul from a heist?
- Reddit Q&A session
- Barbara of "Mission: Impossible"
- Country with about 4 million Quechua speakers
- Long line of text?
- Digression
- Hand wipes
- Bee or beetle
- Oscar winner Ke Huy ___
- Prefix meaning a trillion
- The Wildcats of the Big 12: Abbr.
- Feat of determination on the golf course?
- ___ in sight
- Formal written defense
- "Bye, fly!"
- Sailor of folklore
- Close to the ground
- The Rebels of the Mountain West
- Helper theorem
- Superior, e.g.
- At its most popular
- Confession from one who needs liquid courage?
- Indian state known for tea and silk
- In its present condition
- Reaches, as a total
- With 117-Across, acquire pet waterfowl from Queens?
- "You would have me believe...?"
- Left on ___ (limbo texting status)
- Film brand
- See 107-Across
- "Poor Things" actress Stone
- Writer Zola
- Balloon material
- Organic compound artificially synthesized by Friedrich Wöhler
- Award such as Best Play
- Cheeky
- Frightening
- Legal wrong

Down

- Local rival of the Galaxy, in MLS
- ___ día (another day)
- Attendee, in combination
- Opportunities, metaphorically
- Immature
- Rock song?
- Priestly vestment
- Shared fictional setting of some superhero movies, briefly
- Salon treatment
- Blots with a tissue
- "That was my last pun, honest"
- Hotel visits
- Pasta or bread, in brief
- Double Stuf cookie
- "In the Heights" setting
- Most 43-Across residents
- Sired, biblically
- Steam room
- Fish dam
- ___ Pen (lifesaving device)
- Burlington sch.
- Mongrel
- Director Lars von ___
- Word after news or print
- Steel girder
- Seriously entertaining show?
- South African currency
- Cousin's mom
- Apprehend wrongly
- Brand of soy-based ice cream substitute
- Self-important sort
- ___ out a living (gets by)
- Go well together
- Peace pipe filler
- "Uh-huh"
- All over again
- Kettledrums
- Cincinnati ball club
- "___ if true"
- Different or imbalanced
- Stuff of mine?
- ___ and Barbuda (Caribbean nation)
- Blue-green

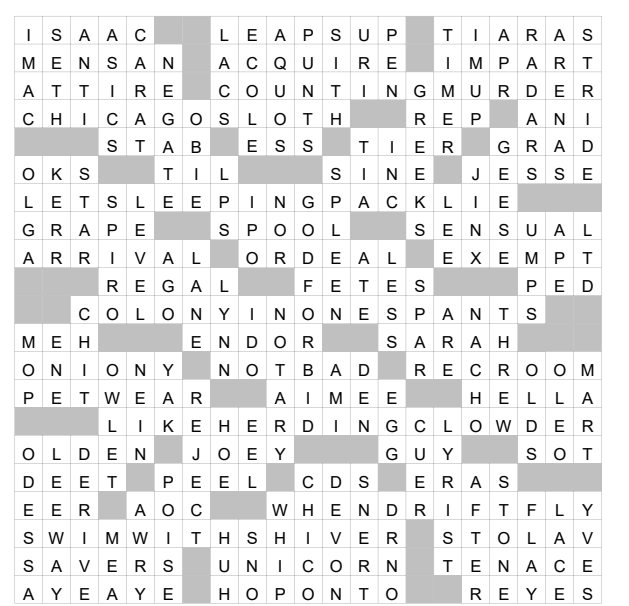


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- N's in Greek
- Browser window set
- Formerly named
- Leaning, as type: Abbr.
- ___ baby (child of celebrity parents)
- Cause of a white Christmas
- Medical research agcy.
- Skewered meat dish
- Python or bushmaster
- Milk source
- Sow's sound
- Liesl's boyfriend in "The Sound of Music"
- "All the Light We Cannot See" author Anthony
- Standing guard
- Tale of woe
- Lecture aids
- Egyptian ___ (cat breed)
- Hotel fridge
- When the checks go out
- Confessional genre
- "House of Mouse" mouse
- The first A of 61-Across
- Headliner
- Click "Accept"
- Appears to be
- Postage purchase
- ___ Ababa, Ethiopia
- Four-stringers, informally
- Capital of Italia
- Virtual people in a video game franchise
- Currency in Austria
- Disney CEO Bob
- "The one there"
- MoMA's home
- In the style of

Last issue's solution

"Animal Collective"



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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Rough start for winless Bears baseball, softball teams

The Brattleboro Bears baseball and softball teams each opened their seasons last week with three losses.

• For the softball team, they endured a 21-2 loss to the Mount Anthony Patriots at Sawyer Field on April 15, followed by a 14-0 loss to the Keene Blackbirds on April 17 and a 24-1 loss to Rutland on April 20. All three games were ended in the fifth inning by the 12-run mercy rule.

Mount Anthony pitcher Abby Foster struck out five batters and helped herself with a 4-for-5 day at the plate. Taeya Guetti went 3-for-5 with a home run and Kyra Stratton also went 3-for-5. Both players scored three runs each as the Patriots scored six runs in the first inning and seven runs in the second inning to take control early and cruise from there.

Brattleboro's only runs came in the first inning, when Cynthia Velazquez singled and later scored on a passed ball, and in the sixth when Briana Brooks singled and scored an infield hit by Kayli Severance.

Keene's win over the Bears was their first of the season. They pounded out 16 hits against the Bears, scoring eight runs in the second inning and five more in the fifth inning. Winning pitcher Kiley Durrell held the Bears to just two hits, with one walk and six strikeouts.

Rutland picked up its first win of the season against Brattleboro, thanks to 13 walks and numerous passed balls by the Bears. Freshman pitcher Chloe Ellison held the Bears to just two hits. The 0-3 Bears are off until April 30, when they host Springfield.

• The 0-3 Bears fared no better on the baseball diamond. They lost their home opener on Tenney Field on April 15 against Mount Anthony, 10-1.

Bears starting pitcher Jackson Emery held the Patriots to just one run on a bases-loaded walk through the first four innings, but Mount Anthony would score nine runs in the sixth and seventh innings off Bears reliever Evan Wright.

Patriots starting pitcher Jacoby Dicranian was equally sharp in the early going, but the game was close until Mount Anthony's Ethan Sherman hit a two-run homer in the sixth inning. Teammates Vance Kobelia, Riley Thurber, Carter Thompson and Sean Moriarty all drove in runs in the seven-run seventh inning. Brattleboro got its only run in the bottom of the seventh inning.

Against the Keene Blackbirds on April 17, the Bears were beaten 11-1 in a six-inning game at Alumni Field. Keene starting pitcher Sean Callahan allowed one walk and four hits while striking out five and surrendering just one unearned run over three innings. Nolan Gillis finished up with three perfect innings of relief, striking out five without a walk or a hit allowed. Keene got 11 hits off the Bears.

The game against Rutland on April 20 at Tenney Field was far more competitive, but the result was a 6-2 loss for the Bears. Wright was the Bears' starting pitcher and held Rutland to one run over the first two innings, but they broke open the game in the third inning with a bunt



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, deputy editor of this newspaper, has written this column since 2010 and has covered sports in Windham County since the 1980s. Readers can send him sports information at news@commonsnews.org.

RBI single by Grady Gallagher and a two-run single by Cam Rider.

Brattleboro got two runs back in the bottom of the third on a passed ball that allowed Wright and Jayke Glidden to score. Rutland then finished off the Bears with a run scored on an error in the fourth inning and another run in the seventh.

Softball

• Arlington played its first varsity softball game since 2019 on April 17, when the Eagles played host to the Twin Valley Wildcats. What ensued was a nearly four-hour slugfest that ended with Twin Valley winning, 24-21.

This was a wild one, for sure. Arlington scored 17 runs in the second inning, sending 22 batters to the plate. With a 21-5 lead, it looked like the Eagles would end this game early via the mercy rule. Instead, the Wildcats scored 19 unanswered runs to rally for the victory.

Twin Valley pitcher Sarah Dix was forced to leave the game in the second inning due to an ankle injury, but managed to return later in the inning after treatment. Despite her gimpy ankle, Dix held the Eagles scoreless over the final five innings and finished with 11 strikeouts for the win.

The Wildcats picked up Dix with two runs in the third inning and five more in the fourth to trim Arlington's lead to 21-12. Twin Valley added another five runs in the fifth inning, and got two more runs in the sixth after a brief delay to turn on the field lights to continue the game.

With Arlington now on the ropes and clinging to a 21-19 lead in the top of the seventh, Twin Valley's Elizabeth Barber drew a bases-loaded walk and Tori Dix smashed a two-run base hit to put the Wildcats in front by a run. Twin Valley got two more insurance runs in the inning, and Sarah Dix completed an improbable comeback by striking out the side in the Arlington seventh.

The Wildcats get plenty of time to savor this win, as they won't be in action again until April 29 when they go the road to face Mill River.

• Bellows Falls defeated visiting Fair Haven, 13-1, in six innings on April 16. BF pitcher Izzy Stoodkey struck out eight batters and walked one in the complete game victory.

Baseball

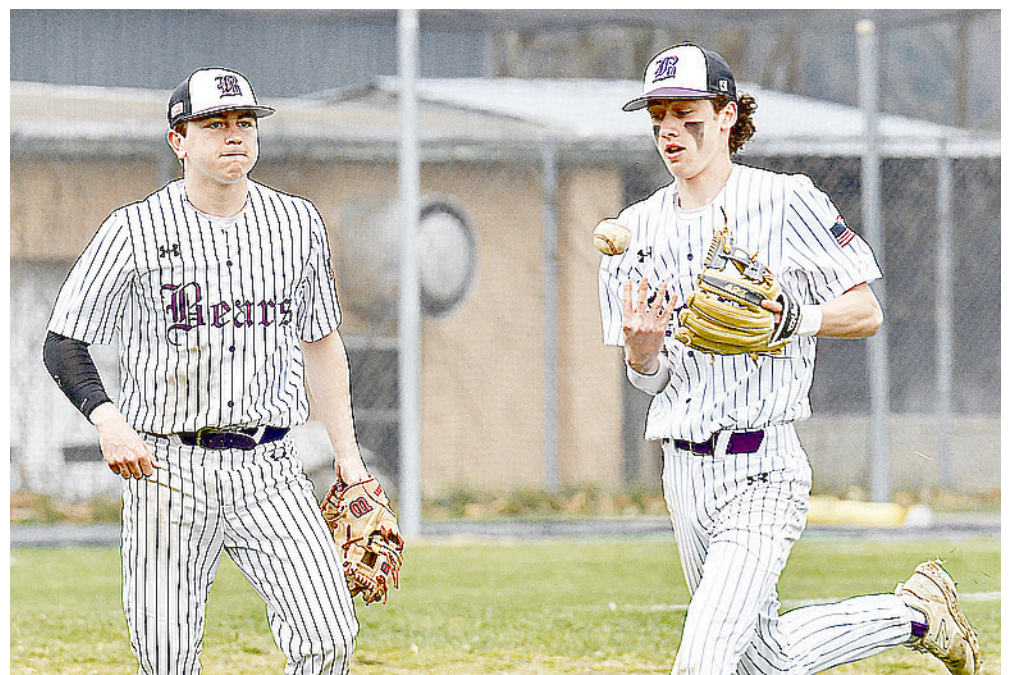
• Eli Allbee drove in a pair of runs with a base hit as Bellows Falls shut out Rutland, 4-0, on April 15 at Hadley Field. BF's Jaxson Clark and Cole Moore combined on the shutout. Clark allowed two hits and struck out two over four innings of work, while Moore allowed one hit and struck out four in relief.

• Otter Valley scored four runs in the sixth inning and held



Brattleboro catcher Kayli Speno tags out Mount Anthony baserunner Eva Cross after she was caught in a rundown in the first inning of their April 15 softball game at Sawyer Field.

Brattleboro shortstop John Satterfield, right, tries to corral the ball as pitcher Evan Wright looks on during the third inning of their April 20 baseball game against Rutland at Tenney Field.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

on to beat the Leland & Gray Rebels, 8-4, in Brandon on April 15. Pitcher Cody Hescoc started the game for the Rebels, with Ryan Peloso finishing up the pitching duties. Spencer Clausen scored a pair of runs for the Rebels.

Against Green Mountain on April 18 in Townshend, the Rebels lost, 6-5. GM trailed 3-1 going into the fifth inning before they scored a pair of runs to tie the game. Leland & Gray regained the lead with a run in the top of the sixth, but GM rallied back with three runs in the bottom half of the inning and hung on for the victory.

Evan Farrar got the win in relief of starting pitcher Tate Pellerin, and Tanner Swisher got the final two outs in the Rebels seventh to earn the save. Payton Butynski had a pair of hits and an RBI and Ryan Peloso drove in a pair of runs with a triple for the Rebels. Peloso also pitched five innings one-hit ball for the 0-2 Rebels.

Track & Field

• The Brattleboro boys started the season with a flourish as they won a seven-team meet on the Freeman Track on April 16.

The relay teams set the pace with the quartet of David Berkson-Harvey, Jack Cady, Dylan Holmes and Sean von Ranson winning the 4x100-meter event in 44.19 seconds, while Holmes, Trevor Gray, von Ranson and Cady won the 4x400 in 3 minutes, 43.06 seconds, and Jonas Ackerman-Hovis, Willow Sharma, Orion Donnelly, and Nico Conathan-Leach won the 4x800 in 9:09.54.

The speedy Bears dominated the sprinting events as they took four of the top five spots in the 100 with von Ranson winning in 11.70, followed by Berkson-Harvey (second, 12.08), Holmes (fourth, 12.17), and Cady (fifth, 12.30). Von Ranson (23.89) and Holmes (24.77) took first and second place, respectively, in the 200, while Cady won the 400 in 51.53. In the distance events, Donnelly won the 3,000 in 9:45.28, with Conathan-Leach finishing second.

• Bellows Falls finished second at this meet on the strength of their performance in the field events. The Terriers took the top four spots in the high jump. Brandon Keller won it with a mark of 5 feet, 11 inches. Tristan Boylan was second at 5 feet, 7 inches, and Colby Dearborn and Camron Mozaffari finished third and fourth respectively. Dearborn won the long jump and triple jump, while Ben Perry won the discus.

• Leland & Gray finished seventh in the meet, as Jacob Flood won the 300 meter hurdles in 45.48 and Trevor Hazelton finished third in javelin.

Lacrosse

• The Brattleboro boys lost to Rutland, 16-6, on April 16 as Noah Bruttomeso had eight goals and two assists in the victory over the visiting Bears. Brattleboro then lost to Burr & Burton, 16-5, on April 18 in Manchester to open their season at 0-2.

• The Brattleboro girls lost 12-7 at Woodstock on April 17, but rallied to beat Rutland, 12-11, at Natowich Field on April 19. Sophia Albright scored six goals to lead the Bears in a game that saw Rutland's Loretta Cooley score six goals in the first half to give her teams a 9-4 lead at the half. The Bears then scored three goals to start the second half and begin their rally.

Boys' tennis

• The Brattleboro boys won their season opener, 7-0, at Hartford on April 15. The Bears

won the No. 1, 4, and 5 singles matches by a 6-0, 6-0 score as 2023 state champ Nathan Kim and Eben Wagner and Mark Richards swept their opponents. No. 2 Malo Renault (6-1, 6-1) and No. 3 Ben Berg (6-0, 6-1) easily won their matches. In doubles play, the Bears won one match by forfeit, and the doubles team of Dorian Paquette and Jackson Pals won their match, 6-1, 6-1.

Locals do well in Boston Marathon

• Putney's Alicia Dana won her second Boston Marathon women's handcycycle title on April 15, covering the course in 1 hour, 15 minutes and 20 seconds, which was more than 18 minutes ahead of second-place finisher Edie Perkins. Dana, a two-time handcycycle medal winner in the Paralympic Games, previously won at Boston in 2018.

Other Windham County competitors included Samuel Vincent of Wilmington, who ran the 26.2 miles in 2 hours, 49 minutes and 12 seconds. It was the 1,185th fastest time in the field of 30,000. Townshend's Al Claussen also completed the marathon in 3:36:11.

Two Brattleboro women also finished the race. Halie Lange crossed the finish line in 3:34:58, while Maxine Stent got there in 4:49:08.

Senior bowling roundup

• With two weeks left in the winter/spring season of the

Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl, first place High Rollers (47-23) had a 5-0 week on April 18 to take a six-game lead on second place Stayin' Alive (46-29), which also had a 5-0 week. Stepping Stones II (44-31) fell to third place, followed by Four Seasons (42-33), Four Pins (33-42), Good Times (28-47), Hairiers (23-52), and Slow Movers (20-55).

Vikki Butynski had the women's high handicap game (246) and series (667), while Skip Shine had the men's high handicap game (269) and series (692). Four Seasons had the high team handicap game (889), while High Rollers had the high handicap series (2,553).

Robert Rigby had the men's high scratch series (655) with games of 225, 218, and 212. John Walker had a 643 series with games of 243 and 215. Milt Sherman had a 597 series with games of 233 and 192, while Gary Montgomery had a 579 series with games of 203 and 196 and Shine had a 538 series with a 221 game. Peter Deyo had a 521 series, Rick Westcott had a 532 series with a 200 game, Duane Schillemat had a 504 series with a 204 game, and Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 502 series.

Nancy Dalzell had the women's high scratch series (466) and Carol Gloski had the high scratch game (184). Butynski had a 176 game, while Dalzell rolled a 170.

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